

POLISH STUDIES –  
TRANSDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES 37

Agata Brajerska-Mazur/Edyta Chlebowska (eds.)

# On Cyprian Norwid. Studies and Essays

Vol. 2. Aspects



PETER LANG

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## On Cyprian Norwid. Studies and Essays

The book is the second volume of an extensive four-volume monograph devoted to the work of Cyprian Norwid (1821–1883), one of the most outstanding Polish authors. The impact of Norwid's oeuvre does not fade, as he addresses fundamental and timeless issues, such as the moral and spiritual condition of men or their place in the world and history, and seeks to answer universal questions. The book contains an extensive selection of contributions by eminent researchers, which represent different approaches to the poet's work. They cover various areas of research, including interpretation, thematology, genealogy, and editing.

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PETER LANG  
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# CONTENTS

<i>Edyta Chlebowska</i> <i>Translated by Aleksandra Niemirycz</i> Editor's Notes .....	9
<i>Stefan Kołaczkowski</i> <i>Translated by Agnieszka Gernand</i> Norwid's Irony .....	11
<i>Wacław Borowy</i> <i>Translated by Agnieszka Gernand</i> Foreword to the Facsimile of <i>Vade-Mecum's</i> Autograph .....	51
<i>Irena Sławińska</i> <i>Translated by Agnieszka Gernand</i> On Norwid's Epic Prose: Poet-Playwriter's Workshop .....	67
<i>Zofia Trojanowicz</i> <i>Translated by Monika Lutostanski</i> Norwid in the Berlin Prison .....	101
<i>Teresa Skubalanka</i> <i>Translated by Rafał Augustyn</i> Norwid's Poetic Style from a Historical Perspective .....	125
<i>Henryk Siewierski</i> <i>Translated by Agnieszka Gernand</i> "Architecture Of Word:" On Norwid's Theory and Practice of the Word ....	151
<i>Fr. Antoni Dunajski</i> <i>Translated by Agnieszka Gernand</i> Man – "An Image Of The Living God" .....	193
<i>Józef Fert</i> <i>Translated by Agnieszka Gernand</i> The Grandson Yet to Come: A Misunderstanding? .....	205

<i>Józef Fert</i> <i>Translated by Agnieszka Gernand</i> <i>Vade-Mecum as an Editorial Problem</i> .....	225
<i>Zbigniew Sudolski</i> <i>Translated by Agnieszka Gernand</i> <i>Norwid's Letters and Epistolary Tradition</i> .....	247
<i>Hanna Widacka</i> <i>Translated by Rafał Augustyn</i> <i>Cyprian Norwid as a Graphic Artist</i> .....	263
<i>Marek Adamiec</i> <i>Translated by Monika Lutostanski</i> <i>Norwid over "the Stream of Human Blood"</i> .....	313
<i>Jadwiga Puzynina</i> <i>Translated by Rafał Augustyn</i> <i>The Language of Values in Vade-Mecum: Selected Aspects</i> .....	335
<i>Elżbieta Dąbrowicz</i> <i>Translated by Rafał Augustyn</i> <i>Sentences and Events</i> .....	361
<i>Joanna Czarnomorska</i> <i>Translated by Rafał Augustyn</i> <i>In the Shadow of the Angel of Destruction: Norwid's Vision of Europe</i> .....	379
<i>Anna Kozłowska</i> <i>Translated by Rafał Augustyn</i> <i>"This-World's Prince": Norwid's Faces of Satan</i> .....	405
<i>Piotr Chlebowski</i> <i>Translated by Monika Lutostanski</i> <i>Romantic Silvae Rerum: On Cyprian Norwid's Notebooks and Albums</i> ....	439
<i>Jadwiga Puzynina</i> <i>Translated by Rafał Augustyn</i> <i>Norwid's Silence</i> .....	457

<i>Elżbieta Lijewska</i> <i>Translated by Monika Lutostanski</i> Chivalric Order, or “Penal Colony?” Norwid in the Saint Casimir House .....	489
<i>Agata Brajerska-Mazur</i> <i>Translated by Agnieszka Gernand</i> Ten Commandments for the Translation of the Works of Cyprian Norwid (And What Came From Them; or, on the Translations of Danuta Borchardt) .....	505
<i>Tomasz Korpysz</i> <i>Translated by Monika Lutostanski</i> Cyprian Norwid: On Definitions and Defining .....	555
<i>Agnieszka Ziółowicz</i> <i>Translated by Monika Lutostanski</i> The Aesthetic of Form in Norwid’s Dramas .....	573
<i>Zofia Dambek-Giallelis</i> <i>Translated by Monika Lutostanski</i> Norwid and the Chinese .....	591
<i>Włodzimierz Toruń</i> <i>Translated by Monika Lutostanski</i> Norwid’s Thoughts on Russia .....	607
<i>Edyta Chlebowska</i> <i>Translated by Monika Lutostanski</i> Norwid’s Watercolour Contrasts .....	635
<i>Łukasz Niewczas</i> <i>Translated by Monika Lutostanski</i> A Concert of Forms: Metaphor with Regard to Polysemy and Simile in Norwid’s Poetry .....	669
<b>Text Sources</b> .....	693

<b>List of Illustrations</b> .....	695
<b>Index of Names</b> .....	699
<b>Index of Titles</b> .....	715



Edyta Chlebowska

## Editor's Notes

The articles collected in this publication were written over a span of almost a century. Some of them were published prior to the publication of seven out of the 18 volumes critically edited by Sawicki, as well as the complete edition of the poet's *Pisma wszystkie* edited by Gomulicki. Up until the 1970s, researchers were using many different editions. If this status quo were continued, we would be dealing with chaotic textual criticism. Given this situation, the decision was made, for the sake of the contemporary readers' (especially foreign readers') convenience, to allow for bibliographical anachronism, in compliance with the binding rules of scholarly critical editing adopted by Norwidology. Thus the quotations have been adjusted – wherever it was possible – and based on the critical edition of *Dzieła wszystkie* prepared by the team led by Stefan Sawicki: Cyprian Norwid, *Dzieła wszystkie*, Vol. III: *Poematy 1*, ed. Stefan Sawicki, Adam Cedro (Lublin: TN KUL, 2009); Vol. IV: *Poematy 2*, eds. Stefan Sawicki, Piotr Chlebowski (Lublin: TN KUL, 2011); Vol. V: *Dramaty 1*, ed. Julian Maślanka (Lublin: TN KUL, 2015); Vol. VI: *Dramaty 2*, ed. Julian Maślanka (Lublin: TN KUL, 2014); Vol. VII: *Proza 1*, ed. Rościśław Skręt (Lublin: TN KUL, 2007); Vol. X: *Listy 1: 1839–1854*, ed. Jadwiga Rudnicka (Lublin: TN KUL, 2008); Vol. XI: *Listy 2: 1855–1861*, ed. Jadwiga Rudnicka (Lublin: TN KUL, 2016) (hereinafter referred to as DW, a Roman numeral indicating the volume, and an Arabic one – the page). In other cases, Norwid's texts have been cited according to: Cyprian Norwid, *Pisma wszystkie*, zebrał, tekst ustalił, wstępem i uwagami krytycznymi opatrzył J.W. Gomulicki [*Pisma wszystkie*, collected, compiled, introduced and critically annotated by J. W. Gomulicki], Vols. I–XI (Warszawa: PIW, 1971–1976) (hereinafter referred to as PWSz, a Roman numeral indicating the volume, an Arabic one the page). This decision, motivated by the present editorial status of Norwid's literature, involves discrepancies in the graphic conventions used; particularly in the case of Norwidian emphases, which in PWSz were rendered in the form of so-called spaced out print while in DW – with the use of italics.

The bibliographic records and notes have been unified in order to produce a synthetic entirety with a coherent and logical message. Concerning Norwid's texts cited in the articles, beside the original (Polish) version, the philological English translations have also been given, their boundaries clearly marked by

square brackets. Sometimes the existing translations of Norwid's poems into the English language were quoted. In such cases, the source of the translation has been indicated in a footnote. Additionally, the volume has been provided with indexes of the names and titles of Norwid's texts. It was also considered appropriate to list the sources of the printed texts.

Stefan Kołaczkowski

## Norwid's Irony

**Abstract:** Stefan Kołaczkowski believes irony to be one of the major “categories” of Norwid’s experiences. It explains the poet’s relationship with the epoch and the social genesis and role of his works, and also indicates the key role of moral judgement and intuitive cognition in his writings. The scholar sees irony mainly in works concerned with socio-historical issues and socio-personal ones, with the reservation that it is often difficult to discern the poet’s intentions, as, in Norwid’s art, irony sometimes takes the form of very advanced objectivism. Kołaczkowski assigns a dominant role in Norwid’s attitude to his ironic view on history, which directs the scholar’s focus towards seeking the poet’s relation to Thomas Carlyle, as well as other contemporary writers. He also indicates the dissimilarity of Norwid’s irony and romantic irony.

Kołaczkowski discusses the topic on the basis of several works: the narrative poems *A Dorio ad Phrygium* and *Quidam*, dramas *Noc tysiączna druga* [*The Thousandth and Second Night*], and *Kleopatra i Cezar* [*Cleopatra and Caesar*]. He also refers to a range of shorter poems, short stories, and fragments of letters to present the broad scale and various shades of Norwid’s irony. A recurrent motif in the discussion are the connections of irony and silence, strongly emphasised in the poet’s works and summarised in the quotation which ends the article: “Norwid did not only know how to keep ironically silent, but he also knew to unexpectedly draw out of the silence the things which you do not say.”

**Keywords:** Cyprian Norwid, Thomas Carlyle, poetry, irony, poethics, silence in poetry

The beginning of all Wisdom  
is to look fixedly on Clothes  
or even with armed eyesight  
till they become t r a n s p a r e n t .

T. Carlyle

Constante  
te muestras a mi pesar.  
¿Es humildad o valor  
esta obediencia?

*El Principe Constante, Pedro Calderón de la Barca*

### Introduction

Contrary to appearances in the cult of poetry, little has been so neglected lately by artists and writers as poeticalness and truth in poetry – at least in theoretical

statements. This is less surprising with the critics. With their tendency for intellectualism, they identified artistry with poetry. They popularised the aesthetics of our writers and literary audience under the pretence of a cult of the form, and while they admired poeticising, they taught that poetry should be disregarded as an allegedly easy thing because one cannot learn it. Thus, they defended a thesis that very much needed a defence – that the poet's personality was unimportant, that the question of how a poet lived was irrelevant. They forgot the minor detail that a person experiences poems not only in a poetic manner. On the contrary, poems are written as subtle tools for organising imagination and emotions to reflect the indefinable – poetry itself.

There was nothing new in that confusion of terms: “*La confusion entre plaisir poétique et plaisir esthétique est traditionnelle*,” said J. Hytier;<sup>1</sup> means and aims are often muddled. Recent events had brought about blatant misunderstandings: on the one hand, in the fervour of combatting realism and intellectualism, the existence of an intuitive cognition element in poetry was negated – contrary to facts, and contrary to the combaters' own cult of poetry in which that element played the dominant role; and on the other hand, in the metaphysics concocted by critics in an attempt to please fashion, it was announced that the whole value of art was contained in artistry and was identical thereto. No one considered how the poetic element could exist despite this in an experience alone, in a landscape or a historical event, or even in the crude form of primitive poetry. Those judgements led to such a glaring contrast between theory and practice, such diametrically different positions of one-sided aestheticians that it had to result in a reaction in the form of differentiation. Hytier, quoted above, dedicated his work to the differentiation of the two terms, yet no one had performed that aesthetic allotment with as much clarity of distinctions as Władysław Tatarkiewicz in his 1933 lecture at the Academy of Learning. Many more interesting issues are contained in his text. This paper does not, however, provide enough space to discuss the complex matter of poetic nature or the distinction between the aesthetic and poetic and the intuitive cognition of truth in art.

The above is meant simply to explain what is meant by this discussion on Cyprian Norwid's irony because the author is convinced that asking such questions would preclude many a quasi-philological work from existence. If it were merely an inventory of frequently reappearing features, it would not be worth writing. The concept for this study actually arose on its own and tempted

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1 Jean Hytier, “L'Activité poétique et l'activité esthétique,” *Journal de Psychologie [Normale et Pathologique]*, No. 1–3 (1926), pp. 160–182.

the author to seek and find justification for it. Irony explains Norwid's relationship with the epoch, the social origin and social role of his art, and one of his principal emotional approaches to life – the stoic one, and it also makes the reader aware of the vast, dominant role of moral judgement and intuitive cognition in Norwid's writing.

Irony is one of the elements linking cognition and moral judgement of the world with Norwid's emotional and poetic experience. Irony in itself, just like humour or tragedy, is not poetic, but an ironic attitude to the world may be the starting point for a special, irony-coloured poetic vision and experience of the world or for presenting truth learned instinctively.

Hytier claims poetic delight differs from illusion and hallucination because for it to occur, one needs to be aware of the difference between reality and the changeable world of our undulating imagination. It may be that humour, and in particular irony, expresses in art the most extreme case of difference, or even contrast, between reality and the world of our dreams and wishes. Irony would thus be a psychological paradox: a means of imposing – with artistic intonation – a judgement and, at the same time, a poetic vision of the world, which the poet judges and condemns; an intended shock that opens perspectives for the contemplation of a new, unknown, fascinating truth. It is there that the greatest triumph of poetry lies: to give a poetic quality to the object furthest from poetic desires. The contrast serves as a springboard, like a hard shore that gives momentum to the wave of poetic emotion. Truth is not shunned, poetic illusion is not nursed; rather, naked truth is boldly challenged as a tool of poetry and object of poetic contemplation. Or rather, it is not so much the truth as it is the reality, screened by the poet with his truth, uncovering its content and value. Wishes and yearnings bear dreams and poetry. And when can greater yearning arise than when reality is furthest from our ideals? The taut bowstring of Norwid's yearning was that very distance – the greatest imaginable one – between him and the world. The irony of fate, of history, were great metaphysical and historical projections of the divergence he felt. Finally, a deep analysis of the essence of irony (the ambiguity of an ironist's intentions) also explains Norwid's categorical imperative: the reader's collaboration.

Once, intellectuals and monists wrote of the *idée-maitresse* of someone's art. We could delve much deeper into art itself if one could find one of the fundamental forms in which the experiences of an author occur, something that, for its peculiar character, could be termed a category of experience for a given artist. The author of the present study is far from monist tendencies and a belief that irony is the most important or even the only "category" of Norwid's experiences. Quite the contrary: irony plays a great role only in that part of

Norwid's writings, which through the scope of its topics belongs to socio-historical and socio-personal works, and which draws its artistic stimuli from the realm of thought and value. Yet the other world of Norwid's poetry, the purely emotional or purely lyrical, which he himself indicated by saying that Lenartowicz took the path he had walked – is no less important.

The originality of Norwid's spiritual organization also consisted in the fact that his talent was composed of two apparently separate, disproportionate elements. One was related to the stoic attitude – statue-like, intellectualist, and based on intuitive cognition. It was static to such an extent that the poet seemed unable to create action or the illusion of motion, and sometimes even went into almost glaring didactics and abstracts. The other – a world of purely lyrical experiences – had that same fluent rhythm, an original and indefinable brightness. Perhaps the other, musical element – both in the literal and metaphorical sense of “music” – is even more tempting for an analyst of artistry. Yet this paper concerns the former of the two spheres of Norwid's writing. Whether irony truly constitutes one of the major forms determining the character of poetic experiences is for the reader to judge.

## I. The Poet and the World

The sense of silence in Norwid's work was often mentioned in lofty terms because Norwid assigned a great role to it. Yet no one asked what the art of speaking with silence consisted of, how much truth and how much eccentricity there was in that paradox.

It would be a good idea to start that discussion with a simple example – and such a silent answer was given by Norwid himself in a letter to B. Zaleski on May 10, 1851 (DW X, 371). In this letter, he described his reaction to another letter with readers' complaints:

Odebrałem szerokie skargi od arcyliberalnej strony, ale dziwnie śmieszne: 1-o że arystokracją jest tak niezrozumiale pisać; że 2-o że cały Kościół uważa się za *monopol prawdy*; 3-o tymi słowami: “*czego my nie rozumiemy, to dla nas jest szatanem.*” Pojmujesz, że łatwo zrozumiałem, jaki to mówi duch – odciąłem kartkę i wypadło tak, że z jednej strony listu było: “*kościelnicy mówią – my mamy prawdy monopol etc.,*” a z drugiej: “*czego ja nie rozumiem, to dla mnie szatanem i uwodzicielem jest*” – dziwny wypadek! Owóż odciawszy tak i czerwono razem podkreśliwszy, odesłałem, pisząc na wierzchu te słowa z Ewangelii: “*Tyś powiedział.*”

[I received extensive complaints from the arch-liberal side, but strangely ridiculous: 1° – that it is aristocratic to write so incomprehensibly; that 2° – the whole Church believes to have the monopoly of truth; 3° – in the words: “*what we do not*

*understand, is [like] Satan to us.*" You realise I understood easily what spirit was talking. I cut the page off, and it thus happened that on one side of the letter there was: "Church says: *we have the monopoly for truth*" etc., and on the other: "*what I do not understand, is a Satan and seducer to me.*" A curious occurrence! Having thus cut the page and underlined it in red, I sent it back, with those words from the Gospel written on top: "You have said thus.]"

What a telling and yet silent reply! Such repetition of others' words with an intonation giving them a contrary sense is called irony. The mention of the Gospel adds one more element of Norwid's artistry to the equation – parabolism. The events of a drama or story were never the full expression of his artistic intention: that was always hidden in the unsaid *s y m b o l i c s e n s e*.

It would be easy to prove that silence or concealment, used as an artistic means, played many more different roles in Norwid's writing. Irony and ironic parable open such broad perspectives on the works of the poet that learning even just a part of that "art of silence" makes for a quite broad topic. The issue of irony is also important because it introduces the reader to the world of Norwid's values and criteria in the most important matters for any poet. Catholicism and Christian humility, as well as his completely personal, aristocratic stoicism, all characterised Norwid to the same extent. The "measure of greatness" in Norwid's works is also his irony. He measured value not only with reverence and humility but also with proud ironic negation. "Nie bronię się więc, ale za przecząm ostatecznie" (PWsz VI, 598) ["Thus I do not defend myself, but I *d e f i n i t e l y d e n y*"], was one of his characteristic statements. Norwid's work expresses a whole spectrum of emotions, from curses and sarcasm – from the anger he described in *Fulminant*, through all shades of irony, up to the sweet smile of a martyr who accepts everything with humility. And on the scale of irony itself, there is also the fluid, intangible line between superhuman, stoic pride and a martyr's understanding. It is sometimes impossible to differentiate where irony contains that stoic "odejście" ["look-back"], annihilating *fatum*, as mentioned in the same-titled poem, and where it contains emotion, as expressed in the "tragedy" titled *Słodycz* [*Sweetness*]. Hence the motto of this study, taken from Calderon's drama. It may be a difficult task to define the poet's intentions at times, for irony is sometimes a form of perfect objectivism in Norwid's art: when measuring values, the poet was satisfied with a statement, keeping his emotions secret or discreet, sometimes unnoticeably betraying them. In a letter to Trębicka, Norwid denied the truth of the statement that one could rely only on oneself. The stoicism of Norwid, deepened through his Catholicism, often took God as the basis of its stability. Yet that happened only in religious

states. It was not always felt, for the poet also knew the stoicism of a wise man who relied on himself. Norwid also offered the “nadobnie-bez-zjadliwa ironia” [“handsomely-non-scathing irony”], which (usually unfairly) he attributed to Słowacki in *Czarne kwiaty* [*Black Flowers*; DW VII, 50]. He also sometimes presented the crushing irony of absolute aristocratic contempt. The ironist’s objectivism had different senses. For example, describing Lenartowicz’s work with the metaphor “Dant na fujarce” [“Dante on a panpipe”] could be taken for crushing irony if Norwid had not put it in a letter to Lenartowicz with the added word “śliczny” [“pretty”] and in a generally kind and favourable context. The ironist demanded an “ideal listener,” or rather, assumed the existence of one. Or – as Norwid often did – he gave everyone as much truth in his irony as the reader or listener was able to accept and process. “Jest niemało do powiedzenia ludziom, ale czy znieść potrafią?... Będzie im można więcej mówić – lecz wtedy dopiero, skoro oni nauczą się wiedzieć: kiedy się godzi śmiać?... a kiedy płakać?” (DW VII, 190) [“There is much to say to people, but can they bear it...? You can tell them more – but only once they learn to know: when it is fitting to laugh?... and when to cry?”] (*Stygmat* [*Stigma*]). Thus, irony is always connected with silence and the “measure of greatness.” Not only because irony is a silent judgement, but also because the author matched it with the reader, giving them precisely as much as they could understand. Without the collaboration of the reader or listener, an ironist cannot fulfil their artistic intentions.

Norwid was not a mystic, or rather, he was one only inasmuch as mysticism fit within Catholicism, accepted that light related to darkness, and indicated untransparent matters. In a lofty jest, he combined heavenly revolutions – miracles, with earthly miracles – revolutions. Thus, it would be loyal and in the spirit of Norwid to eliminate from research statements to the effect that “Norwid was an epoch unto himself,” a “miracle,” etc. Windelband and Rickert were only partially right when defending themselves against the designs of natural scientific methods by stating that a historian was occupied with historical events in their individual existence. A historian who wishes to understand always looks for connections, but not necessarily causal ones or those of a direct, tangible nature. To know without connections is to understand nothing. Philological research on influences through detailed comparison is useful where, like in old-Polish literature, paraphrase, adaptation, or theft often occur. Here, we have to do the same with a great artist. Differences in dates are unimportant when the relationship to the spirit of an epoch counts, and the principal social and historic conditions remain the same over a longer period of time. The identity of character and similarity of particular features of the art of



not just one, but several successive generations, sufficiently explain the historical background of Norwid's activity.

Also, it should be remembered that "epochs" are academic constructs necessary for the awareness of common distinctive features, and despite changes and turning points, there is *c o n t i n u i t y*. With this in mind, we would not exclusively state whether Norwid was a romantic or not, but only gather arguments for and against both sides and define them through negation, instead of giving a positive description of Norwid.<sup>2</sup> Trends and epochs are felt when the structural relations of their particular features are understood. The existence of one or a few features or a lack thereof with some writer does not determine whether they belong to a certain trend. As in a description of a character, in the description of an epoch and trends, the most important thing is *s t r u c t u r e*. The same elements in a different context may have a completely different meaning. If the structure of a trend does not match or explain a writer's aspirations and beliefs sufficiently, there is nothing to achieve by stating their originality or by grasping at particular features common to various trends or people. One must then seek a different structure, in connection with a historic background beyond one generation, with factors more stable than particular movements and schools, or with conditions of more general meaning, such as particular movements and trends, insofar as the trends are individual reactions and transient changes related to symptoms.

From that perspective, the conclusion might be reached that Norwid was no more peculiar than, say, Baudelaire,<sup>3</sup> that he was simply a much greater and more powerful human, and – at least after his death – his loneliness may be overcome by finding people like him in spirit and attitude. The greatness of a human does not consist in extraneous and exorbitant phenomenality, but in the extent of the basis of their actions and the broadness of their horizons. Although it is true that men are affected by things they are unaware of, the number of factors shaping them grows together with their broadening awareness. Both that and the fact that Norwid was a traditionalist must be taken into account if one wishes to understand the "genesis" of his work. Norwid cannot truly be understood without ancient and medieval moralists, without Catholicism, Dante, etc. He covered with his spirit the whole of contemporary culture, and his approach towards it was one of the main elements shaping his general attitude. This may be defined in the most

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2 Similarly, describing Norwid as an epigone and harbinger introduces more confusion than clarification.

3 Below, an explanation is provided for what may seem a strange comparison to some.

general terms as a religious organization whose deepest beliefs and desires went contrary to the principles according to which modern civilization developed. Such an attitude of Norwid towards the whole culture was expressed not only in his historiosophical interests but also in his specific view on tragedy, understood as the irony of history in general.

Naturally, an entire psychological study could be devoted to an analysis of the writings of that great ironist, explaining his work through the poet's personal experiences. Yet this discussion starts with a social basis, for an ironic view on history played a dominant role in Norwid's works. It was not the rebellion of the romantic self against the world at large. With Norwid, it was something entirely different: a refusal to give his time the title of history. Norwid presented his clearly crystallised view on the world to the equally clearly and penetratingly understood entirety of nineteenth-century civilization.

To present that major, essential factor in Norwid's ironic attitude to life fully, much space is dedicated here to a certain comparison, which is even more interesting because the writer compared with Norwid was considered more original. "We are at first put out. All is new here: ideas, style, tone, the shape of the phrases, and the very vocabulary"<sup>4</sup> – thus H. Taine wrote of him. Ludwik Krzywicki called him the sphinx of the nineteenth century. Those quotations concern Thomas Carlyle. The social character of irony and demonic humour is particularly noticeable in Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* because it is not a satire against one phenomenon or another, but an explosion of protests against the whole culture. The "philosophy of clothes" of that writer would today be termed culture criticism. The exceptional position of that book consists in the fact that it is one of the earliest and strongest warnings. The book is about what Norwid formulated in the postulate of "przepalenie globu sumieniem" ["burning the world through with conscience"]. Just before industrialism and capitalism came to full bloom, Carlyle's spirit shuddered with dread, almost seeing a vision of the future victory of matter and technology over man. Norwid's concept of enslavement, consisting of means becoming aims, is matched by Carlyle's pamphlet on the victory of clothing over men. In his black humour, Carlyle announced: "clothes have made men of us; they are threatening to make clothes-screens of us."<sup>5</sup> The shout of an individual, one

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4 Hippolyte Taine, *History of English Literature*, trans. Henri Van Laun, Vol. 4 (Philadelphia: H. Altemus, 1908), p. 285.

5 Thomas Carlyle, *Sartor Reartus: The Life and Opinions of Herr Teufelsdröckh: in Three Books* (Boston: J. Munroe and Company, 1840), p. 39.

spirit against the world, would have vanished into the void, like an eruption of despair of a romantic soul. Unable to communicate, Carlyle reached instinctively for a different means: he presented the world as he saw it, in a monstrous, menacing caricature, and then undermined it. That inability of the writer to communicate with the world in e v e r y t h i n g led not only to a demonic caricature arising from suppressed pathos, not only to an unexpected combination of content which imposed a completely different viewpoint on issues, but also to the need to create an almost completely new language, with odd combinations, merging words into one, emphases, stresses, and graphic innovations. Hence Professor Teufelsdröckh from *Sartor Resartus* says of himself that "I was like no other" and believes that "in action, speculation, and social position, my fellows are perhaps not numerous."<sup>6</sup>

And yet, another such loner like no other can be found: Cyprian Norwid. There is probably no other comparison that can throw as much light on the author of *Tajemnica Lorda Singelworth* [*Lord Singelworth's Secret*] and "Rozebrana" ["Disrobed"] than the one with the "clothes-philosopher" and the book *Sartor Resartus*. The discussion here is not about influences or a mechanical comparison, although when reading Norwid, one may assume he had read that famous book, perhaps in London, on his return from America. The analogy reaches deeper and opens a broader horizon on the same social background. In both cases, a lone individual opposed an entire whole civilization; and it was not the romantic self-against-world protest. Brzozowski owes much to Carlyle<sup>7</sup> as a critic of romantic idealism. Norwid's philosophy of life can also be summarised in Carlyle's words: "The man is ... what he became,"<sup>8</sup> which clearly opposed the beliefs of unrealistic "idealists," who divided their lives into their ideals, wishes, and a course of life different from those.

Since the stances of Carlyle and Norwid in judgement on contemporary culture were very close, it is no wonder that they also showed similarity concerning the consequences of such a stance. What is more, not only were their views on truth, science, or tradition similar, but there were also further analogies in how they viewed silence, secrecy, and mysteriousness. Moreover, similar attitudes to the world sometimes resulted in striking similarities of style,

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6 Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*, p. 110.

7 The impact of Carlyle's artistry is visible, e.g., in Stanisław Brzozowski's *Widma moich współczesnych (fikcyjne portrety satyryczne)*, Lwów: Księgarnia Polska B. Połoniecki, Warszawa: Gebethner I Wolff, 1914).

8 Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*, p. 206.

broadly understood. As Carlyle unearths the hidden sense of social life in the demonic crosscuts of a humourist, e.g., linking the most diverse phenomena into one causal chain, striking at its truth, as he writes of five million quintals of rags being reshaped into great batteries of social power, i.e., journals, which become more powerful than great royal dynasties,<sup>9</sup> Norwid immediately comes to mind.

Norwid is also brought to mind with the deep insight into the sense of culture by giving particularly detailed senses to minor and completely irrelevant and disproportionate facts, which is connected with a more or less apt etymology serving symbolic and historiosophical purposes. Both writers had a similar manner of opening historical perspectives with rhetorical questions (related to that parabolic view on details): “The first ground handful of Nitre, Sulphur and Charcoal drove monk Schwartz’s pestle through the ceiling: what will the last do?”<sup>10</sup> asked Carlyle.

Carlyle’s artistry was heavy, German, and generally minor, if original. Norwid utterly outshone him with his talent. When stating the analogies, a principal difference needs to be indicated: humour. Carlyle was aggressive in his fight and generally didactic. Thus, irony played a minor role, smaller than sarcasm and humour. Carlyle was aptly called by Krzywicki<sup>11</sup> “ostatni kaznodzieja średniowiecznego chłopstwa szkockiego” [“the last preacher of medieval Scottish peasants”]. The differences between the mind of the British writer and the refined artistic soul of Norwid, a Catholic, need not be listed. Yet it is against the background of those great differences that similarities are strikingly visible, indicating the same social basis for irony, sarcasm and linguistic oddities, considered with both writers to be fully individual features.

It is not through similarity, like in *Sartor Resartus*, but through theoretical sociological analysis on the origin of irony that much can be drawn from the book of another ironist and poet of silence, the great Danish moralist, Søren Kierkegaard. In his treatise of 1841, *On the Concept of Irony*, he wrote of prophetic figures at the turn of epochs, who – unable to instil new concepts of the world in their environment – expressed their negation of the old world through irony. Such a role was also attributed to Socrates in his time.

In order to win, the ironist must become a victim like a tragic protagonist. Analogy in attitude towards an epoch already foreign to them explains Norwid’s

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9 Carlyle, *Sartor Reartus*, pp. 43–44.

10 Carlyle, *Sartor Reartus*, p. 39.

11 Ludwik Krzywicki, “*Sfinks XIX wieku*,” *Prawda*, No. 2 (1892).

particular fondness of Socrates, who appeared very often in his writing. Norwid saw in him not so much irony as tragic stoicism. Socrates “kielich dopełnił i na statutę żywą obowiązku zamienił statut pisany” (PWsz VI, 414) [“drank the cup and changed the written statute to the living statue of duty”]. Norwid’s statement from his lecture on Słowacki: “Współczesność albowiem jest dwojaka” [“contemporaneity is always twofold”] clearly expressed that sense of identity. Faith in providence made Norwid accept reality as the expression of God’s will, or at least as an act of God. Yet, on the other hand, that reality denied his Christian moral values, and he could not accept it. That contradiction continuously resulted in stating a lack of adequacy. He overcame the dilemma with thought, explaining that time is not eternity because of the fact that it is time; i.e., reality cannot contain absolute values within itself. He distinguished between apparent and true reality. He used emotion to oppose the circumstances; irony and silence played the role of that opposition in his writings. Feeling unable to present the world in the name of which he negated its surrounding reality, Norwid stated: “Jestem z namię!... / Sam głosu nie mam – Panie” (PWsz I, 136) [“I am a stigma!... / I do not have a voice myself – Lord”]. Characteristically, Norwid wished to change Sophocles’ metaphysical “unfortunately” into a historical “too-late.”<sup>12</sup> He spoke very openly of the misunderstanding of individuals who were ahead of the epoch:

jakże albowiem, posuwając społeczeństwo w przyszłość i język uczuć przyszłych mu przynosząc, porozumiewać się jasno z obecnością .... Nie jestże to tak, jak gdyby kto zdawkową monetą płacił wtedy, kiedy ta jeszcze od stempla oderwać się nie może, albo gdy jest gorąca i do czerwoności rozpalona! (PWsz VI, 458)

[how then, moving the society into the future and bringing it the language of future emotion, [can you] communicate clearly with the present .... Is it not as if someone paid a small coin when the coin still cannot come off the stamp, or is yet red-hot!]

It is noteworthy that Kierkegaard started his considerations of irony by opposing the “romantic irony,” completely foreign to the new post-romantic generation. Contrary to the term, it actually had little to do with actual irony and was certainly in no way connected with Norwid’s irony. Even where Norwid

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12 That statement (in a lecture on Słowacki) contains the anti-metaphysical view on tragedy as a merely historic phenomenon, typical for Norwid. Yet, there is also another narrowing of the concept to a special case of tragedy: the artist missing their epoch. A tragic hero is the one who fights for what future generations would achieve. Hence the hero’s tragedy is called “too-late.”

intentionally travestied romantic irony, as he did in *Szczesna*, he was more of a satirist than an ironist. The romantic irony was born of the individualist anarchism of the romantics, of the fight against one's own sentimentalism, of magical idealism – and finally of an internal split. Anyone “kto by Diogenesa poczytywał jedynie za improwizatora dorywczego i za bezkierunkowy jaki h u m o r” (PWSz VI, 224) [“who would take Diogenes only for an occasional improviser and for some un-oriented h u m o r”] would be very much in error, wrote Norwid in *Milczenie* [*Silence*]. That deprecated un-oriented irony, resulting from whim and often from imaginary superiority over the world, agitated despair, boredom, apathy, or scepticism, cannot be found anywhere in Norwid's works. Norwid did not negate reality as such; neither did he deprecate the common. This differentiated his irony from the irony of romantics, the “disappointed souls” of romantic epigones and the later sceptics of the end of the century. It may be that in his youth, the irony of Norwid and of all the circle of “Warsaw bohemia” was of a typically romantic character and that the ironic stand of “bohemians” had some impact on Norwid's later attitude towards the milieu.<sup>13</sup> Yet the non-disappointed later romantics, like Musset, Heine, or Berwiński, can help explain the character of Norwid's irony and its relation to the epoch.

Contrary to the above, Norwid's irony had one very strongly oriented tendency. It expressed a strongly built and closed individuality, opposing the world in a stoic manner in the name of clearly defined values and concepts. That the uncommon abundance of irony with writers more or less contemporary to Norwid is explained with the disappointment of romantic souls is another matter. The road from romanticism to realism led through irony. The irony of Flaubert's disappointed soul, and, in particular, his immortal Homais from *Madame Bovary*, may serve as a signpost for the evolution leading to naturalism. Irony was the only weapon left to those who could do nothing against the world. When the bourgeoisie took over culture, the edge of irony turned against them. The more the “last Mohicans” of romanticism stabbed about with vicious, aristocratic, desperate, and refined irony, the more overpowered and lonely they felt. An example of that can be *Contes cruels* by Villiers de l'Isle Adam, resembling Norwid's derision in *Ad leones*. Hopes lost after the “Spring of Nations” increased the bitterness. While some were dolefully melancholising in seclusion, like Amiel, others were “liberated” from the world with Schopenhauer's pessimistic philosophy, and still others found solace

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13 See Stefan Kawyn's study on Warsaw bohemia in: “Cyganeria warszawska: szkic z dziejów obyczajowości literackiej,” *Pamiętnik Literacki*, No. 2 (1933), pp. 224–243.

in propagating aristocratic stoicism. The latter can be found in the classicism and aestheticism of the Parnassians, their *poésie objective et impossible*. The greater the rift between historical reality and the elites who understood its false or ostensible nature, the greater was the isolation of the elites. The inability to communicate resulted in the instinctive suppression of emotions; romantic pathos was opposed with the pathos of restraint, silence, loftiness, and statue-like demeanour. Such was the learned and aristocratic, static and composed poetry of the Parnassians and of Norwid.

It may seem strange to compare Norwid with Baudelaire because there is a great difference in the artistry of those writers. Baudelaire was conservative and classical in his artistry, while nothing of the kind may be said of Norwid. Baudelaire had more artistic culture as well, but that is not the point here. They are similar if seen from a sociological point of view. What they had in common was the trait of final tragic eccentricity in seclusion and stoic pride both in persistence and in contrariness. Fortunately for Baudelaire's artistry, his loneliness in the surrounding middle-class atmosphere, his hatred, contempt, and estrangement from the world were expressed in perversion, defiance, and a fancy to surround himself with mystery up to ironic mystification in life, not in art. But those are only different expressions of the same attitude towards the world. Despite all those features of decadence, Baudelaire was not decadent. He was a man with a good backbone, with great, uncommon strength of will. In that strength of will, in that stoicism, the two men had much in common, and likewise with their source – Catholicism. Similar situations resulted in similar features: strength of sarcasm, irony, contempt, and desire for stoicism in art and also in their inner self, which had to survive everything. Neither were intuitive artists – with both of them, art was the result of work, premeditation, and uncommon condensation of the word. “Nie bronię się, lecz ostatecznie zaprzeczam” [“I do not defend myself, but I definitely deny”], one might here repeat after Norwid and Baudelaire. The latter only opposed ugliness with beauty – for he was an aesthete. And therein lies the difference. Baudelaire never looked beyond Paris and art in his thought – he was simply a brilliant writer and poet. He choked and suffocated with Paris and bourgeoisie and lived on dreams and art. Norwid suffered not from a city – he suffered from the whole epoch, he fought practically the entire understanding of the culture of his day, and that vast philosophical and historical horizon of his put him far above Baudelaire. The scope of his thoughts and emotions was incomparably broader and, as a result of the nature of the issues he saw, deeper. Their social role was similar in attitude but not in scope. Leaning on the rock of Catholicism, they maintained was an absolute, unbending negation of the life surrounding them, its weapons

being sarcasm, mocking irony, contempt. They opposed that life with monumentality – of beauty with Baudelaire, and of inner truth with Norwid.

Through his erudition and archaeological interests, Norwid was kin to the Parnassians, but he had more in common with Baudelaire as concerned inner kinship, mainly the tragedy arising from the social situation, which is of greater interest here, when the social background of Norwid's work is discussed. Hence, more time was devoted to that comparison.

The traditions of that monumental pessimistic stoicism, the tendencies for the pathos of restraint, silence, loftiness, and statue-like demeanour could already be found with typical romantics. From the darkness, inspired by old-Scandinavian poetry, there emerged the statue of the unfaltering Iridion. Classical attitudes, combined with the dark, self-focused, stoic poetry by Alfred de Vigny, was manifested by Chasseriau's *Venus*,<sup>14</sup> which is an ideal, if unintended, illustration of that poetry. The increasing intellectualism and scepticism favoured a scientific and historical treatment of religion (Renan). Aestheticism, a symptom of detachment from life, used archaeological, historical, and mythological research as material for aristocratic, learned, and intellectualist poetry, delighting in egotism. Thus, was the art of Leconte de Lisle, who was contemptuous of the masses, and thus was the art of other Parnassians. The interests of writers detached from life turned to the far future in seeking kindred souls, in striving for a moral anchor and an explanation of the matters of culture. For Louis Menard, a Parnassian poet, moralist and philosopher of culture, absence from life also had an adverse effect on drama, giving it a static nature foreign to its essence. In that respect, Norwid's dramas resembled the dramas by Leconte de Lisle and Flaubert's *The Temptation of Saint Anthony*. The ten-act drama by Ibsen on Julian the Apostate, devoid of poetry and a historical sense, is typical of the mid-nineteenth century in its reflectiveness and topic (revision of culture), and through its pursuit of an Apollo-Christ synthesis.

Kiedy to, co miewałeś blisko *osobistym*, połamie ci nagle przed oczyma fatalny wicher i kiedy on co *osobowego* nadweręży lub z kurzawą popiołu precz odmiecie, pozostawiają ci poglądy i poczucia ogólne, ludzkościowe, historyczne... Lecz pozostawiają może jako upajający męt na dnie kielicha... lecz otwierają się one może przed twymi oczyma jak "Egipska umarłych księga" (DW VII, 193)

[When that which you had close and *personal*, is suddenly broken by violent wind before your eyes and when it damages something *personal*, or wipes it away with a storm of ash, you are left with views and sensations which are general to all people

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14 In the Louvre.



and history... But maybe they stay as intoxicating dregs on the bottom of the glass... but maybe they open before your eyes like the "Egyptian book of the Dead"]

Do those words of Norwid not explain not only their author but also the interests of the learned poetry of the time?

Norwid's cult of Socrates, already mentioned here, may serve as a guide into that interest in the past belonging to Norwid and kindred-spirit poets, which is of particular interest due to its connection with irony. The latter finds its closest ally in sarcasm, as will be seen below. The wisdom of ancient stoics often fed old-Polish writers as well and was popular in the time of the motto of perseverance (Orzeszkowa, Świętochowski). It is understandable why Norwid also sought comfort in it and why stoicism was a very common motif with the poets of his time.<sup>15</sup> The advice given by Norwid to the nation in *Niewola* [*Enslavement*] to make use of suffering applied to the whole society in the same way as the thought was applied by Seneca to an individual. In the foreword to *Niewola*, Norwid wrote:

Nie mogę tu albowiem zapomnieć wzoru Sokratesa, który obrażenie od kajdan wytłoczone na nodze uważał za treść i za przykład popierający rzecz o bólu i stosunku bólu do żywota, *panując wyraźnie tym sposobem nad fatalnością położenia, owszem, rosnąc w wolności nie do pokonania pewnej siebie.* (DW IV, 42)

[For I cannot forget here the model of Socrates, who considered the injury chains had impressed on his leg to be the content and an example to support the lesson on pain and its relation to life, *prevailing distinctly in that manner over the fatality of his situation, and even growing in freedom of invincible confidence.*]

Stoicism, restraint, static quality, the cult of silence, and irony remained interconnected, and every now and again, one of those elements appeared with the Parnassians or other writers of the epoch. Symptomatic in that respect was, e.g., the subtle, lofty comedy by Théodore de Banville, titled *Socrate et sa femme*. With stoic irony, Socrates admired Xanthippe in the drama because, with her conduct, she reminded him of earthly matters and thus helped his spirit maintain a perfect balance between the world of ideas and earth. In *Mademoiselle de Maupin*, Théophile Gautier praised the unsaid inner content of the work as being the most perfect. A Catholic thinker, Ernest Hello, saw God's irony in Napoleon's life, and, speaking of the whole nineteenth century, he said: "Qu'est-ce donc le dix-neuvième siècle? Une certaine ironie semble avoir obtenu la présidence de ses destinées."

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15 A good example is L. Ménard's poem *Stoïcisme*.

Norwid's stoicism was being faithful to the truth – being objective. The irony lay thus in the fact that he opposed by s t a t i n g o b j e c t i v e l y. For him, parabolization and allegoricalness resulted not just from a deep attitude towards the world but also had their roots in intellectualism. The parabolic treatment of reality and the resulting linking of realistic elements in art with deep symbolic or allegorical interpretation were not something unique to Norwid, as many claim. To take one example, Théodore de Banville's poem *Le Saut du Tremplin* shows that the analogous phenomena of parabolic and allegorical interpretation of apparently non-poetic things could be found with other poets of Norwid's generation. The discoveries of realism did penetrate non-realist poetry; the triviality of naturalists could also be found with Baudelaire. That issue is important insofar as those features of realism harmonised with the postulates of allegorising reality and objectivism of the ironists and sometimes even formed an inevitable element of that style. In that respect, Norwid was not particularly unique. Irony and parabolism, classical restraint and faithfulness down to the details bore deeper, parabolic meanings or could add value to the point – all these were manifestations of Norwid's objectivism. Norwid also tried to find a theoretical, or rather historical, justification for such an attitude and the resulting artistic style in *Rzecz o wolności słowa*:

*Od Epoki Chrześcijańskiej: Słowo stawia się siłą... I jeżeli tamta dochodziła do arcydzieł potężnie plastycznych, tedy ta, właśnie że przeciwnie – dojść ma do pozornej bez-silności – do bez-personalizmu – do bez-stronności... do arcydzieła Prawdy! (DWW IV, 214)*

*[Since Christian epoch: the Word becomes strength... and if the other one led to mightily visual masterpieces, this one, quite contrary – should lead to apparent power-lessness – to non-personalism – to non-sidedness... to the masterpiece of Truth!]*

The artistry of irony, aiming at objectivity, has a certain dualism in itself: it requires subtle intellectual precision in differentiating terms but also a subtle understanding of the slightest shades and understatements. Both assets are conditions for grasping the intentions deliberately hidden in irony. Irony is, in fact, the language of aristocrats, unintelligible for simpletons, who – to quote Norwid – take “t a k z a t a k – n i e z a n i e – / Bez światło-cienia” (PWSz I, 224) [“y e s f o r a y e s – n o f o r a n o – / Without shades”].

That contradiction of precision and ambiguity of understatement, as an artistic style, must be learned from example – especially as it characterised the whole of the writing of that artist and thinker. That dualism of tendencies is best shown in a poetic description of a sculpture by Norwid, which combines succinct compactness and distinctness of the shape with shades and elusiveness

of expression, opening up the possibility of a subjective view. Norwid spoke beautifully of that in a sonnet to Marcel Gujski:

Męża jeżeli posąg wywiodłeś z kamienia,  
Tak, jak on jest, niech wiekom późniejszym zostanie,  
Lecz kobieta – zarazem kobietą-spojrzenia,  
Sobą i ową, jak ty poglądałeś na nią.

Nieustannym zjawiskiem! Ona i nie ona

(PWsz II, 205)

[If you led a man's statue out of stone,  
Such as he is, may he stay that to later ages,  
But a woman, is a woman made of looking,  
Herself and such as you saw her.

A constant phenomenon! Tis her and tis not her]

The mutual permeation of the empire, classicist style, and neo-Baroque tendencies, or the coexistence of such trends in the early nineteenth century in France formed the background with which Norwid's dualism was in harmony.<sup>16</sup> Besides the constant classical tendencies appearing in France in each epoch, Correggio's influences can also be seen. Next to Ingres' art, there was the demonic Baroque (Daumier). The somewhat earlier painter Prud'hon – freeing himself from the classicism of David – the creator of the famous *The Abduction of Psyche by Zephyrus* in the Louvre, in whose painting the chiaroscuro played a significant role, is an important example here. These distant analogies are given here simply to indicate the compatibility of the artistry of irony with the whole spirit of Norwid's works and the artistry of the epoch. With Leonardo, the elusiveness of Mona Lisa's smile lies in the precision of the representation – and such is the case of irony's artistry with Norwid. A statement contains precision of terms and matter-of-factness, and the elusiveness is only in the continuation, which was how Norwid saw silence or understatement. It is in the merely suggested but never articulated lyricism of an ironically stated fact. That kind of intellectualism and classicist precision in intention provided a striking contrast between Norwid's artistry as an ironist from romantic irony with its whimsical Ariostic smile, profuse lyricism, and subjectivism.

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16 In his *Szkic syntezy*, Jellenta mentioned the influence of Florentine Baroque, but that mention is not entirely clear (Cezary Jellenta, *Cyprian Norwid. Szkic syntezy*, Warszawa: E. Wende i S-ka, 1904).

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On considering the socio-historic background of Norwid's irony, his own views on the topic of irony can be discussed, as well as its connection with the psychology of his experiences. Contrary to what might be expected from a poet of definitions, Norwid gave very little in that respect as a theoretician. The poem "Ironia" ["Irony"] speaks only of the inherent irony in life and work. Psychologically, that truth corresponds to reconciled humour or realism in art, but not to irony. In one of his letters to Trębicka, Norwid quoted his conversation with Lenartowicz, giving as an example of unintended irony the fact that a man "najpobożniej niosący trumnę" ["most piously carrying a coffin"] knocked someone's hat off. But he was mistaken as well since he took humour for irony. Irony is biased in its nature, and even events of the "irony of life" are ironic only insofar as they create the impression of something intentional; coincidence and irony exclude each other. Hence, in a case that creates the impression of irony, people speak of the irony of life, i.e., life's course is not a coincidence. These words of Norwid are not a definition, either, but a defence against incomprehension:

Ci błędzą, co mają *Ironię*  
 Za zło ludzkiego-serca – ta *lewica-marzeń*  
 Niekoniecznie stąd idzie... Jest *Ironia-zdarzeń*  
 I jest *Ironia-czasów*

(DW IV, 252–253)

[Those are mistaken who take *Irony*  
 For the evil of human heart – that *left hand of dreams*  
 Not necessarily comes thence... there is *Irony of events*  
 And *Irony of times*.]

Since Norwid's theories explain little, the next step is to turn to consider the factors which evoked that attitude in him and favoured the development of artistic skill in irony.<sup>17</sup>

What swordplay in the sophist school was for Socrates, the salon was for the worldly Norwid. Irony was an invaluable asset in social situations in that it allowed him to oppose without making the fight open, without pedantry and seriousness. Rather, he isolated himself aristocratically in the form of a game,

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17 The ironic attitude of the Warsaw bohemians towards society and the possible impact of that aura on Norwid has already been mentioned above.

which made him original and pleasant – *un homme spirituel*. It gave him a hidden sense of superiority and elevated him over the company, even as he associated with them. Irony requires subtlety both from the one who uses it and the one who listens; it both hides and uncovers an intention – it is grasped in an instant. It is a guardian of closed and shy souls and yet can serve as coquetry, or a discreet disclosure of one's superiority. Hence the social irony of Norwid was sometimes similar to a slight brush, barely noticeable, and sometimes sharp but still clothed in the appearance of a compliment, as when Norwid stated, for example, that women were like angels, for they have never known work. Such playful superiority of Norwid as a man of the world can be found, e.g., in a letter in which he recounted a conversation with young Delaroche. When Norwid was amazed at his fluent Polish, the Frenchman explained he had learned the language so that he might understand another Christian literature. Surprised at that, Norwid could at first find no words. “‘Jak to?... czy pan zdania tego nie podziela?’” [“What is it?... do you not share this opinion?”], asked Delaroche, and Norwid replied, “z przewrotnością patrycjalną, do jakiej wielokrotnie nakłania obywateli obowiązek: ‘Owszem, szlachetny panie!... owszem... oczekiwałem tylko, ażeby słowa te zaszczytne usłyszeć po polsku i z ust cudzoziemca’” (PWsz VI, 259) [“with patrician contrariness, to which duty often induces a citizen: ‘Yes, sir, I do!... the only thing I have waited for was to hear such noble words in Polish and from a foreigner’”]. Later, in the years of poverty, bitterness, and oversensitivity, refined words and irony were a sharp weapon to him, which he used to gain proud social independence.

I żaden nigdy szambelan nie baczył  
Na ceremoniał, jak ja, gdym zro-zpaczył!

(Assunta, DW III, 334)

[And no chamberlain has never minded  
the etiquette as I did in de-spair!]

It is significant that in one of his stories, Norwid mentioned the words of Marie Antoinette, who, on stepping on the foot of the executioner as she ascended the scaffold, apologised in those words: “Excusez, Monsieur, je ne l’ai pas fait exprès.” Norwid’s courtliness and observance of etiquette contained as much humility as that ironic magnanimity of the one harmed; as much refined loyalty as spite.

There is also another factor that ought to be mentioned here, as it forms the psychological basis for the work of all humourists and ironists – ambivalence. It is defined by psychologists as a twofold (positive and negative) reaction to the same phenomenon; love and hate, pleasure and vexation, attraction and aversion to the same thing. A typical example of ambivalence can be found in Baudelaire's memoirs. "Tout enfant j'ai senti dans mon coeur deux sentiments contradictoires: l'horreur de la vie et l'extase de la vie." The wise and yet simple definition of a humourist by Bolesław Prus – as a person who looks at the same thing from at least two sides – splendidly explains the relationship between ambivalence and a humorous view on reality. With nervous people, ambivalence is connected with the tendency to jump from one mood to another quickly. Contradictory judgements on people, so common with Norwid, for example, in his opinions on Mickiewicz – sometimes full of admiration, at other times overly caustic and mocking – were a striking proof of the quality, vastly enhanced by the frayed nerves. The description of Norwid given by Lenartowicz – sometimes good as an angel, sometimes immensely haughty – confirms that feature. It is enough to mention the description of Lenartowicz's poem ("Dant na fujarce" ["Dante on a panpipe"]), given above, which contains such contradictory opinions that it can be understood both negatively and positively, to realise how great a role ambivalence had in shaping Norwid's writing.

It is clear now what the social ground of Norwid's irony was. That inability to communicate with contemporary culture was accompanied by incomprehension in his own community. Norwid's confession from a letter to Konstancja Górską: "jestem tak wieloracznie nieszczęsny i utrapiony, że mogę tylko m i l c z e ć albo ż a r t o w a ć – mógłbym jeszcze i p i ć, ale to szkodzi i następstwa posiada niedobre" (PWsz IX, 305) ["I am in such manifold misery and distress that I can only be silent, or make jokes – I could also drink, but that is harmful and has bad consequences"] has the significance of a psychological document. To indicate the connection of that sense of loneliness with the character of Norwid's writings, one more psychological term ought to be specified here. According to Bleuler, ambitendency is the principle stating that each tendency to action is accompanied by a reverse reflex: restraint. In the conditions in which Norwid lived, all the masculine power he had turned inwards. Sometimes this suppressed instinct exploded in a curse, sarcasm, or anger, but only for a moment. Power not expressed in expansion transformed into the power of restraint. Objectivism, monumentality, and static character bear the traits of restrained power, thus oriented. Distance from reality allows one to see life as a parable. This often bordered on a habit of seeing it everywhere, like in the very characteristic fragment from the poem "Nerwy" (PWsz

II, 135) ["Nerves"], where a minor occurrence on the stairs evoked a tragic and ironic concept.

chwyciłem się belki spróchniałej...  
 (A gwóźdź w niej tkwił,  
 jak w ramionach k r z y ż a !...).

(PWsz II, 135)

[I grabbed a rotten beam...  
 (A nail was there, as on the arms  
 Of the c r o s s !...)]<sup>18</sup>

It is rare, on the other hand – the poem “Ruszaj z Bogiem” [“Godspeed”] is likely the only example – that Norwid linked irony with an image of some vengeful tendency of God. Irony played an immense role not only in Norwid's lyrical works but was also the point of all his short stories, without exception. The plot served only as a foundation for that ironic sense, and irony recurred within the story numerous times. *Cywilizacja* [*Civilization*] is an ironic allegory of modern civilization that turns at places into a grim *memento*, like in the image of the board of people of trust who start a session at the moment when ice blocks crush the ship's wheel. *Tajemnica Lorda Singelworth* [*Lord Singelworth's Secret*] is a humorous and ironic allegory of the author's own attitude to the surrounding world. *Ad leones* is an ironic presentation of the role of art in a capitalist society. The author's irony is so transparent in those works that it needs no comment. Quite the opposite: he could be accused of excessive mockery and over-saturation with irony. The poem “Czemu” [“Why”] is an ironic point of that tragicomic story of human souls passing each other, never to meet due to stigmas. The longest poem, *Quidam*, smuggles in the thought of the irony of history – and so it continues. The irony “że nie z dziejów te dzieje z ich monarchą treflowym” [“that the history with their monarch of clubs is not from history”] is also contained in the drama *Zwolon*, spiced up at times with a caustic remark like this one (DW V, 73):

A później człowiek bardzo się zadziwi,  
 Że taki wielki Pan, i tak szczęśliwi  
 Poddani kiedyś byli – ci *nieżywi!*

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18 English translation by Danuta Borchardt in collaboration with Agata Brajerska-Mazur, in: Cyprian Norwid, *Poems* (New York: Archipelago Books, 2011), p. 61.

[And later, one shall be amazed  
That such a great lord he was, and so happy  
The subjects once were – the dead ones!]

“Ktokolwiek pisze rzeczy, jak one się dzieją – ten łatwo stawa się cynikiem” (DW IV, 152) [“Whoever writes things as they happen – he easily turns a cynic”], said Norwid. Hence his indignation with “Ludzkość, [co] bez Boskości, sama siebie zdradza” (DW IV, 218) [“humanity who, lacking divinity, betray themselves”], which often exploded with demonic derision. At such times, stoicism left Norwid, and he rose in his irony and sarcasm to an exceptional power of expression. Using trivial details from everyday life, shown with intentional contrast to the perspective of history, he fascinated the imagination with unexpected artistic means and made a dramatic impression. Thus, he characterised contemporary time in the poem “Zapał” [“Fervour”] (PWsz II, 90):

Po legendowych wiekach – przyszły historyczne,  
Ogień-boski za-przestał być Dziejów skazówką.  
(Natomiast – tanie mamy z a p a ł k i - c h e m i c z n e ,  
Które gdy zręcznie ujmiesz – obrócisz w dół główką  
I o obuwie potrzebiesz?... płomyk wraz wybucha,  
A Turki palą fajkę z długiego cybucha!...)

[History followed legendary ages  
And holy-fire ceased to guide the sages.  
(We – by contrast – have a cheap phosphor match:  
Grip it properly – depress its tip  
And rub against your toe – a flame will leap.  
And Turk takes the coiled hookah to his lip!...)]<sup>19</sup>

Norwid’s originality and power in that demonic irony (as shown here) cannot be compared with the expression of another artist because, with him, social emotions were always accompanied by such a broad horizon of history, which gave his irony a vast resonance. That category of irony includes poems like “Słowianin” [“The Slav”], “Rozebrana” [“Disrobed”], “Święty-pokój” [“Blessed-Peace”], etc.

Contempt for the surrounding historical reality, inertia, and stagnancy, a ridiculous parody of history, evoked in him a yearning for that primary history of people which, unaware of itself, was an *epos*:

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19 English translation by Adam Czerniawski in: Cyprian Norwid, *Selected Poems* (London: Anvil Press, 2004), p. 73.



Wolę wsiąść na koń z jakim drabem, który,  
 Prócz ze swoimi, nierad bywa z nikiém,  
 Historii nie zna, ni architektury,  
 Milczy jak *pomnik*, będąc sam *pomnikiem!*

(DW VI, 18)

[I prefer to mount the horse with some fellow who,  
 Except for his own people, prefers to be with no one,  
 History or architecture he knows none,  
 Silent as a *statue*, and a *statue* himself!]

\*

The entirety of Norwid's works can be grasped and the role of irony in it realised more quickly if one understands his views on *epos* and tragedy and what his creative approach was to those genres. The issues are discussed in turn below.

The last of the poems quoted above shows that he saw more epic material in coarsely naïve, even barbarian life than in his own epoch. Theoretically, his definition of an epic in the treatise on *Bogarodzica* [*Mother of God*]<sup>20</sup> does not cause objections, which cannot be said of his definition of tragedy. That theoretical description appeared relatively late. Yet usually, and frequently, he did not use the words “*epos*” or “*epic*” in the same sense in which they are used in poetics. He consistently used them to define *historical reality*, thus opposing it to the apparent reality of an empty epoch – non-historicity. According to Norwid, an *epos* was the entire historical reality. On the other hand, the said definition clearly indicated that it was not the formal side but the topic, which decided what an epic was for Norwid. Hence, such involuntary identification of historical reality with a literary work might have occurred as a result of the use of the word in the two senses.

His own epic works were usually not truly epic but ironic, reflective, and allegorical. They are tiring for the same reason as his dramas – lack of action. Their motif is very often the irony of fate. That is the motif in *Quidam* and *Assunta*, and the case is similar to his short stories, *Stygmata* [*Stigma*] and *Bransoletka* [*Bracelet*]. In such works as *Powieść* [*Novel*] or *Szczesna*, one finds an ironic travesty of epic. One of the most beautiful works, *A Dorio ad Phrygium*, provides an ironic narrative poem instead of an epic. The short list paints the following

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20 See the fragment in the recently published *Cypriana Norwida Poezje wybrane [z całej odszukanej po dziś puszczony poety]* (Warszawa: J. Mortkowicz, 1933), pp. 620–621.

image of Norwid's attitude towards epic: either the topic was irony of history, illustrating a transient epoch, which is an antithesis of epic material (*Quidam* is very significant in that respect, as it presents a world that has no place for a hero – there is only a place for someone, who might perhaps be a hero in other times), or an ironic approach to the topic, or both.

In that situation, it is difficult to speak of the degree of Norwid's epic talent – for the ability to write an *epos* is not, and was not for Norwid, either, only a matter of talent. One thing must be stated emphatically: that the cause lay not in the poet's lack of understanding of what an *epos* was. Rather, it was a deep and full understanding, unlike that of any of his contemporaries, of what epic was that gave him an awareness that the Polish society and contemporariness were the most glaring contradiction of such a life in which an *epos* was born, or life worthy of an *epos*. In contemporary times, Norwid saw material for a martyr parable, for a funeral rhapsody, for an apostrophe to heroes who were an exception, like Abdel-Kader – but never for an *epos*.

If one may say of a work that it contains the whole scale of Norwid's irony, that he sang his entire complaint on the inadequacy of contemporary Polish life when compared with an *epos*, he did this in the splendid, and sadly battered, poem *A Dorio ad Phrygium* (DW III, 351–368). Ironic travesty appears early on in the invocations to Apollo and “muza, rękopisów praczka” [“muse, washerwoman of manuscripts”]; there is painful, crushing satire on the “nominalny czas dziejów” [“nominal time of history”], on a society “co nominalnie istnieje” [“which exists nominally”]; there is a warning, anger, tragic irony, melancholic and yet ironic reflection on the “poza-, czy ponad-historyczna” [“extra-, or supra-historic”] countryside, on land where “jedynie bocian / Poważnym jest miejsc obywatelem” (DW III, 354) [“only the stork is a serious citizen of places”]. If – contrary to what was said at the beginning of this study – romantic irony could be indicated in Norwid's works, it would have to be in *A Dorio ad Phrygium*. But even if it were so, then it must be with a reservation because it is more a case of reversing romantic irony. The romantic ironist interrupted the epic motif, and Norwid did not take it up. Satire and travesty, an ironic approach to epic turned into lyricism, and the most moving epic invocation when the reality of the Polish countryside appeared to him through the prism of longing as dear, and after all, beautiful in its primal nature and idyllic in the glory of its melancholic existence. If one may speak of tender irony, such a term could be applied to that invocation, where the author said of the Polish countryside:

*Przeszłość twa – zawsze wczoraj!*  
*Przyszłość – ręką dosiężna,*

(DW III, 362)

[*Your past* – is always yesterday!  
*The future* – within hand's reach,]

It is impossible to discuss the whole scale of ironic tones of that work, yet the discussion must return to the poem once more. It ought to be said that Przesmycki's statement, in the annotation noted above, on "urzeczywistnienie twórcze eposu" ["creative realization of an *epos*"], on "wieszczące (jakoby) nowe drogi eposowi modyfikacje w tym utworze" ["modification in that work which (supposedly) prophesy new paths for the *epos*"], is a misunderstanding. That cult, which, in the zeal of admiration, names irony of deficiency fulfilling, becomes ironic! It is likely that no other poet expressed with greater strength and tragic irony the disproportion between contemporary life and an *epos* than Norwid did when he wrote of the short Polish heroic breath in the poem "Święty-pokój" ["Blessed-Peace"] or of the Slav who "Duma, w szerokim polu, czekając na siebie –" (PWsz II, 254) ["who muses in the broad field, waiting for himself"] ("Słowianin" ["The Slav"]). Norwid was generally the master of tragic irony, both in his social and personal poems. Among the latter, the poem "W Weronie" ["In Verona"] is doubtless one of the works in which tragic irony reaches its greatest expression. The relation of irony to the tragic requires broad discussion, as given below.

*Noc tysięczna druga* [*The Thousandth and Second Night*] is a work particularly important for the issue because it allows insight into the question of how personal experiences impacted Norwid's idea of history and what strange relation occurred between the tragedy of heartbreak and the visions of historical reality as expressed in what may be the most exalted words of that poet:

Czasy skończone! – historii już nie ma,  
 Tworzenie tylko w bezbrzeżnej otchłani.

(PWsz I, 116)

[The times have ended! – history is no more,  
 Only creating in an infinite abyss.]

The plot of the tragicomic drama story in *Noc tysięczna druga* strangely resembles the story of sending back two letter fragments, glued together and emphasised, which was given at the very beginning of this study. The protagonist

of the work finds himself, after some time, in Verona, in the same hotel in which his love once stayed. There, he finds part of a letter which she wrote to him when she stayed there – the part that she has lost, as she mentioned in the other fragment of her letter, which he received. Considering the content of the letter, the protagonist notes the irony of circumstance. The construction of the drama reveals Norwid's manner of objectifying the irony of circumstance and understanding tragedy thus. The protagonist – believing the beautiful stranger whose arrival is mentioned by the hotel's owner to be his love – acts ironically and on a broken glass, like his heart, he glues both parts of the letter together and waits, hidden in the wardrobe, to see what effect his ironic answer would have when she enters the room and sees the letter. It is quite a different and good irony of fate that the beautiful stranger is not the woman guilty of the protagonist's heartbreak, but a different person. It is clear that it is a story of the poet's love for Mrs Kalergis and an elegant allusion to his new feelings for Miss Trębicka, but that is not the point here. The work is of interest here as a prototype of Norwid's tragedies, with the protagonist's behaviour itself being an illustration. Norwid, the tragedian, uncovering the hidden irony of fate, put it in his scenes. What is tragic here is not the collision of fates but lives missing each other, as objectified in the scenes. The protagonist's mistake, the missed blow of his irony is a comical failure of aims and achievements to meet, which plays the role of reconciliation here. But that reconciliation is not connected, as usually happens in a tragedy, with the knot of moral necessity, but is a result of coincidence – a new irony. The work thus combines two ironies of fate: one is tragic, and the other could be comical if it were not at the same time a sad subjective expression of overcoming one's own self with humour. Instead of action, there is deliberate, subtle allegory organised into scenes; instead of a tragedy's climax (which could not happen because there was no tragic collision), there is the famous lyrical poem "W Weronie" ["In Verona"]. It is again an allegorical interpretation of the rainbow and meteors over the graves of Montagues and Capulets, with a moving, powerfully expressive, tragic-ironic ending. The author's motto when writing that work could be the words he wrote in *Za kulisami*: "nie uchylać się wcale od zabawy, jakkolwiek bardzo dla mnie ironicznej" (DW VI, 82) ["never to evade fun, however ironic it may be to me"].

In *Noc tysięczna druga*, Norwid already had a ready humorous-ironic theory on the irony of fate in love: women and men can be faithful in different periods of life – half of humanity is able to give faithful love at the dawn of life, the other at its ending. A new tragic "law of nature" appeared thus, always leading to the same irony of fate that one finds in one of Norwid's later works, *Stygmat*. In both works, there is the fatalism of two people passing each other. The earliest work uncovers

truly interesting perspectives, both on the dramatic technique and on the motif of the irony of missing each other, and, in general, the irony of missing fate, which is found all the time in both epic and tragedies. It appears in *Zwolon*, in *Quidam*, *Assunta*, *Kleopatra* [*Cleopatra*] – from the first works to the last ones.

Norwid's disagreement with Krasiński on the tragedy of *Quidam* gives much food for thought. What was far from tragic for Krasiński was the peak of tragedy for Norwid, felt all the more painfully and deeply because it was how he viewed and felt the tragedy of his own life. Krasiński was closer to the Christian perspective on the world in that he denied the existence of tragedy without reconciliation. The Christianization of Krasiński's views on tragedy was visible in differentiating between providence and fate. As a Catholic, Norwid could not adopt a tragic-metaphysical view of the world. Hence, he viewed tragedy not in metaphysical but in historical terms, as the "uwidomienie fatalności historycznej" (DW V, 167) ["manifestation of history's fatality"]. But he could only show that tragedy of history that he was experiencing himself, and he felt one thing only: that "historii już nie ma" ["history is no more"]. He lived a tragedy of non-historicity. It was, for him, the most terrible irony of life that one had only appearances of reality, appearances of history, appearances of life. The life of *Quidam*, who had no historical life, had no name for that very reason and died by accident – that is Norwid's subjective tragedy.

Norwid's best tragedy, *Kleopatra*, is, from the general viewpoint, not a tragedy, for it lacks the tragic *fatum* and tragic collision of powers. But then, it was a tragedy for Norwid for that very reason. The most horrible historical fatalism for him was the end of an era, when a person capable of creating history missed their calling, and the inconsequences of the times made them redundant. Irony is static in its nature and does not move the action ahead; it merely *s t a t e s*. The successive scenes can only reveal the topic of the tragedy – emptiness. There can only be one kind of action – missing one's fate, in the sense of the deepest essence of life and calling. The difference between the tragic irony of fate in *Stygmata* or any other non-historical work and *Kleopatra* is that the irony of an ephemeral meeting of two great people destined for each other – only to miss each other forever – is a quasi-repetition, a reflection of the irony of fate. The dead stagnation and pathos, and the ossification of the old Egypt, manifest the end of an era. Strangely, the fault of Norwid's drama – its inaction – plays the role of showing the fatality of history, the lifelessness, and opens the perspective of the greatest horror – the historical void.

It can thus be seen how fluid the borders of irony and tragedy were with Norwid. Tragedy is a properly staged allegory of the irony of fate. The depth of Brzozowski's words may be admitted here

when he wrote that “tragedy expresses the fullest life,” because a tragic death for a truth thus won into life is the fullest fusion of man with life. The inability of a full life bears an inability to create tragedies. In that way, Brzozowski explained in his article “Styl Ibsena” the inability of Ibsen’s protagonists to experience tragedy. Despite all individual differences, in both cases – with Norwid and with Ibsen – the same sociological truth is revealed: the inability to create a tragedy as a symptom of non-historicity. There is one immense difference, however. Ibsen’s protagonists are unable to experience tragedy, and their tragedy frequently consists of realising too late an error made in life or in the inability to live. With Norwid, the case is different, much like in a poem by Staff: “and even he who knew how to die, had nothing to die for.” Norwid’s characters are large enough for a tragedy, but they have no arena worthy of their strength and abilities; they miss their time (hence why Norwid changed “unfortunately” by Sophocles into a historic “too-late” – “za późno”). They miss life because the life they have is not worthy of being called life by them. They miss their fate because they cannot realise their great historic calling. And they also miss their love.

The irony of missing one’s fate is the tragedy of non-historicity. And that is the great silent, tragic pathos of *Kleopatra*. Such intention of the poet is proven, e.g., by the fact that Norwid, in his stylization of history, did not mention Cleopatra’s stay with Caesar in Rome or her child. Such facts would have thwarted the tragedy of great stars of history missing each other and the tragic emptiness in Cleopatra’s heart. Time also has its own meaning in Norwid’s dramas, e.g., in *Krakus*. But in the latter, Christian humility overcomes the pathos of missing one’s time and finds a religious reconciliation in trust in Providence. Norwid made the pathos of non-historicity in *Kleopatra* more obvious and dominant by blending it with a thirst for life in a young woman, and mainly through subjective lyricism.

Jakby wcielonej ciągle puls Ironii:  
Słyszac, wiesz naprzód i wiesz ostatecznie,  
że z godzin żadna siebie nie dogoni!  
że nie wydzwoni siebie, dzwoniąc wiecznie!

(DW V, 16)

[As if constantly hearing the pulse of incarnate Irony,  
You know ahead, and you know with finality  
that no hour can catch up with itself!  
that it cannot ring itself, ringing eternally!]

Those words, written by Norwid in *W pamiętniku [In a Diary]*, could be put in Cleopatra's mouth, for the complaints of her heart are the same, if more exalted:

jestem smętna, jak nowo-wyryty  
 W granicie grób na kogoś czekający – – Pragnę!  
 ...  
 – Wody pragnę, co granit ma za dno i niebo  
 Leżące jak w zwierciadle!

(DW VI, 265)

[I am doleful like a new grave  
 In granite made, and waiting for someone – – I Crave!  
 – I crave water, which has granite for its bed and sky  
 Lying as if in a mirror!]

The historical void is the topic of Norwid's greatest tragedy, and the irony of fate merges with tragedy. Thus, for Norwid, nothingness also had that specific tragic pathos: irony of life. Nothingness, like silence, had its own tenor for him, and those subjective accents are heard in Cleopatra's words when she says: "Ciebie pozdrawiam w braterstwie Nicości" ["I greet you in the brotherhood of Nothingness"], or: "mam za towarzyszkę nicość cichą" ["I have quiet nothingness for a companion"]. That classical objectiveness, limited to stating things, which is typical for the artistry of Norwid's irony, can be found in Cleopatra's monologues:

I jasno ci pogląda w czaszkę – o! *umarła*  
 Lub *umarły*... ta, nigdy co nie była żywą.  
 – Moglibyśmy uścisnąć się, jak znani dawno

(DW VI, 264)

[And gives you a clear look into the skull – oh! *dead woman*  
 Or *dead man*... she who never was alive,  
 – We could embrace each other as old friends,]

When one understands the emotional unity of tragedy and irony with Norwid and links it to his life, suspended in a historical void, to his bitter sense of lack of life, only then can one fully grasp that suppressed pathos, also found in many expressions speaking of nothingness and emptiness. It is clear then why the strange words from a letter to Trębicka, written from America: "Widziałem naiwność nicości" ["I saw the naïveté of nothingness"] carry such dread of

uncovering the essence of life. Norwid's sense of brotherhood in nothingness gave a specific emotional tone to words that were not sufficiently noticed, for instance, in that simple dedication: "Tobie, umarły, te poświęcam pieśni" ["I dedicate those songs to you, oh deceased one"], or: "czekaj mnie, każdy umiera" ["wait for me, everyone dies"]. Nothingness and death seemed, to the poet, bereft of all, and the only content of life left to him, the only thing in common with others. In a moment of utter despair, when he plainly saw the "naïveté of nothingness," it seemed to him to be the essence of the world, the face of God. Such a sense can be read into the shockingly calm gravestone poem "Do Zeszłej" ["To the Deceased"]:

Sieni tej drzwi otworem poza sobą  
 Zostaw – – wzięćmy już dalej!...  
 Tam, gdzie jest N i k t i jest O s o b ą :  
 – Podzielni wszyscy, a cali

(PWsz II, 120)

[Leave open behind you the door of this hall – –  
 Let us ascend higher!...  
 There *No-body* is and is a *Person*:  
 – Divisible all, yet whole!]<sup>21</sup>

Cleopatra also says, strangely:

– Ja tobie, Rycerzu,  
 Nic w nagrodę nie daję (jest to, co najwięcej  
 Zwyczaj ma dawać swoim wiernym *Kleopatra*).  
*Królowa-świata* na to jest, by był ktoś *możny*  
*Niedania nic* w nagrodę znakomitych usług.

(DW VI, 400)

[– I give you, Knight,  
 Nothing as reward (it is the most  
 That *Cleopatra* is in the habit of giving to her lieges).  
 The *queen of the world* is there, for there has to be one *Able*  
 To give nothing as reward for distinguished service.]

Those words contain both Norwid's devotion in his own life to irony, the contrary loftiness of pride, and hieratic resignation. It was with the same objective irony of things that the poet stated that he had but one privilege, being human, or wrote with contrary pride or humility in "Pielgrzym" ["Pilgrim"]:

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21 Translation based on Adam Czerniawski in: Cyprian Norwid, *Selected Poems*, p. 75.



Przecież i ja – ziemi tyle mam,  
 Ile jej stopa ma pokrywa,  
 Dopokąd idę!

(PWsz II, 28)

[Even I – own as much land  
 As much foot can tread upon,  
 As long as I walk on!]<sup>22</sup>

The effusive pathos of romantic lyricism was foreign and worth overcoming, to Norwid's stoic attitude, monumental-classicistic art tastes, and finally to his Catholic humility and anti-individualist attitude. For that reason, he criticised Mickiewicz's *Improwizacja* [*Improvisation*] and restrained his own complaints and grievances when talking to God, limiting himself to a statement that held a call from the deep, the pathos of irony, and the sense of the bereavement of all. The statement is an appeal in the name of the one thing left to a man bereft of the essence of life – mere existence.

O! Boże... jeden, który J E S T E Ś – Boże,  
 Ja także jestem

(Pierwszy list, co mnie doszedł z Europy, PWsz I, 219)

[Oh! The only God, who A R E – God,  
 I also am]

\*

As a Catholic, Norwid could not have a tragic perspective on the world. Hence, tragedy was, for him, a “piorun niebios” [“lightning from heavens”], i.e., something that could happen when God permitted it but did not belong to the order of things. Christian humility urged one to accept with resignation the tragic disproportion between what should be according to the moral order of things, and reality: the irony of life. So, one extreme of irony held a pathos of the direst disproportion, tragedy, and the other offered a view of the world from the perspective of Providence, which permeated all obstacles with the hope of harmony, at least in eternity. In the midst of such a scale, comparisons operating in contrast to illustrate the dismal irony of history ought to be placed as they are in the poem “Sen” [“Dream”]. Sarcasm changes then into the other kind of anger described by Norwid in *Fulminant*:

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22 English translation by Danuta Borchardt in: Cyprian Norwid, *Poems*, p. 27.

Ani gra w ciele jak skry elektryczne...  
 Gołębia kształt ma, żądło ma mistyczne...  
 – Gdy serce, dłużej cierpiąc, już byłoby  
 Nie sercem, ale podłości organem –

(DW IV, 201)

[Neither does it play in the body like electric sparks...  
 It has the shape of a dove, and a mystical sting.  
 – When the heart, suffering for long, would be  
 No more a heart, but an organ of meanness.]

It may appear contradictory when Höffding speaks of irony resulting from religious humility – after all, an ironist sees things from above. But an ironist in a religious state does not make themselves a judge. Norwid’s irony was sometimes mild when he spoke “z góry samego siebie ruin” [“from the top of a ruin of myself”] not just because the enormity of the experience gained throughout his life quenched all anger in him, but also because he measured not with his own measure, but with that of God. He viewed the measure as contradicting the world through the prism of humility. Only humility allowed him to gain an image of that greatness in the dimensions of which he saw and presented life. Then, the ironist poet reached the height of his impartiality. It is to such a state that the following fragment from a letter to Trębicka can be referred when the poet wrote of “bezwłasnowolna ironia” [“involuntary irony”]: “*Któż albowiem równy Chrystusowi? – próżno! jużci dosyć tobie, jeżeli podobny jesteś Mistrzowi*” (DW XI, 120) [“*For who is equal to Christ? – tis to no avail! Tis enough for you to be similar to the Master*”]. Through analogy, such irony could be called reconciled. It is the irony of all human things that marks the differences between God and the world, but through His will finds sanction and seeks the explanation unavailable to the man. As tragedy fades into “sweetness” – and such is the meaning of the title of the poem “*Słodycz*” – with a person of such religious zeal as Norwid, the same happens to irony. It may also grow over time to gain that kind, angelic understanding, or such a restrained objective statement of facts that it is barely discernible. Sometimes, Norwid brightened up with the puckish smile of a sage; sometimes, the irony was impossible to distinguish from a calm maxim. It may be seen both as a joke, an ironic presentation, or simply a truth people need reminding of, when Norwid stated: “*Z karafki napić się można, uściskawszy ją za szyję i pochyliwszy ku ustom, ale kto ze źródła pije musi uklęknąć i pochylić czoło*” (PWsz VI, 424) [“*you can drink from a carafe if you grip its neck and press it to your lips, but if you wish to drink from a spring,*

you must go on your knees and bow your head”].<sup>23</sup> There is nearly no bitterness, only objectivity, in Norwid's reply to Skrzynecki: “nie ja tracę czasu, ale czas mię traci” (DW X, 155) [“it is not I who lose time; it is time which loses me”]. In such cases, there is more artistic satisfaction in the art of a dialectician and aphorist than there is sarcasm.

The extensive scale of irony and lyricism in *A Dorio ad Phrygium* was mentioned above. Here, a few tones need be mentioned, when the melancholy of memories and yearning is interlaced with subtle irony, when it seems to look at the world in intent religious meditation. When one wishes to define such states, the poet's words come to mind: “Na wysokościach myślenia jest sfera, / Skąd widok stromy” (PWsz II, 64) [“at the heights of thinking there is a sphere / whence the view is steep”]. A sarcastically quoted expression: “pchnij z listem człowieka” (DW III, 354) [lit. “push (=send) a man with a letter”] served here as a springboard by means of which the author rose to new heights, whence he saw the irony of things in Poland as if from the infinite distance of the beyond:

cóż jest człowiek?!

\*

– Człowiek jest to ktoś, co sobie idzie  
Gdzieś przez pole, i ty widzisz jego,  
Drogą jadąc. – Parskają twe konie –  
“Człęk” uchyla czapki i żegna się...  
Lekkie chmury wyżej, niżej łąny  
Grzywami bujnych kłosów trzęsą –  
Stoi z dala zamyślony bocian.  
Był w Egipcie, wrócił od piramid;  
Faraonów nędze znając, duma  
O robaczku, o wężu... i o człowieku!

(DW III, 354)

[who is man?!

\*

– A man is someone who walks  
Across some field and you see him  
When driving on the road – your horses snort –  
“The man” raises the hat and crosses himself...  
Light cloud above, below the wind  
Shakes the manes of lush corn.

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23 English translation by Adam Czerniawski in: Cyprian Norwid, *Poezje / Poems* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1986), p. 101.

Afar, there stands a pensive stork.  
 It had been in Egypt, saw the pyramids:  
 Knowing the misery of pharaohs, it ponders  
 On the worm, the snake... and the man!]

Generally, Norwid often took the objectivity in his ironic poems so far that their whole subjective lyricism was in the unsaid, and it may be difficult to state what the larger element is in, e.g., such a poem as “Święty-pokój:” sarcasm, irony, or perhaps that melancholy smile that a sage gives to children. The poetic habit of parabolic vision and presentation of the world, as well as restraint of expression, often define only the objective shape of things, and in the shades of grey, irony blends with other sensations into an integral unity.

To the author of this study, the expression of Norwid’s face in the portrait by Szyndler (Fig. 1) is undefinable in that way. One might see there the mellowness and resignation of an old man who came to understand everything, or a slight smile of triumph from patiently suffered torment, which seems to quote Caesar’s words from *Kleopatra*:



**Fig. 1.** Pantaleon Szyndler, *Portret Cypriana Norwida*, 1882, oil on canvas, National Museum in Warsaw. Photo Piotr Ligier.

To nie jest łatwo stawać się podobnym bogom!...  
Trud to jest właśnie z tego duży, że codzienny

(DW VI, 294)

[It is not easy to become more alike to gods.  
The effort is large for it is daily.]

That sentence may also be viewed as slightly ironic if one considers that Norwid wrote it for the same society he characterised in the poem “Święty-pokój.”

## II. Norwid and Us

A któż zapłacze po nas – kto? – oprócz Ironii.  
Jedyna postać, którą wcale znałem żywą,

(*Do Walentego Pomiana Z. [To Walenty Pomian Z.] PWsz II, 157*)

[*And who shall cry after us – who? – beside Irony.  
The only figure I actually knew alive.*]

Irony was such an inseparable companion of Norwid that even at his own death, he expected sorrow only from irony. And yet, it is a marble beauty of which Baudelaire said that she never cried and never laughed. Irony merely lasts, unwavering, and it never left Norwid, even after his own death, as also proven by today's “cult” of him.<sup>24</sup> Additionally, a great part of the comments on Norwid was first reproaches made to him and then towards those who did not understand him. He held a particular attraction for lofty admirers, much like his Cleopatra, who spent their lives in brotherhood with a mummy and had quiet nothingness for a companion. First, Norwid discouraged readers with his incomprehensibility; then, his admirers deterred readers from him, hiding his works for the future generations of noble souls. It almost seemed as if one needed a foggy or barren mind to admire Norwid, as such was the majority of his glorifiers. This is now subsiding, but what remains is the easiest manner of admiring Norwid, that of placing him against others: romantics, and, in particular, Mickiewicz. Recently, Pigoń caught someone placing Norwid against *Pan Tadeusz*, bypassing in silence (quite unlike Norwid's silence) some of his opinions and intentionally quoting only the negative ones. Słowacki has already

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24 Quite obviously, the comments do not apply in the least to poets who show true and deep consideration of Norwid's poetry in their work, or earnest critical works.

been presented as a consumptive, Mickiewicz as either poisoned or an adulterer, yet no one has said of Norwid that he was a deaf old drinker, seen lying in a gutter. Even Monsieur Homais of Polish journalism's *Boy* did not give a new "concept" of Norwid in the spirit of Rozen's diaries. But this is simply fashion. It is fashionable today to place Norwid against the romantics, and the boring nature of *Krakus* or *Quidam* is spoken of in secret. A "splendid isolation" even upon death. That is truly a strange irony of fate, for Norwid had more of that loftiness of thought, held in such contempt nowadays, than anyone else. It was Mickiewicz, the romantic, who, with his innate levelheadedness and quite justly, said that "Norwida trzebaby oddać w żołdacy" ["Norwid ought to be put in the army"]. Today's glorifiers indicate Norwid's acceptance of reality, forgetting how Norwid understood that acceptance and what he thought of the times contemporary to him. Would Norwid's censure of Mickiewicz's political activity in 1848 be closer to us today than the politics of Mickiewicz, continued by Piłsudski during the war? Or perhaps also, in that case, should placing Norwid against Mickiewicz be ascribed to that which is now seriously termed the "fight against romanticism?"

Klaczko was incriminated in Poland because he did not appreciate Norwid. Klaczko was reproached for his failed prophesy of Polish painting, and quotes from Norwid's treatise on art, in disagreement with Klaczko, were chosen to add insult to injury. The irony of fate is that Norwid actually reasoned in the same manner as Klaczko, for it seemed impossible to him that Ukrainians, brought up in the "bujna karta bezbrzeżnego traktu i gościńca ludów" ["lush card of boundless tract and highroad of peoples"], could ever have sculpture. He wrote that in obvious amazement that Gujski, who came from Ukraine, was a skilled sculptor. Now, Ukrainians might let Norwid be forgotten entirely for that mistake of his. Krasiński, who could not possibly know Klaczko or Norwid as well as we do now, being aware of all their activity, actually called Klaczko a Jewish Norwid. They had much in common. They both had a Catholic perspective on the world, they were traditionalists, and both were characterised by refined aristocratism and oversensitivity. They both had broad historiosophical horizons. As Norwid measured his times with absolute rules, the same was done by Klaczko as a critic, who took a sledgehammer to crack a nut – the utterly innocent Korzeniowski or Lenartowicz could not have had even a general idea of what the man wanted from them. Extensive comparative-historical studies, the material for which could even be two ballads, indicated the same habit of using great measures for everything. Among the Korzeniowskis, Chodźkos and Kondratowicz, Klaczko could say the same as was once said by Norwid: "Wielcy poeci... dopiero przychodzą, kiedy ich nie ma" ["Great poets... they come only

when there are none”]. For he was a poet. However, being as oversensitive as Norwid, he let malicious criticism push him into silence: a tragic Jew, hiding his face. But his brilliance, his writing talent, his ability of creative synthesis, impossible without imagination, and his strength of feeling speak for him. He once betrayed the most hidden drama of his life himself, copying the lines from Michelangelo (in Polish translation by Lucjan Siemieński):

Come può esser ch'io non sia più mio?

...

chi m'ha tolto a me stesso,

c'a me fusse più presso

o più di me potessi che poss'io?

[How can it be that I'm no longer mine?

...

who took me away from myself,

who is closer to me

or can do more with me than myself?]

This is not about crediting Klaczko with a brilliance equal to Norwid's or about finding a parallel. Yet a comparative study of both writers could provide much by way of understanding their attitudes and the type of people from their time. But that would be an obstacle for our writers, who fight romantic individualism in building original sociological theories, according to which Norwid was an absolute phenomenon and an epoch in a single person.

If a foreigner were to ask about the attitude of Polish Catholic thought towards Norwid, we might be as disconcerted as Norwid was on meeting Delaroché. It is as if we were living in times when blissful peace, philology, and academism bloom more exuberantly than the philosophy of history, and so few of Norwid's characters had a gravemound raised for them with philological sand.

I know no writer who would be better than Norwid in educating people towards historical maturity, who would understand the duties of a man as a creator of history in a deeper and nobler manner. Would enthusiasts of Norwid decide to recommend reading his work – which is so current in the matter – when state and civic education are spoken of? Perhaps Norwid might be found a too demanding and difficult writer when he states: “ilekroć się inicjatywy nie uzna, tylekroć żadne przedsięwzięcie ci ą g u mieć nie może i o d p o w i e d z i a l n o ś ć znika” (PWSz IX, 395) [“if you do not acknowledge initiative, no venture can be continued, and responsibility is gone”]. Blasphemy against Poland might be found in the statement that “czyn znaczy [u nas] nieobecność idealnej pracy! *Vacuum* myśli jest to czyn” (DW XII,

251) [“a deed means [for us] the absence of ideal work. A deed is a vacuum of thought”], or disloyalty in the prophecy: “gdzie *energia* wyprzedza zawsze *Inteligencję* – i co pokolenie jest *rzeź*” (DW XII, 321) [“where *energy* always outruns *Intelligence*, there is a *massacre* in every generation”]. He said sarcastic things as well: “tworzymy ciało i szukamy współpracowników podobnych do nas – lękamy się wszelkiej indywidualności umysłowej, bo jak palcem ruszy, to nas obali” (PWsz IX, 344) [“we create a body and seek co-workers similar to us – we are afraid of any mental individuality, for when it moves but one finger, it shall topple us”]. Norwid defined enslavement as mistaking means for aims, hence his fight against fetishism and bureaucratism in any form. “Gdzie indywidualności zaprzestaną dziejowej pełni służby,” he said in a lecture on Słowacki’s *Balladyna*, “tłó zaczyna być wszystkim i nazwiska nawet różne arcy poważne nosi – czasem nazywają je: *la force des choses... raison d’État... fusion... confusion* etc.” (PWsz VI, 471) [“Where individualities cease their historic service, the background becomes everything and even starts bearing various super-serious names – sometimes it is called: *la force de choses... raison d’État... fusion... confusion* etc.”]

Many editors would consider it to be too lofty and romantic to demand today what Norwid appealed for back in 1863. If, as he wrote, “w całej pogodzie majestatu swego i w warunkach swobodnych miejsca stosownego nie postawi się pierw organu umysłowego publicznego, że, jednym słowem, dopóki nie będziemy mieli odpowiedniego epoki dziennika, nikt nie pozna nigdy czasu swojego” (DW XII, 204) [“in the whole aura of its majesty and in free circumstances a suitable place is not found first for an intellectual public body, if, in a word, a journal suitable to its times is not established, no one will ever know their own time”]. And if one were to publish Norwid’s opinion that “żadne pismo polskie nie utrzyma się dla braku pieniędzy, to jest, dlatego iż wszystkie pisma polskie zatrzymują prawdę” (DW XII, 393) [“no Polish paper shall hold for lack of money, that is because all Polish papers withhold truth”], his aphorism would likely become true: “redakcja jest redukcją” [“redaction is reduction”]. That could easily happen with today’s cult of Norwid, although many of the truths he stated could be described in, again, his own words: “zaprzeczyć temu nie można (lubo mówi to ktoś, co nie był *konspiratorem* ani *rannym*, dwie kwalifikacje prawdy nieomylny!!!)” (DW XII, 443) [“That cannot be denied (though it is said by someone who was neither a *conspirator* nor *wounded*, two unerring qualifications of the truth!!!)”. Perhaps he was right in saying that “kto pisze rzeczy, jak one się dzieją, / Ten stawia się cynikiem” (DW IV, 152) [“who writes things as they happen, becomes a cynic”]. The cult of Norwid with current Polish writers is amazing. One might ask if they agreed with him



that a poet demanded only the victory of truth; whether they agreed to condemn the art in which the beauty of the Athenian form was a *point de départ*, and not a *point d'achèvement*; who would sign their name under his opinion on success in the poem "Omyłka" ["Mistake"]; or who would not be offended by Norwid's poem starting with the words: "Dziś autorowie są jak Bóg" (PWsz II, 89) ["Today, authors are like God"]. Finally, it would be hard to find an enthusiast who would agree with the statement: "Cała sztuka wyszła z koryta swego – pracy ludzkiej błogosławieństwem nie jest – tak, jak jest, niepotrzebna" (DW X, 304) ["all art came out of its channel – it is not a blessing of human work – as it is, unnecessary"]. It was not in vain that the great ironist repeated the Biblical quote: "Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me."

He also penetrated the essence of our cults of great people, as can be seen in his statement on the project of a medal for Seweryn Goszczyński: "Potężniej i niepowrotnie potężniej ... było to, kiedy płaszczem zakrywano sobie oczy, aby upogodzenia blaskiem na twarzy Mojżesza nie spotkać, iż zdało się być rażące i wstrętne" (PWsz VI, 551) ["It was more, and far more powerful ... when people covered their eyes with their cloaks to avoid the light on the face of Moses, for it seemed glaring and repulsive"]. *Apropos* such a proposal, Norwid gave an anecdote in *Milczenie* [*Silence*] that once, a man celebrating a jubilee, smiled on seeing his image. When asked later in private for the reason of the smile, he stated that he would not have known his profile without the image, for he could never see it in the mirror, but he did not wish to disclose the reason for his smile publicly, "[bo] takich rzeczy się nie mówi" (PWsz VI, 224) ["for you do not say such things"].

Perhaps if we saw our own faces, reflected in the common and unanimous cult of Norwid, we would need to smile, as well, and remain silent. To return to the starting point, which was the close link between Norwid's irony and silence, it should be stated that the connection was a dual one: Norwid did not only know how to keep ironically silent, but he also knew how to draw out of the silence unexpectedly the things that you do not say.

I allow myself to offer this study  
to Artur Górski  
who can see the irony of things and who knows the  
humility of silence

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Wacław Borowy

## Foreword to the Facsimile of *Vade-Mecum's* Autograph

**Abstract:** This text is a foreword to the first integral edition of *Vade-mecum*, titled *Podobizna autografu*, published by Wacław Borowy in 1947. By referring to Norwid's correspondence, the author reconstructs the history of the collection's creation and Norwid's persistent if finally unsuccessful endeavours to have the volume published. The author also attempts to establish the chronology of writing the cycle. With great solicitude, Borowy presents an editorial description of the incomplete autograph and the changes made in the fair copy of *Vade-mecum*: numerous corrections and modifications of poems, moving them to other, larger poetic and dramatic works, etc.

**Keywords:** Cyprian Norwid, *Vade-mecum*, cycle of poems, manuscript, editing

### 1

May 1866 has the oldest mention of *Vade-mecum* in the surviving correspondence of Norwid. He wrote then to Kraszewski of a volume of poetry that he would like to publish, and that would consist of two dramas, *Tyrtej Lacedemoński* [*Lacedaemonian Tyrtæus*] and *Aktor* [*Actor*], and mainly a collection of “stu poezyj drobnych – stu argumentów stanowiących jedne ‘*Vade-mecum*’” (DW XII, 435) [a hundred small poems – a hundred arguments constituting one *Vade-mecum*]. It follows from the letter that Norwid approached Brockhaus about it, as Brockhaus had earlier published a volume of his poetry (1863), and then *Niewola* [*Enslavement*] and *Fulminant* (1861), but this time, Brockhaus refused, giving the difficulties caused in Europe by the war atmosphere as reason. Asked for advice, after a few weeks' consideration Kraszewski recommended contacting Żupański in Poznań (DW XII, 464–465), which, however, brought no positive results. Norwid then sent a proposal of publishing *Vade-mecum* alone to a publisher with whom he expected to find greater understanding than with others, for the editor was a poet himself: Henryk Merzbach (DW XII, 457, 458, 464–467). Yet Merzbach did not publish it; neither did he encourage quick publication with anyone else<sup>1</sup> (before “spizowe działa ucichną”

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1 Letter from Folkestone of 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1866, in Miriam's collections.

[bronze cannons fall silent], he explained that “niestety! najsłabszy huk działa zawsze jeszcze najsilniejszy głos ducha zagłusza” [unfortunately! the weakest rumble of cannons is still able to drown out the strongest voice of the spirit]). The names of other publishers he listed (Kasprowicz and Rhode) were likely of little use to Norwid, as well, because they are not mentioned any further in his correspondence. And the poet was very intent on publishing the collection soon. One reason was financial, due to the 200 franks he was planning to receive as royalty (the amount is given in letters: DW XII, 441, 446–447, 449, 457–458; the last one – to Merzbach – presents it as a proposal, a “cautious” one, but negotiable, both with respect to the amount and the form of payment). Letters to friends (e.g. DW XII, 449) give a glaring image of how miserable his situation was at the time.

Yet the more important reason to publish the volume was for Norwid the moral one. That pauper, who had, as he wrote to Leonard Chodźko, “parę złamanych ołówków i zardzewiałych ryłców” (DW XII, 453) [a few broken pencils and rusty chisels] left, had an unflinching certainty that “poezja polska tam pójdzie, gdzie główna część *Vade-mecum* wskazuje sensem, tokiem, rytmem i przykładem” (DW XII, 436) [Polish poetry shall go where the main part of *Vade-mecum* directs it with its sense, metre, rhythm, and example].

Somewhat later, he wrote: “Przecież to obchodzi cały ogół interesu literackiego i jest dla wszystkich! – Bogata skądinąd przeszłość poezji polskiej nie przygotowała publiczności do podobnych utworów – ale cóż robić!” (DW XII, 446) [It concerns the whole literary interest and is for everyone! – The otherwise rich past of Polish poetry has not prepared the audience for similar works – – but what can be done!...]

“Jest to moje *Vade-mecum*,” he informed Merzbach, “złożone ze 100 rymów najwzszelakszej budowy, a misterną nicią wewnętrzną zjętych w ogół. Są to rzeczy gorzkie, może głębokie, może dziwne – – niezawodnie potrzebne!” (DW XII, 457) [It is my *Vade-mecum*, consisting of 100 rhymes of most various structure, and woven with a fine thread in one whole. Those are bitter things, perhaps deep, perhaps strange – – but absolutely necessary!]

In his next letter to the same addressee, he presented his opinion of Polish poetry: “Część moralna i obowiązkowa jest u poetów naszych na stanowisku wyjątku i małego odsyłacza, ale nie uzasadnia i nie uźródla poezji ... Stąd: piękność malarska zagórowała – ale to moim zdaniem *skończone jest*” (DW XII, 466) [*The moral and obligatory part is with our poets at a position of an exception and a small reference, but it does not justify poetry or take it back to its source ... Hence: painting beauty has come to rule – but in my opinion that*

*has ended*]. He was developing there the thoughts contained in the collection itself, in the introduction “Do Czytelnika” [“To the Reader”].

Norwid was also fully aware of the significance of the innovations within the verse form he used in *Vade-mecum*.

He wrote to Bronisław Zaleski in late 1867:

Jak wyjdzie z druku moje *Vade-mecum*, to dopiero zobaczą i poznają, co? jest właściwa języka polskiego liryka ..... W doskonałej liryce powinno być jak w odlewie gipsowym: zachowane powinny być i nie zgładzone nożem te kresy, gdzie forma z formą mija się i pozostawia szpary. (PWsz IX, 328)

[When my *Vade-mecum* is printed, they shall see and know what the true lyric of Polish language is ..... Perfect lyric poetry should be like a cast in plaster: the slashes where form passes form, leaving crevices, must be preserved and not smoothed out with the knife.].

Since then, mentions of *Vade-mecum* were less and less frequent in the poet's letters. The only manuscript (the poet did not have the time for copying or money for a copyist) circulated among his friends, who kept it overdue, and forgot about it (evidence of that sad lot of the manuscript is found in letters: PWsz IX, 376–378, 386–387). The poet mentioned it in increasingly bitter words. In November 1868, he wrote to Karol Ruprecht:

Jeśli Nabelak Ludwik oddał Ci dwa moje rękopisma, racz dla siebie jedynie czytać, mianowicie *Vade-mecum*, ... albowiem przeznaczone było na zrobienie skrętu koniecznego w poezji polskiej, czego widać, że zrobić nie warto, jeśli nie wyszło dotąd drukiem upowszechnione.  
(PWsz IX, 377)

[If Nabelak Ludwik gave you my two manuscripts, please read only *for yourself*, I mean the *Vade-mecum*, ... for it was meant as a necessary turn in Polish poetry, which apparently is not worth doing, since it has not been published in print so far].

In a letter to K.W. Wójcicki of 1869, the poet listed *Vade-mecum* among his other unpublished works (PWsz IX, 386). It is definitely included in the later numerous attempts to find a publisher (e.g., in a letter to August Cieszkowski of July 1878: PWsz X, 118). It is probably mentioned in that terrible sentence from a letter to Bronisław Zaleski of September 1878: “już NIKOGO nie szukam, żeby mię zrozumiał w administracji prac moich – bo nie ma z kim gadać o tym” (PWsz X, 122) [I look for NO ONE any more to understand me in the administration of my works – for there is no one to talk to about it].

And so the manuscript of *Vade-mecum* remained with the poet likely until his dying day. It later came into the possession of his relatives the Dybowski.

From there, through Wacław Gasztowtt, it came to Zenon Przesmycki (Miriam) and remained in his collections.<sup>2</sup>

## 2

The inner life of *Vade-mecum* may be traced to some extent through today's appearance of the autograph.<sup>3</sup> Its main part is a collection of sheets of quite poor paper of very pale ruling, with traces of binding, in some instances still in gatherings: they most likely formed one thick notebook or several thin notebooks. On the left edge of sheet 3 (with the title and dedication) there remains some paper lining which covered the collection. The size of the sheets is 190 x 148 mm.

But that concerns only the main part. There are also inserts of a different format and on different paper.

1. Poem VIII (“Liryka i druk” [“Poetry and Print”]) is written on a sheet of 162 x 110 mm, attached (with sealing wax) on a hinge to the sheet containing poems IX and X.
2. To poem XXXII (“Wierny portret” [“An Accurate Portrait”]), the poet added an explanation in the form of a copy of a Torquato Tasso ticket, made with an unknown hand on a narrow strip of paper, irregularly cut (height 50–60 mm, length 125 mm); the strip was glued at its left side under the poem; the right side is folded.
3. “Fortepian Szopena” [“Chopin’s Grand Piano”] (poem XCIX in the cycle) is written on three sheets; the first two are 196 x 127 mm and the last one is 190 x 118 mm; they wear traces of binding, and the third sheet is still glued on a paper hinge with sealing wax between two neighbouring notebook sheets (on two pages of the first of the two sheets, the poet wrote twice the title, dedication, and motto of the work).
4. The “epilogue” of the cycle, poetic letter “Do Walentego Pomiana Z.” [“To Walenty Pomian Z.”] is written over two sheets of 230 x 170 mm, and the first sheet has a note on a piece of paper of 135 x 87 mm glued at the bottom;

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2 *Chimera*, Vol. VIII (“Pamięci Cypriana Norwida”), pp. 422, 451; Cyprian Norwid, *Reszta wierszy odszukanych po dziś a dotąd niedrukowanych* (Warszawa: skł. gł. J. Mortkowicz, 1933), p. VI.

3 Przesmycki’s collection can be currently found in the National Library in Warsaw. The digitalized manuscript of *Vade-mecum* is available in National Digital Library POLONA. See: <https://polona.pl/item/poezje-ii-vade-mecum,MTA1ODEx/7/#info:metadata> (editor’s notes).

the left part of both sheets had a margin (2 cm), a part of which the poet cut, and the rest he glued together with sealing wax, thus forming a paper hinge (like in the manuscript of "Fortepian Szopena"), allowing the "epilogue" to be attached to the rest of the volume.

5. Those last sheets were glued to the whole by the poet, on giving the collection its full title and an introduction ("Do Czytelnika"), which cover sheets 1 and 2. The paper of those sheets is different from the one in the main part of the cycle. Today, the format is no different from the main part, but originally those two sheets were broader by 3–4 cm. The poet used that surplus breadth to bind the spine of the whole manuscript and to attach the two above-described (see point 4) "epilogue" sheets of a different format, bound together with a hinge, in the back. Today, only traces of that binding are found on the *verso* of the outer page of the second epilogue sheet (three small paper pieces which remained attached to the wax).

Yet not all the other poems in the cycle are written on sheets of the main format (190 x 148 mm). Every now and again, the poet attached to the sheets (usually with the wax) texts or parts thereof written on smaller pieces of paper, usually *versos* of deleted versions of other poems from within or without the cycle. Some of those pages remain attached, at least partially, as they were put in by the poet; others have been torn off or detached in an inexpert manner, causing some damage even to the text.

Most of the manuscript sheets were numbered in Miriam's hand (with a soft pencil in the upper right corner of *recto*); that concerns sheets 1 to 52. Further sheets are numbered in a different hand, and not with a very careful eye: number 53 is lost, and 54 continues to 58; the last sheet of the cycle bears the "lost" No. 53. There are thus 58 sheets of the principal or similar format, plus two separate epilogue sheets, which makes 60 sheets in total.

And yet that is not the entire cycle, which consisted of a hundred poems with introduction and epilogue, and which is mentioned in the poet's letters of 1866 and 1867. The manuscript lacks several full sheets that held twelve poems (XXI – XXIII, XLVI – XLVIII, LVIII, LXIV – LXVII, LXXVI). Two of them (XXXIII and LIV) were lost, as the attached pieces of paper with the texts were detached. Eight poems (XLV, XLIX, LIX, LXIII, LXVIII, LXXII, LXXV, LXXVII) survive only partially: without the beginning, ending, or middle.<sup>4</sup> What happened with

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4 Cf. Zenon Przesmycki's description in the foreword to *Reszta Wierszy*, p. V.

those sheets is truly anyone's guess.<sup>5</sup> It is highly unlikely that the poet himself would have torn them out to seek a printing chance for some of the poems in periodicals or in some collective volumes. His letters are a clear testament of what weight he attached to the cycle being whole and inseparable.

Those few poems from *Vade-mecum* of which it is known that they were published – VI (in the Lviv *Dziennik Literacki* 1867 No. 5, and in the Warsaw *Bluszcz* 1870, p. 66<sup>6</sup>), IX and XXVIII as *Rymy dorywcze* [*Casual Rhymes*] in Sarnecki's *Echo* 1876/77 No. 1,<sup>7</sup> XCIX (in the second volume of the Bendlikon *Pismo Zbiorowe* 1865), LXIII (in the Kraków *Czas* 1865 No. 1, but with a different title and some minor changes to the text<sup>8</sup>), LXXXIII also with a different title and minor changes to the text in *Kalendarz gospodarski dla kobiet* for 1877, prepared by the editors of *Przegląd Tygodniowy*, p. 85<sup>9</sup> – have not been cut out

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- 5 J.W. Gomulicki supposed that the lost sheets had to hold, e.g., the three poems listed in a letter to Antoni Zaleski (214) of 1858 (“Model,” “Kropla wody” [“Drop of Water”], “Nie wiedzieć co” [“Know Not What”]), which were meant – like “Wierny portret” [“An accurate Portrait”] and “Na zgon Potockiego” [“On the Death of Potocki”] – for the collection of Norwid's writings planned at that time. From later works, the following poems were probably to be included therein: “Sława” [“Fame”] (published in the Kraków *Czas* on 31<sup>st</sup> March 1858), “Memento” (printed in the Bendlikon *Pismo zbiorowe* in 1865), *Dziennik warszawski* [*Warsaw Journal*], and “Do słynnej tancerki rosyjskiej, nieznaney zakonnicy” [“To a Famous Russian Dancer, an Unknown Nun”].
  - 6 Regardless of earlier publication in yearbook III of the Poznań *Pokłosie* (1854). See Cyprian Norwid, *Poezje wybrane* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo J. Mortkowicza, 1933), p. 571; Cyprian Norwid, *Pisma Zebrane*, Vol. C (Warszawa-Kraków: Wydawnictwo J. Mortkowicza, 1911), p. 392. Miriam supposed (Vol. C, p. 392) that the poem was published in *Dziennik Literacki* (titled “Improwizacja w Castel Fermo pod Weroną” [“Improvisation in Castel Fermo at Verona”]) from a copy of the comedy *Noc tysięczna druga* [*The Thousandth and Second Night*] perhaps even without the author's knowledge, and *Bluszcz* probably reprinted it from there.
  - 7 Poem XXVIII (“Saturnalia”) was titled there “Echa czasu” [“Echoes of Time”]. The text has some changes. J.W. Gomulicki, to whom this piece of information along with many other ones is owed, wrote: “Norwid proposed sending such *elusive poems* in letters to Sarnecki of November 1876 (not surviving today).”
  - 8 That poem (titled *Praca* [*Work*]) was reprinted by S.P. Koczorowski in: *Tygodnik Ilustrowany*, No. 22, (1921), and after him by Stanisław Cywiński in: Cyprian Norwid, *Wybór Poezji* (Kraków: Krakowska Spółka Wydawnicza, 1924), p. 174. See Miriam's notes to *Reszta Wierszy*, p. V. The text in *Czas* is significant because in the autograph, only the first 37 lines of the poem survive.
  - 9 Reprinted by Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki in: *Ateneum* (Warszawa 1938), p. 425, and in: *Gromy i pyłki* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Godziemba, 1944), p. 54.



of the autograph; the first two and the last one are contained there in full, and the third one in large part. The loss of the pages might likely be attributed to the interference of some unauthorised “carer” and censor, to simple neglect, or to uncommon savagery.

The poet prepared the manuscript very carefully. It is clearly a fair copy. The writing is generally perfectly legible, sometimes outright calligraphic. The rare cases of crossing something out were encircled and filled in with rhythmic crosshatching, which makes them look nearly like intentional breaks. Roman numerals given to the particular poems were marked by the poet in red or blue pencil. The divisions of stanzaic works are always very clear graphically. The script shows perhaps no bibliophilic meticulousness, but it bears a clear imprint of a nature of instinctive taste and instinctive need for cleanliness.

Yet the autograph was changed with time – at least, some parts of it were. The poet returned to some poems and modified them. He crossed out much and entered changes – but without the previous care: it seems as if he only briefly grabbed the manuscript and made hasty corrections on the paper, as if he made the changes only for himself. Those notes are made almost exclusively in pencil – black, red, violet, mostly blue – sometimes very thick, like a carpenter’s pencil. Some of the thus corrected poems are “Ogólniki (za wstęp)” [“Generalities (As Introduction)”], “Addio” (VII), “Liryka i druk” (VIII), “Ciemność” [“Obscurity”] (IX), “Sieroctwo” [“Orphanhood”] (XXIV), or “Saturnalia” (XXVIII).

Some other poems were treated differently. The poet extracted them from the collection to include them as components in other works, planned out later. And so, the poem “Wieś” [“Village”] (XVII) and “Kółko” [“The Little Circle”] (LV) were included with some changes in the long poem *A Dorio ad Phrygium* (finished in 1872, according to Miriam<sup>10</sup>). Similarly, the poem “Czemu” [“Why”] (LXXXIV) was included with some changes in the comedy *Miłość czysta u kąpieli morskich* [Pure-Love at Sea Baths] (written in 1877–1881, according to Miriam<sup>11</sup>), and with some other changes<sup>12</sup> in the short story *Stygmat* [Stigma] (1883). But the poems were not deleted from the manuscript of *Vade-mecum*. The fact of leaving “Wieś” and “Kółko” in *Vade-mecum* is the more noteworthy

10 In the notes to the first edition of the poem, *Mysł Polska*, Vol. 3 (1915), pp. 440–441. Some versions of the poem “Wieś” were compared by W. Borowy, the poem having been first printed in: *Tygodnik Powszechny*, No. 75, 11<sup>th</sup> August 1946.

11 See the note to the first edition of the comedy (*Droga*, No. 11, 1933, p. 959).

12 All versions were compared by Miriam in the notes to: Cyprian Norwid, *Pisma Zebrane*, Vol. E, pp. 296–297.

that, at some point, the poet decided to combine that cycle with the poem *A Dorio ad Phrygium* into one publishing unit. Proof of that is found on the title sheet of the autograph. At first, under the words: *Cypriana Norwida poezie II Vade-mecum* there was a motto, which can be deciphered today only by looking against the light:<sup>13</sup>

Nie pochlebiaj cieniowi! o Ulissie szlachetny, synu Laerta – wolałbym pomiędzy wami być pacholkiem ostatniego wyrobnika nie posiadającego nic i mającego pług za całą własność i zaledwo zdolnego wyżyć: aniżeli panować jak Monarcha nad narodem Umarłych! (Odyseon)

[Nay, seek not to speak soothingly to me of death, glorious Odysseus. I should choose, so I might live on earth, to serve as the hireling of another, of some portionless man whose livelihood was but small, rather than to be lord over all the dead that have perished.<sup>14</sup> (Odyssey)]

Later, the poet covered the motto with a small strip of paper with rounded corners (5 cm high, 8 cm wide) glued on top, and on the strip, he wrote between two parallel lines the title: “*a Dorio, ad Phrygium.*” The fact that the title is written “with identical hand and the same slightly watery ink” as “Pierścień Wielkiej-Damy” [“The Noble Lady’s Ring”], finished in 1872 (that date is known for certain), led Miriam to conclude that the idea of a new shape of the planned second volume of poetry (with only *Vade-mecum* and *A Dorio ad Phrygium*, and without *Tyrtej* and *Aktor*, mentioned in a letter to Kraszewski of May 1866) was similarly dated.<sup>15</sup>

The same title sheet gives proof (unfortunately, a merely vestigial one) of some other plan. As has been mentioned, the sheet was once wider than those which hold the majority of the collection; its left edge bound the spine of the whole book and was sealed with wax to the hinge of the last two sheets (the “epilogue”). Today – again, as mentioned above – only meagre remnants of that binding survive, in the shape of three small paper pieces stuck to the wax on the final sheet. At some point, the poet wrote on the said binding a list of the works which were to be included in the second volume of his poetry. The title page has fragments of that list, quite readable: “tej... P... ki” “[Ostatni]

13 The text was deciphered by Miriam and copied onto a page now attached to the autograph. It is a translation of four lines from *The Odyssey*: XI 488–491 (Odysseus speaking with the ghost of Achilles in Erebus).

14 Homer, *The Odyssey*, book XI, trans. Augustus Taber Murray, Loeb Classical Library Volumes (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London, UK: William Heinemann Ltd., 1919), 488 ff.

15 Notes to: *A Dorio* in *Myśl Polska*, Vol. 3 (1915), p. 441.

despotyzm” “[Stoli]ca[?]” “[Fortep]ian Szopena” “[Na] zgon J. Z.” – “[Epilo]g” – “list do W. P. Z.” – “Relacja” – *za kulissami* – Koniec [“tej... P... ki” “[The Last] Despotism” “[Capit]al[?]” “[Chopin’s Grand] Piano” “[On the] Death of J. Z.” – “[Epilo]gue” – “letter to W. P. Z.” – “Relation” – *backstage* – End]. The final page has very small remnants of the writing. The top one could possibly be read as: “[W]chodzą” [lit. they come in]. The lowest one may be guessed to hold remnants of the word “[The]atrum.” (It is very close to the height of the words *za kulissami* [*backstage*] on the title page; perhaps the title of the drama originally consisted of those three words). Nothing is today known of the poem “Relacja” [“Relation” or “Recount”]. As to the drama *Za kulissami* [*Backstage*], Miriam claimed it had been finished in 1866,<sup>16</sup> but he dated the title 1869;<sup>17</sup> on the same grounds, he claimed that the discussed vestigial plan of the second volume of poetry ought to be linked with the same year: 1869.<sup>18</sup>

The question arises as to what can be deciphered from the autograph as concerns the chronology of writing *Vade-mecum*. The earliest date found in the autograph is 1859, at the end of the “epilogue,” i.e., the poetic letter “Do Walentego Pomiana Z.” The poem is connected with the preparations for the first edition of the poet’s collective works, planned by Antoni Zaleski et al., but never realised. The poet included the old manuscript in the new collection without any apparent changes, adding only a short note in brackets by way of a comment and crossing out (in red pencil) the date and signature at the end.

The poems “Wierny portret” (XXXII), “Pamięci Alberta Potockiego” [“In Memory of Albert Potocki”] (LXXXVI) and “Klaskaniem mając obrzękłe prawice” [“Their Hands Swollen from Clapping”] (I), listed by the poet in letters or quoted in 1858,<sup>19</sup> belong to the same period. Also in 1858 (if not earlier), the first version of the poem “Sens-świata” [“Sense-of-the-World”] (LXXXIII)

16 The main argument is the date under the dedication, because writing a dedication before finishing a work was against Norwid’s writing practice.

17 That year is mentioned in the autograph under the foreword: “dan 1869-o” [given on 1869].

18 Notes to: Cyprian Norwid, *Pisma Zebrane*, Vol. C, pp. 448–451.

19 In a letter to Antoni Zaleski, written after 13<sup>th</sup> December 1858 (214), among the poems to be included in the planned collection, the poet listed “Na zgon Potockiego” and “Wierny portret” “Klaskaniem mając” comes from the last months of 1858 or from early 1859, because Norwid wrote the last stanza of that poem as a dedication on the brochure *On Art*, given to Ms Łuszczewska (J.W. Gomulicki).

was written, titled: “Obyczaje” [“Customs”]: the poet sent it to Mieczysław Pawlikowski in November 1858.<sup>20</sup>

Earlier is the poem “Socjalizm” [“Socialism”] (III), a variant of “Czasy” [“Times”], printed in the Poznań *Pokłosie* in 1856, and the poem “W Weronie” [“In Verona”] (VI), published also in *Pokłosie* with the title “Nad grobem Julii Capuletti w Weronie” [“Over the Grave of Julia Capuletti in Verona”] in 1854. Incidentally, both poems had undoubtedly been written long before publishing.<sup>21</sup>

More extensive chronological indications could be expected to be found on the backs of small pieces of paper glued on the “principal” sheets. However, actually only on the *verso* of the paper with “W Weronie” (sheet 7 r.) there is a text clearly indicating time before 1863: it is the poem “Baczność” [“Attention”], crossed out, which was included in the Leipzig volume of *Poezje* with some small changes.<sup>22</sup>

The paper with the poem “Harmonia” [“Harmony”] (V, sheet 6 v.) has a crossed-out poem “Po balu” [“After the Ball”], which is known in a slightly different version as the song of the Mandolin from the drama *Za kulisami*. Miriam was quite right to state that “the version from *Vade-mecum* should

- 20 A postmark is left on the autograph, which was sent without an envelope: “28. octo. 58.” See Tadeusz Pini, “Z pośmiertnych utworów C. Norwida,” *Pamiętnik Literacki*, 1907, p. 104; Cyprian Norwid, *Wybór Poezji*, ed. Roman Zrębowicz (Lwów: nakładem B. Połonieckiego, 1908), p. 163; ed. II (Lwów: nakładem B. Połonieckiego, 1911), p. 251. It may be assumed that the title *Obyczaj* in the letter to Antoni Zaleski of 1858r. (214) refers to the same poem.
- 21 Miriam dated *Czasy* for 1849 – based on the text similarities with works written definitely in that year (see notes to: Cyprian Norwid, *Pisma Zebrane*, Vol. A, p. 864). The replica of the text, mentioned below, withdrawn from the autograph of *Vade-mecum*, was titled “Socjalizm 1848.” The poem “W Weronie” is included in the comedy *Noc tysięczna druga*, written in 1850 (see Miriam’s notes to: Cyprian Norwid, *Pisma Zebrane*, Vol. C, p. 387). Miriam believed of the same poem that “the poet wrote it undoubtedly ... when going through Verona for the first time in 1843.” (notes to: Cyprian Norwid, *Poezje wybrane*, 1935, p. 571) J.W. Gomulicki was more convincing with the argument that the poem was written “rather around 1848, because it was most likely published in *Pokłosie* by J. Koźmian, to whom Norwid sent in 1848–1849 almost all poems printed in *Pokłosie* and meant for *Przegląd Poznański*” (letter to W.B.). Norwid was particularly attached to that poem. It is proved, e.g., by one more autograph, written in later years – in pencil, but with particular care – for J.B. Wagner’s daughter, as J.W. Gomulicki supposed. It has some changes, and it survives in the collections of Miriam.
- 22 The volume was published in November 1862. In a letter with a postmark of 18 XII 62, Norwid informed Cieszkowski of the publication (DW XII, 141).

unquestionably be considered the earlier one.”<sup>23</sup> But such a statement still does not help with the chronological data much, since both the *Vade-mecum* cycle and the drama *Za kulisami* were written at approximately the same time.

*Verso* of the page with poem XXVI (“Czemu nie w chórze”) holds (sheet 16 r.) “Mistycyzm” [“Mysticism”], written by the poet on the very next page (sheet 16 v.) with minor changes as poem XXVII.

*Verso* of the page with the first five stanzas of poem XXXI (“Ruszaj z Bogiem” [“Godspeed”]) holds (sheet 18 v.) the poem “Socjalizm 1848,” with the same text found in the cycle at No. III (minus the “1848” in the title).

The otherwise unknown poem “Tymczasem” [“Meanwhile”], written on the back of the loosely attached paper (sheet 17 v.) with “Obojętność” [“Indifference”] (XXIX), is a separate case. It is not numbered as part of the cycle, and so it cannot be considered part of *Vade-mecum*. Yet the style and tone prove that it was written in the same period.

The latest date found in the manuscript is 1865. The poet wrote it under the cycle’s title and dedication (today it is sheet 3 r.). He crossed it out later; it was probably at that time that he included the two initial sheets, with a fuller title and the three-page introduction “Do Czytelnika,” yet that introduction still ended with the words: “Pisałem 1865” [I wrote it 1865].

Most quotations and replicas in the collection, if given a date, are also dated for or around 1865.

The poem “Na zgon ś.p. Józefa Z.” [“On the Death of the Late Józef Z.”], which was planned to close the cycle, was written already in February 1864 and sent in a letter to Józef Bohdan Zaleski (DW XII, 263). The second (untitled) autograph of poem XLIII (“Purytanizm” [“Puritanism”]) was sent to M. Sokołowski with some small changes and the comment: “Marianowi odśpiew, odpowiedź” [a sing-back, a reply to Marian], comes from 1865.<sup>24</sup> The album of Sokołowski also holds a version of the first two stanzas of “Ironia” [“Irony”] (XXXV); in all likelihood, that album entry should also be dated 1864–65, because in that period the relation between Norwid and Sokołowski was particularly animated and warm.<sup>25</sup> “Zagadka” [“Riddle”] (LIII) is quoted with some small changes in a letter to Karol Ruprecht of 1865 (DW XII, 412)<sup>26</sup> and in a letter to M. Sokołowski of late 1865 (DW XII, 408). The echo of the

23 See notes to: Cyprian Norwid, *Pisma Zebrane*, Vol. C, p. 435. Changes are listed there.

24 See Miriam’s notes to: Cyprian Norwid, *Poezje Wybrane*, p. 590.

25 See Feliks Kopera’s introduction to: “Nieznana autobiografia C. Norwida,” *Wiadomości Numizmatyczno-Archeologiczne*, No. 34 (1897), p. 355.

26 According to J.W. Gomulicki, the letter can be dated quite precisely to 1<sup>st</sup> November 1865.

poem “Omyłka” [“Mistake”] (LXXXVII) is found in a letter to Konstancja Górska of 1866 (DW XII, 478–480). The poems “Litość” [“Mercy”] (XIV) and “Narcyz” [“Narcissus”] (XVI) were included in the cycle “Z mojego albumu” [“From My Album”], dated by Miriam for 1866, but J.W. Gomulicki believed it to be “most likely ... written somewhat earlier.”<sup>27</sup> It should also be remembered that “Praca” [“Work”], a version of “Prac-czoło” [“Work in Brow’s Sweat”] (LXIII), and “Fortepian Szopena” (XCIX) were published in 1865.

Thus, 1865 can be accepted as the date of closing the cycle. Miriam extended that period with his suggestion to date the poem “Do Zeszłej” [“To the Deceased”] (LXXXV) for 1869; yet also he indicated the possibility of earlier dating by linking the outer impulse for the poem not with the death of Z. Węgierska, but with the demise of the poet’s sister, Paulina Suska, in 1860.<sup>28</sup>

Based on the above listed data, *terminus a quo* of the first idea of the cycle may likely be dated for the period of publishing the Leipzig volume, or soon after.<sup>29</sup>

Readers learned of *Vade-mecum* only thanks to Zenon Przesmycki from the Norwid-themed issue of *Chimera* (1904). It held a brief note on the entire cycle and seventeen poems included in it. Earlier, the letter “Do Walentego Pomiana Z.” was published as a separate poem in *Chimera*’s volume I. Some other parts were published by Przesmycki in other periodicals (*Nowa Gazeta*, *Krokwie*, *Droga*, *Kultura*), and a larger part was included in the volume *Poezje Wybrane* [Selected Poems] (1933). In that manner, within thirty years he made forty-six entirely unknown poems from the cycle public. In the same period, the poems: “Fortepian Szopena,” “W Weronie,” “Obyczaje” (i.e., the first version of “Sens świata”), and “Praca, printed when Norwid was still alive, were reprinted. A further thirty-three poems from *Vade-mecum* (full or fragmentary) were first published by Przesmycki in *Reszta Wierszy* [Remaining Poems] (1933).

As can be seen from the material left by Przesmycki, his work towards publishing the entire *Vade-mecum* in volume B of Norwid’s *Pisma Zebrane* was very advanced.<sup>30</sup> Yet the First World War stopped the publication. Similarly, WWII stopped the publication of the poet’s *Wszystkie Pisma*, which seemed to be nearly ready: one of its two unprinted volumes was planned to include *Vade-mecum*.

27 Both poems obviously have some changes here, later than *Vade-mecum*. See *Wszystkie Pisma*, Vol. V, pp. 123–128.

28 See notes to: Norwid, *Poezje wybrane*, p. 530.

29 A letter to M. Sokołowski of 9<sup>th</sup> October 1864 mentions “II tom pism” [2nd volume of writings], but without a mention of *Vade-mecum* (DW XII, 304).

30 See *Cyprian Norwid: Wystawa w 125 rocznicę urodzin: Katalog* (Warszawa: Muzeum Narodowe, 1946), pp. 126–127; *Cyprian Norwid: Wystawa w 125 rocznicę urodzin: Przewodnik* (Warszawa: Muzeum Narodowe, 1946), pp. 19–20.

Thus, this phototypical edition is the first one that allows one to present the collection in its entirety and the shape given to it by its author. It is not only an act of respect for the writer, but also a fulfilment of an important national and scientific postulate. So many treasures have been lost to Poland that the remaining ones should be possibly shielded from the dangers looming (and not only at wartime!) over any unique objects. The autograph of *Vade-mecum* is a treasure not only because it brings us closer to the poet's hand, but mainly because it contains poetic masterpieces the texts of which are not yet entirely known. Any editor is bound by the author's last intention, and – as has been stated here – it is not an easy task to grasp Norwid's last intention with respect to the various parts of *Vade-mecum*. Deciphering some of the late changes seems impossible. Przesmycki, greatly intimate with Norwid's writing, did not always take risks of going beyond the original calligraphic version.

To give just one example: when publishing the poem "Ogólniki (za wstęp)" for the first time in Norwid's *Reszta Wierszy* (1933), Przesmycki gave the following version:

Gdy, z wiosną Życia, duch Artysta  
Poi się jej tchem jak motyle,  
Wolno mu mówić tylko tyle:  
"Ziemia jest krągła – jest kulista!"

Lecz gdy późniejszych chłódów dreszcze  
Drzewa wzruszą, i kwiatki zlecą,  
Wtedy dodawać trzeba jeszcze:  
"U biegunów spłaszczona nieco"

Ponad wszystkie wasze uroki,  
Ty! poezjo, i ty, wymowo,  
Jeden – wiecznie będzie wysoki:  
-----  
Odpowiednie dać rzeczy słowo!

[When, in the spring of Life, the  
Artist's spirit  
Draws breath like a butterfly,  
Herein his only limit lies:  
"The earth is round – it is spherical!"

But when late shivers, chills  
Move a tree, and little flowers flit,  
He must enlarge upon it still:  
"Though at the poles it's flattened  
just a bit"

Beyond, above all your charms,  
You! poetry, and you, speech!, Behold  
Ever the highest will be – this aim:  
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To name each matter by its rightful word!]<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> English translation by Danuta Borchardt in collaboration with Agata Brajerska-Mazur, in: Cyprian Norwid, *Poems* (New York: Archipelago Books, 2011), p. 13.

Such is the original, calligraphic text. Yet when one carefully studies the autograph, a later version, finally binding, may be deciphered from the poet's hasty deletions and inserts. Below is that final version (with italics to indicate the changes).

Gdy, z wiosną Życia, duch Artysta  
Poi się jej tchem jak motyle,  
*Głosić wolno mu* tylko tyle:  
"Ziemia, jest krągła – jest kulista!"

*Lecz skoro puchy kwiatów zlecą,  
Nawalne gdy przeminą deszcze,  
Wtedy dodawać trzeba jeszcze:  
"U biegunów, spłaszczona, nieco"*

Ponad *mnogie* wasze uroki,  
O, poezjo, i ty, wymowo,  
*Pozostanie jeden* wysoki:

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Odpowiednie *rzeczy* dać słowo!

[When, in the spring of Life, the  
Artist's spirit  
Draws breath like a butterfly,  
*His limit lies only therein:*  
"The earth is round – it is spherical!"

*But when little flowers flit,  
And stormy rains pass,  
He must enlarge upon it still:  
"Though at the poles it's flattened  
just a bit"*

Beyond, above *many* of your charms,  
You! poetry, and you, speech!, Behold  
*One* ever the highest will be – this aim:

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Each matter to name by its rightful word!]

However, written in the poet's later, nervous handwriting, one more stanza is added in the autograph, or perhaps a thorough change of one of the earlier stanzas, which is impossible to decipher today. The same could be said of the versions of "Sieroctwo," "Ciemność," and other poems. Yet what seems unreadable to one eye may be more easily unravelled by another. The more eyes that can see the autograph, the greater the certainty that we get to know it better and more fully. A phototypical edition, making the autograph available in faithful copies, allows teamwork, which is so necessary in this case.



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Irena Sławińska

## On Norwid's Epic Prose: Poet-Playwriter's Workshop

**Abstract:** The article attempts to characterise Cyprian Norwid's epic/narrative prose. According to the author, Norwid's artistic method within prose was based on five major premises: 1) the writer wished to create modern art that would present a synthetic view on civilization; 2) each story of events served such synthesis; 3) the characters and events were of specific, unique, and individual natures; 4) the truth of the entirety was connected with the truth and impression of authenticity of detail; 5) prose thus shaped had to have a specific style, devoid of unnecessary ornaments, and possibly had to conform to the presented topic/event/plot. Later in the study, the author discusses the means that Norwid used in his prose to achieve the generalising semantic perspective while at the same time keeping the uniqueness and authenticity of the chosen topic in mind. Three main strategies are indicated: parabolising the main event, dramatising (understood as using means characteristic for drama within prose, e.g., purely external presentation of characters, a dramatization of the word: dialogues and monologues as the main structures of expression, situation and gestures used as a basis, etc.), and narrator's perspective. The latter evolved in Norwid's epic-writing towards a gradual enrichment of functions and inclusion in the world he presented. The three strategies are discussed by the author with the help of rich illustrative material.

**Keywords:** Cyprian Norwid, narrative prose, dramatising, narration, anecdote

The phrase "epic prose" is not clear enough in and of itself. It has two determinants: 1) prose speech, as opposed to versification, 2) narration of events as opposed to non-narrative treatises, studies, or longer poems. Yet when those two determinants are used to define more precisely, the area of the works examined here, many doubts arise: should only short stories be taken into account, or should perhaps various texts of a basically non-narrative nature (like, e.g., *Białe kwiaty* [*White Flowers*] or the treatise *Milczenie* [*Silence*]) be combed through for any small, scattered anecdotes?

That same question was faced by Miriam, Cyprian Norwid's editor, twice: first when he was preparing volume E of *Pisma zebrane* [*Collected Works*],<sup>1</sup> and

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1 Cyprian Norwid, *Pisma zebrane*, ed. Zenon Przesmycki, Vol. E: *Pisma prozą*. Part one, comprising legends and short stories (Warszawa-Kraków: J. Mortkowicz, 1911) (hereafter: PZ).

sixteen years later, when he was the editor of volume 5 of *Wszystkie pisma po dziś w całości lub fragmentach odszukane* [Cyprian Norwid's *Collected Works Found in Fragments or in their Entirety*].<sup>2</sup> Each time, he answered the question in a different way. These two conceptions of Miriam match the two answers suggested above.

In *Pisma zebrane*, Miriam included only Norwid's larger, completed works of narrative prose. These are: *Garstka piasku* [A Handful of Sand], *Bransoletka* [Bracelet], *Cywilizacja* [Civilization], *Ostatnia z bajek* [The Last of the Fables], *Tajemnica Lorda Singelworth* [Lord Singelworth's Secret], *Ad leones*, *Stygmat* [Stigma], and separately *Łaskawy opiekun* [Kind Guardian], as "utwór młodzieńczy" ["a juvenile work"]. The volume was titled *Legendy i nowele* [Legends and Stories], taken from a phrase by the poet himself. The editor wrote in the comment: "The most modest part of Norwid's legacy is epic prose. There are only eight legends and stories surviving, as contained in this volume."<sup>3</sup>

Both the construction of the volume and the statements above lead to the conclusion that, at the time of that publication, Miriam followed the narrower view on "epic prose" since he chose only the works listed above, even though, in a commentary, he emphasised the link between Norwid's stories and memoir records. In Miriam's view, the source of short-story writing could be traced back to the tendency "do medytacyjnego i artystycznego pamiętnikarstwa"<sup>4</sup> ["to meditative and artistic memoir writing"].

That last statement led Miriam to further editorial decisions only in the edition of *Wszystkie pisma*, issued much later. Aside from the eight works published previously, Volume 5, titled *Proza epicka* [Epic prose], contained a whole series of other texts, either fragmentary or fully completed, including *Menego*, *Czarne* and *Białe kwiaty* [Black and White Flowers], *Milczenie*, as well as some shorter fragments. The presence of aesthetic treatises – like *Białe kwiaty* and *Milczenie* – in the volume of epic prose may raise doubts. The reason for their inclusion is likely the presence in both works of short narrative inserts – anecdotes – presented to illustrate the general aesthetic laws established by both works (the "white flower" law, the law of silence).

2 Cyprian Norwid, *Wszystkie pisma po dziś w całości lub fragmentach odszukane*, ed. Zenon Przesmycki, Volume five of the first complete issue: *Proza epicka*, (Warszawa: skł. gł. Kasa im. Mianowskiego, 1937) (hereafter: WP).

3 PZ, Vol. E, p. 241.

4 PZ, Vol. E, p. 244.

Thus, works of narrative prose could be divided into two groups. One is made up of texts in which the event that is presented gains a more general perspective thanks to various elements of the narrative structure: exposition, background, dialogues, etc. The second group includes short accounts of an event – only an outline of an anecdote given to explain more general laws. Of such a nature are the short narratives of meeting the Mountaineer in the Apennines or speaking to a fellow Pole in London (both from *Białe kwiaty*). These are not independent literary works but rather illustrative examples. Another well-remembered anecdote is the one about Róża Nagnioszewska (from a letter to Konstancja Górka, 1866; DW XII, 518–519), which allowed Norwid to mock Polish political history. With such short accounts, the generalising function is transferred onto the text of the interpolated treatise; it is the comment that adds a broader perspective to the event.

In both groups of works, the emphasis was placed on the presence of “generalising perspectives.” One may ask if, e.g., in his journal writing, Norwid ever strived simply to record a single, individual fact without a double-layered meaning. The answer would have to be a definite No. “Albowiem zabawiałbym się fotografowaniem” [“For I would play a photographer”], the poet might add; he never considered the duties of a notary or calligraphist to be his calling.

Yet “photography” seems difficult to avoid when the poet wishes to record an actual happening, a contemporary event. After all, Norwid saw contemporariness, understood deeply as addressing the issues required by the epoch, as one of the tasks of poetry. He also felt compelled to “współczesnym zacnym oddać cześć” [“honour noble contemporaries”].

He expressed that difficulty in the introduction to *Czarne kwiaty* [*Black Flowers*], which were written as biographies of well-known artists: Mickiewicz, Słowacki, and Chopin, to name a few. Those biographic, or rather obituary, accounts were meant to record faithfully one unique fact: the last meeting with the artist, a visit before he died. But it is also clear that those accounts were only a background used to show both the whole artist and a truth about art.

For that type of artistic work, “formuła stylu nie ma” [“style formulas do not exist”], stated Norwid. There are only two formulas, both equally useless to a creative artist: “jakiś książkowy klasycyzm” [“some bookish classicism”] and a “formuła czasowa dziennikarska” [“temporal journalist formula”].

The latter is a journalist report, or, as Norwid would say: daguerreotype, a hasty note recording everything, but “mniej istotę źródeł, z których ono wszystko płynie” [“less the essence of sources which give rise to it all”]. Today, a different term could be used: to indicate an external, detailed record of a fact while evading any generalising interpretation. Obviously, such a record of

events remains beyond the borders of poetry, despite bearing the highest factual load; it better fits the category of *faits-divers*, annals.

But living poetry is also killed by “książkowy jakiś klasycyzm” [“some bookish classicism”], an abstract generalization without the hot breath of the said factual load. It cannot reflect the “łączości pomiędzy książką a żywotem” [“connection between book and life”]. Poetry is fed by the concrete, but those concrete things must be meaningful and generalised, a fact that expresses a truth or illustrates a law.

That artistic dilemma is born as a side note to the writing methodology of *Czarne kwiaty*, but obviously also applies to other works. Norwid had to seek his own method in order to implement the ideal of true poetry: filled with life and deeply submerged in life, and, at the same time, revealing some general truths. Of course, the artistic problem varied depending on the conception of the particular work and on the literary genre.

Norwid’s narrative prose is also very diverse, but all his works are linked with the element of the plot, rooted in the plane of eventualization. On – or over – that plane rises poetic generalization.

This study is meant to present only the basic principles of Norwid’s artistic methodology, which he developed over many years. To better highlight these principles, Norwid’s juvenile story *Łaskawy opiekun* is often brought back from oblivion for reference, as it is a story from the time when the young and naïve poet did not yet notice the issue discussed here.

Below, a summary is given of the assumptions that should form the basis for the method examined here:

- 1) Norwid wished to create modern art – art that would participate in contemporary issues and give a synthetic image of the civilization.
- 2) Each account of events is meant to serve the synthesis mentioned above. Norwid reached for it in particular in his dramas and short stories, i.e., in narrative works. Thus an event needs to have such a “nabój znaczeniowy” [“semantic load”] if it is to shake the vision of the whole culture.
- 3) At the same time, the events and characters in that story have to be convincing in their unique, exceptional concreteness; they are to be colourful, tangible, alive, and not flat.
- 4) The general truth must be connected with authenticity of detail.
- 5) The poet should “uniknąć stylu” [“avoid style”], but “nie zaniedbać stylu” [“not neglect style”]. That paradox was also explained by Norwid in the introduction to *Czarne kwiaty*. To avoid style means to abandon stylizacja, ornamentation, or any amplification out of respect for the topic,

and also as an expression of trust that the “rzecz opisywana” [“described object”] speaks for itself with sufficient strength. But also, that same respect for the topic requires the author not to neglect style: to seek the best possible expression earnestly and diligently, and not allow the temptations of artistic laziness or the “easy way out” to sway the writer. Such a lazy solution would be to follow in the ruts of others' wheels, to be obedient towards routine. The new style “surowym musi być koniecznie, / Bo surowość jest całość walcząca z szczegółem” (*Hrabina Palmyra* [*Countess Palmyra*]; DW V, 314) [“must necessarily be rugged, For ruggedness is the entirety fighting against the detail”]. The dynamism of that fight saturated all of Norwid's narrative prose.

Two questions follow: how did these generalising semantic perspectives arise, and how did Norwid save the concreteness of the literal plane at the same time? Three artistic means are used to implement the paradox: 1) parabolising the main event, 2) dramatising, and 3) establishing a narrative perspective. Three means are discussed below with the help of referring to Norwid's stories – the longer, well-developed ones, naturally, where meanings arise without the help of an additional commentary. When the whole treatise (as in *Białe kwiaty* or *Milczenie*) serves for semantic context, such generalising procedures would be completely redundant, and so Norwid did not use them.

His texts will naturally be referenced very often, but this paper does not attempt a comprehensive discussion of Norwid's stories and is not meant to be an outline of a monograph. Neither does it present the writer's artistic evolution in full, although a developmental approach does seem to be the only fitting one when considering, e.g., the issue of the narrator. It is very easy to note the abysmal difference between Norwid's first attempt at a story (*Łaskawy opiekun*) and each of the subsequent ones from the mature, post-American period. Yet, when the mature narrative works written between 1855 and 1883 are juxtaposed, no striking divergences in the artistic method discussed are noticeable. The method was outlined around 1856–1858, at the time of *Czarne* and *Białe kwiaty* and *Bransoletka*. Doubtless, in the later years, those of *Ad leones* and *Stygmat*, it was perfected to a particular degree, but its foundations had been laid earlier.

## 1. Parabolising the Event

The term “to parabolise itself” comes from Norwid. It is recurrent in the poet's reflections whenever Norwid wished to indicate particular layers of senses

suddenly arising over a word or event. He also frequently used the terms of legend or parable to define his works, as he did for *Quidam*, *Epimenides*, *Cywilizacja*, *Garstka piasku*, *Bransoletka* – five larger works that the poet truly wished to include in Brockhaus' publication. In each of them, Norwid attempted to emphasise the broad semantic range of the anecdote, its symbolism, which would have allowed him to call each of his works “a legend of the nineteenth century.” Among them is *Quidam*, in which an analysis of contemporary times and phenomena leads clearly towards questions about the genealogy of Western European culture. But each of those works contains elements of still greater generalizations of truth, pertinent to all epochs.

What possibilities are offered by the anecdote, by a mere recount of events, Norwid stated near the end of his life, in the treatise *Milczenie*. That work outlines a fantastic development of literature in the world, a development whose fundamental law would be the law of silence. After the era of legend, *epos*, and history came the time of anecdote, passed over in the previous developmental phase:

Tam są tajemnice psychologii dziejów, biografii, niezmiernie ważne częstotliwie, lecz za małe i za mnogie dla historii, i ona je przemilcza, ale one na dnie anegdoty czekają fatalnej godziny swojej, albowiem po epoce tej, którą Anegdotą zowiemy, jest Rewolucja!...

(PWsz VI, 246)

[There are the mysteries of psychology of history, biography, oftentimes of immense importance, yet too small and too numerous for history, and so it passes over them in silence, but they await their fatal hour in the depths of anecdote, for after that epoch which we call Anecdote, there is Revolution!...]

That authentic raw material that is provided by an anecdote may be used in various ways: it may be spread into a background (“rozlać go na tło”) or told in a fun and colourful manner, as is done in “romans i powieść, i cały ten rodzaj pobieżnej literatury” (DW VI, 246) [“love stories and novels and all that kind of cursory literature”] (The contemporary romance writing was often the object of Norwid's thrusts of irony). Obviously, such use of an anecdote robs it of its documentary and metaphoric character and deprives it of the blade of revolution (“Tego ostatniego wyrazu nie należy tu brać z żadną wyłącznością” (DW VI, 246) [“That last word should not be taken with any exclusivity here”]).

But a true poet should look at those minor facts passed over by history and see stigmas of the past, of contemporary times, or a harbinger of the coming eras. And Norwid wished to be such a careful witness, a reader of the “mystery of history.”



With Norwid, the theory of metaphoricalness of events has another, romantic layer. Although some said, "The parable proves nothing," he responded:

Jużci tak jest, bo paraboli zadaniem nie jest d o w i e ś ć , ale u - o c z y w i s t n i ć – jedna zatem parabola o c z y w i s t n i , lecz wszystkie razem uważane parabole nie tylko że d o w o d z ą , ale dowodzą one tak bardzo ogromnej rzeczy, iż strach święty bierze pomyśleć o tym!... Dowodzą one albowiem analogijnego stosunku pomiędzy prawami rozwoju rzeczy świata tego a prawami rozwoju ducha...

(PWsz VI, 236)

[‘Tis true, for the task of the parable is not to p r o v e , but to m a k e - o b v i o u s – thus one parable m a k e s t h i n g s o b v i o u s , but all parables treated together not just p r o v e , but they prove such an immense thing that to think of it makes you shudder in holy fear!... Because they prove the analogous relationship between the laws of development of the things of this world and the laws of development of the spirit...]

One may ask, what events may be parabolised in Norwid's stories? The answer would have to be varied: the commonplace and tiny facts, as well as the highly uncommon ones – the regular balloon flights of Lord Singelworth, or the sinking of a ship. Each work has its own concept and its own range of meanings. Among all the works discussed, only particular obituaries of *Czarne kwiaty* and *Menego* – the earliest of the obituaries – may be considered close. They are linked by the same artistic intention: to metaphorise the last moment of life, which is meant to present the whole truth of an artist. That last moment has a particular glow to it; it becomes a lens concentrating the whole life – hence its symbolic worth. (Norwid similarly metaphorised "błyskawic światło" ["the light of lightnings"] of the moment right before a wedding, which revealed the entire truth of human feelings.)

Memories of great historic figures particularly obligate one to precision and restrain all structure. Obituaries should be faithful "jak podpisy świadków" ["like witnesses' signatures"]. It was the poet's aim to achieve the highest, almost rigorous simplicity, to avoid any ornaments; he also avoided any pretence of structure in the recounted events. But the structure is revealed in that very conciseness, in the careful selection of *ante mortem* words and gestures, which the narrator will recount. Only those words or snippets of conversation that gain particular significance in light of the recent death of the artist are quoted. That significance is decided only by emphases, obviously few and immediately toned down. After the emphasised word or gesture (Mickiewicz's "Adieu," Chopin's "wynoszę się" ["I am leaving;" lit. "I am getting out"]) usually

comes a decrescendo, a falling tone and a very calm, “prosaic,” report-like account of death.

The metaphorization of the last moment that uncovers “całość żywota” [“the whole life”] through a sudden flash of the spotlight stopping on that one gesture is supported and further enhanced by other factors: the descriptive ones. Mickiewicz’s “Adieu” (= *à Dieu*) is shaken out of convention not only through the narrator’s commentary, but also thanks to some details of the room, at which the poet’s spotlight stops: “piękna rycina przedstawiająca św. Michała Archanioła,” “Także Ostrobramska Matka Najświętsza i Dominikina oryginalny rysunek, komunię św. Hieronima przedstawiający” (*Czarne kwiaty*; DW VII, 52) [“a beautiful image presenting St Michael the Archangel; Also Our Lady of the Gate of Dawn and the original drawing by Domenichino, presenting the communion of St Jerome”].

The account of the death of Byczkowski, the painter in *Menego*, goes in a different direction. It is not mainly about viewing the artist’s entire life through a talk on the deathbed, but about the symbolic dimension of death as an inevitable failure of the Slav-artist. Again, various details, which have been carefully collected on the way, lead to such an extension of senses: a brief biography of the artist, the meeting at Riva degli Schiavoni (= Riva degli Slavi), conversation on art, and the idea of the painting (the fisherman with an empty shell fished out). Those elements of generalization are, at the same time, the actual premises motivating the event. Death by drowning loses the character of an accident: the event expresses a more general law and is simultaneously subject to that law – it occurs *d u e* to the law. The immediate causal motivation (“*za głęboko w fale zaszedł*” – *Menego*, DW VII, 39, [“went too deep into the waves”]) is given in inverted commas by the narrator himself.

It is similar to other “accidents” that become the axis of the story’s plot. Those are sometimes minor events (losing a bracelet, saying a word too loud) or a major, apparently accidental catastrophe: a ship sinking. Norwid always prepared them carefully, trying to show the roots of the events. In *Bransoletka* or *Cywilizacja*, the “roots of events” spread through the whole social atmosphere. The events are not directly connected with the circumstances preparing them: Norwid left it to the reader to add in the missing links. In *Bransoletka*, the poet immediately stressed the thoughtlessness of high society (the thoughtlessness is shown, e.g., through their attitude to the seven sacraments), losing the bracelet, breaking the engagement, and remarrying have their roots in that very thoughtlessness. The legend of a ship (*Cywilizacja*) has its events constructed in a similar manner. First, there is the careful and apparently unbiased exposition, the presentation of the passengers. Emphasis is given to their egoism and

lack of any social bond; the latter feature is discussed in the commentary in the narrator's monologue. Only then is the catastrophe pictured – the ship sinks. The event is justified by the ship meeting the iceberg, yet a significant motivation is indicated to be the said lack of a social bond. "Civilization" must sink because of the passengers it has because there is nothing linking them. That is the main cause of the event and the one that cooperates with the parabolising process. In that particular work, the background of literal senses nearly fades away.

We have thus discussed several artistic means used by the poet to expand on meanings: careful choice of details, emphasising the most important detail, revealing the roots of various accidents, generalising, "symbolic" motivation, and a superstructure over the usual, literal causality. Yet there are many more such means. The poet demonstrated such great inventiveness and enriched his method so much that, as years passed, new discoveries appeared, and new sets were created. Each work was created on the basis of its very own, individual conception and took a different path to giving the plot the sense of a parable.

In *Garstka piasku*, the poet put together two accounts of the life and death of exiles: a Roman one from the first century AD and modern ones, a pagan and a Christian. That juxtaposition leads to a generalization, as it demonstrates – in a nutshell – the difference between the two civilizations or, more precisely, the difference between two views on life and death.

The method of juxtaposition concerns not only the combination of a few plots. The poet juxtaposed two cultures, e.g., the old Italian art, arising spontaneously from life, against the imitative Slavic culture. Hence, within the narration, there appear seemingly unnecessary descriptive inserts or apparently redundant dialogues. A traditional idea of the romantics, vision, serves in *Stygmata* to extend the law of stigma onto all human history. It is worth noting that Norwid drew from such historiosophy previously and frequently.

The poet did not avoid introducing a direct commentary from a party. Sometimes the objective sense of a parable was revealed only in the confrontation of various comments, both true and false ones. In *Tajemnica Lorda Singelworth*, confrontation of this kind is the compositional principle: the poet collected various false interpretations of the Lord's strange habits (daily balloon flights) to put an authoritative, true interpretation into the Lord's mouth only at the very end.

Yet usually, interpretation belongs not to the narrator but to characters. In *Garstka piasku* or *Ostatnia z bajek*, the reader hears the sound of sand in the hourglass, a light breeze, or an angel. In *Stygmata*, the whole historical lecture on the origin of nations is given by a fantastic shape from the narrator's vision.

Sometimes, epilogues have the commenting function. Such epilogue scenes that extend the meanings can be found in a few works: in *Stygmata*, *Ad leones*, and *Cywilizacja*. What is particularly interesting is that in the last two stories, the ironic epilogue is a conversation between the narrator and the Editor, who constantly appears as an antagonist and, at the same time, the most significant representative of modern civilization.

Next, various resonators (a term by Tadeusz Makowiecki) should be listed, which support and enhance the works' semantic structure. Those resonance boxes include means known from elsewhere in Norwid's poetry, like mottos, dedication poems, and titles: *Stygmata* and *Cywilizacja*, for example, although there are also titles evoking no associations, as with *Bransoletka* or *Tajemnica Lorda Singelworth*. A signal of the semantic range may also be the subtitle: parable, legend, or "legend of the nineteenth century." Such a subtitle indicates that, on top of the literal sense of the plot, there arises a layer of new senses. Norwid gave meaningful names to various significant objects or characters: a ship is named "Civilization," or a sculpting group called "*christiani ad leones*" transforms into capitalization – the owner of the balloon is Lord Singelworth.

The role of semantic signals is also taken by some regular motifs in conversations, recurrent expressions, and verbal refrains. They draw attention and carry emphasis due to their repetitiveness alone. The poet took savages through the deck of "Civilization" several times, and as many times he wrote of their joy that "wszystko dokoła jest tak równo, pięknie i gładko" (*Cywilizacja*, DW VII, 106) ["everything around is *so even, beautiful and smooth*"]. Three times, and all close to each other, the formula of social conversation that "kończy się właśnie karnawał hucznie, gdyż post zbliża się" (DW III, 83) ["the carnival is now sumptuously coming to an end, for Lent is coming"] is repeated in *Bransoletka*. The third time over, it takes even stronger emphasis: "iż post – czyli czas sakramentu pokuty – zbliża się" (DW VII, 83) ["for Lent – the time for the sacrament of penance – is coming"]. That formula is meant to unmask the thoughtlessness of society, "modlącego się i robiącego zbrodnie"<sup>5</sup> ["praying and committing crimes"]. In both examples quoted above, the common elements are the blade of irony and the stance of the narrator, who refrains from commenting.

The story may also be generalised through poetic inserts, like lyrical poems placed between conversations or the narrator's stories or separately, forming a dedication. It is again an artistic means that is used not only for stories.

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5 A description relating in letters to the Polish woman – a great lady.

Obviously, lyrical poetry has a far greater potential for synthesis and universalization of sense; Norwid also used such condensers in dramas and stories. It is interesting to note that he introduces the erotic poem "Czemu" ["Why"] both in *Miłość czysta* [Pure-Love] and in *Stygmat*; in each of those works, the poem plays a slightly different role, yet in both, it introduces the general issues of love.

The "parabolization of event" is also supported by punctuation and graphic emphasis. Norwid used these means very often. In his artistic prose, emphases of this kind appear particularly frequently where a generalising semantic stress is present. For example, in *Stygmat*, they are found only in part II, where they are used to express historical stigmas. Also, the "OKOLICZNOŚCIOWE SŁOWO" ["occasional word"] is emphasised in the epilogue. Yet the anecdotal part does not have such particularly emphasised fragments, even though it has some stressed words.

The general consequences of such parabolization of events for the narrative structure should be noted. First of all, the great semantic "density," the tension of the entire work, makes every element gain a second meaning and participate in the whole process. There are no neutral characters or events beyond the scope of the parable.

In plot construction, a shifting of events towards the end may be observed since a large part of the work is needed for the purposes of exposition. Here, exposition is meant to prepare those meanings "potęgi wtórej" ["of second power"] and only secondarily to justify the events, which also gain a symbolic dimension.

Shifting an event towards the end, which is common practice in short stories, is not an obvious principle here. Sometimes the event seems to be given in the beginning, like the daily balloon flights of the Lord. They are the starting point for various interpretations, which finally lead to the Lord's statement. And yet, the significant *event* of the work is not about the flights, but about revealing their true sense: the whole work leads to uncovering the mystery. Similarly, the anecdote in *Stygmat* is closed well before the ending of the story. Again, it is not the broken engagement and the death of Róża that constitute the *event* of the work. The story has three clear sections: it shows the stigma in individual life (the *exemplum*: the story of Róża and Oskar), in the history of nations (the vision), and the stigma impressed on a word (the Editor's visit). In the anecdotal part, exposition given after the event executes the poet's conscious intention: it reveals the unnoticed, unknown roots of events and indicates that that very lack of knowledge leads to a catastrophe.

As has already been mentioned, the motivation of events at the literal plane simply fades in favour of the generalization. The poet had to abandon half-shadows and half-tints, as well as to refine the characters' mental processes.

The reader learns only the main, rugged outline of the plot. Such motivation would clearly not withstand the trial of "realistic" psychological tests – certainly not in *Bransoletka* or *Stygmata*, not to mention *Tajemnica Lorda* or *Cywilizacja*. Yet, for the structure of the general senses, that brief record of the event is enough.

Norwid's artistic method did not remain constant – it evolved and improved. The range of the meanings he communicated also grew. In the poetic obituaries (*Czarne kwiaty*), the dying moment is meant to show just one person. *Bransoletka* exposes the whole of "high society," and thus an entire social layer, with its ruthlessness and falsehood (superficial religiousness). Through *Garstka piasku*, Norwid turns to the problems of the whole of modern civilization, accused through the legend of the ship and the lonesome protest of Lord Singelworth. In that process of gradual expansion of sense, *Ad leones* seems to be regressing. Yet the main event of the work (a change from a group of martyrs to capitalization) has many semantic layers. It is not just an issue of modern art and the whole social atmosphere: the flash of that event gives a glimpse into the history of all European society, from its catacomb beginnings ("*christiani ad leones*") up to *capitalization*. Finally, the last narrative work, *Stygmata*, establishes a general law that is binding both in individual lives and in the lives of nations. An anecdote is clearly becoming an *exemplum* here.

But that exemplifying character of the stories was outlined much earlier than that. The poet aimed to define some laws, and an anecdote was meant to illustrate them, to "make them obvious." Those laws arise over the issues of modern culture and explain its weakness and failure. One such law is illustrated with the life of a painter (*Menego*). It concerns the conditions for art to live – imitative art, which does not grow directly out of life, must wither, and such an artist must fail.

In many of his statements, Norwid indicated "organic relations" between the life of an individual and the course of history (Makowiecki and Borowy wrote more on that). The same truth is revealed in both a small and large area; it governs both the human dust and the storms of history. And so, an account of an event becomes a parable.

## 2. Dramatising the Story

Norwid's artistic method was shaped, as has been said, to serve two premises: to reveal the broad semantic perspectives of events and, at the same time, save the truth of the concrete detail, of the literal image. Means constructing the "second bottom" or higher layers of senses were briefly indicated above. This part of the paper shows how the poet convinced the reader of the truth of "vehicle," the specific details that carried those meanings.

The term "dramatization" is introduced here. It is a term generally and generously used to define various, often vague issues. Hence the first step is to define the use of the word here.

The essence of dramatising epic forms is not necessarily present in building tension, emphasising conflicts, or lively action. A structural criterion is suggested here: the dramatization of epic consists of using, to some extent, the structural categories of a drama. The categories are:

- 1) Division into acts or scenes, into units divided by time and space. Construction of closed and specific wholes-visions.
- 2) Showing characters only from outside: in gesture, motion, word-quote.
- 3) Dramatization of word: dialogues and monologues of characters, stage directions as the basis of the verbal structure; situation and gesture as a basis, speech stylization.

Obviously, when speaking of dramatization, two reservations should be considered: 1) narrative structures, drama, and epic have many features in common and are subject to some common rules; 2) "drama categories" are introduced in narratives as a supportive means, not removing completely, e.g., the accounts. Otherwise, it would be a drama and not a story anymore.

If we take a closer look, we can see that Norwid did not use a continuous structure in his epic forms. Each of the stories consists of a range of fragments – mini-chapters or scenes. It is striking because those are already short stories in themselves, except for *Stygmata*. Therefore, the divisions evoke questions about their role.

Their purpose is to eliminate the "intermission," the accessory, or linking parts. It is easy to notice that those scenes are separated by the passage of time and often a change of scene. The poet tried not to fill that passage of time visually, but rather *ex post* in an account. It did not have to be a long period of time, either: the visit with Lord Singelworth is also divided into parts, yet in this case, it is about signalling the moment of "stage silence," which is used to emphasise the significance of the Lord's last words further.

Another dramatic method is also raising the curtain in the midst of a sentence or conversation and slowly expanding the exposition throughout the first act, and sometimes over more than one. In Norwid's time, novels usually started with the character's biography. Norwid used that convention only for humorous or parodical purposes; he preferred to bring the reader immediately *in medias res*. He also used the scene as one unit linked with a continued time sequence and unity of the spatial construction. Among those complete visual units, two types that recur in all stories may be distinguished: 1) the chamber scene type – the action takes place in a house, in the living room; 2) the perspective, open scene type – a fragment of a street with a view to the city, usually an old Italian street. No exceptions can be found. The ship's deck in *Cywilizacja* and the scene on the Roman Bridge can easily be linked to the second perspective scene type.

Lack of imagination or a coincidence might perhaps be suspected, but that would not be enough to explain the regular recurrence of the scenery: the living room or street in Italy. Quite obviously, the methodological premises of this study exclude the consistently insecure area of genetic considerations, and an answer will be sought only at the level of the artistic function. That regular scenery is, first of all, linked to the topics of the story, the usual complex of cultural issues. The living room – again, similar to dramas – provides a particular occasion to confront various people and attitudes. It is a focusing lens, a product of the social culture of the time. Hence comes the possibility of the synthesis of contemporary times. An old city street in a city with history and tradition allows us to read both the past and the present. The idea of stigma is hovering very clearly over Norwid's epic prose, written in his mature writing period. Hence the attempt to reconstruct the culture and the epoch from its imprints – in stone, in words, in human gestures. Hence also the artistic method of observing reflections rather than the distant and monumental origins of those reflections. Of course, there is also the other aspect: the need to place events and characters against a specific visual background.

When comparing the two kinds of scenery, a strong prevalence of the chamber location over that of perspective can be seen. As stated in the literature, Norwid is “a poet of the house interior. He loses no opportunity provided by the topic to notice and poetically recreate a dwelling space.”<sup>6</sup> House interiors provide units that are far more complete and furnished than the usually sketchy perspectives of streets or landscapes. That is no surprise.

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6 Kazimierz Wyka, *Cyprian Norwid. Poeta i sztukmistrz* (Kraków: PAU, 1948), p. 89.



When viewed from up close, the interiors capture the attention with precision of detail, unnoticeable at a greater distance. Closeness and limited, walled space allow for the artistic play of elements, such as facial expressions, gestures, and costumes. From afar, a viewer notices only patches of colour and the main outlines of shapes and lines. In chamber scenes, the writer can show both "pięty poruszenie" ["motion of the heel"] and "fałd szaty" ["fold of a robe"].

The analytical close-up, characteristic of the earlier stage, that of *Czarne kwiaty*, also appeared in the later writing period, but then it was accompanied by another artistic method, which clearly tended towards synthesis, towards grasping a more distant interior with one holistic look. The phenomenon could probably also be linked to the tendency towards a large, extensive stage with a closed back wall, representing the interior of a room – such as is found in the ball scene of *Za kulisami* [*Backstage*]. Of course, using a great closed scene is only possible when the text leads the reader into a fine drawing or living room. Such is the case in *Bransoletka*, and mainly – and even more boldly – in *Stygmata*. In both works, Norwid attempted to give a synthetic view of a large room, only generally marking the colour, light, the basic silhouette of a door or window frame, and stage motion. That motion is also synthetically composed, without emphasising single gestures: the favourite motif of such compositions are dancing pairs flowing through the scene, "jako piękne fale słońcem zachodnim oświecone" (DW VII, 80) ["like beautiful waves lit by the setting sun"]. Few visual details can be found here; in *Stygmata*, they are replaced by an extended reflective part: an attempt to formulate the essence of the room verbally, like general *didaskalia* for the director to show what the character of the setting should be.

That is the background for characters. In a dramatic structure, the author forewent his own, direct intervention in defining the characters, as well as omniscience, expressed in narrative forms through the reporting of thoughts and feelings. The characters are meant to present themselves: through words, gestures, props, and elements of the stage background. The latter is the starting point for the discussion below.

Information about the characters can also be found in the interiors of their homes ("Człowiek tak z miejscem bywa solidarny" (DW III, 139) ["A person is sometimes so solidary with the place"]). The poet used this to a great extent in *Czarne kwiaty*, where Mickiewicz was characterised by the images hanging on the walls in his room, as has been discussed above. In those obituary stories, each artist appears against the background of their own home, which was likely shaped by the dweller. A similar function belongs to the graphic artists' own work: Byczkowski's, Delaroché's or the sculptor's from *Ad leones*. The setting

for a talk with the painter is his atelier, filled with paintings standing on easels. Particularly interesting is how the images that are not painted by Delaroché or Byczkowski relate to that scenery. Then, of course, the main function is their semantic value.

The painting in the living room of *Bransoletka* works still differently in characterising people (individuals and the whole community):

obraz stary wisiał przed nami, wyobrażający jako Zbawiciel łamie chleb, między dwoma siedząc uczniami w gospodzie przydrożnej.

(DW VII, 79)

[the old painting hung before us, showing the Saviour break bread, sitting between his two disciples in an inn by the road.]

The intention here is to emphasise the sharp dissonance, the contrast between the seriousness and truth of great art, and the thoughtless, conventionalised community. Thus, scenery elements may be meant to complete the harmony or to flash with jarring irony.

Norwid also made extensive artistic use of props related to the characters. Each of the passengers of “Civilization” is given some detail completing their characterization. Oskar (*Stygmat*) is constantly armed with a hat with crepe and a violin bow; both objects are important to sketching his character as a musician and a sentimental widower, and also necessary to modulate gestures. The Editor – who appears in three works – has the broadest prop repertoire. In the two latest stories (*Ad leones* and *Stygmat*), his hands are constantly busy with two objects: an umbrella and a pair of “giętkie okulary” [“flexible spectacles”] (even that flexibility is symbolic!). Moreover, in the epilogue of *Stygmat*, the range of props is further expanded: an envelope, a cloakroom ticket from the theatre, and a wall calendar all direct the Editor’s conversation and bring the “okolicznościowe słowo” [“occasional word”] to life – not the live one, but the one evoked by circumstances.

Characters are also brilliantly presented in their gestures. Kazimierz Wyka wrote about this when he analysed the artistic value of gestures with Norwid. He indicated three functions of those gestures: dramatic vividness, dramatization, and expansion of psychological knowledge about the characters.<sup>7</sup> Yet one more feature should be emphasised here: the parallel existence of the synthetic and analytical treatment of both stage motion and gesture. Norwid’s artistic technique accomplished a particular paradox: the ability to synthesise

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7 Wyka, *Cyprian Norwid*, p. 18 f.

grew together with the need to draw details precisely. That paradox is likely best opened with the key to the law of “organic continuity,” mentioned above. Thus, even in such great synthesis constructs as *Stygmata*, the recorded gestures play with details.

Despite the monumental design of the whole, the individual is always in the foreground. The poet brought the characters so close to the audience that each wrinkle, each facial expression, was visible. Possibly, no character has ever been shown in such minute detail as Oskar in *Stygmata*. The reader can see his costume (or at least the most characteristic part thereof, the hat with the black band), facial movements, and, in particular, his gestures.

But in order to show him from such a close distance, the poet limited the field of vision: he took Oskar out of the great rooms of the General's wife and into the meagre cubicle of the narrator. There, three confession scenes play out, both triumphant and tragic. In each of them – depending on the musician's mood – a different pose is shown:

o godzinie późniejszej od późnych ... wniknął Oskar mistycznym swoim krokiem, frak zrzucił i krawatę białą, klękał przy łożu moim, głowę ku kolanom moim w posłanie zatapiał, mówiąc .... (DW VII, 178)

[at an hour later than others ... Oskar softly entered with his mystic step, discarded his tailcoat and the white cravat, knelt at my bed, rested his head near my knees on the covers, saying]

Oskar's gesture is related to the props that have already been listed here: the hat and the bow. They form the best frame to highlight the artist's manner, being different in various circumstances.

The Oskar who is happy and in love, with pink laurel at his breast, first plays a song “wysunąwszy naprzód rękę lewą, na wyżynie strun utwierdzoną” (DW VII, 179) [“bringing forward his left hand, resting on the uplands of strings”], and then “cicho, spokojnie I uważnie złożył ... skrzypce” (DW VII, 180) [“quietly, calmly and carefully, he put away his violin”]. The scene after the disengagement emphasises his manner in a far more striking way. Oskar throws himself into the chair, and then:

[obrażony] przybrał nagle odmienną postać i ze spokojnością szczególniejszą począł na sobie nieład odzienia poprawować – nierówność zapięć fraka, nieukład włosów... Podjął z ziemi kapelusz połamany leżący przy krześle i z pomocą kolana powrócił mu zwyczajną formę, a potem ze staraniem drobiazgowym układał drobne i zniepokojone pierwej fałdy żalobnej krepki ....

Po chwili ... wziął smyk, jak się laseczkę biera, i poprawną postać przyjąwszy, począł mówić nieco profesjonalnym i obrażonym tonem.

(DW VII, 185)

[[offended] he suddenly took a different stance, and started to correct his dishevelled clothing with particular composure – the unevenly buttoned tail-coat, the ruffled hair...He picked the broken hat from the ground, where it lay by the chair, and returned it to its usual form with the help of his knee, then with meticulous care he arranged the small pleats of the mourning crepe, previously disarrayed ....

After a moment ... he took the bow like you take a walking stick, and on taking a proper pose, he started speaking in a somewhat professional and offended tone] These few quotations are given here to present the coexistence of the analytical and the synthetic take on gestures. Even with such a close look at the detail, the generalising sense of the poet is active. Hence such expressions as: “Oskar wniknął mistycznym swoim krokiem” [“Oskar softly entered with his mystic step”] or “wziął smyk, jak się laseczkę biera” [“he took the bow like you take a walking stick”]. In both cases, the gesture is stylised and thus synthesised. The phrases quoted here indicate the direction of that stylization only in general terms.

It is not only the visual elements that play a role in staging the events. An equally large part is assigned to sound effects. The reader is supposed to see the characters, their faces and gestures, and, at the same time, hear their voices, which are very diverse and often set against music.

Also, in that area, a significant evolution can be observed: the theatrical shaping of the word increased in Norwid's prose. It was expressed in various ways: in the layering and diversity of account and dialogue forms, in monologue dramatization, in dividing the story into voices, in forming general conversations, or in the care for intonation of speech.

Social talk, whether individual or collective, took up substantial space in Norwid's stories, even though he rarely presented the conversation in its entirety. Yet a thesis of dramatization or even theatricalization of the word can be posed, and also one of that process increasing. The entire story is always an account of the narrator from a visit or meeting with people: in a room, in a study, on a ship. Hence comes a constant need to report the conversation that took place – whether the narrator was an active or merely a passive participant thereof. The manner of reporting varies: sometimes, the narrator repeats the general course of conversation in his own words; sometimes, the conversation is quoted in its entirety; sometimes, both manners are combined partially to report the

conversation and partially to quote it. It seems that the latter reporting type was finally established in the end. It gave the poet the opportunity to follow both of his parallel artistic tendencies – analysis with its concrete detail and synthesis, which emphasised general senses. In the case of reporting conversation, this is expressed through the staging of some fragments with a general account of the entire conversation. Careful selection is active throughout: the more representative, significant, “symbolic” fragments are recorded literally, and other ones are given synthetically.

But that general, synthetic account of a conversation could also go in two directions, either emphasising the topic or creating more of an impression of a listening observer. To give an example:

A mówił mi właśnie o istocie czynu odważnego, który niedawno miejsce miał, i stąd przyszło cieszyć się rozmową o wielkich pięknościach prawdy żywej i jako bogatym jest dramatem życie tego lichego zleпка, który doczesny jest co chwila, a wieczny zawsze.

(DW VII, 79)

[And he was just speaking to me of the essence of the brave deed which has recently taken place, and hence arose the pleasure of conversation on the great beauties of living truth, and on how rich a drama the life is of that wretched cluster who is temporal every minute, and eternal forever.]

The account only provides the topic and general tenor of the conversation, which are later contrasted with drawing room small-talk, also given very synthetically:

A rozmowa była: że tak świetnej i hucznej zabawy zaprawdę przez cały karnawału ciąg nikt nie widział – lecz to właśnie dlatego wydarzyło się, iż *post się zbliżał*.

(DW VII, 80)

[And the talk was: that such a fine and grand party was truly not seen throughout the whole carnival –but it happened so, *for Lent was coming*.]

This is quite different from what happens in *Cywilizacja*, where the narrator reports the buzz he hears, emphasising only the general auditory impressions:

A cofając się od jęku konających w boczny statku korytarz, usłyszałem śmiechy, przekleństwa i gadanie ochryplym gardłem niestateczne – i coś podobnego do naglonych pośpiechem modlitw – więcej przeklinaniu podobnych. (DW VII, 116)

[And backing from the moans of the dying into the side corridor of the ship, I heard laughter, curses and unsteady ranting in hoarse sounds – and something alike prayers hastened in a rush – more like cursing.]

In *Stygmata*, Norwid also introduced an account of “druga potęga” [“second power”]: Oskar tells the narrator of his conversations with Róża. But the ironic epilogues with the Editor in both *Ad leones* and *Stygmata* are given with no mediator and with no abbreviations, quoted in full. The Editor’s priceless words are directly reproduced by the narrator within the setting of the gestures accompanying them.

Among those conversations, collective scenes deserve particular attention – the conversation in the living room or the chaotic exchange on the ship in the face of a disaster. Collective conversation was always of interest to Norwid as a social phenomenon, hence an attempt at a theory of social exchange at the beginning of *Stygmata*. The poet usually treated such conversations in a synthetic manner, trying to reproduce their mood, fluctuation, and growth.

The monologue parts were also changed to dramatise them. There are many monologues in the stories: they provide the necessary exposition, recount the “intermission” events and comment on them, and introduce reflections or generalizations. The dramatization of the parts consists of giving them a spoken, presentational character. Thus, Norwid puts them in the mouth of particular characters partaking in the events (they may be – like in *Bransoletka* or *Cywilizacja* – accessory, nameless interlocutors). The parts are also set in a specific situation and thoroughly justified. The long monologue of the Lord is prepared by the author with a description of the bet, choice of the delegation, and their visit to the palace. Even the narrator’s reflective monologue on board the ship is dramatically outlined, related to the situation and a gesture (“uderzyłem nogą w ruchomy pokład statku” (DW VII, 114) [“I stamped my foot on the ship’s moving deck”]), spoken aloud without company. The thinking out loud is filled here with questions asked of oneself in a great variety of syntactic and intonational forms. Likewise, in *Cywilizacja*, the other long monologue of the narrator is included in a conversation with an anonymous friend.

Stylization into a spoken comment was much of a constant with Norwid. Various signals point to its presence: lexical diversification of speech, syntactic deformations, manners of relating dialogue responses, intonation modulation, and combining speech with gesture.

Within lexis, conventional formulas marked with irony play a particular role. In *Stygmata*, the poet stressed such empty, mindless phrases as “panna n i c z e g o” [“the lady *had something going*”] or “panna ... *nie ma co mówić*” (DW VII, 175) [“lady ... *uh! no doubt*”]. In that manner, the statement of “zacny z kraju obywatel” [“respectable Polish citizen”] is constructed:

Cóż za smutny przypadek! ta śp. panna Róża – bo żeby to nie *u wód*, gdzie się przecież dla zdrowia jeździ!... acz i tu, panie dobrodzieju, tak samo się przeziębisz jak gdzie indziej... Wyznać też należy, że to panna była! *nie ma co mówić*. (DW VII, 198)

[What a sad occurrence! the late Miss Róża – I mean, if it weren't at the springs, where you go to repair your health!... although here, my dear sir, you can catch a cold just as well as anywhere else... It must be said, too, that the lady was, uh! *no doubt*.]

Easily noticeable are the graphic emphases concerning the said expressions, the punctuation, and the lexical peculiarities. Graphic signals have been mentioned above and have a double function – a semantic one, as they highlight the more meaningful words, and a phonic one, as they shape the actual tone and tenor of the statement. Such ironically emphasised, mocked terms include the adjective “scientyficzny” [“scientific”], frequent in *Ad leones*, or “nieśmiertelny” [“immortal”] (“nieśmiertelny Wiktor Hugo” [“the immortal Victor Hugo”]) – always as common language slogans. Noticeable is also the frequency of ellipses or dashes to indicate pauses. This is again a sign of care for the tone, organization, and course of a statement. All those issues, present in various kinds of Norwid's poetic writings, are still waiting for a comprehensive study.

Sometimes, the poet attempted a descriptive distinction of the manner of speech of the particular characters: the reader learns of the tutor (*Ad leones*) that he was “w mówieniu szybki, ale nie w wymawianiu, seplunił nieco i parskął śliną, ilekroć w zapale się poczuwał” (DW VII, 207) [“fast in speaking, but not in enunciation; he lisped some and sputtered whenever he grew enthusiastic”]. A longer fragment reflects the style and eloquence of the Editor in a synthetic manner, using metaphors. Even within one character's speech, the poet made distinctions. At such times, the narrator's text resembles stage directions.

All conversations are also strongly rooted in the situation and in gestures, which not only add colour to the wording but complement it. The poet shaped the language of the word and the language of gesture at the same time, such duality being characteristic of the drama method. Of course, gesture had to be used sparingly – often a constant like *epitheton ornans*. Such a gestural attribute of the Editor is connected with his glasses and umbrella. Both in *Ad leones* and in *Stygmata*, the gesture is marked with the same formula “giętkie okulary poprawując” (DW VII, 197, 215) [“correcting the flexible spectacles”]. In the conversation of the Editor and the narrator (*Stygmata*), the former's gestures merge with his words, robbing them of any significance and gravity... “– Trzeba się ochraniać... – mówił z gałką parasola wstrzymaną w ustach, gdy oczyma spod szkieł wkoło rzucal” (DW VII, 197) [“– One needs to protect oneself... – he said as he held the knob of the umbrella in his mouth and threw glances around from behind his glasses”]. And further: “Redaktor wyciągnął nogę,

zasiadając poprawniej” [“The Editor pulled out his leg, sitting more proper”], then “poprawiając giętkie okulary, dopowie” (DW VII, 197) [“correcting the flexible spectacles, he adds”].

The phenomena mentioned here are not exceptional in Norwid’s poetry. They appear simultaneously and in parallel within narrative prose and drama. Both there and in comedies, there is that same tendency towards synthetic art, towards great scenes of several layers with the possibility of taking a character to the forefront for a closer look. In all of those genres, there is the careful moulding of gesture and the sound of voice. The use of props, grouping, predilection for collective scenes, and a wealth of ironic emphases are also frequent. Finally, common to all of them is the use of the method: building a synthetic image of contemporary civilization by closely presenting specific elements expressing and reflecting it.

The discussion above only signals some of the issues mentioned previously in more extensive terms. The developments of Norwid’s drama-writing art enrich the methodology of the narrator-prosaist.

### 3. Narrator’s Perspective

As has been stated, the development of Norwid’s epic prose led to great realism, encompassing all issues of culture and looking at it through the focusing lens of one event. That tendency was accompanied by establishing a specific narrator, which resulted in certain limitations.

It may seem paradoxical, but when reaching for great synthesis, the poet also needed great freedom and the opportunity to observe multiple events from various points of view. Adopting one narrator limits that freedom quite clearly and does so in two aspects: 1) as concerns the scope because it limits the field of vision, and 2) as concerns perspective because it establishes only one point of view, that of the narrator. With such a construction premise, the poet had to renounce the author’s omniscience, the presentation of mental processes from the viewpoint of the people experiencing them, a synchronic presentation of events occurring in various places, free changes of place, and many other artistic licences. All characters are presented only from the outside. It was also highly inconvenient for the author to organise the meetings of particular characters with the narrator or – as the other option – to pursue reporting characters who would inform the narrator of the course of events beyond his vision and provide exposition. Further temptations and traps lurk. It would be easy to abandon the position of that particular narrator or let yourself be lured into a subjective view of the world and note the reflections of events inside the speaker’s mind



rather than report the actual events. The narrator being an excuse to annihilate objectivity in a story fully is an all too common occurrence (cf. the lyrical novel of the late nineteenth century).

This part of the paper examines the evolution of the narrator, focusing mainly on the manner in which that character is used for the great syntheses, towards which Norwid's epic prose is aimed. It is also an opportunity to see how the narrator's presence coexisted with the growing dramatization.

A specific narrator did not appear in Norwid's prose before the time of *Czarne kwiaty*. He was undoubtedly introduced through fragments of a memoir-like nature – fragments that were correctly linked by Miriam to the poet's later narrative works. In 1852–1857, there appeared more such reminiscent prose: the lost *Dziennik żeglugi* [*Navigation Log*], *Pamiętnik podróży* [*A Traveller's Journal*], and *Czarne kwiaty* – accounts that were almost modern and gave a live record of facts and memories of recent events. The passage from memoirs to narratives was clearly a decision towards greater synthesis, a need to present the general meanings and origins of facts. Precision and the concrete nature of the vision, learned from those memoirist attempts, remained part of the artistic method.

Before that “memoir” era, at the time of Norwid's first epic attempts in his youth, which included *Łaskawy opiekun* (1840), the same type of the author's chat with the reader can be found with Norwid that is typical of that era, e.g., in the early novels by Korzeniowski. The omniscient author knows the thoughts and the past of all the characters, effortlessly moves between places, e.g., from the city to the country (“pośpieszajmy na wieś, ażeby zobaczyć” (DW VII, 12) [“let us hasten to the country to see”]), and gives opinions of the characters (“Pan pułkownik, jak się spodziewam, nie służąc w wojsku nigdy” (DW VII, 16) [“The colonel, I expect, never having served in the army”]). The narrator's storytelling style also facilitates shifting from one motif to another: “Należałoby jeszcze, jak mniemam, dołączyć tutaj słówek kilka o radczyni W\*\*\*” (DW VII, 17) [“We ought to, I suppose, add here a few words about Mrs W\*\*\*, the townsman's wife”].

The constant interference of the character aspect and the narrator aspect is also significant. The poet clearly introduced the aspect of a character, either through free indirect speech reporting thoughts and opinions or through direct quotations. But the aspect of an author was constantly active, even if sometimes cloaked for a moment with an ironic remark that seemed to present the viewpoint of an average recipient. The author did not hesitate to interfere directly through pejorative descriptions (“nielitościwy kupiec” [“merciless merchant”]) or even through longer commentaries or polemics. The parodic

account of a conversation on the weather is interrupted by the narrator's insertion: "Wpadam na myśl, czy nie lepiej byłoby w progach naszych *salonów* zawieszać barometra" ["A thought comes to me that it might be best if we hung barometers on the threshold of our drawing rooms"] and then the interrupted narration is calmly continued: "Potem pani pułkownikowa zaczęła nową anegdotę" (DW VII, 23) ["Then the colonel's wife started a new anecdote"].

Sometimes, the author's interference in the work combined the aspect of the environment and the severe judgement of the author:

Ale u państwa Drażkowskich nic gminnego się nie pokaże; tam wyrwano fijołek i lilię białą, a wetknięto na to miejsce papierową *gierlandę*, którą usłużni kupcy sprowadzili z Paryża.

Śmiesznie jest, a czasem przykro patrzeć na tych obłąkanych ludzi, co znacznymi pieniędzmi zakupują okrawki wstążek i papieru, które w obcym narodzie posklejali próżniacy w jakieś arlekińskie ubiorki.

(DW VII, 23)

["But with the Drażkowskis, nothing common is to be seen, they had the violets and white lilies pulled out, and a paper *garland* was put in that place, brought from Paris by the obliging merchants."]

Tis ridiculous, and sometimes sorry to see those insane people who spend considerable money on scraps of ribbon and paper, glued together in some harlequin clothing by loafers in a foreign nation.]

That type of narrator never returned in Norwid's narrative works, at least in those known to the public. In the era of *Czarne kwiaty*, there appeared a specific narrator, as indicated above.

This narrator was born of the need for raw truth. He was to report what he saw for himself, vouch for the accuracy of his report with his presence, and take responsibility for it. A story told in the first person has great power of suggestion – that credit was so often used in the eighteenth-century novel. In no work of that time did Norwid try to shift the narrator away from himself, to stylise him; quite the contrary – in every fragment, he allowed for full identification and took responsibility for the narrator's words. Importantly, in both *Czarne* and *Białe kwiaty*, the narrator steps away as a person: it is not of himself that he speaks. He sets himself in the position of a viewer, an observer who is to report what he has experienced. In *Czarne kwiaty*, he does so to honour great contemporaries; in *Białe kwiaty*, to document some general truths.

It is symptomatic that both *Białe* and *Czarne kwiaty* repeat the same situational setting: the narrator meets one person. In *Czarne kwiaty*, it is specifically

about reporting the narrator's visit. That constant situation also establishes the "visual perspective:" the narrator enters the room, takes in the space, the pictures on walls, and the host's figure. The fact that the visits concern great contemporaries establishes another aspect of the perspective: the atmosphere of reverence, the desire to pay homage to the dead through the austere record of knowledge about them. Only the death of the unknown lady on the ship is different from the analogous (double-perspective) reports. It is connected to the other "black flowers" through the character of an obituary, the grief for a prematurely faded beauty, but the scene itself is different: 1) it is not as intimate as a room, for the background is the open sea, and 2) for the first time, an accessory character is introduced, an "interlocutor," unimportant for his own sake, yet necessary as an informer. That figure takes a regular shape in Norwid's later works.

That stage of writing opens with *Garstka piasku*, *Bransoletka*, and *Cywilizacja*. It is a stage of legends, where Norwid reached for a broader scope of representations and a more extensive range of meanings. This resulted in a change of the narrator's function: his main task was not to vouch for the authenticity of facts but to work for those synthetic premises. That sphere of great meanings was revealed not through his commentary but through a range of factors, as has been discussed above. Yet the task of the narrator – who stepped back as a person – was to reveal all that inevitably led to the one necessary conclusion.

Those great syntheses also needed other characters. It was they who formed the social environment and its opinion. For instance, in *Bransoletka*, the social circle is unmasked through their mindless approach to religious practices and sacraments. The process of tearing down the mask is only partially staged. Some facts are recounted, yet not in the account of the narrator, which covers the whole work, but in an "inner," "second degree" report, something the narrator hears from an informer who is introduced for that particular purpose. It is the informer who provides the exposition, presents the characters, and also provides material for those generalizations that are constructed by the poet even in the very first sentence. Besides a "poważny przyjaciel" ["serious friend"], there appears another accessory figure, "miły znajomy" ["polite acquaintance"], although the latter is not just an informer, but has his own role in the drama: that of an unlucky suitor and – mainly – a mannered poet.

The two accessory interlocutors ("młody mój znajomy" ["a young acquaintance of mine"] and "poważny przyjaciel" ["a serious friend"]) reappear in *Cywilizacja*. The former has a short-term and merely auxiliary role as a listener to the narrator's long monologue on a sailing ship. The latter facilitates

the exposition and presentation of the characters. It is no coincidence that the author assigned this role to that figure: both in *Bransoletka* and in *Cywilizacja*, the serious friend's great life experience and noble character are mentioned, so his words guarantee full truth. He represents unwavering authority in the work.

It was only in the last stage of his writing – that of *Ad leones* and *Stygmat* – that Norwid could do without the accessory figures. The partners of additional reporting scenes were protagonists themselves (e.g., Oskar in *Stygmat*) or at least characters partaking in the representation of the environment or in the event. Norwid drew numerous benefits from such reports: they communicated the “off-stage,” “intermission” facts and, at the same time, revealed the reporting character and refreshed the narrating aspect.

Starting with *Bransoletka* and *Cywilizacja*, the narrator was included in collective scenes as a coordinated partner of social gatherings, a silent ball observer, or a confidant of lovers. The poet clearly aimed to make him part of the environment, to erase any distance between him and the satirically portrayed world. He had the narrator share the responsibility for the warp of contemporary civilization and did not wish to exclude him from its stigmas. And although the judgment on that world and its culture is unambiguously severe, it seemed to include the narrator as well – hence a flash of self-irony hovering over the prose. This is clearly visible in *Bransoletka*, *Cywilizacja*, and *Tajemnica Lorda Singelworth*. In the latter work, the superior, absolutely positive aspect is shifted onto the Lord himself, and the narrator belongs to the crowd of the curious, superficial interpreters of the Lord's balloon and his daily flights. It is not him who forms a judgement on contemporary culture.

And yet that “absolute aspect” is found everywhere; all Norwid's narrative prose is entirely explicit in its tenor. The author achieved that partially with the narrator's commentary: a diagnosis of the disease of contemporary culture (the opinion on its desocialization) is given by the narrator's monologue on the ship; the narrator's words end the work and summarise the issue in *Ad leones*; and finally, in the last story, in *Stygmat*, the “tragedia słowa” [“tragedy of the word”] is also phrased by the narrator. Yet direct commentary is usually the part of other characters, and the final opinion is evoked in the reader mainly thanks to the construction of the event, the choice of characters, the quoted conversations, and the irony towards false opinions. The negative aspect is revealed much more clearly: in *Cywilizacja*, it is represented by the Editor, as well as in *Stygmat* and *Ad leones*. That repetitiveness is not coincidental: the Editor is an official spokesman of public opinion, responsible for its false direction, and therefore, it is no wonder that the poet linked a negative aspect to that character. And it is the ironic light cast on that negative, false aspect that helps

uncover an important truth. It is revealed in the confrontation of two views or two attitudes. This is very clear in *Ad leones* or anywhere else where the Editor appears as the antagonist of the narrator.

But Norwid's irony in epic prose was played on very fine strings. It seemed to float over the narrator's head, beyond his intention. It was a pure irony of facts, not a result of the reporter's sarcasm. For the reporter is not sarcastic at all; quite the contrary – he is benevolent, ready to be amazed, kind, and sometimes almost naïve. All those features are present in *Bransoletka*: the narrator actually belongs to that world, is interested in it, collects gossip, and delights in the beautiful young lady and the whole party. It is only in passing, so as not to forget, that he notes that the beautiful lady is a Eulalia for fashionable r o m a n c e , that the carnival ends sumptuously, for L e n t i s c o m i n g , and that Edgar wanted to become a monk in a n g e r . It is not the narrator's comment that is ironic, but the facts and their setting. This is very clear in *Cywilizacja*, where the ship, which the narrator expected to provide security, peace, relaxation, and speed, sinks.

The development of the narrator through the years that passed between Norwid's early prose and the mature stories by the end of the poet's life has been presented above. It is striking to see how his functions were enriched and how he was included in that reconstructed world. To an observer, he became a participant of the “drama wcale żywotna” [“quite vital drama”]. Yet he always retained the ability to ponder on events, the ability to see facts in broader, more general perspectives. That ability clearly grew, as the largest number of synthetic views could be found in the very last story: the “musical” theory of social talk, the general presentation of the health resort, remarks on lovers, and the formula of a word's stigma. The tendency for synthesis is also expressed in the gnomic phrasings, which are present particularly in the last works. Such a gnome closes *Ad leones*, and they are even more frequent in *Stygmat*.

Thus, the reflection input and the need for synthetic formulae rose but, at the same time, the dynamism of feelings pierced the surface of an objective account with growing audacity. In earlier works, a feeling revealed itself very discretely and quite indirectly in the choice of words and phrases. In *Bransoletka* and *Cywilizacja*, the narrator was still not expressing his emotion in a straightforward manner. It may instead be recognised in, e.g., an image (like that of a priest bringing the Eucharist to a sick man):

A pod onym niegdyś purpurowym baldachimem najświętsza z dotykalnych i niedotykalnych na świecie rzeczy i istot, kruszyna obecności Bożej, szła w gwiazdziej srebrnej, płótnem obwiniętej czystym, jakoby tam był pochód króla wygnanego i

ostatniego jakiego z panujących – albowiem purpury resztki i złocień resztki, i poczet idących lichy był.

(DW VII, 85)

[And underneath that, once purple, canopy the holiest of the tangible and intangible things and beings in the world, a crumb of God's presence, went in a silver star, swathed in clear linen, as if that was a procession of some exile king, the last of rulers – for the purple had faded, the gilding had faded, and the retinue was meagre.]

In the poet's last years of writing, the narrator was not embarrassed anymore to speak not only of the events, but also directly of his emotional reactions: "Serce miałem obrzmiałe i ciężkie, ducha czułem poniżonego" (DW VII, 213) ["My heart was dismal and leaden, and my spirit down"]. Needless to say, that emotional touch greatly refreshed the account itself.

Worthy of particular focus is also the narrator's humour, which is quite invigorating in *Stygmata* – especially the humour that concerns the presentation of Oskar and his love confessions. It is a very complex and subtle phenomenon; that humour does not undo the truly serious attitude towards love in that work and towards the love tragedy of Oskar and Róża. It is humour of the same calibre and type as that which sparkles in the beautiful erotic poem "Czemu."

When listing the various functions of the narrator above, one has not been accounted for, namely the introduction of descriptive parts. The narrator always reproduces the background of the events – he presents the scenery – and recreates it as a "wiedny" ["aware"] observer, as an artist enamoured with beauty, extracting the "odblask rzeźby" ["reflection of sculpture"], colours, and aura.

At this point, the principal artistic benefits of that specific narrator ought to be summarised:

- 1) he is a witness, a viewer, and a voucher for the truth of the events;
- 2) he gives a precise reproduction – adding his own, fresh emotion – of the facts previously carefully observed;
- 3) he selects his observations in order to extract more general senses;
- 4) he describes the setting of the events (living room, street) from the specific perspective of the experiencing subject – an artist;
- 5) he facilitates the dramatization of exposition by conversing with someone, asking questions;
- 6) he brings the freshness and dynamism of direct emotional reaction to the account;
- 7) he adds reflection and formulates general truths, as well as gives psychological remarks;

- 8) he is sometimes a commentator and sometimes an oppositionist (of the Editor, the negative aspect);
- 9) he combines the approach of a reporter and that of an active participant; he is both viewer and actor, he is – like Marlowe in *Lord Jim* – “one of us,” a co-creator of civilization, a victim and, at the same time, co-judge thereof.

It might seem disputable whether the presence of the narrator can coexist with a tendency to dramatise events. Yet it has been stated that the said tendency increased, and parallel to that, the narrator settled better into the stories and took on more functions.

That apparently paradoxical coexistence of the storyteller and the staging can be explained with one more function of the narrator, which has not yet been mentioned: he is actually a theatre reporter.

The motif of “life dramatization” was recurrent with Norwid. He saw elements of conscious staging not only in ceremonies (processions, celebrations, funerals), but in general in all social life, at teas, and in all forms of social contact. Just as recurrent is the question of where the backstage is actually found: The border between the scene and the audience? Between the actor and the viewer? Between an act and an intermission? Norwid often compared life in appearances, which are insignificant and almost at the margin of reality and history, to an intermission, to staying backstage – outside the actual “drama,” outside of the main plot of the spectacle. He generalised it with regard not only to emigration life, but also all Polish life, and sometimes even the contemporary civilization. “*Rzeczywistością całą / Jestże entr'acte w teatrze?*” (PWsz II, 41) [“*Is the whole reality / intermission in the theatre?*”]. The title of the comedy *Za kulisami* is also related to such a concept; in *Aktor* [Actor], a movable backstage is also mentioned, which can be placed to one side, then another. Many such statements could be cited here.

The dramatization of a story was not just a “trick,” an artistic idea – it was the result of seeing life in the categories of the theatre. The narrator was the mediator here. It was he who shifted the “movable backstage” and who literally became, as was stated earlier, an actor and viewer. He reported the course of the particular scenes, reproduced the situation, the costume, stage motion, gestures of a character. And for that reason, not only did he form no obstacle, but quite the contrary – he was useful. He was a dramatist: he noted “pięty poruszenia” [“motions of the heel”] and knew how to recount them to show in that motion “*duşę, jak zadziała*” [“how the soul works”].

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This study is meant to list the principal elements of Norwid's own artistic method, developed by him to create modern art. He considered the lack of such art to be an unabsolved sin of both Polish artists and social life – hence he wished to counteract it. New issues brought a need to create new means of expression. The artist's innovation was subservient towards the new perspective on reality and its issues. But that “new perspective on reality” was obviously a perspective of a creative, original artist.

The premises of that new method need not be listed again here. It was meant to convey general meanings, even crossing the boundaries of one century's culture, to establish general history laws, conditions of true culture, and thus to explain the bankruptcy of the era. It was also meant to save the theatrical truth of the image reproduced at present.

A result of those bold attempts was a great richness of the meanings conveyed – as well as a creative renewal of a literary genre. A legend, a parable, a tale – all were reshaped by Norwid to a fresh, completely different, modern shape. There was little occasion in this study to emphasise the great diversity of the constructional concepts; *Ostatnia z bajek*, *Garstka piasku*, or the smaller – but so outstanding! – texts like *List króla Abgara* [*King Abgar's Letter*] or *Modlitwa* [*Prayer*] would all require separate discussions. Analysis of those texts should be attempted on a different occasion.

The aim of this study is only to outline and signal some issues. It is also a signal of a need for more work, which should include the issues discussed here in far broader complexes. It can be argued that nearly all of it requires a broader and deeper approach. And so many areas have not been mentioned at all! These include the whole scope of detailed artistic consequences of Norwid's more general decisions, like parabolising an event or adopting a specific narrator and a theatrical perspective. This will require a focus on the issues of descriptiveness, reflectiveness, gnomic nature, and the whole area of style – including syntax, metaphors, lexis, and above all, spoken language intonation; the matter is as fascinating as it is (so far) neglected.

A question also arises concerning the attitude towards other poems by Norwid, versed stories, or comedies. Parallelism – both as regards general issues and the artistic method – appears to be obvious. Finally, it would be a good idea to consider Norwid's method against contemporary poetics and not just the Polish one. It is likely that the thesis about the poet's innovativeness would not be shaken by that.



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This essay does not discuss subject literature. Little has been written on Norwid's prose; no study was dedicated to the issues of his writing method. However, some interesting comments, which are useful in this area of research, appeared in various publications, starting with Miriam's commentary and a study by Zofia Szmydtowa,<sup>8</sup> which stressed the "rzeźba zdarzenia" ["sculpture of the events"] and "typ noweli toskańskiej" ["Tuscan short story type"]. Among post-war publications, the work by Kazimierz Wyka is particularly noteworthy, full of subtle remarks on the sculptural perspective on a character and the use of gesture,<sup>9</sup> as well as the analysis of *Ad leones* by Konrad Górski,<sup>10</sup> which, within its rich, multilateral research area, also includes matters of style – the linguistic analysis provides interesting conclusions, in particular as concerns syntax.

In recent Polish literary articles, two works are of interest: Bronisław Mamoń's article *Glossy o nowelach Norwida*<sup>11</sup> and Natalia Modzelewska's study *Norwid – prozaik*.<sup>12</sup> The former was written by a student of lectures on Norwid given by this study's author. Mamoń generally states a need for interest in Norwid's prose, signalling a range of important cultural issues. The latter study requires a polemical answer, with all the mistaken theses that it provides: that "[Norwid's] worldview contained contradictory elements;" that "Next to great work of progressive tenor ... he left works which are ... practically regressive." It is also difficult to agree with the author when she elevates the weak, nearly amateurish story from Norwid's youth *Łaskawy opiekun* over all modern Polish prose, and even over world prose!

Norwid's epic prose has long been of interest to foreigners as well. Quickly accessible with translations (German translation in 1907; Czech, in 1921; French, in 1932), it evoked admiration and the highest praise. Norwid was named a versatile genius; the poet's artistic innovativeness and precursoriness were focused upon unanimously.

The older, quite general works (and the newer ones, as yet unknown) are now joined by a much more comprehensive study, which is part of an American

8 Zofia Szmydtowa, "Nowele Norwida," *Przegląd Współczesny*, Vol. XVII, Nos. 8/9 (1938).

9 Wyka, *Cyprian Norwid*, pp. 1–61.

10 Konrad Górski, Tadeusz Makowiecki and Irena Sławińska, *O Norwidzie pięć studiów* (Toruń: Księgarnia Szczęśny, 1949), pp. 65–91.

11 Bronisław Mamoń, "Glossy o nowelach Norwida," *Tygodnik Powszechny*, Vol. XI, No. 38 (1955).

12 Natalia Modzelewska, "Norwid – prozaik," *Życie Literackie*, Vol. III, No. 33 (1953).

monograph of Polish short story. Nineteen pages are dedicated to Norwid there, with nearly half of that focusing on the English translation of *Tajemnica Lorda Singelwortha*. In the study, the author of the monograph writes a little on each of Norwid's stories and also tries to find some common principles. She stresses the symbolism of events (and takes the occasion to indicate the impact of lyrical poetry on such a perspective on events) and the role of humour, and she also analyses the endings of the stories, differentiating "external conclusions" from "plot solutions." Out of necessity, much space in her work is dedicated to plot outlines; she understandably refers to Polish comments on the works. Yet the work also presents the author's own, subtle remarks (e.g., on the leading role of flowers in *Stygmat*). Further, the author praises *Czarne kwiaty*. The discussion ends with a reference to modern prose:

Such areportage, until then unknown in Polish literature, leaves the realm of expository prose; moulded into the form of fiction and highly stylised, it belongs rather to the tradition of the modern epic.<sup>13</sup>

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13 Olga Scherer-Virski, *The Modern Polish Short Story*. ('s-Gravenhage: Mouton & Co., 1955), p. 66. This is a doctoral dissertation written under the supervision of Prof. Manfred Kridl and presented at Columbia University in 1952.

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Zofia Trojanowicz

## Norwid in the Berlin Prison

**Abstract:** The purpose of the article is to shed some light on the facts surrounding one of the more mysterious episodes of Cyprian Norwid's life – his imprisonment in Berlin in 1846. Trojanowicz challenges the previous studies on the chronology of his detention, which were determined (Przesmycki, Gomulicki) based on the dates in the illuminated *Modlitewnik* [Prayer Book] made for Włodzimierz Łubieński. Trojanowicz argues that *Modlitewnik* must have been created after Norwid's stay in prison and also proves that the dates therein are misleading, on account of Norwid's own mistake; he consistently entered the wrong month (June instead of July). In further analysis of the primary materials, the scholar determines that Norwid was imprisoned not in the first, but in the second half of June 1846 (most likely June 23–30). According to Trojanowicz's reconstruction, the poet was arrested after 22 June 1846, and, after a week in the Berlin prison, Hausvogtei, was transferred to the clinic, which he left shortly after 25 July.

**Keywords:** Cyprian Norwid, biography, Berlin prison Hausvogtei, epistolography, prayer book

One of the most interesting riddles in Cyprian Norwid's biography is his mysterious imprisonment in Berlin in June 1846. It has been written about on more than one occasion, and yet it remains an enigma. The discovery of previously unknown materials that shed new light on the Berlin incident or verify previously proposed hypotheses makes it possible for us to take a fresh look at how this sad episode in the poet's life has been described thus far and to propose new ideas.

There are so many ambiguities in this story, including the reasons for his arrest, the course of the investigation, and the dates of these events, that the search for the truth almost resembles a circumstantial trial, taking place many years later. The accounts of the “accused” and the “testimonies” of the witnesses (both Norwid's contemporaries and later ones, who were familiar with the documents from that time) are not always consistent. Many details still cannot be determined – not all the witnesses were able to attend this proceeding.<sup>1</sup>

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1 A closer look at the Berlin archives could provide us with a complete explanation.

## Dates

The chronology of Norwid's stay in the Berlin prison has usually been determined using the dates of his illuminated *Modlitewnik* [*Prayer Book*]. The poet created it for his Berlin friend, Włodzimierz Łubieński, while he was in prison. On 19 July 1846, Łubieński wrote to his mother, Józefa Łubieńska, née Pruska:

My poor Norwid is still being detained, at least now he is a bit more comfortable, he is also very lucky; everyone who meets him is immediately interested in him, strangers send him fruit and other things, especially the wife of a doctor who manages this hospital under Dieffenbach, she is extremely good to him, I stopped by her home yesterday to thank her. Norwid made for me a souvenir to commemorate the 7 days, that he spent in that harsh prison, in perpetual uncertainty, whether they would at any moment send him to Russia, a kind of prayer book, i.e. a Psalm of David for every day, rewritten to include a vignette corresponding to each object of faith, that was intended for each day of the week, as you know, Mother, e.g. Saturday to the Mother of God, Sunday to the Holy Trinity etc. It is a small masterpiece, so beautifully made, and what is so interesting about it, is that it is all in some pitiful notebook, that he was able to smuggle into the prison.<sup>2</sup>

Zenon Przesmycki reconstructed the timeline of that “harsh prison” Łubieński mentions using the dates that appear in *Modlitewnik*:

Norwid began to write in this notebook from the end, perhaps when he was still at home, before prison. On page 27, the soulful prose poem “Monolog” [“Monologue”] (“Modlitwy idą i wracają” [Prayers go and come back...]) bears the date: Monday – 6 June 1846, while the excerpts from the Psalms, commemorating those 7 days of “harsh prison,” on pages numbered 1–16, according to their explicit and detailed dates, are from 10–16 June. Apparently from later dates, there are: on pages 17 and 19–22: – a copy of the introductory antiphon from page 1, an explanation of the ordination of the days of the week, and excerpts from the Acts of the Apostles and Saint John; on page 23, the title: *Z Danta* [From Dante], written in the center in gold, and on pages 24–26 the following translation ... signed: C. N.; and finally, at the beginning, on unnumbered page 3, the title illustration, which is a kind of dial with the number VII on it, and a motto at the top of the page.<sup>3</sup>

Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki went a step further in his commentary on “Monolog,” when he recognised all the dates entered by the poet in *Modlitewnik* (not just 10–16 June) as determinative of Norwid's period of detention in prison:

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2 Cyprian Norwid, *Pisma zebrane*, ed. Zenon Przesmycki, Vol. A, Part 2 (Warszawa, Kraków: Jakub Mortkowicz, 1911), p. 769.

3 Norwid, *Pisma zebrane*, Vol. A, Part 2, p. 770.

Norwid's detention in prison lasted a total of over four weeks, including seven days in especially harsh conditions. He created the memorial *Modlitewnik* in prison as well .... It was in this *Modlitewnik* that the widely discussed "Monolog," dated 6 June, was found, which means that he created it just a few days before that week of "harsh prison" (10–16 June).<sup>4</sup>

Norwid wrote his "Monolog" at an exceptionally difficult and depressing time, because he happened to be in the Berlin prison.<sup>5</sup>

Tying the dates in *Modlitewnik* to the dates of Norwid's stay in the "harsh prison" does not seem right for several reasons. Łubieński's letter to his mother, from which this supposition originated, cannot be considered a sufficient basis. According to Łubieński, the poet made the "little prayer book" as "a souvenir to commemorate the 7 days, that he spent in that harsh prison." It does not mean, however, that this book was crafted in prison or that the dates therein correspond to that memorable week. It would make more sense to surmise that Norwid memorialised something that had already ended after the fact.

It is difficult to imagine the painstaking work on *Modlitewnik* being done in the primitive conditions of the prison, all the more so by a sick man. The little book, whose current whereabouts are unknown, can be partially reproduced using Przesmycki's precise description and prospectus of three of the Psalms in "Przegląd Powszechny."<sup>6</sup> The prayer book, consisting of 25 pages, was richly decorated with colourful initials, in which the poet inserted a number of images, e.g., the Virgin Mary with Child, Christ, and pen and watercolour drawings, gilding, and borders. Norwid described "the harsh prison," in which the work was allegedly done, in a letter to Adam Potocki from 16 July 1870:

rozmowa była o smętnej mojej ułomności – o głuchocie – i o tym, że początki jej nagabnęły mię we więzieniu pruskim w 1846, w Haus-fochtag, więzieniu ciężkim, gdzie w gorący dzień w lekkim fraku po mnóstwie agitujących nerwy indagacji byłem zawarty na słomie i we wilgoci, i gdzie ś.p. zacny doktor Dieffenbach był łaskaw do

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4 Cyprian Norwid, *Okruchy poetyckie i dramatyczne*, collected and compiled by Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki (Warszawa: PIW, 1956), pp. 290–291.

5 Norwid, *Okruchy poetyckie i dramatyczne*, p. 290.

6 Przesmycki provided two descriptions of *Modlitewnik*: the more precise one is in Przesmycki's Norwidian Archive in the National Library (ref. No. 6321, sh. 266–278; ref. No. 6322, sh. 148) and the other was printed in a footnote to *Pisma zebrane*, Vol. A, Part 2, pp. 769–771. The prospectus of *Modlitewnik* was published as a supplement to "Przegląd Powszechny" in 1911.

mnie do więzienia przyjechać, a potem zowąd mię wydobyć przez osobistą Jego dla mnie dobroć.

(PWsz IX, 459)<sup>7</sup>

[the conversation was about my unfortunate disability – about my deafness – and about the fact that its onset began to plague me in Prussian prison in 1846, in Hausfochtag, a harsh prison, where on a hot day in a light jacket, after a lot of questioning which agitated my nerves, I was locked up on straw and in the dampness, and at some point the late noble Doctor Dieffenbach was kind enough to come to me in the jail, and then, out of His personal kindness, get me out of there.]

The harsh prison in which Norwid was “locked up” was the Berlin police prison Hausvogtei (Norwid misspells it: haus-fochtag) at Hausvogteiplatz. Aleksander Guttry, who spent the entire second half of 1846 there, described the prevailing conditions there at the time.<sup>8</sup> It was a preventative detention centre for offenders of all kinds. There were also individuals suspected of political activities, criminals, and ladies of the night. The Prussian government allocated 15 silver pennies per prisoner per day to Hausvogtei. Sending letters was made very difficult. Investigations were carried out in various ways, depending on the whims of the presiding official. Guttry, for example, was assigned to an investigative judge named Mikiet, about whom he wrote about in his diary:

The investigation he conducted with me in this prison lasted six weeks, with the exception of Sunday, every day in the morning from half past nine to twelve and from two to six in the evening. – I, having learned through the banging on the walls what he allowed himself to do to other prisoners, was prepared that if he allowed himself even the slightest brutality with me, I would smash his face in with the inkwell and beat him up as much as I could.<sup>9</sup>

It seems unlikely that Norwid would have had all the necessary materials to make handicrafts in prison. It is entirely possible, however, that he kept busy with artistic work of a different kind. He mentioned this in 1880 in a letter to Konstancja Górska:

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7 In the most recent critical edition of Norwid’s *Dzieła Wszystkie* (DW), the date of one of Norwid’s letters to Maria Tębicka has been changed (from July 7 to July 14 or 21) in relation to Gomulicki’s edition, as quoted by Trojanowicz. In her article, all citations are given from PWsz (editor’s note).

8 Aleksander Guttry, *W przededniu Wiosny Ludów. Wspomnienia z r. 1846–1848*, published and with introduction by Maciej R. Wierzbński (Wilno: Księgarnia Stowarzyszenia Nauczycielstwa Polskiego, 1913), pp. 122–128.

9 Guttry, *W przededniu Wiosny Ludów*, p. 122.



Kiedy Król Saski w swoim pałacu, zapewne we willi nad rzeką, tłumaczył *la Divina-Commedia* Danta, i myślę, że tłumaczył *il Paradiso*, to ja właśnie wtenczas tłumaczyłem *Inferno*, leżąc na słomie przegniłej w więzieniu w Berlinie.

Mówię Pani najściślejszą prawdę: jedną książkę pozwolili mi Prusacy mieć w więzieniu, i zażądałem Danta, i dali mi – tłumaczyłem więc *Inferno* i myślałem nawet, że ten rękopism zginął z papierami innymi – ale ja dałem go, przez kraty więzienia rzuciwszy, ś.p. hr. Włodzimierzowi Łubieńskiemu, przyjacielowi, który co sobota przychodził pod okno więzienne, gdy mnie miano wydać Rządowi Mikołaja I-o – i zapewne, gdyby wydali, tłumaczyłbym Danta gdzie indziej.

(PWsz X, 142)

[When the King of Saxony, in his palace, probably in a villa on the river, was translating Dante's *la Divina-Comedia*, and I think he was translating *il Paradiso*, it was then that I was translating *Inferno*, lying on rotten straw in a prison in Berlin.

I'm telling you the honest truth – the Prussians allowed me to have one book in prison, and I demanded Dante and they gave it to me – and so I translated *Inferno* and even thought that this manuscript was lost along with other papers – but I gave it, by throwing it through the prison bars, to the late Count Włodzimierz Łubieński, a friend of mine who came to my prison window every Saturday when I was to be transferred to the government of Mikołaj I – and probably, if they had transferred me, I would have translated Dante elsewhere.]

Undoubtedly, after so many years, there would be a considerable amount of emphatic exaggeration in this reminiscence. Norwid only spent a week on the “rotten straw,” and he did not throw the manuscript through the window bars because, after the seven days of harsh prison, he was in the clinic being cared for by friendly doctors that he already knew. The manuscript in question is surely *Modlitewnik*, which indeed came into Łubieński's possession while the poet was still in prison (Norwid was a prisoner not only in Hausvogtei but also in the clinic). On pages 24–26 of *Modlitewnik*, there were the poet's translations of Dante, yet they were fragments not of *Inferno*, but *Purgatorio*. The first draft of this translation from the *Divine Comedy* may very well have been written in prison, but his edited “final draft” should be attributed to the later period of his work on *Modlitewnik*.

In reconstructing *Modlitewnik* according to Przesmycki's description, there are two issues that have not been addressed as of yet: the confusing page numbering and the erroneous dates.

The numbering is strange because Norwid numbered some of the pages *recto* and *verso*, and others only *verso*. Thus, we have: two unnumbered pages are followed by nine pages numbered *recto* and *verso* (pp. 1–18), followed by four pages numbered only *recto* (pp. 19–22), followed by three pages *recto* and *verso*

(pp. 23–28), and then seven blank, unnumbered pages. The continuity of such an erratic way of numbering indicates that Norwid marked the pages as the notebook was being filled and that he created *Modlitewnik* not “from the end” but “from the beginning.”<sup>10</sup>

On pages 1–18, the poet included Jakub Wujek’s translations of the seven Psalms of David (with major modifications) and dated them: Friday – 10 June 1846, Saturday – 11 June 1846, Sunday – 12 June 1846, etc., all the way through Thursday. However, in 1846, 10 June did not actually fall on Friday, but on Wednesday, 11 June was not a Saturday, but a Thursday, 12 June was not a Sunday, but a Friday, etc. The same is true for the date on the penultimate numbered page of the *Monolog* notebook – 6 June did not fall on Monday in 1846, but on Saturday. Norwid is off by two days in all these instances, and these errors are consistent in *Modlitewnik*. However, it turns out that if you change the month – from June to July – these dates are completely correct: 10 July 1846 was a Friday, 11 July – a Saturday, 12 July – Sunday, etc.<sup>11</sup> Of the possible explanations for this notorious disparity with the calendar, one is acceptable, namely, that Norwid must have mistaken the month. Other than the fact that July – as the month of *Modlitewnik*’s creation – matches the dates, there is also the fact that on the second of the first two unnumbered pages, Norwid drew vignettes with a large Roman numeral seven integrated into the whole, most likely denoting the month. The chronology of the poet’s fate in prison also favours July. But this timeline must be established anew.

One of the aims of the discussion thus far was to show that it was impossible for Norwid to have created *Modlitewnik* during his seven-day stay in Hausvogtei. We have also established that the dates of the Psalms and “Monolog” – because they are inconsistent with the calendar – must be corrected. However, this does not yet allow us to indicate when exactly the poet was in prison. To establish that which it “does not indicate,” we must use a different set of arguments.

Generally speaking, Norwid’s Berlin acquaintances can be divided into two categories: one circle was Maria Kalergis and Maria Trębicka, who left the capital of Prussia in 1845, and the other was people associated with Jan Koźmian. The latter, especially Włodzimierz Łubieński, August Cieszkowski, Cezary Plater, and Koźmian himself, showed much interest in the then-young

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10 The earliest dated work – “Monolog” – is actually at the end of the numbered part of the notebook, that is, after the Psalms bearing later dates, but this means that it was written earlier and added to *Modlitewnik* at the very end of Norwid’s work on it.

11 J.W. Gomulicki brought to my attention the possibility that the dates in *Modlitewnik* corresponded with July.

multitalented artist, so when the poet was arrested, they strove by every means to have him released. And it was not easy, considering that Norwid's imprisonment took place during the period following Prussia's reaction to the unsuccessful Poznań revolution of 1846. The extent of the "Kozmianites'" concern over the unhappy fate of the young poet is attested to by Kozmian's unpublished letters to Plater, who was in London during this critical time in Norwid's life. We have some fragments of this correspondence. Here is Kozmian's Berlin account from 29 June 1846:

Here a very sad event has taken place, Norwid was arrested: we don't really know what for yet – Włodzio Łubieński and other friends are very preoccupied with his fate. He is not doing well in prison, he is sick and irritable.

9 July 1846:

Our sculptor is no longer in confinement, but in the clinic, where the head doctor is taking utmost care of him. His health has improved. No one is allowed to see him, but we are allowed to write and send him anything he wishes.

25 July 1846:

During those early days C. was ill, so Dieffenbach, who was actively taking care of him, arranged for him to be transferred to the clinic, where, although under supervision, he is well looked after. We are able to and do see him through the window, but we are not allowed to talk. He's become thinner, but is in good spirits. Sometimes he goes to church for mass with the guards. He made a beautiful album for Włodzio with extremely striking miniatures, into which he also copied 7 Psalms and added several poems. God knows how long this will all last. Your arrival would not help. Rest assured that we will look after him in everything .... Włodzio, I will tell you again how ardently and sensitively I am looking after our friend. I let Cypr. know about your sincere willingness and alacrity; if anything new happens, I will write to you straight away.

Just after 25 July 1846 – the day Plater got the letter: London, 31 July 1846:

I can hardly wait, dear brother, to tell you the good news – Cyprian was released – yesterday evening his guards were removed and he is completely free, only by his own volition he will stay at the clinic for a few more days. I spoke at length to him this morning, he looked as if he had had a long retreat. His face got thinner, but not by very much. After our meeting, he said he would go to P. Bod.<sup>12</sup> and try to stay there. In any case, we are all ready to help him, however much and in whatever way he

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12 See the attempts to resolve what "P. Bod" stands for in the later part of this essay.

needs. I am enclosing a note he wrote you.<sup>13</sup> – To this day we don't know why he was imprisoned.<sup>14</sup>

Koźmian's first letter from 29 June, reporting the "sad event," appears to be the latest news rather than a belated account. Koźmian wrote to Plater about the fate of the poet stopped by the Prussian police almost immediately after each major development. We may assume, therefore, that on 29 June, Norwid had been a prisoner for several days at most.

This assumption becomes more plausible if we compare Koźmian's letters to the previously quoted letter from Łubieński to his mother from 19 July 1846. Łubieński wrote that Norwid spent seven days in harsh prison, and so, if he were there – as it has thus far been calculated based on the dates in *Modlitewnik* – on 10 June, he would have left on 16 June. Yet, according to Koźmian, Norwid was still in prison on 29 June. It was not until 9 July that Koźmian reported a location change to Plater: "during those early days C. was ill" (emphasis – Z.T.). They then arranged for him to be transferred to the clinic, where he went directly from Hausvogtei.

On 29 June, when Koźmian was writing the letter to Plater, Norwid had already been in custody for several days and had even managed to become ill there. Assuming that his transfer to the clinic could have taken place on 30 June at the earliest, the minimum amount of time the poet could have been in prison would place the start of his imprisonment on 23 June (seven days before 30 June). The need to shift the dates of Norwid's arrest from the first to the second half of June is also indicated by the reasons for his imprisonment, about which we will speak later on.

After 30 June (but before 9 July), Norwid was in the clinic, which was the second and final stage of his miserable stay in prison. After a week's discomfort

13 The contents of the note are as follows: "Szanowny Panie Cezary – / Podobąo się Panu Bogu, że mnie nareszcie wypuszczono. Pośpieszam, żeby Ci to donieść i podziękować z serca za współczucie Twoje. / Jestem bardzo jeszcze osłabiony. / Pani łączę moje uszanowanie i pp. Małachowskim. / Norwid" (PWsz VIII, 40) ["Dear Mr. Cezary – / By God's grace I was finally released. I am eager to report it to you and thank you with all my heart for your compassion. / I'm still very weak. / Give my regards to your Mrs. and the Malachowskis. / Norwid"]. See also: Zofia Muszyńska, "Listy Cypriana Norwida do Cezarego Platera," *Przegląd Humanistyczny*, No. 6 (1960), p. 103.

14 These are fragments of J. Koźmian's letters to C. Plater, which (as in the case of fragments quoted later on in the essay) are cited according to B. Erzepki's copies, modernising the writing and punctuation. Erzepki copied the excerpts concerning Norwid from the correspondence between Koźmian and Plater. Those excerpts are currently in Erzepki's portfolio of Norwid materials at the Poznań Society of Friends of Learning Library. I do not know what happened to the originals.

in Hausvogtei, this was a huge relief for the sick poet and one which he owed to Doctor Dieffenbach. Hans Friedrich Dieffenbach (1794–1847), an outstanding German surgeon, was a professor and director of the university surgical clinic in Berlin (on the corner of Friedrichstrasse and Ziegelstrasse) from 1840 onwards. He was no stranger to Norwid’s friends, who were associated with the Berlin university society, which would probably explain Dieffenbach’s attentive and genuine care for the young prisoner.

In his new place of residence, Norwid was still a prisoner but, unlike in Hausvogtei, one could see him through the window and also “send him everything he wishes.” This last possibility was taken advantage of fully. Ten years later, Norwid wrote to Trębicka:

ale Włodzimierz, np. kiedy wiedział, że *przypadkiem musiałem długo nie wychodzić*, między czterema pustymi murami siedząc, to przysłał mi tam gipsową głowę odlewu Venus de Milo, wiedząc, iż to greckie arcydzieło bardzo lubię i często je czytywać chodziłem do gipsowych zbiorów w Berlinie. Zrobił więc coś nie już człowiekowi, ale mnie, wdzięczność zaś osobista odtąd się poczyna.

(PWsz VIII, 284)

[But Włodzimierz, e.g. when he learned that I happened not to be able to go out for a long time, and was sitting between four empty walls, sent me a plaster cast of the head of the Venus de Milo, knowing that I like this Greek masterpiece very much and that I often studied it in the Berlin plaster collections. So he did something not just for a fellow human being, but for me in particular; and thus began my personal gratitude towards him.]

At the clinic, and thus not until July, the poet finally had the necessary conditions to carry out the arduous, artistic work, which would become the ornate *Modlitewnik*. It came into Łubieński’s possession before 19 July; he described this “small masterpiece” in a letter to his mother, but also showed it to Jan Koźmian. The dedication in *Modlitewnik* (“Mojemu najdroższemu, ażeby o mnie nie zapomniał, jak ja nie zapominam, i żeby wieściom przypadkowym nigdy, nigdy nie wierzył, a trwał w Chrystusie Panu, czego mu z serca życzę. C.K.N. 1846”<sup>15</sup> [“To my dearest, may you not forget me, as I do not forget you, and may you never ever believe everything you hear, and trust in Christ the Lord, which I wish for you with all my heart. CKN 1846”]) in no way indicated that it commemorates seven days of harsh prison. Norwid probably explained the symbolic significance of the illuminated notebook to his friend in an oral or written commentary attached to *Modlitewnik*, and we can furthermore

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15 Norwid, *Pisma zebrane*, Vol. A, Part 2, p. 770.

presume that he recorded the week in prison through the images of the objects of religious worship for each of the seven days of the week. But he recorded it after the fact.

The poet was arrested after 22 June 1846. Having spent a week in Hausvogtei, Norwid was transferred to the clinic and regained his freedom shortly after 25 July. He was thus a prisoner for a month or a month and several days. The poet himself – in a letter to Trębicka from 11 August 1846, from Brussels – suggests the second possibility:

Pana Trębickiego nie poznałem, z powodu iż w Berlinie miesiąc p r z e s z ł o, <sup>16</sup> i właśnie podczas jego bytności tamże – nie wychodziłem wcale – z domu. (PWsz VIII, 40)

[I did not meet Mr. Trębicki because in Berlin for over a month and precisely during his stay there – I did not at all leave – the house.]

## Reasons for Arrest

Norwid wrote to August Cieszkowski in 1850: “też samą niepraktyczność, lubo w lżejszym stopniu, wyrzucał mi ambasador moskiewski, więzieniem grożąc, a do robienia k a r i e r y nakłaniając, uważałem wszakże za praktyczne pójść na wygnanie, jako wiesz” (PWsz VIII, 111) [“the Moscow Ambassador accused me of the same impracticality albeit to a lesser degree, when he threatened me with imprisonment and urged me to think of my c a r e e r, I thought, however, it would be more practical to go into exile, as you know’”]. In a letter to Józef Bohdan Zaleski from January 1852, he reported that he was repulsed by the Towianists’ allegations against him:

Ale – jakże chcesz – jestem za to na wygnaniu, żem się podobnież rozmówił z reprezentantem Państwa Rosyjskiego, *ministre-plénipotentiaire* – za to byłem więziony i uszedłem – a teraz mam się kłaniać ludziom, którym się podoba duchem moim również rozporządzać? – wariaty są! – a jużcić by mi prościej było tam się pokłonić, gdzie mię w ręku trzymali.

(PWsz VIII, 151)

[But – what do you expect – I am in exile because I allegedly spoke to the Representative of the Russian State, the *ministre-plénipotentiaire* – this is why I was imprisoned and released – and now I have to bow to people who wish to control my spirit – they are madmen! It would be easier for me to bow down to those who held me captive.]

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16 Emphasis – Z.T.

Thus, the poet perceived the reason for his arrest to be the harsh briefing he gave to Fonton, the secretary of the Russian Embassy in Berlin, who offered him a career as a spy. We know of his conversation with Fonton from a second-hand account – a year and a half later in Rome, Norwid told Zygmunt Krasiński, who did not hesitate to pass it on to Delfina Potocka in a letter from 25/26 January 1848:

Then, Norw[id] described to me a very interesting scene. – Fonton is the secretary of the Berlin Embassy – surely you’ve heard. – ideal of a traitor. – Debauchery, insolence but diligence in service, deceit and feigning civilization, etc., etc. And so, he advised the disgraced, that to clear his name of any appearance [of impropriety] and the stain resulting merely from the fact that he got involved in things unreal, in “dreams” that he should go to Petersb[urg] and join the service, promising him *“une carrière brillante.”* [Norwid] listened to him for three hours and contemplating the three paths in front of him, the first of which led straight to the Citadel and the Caucasus, the second to expiation by Saint Petersburg and the Board of External Affairs, the third to exile, his soul chose the third and when the Fontonic improvisations ended, he bowed deeply, and replied: “I am unworthy of the great career that you offer me, accept my forever farewell.” The speaker who thought he would convince Norwid with his speech got angry, and when the departing was already at the threshold, he glared at him with tiger eyes and shouted, in Polish: “You, Polish gentlemen, you are poets, we Muscovites, are not. – We will see who gets further” – These few phrases encompass the entire fate and contents of both fighting powers, one of which is the soul and the other – the body! – But the representative of the soul was moaning in Prussian prison t h r e e d a y s l a t e r , among the villains, cast there by the representative of the body, who used the courtesy of the Prussian police to lock him up there.<sup>17</sup>

Fonton’s proposition shook Norwid to the core. The entire scene stuck in the poet’s memory – hence the many references to it – and was reflected in the poem “Scherzo,” written in Rome in 1847. One of the tempters extends earthly pleasures like this to the tempted:

A ja dam tobie miast i ziem obfitość,  
Szalonych koni sto, służebnych chóry,  
I nade drzwiami ci napiszę: “sytość” –  
Ażebyś sobie był jako dzień, bez chmury.  
– I niech ci nektar piwnice wypełnia,  
Muzyka w krągłych gnieździ się sklepieniach,

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17 Zygmunt Krasiński, *Listy do Delfiny Potockiej*, ed. Zbigniew Sudolski, Vol. III (Warszawa: PIW, 1975), p. 605. Emphasis – Z.T.

A kędy stąpisz, szarłat się rozwełnia...  
Wybieraj!

(PWsz I, 83–84)<sup>18</sup>

[And I will give you an abundance of cities and lands,  
A hundred crazy horses, choirs of servants  
And above the door I will write: "satiety" –  
So that you may be like a day, without a cloud.  
– And may your cellars flow with nectar,  
Music nest in rounded vaults,  
And wherever you walk, amaranth grows...  
Choose!]

If Norwid's choice was the reason he was deprived of liberty, it was only in the sense that if the poet had decided to pursue a career in Saint Petersburg, the whole matter would have automatically taken a different turn. In fact, the harsh response he gave Fonton was only one of the links, and not even the most important one, in the chain of events that led the poet to his prison cell.

Józef Ujejski and Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki point to another set of possible reasons for his arrest.

Ujejski based his hypothesis on documents which no longer exist, from the Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw:

Regarding this incident with the ambassador and Norwid's imprisonment, the genesis of all this is undoubtedly connected with the case of a certain Maksymilian Jatowt, who was drafted in 1845, escaped in September of this year, managed to get abroad, and met Cyprian Norwid, who was returning from Italy, in Mikołów in Prussian Silesia. The poet, having learned of his situation, gave him his passport to facilitate his further escape. Jatowt took this passport to Paris, moved in with the Resurrectionists using Cyprian Norwid's name, with their support got a job in Prince Ad. Czartoryski's office and... in the spring of 1846 began taking documents from this office to... the Russian embassy. It was also there that he presented the passport given to him by Norwid. It is not difficult to guess, then, that the Russian ambassador in Berlin, having learned of C. Norwid's stay there, wanted to investigate his attitude towards the informant of the Russian embassy in Paris bearing the same first and last name, perhaps even took him for a spy, hence his summoning and this conversation started with some "flattering" proposals, and ended up trapping the poet – simply for having made it easier for a deserter to escape by granting him his passport.<sup>19</sup>

18 Cf. J.W. Gomulicki's commentary to this poem in the anthology: Norwid, *Okruchy poetyckie i dramatyczne*, pp. 292–293.

19 Józef Ujejski, "Listy Norwida do Augusta Cieszkowskiego i Zygmunta Krasińskiego," *Pamiętnik Literacki* (1925/1926), p. 615. Copy, p. 33.



Gomulicki writes in a comment to Norwid's *Okruchy poetyckie I dramatyczne* [*Poetic and Dramatic Pieces*]:

One of the main points of the accusation was certainly the help Norwid provided to two fugitives from the Kingdom – Maksymilian Jatowt (later known by the pseudonym Jakub Gordon) and Michał Sadowski – whom the poet aided in their escapes to France and Italy.<sup>20</sup>

There is not much to say about Norwid's contact with Michał Sadowski. Gomulicki probably based his claim on Krasiński's letter to Potocka from 25 January 1848 (it is presumably an answer to a question Potocka asked about Sadowski): “– This Sadowski is a man from the recent riots. Norwid facilitated his escape through Berlin. – You could tell they got him involved in the work of the journal “Trzeci Maj,” as he came in with Witold [Czartoryski].”<sup>21</sup>

In all probability, Sadowski did not meet Norwid until the very end of 1845 in Berlin. His correspondence with Trębicka reveals that he liked the poet very much. In a letter from Dresden dated 8 November 1845, he wrote: “Give Cyprian my warmest regards, be his guardian angel and give me news of him – if you would be so kind, it would give me great pleasure if you would write to me” – and then in a letter from 15 November 1845: “Tell Norwid, the most tender thing you can think of.”<sup>22</sup>

At the beginning of November 1845, Sadowski left Berlin and went to Dresden, from where he intended to depart (and probably did depart) through Wrocław to Kraków on 15 November. By 1846, he was already living – according to Adolf Tabasz Krosnowski's *Almanach* – in Paris.<sup>23</sup>

It is difficult to determine when and how Norwid helped him escape through Berlin. It could have been during the first half of 1846, but the “latest riots” with which Krasiński associates Sadowski do not necessarily point to this period. He may have meant Sadowski's passage through Berlin between October and November 1845. If that were the case, the emphasis on his cordiality towards Norwid in Sadowski's Dresden letters to Trębicka would understandably be expressions of gratitude.

Maksymilian Jatowt is a different case. This man's role in Norwid's life is not entirely clear. Sometime between September and October 1845, the poet,

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20 Norwid, *Okruchy poetyckie i dramatyczne*, p. 290.

21 Krasiński, *Listy do Delfiny Potockiej*, Vol. III, p. 598.

22 From the collection of M. Trębicka's letters, Jagiellonian Library, manuscript 5781.

23 Adolf Tabasz Krosnowski, *Almanach historique ou souvenir de l'émigration polonaise* (Paris: Bourgoigne, Martinet: 1846), p. 380.

who was in Mikołów in Silesia at the time, gave Jatowt his passport and a wallet containing money. Jatowt describes this event in his diary (published under the pseudonym Gordon), where he calls Norwid “Mr. N.”<sup>24</sup> This is also confirmed by the poet himself in a letter to Jan Koźmian from December 1866: “Był czas! – i są mimowolne świadectwa tego drukowane (PATRZ ‘GORDONA PAMIĘTNIK’), że p. Norwid nie kalkulował i nie rozliczał groszy w wypadkach daleko więcej personalnych” (PWsz IX, 270) [“There was time! And there are incidental printed reports (SEE ‘GORDON’S DIARY’) that Mr. Norwid did not count p e n n i e s in far more personal matters”].

But did Jatowt really become a Russian spy in Paris who smuggled documents out of Czartoryski’s office under Norwid’s name? It seems that in spite of some circumstances in his favour, this was likely the case.

Certain doubts about Jatowt’s infamous “mission” in Paris can tell us more about what happened next in his life. In 1848, he found himself in Kraków, and during the height of the conspiracies, he relocated to the Grand Duchy of Poznań, where he intended to join the staff of a school intended for Polish youth. In Skalmierzyce, he was captured and sent to the Warsaw Citadel. During the investigation, he provided testimony – as he writes in his diary<sup>25</sup> – that was not entirely true, which was supposed to minimise the deserter’s guilt towards Russia and thus reduce his sentence. However, Jatowt’s efforts did not move the tsarist officials. In the preserved registration book of the Files of the Permanent Inquiry Committee, containing brief summaries of individual “cases” and rulings, under number 2573, there are the provisions regarding our deserter. On 22 February/6 March 1849 the Investigative Committee ordered that Jatowt “как военного дезертера проживавшего за границую, предать военному Суду” and the verdict from March 21/April 2 of that year mandates, “обратить его по прежнему в военную службу с назначением в отдельный Оренбургский Корпус.”<sup>26</sup> The sentence was carried out.

After 1860, when Jatowt finally returned to Europe after his many adventures in Russia and America, he began to publish his diaries under the pseudonym Jakub Gordon, which enjoyed some popularity and were translated into French,

24 Jakub Gordon [Maksymilian Jatowt], *Obrazki caryzmu. Pamiętnik* (Lipsk: A.F. Brockhaus, 1863), pp. 93–94.

25 Gordon, *Obrazki caryzmu*, pp. 124–129.

26 Investigative Commission Files, part 1, Central Archive of Historical Records in Warszawa.

German, and Czech. He even dedicated one of his publications to Prince Adam Czartoryski.<sup>27</sup>

The diaries devoted to his first escape from Russia and the events mentioned above place them in 1846 rather than 1845. This is not the result of a mistake (such dates are not forgotten) – Gordon consciously wants to erase this year from his life. He says nothing about the stay in Paris, to which he testified – as we know from Ujejski’s archival research – before the Investigative Commission. When reporting the events in Mikołów, he says in a footnote: “This passport later saved another young man from misfortune.”<sup>28</sup> However, this only ostensibly exonerates Gordon. The obvious purpose of this note was to remove all suspicions in the event that they arose. And they could have arisen because there is evidence that Norwid’s passport ended up at the Russian embassy in Paris in late May or early June 1846. If it were submitted there by another “young man” who had allegedly used the poet’s passport after Jatowt, then Jatowt would not have known about it in such detail as he had described in the report for the Warsaw Investigative Commission.

The Russian embassy in Paris “sent couriers” with cables to Berlin and Saint Petersburg nearly every day. One of them, dated 29 May/10 June 1846, contained news regarding Norwid. Because this document has never before been published, I will quote it in its entirety:

Copie d’une dépêche (en chiffre) de Mr. de Kisséleff à Mr. de Fonton à Berlin, en date de Paris le 29 Mai / 10 Juin 1846.

Rodolphe Rzyckiński, fils d’un riche propriétaire de Cracovie, a quitté avant-hier Paris pour se rendre à Berlin.

Avant son départ il avait réuni chez lui Erasme Zarembo, fils d’un riche propriétaire de Sandomir, nouvellement arrivé ici, et Grégorowicz, du parti des démocrates qui avait accompagné Mieroslawski dans le Grand-duché de Posen.

Grégorowicz dicta à Zarembo une lettre en chiffre; il se servait à cet effet d’un dictionnaire français-polonais dont on doit me procurer un exemplaire.

Cette lettre était destinée à être communiquée aux propriétaires de la république de Cracovie, et Rzyckiński devait être porteur également d’autres missives pour divers Polonais qui sont ou se trouveront à Berlin au moment de son arrivée.

Il est aussi parvenu à ma connaissance que Kiprian Norwid, peintre ou sculpteur, actuellement à Berlin et qui voyage à l’étranger avec l’autorisation du Maréchal Prince de Varsovie, sert d’intermédiaire pour les machinations polonaises,

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27 *Mes prisons en Russie. Mémoires de J. Gordon [M. Jatowt], citoyen des États-Unis d’Amérique* (Leipzig: A. Franck, 1861).

28 Gordon, *Obrazki caryzmu*, p. 94.

ainsi que le nommé Wladislaw Węzyk qui doit avoir pris part à l'insurrection de Cracovie.

Ce qui me fait croire que la dénonciation contre Norwid pourrait être vraie, c'est que l'on m'a exhibé en même temps un passeport qui lui a été délivré à Varsovie par le Général Pissareff le 19/31 Décembre 1844 sub N°. 6094 et qui par conséquent pourrait bien avoir servi à quelque émissaire. Vous trouverez peut-être moyen d'éclaircir ce point interrogeant Norwid.

Veillez bien, Mr., transmettre au Ministère Impérial et au Prince de Varsovie les renseignements renfermés dans la présente, ainsi que ceux par lesquels Vous series à même de les compléter.<sup>29</sup>

The names mentioned in the first part of the letter by Paweł Kisielew, the Russian ambassador in Paris, do not directly relate to Norwid's case and therefore, we will not consider the charges against Rudolf Rzyckiński (Życiński?), Erazm Zaremba, and Gregorowicz (Jan Kanty? Karol? Kazimierz?). We do not know anything about a Gregorowicz accompanying Mierosławski in the Grand Duchy of Poznań. As for Norwid, Kisielew's message not only confirms the receipt of the poet's passport but also points to Jatowt as the one who gave Norwid's name to the tsarist authorities. This is proven by the connection between the two names: Węzyk – Norwid. In Silesia, the poet lived with his friend from his Warsaw days, Władysław Węzyk.

Kisielew was not entirely sure whether the tip letter with the information about Norwid and his involvement in the conspiracy was true. As proof, the informant presented him with the poet's passport (which could have been – if it had been given to a deserter of the Russian army – useful to some emissary, but it was not, because it accidentally fell into “good hands”). It remains an even more interesting mystery, given Norwid's staunch disapproval of conspiracy, whether the poet revealed the political purpose of his journey to Jatowt, or whether Jatowt made it up in a fit of informant's zeal. Norwid's visit to Silesia and its possible political motivations would require a separate discussion.

A few days after 10 June 1846, the secretary of the Russian Embassy in Berlin, Fonton, received a confidential cable from Kisielew accusing Norwid of two

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29 Jerzy Wojciech Borejsza was the first to reveal the existence of this document in his article “*Nieznany list Adama Mickiewicza z 1831 r.*,” *Nowa Kultura*, No. 44 (1958). Thanks to the Polish Embassy in Moscow and Dr. K. Koziół, I was able to obtain a photocopy of Kisielew's decrypted cable. The original is at the Foreign Policy Archive in Moscow. In the top left corner of the photocopy a note reads: “ad N° 77–1846 –,” in the right: “1731/284.” According to Borejsza's description, it reads: “zesp. Kancelarii, 1846, N° 137, sh. 284.”

related “crimes:” the mediation of Polish conspiracies, and the illegal handing over of his passport. The Berlin Embassy had been watching the poet since his arrival in the city. Norwid had already been having passport problems at the end of 1845 and the beginning of 1846. We can assume that the poet tried to explain the absence of these documents to embassy officials similarly to how he did in his letter to Trębicka from 2 January 1846: “paszport mój zgubiłem I pulares z pieniędzmi w P o l k o w i z ” (PWsz VIII, 29) [“I lost my passport and wallet with money in P o l k o w i z ”]. In February, his troubles were successfully resolved. However, by early June of that year, the poet’s relations with the embassy were already strained again, as evidenced by a fragment of his letter to Trębicka from 7 June: “Co do portretu, proszę – jeżeli można – nie przez ambasadę posyłać; nie chcę tym robić subiekcji – nie powinienem” (PWsz VIII, 39) [“As for the portrait – please – if you could not send it through the embassy – I do not want to inconvenience them – I should not”].

There seems to be no doubt that the conversation Fonton had with Norwid a few days before his arrest was brought about by the Paris cable. After the altercation at the embassy, the poet was released for a few days, and after 22 June, the Prussian police came for him. The circle of causes and effects only mostly closes in this way – it lacks the link connecting the allegations of the Russian embassy with the interest of the Prussian authorities that issued the arrest warrant.

According to Jan Koźmian – who was relatively well informed about the whole case, if only because he and Włodzimierz Łubieński were actively considering possible ways of freeing the poet – the accusing party was the Grand Duchy of Poznań, not Russian officials. In a letter from Koźmian to Plater, written from Berlin on 9 July 1846, we read:

It seems, and it is very comforting, that it was not Russia, but the Grand Duchy that issued the charge, and that it is the local government that is suspicious of him. This being the case, he will be proven entirely innocent. Włodzio is exclusively and completely occupied with this matter, I will not overlook any favorable circumstances, so you can be c o m p l e t e l y calm. I asked Włodzio to tell Cypr. About your genuine concern. Włodzio has already told August everything.

And additionally, from 25 July:

Here I will repeat what I said there. The reason our Cypr. Was (treat)ed. Is not known; it is only comforting (that) it was not by distant command, but just by local circumstances that he fell (into) misfortune. Włodzio, who (s)hows very warm concern, hopes to find out soon how this all came about.<sup>30</sup>

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30 The supplements in parentheses were added by B. Erzepki.

Koźmian's view is confirmed by two encyclopedic entries about the poet, written based on materials Norwid had provided. Here is an excerpt about 1846 from Brockhaus's 1867 *Lexikon*:

Al ser 1846 zur Zeit der poln. Bewegung nach Deutschland zurückkehrte, wurde er unweit der poln. Grenze verhaftet und nach Berlin gebracht. Auf Fürsprache lieferte man ihn aber nicht an Russland aus, sondern entliess ihn mit der Weisung sich nach Frankreich zu wenden.<sup>31</sup>

An analogous note in Larousse's encyclopedia from 1874 is very similar:

De retour en Allemagne de l'époque du soulèvement de 1846, il fut arrêté près de la frontière de Pologne et emprisonné à Berlin. Le gouvernement prussien ne le livra pas à la Russie; mais en lui rendant la liberté, il enjoignit à Norwid de se rendre en France.<sup>32</sup>

Both entries associate Norwid's imprisonment with his detention at the Polish border during the revolutionary movements of 1846. In relation to the territory of the Prussian Kingdom – the Grand Duchy of Poznań was situated at the Polish border, i.e., at the border of the Polish Kingdom. In 1846, especially during the first half of the year, the situation in Greater Poland was so strained that every visitor was a suspect by nature. The poet's position could have been all the more ambiguous because – as Kisielew's cable to Fonton proves – he did not have a standard passport at that time, but only a temporary residence authorization that had probably been sent to him by the Warsaw police.

According to his biography in the encyclopaedia, Norwid was taken to Berlin from the Polish border and imprisoned there, then released and ordered to leave Berlin and go to France. In reality, the matter was slightly different. If the poet had been arrested immediately upon arriving in Poznań, Koźmian would not have written to Plater: "I t s e e m s ... that it was not Russia, but the Grand Duchy that issued the charge" [emphasis – Z.T.]; he would have known for sure. Between the day of his arrest and his arrival from the Grand Duchy, there was still time for his conversation with Fonton – it was only a few days afterwards that the poet wound up in prison. Determining the exact date of his visit to Greater Poland, which had such an unfortunate epilogue, presents many

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31 *Conversations-Lexikon*, Vol. X (Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus, 1867), p. 898.

32 *Grand dictionnaire universel du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle* par P. Larousse, Vol. X (Paris: Administration du grand Dictionnaire universel, 1874), p. 1100. J.W. Gomulicki pointed out to me that both encyclopedias associate Norwid's arrest with his detention at the Polish border.

difficulties. Perhaps it would make sense to place it before 7 June 1846. This timeline is supported by Norwid's correspondence with Trębicka.

The poet's letters to Trębicka from the first half of 1846 are dated as follows: 2–3 January, 25–27 January, 20 February (postage stamp 2 March), 11 April, and 7 June. It took the recipient a long time to answer the letter of 20 February. An impatient Norwid wrote to her on 11 April:

Śmiem sobie wyobrażać, że nie zasłużyłem na ukaranie mię milczeniem blisko dwa miesiące już trwającym. Nie chcę tego tłumaczyć niepowodzeniem lub słabością, bo mam w Bogu nadzieję, ale przypuszczam, że nadeszła ta epoka korespondencji, w której się trudno wziąć do pióra po niepisaniu długim – i w której nie bez wstrętu przerywa się milczenie; znam to, bo kilka ciągłych korespondencji miałem, i jestem zdania, iż w podobnych zdarzeniach któraś strona powinna obowiązek wznowienia przerwanych rozmów uczuć. Jakoż czynię zadosyć i śmiem prosić o słowo odpowiedzi.

(PWsz VIII, 36)

[I dare say I do not deserve to be punished with silence that has now lasted close to two months. I do not want to explain it by some misfortune or illness, which I hope to God is not the case, but I suppose now the time has come in our correspondence when it is difficult to put pen to paper after not having written for a long time – and in which one breaks the silence not without dread; I know this because I had several correspondences going, and I am of the opinion that in such circumstances one party should feel the obligation to resume interrupted conversations. And so I am fulfilling this obligation and ask for a few words in reply.]

Actually, it was Trębicka who had responded twice to Norwid's letter from 11 April, and the silent one was he, who had previously taken on the "obligation to resume interrupted conversations." Finally, Norwid wrote on 7 June:

Wiele dni upłynęło od tej przyjemnej chwili, która mi list Pani z 19-o maja wniosła, a lubo to już drugi przeze mnie dotąd przemilczany – usprawiedliwiać się nie będę, jak również i w niniejszym, co Panią będzie razić, także nie będę Jej tłumaczył ani usprawiedliwiał. ... Życzyłem sobie coś stanowczego Pani donieść, lecz dotychczas nie mogę, lubo okoliczności przypomniały mi, ażebym sobą się zatrudnił – to tylko powiem, iż, da Pan Bóg, mój przyszły list będzie jeżeli nie przyjemniejszy (bo to wątpię), to przynajmniej jaśniejszy. (PWsz VIII, 37)

[Many days have passed since the pleasant moment, when I received your letter from 19 May, and this is the second one I have left unanswered – I will not try to explain myself in this, and though you will be offended Madam, I will not offer excuses or justifications on your behalf. ... I wished to tell you something more substantial, but I cannot yet, the circumstances are such that I need to focus on myself – I will only say that, God willing, my next letter will be, if not nicer (because I doubt it), at least clearer.]

It seems that Norwid, who at that time was very keen on maintaining his correspondence with Trębicka, was not reticent because he did not want to write but because he could not really do so. Even at the time when he was sending the letter, his circumstances prevented him from clearly explaining his silence. He was convinced that these conditions would change in the near future, allowing him to write more freely. All this may or may not support the idea that the poet left Berlin for some time between 11 April and 7 June.

He returned to Berlin under circumstances that prevented him from explaining his situation. It is true that Norwid writes in the same letter: “nie wyjeżdżałem stąd na chwilę – nie mogłem,” [“I did not leave here even for a second – I could not”], but considering the enigmatic nature of the whole letter, it cannot be considered a denial of his departure. This sentence may have been a calculated and cautious measure against censure or Russian interference (the letter was sent to the Kingdom). In the same letter, written by the poet late at night on 7 June, we read:

Z czasem szerzej i lepiej będę się mógł tłumaczyć – teraz może mi przyjdzie zatrudnić się sobą w bardzo praktycznym słowa tego znaczeniu. ... Przyjdzie może epoka, że będę często – bardzo często – listami mymi Pani na przykrzał się (przepraszam) – wtedy adres jej przeszlę – bo domyślałam się, że w przyszłym liście już to zrobię. ... Niedługo będę pisał, bo może przeszlę adres – – Co do portretu – proszę – jeżeli można – nie przez ambasadę posyłać; nie chcę tym robić subiekcji – nie powinienem. (PWsz VIII, 37–39)

[With time, I will be better able to explain myself in more detail – right now I may need to take care of myself in the very practical sense of this word. ... Perhaps a time will come that I will often – very often – beleague you with my letters (apologies) – and then I will send you my address – I think I might even be able to do it in the next letter. ... I will write soon, because maybe I will be sending you my address – – As for the portrait – please – if you could not send it through the embassy – I do not want to inconvenience them – I should not.]

As we are operating in the sphere of speculations that cannot be verified at this time, we may assume that the references to the change of address were related to the Prussian authorities' order to leave Berlin, to remove the burdensome and suspicious foreigner. It seems that this was the final stop on his trip to Greater Poland. Imprisonment was its epilogue.

How did Norwid fall into disfavour with the Prussian authorities? Again, because of sparse documentation, we cannot be too certain. The concerns of the police, who suspected a political purpose in the poet's arrival in Poznań, were rather unfounded. And this is indicated not only by Norwid's contempt for conspiracy – because claims do not always reflect reality – but also by other



circumstances. Let us bring up Koźmian's words again. In his opinion, the party accusing the poet was the Grand Duchy of Poznań and not Russian officials. Of course, he was not aware of Kisielew's message, nor did he know the reason for the accusation. But the very fact that the allegations came from Poznań greatly reassured the future priest as to Norwid's fate – "this being the case, he will be proven entirely innocent." Koźmian undoubtedly learned about Norwid's passport violation prior to his arrival in Berlin either from the poet himself or Włodzimierz Łubieński. And while he knew the story of Michał Sadowski, which we are not able to reconstruct today, he could have considered it an equal factor in worsening his situation. If the accusation had come from the Russian side, the prisoner's situation – as a Russian subject – would have been very troublesome, and the punishment severe. This was one reason why Koźmian was less afraid of Prussian accusations than Russian.

The second reason is clearly that Koźmian was absolutely certain of Norwid's loyalty to Prussia. He knew the people with whom he associated in Berlin, as well as why and with whom he was in Poznań.<sup>33</sup> It is characteristic that Koźmian, Łubieński, and Plater, who even expressed his readiness to come to Berlin from London, showed the most concern for Norwid during his imprisonment. If the poet had been associated with other, more revolutionary figures, we can imagine that the composition of his group of guardians would have been quite different.

In light of this, it seems that Norwid's arrest was rather a proactive measure dictated by Prussia's caution. In the summer of 1846, around 600 suspects (which does not mean that they were indeed conspirators) wound up in Prussian prisons.<sup>34</sup> One of them was Cyprian Norwid. The slightest hint of suspicion – which was inevitably evoked by the poet's arrival in Poznań, the purpose of which was not entirely clear to the police – was sufficient evidence of a crime. This claim is also supported by Norwid's relatively quick release. Prussian foresight was presumably first expressed in the order to leave Berlin,

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33 There are indications that Norwid had been, or even often been, in Pudliszki near Leszno during the first half of 1846, at Józef Łubieński's, the father of Włodzimierz. We do not know, however, whether the trip to the Grand Duchy of Poznań, which drew the attention of the Prussian police, was associated with Pudliszki because there could have been other reasons for his visits to Greater Poland. Cf. Zofia Muszyńska, "Na wielkopolskim tropie Norwida," in: *Literackie przystanki nad Wartą*, ed. Zygmunt Szweykowski (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 1962).

34 Cf. Stefan Kieniewicz, *Spółczesność polskie w powstaniu poznańskim 1848 roku* (Warszawa: Towarzystwo Naukowe Warszawskie, 1935), p. 61.

which the Prussian authorities issued to Norwid prior to 7 June. The poet did not leave as planned, because the officials from the Russian embassy in Berlin added their allegations resulting from both Kisielew's cable and Norwid's confrontation with Fonton to the charges by the Prussian authorities. Jan Koźmian was not aware of "the reason for the harsh treatment of our Cypr."

## Release

Once he was in Brussels, Norwid wrote to Trębicka on 11 August 1846: "Tak zmęczonym jeszcze się czuję po podróży, którą śpiesznie odbyłem, że nie przedsięwiorę listu" (PWsz VIII, 40) ["I still feel so tired after this journey, that I had to make quickly, that I cannot endeavor to write"]. And in 1880 to Konstancja Górska, he wrote:

Książę Wilhelm Radziwiłł był łaskaw mówić o mnie Królowi Pruskiemu i tym sposobem ułatwiono mi ujechanie z więzienia – mówię u j e c h a n i e, nie: ucieczkę, bo nie uciekałem nigdy!

(PWsz X, 142)

[Prince Wilhelm Radziwiłł was kind enough to tell the Prussian King about me, and because of that it was easier for me to get away from prison – I say g e t a w a y, not escape, because I never escaped!]

And here are fragments of Koźmian's letters to Plater from Berlin – from 9 and 25 July 1846:

Thus far it was not necessary<sup>35</sup> X. Wil., but I have already briefed him.

It's a shame, that X. Wilh. is not here and won't be back any time soon, I have briefed him on the matter, but it was not yet necessary to use his influence.

As we remember, the Prussian authorities released Norwid shortly after 25 July. He was not asked to leave Berlin; the poet voluntarily spent a few more days in the clinic recovering after he had regained his freedom. Together with Koźmian, they agreed that after leaving the hospital, "he would go to P. Bod." and try to stay there.

Deciphering the abbreviation "P. Bod." was made easier in part by Erzepki, who had written: "Bodelschwing? 19 May 1847" in the margins of the copy of the letter. Presumably, this name was mentioned in Koźmian's later correspondence with Plater (in a letter from 19 May 1847), and Erzepki had made the

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35 The copy is missing a phrase here. The sentence can be completed as follows: "Thus far it was not necessary [to use the influence] of X. Wil[helm Radziwiłł], but I have already briefed him."

connection with that “P. Bod.” If this guess is correct, Norwid was meant to go to Ernst Bodelschwingh, the Prussian Minister of the Interior at that time, or to his brother Carl, a high-ranking official in the Prussian administration, or in any case, to someone else from this family. Being able to take advantage of the kindness of such influential people in Berlin suggests that one of the Bodelschwings could have been instrumental in Norwid’s release.

This hypothesis seems all the more probable considering that Prince Wilhelm Radziwiłł’s assistance, which Koźmian, and probably also Plater and Cieszkowski, were counting on, is doubtful. Norwid knew about these efforts from Koźmian or Doctor Dieffenbach, hence his mention of Wilhelm Radziwiłł in the letter to Górska from 1880.

But Radziwiłł’s intervention on behalf of the poet, especially to Frederick William IV himself, seems unlikely for several reasons. On 22 July 1848, the Prussian king, according to the newspapers of the time, was traveling the route Erfurt – Nuremberg – Regensburg – Karlsbad – Cieplice; he would not have been in Potsdam until 1 August.<sup>36</sup> Wilhelm Radziwiłł was also not in Berlin at that time, and besides, on 25 July, Koźmian wrote to Plater that Radziwiłł did not think it possible to use his influence in the matter. And so, if Norwid owed him for anything, it could only have been the carefully manipulated correspondence, possibly intended for one of the Bodelschwings.

Despite the withdrawal of the arrest warrant and permit to stay in Berlin, soon after regaining his freedom, Norwid made a quick and “amusing” journey to Brussels. The Prussian authorities no longer had any claims on the poet, but the Russian embassy had no intention of ending its watch.

Krasiński wrote to Potocka on 25/26 January 1848 from Rome:

However, after a month and a half, the representative of the soul [Norwid] flew away down the iron road, quick as a thought, and the representative of the body [Fonton], who knew nothing about it, sat in his office and was preparing to give the order the next day that he be seized and taken further into the depths of earthly hell iron-bound.<sup>37</sup>

The poet’s friends did not know the Russian side’s allegations and could not predict their consequences. Promising to help “however much and in whatever way he needs,” they considered Norwid’s further stay in Berlin to be necessary. This plan was thwarted by an unforeseen circumstance: the Russian embassy

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36 “Gazeta Wielkiego Księstwa Poznańskiego” No. 174 (1846). Under the heading “Wiadomości krajowe.”

37 Krasiński, *Listy do Delfiny Potockiej*, Vol. III, pp. 605–606.

intended to ask that the poet be handed over to the tsarist authorities, who were to impose a penalty at their own discretion. Having been warned in time by a friendly someone, Norwid “got away” to Brussels.

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Teresa Skubalanka

## Norwid's Poetic Style from a Historical Perspective

**Abstract:** The aim of the article is to analyse the stylistic and linguistic relations between Norwid's poetry and the works of other Polish Romantic poets, in particular Mickiewicz and Słowacki. The author characterises those features of Norwid's style and language that are considered particularly characteristic of his poetry, i.e. the tendency to etymologization, his love for neologisms, the poetics of silence, understatement, allusions (which in this article are considered to belong to the superior category of ellipticism), the use of adages and hieratic style (including the tendency to archaization), and irony. The researcher notices that all these categories are also characteristic of the language of poetry of other great Polish Romantics, and therefore does not see the need to study Norwid's language and texts in isolation from the Polish Romantic context. However, the features that make Norwid's style distinct from that of Polish Romanticism, are – according to the researcher – the phenomenon which she refers to as “specific poetic non-pictoriality” and the particularly strong discursiveness (dialogicity) of Norwid's poems.

**Keywords:** Cyprian Norwid, poetry, linguistics, stylistics, poetic style, style of Romantic poetry

The need for a historical view of Norwid's creative work was demonstrated quite a long time ago – Waław Borowy,<sup>1</sup> Zofia Szmydtowa, and somewhat later Zofia Stefanowska, among others, wrote on this subject. However, it so happens that the only monographic study of the poet's language by Ignacy Fik considerably diverges from the historical point of view.<sup>2</sup> We should thus try to make

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- 1 Cf. Waław Borowy, “Norwid poeta,” in: Waław Borowy, *O Norwidzie. Rozprawy i notatki* (Warszawa: PIW, 1960), p. 17; Zofia Szmydtowa, “Norwid wobec tradycji literackiej,” *Spraw. Gimn. im. C. Plater-Zyberkówny* (Warszawa: Jan Cotty, 1925); Zofia Stefanowska, “Norwidowski romantyzm,” *Pamiętnik Literacki*, 59, Vol. 4 (1968) and other studies, prominently works by Tadeusz Makowiecki (e.g. “Młodzieńcze poglądy Norwida na sztukę,” *Pamiętnik Literacki*, 24, 1927). It is impossible to mention all the major studies on this subject.
  - 2 Ignacy Fik, *Uwagi nad językiem Cypriana Norwida* (Kraków: Kasa im. J. Mianowskiego, 1930). This study was critically discussed by W. Borowy, who wrote: “Apart from history, also the evaluations of linguistic phenomena are wrong here” (“Norwid poeta,” p. 169) and also by A. Obrębska-Jabłońska (*Język Polski* 16, 1,

some observations to complement the current state of knowledge about the historicity of Norwid's poetic style.

The writings of the poet do not form in their entirety – as Zdzisław Łapiński puts it – “a closed poetic world,”<sup>3</sup> or at least they only seemingly constitute such a closed world. One of the difficulties arising from understanding the poet's works becomes his language, and this is for two main reasons. First, the language of Norwid's works is separated from us by a distance of more than one hundred years. It is not only about the change of the time perspective, it is also about the fact that today's Polish language is qualitatively different from that used in the nineteenth century. The linguistic competence of the contemporary reader and the virtual audience of the poet's works are comparable only to some extent. Returning to the thought outlined above, we will secondly stress the importance of what is sometimes called the “concept of language realised in the work.” The line of our reasoning in this respect will aim to show the stylistic and linguistic connections between Norwid's poetry and the works of other poets of that time. In the absence of extensive studies on the subject, at least some major problems in this area should be mentioned.<sup>4</sup>

Above all, we lack thorough research into the poet's manuscripts.<sup>5</sup> The review of the manuscript of *Vade-mecum*, published by Waclaw Borowy,<sup>6</sup>

p. 16). Nevertheless, in the ensuing parts of this study, we will have to refer to I. Fik's observations more than once. At the same time, many valuable sources of historical and literary knowledge, such as the works of T. Makowiecki, K. Górski and others, will not provide sufficient context of reference because they pay too little attention to Norwid's language itself.

- 3 Zdzisław Łapiński, *Norwid* (Kraków: Znak, 1971), p. 9; cf. the sentence: “The closed poetic world of every writer opens up completely to us only when we can read the very principle of building this world, realised in the work of the concept of language.”
- 4 It seems to be a *cliché* today to claim that the poet's links with contemporary literature are not synonymous with so-called influences. Cf. Fik, *Uwagi*, p. 12.
- 5 It must be said with sadness that the phototypical editions of manuscripts cannot fully recreate the sometimes subtle strokes of the author's pen. We were plausibly convinced of this by the studies of the manuscripts of *Pan Tadeusz*, cf. the work by Halina Cieślakowa, Henryk Misz, and Teresa Skubalanka, “Praca Mickiewicza and językiem *Pana Tadeusza* na podstawie autografów,” in: *O języku Adama Mickiewicza. Studia*, ed. Zenon Klemensiewicz (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1959), pp. 87–184.
- 6 Cyprian Norwid, *Vade-mecum*, autograph image, with preface by Waclaw Borowy (Warszawa: Towarzystwo Naukowe Warszawskie, 1947). Henceforth referred to as *Vm*.

allows us to think that both the edition of Zenon Przesmycki and that of Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki largely erase the mid-verse phonetics of the original, making concessions mainly in rhymes. This is how, for example, in the poem "Socializm" ["Socialism"] there clearly is *glób* [globe], while in Gomulicki's edition there is *glob* (PWsz II, 19), *giestem* [with gesture], while in the Gomulicki's edition *gestem* (PWsz II, 25), *mondury* [uniforms] vs. the literary form *mundury* (PWsz II, 27), *źwierciadeł* [mirrors] vs. *zwierciadeł* (PWsz II, 23). The same applies to Przesmycki-Mortkowicz's edition;<sup>7</sup> for example, in the famous poem from the *Vade-mecum* cycle which begins with the words "Kłaskaniem mając obrzękłe prawice" ["With hands swollen from clapping"], even in the rhyme to the word *liściu* [leaf], the form of *przyściu* [coming] (as found in MS) was changed to *przyjściu* (Pw 57).

Ultimately, according to the principles of editorial art, the publisher has the right (depending on the nature of the edition) to make certain changes to the legacy of the author, and this is not the point here, but we would like to support the well-known idea of the need to examine the manuscripts in parallel with studying the poet's prints.

A look at the manuscript of *Vade-mecum* enables us to notice that even the fair copy of this cycle was subject to considerable stylization. This is evidenced by such changes as the replacement of *Lecz* [but/though] with *Acz* [though <obsolete>] ("Przeszłość" ["The Past"], "Powieść" ["Novel"]), *wspomni* [recall] with *spomni* [recall <obsolete>], and the change of *człowiek* [man] to *mąż* [husband/man <obsolete>] ("Grzeczność" ["Politeness"]). This is confirmed by the conviction, in I. Fik's work among others, about Norwid's inventive, creative attitude towards language;<sup>8</sup> in this case we see how the language used in his works is detached from the colloquial ground, and given a certain archaic, hieratic style.

At the present stage of research on the manuscripts of the great Romantic poets, it would be difficult to say whether this phenomenon was more widespread. In our previous study of the manuscript of Mickiewicz's *Pan Tadeusz*, the archaization of the style occurred alongside other, even contrary tendencies

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7 Cyprian Norwid, *Poezye wybrane z całej odszukanej po dziś spuścizny poety* [Cyprian Norwid's Collected Works Found in Fragments or in their Entirety], compiled and annotated by Zenon Przesmycki (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo J. Mortkowicza, 1933). Henceforth referred to as Pw.

8 Fik, *Uwagi*, p. 87, cf. also p. 72: "The poet says something new." (However.) "the introduction of new content technically requires a new word layout ... the word appears as a symbol of new content."

to make the language more colloquial. Due to this, it had strictly limited stylistic and compositional functions.<sup>9</sup> But *Vade-mecum* was created in a different period of development of Polish Romantic poetry, probably before 1866, which at that time generated a different historical arrangement of external poetic influences. This will be addressed below.

From the stylistic point of view, we should exclude those components of poetic texts,<sup>10</sup> which, as mentioned above, result from the purely linguistic difference between the competencies of the author and those of the receivers of these texts. This distance may also indirectly affect the description of Norwid's poetic style, thus it should be analysed right at the beginning of said description.

In the history of the poet's language (not his style), we can see several significant phases, determined by the vicissitudes of his life. The first period, including his childhood and youth, extremely important due to the development of basic habits that determined the linguistic basis of all his work, is marked by the co-presence of Masovian<sup>11</sup> and borderland features. The Masovian features, which at the same time permeate the colloquial speech of the residents of Warsaw, include, for example, words without ablaut, such as: *zniesą się* (PWsz II, 343) [bear each other] (in the mid-position), *biera* (PWsz II, 367) [take] (in the rhyme), *rozmieta* (Vm 110) [disperse] (in the rhyme); accusative forms such as *drugę* (Pw 26) [second] (in the rhyme). Undoubtedly, some forms originate in dialects, e.g. *wielgoluda* (Pw 312) [giant], *letsze* (Vm 16) [lighter], *mondury* (Vm 16) [uniforms], *wziąć* (Vm 57) [take], *obejmać* (Vm 58) [embrace], *garła* (PWsz II, 185) [throats] (in the rhyme to *oparla* [lean]), *tchniej* (Vm 82) [breathe] (in the rhyme), *któs* (Vm 52) [someone], and *cós* (Vm 23) [something]. This seems to be a Masovian feature – to extend vowels in such forms as *się uczem* (PWsz II, 366) [learn] (in the rhyme to *kluczem* [key]) (although it might be assumed that the ending *-m* instead of *-my* had already been recognised as an inflexional poetism), *odleciem* (PWsz I, 96) [fly away].

There are also particular dialectal words, such as *roki* 'lata' (PWsz I, 61) [years], *ino* 'tylko' (Pw 390) [only], and *lichy* 'słaby, chory' (PWsz II, 262) [weak, sick]. These components appear in the poet's non-stylised texts. By contrast, for example, *nadobne dziewczę* [a comely lass], taken from folklore performs a stylistic function in the poem "Do wieśniaczki" (Pw 221) ["To the

9 Cf. Cieślakowa, Misz and Skubalanka, "Praca Mickiewicza," p. 150.

10 In this study, I analyse only rhymed works, as they correspond to poetic works.

11 The presence of these features in Norwid's language was indicated by A. Obrębska-Jabłońska in the quoted review of I. Fik's book, published in *Język Polski*.



Peasant Girl”], similar to the basically non-dialectal epithets *malinowy* [raspberry] and *kalinowy* [viburnum] in the poem “Próby” (Pw 183) [“Attempts”].

Alongside the Masovian features, in Norwid's prints and manuscripts we can sometimes, albeit rarely, find features of borderland Polish (the poet's father came from Lithuania), which include the features that are well known from the analyses of Adam Mickiewicz's language, such as the reduction of *ó* and palatalised consonants, cf. e.g. the rhyme *popiół* [ash] – *dopiął* (Pw 13) [button up], clearly reflecting the pronunciation of *popiół*, the notations such as *kościół* (Vm 51) [church], *wzniósłszy* (Vm 80) [having raised], *przyjacioł* (Vm 57) [friends] (whereas in the whole manuscript we can observe very careful marking of diacritical signs), rhymes *za stoł* [behind the table] – *wziął* (Vm 84) [took], *nożem* [with a knife] – *aniołem strożem* (Vm 84) [guardian angel]. However, it should be borne in mind that, for example, some differences in the distribution of *o* – *ó* were of general national character at that time, e.g. *o* in *bole* (Vm 104) [pains] (in the rhyme to *stole* [table]), *tlumaczeń* (Vm 73) [explanations], perhaps *mowił* (Vm 78) [was saying]. This category may also include: *zwierz* (Vm 35) [animal], *zwierciadeł* (Vm 23) [mirrors], and *spelźnie* (Vm 57) [fade].

Substandard (dialectal) Polish elements can be found in the poet's entire work, also not determined by a particular stylization.<sup>12</sup> These are thus systemic features.

When reading the works of the authors of the past centuries, we are not always fully aware of the temporal veil separating the language of that time from the language of today. Since Norwid was rightly regarded as a poet who used language particularly difficult for readers, this also applies to the present day audience; the description of the linguistic background on which the poet's style developed requires more comprehensive explanation. Of course, this study cannot offer such an extensive description. We should therefore highlight a number of features that occur quite often. As it is known, the Polish pronunciation in the first half and middle of the nineteenth century was characterised by the residual retention of old *é*, pronounced as /i/ or /y/, e.g.: *wié* (Vm 21) [know], *zégarek* (Vm 72) [watch], *papiér* (Vm 80) [paper], *świcą* (Vm

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12 A separate issue is the combination of such distinct features in a language system. However, it turns out that in a circle of one family such syncretism did not lead to the absolute elimination of the speech properties of one of the parents, but turned into a peaceful coexistence, differentiating the linguistic background of the child. (Today, after a deeper study of Norwid's rhymes, I would be more cautious about his supposed “borderland features”).

82) [candle] (in a rhyme), *świećq* [candle] – *błyskawicq* (Pw 55) [lightning], *w powiecie* [in the district] – *dziećię* (Pw 19) [child], *nie ma* [there is not] – *oczyma* (PWsz I, 70) [eyes]. Another feature of this phonetics was (although with some exceptions) pronouncing foreign clusters *-ja* as */-ija/* || */-yja/*, such as in *Julijusza* (PWsz I, 108), *Adrian* (read as *Adryjan*) (Pw 380 f.), and pronouncing the cluster *ge* as */gie/*, e.g. *giestem* (Vm 16). In terms of word formation and inflection we can mention, such properties, among others, as the greater possibility for gradation of adjectives and even participles, e.g. *niepoiętsze* (Vm 6) [more incomprehensible], *złotzych* (PWsz I, 69) [goldener], verb formations ending with *-nienie*, *-niony* instead of today's *-nięcie*, *-nięty*, e.g. *kwitnienia* (Vm 2) [blooming], *owionionego* (Vm 37) [wrapped], adjectives ending with *-ny* that are more frequent than today and more dependent on the meaning of the verb base, e.g. *w szelestnej sukni* (Pwp 117)<sup>13</sup> [in the rustling gown], *ręką dosiężna* (Pwp 111) [reachable with hand], and different uses of verbal affixes and stem modifications (the latter perhaps only in the colloquial style, in connection with dialectal use), e.g. *zawięzuję* (Pwp 32) [I tie up], *wycelić* (Pwp 121) [aim], *zawściągnione* (Pwp 85) [restrained], *grosz zwierzony* (Pwp 85) [entrusted money], *dla uszów w swej zatyłych dumie* (Pwp 120) [for the ears grown in their pride], and *psowa* (PWsz II, 217) [spoil]. We will return to the question of neologisms later, but here we will yet pay attention to a few more inflectional forms common at the time, e.g. *na Alpów szczycie* (PWsz II, 46) [on the peak of the Alps], *panię* (Accusative, singular) (Pw 249) [mister], *generały* (PWsz II, 172) [generals], *czynownicy* (Pwp 111) [chinovniks], *buntonwici* (PWsz I, 122) [rebel] – forms with certain connotations, which may also occasionally be found in current language use.

There are a lot of words and expressions different than in the current state of the Polish language, forms completely forgotten or with changed meanings, e.g. *mdły* (PWsz II, 227) [dull, 'weak'], *śpiewając krzepko* (PWsz II, 220) [singing vigorously, 'powerfully'], *jałowce błędnej* (Pwp 111) [erroneous heifer, 'stray'], *sensat* (Pwp 146) [sensate, 'educated man, intellectual'], *nędznik* (Pwp 115) [wretched, 'poor in the material sense'], *poważny Narodzie* (Pwp 61) [serious Nation, 'respectable, honourable'], *ubocz* (PWsz II, 256) [sideline – feminine instead of neuter], *humor* (Pwp 56) [humour, 'disposition'], *trzymać* (Pwp 116) [keep, 'judge'], *mekintosh* (PWsz II, 137) [apple cultivar, 'waterproof coat'], and many others.

13 Cyprian Norwid, *Pisma wierszem i prozą*, compilation, introduction Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki (Warszawa: PIW, 1973). Further referred to as *Pwp*.

Sometimes the semantic change of an expression, resulting from historical transformations of the language in general, can even suggest to the contemporary reader the original metaphor, as in the famous poem “Pieśń od ziemi naszej” [“Song of Our Land”]:

Tam, gdzie ostatnia świeci szubienica,  
 Tam jest mój środek dziś – tam ma stolica,  
 Tam jest mój gród.

[Where the last gallows shines,  
 There is my centre today – there is my capital,  
 There is my fortress.]

*Świeci* [shines] means here ‘widnieje’ [can be seen].<sup>14</sup>

During his emigration, Norwid's life was marked by strong foreign influences, already discussed extensively in I. Fik's monograph, including especially Latinisms and Germanisms.<sup>15</sup> However, this issue requires a thorough analysis, as it is not so simple. Not all foreign elements are stylistically relevant. Entering the new, mainly Western European, emigration environment,

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14 In a soldier's song from that time, we find a similar meaning, except that at that time the following referred to a colour lighter than the background: *tam na błoniu błyszczą kwiecie* [there on the common ground shines a flower] in Mickiewicz's texts: *Laura błysnęła w oknie, pośród mrowiska / Wrzucony motyl błyszczą, Dzień cały błyszczą wojska* [Laura flashed in the window, amidst the anthill / A thrown in butterfly shines, The whole day the army shines], often about flowers, according to *Słownik języka A. Mickiewicza* [Dictionary of A. Mickiewicz's Language]. In Mickiewicz's language *świecić* often appears in the meaning of ‘be prominent as a light spot against a dark background,’ cf.: *Niechaj nagie świecą kości, Dróg tych nie dojrzysz ... Świecą wśród lasów* [Let the naked bones shine, These roads you will not see ... They shine among the woods], according to *Słownik języka A. Mickiewicza*. As for the words discussed above, cf. the following documentation from the dictionaries – *krzepko* ‘powerfully,’ *humor* ‘disposition,’ *mdły* ‘weak,’ *poważny* ‘having authority, honourable, important’ – with quotations from Mickiewicz's prose – *błądny* ‘stray,’ *ile* corresponding to the present ‘o ile’ [whereas] or conditional ‘jeśli’ [if] is richly documented in Mickiewicz's prose. According to *Słownik Warszawski* [Warsaw Dictionary], *sensat* was still in use in the first half of the nineteenth century, as for *nędnik* [wretched, miserable], let us recall the Polish title of the translated novel by V. Hugo [Pol. *Nędznicy*] as a proof of the persistence of the old meaning. According to *Słownik Warszawski*, *ubocz* was known throughout the entire nineteenth century. *Trzymać* ‘judge about sth’ is listed in *Słownik* edited by Doroszewski as an expression found in the works of writers from the first half of the nineteenth century.

15 Fik, *Uwagi*, p. 25 f.

Norwid, like other Polish artists in exile, also entered the circle of extended civilization and culture, both in the material and linguistic sense. Mickiewicz, for example, wrote about *juste-milieu*, and Słowacki about *manatees* (i.e. sea cows), but none of them was as entangled in current European issues as Norwid. Such deep participation in the problems of the world at that time must have inevitably led to a weakening of contacts with the original environment, with the country, with the mother tongue.

Norwid, as a poet of declining Romanticism, was creating in a different historical situation, although several of the main structural principles of his style derive directly from the poetics of Mickiewicz or Słowacki. The separation from the living language of the nation, from the language of folklore, goes hand in hand with the intellectualization of poetic expression – the use of foreign, technical, or scientific terms – types of neologisms. The poem “O historii” [“On History”] becomes a kind of poetic scientific dissertation, while such notions as *socialism* or *puritanism* become the themes of poems. Terms such as *element* (PWsz I, 127), *dysertacja* (PWsz I, 127) [dissertation], *eksperyment* (PWsz II, 225) [experiment] proliferate during the period of emigration.<sup>16</sup>

A completely different context in Norwid’s works has antique echoes, not only reinforced by his personal contact with the art and culture of Rome during his Italian travels, but also determined by the multitude of arts he practised, as well as by his historical sense, i.e. the links between antiquity and the old Polish language, along with Norwid’s historiosophical ideas. Thus, at this point we come to the analysis of the poetic programme and its specification, i.e. the issues of the poet’s style.

This style developed as a concretization<sup>17</sup> of various types of the poet’s language, including those already characterised in the previous part of this article.

Most of the significant stylistic and linguistic categories of Norwid’s poetry result from their affinity with (or often perverse relation to) the style

16 Waław Borowy reproached I. Fik for giving only selected examples (Fik, *Uwagi*, p. 167). As for this issue, we have to admit that a style researcher who does not use statistical methods is always satisfied with a selection of the examples described. The essence of the scientific nature (i.e. reliability, truthfulness) of such an analysis lies in the reliable categorization of the mentioned examples.

17 The definition of style as a kind of specific concretization of language is discussed in more detail in my work “Założenia analizy stylistycznej,” in: *Problemy metodologiczne współczesnego literaturoznawstwa*, ed. Henryk Markiewicz, Janusz Sławiński (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1977), pp. 260–266.

of Romantic poets. However, before we provide a more detailed description of these categories, we need to define the term itself.<sup>18</sup> The term 'stylistic category' is used here to refer to the concentration of characteristic features, or put differently, the concentration of linguistic components that are vehicles for these features. A stylistic category differs from other linguistic categories in its reference to a specific text or set of texts, whereas linguistic categories relate to a system and to texts. Moreover – there is no room here for a detailed analysis of this concept – the stylistic category as such indicates the presence of selected stylistic components and their functions.

A particularly characteristic category for Norwid's style is the use of neologisms. The poet's neologisms were studied by Fik, who paid particular attention to compound formations featuring the segments *wszech-* [omni-], *nie-* [non-], and *bez-* [without-], but also to neologic verbs, such as *psalmić się* [to psalm], e.g. in the quote: *Gdy tyle bólów, smutków, tyle się dziś psalmi* [When so many pains, sorrows, are so much psalmed today]. Above all, however, the researcher's attention was focused on the so-called hyphenated formations, involving either combined phraseological units (e.g. *mądrość-klamstwa* [wisdom-of-lie] vs. *klamstwo-wiedzy*, PWSz I, 123 [lie-of-wisdom]) or the separation of the morphemes of a single word (e.g. *cało-lico*, PWSz I, 195 [whole-faced]).<sup>19</sup> This issue was also addressed by Bożena Sikorska in an article published in an ephemeral student magazine,<sup>20</sup> entitled "Zagadnienia związków języka C. Norwida z epoką na przykładzie nowotworów," in which, based on Włodzimierz Ćwik's and my own research on the neologisms of Romantic poets, she convincingly concluded that all the formal types of Norwid's neologisms stem from the poetic practices of that era. A large number of these new expressions in Norwid's poetry are linked to other trends in the development of the poetic style after 1840.<sup>21</sup> The poet expanded hyphenated formations and word clusters to an enormous extent.

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18 This issue deserves a separate article, as does the reconstruction of the style theory based on the poet's direct statements. Much has already been written about this subject, especially in connection with Norwid's theory of silence. Unfortunately, this problem needs to be put aside for an intended monograph on the poet's style.

19 Cf. Fik, *Uwagi*, p. 40 f.

20 *Młoda Myśl. Dwumiesięcznik Kół Naukowych*, year I, Vol. 1 (Rada Uczelniana ZSP UMK, 1958), pp. 38–50.

21 According to my calculations, which did not include Norwid's neologisms, the total number of "peculiar" formations in the years 1820–1830 accounts for 40% of the new word-formations, in the years 1830–1840, 80%, and in the years 1840–1850, 78% of

Sikorska rightly notices here both the influence of the language used by the philosophers of that time, and Norwid's striving for poetic etymologization, which was supposed to lead the author to meanings hidden in the word under its external form, which Norwid called the *letter*. Fik wrote extensively about the poet's etymologies, drawing attention to the various functions of the word in Norwid's poetry and to his peculiar theory in this respect. This theory emphasises the sign function of the word, i.e. the fact that an extrasensory content, which the poet called the *spirit*, is revealed in the word. Hence his extremely serious attitude to the text he formulated, his respect for every word and the thesis that a word not spoken also speaks and is a sign.

If we now turn our attention to these etymological ideas of Norwid, we must recall that they belonged, in a way, to the mainstream of the epoch, that all outstanding poets were etymologising to some extent, and the most fantastic manifestation of that was Adam Mickiewicz's "Pomysły etymologiczne" ["Etymological ideas"].

It is impossible not to mention at this point the role in popularising etymology, which was played by Jan Nepomucen Kamiński's study "Czy nasz język jest filozoficzny,"<sup>22</sup> full of not only neologisms (*umostowie* 'logic,' *postaciowny*, *wid*, and *wied umu* etc.), but also – which in this case is even more important – hyphenated formations, such as *przy-czucie*, *Lellum-po-Lellum* [namby-pamby], *ślepo-umny*, *u-ważać*, and *za-sumać się*. This work was extremely popular at that time and, among others, quoted by Mickiewicz at his Paris lectures. Thus, in general, Norwid's neology, although in many respects exaggerated, fits into the developmental style of late Romantic poetry.

The second category, emerging as a result of the analysis of the poet's style, includes silence, understatement, and allusion. I subsume these concepts under one category because, despite some differences, they are linked, generally speaking, by the phenomenon of semantic and formal-linguistic ellipsis.

Although the stylistic figure of allusion originates from ancient rhetoric, its real domain was Romantic poetry – through reminiscences (even *Pan Tadeusz* starts with reminiscences from Jan Kochanowski's epigram) and allusion proper. The master of the latter was Słowacki; some of his texts, such as *Balladyna* or the poems "W Szwajcarii" ["In Switzerland"] and "Anhelli" are spun from an intricate yarn of reminiscences and understatements, most often

words of dubious novelty collected by me. See Teresa Skubalanka, *Neologizmy w polskiej poezji romantycznej* (Toruń: PWN, 1962), p. 181.

22 Printed in the yearbook *Haliczanin* (Lwów, 1830), Vols. 1, 2.

originating in literature. A special place belongs here to the poem *Beniowski* with its distinct meta-commentary.

However, the beginning of this deconstruction of text semantics coincides with the emergence of ballads, where the words *mysterious* and *strange* gain an aesthetically positive value. In the ballads, we can find a programme of understatement or silence. Here we can recall the famous stanza of Mickiewicz's "Świtezianka" ["The Nixie"]:

Ona po srebrnym płąsa jeziorze,  
 On pod tym jęczy modrzewiem.  
 Któż jest młodzieniec? – strzelcem był w borze.  
 A kto dziewczyna – ja nie wiem.<sup>23</sup>

[She plays where the lake glitters silver and clear,  
 He groans under this larch tree,  
 Who is the lad? – he was a forest ranger here,  
 And who is the maiden? – she is strange to me.]

The poetics of silence has also woven the clever tissue of the composition of Jacek Soplica's deathbed confession in *Pan Tadeusz*.

Unfortunately, this category in Norwid's poetry has not been given a more detailed, linguistic and stylistic analysis. It can be assumed that it is as multifaceted, not omitting literary reminiscences and allusions, as in works by other Romantics, e.g. in the poem "Częstochowskie wiersze" (PWsz I, 141) ["Częstochowa Rhymes"], or in the poem "Do Józefa Bohdana Zaleskiego" ["To Józef Bohdan Zaleski"], imitating his style:

Ej – i z lutnią złoto-runą,  
 Złoto-ustą, siedmiostruną,  
 Nieba obiec sklepy  
 Lżej – niż piosnkę raz zaczętą  
 Już we fletnię dąć pękniętą,  
 Jak włóczęga ślepy.

(PWsz I, 85)<sup>24</sup>

23 Adam Mickiewicz, "Świtezianka," in: Adam Mickiewicz, *Dziela*, Vol. 1: *Wiersze* (Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1955), p. 118.

24 Some of the reminiscences are characterised by dubious allusiveness, e.g. in the following passage imitating Słowacki's style:

Więc – z tym Aniołem, ponad szatą ciała,  
 Co na kolana zgięła się i padła,

[Hey – and to run with a gold-plated lute  
With golden mouth, with seven strings,  
Around the heavenly vault.

Is easier – than a song once started  
To blow with the cracked pipes,  
Like a blind rolling stone.]

Sensitive to the styles of other poets, Norwid does not melt his stylistic originality in allusions and pastiches, as Słowacki did sometimes.

Undoubtedly, the interrupted poem suggests the continuation of the lyrical action, as such is the case in “Bema pamięci żałobny-rapsod” [“A Funeral Rhapsody in Memory of General Bem”], where in the ending we read:

I powleczem korowód, smęcąc ujęte snem grody,  
W bramy bijąc urnami, gwizdając w szczyrby toporów,  
Aż się mury Jerycha porozwalają jak kłody,  
Serca zmdlałe oczucą – pleśń z oczu zgarną narody...

.....

Dalej – dalej – –

(Pwp 35)

[And we'll drag the cortege, troubling slumbering forts,  
Hitting their gates with urns, whistling through notches in axes,  
Till Jericho's walls go tumbling like logs,  
Swooned hearts will revive — nations clear mold from their eyes...

.....

On — and on — —]<sup>25</sup>

The interrogative is considered one of the most common figures of understatement. Norwid's poems are full of questions, but it should be noted that their functions are diverse. Rarely does the question, as was the case in the ballads, show us the uncognisability and mystery of the seemingly familiar world:

Ja, duch, stanąłem, jak fontanna biała,  
Odrywająca się z swego zwierciadła –

(Pw 33)

[So – with this Angel, above the bodily robe,  
Which bent to the knee and fell off,  
I, the spirit, stood like a white fountain,  
Breaking away from its reflection –].

25 English translation by Danuta Borchardt in collaboration with Agata Brajerska-Mazur, in: Cyprian Norwid, *Poems* (New York: Archipelago Books, 2011), p. 93.



“Czemu zwaliska? i czemu zasłona?  
 Czemu niewieścia?” – krytyk niech już pyta,  
 ...  
 Ja – nie wiem... widzę i rzecz kreślę smutno  
 Jakbym był jednym z ciągnących żurawi,  
 Co cień swój wiodą przez masztowe płótno,  
 Nie myśląc, czy stąd obraz się zostawi!...

(Pwp 35)

[“Why ruins? and why a veil?  
 Why a woman’s?” – let the critic demand,  
 ...  
 I – do not know... I see and sketch this sadly  
 As though I were one of the flying cranes  
 That drag their shadow across the sails  
 Not thinking whether any trace remains!...]<sup>26</sup>

The vast majority of the questions in Norwid's poems are related to the category of discursiveness, which will be discussed below. At this point, we should also mention the formal ellipsis which supports silence (an example from the poem “Wczora-i-ja” [“Yesterday-and-I”]):

W uszach mi szumi (a nie znam z teorii,  
 Co burza?) –  
 Więc śnię i czuję, jak się tom historii  
 Z-marmurza...

(Pw 56)

[In my ears a roar (not theory – don't I know  
 A storm?) –  
 So I dream and sense that history's tome  
 Turns marble-hard...]<sup>27</sup>

The basis of the myth of the so-called “incomprehensibility” of the poet was often the accumulation of the many stylistic tendencies of his predecessors, taken to the extreme. The constant parabolicity of Norwid's poetry was also a significant reason for his lack of contact with the reader.

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26 English translation by Adam Czerniawski in: Cyprian Norwid, *Selected Poems* (London: Anvill Press, 2004), p. 37.

27 English translation by Danuta Borchardt: Norwid, *Poems*, p. 117.

The category of parabolicity (symbolism, allegory) in Norwid's style is associated with his use of adages. Both of these properties lead to the semantic "thickening" of the poet's texts, which all the researchers of his mature poetry paid close attention to, and to which Michał Głowiński even devoted a separate study, regarding Norwid's parables.<sup>28</sup> Norwid's poetic texts are built as if on two parallel planes – on the plane of the surface structure and on the plane of the deep structure<sup>29</sup> (in a more autonomous way than occurs normally). This arrangement of the text ensures maximal semanticization, since even a tiny fragment of reality described in the language of the surface structure gains additional meaning in the deep structure of the text. This is what happens, for example, in the poem "Moja piosnka (I)" ["My song (I)"] with a symbolically represented *black thread*:

Źle, źle zawsze i wszędzie  
 Ta nić czarna się przędzie:  
 Ona za mną, przede mną i przy mnie,  
 ...

Nie rozerwę, bo silna,  
 Może święta choć mylna,  
 Może nie chcę rozerwać tej wstążki;

(Pw 16)

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28 Michał Głowiński, "Norwida wiersze-przypowieści," in: *Cyprian Norwid. W 150-lecie urodzin. Materiały konferencji naukowej 23–25 września 1971*, ed. Maria Żmigrodzka (Warszawa: PIW, 1973) [published in the first volume of this edition as: "Norwid's Poem-Parables," pp. 337–374 – editor's notes]. The contribution contains important observations, resulting from previous analyses of the category of parabolicity, namely the statement that there is a "dialectic of concreteness and schematicity" (p. 73) and that allegory is a "two-level structure" (p. 79). The author sees in Norwid's poetry a combination of conceptual and poetic language through free assembly of expression. A similar statement can be found in Zdzisław Łapiński, who demonstrates in Norwid's poetic style, among others, "the tactics of combining very sensory, very specific representations with elements of abstract concepts" (Łapiński, *Norwid*, p. 29). In connection with a number of other problems raised in the article, such as the perception of tradition, irony, or brevity, Łapiński rightly describes Norwid's poetic expression as "having maximal content," but "at the same time, the expression [leaves] a wide field of diverse, opposing and complementary semantic intentions" (pp. 27–28). The very last sentence seems disputable.

29 Cf. Teun Andrianus van Dijk, *Beiträge zur generativen Poetik* (München: Bayerischer Schulbuch Verlag, 1972).

[Oh, sorrow, sorrow from end to beginning,  
 The black thread is spinning:  
 It is behind, it's ahead, and it's with me  
 ...  
 I can't rip it – it's strong,  
 Perhaps holy, though wrong,  
 Perhaps I've no wish to tear this ribbon;]<sup>30</sup>

The growth of deep planes can be seen especially in the poet's later works, for instance, consider Poem LXXXIII from the *Vade-mecum* cycle, entitled "Sens-świata" ["Sense-of-the-World"] based on various detailed facts from the banquet, which reveal a different content at the end of the work:

Sens z tego, że dziwnie przewrotnym jest świat:  
 A gdy nie masz miejsca, to cię żenią,  
 A skoro pogrzebią – dodają sto lat,  
 A gdy zapominają – cenią!

(PWsz II, 117)

[The point is that the world is strangely perverse:  
 And when you don't have a place, they'll get you married,  
 And once they have buried you – they add a hundred years,  
 And when they forget you – they appreciate you!]

In this respect, we must recall the transformation of Mickiewicz's poetry – prophetism growing in exile, the sense of an exceptional, missionary role in the history of the nation, expressed in the parabolic works *Księgi narodu polskiego i pielgrzymstwa polskiego* [*Books of the Polish Pilgrimage*] and *Zdania i uwagi* [*Opinions and Remarks*], which perhaps have not yet been properly presented in the entirety of the poet's work, especially since the author himself added in the title: *z dzieł Jakuba Bema, Anioła Ślązaka (Angelus Silesius) i Sę-Martena* [*from the works of Jakub Boehme, Angelus Silesius and Louis-Claude de Saint Martin*].<sup>31</sup>

These modest notes, in the form of a diary, a chaotic collection of loose reflections, constitute a *pendant* work for many other works by Norwid – the interpreter of reality, squeezing out the essence of the facts described. Of course, as a stylistician, I have to limit myself here to the most superficial interpretations

30 English translation by Danuta Borchardt: Norwid, *Poems*, p. 79.

31 Mickiewicz, *Zdania i uwagi*, p. 383. Anyway, the issue of parabolic affinity between the two poets goes beyond the scope of *Zdania i uwagi*.

(although the selection of meanings introduced is usually stylistically marked). Therefore, it is worth noting, among other things, the variety of construction of particular sentences and remarks. There are a lot of questions that set a problem (e.g. *Gdzie szkoła sceniczników, wodzów i śpiewaków? / Tam, gdzie szkoła dla mrówek, bestyi i ptaków* [Where is the school for stage performers, chiefs and singers? / There where is a school for ants, beasts and birds]), there is a discursive line, a semantically generalising form of sentences, and there are also characteristic conceptual antinomies (*Trzeźwy człowiek bezpiecznie przy ogniu się grzeje, / Pijak ledwie się zbliży, na popiół goreje* [A sober man is safely warming himself by the fire, / A drunkard barely approaches and sets on fire and burns to ashes]).

These features are multiplied in Norwid's poetic style, especially in the *Vade-mecum* cycle. However, in relation to Mickiewicz's *Zdania i uwagi*, we can notice a number of significant structural differences in the composition of the epigrammatic text. The most important is the two-level semantics of an expression as an implementation of the poetic principle of silence.

Not all of Norwid's poetic texts (like those of other poets) have a two-level structure in the stylistic sense – sometimes only the use of a trope indicates the existence of the semantic depth of a certain text section.<sup>32</sup> For stylisticians, both levels are important, although stylisticians, by their very nature, focus on the textual surface.<sup>33</sup> This raises an extremely interesting problem of the adequacy of each level. According to Van Dijk, the deep text is a microtext, while the surface text is redundant in relation to it.<sup>34</sup> In the case of Norwid's parabolic texts, the situation is opposite; the reader has to interpolate the missing semantico-grammatical particles of the read text in order to obtain a semantically complete text, i.e. a text that is accessible to him.

An additional structural complication of Norwid's poetic works results from the distinct semantics of his language. It is worth quoting here an important statement by Zofia Stefanowska about the independence of individual words

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32 Whether each text has such a double structure in the linguistic sense depends again on adopting such and not other methodological assumptions in the area of linguistics.

33 Teun Andrianus van Dijk is of different opinion. He writes: "Der (Oberflächen-) Satz kann nun so zusagen als stilistische Einheit angesehen werden," *Beiträge zur generativen Poetik*, p. 97.

34 van Dijk, *Beiträge zur generativen Poetik*, p. 55. According to some conceptions, the text of the artistic style is characterised precisely by a lack of redundancy.

used by Norwid, from their context. For instance, the word *lira* [lyre] is 'the sound form of poetry,' *litera* [letter] is 'a form of the work or the external, formal form of the word which has its specific meaning.'<sup>35</sup>

The usage of adages, expressed in so-called generalising sentences (affirmative mode, detached nouns, sometimes personifications, frequent nominal constructions, evaluating terms etc.) coincides with the category of hieraticity, which was examined by, among others, Marian Piechal.<sup>36</sup> Hieraticity is Norwid's most striking stylistic legacy inherited from his great predecessors. It was particularly intense in Słowacki's last works, e.g. in his constant variants of *Król-Duch* [*King-Spirit*], the fragments of which were known to Norwid (not without significance are also his brother's direct contacts with the dying poet), as evidenced by, among other writings, the reminiscences of this Genesis poem.<sup>37</sup>

The hieraticity of style is expressed primarily in the use of archaisms (both in the proper function, i.e. those characterising a bygone era, and in various secondary functions). The plane of archaization is often mixed in Norwid's poetry with his contemporary time, e.g. in the poem "Bema pamięci żałobny-rapsod" or in the poem "Epos-nasza" (1848) ["Our Epic"] which revises the theme of Don Quixote. Hence the archaisms used in that work, such as *przechrobry* (PWsz I, 161) [valiant] or *z wieżyce* (PWsz I, 161) [from a tall tower], which serve as means of antique stylization, in the whole stylistic layer of the work, gain additional, in a way "systemic," meanings of projection into the contemporary plane.

Generally speaking, it can be said that the vast majority of archaic forms, expressions, and syntactic constructions do not serve proper archaization, but rather poetic hieratization of the style. These include inflectional forms such as *mężę* (PWsz II, 110) [husbands/men], participles and adjectives such as *polan*

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35 See the comments on this subject by I. Fik who wrote about the theory of words in Norwid's philosophy: "The word is the most general synthesis of the spiritual and material element," etc., *Uwagi*, p. 55. As for the quoted Zofia Stefanowska, cf. her article "Norwidowski Farys," in: *C. Norwid. W 150-lecie urodzin*, p. 559, where the author writes that one can observe in the poet a "phenomenological treatment of words, which results in the conviction that the word is equipped with a relevant meaning and that it retains that meaning independently of the context."

36 Marian Piechal, *Mit Pigmaliona. Rzecz o Norwidzie* (Warszawa: PIW, 1974), p. 83.

37 Here we should refer to such characteristic details as the use of the words *rapsod* (Pw 54) [rhapsody], repeatedly *glob* (Pwp 81) [globe], and *harfiarz* [harpist]. Unfortunately, due to space limitations, this documentation cannot be expanded here.

(Pwp 33) [wet/poured upon] and *mocen* (Pw 37) [powerful/strong], instrumental forms of plural masculine nouns and even feminine nouns ending with *-y, -i* (*z kapłany*, Pw 89 [with priests], *Bazaltowymi ... wargi*, PWSz II, 307 [with Basaltic ... lips]), genitive forms of feminine nouns with soft stems ending in *-e* (*my nie mamy ziemie*, Pw 452 [we do not have land]), and a lot of archaic pronouns, prepositions and conjunctions (*Ośle a konie szły* Pw 382 [Donkeys and horses walked], *okrom* Pw 45, ‘apart from,’ *niżli* Pw 30, ‘before,’ *owdzie* Pw 63, ‘there,’ *ile*, Pwp 26 ‘if’). There are also some archaic nouns, such as *zbroica* (Pw 387) [armour] and *białogłowa* (Pw 37) [lady], where we have the accumulation of functions. Another exponent of the hieratic style may be religious terminology.

Another well-known stylistic category characteristic of Norwid is irony.<sup>38</sup> As a specific semantic function of the components of language, it usually coexists with paradox and antinomy, with word play. In this respect, the poet turns out to be a child of his epoch who was provided patronage by such ironists as Byron and Słowacki. Without addressing here the role of irony in Norwid’s literary vision of the world, we would like, nonetheless, to discuss a few examples that reveal the stylistic and linguistic character of this category.

The contrasting parts of a comparison, which characterises the concept that is not so much elevated, but positively evaluated, have an ironic function. An example from the poem “Czułość” [“Tenderness”]:

Czułość – bywa jak pełny wojen krzyk,  
I jak szemrzących źródeł prąd,  
I jako wtór pogrzebny...

\*

I jak plecionka długa z włosów blond,  
Na której wdowiec nosić zwykł  
Zegarek srebrny – – –

(PWSz II, 85)

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38 Stefan Kołaczkowski (*Dwa studia. Fredro, Norwid*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Droga, 1934) and other researchers of Norwid have devoted much attention to this problem. Cf. also Maria Straszewska’s study: “Paradoksy w liryce Norwida,” in: *Nowe studia o Norwidzie*, ed. Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki and Jan Zygmunt Jakubowski (Warszawa: PWN, 1961), which contains a description of oxymorons, seemingly contradictory sentences and other exponents of this category with emphasis on their worldview-expository functions.

[Tenderness – it oft like a war-drenched cry,  
And like wellsprings' murmuring whirl,  
And like a burial lament...  
\*

And like a braided long blond curl,  
Upon which the widower is wont to wear  
His silver watch – – –]<sup>39</sup>

Ironic reinterpretation (an example of another phenomenon, here about one of the civilizations):

Zakrywająca?... cieszy znów inaczej:  
Pokaż jej łez zdrój?... ona odpowiada:  
“Nie trzeba zważać na to... co? to znaczy!...  
Może – deszcze pada.”

(Pwp 113)<sup>40</sup>

[Covering?... pleases again differently:  
Show her a stream of tears?... she answers:  
“You don't have to care... what? this means!...  
Maybe – it's raining”].

And here is an example of irony that arises against the background of an anti-nomic sequence of concepts, which was particularly characteristic of Słowacki:<sup>41</sup>

Ogień-boski za-przestał być Dziejów skazówką.  
(Natomiast – tanie mamy zapalki-chemiczne ...)

(PWsz II, 90)

[The divine-fire has ceased to be the sign of History.  
(But – we have cheap matchsticks-chemical ...)]

Śmiech człowieka był wściekły ...  
Którym wybrzmiewał sarkazm, chrypnąc z nienawiści:  
“Patrzcie!... jak Duch-stworzenia obuwie mi czyści!”

(PWsz II, 133)

39 English translation by Danuta Borhardt: Norwid, *Poems*, p. 53.

40 This excerpt from the poem “Sieroctwo” [“Orphanhood”] shows that the publishers hold the author's punctuational mannerisms in unnecessary reverence. This applies especially to question marks.

41 Cf. his famous juxtapositions: *Co za dziwne stworzenie z mgły i galarety* [What a strange creature from fog and jelly!] (Grabiec's statement from *Balladyna*), or *Duchowi memu dała w pysk i poszła!* [She gave my spirit a smack across the face and went away!] (Fantazy's utterance).

[The man's laughter was wild ...  
 Echoing with sarcasm, hoarse with hate:  
 "See!... how the Creation-Spirit cleans my shoes!"]

At the end of this – certainly incomplete – analysis of the relations between Norwid's poetic style and the style of Romantic poetry, we will draw attention to the common lexico-semantic category of the cosmic landscape. This field includes names such as *glob* (Pw 44 f.) [globe], *ocean* (PWsz I, 10), *otchłań* (PWsz I, 105) [abyss], *piorun* (PWsz II, 32) [lightning], etc.<sup>42</sup> There would also be more polar opposites, such as the field of melancholy with very characteristic (especially for Słowacki) *smętek* (Pwp 69) [gloom], *smętno* (Pwp 55) [wistfully], the field of angelic benevolence, heroism, etc. However, such an analysis requires extensive documentation, which would grow into a separate study. At the centre of these semantic fields there would be keywords such as *anioł* [angel], *lud* [people], or *smutek* [sadness]. In addition to these, we should also mention lexical witnesses of even early Romanticism, such as *larwa* (Pwp 78) 'larva,' *luby* (Pw 5) [paramour], *blady* (Pw 7) [pale], *magnetyzm* (Pwp 69) [magnetism], *obłąd* (PWsz II, 66) [madness], which – unlike the keywords – in Norwid's mature poetry no longer have the strength to organise huge word groups around them.

We yet have to try to explain how Norwid differs from other great Romantic poets in the face of so many stylistic affinities here revealed. There is probably

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42 For comparison, here are some examples from the works of other Romantic poets: *Wszystkie żywioły naciągnął jak struny: / A wodząc po nich wichry i pioruny / Jedną pieśń śpiewa* [He stretched all the elements like strings: / And running on them winds and thunders / One song is sung], Adam Mickiewicz, *Zdania i uwagi*, p. 343; *Rozumie ludzki!*... *Świat cię niezmiernym zowie oceanem*... *Otchłanie ryjesz i w górę się ciskasz* [Human mind! ... The world calls thee the immeasurable ocean ... Thou dig the abyss and shoot up], p. 351, *A ja czekam, aż piorun uderzy* [And I have waited until the lightning strikes]; Juliusz Słowacki, "Król-Duch," in: *Dzieła wszystkie*, ed. Juliusz Kleiner, Vol. 7 (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1956) p. 145; *Niech mię ognistą otoczy otchłanią*... [Let him surround me with a fiery abyss...], p. 148, *glob* [globe] frequent in Słowacki's texts, cf. Andrzej Boleski, *Słownictwo Juliusza Słowackiego (1825–1849)* (Łódź, Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1956), p. 97; *I jędma bólu, która we mnie żyje, / Mózg mój wydrąży na otchłań piekielną* [And the witch of pain, which lives in me, / My brain will hollow out to the abyss of hell] Zygmunt Krasiński, *Poezye wybrane*, compiled by Stanisław Wyrzykowski (Kraków: Wydawnictwo J. Mortkowicza, 1911), p. 15, etc. An unquestionable argument in this respect could be the statistical data which, however, cannot be provided. This lack is counterbalanced by the extensive knowledge



no need to point out the difficulties involved in examining this issue. The main reason for these difficulties can be seen in the lack of exhaustive and yet synthetic studies on the poetic styles of our writers. On the basis of previous research and my own reading of the texts by Mickiewicz, Słowacki, and Krasiński, I can – at least conditionally – define several stylistic categories that distinguish Norwid's poetry from those poets.

Above all, it seems that this is the category of specific poetic non-pictoriality. In Norwid's poetic descriptions of lyrical or epic reality there are no sufficient semantic clusters creating fields that would convey – in a way appropriate for a literary work – complexes of phenomena that belong to sensorially and concretely cognisable reality.<sup>43</sup>

This non-pictoriality does not apply to all works, besides the numerous texts in which it occurs in a dispersed form. For example, the journey of the ray of light in "Dedykacja" ["Dedication"] blends the described reality into one semantic field:

Patrzyłem, jak przez szyb brylanty  
 Promień słońca wblysł – i zalotnie  
 Na rzeźbionem czole Atalanty,  
 Drżąc, rozwachlarzył się stokrotnie.  
 – Potem, przez liście bluszczów w wazie  
 Kropli, i piasku żdźbła kryształił,  
 I aksamit czerwonych kotar  
 Po łamiących się fałdach palił, –  
 Nim złocony grzbiet książki otarł...

(Pw 146)

[I watched a ray of sunlight flash in  
 Through the diamonds of glass – and flirtatiously  
 On the carved forehead of Atalanta,  
 Trembling, splitting itself into hundreds.  
 – Then, through the ivy leaves in a vase

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of literary historians on the subjects of the cited poetry, and it is known that certain subjects attract specific vocabulary. As for the words-witnesses and keywords mentioned here, it should be noted that they occur throughout the entire period of Norwid's work, although some of them, the so-called "wild vocabulary" is characteristic of his youthful work. Cf. Zofia Trojanowicz, *Rzecz o młodości Norwida* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 1968), pp. 88–89.

43 The author of this work is aware of other possibilities for defining poetic imagery.

It beaded, and crystallised the grains of sand,  
 And it burnt the velvet of red curtains  
 Through the breaking folds, –  
 Before it rubbed the gilded spine of the book...]

In this sense we can refer to “Bema pamięci żałobny-rapsod” as pictorial, while, for instance, “Fortepian Szopena” [“Chopin’s Grand Piano”] has a fragmentary structure of images (except for the ending) – perhaps because the whole of the poetic description is broken by the syncretism of arts, especially the presence of music.

One of the manifestations of the dichotomy of concretism and abstraction in Norwid’s poetry are quite numerous personifications, such as:

Widzę ... głupstwo czerstwe, jak dryadę  
 Rumianą, w płąsach, w chichotaniu całą –  
 I czczość... a wyżej nad owym chaosem,  
 Kometę sądu z okrwawionym włosom –

(Pw 79)

[I see ... stale foolishness as a dryad  
 Ruddy-faced, dancing, all giggling –  
 And emptiness... and above that chaos,  
 The comet of judgement with bleeding hair –]

In the case of personification, the background of the deep textual structure remains non-pictorial, but this cannot be generalised to other works of the poet. With all the abstractness of depth, there is no continuity in the logic of reasoning that characterises the scientific style. Non-pictorial poems are at best a collection of reflections, or aphorisms, but not (with few exceptions) rhymed scientific treatises.

What makes the poet different from other Romantic poets is the constant discursive (dramatic) nature of his poetry. This lyrical dialogicity can take the form of successive questions and answers (and not only in poems stylised as letters or dedications), e.g. in the poem “Wielkość” [“Greatness”]:

Wiesz, kto jest w i e l k i m ? – posłuchaj mię chwilę,  
 Nauczę ciebie  
 Poznawać wielkość nie tylko w mogile,  
 W dziejach lub w niebie.

(PWsz I, 348)

[You know who is great? – Listen to me for a while,  
I will teach you  
To recognise greatness not only in the grave,  
In history or in heaven.]

Another example is the poem “Na zgon poezji” [“On the Death of Poetry”]:

Ona umarła!... są-ż smutniejsze zgony?  
I jak pogrzebać tę śliczną osobę?  
Umarła ona na ciężką chorobę,  
Która się zowie: p i e n i ą d z i b r u l i o n y .

(PWsz II, 200)

[She is dead!... Are there sadder deaths?  
And how to bury this lovely person?  
She died of a serious illness,  
Which is called: m o n e y a n d n o t e b o o k s .]

Another manifestation of discursiveness are the apostrophes to the recipient of the text, poetic meta-commentaries that run through Norwid's entire work, e.g. *Ona zaś [mówię: Poezja], swe ramię / Blade ku oknu niosąc, znak mi dała* (PWsz II, 200) [Whereas she (I say: Poetry), carrying her arm / Pale towards the window, gave me a sign].<sup>44</sup>

Finally, the third peculiar categorical feature of Norwid's work seems to be the renaissance of classical tastes, emphasised by many researchers, which also exerts its mark on the poetic style, mainly on vocabulary and often laconic syntax. Known to Polish poets for centuries, and partly lost in Romanticism, the constant evocation of antiquity in the form of names of mythical and historical figures of antiquity is revived in Norwid's poetry:

Wyobraźnio!... pani Penelopo,  
Znam cię – i lekką jak pomykasz stopą  
Po spopielonych sercach twych amantów...  
Znam cię – i wachlarz twój przerozmaity,  
I gest – i słodkich zapiewy dyszkantów,  
I moc – i p r a w d ę t w ą – i – jestem syty...

(PWsz I, 154–155)

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44 The discursiveness described here differs from a similar category, for example in

[Oh imagination!... Lady Penelope,  
 I know you – as when your nimble foot  
 Skips over your suitors' ashen hearts...  
 I know you – and your mottled fan,  
 Your gesture – the sweet descants' chant,  
 Your power – and t r u t h – and – I rest content...]<sup>45</sup>

The hieroglyphic nature of Norwid's poetry felt by the readers who were his contemporaries, often called "darkness" and "incomprehensibility," derived from many sources: the laconic and elliptical nature of his expression was associated here with excessive symbolism. The meanings of various words important to the author (written in italics or spaced out) were understandable against the background of his entire world-view; in this respect Fik aptly points out the need to recreate the occasional meanings of such words (often the poet himself defines them poetically in the context). To all this, one should add the breadth of the intellectual horizons of the creator and the related multitude of concepts from different cultural circles.<sup>46</sup> The whole style is additionally covered with a patina of archaisms specially prepared or natural for us.<sup>47</sup>

Nevertheless, there is no sufficiently justified need to study and read the style of this great poet's works in isolation from the time in which he lived and created.<sup>48</sup>

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*Beniowski*, in that in this poem interjections originating from the narrator bring lyrical elements to the epic matter of events. By the way, the dramatic style of Norwid's poetic style is presented differently by Mieczysław Jastrun in the sketch "Monolog Norwida," in: *Nowe studia o Norwidzie*, p. 35 f. On the other hand, Z. Łapiński rightly points to the poet's implemented idea that speech should be "dramatic," dialogical, in: Łapiński, *Norwid*, p. 10.

45 English translation by Adam Czerniawski, p. 33.

46 Cf. the seminal book by Kazimierz Wyka, *Cyprian Norwid. Poeta i sztukmistrz* (Kraków: PAU, 1948), where the author, among others, draws attention to the presence in Norwid's poetic language of the "language of artistic technique" of a painter and sculptor (p. 161). This subject was also addressed by K. Górski, T. Makowiecki, Z. Szmydtowa and others.

47 This work, which is primarily a sketch of the poet's style determined by native culture, completely ignores Norwid's important stylistic links with Western European poetry of that time. The identification of these links could even lead to the modification of the final theses of this study. There is still some research work to be done in this area.

48 It is difficult to agree entirely with J. Przyboś's view that "Norwid's poetic path was his own, consciously marked out for and by himself. ... He rejected virtually everything that in his time was deemed and that today is regarded as poetry." Julian Przyboś, "Próba Norwida," in: *Nowe studia o Norwidzie*, p. 74.

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Henryk Siewierski

## “Architecture Of Word:” On Norwid’s Theory and Practice of the Word

**Abstract:** This paper attempts to reconstruct Cyprian Norwid’s theory of word/the Word, based on an analysis of both his artistic texts (mainly *Rzecz o wolności słowa*) and his discursive ones. Siewierski analyses Norwid’s metaphor of the “architecture of the word:” the division into the inner and the outer word, the material and spiritual being, earthly and heavenly, human and supra-human existence. The researcher examines Norwid’s theory of the word against a broad background of Enlightenment and romantic views on language: its origin, purpose, the relationship between the word and its designation, etc. He notes that Norwid’s statements on language are rooted in Enlightenment traditions but also draw much from the nineteenth-century comparative-historical linguistics, which assumed a different relation between the word and its designation than the conventional one. Norwid supported those language scholars who indicated the natural character of linguistic signs, seeking connections between the words’ shapes or sound and their designates. In the artistic area, such a way of thinking about language is shown, e.g., in Norwid’s etymologies, as well as in his tendency to perceive the world through allegory – as was often indicated by researchers – where particular signs (events, things, etc.) refer to a different sense than the literal one and his use of allegory as the principle of constructing literary works. Both etymology and allegory are used by Norwid for semantic reinterpretation, accompanied by the reinterpretation of terms, beliefs, and attitudes.

**Keywords:** Cyprian Norwid, poetry, metaphor, allegory, linguistics, etymology

The fact that Cyprian Norwid was interested in issues of language is proven not only by his philological and ethno-philological notes and treatises, such as *Słowo i litera* [*Word and Letter*], *Milczenie* [*Silence*], *Rotacja słowa* [*Word Rotation*], but also his lectures on Juliusz Słowacki, his interpretation of *Bogurodzica* [*Mother of God*], and the poetic treatise *Rzecz o wolności słowa* [*On the Freedom of Speech*]. The names which appear in his notes and letters indicate that his interests in that area covered a broad range of issues concerning both grammar and the philosophy of language. It is well known that Norwid read the works of Max Müller, Éugène Burnouf, Constantin F. Volney, and Jan Nepomucen Kamiński.<sup>1</sup> That list of names is far from extensive when speaking

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1 See also Norwid’s letter to August Cieszkowski of 20 July 1878: “*Actes de la Société Philologique de Paris: lista członków: Norwid (Comte de), tudzież udział Norwida w*

of Norwid's "linguistic library," which can be reconstructed only with detailed research. The author of *Vade-mecum* does not facilitate such reconstruction as, in the words of Kazimierz Wyka, he often behaved "as if his reading ended with Dante, Shakespeare or Byron," e.g., "his short stories bear ... traces of knowledge of Poe's stories, just introduced to European literature through Baudelaire, but searching for the names in his letters would be in vain."<sup>2</sup>

Interest in views forming Norwid's "philosophy of language" is most typically dated back to Kazimierz Bereżyński's study *Filozofia Cypriana Norwida*. The author discussed how the concept of *Logos* functioned for Norwid, terming it the key category in the poet's conception of language. Bereżyński focused his considerations on *Rzecz o wolności słowa*, adding a brief comment of his own to the poem. He thus saw the understanding of word as discussed in the poem:

The Word overcomes the dualism of divinity and humanity: it has its inner side, closely related to the spirit of man, the divine side – and the external human one. The harmony of both sides of the Word is its ideal, its "goal and masterpiece." The history of humanity shows greater or smaller diversion from the ideal. Christianity brought about the desired harmony – and the visible sign thereof is Jesus Christ, the Word incarnate, who combines in Himself divinity and humanity.<sup>3</sup>

Bereżyński also discussed Norwid's theory of silence, seeing it as having crucial significance in the poet's philosophy:

Human speech is not the only manner of expression of the human spirit. In that respect, "expression and silence" have equal value; they are as if two sides of a word.<sup>4</sup>

Almost 20 years after the publication of Bereżyński's study, Ignacy Fik's work *Uwagi nad językiem Cypriana Norwida*, was issued. The book is a collection

dyskusjach i archiwach ciała uczonego, mianowicie: / w kwestii Języka Basków; w wyczytaniu napisu, znalezioneego nad Renem, bogini R o z m e r t y ; w wyczytaniu napisu meksykańskiego; tudzież o g l o s s o l a l i i , o początku mowy: *sur l'origine du langage – sur l'origine de la lettre – sur la liberté de la parole du point de vue scientifique*." (PWSz X, 119) ["*Actes de la Société Philologique de Paris*: list of members: Norwid (*Comte de*), likewise participation of Norwid in discussions and records of the scholarly body, namely: on the issue of Basque language; in reading an inscription found at the River Rhine, of goddess R o s m e r t a ; in reading a Mexican inscription; also on g l o s s o l a l i a , on the beginning of speech: *sur l'origine du langage – sur l'origine de la lettre – sur la liberté de la parole du point de vue scientifique*"].

- 2 Kazimierz Wyka, *Cyprian Norwid. Poeta i sztukmistrz* (Kraków: PAU, 1948), pp. 65–66.
- 3 Kazimierz Bereżyński, "Filozofia Cypriana Norwida," *Sfinks*, No. 38–41 (1911), p. 19.
- 4 Bereżyński, *Filozofia Cypriana Norwida*, p. 26.



of rich material outlining the relationship between the linguistic practice of the poet and his philosophical views. Some of Fik's conclusions and remarks would later enjoy great popularity with post-war researchers, like the statement that "Norwid's language strived to overcome the automatization of commonly accepted meanings."<sup>5</sup>

The most recent attempt to reconstruct the "philosophy of language" of the author of *Milczenie* is the first chapter of Zdzisław Łapiński's book, *Norwid*, titled "Filozofia i poezja języka"<sup>6</sup> ["Philosophy and Poetry of Language"]. As he discussed Norwid's views on language in modern terms (e.g., referring to information theory), Łapiński stated that three premises constituted the essence of those views: dialogicality of language, the principle of "przemilczenia" ["passing over in silence," lit.: "not saying"] and "przybliżenia" ["approximation"], and the conventional nature of language. The author then moved from such an outline of a language concept to sketching the framework of Norwid's poetics. Just like the studies by Bereżyński and Fik, listed above, Łapiński's work forms an important basis for this paper.

Norwid's unfinished history of art (*Sztuka w obliczu dziejów jako syntetyki księga pierwsza* [*Art in the Face of History as Synthetics Part One*]), which was part of a bold plan of creating a synthesis of history from its very beginnings, was given a motto from the Prologue of the Gospel of John:

1. Na początku było S ł o w o a ono Słowo było  
u Boga, a Bogiem było ono Słowo.
2. To było na początku u Boga.
3. Wszystkie rzeczy przez nie się stały a b e z  
niego n i c s i ę n i e s t a ło, co się stało.

(PWsz VI, 269)

- [1. In the beginning was the W o r d, and the Word was  
with God, and the Word was God.
2. He was with God in the beginning.
3. Through him all things were made;  
w i t h o u t h i m n o t h i n g w a s m a d e that has been made.<sup>7</sup>]

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5 Ignacy Fik, *Uwagi nad językiem Cypriana Norwida* (Kraków: Skł. Gł. w Kasie im. J. Mianowskiego, 1930), p. 72.

6 Zdzisław Łapiński, *Norwid* (Kraków: Znak, 1971).

7 John 1: 1–3; New International Version. All further Bible quotes are given after NIV unless otherwise indicated [translator's note].

The concept of *logos*, which played such an important role in Polish romanticism – to mention just the mystic works by Słowacki or Mickiewicz’s Parisian lectures – appears here, i.e., at the beginning of Norwid’s mature period, in its basic Christian context. John used that term, so polysemous in Greek, to define the principle forming the basis of Christ’s relation to the Father – the same principle that made God create the world and then reveal Himself to it through his Son.<sup>8</sup> John the Evangelist was the apologist of that principle called the Word, for it was only God’s love for the world that could make the Word, which was, in the beginning, “become flesh and make his dwelling among us” (after John 1: 14). The Word incarnate thus became a mediator between divinity and humanity, between the world of the spirit and the world of matter, and hence the romantic, dualist understanding of the linguistic sign should also be viewed from the perspective of that Christian tradition.<sup>9</sup>

In the introductory chapter to *Sztuka w obliczu dziejów* [*Art in the Face of History*], Norwid indicated the source of art, both as regards form and as regards its meta-formal, spiritual element. The source of art is where, for the first time, “*duch się uzewnętrznia i n a z n a c z a stosunek swej czynności do otaczającej go przyrody*” (PWsz VI, 278–279) [“the spirit externalises and m a r k s the relation of its activity to the surrounding nature”]. That first contact of the active human thought with nature starts the activation of man’s inborn predisposition to order reality and give it meaning, the first visible sign whereof is a symbol:

Że ta siła znaczenia, symbolizowania, założenia wszystkim ludom jest wspólną – wszystkim ludom, bowiem człowiekowi – więc i sztuki źródło jest też wszędzie, lubo swoim zwierciadłem różnobarwne okregi firmamentu i rozliczne odbija krajobrazy. A że dzieje - sztuki tak wywodząc do wewnętrznego jej źródła zstępujemy, przeto jakby do Sztuki - sztuk, do miejsca, skąd się słowe m, liczbą, głosem, kształtem i barwami rozwijają. (PWsz VI, 279)

[Since that power of meaning, symbolising, assuming is common to all people – all, as it is common to man – thus the source of art is everywhere, too, or reflects multi-coloured spheres of the firmament and numerous landscapes with its mirror. And since in deriving the art-history we descend into its inner source,

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8 See Arthur H. Armstrong, *Christian faith and Greek philosophy* (NY: Sheed and Ward, 1964), p. 23.

9 On that issue, see Bereżyński, *Filozofia Cypriana Norwida*; Zdzisława Kopczyńska, *Język a poezja. Studia z dziejów świadomości językowej i literackiej Oświecenia i romantyzmu* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1976), chap. 8.

so [we descend] as if into the Art - of - arts , the very place where they develop in word , number , voice , shape and colour .]

Those indivisible elements of arts, which, at the same time, are the arts' historical origins, in Norwid's view, are symbolic "pierwoksztalty" ["proto-shapes"] (perpendicular, triangle, square, circle, oval), from which come "pierwogłosy" ["proto-sounds"] (*a, e, i, o, u*), "pierwoliczby" ["proto-numbers"] (from 1 to 5), and even "pierwobarwy" ["proto-colours"] (also five). That speculative concept of five corresponding prototypes serves to emphasise the interrelation of all arts through the kinship of the elementary units, but its main aim is to prove their joint origin. The awareness of those "pierwoksztalty" ["proto-shapes"], like the ability to create symbols, did not appear at some stage of evolution but was given to man at the moment of creation:

pierwo-liczby, pierwo-głosy, pierwo-kształty i pierwo-barwy, wszystkim ludom bez wyjątku właściwe, albowiem właściwe człowiekowi i ze Słowa tchnionego węd idące. (PWsz VI, 280)

[proto-numbers, proto-sounds, proto-shapes and proto-colours are common to all peoples without exceptions, for they are common to man and enter them from the Word inspired.]

The Word, given to man at the moment of creation, and thus organic to them, together with the symbolic proto-shapes coming from it, fit the evangelical lesson of the *logos*: "That was the true Light, which lighteth<sup>10</sup> every man that cometh into the world" (John 1: 9, *King James Bible*). In that relatively early work of Norwid, the category of word was given an anthropological sense in the spirit of the Christian philosophy. The ability to create symbols thus lies in human nature and constitutes the basic culture-forming factor – although, like everything else, it has its final source in God.

The concept of word appears in such sense more often in Norwid's further work, particularly as an element of criticism against Darwin's theory of evolution. For Norwid, it was not possible to separate the concept of the word as a linguistic act from the Word as an act of God's creation of humankind. According to the poet, the genesis of the word as a linguistic act is integrally connected with the act of creating humanity; the latter, being an act of creation in the

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10 *Archomenon* is also sometimes translated as *nom. neutri*: "coming," referring to the coming of light (cf. NIV: "The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world"). However, orthodox exegetes defend the form used in King James Bible. See Zygmunt Poniatowski, *Logos Prologu Ewangelii Janowej* (Warszawa: PWN, 1970), pp. 168, 175–176.

likeness and image of the Creator, is also the revelation to man of that Word through which “all things were made.”

Hence the nature of the human language, both through its genesis and its creative capabilities, is somewhat of a mirror image of that Word, which was in the beginning with God. The nature of the word and its realization in the history of art were discussed by Norwid already in his unfinished study, titled *Słowo i litera* by later publishers, and kindred to *Sztuka w obliczu dziejów*. However, the views discussed here were expanded in the poetic treatise *Rzecz o wolności słowa*, written some dozen years later, and so this is the work focused on further here.

In the introduction to the poem, Norwid reinterpreted the concept of “freedom of speech” (in Polish, literally “freedom of word”), questioning its common understanding resulting from “little knowledge of the *Word*:”

Dotąd *wolność-słowa* jest tylko zdobywaniem *wolności objawiania słowa*. Jest przeto atrybutem wolności osobistej.

Ale – o samejże *wolności słowa* nikt nie mówił. Tak, na przykład: jak wolno jest każdemu puszcząć się balonem, albowiem to należy do jego wolności osobistej – ale żegluga powietrzna nie jest wcale uzasadnioną.

To, co nazywają *wolnością-słowa*, jest dotąd *wolnością-mówienia* – *la liberté de dire* ... (DW IV, 213)

[Until now, the *freedom-of-word* is mere gaining of the *freedom of revelation of the word*. It is thus an attribute of personal freedom.

But nobody spoke of the very *freedom of the word*. For instance: everyone is allowed to go up in a balloon, for that is part of their personal freedom – but air travel is not justified at all.

What they call the *freedom-of-word*, is so far the *freedom-of-speech* – *la liberté de dire*]

Already, the title of that poetic treatise announces an anthropological perspective on the issue of the word. Out of all attributes of the word, freedom is stressed the most, and even in the first words of the introduction, the poet states how he understands that freedom. Such clear contrast between the common understanding of “freedom of word” and the new meaning, as revealed by Norwid, serves here to create the Word as an autonomous being, free also from man, in the sense that it is not just an instrument in human hands. The word in its nature is as free as man: “Dłatego jest wolne słowo, jak stworzenie!” (DW IV, 227) [“Hence it is a free word, like creation!"]. True freedom of the word does not consist of the right of man to use it. Freedom is the principle of the existence of the word, just like it is the basis for human existence. *Rzecz o wolności słowa* is also about the freedom of man, for people to realise their freedom in the word, and the freedom of word is fulfilled in them.

The treatise, although it is organised on a historic plane, also provides rich material on the theory of the word, defining “jak? s ł o w o się czyta / W sobie samym” [“how? to read the w o r d / in itself”] The chronological sequence accompanies the theoretical discussion, and they complement each other. To find the key to the poem's interpretation, one must reconstruct the concept of word inscribed in it. The task is easier thanks to the consistency with which Norwid used a certain metaphor to illustrate the construction and the characteristics of the word. That metaphor appeared earlier in *Promethidion*:

Bo jest, powiadam, w *słowa* określniku  
 Architektura taka, jak te gmachy,  
 Gdzie, któryś z mędrców starożytnych mniema,  
 Że *duch* się jego mieści – to na dachy  
 Wstępując płaskie – to pomiędzy dwiema  
 Kolumny w sieniach stając – to w piwnicy...

(DW IV, 103–104)

[For there is, I say, in a *word's* definition  
 Architecture such as the edifices here,  
 Where, as an ancient sage believes,  
 Its *spirit* lives – once climbing  
 on the flat roofs – once between two columns  
 Standing in the hall – once in the cellar...]

Kazimierz Wyka noted what a significant role was played in Norwid's poetry by “odbłask architektury”<sup>11</sup> [“reflection of architecture”]. It is thus no wonder that the argumentation of the poet, quoted above, refers to that realm of art. A similar analogy (architecture of the word – architecture of a building) is also found in *Rzecz o wolności słowa*, but here its function is far more important:

Słowo więc całość w sobie od początku niosło,  
 Rozwinęło je tylko uczone rzemiosło.  
 I od początku była *część zewnątrzna* słowa  
 I *wewnętrzna* – jak wszelka świątyni budowa.  
 – Duch miał czym się na *zewnątrz* wyrażać lub w *górze*  
 Monologiem podnosić – miał architekturę!  
 Lecz budowa, gdy części w ciężeniu się miną,  
 Czołem zapada w ziemię i stérczy ruiną.

(DW IV, 237)

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11 Wyka, *Cyprian Norwid. Poeta i sztukmistrz*, pp. 82–89.

[Thus a word always had unity in itself,  
 Only developed through learned art.  
 And since always, there was the word's *external part*  
 As well as *internal* – like every temple's structure.  
 – The spirit had a way to express itself *outside* or *up*  
 In a monologue – it had architecture!  
 But when parts are not supported in gravity, the structure  
 Falls into the ground and only ruin is found.]

Such a twofold approach in thinking of language was characteristic of romanticism. The word was treated as a being both carnal and spiritual, earthly and heavenly, human and superhuman, reflecting the human being consisting of body and soul. Citing Stanisław Potocki, Mickiewicz stated:

The word is a globe made of two hemispheres, one of which is unseen, and the other material; one heavenly, the other earthly.” It is the soul and the body, the whole human.<sup>12</sup>

For Mickiewicz, the confirmation of such a definition was the understanding of the word by the folk, who – in contrast to “rhetoric” and the “French dictionary” – were aware of the anthropological “wholeness” of the word. Yet such awareness was rarely manifested in everyday linguistic practice; it concerned mostly exceptional speakers, marked with a divine charism.<sup>13</sup> According to Norwid, the everyday linguistic practise was not based on knowledge of the full spectrum of the word; quite the contrary – it lost the word's spiritual dimension.

Najmniej-bo znaną rzeczą, *lub znaną najbłędniej*,  
 Bywa Słowo – – Nałóg je codzienny podrzędni  
 I rozlewa jak wodę – tak, że nie ma chwili  
 Na globie, w której nic by ludzie nie mówili.

A jako w gospodarskich zaprzętach bez końca  
 Nieustannie się wody używa niż słońca,  
 Tak i słowo brzmi ciągle i ciągle jest w ruchu,  
 Bardziej niż światłość jego promieniująca w duchu.  
 I gdy wciąż wszyscy mówią, mało kto się spyta:  
 Jaki też jest CEL-SŁOWA... jak? Słowo się czyta  
 W sobie samym... i dziejów jego promień cały  
 Rozejrzeć – mało kto jest ciekawy... zuchwały...

(DW IV, 219)

12 Adam Mickiewicz, *Literatura słowiańska*. Course IV, in: *Dziela*, Vol. 11 (Warszawa: Wyd. Narodowe, 1952), p. 374.

13 See Kopczyńska, *Język a poezja*, pp. 157–158.

[The least known thing, or *the most wrongly known one*,  
*May be the Word* – – by everyday Habit demeaned  
 and spilled like water – as there is no moment  
 On the globe when people say naught.

And like in house and farming duties endlessly  
 You use continuously more water than sun,  
 So the word constantly sounds and stays in motion,  
 More than the light radiating in its spirit.  
 And when everyone talks, barely anyone has a notion  
 To ask for *the PURPOSE-of-WORD... how? to read a word*  
*In itself...* and the whole range of its history  
 To know – few are curious... and bold...]

Both in history and in times contemporary to him, Norwid saw the process of word depreciation. Showing the existence of the word-*logos* in human history, *Rzecz o wolności słowa* notes the word's culture-forming role. Purely instrumental treatment of the word is contrasted with creative vigil over that "architecture," so that the relation between the inner and the outer word is not loosened.

The inner and the outer word are first – to use the wording of Norwid himself, from *Słowo i litera* – "akt psychiczny w duchu" ["a mental act in the spirit"], "poczucie wydzwięku całomechaniką organów głosowych" ["a sense of expression of all the mechanics of vocal organs"], and "akustyczne części onych organów, osklepienie" (PWsz VI, 311) ["acoustic arch with some of those organs"]. That resembles somewhat the distinction by Thomas Aquinas between the inner mode of the word and the outer voice, the language which one speaks out. The "vocalised" word is a sign of the inner word, which is the sense and cause of the former.<sup>14</sup>

Yet the relation between the inner and the outer word is not reduced to a two-part relation between *signifiant* and *signifié*, for the model of the inner word is not a model of the sign alone, but of a word-*logos*, which entails the three-part relation of idea-term-object occurring therein. Difficulties in

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14 See Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones disputatae De Veritate*, q. IV, art. 1 (quoted after: Etienne Gilson, *Linguistique et philosophie: essai sur les constantes philosophiques du langage*, Paris: Vrin, 1982, p. 140): "le verbe proféré extérieurement signifie ce qui est intelligé, non l'intelliger même, ni non plus cet intellect qui est un habitus ou une

reading *Rzecz o wolności słowa* may result from the fact that it interchangeably uses such conceptual pairs as: the word as a linguistic act, “mental” act (idea), and word-*logos*; the linguistic sign (term) and a form of culture; the designation (object) and the object of culture. The situation here is the same as in *Milczenie*: the same laws that rule the history of culture work also in the language.

The relation between the inner and the outer word is defined in the fragment of *Rzecz o wolności słowa*, quoted above, through metaphoric reference to architecture. The linguistic sign (the outer word) has always been the temple of the “designation” (the inner word), and the “designation” has always had its architecture. Like an architectural work stands strong thanks to the precision of the constructor, there also has to be a balance between the inner and the outer word. Otherwise, the word loses its power and like a building, “gdy części w ciężeniu się miną, / Czołem zapada w ziemię i sterczy ruina” [“when parts are not supported in gravity, the structure / Falls into the ground and only ruin is found”].

Norwid rejected both Darwin’s theory of evolution and the assumption of the conventional nature of the linguistic sign. He took the side of those language researchers who followed a rationalistic assumption of a natural character of linguistic signs and looked for relations between the acoustic and graphic forms of words and their designations. That group of researchers included Jan Nepomucen Kamiński, who – when undertaking a discussion on the philosophical nature of the Polish language – developed a theory already known in Poland, propagated mainly by Kopczyński and Wyszomirski, on the natural origin of linguistic signs.<sup>15</sup> Norwid knew Kamiński’s works and valued

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puissance, il ne les signifie qu’en tant que eux aussi peuvent être objets d’intellection. Le verbe intérieur c’est donc intelligé intérieur lui-même” [“speech uttered externally signifies that which is intelligible, not intellect in itself, and not that intellect which is a habit or a power; it only signifies things in so far as they too can be objects of intellect. The internal speech is therefore what is internally understood through intellect”].

- 15 It should be noted that supporters of the thesis of natural origin of linguistic signs believed that in contemporary language motivation of those signs cannot be reproduced. Such was the belief of Kopczyński, who within the issue of current state of language stood for “linguistic habit,” and so he related to the conventional conception, understood as that habit.



them highly.<sup>16</sup> What is more, he shared the views of the author of *Wywód filozoficzności naszego języka* [*On the Philosophy of Our Language*], and, like Kamiński, he assigned semantic value not just to the roots of words, but also to particular alphabet characters and numbers.<sup>17</sup> Kamiński's etymological argumentation, for all its superficiality and the pseudo-scientific, sometimes even incomprehensible language, which seems ridiculous today, played an important role in bridging the gap between philosophy and poetry in their time.<sup>18</sup>

The "architectural" relation of the inner and the outer word is realised both at the level of the word and of a letter. The shape of letters is not arbitrary; it is not justified by convention but by a "pierwiastek wieczny" ["eternal element"] that it reflects. In the lectures *O Juliuszu Słowackim* [*On Juliusz Słowacki*], it is stated:

gmach architektury doskonałej przezroczysty być może i powinien, chociaż z granitu, a jest on nim wtedy, gdy fronton pozwala odgadnąć plan i budowę wewnętrzną gmachu całego. (PWSz VI, 407)

[the edifice of perfect architecture may and should be transparent, even if built of granite, and it is thus when the fronton allows to guess the plan and inner structure of the whole edifice.]

– and so the letter, that elementary linguistic sign, also allows to notice its whole multi-level, symbolic construction. That basic function of a letter – making a word "staid" – is likely incomprehensible without linking its shape closely to the world of things (objects).

Litera – wcale nie jest, jak tuszy niektórzy,  
Czymś dowolnym, co nie ma swej architektury,  
Ani uzasadnionym na pierwiastku wiecznym.  
Stara jak słowo: ona – czyni je statecznym.

(DW IV, 226)

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16 That did not prevent him from opposing some of Kamiński's etymology in a letter to Mieczysław Pawlikowski of 12 III 1859 (PWSz VII, 383).

17 Jan Nepomucen Kamiński's views are discussed in: Adam Bar, "Zwolennicy i przeciwnicy filozofii Hegla w polskim czasopiśmiennictwie (1830–1850)," *Archiwum Komisji do Badania Historii Filozofii w Polsce*, Vol. 5 (1933), p. 74; Kopczyńska, *Język a poezja*, chap. 5.

18 Kopczyńska (*Język a poezja*, p. 140) assessed them thus: "they provided important premises which allowed to build a bridge between philosophy and poetry; they indicated the poetic sources of the philosophical nature of language; they raised the constant topicality of relations between the philosophicalness of language and the poetic output."

[The letter is not, as some would lecture,  
 Something arbitrary without architecture,  
 Or justified by an eternal element.  
 Old as a word: *the letter – makes it staid.*]

Thus, the shape of letters always contains some element of mimicking the object they define; it is the external expression, once created by man, of the idea of things, and even though the motivation of the relation between the sign and the object faded in time, it is possible to reconstruct it, just as it was possible to decipher the cuneiform writing:

Wszech-mądrość i Sumienie, jak słońce z zwierciadłem  
 Rozejrzawszy się, ciska promień abecadłem...  
 Garbate G w pisaniu starych Samarytan  
 Jest “*Ghimel*” – wielbłąd, “*nun*” jest jako ryba czytan.  
 Wszystkich języków *jeden* początek źródłowy,  
 Do dziś widny – bo *wszędzie jedne części – mowy!*

(DW IV, 227–228)

[Omni-wisdom and Conscience, like sun in a mirror  
 Reflecting, throw rays of alphabet...  
 The humpbacked letter *G* as old Samaritans teach  
 Is “*Ghimel*” – a camel, “*nun*” reads as a fish.  
 All tongues have their one common source,  
 Visible even now – for *all have the same parts-of-speech!*]

The conviction of a semantic markedness of letters and sounds, so characteristic of the Enlightenment (e.g., Charles de Brosses or Court de Gébelin, to name but two), had its followers also during the age of romanticism among linguists, philosophers, and poets. For instance, much attention was given to researching the semantic value of vowels and consonants by August Wilhelm Schlegel, who concluded that, e.g., “the spirit and character of various nations is also reflected manifold in the relation between consonants and vowels, and in the nature of both of them.”<sup>19</sup> The topic of the hidden sense of the alphabet was also addressed by Victor Hugo in a letter of 1839: “The human society, the world, man are all within

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19 August W. Schlegel, *Kritische Schriften und Briefe: Sprache und Poetik* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer Verlag, 1962), p. 189.

the alphabet.”<sup>20</sup> And his detailed reasoning was sometimes very close to Norwid's speculations: “A is a roof, the gable with its cross, the arch, *arx*; or a hug of two friends who kiss and shake hands.”<sup>21</sup>

Norwid was also no foreigner to simple association of letter shapes with shapes taken from observing the world, as in “Częstochowskie wiersze” [“Częstochowa Rhymes”]:

Uczę się też c z y t a n i a  
i wiem, że O jak bania,  
Lub jak koło u woza,  
Że A jak szczyt u chaty,  
Że I jak gibka łoża,  
Że E jak dziad szczerbaty,  
Że U jak wół rogaty  
Albo jak przewrócona  
Dua, gdy wyprężona...

(PWsz I, 143)

[I also learn to r e a d  
And I know that O is like a pumpkin,  
Or like a wheel,  
That A is like top of the roof,  
That I is like a lithe willow,  
That E is like a gap-toothed man,  
That U is like an ox  
Or like overturned  
Chaise when unhitched...]

The verse stylization itself indicated a folk addressee, for whom Norwid postulated to create “elementarz plastyczny, postaciowy, ułatwiający rozwinięcie chłopskiego-rozumu w obowiązujących go kierunkach” (PWsz VII, 111) [“a graphic, character primer to facilitate the development of the common sense in the directions it needs”] in the *Memoriał o Młodej Emigracji* [*Memorial on Young Emigration*]. Yet the author of *Promethidion* did not confine himself only to registering such associations or – as in the poem quoted above – using them for education. His reflection went deeper: he researched the reasonableness of those associations at the stage of creating writing, then came

20 Edmond Huguet, *Le Sens de la forme dans les métaphores de V. Hugo*, Vol. 1 (Paris: Hachette, 1904), p. 355.

21 Huguet, *Le Sens de la forme*, p. 355.

to the conclusions that the shape of letters (vowels) matched the “proto-shapes” inborn to humans (in *Słowo i litera*: “pierwopojęcia przyrodzone” (PWsz VI, 314) [“innate proto-senses”]), which were first expressed in forms of architecture and then entered alphabet.

That poetic interpretation of alphabet character signs bonds them with a relation of a result, the cause being the natural human predisposition of symbolic naming. If such a relation exists at the level of elementary units, a letter understood as a system of signs “w pojęciu uważana” [“kept in the mind”] also remains a “łącznik między światem wewnętrznym a zmysłowym” (PWsz VI, 323) [“link between the inner and the sensual world”].

Both “pismo – dla wzroku” [“writing – for the eye”] and “język – dla głosu” [“language – for the voice”] are two different ways of externalising the inner word, described by Norwid as “akt psychiczny w duchu” [“mental act in the spirit”]. The natural word consists inseparably of content and form. The content is the said “akt psychiczny w duchu,” and the form is “poczucie wydzźwięku cało mechaniczną organów głosowych ... i akustyczne, częścią onych organów, osklepienie” (PWsz VI, 311) [“a sense of expression of all the mechanics of vocal organs ... and acoustic arch with some of those organs”]. The word and the letter thus form an inseparable unity since the very beginning of humanity. The development of humanity shapes new forms of expression, including the alphabet, a revolutionary discovery. Although that development was not always harmonious, although the natural relation between a word and a letter was repeatedly obliterated, that did not undermine Norwid’s conviction that each language fits within language universals.<sup>22</sup>

The original protolanguage was not fully lost; its material, outer side has been fragmented. The divine guarantee of language allowed for its “inner structure,” perfect since the beginning, to remain unchanged and to link languages of all peoples spread across the earth. Such a view was presented by Norwid in *Notatki z mitologii* [*Notes on Mythology*]:

Owszem, człowiek nie wynajduje języka, ale strzeże starego i cześć ma dla starych słów. “*Vetera verba majestas quaedam et, ut sic dixerim, religio commendat*” (Quintilianus). Pierwszy Noego język zaginał do nieodszukania w materii jego (Babel). “*Ecce unus est populus et unum labium omnibus*” (Gen. XI).

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22 Norwid’s linguistic speculations may be considered current to some extent, since language universals are also important in modern linguistics.

Gdyby ludzkim wyraz był, to każdy dom familijny mówiłby odrębnym już. (PWsz VII, 253)

[True, man does not invent the language, but guards the old one and esteems old words.

"*Vetera verba majestas quaedam et, ut sic dixerim, religio commendat*" (Quintilian).

The first language of Noah is irrecoverably lost in its matter (Babel). "*Ecce unus est populus et unum labium omnibus*" (Gen. XI).

If the word were human, each family would have had its separate [language] by now.]

In the eighteenth century, so intently interested in the issues of language origins, two different answers to the question for its source dominated. One stated that it was God's gift given to man at the moment of creation in a ready-made, perfect shape all at once. The other assumed that language was a gradually shaped, fully human-made creation.<sup>23</sup> Norwid definitively rejected the latter view, developed particularly in the atmosphere of British naturalism (Bernard Mandeville, Adam Smith), as well as the naturalist view, leading from the interjectional theory of Democritus through the views of Epicurus, Lucretius, Vico, and Rousseau, up to Darwin's evolutionism.

...więc, człowiek-natury

Szukał jakiegoś piękna, ponad piękno-skóry  
 Zmysłowe – i nie zaczął od potrzeb bez wdzięku,  
 A mówił: że... i słowo poczęło się z jęku...

(DW IV, 224)

[...and so the man-of-nature

Sought some beauty beyond the beauty of senses  
 Skin-deep – and started not with needs ungraceful,  
 And yet they say that... even the word was born of a cry...]

Also, Norwid had to reject the stand of Herder, defining language as a human creation, as well as the views of Locke, who limited God's participation in

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23 Data concerning the history of linguistics are quoted mainly after: Bertil Malmberg, *New Trends in Linguistics. An orientation*, trans. Edward Carney (Stockholm & Lund: Naturmetodens Språkinstitut, 1964); Milka Ivić, *Trends in linguistics*, trans. Muriel Heppell (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1965); Zofia Florczak, *Europejskie źródła teorii językowych w Polsce na przełomie XVIII i XIX wieku. Studia z dziejów teorii języka i gramatyki* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1978); Adam Heinz, *Dzieje językoznawstwa w zarysie* (Warszawa: PWN, 1978).

that work to giving man the ability to form articulated sounds. Yet, taking an orthodox position stating that language is the creation of God did not necessarily lead to identical conclusions, as proven, e.g., by the vastly different views of Süßmilch and Saint-Martin.

When contemplating the origins of human speech, Norwid refers to the authority of the Biblical message. In *Rzecz o wolności słowa*, the basic argument for the divine origin of language is taken from *Genesis*. “Słowa człowiek nie wywiódł sam z siebie,” [“Man did not originate the word in themselves”] says Norwid in the introduction to the poem; it was God who shared His power of naming with man and induced in them the word, which already in the very beginning defined the essence of the created object.<sup>24</sup>

*Dziwnie wielki! Mojzesa stilus w jednym słowie*  
 Kreśli początek ludzkiej założony mowie –  
 “Oto (mówi) Przedwieczny przywiódł przed Człowieka:  
 Bydło, zwierzę i ptastwo powietrzne... i czeka,  
 Aby je wszystkie przezwiał ICH IMIENIEM WŁASNYM...  
 Nie można być – doprawdy! – kolosalniej jasnym...

(DW IV, 227)

[*Strangely great! Moses' stilus in one word*  
 Depicts how human speech first stirred –  
 “The Eternal (he says) brought them to the Man:  
 Cattle, animals and birds in the sky... and waited  
 Whatever the Man called them, that was THEIR OWN NAME...  
 Truly – there can be no more distinct claim...]

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24 See *Notatki z mitologii* [*Notes on Mythology*]: “S ł o w o . Język nie jest wynalazkiem człowieka: od początku doskonały jest, bo wyrażający. Nawet poniekąd istniej, im pierwotniej. A c ó ż l i r y s ł o w o – społeczne, tworzące. Słowo na początku: Adam n a z y w a przez nie. Człowiek od razu jako stworzenie doskonały. “*Et videt Deus quod esset bonum*” (*Geneza*)” (PWsz VII, 253) [“W o r d . Language is not human invention: it is perfect since the beginning, for it expresses. The more primary, the more real it is, in a way. And what to say of the word of lyre – the social, creating one. The word in the beginning: Adam n a m e s through it. Man is immediately perfect as a creation. ‘Et videt Deus quod esset bonum’ (Genesis)”]; “*W Genezie Adam nazowie zwierzęta: wyraźnie, iż są to ich n a z w i s k a*” (PWsz VII, 263) [“*In Genesis, Adam names animals: clearly, those are their n a m e s*”].

Naming, or “imposing” a name on an object, was at first the power of God alone. By sharing that power with man, God gave them a feature of His own perfection:

God called the light “day,” and the darkness he called “night.” (Gen. 1: 5)

Now the Lord God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them ... So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals. (Gen. 2: 19–20)

named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living. (Gen. 3: 20)

In his poetic adaptation of the fragment of the Book of Genesis, Norwid clearly stressed the fact that the names of protolanguage given by the man to all things were neither accidental nor arbitrary: “Aby je wszystkie przezwiał ICH IMIENIEM WŁASNYM” [“*Whatever the Man called them, that was THEIR OWN NAME*”] That was where the perfection of the protolanguage lay – it was the expression of direct and true cognition, naturally joining the *signifiant* with the *signifié*. Below continued is the quotation from *Rzecz o wolności słowa*, given above:

Dwie albowiem przyczyny tu w działanie wchodzą,  
Słowa się po sprawdzenie odnoszą, gdy rodzą,  
Swoją zaś ścisłość mierzą natury obrazem – –  
Są z prawdy, ducha i są z litery zarazem.

(DW IV, 227)

[For it is two causes which interact,  
Words ask for verification when born.  
And they measure their precision with nature's form:  
They are from the truth, the spirit, and also the letter.]

The protolanguage was the proto-unity of *logos*, the expression of the creative act of God Himself and man united with Him. It was thus in the beginning. Then the fall of man came, together with disintegration, which also had to impact language. Here, Norwid's thought is interestingly similar to the Enlightenment-born but highly romantic theory by Saint-Martin. In the philosophy of that leading representative of French illuminists, there was a close relationship between human history and language history, for man and language were two aspects of the same creative act. Through sin, man lost their original perfection, with only meagre bits left thereof. Yet those remnants, as a partial testament to the divine origin of man, support man's desire to return to the lost unity with God. As human history

goes from the original perfection through a fall to the expiatory path of return, so also the perfect protolanguage, lost through sin, exists in today's languages only in a residual form. However, those traces have the power to orient man on their return to the lost Paradise. For Saint-Martin, the language of poetry was the closest to that lost language, since it is an expression of cognition in which harmony between the name and the object is restored. Thus the original human was a poet, which is also stressed by Norwid in *Milczenie*:

Nieobecność - prozy jest pierwszym wielkim pojawem na początku wszystkich literatur. Człowiek od pierwszego na świat kroku wchodzi jak zupełna postać umysłowa: jest poetą! I innego my umysłowego człowieka nie znamy udowodnie na początku dziejów, jedno poetę! (PWSz VI, 242)

[The absence-of-prose is the first great occurrence at the beginning of all literatures. From the first step into the world, man appears like a full mental person: he is a poet! And we know unerringly no other mental human in the beginning of history, only a poet!]

Language is here not only a cognitive tool but cognition itself; it is an expression which externalises the spiritual creative and cognitive powers. The closer to God man is, the more perfect their language – as a revelation of truth because its sense is given by God Himself. When man is separated from God through sin, they sentence themselves to independent creation of sense and grow apart from the truth. *Langage* was, for Saint-Martin, a language established by God, and *langue*, the language of people after the fall – a language where only mere glimpses of the protolanguage retained a weak bond between the two. *Langue* indicated the superior *langage*, just like *natura naturata* indicated *natura naturans*.<sup>25</sup> That double two-sidedness in thinking of language was also visible with Norwid: the outer and the inner word were not just the linguistic sign and the designation thereof, but also, in a broad diachronic perspective, the divine *logos* and its human realization in history.

Even as early as *Promethidion*, Norwid strongly stresses the criticalness of the human fall through the original sin:

Gdy jak o pięknie rzekłem, że jest profil Boży,  
Przez grzech stracony nawet w nas, profilu cieniach,  
I mało gdzie, i w rzadkich odczuwan sumieniach,  
Tak i o pracy powiem, że – zguby szukaniem,  
Dla której pieśń – ustawnym się nawoływaniem.

(DW IV, 107–108)

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25 See Florczak, *Europejskie źródła teorii językowych*, p. 17.



[When I spoke of beauty – that it was *profile of God*,  
 Lost through sin even in us, *shadows of the profile*,  
 And nearly nowhere, in few consciences felt,  
 Thus I shall speak of work – that it be *searching for the lost*,  
 For which the song be a constant call.]

The original sin was a turning point in human history, for that was when the toil of searching for the lost wholeness began. In *Rzecz o wolności słowa*, the original sin is also self-destruction; it breaks the “wholeness” of man and then starts the road of “consolidation.”

Nie! – człowiek *całym* powstał, *zupełnie-wytwornym*,  
 I *nie było mu łatwo być równie pokornym!*...  
 Bo *cały był i piękny... i upadł...*  
*Dziś – praca*  
 Coś w nim trawi – kształtuje, i coś mu powraca;

(DW IV, 225)

[No! man arose *whole, totally – grand*,  
 And *not easily taking humility pains!*...  
 For *he was whole, and beautiful... and he fell...*  
*Today – work*  
 Consumes *something* in him – shapes something, and regains;]

What was a given to man in the Paradise, that completeness in harmonious unity of the spirit and the body, now had to be gained with huge effort. By presenting the history of man as the history of the word, Norwid did not limit himself to the linguistic aspect of the latter but gave a broader anthropological sense to the meaning of a word. As in *Milczenie* and *Słowo i litera*, the laws of language are also realised on a historic plane; in *Rzecz o wolności słowa* the inner and the outer word are also a model of the historically changing structure of human culture.

It is not a coincidence that language is the aspect that plays such an important role in that poetic vision of man. The anthropological interpretation of language, foreshadowed by Saint-Martin's philosophy, permeated Norwid's time, which is best represented by the linguistic thought of Wilhelm Humboldt. That scholar, like Saint-Martin, treated language not as a finite work but as “activity” (*energeia* rather than *ergon*), which was a creative effort of expressing

the inner outwardly.<sup>26</sup> However, while Saint-Martin saw that process in historical terms, in the perspective of human history, Humboldt took a synchronic approach, where he separated the inner and the outer form of language. Although he approached the mystery of language origins cautiously, that major theoretician of nineteenth-century linguistics developed language theory based on an analysis of synchronic language profiles. As he viewed language as a dynamic phenomenon able to transform the world and make it to “das Eigentum des Geistes” [“the property of the spirit”], Humboldt introduced the concept of the inner form of language (“innere Sprachform”), specifying the psychological structure of the particular nation, and the outer form of language (“äussere Sprachform”). It seems that Norwid’s distinction of the inner and the outer word is a complex one and builds upon the two two-sided perspectives on language mentioned above: the metaphysically-oriented (Saint-Martin) and the anthropologically-oriented (Humboldt).<sup>27</sup>

*Rzecz o wolności słowa* also contains the motif of language universals, so characteristic of the eighteenth century. Norwid did not reject the basic assumption of Cartesian linguistics, which argued for a universal structure of all languages that reflected the universal operational structure of man mind. His ethno-philological notes contain some notes to his reading of Max Müller, interesting in the discussed respect:<sup>28</sup>

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26 Wilhelm von Humboldt, *Über die Verschiedenheit des menschlichen Sprachbaues und ihren Einfluss auf die geistige Entwicklung des Menschengeschlechts* (Berlin: Druckerei der Königlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1836), p. 41.

27 Like most theoretical solutions, those also have their precursors in early Greek thought, where the metaphysical understanding of language was represented by Heraclitus, and the opposite idea that “man is the measure of all things” by sophists. See Ernst Cassirer, *An Essay on Man* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1944), pp. 102–105.

28 It is noteworthy that Norwid’s ethno-philological notes contain many remarks proving that Max Müller’s Oxford lectures (*Lectures on the Science of Language*, Vols. 1–2, London, 1862–1864), promoting (and slightly modifying) Schleicher’s linguistic views were an important position in the poet’s study of the issue. The lectures were already available in Polish translation in 1866, in a shortened version (Max Müller, *Odczyty o umiejętności języka*, trans. Bronisław Trzaskowski, *Tygodnik Naukowy i Literacki* 1866, Nos. 3–7), and in 1867, they were published as a book: Max Müller, *Odczyty o umiejętności języka miane w Londynie w r. 1861* (Warszawa: Drukarnia Gazety Polskiej, 1867).

109. Czy jedno źródło mnogość zaprzecza?

Max Müller wnioskuje, że tak być może.

Indoeuropejskie – chiński – amerykańskie – semickie – fińskie i hotentockie żadnego śladu wspólnego pochodzenia. Max Müller: niech dowodzą pierwej niemożliwości pogodzenia.

110. Misjonarze i podróżni zastają nieraz w kilka lat odmieniony cały język u wyspiarzy Oceanu Południowego, Kafrów, Indian amerykańskich (dialekty). (PWsz VII, 393)<sup>29</sup>

[109. Does one origin deny a multitude?

Max Müller concludes that it may be so.

Indo-European – Chinese – American – Semitic – Finnish and Hottentot [languages] bear no trace of common origin. Max Müller: let them first prove the impossibility of reconciliation.

110. Missionaries and travellers oftentimes find the language of islanders from the Pacific, the Bantu, American Indians (dialects) changed completely within a few years.]

Norwid clearly tended towards the position that the number of languages did not deny a common origin thereof, and so it did not exclude the existence of some “deep structure” that linked them into one family.

Before the sententious credo of Cartesian linguistics was stated in *Rzecz o wolności słowa* (“Wszystkich języków jeden początek źródłowy, / Do dziś widny – bo wszędzie jedne części-mowy!” (DW IV, 228) [“All tongues have their *one* common source, / Visible even now – for *all* have the *same parts-of-speech!*”]), Norwid examined a series of data in his unfinished treatises *Sztuka w obliczu dziejów* and *Słowo i litera*. The main proof, in his opinion, was the possibility to distinguish elementary units (the proto-shapes, as discussed earlier in this paper) common to all peoples and matching basic language units (the proto-sounds, i.e., vowels). The poet established the relation between the “proto-shapes” and the “proto-sounds” on the basis of similarity of alphabet characters and the said “proto-shapes,” e.g., the pyramid, which expresses the “proto-shape” of a triangle matches the letter *A*, as a symbol of one of the basic “proto-sounds:” the vowel *a*. The symbolic “proto-shapes,” before they were

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29 Cf. Müller, *Lectures on the Science of Language*, Vol. 1, pp. 54–55: “We read of missionaries in Central America who attempted to write down the language of savage tribes, and who compiled with great care a dictionary of all the words they could lay hold of. Returning to the same tribe after the lapse of only ten years, they found that this dictionary had become antiquated and useless. Old words had sunk to the ground, and new ones had risen to the surface; and to all outward appearance the language was completely changed.”

transferred by the Phoenicians into an alphabetic system, existed in architecture, which expressed the intentions of the rulers as a form of “word of decree:”

Samowładcy owi, to jest (jak w przedalfabetycznej epoce się uważa) one wcielone s a m o g ł o s k i, one inicjujące akcenta, o d p o c z ę ł y w pomnikach i okazały się jawnie w p i e r w o - k s z t a ł t a c h. (PWSz VI, 313)

[Those autocrats, that is (as is considered in the pre-alphabetic era) those incarnate vowels, those initiating accents, r e s t e d in monuments and appeared openly in p r o t o - s h a p e s.]

Similar to the scholars of Enlightenment, Norwid aimed to grasp common principles and elementary units in languages, although he was aware of the diversity and great number of the latter. Again, similar to Enlightenment scholars, he explained the origin of language diversification by referring to the Biblical story of the failure of a human venture (Gen. 11: 1–9). Indicating that same event, author (N. Beauzée) of the “Langue” entry in the French *Encyclopédie méthodique*, which continued the traditions of Port-Royal Grammar, wrote: “Tel est le sait de la première multiplication des Langues; ... Dieu opéra subitement”<sup>30</sup> [“That is known of the beginning of the multiplication of languages; ... God worked immediately”]. Also, in *Rzecz o wolności słowa*, the Biblical story of the Babel tower serves to explain the causes of language diversity:

Tu – wewnętrzne-słowo

Wdziawszy na się obrządek zakwitnęło *mową*  
 I w tym je stopniu widzimy wychodzące z Arki,  
 I nie brzmiało inaczej między patryjarki,  
 Aż do czasu, gdy coraz to szerzej *zewnątrzne*  
 Stawić sobie chce miasto Babelu napiętrzne,  
 I o ile *pierw było* w monologu schnące  
 Jako zbujające drzewo wątpliwie kwitnące,  
 O tyle *teraz całe* się na zewnątrz niesie,  
 Już mu dość, gdy wie, jako? podrzędna rzecz zwie się,  
 Aż właśnie (podług dziwnie pięknego podania)  
 Z *wewnętrznych* poszły przyczyn *mowy pomieszania*.

(DW IV, 230)

[Here – the inner-word,

Putting robes upon the self, blossomed with *speech*,

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30 *Encyclopédie méthodique. Grammaire et littérature* (Panckoucke: Oxford University, 1784), p. 409.

And we see it thus when coming out of the Ark,  
 And it sounded no different among the patriarchs,  
 Until the time when the *outer* one ever growing  
 Wishes to build the Babel city upwards going,  
 And while first it withered in monologous air,  
 Like a wilding tree of meagre bloom in spring,  
 Now it spreads all outwards and out there,  
 Satisfied to know how? to call a lesser thing,  
 And then (as in that beautiful, wondrous tale is sung)  
*From the inner causes came the mixing of all tongues.*]

God confused human languages when humanity, striving towards transgressing the established boundaries, gradually grew away from their Creator. Even if the Tower of Babel was meant by the constructors to be simply a sign of human unity,<sup>31</sup> Yahweh saw in it the danger of building a community based on formal rules and stopped the process in time. Christ brings back to humanity the unity based on the principle of love, and the symbol thereof is the gift of tongues.<sup>32</sup> As can be concluded from the Old Testament, God disrupted interhuman communication (the outer word) to save the relationship between the humans and Himself (the inner word). And so the poet says: “Z wewnętrznych poszły przyczyn mowy pomięszania” [“From the inner causes came the mixing of all tongues”].

The number and diversity of languages did not exclude universal principles linking them; those were two aspects of language, which were also reflected in the distinction between the outer and the inner word. Norwid did not completely yield to either the Enlightenment tendency to universalist concepts or the romantic nationalization of linguistic theories. For him, language was a unity in diversity. The structure of language reflected the structure of the humans, who fulfilled themselves “in themselves” and in a community – in a national and supranational community:

*Oderwać się od siebie i wejść w siebie: słowem,  
 Aby być narodowym, być nad-narodowym!  
 I aby być człowieczym, właśnie że ku temu  
 Być nad-ludzkim... dwoistym być a jednym – czemu?*

(DW IV, 223)

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31 Gen. 11: 3–4: “They said to each other, ‘Come, let’s make bricks and bake them thoroughly.’ They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar. Then they said, ‘Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth.’”

32 See Acts 2: 5–12.

[*To tear yourself off yourself and enter yourself: in short*  
 To be national, be beyond-national!  
 And to be human, for that very purpose  
 To be *beyond-human*... dual, and *one* – why?]

Just like other romantics, Norwid – for all his atypical romanticism – also believed in the idea of *correspondences*, which stated that the visible and the invisible world gained close connection through symbolic language.<sup>33</sup> Hence he treated the linguistic sign like an iceberg, whose visible shape allowed one to deduce the size of the whole block hidden under the water. The wholeness referred to by that sign is the very word, a consequence of planting *logos* in human nature. The inner word, thus understood, is externalised through linguistic form both in the elementary units of language and in works of a higher order, as well as in broadly understood culture. The freedom of word (speech) with Norwid is a law that requires harmonious unity of the inner and the outer word. Like the connection between the sign and the object may be lost – more so for the fact that “*wyrazy / Przeistaczają brzmienia po wielokroć razy*” (DW IV, 265) [“words / convert tenor for so many times”] – freedom of the word may also be lost. As he followed human history from its beginning in the poem, Norwid followed the turbulent history of freedom of word, which became there the driving force of the volatile cycle of world history. Whenever there was a triumph of the outer word over the inner word, when the law of freedom of word was broken, captivity came:

*Gdziekolwiek bądź wewnętrzne słowo ucierpiało,  
 Szedł potwór, który wietrzył, aż utyje ciało;  
 Szła hijena niewoli... ...*

(DW IV, 235)

[*Wherever the inner word came to suffer,  
 Came a monster which sniffed for the body of fat;  
 The hyena of captivity...]*

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33 As Jan Błoński wrote (“Norwid wśród prawnuków,” *Twórczość*, Vol. 5, 1967, p. 77; in this edition published as: “Norwid among the Great-Grandchildren,” Vol. 1, p. 202), it is the call of a poet to “read the signs dispersed by Providence throughout reality (naturally, not only the historical one).” Irena Sławińska (“O prozie epickiej Norwida. Z zagadnień warsztatu pracy,” *Pamiętnik Literacki*, Vol. 2, 1957, p. 470) put it differently: “The general truth must be connected with authenticity of detail” (in this volume published as: “On Norwid’s Epis Prose. Poet-playwright’s Workshop,” p. 70 – editor’s notes).

In other words, captivity ensued when a given community lost the sense of true values, whose place was taken by the empty shell of the form, which became a purpose unto itself:

*Niewola – jest to formy postawienie  
Na miejsce celu. – Oto uciśnienie...*

(DW IV, 49)

[*Captivity – is putting the form  
For the purpose. – That is the oppression...*]

Overgrowth of form, leading to formalism, was not the only cause of captivity. Another cause might also be a shortage of form, which, in Norwid's view, afflicted the tradition of Polish culture. Antiquity, even though it developed a rich repertoire of forms of expression and thus gave the means for externalising the word, easily fell into “zewnętrzne bałwochwalstwo” [“outer idolatry”], which “uciskało ducha” [“oppressed the spirit”]: the inner word. But prophets guarding the faith in the integrity of the word prepared the coming of the “Słowo, które stało się ciałem” [“Word which became flesh”]. Christ started a new era, replacing Old Testament theocentrism with Christian anthropocentrism (“Nie sama *Boskość – Ludzkość* ludziom objawiona” (DW IV, 242) [“Not just *Divinity – Humanity* revealed to humans”]), and at the same time, as He revealed to humanity their starting point and their final purpose, He indicated the crucial role of the spiritual element and returned the inner word to its original position. Since then, the aim was not to create “arcydzieła potężnie plastyczne” [“hugely graphic masterpieces”], as it was done in antiquity, but to strive for the truth: formal means of expression were to mediate between the world of the spirit and the world of the matter. The outer word should serve the inner word down “do *pozornej bez-silności – do bez-personalizmu – do bez-stronności...* do arcydzieła Prawdy!” (DW IV, 214) [“to *apparent power-lessness, personalism-lessness, partiality-lessness...* to the masterpiece of Truth!”].

*Rzecz o wolności słowa* aimed to judge the poet's native language with respect to the relation between its inner and outer form. As in *Promethidion*, wherein the judgement on art in Poland was preceded by a broad cultural background, here, the judgement on the Polish language is done from the position of universal laws. In *Promethidion*, Norwid accused Polish art: “I – tylko *kształtu* nie masz dla *wnętrżności*” (3, 441) [“And – you lack *shape* for the content”]. In *Rzecz o wolności słowa*, a similar accusation is made on the grounds of language:

Polskiemu językowi na czym z rodu zbywa?...  
 Na literze! – to jego strona jest wątpliwa –  
 Nie na słowie, ni słowa duchowym bogactwie,  
 Ni jego włóknach srebrnych; raczej – na ich tkactwie.

(DW IV, 259)

[What does the Polish language lack in its health?...  
*The letter!* – that is the part that ails –  
 Not the word, nor the word's spiritual wealth,  
 Nor its silver threads; rather – 'tis the weave that fails.]

Formal deficiencies of the Polish language resulted from both historical neglect and current lack of respect and understanding for the letter; the letter is understood here both as the formal side of language and as art and craft. Without awareness of the significance of the letter, there is no continuation of tradition, but only convulsive jerking of history, whose amplitude is shaped by deeds coming too early and books published too late. The proof of how little the letter counted with Poles and how little work they were willing to offer to improve it, Norwid found in the current condition of Polish:<sup>34</sup>

Praca-literary nigdy nie była jak funkcja,  
 Ortografia wątpliwą, mętna interpunkcja...  
 Do dziś terminologia obca lub uboga  
 (Owoc niedbalstwa głośno składany na wroga!),  
 W polemice tak mało formy urobione,  
 Że trudno jest się różnić, łatwiej zejść na stronę  
 I, nie mogąc do głębi każdą kwestię zbadać,  
 Rwać się nie w czas lub nie w czas do snu się układać.  
 W społecznych formach wyleźć nie można z praktyki  
 Robronów: "*Jaśnie, Imość, Pani, Dobrodziki!*"

(DW IV, 268)

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34 See the letter to Karol Ruprecht of 12 August 1868 (PWSz IX, 356): "Zaiste – Język Polski jest tak wcale zaniedbany, iż zdarzają się już błędy takie, że poradzić onym pojedynczy pisarz nie może, ale czekać musi na spółdziałanie ogółu społeczeństwa" ["Truly – the Polish Language is so wholly neglected that such errors already happen as cannot be helped by a single writer, but the writer must wait for the joint action of the whole society"]. See also Bereżyński, *Filozofia Cypriana Norwida*, pp. 58–59.



[The work of letter has never been a function,  
 The spelling doubtful, punctuation woe...  
 Terminology still foreign or poor  
 (A fruit of neglect, but the blame is shifted on the foe!),  
 In polemics, the forms are so little refined  
 That it's difficult to argue, easier to go aside  
 And, unable to examine each issue in depth,  
 One rushed in untimely, the other untimely slept.  
 In social forms, unabandonable seem the stuffed braces  
 Of: "*Honourables, Sirs, Lords, Madams, Graces!*"]

It ought to be stressed that word-formative and punctuational experiments with Norwid were mainly motivated by the conviction of a formal deficiency of the Polish language and of the necessity to work to improve that area.

Norwid's statements on language, although strongly rooted in the tradition of the Enlightenment, also took much from the comparative history of linguistics of the nineteenth century, as well as from the romantic theory of symbolism. The theory assuming a relation of proportionality between the form of language and its inner essence gave direction to comparative research where similarities noticed between words of various, sometimes quite distant languages were taken as proof for the natural ability of man to create symbols, including linguistic ones.<sup>35</sup>

The concept of symbolic prototypes is based on the same thesis, which was formulated by Johann G. Hamann when he stated that there had to be "similarities underlying all human languages."<sup>36</sup> Viewing linguistic signs as motivated symbols, Norwid sought their motivation in symbolic elementary units (the proto-sounds, proto-shapes, etc.) common to languages and art of various cultures; the units were symbolic since their forms reflected patterns taken from nature observation:

Słowa się *po sprawdzenie odnoszą, gdy rodzą.*  
 Swoją zaś ścisłość mierzą natury obrazem --  
 Są z prawdy, ducha i są z litery zarazem.

(DW IV, 227)

35 See Maria Janion, *Gorączka romantyczna* (Warszawa: PIW, 1975), pp. 10–12, 258–264.

36 Johann G. Hamann, *Kreuzzüge des Philologen* (Königsberg: Kanter, 1762). Quoted after: Roger L. Brown, *Wilhelm von Humboldt's Conception of Linguistic Relativity* (The Hague: Mouton, 1967), p. 61. Noteworthy here is the similarity of Norwid's linguistic reflection to Hamann's thought. This concerns mainly understanding the language as both a divine and a human creation, as a human reaction to the sign

[For it is two causes which interact,  
 Words ask for verification when born.  
 And they measure their precision with nature's form – –  
 They are from the truth, the spirit, and also the letter.]

The ability to create symbols equals here the ability to create language, which is symbolic in the sense that its outer form does not merely refer to a concept or object but is also its defining equivalent. Hence etymology is possible, to not just establish the origin of words and their original sense, but to provide a definition of the designation from the very construction of the word. Below a few examples provided by Norwid for Polish: piękno – pieśń + jęk [beauty – song + cry]; brzydki – bez-życia [ugly – life-less]; szkaradny – zakarę-dany [hideous – given-as-punishment] (*O sztuce* [*On Art*]); głąb – kłąb + gołąb [fool – tangle + dove] (*Białe kwiaty*); *slawi* – słabi, *sklavy*, sławni, słowo [*slavi* – weak, *sklavy*, famous, word]; Bułgar – Wołga and *vulgus* [Bulgarian – Volga and *vulgus*] (*Rzecz o wolności słowa*); szlachta – *schlagen* [nobility – *schlagen* (Ger. “to hit, to strike on the armour, to knight,”)] (e.g., in *Rzecz o wolności słowa*).

That manner of “reading” language is based on the conviction of embodying, i.e., allegorical values of both the letter and the word. With Norwid, the concepts of “person” or “character” (“embodying”), “parable” and “symbol” appear in the same semantic contexts. If, in a general view, one goes beyond the letter and a single word in understanding language, that allegorical and symbolic method is visible both in the interpretation of any and all linguistic phenomena (including silence and irony), all situations and occurrences and in the interpretation of literary works (e.g., of *Bogurodzica* or Juliusz Słowacki’s *Balladyna*). For the author of *Quidam*, both a letter and a whole word, as well as any character of an analysed work of literature and almost any event presented in poetry or prose, is an allegory, a specification of the abstract.

That search for allegorical or parabolic senses everywhere may suggest the conclusion that the poet stubbornly used one single method to interpret history, culture, and contemporary reality. And that method may easily be labelled allegory, understood as an interpretation of not only a literary text,

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system contained in the world, and finally as direct, non-abstract cognition in that contact of a sign with reality. See Krystyna Krzemień, “O myśli estetycznej J. G. Hamanna,” *Studia Estetyczne* (1969), pp. 215–227.

but also of such texts, which, for Norwid, are history or culture together with all the signs in general that surround man.<sup>37</sup> Allegory, understood here as a method of interpretation consisting in recognising the general sense of a text beyond its literal reading, not only defeats time, as it gives current sense to texts born in the past, but also provides a universal perspective to signs created currently. That allegorical interpretation of any texts is related to the way Norwid saw the past. For him, the past continued now, only reshaped; what used to be, returned – and that in a fuller semantic dimension. “Post scriptum (I)” states:

Nie tylko p r z y s z ł o ś ć wieczna jest – nie tylko!...  
 I przeszłość, owszem, wieczności jest dołą:  
 Co stało się już, nie odstanie chwilą...  
 Wróci Idea, nie powróci s o b ą .

(PWsz I, 366)

[Not only t h e f u t u r e is eternal – not only!...  
 The past, too, belongs to eternity mould:  
 What used to be, will not be undone in a moment...  
 It will return as an Idea, not the s e l f of old.]

In that inclination to parables, Michał Głowiński sees one of the main causes of Norwid being misunderstood by the literary audience of the late nineteenth century, for whom allegory and also parable as one of its forms, distanced with a symbol, were archaic. Not only did Norwid use it quite stubbornly, but he also situated it in previously unknown contexts.<sup>38</sup> It ought to be stressed that it was not merely the use of allegorical forms but more their very peculiar use that worked against the acceptance of receivers. Although the romantic process of discrediting allegory was already started by Goethe in the late eighteenth century, it was symbolists who drew practical conclusions from the juxtaposition of the allegory and the symbol. It is enough to mention that in the most eminent works of Polish romanticism, the allegorical or allegorical plus symbolic fabric

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37 See Morton W. Bloomfield, “Allegory as Interpretation,” *New Literary History* 3 (1972).

38 Michał Głowiński, “Norwida wiersze-przypowieści,” in: *Cyprian Norwid. W 150-lecie urodzin*, ed. M. Żmigrodzka (Warszawa: PIW, 1973), pp. 106–107 (in this edition published as: “Norwid’s Poem-Parables,” Vol. 1, pp. 368–370).

had a dominant function.<sup>39</sup> Discussing the form of a parable (understood as an extended metaphor) in Norwid's short poetic works, Głowiński indicates the importance and multi-functional nature of that two-level semantic construction with the author of *Vade-mecum*.

Considering Norwid's attitude towards language allows us to understand his taste in allegory better. The structure of an allegory reflects the structure of language, both as concerns single signs and more complex forms. Thus, as a poetic means, allegory allows one to present that "architectural" complexity of the language of signs and events. But Norwid reflected the architecture of the word, not only through allegory. He did this also by diving deep into the semantics of the word, for without knowing it, it is impossible to know reality, as it is not possible to "odpowiednie dać rzeczy – słowo" ["to name each matter by its rightful – word"].

Ponad wszystkie wasze uroki,  
Ty! Poezjo, i ty, Wymowo,  
Jeden – wiecznie będzie wysoki:

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Odpowiednie dać rzeczy – słowo!

(PWsz II, 13)

[Beyond, above all your charms,  
You! poetry, and you, speech! Behold,  
Ever the highest will be –this aim:

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To name each matter by its rightful – word!]<sup>40</sup>

Such a definition ("Za wstęp. Ogólniki" ["As Introduction. Generalities"]) of the highest mission of poetry refers back to the classical definition of truth: "Veritas est adaequatio rei et intellectus." In turn, the postulate of adequation of things and intellect, or word, has no connection to the rhetoric principle of aptness (*aptum*), whose vitality, modernised as it may be, Norwid noticed in his times and criticised, as shown, e.g., in the following fragment of the motto to *Rzecz o wolności słowa*:

39 Julian Krzyżanowski, "Alegoria w prądach romantycznych," *Przegląd Humanistyczny*, No. 5 (1962), pp. 10–13.

40 English translation by Danuta Borchardt in collaboration with Agata Brajerska-Mazur, in: Cyprjan Norwid, *Poems* (New York: Archipelago Books, 2011), p. 13.

Są, którzy uczą, iż dla poezji trzeba przedmiotów, które nie byłyby suche i niewdzięczne... Poezja ta – co, ażeby była poezją, potrzebuje przedmiotów niesuchych... i czeka na wdzięczne – nie należy do mojej kompetencji. (DW IV, 211)

[There are those who teach that poetry needs subjects which are not dry and graceless. A poetry which in order to be poetry requires non-dry subjects and awaits graceful ones lies outside my competence.]<sup>41</sup>

In the poem “Co słyhać?” [“What’s New?”], Norwid also protested against narrowing the thematic scope of poetry, against “utilising” it in such a manner that the rhymed form limited the range of themes and forbade “prosaic” topics.

The sentence finishing “Ogólniki” [“Generalities”] makes speaking the truth the main task of mature poetry and elocution; it thus requires them to put the word-*logos* into practice, for the truth is the most important aspect of the word-*logos*. The first two stanzas of the poem prepare the reader for such an understanding of the point, as they show the way of cognition in which the postulated conformity of the word and object is achieved gradually. Aristotle’s definition made the truthfulness of an opinion or statement dependent on objective reality. Assuming the same relation, Norwid formulated a law – which he considered a universal one – that posed to poetry the task of developing such a skilled tongue to be able to express the growing complexity of reality.

Thus the process of cognition must be accompanied by intensified linguistic skill<sup>42</sup> because the word that was “accurate” yesterday will not be such today.<sup>43</sup> If yesterday’s formal structure remains for its own value, then its sense will be lost today, which leads to breaking the two-dimensional nature of the word. The same happens if the connection between the form of the word and its content is loosened; if, in other words, the faith in the organic nature of the word is overpowered by the schism saying that language “myślom kłamie” [“belies thoughts”]. Then, culture experiences a loss of balance between the plane of expression and the plane of content.

Norwid wrote with the awareness that his times saw such a condition of disrupted balance in various aspects, with that state being the most visible in poetry. According to Norwid’s opinion (an unfair one, to be honest), romantic

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41 English translation by Adam Czerniawski, in: Adam Czerniawski, Jerzy A. Laskowski and Reuel Wilson, “Polish Poetry Supplement,” No. 7 (*Oficyna Poetów*, No. 2 (29), London, May 1973), p. 10.

42 See Łapiński, *Norwid*, p. 16.

43 Zofia Trojanowicz (“Norwid wobec Mickiewicza,” in: *Cyprian Norwid. W 150-lecie urodzin*, ed. Maria Żmigrodzka, pp. 217–218) noted Norwid’s distance towards the conventional belief in the salvaging power of time.

poets did not rise to “urząd słowa” [“the office of word”]; they committed the sin of “one-sidedness,” escaping reality into the land of dreams. They were merely false prophets who flitted by over the major problems of their era in their dazzling chariot of poetry, as Norwid stated in “Niewola” [“Enslavement”]:

Literatura nasza, wykwitnąwszy w poezji na wyżyny prawie europejskiego horyzontu, zaniedbała nagannie najważniejsze kierunki – tak, iż *na jawie* nic nie wiemy z tego, co najserdeczniej i najpoważniej nas obchodzi. (DW IV, 65)

[Our literature, having bloomed in poetry almost to the heights of the European horizon, has reprehensibly neglected the most important directions – so that *in waking* we know nothing of what concerns us the most dearly and seriously.]

The poetic one-sidedness of Polish romantics led them to neglect the word’s cognitive function – thus the spectre of romantic epigonism was, for Norwid, also a threat of forfeiting all the opportunities of expression provided by language. As he formulated a programme against the romantic poetics of inspiration in “Niewola” (DW IV, 41), Norwid did not go into extreme opposition because, for him, poetry was not just a kind of discourse, but also a form of creation (see, e.g., “Liryka i druk” [“Poetry and Print”]). As Zofia Stefanowska noted, Norwid’s programme of new poetry assumed overcoming the one-sidedness of classicism and romanticism.<sup>44</sup> Romanticism presented a demonstrative “counter-formalism,” a necessary step on the way to neutralise classic formalism.<sup>45</sup> Yet both those models of poetry broke the nature of the word in their own ways: either through an overemphasis on formal structure or through an overemphasis on content – i.e., overgrowth of the outer or the inner word. In justifying the need to free the word from disproportion in its “architecture,” which might push culture to ruin,

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44 Zofia Stefanowska, “Norwidowski romantyzm,” *Pamiętnik Literacki*, Vol. 4 (1968).

45 See the introduction to the poem “Niewola” (DW IV, 41) [“Enslavement”]: “Teraz – po tym *duchowym*, po tym przeciw-formalnym obrobieniu – literatura ta, nie wątpię, *czynny* przyjmie kierunek .... U progów tej to pracy dzisiaj niewątpliwie stoimy, pracy, która zażartsze może niżli pierwsza napotka przeciwności. – A to dlatego naprzód: że o ile pierwsza samym natchnieniem, samą nieograniczoną, że tak powiem – samym przeciw-formalizmem zdążyć mogła, o tyle druga już wiedzeniem, już opatrzeniem się sumiennym, już przyjęciem pewnej osi bytu może tylko się wzmóc i zakwitnąć” [“Now – after this *spiritual*, this counter-formal preparation – that literature will undoubtedly take an *active* direction .... It is at the threshold of this work that we doubtlessly stand today; work which may encounter obstacles fiercer than the previous one. And that is foremostly because: while the first one could go on inspiration alone, limitlessness alone, so to say – counter-formalism alone, the

Norwid saw in those syntheses of the classicist thesis and romantic anti-thesis a necessary condition to make poetry the means to learn the truth.

Let us pass now from "Ogólniki" to details in order to examine where the process of freeing the word from the romantic one-sidedness lies in Norwid's poetry. The utmost philological care and its fruit in the shape of, e.g., numerous etymologies and the particular tendency towards the parable, have already been mentioned. Now, by referring to poems chosen from *Vade-mecum*, it may be examined whether the postulate of naming "each matter by its rightful – word" is also implicitly contained in that poetry; whether the architectural complexity of the word is revealed, mainly on the semantic plane.

Although the poem "Królestwo" (PWsz II, 63–64) ["Kingdom"] is an interpretation of the concept of "freedom," only its last stanza directs the reader towards a positive definition. The rest of the poem is oriented towards convincing the reader that the common understanding of freedom has little to do with the sense thereof as dictated by history. Contemporary times pragmatically narrowed the semantic scope of freedom and left only that snippet thereof, which refers to *libertas*, i.e., the freedom from external pressure, personal and civil freedom. Awareness of such freedom alone would not lead to exercising human values; quite the contrary, it leads to madness:

Na probierczy kamień dość przeszłości;  
Było jej dość, by sprawdzić, co? boli –  
Więc nie słuchaj, co dziś o wolności  
Mówią – co dziś mówią o niewoli.

Kto czyniłby to przez całe życie,  
Co sam tylko dla siebie uchwał, –  
Nie dopiąłby on nic należycie,  
Lecz gryzłby się, jak Neron, i szalał.

[Enough past on the touchstone;  
There was enough of it to see what? hurts –  
So do not listen to what they say today  
Of freedom – what they say today of captivity;

He who would do all lifelong  
What he ruled for himself alone,  
Would achieve nothing in the end,  
Would be left fretting, like Neron, in mad activity.]

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other one may only strengthen and bloom with knowing, with diligently preparing, with accepting a certain axis of existence”].

Freedom understood and practised in such a way turns against man. Also, its extreme opposite, the attitude accepting captivity as a way to free yourself from the yoke of your own decisions and choices, deprives people of their human dignity and threatens them with turning them into “beasts:”

Kto zaś nigdy nic po woli własnej  
Nie spełniłby – nic o własnym skrzydle:  
W widnokrażek coraz więcej ciasny  
Zakląłby się i spętał, jak bydlę!

[And he who would never get anything performed  
As he wished – never do anything of his own will:  
In a horizon ever smaller, tighter, malformed  
He would hamstring and hobble himself, like an animal!]

A third programme appears in the poem; one that reconciles both those extremes, but it is rejected with equal, if not with particular, contempt. Both the concept of freedom and of captivity, when built in one dimension only, that of *libertas*, are sick constructs, which cannot be cured with a “concoction” of both of them:

Lecz ten z wszystkich nieudolny lekarz,  
Kto, nie wiedząc, z chorób leczyć którą?  
Pomięsza dwie – nie mędrzec! – aptekarz!  
– Prawda? – nie jest przeciwieństwami ksturą...

Orzeł? – nie jest pół-żółwiem, pół-gromem.  
Słońce? – nie jest pół-dniem, a pół-nocą.  
Spokój? – nie jest pół-trumną, pół-domem.  
Łzy? – nie deszcz są, choć jak deszcz wilgocią.

[But among doctors the one is incapable  
Who, knowing not which disease to cure?  
Mixes both – no sage! – pharmacist!  
– Truth? – is not a concoction of contrasts...

Eagle? – is not half-turtle, half-thunder.  
Sun? – is not half-day, half-night.  
Peace? – is not half-coffin, half-home.  
Tears? – are not rain, although they leave wet rainy stains.]

It is only in the last stanza, after rejecting the narrow perspective of *libertas*, that Norwid’s definition of freedom appears. If, in common understanding, freedom was identified only with *libertas*, it was necessary to provide a new translation of the Latin term *liberum arbitrium* (free will), which, in Norwid’s Christian worldview, was the adequate term for true, inner freedom of man. That translation does



not hold the word “liberty,” or “freedom,” for these are burdened with a specific pejorative association. The translation of *liberum arbitrium* must recover the right dimension of freedom as a term through circumlocution:

Nie niewola ni wolność są w stanie  
 Uszczęśliwić cię... nie! – tyś osobą:  
 Udziałem twym – więcej!... p a n o w a n i e  
 Nad wszystkim na świecie, i nad sobą.

[Neither bondage nor freedom are capable  
 Of making you happy... no! – you are a person:  
 Your share is – more! – to rule  
 Over everything in this world, and yourself.]

The outer freedom or captivity concerns only the body. Man, however, is a person, and so – according to the views of Thomistic hylomorphism – a unity of the body and the soul. Hence freedom is an inherent attribute of a man; freedom defined by Norwid as “panowanie / Nad wszystkim na świecie, i nad sobą” [“ruling / Over everything in the world, and over own self”]. The word “panowanie” [“rule/control”] combines two senses, which are, at the same time, two aspects of free will innate to man. This allows them to rule the world and simultaneously commands them to control themselves – to rule over their passions and sensual desires, for, according to the teachings of Thomas Aquinas, where there is true freedom, evil desire may not exist.<sup>46</sup> Thus man is free in their nature, regardless of the external conditions of their lives, and happiness can only be achieved by way of improving their character, which is also the way of true freedom, to which we are called, according to St Paul in his *Epistle to the Galatians*:

You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. [Gal. 5: 13]<sup>47</sup>

The degree of exercising the freedom to which man is called is measured, both in Christian personalism and with Norwid (see, e.g., *Tyrtej. (W pamiętniku) [Tyrtaeus. (In a Diary)]*), with the measure of “self-control:”

46 See Józef Keller, “Katolicka teoria wolności jako swobody od determinacji psychologicznej,” in: *Antynomie wolności. Z dziejów filozofii wolności* (Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1966).

47 Words from Karol Wojtyła’s Vatican retreat (“Znak, któremu sprzeciwiać się będą... Rekolekcje watykańskie 5–12 III 1976” (fragments), *Znak*, No. 10 (1976), p. 1349) on true freedom – in the Christian understanding thereof – sound like a

Wtedy to *próba* jest, wtedy jest waga,  
 Ile? nad sobą wzięłeś panowania;  
 Wartość się twoja ci odsłania naga –  
 I oto widzisz, *ktos-ty?*... bez pytania.

(DW VI, 17)

[That is the *trial*, that is the weight,  
 How much? self-control you lay out;  
 Your worth is revealed to you on a plate –  
 And you see, *who-you-are?*... with no doubt.]

The above comment to the poem “Królestwo” allows us to see better the semantic “architecture” of the word “freedom” contained therein. In colloquial language and in social awareness, the concept of freedom functioned exclusively as a social and political category, and its meanings were removed from the senses, which reflected the inner freedom, i.e., its ethical aspect. Thus the common specification of the word “freedom” did not reflect its actual meaning; it was one-sided, like a building that is not supported by internal construction. It is thus not surprising that, when questioning the common understanding of freedom, the poet referred to its fundamental sense in the spirit of Christian anthropology. To give the right word to freedom – freedom worthy of man – he created a synonymic phrase (“panowanie nad wszystkim na świecie i nad sobą” [“rule over everything in the world, and over own self”]), which, in contrast to the previously exposed one-sidedness of the functioning meanings, expressed the multi-aspectual nature of human freedom – obviously within the scope of the indeterminist idea.

The full semantic structure of the word “tenderness,” also constrained in colloquial language to denote situations and states which have little to do with actual tenderness, is revealed in a different manner.

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commentary to *Królestwo*: “W posłuszeństwie wobec sumienia leży klucz wielkości moralnej człowieka i istotna podstawa jego ‘królewskości,’ owego panowania, które w zasadniczym – humanistycznym i personalistycznym – wymiarze jest przede wszystkim samo-panowaniem” [“It is in the obedience to conscience that the key to a human’s moral greatness and the crucial basis for their “kingliness” lie, that reign which in its fundamental dimension – humanist and personalistic – is foremostly self-rule”].

Czułość – bywa jak pełny wojen krzyk,  
I jak szemrzących źródeł prąd,  
I jako wtór pogrzebny...

\*

I jak plecionka długa z włosów blond,  
Na której wdowiec nosić zwykł  
Zegarek srebrny – – –

(PWsz II, 85)

[Tenderness – is like a war-drenched cry,  
And like whisperings' murmuring whirl,  
And like a burial lament...

\*

And like a braided long blond curl,  
Upon which the widower is wont to wear  
His silver watch – – –]<sup>48</sup>

Versification divides the poem into two symmetric parts; that division also reflects the two understandings of the idea from the title. The first stanza shows the rich semantic spectrum of the word through a series of three comparisons of tenderness to phenomena of a large scale of expressiveness. The fourth comparison, due to the static nature of the fetish-symbol, does not fit on the scale of the previous three. The first stanza defines tenderness as a set of various scopes of the word, and the expressional value of the habit presented in the second stanza narrows the idea of sensitivity to the conventional form of tenderness. This is an ironic exemplification, opposed to the vast semantic range of the idea defined by the poem.

Among the words which were given in-depth definitions by Norwid, one can distinguish time designations. Such words as “czas,” “wczasy,” “ery,” “epoki,” “lata,” “dnie,” “chwile,” “przeszłość,” “przyszłość,” “wieczność” [“times,” “due-time,” “eras,” “epochs,” “years,” “days,” “moments,” “past,” “future,” “eternity”] appeared most often in contexts meant to highlight their true sense and indicate the aspects which are lost in everyday communication. There is also the word “wczesny” [“early”], given a new meaning by Norwid: ‘pojawiający się w odpowiednim czasie’ [“appearing at the right time”] (“w-czas” [“in-time”]). The second poem in the *Vade-mecum* cycle is dedicated in its entirety to showing the sense of the word “przeszłość” [“past”]. The last stanza specifies the concept

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48 English translation by Borchardt: Norwid, *Poems*, p. 53.

in the following manner, referring to the parabolic vein incorporated in the discourse of the poem:

Przeszłość – jest to dziś, tylko cokolwiek dalej:  
Za kołami to wieś,  
Nie jakieś tam coś, gdzieś,  
Gdzie nigdy ludzie nie bywali!...

(PWsz II, 18)

[The past – is a today taken somewhat further:  
Beyond the wheels the village is there,  
Not – something, somewhere,  
Where people never gathered!...]<sup>49</sup>

To define “past,” Norwid used the categories of time and space. How amazing is the relation between time and space that is contained in the sentence: “Przeszłość – jest to dziś, tylko cokolwiek dalej” [“The past – it is a today taken somewhat further”]! The past is a “today” in time and “somewhat further” in space. Nowadays, it is much easier to understand this sentence that it was a century ago, and it is more difficult to dispute. Looking at the starry sky, we now read in the book of cosmos that barely comprehensible theory of relativity, which says that “przeszłość – jest to dziś, tylko cokolwiek dalej.”

But time and space in the poem “Przeszłość” are not the cosmic values – they refer to history. Only a child could believe that what happened yesterday is gone from the grasp of time and space, which are the environment of today. Continuity of time and space exists despite the intentions of the one who “prawa rwie” [“breaks the laws”]. It also exists despite the dialectic view on history in Hegelianism – the past is not just a stage in development, a ladder that is pushed away after it has served its purpose. Time and space have a divine guarantee of eternity – like man. Hence no death and no historic cataclysm have the power to break the unity formed by man and history in their embedding in eternity.<sup>50</sup> To quote the first two stanzas of “Przeszłość:”

Nie Bóg stworzył p r z e s z ł o ś ć, i ś m i e r ć, i c i e r p i e n i a,  
Lecz ów, co prawa rwie;  
Więc – nieznośne mu dnie;  
Więc, czując złe, chciał odepchnąć s p o m n i e n i a!

49 English translation (except for the first line) by Borchardt: Norwid, *Poems*, p. 21.

50 See Jacek Trznadel, *Czytanie Norwida. Próby* (Warszawa: PIW, 1978), pp. 90–93.

Acz nie byłże jak dziecko, co wozem leci,  
 Powiadając: "O! dąb  
 Ucieka!... w lasu głąb"  
 – Gdy dąb stoi, wóz z sobą unosi dzieci.

(PWsz II, 18)

[God did not create the p a s t , nor death nor pain,  
 But he who breaks the laws;  
 His days are – woes;  
 So sensing evil, wards off memory, in vain!

Wasn't he like a child that whirs by in a dray,  
 Saying: "Oh! an oak tree  
 Deep into the woods... it fleets!"  
 – The oak stands still, the cart sweeps the children away.<sup>51</sup>

That poetic definition of the term "past," opening such interesting venues of interpretation, also seems to be based on a careful analysis of the word. It may be proven in a parable stating that it is only the place of man which changes in time and in space, but neither time nor space loses its constancy through that. The root of the past tense for "go" – "iść," which in Polish forms the stem for "przeszłość" ["past"], provides further etymological grounds to specify the designation of the word defined here as what man has gone through ("przeszedł") in their trek, what was left behind them – but that does not mean it ceased to exist.

Many examples similar to the three above discussed poems could be found with Norwid.<sup>52</sup> However, these are sufficient to illustrate one of the basic features in the poetics of the author of *Vade-mecum*, which has often been termed semantic reinterpretation, accompanied by a reinterpretation of terms, beliefs, and attitudes. It is the unearthing of the meanings of words that have been lost in social linguistic practice and poetic use of the conviction of multi-pronged readers' associations.<sup>53</sup>

51 English translation by Danuta Borhardt: Norwid, *Poems*, p. 21.

52 In *Vade-mecum* alone, such examples could be found, e.g., in the following poems: *Ciemność* [*Obscurity*], *Czynownicy* [*Officialdom*], *Omyłka* [*Mistake*], and *Śmierć* [*Death*]. See Stefan Sawicki, "O 'Śmierci' C. K. Norwida. Z zagadnień semantyki poetyckiej," *Teksty*, No. 4 (1972).

53 See Ignacy Fik, *Uwagi nad językiem Cypriana Norwida*; Jan Błoński, "Norwid wśród prawnuków" (in this edition published as: "Norwid among the Great-Grandchildren," Vol. 1, pp. 173–216); Stefan Sawicki, "O 'Śmierci' C. K. Norwida."

Norwid's consistency in confronting the common meanings of words with the senses they have in the "lexicon" of a Christian moralist allows us to assume that this was the way in which his views on the nature of word – defined on the one hand by God's programming (*Logos*), and on the other by human use thereof – were reflected in the sphere of poetic semantics. Such a confrontation served thus to diminish the disproportion between the real sense and the ideal one constituted by *logos*; it was the way to learn and express truth – a path as long as "dziejów praca" ["history's work"] is going to be. The fact that the word has "architecture" embracing the outer and the inner (potential, in a way) semantic fields makes the creation of such "lexicons," which would strengthen the relation of those fields, the task of the poet, as was clearly, explicitly and implicitly, expressed in *Vade-mecum*. That task may be performed, e.g., through etymologising, creating allegorical images, giving the rank of a parable to events, reinterpreting sense allocated to specific words, or deepening their definitions. Those characteristic features of Norwid's poetics become more understandable in the context of his views on language and the objectives he set to his poetry.

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## Man – “An Image Of The Living God”

**Abstract:** The image of God present in man is the idea to which Cyprian Norwid frequently refers when talking about the essentiality of paying respect to human dignity and the great historical mission of man. Norwid’s starting point is strictly biblical and theological; his understanding of “God’s image” implies a Christian interpretation: man ought to be respected since God Himself has respect for him. It is characteristic that, according to Norwid, the “image of God” is present not only in the spiritual sphere of human beings (which is stressed by the Patristics) but also in the whole person of man. Thus, it is, in some sense, present in the sphere of human corporality. Therefore, one must not touch a human body or human soul without showing respect to man’s dignity – man’s image of God. These considerations result in the establishment of a social-moral datum which facilitates solving the problem of the caste society. All people are equal by nature because all are created in God’s own image. If that is true, we are all obliged to respect our neighbours and constantly regenerate within ourselves the noblest measure of man. Here, we also find the foundations and a guarantee of the persistence of various forms of communal life (the Church, nation, etc.). In his writings, Norwid underlines his idea about the special dignity of man, who is made in God’s image. This dignity results from “man’s historic service” and his ability to participate in God’s creation. Thus, for Norwid, man is the image of God. Man, being history himself, participates in the process of creating history, in which he has his own individual part to play (“Aż uniemożliwi się w apoteozie / Na tryumfalnym do Królestwa wozie” – “Until he becomes infant in apotheosis, on a triumphant cart to the Kingdom”). This original and functional-dynamic interpretation of the idea of God’s image agrees with the current constructions in theology.

**Keywords:** Cyprian Norwid, Christian tradition, theology, Bible in literature, Christian anthropology

As he stubbornly returned to the issue of respecting human dignity, Norwid constantly referred to the idea of God’s image being present in man. The foundation for his argument was strictly biblical and theological: man should be respected because God Himself treats every man with great respect. In February 1854, Norwid thus wrote to Maria Trębicka from New York:

powiedziano jest w Księgach Mądrości, iż “cum magna reverentia... avec une grande révérence Dieu dispose de l’homme..” “I każdy, ktokolwiek czuł sprawy ręki Pańskiej, choćby sobie nie śmiał powiedzieć tego, ani napotkał tego w Piśmie Św., w głębi serca czuje to – nieuszanowanie człowieka *jest czysto-ludzki wynalazek.* (DW X, 485)

[it is said in the Books of Wisdom that “*cum magna reverentia... avec une grande révérence Dieu dispose de l’homme.*” And anyone who has ever felt the matters of God’s hand, even if he dare not say it, or has not found it in the Bible, feels it deep in his heart – disrespect of man *is a purely-human invention.*]

In a note to this letter, the poet gave an additional explanation: “Nieuszanowanie człowieka jako człowieka, jako obraz-Boży,” [Disrespect of man as a man, as God’s-image]. The term was used here by Norwid, likely for the first time, in a strictly biblical sense. It would return later on numerous occasions, sometimes purely metaphorically. Also, the issue is often present in his works, even if the term itself does not appear. In each case, Norwid’s understanding of “God’s image” has Christian implications and ought to be interpreted within that tradition.

The very idea of man as the image of God also appears in ancient Babylonian and Egyptian epic poems, as well as in the oldest Greek writings, of which Norwid knew: “Homer ... wszelkiego człowieka uznaje «b o s k i m »! I dlatego to boski Homer jest n a t u r a l n y m” [Homer ... considers every man ‘d i v i n e’! And hence divine Homer is n a t u r a l], he wrote in the introduction to his translation of the *Odyssey* (PWSz III, 675). But he was also aware of the extremity of non-Christian perspectives on the issue, as proven by a remark in his notebook: “Człowiek w Egipcie był nicość; w Grecji – ubóstwiony” [Man was nothing in Egypt; in Greece – a deity] (PWSz VII, 280). In that regard, the biblical idea took an intermediate position and was the one that Norwid followed.

Before pertinent works by Norwid are discussed, it is worth considering a brief review of strictly biblical perspectives on the topic. The key expression used in sacerdotal tradition “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness” (actually “*besalmenu kidmutenu,*” i.e., in our image as our likeness – Genesis 1: 26), although commented upon in various ways, distinguishes man from other beings in a specific manner, and contains a call to participate in God’s creative act by multiplying life, as well as through any and all forms of creative activity. When creating people in His image, God “endowed them with strength like his own” (Sirach 17: 3).

At the same time, the biblical image of God indicates a particular dignity of man: “For God created man to be immortal, and made him to be an image of His own eternity” (Wisdom of Solomon 2: 23; Genesis 9: 6; Psalm 8). Finally, the New Testament displays the image as being true and full for the first time in Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 3: 18–4, 4), and so we see God – and at the same time, the full extent of perfect humanity – in His human face and every one of His gestures (John 14: 9). God’s image renewed in Christ is the leading element

in the redemptive process of the realization of that full humanity in each man “renewed” in the “new self” (Colossians 3: 10). The process has already begun and continues, not only in the community of the Church, but also in each man individually, and in that view, the reality of God’s image becomes a special reason to respect human dignity and a call to love your neighbour (James 3: 9; 1 John 4: 20). That message must have been clear beyond any doubt, since, e.g., Clement of Alexandria stated plainly: “When you see your brother, you see God.”<sup>1</sup>

Considering the fact that Norwid had no systemic theological education, it is quite astonishing to see how aptly he grasped nearly all the biblical and patristic theological elements that constitute the Christian understanding of “God’s image” in a man. It is impossible to know today what played the most significant role therein: works of the Fathers of the Church, the Bible itself, or Church teachings of the time? Perhaps he was also impacted by the thinkers of his time? That question might be answered by further, extensive research of a separate nature. This short paper is limited to reconstructing Norwid’s views on the matter, and a modern view that rises of its own accord.

Significantly, Norwid believed that God’s image was contained not only in the inner, spiritual sphere of human personality (as emphasised by patristic thought, in particular by St. Augustine) but in the whole person. It thus included, in some sense, the sphere of carnality. The author of the letter to Teofil Lenartowicz (1856) gave a theological argument: no “mortal” may touch their neighbour’s body or soul – “nie szanując w nim godności człowieka, obrazu Bożego, którego Wszechmocny nie utworzył *słowem rozkazującym*, ale ulepił ręką kochającą Ojca Twórcy (DW XI, 45) [without respecting the human dignity in them, that God’s image which the Omnipotent did not create with an *imperative word*, but moulded with the loving hand of Father the Creator]. At a different point, he added, somewhat more radically: “Człowiek – jest Obraz i Cząstka Boga, tj. Stworzyciela” (PWsz VI, 549) [Man – is the Image and Particle of God, i.e. Creator].

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1 Cf. *Słownik teologii biblijnej*, ed. Xavier Leon-Dufour, trans. Kazimierz Romaniuk (Poznań-Warszawa: Pallotinum, 1973), p. 594 f. The biblical theology of God’s image is more extensively discussed, e.g., by Dominique Barthélémy, *Dieu et son image. Ebauche d’une théologie biblique* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1973); Oswald Loretz, *Die Gottebenbildlichkeit des Menschen* (München: Kösel-Verlag, 1967); Marian Filipiak, “Godność osoby ludzkiej w świetle opisów stworzenia człowieka,” *Zeszyty Naukowe KUL* Vol. 2, No. 16 (1973), pp. 27–35.

That respect for God's image in man brings further social and moral consequences. Norwid first noted a common denominator, a single point of view that allowed him to solve the pressing issue of the "caste system." Although it occurred with varying levels of intensity, it left an imprint on nearly all communities. The poet considered it from the Christian perspective. Factors such as fame, power, belonging to the upper class, or financial situations, in short: everything that differentiates people must make way for that which connects, that which is common to all people. That reality is God's image in man, and it is this presence that places all people on one ontic level. In that respect, there is no greater dignity or splendour than "to be man" (see, e.g., 1, 239 and 323).

Recalling the downtrodden, homeless paupers in London, the poet used a beautiful, but shocking metaphor:

Rzekłbyś, że to Biblii księga  
Zataczająca się w błocie,  
Po którą nikt już nie sięga,

(PWsz II, 30)

[One might say this is the book of Bible  
Rolling in the mud,  
And no one reaches for it anymore,]

Just as the Bible cast into the mud remains the carrier of God's word, so the pauper lying in the gutter remains a carrier of God's image. And just like God's word is not just information, but also a call, so the reality of God's image not only reveals something but also places one under an obligation:

jeśli ja – powie Norwid – tonącemu lecę podać się, albo zgłodniałemu, albo upadającemu, albo idiocie, albo uciśnionemu do głębi, to ja służę, bo to Bóg (PWsz VII, 164).

[If I, says Norwid, hurry to help a drowning man, or a hungry one, or a falling one, or an idiot, or one deeply oppressed, then I serve, for he is God]

Respect for a man as a person is also the fundamental condition for the existence of the nation (PWsz VIII, 160; PWsz VI, 585). A situation when "*Polak jest olbrzym, a człowiek w Polaku jest karzeł* – i jesteśmy karykatury, i jesteśmy tragiczna nicość i śmiech olbrzymi" (DW XIII, 128) [*a Pole is a giant, and the man in a Pole is a midget* – and we are caricatures, and we are a tragic nothing and huge ridicule] must cause great concern. That statement contains the requirement that men need first to see and respect their own human dignity because

the way to the nation’s rebirth must begin by finding the lost “*miara-człowieka*” [*measure of humanity*]. It is in that, and in showing the “*miara najwznieściejsza człowieka*” [*grandest measure of a man*] and their exceptional dignity that the foundation and guarantee of durability of various forms of community life lie (DW XI, 432, 433).

In order to eliminate “*twórczą miłością technicznego elementu kast*” [the technical caste element with creative love] in Polish society, in 1875, Norwid postulated establishing a special Society for Respect for Man, whose aim would be to “*wprowadzenie człowieczej pokory we warunki socjalne i historyczne*” [bring human humility into social and historic circumstances]. Although the proposal did not find resonance among the recipients, as it was too fantastic, the idea itself is highly interesting and quite significant in its description of the writer’s thought. The memorial stated, e.g., that:

Towarzystwo wyznacza konkursy, ale i spośród poza onymi będących prac myśli, czynu, gestu, życia uznaje, wybiera i nagradza.

Wszystko, cokolwiek do uszanowania człowieka w społeczności i historii, i pracy kwapi się, nie jest mu obojętne.

Człowiek nie tylko jest interesujący, ale i święty – szanowny. ... *estimable*. (PWsz VI, 644)

[The Society initiates the competitions, but also recognises, chooses and rewards works of thought, deed, gesture, life from beyond the competitions.

Everything, anything aiming for respecting man in society and history, and work, is important to them.

Man is not only interesting, but also holy – respectable. ... *estimable*.]

The text – even if indirectly – also refers to the issue of God’s image in man. This idea might be supported by Norwid’s additional explanations in the letter of 1875 to Marian Sokołowski (PWsz X, 53–55). The Society was to be a reaction to Darwin’s theory, which, in the writer’s view, went against humanity. Its activity should stress the transcendence of man as compared to the natural world. Norwid reminds the reader that “*zwierzęta są tylko parabolicznymi braćmi naszymi*” [animals are only parabolic brothers of ours] because only man “*może coś początkować i tworzyć*” [can start and create something]. Thus, suitable conditions should be established for creativity so that a “*wielka rzecz! godna ludzi wolnych*” [great thing! worthy of free people] should be available to every person. That purpose could be further served by numerous competitions organised by the Society aimed at triggering various initiatives. Yet the reward would not be money, but value, in order not to insult the participant. To illustrate the idea, it is worth quoting a few titles

of the competition works suggested in that same letter, whose content was to pulsate “w rytm życia społecznego” [with the rhythm of social life]: *O ile i jak każdy człowiek jest Jaśnie Wielmożnym Panem?; Czy pokora kastowa jest tegoż, co chrześcijańska źródła?; Skorowidz Ceremoniału od najdawniejszego czasu, tj. od ksiąg chińskich, aż do dziś w zestawieniu z prawdą chrześcijańską* [In how far and how is every man His Excellency?; Is caste humility of the same origin as the Christian one?; Index of the Ceremonial since the oldest of time, i.e. from Chinese writings up until today, as compared to Christian truth]. Obviously, what Norwid meant was the “ceremonial” of polite gestures expressing respect for a man as a man, and the “Christian truth,” in this respect, was contained mainly in the theology of God’s image.

While strongly emphasising the presence of “God’s particle” in man, Norwid never erased the dimension of God’s transcendence in contrast to man. God’s image contained in man did not entitle one to deify man (even more so because the said image was flawed). The poet warned against such idolatry:

albowiem człowiek dla człowieka *adoracji nie może mieć*, jeno może w *pośmiertnej* lub w *przedżywotnej* apoteozie bytu człowieczego, to jest: w niemowlęctwie lub w dojrzałej ofierze – w żłobie lub na Golgocie! Pomiędzy zaś onymi kończynami żywota człowieczego *miłość* jedynie, a nie *adoracja* służy zdrowo (DW XIII, 149).

[for a man *cannot have adoration* for another man, only perhaps in the *posthumous or pre-life* apotheosis of human existence, that is: in infancy or in mature sacrifice – in the manger or on Golgotha! Between those two extremes of human life only *love*, not *adoration* serves right.]

Allowing these two exceptions of human “adoration” is quite characteristic here.

First, God’s image seems particularly visible in the innocence of a child. “Trzeba spojrzawszy na dziecko małe, widzieć Boga” [On seeing a small child, you must see God] said the author of *Jubileatyzm*, noting, at the same time, that an infant is a “żywy człowiek historyczny” [living historic man] (PWsz VI, 585). Shortly before his death, when writing the philosophical essay *Ostatnia z bajek* [*The Last of the Fables*], Norwid referred to the moving ceremony of a child’s christening and had the angel sing a beautiful hymn to honour the tiny man, who was holding a “service” of their innocence:

“A kto by powątpiewał, że najpiękniejszym ze stworzeń jest człek-niemowlę, ten niechaj je ogląda w domu Ojca naszego – w kościele... Cóż wdzięczniejszego jest, w każdym ruchu i w oglądaniu się na wsze strony szukając Wszędy-obecnego, jako jest niemowlę czyniące nabożeństwo swej niewinności?... One nie idzie za tłumem – ani do świecących blasków kapłańskiego ubrania wyciąga rączek – ani do

zapalonych świec – bynajmniej. Pełni swoją modlitwę, jaka mu jest tchnięta, i zaiste że pogląskanym bywa niewidzialną Boga prawicą.

Dlatego to ja wam podaję – z uweseleniem, że jeden więcej błogosławiony, jeden więcej piękny narodził się”

...

“Piękny – piękny – piękny! jest człowiek-dziecię” (DW VII, 243).

[“And who ever doubts that the most beautiful of creatures is the human-infant, should see the infant in the house of our Father – in the church... What may be more charming, in every movement and in looking round to seek the Omni-present, than an infant holding a service of its innocence?... The child does not follow the crowd, nor does it reach his tiny hands for the shiny glitter of the priest’s clothing – nor to the candles alight – not at all. The child performs his prayer, such as is breathed to him, and indeed he may be caressed with the invisible right hand of God.

Hence I tell you – with joy that one more blessed, one more beautiful man has been born”

...

“Beautiful – beautiful – beautiful! Is the human-infant,”]

It seems that some elements of that fragment (“service” of innocence, “breathed” prayer, “caress” with God’s right hand) also refer, in some sense – even if indirectly – to Norwid’s theology of God’s image, which, in this case, would allude more to the New Testament perspective on the issue (Colossians 3: 10).

When contrasted against the harsh reality of a society tainted with sin, that image is less and less visible in man (DW VII, 243 ff), and only the creative moral effort of a man answering to grace allows him to restore that initial transparency of God’s image. It is usually the work of a whole life, and its results become visible only in the face of an old man weathered with toil, or so Norwid seems to indicate. In that sense, the evolution of a man maturing (“starzenie się” [getting old]) goes in some aspects back towards its “pierwo-wzór” [archetype], the faithful image of God, the simplicity and innocence of a baby. The thought can be found even in one of Norwid’s early poems, titled *Vendôme*:

..... Człowiek coraz więcej dziecię,  
Aż uniemowli się w apoteozie  
Na tryumfalnym do K r ó l e s t w a wozie.

Widziałeś? – mężę jak kończą dojrzali,

...

... jakby życia drugiego poczęciem,  
Gdy o l b r z y m ziemi – nieba już d z i e c i ę c i e m?...

[..... The man is more and more a child,  
 Until they are an infant in apotheosis  
 In the triumphant carriage to the Kingdom.]

Did you see? – how mature people end,

...

... as if born to a second life,

When a giant on earth – becomes an infant of heaven?...] ]

It is a certain evolution of “a man” to the perfect “Man,” awaited from afar (“się go w dali czeka”). The perfect Man will not be so much the result of human efforts on a scale of perfection understood in strictly human terms, but will rather be the work of God, who will recreate in them His own image, now deformed but still present (cf. PWsz I, 233; PWsz II, 98). That permanent presence of God’s image in each man is the basic determinant of man’s exceptional dignity. For that reason alone, each person deserves respect and love (not “adoration”), a belief often expressed by the poet. He was strongly against whipping, which was used as punishment at that time, even by priests. He could not comprehend that a “chrześcijański obywatel” [Christian citizen] could whip a child, raise their hand against a fellow countryman, or threaten a woman with a whipping. He saw it not only as meanness and lack of awareness, but also (or perhaps mainly) as a betrayal of the Gospel:

Albowiem: *człowiek nigdy nie jest zwierzęciem istnym z tej przyczyny, iż człowiek jest zawsze obrazem i podobieństwem Boga żywego – zasługuje przeto od równych sobie na głębokie uczczenie. Może ten obraz być skażony, ale to zawsze Boga żywego obraz* (DW XII, 291–292; cf. DW XI, 42; DW XII, 89, 90).

[Because: *man is never a sheer animal*, for man is always the image and likeness of the living God – so they deserve deep celebration from their peers. That image may be tainted, but it is still the image of the living God.]

It is worth quoting one more significant argument in this context, which Norwid used against the punishment of whipping administered to the common people. He indicated the particular dignity of man that resulted from their participation in shaping the face of history. At a time of a sudden turn towards the common people within the fight for the nation’s independence, whipping those people as punishment seemed particularly absurd to him. In a special note on the above issue, the writer stated:

Kara cielesna w stosunku do Ludu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w tych czasach, kiedy się Lud przypuszcza jako czynnika sprawy historycznej narodu całego, jest przez to samo o trzykroć większą – albowiem uderza się człowieka, którego się do komputu dziejowej służby przypuściło. (PWsz VII, 115)



[C o r p o r a l p u n i s h m e n t f o r t h e P e o p l e o f t h e P o l i s h R e p u b l i c i n t i m e s w h e n t h e [c o m m o n] P e o p l e a r e a d m i t t e d a s a n a g e n t o f t h e h i s t o r i c m a t t e r o f t h e w h o l e n a t i o n , i s b e c a u s e o f i t t h r i c e a s b i g – f o r i t h i t s a m a n a d m i t t e d t o t h e a r m y o f h i s t o r i c s e r v i c e.]

The idea of a particular dignity of man resulting from the fact of their “historic service,” as shown in the fragment above, is an extrapolation of Catholic teachings on the possibility of man’s collaboration in God’s creative and redemptive work. The Bible sees it as a form of participating in His image (Sirach 17: 3).

In Norwid’s time, it was a common opinion that what marked God’s image and likeness were the spiritual powers of man, or simply the unchanging human soul itself. Everything points to the conclusion that such an ontological and static interpretation (with Hellenistic influences) was not at all satisfactory to a poet who viewed reality in historical terms. In a letter of 1866 to Julian Fontana, he wrote: “któż wierzy, że różnimy się, ludzie od zwierząt, *rozumem i mową*??? ... różnimy się *postępem i tradycją!*” (DW XII, 419) [who believes that we, people, differ from animals with *mind and speech*??? ... we differ with *progress and tradition!*]. The author returned here to an opinion he had expressed a few years earlier in *Garstka piasku* [*A Handful of Sand*]:

Wiedz, że to przez *tradycję* wyróżniony jest majestat człowieka od zwierząt polnych, a ten, co od sumienia historii się oderwał, dziczeje na wyspie oddalonej i powoli w zwierzę zamienia się. (DW VII, 98)

[Know this, it is *tradition* which distinguishes the majesty of man from field animals, and one who has broken away from the conscience of history grows savage on a faraway island and slowly changes into an animal.]

Both quoted statements are quite significantly related to the topic discussed here, even if the relationship is indirect. Norwid notes in them the *h i s t o r i c a l n a t u r e* of human existence, which is a special attribute of humanity, even more so than the mind and speech. And if it is so, it should come as no surprise that Norwid has such a strong tendency to emphasise the dignity of the human body. It is the awareness that through his own carnality, man enters history. For Norwid, God’s image is not just in the spiritual furnishings of man, but in the whole “historical man.” the man, who co-creates history and at the same time *is* that history, for everyone has their own individual history (“Aż uniemowli się w apoteozie / Na tryumfalnym do K r ó l e s t w a w o z i e” [Until they are an infant in apotheosis / In the triumphant carriage to the K i n g d o m]). That original, functional-dynamic interpretation of the idea of God’s image reflects the modern understanding of the relevant biblical tradition. “W tym ujęciu idea obrazu Bożego wyraża sposób, przez który człowiek realizuje siebie samego

przez swoiste relacje z Bogiem, z innymi ludźmi i ze światem”<sup>2</sup> [In that perspective, the idea of God’s image is expressed in the manner in which man realises himself through their specific relationship with God, other people, and the world]. Norwid the “theologian” would certainly give his full agreement with that statement of the modern professional theologian.

In summary, it ought to be stated that although Norwid’s understanding of man as God’s image is fully included in the Christian tradition, it is still original and interesting, especially to a theologian. The poet pays particular attention to two elements that constitute the idea of God’s image: the exceptional dignity of man and the ability to collaborate in God’s creation and His redemption. To an extent, this reflects two currents of the Christian tradition, which differ slightly in the distribution of emphasis. The first trend – stressing the dignity of man alone – was always dominant. Since the very beginning, the Christian tradition saw the motif of man as God’s image as the key and foundation for reflection upon the exceptional dignity of man as human.<sup>3</sup> The other trend, somewhat newer and of a less continuous nature, saw God’s image and likeness mainly in the fact that man exists in the world as a factor co-creating history (*cooperatio*).<sup>4</sup> At most times, both those trends complemented and interlaced with each other, although alternative views appeared now and again, which saw the reality of God’s image not in the ontic sphere, not in who a man was, but in the sphere of activity, i.e., through human participation in God’s reign over the world.<sup>5</sup>

Of course, Norwid was very far from such an extreme view of the issue. Even if he stated that the admittance of man to the “army of historic service” gave him particular dignity (“trzykroć większą” [thrice as big]), he still emphasised at every step that “człowiek jest zawsze obrazem i podobieństwem Boga żywego” [man is always the image and likeness of the living God]. For the very fact of being human, he deserved “głębokie uczczenie” [deep reverence]. From

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- 2 Marian Filipiak, *Biblia o człowieku. Zarys antropologii biblijnej Starego Testamentu* (Lublin: TN KUL, 1979), p. 84.
  - 3 Henri de Lubac, *Le drame de l’humanisme athée* (Paris: Union Générale d’Éditions, 1963), p. 15.
  - 4 In the writings of Leo the Great, who followed that tradition and, in some sense, co-created it, people are called: “*cooperatores operum Dei*,” “*cooperatores gratiae*,” “*consortes operum Dei*,” “*imitatores operum Dei*,” etc. See Czesław Bartnik, *Teologia historii według Leona Wielkiego* (Lublin: TN KUL, 1972), p. 112 with note 126.
  - 5 See, e.g., D. T. Anselin, “The Notion of Domination in Gen. 1–3,” *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, No. 16 (1954), pp. 277–294.

the theological point of view, this is the most appropriate balance achievable within the issue.

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## The Grandson Yet to Come: A Misunderstanding?

**Abstract:** The text concerns the issue of the addressee assumed in Norwid's works and appointed by the poet himself, and attempts to answer the question: for whom did Norwid write? The author disputes the popular belief that, rejected and lonely, Norwid wrote mainly for the "późny wnuk" – grandson (and addressee) yet to come. However, according to Fert, the main addressee of Norwid's poetic declaration was mainly the contemporary, nineteenth-century reader of his poetry. Fert stresses that considering Norwid's writing to be primarily oriented towards the future obscures the poet's immense sensitivity to the matters contemporary to him and dims the fact of Norwid's deep immersion in artistic, political and ideological issues of his time. With that in mind, the author analyses Norwid's takes on and visions of the future, which draw attention with the ambivalence and ambiguity of assessing that which is to come. The future is "korektorka wieczna" [eternal corrector], but also a sphere of doubts; even if it is just, the victory is bitter. In conclusion, Fert defines Norwid's addresses towards the future as operations meant to appeal mainly to the consciences of his contemporaries, nineteenth-century readers of poetry.

**Keywords:** Cyprian Norwid, "Fortepian Szopena," nineteenth-century poetry, poet – reader

The process of "restoring" Norwid to national culture, which started over 80 years ago with the initiatives and activities of Zenon Przesmycki, laid the groundwork for a conviction which very quickly grew popular – the conviction that on "rejection" by the literary audience contemporary to him, the poet "bequeathed" his work to future generations.

The "późny wnuk" [grandson yet to come] from the poem "Fortepian Szopena" ["Chopin's Grand Piano"] became in this process almost a synonym of Norwid's main addressee, the heir of his poetic will.<sup>1</sup> And today, the career of this metaphor (or simply *topos*) has more than just a psychological motivation. It was not only the arbitrary decisions of modern readers that linked Norwid

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1 "Potomni" [descendants] are a rare poetic motif in Norwid's works. Relatively frequent, by comparison, is the motif of the future, which is treated here as the closest context of the former motif.

to his future recipient. After all, could the ideological declarations of those who see Norwid as their patron ever be considered a collective mystification?

Zdzisław Łapiński said:

[Norwid] does not serve [today's] reader with the detour kind of analogous thinking, like other poets who educate us in sensitivity, who train lively imagination, educate the language, force to honesty towards ourselves – but all that on a foreign material for which we have to substitute the material of current experiences, convictions, doubts. Norwid teaches not only the method, but also solutions of the same kind of *problema* which are posed before us, as well, for the processes which have started in the previous century and are now maturing, although they were not visible for the majority back then.<sup>2</sup>

The statement quoted above reflects a very important trend in current Norwidological thought: the work itself is likely to hold enough premises to bridge the events in which Norwid takes part not by his own will, but by ours. Yet perhaps in this recovery bustle about Norwid's heritage, we might be losing sight of the sobering view that Norwid's element of our culture is a historically "unestablished" one.<sup>3</sup> The doubt seems well-timed enough since one of the newer publications states:

Determined with external conditions, feeling definite estrangement and loneliness among his contemporaries, he shaped his literary programme and the poetics of his works entirely on his own. Unable to find understanding among the audience of his time, he addressed his works to future generations, seeking there the right recipients of his poetry.<sup>4</sup>

Such a statement invites one to profess quite contrary views. However, that is not the issue here; it is not about turning the matter upside down. The "future" addressee of Norwid's poetry, that reader of his whom he named "późny wnuk," might be found, but more as one of the components of the form of addressing<sup>5</sup>

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2 Zdzisław Łapiński, *Norwid* (Kraków: Znak, 1971), p. 149 f.

3 See Maria Grzędzielska, "Nie nawiązane ogniwo rozwojowe poezji polskiej." In the conference proceedings collection: *Cyprian Norwid. W 150-lecie urodzin. Materiały konferencji naukowej 23–25 września 1971.* (Warszawa: PIW, 1973).

4 Marek Kozanecki, "Norwidowska koncepcja poezji," *Ruch Literacki*, Vol. 4 (1976), p. 213. Emphasis J. F. – cf. Jan Błoński, "Norwid wśród prawnuków," *Twórczość*, No. 5 (1976), p. 76. For comments on the origins of Norwid's "defensive aggression," see the study by Andrzej Walicki, "Cyprian Norwid: trzy wątki myśli," *Archiwum Historii Filozofii i Myśli Społecznej*, Vol. 24 (1978), p. 30.

5 The "form of address" refers to the speaker and receiver as parties to potential and actual linguistic communication.

the primarily contemporary addressee, the one potentially within the impact range of Norwid's poetry in the poet's times. It could have been the literary critic frowning with dismay, or the fellow artist shrugging his shoulders, or perhaps the "światły obywatel" [educated citizen], recalled by the poet from his travels throughout Poland: "dajcie mi też jaką książkę z brzegu, bo idę spać do ogrodu" (DW VII, 147) [and give me *just about any book*, because I am going to take a nap in the garden]. I believe that even when addressing the "późny wnuk," Norwid wished to be heard mainly by his own contemporaries.

There is danger hiding in the unambiguous treatment of the "późny wnuk" as the future addressee. A writer who was tuned in the most sensitive manner to the present has been moved into dimensions and contexts that he treated more like a necessary evil than as the expected crowning of his work.

The question arises then, of how to understand those rare but still present and clear addresses of Norwid towards the future. If they are placed in the context of Norwid's autobiography, constructed mainly from the poet's letters, and if the modern "apoteozy pośmiertne" [posthumous apotheoses] are contrasted against the glaring "injustice" of the judgements of literary critics of the previous century, perhaps one may say that we are the legitimate heirs of his will.

The question also remains of how Norwid envisioned the future.

Even the "unaided" eye of a layman may notice the ambivalence in its presentations. It is most visible in the statements considering the possibility of correctly evaluating past works in the future. On the one hand, Norwid presents a conviction that the future "corrects" errors made towards authors and their works in the past<sup>6</sup> – a kind of a steward of atonement, which allows each valuable work that has been undervalued or missed by contemporaries to win due appreciation one day. That belief and motif have been forever linked to literature, as well as other areas (e.g., Homer's: "Zeus has brought an evil fate upon us, and in days to come we shall be a song for those yet unborn").<sup>7</sup> Kochanowski – the poet who brought the models of ancient poetry to Polish,

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6 The famous phrase from the poem "Do Walentego Pomiana Z." (PWsz II, 152) ["To Walenty Pomian Z.": "współczesność minie niestateczna, / Lecz nie ominie Przyszłość: K o r e k t o r k a - w i e c z n a !"] [the unstable contemporariness will come to pass, / But future: the e t e r n a l - c o r r e c t o r , will come to last!...] – expresses the poet's hope for his words to "bloom" into a "custom," his dreams of deeds accomplished through poetry.

7 Homer, *The Iliad*, VI 357, transl. by A. S. [Tony] Kline (Poetry in Translation, 2009). For a discussion on the issue, see: Władysław Tatarkiewicz, *Historia estetyki*, Vol. 1. (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1962), p. 42 *passim*.

and who had been a reference for poetic ways for Norwid since the latter's youth<sup>8</sup> ("rzecz czarnoleska" [Czarnolas matter, referring to the poetry of Jan Kochanowski]) – wrote:

Sobie śpiewam a Muzom. Bo kto jest na ziemi,  
Co by serce ucieszyć chciał pieśniami memi?

[I sing to myself and the Muses! Who on earth  
Would like to please his heart with my melodious airs?]<sup>9</sup>

And further, in the same "Muza" ["Muse"]:

Jednak mam tę nadzieję, że przedsię za laty  
Nie będą moje czułe nocy bez zapłaty;  
A co mi za żywota ujmie czas dzisiejszy,  
To po śmierci nagrodzi z lichwą wiek późniejszy.<sup>10</sup>

[And yet I have this hope that many years away  
My wakeful nights will not be left without repay;  
And what the present time takes while I still live by,  
Later age will richly reward after I die.]

The motif of posthumous fame, understood as the opposite of alleged or true underappreciation when alive, that Horatian "*Non omnis moriar*," is, with the Renaissance poet, the expression of proud individualism,<sup>11</sup> the splendours of which are readily "granted" to his contemporaries worthy of commemoration.

The poetry of later generations followed that Renaissance tradition – crowning and expecting a crown, as in *Wojna chocimska* [*The Chocim War*] by Potocki:

Wprzód, niżli sarmackiego Marsa krwawe dzieje  
Potomnym wiekom Muza na papier wyleje,

[Before the bloody history of the Sarmatian Mars  
The Muse commits to paper for posterity]

8 See Zofia Szmydtowa, "Norwid wobec włoskiego odrodzenia," in: *W kręgu renesansu i romantyzmu. Studia porównawcze z literatury polskiej i obcej*. Selection and foreword by Zdzisław Libera (Warszawa: PWN, 1979), p. 643.

9 This and next quote as transl. by Michael J. Mikoś, *Staropolska On-Line*: 2018 <[http://staropolska.pl/ang/renaissance/J\\_Kochanowski/muse.php3](http://staropolska.pl/ang/renaissance/J_Kochanowski/muse.php3)>.

10 Jan Kochanowski, *Dzieła polskie*, ed. Julian Krzyżanowski, 10<sup>th</sup> ed. (Warszawa: PIW, 1980), p. 119.

11 Jerzy Ziomek, *Renesans* (Warszawa: PWN, 1973), p. 215.



– although in this case, the poet bowed before the greatness of the deed, which he served with his song until the meaning of the song itself was blurred:

... Otwieraj, odźwierny,  
Wrota, gdzie na szerokiej mej ojczyzny sali  
Wielcy bohaterowie będą się pisali.<sup>12</sup>

[Doorman, open  
The door where in the great room of my homeland  
Great heroes will be written.]

Sarbiewski pushed the motif even further, didactically:

Wieczną na wielkiej krępakowej skale  
Rysuję piosnkę. Umieście ją całe,  
Potomne czasy! Niewinne dziewczęta  
Niech ją i późne śpiewają wnuczęta.<sup>13</sup>

[Eternal song upon the great Krępak rock  
I draw. Learn it well,  
Future times! Innocent maidens  
Shall sing it, and the grandchildren to come.]

In the Enlightenment, which was always ready to use the didactic possibilities of literature, the instrumental approach to the discussed *topos* was accompanied by opinions quite contrary to the traditional one, as with Krasicki:

Ogłaszaj potomności, jak los cnotę nęka,  
Pisz, coś widział, poczciwość prawdy się nie lęka.<sup>14</sup>

[Announce to posterity, how fate harasses virtue,  
Write what you have seen, decency is not afraid of truth.]

That tradition was particularly complicated in Polish Romanticism. With Mickiewicz, one finds many notes of proud individualism, e.g., in the ending of *Sonety krymskie* [*Sonnets from the Crimea*]:

Podobnie na twe serce o poeto młody!  
Namiętność często groźne wzburza niepogody,  
Lecz gdy podniesiesz bardon, ona bez twój szkody

12 Quote after: *Poeci polskiego baroku*, ed. Jadwiga Sokołowska, Kazimiera Żukowska, Vol. 2 (Warszawa: PIW, 1965), pp. 7–8.

13 Maciej Kazimierz Sarbiewski, “Do rycerstwa polskiego. Ad équités Polonos,” in: *Poeci polskiego baroku*, Vol. 1, p. 451. The “great Krępak rock” (Krępak being a summit in the Carpathians) means here “on a mountain rock.”

14 Ignacy Krasicki, *Wiersze wybrane*, selection and introduction by Jan Kott (Warszawa: PIW, 1964), p. 141.

Ucieka w zapomnienia pograćzyć się toni,  
 I nieśmiertelne pieśni za sobą uroni,  
 Z których wieki uplotą ozdobę twych skroni.<sup>15</sup>

[Thus, Poet, in your youth when storms are wild  
 And passions break upon the heart and brain,  
 To leave their ruin there—shipwreck and waste—

Pick up your lute! Upon it undefiled  
 You'll find song-pearls that your heart-deeps retain,  
 The crown the years have brought you, white and chaste.<sup>16]</sup>

But the break comes – after the apogee – in Konrad's drama in *Dziady* [*Forefathers' Eve*] part III. The inspired romantic poetry, that guide of the Polish pilgrimage, elevates the most beautiful, divinised future. Słowacki's poem ["Śni mi się jakaś wielka a przez wieki idąca"] ["I dream of some great [story] walking through ages"] says:

Ojczyzny nieśmiertelnej... serce wielkie niech słyszę  
 Ciągłe w sobie bijące... a na wielką się ciszę  
 Przygotuję... że żadnych stąd oklasków nie będzie...<sup>17</sup>

[The great heart of my immortal homeland... let me hear  
 Its constant beat inside me... and I will be ready  
 For the great silence... when no applause comes from there...]

Norwid undertook traditional motifs, but he linked the vision of the future to his theory of history as a process of continuous completion in the dynamic present of what (really) occurred in the past: "czytanie każdego arcydzieła jest nieskończone"<sup>18</sup> [the reading of each masterpiece is never finished], and, at the same time, he adjusted it to an extensive complex of issues born out of "sytuacja pisarza w społeczeństwie cywilizacji przemysłowej"<sup>19</sup> [a writer's situation in the society of industrial civilization]. That civilization imposed uncommon

15 Adam Mickiewicz, *Dzieła wszystkie*, Vol. 1, part 2, ed. Czesław Zgorzelski (Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1982), p. 26.

16 Adam Mickiewicz, *Sonnets from the Crimea*, transl. by Edna Worthley Underwood (San Francisco: Paul Elder and Company, 1917), p. 33.

17 Juliusz Słowacki, *Dzieła wszystkie*, ed. Juliusz Kleiner, with Władysław Floryan, Vol. 12, part 1 (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1960), p. 205.

18 *O Juliuszu Słowackim*. PWSz VI, 444.

19 Zofia Stefanowska, "Norwid – pisarz wieku kupieckiego i przemysłowego," in: *Literatura – komparatystyka – folklor. Księga poświęcona Julianowi Krzyżanowskiemu* (Warszawa: PIW, 1968), p. 428. That "professional awareness" is

limitations on artists and also tempted them with new, previously unheard of perspectives. The poet retained a critical distance towards the noisy present, opposing it with, e.g., a vision of progress understood as the progress of an individual spirit immersed in civilizational creative work, allied with a nation's work of multiple generations.<sup>20</sup>

And yet, the future also had a less kind face. From the perspective of Norwid – a reader of history, historiosopher, creator, and no mere viewer of history – the (predictable) future bore no difference in its axiological competences when compared to the past and the present. The ending of the poem [“Coś ty Atenom zrobił, Sokratesie”] [“What Have You Done to Athens, Socrates”] echoes with a clear warning against uncritical faith in the future:

Więc mniejsza o to, w jakiej spoczniesz urnie,  
Gdzie? Kiedy? W jakim sensie I obliczu?  
Bo grób Twój jeszcze odemkną powtórnie,  
Inaczej będą głosić Twe zasługi  
I łez wylanych dziś będą się wstydzić,  
A lać ci będą łzy p o t ę g i d r u g i ę j

(PWsz I, 236)

[The kind of urn counts little, where you're laid to rest,  
Where? When? With what visage, in what sense?  
For they'll open your grave a second time,  
Proclaim your merits in a different way,  
Ashamed today of tears shed yesterday;  
Those not seeing the human in you  
Will now shed tears *to the power of two*...] <sup>21</sup>

Those “tears to the power of two” are usually laced with the posturing of those who stoned and perhaps later even venerated their own prophets. Such a fate, in Norwid's view, was to be expected by all who dared surpass their time:

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characteristic of Norwid and was eagerly accepted by modernists – “discoverers” of the poet (see *Literatura – komparatystyka – folklor*, p. 443).

20 See Walicki, “Cyprian Norwid: trzy wątki myśli,” p. 10. Walicki's study emphasises e.g. Norwid's opposition towards the tendency of Polish Romanticism – most notably Mickiewicz – to move towards millenarianism.

21 English translation by Danuta Borchardt in collaboration with Agata Brajerska-Mazur in: Cyprian Norwid, *Poems* (New York: Archipelago books, 2011), p. 107.

Każdego z takich jak Ty ś w i a t nie może  
Od razu przyjąć na spokojne łożo,

(PWsz I, 236)

[For none of you who are like that, can the w o r l d  
Immediately offer rest and peace]

In the poem “Adam Krafft,” earlier than the one quoted above by some dozen years, Norwid stated:

O wielki mistrzu! słusznie zginasz barki  
I na ramionach własne pieścisz dzieło,  
Gdy oto widze, wedle błahej miarki,  
Nie ocenili, co ich prześcignęło:

(PWsz I, 60)

[Oh great master! you are right to bow your shoulders  
And carry your work on them like a child,  
When the spectators with a trivial measure  
Could not appreciate what surpassed them:]

One may ask whether the fate of the “surpasser” would be loneliness;<sup>22</sup> or whether the future would be as blind as the present; or, whether that which “surpassed” would be sentenced to eternal non-appreciation. Norwid read the vision of the future from the past – from that which is “d z i ś, tylko cokolwiek dalej” [t o d a y, but only somewhat further] and from the present created by those who “zaniemili pod koniec Mickiewicza – którzy otruli Słowackiego – którzy Zygmunta zaniepodzieli w nicość fałszu społecznego” (DW XI, 161) [eventually silenced Mickiewicz – who poisoned Słowacki – who lost Zygmunt in the nothingness of social falsehood]. The bitterness of the poem “Styl nijaki” [“Bland Style”] is notable:

Szkoła - stylu klóciła się z szkołą - n a t c h n i e n i a ,  
Zarzucając jej dziką niepoprawność. – Ale!...  
P o t o m n i nie są tylko grobami z kamienia,  
Ciosanymi cierpliwym dłutem doskonałe:  
Są oni pierw W s p ó ł c z e ś n i, których przeznaczenia  
O d d o - r a ż n e g o w chwili że zależą słowa;  
Przestawa być wymowną s p ó ż n i o n a w y m o w a !

(PWsz II, 110)

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22 See Stefanowska, “Norwid – pisarz wieku kupieckiego i przemysłowego,” p. 438.

[The school-of-style clashed with the school-of-inspiration,  
 Accusing it of wild incorrectness. – But!...  
 Descendants are not just tombstones,  
 With the perfection of a patient chisel cut:  
 They are first Contemporaries, whose fate  
 Depends on the present word of the moment;  
 Expression is no more expressive when late!]

Perhaps the words “Expression is no more expressive when late” provide some hope for future compensation.<sup>23</sup> And perhaps, that passion of Norwid in striving to announce his works despite the constantly growing dislike of the potential audience took its origin mainly in the poet’s fear of “spóźnienie się w dziejach” [being late in history]. Publication attempts, failures and disappointments, ironic summarising: “I had been speaking about it for five years, four, two years, and you did not want to listen” These are clear proofs that the poet was intent on “zaciężenie na szali polskiej” [weighing heavily on the Polish scales] at the right time.

The poem “Epos nasza. 1848” [“Our Epic. 1848”], in some sense, closed the period of Norwid’s relative popularity. For several years prior, he had published his works in the national press and “was noticed.” In fact, after 1842, he moved in the emigration of the artistic and political elite and was far from being a passive element of the community. In 1848, he had a public dispute with Mickiewicz, which might not have increased the number of his followers, but left an imprint on the memory of his contemporaries. In the poem mentioned above, that “Krafft” line of reflection on the future can be heard:

A śmiech? – to potem w dziejach – to potomni  
 Niech się uśmieją, że my tacy mali,  
 A oni szczęśni tacy i ogromni,  
 I czyści, i tak zewsząd okazali...

(PWsz I, 160)

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23 Norwid considered himself to be “late” or “delayed” rather than “premature.” Zofia Trojanowiczowa presents a convincing explanation thereof in her study “Norwid wobec Mickiewicza,” in: *Cyprian Norwid. W 150-lecie urodzin*. On p. 204, she writes: “he is the last of the row of great romantic poets, and not the first one to open a new chapter .... Too early or too late? Norwid’s researchers usually indicate him as being premature. Norwid himself believed, and often stated, that ‘everything is too late for me.’”

[And laughter? – later in the history – the descendants  
 May laugh at how little we are,  
 While they're so fortunate and great,  
 And pure, and magnificent throughout...]

The bitterness of the poem correlates with the increasing momentum of various failures in the poet's life, and with the progressing sense of loneliness, which would in time "exile" him across the ocean.

Jednego ciebie to wspomnienie wzruszy,  
 Bo gawiedź śmiać się będzie wielolica, (PWsz I, 161)

[Only you will be moved by the memory,  
 For the masses will laugh with their many faces,]

There may perhaps be a hint of yielding to general opinion and agreement to be knighted as Don Quixote – but if there is, it rises from the awareness of walking one's own way, self-chosen, perhaps dramatic, but leading into lonesome independence. After all, Don Quixote symbolises the sovereignty of fate and work against the present and the future, against laurels and derision:

prawda jedynie wystarczy  
 Nam, co za prawdą gonim, D o n K i c h o t o m , (PWsz I, 162)

[truth is enough  
 To us who seek the truth, us D o n Q u i x o t e s ]

A very simple conclusion may be drawn from the fragments of Norwid's thought quoted above: the artist took an ambiguous stance towards the future. He did not reject hope but still saturated it with the awareness of how bitter the late "zwycięstwo za grobem" [victory beyond the grave] was. That mature knowledge and emotion are clearly visible in the choice of the significant sentence from *The Odyssey* for the motto opening the second volume of the poet's works, which he was preparing for print:

Nie pochlebiam Cieniowi! o! Ulissie, szlachetny synu Laerta – wolałbym pomiędzy wami być pachołkiem ostatniego wyrobnika, nie posiadającego ziemi, mającego pług za całą własność i zaledwo zdolnego wyżyć, aniżeli panować, jak Monarcha, nad narodem umarłych!

(PWsz II, 7)

[Nay, seek not to speak soothingly to me of death, glorious Odysseus. I should choose, so I might live on earth, to serve as the hireling of another, of some portionless man whose livelihood was but small, rather than to be lord over all the dead that have perished.]<sup>24</sup>

That is not the only “inconsistency” or contradiction in that poetic vision of the future. But Norwid’s irony towards the future paled in comparison to the heat of the battle which he fought with the present that sentenced him to silence, loneliness, queerness – of the “późny wnuk.” For him, loneliness was misery, a curse to be broken, even for the sake of the present itself. The entirety of his literary and graphic work was saturated with the thought of his addressee: not the “późny wnuk,” but the contemporary one who needed to be reached, the one living today, only “cokolwiek dalej” [somewhat further]. It is true that Norwid kept the future in mind, but he did not make it the main character of his work. Even if the poet stepped into that future, it was presented most frequently as a component of the historiosophic perspective of the “wieczny człowiek” [eternal man]. How significant it is that *Promethidion* was dedicated to a dead man:

Tobie – *Umarły*, te poświęcam pieśni,  
Bo *cień* gdy schyla się nad pergaminem,  
To prawdę czyta, o podstępach nie śni...  
Tobie poświęcam, Włodziu!... słowem, czynem,  
Modlitwą... bliskim znajdziesz mnie i wiernym  
– Na szlaku białych słońc –

(DW IV,94)

[To you – the *Departed*, I dedicate these songs,  
For when the *shadow* leans over the parchment,  
Truth he reads, and thinks no deceit...  
To you I dedicate it, Włodziu!... With the word, the deed,  
The prayer... you shall find me close and faithful  
– On the trail of white suns –]

Norwid’s romantic rebellion against the present had one essential characteristic: taken instrumentally, as serving to show the distinctness of the poet and

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24 Homer, *The Odyssey*, book XI, 488 ff, transl. by Augustus Taber Murray, Loeb Classical Library Volumes (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1919).

the proud individualism and proud loneliness resulting from “the calling,” it should, at the same time, lead or provoke the transformation of the “evil” world – the “present” one, some long ago, faraway one “gdzie nigdy ludzie nie bywali” [where people never gathered]. Peeking “behind the scenes” of God’s world, urging “*le rouage de la Providence*” is not merely foreign thereto, but even blasphemous. References to the future serve thus a crucial point: “waking” the present. The “późny wnuk” has a much stronger motivation as the ideological provocation of the contemporary time, a counterpoint of the principal line of artistic impact – in and on contemporariness – than as a project of a future “executor” of what should have been “executed” now. Norwid never reconciled himself with the possibility of writing just for himself. He kept on looking for publishers, annoying and importuning friends and strangers. He seized upon the smallest hope for publication. He even went so far as to wish to “żyć z honorariów”<sup>25</sup> [earn a living with royalties]. It is true that his works, for the most part, were locked in the proverbial sock drawer, in the attic or the cellar, and played the social role assumed by their author only minimally in their own – or perhaps not just their own – time.

That future-oriented perspective of Norwid’s poetry may be treated as a fully intentional tactic, coexisting with other such measures in his rich repertoire of means aimed at provoking the “now.” One may ask, what was the basis for the poet’s faith in the effectiveness of reaching his audience in that way? He did know that the easiest way to his readers was to follow their tastes, which had already been formed for many years by Romanticism. Again, questions arise of what he aimed to persuade them to do, and why he was not successful in his own time. Moreover, he is currently viewed as the “most modern” of the artists of the time.<sup>26</sup> The answers are worth seeking as one considers the issues of the autonomy of the “późny wnuk.” It is noteworthy that the “późny wnuk” gives a particularly dramatic dimension to Norwid’s words. When viewed as a category encompassing the whole work, as it is observed today (in particular as a

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25 See letter to Józef Ignacy Kraszewski from ca. 15 V 1866 (DW XII, 447): “bardzo mi o to idzie, abym ów rękopism sprzedał, a zaręczam, że nabywca nie straci na nim – tylko nie mogę mu zapłacić z góry, aby mi zapłacił potem – lub po śmierci” [it is very important for me to sell that manuscript, and I assure you the buyer cannot lose by it – only I cannot pay him *in advance to have him pay me later – once I am dead*]. See also Stefanowska, “Norwid – pisarz wieku kupieckiego i przemysłowego,” p. 457.

26 See Marian Piechal, *Żywe źródła. Szkice literackie* (Warszawa: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1972).



result of the Norwidological modernist tradition<sup>27</sup>), he greatly facilitates the reader's synthetic perspective on that work, although Norwid's work arose from the constant opposition against "ease," which simplified and levelled out the difficult values in literature. Further, the poet's degree of consistency in fighting for the present should be noted.

Doubtless, ever since the beginning of his creative path, Norwid was haunted with distrust towards the recipients of art whom he knew. That distrust is already seen in an early poem "Pismo" ["Writings"], quite ostentatiously indicating the disaccord between poetry (and the poet) and its recipients. Still, such a stance belonged to the repertoire of the literary tradition of Romanticism, which was well-established by that time.<sup>28</sup> As time passed, however, it was not a well-established convention but personal literary experiences which directed the poet's attacks against the readers. The contemporary audience from that poem treated the poetic word – "klejnoty ducha" [jewels of the spirit] – as a kind of refined trifle or as "gorzkie i niegrzeczne" [bitter and rude] quirks offensive to "dobry smak" [good taste]:

Lepiej, żeby nam kwiatów poszedł szukać w polu,  
Albo żeby już milczał, kiedy taki nudny.

(PWsz I, 36)

[He had better go find us some flowers in the field,  
Or keep silent, as boring as he is.]

Norwid's contemporariness turned away from the offered poetry of truth. Perhaps it was because it was too intense an invasion into their well-mannered blandness, or made them change or improve, or made them surrender their inertness or conventional activity in favour of true action and understanding that it was received with distinct aversion. To the image of the amused contemporaries from the poem "Pismo," the audience of Norwid's debut, one may add the equally dreary historical context: Warsaw was the same ten years after the November Uprising – a city terrorised by the builders of the Citadel. The poet had to wait another twenty years to see a different Warsaw.

27 See Stefanowska, "Norwid – pisarz wieku kupieckiego i przemysłowego," p. 424 *passim*.

28 See Zofia Trojanowiczowa, *Rzecz o młodości Norwida* (Poznań: Wyd. Poznańskie, 1968).

There was the poet's aversion towards compromise in favour of the empty convention that treated poetry as a pleasant entertainment, and his search for topics and formulas corresponding to poetry's noble calling, as in "Dumanie [II]" ["Meditation II"]:

z czynem, z wielkim czynem, jak z oszczepem w dłoni  
 Lub z palmą, iść, nie ufać ni trwodze, ni słowu,  
 Nie starać się, by wawrzyn załechtał po skroni,  
 Lecz pragnąć, by cierpiący rozśmieli się znowu.

(PWsz I, 43)

[with the deed, the great deed, as if with a spear in hand  
 Or with a palm, go forth, trust neither fear nor word,  
 Do not strive for laurels to grace your temples,  
 But desire for the suffering to rejoice again.]

But that aversion never prevented Norwid from his constant search for ways of establishing a true dialogue with his contemporary audience. It is true that scornful judgements, bitter reproaches and scathing diatribes were born of his pen since the beginning of his literary presence in Poland, and later abroad, but those were the means rather than the aim. Those means were meant to reach the reader of the time: Polish and, importantly, foreign ones, to move their conscience. One such means would be presenting the "późny wnuk" as a silent witness of the accusation. Admittedly, he is often simply a puppet, wholly dependent on the will of the author, satisfying the author's need for acceptance as a passive instrument. Incidentally, that artificial recipient appears in Norwid's poetry relatively late. He is not to be found in the early works, even if they also contain acts of negation of the contemporary audience, accompanied by references to some "positive" recipients (e.g. the Guardian Angel). The tactic is associated most strongly with *Vade-mecum* – a collection that, in some ways, crowned Norwid's poetic experiences and was designed to play a crucial role in the history of Polish poetry and culture in general. *Vade-mecum* was a largely individual selection of Norwid's from his previous literary works, and a carefully measured step of the poet (again) towards the indifferent or even hostile contemporariness. The collection was meant to cause a crucial turn in the history of Polish literature, and the reader should, or even must, take part therein. Without the reader, that plan of a "cultural revolution" would become just "ogryzmolony pamiętnik artysty" [ink-besmeared artist's diary]. It was to

be a momentous and multifunctional deed; yet it never became what it was meant to be, despite the poet's persistent endeavours over many years.<sup>29</sup>

The function of the "późny wnuk" is well-illustrated in the poem "Klaskaniem mając obrzękłe prawice" (PWsz II, 15) ["Their Hands Swollen from Clapping"]. That work, opening the *Vade-mecum* cycle, is, in a way, a self-referential piece, and one of the elements of the multithreaded "introduction" to the collection forming volume 2 of *Poezje* [Poems]. It is a poetic summary and account of the poet's existing activity in national art. The issue of the artist's loneliness comes to the fore, which – typically for Norwid – goes together with a declaration of full independence of his activity.<sup>30</sup> The only judge of the poet's "życie i sprawy" [life and matters] here is God's will, which "nie zdaje liczby z rzeczy, które czyni" [does not account for what it does]. There is also a "witness," even if very enigmatically indicated: the people who "znudzony pieśnią, woła o czyni" [bored by chants, call for action]. The response to the action demanded by the people is meant to be that very work, offered to the contemporaries, as stated in the poem. In contrast to God's will, invoked by the poet as the inspiration of his actions, the protagonists of national literature contemporary to him – that "babilońska żelazna kurtyna" [iron wall of Babylon] on the way to Jerusalem<sup>31</sup> – play the "kaci" [executioners] who murder his works. It is to them that he said:

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- 29 When discussing the life of Felicjan Faleński, Grzędzińska ("Nie nawiązane ogniwo rozwojowe poezji polskiej," p. 146 *passim*) reconstructs the likely reactions of the "reading minority" to Norwid's proposal of making an essential turn in the route of Polish poetry: "Printing *Vade-mecum* would not have been to the taste of positivists, it would have been an occasion to thunder against Norwid like Faleński was thundered against."
- 30 See Gomulicki's comment to the poem in: Cyprian Norwid, *Dzieła zebrane*, Vol. 2 (Warszawa: PIW, 1966), p. 748 f.
- 31 The apparently unclear sentence (as can be seen in the continuous disputes): "piszę na Babilon do Jeruzalem" [I write by way of Babylon to Jerusalem], I see as the description of the current situation of the poet rather than a vision of the future. The "Babylon" is a generalization of contemporary times, although it also has a specific meaning – that of Paris (after all, it was the "capital of the (then) world;" cf. the poem "Odpowiedź do Włoch," PWsz I, 184, 185 ["A Response to Italy"]). "Jerusalem" may be the sign of contemporariness that accepted Norwid's message ("i dochodzą listy" [my letters arrive] – such phrasing opening the nearly published volume 2 of *Poezje* is not strange: the "letter" nearly arrived with the contemporaries), but it can also be read in a sacral way ("eternal Jerusalem"). Perhaps it also indicated "Jerusalem Delivered" – "Polska – przemienionych kołodziejów" [Poland – of wheelwrights transfigured into kings]?

– Czemu? dlaczego? w przesyty-Niedzielę  
Przyszedłem witać i żegnać tak wiele?...  
Nic nie uniósłszy na sercu, prócz szaty –  
Pytać was – nie chcę i nie raczę: k a t y !...<sup>32</sup>

(PWsz II, 16)

[– Why? Why? In that Sunday's excess  
Did I come to greet so many – say adieu?...  
Clothing my heart in naught – save attire –  
To ask you – I will not, deign not: E X E C U T I O N E R S ! ...]<sup>33</sup>

Yet throughout his artistic activity, it was them – his patrons, fellow artists, critics, editors – that he “raczył pytać” [wished to ask], because he specifically wanted to “wake” that particular layer of the living nation. The fact that he spoke to them in a manner offensive at times, perhaps derisive, but intended as a provocation, resulted from both his artistic experiences<sup>34</sup> and his programme

32 In his comment in: Cyprian Norwid, *Dzieła zebrane*, Vol. 2, p. 749, Gomulicki relates the word “katy” to women who “zatrwały serce” [poisoned the heart] of the poet. Yet the association is problematic. The word does appear in the context of a diatribe directed at “niewiasty, zaklęte w umarłe formuły” [women, into dead canons bewitched], but can be far more clearly associated with the statement beginning the poem, presenting the image of the “laurowy i ciemny” [laureled and dark] homeland. The counterpart of the image: “Było w Ojczyźnie laurowo i ciemno / I już ni miejsca dawano, ni godzin” (PWsz II, 15) [My Country was laureled and dark / With no place allotted, nor hour] is this reflection: “– Czemu? dlaczego? w przesyty-Niedzielę / Przyszedłem witać i żegnać tak wiele?” (PWsz II, 16) [– Why? Why? In that Sunday's excess / Did I come to greet so many – say adieu?...]

The two fragments are doubtless linked with a reckoning note. A similar thought appears in the poem written in 1854 (“Trzy strofki” [“Three Stanzas”]): “I nie myśl – jak Cię nauczyli w świecie / Świętecznych-uczuc świąteczniczciciele –” (PWsz I, 222) [And think not – as taught in the world / By Sunday worshippers of Sunday feelings, –]

And another fragment: “I powiem tobie tylko jedno słowo: / “Tyś... jak... publiczność.” (PWsz I, 315) [And I shall tell you one thing only: / “You... are like... audience.”]

It was not only in the poem “Beatrix” that a woman was associated with the present.

33 Here and in footnote 32. English translation of *Vade-mecum* by D. Borchardt, Cyprian Norwid, *Poems*, p. 17.

34 See *Milczenie* (PWsz VI, 221) [*Silence*].

of saturating poetry with a provocative tone in order to rouse the reader from his comfortable, lethargy-like silence. That provocative tone was also the result of the psychological conditioning of the language of an artist constantly pushed into negation. It is a trace of conquered negation that was never quite wiped out.

Norwid was convinced of the particular significance of a writer's profession, impacted by the ideas and situations of the great artists of Polish Romanticism. He often expressed that conviction in declaring that he gave society truly important values, for instance, explaining the duties of a writer towards the individual, nation, and humanity. What role in that mission was assigned to the "późny wnuk?"

Syn – minie pismo, lecz ty spomnisz, wnuku,

[The son – will skirt this work, but you, the grandson, will note]

In the ending of the poem, but only indirectly (just as it is presented throughout), the grandson appears again:

Tak znów odczyta o n , co ty dziś czytasz,

Ale on spomni mnie... bo mnie nie będzie! (PWsz II, 17)

[So will he read again what you read today,

And will recall me... when I'll be no more!]<sup>35</sup>

If one were to take this statement literally, the last will oblige the "grandson" to a reminiscence, that is, to the common human duty to remember "our dear departed." How significant is it that the "grandson" reads the same as the "son," who "skirts." The question arises of how they differ in their reading competence, and whether the phrase "will note" is correctly interpreted as stating "will understand/appreciate me." The poem "Finis" adds:

Tak F l o r y - b a d a c z , dopełniwszy z i e l n i k ,

Gdy z poziomego mchu najmniejszym liściem

Szeptał o śmierciach tworów, chce nad wnijściem

Księgi podpisać się... pisze... ś m i e r t e l n i k !

(PWsz II, 139)

[Thus a b o t a n i s t having completed his book of plants immortal

– After he has, with lowly moss's smallest leaf

Whispered of animal death – wants on the front seath

Of the book to pen his name... he signs... a m o r t a l !]<sup>36</sup>

35 English translation by D. Borchardt, Cyprian Norwid, *Poems*, p. 19.

36 English translation by D. Borchardt, Cyprian Norwid, *Poems*, p. 67.

Finally, it is worth noting that Norwid rarely addressed the “grandson” directly in his works, as he did in the poem *Klaskaniem mając obrzętkę prawice*. Direct “you” addresses were usually meant for the contemporaries of the poet. It is true that the poems could be read as an accusation that would, in the future, turn against the “past present,” but even such a reading could be composed in the activities oriented towards the “present,” in the sense of a warning against the severe judgement from the future. In fact, Norwid did not count on seeing immediate results of his works’ impact. He knew that “prawda się raz em do chodz i i czeka!” (PWsz II, 66) [you both arrive at and wait for the truth]. As the poem, “Socjalizm” [“Socialism”] states:

– O! nie skończona jeszcze Dziejów praca,  
Nie-prze-palony jeszcze glob, Sumieniem! (PWsz II, 19)

[O, nay! History’s work is still not done  
The world not-all-consumed by conscience yet!]<sup>37</sup>

It might have been all the more tragic for Norwid since people did not want to listen to the “voice of conscience,” and yet he stayed true to his calling. In that sense, we, the “great-grandchildren,” may consider him a modern poet, contemporary to us.

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37 English translation by Tymoteusz Karpowicz, “Five Poems from *Vade-Mecum*,” *The Polish Review* 1983, Vol. XXVIII, No. 2, p. 78.

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Józef Fert

## *Vade-Mecum* as an Editorial Problem

**Abstract:** This paper presents the most important problems encountered by the publisher and reader of the poetical cycle *Vade-mecum* by Cyprian Norwid. Part 1 of the paper provides an outline of *Vade-mecum*'s publishing history. Part 2 presents unsolved problems or those whose explanations are unsatisfactory or altogether wrong: 1. *Vade-mecum* was intended by Norwid to constitute one of the three parts of volume 2 of his *Poezje*. Apart from *Vade-mecum*, volume 2 was to include two dramas: *Tyrtej* [*Tyrtaeus*] and *Aktor* [*Actor*]; however, such a composition of the edition has not been published so far. Thus, in this case, the author's intention has not been fulfilled. 2. *Vade-mecum* has been traditionally treated as a uniform piece of poetry or an artistic whole. From the one hundred poems, actually marked from 1 to 100 by the author, 14 poems have been lost altogether and a further 8 survive only in fragments. Thus, *Vade-mecum* can never truly be called complete. 3. The practice of publishing individual texts from the collection separately erroneously removes them from being recognised as part of *Vade-mecum*. The lack of such recognition runs counter to the intention of the author and deprives a non-professional reader of important contextual information. 4. There are significant difficulties in unquestionably establishing the date when the *Vade-mecum* cycle was written.

Part 3 of the paper discusses detailed editorial problems: 1. Due to the fact that Norwid corrected and revised the manuscript of *Vade-mecum*, the editor has to choose between different versions of the text when publishing. This paper presents analysis of some current editing decisions which raise doubts. 2. With regard to Norwid's handwriting and orthography, much remains to be studied thoroughly. In the paper, the author names numerous graphic and orthographic inconsistencies which make positing a definitive edition of *Vade-mecum* extremely difficult, as well as lead to some arbitrary solutions. 3. Norwid's punctuation is one of the most difficult areas as regards editing. In this aspect, *Vade-mecum* is characterised by great unconventionality and punctuation in many ways. 4. The author comments upon the graphic composition of the poems in *Vade-mecum*. He demands that Norwid, as a talented graphic artist, be not "corrected," or when he is, this should be executed with great care. Unfortunately, *Vade-mecum* has not been protected from editorial "corrections." The author concludes that further collective work from Polish philologists is necessary to reveal the complete shape of Norwid's poems.

**Keywords:** Cyprian Norwid, "Vade-mecum," poetical cycle, editing, editorial problems

## 1

The most eminent of modern publishers of Norwid, Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki, dedicated proportionally the most space in his two-volume edition of *Dzieła zebrane*<sup>1</sup> [*Collected Works*] to the *Vade-mecum* poetical cycle. The merits of Gomulicki's publication lie mainly – though not merely – in promoting that work, part of which had been published by Norwid himself, and other parts which were issued for the first time in various prints from 1901–1933.<sup>2</sup> We owe the first integral edition of the collection to Waclaw Borowy who, in 1947, published three thousand copies of *Podobizna autografu* [*Facsimile of the Autograph*].<sup>3</sup> The first typographic edition of the cycle was prepared in Great Britain on the basis of the above mentioned facsimile by Kazimierz Sowiński, who was in fact the creator of the book's first edition.<sup>4</sup> The second integral edition was prepared by Gomulicki.<sup>5</sup> The most extensive edition with the richest documentation is found in *Dzieła zebrane*. The commentary to *Vade-mecum* takes up almost a quarter of the second volume. Another edition of the whole cycle came with the second volume of the editorial “opus magnum” – *Pisma wszystkie* [*Collected Writings*]. One may add to that list various occasional publications of parts of the collection, as well as the bilingual edition of the whole, prepared by Rolf Fieguth.<sup>6</sup> All these publications followed *Podobizna autografu* and the editorial work by Gomulicki, to the point of copying his mistakes.

Promotion of the *Vade-mecum* poetical cycle by means of publication was accompanied by increasing interest, expressed, for example, in the numerous

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- 1 Cyprian Norwid, *Dzieła zebrane*, ed. Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki, Vol. 1: *Wiersze. Tekst*; Vol. 2: *Wiersze. Dodatek krytyczny* (Warszawa: PIW, 1960).
  - 2 Mainly the works of Z. Przesmycki on *Vade-mecum*, starting with the publication of the epilogue in the first edition of *Chimera* (Vol. 2). For discussion on the publishing history of the cycle see Cyprian Norwid, *Dzieła zebrane*, Vol. 2, pp. 40–52, 136–75, 725–734 and other; PWSz II, 375–379; PWSz XI: 215–218, 314–315.
  - 3 Cyprian Norwid, *Vade-mecum. Podobizna autografu*, foreword by W. Borowy (Warszawa: Tow. Naukowe Warszawskie, 1947).
  - 4 Cyprian Norwid, *Vade-mecum*, ed. Kazimierz Sowiński (Tunbridge Wells: Oficyna Poetów i Malarzy, 1953).
  - 5 Cyprian Norwid, *Vade-mecum*, preparation of texts, introduction and annex by Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki (Warszawa: PIW, 1962; ed. 2: Warszawa: PIW, 1969).
  - 6 Cyprian Norwid, *Vade-mecum. Gedichtzyklus (1866)*. *Polnisch-Deutsch*, übersetzt und eingeleitet von Rolf Fieguth, Vorwort von H. R. Jauss (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1981).

opinions of literary critics. The beginnings of the work's critical reception foretold neither great popularity nor extensive acclaim for *Vade-mecum*. The starting point may be dated back to an aggressive review of "Fortepian Szopena" ["Chopin's Grand Piano"]; even though it had been printed separately,<sup>7</sup> it did constitute an important part of the cycle. Marcelli Motty wrote:

po cóż to ciągle silenie się na mgliste logogryfy i wykręcanie zdaniem wszystkich członków, umyślne gwałcenie wszelkiego rytmu i harmonii ... nawet najelementarniejszej interpunkcji!<sup>8</sup>

[what is the point of this persistent effort to create vague logogriphs and to twist all the limbs of sentences, this intentional violation of any rhythm and harmony ... even the most elementary punctuation!]

The cycle was also accompanied by comments in letters from Norwid's friends, who read the work mainly between 1866 and 1869. Yet truly intense interest in the cycle started with press publications by Zenon Przesmycki, followed by the publication of nearly the whole of *Vade-mecum*: starting in the first volume of *Chimera* (1901), and concluding in 1933 in two extensive book anthologies (*Inedita* and *Poezje wybrane* [*Selected Poems*]). The first comprehensive review of the cycle was published in 1957 by Zdzisław Jastrzębski.<sup>9</sup> His monograph signalled the major issues with the cycle, both as concerned its poetic form and matters of a strictly editorial nature. In his study, Jastrzębski based most of his considerations on *Podobizna autografu*. The crowning event of the cycle's "recovery" was undoubtedly the edition within *Dzieła zebrane*. There, Gomulicki gave such an extensive, rich commentary on the whole cycle and particular elements of it that his work undoubtedly forms a solid basis for the work of current and future philologists.

Yet *Vade-mecum* needs further analysis for the following reasons: not all the editorial problems have been solved; not all currently adopted solutions are entirely acceptable; various editions of the work contain omissions or arbitrary statements.<sup>10</sup> Perhaps the author himself would say:

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7 *Pismo zbiorowe wydane staraniem Towarzystwa Naukowego Młodzieży Polskiej w Paryżu*, Vol. 2 (Bendlikon: TNMP, 1865).

8 Letter 7 in No. 196 of *Dziennik Poznański* of 1865.

9 Zdzisław Jastrzębski, "Pamiętnik artysty. (O "Vade-mecum" Cypriana Kamila Norwida)," *Roczniki Humanistyczne*, Vol. 1, 1956–1957, pp. 7–115.

10 The most important review of Gomulicki's edition with regard to the discussed issue was written by Konrad Górski in: *Pamiętnik Literacki*, Vol. 2 (1965), pp. 617–627.

Poniekąd złudna szybkość w tym upowszechnieniu,  
Które Ogółu nie zna: gdy *mniejszość* jest w cieniu.

(*Rzecz o wolności słowa* [*On the Freedom of Speech*] DW IV, 251)

[Speed is somewhat illusive in that propagation  
Which knows not the *Entirety*: when the *minority* is in the shadow.]

## 2

Below are presented some of the questions or doubts which may arise in editorial reflection.

1. Norwid intended for *Vade-mecum* to be one of the parts of the second volume of his poems – a book commissioned by the Leipzig Brockhaus publishing house – as is clearly stated in the poet’s letters.<sup>11</sup> The volume was supposed to contain two more works: the dramas *Tyrtej* [*Tyrtaeus*] and *Aktor* [*Actor*]. Norwid’s intention that *Vade-mecum* be part of the second volume of *Poezje* has not been undertaken so far, although it was the primary context for the cycle. The poet actually did abandon this idea at some point, but it may be surmised that he did so for tactical and practical reasons rather than content-related ones. He did not efface all traces of the original publishing concept (interestingly, traces of an even older idea can be found – the epilogue poem “Do Walentego Pomiana Z.” [“To Walenty Pomian Z.”] with “updating” author’s notes, which dates the idea back to 1858). Particularly important for the hypothetical reconstruction of Norwid’s plans is the poem “Za wstęp. (Ogólniki)” [“As Introduction. (Generalities)”], which comes after the introductory text “Do Czytelnika” [“To the Reader”]; such placing evokes the question of the relationship between the poem and the introduction. The title “Za wstęp” [“As Introduction”] may be taken as a logical equivalent of the phrase “instead of an introduction.” If the “instead” were right, the question of how it relates to the journalistic introduction “Do Czytelnika” [“To the Reader”], which now opens *Vade-mecum*, needs to be answered. Another view is that perhaps “Ogólniki” [“Generalities”] ought to be treated as a compact, lyrical “introductory word” only to the cycle itself, and the journalistic text “Do Czytelnika” [“To the Reader”] as a “preamble” of the whole second volume of *Poezje*. In a letter to Józef Ignacy Kraszewski from May 1866, the poet stated:

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11 E.g. a letter to Joanna Kuczyńska from July/August, 1865 (9, 180), and a letter to Józef Ignacy Kraszewski from (5) May, 1866 (9, 217).

Tom ten składa się:

1. Ze stu poezyj drobnych – stu argumentów stanowiących jedno “*Vade-mecum*.”
2. Z tragedii fantastycznej “Tyrtej Lacedemoński,” pisanej rymem osobnym, w prozie krytym, aby wytrzymał pomiędzy czasami wojny mesyńskiej i czasami obecnymi, tj. pomiędzy doryjskim a frygijskim żywiołem i sensem.
3. Z komedio-dramy “Aktor,” pisanej rymem wierszowanym zwykłym – to jest, jak ja nazywam, w i e r s z e m - b a r b a r z y ń s k i m ! etc.

“Tyrtej” jest u mnie, ...– “Aktora” rękopism główny jest w Dyrekcji Teatrów Galicyjskich –

Zaś 100 §§ “*Vade-mecum*,” rękopism jest opodal Ciebie, Szanowny Panie Józefie, bo u byłego mego wydawcy Brockhousa. (DW IV, 435)

[The volume comprises:

1. A hundred short poems – a hundred arguments constituting one “*Vade-mecum*.”
2. A fantasy tragedy “Tyrtej Lacedemoński” [Lacedaemonian Tyrtaeus], written in a separate rhyme, hidden in prose, so that it lasts between the times of the Messenian war and today’s times, i.e. between the Dorian and the Phrygian element and sense.
3. A comedy-drama “Aktor” [Actor], written in the usual rhyming verse – what I call *barbaric-verse*! etc.

“Tyrtej” [Tyrtaeus] is with me, ... – the main manuscript of “Aktor” [Actor] is with the Management of the Galicia Theatres –

And 100 §§ *Vade-mecum* in manuscript is near you, Dear Józef, for it stays with my former publisher Brockhaus.]

2. The second issue is of a far more dramatic nature. With regards *Vade-mecum*, the word “whole” is often used. That usage is not fully justified. It can safely be said that no one is ever going to see the entire cycle. It survived until today, or more precisely – until Przesmycki’s time – in a much-depleted form. Fourteen of the cycle’s parts were lost, eight further survive in more or less mutilated fragments. Out of the “hundred paragraphs,” only seventy-eight remained in full form until Przesmycki’s time, plus two others: the introduction (“Ogólniki”) and the epilogue (“Do Walentego Pomiana Z.”). That lyrical circle includes also the journalistic “Do Czytelnika” with the motto, dedication, and gloss introducing the epilogue poem.

Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki, who published the cycle more than once, attempted to complete the missing and damaged elements. Thus, in place of poem 23, he suggested the poem “Tymczasem” [“Meanwhile”], written on the back of the page with poem 29 (“Obojętność” [“Indifference”]). The empty places for poems 21 and 22 remained unfilled. In place of poem 54, Gomulicki put the poem “Jak” [“Just As”], an element of *A Dorio ad Phrygium*, a longer poem

written after *Vade-mecum*. In place of poem 64, he put “Co słyhać?” [“What’s New?”], known from a later cycle *Co słyhać? i co począć?* [What’s New? And What’s to Do?], which also contains a few other poems from *Vade-mecum*, surviving in manuscript. Another completion proposal – for poem 67 – is “Krzyż i dziecko” [“The Cross and a Child”], also included by Norwid in the cycle *Co słyhać? i co począć?*. The other eleven poems should be sought at the back of the pages of the codex. There you find the poems: “Po balu” [“After the Ball”] – at the back of the autograph of “W Weronie” [“In Verona”] – and “Baczność” [“Attention”] – at the back of the manuscript of “Harmonia” [“Harmony”]. Even if one accepts that those poems were actually included by Norwid in the cycle of interest here, nine full texts and eight fragments still remain unknown. Some of the surviving fragments are quite extensive and close to the original full form, e.g. the poem “Cnót-oblicze” [“Face-of-Virtues”]; yet other ones are in a far worse condition. Unless some fantastic finds are uncovered, the reader is likely left to know only the “ruins” of *Vade-mecum*. Also, the completions suggested by Gomulicki are not quite undisputable. Hence, while appreciating the efforts of the discoverer, one cannot forget the hypothetical nature of such completions, both as concerns their place in the cycle and whether they actually belong thereto. It is another reason against blurring the basic fragmented state of the cycle.

3. Konrad Górski, arguing against some of Gomulicki’s editorial solutions, stated:<sup>12</sup>

... it would have been more correct to remain with the fair copy, for when it was being prepared for print it formed a complete, harmonised whole.

Today, poems selected from *Vade-mecum* are published as if they did not belong to a specific whole. The practice of the author himself seems to weaken the above doubt: not only did Norwid publish several poems out of the whole, he even linked some parts of his “artistic diary” to other poems, written already after the cycle was created, e.g. *A Dorio ad Phrygium* or “Co słyhać? i co począć?” [“What’s New? And What’s to Do?”]. Perhaps the responsibility for tearing a few pages out of that “poetic album” might even be shifted onto him. Yet all his life, Norwid used specific methods for promoting his poems in their entirety – or in fragments. He very often sent his poems in letters, recited many of his works in salons, and read some of his works in public meetings, e.g. *Rzecz o wolności słowa* [On the Freedom of Speech]. It can also easily be stated

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12 In Górski’s review (p. 620).

that although he treated the printing press with distrust, and his presence in the-then “publishing market” resulted in many a bitter experience, he appreciated the value of print and knew the value of publications, particularly in press. At the same time, he enjoyed much popularity as a speaker and reciter;<sup>13</sup> he had deep consideration for the “art of the living word” and often spoke on the issue publicly. Thus, he published “siłą płuc” [by the power of his lungs], composed of a selection of poems, and made other “selections” e.g. from *Vade-mecum*. But *Vade-mecum* represents the only remaining collection where the poems were selected by Norwid himself. The volume of his poems published within the Biblioteka Pisarzy Polskich [Library of Polish Writers] series in 1862 (post-dated to 1863) is marked with some hurry and randomness. Besides, that was a “wybór z pism” [selection of writings] (comprising poetry, narratives, dramas, journalist texts) and even though the poet valued highly that “first collective edition” of his work, he did not refer to it in the planned volume two – at least not fully. He excluded dramas early on and focused on seeking a publisher for *Vade-mecum* alone (e.g. negotiating with Merzbach). Available today are publications of the surviving cycle (facsimile of the collection, Sowiński’s edition, Gomulicki’s edition) or poems selected from them and published in various anthologies or occasional prints. Gomulicki himself, in his 5-volume edition of *Pisma wybrane*<sup>14</sup> [*Selected Writings*], dismantled the “entirety” of the collection, described with such great care in *Dziela zebrane*. Naturally, Norwid’s work – as if following the prophecy in his letter to Jan Koźmian (DW X, 227):

Sam powiedziałem, że uboga jest szata pieśni, naumyślnie *Alwar* taki zrobiłem – ale – ale – o! praktyczni pisarze – jak ona się rozsypie na *przysłowia*, to będzie moja pieśń!

[I said myself that poor is the cloth of my song, I intentionally made such an easy reading – but – but – oh! the practical writers – when it scatters into *proverbs*, it shall be my song!]

– really does seem to scatter before our eyes “into proverbs.” Some of his phrases are even painted among other beauties of this age in public places, but that practice of praising, advertising, and promoting ideas may easily lead to reducing Norwid’s art to something shallow, vulgar and “uglified.” Also, it is worth remembering that many dramatic selections have already been made

13 Interesting comments on the issue were made by Wojciech Górny (“Jedna z zagadek niezrozumiałości,” *Tygodnik Powszechny*, Vol. 12, No. 27, 1958, pp. 4–5).

14 Cyprian Norwid, *Pisma wybrane*, selected and explained by Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki (Warszawa: PIW, 1968; ed. 2: Warszawa: PIW, 1980).

within *Vade-mecum* and, in effect, today's reader has only a "selection" from the cycle available to them. Norwid thus wrote in *Rzecz o wolności słowa*:

I natychmiast szepnęła do mnie myśl ostrożna:  
 "Patrz!... *oto i Ruinę nawet popsuć można!*" (DW IV, 271)

[Immediately, careful thought whispered into my ear:  
 "Lo!... *even a Ruin can be spoiled!*"]

Particularly striking is the one-sentence comment on the issue from an editor who, in the commentary to *Dzieła zebrane*, constantly discussed logical continuities: "klamry" [brackets], "ogniwa sekwencji" [sequence links] etc., and, in *Pisma wybrane*, adopted the following selection criterion: "the most beautiful, most important (for various reasons) and most popular works by Norwid" (ed. 2, p. 140), grouping the "lyrical arguments" of *Vade-mecum* in works relating to "issues of fame, success, criticism, etc." (p. 142). *Pisma wybrane* is used here as an example, although it is not the most extreme example. It fails to stress, like all other selections, the relation of the chosen texts to the whole, formed by the entire cycle.

4. One of the most difficult editorial issues is the chronology of the particular elements and the whole collection. As has been stated, *Vade-mecum* is, in some sense, an author's choice of poetry and, at the same time, an integral work. It includes poems written over nearly twenty years, in a more or less modified form. The oldest work of the cycle seems to be "W Weronie," the first version of which is dated to 1848. Almost half (38) of the surviving poems were written, according to Gomulicki's findings, before 1864, and many of them can be dated to around 1861. The others were probably written around 1865, i.e. at the time when the issue of the second volume of *Poezje* was prepared.

It is not possible to discuss here the sometimes intricate, yet largely problematic, findings concerning the chronology of particular elements of the cycle. Gomulicki himself, who contributed greatly to these findings, sometimes preferred to use the safe formula of "the work was written before" etc. A common procedure when establishing chronology is indicating "coincidence" between texts from various periods; in such cases, at least one text has to have a specific date. The process resembles, at times, the reconstruction of a damaged mosaic. With respect to Norwid, it is a particularly difficult activity as, for example, some ideas or motifs were used by the poet multiple times across various periods. To illustrate the issue, the motif of conflict between the poet and readers or critics may be considered. That topic is presented very sharply in the youthful poem "Pismo" ["Writing"], but it also reappears throughout Norwid's works. The contexts and methods of expression obviously change, but the issue



remains the same. That is only one example of many. The establishment of exact chronology of the elements of *Vade-mecum* remains beyond the abilities of modern editing.

5. The next question is whether it is possible to establish more precisely the time when the concept of the whole cycle appeared. The only likely dating seems to be the approximate time of finishing the editing work on volume two of *Poezje*, commissioned by Brockhaus. It can be dated – in the light of the author’s correspondence – to the end of March 1866. The poet probably started editorial work in July 1865. A trace of that work is e.g. a comment in correspondence with Joanna Kuczyńska, in a letter of July or August 1865. Norwid informed (DW XII, 368): “Wracam pisać dla księgarza niemieckiego” [I return to writing for the German bookseller].

Gomulicki compared *Vade-mecum* to Dante’s *Divine Comedy*; he called Norwid’s work the “fourth part” of Dante’s epic, which corresponds to the (fragmentary) work of Norwid titled *Ziemia* [*Earth*] with a subtitle [“*Komedii*” *Danta czwarty tom*] [*Fourth Volume of Dante’s “Comedy”*], likely dated 1850, which may suggest even such early beginnings of the concept of the cycle. Yet if one notes the number of common motifs occurring in works written between 1855 and 1865, the possibility of establishing precise chronology greatly decreases. It is important to remember that – in the face of the process of further reshaping of *Vade-mecum*, which cannot be really closed within dates – any chronological specifications are of a clearly hypothetical value.

### 3

Let us discuss some more detailed issues concerning *Vade-mecum*.

1. First for consideration is the important question of the final shape of the poems comprising the discussed cycle. Among the surviving seventy-eight poems, only a little over a third were not improved by the author following the volume’s first publication. Eighteen poems were either corrected to a large degree or completely rewritten, like “Za wstęp. (Ogólniki),” “Liryka i druk,” “Sieroctwo,” “Ironia,” “Powieść,” “Źródło” [“As Introduction. (Generalities),” “Poetry and Print,” “Orphanhood,” “Irony,” “Novel,” “Source”]. Since not all corrections are legible today, *Vade-mecum* is most often printed in accordance with the first version, i.e. the first fair copy prepared by Norwid for the publisher. That copy was further improved by the author over many years of later efforts to publish the volume. The “improvement” concerned the whole collection, although not all texts were changed. It remains unknown whether during

that work the poet might have torn out some pages of the manuscript (e.g. less legible parts). It is difficult to believe his heirs could have done this.

Contact with the autograph kept in the National Library is indispensable when establishing the order of Norwid's corrections. Thankfully, the author used a different writing tool with each such correction. Thus, pages written in ink were gradually covered with corrections made either in a different pen, a different ink, pencil, pastel, or even a thick pencil like a carpenter's one. Hence it should not be too difficult to separate the corrections made when preparing the texts for printing with Brockhaus – which belong to what may be considered the original edition of the fair copy – and the ones accumulating over the years, sometimes not intelligible anymore. With the autograph in such condition it is, in some cases, utterly impossible to establish the final version (e.g. in the case of the poem “Za wstęp,” the lower part of the page is filled with annotations which are indecipherable today). In such a situation, the question arises of the possibility of issuing the cycle in a version representing the same editorial stage. Perhaps a common-sense principle should be adopted in such cases as much as can be read from the “palimpsests.” A proper copy of the autograph in colour would be of immense help in continuing the process of “deciphering” the final draft of *Vade-mecum*; the edition of Borowy's facsimile has long been exhausted, and besides, that black and white copy of the manuscript was not entirely readable, either. Reservations concerning the facsimile were already formulated by Gomulicki.<sup>15</sup> Comparison of the autograph's copy, made with the imprecise technique of phototype, with the actual autograph shows numerous inaccuracies: etching of the films resulted not only in the disappearance of the background of the autograph, but in the disappearance or deformation of some punctuation signs, and the writing's gradation was blurred. A crossline screen was used, but the quality of the printing ink and the paper, and most of all the low technological requirements of copy-making did not allow even a “true copy.” Yet it should be remembered that Waław Borowy published it in 1947, and his publication has not been repeated until today, even at the level of the then printing techniques.

And yet, even working with the autograph does not always provide definitive answers. For instance, the poem “Przeszłość” [“The Past”] contains issues which have not been entirely solved. The first line of the second stanza was originally:

Lecz, nie byłże jak dziecko, co wozem leci

[But was he not like a child that whirs by in a dray]

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15 Norwid, *Dziela zebrane*, Vol. 2, p. 139 *passim*.

The poet made a handwritten correction of “Lecz” [But] to “Acz” [Although], then again wrote over the somewhat smudgy correction – upon crossing it out – “Acz.” Gomulicki gives the line this way, and others follow:

Acz nie byłże jak dziecko, co wozem leci,

(PWsz II, 18)

[Although was he not like a child that whirs by in a dray,]

But such an editorial decision – in the face of omitting a parallel correction in the third stanza – meant, in the words of Gomulicki, creating a “hybrid.” The first line from the third stanza in the fair copy looked (and is printed) as the following:

P r z e s z ł o ś ć – jest t o d z i ś , tylko cokolwiek dalej:

[T h e p a s t — is t h i s t o d a y but somewhat further:]

The poet corrected that line almost identically to the previous one: smudging or crossing the earlier version and writing a new one over it. After that operation, the word “to” [this] changed into “i” [also, lit.: and] (and more precisely: into a non-existent word “ti” – while the author pressed the pen on the paper when entering “i” for “o,” like he did when correcting “lecz” to “acz,” he did not cross out the “t.” and the result was “ti”), and the expression “tylko cokolwiek” [but somewhat] – now crossed out – changed into “i te dziś” [and this today], written over the original. In effect, the ninth line of the poem – if the version with “Acz” is taken into account – should actually be:

P r z e s z ł o ś ć – jest i d z i ś , i t e d z i ś dalej:

[T h e p a s t — is a l s o t o d a y , and this today further:]

Accepting that version as the final one, one must notice not only the difference in its versification (as happens also with other re-editing), but also the change in the semantics of the “past,” which is one of the major motifs in Norwid’s poetry. First of all, the relatively clear time scheme is disturbed – in the former version (“tylko cokolwiek dalej” / “but somewhat further”) the author stressed the present nature of the “past,” its coexistence with the “today,” and so the seemingly true category of the past whose origin is different than an eternal, divine version of time:

Nie Bóg stworzył p r z e s z ł o ś ć , ...

[God did not create the p a s t ,]

The past was “created” by God’s enemy:

... ów, co prawa rwie;

[he who breaks the laws]

And so, like in the poem “Fatum,” the Misfortune, when given a “mądre odejrzenie” [wise look back], disappears, steps aside and leaves the man... with experience.

The version of “i te dziś daléj” [and this today further] allows a different reading of time beside the one already described here – as a category oriented towards the future. The word “dalej” [further or farther], polysemous and not specified in a clear context, may concern both a “backwards” perspective and a “forward” one.<sup>16</sup>

The above is just one of many examples. Critical editions clearly provide all versions of texts which could be found.<sup>17</sup>

2. Norwid’s graphic and orthographic choices are extremely problematic for editors. That concerns not just *Vade-mecum*. The poet was fond of various emphases and graphic distinctions; his manuscripts are full of them. Sometimes, as in a letter of 9 February 1848 to Józef Bohdan Zaleski (DW X, 129–130; see autograph’s facsimile after p. 304) – he created elaborate decorations and illustrations. And yet, the overuse of emphasis gave an effect contrary to the intended one: this mannerism did not so much stress the content that was of particular importance to the poet, as it distracted from the senses, which were strongly blurred with the graphic repetitiveness. It is also important to mention Norwid’s tendency for etymologising, often in a quite fantastic manner, which produces various kinds of word clusters or the dismemberment of individual words, joined by the poet with a double dash, as if they are mathematically equal, e.g. “od=calić,” “roz=siędą się,” “w=czasów królowo” [un=unite, sit=back, queen of holy=day]. Etymologising was often accompanied by emphasis. These graphic operations were linked to spelling that was highly divergent from the orthographic rules of the time. It may be said that, in that area, the poet was

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16 “The change of sense accompanies a different look and a different understanding” – Stefan Sawicki, “Z zagadnień semantyki poetyckiej Norwida,” in: *Poetyka, interpretacja, sacrum* (Warszawa: PWN, 1981), p. 83.

17 Cf. Norwid, *Dzieła zebrane*, Vol. 2, pp. 153–158 *passim*. The findings are not fully beyond doubt (see Górski’s review, p. 619).

also an individual – for example, he even devised linguistic theories to justify his “suverenność ortograficzna”<sup>18</sup> [orthographic independence].

The suggestiveness of Norwid’s theses, the frequency of his “innovations,” and a likely reverence towards the artist’s manuscript makes for some very difficult decisions for the modern editor. The orthographic “monstrosities” are corrected, the spelling is modernised in places, but most of his graphic ideas are kept, like the plentiful use of capitalization, construction of word conjunctions and etymologising disjunctions, mannerist emphases, etc. That overload of various emphases and highlights does distinguish Norwid’s texts from the works of Polish writers of the nineteenth century, but it does not necessarily help their reception. The question may be asked whether the poet should be “corrected” in that respect at all.<sup>19</sup> It must be noted here that any such editorial decision requires an interpretation of Norwid’s intention. Thus, today’s editorial decisions will always be marked with some arbitrariness.

3. Even more troublesome, from an editor’s viewpoint, is Norwid’s punctuation. The poet often demanded respect for his decisions in that matter. For instance, he wrote in connection with his poem “Do Emira Abd el Kadera” [“To Emir Abd el Kader”] that:

Rzeczy, zwłaszcza muzycznym rytmem pisanych, bez starannej korekty ani udzielać, ani drukować nie godzi się, bo są zabite – dla kropki jednej nieraz. (DW XI, 444)

[Works, in particular those written in a musical rhythm, shouldn’t be distributed or printed without careful proofreading, for they are killed – sometimes for just one period.]

In a letter to Magdalena Łuszczewska of that same year, 1860, he stated:

... żałuję, że nie mam czasu i myśli, aby przejrzeć, czy kopie są bez omyłek, w czym ucho do rytmu nawykłe poradzić sobie i na kopiach sprostować będzie umiało. (DW XI, 457)

[I regret that I lack time and thought to check if the copies are without mistakes, which an ear used to rhythm will be able to manage and correct in the copies.]

And in the letter to Zygmunt Sarnecki of early 1865:

... muszę mieć swobodny spokój do tworzenia i uważania każdej k o m m y i każdej l i n i i .... (DW XII, 342)

[I need freedom and peace to create and mind each c o m m a and each l i n e ....]

18 In letters to Julian Fontana: from 26 March, 1866, and two from March/April of the same year (DW XII, 416–422).

19 W. Górny’s opinion was: “do ... the emphases really help in the work’s perception? They undoubtedly do” (Górny, “Jedna z zagadek niezrozumiałości,” p. 5).

Norwid's focus on punctuation stemmed from old Polish tradition where punctuation was used to emphasise the intonational and rhetorical features of a poem. In Norwid's time, a different approach to punctuation spread, based on principles drawn from the German language and serving mainly to highlight the syntactical and logical sentence structure.<sup>20</sup> Norwid's theory drew from an older tradition, but his writing practice had strong tendencies towards newer methods. As a result of the clash of these two contrary punctuational tendencies, Norwid's writings appear both arbitrary and inconsistent. It is true that a refined theory could possibly be built upon his writing practice – as was posited by the poet himself – but such a theory will be essentially one-sided.

In a letter to Łuszczewska, the poet gave the reader the freedom to decide “by ear” on the correct form of a poem as an obvious choice, as long as the reader possessed “ucho do rytmu nawykłe” [an ear used to rhythm], which would allow them to correct possible segmentation mistakes; in the letter to Sarnecki, Norwid presented himself as a true pedant, “minding *every comma* and *every line*” (additional emphasis – J. F.).

Let us take a closer look at one of the autographs of *Vade-mecum*. The already discussed poem “Przeszłość” is not an extreme case of Norwid's punctuation choices, therefore it may be a good example of his typical work. The text below is given as marked in the manuscript, since editors masked some cases of Norwid's punctuation “malpractice:”

## 1

Nie Bóg, stworzył p r z e s z ł o ś ć i ś m i e r ć i c i e r p i e n i a,  
Lecz ów, co prawa rwie,  
Więc, nieznośne mu, dnie;  
Więc, czując złe, chciał odepchnąć s p o m n i e n i a!

## 2

Acz, nie byłże jak dziecko, co wozem leci  
Powiadając: “o! dąb  
“Ucieka!... w lasu głąb”...  
– Gdy dąb stoi, wóz z sobą unosi dzieci.

## 3

P r z e s z ł o ś ć , j e s t i d z i s , i t e d z i s d a l e j :  
Za kołami to wieś,  
Nie, jakieś tam, c ó ś , g d z i e ś ,  
Gdzie nigdy ludzie nie bywali!..

20 Cf. Konrad Górski, *Tekstologia i edytorstwo dzieł literackich*, ed. 2 (Warszawa: PWN, 1978), pp. 236–254.

[God did not create the past, nor death nor pain,  
 But he who breaks the laws,  
 His days are – woes;  
 So, sensing evil, wards off memory, in vain!

Wasn't he like a child that whirs by in a dray,  
 Saying: "O! An oak tree  
 Deep into the woods... it flees!"  
 – The oak stands still, the cart sweeps the children away.

The past is here today, and today is even further:  
 Beyond the wheels the village is there,  
 Not – something, somewhere,  
 Where people never gathered!...]²¹

Already a cursory comparison of Norwid's poems with the autographs of other poets of the time allows us to note that the author of *Vade-mecum* used the comma much more often than his contemporaries, and that he put it in places which may seem quite unusual for today's reader, and likely readers of the time, too. The above-quoted Marcell Motty, the first reviewer of "Fortepian Szopena," called it the "violation of ... most elementary punctuation."

The variety of punctuation usage had to have a purpose. Perhaps it was to imitate, visualise and magnify the process of thinking aloud. When looking for justification for that overload of graphic notation, one suggestion could be that Norwid strived to hinder fast or "sing-song" reading (in a "pańszczyźniane cepy" [peasant flails] manner). However, that would be contrary to another of Norwid's theories and practices – the idea of understatement and polysemy – together with his artistic tendency to construct ambiguous works. Such a vast number of author's instructions had and still has disastrous effects on the publication of his works. Starting with the Brockhaus volume up to Gomulicki's editions, the punctuation and emotional and intonational notation in Norwid's works present an image of inconsistencies and arbitrariness. Gomulicki was right to conclude that the poet was no pedant as concerned punctuation; yet that statement was not followed by consistent editorial decisions.<sup>22</sup> Proof of the

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21 English translation by Danuta Borchardt in collaboration with Agata Brajerska-Mazur in: Cyprian Norwid, *Poems* (New York: Archipelago Books, 2011), p. 21.

22 He was not pedantic, but that fact does not constitute permission to treat Norwid's notations and punctuation unceremoniously. Much can be understood in that respect on reading Marian Kwaśny's study "Norwid – poeta źle rozumiany" (*Pamiętnik Literacki*, Vol. 4, 1968, pp. 191–202), as well as the above-mentioned thorough review by Górski.

fact that Norwid was not pedantic can be seen by, for example, comparing in *Vade-mecum* those lines which are written twice in the same autograph. When the page ended, the poet was in the habit of copying a line or more onto the next page,<sup>23</sup> or writing at the end of the previous page the line, or its beginning, from the following page,<sup>24</sup> creating a kind of additional pagination (analogous to a *reclamans*). By way of comparison, given below are two versions of the same line from the poem “Posąg i obuwanie” [“Statue and Shoes”]:

“Zabija czas..!” Rzeźbiarz, jemu, na to: (version 1)

“Zabija czas..!” Rzeźbiarz jemu na to: (version 2)

[“Kills the time..!” Says, the sculptor, to him:

“Kills the time..!” Says the sculptor to him:]

In *Pisma wszystkie*, Gomulicki obviously printed the more “natural” version:

“Zabija czas!” Rzeźbiarz jemu na to:

[“Kills the time..!” Says the sculptor to him:]

In the face of the punctuational nihilism of today’s Polish speakers, publishing Norwid in the form he suggested may actually give rise to a “new quality” of language. The question remains: would that be right?

Still different, and no less difficult issues arise with the function of Norwid’s question mark. From today’s point of view, the overuse of the sign by the poet can be stated beyond doubt. It is not used merely to indicate the intonation of a question. It has a far broader usage than today’s or, indeed, Norwid’s era. At the same time, it is difficult to identify in the writer’s practice some formal, grammatical directive for how he uses the sign.<sup>25</sup> It has many functions and is therefore truly Norwidian. Particularly surprising for today’s reader are the question marks inside sentences, e.g. with the question word “co” [what] or the conjunction “czy” [or/whether]. Such is the case in the manuscript of “Larwa” [“Larva”]:

Poszepty z Niebem, o cudzie

W wargach... czy? piana bezbożna!..

23 See, e.g., p. 48 in: *Vade-mecum. Podobizna autografu*.

24 See, e.g., p. 16 in: *Vade-mecum. Podobizna autografu*.

25 Perhaps that only shows Norwid’s attachment to the older punctuation tradition clashing with practice contemporary to him.



[Are whispers of Heaven's wonder  
On her lips... or? a godless froth!...]<sup>26</sup>

but earlier it is written:

Czoło ma w cierniu? czy w brudzie?

[Is her forehead in thorns? or dirt?]

It seems obvious to use the internal question mark in the following construction:

Skąd idzie?.. sobie to chowa  
Gdzie idzie?.. zapewne gdzie n i c !

[Whence comes she?... She keeps the secret  
Where goes she?... doubtless to a v o i d !]

but the one given below raises serious doubts:

– Jak historia?.. wie tylko: “k r w i !..”  
Jak społeczność?.. tylko: “p i e n i ę d z y !..”

[– What of history?... she knows only: “o f b l o o d !”  
What of community?... just: “o f m o n e y !”]

Perhaps it is a sign of irony? Gomulicki retained most of these unusual question marks, which naturally gave rise to questions of the validity of their use. This issue requires further analysis. But even now one may risk saying that the question mark, like other graphic signs used by Norwid, was intended to reflect at least two things: 1. to signal a particular semantic function of a given part of the poem, and 2. to give the poem a specific intonational score, which is related to the aforementioned idea of presenting the work in recitation.

4. It is much simpler – although not entirely a process free from doubt – to recreate the graphic layout of the texts. In that aspect, *Vade-mecum* may be a perfect example of the care for a clear-cut division of the volume into smaller poems. They were numbered with Roman numerals from one to a hundred.

Pod sobą samym wykopawszy zdradę,  
Coś z życia kończę, kończąc – *mecum-vade*,  
Złożone ze s t u perełek nawlekłych,  
Logicznie w siebie, jak we łzę łza, wciekłych.

[Digging out treason from beneath me,  
Something of life I end, by ending *mecum-vade*,

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26 English translation based on Walter Whipple's: <http://www.mission.net/poland/warsaw/literature/poems/larva.htm>. [Last accessed: 10<sup>th</sup> October, 2020].

Composed of a h u n d r e d pearls and threaded,  
Logically as tear flows into tear one into another]<sup>27</sup>

Beside the main numeration, each work in the cycle has its own title, and stanzaic texts have numbered stanzas. However, the author is not fully consistent there. Some stanzas have Roman numerals (most poems of the cycle have such). In a large part, stanzaic divisions are marked with asterisks (twenty-two poems); in some cases, they are marked with Arabic numerals (ten poems); and some have no markings, either because those are very short, 4-line poems, or they are treated as non-stanzaic forms. In two cases one can see double numbering of stanzas: the poem “Larwa” has a parallel sequence of Arabic and Roman numerals, and the poem “Spowiedź” [“Confession”] is divided in parts with asterisks and also with the names of the interlocutors in the dialogue. It is actually difficult to find in that variety of markings some justification with the content. Gomulicki “standardises” almost all of Norwid’s solutions, obviously deleting the double numbering of “Larwa” stanzas. The case is worse when the shape of a stanza in the autograph is not entirely clear. E.g. in the autograph of the poem “Za wstęp,” stanzas 1 and 2 have the indentations of last lines (4 and 8) additionally enhanced with quotation marks; also, in stanza 1, line 2 is indented. Gomulicki printed the entire poem aligned to the left margin – perhaps because those are isosyllabic verses. The poem “Vanitas” he divided into stanzas, even though the autograph does not contain any suggestion for shaping the texts in such a manner.

Much more extensive was the interference of the e d i t o r in the case of the poem “Język-ojczysty” [“Mother-Tongue”]. In the autograph, Norwid broke the penultimate line of the poem in two, emphasising that with a sequence of dots:

Lirnik na to .....  
.....“nie miecz, nie tarcz bronią Języka,  
” –

[The lirnyk says to that.....  
..... “not the sword, not the shield defend the Language,  
” –]

Gomulicki also moved that graphic solution to line 3:

Gó r ą c z y n y !...  
– a słowa? a myśli?...  
– potem!...

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27 English translation by Danuta Borchardt: Norwid, *Poems*, p. 67.

[Hurrah for d e e d s!...

- and words? and thoughts?...
- later!...]

The effect is a layout in the style of futuristic “stairs.” Perhaps Norwid did intend such a graphic shape, but there is no proof of this, and the graphic layout of the text belongs to the sphere of an author’s autonomous activity, even if it undergoes changes, like any convention. But while reverence, e.g. as regards the poet’s punctuation, may cause the work to be highly anachronistic, it is still recommended when revising Norwid’s graphic layouts: it ought to be remembered that the author was a “professional” graphic artist and the spatial moulding of literary texts was very strongly present in his mind.

#### 4

The issues indicated here do not exhaust the list of questions which may be faced by editors of Norwid’s works, in particular with regards *Vade-mecum*, as surviving in the autograph. It was the work of many people, mainly Przesmycki and Gomulicki, that made it possible to restore Norwid’s legacy, which has melted into Polish consciousness in an amazing manner within the last eighty years. And yet Norwid’s works – wonderfully crowned with the publication of *Pisma wszystkie* – have not fully regained their intended shape. “Duch i litera” [“The Spirit and the Letter”] existed in Norwid’s mind as two elements of human creation which mutually complemented each other. The “spirit” of Norwid’s work can now be grasped by his current readers in an increasingly all-embracing manner; as concerns the “letter,” much is left to do. Thus if, according to Norwid’s view, the “spirit” belongs to the sphere of personality, the creative individual, and the “letter” to the sphere of social collaboration of human individualities and to a creative and free community, instructions for editorial work should be drawn from these assumptions. In the dramatic events of 1850, the poet wrote to Jan Koźmian, one of his publishers:

Błogosławiony to czas, kiedy *człowiek* stać się *cegiełką* może – to jest, kiedy plan i ogół jest.

Inaczej – do czegoż dołożyć tę cegiełkę? Zawsze to będzie kupa cegieł. (DW X, 226)

[Tis a blessed time when the *man* can become a *contribution-brick* – that is, when there is a plan and a community.

Otherwise – what do you add the brick to? It shall always be a pile of bricks.]

The process of the repeated – and still original – introduction of Norwid’s art to Polish culture bears a very strong imprint of the conditions of the time of its principal revival: modernist times.<sup>28</sup> The period helped form certain myths which, elevating the poet above the crowds of “ordinary” citizens, made and sometimes still make him an artist for “insiders,” which leaves us with hope that Norwid’s work will be better known and read in the face of continuously reviving disputes for its “dot and line.”

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28 See Zofia Stefanowska, “Norwid – pisarz wieku kupieckiego i przemysłowego,” in: *Literatura, komparatystyka, folklor. Księga poświęcona Julianowi Krzyżanowskiemu*. Eds. Maria Bokszczanin, Stanisław Frybos, Edmund Jankowski (Warszawa: PIW, 1968), pp. 453–457.

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Zbigniew Sudolski

## Norwid's Letters and Epistolary Tradition

**Abstract:** The article consists of two parts – an introduction, which describes the epistolary tradition before Norwid, and the main part, which defines the main characteristics of Norwid's letters. The poet had excellent knowledge of the tradition of the genre and was aware of the utilitarian origins of epistolography, but, at the same time, he declared the need for originality and for breaking with the "Arcadian idleness" manifested in letters in favour of philosophical and moral issues, as well as historical and social comments. In his letters, he purposefully avoided personal issues, descriptions of complex psychological states, and neglected the realities and details of everyday life. Norwid's letter steps away from the conventional confession-letter and from the cult of biography, in order to become an intellectual conversation. Even when he put detailed descriptions in his letters, which he termed "photographs," they were there to lead the thought into generalizations and deeper reflections. Norwid saw the essence of a letter in the formula of "writing with one's life," aimed at illuminating philosophical and moral reflection that would lead to eternal truths, and inspired by the Bible, in particular the New Testament. The principles of Norwid's letters, visible in the content thereof and contrary to the romantic tradition, also impacted their form, limiting information concerning the time and place of the letter-writing, eliminating its traditional elements, and presenting a variety of forms and language, as well as graphic layouts, but also fragmentariness and sketchiness.

**Keywords:** Cyprian Norwid, epistolography, Bible, epistolary tradition, romantic tradition

Modern epistolography arose in clear opposition to those elements of the ancient and the later tradition of writing letters that referred primarily to the utilitarian character of written correspondence – elements that defined its practical functions through a canon of rules and norms. Obviously, that does not mean that nineteenth-century letter writers blindly believed in the possibility of completely overcoming the utilitarian functions of correspondence. The genre of a letter, which is, by definition, a conversation between the author and the addressee, could only attempt to limit the scope of practical objectives or shift them to a secondary position. Such intentions of letter writers are evidenced primarily by the initiation and continuation of those elements of the ancient letter-writing tradition that developed parallel to an epistolography cultivated only for practical purposes. Thus, the thought expressed by the end

of the ancient era by Demetrius: “It may be said that everybody reveals his own soul in his letters,”<sup>1</sup> was developed in Norwid’s time. The tendency to show the personality of a writer as the most constitutive element of the modern letter was looked upon kindly, promoted, and widely developed, especially at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Romantic egotism likely found the fullest residence in the letter-writing genre. In that way, the content of informal, personal letters was constantly expanding, and the recipient also began to play a large and – with time – increasingly conscious role in shaping its character.

The other ancient thread taken up by modern epistolography was the tradition of a philosophical and moral letter, originating from Caesar, Cicero and Pliny the Younger, and brilliantly developed in the *Epistles*.

The first trend turned out to be the most fruitful, and thanks to the discoveries of sentimentalists, the personal letter was diversified and expanded in its content. The Polish precursor of discoveries made by sentimentalists regarding the content and form of letters was King Jan III Sobieski, whose letters to his wife Marysieńka reveal the literary and emotional culture of the writer, shaped by French romance literature; the letters he wrote were the starting point of a retreat from the purely practical functions of a letter. That uncommon correspondence, mixing elements of Polish native culture and French influence, introduced the reader to a different spiritual world, far from Sarmatian coarseness or devotional tenor, full of melancholy and romantic heartache. The uniqueness of this correspondence is visible above all in the truthfulness of the writer’s experiences, the richness of moods and feelings, and in overcoming traditional letter forms. It may not be something everyone is aware of, but it was King Sobieski who initiated the liberation of epistolography from the binding norms and utilitarian functions; it was he who first wrote literary letters. The set of correspondence between the King and Marysieńka contained elements of the confession-letter theory formulated by sentimentalists about a century later. Unfortunately, that innovative epistolary collection went largely unnoticed in Polish culture and was only rediscovered in 1823, when customs and

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1 Demetrius of Phaleron (350–283), eminent Athenian politician and statesman, orator, philosopher, and scholar. His writings do not survive until today; the titles and main thoughts are known thanks to his biographer, Diogenes Laertius. Quotation from: Demetrius, *On Style*, chap. 4, transl. by W. Rhys Roberts (1902), § 227.



conventions arising from the spirit of old Polish and French culture had become obsolete for the romantics.<sup>2</sup>

In the era of sentimentalism, the letter was finally liberated from the yoke of norms and purely utilitarian functions, and the theory of the letter as a confession formulated at that time was truly revolutionary for modern epistolography. The broad development of the press and new forms of periodicals also had a positive effect on the development of letter-writing; letters were freed from their informative and official functions and turned to the psyche of the author. Sentimentalists discovered and promoted the opportunity to describe one's own feelings in letters. That quickly brought the letter-writing technique into the novel; a letter became a valuable means of psychological analysis in romance prose, which, in turn, shaped the tastes and epistolary practices of its readers, revolutionising the traditional principles of letter-writing. This is the origin of romantic and modern epistolography. The new tendency to describe inner experiences had a decisive impact on loosening the traditional principles of letter poetics.

Romantics were fully aware of the influence of sentimentalists on epistolary-psychological preferences of letter-writers, which was most clearly expressed by Henry Reeve, a friend and addressee of Krasieński's youthful correspondence:

the correspondence forms a sort of novel, no less than *La Nouvelle Heloise* and certainly, a bit more true as for the human heart, a bit more moral as for our souls, as for us who are its authors.<sup>3</sup>

Under Rousseau, a retreat occurred from the classic, old epistolary norms, formulated and preserved in various French handbooks and letter-writing textbooks, still popularised in the nineteenth-century by Polish epistolography theorists, such as Ignacy Legatowicz, Alojzy Feliński, Stanisław Bratkowski, or Michał Korzeniowski.<sup>4</sup> The victory of romanticism further established the

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2 Stefania Skwarczyńska, "Listy Sobieskiego do Marysienki jako zjawisko kulturalne i literackie," *Ruch Literacki*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (1936), pp. 38–48; No. 3, pp. 71–75.

3 Quoted after: Wiktor Weintraub, "Krasieński and Reeve," in: *Zygmunt Krasieński, romantic universalist: an international tribute*, ed. Waclaw Lednicki (New York: Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in America, 1964), p. 21.

4 Ignacy Piotr Legatowicz, "Rozprawa o listach," *Tygodnik Wileński* nos. 78–79 (1817); Alojzy Feliński, "O listach," in: *Dzieła*, Vol. 2 (Wrocław: Nakładem Zygmunta Schlettera, 1840), pp. 249–258; S. Bratkowski, *Teoria pisania listów dla młodych Polek* (Warszawa, 1830), p. 189; Michał Korzeniowski, *Sekretarz doskonały, książka podręczna zawierająca wybór z dzieł Krasieńskiego, Kottschuli, Królikowskiego, Rumpfa i wielu innych. Wzory listów kupieckich, krótkie objaśnienie i wzory weksłów, obligów itp. Wzory przedstawień do władz, wzory kontraktów, testamentów, rozmaitych*

theory of confession-letter; epistolography contained the right to express the writer's feelings and reveal their personality. The utilitarian purposes of correspondence in the traditional sense became marginal. The desire to record one's own experiences and reveal one's deepest feelings to a soulmate like a friend or a lover became the main stimulus for abundant correspondence. The tendency had a decisive impact on the nature of romantic letters – not only the psychological content, but also their improvisational character, originality, and pronounced kinship with other literary genres (diary, memoir, meditation, and treatise). In a romantic letter, thanks to its extraordinary literary values, description gained immense importance; the author meticulously collected observations by analysing his or her own spiritual states and describing reactions to the world and the people around. The plasticity of the description, meant to evoke an emotional experience with the addressee, was strongly individualised – hence the expanded elements concerning emotions and aura, the introduction of metaphors and comparisons strengthening the description and its emotional interpretation, the effort to achieve maximum expression, and, finally, the diversity and richness of epistolary themes. The romantic multi-topic letter reflected the author's personality in a much broader fashion, mixing everyday issues and events, trivial things and most intimate confessions with transcendent matters. Krasiński excelled in writing such letters; his correspondence grew into a true story about a man of romanticism with all the passions of his time. At the same time, the romantic multi-topic letter abandoned the eighteenth-century epistolary principle of building content and form on the basis of rational relations; in contrast to that tradition, a loose layout of content linked with a chain of free associations was promoted. Traditional components were also rejected, like salutations or complimentary closes; instead, the focus was on individual content. For romantic letter-writers, everything was an opportunity to express themselves. Undoubtedly, romanticism took epistolography to the heights of its possibilities and development.

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Few Polish epistolographists had such good orientation in the tradition of the genre from ancient to modern times as Cyprian Norwid. He was aware, above all, of the utilitarian sources of epistolography; he stated: "Okoliczności matką tych narodzin stały się" (PWsz X, 9) [Circumstances were the mother of that birth]. As he referred in one of his letters to the names of Julius Caesar

and Pliny the Younger as the creators of correspondence and emphasised the ancient roots and kinships of the genre, he also strongly manifested the need for originality, for impressing one's own individual, indelible mark and rejecting the "arkadyjskie próżniactwo" [Arcadian idleness] present in many letters:

ci szczególnie, którzy nie mają co robić, wytworne listy piszą!  
 ... nawet apostołskie Pawła Ś-o listy... czyliż, literacko uważane jako listy, są właściwie listowej przykładem formy?? Bynajmniej! To są rapsody, półpoetyckiego, półfilozofijnego i natchnienego pełne ognia. Częstokroć zadyszane profetyzmem – kurzem dróg, które przebiegał Apostoła sandał, posypane, ażeby lityry pisma osuszyć! Acz pogody i toku, i tej arkadyjskiej mierności stylu, listowi właściwemu należnej, tam nie ma. Trzeba być arkadyjskim "b o s k i m" próżniakiem, żeby dobry nakreślić list. (PWsz X, 9)<sup>5</sup>

[those in particular who have nothing to do, write elegant letters!  
 ... even St Paul's Epistles... are they, while considered letters in literature, truly an example of a letter's form?? Far from it! Those are rhapsodies, full of half-poetic, half-philosophical, inspired fire. Oftentimes breathless for prophetism – strewn with the dust of the road the Apostle's sandal traversed, to dry the lettering!  
 Yet they have none of the cheer and flow, and that Arcadian mediocrity of style that is due in a proper letter. You need to be the Arcadian "d i v i n e" idler to write a good letter.]

Thus, Norwid stressed two epistolary traditions: the ancient tradition of the philosophical and moral letter, to which – in his view – the Epistles were related, and the tradition of the personal letter, which carried both the mediocrity of style and the said "Arcadian idleness." The pejorative nature of the descriptions is clear, as well as Norwid's quite definite detachment from the tradition of the personal letter. All his writing, especially the originality of topics and form, and the philosophical and moral reflection based on the observations and experiences of the Apostle of Nations, led the poet to the moral and philosophical archetypes.

As was rightly noted, Norwid did not deviate from romanticism if the size or place of epistolography in his work is considered, yet he assigned a different function to his letters.<sup>6</sup> To all appearances, his letters were a continuation of a social conversation – they maintained the nature of improvisation or intimate confession, and yet they clearly differed from the typical talkative and

5 All citations are given from PWsz (editors note).

6 Cf. Zdzisław Jastrzębski, "Rupieciarnia i wiek atomu," *Tygodnik Powszechny*, Vol. 15, No. 6 (1961), p. 6.

hyper-descriptive romantic letters. One may thus ask about the actual essence of Norwid's letter writing.

Norwid's letter-writing technique was quite specific in itself – the improvisational nature of the letter, if one can term it thus, was precisely planned, modified, and limited by the specific situation in which it was written. Norwid “writes as if he were speaking.” “Ja, jako gadam, kreślę,” “to wszystko nie listy – to tak, jak pisuję, mówiąc z Tobą,” (DW XII, 437) “możność listownej z Nią rozmowy” (PWsz X, 72; IX, 211; VIII, 34) [I write same as I speak; all these are not letters – it is as if I spoke to you, when I write; the possibility of speaking to Her in writing]. The letter may indeed continue a conversation started earlier, but the specific conditions in which that conversation is continued determine its character. As proven by Norwid's confession in a letter to Michalina Dziekońska of 10 November 1858, he wrote his letters in breaks between sculpting and painting: “i powracałem znów do listów, i znów do roboty, i tak pisuję często” (PWsz VIII, 361) [and I returned to the letters again, and to work again; I often write that way]. Also, he wrote in a letter to Karol Kaczanowski of April 1862: “mam dni wyznaczone do korespondencji, a które chybiając zrobiłbym sobie duży i niedogoniony potem nieporządek w robotach” (PWsz IX, 29) [I have days assigned for correspondence, and if I missed any of them, I would have brought much disorder which could not be caught up later, to my work]. Another comment of Norwid on the same issue comes from his letter to Jan Koźmian, also from April 1862: “prace moje nie pozwalają mi uradować się swobodniejszym pisaniem” (PWsz IX, 29) [my work does not allow me to enjoy freer writing]. Thus, if one were still to term that writing “improvization,” it was improvization subjected to clear temporal discipline, which modified its character, mood, and size. The conditions in which Norwid wrote his letters, primarily shaped by the poet's material situation, had a major influence on the content and form of his correspondence. That is why Norwid wrote in one of his letters to Józef Bohdan Zaleski (of August-September 1854) that: “inni nazwą teorią ten list, którego każdy prawie wiersz życiem piszę” (PWsz VIII, 229) [others may call this letter a theory, but almost each line of it I write with my life]. Similar confessions were often repeated, mantra-like, in the poet's letters, and yet he did not like to write about himself; he deliberately avoided personal topics, descriptions of his complicated mental states, or disclosures in the kind of the romantic “confession of a child of the century.” It seems nearly impossible to reconcile the proclamation of “writing with his life” with the reluctance to describe the reality and the small matters shaping the poet's everyday life. How is that contradiction understandable or explainable?

In a letter to Maria Trębicka of 2 August 1847, Norwid wrote:

O sobie, nie wiem, co napisać, bo nie uczyłem się, niestety, retoryki i stylu od francuskich pisarzy, a mianowicie *journalistów*, którzy o przedmiotach najmniej interesujących wielkie foliały kreślić mogą. (PWsz VIII, 50)

[Of myself, I know not what to write, for unfortunately, I did not learn rhetoric and style from French writers, namely *journalists*, who can write extensive volumes on the least interesting subjects.]

The reluctance to discuss personal issues, which otherwise prevailed in romantic correspondence, was obvious. The poet expressed it even more clearly in two earlier letters to the same addressee. On 2 or 3 January 1846, he wrote from Berlin:

już to listy moje nie są do biografii i fac-similu pośmiertnego. Pragnę być zawsze jasnym i bardzo jestem szczery – trudno jednakże by mnie pojąć, z tego sądząc jedynie, co mi się uda wypowiedzieć. ... można by często dwuznaczności fałszywe przypisywać, chociaż Pani wiesz dobrze, jak nienawidzę *kalamurów*. (PWsz VIII, 29)

[my letters are useless for a biography or obituary facsimile. I always wish to be clear and I am very frank – yet I would be difficult to understand, judging only from what I manage to say. ... often, false ambiguities could be attributed, although you know well how I hate *wordplay*.]

And in a letter to Trębicka of 7 June 1846, he added:

nie lubię, ażeby doczesne moje interesa, drobiazgowo zajęcia, małe walki z tysiącem małych przeciwności, z małych ludzi małymi intrygami, mięszały się do rozmów, które z przyjaciółmi mymi chcę uprawiać (PWsz VIII, 37).

[I do not like for my worldly interests, trivial activities, small battles against a thousand small adversities, against small intrigues of small people, to be mixed into conversations which I wish to hold with my friends.]

Those undoubtedly frank and almost programmatic confessions can serve to reveal the specificity of Norwid's epistolography, which departed from the confession-letter theory promoted by sentimentalists and practised by romanticists, and from the cult of biographism and the reality of everyday life, and promoted an intellectual conversation in the form of a letter – a form often accused of incomprehensibility and ambiguity. Hence, there is no contradiction between Norwid's confession of "writing with his life" and the avoidance of personal topics in the romantic understanding. It must be said that Norwid departed from the basic convention of a traditional romantic letter based on a confession, for personality was expressed in his letters in a completely different way: it was visible in the intellectual layer, in generalizations built on careful

observations of the world and people, and transferred to his correspondence in a thoughtful and almost gnomic, sententious, and aphoristic form. Norwid's "writing with life" was devoid of a private character and had polemic passion and commitment, aimed at having the broadest possible impact. It contained judgments based on socio-historical and personal experiences, treated as examples and supporting evidence. Conveying his thoughts in letters, the poet always started with facts, which then formed the basis for sententious generalizations – hence the deep sense of his confession about "writing with life." The latest analyst of Norwid's work was absolutely right in writing about his extraordinary correspondence that:

expression of the personal theme ... is immediately removed from the fore, or rather, it is subordinated to a general reflection, in which the personal becomes a material for statements of the most general perspective .... The assessment of his own situation, also generalised, is placed within the framework of the Christian understanding of the sense of suffering.<sup>7</sup>

Therefore, even if Norwid's letters are treated as a confession, they are a confession of an intellectual who was primarily interested in a general reflection and moral sense, not in individualist exhibitionism.

The intellectual layer manifested in Norwid's epistolography meant that his letters were born of great effort and were rarely properly understood by the addressee. In the letter to Maria Trębicka quoted above (of 2 or 3 January 1846), the poet complained about "fałszywe dwuznaczności" [false ambiguities] being attributed to him, and a few months later, on 11 April 1846, in a letter to her he wrote:

zbyt wielkim może byłoby szczęściem na tej ziemi, ażeby być zupełnie zrozumianym od ludzi, ale też tego się spodziewa – że nie powiem: wymaga – od małej bardzo liczby. (PWSz VIII, 36)

[it would perhaps be too great happiness on this earth to be perfectly understood by people, but you expect it – not to say: require it – from very few.]

As Józef Fert proved, Norwid was focused on dialogue, and correspondence provided an excellent opportunity for "obieg idei" [circulation of ideas] – hence his particular concern for being understood by the addressee, whom he saw as an intermediary in transmitting his thoughts and works to national culture.<sup>8</sup>

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7 Józef Franciszek Fert, *Norwid poeta dialogu* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1982), p. 40.

8 Fert, *Norwid poeta dialogu*, p. 44.

Such an understanding of the addressee also distinguished Norwid among romantic epistolographers, who were inclined to treat the recipient as a medium to trigger their most intimate confessions.

In light of the discussion above, Norwid's letters were not only devoid of complicated deliberations on his own psyche but also included impressions from his journeys in a different and much more limited manner than was the practice in romantic epistolography. It is noteworthy that Norwid maximally shortened any extensive descriptions of his emotional experiences while traveling; he merely outlined them, sketched them in delicate pen strokes so that they did not overwhelm with their size and detail an in-depth reflection of a more general sense. As Julian Przyboś noted while analysing the poem *Italiam! Italiam!*, the world was, for Norwid, only an external sign of the moral laws that governed it. Therefore, it is significant for the author of *Vade-mecum* that he gave no description of the landscapes he saw as a traveller. The few concise descriptions found in his epistolary work provided a basis for philosophical and moral reflection.<sup>9</sup>

Norwid's first "Roman" letter, addressed to Antoni Zaleski, written on 24 or 25 February 1845, contains the following passage:

odpisuję Ci przeto nie, jakem sobie był ułożył, o wielu drobnych rzeczach mówiąc i opisując całą podróż, lecz pokrótce, do-rzeczy, ażeby nie być zbyt rozwlekłym i drobnostkami Cię nie nudzić.

...

Gdy wjeżdżałem do Rzymu przez *Porta dei Cavallieri*, nieraz o Tobie wspominałem – wjazd ten dziwnie uderza: pierwszą bowiem budową, jaką się napotyka, jest sobie sam Piotr Święty, jakoby na ustroniu, więc jakoby do Niego, a nie do Rzymu, się jechało. (PWSz VIII, 15)

[so I am replying to you writing not in the way I have planned, speaking of many trivial things and describing the whole journey, but briefly, to-the-point, not to be too long-winded and not to bore you with trifles.

...

When I was entering Rome through *Porta dei Cavallieri*, I often thought about you – the entrance makes a strange, striking impression: the first structure you see is St Peter himself, as if you were travelling to a secluded place, thus as if you travelled to Him, not to Rome.]

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9 Julian Przyboś, "Próba Norwida," in: *Nowe studia o Norwidzie*, ed. Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki and Jan Zygmunt Jakubowski (Warszawa: PWN, 1961), p. 71.

Similarly, his description of the journey across the Atlantic is strikingly sparing. In the first letter sent from New York to Maria Trębicka, Norwid wrote in April 1853:

Widziałem rekiiny ogromne – i mewy, którym osłabiają skrzydła od przestworów drogi, i opuszczają je na falę dla chwilowego spoczynku, nim do skał gdzie sterczących wrócić mogą... to wszystko – ta przepaść z wałami piętrzącymi się do pół masztów, tak że okręt skrzyypi na wszystkie strony od ścisku fal – to słońce czerwone, za płaszczyną ruchomą zachodzące tyle i tyle razy – te nocy najreligijniej przerażające cichością lub burzą – powiadają ludzie, że to nas dzieli. Powiadają, mówią ci, którzy powiadają. Ludzie, którzy czynią, nie powiadają tego – powiadają czasem, że to nas łączy (PWsz VIII, 191–192).

[I saw huge sharks – and seagulls, their wings so weakened by the expanse of the route that they would lower them down to the waves' level for momentary rest, before they could return to some protruding rocks, – yes, all that. And I saw the abyss with billows mounting half way up the masts so that the ship creaked on all sides under the pressure of the waves – and the red sun setting beyond the mobile plain many, so many times; and the most religious nights frightening with their calm or storms – and all that, people say, divides us. So they say, speaking to you now, those who always say. The people who do deeds say nothing of this; sometimes they must say that this is what binds us.]<sup>10</sup>

It is clearly noticeable that in both cases, the short description was only an excuse to express the author's reflection. At the same time, the extraordinary conciseness of the fragments makes it insurmountably difficult to separate the sphere of realistic description from the lyrical and symbolic one, to separate narration from mood, emotion, and reflection. The multi-themed, extensive letters with elements of description of his personal situation and general observations were called by Norwid "prozo-pisane" [prose-written], and he did not try to hide his aversion to such correspondence, for which he had little time and which he avoided on principle, striving to formulate stylistically compact texts (PWsz VIII, 293).

He was fully aware of the otherness of his letters, their non-adherence to what romantic epistolography conveyed to readers. In June 1855, he wrote to Maria Trębicka:

to wszystko, co Ci tu piszę, niepodobne jest do listów, jakie zwykle czytujemy mniej więcej – daję Ci więc najświętsze słowo honoru, iż każdy wiersz n a j p r o s t s z ą i n a j p r o ś c i e j p o w i e d z i a n ą jest prawdą – tak to jest – coś mam mówić inaczej. (PWsz VIII, 241)

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10 English translation by Jerzy Peterkiewicz, Cyprian Norwid, "Listy," *Botteghe Oscure*, Vol. XXII (1958), autumn, p. 182.



[all that I am writing to you here is unlike the letters which we usually likely read – so I give you my holiest word of honour that each poem is the simplest truth said in the simplest manner – it is so – why should I say otherwise.]

This is another firm confirmation in Norwid's correspondence of the very essence of his letter-writing: "writing with life" and saying the truth validated with personal and social experience. Writing letters in the name of proclaiming the truth and of noble didacticism led Norwid to abandon extensive descriptions of the world, and people since small details and observations often made it possible to formulate a more meaningful generalization full of wisdom than many a lengthy, tedious description. In a letter to Mikołaj Kamiński from the turn of 1858 and 1859, the poet wrote:

Każdy, kto sprzedaje choćby w najlepszym celu rozum swój, nie dodając do tego osoby swojej, knowa zdradę prawdy, bo ... prawda nie jest tylko wiedzą, ale i życiem razem. (PWsz VIII, 369)

[Each person who sells their mind, even for the best of purposes, without adding themselves to it, conspires against the truth, for ... the truth is not only knowledge but also life itself.]

Such was the purpose and sense of the programmatic "writing with life," which enabled the poet to formulate the truth and confirm its truthfulness. Defending himself against emotional exhibitionism, well-rooted in Romantic epistolography, and against lengthy and sometimes tedious descriptions, he advocated maintaining a certain "proporcja ziemi" (PWsz VIII, 239) [proportion of earth], without which all consideration is vague. By isolating some elements from his observation of the world, other people, and himself, he phrased his aphorisms of philosophical and moral nature, defining the letter writer's worldview and specifying the rules of conduct for himself and the recipients of his correspondence. That philosophical reflection, present in almost every letter he wrote, and one which made him reject the commonly accepted components of romantic letter-writing, was something that defined the entire otherness of Norwid's epistolography, making it to the most appropriate background, commentary, and completion of his poetic work.

That programmatic restraint in talking about himself and the world also was at the root of the poet's exceptional hostility towards insignificant details, and in particular gossip and inconsiderate information, so abundant in traditional personal letters. Consequently, Norwid's letters were devoid of the numerous realities of the epoch, the wealth of which was typical, e.g., for Krasiński's letters. Norwid's correspondence does not require extensive commentary or

knowledge of the entire background of memoir or journalistic writing because, as he wrote in a letter to Maria Trębicka of January 1852, “praca, epoka, myśl, nauczyły mię skąpstwa w mowie” (PWsz VIII, 300) [work, epoch, thought, they taught me to be scant in speech].

He marked that contemptuous attitude towards unimportant details and gossip that did not convey any pertinent information about life with pejorative terms such as “babskie plotki” [old wives’ gossip], or with openly critical comments. News from the “big world” was in his view good “na plotki” [for gossip], and never sufficient “na sądzanie”] (PWsz IX, 57) [for judgement and opinion, which for him were the true sense of letter writing. That attitude of Norwid as a letter-writer rejecting any gossip as useless must have caused particular respect among contemporary researchers.

Although Norwid repeatedly manifested in his letters an aversion towards extensive accounts or occasional gossiping, he sometimes made an exception for a detailed description, certifying its truth by using the terms “fotograf” [photograph] or “fotografijna wierność” (PWsz X, 43) [photographic faithfulness] in his letters. Such photographic descriptions were rare in Norwid’s correspondence, especially when they revealed his personal situation. Correspondence with Joanna Kuczyńska shows that the “photograph” of the state of mind also served deeper purposes, as it led to generalizations that the poet always sought (PWsz IX, 175). Two extensive “photographs” sent in his letters from 1864 and 1865, regarding Roger Raczyński and a caretaker’s daughter marrying a baron of the empire, provoked Norwid’s deep reflection and are characteristic of his worldview (PWsz IX, 132–134; 179–182).

Thus, both the lack of extensive descriptions and introducing description in the letters by way of a “photograph” made considerable sense, for they were in line with the primary goals that Norwid set for epistolography, and led to specific philosophical reflections. Such a reflection always revealed a degree of initiation into eternal truths, showed a clear affinity with the Bible, phrased moral judgements in the spirit of the Gospel, sanctified words, and led to a comprehensive deification of the world, because everything was subordinated to that vision. This is a characteristic feature of Norwid’s epistolography, leading to the fact that, while rejecting the contemporary epistolary practice so definitively, at the same time, the poet created letters saturated with deeply romantic religiosity, embracing the entire vision of the world from the smallest realities of everyday life to transcendent phenomena. For him, the whole world was full of signs allowing one to see deeper meanings and formulate them in a generalised reflection. Thus, the anti-romantic attitude of Norwid as a letter-writer essentially meant removing all unnecessary content ballast from a letter, while his

vision of the world, shown and generalised in an intellectual reflection introduced in correspondence, was clearly inclined towards romanticism.

Fighting for new content in letters, Norwid sought to fill his epistolary prose with truth expressed in the evangelical spirit – hence his occasional tendency for short parables, which, like those in the New Testament, allowed for a more transparent expression of fundamental reflections of lasting, timeless value. In September-October 1852, he wrote to Jan Koźmian:

Możesz tego, komu chcesz, udzielić, nie wstydam się tego, co omacku mówię, i na rynku. Wszyscy przyjdziecie do tych przekonań, choć ja może tego nie doczekam – (PWsz VIII, 186)

[You can share it with anyone you wish, I am not ashamed of what I say blindly, even in public. You will all come to those convictions, although I may perhaps not live to see this –]

Avoiding accurate dating of his letters is undoubtedly one of the suggestions which indicate the timeless dimension of Norwid's epistolary reflections. As far as chronology is concerned, his correspondence was most often limited to giving the year, or a month at the most; sometimes it could be the day of the week or the hour, but rarely an exact date. Removing courtesy phrases in salutations and at the end of his letters most likely served the same purpose. Limiting or sometimes even removing traditional elements of a letter deprived his correspondence of a private character, and new content often made Norwid's letters into "essays" or complete poetic works.

The conditions in which Norwid's letters were created also determined, to a large degree, their formal richness (division into chapters, introductions of poems), language diversity (numerous foreign language fragments), and graphic diversity (vignettes, drawings, emphases, capitals, dashes, ellipses, asterisks and crosses, colours, and blank spaces). That entire visual aspect of Norwid's letters served to enhance the expressiveness and clarity of his thought. Sometimes it revealed the numerous threads of his personal reflection, but it was subordinated to the primary goal of creating a letter containing the author's thought in the form of a concise maxim or a letter transformed into an epistolary treatise.

Norwid did not show any special concern for the form of his letters; their sketchiness and fragmentation were deliberate. In March 1876, when writing to Jan Szwański, the poet advised:

racz donieść, na właściwą ci staranność listową czasu i sił nie marnując, bo uwzajemnionym nie będziesz ode mnie.

Ja, jako gadam, kreślę ... (PWsz X, 71–72)

[do reply, not wasting your time and effort for your usual meticulousness in letters, for you will not find me mutual in care.

I write same as I speak]

And in a letter to Maria Trębicka of 18 July 1856, he wrote:

niech Pani nie dziwi, że najmniej dobiaram wyrazów pisząc. Bowiem ani wyglądam tak, ani czuję tak, ale mam w tym moje głębokie powody, dla których uważam za słuszne pokazywać się we wszystkim w najniższym stopniu istoty mojej ... (PWSz VIII, 273)

[do not be surprised that I take little care to select words when writing. For I neither look that way nor feel that way, but I have my deep reasons to believe it right for me to show myself in everything in the lowest degree of my own self]

That attitude, contrary to the romantic care for a literary version of the biography contained in letters, was also characteristic of Norwid and his epistolography.

Unlike his contemporaries, he was aware of the poverty of the language and its inadequacy to the aims of his correspondence. That was why he referred to “dobra wiara” [good faith] – the best “pośrednik i professor stylu” [intermediary and professor of style]. On 2 January 1846, he wrote to Maria Trębicka:

Ta jedna może to dopełnić, czego wyrazić nie możemy dla braku słów, częstokroć – a może prawie zawsze – tak blado rzeczy malujących. (PWSz VIII, 29)

[Only that [the good faith] may complete that which we cannot express for lack of words, which oftentimes – perhaps nearly always – paint things so dimly.]

The style of Norwid’s epistolography faithfully reflected its character – the intellectual reflection that took a central place in his letters was being born as he was writing them, in the breaks between work and writing, without refining words and sentences. That rough and complex style is a faithful proof of thought phrased while writing, and matches the content of these letters, which are a very characteristic “pamiętnik myśliciela i artysty”<sup>11</sup> [diary of a thinker and an artist].

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11 Cf. Mieczysław Jastrun, “Wstęp” to: Cyprian Kamil Norwid, *Pamiętnik artysty*, selected and introduced by Mieczysław Jastrun (Warszawa: PIW, 1959).

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Hanna Widacka

## Cyprian Norwid as a Graphic Artist

**Abstract:** Cyprian Norwid is principally known as a poet and less well as a painter and graphic artist. His work as an engraver began in the autumn of 1844 in Florence, where he studied for a time at the Academy of Fine Arts. This article outlines the poet's graphical works, which comprise over 20 compositions, most often copperplates and lithographies, and also a few pieces based on creations made by other artists. Norwid can be described as a *peintre-graveur*, i.e., an engraver who based his works entirely on his own drawings, for reproduction played no major role in his art. In his engravings, Norwid seems to have remained indifferent to the important political events that he witnessed. He drew his subjects mostly from the New Testament and occasionally from Antiquity. It is notable that he engraved no portraits or landscapes in the strict sense. He had an inclination towards symbolic compositions of hidden, indeterminate meaning, usually with just one or two figures; there are few multi-figural scenes. Norwid's engravings are a rarity. They were usually printed in a small number of copies, sometimes even just once. Only a few prints have been preserved, and the copperplates are lost. Norwid's graphic art is unique and does not fit into any schemata. Although it was created outside Poland, it constitutes a major closed chapter of the history of Polish art.

**Keywords:** Cyprian Norwid, *peintre-graveur*, graphic art, etching, lithograph, New Testament

[P]rzez lat wiele w południowych monumentalnych krajach uczyłem się naprzód *Sztuki* w ogóle, potem przede wszystkim, lubo różnymi drogami, tej jej gałęzi najszanowniejszej, która *rytownictwem* nazywa się.

[For many years, in the southern monumental countries, I have studied *art* in general, and then, above all, in various ways, this most respected branch of art, which is called *engraving*.]

– wrote Cyprian Norwid to Adam Potocki from Paris in the second half of 1855 (DW XI, 24). He wrote these words from a certain distance – despite his young age – as a mature poet, painter, graphic artist, and engraver, and did so at a time when he was trying to make printmaking his main source of living in France.

There are more such references to printmaking in Norwid's rich correspondence, which has been made available in more detail today owing to the 11-volume monumental edition of his writings, compiled by Juliusz Wiktor

Gomulicki.<sup>1</sup> The poet wrote about his engraving works willingly and often to various addressees; thus, his letters, sometimes very personal in content, may constitute the most authentic source material.

Certainly, Norwid's poetic output is most widely known both among researchers and his large audience, as he was primarily a poet. The second most popular is his extensive drawing legacy, and only in the third place comes his engraving output, much smaller compared with his drawings, since there are less than forty of his print works in total.

However, these works did not go unnoticed by his contemporaries. Acknowledging Norwid's talent as an engraver, Józef Ignacy Kraszewski listed four of his engravings in his collection catalogue.<sup>2</sup> The same year's edition of the catalogue of the Nîmes Fine Arts Exhibition noted three other etchings by the poet.<sup>3</sup> In addition, Edward Rastawiecki included a laconic mention of the artist, but without specifying his graphic works.<sup>4</sup>

Norwid, as an engraver, became a source of greater interest in the twentieth century. This growing interest can be seen in abundant materials on Norwid's graphics and drawings, collected by Zenon Przesmycki.<sup>5</sup> As for publications, we should mention here the catalogues of exhibitions, organised for various occasions,<sup>6</sup> folders with reproductions of selected drawings and

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- 1 Cyprian Norwid, *Pisma wszystkie*, Vols. 1–11 (Warszawa: PIW, 1971–1976).
  - 2 Józef Ignacy Kraszewski, *Catalogue d'une collection iconographique polonaise* (Dresde: Imprimerie de Hellmuth Henkler, 1865), p. 177.
  - 3 *Livret de l'Exposition des Beaux-Arts de la ville de Nîmes* (Nîmes, 1865), p. 28, item 121.
  - 4 Edward Rastawiecki, *Słownik rytmików polskich tudzież obcych w Polsce osiadłych lub czasowo w niej pracujących* (Poznań: Drukarnia J.I. Kraszewskiego, 1886), p. 217.
  - 5 Zenon Przesmycki. "Materiały do twórczości malarskiej i rysowniczej Cypriana Norwida," National Library in Warsaw, MS III. 6330, mf 47970. The manuscript contains, among other things, the description of the contents of Norwid's artistic albums, formerly owned by Aleksander Dybowski in Paris, Konstancja Górka, Teofil Lenartowicz, Franciszek Tański, and the collections of Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki, Wanda and Aleksander Neumann, and, finally, the Rapperswil collection.
  - 6 Cf. *Pamiętnik wystawy starych rycin polskich ze zbioru Dominika Witke-Jeżewskiego urządzonej staraniem Towarzystwa Opieki nad Zabytkami Przeszłości w r. 1914* (Warszawa: Towarzystwo Opieki nad Zabytkami Przeszłości, 1914); *Cyprian Norwid. Wystawa w 125 rocznicę urodzin. Katalog* (Warszawa: Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie, 1946) (hereafter: CN, *wystawa* 1946); Roman Zrębowicz and Maria Rubczyńska, *Tradycja rembrandtowska w grafice polskiej. Katalog wystawy* (Łódź: Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych, 1956); Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki, *Liryka i druk, Katalog wystawy książek Cypriana Norwida*,



prints,<sup>7</sup> as well as contributory and holistic works.<sup>8</sup> The culmination of the latter is the above-mentioned 11-volume edition of *Pisma wszystkie* [Collected Writings]. In its final volume, Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki registered in chronological order all of Norwid's known artworks and made a catalogue of them in his selection.<sup>9</sup>

However, for understandable reasons, Norwid has been of greater interest to literature scholars rather than art historians;<sup>10</sup> this disproportion in the vast bibliography on Norwid's work is particularly evident. The aim of this article is to look at Norwid as a graphic artist and, consequently, to analyse his print works from the point of view of iconography, technique and artistic values.

\*

The young Norwid began his artistic studies in 1837 when he enrolled at the Warsaw painting school at Krakowskie Przedmieście, led by Aleksander

*książek o nim oraz norwidowskich druków okolicznościowych*, compiled ... (Warszawa: Biblioteka Narodowa, 1969); *W kręgu rembrandtowskiej tradycji. Rysunki i grafika*, (Warszawa: Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie, 1961) (exhibition catalogue); *Romantyzm i romantyczność w sztuce polskiej XIX i XX wieku. Katalog wystawy* (Kraków: Muzeum Narodowe w Krakowie, 1975).

- 7 Cf. *Rysunki i grafika C. K. Norwida* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo J. Mortkowicz, 1946), file (20 plates); *Rysunki i grafika Norwida*, preliminary remarks and explanations of the reproduction by J. Ruszczyćówna (Kraków: Wydawnictwo J. Mortkowicz, 1946), file (27 tablets); *Rysunki i grafika K.C. [sic] Norwida* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo J. Mortkowicz, 1947) (20 tablets); Zdzisław Łapiński and Halina Natuniewicz, *Cyprian Norwid. W 150 rocznicę urodzin. (Tekę z okazji wystawy w Muzeum Adama Mickiewicza w Warszawie)* (Warszawa: Muzeum Adama Mickiewicza, 1972).
- 8 Cf. *Cypryana Norwida antologia artystyczna*, album, compilation, and introduction by Zenon Przesmycki (Warszawa, 1933), reprint from *Grafika*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (1933); J. Seruga, "Grafika Cypryana Norwida w zbiorach biblioteczno-muzealnych hr. Tarnowskich w Sucheju," *Czas*, No. 127 (1933), p. 4 (I owe the information about this source to Professor A. Ryszkiewicz); Aleksander Janta[-Połczyński]. "Na tropach Norwida w Ameryce," in: *Norwid żywy*, ed. Władysław Günther (London: B. Świderski, 1962).
- 9 Volume 11 of *Pisma wszystkie* (Warszawa: PIW, 1976) was republished in the same year as a separate volume under an amended title: *Cyprian Norwid. Przewodnik po życiu i twórczości* (hereafter: *CN, przewodnik*).
- 10 An exception here is the article by J. Sienkiewicz, entitled "Norwid malarz." However, it is devoted exclusively to the poet's drawings. *Pamięci Cypriana Norwida* (Warszawa, 1946), pp. 61-77 (in this edition, published as: "Norwid the painter," Vol. I, pp. 111-122 - editor's note).

Kokular.<sup>11</sup> He intended to supplement his education from January 1839 by attending drawing lectures held at the Kazimierz Palace.<sup>12</sup> At the same time, he made contact with the painter Jan Klemens Minasowicz, who became his private teacher.<sup>13</sup> Perhaps it was owing to the initiative of his teacher that Norwid found himself in Italy a few years later.

In November 1843, he came to Florence.<sup>14</sup> Although he was not formally a student at the local Academy of Fine Arts, it is there that he was supplementing his education, received formerly in Warsaw, in the area of sculpture and engraving skills.

Norwid's first engraving attempts come from autumn 1844, which we can learn mainly on the basis of the poet's correspondence. Before September of that year, he wrote in Florence to the local copperplate engraver Vincenzo della Bruna, informing him that he had started again to draw a new composition (which he did not specify) and that he would try to engrave it with the greatest possible care.<sup>15</sup> From Florence, in September, he probably reported on the same work to his friend Antoni Zaleski.<sup>16</sup> Unfortunately, he did not mention exactly the composition in question; in a somewhat later letter written to the same friend from Rome (24–25 February 1845), he returned once again to his Florentine graphic studies, but this time, addressed their technical aspect.<sup>17</sup>

11 *CN, przewodnik*, p. 33 f.

12 *CN, przewodnik*, p. 34.

13 *CN, przewodnik*. Norwid later mentioned his teacher in his autobiography, referring to him almost with reverence. It is interesting that, probably intentionally, he did not mention either Kokular's paint shop or his studies in Florence; cf. *PWsz VI*, 556; 7, 613.

14 *CN, przewodnik*, p. 45. He received a letter of recommendation from an Academy professor Giuseppe Bezzuoli, whom he met there. The letter opened the way to Luigi Pampaloni's sculpting workshop for him, where he studied sculpture.

15 *PWsz XI*, 441, item 7a (1045). cf. also: *CN, przewodnik*, p. 320, item 207. Della Bruna (born in Venice in 1804, still alive in 1870), a pupil of Rafael Morghen, was an average reproductive engraver who copied the works of Italian masters of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, including Correggio, Domenichino, and Titian.

16 "Moja [kompozycja] jest na skończeniu i może to dlatego, że już tracił nadzieję, ale nadspodziewanie wygląda mi porządnie – jak mi przyjdą pieniądze, wraz zacznę ją sztychować, a druga już w robocie, ale żadna z tych, któreś widział" (*DW X*, 37) ["My (composition) is almost finished and maybe it's because I've already lost hope, but unexpectedly it looks good to me – as soon as the money comes, I'm going to start engraving it, and the other one is in progress, but none of those you had seen"].

17 "We Florencji, gdzie różne napotykały mię przeszkody, robiłem czasem *aqua fortis* i próbowałem zrobić jedno *alla prima*, bez kalki, dla dowiedzenia się niektórych

It is clear from the artist's statements that he studied engraving under the supervision of Vincenzo della Bruna and that he showed a great deal of independence and inventiveness (perhaps because he relied heavily on himself, on his own inquiries?), and finally, that the works he made gained his master's recognition.

And that is all that can be deduced today from Norwid's Florentine graphic education. It is also difficult to state how long it actually was – over a year or just four months?<sup>18</sup> However, it is worth remembering because it was the first and probably the last time in the poet's life that he thought he would undertake this work, as he did not know that he would continue similar studies later. The foundations that he had obtained had to suffice for many years; he had to learn the rest – perhaps almost everything – by himself.

The only preserved trace of the artist's engraving activity during his stay in Florence is a unique etching depicting *St Mary Magdalene kneeling at the feet of Christ* (Fig. 2).<sup>19</sup> The print is a fragment of a larger composition copied from the painting by Andrea del Sarto *Pietà* (1524), which Norwid could have seen in the Pitti Gallery.<sup>20</sup> Unfortunately, the circumstances of the cut-out of the print from the whole composition are not known; thus, it is difficult to determine with certainty whether only the print itself has been irregularly cut out, or also the (signed?) plate, which has not been preserved up to the present time.<sup>21</sup>

rzeczy w części technicznej – ta próba tak mi się udała, że Della Bruna prosił, ażeby mu zostawił jeden egzemplarz na pamiątkę” (DW X, 46) [“In Florence, where I was facing various obstacles, I sometimes made *aqua fortis* and I tried to make one *alla prima*, without a carbon copy, to find out some technical details – this attempt was so successful that Della Bruna asked me to leave him one copy as a souvenir”].

18 In early 1845, Norwid left Florence and went to Rome.

19 Irregular cut-out, dim. 9×46 mm, pasted on a brown cardboard; under the print there is an inked note by an unknown person: “z sztychu Norwida wyrznięta Magdalena” [“Magdalene carved out from Norwid's print”]. The print was pasted into the so-called Berlin Album with the poet's drawings in the National Museum in Warsaw (hereafter: MNW), Rys.Pol.1843, sh. 41. In the Department of Iconographic Collections of the National Library in Warsaw (hereafter: BN) in the collections of Zenon Przesmycki, there is a photo of this cut-out (inv. No. F.336). Cf. *CN, przewodnik*, p. 46, item 163; pp. 228, 320, item 207 (repr. *ibid.*).

20 It still exists there today – cf. Anna Maria Francini Ciaranfi. *Pitti Firenze* (Novara: De Agostini, 1980), repr. p. 34.

21 According to J.W. Gomulicki's suggestion, the cut-out was “probably performed by Norwid himself, who might have lost or destroyed the printing plate and had only a fragment of its print” – cf. *CN, przewodnik*, p. 320, item 207.

Indeed, as Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki suggests, perhaps Norwid wrote to Vincenzo della Bruna about this very composition?<sup>22</sup>



**Fig. 2.** Cyprian Norwid, *Św. Maria Magdalena u stóp Chrystusa* [*St Mary Magdalene kneeling at the feet of Christ*], etching, National Museum in Warsaw. Photo Piotr Ligier.

The etching performed “con tanta pulitezza quanto è possibile” is, most probably under the influence of the master, a typical reproductive print, which at

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22 PWSz 11, 553.

first sight, gives the impression of steel engraving. The line is stiff and dry, and the whole is very “academic.” In spite of the diversity of planes, the dominant feature is its flatness, which cannot be compensated for by a rather sparing modelling of Magdalene’s face and hands, a fragment of Christ’s right leg and draperies. One can recognise here a certain clumsiness and restraint of the yet amateurish engraver’s hand. The print is not signed, but with a high degree of certainty, it can be dated back to the autumn of 1844.

The second unique etching also comes from the 1840s and depicts the *Original Sin* according to the fresco by Raphael from the Raphael Rooms in the Vatican.<sup>23</sup> It was preceded by a pencil sketch of Eve alone – probably a preparatory drawing for this purely reproductive, contouring etching.<sup>24</sup> Both of these objects were probably created during Norwid’s stay in Rome, where he stayed successively in 1845 (January-September), in 1847 (from 6 February) and with small breaks throughout 1848.<sup>25</sup> In the Eternal City, the poet was broadening his knowledge of ancient Christian art and made trips to the catacombs, the Colosseum, and the Roman temples; it is possible that he remained under Raphael’s strong charm for many years.<sup>26</sup>

In 1850, during his first stay in Paris (1849–1852), Norwid made two original prints, both using themes taken from the New Testament, a source to which he would frequently return later. These were *Nie było dla nich miejsca w gospodzie* [*There was no Room for them at the Inn*] and *Św. Józef z Dzieciątkiem* [*St. Joseph with the Child*].

The first one, an etching, illustrates the seventh verse of the second chapter of the Gospel of Luke (quoted at the bottom of the composition), i.e., the journey of pregnant Mary and her husband Joseph, seeking in vain for refuge in the vicinity of Bethlehem (Fig. 3).<sup>27</sup> The composition, set in a kind of Italian,

23 Sign.: *Raff. Urb. inv. N.C.inc.*, dim. 122×139 mm (cut-out print), print in BN Ikonogr. Przesm. inv. No. G.22189.

24 BN Ikonogr. Przesm. inv. No. 768, pen and ink, dim. 120 × 88 mm.

25 Cf. *CN, przewodnik*, pp. 46–48, 53–59, 180–183.

26 We can find evidence for that, for instance, in Norwid’s poem written in Paris in 1857, entitled “Rozmowa umarłych” [“A Conversation of the Dead”] (a dialogue between Byron and Raphael) – cf. *PWsz I*, 278–282. It is also known that Norwid had in his possession the original drawings by Raphael and Leonardo da Vinci, which he was forced to sell in 1875 due to lack of money. Cf. *CN, przewodnik*, pp. 127–128.

27 “il n’y avait point de logement pour eux Dans l’hôtellerie” (*Selon S’ Luc. II.77*) (!). Sign.: *Norwid 1850*, dim. 153 × 218 mm (cut-out print). BN Ikonogr. Krasieński’s collection inv. No. G.1805; Przesm. G.4405. A few prints also in the National Museum in Kraków (hereafter: MNK) in Czapski’s collection (hereafter: Czaps.)

sketched landscape, is divided into two parts by two vertical wooden pillars, which stand at the entrance to the inn. The young man standing in there, visible in half-length, with a decisive hand movement forbids St. Joseph, who is approaching from the left, to come inside. St. Joseph, with a discreetly marked halo, walks arduously up the hill; his gait and posture show tiredness. A worried Mary is waiting in the background. The right side of the scene occupies the inn's interior, which opens without any wall to the viewer. It is filled with six men of different ages, gathered tightly at the table. Their draped robes are slightly antiquated, even timeless. In the back of this undefined and essentially flat space, there is a young man lifting a bowl high. The whole is completed by such details as a cat in front of a wooden gate, an ivy-entwined boulder, and an amphora at the feet of the feasters.



**Fig. 3.** Cyprian Norwid, *Nie było dla nich miejsca w gospodzie* [*There was no Room for them at the Inn*], 1850, etching, National Library in Poland. Photo National Library in Poland.

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and Czartoryski's collection (hereafter: Czart.) and in MNW. Cf. Józef Ignacy Kraszewski, *Catalogue; CN, wystawa 1946*, p. 116, item 532; *CN, przewodnik*, pp. 229, 321, item 209 (repr. *ibid.*).



The very action in the scene required adopting a few planes, but their variety in the composition is minimal. Norwid grouped the figures with a strongly emphasised musculature (St. Joseph included) almost on one plane; excessively crowded on the right side, they seem packed into the symbolically marked interior of the inn. There are also noticeable disparities in the height and postures of the scene participants; e.g., the figure of the man sitting at the table (the first on the right) is as tall as the person standing at the entrance to the inn. Even if Norwid used a perspective shortcut here, it is not very consistent.

Despite these reservations, the etching analysed here, in comparison with the previous ones, is of a completely different character, both regarding the form and the lines carved. Although, as has been mentioned above, it did not conform to the principles of correct perspective, the characters are not contoured, but plastic. The etching line, performed with a thin needle, is – in contrast to Norwid’s youthful prints – vivid, nervous, and uneven in its thickness and clearly more spontaneous. The typical features of style and line operation, which would become even more distinct in the artist’s later engravings, can already be seen in this engraving technique.

In the autumn of 1850, Norwid created the print *Św. Józef z Dzieciątkiem* [*St. Joseph with the Child*] (Fig. 4), in which he successfully utilised the soft varnish technique.<sup>28</sup> The composition was intended for possible use in one of the yearbooks published in Wielkopolska – through and at the discretion of Jan Koźmian. At the beginning of November, Norwid sent him a metal plate (a negative of his work), asking the addressee to give it to the publisher.<sup>29</sup> At the same time, he suggested that the prints be made on Chinese paper, which is best for this purpose.<sup>30</sup>

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28 Sign.: C. Norwid (CN – interlocking monogram) 1850, dim. 183×115 mm. MNK Czaps., inv. No. 70222 (copy for Koźmianowa), MNK Czart. inv. No. R.9227. Cf.: CN, *wystawa*, 1946, p. 114, item 520; CN, *przewodnik*, pp. 229, 320–321, item 208 (repr. *ibid.*).

29 “W Berlinie (gdzie umieją odbijać) mogą z niej odbić przeszło sto pięćdziesiąt rycin .... Sądzę, że uszanujesz pracę moją i nie zatracisz blachy, która na nic innego się przyda” (DW X, 266, 268) [“In Berlin (where they know how to make copies) they can make more than one hundred and fifty prints from it .... I think you will respect my work, and you won’t lose the plate that is not going to be used for anything else”]. Two prints were attached to the plate, one for Cezary Plater, the other (with a dedication) for Zofia Koźmianowa née Chłapowski. Judging from the number of copies in Polish collections, the plate was not used very intensively. Nothing is known about its further fate, similarly to all the other printing plates of Norwid’s engravings.

30 PWSz VIII, 107–108.



**Fig. 4.** Cyprian Norwid, *Św. Józef z Dzieciątkiem* [St. Joseph with the Child], 1850, soft varnish, National Museum in Poznan. Photo National Museum in Poznan.

The composition, created with a soft, spreading line, this time limited to only two persons, is intimate and calm. The Protector of God is sitting in front of the house on a big rock and, with great concentration, is hewing with an axe the log he is holding in his right hand.<sup>31</sup> A little further in the background, there is infant Jesus, standing in a long shirt, pointing to a cross lying on the ground, loosely made of wood shavings. Here too, the landscape is sketched with just a few lines.

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31 St. Joseph's left-handedness was obviously not intentional; Norwid did not reverse the drawing before transferring it onto the plate.



The third “Parisian” print of the poet is the etching *Wskrzeszenie Łazarza* [*The Resurrection of Lazarus*], which he prepared before his trip to America (29 November 1852; cf. Fig. 5).<sup>32</sup> There is no information on the circumstances of its creation.



**Fig. 5.** Cyprian Norwid, *Wskrzeszenie Łazarza* [*The Resurrection of Lazarus*], 1852, etching, National Museum in Poznan. Photo National Museum in Poznan.

32 Sign.: C. Norwid 1852, dim. 198×154 mm, top corners rounded. MNK Czart., inv. No. R.9230; MNW, Gr.Pol. 5039. Cf. *Cypryana Norwida antologia* repr. on p. 10; *CN, wystawa 1946*, p. 114, item 521; *W kręgu rembrandtowskiej tradycji*, p. 91, item 352; *CN, przewodnik*, pp. 229, 321, item 210 (repr. *ibid.*). The artist made this etching according to his own composition. The first sketch for the figure of Lazarus was supposed to be included in an album once owned by Aleksander Dybowski in Paris – cf. Zenon Przesmycki, *Materiały* sh. 131.

The action of the scene takes place, according to the evangelical description, in a gloomy cave, where a dense crowd of male and female characters is staring beguiled at resurrected Lazarus. Lazarus himself, whom Norwid highlighted as the main person of the drama, is standing on the right side, almost in the foreground, being the centre of attention for those present in the scene and, at the same time, the focus of the composition. Visible from his profile, leaning back a little bit, he is emerging from the darkness as a whitening spot. His whole body is still tightly wrapped in shrouds, with only his face, with a lowered jaw and squinted eyes, revealed. Among the crowd of scared and dumbfounded onlookers, the attention is drawn to two female figures in the foreground, one presented in profile, the other – with excessively muscular arms – visible from behind; perhaps these are Lazarus's sisters, Maria and Marta.

The artist placed the figure of Christ in the very back, against the background of the sky, an irregular fragment of which can be seen through a hole in the cavern. This hole – the only source of light in the composition – simultaneously expands the space around the Saviour's head, owing to which He immediately catches the viewer's attention, even as He significantly recedes into the background.

With all the bulkiness of so many figures, lit up by sun reflections, the inside of the cavern, engulfed by the darkness, has no depth. It is hard to unequivocally state whether this is caused only by some skill deficiency or whether it was the artist's intention, for whom *dramatis personae* are much more important than their surroundings. Here, we can also observe a strong variability in the line quality, which is so specific to Norwid – from a delicate cobweb of crossings in the most illuminated parts to thickened and deeply etched hatchings, especially in the background.

Norwid's stay in America and then in England lasted until December 1854. In the last days of that month – burdened with new experiences and bitterness – the artist found his way again in Paris.<sup>33</sup> Here, he returned to that which he had abandoned but also took up new literary works. He cultivated painting, and, as has already been indicated in the introduction, he seriously thought about

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33 Józef Bogdan Dziekoński was the first to notice at the beginning of 1855 a great internal transformation in Norwid, defining his state in the following words: "A real ruin of what once was: the former pride, former self-confidence obliterated by misfortune and fight" – quoted after: *CN, przewodnik*, p. 78. Norwid created no graphic work in that period; he was absorbed by other different activities, among others, he made drawings for American woodcutters. This problem is referred to in a later part of the article, which deals with Norwid's drawings engraved by other graphic artists.

making graphic arts his main activity. From Paris, he wrote to Adam Potocki in the second half of 1855: “Przyjmuję pomysł opisany w sposób przystępny albo i poetyczny, albo z cytacji autorów – albo z motywów wskazanych. Wykonuję blachę taką w tygodni 3, jeżeli z kilku figur złożona, w 2 mniejszą, w 7 dni mniejszej obszerności rzeczy” (DW XI, 25) [“I accept an idea, described in an accessible manner, or in a poetic form, or from authors’ quotations – or from indicated motifs. I can make such a plate in 3 weeks if it is composed of a few figures, a smaller one in 2 weeks, and things of smaller volume in 7 days”]. From the same source, we know of the “price list” used by the poet for his engravings, e.g., for a composition with a single figure engraved on copperplate, he charged 50 francs; a composition with a larger number of figures was twice as expensive. The artist practised copperplate<sup>34</sup> and steel engraving, and the scope of his works included both illustrations for magazines (e.g., calendars) and religious compositions.<sup>35</sup>

It is unknown whether the addressee of this clearly “advertising” letter would ever want to use the engraving services offered to him by Norwid. Maybe as an incentive, secretly hoping for receiving a specific order,<sup>36</sup> Norwid sent along with the letter to Potocki his latest (1855) print *Modlitwa dziecka* [A Child’s Prayer] (Fig. 6), also known under later titles given to it by the artist: *Mała modląca się* [A Praying Little Girl] and *Parabola o świecy pod korcem* [The Parable of the Candle under a Bushel].<sup>37</sup>

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34 DW XI, 24–26. According to Norwid, a copperplate could yield up to 500 “proper” prints and up to 550 “good” copies.

35 DW XI, 26: “żadnych za małe i niegodne nie poczytując, wszystko albowiem ... może być piękne i sztuki przedmiotem stać się” [“deeming none too small and unworthy, for everything ... can be beautiful and become an object of art”].

36 Norwid explained in his letter that “Specimen załączony tu nie jest tym, co na zamówioną rzecz zrobić mógłbym, bo żal mi czasu (który sprzedaję) marnie trwonić. Czytelny może być wszelako dla każdego, kto Rembrandta albo Ribejry zna ryciny i szkice” (DW XI, 25) [“The specimen attached hereto is not what I could have done for an order, because I despise wasting time (which I am selling). Nevertheless, it can be clear for anyone who knows the drawings and sketches by Rembrandt and Ribera”]. From the above, it might be inferred that: (1) *Modlitwa dziecka* was not created on request; (2) Norwid greatly valued his time; (3) the flattering words addressed to Potocki as a connoisseur of Rembrandt and Ribera were not accidental.

37 Etching, roulette, and dry needle, double signature – on the top right: C. NORWID f. 1855, and at the bottom, on the left vertically: NORWID f. 1855. BN Ikonogr. Przesm.



**Fig. 6.** Cyprian Norwid, *Modlitwa dziecka* [A Child's Prayer], 1855, etching, National Library in Poland. Photo National Library in Poland.

inv. No. G.4408, G.4409 (print in sepia). A copy also in MNK and MNW. Cf. Józef Ignacy Kraszewski. *Catalogue, Pamiętnik wystawy ... ze zb. Dominika Witke-Jeżewskiego*, p. 59, item 558 (*Sceny z życia dziecinnego* [Scenes of a Child's Life]), CN, *wystawa*, 1946, p. 114, item 522 (*Paciorek dziecka* [Child's Prayer]); Roman Zrębowicz and Maria Rubczyńska, *Tradycja rembrandtowska*, p. 25, item 12, repr. 18 (*Paciorek dziecka* [Child's Prayer]); CN, *przewodnik*, pp. 79, 230, 321–322, item 211 (repr. *ibid.*).

*Modlitwa dziecka* is an illustration of the evangelical parable of light,<sup>38</sup> which is additionally confirmed by the quote placed under the upper composition: “On n’allume point une chandelle pour la mettre sous un boisseau.”

Two compositions are put together on one plate. The larger, upper part shows a child deep in prayer, kneeling in front of a wooden bushel, on which there lies a sheet of paper and a little candlestick with a burning candle, lighting up the darkness in the room. The flickering light reaches the floor tiles, the bedding in the background, and around the girl herself, who is portrayed in profile, creating a bright, irregular spot. In the darkness, it is still possible to discern an arcade on the right side of the composition.

The lower scene, smaller, is a vignette that shows busts of eight children over whom a butterfly is flying. Some children have single flowers attached to their hair, and one of them on the right, with a hidden face, is wearing a whole garland on her head.

The upper print is dominated by an atmosphere of silence, concentration and reverie, while the lower one is characterised by harmony and cheerfulness. The etching was developed extremely gently and softly, which was probably a result of using a roulette.

The engraving was printed only in a few copies. This number turned out to be too small because as early as in the autumn of 1868, Norwid complained that he did not have a single copy.<sup>39</sup> In 1858, he had donated the plate to the

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38 “No one lights a lamp and puts it in a place where it will be hidden, or under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, so that those who come in may see the light” – Luke 11: 33 (NIV). The source, from which the theme of etching was taken, is mentioned by Norwid himself in a letter to Kazimierz Władysław Wójcicki from Paris [dated about 27 January 1869] – cf. PWSz IX, 387, item 682. The poet also illustrated other evangelical parables: *Parabola o wielbłądzie w uchu igielnym* [*Parable of the Camel in the Eye of a Needle*], a cycle of six drawings from 1857, acquired by Delfina Potocka, lost in Rogalin (Count Raczyński) or in Warsaw in 1939, and *Parabola o perłach przed trzodą wieprzów* [*Parable of the Pearls in Front of Pigs*] – fate unknown. Cf. PWSz VII, 614, 721.

39 A letter to Bronisław Zaleski from 2 November 1868 – cf. PWSz IX, 376.

publisher Jan Kazimierz Wilczyński, which he later regretted.<sup>40</sup> Wilczyński, in turn, gave it as a present to Edward Rastawiecki, who – according to Aleksander Lesser – was supposed to frame it behind the glass.<sup>41</sup> The traces of the plate are lost in Warsaw; its further fate remains unknown; it was probably lost.

Two prints from 1856, also inspired by the New Testament, are among the poet's greatest rarities. These are: *Chrystus na krzyżu* [*Christ on the Cross*] (Fig. 7) and the lithography *Zwiastowanie pasterzom* [*Annunciation to the Shepherds*] (Fig. 8).

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40 “zrobiłem dzieciństwo, iż darowałem blachę rytą Chińczykowi, to jest W[ielmożne] mu Wilczyńskiemu, edytorowi *Album Wileńskiego*” (cf. a letter to Kazimierz Władysław Wójcicki [dated around 27 January 1869], PWSz IX, 387) [“I made a childish mistake that I gave the engraved plate to the Chinese man, that is The Honourable Wilczyński, the editor of the *Vilnius Album*”].

41 It is intriguing why Edward Rastawiecki did not say a word about this object in his *Słownik*. At other times, he often published information known to him on the fate of copperplates (e.g. from Konstanty Tyszkiewicz's Lahoyok collections – cf. pp. 14, 160–161, 193, 218 and others; see also pp. 122, 303–304), as well as on those objects (engravings, memorabilia, etc.) which were part of his collection (*among others*, on pp. 52, 69, 116, 136, 143, 181–182, 192, 245). Norwid hoped that Rastawiecki, as a connoisseur and collector, would make further prints from the plates, but he was greatly disappointed, which he expressed in bitter words: “blacha jest w Warszawie, podobno za szkłem u barona Rastawieckiego schowana, i tam zardzewieje i zgnije w tym waszym Telimeny kraju” (a letter to Bronisław Zaleski from 2 November 1868, PWSz IX, 376) [“the plate is in Warsaw, supposedly hidden behind the glass at Baron Rastawiecki's residence, and it will rust and rot in this Telimena's country of yours”]. In another place, he wrote: “podobno że Baron blachę bez odbicia rycin zachował. To bardzo po a m a t o r s k u !! – wyznaję! – ale blacha się zniszczy rdzą” (a letter to Kazimierz Władysław Wójcicki [dated around 27 January 1869], PWSz IX, 387) [“reportedly the Baron has kept the plate without making any print. That's very a m a t e u r i s h !! – I confess! – but the plate will be destroyed by rust”]. In his [*Autobiografia artystyczna*] [*Artistic Autobiography*] he responded briefly: “blacha oryginalna jest podobno w zbiorze b[aron]a Rastawieckiego lub zaginęła w Polsce” (PWSz VI, 559) [“the original plate is reportedly in Baron Rastawiecki's collection or has been lost in Poland”].





**Fig. 7.** Cyprian Norwid, *Chrystus na krzyżu* [Christ on the Cross], 1856, etching, Scientific Library of the Polish Academy of Art and Sciences and the Polish Academy of Sciences. Photo Scientific Library.



**Fig. 8.** Cyprian Norwid, *Zwiastowanie pasterzom* [Annunciation to the Shepherds], 1856, lithograph, private collection. Photo Edyta Chlebowska.

The former, donated by the artist to Teofil Lenartowicz, with appropriate dedication,<sup>42</sup> precisely illustrates the passage from John 19: 28–29, i.e., the moment when Christ on the cross uttered the words I am thirsty.”

The figure of the Saviour, with a strongly emphasised musculature, presented straight, is leaning to the right, towards the vinegar-soaked sponge served to Him on the reed by a Roman soldier. On the left, there is St John the Evangelist, supporting the fainting Mother of God. The sky, visible in the background, is marked with sketchy bundles of diagonal lines and fragmentary hatching, irregularly filling the rectangular field.

The first lithography *Zwiastowanie pasterzom* [*Annunciation to the Shepherds*], made with pen and ink on Christmas Day at Polikarp Gumiński's office in Paris, is known only from two prints.<sup>43</sup>

A group of four young shepherds are visited by an angel with a palm frond in his hand. Two of them are kneeling, and the other two are standing, staring

42 Sign.: C. Norwid f. 1856, dim. 104 × 70 mm, print pasted into Teofil Lenartowicz's album *Umarli i żywi* [*The Dead and the Living*] – PAN Library in Kraków, MS 2029, sh. 21. Cf. *CN, przewodnik*, pp. 230, 322, item 212 (repr. *ibid.*). The second copy, printed in sepia on thick paper, used to be kept in the presently lost personal album owned by Norwid's cousin, Aleksander Dybowski, in Paris – cf. Zenon Przesmycki, *Materiały*, sh. 3.

43 Sign. in the upper right corner: “W dzień Bożego Naro<sup>da</sup> 1856 r. u Gumińskiego rysował C. Norwid” [On the Christmas Day 1856, at Gumiński's drawn by C. Norwid]. Lithography in the Prussian blue tone, on yellow tint, cream paper with filigree, dim. 204 × 188 mm. Historical Museum of the Capital City of Warsaw, Gab. Fig. inv. No. 1073. Verso: the stamp “Musée Polonais Château Rapperswil Suisse.” In the collection of the Historical Museum since the 1950s. I would like to thank Dr Irena Tessaro-Kosimowa for giving me information about this object. The second copy in the PAN Kórnik Library. Gab. Fig. inv. No. A. LV. 4000.

Polikarp Gumiński (1820–1907), painter, draughtsman, and lithographer, settled in Paris from 1855. There, he was first associated with the publishing house (perhaps lithographic house?) of Abbot Migne, then he worked independently, painting and drawing historical compositions. He returned to Poland at the beginning of 1870. For more details on him, see Zbigniew Nowak, “Gumiński Polikarp,” in: *Słownik artystów polskich i obcych w Polsce działających. Malarze, rzeźbiarze, graficy*, ed. Jolanta Maurin-Białostocka et al., Vol. 2 (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1975), pp. 515–516. Norwid's term “u Gumińskiego” [at Gumiński's] probably refers to Migne's facility, maybe later owned by Gumiński.

It is not excluded that the lithography is identical with a pen and ink drawing mentioned by J.W. Gomulicki in the register of Norwid's artistic works from 1856 under the same title – cf. *CN, przewodnik*, p. 230.



with admiration at the miraculous phenomenon. In the background, among the sheep, which are dispersing in fear, another sketched shepherd is spreading his hands helplessly.

In 1857, Norwid, who was constantly struggling with financial problems (his earnings from artistic works, which were very diverse, were – as we know – not sufficient to earn him a living), made two versions of the etching *Na cmentarzu* [*In the Graveyard*], also known as *Alleluja* [*Hallelujah*].

In the composition mentioned above, the artist tried to see, in his own words, “czyli podobna jest okazać obliczem, jako pierwsza trąba Zmartwychwstania czyni, iż ciało w ducha, a duch powraca w ciało” [“so it is possible to show on the face, like the first trumpet of the Resurrection does, that the flesh returns into the spirit and the spirit into the flesh”].<sup>44</sup> This allegorical composition was also interpreted symbolically as the resurrection of Poland.<sup>45</sup>

The scene depicts an old cemetery with graves irregularly scattered among the ruins of an ancient temple, with a row of columns still bearing cornices and a triangular pediment. In the foreground, on the left side, a young girl is rising from the tomb, shown in half-length, facing three-quarters to the right. Her lips are slightly open as if in a smile, her eyelids are half-closed, and her right hand seems to be supporting the folds of her dress.

This scheme remains the same in both versions, but the details are different. Version I (Fig. 9), drawn very gently with a thin needle and softened in some parts with a roulette, gives the impression of being bathed in bright light.<sup>46</sup> A tiny silhouette of a trumpeting angel is hovering above. Version II (Fig. 10), described in general terms by Józef Ignacy Kraszewski,<sup>47</sup> was underpainted with watercolour, which gave it a different quality. It is enriched with a number of details, including: much larger figures of three angels playing trumpets above;

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44 A short letter to Józef Ignacy Kraszewski written from Paris in 1863(?), pasted on the back of Norwid’s etching *Alleluja* [*Hallelujah*], sent to the writer in Version II (DW XII, 203, item 457).

45 *CN, przewodnik*, p. 322, item 213.

46 Etching, roulette, dry needle, sign.: *Cyprian Norwid 1857*, dim. 243 × 162 mm. BN Ikonogr. Przesm. inv. No. G.4413 (print in sepia). Unfortunately, the print reproduction presented here lost the subtlety of the line caused by too strong a contrast. Cf. *CN, wystawa 1946*, p. 115, item 523, repr. Plate 3; Zrębowski and Rubczyńska, *Tradycja rembrandtowska*, p. 25, item 126; *CN, przewodnik*, pp. 231, 322, item 213 (repr. *ibid.*).

47 “une figure de mort rescuscitant du tombeau, anges sonnans des trompètes en haut” – Kraszewski, *Catalogue*. Sign.: *Cyprian Norwid 1857*, dim. 290 × 160 mm (comp.). Cf. *CN, przewodnik*, pp. 231, 322, item 214 (repr. *ibid.*).

crosses among the graves; the inscription “Alleluja” [Hallelujah] in the middle on a stone frame; a drapery flowing from the girl’s left shoulder; flowering plants in the foreground. The print in the second version, which in the 1860s was in the possession of Kraszewski, was already unique because Norwid – apparently dissatisfied with the execution of the task, which he “considered necessary to empirically explore” – destroyed the plate.<sup>48</sup> In addition, this print has also been lost; the only thing that gives us a clue about it is a photograph that has been luckily preserved in Zenon Przesmycki’s collection.<sup>49</sup>



**Fig. 9.** Cyprian Norwid, *Alleluja*, Version I, 1857, etching, National Library in Poland. Photo National Library in Poland.

48 Cf. A short letter to Kraszewski (see footnote 46); CN, *przewodnik*, as Z. Przesmycki claims – contrary to Kraszewski – that there is yet another print of this version on thick, matt paper, which had once been in Aleksander Dybowski’s album – cf. Przesmycki, *Materiały* sh. 467. It is interesting that this researcher mentions Version II of *Alleluja* [Hallelujah] in J.W. Gomulicki’s collections in Warsaw – *Materiały*, sh. 142 and 146.

49 BN Ikonogr. inv. No. F.169.



**Fig. 10.** Cyprian Norwid, *Alleluja*, Version II, 1857, etching, National Museum in Warsaw. Photo Piotr Ligier.

In August 1857, Jan Kazimierz Wilczyński, a well-known Parisian editor, turned to Norwid with a proposal to make lithographs of a series of satirical drawings *Łapigrosz* [*The Money-grubber*] (1845) by Artur Bartels, a popular amateur draughtsman.<sup>50</sup> Wilczyński was about to publish in *Lemercier* another issue of the sixth series of the famous *Album de Wilna*, which was to include Bartels's drawings.

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<sup>50</sup> A different form of the name is Barthels (1818–1885), also a singer and satirist. Apart from *Łapigrosz*, he created two other series of satirical drawings: *Pan Atanazy Skorupa* and *Pan Eugeniusz*. For more information, see *Słownik artystów polskich*, Vol. 1 (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1971), pp. 94–95 (J. Wiercińska). In 1833, Bartels was a senior schoolmate of Norwid in the Provincial Warsaw Grammar School at Krakowskie Przedmieście – cf. *CN, przewodnik*, p. 31.

The arrangements with Norwid on this matter were not going smoothly, as the editor openly complained.<sup>51</sup> The problem was not financial issues (Wilczyński agreed to the price quoted by the poet), but the subject matter itself – Norwid was clearly against producing lithographs of someone else’s drawings, especially when these were not the best.<sup>52</sup> Eventually, as a result of intense persuasion on the part of the publisher, he accepted the proposal. However, knowing the poet’s reluctance to copy foreign patterns slavishly, it can be assumed with great likelihood that Norwid’s participation was not limited to simply copying Bartels’s sketches. They were either corrected by him or completely changed. In the absence of original drawings (prototypes), it is difficult to tell where Bartels’s invention ends, and Norwid’s creativity begins.

The album *Łapigrosz. Szkice obyczajowe*<sup>53</sup> [*The Money-grubber. Moral Sketches*] consists of fifteen lithographic plates with numerous explanatory comments and Arabic numerals in the upper right corner of the plates. Five of

- 51 In a letter to Józef Ignacy Kraszewski from Paris, J.K. Wilczyński wrote shortly before 16 August 1857: “It is very difficult to do business with the good-natured Norwid .... It is a pity that such a noble and honest man has his own delusions and, adding to this, he is extremely sensitive” (cf. PWSz XI, 478, 577).
- 52 The poet was to say to Wilczyński that “nie może cudzych rysunków rytować ani litografować, że własnego pomysłu przedmioty chętnie przyjmie wykonanie” [“he could not produce engravings or lithographs of other people’s drawings, that he would gladly accept the execution of objects based on his own ideas”] – cf. PWSz XI, 478. Norwid’s attitude was once again confirmed in his later letter (December 1871 – January 1872), written from Paris to Bronisław Zaleski: “Nie robię żadnej ścisłej kopii – to jest: mogę przyjąć dany tekst, abrys ogólny, *motif*, ale robię tylko moją kompozycję” (PWSz IX, 500) [“I do not do any strict copy – that is: I can accept a given text, general outline, *motif*, but I only do my composition”]. And to Bartels himself, referring to his drawings *Łapigrosz*, Norwid wrote on 1 September 1 1875: “Nie przeto jednak raz W[ielmoż]ny Wilczyński uciekał się do mnie z rysunkami Twymi” (PWSz X, 50) [“But it is not for this reason that once the Honourable Wilczyński had come to me concerning your drawings”].
- 53 Artur Bartels. *Łapigrosz. Szkice obyczajowe*, drawing and text explanation by ... (Paris, 1858). Published by J.K. Wilczyński. Imprimerie Lemercier. Folio oblong, 1 unnumb. p., 15 lit. tab. *Album de Wilna*, 6<sup>e</sup> Série, N<sup>o</sup> 3. BN Ikonogr. inv. No. A.2852/G.XIX/III–105, A.2853/G.XIX/III–106. Cf.: *Cypryana Norwida anthologja*, repr. on p. 12 (Table 13); *CN, wystawa 1946*, p. 118, item 539; Gomulicki, *Liryka i druk*, p. 28, item 39; *CN, przewodnik*, pp. 231, 248, item 39; p. 329, item 228, repr. ibid. (Table 13).

these plates are signed by Norwid,<sup>54</sup> and the remaining ones do not bear any signature.<sup>55</sup>

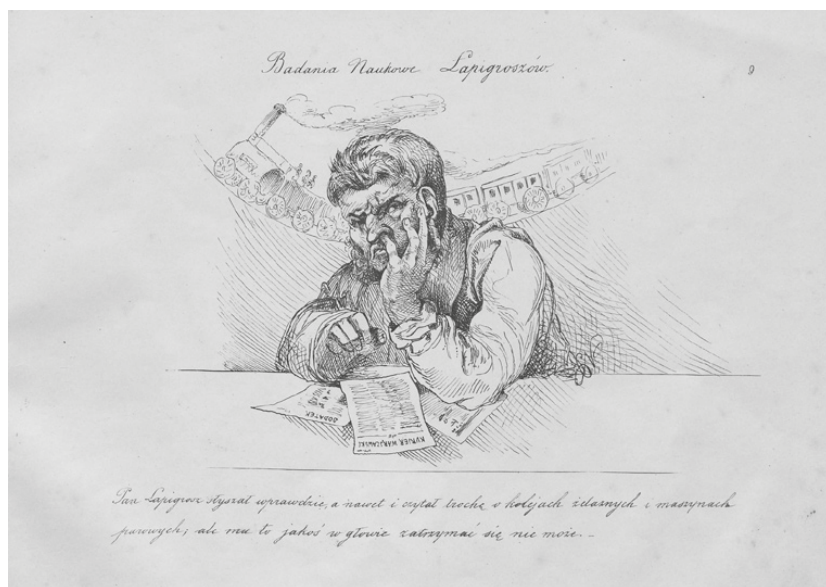
The satirical and humorous history of the Money-grubber, a typical rural *nouveau riche*, was presented in nearly fifty drawings, all of which are exclusively genre scenes and present so-called characteristic types, all caricaturised. The whole is completed by corresponding headlines and much more extensive explanatory commentaries, maintained in the tone of scathing satire.

For example, the composition entitled *Badania Naukowe Łapigroszów* [*Money-grubbers' Scientific Research*] (Plate 9) presents a man with a thoughtless look, sitting at a table and reading periodicals (see Fig. 11). Supported on his left hand, he is picking his nose. In the background, a steam locomotive is pulling little cars. Commentary: “Pan Łapigrosz słyszał wprawdzie, a nawet i czytał trochę o kolejach żelaznych i maszynach parowych; ale mu to jakoś w głowie zatrzymać się nie może” [“Although Mr. Money-grubber heard, and even read a little bit about iron railways and steam machines; it somehow can't stick in his head”]. In another lithography, depicting *Łapigrosze na kontraktach* [*The Money-grubbers on Contracts*] (Plate 13), four male characters are distinctively gesticulating, preoccupied with business matters. It is the same Money-grubber in different situations: “gdy jest łagodnym względem swego Debitora” [“when he is lenient towards his Debtor”], “gdy płaci pieniądze i gdy bierze pieniądze” [“when he pays the money and takes the money”].

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54 These are: Table 2. *Łapigrosze* [*The Money-grubber*], sign.: CN: (interlocking monogram); Table 4. *Małżonki Łapigroszów* [*Money-grubbers' Wives*], sign.: CNorwid; Table 8. *Wiadomości Naukowe Łapigroszów* [*Money-grubbers' Scientific News*], sign.: CN: (interlocking monogram) f.; Table 9. *Badania Naukowe Łapigroszów* [*Money-grubbers' Scientific Research*], sign.: sign.: CN: (interlocking monogram); Table 13. *Łapigrosze na kontraktach* [*The Money-grubbers on contracts*], sign.: CNorwid (CN – interlocking monogram).

55 Table 3. *Pochodzenie Łapigroszów* [*The Origin of the Money-grubbers*]; Table 5. *Potomstwo Łapigroszów* [*Money-grubbers' Progeny*]; Table 6. *Dwór Łapigroszów* [*Money-grubbers' Court*]; Table 7. *Dygnitarze Dworu Łapigroszów* [*Dignitaries of the Money-grubbers' Court*]; Table 10. *Szczególne upodobania Łapigroszów* [*Money-grubbers' Special Predilections*]; Table 11. *Filantropia Łapigroszów* [*Money-grubbers' Philanthropy*]; Table 12. *Podróż Łapigroszów na Kontrakta* [*Money-grubbers' Trip on Contracts*]; Table 14. *Zabawy Łapigroszów* [*Money-grubbers' Games*]; Table 15, *Epilog* [*Epilogue*].



**Fig. 11.** Cyprian Norwid, *Badania Naukowe Łapigroszów* [*Money-grubbers' Scientific Research*], 1857, lithograph, National Library in Poland. Photo National Library in Poland.

In a similar tone, the graphic artist ridicules the Money-grubbers' children, their servants, and the “dignitaries” commanding the “court,” i.e., the economist and his wife. The satire is also levelled at the everyday life of the *nouveau riches*, i.e., at their tastes, pastimes, travels, philanthropic activities, etc.

In 1861, two poems by Teofil Lenartowicz, entitled *Zachwycenie i Błogosławiona* [*Delight and the Blessed*], illustrated by Antoni Zaleski, were published in Poznań by Jan Konstanty Żupański's bookshop. The frontispiece for this publishing house was created a year earlier by Norwid, according to the drawing of the aforementioned Zaleski (Fig. 12).





**Fig. 12.** Cyprian Norwid, *Zachwycenie i Błogosławiona* [*Delight and the Blessed*], 1861, steel engraving, National Library in Poland. Photo National Library in Poland.

This is a static, harmonious, and symmetrical composition.<sup>56</sup> The steel engraving is divided into two spheres, the lower – earthly – and the upper – heavenly. The lower part is a picture of a Polish village. There are shepherds, a

<sup>56</sup> Sign. in the bottom left corner: *AZaleski* (AZ – interlocking monogram) 1857, at the bottom, under the composition: *AZaleski del CN dla AZ* (AZ – interlocking monogram) 1860, dim. 250 × 175 mm, BN Ikonogr. Przesm. inv. No. G.4417. Cf.: *CN, wystawa* 1946, p. 118, item 540; Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki, *Liryka i druk*, p. 28, item 40; *CN, przewodnik*, pp. 231, 248, item 40; p. 330, item 229 (repr. *ibid.*).

cow drinking from the river, grazing geese, a leaning woman picking berries into a pitcher, and two mowers entering the forest. On the right side, there is a peasant hut, a branched willow, and a tall roadside cross. In the upper part, in the middle, there is an archangel sitting on a cloud with a sword and scales in his hands, presented in a hieratic pose. A little lower, on his sides, on the left, an angel is guiding a soul, and on the right, St Peter sits with his keys. The titles of the poems *Zachwycenie i Błogosławiona* are arranged semi-circularly in a decorative arcade inscription.

This frontispiece lacks deeper quality contrasts – there is certain greyness, and the tonality is flat. This results from the specificity of the steel plate, which is much harder and requires more effort in engraving than copper-plate. Almost the entire background – irregularly interrupted by white streaks of light – was filled here with dry, schematic ribbing obtained with the so-called multiple burin. The characters themselves in both spheres are engraved more freely.

This is the only known example of Norwid's mastering the technique of steel engraving. In his later works, he did not return to it, remaining faithful to his favourite etching and lithography.

Probably in the 1860s, Norwid made a unique, unsigned lithograph painted in watercolour,<sup>57</sup> which depicts an eagle standing on a rock, with its wings lowered and beak open, its head facing to the right (Fig. 13). This print is, to some extent, related to Norwid's watercolour *Biały orzeł* [White Eagle] (Fig. 14),<sup>58</sup> although the details of the composition are different in the print and in the drawing.

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57 Dim. 116 × 59 mm. BN Ikonogr. Przesm. inv. No. G.14449.

58 Watercolour underpainted with pen and ink–sepia, sign.: *Norwid 186...* dim. 108 × 62 mm. BN Ikonogr. Przesm. inv. No. Fig. 841. Cf. *CN, wystawa 1946*, p. 112, item 511.





**Fig. 13.** Cyprian Norwid, *Orzeł* [*Eagle*], lithograph, National Library in Poland. Photo National Library in Poland.



**Fig. 14.** Cyprian Norwid, *Biały orzeł* [*White Eagle*], watercolour, National Library in Poland. Photo National Library in Poland.

The result of Norwid's artistic collaboration in 1861 with the Parisian lithographic establishment Saint-Aubin is three pen and ink lithographs known under the titles: *Echo ruin* [*Echo of the Ruins*], *Scherzo*, and *Solo* (also called *Melancholia* [*Melancholy*]). Although the poet describes his works as “rysunki zatrzymujące się na granicy poważnej karykatury” [“drawings that are on the verge of serious caricature”],<sup>59</sup> their content, which is ambiguous and implies various interpretations, goes far beyond this kind of art.

*L'Écho des Ruines* (Fig. 15)<sup>60</sup> depicts the bust of a man, facing to the right. His face, with its sharp, bird-like features, has something predatory, even demonic about it. His inquiring gaze is directed somewhere upwards as if he is looking for something. In front of the man, there are manuscripts on which he is resting both hands; a goose feather seems to be falling out from his left hand. The landscape stretching into the distance is extinct and gloomy. The visible ruins form a meaningful inscription NEMESIS, i.e., Destiny. This symbolic composition, full of obliqueness, evokes an irritating and disturbing mood. Many questions arise. For example, it is not clear what these manuscripts lie on (table? desktop?). Is the goose feather sliding out of the man's hand, or is he only touching it with his fingertips? And finally, who is this man: “the echo of the ruins?” Destiny?



**Fig. 15.** Cyprian Norwid, *L'Écho des Ruines*, 1861, lithograph, National Library in Poland. Photo National Library in Poland.

59 [Autobiografia artystyczna] [Artistic Autobiography] – see PWsz VI, 558.

60 Sign.: 1861 CN (interlocking monogram), Lith. S' Aubin, Pas. Verdeau 30, dim. 140 × 195 mm (composition + inscription). BN lkonogr. Przesm. inv. No. G.4418. Cf.: *Cypryana Norwida antologia*, repr. on p. 12; CN, *wystawa* 1946, p. 115, item 524; *Romantyzm i romantyczność*, item 151; CN, *przewodnik*, pp. 95, 231, 323, item 216 (repr. *ibid.*).

The second lithograph is entitled *Scherzo* (Fig. 16),<sup>61</sup> which means “joke.” It depicts six augurs (priests who tell fortune from the flight and calls of birds) in slightly antiquated robes. Gathered into two groups, they are preoccupied with conversation. All the fortunetellers’ faces are ugly caricatures and additionally twisted into grimaces. The pronounced gestures testify to a lively discussion; one of its participants is even biting his fingertips. In the background, there is a paper screen with a drawing of three ducks; next to it – as if on a cornice – there is a skull among laurel branches and an hourglass, the symbols of Vanitas, or Passing.



**Fig. 16.** Cyprian Norwid, *Scherzo*, 1861, lithograph, National Library in Poland. Photo National Library in Poland.

What or who did Norwid want to mock? Was he only mocking the Roman priests themselves, who specialised in fortunetelling, or the blind faith of people in natural phenomena that are unfamiliar to them? Or is it a joke about the eternally complex Polish emigration? No one knows.

61 In the bottom right corner, Norwid’s explanation: “Augure, sorte de divination par l’inspection du vol des oiseaux, par leur chant & par la maniere dont ils mangeroient & c.” Sign.: CNorwid (CN – interlocking monogram) 1861 f, *Lith. Saint Aubin Paris*, dim. 202 × 80 mm (composition + inscription). BN Ikonogr. Przesm. inv. No. G.4422. Cf.: CN, *wystawa* 1946, p. 115, item 525; CN, *przewodnik*, pp. 95, 231, 322–323, item 215 (repr. *ibid.*).

However, the most hidden content can be found in the third lithograph – *Solo* or *Melancholia* [*Melancholy*] (Fig. 17).<sup>62</sup> The composition itself is said to have its origin in an anonymous, today unknown drawing by some French artist.<sup>63</sup> In any case, in October 1860, Norwid made an unspecified “obraz pędzla mojego Melancholiję przedstawiający” [“painting depicting Melancholy”],<sup>64</sup> which perhaps was an outline for his later engraving. Its title is undoubtedly linked to Albrecht Dürer’s famous copperplate print, although Norwid’s work remains entirely separate. It can be described briefly: a woman against the background of the landscape. However, the surprising, if not surreal, arsenal of means used here by the artist indeed evoke in the viewer the impression of sadness, melancholy, and abandonment.



**Fig. 17.** Cyprian Norwid, *Solo* or *Melancholia* [*Melancholy*], 1861, lithograph, National Library in Poland. Photo National Library in Poland.

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- 62 Sign.: CNorwid (CN – interlocking monogram) f. 1861, Lith. Saint Aubin Pass. Verdeau 33, dim. 215 × 265 mm (composition + inscription). BN Ikonogr. Przesm. inv. No. G.4419, G.4420, G.4421 (copy in watercolour, print avant la lettre – without title and publishing address). Cf.: CN, *wystawa* 1946, p. 115, item 526; *Romantyzm i romantyczność*, item 152; CN, *przewodnik*, pp. 93, 95, 231, 323, item 217 (repr. *ibid.*).
- 63 His reproduction was in the missing personal artistic album of the poet, which once belonged to his cousin, Aleksander Dybowski – cf. CN, *przewodnik*, p. 323, item 217.
- 64 He promised to send it to Magdalena Łuszczewska. See a letter to her sent from Paris [dated around 18 October 1860]. DW XI, 457–459.

A very important thing is the landscape showing all the power of unbridled nature – a forest with a huge tree, fallen over the pits, with a body of water close to it – all this lit by the large disc of the rising (or setting) sun. Against the background of this wild and uninhabited landscape, musical instruments are arranged in a certain order; there are notes on chairs and stands. One gets the impression that the musicians have abandoned the orchestra, leaving it to its fate. And finally, there is the foreground, which is occupied by one single female character with her hair loose, wrapped in draperies and deep in thought. She is completely lonely, like “owa / Czysta boru, co w głuchej sosen kolumnadzie / Błądzi niby martwica – albo jak królowa / Zakłęta” [“this / Silence of woods, which in a deaf colonnade of pine trees / Wanders about like necrosis – or like a queen / Enchanted”].<sup>65</sup> Contrary to Dürer’s *Melancholy*, she is accompanied by no living creature, neither putto nor dog. Although stillness and silence dominate, there is a sense of inner tension. The extinct orchestra in the wilderness – certainly placed there by Norwid, not by coincidence – is unsettling. Maybe the examined lithography is an illustration of Boethius’s doctrine about heavenly and human music,<sup>66</sup> or maybe it refers to music in general?<sup>67</sup> After all, the title *Solo* is itself a musical term.

The content of this lithograph, which is still not entirely clear even today, probably evoked some “dissident” connotations since it drew the attention of the tsarist censorship, which suspected some hidden patriotic symbolism. Proof of that may be the fact that a larger number of copies of *Melancholia*, sent by the artist from Paris at the end of November 1861 to Ksawier Norwid, his brother, was confiscated by the censors and, even worse, it was forbidden – under pain of the most severe penalties – not only to sell this drawing publicly but even to

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65 Norwid’s poem, “Wieczór w pustkach. (Fantazja)” (PWsz I, 29) [“An Evening in Wilderness. (Fantasy)”].

66 “There are three types of music. The first is the music of the universe (*musica universalis*), the second is human, the third is based on certain instruments. What is the music of the universe is best demonstrated by everything that is in the sky, in the arrangement of the elements or in the revolutions of spheres. And the music that is in a person is understood by everyone who descends into the depths of oneself” – quoted after Władysław Tatarkiewicz, *Estetyka średniowieczna* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1962), p. 105.

67 “Music in a general, objective sense, refers to, as it were everything, to God and creatures, corporeal and non-corporeal, heavenly and human, to theoretical and practical sciences” – Jacques de Liège, *Speculum musicae* – cit. after: Tatarkiewicz, *Estetyka średniowieczna*, p. 159.

distribute it privately.<sup>68</sup> In mid-December 1861, in Paris, Norwid donated the remaining 100 prints (including perhaps the returns from the aforementioned parcel) to the Czartoryski family for a “Polish fair,” organised by the wife of Prince Adam Czartoryski at Hotel Lambert for charity purposes.<sup>69</sup>

Norwid rarely referred in his prints to specific historical figures. One of the exceptions was an etching, made in 1863 in two versions, depicting Ludovico Sforza (1452–1508), the Duke of Milan, who, due to his swarthy complexion, was called “Il Moro” (Moor). Ludovico was presented as a prisoner of Louis XII at Loches Castle, where he died.<sup>70</sup> Thus the titles of both versions: *Sforza w więzieniu* [*Sforza in Prison*] (also called *Le Prisonnier*) and *Męczennik* [*The Martyr*] (*Le Martyr*).

Version I (Fig. 18)<sup>71</sup> – *Sforza w więzieniu* (ca. 1863) – is a half-length portrait of the duke,<sup>72</sup> facing three-quarters to the right. With his left hand, he seems to be moving ruffled hair off his forehead and with his right hand – with bony

- 68 A letter to Marian Sokołowski [from 7 December 1861] (DW XI, 518). A confused Ksawery Norwid wrote to his brother on 30 November 1861: “The censorship does not want to give me your engraving with the inscription *Solo* unless I make a declaration, under the strictest personal liability, that I will keep it for myself, and I will not sell or give this drawing away. I asked the artists, your friends, what the meaning of this drawing was, in which nothing really can be found against the local regulations. I was told that it meant *Loneliness*, which the word *Solo* actually confirms” – see PWSz VIII, 575–576. The further fate of this parcel is unknown; it might have returned to Paris.
- 69 A letter to Władysław Czartoryski [dated mid-December 1861] (DW XI, 523). See also *CN, przewodnik*, pp. 93, 323, item 217.
- 70 Louis XII, claiming the right to Milan, conquered the duchy in 1499 and expelled Sforza. Ludovico captured Milan twice, the second time with the help of the Swiss, who committed treason. The duke was captured and sent back to France. He was the patron of Leonardo da Vinci and Donato Bramante.
- 71 Sign.: C. Norwid, dim. 92 × 75 mm (composition). Cf. *CN, przewodnik*, pp. 232, 323–324, item 218 (repr. *ibid.*).
- 72 This is not Norwid’s imagined image of Sforza, because his features bear certain resemblance to a miniature portrait of the duke in the armour, painted in profile by an anonymous author (maybe Ambrogio de Predis?), stored in Biblioteca Trivulziana in Milan. Cf. M.A. Gukovskij, *Leonardo da Vinci. Tvorčeskaja biografija*. Moscow 1967, p. 69, repr. Fig. 30. Cf. also an anonymous painting, the so-called *Pala Sforzesca* (1495), in which Ludovico II Moro, with his family, is presented to the Madonna and the Child (Brera Gallery in Milan) – cf. Kenneth Clark. *Leonardo da Vinci* (Warszawa: Arkady, 1964), p. 57. It is also known that during the first years of his stay in Milan, Leonardo painted a portrait of Ludovico, which has not been preserved – see Clark, *Leonardo da Vinci*, p. 46.



fingers – he seems to be holding the folds of the sketched robes. On the left forearm, there is a hoop from which handcuffs are hanging. The long hair is in disarray, the figure has grimly knitted brows over expressive eyes, while the lips are distorted in a painful grimace. The prison cell is symbolised by a small, barred window in the background. The unique copy of this etching was included in Norwid's personal artistic album and went missing after Aleksander Dybowski's death.<sup>73</sup> Today, we know it only from the photograph preserved in Zenon Przesmycki's collection.<sup>74</sup>



**Fig. 18.** Cyprian Norwid, *Sforza w więzieniu* [*Sforza in Prison*], Version I, 1863, lost etching. Photo in National Library in Poland.

73 CN, *przewodnik*, pp. 149, 324, item 218. It was a print in brown tonality on white, thick paper, dim. 104 × 88 mm. As Z. Przesmycki stated, “there are no signatures on the etching or any attributes on this copy. In the right corner from the viewer’s perspective – some indistinct marks of something scratched out. At the bottom in the middle, there is also a trace that resembles a scratched signature. Below the picture, to the left of the viewer, Norwid’s known embossed stamp: C. Norwid – overlapping in the upper edge with the first frame of the etching.” See Zenon Przesmycki, *Materiały*, sh. 7.

74 BN Ikonogr. inv. No. F.150, F.359.

Version II, titled *Męczennik* (Fig. 19),<sup>75</sup> is more precisely developed than the previous one but less expressive. Ludovico's face has a totally different expression, and it seems fuller, not so wretched; the hairstyle seems to be carefully arranged; the hoop with the chain has disappeared from the left forearm. The robes are marked more clearly, and so is the window in the background. Moreover, in the upper right corner of the composition, in the background, there is a decorative, semi-circular inscription, MARTYR, and the interlocking monogram XP. The thin, nervous line, sometimes etched more strongly, is additionally retouched with a dry needle.



**Fig. 19.** Cyprian Norwid, *Sforza w więzieniu* [*Sforza in Prison*] titled *Męczennik* [*The Martyr*], Version II, 1863, etching, National Museum in Warsaw. Photo Piotr Ligier.

75 Sign: C. Norwid f. 1863, dim. 94 × 86 (composition). MNW, Gr.Pol.5076 (gift by D. Witke-Jeżewski), Gr. Pol.1879, Gr.Pol.5075 (gift by K. Woźnicki). Cf.: CN, *wystawa* 1946, pp. 115–116, item 528; *W kręgu rembrandtowskiej tradycji*, p. 92, item 354; CN, *przewodnik*, pp. 232, 324, item 219 (repr. *ibid.*). In June 1872 Norwid no longer had a single printed copy of *Męczennik* and had to buy it in the editorial office of *L'Artiste* – cf. a letter to Bronisław Zaleski from [12] June 1872 (PWsz IX, 512, item 809).



From the same year (1863) comes *Pythia* (Fig. 20), an etching with a theme taken from antiquity.<sup>76</sup> The Pythia of Delphi, a priestess of the god Apollo, presented in the composition, seems to be in ecstasy. Depicted half-length, she is raising her right hand above her head; the widely spaced bony fingers of the left hand are somewhat reminiscent of claws. Her hair is falling in tresses on her shoulders; the curly draperies indicate a violent movement. Pythia's face is also expressive – it is elongated, with protruding cheekbones, with sharply outlined eyebrows and eyes raised upwards, and lips open as if in a cry. The dark background is not really defined; only from the upper right corner does a beam of light fall on the priestess, bringing out her face and hands from the darkness. In the upper left corner, hidden in the shade, there is a decorative inscription: Pythja. The dense hatching running in different directions results in soft, velvety spots. Some parts of the etching are not even touched by the needle (fragments of both hands, the top of the left cheek), creating small white fields that focus the light.



**Fig. 20.** Cyprian Norwid, *Pythia*, 1863, etching, National Museum in Warsaw. Photo Piotr Ligier.

76 Sign.: C. Norwid f. 1863 [3], dim. 126 × 113 mm. MNW, Gr.Pol.5074 (gift by D. Witke-Jeżewski), Gr. Pol. 1878 and Gr.Pol.5073 (both a gift by K. Woźnicki). Cf.: *CN, wystawa* 1946, p. 115, item 527; *W kręgu rembrandtowskiej tradycji*, p. 91, item 353; *CN, przewodnik*, pp. 232, 325, item 220 (repr. *ibid.*). In BN Ikonogr. Przesm. there is a photograph of this print – inv. No. F.360.

*Sybilla* [*Sibyl*] (Fig. 21), perhaps depicting the most famous one, the Cumaean Sibyl,<sup>77</sup> is maintained in a similar style. Norwid's signed drawing to this etching (made with pen and ink, lightly washed with sepia) was made earlier, in 1856.<sup>78</sup> The oracle, depicted in the form of an old woman supported on a knobby cane, is sitting against a wall. Her furrowed face is shaded by a thick velum; her left hand is resting on her knees. The light falling from an unknown source on the right illuminates the figure of the oracle and a cracked wall in the background (featuring the artist's signature), as well as the ground at her feet, where Norwid placed the title inscription, *SIBILLA*. According to Zenon Przesmycki, the figure of Sybil in the etching was supposed to be "loftier than in the drawing, without slumping, more good-hearted but more powerful."<sup>79</sup>



**Fig. 21.** Cyprian Norwid, *Sybilla* [*Sibyl*], 1863, etching, National Museum in Warsaw. Photo Piotr Ligier.

77 Etching, dry needle, sign. twice: *C. Norwid 1863* and *C. Norwid f. 1864* (in both signatures CN – interlocking monogram), dim. 136 × 84 mm. MNW, Gr.Pol.1877 (gift by K. Woźnicki), Gr.Pol.5038 (gift by D. Witke-Jeżewski). cf.: *CN, wystawa 1946*, p. 116, item 529; *W kręgu rembrandtowskiej tradycji*, p. 92, item 355; *CN, przewodnik*, pp. 232, 325, item 221 (repr. *ibid.*).

78 Drawing on smooth white paper, dim. 107 × 62 mm, pasted on a slightly larger sheet of paper, sign. and date: *C. Norwid 1856*. It was in the frequently-quoted album belonging to Aleksander Dybowski – cf. Zenon Przesmycki, *Materiały*, sh. 6.

79 Zenon Przesmycki, *Materiały*, sh. 6.

Norwid managed to exhibit the three etchings discussed above, i.e., *Męczennik*, *Pythia* and *Sybilla*, in 1865 in Nîmes, in the local museum set up in the ancient temple of Diana at the foot of Mont-Cavalier.<sup>80</sup> His engraving works were positively received there, and the artist was notified of that fact in writing by the mayor of the city.<sup>81</sup> At the beginning of March 1866, Norwid submitted them to the editorial office of the Paris-based magazine *L'Artiste* in order to include them in the form of a supplement to each monthly issue.<sup>82</sup> The copperplates, which were probably covered with a thin layer of steel for greater print output, were – according to the contract – to remain the poet's property.<sup>83</sup> Although Norwid's offer was accepted,<sup>84</sup> the prints were published only two years later (February–March 1868), and moreover, with the omission of *Pythia*.<sup>85</sup>

For this publisher's omission, Norwid was doubly compensated by the French critics, who compared his graphic work to that of Dürer, Leonardo da Vinci, and Rembrandt. The statement of the anonymous editor of *L'Artiste*, certainly more polite and exaggerated than true, was received by the poet with great pride and satisfaction. Norwid was as happy as a sandboy with the general recognition of his printing art (especially as this was the first time it had

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80 *CN, przewodnik*, pp. 103, 324–325.

81 Norwid reported it with satisfaction to Joanna Kuczyńska [10 January 1866] (*DW XII*, 413).

82 *CN, przewodnik*, p. 324, item 219.

83 A letter to Bronisław Zaleski [dated around 23 September 1868] – cf. *PWsz IX*, 366, item 662.

84 See a kind letter by the administrator P. Delbanse, dated 12 March 1866 (*PWsz IX*, 577). Norwid responded to this fact in a letter to Leonard Chodźko [dated 2 June 1866]: “Pozostaje mi parę złamanych ołówków i zardzewiałych ryłców. Oto i wszystko” (*DW XII*, 453) [“I am left with a few broken pencils and rusty burins. That is all”]. See also *CN, przewodnik*, p. 104.

85 *Sybilla* was Norwid's first etching to be published as a separate addition to *L'Artiste*. It appeared in the February 1868 issue, entitled *Figure de caractère*. The second was *Męczennik* [*The Martyr*] (in the March issue), which had a wrong title from the first version: *Le Prisonnier*. Cf. *CN, przewodnik*, pp. 324–325, items 219–221. Norwid was certain that *Pythia* would appear in the April issue – cf. his letters to Ludwik Nabeliak ([from summer? 1868], *PWsz IX*, 359) and Bronisław Zaleski – ([from around 23 September 1865], *PWsz IX*, 366). The poet was reported to have bought one of the print copies for 2 sous from a street antiquarian – see *CN, przewodnik*, p. 325, item 220.

happened), and thus he eagerly wrote about it several times to his friends.<sup>86</sup> In these circumstances, he should be forgiven for a certain lack of criticism over his own artistic work.

At the Paris Spring Salon in Champs-Élysées in May 1808, Norwid exhibited his latest etching (1867) entitled *Muzyk niepotrzebny* (*Le Musicien inutile*) [*The Useless Musician*] (Fig. 22).<sup>87</sup> This fact infused the artist with great joy, which he reported to August Cieszkowski.<sup>88</sup> This is how he described the print in his [*Autobiografia artystyczna*] [*Artistic Autobiography*]: “Skrzypek niepotrzebny ... nastrojający swoje skrzypki w karczmie – ale cała ta karczma już najzarliwiej tańczy bez muzyki, wywróciwszy świecę” (PWsz VI, 559) [*“The useless violinist*

86 Letters to: Łucja Rautenstrauchowa [from February 1868] (PWsz IX, 345, item 643); to August Cieszkowski [from July 1865] (“I krytyka francuska po raz pierwszy postawiła nazwisko Polaka w jednym wierszu z Leonardem da Vinci, Dürerem i Rembrandtem,” PWsz IX, 351 [“And for the first time the French critics put the name of the Pole in one line together with Leonardo da Vinci, Dürer and Rembrandt”]); to Michał Kleczkowski from 12 July 1868. (PWsz IX, 352–353); to Ludwik Nabelak [from summer? certainly after March 1868] (PWsz IX, 359 – see the publisher’s amendment in PWsz XI, 256); to Bronisław Zaleski [from 5 September 1868]: “są to prace Polaka, którego utwory krytyka Francuzów (nie znanych przezeń osobiście) odnosi do Alberta Dürera i Leonarda da Vinci ... Wyznam Ci, że dobrze robi – tak być powinno” (PWsz IX, 360) [“these are the works of a Pole whose works the French critics (not known by him personally) refer to Albert Dürer and Leonardo da Vinci... I will confess to you, they are doing well – it should be like this”]; to Joanna Kuczyńska [from around 25 October 1868]: “Po pierwszy raz zobaczyłem nazwisko polskie (moje) w jednym wierszu drukowane z powyższymi wielkimi imionami” (PWsz IX, 373) [“For the first time I saw this Polish name (mine) printed in one line with the above big names”]. Cf. also *CN, przewodnik*, p. 109. In 1868 Norwid created in Paris a poem entitled “Recepcja moich dzieł sztuki” [“Reception of My Works of Art”] (see PWsz II, 184), which was certainly linked to the French critics: “Un peu de Leonard da Vinci. / Un peu de Rembrandt. / Un peu d’Albert Dürer. / Un ultramontain. / Un Voltaire!”

87 Sign. at the bottom, roughly in the middle: *CNorwid f. 1867*, dim. 255 × 382 mm. MNK, Oddz. Czart, Gab. Fig. inv. No. R.9229 – Norwid’s pencil autograph at the bottom margin: “Le musicien inutile dess. et grav. à l’eau forte par CNorwid 1867.” Cf.: *CN, wystawa 1946*, p. 116, item 530; Jerzy Banach. *Tematy muzyczne w plastyce polskiej*, Vol. 2: *Grafika i rysunek* (Kraków, 1962), repr. Fig. 116; *CN, przewodnik*, pp. 109. 232, 325–326, item 222 (repr. *ibid.*).

88 “a Francja dała mi *au moins un escalier et une porte d’honneur au Palais des Champs Elysées*” (a letter [from July 1868], PWsz IX, 351) [“and France gave me *au moins un escalier et une porte d’honneur au Palais des Champs Elysées*”].

... tuning his violin in a tavern – but the whole tavern is already dancing most passionately without music, turning over the candles”].



**Fig. 22.** Cyprian Norwid, *Muzyk niepotrzebny* (*Le Musicien inutile*) [*The Useless Musician*], 1867, etching, National Museum in Krakow. Photo National Museum in Krakow.

In fact, this small interior with a low ceiling is trembling from dizzying jumps and dancing. Three pairs of muscular dancers closed in an embrace are spinning frantically, paying no attention to anything else. A wooden bench is being turned over, a vessel and a candle holder with a candle are falling; the violent movement is also emphasised by lively gestures and blown robes. In the depths of the rooms, there is a large glazed window, closed with a basket arch, behind which the sun is emerging. The rays of the sun, marked in the composition with diagonal lines, are cast on the massive figures of the dancers. In the foreground, on the left side of the print, there is a young violinist who is holding a bow and a violin in his left hand, tuning them with his right hand. Facing the amused couples, he is turning his face away from them; one can notice in it an expression of discouragement and even disapproval. He is a superfluous person here, and he is aware of that.

In this case, too, Norwid returns to a musical motif. Moreover, the musician's facial features show a surprising resemblance to young Norwid,

which can be noticed by comparing this print to his early self-portraits from the 1840s.<sup>89</sup>

If *Le Musicien inutile* is indeed a hidden self-portrait of the poet, the meaning of the etching is much deeper than the interpretation contained in [*Autobiografia artystyczna*]. Unfortunately, again, we can only speculate. Perhaps it is Norwid's reaction to the setbacks he suffered in that year (1867),<sup>90</sup> or perhaps a reaction to the lack of interest among his contemporaries in his work, mainly poetry.

*Muzyk niepotrzebny* is Norwid's biggest etching by dimensions. The artist managed to print it only in one copy because the etching plate soon burst and was no longer usable. In September 1868, the engraver donated the only print, which was exhibited in May, through Bronisław Zaleski to Władysław Czartoryski as an expression of gratitude for his financial help.<sup>91</sup>

The year 1871, spent similarly to previous years in Paris, was hard for the poet. The siege and bombardment of the city by the Prussians, followed by the period of Paris Commune and the entry of the supporters of the French Republic – all this created the conditions remarkably unfavourable for normal artistic work. Norwid struggled with finances; for making one etching, sized 110 × 73 mm, for which he had to devote three weeks, he now demanded 65 francs, but the buyer was given the plate and a “model print.”<sup>92</sup> It is unknown on whose commission Norwid created the last print that year – an etching entitled *Dialog zmarłych* [*Dialogue of the Dead*] (Fig. 23).

89 For instance, the “Florentine” self-portrait from 1843 (*CN, przewodnik*, p. 303, item 120, repr. *ibid.*); two “Berlin” self-portraits from 1845/46 (*CN, przewodnik*, p. 304, items 124 and 125, repr. *ibid.*). It is also worth noting that in another drawing by Norwid, depicting the artist and his father (1845–1846) there is a playing violinist – cf. *CN, przewodnik*, p. 303, item 119 (repr. *ibid.*).

90 For instance, J.I. Kraszewski's biting remarks about Norwid's ideas “rzucanych od niechcenia na papier” [“put casually on paper”] or about his nature “nie nawykłej przez długie lata do żadnego woli hamulca” [“not accustomed for years to suppress his willpower”]; the artist's financial disaster in the middle of October; Norwid's sharp polemic with K. Ruprecht and B. Zaleski about the poem-flyer titled “Encyklika-Oblężonego” [“Encyclical of the Besieged”] – cf. *CN, przewodnik*, pp. 107–108.

91 A letter to Bronisław Zaleski [from 9 September 1868] (PWsz IX, 361, 611).

92 A letter to Bronisław Zaleski [from December 1871–January 1872] (PWsz IX, 500, 654).





**Fig. 23.** Cyprian Norwid, *Dialog zmarłych* [*Dialogue of the Dead*], 1871, etching, National Library in Poland. Photo National Library in Poland.

Thematically, it is a graphic equivalent of the earlier, poetic “dialogues of shadows,” namely Napoleon from the Vendôme Column with Julius Caesar,<sup>93</sup> and Byron with Raphael.<sup>94</sup> This time, the etching illustrates Rembrandt’s conversation with Phidias<sup>95</sup> about what – in the author’s own words – is more difficult in contemporary art.<sup>96</sup>

93 Norwid’s poem “Vendôme,” written in Paris between 1849–1832 (PWsz I, 108–112).

94 Norwid’s poem “Rozmowa umarłych” [“Dialogue of the dead”] (PWsz I, 278–282). See also footnote 26.

95 Etching, dry needle, sign. on the left side vertically: *CNorwid* (CN – interlocking monogram) *f.* 1871, dim. 171 × 125 mm. BN Ikonogr. Przesm. inv. No. G.4409, G.4411, G.4412 (in various conditions). In the lower margin of the print G.4411 there is an artist’s annotation by pencil: “WP. Wagnerom C.N.” [To the Honourable Mr and Mrs Wagner C.N.]; MNK Oddz. Czart. Gab. Fig. inv. No. R.9228. Cf.: *Pamiętnik wystawowy ... ze zb. Dominika Witke-Jeżewskiego*, p. 59, item 557; *Cypryana Norwida antologia*, repr. on p. 11; *CN, wystawa* 1946, p. 116, item 531; Susanne Heiland and Heinz Lüdecke, *Rembrandt and the Nachwelt* (Leipzig: Seemann, 1960), p. 117, Fig. 42b. I would like to thank Professor A. Ryszkiewicz for indicating this position; *W kręgu rembrandtowskiej tradycji*, p. 92, item 356, Fig. 24; *Romantyzm i romantyczność*, item 153, Fig. 30; *CN, przewodnik*, pp. 122, 126, 232, 326, item 223 (repr. *ibid.*).

96 A letter to Władysław Czartoryski [from February 1872] (PWsz IX, 507).

Rembrandt and Phidias are walking next to each other, depicted facing forward; the painter is slightly in front of the sculptor. Their outfits are not entirely historically accurate. The Dutchman (on the left), with a beret on his head, dressed in a loose robe with a standing collar on his neck, slightly puffy trousers and boots, is holding a sheet of paper (a print?) in his right hand, to which he is directing his gaze. With the left hand, he is holding the folds of his coat. Phidias is wearing a slightly draped outfit bearing little resemblance to antique robes. The background is undefined, unimportant; the only detail is a laurel branch under both characters' feet, which is clearly visible in one of the previous stages of the print.<sup>97</sup> The laurel refers both to divine realism (*le réalisme-divin*), symbolised here by Rembrandt and to divine idealism (*l'idéalisme-divin*), represented by the brilliant Greek.<sup>98</sup>

In February 1872, the poet made three prints of *Dialog zmarłych*. He gave one, "artistically printed," to Bronisław Zaleski, and the remaining two "commercial prints" he presented to Prince Władysław Czartoryski and his recently married spouse, Małgorzata Orleańska.<sup>99</sup> Additionally, in early April 1874, Norwid sent one copy of the etching to London to his old friend K. Kirkpatrick, who, while expressing his gratitude in an extensive letter, noticed Norwid's features in the face of Rembrandt.<sup>100</sup>

As it has already been mentioned, *Dialog zmarłych* was the poet's last engraving, which definitively ends his printmaking *oeuvre*. The artist intended to go (in January 1877) to Florence, the city of his youthful studies and

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97 A copy from MNK Czart. (see footnote 95). On the copies from BN, the branch is almost invisible, hidden under the hatching. The differences between the individual stages of the drawing mainly concern the different crossing of lines in the background and the inscription: "*Dialogue des Morts Rembrandt Phidias* and *Dialogue des Morts Rembrandt-Phidias*."

98 A letter to Władysław Czartoryski [from February 1872] (PWsz IX, 507).

99 For "commercial" prints Norwid usually charged 5 francs ("drogo! ale to nie moja wina, bo wiele odbijać nie mogę" (a letter to Bronisław Zaleski [from February 1872], PWsz IX, 506, 656) ["expensive! but it is not my fault, because I cannot print many copies"]). Cf. also a letter to Władysław Czartoryski [from February 1872] (PWsz IX, 507); CN, *przewodnik*, p. 122.

100 "Rembrandt vous ressemble, et son sourire dédaigneux et moqueur a du être copié du votre" – cf. a letter by K. Kirkpatrick to Norwid from 6 April 1874 (PWsz IX, 656). See also CN, *przewodnik*, p. 126. J.W. Gomulicki rather discerns Norwid's features in Phidias's face and suggests that Kirkpatrick made a mistake here – CN, *przewodnik*, p. 126.



memories, but the travel came to nought. In February of that year, Norwid moved to a small cell in the Parisian Saint Casimir's Poorhouse, where he lived for five more years creating poems, short stories, and drawings, but no longer making engravings.

It is worth mentioning in a few words those drawings by the artist that have been transferred onto the copperplate or woodblock by other, often foreign, engravers. In most cases – although not always – this happened with Norwid's knowledge and consent.

Chronologically, probably the earliest was the pencil drawing *Wanda* (1850), made directly on the engraving block.<sup>101</sup> A year later (1851), at the request of general's wife Maria Dziekońska and her husband's niece, Michalina, the poet prepared an illustration entitled *Kordecki na wałach Częstochowy* [*Kordecki on the Embankments of Częstochowa*] to Eustachy Iwanowski's (pseud. Eustachy Helleniusz) book, entitled *Matka Boska na Jasnej Górze Częstochowskiej, Królowa Korony Polskiej. Pamiątka z pielgrzymki odbytej w R. P. 1848*, published in 1852 in Paris by Księgarnia Polska.<sup>102</sup> The woodcut made in Paris by Jean (Louis Joseph Camille) Lacoste gained Norwid's recognition.<sup>103</sup>

While the French engraver loyally put Norwid's name on the engraving as the creator of the original, this was not the case with dishonest graphic artists from New York, who transferred many of his drawings onto woodblocks. This concerns the illustrations prepared in 1853 to a lengthy, occasional album publication, which contained descriptions and drawings of objects displayed at General Exhibition in New York.<sup>104</sup> Norwid, who was in New York at that time, managed to get to Karol Emil Doepler's graphic design studio, where he

101 *CN, przewodnik*, p. 229.

102 Cf. *CN, wystawa* 1946, pp. 116–117, item 533, Gomulicki, *Liryka i druk*, p. 27, item 36; *CN, przewodnik*, pp. 229, 248, item 36; pp. 326–327, item 224 (repr. *ibid.*).

103 “‘Obrona Częstochowy’ już wyryta – prosiłem Jełowickiego, aby starannie, wedle podanych ostrzeżeń, odbito ... bo jest to pierwszy do czegoś podobny drzeworyt polski, przynajmniej Francuzom artystom bardzo się podobał” (a letter to Józef Bohdan Zaleski [from 1 August 1851], DW X, 340) [“‘The defence of Częstochowa’ has already been engraved – I asked Jełowicki to carefully, according to the warnings given, print it ... as this is the first good Polish woodcut; at least the French artists liked it very much”]. BN, inv. No. G.4406, G.4407, G.4416.

104 *The World of Science, Art and Industry Illustrated from Examples in the New York Exhibition, 1853–1854*. New York 1854. The only copy in Poland in BN inv. No. A.4709/G.XIX/III–318.

selected and drew the exhibits most deserving of reproduction.<sup>105</sup> Norwid's monogram CN was used only three times out of nearly five hundred woodcuts in the album. In other cases, it was not placed where it definitely should have been used.<sup>106</sup> Concerned with exposing their own names, New York engravers (including John William Orr, W. Roberts, H. Jewitt, N. Levy and Leslie-Hooper) left out Norwid's signature on purpose, which resulted in far-reaching difficulties in the identification of the poet's drawings.

In 1855, Józef Bogdan Dziekoński made a cover vignette for the first edition of T. Lenartowicz's poetry collection *Lirenka* [*The Small Lyre*] (Poznań, 1855). It was a copperplate based on Norwid's drawing, which was also emphasised in the signature: "Przerysował z poezyi NORWID" [Drawn from the poetry by NORWID] (Fig. 24).<sup>107</sup> The poet's other drawings – *Zoilus* (1841) (Fig. 25), *Mecenas otoczony klientami* [*The Lawyer Surrounded by his Clients*] (unpreserved, 1860) and *Lokaj spanoszony* [*The Lording Lackey*] – appeared in woodcut in Warsaw-based *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* in 1860, 1861, and 1862.<sup>108</sup> The publication of *Zoilus* in the magazine without Norwid's knowledge resulted in a letter from the poet, offended by this boldness, to editors Kazimierz Władysław Wójcicki and Ludwik Jenike.<sup>109</sup>

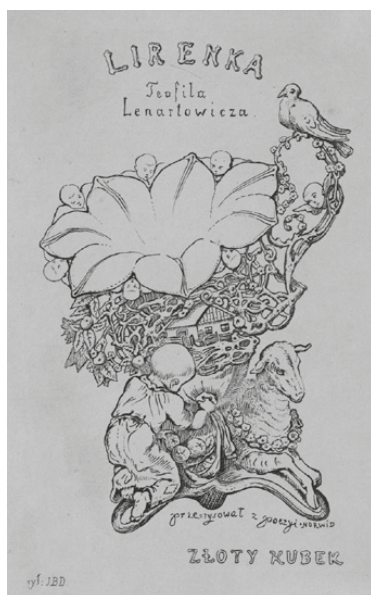
105 This is best described in the article by Aleksander Janta (Janta, "Na tropach Norwida w Ameryce," pp. 71–85). Cf. also Gomulicki, *Liryka i druk*, p. 27, item 37; CN, *przewodnik*, pp. 74, 248, item 37; pp. 327–329, items 226–227 (repr. *ibid.*).

106 According to what Norwid wrote himself in his [*Autobiografia artystyczna*] (PWsz VI, 559) [*Artistic Autobiography*].

107 Cf. Kraszewski, *Catalogue*, p. 177; CN, *wystawa 1946*, pp. 117–118, item 538; Gomulicki, *Liryka i druk*, p. 28, item 38; CN, *przewodnik*, pp. 79, 230, 248, item 38; p. 327, item 225 (repr. *ibid.*). Norwid's drawing of "Złoty kubek" ["Golden mug"] significantly corresponds to Lenartowicz's poetic description. A copy in MNW Gab. Fig. inv. No. 4285.

108 *Zoilus*, sign.: R.M., the inscription at the bottom: "Drawn by Kostrzewski based on the original sketch by Cyprian Norwid, engraved by Muller in the woodcutting workshop of Tygodnik" *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* 1860, first half year – cf. CN, *wystawa 1946*, p. 117, item 537; *Mecenas otoczony klientami* [*Lawyer Surrounded by Clients*], *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* 1861, first half year, p. 36 – cf. CN, *wystawa 1946*, p. 117, item 535; Ludwik Grajewski, *Bibliografia ilustracji w czasopismach polskich XIX i pocz. XX w. (do 1918 r.)* (Warszawa: PWN, 1972), p. 191, item 11061. BN, inv. No. G.53714; *Lokaj spanoszony* [*The Lording Lackey*], *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* 1862, first half year, p. 120; cf. CN, *wystawa 1946*, p. 117, item 536; Grajewski, *Bibliografia ilustracji*, p. 191, item 11058. BN, inv. No. G.53715.

109 CN, *przewodnik*, p. 89.



**Fig. 24.** Cyprian Norwid, *Lirenka* [*The Small Lyre*], 1855, copperplate from the cover designed for *Lirenka* by T. Lenartowicz, published by J.K. Żupański (Poznań 1855). Photo National Library in Poland.



**Fig. 25.** Cyprian Norwid, *Zoilus*, 1841, pen drawing, National Library in Poland. Photo National Library in Poland.

\*

When characterising the graphic art of Cyprian Norwid, one must bear in mind that he was – due to his interests – so to speak, a *homo universalis* living in a closed and very specific environment of Polish emigration. He was a poet and prose-writer, painter, draughtsman, engraver, and sculptor, he designed various goldwares, and he also displayed a talent for music and foreign languages. This versatility of interests stemmed both from the mundane need to secure his living and from the artist's disposition. According to contemporary sources, Norwid enthusiastically threw himself into one area and then another, “working on something different every month,” but “his volatile character usually did not allow him to finish it; he ceased in the middle and then was again after something new.”<sup>110</sup>

Norwid's printmaking work allows us to describe him as a *peintre-graveur*, i.e., an engraver who performs his works according to his own compositions. The reproductive graphics, with which he started (*Św. Maria Magdalena u stóp Chrystusa* [St. Mary Magdalene at the Feet of Christ], *Grzech pierworodny* [The Original Sin]), marked only a short episode and did not play a major role in his artistic path. It is well known that in later years, Norwid was reluctant to transfer other people's drawings (*Łapigrosz* [The Money-grubber], *Zachwycenie i Błogosławiona* [Delight and the Blessed]) onto the lithographic plate and stone.

In the graphic works of the author of *Pierścień Wielkiej-Damy* [The Noble Lady's Ring] – by contrast to his prose and poetic works – we cannot find contemporary issues, i.e., the events (including political) taking place before Norwid's eyes.<sup>111</sup> The artist remained as if indifferent not only to the events taking place in distant Poland (the January Uprising) but also to those taking place in France itself (the French-Prussian War, the Paris Commune).

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110 CN, *przewodnik*, p. 36.

111 Among others: “Bema pamięci żałobny rapsod [“A Funeral Rhapsody in Memory of General Bem”] (1851), “Czarne kwiaty” [“Black Flowers”] (1856), “Do obywatela Johna Brown” [“To the Citizen John Brown”] (1859), “Fortepian Szopena” [“Chopin's Grand Piano”] (1863), [“W sprawie zamachu Berezowskiego”] [“On Berezowski's Assassination Attempt”], “Nota” [“Note”] (1867), “Na cześć poległych pod Mentaną” [“In Honour of the Fallen in the Battle of Mentana”] (1867), [“Odezwa w sprawie udziału Polaków w wojnie francusko-pruskiej”] [“Appeal Concerning the Poles' Participation in the French-Prussian War”] (1870), [“W pięćdziesiątą rocznicę Powstania Listopadowego”] [“On the 50th Anniversary of the November Uprising”] (1874), “W rocznicę Powstania Styczniowego” [“On the Occasion of the Anniversary of the January Uprising”] (a speech, 1875), [“W pięćdziesiątą rocznicę Powstania Listopadowego”] [“On the 50th Anniversary of the November Uprising”] (1880).

It is characteristic that he preferred to draw the themes for his own engravings from the New Testament (*Nie było dla nich miejsca w gospodzie* [*There was no Room for Them at the Inn*], *Św. Józef z Dzieciątkiem* [*St. Joseph with the Child*], *Wskrzeszenie Łazarza* [*The Resurrection of Lazarus*], *Modlitwa dziecka* [*A Child's Prayer*], *Chrystus na krzyżu* [*Christ on the Cross*], *Zwiastowanie pasterzom* [*Annunciation to the Shepherds*]) and less often, from antiquity (*Pythia*, *Sybilla* [*Sybil*]) and history (*Sforza w więzieniu* [*Sforza in Prison*], *Męczennik* [*The Martyr*]). His own poetic works also rarely served as an inspiration for his engravings (*Alleluja* [*Hallelujah*] – two versions, *Dialog zmarłych* [*Dialogue of the Dead*]).<sup>112</sup> He sometimes leaned towards symbolic compositions with a hidden meaning, which were not easily readable (*Echo ruin* [*Echo of the Ruins*], *Scherzo, Solo, Muzyk niepotrzebny* [*The Useless Musician*]). It is interesting that in the area of graphic arts – in contrast to drawings and paintings – he did not make portraits or landscapes as separate genres.<sup>113</sup> He said about his prints that “każda akwaforta moja, osobno wzięta, jest zawsze niepełną wartością – i dopiero ciąg jakikolwiek je objaśnia” [“each etching of mine, taken separately, is always of incomplete value – and only a sequence can explain them”].<sup>114</sup>

His figural compositions, usually of small size, were generally designed by Norwid in an intimate manner, showing one or more people. The exception to that rule is the multi-figure *Wskrzeszenie Łazarza* [*The Resurrection of Lazarus*]. A slightly smaller number of characters can be seen in the etchings *Nie było dla nich miejsca w gospodzie* [*There was no Room for Them at the Inn*] and *Muzyk niepotrzebny* [*The Useless Musician*]. In these last three examples, the prominent feature is Norwid's construction of the interior – an enclosed space (cave, chamber), which is very specific to him; i.e., while rendering the interior, he did not always consistently follow the rules of perspective, and the figures themselves were drawn as if symbolically, regardless of the surrounding room, which thus often became flat, without depth. It seems as if the poet had some problems with setting figures in an enclosed space; however, these difficulties do not occur when he presented a human figure against the background of an open landscape, with a correctly drawn perspective (*Alleluja* [*Hallelujah*] – two versions, *L'Echo des Ruines, Solo*).

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112 J.W. Gomulicki links the etching *Alleluja* [*Hallelujah*] with the poem *Sfinks* [I] [*Sphinx* I] – cf. *CN, przewodnik*, p. 322, item 213.

113 “Nie robię wcale pejzażu” (a letter to Bronisław Zaleski [from December 1871–January 1872], *PWsz* IX 500) [I do not do landscape at all].

114 A letter to Bronisław Zaleski [from 12 June 1872] (*PWsz* IX, 511).

Something that is common to almost all of Norwid's engravings is their rarity. In Polish collections, they are represented by just a few prints, and very often, only single copies can be found (*Św. Maria Magdalena u stóp Chrystusa* [*St. Mary Magdalene at the Feet of Christ*], *Grzech pierworodny* [*The Original Sin*], *Chrystus na krzyżu* [*Christ on the Cross*], *Orzeł na skale* [*An Eagle on the Rock*], *Muzyk niepotrzebny* [*The Useless Musician*]). Some of them are also known only from lithographs (*Alleluja* [*Hallelujah*] – Version II, *Sforza w więzieniu* [*Sforza in Prison*]). There are two reasons for this: first, Norwid did not make many prints from his plates, and second, fate has not been kind to these copperplates. Some of them were destroyed while the artist was still alive, and the rest were lost.

Norwid's graphic art was created exclusively in foreign lands, in France. Owing to the poet's distinctiveness – as in other fields – he developed his own completely independent style of engraving (the artist quickly freed himself from the influence of the rather accidental master – Vincenzo della Bruna). He himself, in turn, had neither students nor followers, as his art of engraving was quite hermetic and simply remained unknown to the general public in the nineteenth century. In France, it was only accessible to an elite circle of artists, friends, and acquaintances of the poet, and, to a lesser extent, to Polish collectors. The knowledge about his work in Poland was probably even less.

How did Norwid's contemporaries receive his graphic art? Probably much better than his poetry. In any case, his prints were not disdainfully and contemptuously deemed “androny” [“gibberish”], as was the case with his poems *Zwolon* and *Promethidion*.<sup>115</sup> On the other hand, they were neither easy in reception nor popular enough to ensure their creator even a decent living. At the same time, they were not valued highly enough to be of greater interest to collectors. Norwid, a loner but also an outstanding artist, was never popular or even in fashion – even in the area of graphic arts. The flattering voice of the French critics remained virtually isolated, and the positive opinions of Józef Ignacy Kraszewski and the Englishman K. Kirkpatrick were sporadic.

The graphic legacy of Cyprian Norwid is completely separate and does not fit into any framework. Although it was created outside Poland, it constitutes a closed and important chapter in the history of Polish graphic arts, worth remembering in connection with the recent hundredth anniversary of the poet's death.

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115 “*Promethidiony, Zwolony i inne androny!*” [“*Promethidions, Zwolons and other gibberish!*”] – a trivial statement by J. Klaczko published in *Goniec Polski* (1851) – cf. *CN, przewodnik*, p. 68.

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Marek Adamiec

## Norwid over “the Stream of Human Blood”

**Abstract:** This study is devoted to the analysis and interpretation of the motif of human blood, recurrent in Norwid’s work. Among texts in which the motif of blood occupies a central place are the letter to Konstancja Górska of May 1862, reporting on the massacres of that time, a passage in the poem *Quidam* depicting the particularly unheroic scenery of the death of the main character, the son of Alexander of Epirus, and the poet’s account of his trips to the Roman catacombs (where phials containing the blood of the first martyrs were scrupulously preserved), included in *Czarne kwiaty*. An analysis of these texts reveals certain peculiarities in Norwid’s language, which violates the norms of colloquial language and exceeds the repertory of stylistic devices then recognised by Polish literature. Norwid speaks about blood in a way that no one did; this concerns both phraseology and imagery.

Norwid’s polemic with the Polish linguistic norms, especially with the phraseology, and with the repertory of means of expression used in artistic and journalistic writings leads him to a dispute with some philosophical conceptions of history. As the guiding image for reflection on human blood nineteen centuries after the death of Christ, one to replace the petrified aquatic metaphor, he proposes the image of “book” together with the related image of “reading.” This new phraseology and imagery directly implies certain axiological and ethical categories. Norwid’s effort to restore the dignity of human blood is part of his broader reflection on the dignity of being human.

Norwid’s works, including those with the blood motif, did not attract the interest of his contemporaries and remained practically unknown. Also the historical circumstances (such as the 1863 uprising and its aftermath) were unfavourable to their profound interpretation. Still, Norwid’s idea does not belong purely to an irrecoverable past. The problem of the dignity of human blood has reappeared in some texts by Bolesław Miciński, such as his essay *O nienawiści, okrucieństwie i abstrakcji*, and in the work of Zbigniew Herbert (e.g. the poem “Pan Cogito myśli o krwi”), to name but two examples. Norwid’s “praca w języku” (“work in language”) may be a valuable direction for twentieth-century men. But at this point our thinking acquires a different dimension; it becomes, in the words of Paul Ricoeur, “reflection starting from symbols.”

**Keywords:** Cyprian Norwid, poetry, motif, blood, phraseology, Christianity

we now know exactly  
that through the body of each man  
convict and executioner  
flows scarcely  
four to five liters

of that which used to be called  
the soul of the body

a few bottles of burgundy  
a pitcher  
one fourth  
of a pail's capacity  
very little

Mr. Cogito wonders naively  
why this discovery  
did not invoke a revolution

it should at least encourage  
sensible thrift

– Z. Herbert, “*Mr. Cogito Thinks About Blood*”

## 1. “A Peculiar Fluid”

The familiar age-old proverb says “*blood is thicker than water.*” As in the case of many other proverbs, the cultural origins of this expression have become obscured. Its linguistic use, on the other hand, even at the phraseological level, thoroughly undermines this tautology: in Polish, we actually used to talk about “blood” as if it were “water.” Let us take this ambiguous situation (which has nothing to do with logomachy) as the starting point of our consideration of one aspect of Cyprian Norwid’s artistic language.

## 2. “I Have Seen Blood!”

The following confession appears in the poem “*Czemu nie w chórze?*” [“Why Not in Chorus?”], from the *Vade-mecum* cycle:

3

Śpiewajcież, o! wybrani,  
U żłobu, gdzie jest Bóg;  
Mnie jeszcze ucho rani  
Pogoni róg...

4

Śpiewajcież, w chór zebrani – –  
Ja? – zmięszać mógłbym śpiew  
Tryumfującej litanii:  
Jam widział k r e w !...

(PWsz II, 45)

[3

Sing you! Who are chosen  
 There where he was born;  
 My ear is pierced  
 By the pursuing horn...

4

Sing in triumphant chorus  
 Your praises unto God – –  
 I? – could spoil your song:  
 I have seen b l o o d ! ...]<sup>1</sup>

This poem<sup>2</sup> was written in 1861. Its rhythmic pattern and imagery are a direct reference to the Christmas carol genre, so popular in Polish culture. However, in this song, associated with the joy of Christmastime, invoking the most intimate, familial sphere of symbolism, Norwid reveals yet another aspect of this period – the “slaughter of infants” from the Gospel of Saint Matthew. For Polish émigrés, Christmas Eve in 1861 was overshadowed by news from their home country. Thus, true joy in light of the miracle of Christ’s birth was impossible for them. This poem falls within the vital genre in the history of Polish literature which is best described as “a carol for joyless times;”<sup>3</sup> a carol in which anxiety and unrest replace the experience of joy in the Christian community.

Let us repeat: complete joy is impossible, the “triumphant chorus” will be disturbed; an exceptionally brutal argument is raised in contrast to the familial nature of the holidays: “Jam widział k r e w !” [I have seen b l o o d !...]; it drastically breaks carol convention, which has a strictly limited repertoire of images (in which “blood” has no place).

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- 1 English translation by Adam Czerniawski in: Cyprian Norwid, *Selected Poems* (London: Anvil Press, 2004), p. 65.
  - 2 I would like to thank Professor Zofia Stefanowska for this interpretative hint, as well as for many other valuable substantive comments; let me at least in this way express my gratitude to her.
  - 3 Because I have not come across any serious analysis of this literary genre, which is so important for Polish literature, I would like to note that it is still a vital genre. After Stanisław Baliński’s *Kolęda warszawska 1939* or Tadeusz Borowski’s *Kolęda obozowa*, it has reappeared, in primarily anonymous form, after 1983.

And yet we should remember that this experience was an intrinsic element of the lives of second and third generation Romantics. It was practically part of their daily lives from the French Revolution up until the Paris Commune, even for Poles. Although Europe experienced a time of relative stability between the Congress of Vienna and the Crimean War, there were still local conflicts (including the “Polish question”) that caused bloodshed; consciousness of the motif of blood and suffering was a constant. It was consistently reinforced by the cases of individual victims, for example, the execution of Artur Zawisza on 15 November 1833 or Michał Wołłowicz, who was hanged on 2 August 1833 in Grodno, as well as the heroic death of Karol Levittoux in July 1841. These facts – and the list of “martyrs for the national cause” goes on – carried significant meaning for Norwid’s contemporaries, and were broadcast by émigré publishing houses as well, in French and other languages.

Charles Michel Guilbert d’Anelle’s painting *Varsovie. Épisode de 1831* (exhibited at the Paris Salon in 1849) depicts a dying soldier in the November Uprising, who is writing the words from *Mazurek Dąbrowskiego* [Dąbrowski’s Mazurka]: “Jeszcze Polska nie zginęła” [Poland is not yet lost] on the wall in his own blood. The motif of “writing in blood on the walls” has permanently entered the repertoire of patriotic art as one of several gestures of the dying hero, who uses his own blood to send a message to his enemies and descendants.

Polish poetry makes us realise – that in order for this message to be clear, and in order for it to serve its purpose – quite a bit of this fluid is necessary; as is the case in Ryszard Berwiński’s poem “Marsz w przyszłość” [“March into the Future”]. Kornel Ujejski’s “Skargi Jeremiego” [“The Complaints of Jeremy”] expresses horror at this situation; the poem “W cześć umarłym” [“In Honor of the Dead”] paints a shocking picture:

Och! cała ziemia ta nasza cmentarna  
Wygłąda, Panie, jak czara ofiarna,  
W którą poganie zlewali krew wrogów  
Dla dawnych bogów.

Coraz się więcej spód ziemi zaplemia,  
Na nowe groby miejsca nie ma ziemia,  
A więc na prochach ojców twarzą bladą  
Syny się kładą.<sup>4</sup>

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4 Konrad Ujejski, “W cześć umarłym,” in: Konrad Ujejski, *Pisma wybrane*, edited, with introduction and annotations by Antoni Jopek, Vol. 1 (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1955), p. 119.

[Oh! this graveyard earth of ours  
Looks like a sacrificial goblet, Lord,  
Into which heathens have poured their foes blood  
For the Gods of yore

Underneath, the earth is growing ever more crowded  
It has no room for new graves  
And so atop their fathers’ ashes  
Pale-faced sons lie down.]

This horror culminates in “Chorał” [“The Chorale”], where a “voice” rises “with the dust of brotherly blood.” Such is the insuperable fate of Poles – demonstrated by a fragment of Felicjan Faleński’s “Zapłata po pracy” [“Paycheck after Work”] (written on “The Day of the Execution of Members of the National Government”):

Idziemy dalej. Tam znów pies wyje –  
W poprzek krew wrzącą wylała rzeką –  
Brniemy do kolan, po pas, po szyję... – Daleko jeszcze? – Ho! ho! Daleko – ...<sup>5</sup>

[We go on. Another dog howls in the distance –  
In our path, boiling blood spills like a river –  
We are knees deep, waist deep, chin deep...  
– Are we there yet? – Oh! Oh! Far from it –]

The messianic interpretation blurred the reality of the actual bloodshed. On the other hand, for Juliusz Słowacki, the obligatory bloodbath – in the rather literal sense – was a necessary condition for the “gradual ascent” to higher forms of existence – *Król-Duch* [*The King-Spirit*] is a telling example of this.

Thus, the argument in “Czemu nie w chórze?” has a special character. Not only does it disturb the peace of Christmas and violate Christmas carol convention, but it can also be seen as a polemic with the worldview of Polish Romanticism.

In a letter to Konstancja Górska from 19 May 1862,<sup>6</sup> Norwid wrote:

W roku 1848 – Kilka lat temu, przechodząc po tych płaskich kamieniach, po których się idzie bulwarami do Magdaleny, trzeba było przestępować ostrożnie przez strumień

5 Felicjan Faleński, *Wybór utworów*, ed. Maria Grzędzińska (Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków-Gdańsk: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1971), p. 47.

6 Cf. the interpretation of this letter, as well as certain editorial and factual determinations in: Zbigniew Sudolski, *List do Konstancji Górskiej z 19 maja 1862 roku*,

czerwonej krwi ludzkiej, spływającej od strony Ministerium Spraw Zagranicznych przez szerokość ulicy na dół.

Ta krew była wylaną przez konających *ludzi*, którzy może się omylili, ale wylewali tę krew ze wszystkich żył swoich na to, aby ci, co po ich śmierciach żyć będą, byli swobodniejsi i wyżsi, i szczęśliwsi.

Ja obuwie moim przestępowałem przez ten strumień krwi *ludzkiej*.

– Parę lat temu, pod Solferino, skonało na placu *pięćdziesiąt tysięcy serc ludzkich* i w boleściach wielkich wyciągnęło się umierając – wnętrzności ich włożyły się po ziemi – słońce świeciło – zgnilizna się szerzyła – psy lizały ciała poległych. Byli to *ludzie*, których matki i siostry kochały, a którzy padli konając na to, aby ci, [co] po ich śmierciach żyć będą, byli wyżsi i szczęśliwsi.

– Parę tygodni temu w Ameryce *ośmdziesiąt tysięcy* trupów w jednym dniu na placu roztoczyło wnętrzności swoje czerwone krwią wylaną na to, by ci, co po ich śmierciach żyć będą, byli troszkę wyżsi i szczęśliwsi (DW XII, 74).

[In the year 1848 – some years ago – walking on those flat stones along the boulevards on the way to Madeline, I had to cautiously step over the stream of red human blood, flowing street-wide from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs downwards.

This blood was shed by dying *people* who had been mistaken, perhaps, but shed this blood from all of their veins so that those who would live after their deaths could be freer, more dignified and happy.

My shoes stepped through this stream of human blood.

–A few years ago, near Solferino, *fifty thousand human hearts* perished in the square and they lay out dying in great agony – their entrails were scattered on the ground – the sun was shining – rot was spreading – dogs licked the bodies of the deceased. They were people whose mothers and sisters loved them, and who fell to their deaths so that those who would live after them could be more dignified and happy.

–A few weeks ago in America, in one day *eighty thousand corpses* spread their guts on the square with red blood spilled so that those who would live after their deaths could be a little bit more dignified and happy.]

This account relates events that were practically part of everyday life in the civilised nineteenth-century world. The eminent Hungarian poet – Sándor Petöfi – bitterly asked:

Coś jadła, ziemio, dziś – proszę, odpowiedz mi,  
Że tyle pijesz łez i tyle ciepłej krwi?<sup>7</sup>

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in: *Cyprian Norwid. Interpretacje*, ed. Stanisław Makowski (Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne, 1986), pp. 169–185.

7 Sándor Petöfi, “Coś jadła, ziemio?,” trans. T. Stępniewski, in: Sándor Petöfi, *Poezje wybrane*, selection and introduction by István Csapláros, poetic editor Leon Kaltenbergh (Warszawa: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1973), p. 64.

[What did you eat today, earth – please, tell me,  
That you’re ever so thirsty for tears and warm blood?]

Norwid’s enumeration, in its arithmetic accuracy and anatomical precision only seemingly approves of the presented reality. The chronicler-like book-keeping is clearly in conflict with the language here. We know very well that “blood” is “red;” The repetition of the word “people” and its derivatives might also be abrasive. Finally, the phrase “wylewać ... krew ze wszystkich żył swoich” [to shed ... blood from all of their veins] violates linguistic norms, which consequently a s s i g n s this state (of “bleeding to death”) the value of a c t i o n . The discreet paronomasia (which brings to mind the expression “to give blood”), which may be overlooked or taken for a slip of the pen, reveals a unique paradox. Recognising the possibilities contained by the expression “czynić coś ze wszystkich sił” [doing something with all one’s m i g h t ] depends entirely on the reader’s discernment. Ultimately, the whole statement is in clear opposition to the rules of the colloquial, chronological, journalistic or even artistic language that was used to describe such events in the nineteenth-century Norwid’s rhetoric gives mass slaughter special status, as it does the extraordinary experience of c r o s s i n g “a stream of human blood;” the direct connection between “blood” and the human body is drawn in a distinctive way (a fact we are well aware of), as is its significance for the future of human history; it has nothing to do with the messianic interpretation of the sacrifice. At the same time this is an almost exact affirmation of the argument in “Czemu nie w chórze?”

In the poem *Quidam* there is a scene describing the exceptionally non-heroic death of the main character – “the son of Alexander of Epirus,” who came to Rome in search of the truth. Here, again, the “blood” motif plays an above-average role:

setnik ręką skinął – w tymże czasie  
Kapłański sługa wyrwał się – a potem  
Brazowy topór jak ptak z rąk mu sunął,  
Powietrze skrzydłem swym przekroił złotem –  
Padł – Aleksandra syn zadrżał i – runął.

Krwi sute pasmo fontanną wraz krzywą  
Z początku bystrzej, potem szło leniwo,  
Kolana widzów pieczętując nagie,  
Wokoło trupa ciepłego zebrane –  
Utrzymujące ciało tych równowagę,  
Które traf skupił i ułożył w ścianę.

...

Ogrodnik tylko, obecny tej sprawie,  
 Wyciągnął rękę i rzekł: “Błogosławię Duszy twojej – a wy! *co znaczy* skonanie  
 Młodzieńca tego, kiedyś się dowiecie –

...

Bóg, gdy ofiarę nożem czynić miano  
 Na niewinnego młodzianka wzniesionym,  
 Nasunął owcę w ciernie uwikłaną,  
 Krwią ludzką nie chcąc, aby był chwalonym –  
 I wołał przenieść ofiarne skonanie  
 Nad krwi wylanie. – –

Ale wy – byka minąwszy toporem,  
 W człowieczej krwi się chłodzicie – szaleni!  
 Tym, mówię, czytać gdy poczniecie wzorem  
 Pisanie, co się w powietrzu czerwieni,  
 Padniecie na twarz ...

“Czytać” – ogrodnik ciągnął, patrząc w górę  
 Jakoby w pisma zwój – “czytać żywotów  
 I skonań księgę, czytać chmurę  
 I światłość czytać, zapisanie grzmotów –”

...

I niezadługo na tym placu gwarnym  
 Zamknięte tylko kupczących szałas  
 Stały szeregiem milczącym i czarnym. –  
 Zachodu słońce, purpurowej krasy,  
 W błota się szybach mętnych odbijało;  
 Młodzieńca cichy trup leżał, okryty  
 Kwiatami z koszów gwałtem wyrwconych –  
 Pies jakiś wietrzył krew – – jakieś kobiety,  
 Przechodząc, kilka róż mało zbuczonych  
 Podniosły – cicho było i zielono  
 Na bruku, który właśnie opuszczono,  
 Podobnym z barwy, miejsca i wspomnienia  
 Do *wag-rzeźniczych* – te, z urzędzeń zmianą,  
 Z ciężkiego nader że były kamienia,  
 Do nóg męczeńskich gdy przywiązywano –  
 Krwi nieraz świętej bywał na nich napis,  
 Stąd kamień wag tych zwą: *martyrum-lapis*.

(DW III, 265, 266)

[The centurion beckoned – at the same time  
 The priest-servant sprang forward – and then  
 The bronze axe soared from his hands like a bird,  
 It cut the air with its golden wing –  
 It fell – Alexander’s son trembled and – collapsed.



A thick trickle of blood like a crooked fountain jet  
 At first swiftly, then moving lazily,  
 Branding the observers’ naked knees,  
 Gathered around the warm corpse –  
 Keeping in balance these bodies  
 Gathered and arranged into a wall by chance.

...

Only the gardener, who witnessed this matter,  
 Reached out his hand and said, “Bless  
 Your soul – and you! The *meaning*  
 Of this young man’s death, you will learn one day ...

God, when a knife was raised  
 To sacrifice an innocent young man,  
 Slipped in his stead a thorn-entangled sheep  
 Not wanting, to be praised with human blood;  
 He preferred sacrificial death  
 To the spilling of blood – –  
 But you – sparing the bull from the ax,  
 In human blood you cool yourselves – madmen!  
 I say to you, when you begin to read  
 The writing that reddens in air  
 You’ll prostrate yourselves –”

...

“*To read*,” the gardener continued, looking up  
 As if at a scroll – “read the book of lives  
 And deaths, read the cloud  
 And read the light that writes thunder” ...

And presently on this bustling square  
 Only the traders’ tents were closed  
 They stood in a silent and grim row.  
 – The setting sun of purple colour,  
 Was reflected in the mud’s dim windows;  
 The young man’s corpse lay silent, covered  
 With flowers from forcefully upturned baskets –  
 Some dog was sniffing out the blood – – some women,  
 Passing by, picked up a few slightly bloody roses –  
 It was quiet and green  
 On the cobblestones, that had just been abandoned,  
 Similar in the colour, place and memory  
 Of *butchers’-scales* – those, with changing gears,  
 They were of very heavy stone,

When they bound them to martyrs' legs,  
 They were often inscribed with holy blood,  
 Hence the stone of these scales is called: *martyrum-lapis*.]

We see two ways of talking about “blood” here, practically two languages even, which attest to different axiological systems. First of all, it “flows” profusely, it “spurts” – evoking the image of a “fountain” (although this “fountain” is peculiar, it is created by the “trickle” of departing life). At the same time, it plays the role of Cain’s mark, “branding” the bodies of all present, whether they are curious observers or casual passers-by who, either way, were not active participants in the crime. The dog “sniffs out” the blood spilled on the market square, right next to where the “inscription” of holy blood appears. Two orders of things coexisting in everyday life, but logically mutually exclusive, shown in this fragment of *Quidam* are the slaughterhouse associated with aquatic metaphors, derived from colloquial images and expressions, and the writing – dictating a completely different use of the word “blood” than the one established in the general consciousness (which requires the special skill of “reading,” made known, in part, by Christ to the Pharisees, who demanded “a sign from heaven” from him). This is yet another supplement to the argument from “Czemu nie w chórze?” for the critical analysis of colloquial language, which is, after all, a reflection of consciousness – only “slightly bloody” roses are worth noticing.

And finally, the last quote – a memory from an expedition to the Roman catacombs recounted in *Czarne Kwiaty* [*Black Flowers*]:

to ogromne podziemne miasto z napisami i rysunkami swymi okazało mi, jako przez całe akta dramatu tego seraficznie-krwawego nie była prawie jedna kropelka krwi wylana bez uszanowania jej i omodlenia braterskiego współwyznawców. Te szkła, dziś błękitno-krzemiennej barwy, które jako ampułki rozbite (albo i całe) w katakombowych sarkofagach, do półek biblioteki podobnych, tu i owdzie leżą, błogie robią wrażenie, świadcząc, jako zbierano rozpryśniętą po ścianach katowni i schodach gmachów publicznych krew męczeńską. Tak ją szafowano szeroko i wspaniale, jako owczarni krew bogaty pan szafować może – a tak skąpi jej byli!! (DW VII, 44).

[this enormous underground city with its inscriptions and drawings revealed to me, that throughout the entirety of its seraphic-bloody dramatic act, hardly a drop of blood was spilled before it was honored and prayed over by fellow believers. These glass pieces, now tinted flint-blue, which lie here and there in the catacumbal sarcophaguses resembling library shelves, as shattered ampules (or whole), make a blissful impression, as if testifying to the way the martyrs’ blood splattered on the walls of the torture chamber and steps of public buildings was gathered. That is how widely and generously they gave it away, like a rich lord giving away a flock of lambs’ blood – yet they had so little to spare!!!]

The underground city described here is a place where a violation of the rules of conduct established in everyday language occurred. “Blood” was collected like a precious metal; having lost its natural red colour, it became part of a unique library collection, which collects ampules (often even shattered ones) instead of books. “Bliss” (a peculiar feeling for Norwid) appears in the context of being in the presence of testimonies of the past. Does this not mean that the contemporaries of the author of *Czarne Kwiaty* squandered some important values, which were only brought to light by his repeated descent underground? The quoted passage also adds to the argument from the poem “Czemu nie w chórze?”

### 3. “The Saying Goes”

“Blut ist ein ganz besonderer Saft” – “Krew to osobliwy płyn”<sup>8</sup> [Blood is a peculiar fluid] – Mephistopheles confesses with feigned embarrassment during a conversation with Faust. Satan knows the value of a “drop of blood” perfectly well, whereas the learned man does not even realise it, preoccupied by his study of the secrets of the universe.

Indeed, in our culture this substance exists simultaneously in two spheres of reality: the sacred and the profane; it is both an object, and a symbol, and as a symbol it is associated with various axiological systems. There is no room here for an overview of the changes in imagining the nature and function of blood,<sup>9</sup> all the more so, because in our consciousness it functions – even when it comes to purely anatomical issues – in the symbolic dimension (starting with irrational fear at the sight of a small cut). There is also no point in a presentation (which would have to be brief, anyway) of the complexity of blood’s symbolism. What is important for us are its two aspects.

First of all, colloquial language provides us with important information, because some of its elements remain constant despite the passage of time,

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8 Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *Faust*, trans. Feliks Konopka (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1977), p. 90.

9 The book by Alistair Cameron Crombie, *Nauka średniowieczna i początki nauki nowożytnej*, trans. Stanisław Łypacewicz, Vols. 1–2 (Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy PAX, 1960), provides immensely valuable information on the subject – individual chapters also discuss the development of the study of the nature and function of blood.

scientific developments, and changing philosophical views.<sup>10</sup> Fixed expressions such as “krew płynie” [blood flows], “pieni się” [froths], or “chlupocze” [boils], and “morze” [seas], “potoki” [torrents], “strumienie” [streams], or “kałuże krwi” [pools of blood], confirm archaic beliefs, whose primary component was reasoning through analogy, which determined how reality was understood.

“Water” – one of the four elements (in many cultures, even the most important one, as reflected by cosmogonies or ritual behaviours which have survived to this day in the form of superstitions) – was the basis for reflection on other liquids; therefore, “blood” was subordinated to aquatic metaphors. The crystallization of metaphors into fixed expressions not only erases the magical character of the language, but also – in this case in particular – diminishes its worth (blood is – contrary to modern anatomical and physiological findings, for example – just one of many liquids in the consciousness of language users).

The second important frame of reference is the sphere of religion, which gives blood special meaning in various rites. Of course, Christianity has played a dominant role in our culture. The Eucharist<sup>11</sup> refers directly to Christ’s sacrifice on the cross, and the transformation of water into wine is a fundamental Catholic miracle of faith. The blood of Christ, sacrificial blood, was for a long time one of the most important motifs in European art,<sup>12</sup> meant to spread the Christian system of values.

It is the “living blood” that becomes testimony to various miracles. Let us now hear from the author of a brochure about “the miraculous nineteenth-century Saint Philomena,” who wrote thus about the discovery of her grave “during the excavations, which take place every year in Rome:”

Meanwhile, when they were scraping away dried blood, stuck to various pieces of a broken dish, and collecting it in a crystal urn; those present, among whom there were

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10 A review of Polish language dictionaries, whether historical, or descriptive – starting with S. B. Linde’s edition, and ending with S. Skorupka’s *Słownik frazeologiczny języka polskiego* – reveals an inseparable relationship between “blood” and aquatic metaphor; in the interest of limiting the scope of this work, I have opted not to quote any examples here.

11 Cf. “Eucharystia,” in: *Encyklopedia katolicka*, Vol. 4 (Lublin: TN KUL, 1983), col. 1239–1254.

12 Cf. Wolfgang Brücker, “Blut, Heiliges,” in: *Lexikon der Christlichen Ikonographie*, ed. Engelbert Kirschbaum S.J., Vols. I–VIII (Rome-Freiburg-Basel-Vienna: Herder, 1968–1976); and also: Gebhard Spahr, *Kreuz und Blut Christi in der Kunst Wiengartens* (Konstanz: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1962).

talented men, perceived with utter astonishment, that the urn began to shine. And so they stepped closer, so they could more keenly observe this miraculous phenomenon, and overcome by a sensation of the greatest wonder, they worshipped God, who is praiseworthy through his Saints. When, in turn, the particles of that holy blood fell into the mentioned urn, they turned into all kinds of rare and bright sights, and the transformation was everlasting. Some had the colour and sheen of gold, others of silver, and yet others of diamonds, rubies, and other precious stones: yes, even the colour of blood, which was dark brown, when it was taken from the first dish, appeared as a shining rainbow in the crystal urn.<sup>13</sup>

Such accounts, of which the *advocatus diaboli* is generally extremely sceptical, are not uncommon, especially when dealing with folk forms of religiosity.

On the one hand, we can talk about the sacredness of the blood of every man (of every baptised man, at least) by acknowledging its mystical relationship with Christ’s sacrifice. But tied to this is another issue – the consequences of popular devotional art. Alongside subtle mysticism, unprecedentedly generous “zafowanie krwią” [giving away of blood], for example by the authors of the lives of saints and martyrs, began to take place; the work of Piotr Skarga paints a telling picture; we should also remember the images, which very realistically depicted the sufferings of martyrs. The “giving away of blood” was also one of the favourite ruses of chroniclers and historians; when it was the blood of “enemies,” it emphasised triumph, and when it was that of “their own,” it showed the gravity of their losses and the boundless cruelty of the enemy. It was precisely this “aquatic” nature of sacred blood, so generously spilled, that became part of Polish patriotic works (primarily poetic). And in this domain it quickly became standardised and trivialised. Therefore, even in the sacred sphere, the Polish reader could easily ascertain that there was not much difference between blood and water; the earth is equally abundant in these two substances.

In the quoted fragment of Norwid’s letter to Konstancja Górską, we paid attention to the peculiarities of the language, most of all its distinctions from everyday use. We should now take a different look at this matter.

John L. Austin, a renowned English speech philosopher, wrote:

Certainly ordinary language has no claim to be the last word, if there is such a thing. It embodies, indeed, something better than the metaphysics of the Stone Age, namely, as was said, the inherited experience and acumen of many generations of men. But then, that acumen has been concentrated primarily upon the practical business of life. If a distinction works well for practical purposes in ordinary life

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13 *Wiadomość o cudownej wieku XIX św. Filomenie, pannie i męczennicze, wraz z modlitwami i nabożeństwem do tejże świętej* (Warszawa: Druk Ś. Krzyża, 1872), p. 2.

(no mean feat, for even ordinary life is full of hard cases), then there is sure to be something in it, it will not mark nothing: yet this is likely enough to be not the best way of arranging things if our interests are more extensive or intellectual than the ordinary. And again, that experience has been derived only from the sources available to ordinary men throughout most of civilized history: it has not been fed from the resources of the microscope and its successors. And it must be added too, that superstition and error and fantasy of all kinds do become incorporated in ordinary language and even sometimes stand up to the survival test (only, when they do, why should we not detect it?). Certainly, then, ordinary language is not the last word: in principle it can everywhere be supplemented and improved upon and superseded. Only remember, it is the *first* word.<sup>14</sup>

Austin's footnote, supplementing his comments, formulating the doubt – “And forget, for once and for a while, that other curious question ‘Is it true?’ May we?”<sup>15</sup> – is important for our considerations. Precisely this uncertainty of the modern thinker holds the primary interpretative significance for us.

Norwid's philippics aimed at “stupid Polish society” (as the years went by, “Europe” became the subject of these more or less justified attacks, then all of humanity) are widely known; they often bring to mind the philological interests of the author of *Rzecz o wolności słowa* [*On the Freedom of Speech*] (which often bordered on – pardon my French – amateur divagations). And now (with the rigor of certain simplifications) it will suffice to quote a fragment of the third “lesson” from the lectures *O Juliuszu Słowackim* [*On Juliusz Słowacki*]:

Mowa ludzka gdyby nie składała się więcej z niczego, jak z pewnej tylko liczby wyrazów i z pewnej kombinacji wyrażeń, nie byłoby różnicy między literaturą a matematyką: literatura byłaby tylko błędną matematyką! Jeżeli więc mędracy i filozofowie dzisiejsi uczą nas, że słowa nas wyrażają – przepraszam i ostrzegam, że jest to mimowolna zdrada, bo wyrazy i słowa nasze są także i na to, że nas sądzą, nie tylko że nas wyrażają (PWsz VI, 429).

[If human speech consisted of nothing more, than a certain number of words and a certain combination of expressions, there would be no difference between literature and math: literature would just be incorrect math! And so, if today's sages and philosophers teach us that words express ourselves – I apologize and warn you, that this is an involuntary betrayal, because our expressions and words are not just used to express ourselves, but also to judge us.]

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14 John L. Austin, “A Plea for Excuses: The Presidential Address,” in: *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society. New Series*, Vol. 57 (1956–1957) (Oxford University Press on behalf of The Aristotelian Society), p. 11.

15 John L. Austin, “A Plea for Excuses: The Presidential Address,” p. 11.

By adopting this assumption, which would reappear in later statements, Norwid persistently continued to uphold “prawdziwość mowy” [the veracity of speech] and reveal the various consequences of colloquial expressions. As, for example, in the “dialogue” *Wiesław* from *Promethidion*:

Cichość nastąpiła głucha,  
 Jak po zaśpiewie na pogrzeb choralnym,  
 Jak po zabiciu kogoś (choć moralnym),  
 Jeżeli *moralnym* może być zabicie?!!

(DW IV, 121)

[Dead silence ensued,  
 Like after a choral chant at a funeral,  
 Like after killing someone (even morally),  
 If a killing can be *moral*?!!]

This is the case, for example, in a letter to Joanna Kuczyńska [from 3 January 1862], in which Norwid (very partially) presents a “scene” made by Łucja Rautenstrauchowa née Giedroyc:

scenę za to, iż fotograf mój w *czapce* – w *czapce*, którą miałem zaszczyt Paniom pokazywać – w *czapce*, o której gdyby mi przyszło wyrazić się skromnie, nazwałbym *czapką-ranną*.

Alboż nieprzywoita rzecz jest rannym być? – tu przerywam, spostrzegam się albowiem, że mógłbym popełnić kalambury. Świat pozwala człowiekowi poranionym być na piersiach lub na skroni, byleby to zawsze uczesane i bezamarantowe było. (DW XII, 12)

[a scene because, my photographer was wearing a *cap* – a cap, that I had the honor of showing the ladies – a cap, that I would humbly describe as a *morning-cap*.

Is it an indecent thing to be a morning person? I stop, because I realize that I could be making a pun. The world allows a man to have wounds on his chest or temple, as long as he is groomed and no red shows through.]

The list of Norwid’s attempts to verify colloquial expressions goes on (in which – despite the reservations – the pun technique plays an important role). We should read the quoted passages which contain the motif of blood in this vein, too.

The fact is, that common everyday expressions have effaced the magical characteristics of aquatic metaphor in relation to blood; there has never been – understandably – any phenomenon which we could call the “sanguinary theme.” The fact is, that the aquatic theme of Polish patriotic art, which subordinated the motif of blood (in accordance with the requirements of hyperbole), has been banalised. The historiosophies of that time (e.g. messianism, the ideas of Ballanche or Józef de Maistre – Bolesław Miciński spoke with real horror

about the latter)<sup>16</sup> ostensibly downplayed the reality of suffering and sacrifice by placing them in a definitive interpretive system; let us not forget the “cruelty” of Hegel’s doctrine, which eliminates the individual from the historical process.

The world of religious values, popularised by devotional art, featuring cruelty (present in works of fine art, as well), inadvertently led to the “desensitization” of the recipient to bloody images; all the more so because of the considerable question of the reward for each instance of suffering, which awaited one in the afterlife (which led to many simplifications in understanding of earthly existence). These phenomena belonged to the realm of the everyday life of the author of *Promethidion* – just as they did for every nineteenth-century European.

In any case, these facts determined, among other things, a view of reality such as the one outlined in a letter to Konstancja Górska from [summer?] 1881:

Europa jest to stara wariatka i pijaczka, która co kilka lat robi rzezie i mordy bez żadnego rezultatu ni cywilizacyjnego, ni moralnego. Nic postawić nie umie – głupia jak but, zarozumiała, pyszna i lekkomyślna. Kiedy do innej części świata robiłem wycieczkę, nie wiedziałem, jak listy adresować do Europy, bo adresując do Rz[eczy]pospolitej – list dochodził do Cesarstwa, do Danii – list szedł do Niemiec, do Austrii – list szedł gdzie indziej, i tak zawsze – a za to kilkadziesiąt milionów trupa, łez i opchanych worków fałszywą monetą (PWsz X, 155).

[Europe is an old madwoman and drunkard, who commits slaughter and murder every few years with no consequence to civilization or morality. She can’t do anything constructive – thick as a brick, conceited, full of herself, and reckless. When I was traveling to a different part of the world, I did not know how to address letters to Europe, because when I addressed it to the [Polish] Republic – the letter would arrive in the [Russian] Empire; to Denmark – the letter was sent to Germany, to Austria – the letter went somewhere else, always –instead, we have tens of millions of corpses, tears, and bags stuffed with false coins.]

Let us now quote the warning from Eugene Ionesco’s grotesque *The Lesson*:

arytmetyka prowadzi do filologii, a filologia do zbrodni<sup>17</sup>  
[arithmetic leads to philology, and philology leads to crime]

16 Bolesław Miciński writes: “Gdy tłumaczyłem ... *Pochwałą kata*, miałem wrażenie, że mam palce poplamione krwią” [When I was translating *Pochwałą kata* [In Praise of the Executioner], I felt as if my fingers were stained with blood]; cf. Bolesław Miciński, *O nienawiści, okrucieństwie i abstrakcji*, in: Bolesław Miciński, *Pisma. Eseje. Artykuły. Listy*, ed. Anna Micińska (Kraków: Znak, 1970).

17 Eugène Ionesco, *Teatr*, foreword by Marta Piwińska, afterword by Jan Błoński, Vol. 1 (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1967), p. 124 (J. Błoński translated *Lekcja*).



This sentence can be slightly altered, to expand the chain of associations to suit our needs: crime will thus be the consequence of phraseology, which, in turn, has its roots in the theme. Especially when it comes to blood.

#### 4. The “Old Madwoman” and Phraseology

If language leads to falsehood, which ultimately leads to crime, then the task of the artist – the “organiser of collective imagination” – is to transform language. This exactly was the function of the quoted texts in which the motif of “blood” was the central focus. The goal, among other things, was to clarify what we mean when we say – at an entirely inappropriate moment, “Jam widział krew!” [I have seen blood!].

We can interpret a letter to Konstancja Górską [from 19 May 1862] as an example of Norwid talking about mass slaughter in the proper way, because the rhetoric he uses restores dignity to human suffering; the repetitions and tautologies take on the nature of an arduous reminder of fundamental truths, lost by language speakers, and readers of “Telegraficzne depesze o różnem powstaniu” [“Telegraphic messages of various origins”] or of succinct notes, reporting that:

Ten się struł, zabił się owy: Pracował w Ossolińskich Księgozbiorsze sporo –  
Zbyt czuwał – konstytucję nie dość krzepił chorą

(PWsz II, 158)

[O n e p o i s o n e d h i m s e l f, a n o t h e r c o m m i t t e d s u i c i d e:  
H e w o r k e d q u i t e a b i t i n t h e O s s o l i ń s k i B o o k C o l l e c t i o n –  
H e w a s t o o d e v o t e d – d i d n o t p a y h i s s i c k b o d y s u f f i c i e n t c a r e]

Thus, the author of *Pięć zarysów* [*Five Sketches*] often criticises the journalistic style of those times.

This fragment of *Quidam*, as well as the account from his expeditions to the Roman catacombs present the only appropriate – according to their author – reference system for commenting on human existence. We are witnessing the exchange of the a q u a t i c theme and its phraseology for a b o o k t o p o s – the bloodshed imposed on people the obligation of r e a d i n g this book. This, in turn, not only indicated a polemic with the norms of Polish colloquial language and the repertoire of artistic forms of the literature of that time, but also a

polemic with simplified Christianity, above all with Catholicism,<sup>18</sup> which often uses (out of concern – so to speak – for the “mass” consumer) very primitive symbolism. As a consequence, this led to ideological discussions – from stereotypes, implied by speech, to historiosophic concepts. According to Norwid, this was the only way there was a chance of restoring dignity to human blood. The dignity spoken of in the Gospel – the text which opened the eyes of the author of *Quidam* to a new epoch in the history of humanity, proclaims almost directly, that a disregard for individual suffering is the disregard of Christ’s sacrifice. We should remember that Norwid’s reflections on ways of talking about blood is very strongly associated with the times he lived in. In a letter to Jan Koźmian [from 9 February 1850] he expresses this shocking wish:

a jak będziesz miał dzieci (czego Ci z serca życzę), to niech Aniołowie im usuną sprzed nóg te wszystkie drzazgi trumien, po jakich przewłóczyć nam się przyszło. (DW X, 217)

[and if you have children (which I wish for you with all my heart), let the Angels remove from under their feet all those splinters of the coffins, over which we had to drag ourselves.]

These “Angels” do not relieve man of his basic duties – one of which is *l e a r n i n g h o w t o t a l k* about basic things – and one is “czerwona, ludzka krew” [red, human blood].

Mickiewicz’s project documenting the “biographies” of all the Polish martyrs, who spilled their blood on behalf of the nation, fell through partly because he had no suitable collaborators. Since 1908, Maria Konopnicka’s “Rota” [“The Oath”] holds a special place in the world of Polish values; it includes a couplet, which – using Norwid’s reasoning – we might go so far as to call illogical:

Until the last drop of blood from the veins  
we will defend the spirit.

*I l l o g i c a l* – I say this with a conscious perversity, because what is left of the “spirit” if life has irretrievably left the body?

Norwid’s texts were little known to his contemporaries. During the period of the development of positivist linguistics, Norwid’s attempts, whether more or less successful, at speech hermeneutics were not taken seriously. His reflections

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18 Cf. Andrzej Walicki, “Cyprian Norwid: trzy wątki myśli,” in: *Między filozofią, religią i polityką. Studia o myśli polskiej epoki romantyzmu* (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1983), especially pp. 236–238, where the specificity of Norwid’s religiosity and orthodoxy is outlined.

on blood, as well, and the associated attempt to transform natural and artistic language (from imagery to phraseology) remained in the sphere of unrealised projects. Norwid’s polemic with various nineteenth-century historiosophies did not resound loudly. The argument from “Czemu nie w chórze?” did not reveal all of its meanings – it could not be otherwise (even if only on account of the characteristic features of Norwid’s poetics).

In Dante’s *Inferno* a terrible punishment awaited those, who used violence against others; Virgil notes, that it began at the moment Christ descended into the Abyss:

Now I would have you know: the other time  
That I descended into lower Hell,  
this mass of boulders had not yet collapsed;  
  
but if I reason rightly, it was just  
before the coming of the One who took  
from Dis the highest circle’s splendid spoils  
that, on all sides, the steep and filthy valley  
had trembled so, I thought the universe  
felt love (by which, as some believe, the world  
has often been converted into chaos);  
and at that moment, here as well as elsewhere,  
these ancient boulders toppled, in this way.  
  
But fix your eyes below, upon the valley,  
for now we near the stream of blood, where those  
who injure others violently, boil.<sup>19</sup>

Phlegeton – a river of boiling blood – is a place where people who spilled the blood of others suffer. It indeed embodies a special relationship between guilt and punishment.

## 5. Phraseology and Ethics

I believe that Norwid’s polemic with Austin’s “first word” in the Polish language with relation to “blood” is of more than just historical value to us. It is not only

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19 *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri: Inferno*, trans. Allen Mandelbaum, used by permission of Bantam Books, a division of Random House, Inc. *The World of Dante*. Sponsored by the Institute for Advanced Technologies in the Humanities, University of Virginia, 1980, 1982, 1984. <http://www.worldofdante.org/comedy/dante/inferno.xml/1.12>.

a lost link in the search for the dignity of “man” – after all, blood is a condition of human existence. It is not exclusively a problem of the past, as Zbigniew Herbert’s poems “Pan Cogito czyta gazetę” [“Mr. Cogito Reads the Paper”], “Pan Cogito o potrzebie ścisłości” [“Mr. Cogito on the Need for Precision”], or “Pan Cogito myśli o krwi” [“Mr. Cogito Thinks about Blood”] prove. We now know with full certainty that thematics and phraseology sometimes have a decisive meaning in matters of life and death; it suffices to take a look at Victor Klemperer’s work on the language of the Third Reich.

The excessive giving away of this fluid – even at the verbal level – sometimes has unintended effects: instead of horror and terror, it evokes disgust and irritation; Czesław Miłosz and Andrzej Walicki,<sup>20</sup> among others, wrote about it in a way that was perhaps drastic for the Polish reader, unmasking certain stereotypes derived from Romanticism (their reflections, at least on some level, are similar to Norwid’s dispute with nineteenth-century historiosophies, one element of which was his interpretation of the *hermeneutics of blood* leading to the *hermeneutics of humanity*).

It seems fitting to note at the end, that an expression for avarice taken to the extreme is: “His money comes from him like drops of blood.” Let us repeat after Austin, “there is sure to be something in it.” But here a completely different dimension of reflection begins. We should nevertheless remember Norwid’s confession from “Czemu nie w chórze?:” “Jam widział krew!” [I have seen blood!] – even in the seemingly least appropriate moments.

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20 Cf. Czesław Miłosz, *Prywatne obowiązki wobec polskiej literatury*; “O historii polskiej literatury, o wolnomysłicielach i masonach,” in: Czesław Miłosz, *Prywatne obowiązki* (Paris: Instytut Literacki, 1972), and also Andrzej Walicki, “Naród, romantyzm, mesjanizm,” in: *Spotkania z Miłoszem* (London: Aneks, 1985).

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Jadwiga Puzynina

## The Language of Values in *Vade-Mecum*: Selected Aspects

**Abstract:** This article analyses the language of values, as a way of talking about values and anti-values, present in Norwid's *Vade-mecum*. The linguistic analysis is preceded by a reconstruction of the general division and hierarchy of values professed by Norwid, which the researcher considers to be close to Scheler's. The proper source of those values is Christian axiology, in which the highest place in the hierarchy is occupied by the sacred, which has its source in God, while manifesting within the profane; vital values are separated from the higher, spiritual ones. The names of the so-called proper values (e.g. good, evil, true, false) distinguished in this study, are accompanied by numerous words which have important functions in Norwid's texts, referring to secondary values. These include various elements of reality and their axiology results from specific relationships which link them to proper values (e.g. heroism, maturity). The analytical part of this article presents various classes of evaluative vocabulary found in *Vade-mecum*: proper names (e.g. Paweł, Abraham, Szopen), social / professional roles (printer, gladiator), names of nationalities, names of holders of specific qualities, evaluative words based on connotations, and evaluative vocabulary construing poetic figures – such as metaphor, comparison, and irony. The author of the article observes that despite the saturation of *Vade-mecum* with evaluative vocabulary, Norwid's axiological intentions are rarely expressed explicitly and unambiguously; they are more often revealed in subtle and ambiguous ways and decoding them requires cooperation on the part of the reader.

**Keywords:** Cyprian Norwid, *Vade-mecum*, values, linguistics, Christian axiology

### 1.1

Our reflections should start with an explanation of the words used in the title: the language of values will be understood here as a means of talking about values and anti-values. Values in the primary sense are assumed to be the characteristics of objects, situations, or other phenomena that we intellectually consider good and/or perceive to be good, whereas anti-values are characteristics that we consider bad and/or perceive as bad.<sup>1</sup> The names of primary (anti-)

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1 There is no place here for broader justifications of the adopted definition or the discussion of other names for values that can be found in axiological dictionaries

values<sup>2</sup> can be expressed with adjectives, verbs, and adverbs (e.g. *good, well, to love; bad, badly, to hate*), as well as nouns derived from them (e.g. *goodness, love, hatred*).

This article tries to look at the language of values in *Vade-mecum*<sup>3</sup> mainly from the point of view of vocabulary, to show how words (evaluative beyond their basic semantic content) serve to express values (Sections 1.2. and 2–5). As a linguist interested in the problems of axiology, I discuss at the outset the general division and hierarchy of values specific to Norwid (Sections 1.2 and 2.1), as well as (in Section 6) a network of relations characteristic of Norwid's poems, which show his values.<sup>4</sup>

and literature. Cf., *among others*, Gerhard Kloska, *Pojęcia, teorie i badania wartości w naukach społecznych* (Warszawa: PWN, 1982); Dietrich von Hildebrand, Jan A. Kłoczowski, Józef Paściak, Józef Tischner, *Wobec wartości* (Poznań: W drodze, 1982); Władysław Stróżewski, *Istnienie i wartość* (Kraków: Znak, 1981); Andrzej Grzegorzczak, *Próba treściowego opisu świata wartości i jej etyczne konsekwencje* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1983); Zofia Zaron, *Wybrane pojęcia etyczne w analizie semantycznej (Kochaj bliźniego swego)* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1985). Above, I have listed only the works recently published in Poland.

- 2 This is an abbreviation I use to for “values and anti-values.” In axiological literature anti-values are also often described as negative values. According to tradition, for the sake of simplicity, in this article I sometimes use the term “values” to refer to both positive and negative values.
- 3 In this article, *Vade-mecum* will abbreviate the poetic cycle *Vade-mecum*. I refer to particular poems from *Vade-mecum* by giving their titles or numbers (Roman numerals) (PWsz II, pp. 7–172).
- 4 The world of values in *Vade-mecum* (from the point of view of the content) has been interpreted by many historians of literature; cf., *among others*, Zdzisław Jastrzębski, “‘Pamiętnik artysty.’ (O *Vade-mecum* Cypriana Kamila Norwida),” *Roczniki Humanistyczne*, Vol. 6 (1) (1956–1957); Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki, “Komentarze,” in: Cyprian Norwid, *Dzieła zebrane*, Vol. II (Warszawa: PIW, 1966); Bogusław Wróblewski, “Kosmos *Vade-mecum* (fragmenty),” *Poezja*, Vol. 3 (1978); Zdzisław Łapiński, *Norwid* (Kraków: Znak, 1971); Jacek Trznadel, *Czytanie Norwida* (Warszawa: PIW, 1978); Edward Kasperski, *Świat wartości Norwida* (Warszawa: PWN, 1981); Józef Franciszek Fert, *Norwid – poeta dialogu* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1982). In the last four books the authors discuss the world of Norwid's values in general, not only in *Vade-mecum*, however, all of them devote much attention to this cycle. I omit here numerous articles devoted to the interpretation of particular poems from the *Vade-mecum* cycle and the problems of values in Norwid's works.



## 1.2

For Norwid in general, as well as for the entire poetic cycle *Vade-mecum* examined here, a division of values close to Scheler's hierarchy seemed to me the most adequate. It forms the basis for the typology of expressions designating (anti-)values in Norwid's *Vade-mecum*, and presented in the Appendix. The different types of values in the chart are assigned vocabulary items (of course only as examples) with appropriate contexts.

The right side of the diagram includes vocabulary with very general, non-specialised meanings of positive or negative values.<sup>5</sup> The separation of a subgroup of words designating anti-values, which refer to certain vague concepts, is explained by Norwid's understanding of the lack of the sacred, goodness, beauty, or cognitive value as clearly negative, i.e. their lacks being equal to anti-values.<sup>6</sup>

Norwid's system of values is based on Christian axiology, for which it is important to separate – within the profane – the vital values from the higher, spiritual ones and to introduce the sacred, which originates in God, as the highest value. The diagram shows the area, characteristic of Norwid's deeply Christian thought, of the potential sacralization of the profane, i.e., both spiritual values and vital values and (importantly!) anti-values (suffering, pain, misery etc.).<sup>7</sup> The line of names of basic spiritual values demonstrates that Norwid (following Plato, Pseudo-Dionysius, and many medieval philosophers)<sup>8</sup> treats them as the sacred unity having different manifestations.<sup>9</sup>

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5 The meanings of these words are sometimes (although not always) specified in contexts: e.g. the word *nijaki* [non-distinctive/flat] in the quoted phrase *styl nijaki* [non-distinctive style] can be referred to as aesthetic values.

6 Cf. the fragment (quoted partially in the footnotes to the diagram) from "Fortepian Szopena" ["Chopin's Grand Piano"]: "O ty! – Doskonałe wypełnienie, / Jakikolwiek jest Twój, i gdzie?... znak... / Czy w Fidiaszu? Dawidzie? czy w Szopenie? / czy w Eschylesowej scenie?... / Zawsze – zemści się na tobie: brak! ... / – Piętnem globu tego niedostatek: / Dopełnienie go boli!" [Oh you! – Consummate-completion, / Whatever is Your sign... and where? / Be it in Phidias? in David? or Chopin? / or in an Aeschylus's scene... / Always – you'll be revenged by: NOT ENOUGH...! / – Privation is this globe's stigma: / Fulfilment?... pains it!...] (English translation by Danuta Borhardt in collaboration with Agata Brajerska-Mazur, in: Cyprian Norwid, *Poems*, New York: Archipelago Books, 2011, pp. 73–75.)

7 For a more detailed discussion of this subject, see Section 6.3.

8 Cf. the concepts of transcendental beauty and beauty as the highest value in: Władysław Stróżewski, "O pojęciach piękna," in: Stróżewski, *Istnienie i wartość*.

9 Of course, both the sacralization and syncretism of spiritual values in Norwid's texts concern the values themselves, not their names.

## 2.1

In addition to the vocabulary designating primary values in the sense specified in the introduction, we can find in *Vade-mecum* words designating values that we define as *secondary*. Their secondary nature is based on the fact that they represent different kinds of elements of reality that are axiologically charged through certain relations with primary values. These relations include: a) the roles of subjects of states and characteristics constituting (anti-)values, agents, instruments, or results of axiologically marked activities – in other words, roles of predicate arguments known from semantics and semantic syntax (with the reservations that the predicates are here names of primary (anti-)values); b) elements of actualization: names of the places and times of the actualization of given (anti-)values. From among the primary (anti-)values in the sense adopted here, not all of them can be recognised as belonging to the distinguished classes of basic spiritual, vital and sacred, values that we henceforth refer to as *proper values*. There include many characteristics, states, and activities that we clearly value as good or bad – but in a subsidiary sense, as determining proper (anti-)values, as contributing to their creation or, conversely, as threatening them, or contributing to their annihilation. For example, the name of a trait serving the good is Norwid's *umysłu-stałość* [constancy of mind] from “Prac czoło” [“Work in Brow's Sweat”], and a feature threatening spiritual values is *niedojrzałość* [immaturity] from “Sfinks” [“Sphinx”]. We refer to such values, as opposed to the proper ones, as *auxiliary* values.

The mutual relations between the types of (anti-)values differentiated here can be presented in the following typology:

- 1.1. primary proper values, e.g. *goodness*;
- 1.2. primary secondary values, e.g. *hero*;
- 2.1. secondary proper values, e.g. *(im)maturity*;
- 2.2. secondary auxiliary values, e.g. *democrat*.

The specific values of a lower degree can be auxiliary to the values of a higher degree, e.g. life as well as death, and happiness but also suffering, can be auxiliary to moral values.<sup>10</sup>

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10 The division into proper and auxiliary values is not always obvious, therefore we speak of a typology, not a classification of values in this respect. Among others, the

At the same time, auxiliary values are usually the effects of some specific values or anti-values, so they are linked by a double cause-effect relationship with proper (anti-)values.

A very important auxiliary value in Norwid's axiology is *conscience*. Its high axiological value is connected (in the poet's viewpoint) principally with its rootedness in the sacred; within the profane, it constitutes that spiritual power which, in all circumstances, helps a man to discern a proper hierarchy of values and interpret a given situation in accordance with it.<sup>11</sup>

ways in which vital values are treated and their relations to spiritual values vary, and it seems that even Norwid's approach to spiritual values is subject to certain changes (e.g. Norwid does not always treat vital values as auxiliary spiritual values).

- 11 Here are two quotations concerning the role of conscience and its rooting in the sacred:

**Pytanie:** Jak zyskać wiedzę (ufność), że to a to przedsięwzięcie jest oryginalnym (czyli że zapewnia zwycięskie upadki i wreszcie zwycięstwo zupełne)?

**Odpowiedź:** Tę wiedzę-ufność indywidualnie zyskuje się przez odniesienie indywidualnego sumienia swego do ostatecznego źródła prawdy, za pomocą najzdrowszej - ekstazy, modlitwami coraz to krótszymi, aż do tak krótkiej i w tym zjętej toku, w jakim jest *Modlitwa Pańska* .... Sumienie indywidualne, zamiarem zaprzątnięte i z onym tą i tam idące drogą, o d-źródła wyboru i wynalastwa wolę i siłę. (PWsz VII, 55)

[**Question:** how can one gain the knowledge (confidence) that this and that undertaking is original (that is, it ensures victorious falls and finally complete victory)?

**Answer:** This knowledge-confidence is gained individually by relating one's own individual conscience to the ultimate source of truth, by means of the healthiest-ecstasy, by saying ever shorter prayers, until they are so short and concise as the *Lord's Prayer* .... An individual conscience, preoccupied with the intent and going with it this and that way, twists backwards the source of will and strength to choose and invent.]

The second quotation comes from *Promethidion* (DW IV, 120):

nie wiem, za co słowo to: *sumienie*  
 Miałby dotyczyć kto z was ostracyzmem...  
 I owszem... toć jest *urzeczywistnienie*  
*Najdoskonalsze*, i może jedyne,  
 I owszem, brylant to jest, który wagą  
 Przecieka, prując powierzchną glinę  
 I owszem – prawda to, z swą piersią nagą!

## 2.2

Looking at the vocabulary expressing values in *Vade-mecum* leads to a conclusion that secondary value names constitute a large part of its text. This is not a feature unique to *Vade-mecum* or Norwid's poems in general. Poetry usually uses images and expressions that say more about the holders, products, sources of values than directly about values themselves.

Particularly striking in *Vade-mecum* is a rich register of strongly axiologically marked names of people:

- proper names, such as *Abraham*, *Ezechiel* [Ezekiel], *Mojżesz* [Moses], *Chrystus* [Christ], *Paweł* [Paul], *Fidiasz* [Phidias], *Eschyles* [Aeschylus], *Herkules* [Hercules], *Maccniawel* [Machiavelli], *Szopen* [Chopin] etc.;
- names of social role holders, e.g. *handlarz* [tradesman], *szewc* [shoemaker], *szynkarz* [innkeeper], *mecenas* [lawyer], *akademik* [academic], *kawaler orderów* [knight of orders], *mandarynek* [mandarin], *celnik* [customs officer], *kat* [executioner], *czynownik* [chinovnik], *żołdak* [mercenary soldier], *dziejopis* [historiographer], *artysta* [artist], *muzyk* [musician], *poeta* [poet], *lirnik* [lirnyk], *gladiator*, *mag* [magician], *chrześcijanin* [Christian], *kapłan* [priest]; most frequently, though not always (cf. *czynownicy* [chinovniks] in Poem X, *kapłan* [priest] in Poem XV), they appear as names of specified (definite) objects;
- names of holders of properties and performers of actions, e.g. *doktryner* [doctrinaire], *demagog* [demagogue], *faryzeusz* [Pharisee], *hipokryta* [hypocrite], *rozpustnik* [lecher], *złodziej* [robber], *nieprzyjaciół* [enemy], *kazuiści* [casuists], *reformator* [reformer], *jędźca* [witch]; *demokrata* [democrat], *genius* [genius], *męczennik* [martyr], *mędrzec* [wise man], *piastunka* [nanny]; these names are usually used as predicates or attributes;
- names of nationalities: *Arab*, *Chińczyk* [Chinese], *Kolch* [Colchean], *Amerykanie* [Americans].

Most names of people are morally marked – positively or negatively.

[I do not know why this word: *conscience*  
 Would be touched by some of you with ostracism...  
 And indeed... this is *fulfilment*  
*The most perfect*, and maybe the only one,  
 And indeed, this is a diamond, which is  
 outweighing, cutting through the surface clay  
 And indeed – it is true, with its naked breast!].

### 3.1

In the evaluative vocabulary of *Vade-mecum*, a clear minority of words constitute words express conventional values. Most often, the value is expressed with words, in which the positive or negative evaluating element is only a more or less stabilised connotation (association).<sup>12</sup>

The evaluative words can be divided into several groups, regardless of their roles in the text. The first of these are words with connotations that are stable in the whole society, very often appearing in different languages, based on elementary human feelings. In *Vade-mecum* these include: *śloto* [mud] and *brud* [dirt] (from “Larwa” [“Larva”]), *kał* [faeces] (from “Idee i prawda” [“Ideas and Truth”]; at that time – also in Norwid’s text – in the meaning of ‘mud’), *dojrzałość* [maturity] (from “Laur dojrzały” [“Mature Laurel”]), *kajdany* [shackles] (from “Zagadka” [“Riddle”]), *ciepło* [warmth] of a bonfire (from Poem XLIX,) *katy* [executioners] (from Poem I), etc.

The second type includes words with connotations characteristic of a certain social group. In Norwid’s writings, these are above all connotations related to Christian culture, typical of words such as *Christus* [Christ], *Hostia* [the Host], *Chrzest* [Baptism], *Emanuel*, *Tabor*, *kapłan* [priest] – thus, of both numerous proper and common names. Norwid also uses words with connotations characteristic of his intellectual sphere, such as *artysta* [artist], *fortepian* [piano], *Fidiasz* [Phidias], *Cicero*, *Sokrat*, *handlarz* [tradesman], *kazuista* [casuist], or *mydło* [lit. soap] in “Purytanizm” [“Puritanism”] (related to *mydlarstwo* [lit. soap making] in the sense of ‘petite bourgeoisie, hypocrisy’).

The most numerous group in *Vade-mecum* are words with evaluative connotations belonging to the two groups mentioned above. However, there is also a third group – a whole series of evaluative words based on Norwid’s individual connotations. This group of connotational and often, simultaneously, semantic individualisms includes Norwid’s keywords such as *cały* [whole/entire] and *całość* [the whole/the entirety], *dopełnienie* [complementation/fulfilment] and *dokończenie* [completion] (cf. Poem C), and *ciąg* [sequence] and *praca* [work] (Poem LXIII), such types of writings highly appreciated by Norwid as *epos* [epic] and *dziennik* [diary]) (cf. LXXXVIII), and designations of people such as *historyk* [historian] in Poem XCIV or *korespondent Czasu* [time

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12 In the last decade, interest in pragmatics has increased in linguistics, and within its area, in the pragmatic meanings of words. The extra-definitional elements of contextual meanings are Machiavellian – as it is adopted here – connotations, closely related to the broader concept of Gricean implicatures.

correspondent] from “Czas i prawda” [“Time and Truth”]. For many of these words, in order to understand the content and characteristics given to them by Norwid, one has to reach for Norwid’s prose and letters, where one can find their explanations as their roles in the evaluative language and thought system of the poet becomes clearer.

### 3.2

A large proportion of connotation-based evaluative words have fixed values in Norwid’s texts and are repeated in many uses. This applies to words such as *słońce* [sunshine], *dojrzały* [mature], *cichość* [quietude] and *cichy* [quiet], *kapłan* [priest] and *krzyż* [cross], *bydlę* [cattle], and *kajdany* [shackles]. However, there are many words with ambivalent connotations – e.g. the adjective *czysty* [pure/clean], treated almost as pejorative in “Purytanizm” (*najczystsze mydło* [the purest soap]) and in “Czas i prawda” [“Time and Truth], where the “time” correspondent will express a pure thought in all languages, but connected with positive connotations in “Narcyz” [“Narcissus”] (*lubo pozierasz w wody czyste* [you look delightfully in pure waters]) or in “Bohater” [“Hero”] (*Heroizm czysty wcześniej nie dostawa* [pure Heroism was not enough earlier]). *Dziki* [wild] in “Dwa guziki” [“Two Buttons”] has clearly pejorative connotations, but in “Powieść” [“Novel”], appears *dziki chłopiec nagi* [a wild naked boy] as an alternative sense of *dziki* [wild] to the educated author, which seems to emphasise naturalness, unpretentiousness, and lack of dependence on convention; this expression would thus be one of the features that could serve aesthetic, moral, and cognitive values.

Writing about *chrześcijański skonu pogodnego ton* [the Christian cheerful tone of death] in Poem C, Norwid evokes the positive associations of the adjective *chrześcijański* [Christian], while in “Grzeczność” [“Politeness”] he uses it ironically, thus questioning its positive value.

Laurels in “Początek broszury politycznej” [“Beginning of a Political Pamphlet”] (*sprzedawać laury starym znajomościom* [sell laurels to old acquaintances], *laurów bujny szpaler* [a lush avenue of bay trees]) in “Tajemnica” [“Mystery”] convey an atmosphere of officiality; they are connected with the notion of fame, not necessarily deserved but artificially supported, whereas “Laur dojrzały” [“Mature Laurel”] in the title of the poem has positive associations.

There are also contextually evaluative words in *Vade-mecum* which are, in principle, completely neutral; e.g. *kanapka* [sofa] as a prop and with the attribute *atłasowa* [satin], *stół biurowy* [office table] in “Krytyka” [“Criticism”], in the context, *Ni burz opisy przy biurowym stole* [not a single description of storms at

the office table], and *Judea (złotousta)* [(gold-mouthed) Judaea] in “Tajemnica” [“Mystery”]. A specific type of contextual evaluation is used in the case of meta-textual evaluations when, for instance, *brzozy płaczące* [crying birches], *blaski* [glows], *usłoneczniania* [insolations], and *blawatki* [cornflowers] (“Do Walentego Pomiana Z.” [“To Walenty Pomian Z.”]; “Krytyka” [“Criticism”]) are evaluated negatively (via irony), as components of a specific text, which nevertheless does not change their positive connotations in the object language.

It is worth noting that words such as *blaski* [glows], *jasności* [brightness-es], *słońca* [suns], *obłoki* [clouds], and *kwiaty* [flowers] are frequent in *Vade-mecum*, also in non-ironical uses, contrary to what is said about the paucity of vocabulary describing nature in Norwid’s poetry.<sup>13</sup> However, images of nature always serve a greater purpose beyond the contemplation of nature itself; they are woven into a moral philosophy. We can see this in “Wies” [“Village”], “Narcyz” [“Narcissus”], “Źródło” [“The Source”], “Fortepian Szopena” [“Chopin’s Grand Piano”], “Weronia” [“Verona”], “Mistycyzm” [“Mysticism”], “Zawody” [“Occupations”], “Idee i prawda” [“Ideas and Truth”], “Purytanizm,” “Cnót-oblicze” [“The Face of Virtue”], “Wtedy ty Matko” [“Then You Mother”], and many other poems in which, at least as comparisons or elements of scenery, beautiful images of nature are axiologically marked, testifying to Norwid’s sensitivity to nature – not to mention the poem “Jak” [“Just As”], a personal lyric poem in the full meaning of the word, in which the relationships between the poet’s experiences and the natural world – plants, birds, atmospheric phenomena – are most fully revealed.

Atmospheric phenomena, along with the whole background of the sky and celestial bodies, constitute the most utilised and, at the same time, non-neutral axiological semantic field within the category of natural phenomena. *Słońce* [sun], *gwiazdy* [stars], *niebo* [sky] itself, *planeta* [planet], *grom* [thunderbolt], *piorun* [thunder], *grzmot* [thunderclap], *błyskawica* [lightning], and *wiatr* [wind] – these words are relatively frequent in *Vade-mecum*.<sup>14</sup> All of them are connected with some values, either vital or aesthetic, and based on the principle

13 cf., e.g., Zdzisław Jastrzębski, “Pamiętnik artysty,” pp. 49–50.

14 Here are the quantitative data on their frequency: *słońce* 13, *gwiazda* 8, *niebo* 8 (+ *niebiosą* 4) (for both lexemes, I give only the tokens for cosmic or, among others, cosmic meaning), *planeta* 5, *grom* 4, *piorun* 2, *grzmot* 4, *błyskawica* 3, *wiatr* 4. These data come from the *Vade-mecum* concordance, which was prepared in the Cyprian Norwid Language Dictionary Division with the assistance of a team of computer scientists from the Institute of Computer Science of the University of Warsaw and the mathematical machines of the University’s IT Centre.

of re-evaluation – and on sacred values. When speaking about the vocabulary of natural phenomena, it is worth noting that statements concerning the static nature of the language of Norwid’s poetry are incorrect.<sup>15</sup> The images of nature in *Vade-mecum* are overwhelmingly dynamic, showing nature in action. This also applies to images of human civilization – e.g. in “Stolica” [“Capital”] or the salons in “Nerwy” [“Nerves”] and “Ostatni despotyzm” [“The Last Despotism”]. Even in poems that are collections of moral guidelines, such as “Początek broszury politycznej” [“Beginning of a Political Pamphlet”] or “Prac czoło,” most directives and evaluations of conduct are formulated in a dynamic way – in metaphorical images, as in the stanza of “Początek” which starts with the words: *Nie trzeba kłaniać się okolicznościom...* [One does not have to bow to circumstances...] or in direct indications, such as, *Musisz pracować z potem twego czoła* [You have to work with the sweat of your brow].

This dynamism in form and content is closely related to Norwid’s definitely negative attitude towards apathy, stillness, and lifelessness, an attitude that the poet repeatedly expresses in *Vade-mecum*, whether it is when he writes in Poem I, *o niewiastach zaklętych w umarte formuły* [about women into dead canons bewitched] who *odchodzą – senne* [go away – half sleeping], or when he warns in “Prac czoło” that by encouraging people to work for enrichment just after the fatal “jatkę dziejów, zbawi się ludzkość... lecz automatów” [shambles of history, the humanity will be saved... but of automats] – and thus will be spiritually dead.

#### 4.1

The vocabulary items with evaluative connotations and those with evaluative conventional meanings play different roles in the text.

First of all, evaluative words appear in the axiological discourse directly, in the statements of the lyrical subject who says, for example in “Sfinks” [“Sphinx”], that “człowiek to kapłan bezwiedny i niedojrzały” [the man is a high priest unaware and unformed], in “Dwa guziki,” “Dzikość bowiem stąd pochodzi, / Że się jest je d n o s t r o n y m” [For wildness comes from the fact

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15 Cf., e.g., Ignacy Fik, *Uwagi nad językiem Cypriana Norwida* (Kraków: Kasa im. J. Mianowskiego, 1930), p. 23. The author writes: “It is not kinetics, not action, but statics, the state determines the essence of his style and creativity. For him, momentum is a frivolous thing. He hardly ever uses metaphors and comparisons of movement, unless he consciously wants to characterise a person or a thing of inferior kind.”



that one is o n e - s i d e d ] and the lyrical subject wonders that “Może byśmy już na śmierć zapomnieli / O chrześcijańskim skonu pogodnego tonie / I o całości żywota dojrzałego” [Maybe we would have completely forgotten about the cheerful Christian tone of death / And about the whole mature life] if it had not been for the beautiful, calm departure of Józef Zaleski.

Evaluative words also appear in the statements made by characters or personified objects or concepts in the genre of parable. For example, *Popularność* [Popularity] in “Addio” says: “Ja? nazywam się c z y n n o ś ć, Prawda?... – m a r n o ś ć!” [Me? I am called a c t i o n, Truth?... – v a n i t y!]. The gladiator in “Spowiedź” [“Confession”] asks: “Cóż? mi każesz, bym począł – gdy ... poklasną m n i e! ... nieczuli – B o g u!” [What? will you tell me I should do – when ... they applaud m e! ... insensitive – t o G o d! ...] and the painted parrots in “Nerwy” call out “Socialism” which has, in their beaks, undoubtedly negative connotations, although, for the author, there are no such connotations. Very often the evaluations of Norwid’s heroes do not agree with the author’s evaluations. Also, the poems often involve clashes between different attitudes and value hierarchies.<sup>16</sup> The two ranges mentioned above contain the vast majority of words with conventional evaluative meanings used in *Vade-mecum*.

## 4.2

Very often the evaluative connotations of words in *Vade-mecum* emerges from their roles in contexts such as parables, exempla, and visions. Some of them function there as names of props, such as *kanapka atlasowa* [satin sofa] or *papugi* [parrots] in “Nerwy,” such as *Cicero*, *Paweł* [Paul], and *Sokrat* in “Wielkie słowa” [“Big Words”]; and *Fidiasz* [Phidias], *Dawid* [David], *Szopen* [Chopin], and *Eschyles* [Aeschylus], as well as *kość słoniowa* [ivory] or *dom modrzewiowy wiejski* [larch-wood country manor] in “Fortepian Szopena.” It is worth noting how frequently this role is played by designations for people – specific, historical names or social roles, such as *akademik* [academic], *słynny pisarz* [famous writer], *mandarynek* [mandarin], *handlarz* [trader], *szynkarz* [innkeeper], etc. Within such texts are also names of traits with clear connotations, e.g. *białość alabastrowa* [alabaster whiteness] of Chopin’s hands, *jaskrawość gwiazdy* [brightness of a star] that shines over Warsaw, *szarość* [greyness] of cobblestones in “Fortepian Szopena,” *zwęglone łąny* [charred fields] in “Źródło,” *cień chłodny*

16 Cf. “Posąg i obuwie” [“Statue and Shoes”], “Addio,” “Narcyz” [“Narcissus”], “Saturnalia,” “Niebo i ziemia” [“Heaven and Earth”], “Język-ojczysty” [“Mother Tongue”].

[cold shade] in “Klaskaniem mając obrzękłe prawice” [“Their Hands Swollen from Clapping”], etc.

### 4.3

The other roles of evaluative vocabulary are related to stylistic tropes: metaphor, comparison, and irony. Among metaphors in *Vade-mecum* we find, for example, *balsamy strun* [string balms] in “Cacka” [“Pretty Things”], the very *cacka* [pretty things] in the title of this poem and also in the ending of Poem XCII, *karły* [midgets] in “Wielkie słowa” [“Big Words”] (*gałąź, włosy wzięwszy Absalona, / Skrzypiącą jemu i hufcowi: “Karły!”* [branch, taking Absalon’s hair, creaking to him and the troop: “Midgets!”]), and the idiom *brać przez rękawiczkę* [take sth through a glove] in “Początek broszury politycznej” (“Ni Ewangelii brać przez rękawiczkę” [Not even the Gospel taking through a glove]). There are frequent personifications, such as *Miłości-profil* [Love’s profile], *Dopełnienie* [Fulfilment/Complementation], *brak* [privation/lack] in “Fortepian Szopena,” and *Prawda i Popularność* [Truth and Popularity] from “Addio.” These personifications additionally underline the anthropocentric character of the cycle.

The domain of evaluative statements in *Vade-mecum* includes also comparisons. For instance, in the poem “Na zgon śp. Józefa Z.” [“On the Death of the Late Józef Z.”] we read, “Lecz mało kto je zamknął z tym królewskim wczasem i pogodą / Z jakimi kapłan zamyka Hostię w ołtarzu” [But few have closed them with this royal calmness and cheerfulness / With which the priest closes the Host in the altar]; *kapłan* [priest], *Hostia* [Host], *ołtarz* [altar] are here evaluative words, representing the sacred and introduced here for comparison. Similarly, but with negative connotations, are comparisons featuring *bydłę* [cattle] (in “Królestwo” [“Kingdom”]), *targ bydłęcy* [cattle market] (in “Nerwy”), and *tętno bębna* [pulse of the drum] (in “Źródło”).

Irony – often questioning what, on the basis of connotations (or conventional meanings), is value – can be found both in the titles of poems, such as “Kółko” [“Little Circle”], “Specjalności” [“Specialties”], “Grzeczność” [“Politeness”], in my opinion in “Początek broszury politycznej,”<sup>17</sup> and in the texts themselves. Compare, for example, the double use of the word *bliźni* [neighbour] in “Grzeczność” (“Wśród podejrzewających się bliźnich owych” [Amongst those neighbours suspecting one another] – an allusion to pseudo-Christianism, and

17 Cf. Jadwiga Puzynina, Barbara Subko, “Interpretacja wiersza Cypriana Norwida ‘Początek broszury politycznej,’” *Pamiętnik Literacki*, Vol. 2 (1985), p. 145.

similarly in “Nie ufając bliźniej ręce i oku” [Not trusting the neighbour’s hand and eye!]).

Norwid’s irony in *Vade-mecum* is directed at those who speak – loudly, in writing, or in thought – words in one way or another associated with values. This irony affects words with both positive and negative meanings or connotations. Consider a stanza from “Krytyka” [“Criticism”]:

Wiersz – kwitnie u nas – kwitną rymy śpiewne  
 Woni rodzimej, jak zielona fletnia;  
 I czują u nas z dala wiew trucizny.  
 – Satyra wtedy Muzę uszlachetnia,  
 Skoro się głównie rzuca na obczyzny,  
 Naleciałości chore, z krajów owych,  
 Gdzie naszych wiosen brak konwalijowych!

(PWsz II, 140)

[The poem – it blossoms with us – melodious rhymes bloom  
 Of native scent, like a green flute;  
 And from afar they feel a gust of poison.  
 – Satire ennobles then the Muse,  
 Since it mainly throws itself into the foreign lands,  
 Sick foreign influences, from those countries,  
 Where we lack our lily-of-the-valley springs!]

*Rymy śpiewne* [melodious rhymes], *rodzima woń* [native scent], *zielona fletnia* [green flute], and *wiosny konwaliowe* [lily-of-the-valley springs]; all these expressions, with positive connotations, along with those in which the value is part of a conventional meaning, e.g. *kwitnąć* [blossom/flourish] and *uszlachetniać* [ennoble], have been questioned here in the metatextual sense, as elements of the poetry of so-called national Romanticism. In this context, also the words with negative meanings or connotations have been questioned, such as *naleciałości* [foreign influences], *obczyzna* [foreign lands], *trucizna* [poison], and *chory* [sick]. The blade of “de-slandering” irony here cuts against those who wrongly evaluate foreign influences in literature and its language as inherently negative.<sup>18</sup>

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18 In this sense, we can recognise the rightness of the statement by Barbara Wosiek, “Ironia w liryce Norwida,” *Roczniki Humanistyczne*, Vol. 6 (1) (1956–1957), p. 184: “In these works (i.e. in Norwid’s lyric poetry) there is also no irony the subject of which would be phenomena ultimately evaluated to be positive or at least

Sometimes, Norwid's irony does not question the quoted evaluation; irony may relate to the very topic of the statement or the way the conversation is conducted, such as in "Ostatni despotyzm:" "Pomarańcza, jak widzę, z Malty – wymieniona!" / "Może druga?" / "i jakże Despotyzm ów runął??" ["I see the orange's from Malta – it's very sweet." / "Have another" / "and how is Despotism in defeat?"]. The author does not deny the quality of oranges here. His bitter irony concerns the hierarchy of topics and submission to conventions that derail conversations in salons. Also here, irony is aimed at the person participating in this mindless discourse.

## 5.1

The main objective of this work has been to demonstrate the distinguished classes of evaluative vocabulary present in *Vade-mecum* in various ways and their roles in the text. However, at least briefly, I would also like to address the issue of types of statements about values. Although, as announced in the introduction to *Vade-mecum* it is a cycle devoted to moral issues; there are very few author's or cited guidelines<sup>19</sup> related to values; there are also relatively few expressions in which the author himself directly attributes an (anti-)value to anything.<sup>20</sup> Owing to this, *Vade-mecum* has no moralising features. The poet most

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harmless." In recent years, authors writing about irony have increasingly often questioned its necessary connection to antiphrasis. Cf., e.g., Dan Sperber, Deirdre Wilson: "Irony and the use – mention distinction," in: *Radical Pragmatics*, ed. Peter Cole (New York: Academic Press, 1981), where the authors associate irony with expressing distance towards a certain statement (explicit or implicit); Catherine Kerbrat-Orecchioni, "L'ironie comme trope," *Poétique*, Vol. 41 (1980). The author of this work believes that the most important elements of an ironic expression are mockery and evaluation.

- 19 The poem "Początek broszury politycznej" consists entirely of the author's directives (which can also be read as commissive speech acts). For more on this subject, cf. Puzynina, Subko, "Interpretacja," p. 139. The author's directives directly related to values also appear in "Liryka i druk" ["Poetry and Print"], "Ciemność" ["Obscurity"], "Zawody," "Prac czoło," and "Kolebka pieśni" ["The Cradle of Songs"]. Such directives are also cited in "Addio," "Niebo i ziemia," "Język ojczysty," "Prac czoło," "Spowiedź," and "Cacka."
- 20 Such statements can be found in 14 poems, in: "Ogólniki" ["Generalities"], Poems III, XIII, XXIV, XLI, XLII, XLIII, LXIII, LXXI, LXXIV, LXXVIII, LXXXI, LXXXVII, XC. However, only the poem LXXXVIII "Omyłka" ["Mistake"] constitutes such an author's statement in its entirety.

often expresses his views on values indirectly, reporting on someone's values – which may correspond with his own judgments, or oppose them, constructing dialogues, asking deliberative and rhetorical questions, using irony, metaphors, comparisons, parables, and paradoxes, offering poetic (ironic?) definitions of concepts,<sup>21</sup> or expressing the feelings of the lyrical subject.<sup>22</sup>

## 5.2

The author's final evaluations, the messages of the poems, are often not explicitly expressed at all. They can often be inferred only after reading larger fragments of text, sometimes whole poems, sometimes even only by evoking the broader context of the poet's work, often with difficulty and uncertainty. For example, after reading the second stanza of "Sieroctwo" ["Orphanhood"], it seems that the civilization which "chce wszystko o d k r y w a ć na serio" [wants to d i s c o v e r everything seriously] is contrasted in a positive sense with the one which "chce wszystko p o k r y w a ć zabawnie / Świetną liberią!" [wants to

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21 For a discussion of these various textual structures in *Vade-mecum* (or more broadly – in Norwid's work), see Zdzisław Jastrzębski, *Pamiętnik artysty* (chapter: "Poetyka Norwida w *Vade-mecum*"), pp. 74–91; Zdzisław Łapiński, *Norwid* (Chapter 1: "Filozofia i poezja języka"), pp. 27–36; Michał Głowiński, "Norwidowska druga osoba," *Roczniki Humanistyczne*, Vol. 19 (1) (1971); Elżbieta Nowicka, "O dialogowości *Vade-mecum* Cypriana Kamila Norwida," *Ruch Literacki*, Vol. 5 (1979); Józef Franciszek Fert, *Norwid – poeta dialogu*; Edward Kasperski, "Problem pytań w twórczości Norwida," *Przegląd Humanistyczny*, Vol. 6 (1977); Stefan Kołaczkowski, "Ironia Norwida," *Droga*, Vol. 11 (1933); Wosiek, *Ironia w liryce Norwida*; Michał Głowiński, "Norwida wiersze-przypowieści," in: *Cyprian Norwid. W 150-lecie urodzin* (Warszawa: PIW, 1973); Maria Staszewska, "Paradoksy w liryce Norwida," in *Nowe studia o Norwidzie* (Warszawa: PWN, 1961); Henryk Siewierski, "Architektura słowa. Wokół norwidowskiej teorii i praktyki słowa," *Pamiętnik Literacki*, Vol. 1, 1981 (published in this volume as "Architecture of word." On Norwid's theory and practice of the word," pp.? – editor's note); Roman Jaskierny, "Diatryba, czyli Norwid jednoznaczny," *Teksty*, Vol. 5 (1979).

22 The problem of feelings in Norwid's poetry was thoroughly discussed by Danuta Zamącińska, *Słynne – nieznanne. Wiersze późne Mickiewicza, Słowackiego, Norwida* (Lublin: RW KUL, 1985) – published in the first volume of this monograph as: "Discovering Norwid's poetry," pp. 427–464. *Vade-mecum* is saturated with emotions, as evidenced also by numerous exclamatory sentences. Many of the poems in their entirety (I, XXVI, LIV, LXXXIV, XCV) or in part – which is often of evaluative character – are subjective confessions (cf. poem V stanza 3, poem VII stanza 7, poem XIX stanzas 6 and 7, etc.).

cover everything in a funny way / With a grand uniform!...];<sup>23</sup> only the further stanzas (3 and 5) allow us to conclude that the discovering civilization is also valued negatively by Norwid. The attitudes of people “mówiących uczenie” [speaking eruditely] and the cypresses in the poem “W Weronie” can be hypothetically marked with Norwid’s signs of value only by knowing about his vision of the world full of God’s signs and his aversion to the rationalists’ oversimplified view of reality. The reader may infer the negative assessment of the salon in “Ostatni despotyzm” from the quoted conversation; the poem is devoid of any author’s statement. This frequent lack of “dotting the ‘i’s and crossing the ‘t’s” in the author’s evaluations, or the evaluation through the expression of feelings – is a sign of good poetry, which avoids excessive didacticism.<sup>24</sup>

When discussing Norwid’s journalistic work, Radosław Pawelec states that it is characterised by evaluative statements in the form of assertions.<sup>25</sup> In poetry, this is different, which is probably connected with various manifestations of “poetry:” evaluative words are much more often found in presuppositions. Thus, for example, in each successive stanza of poem LXXX there is a mention of *słowa-wielkie* [big words], in “Ciemność” – *zimnota wieku* [epoch’s chill] (“Nim, rozgrzawszy pierwaj zimnotę wieku, / Płomień w niebo rzucą ofiarny” [Ere, first kindling epoch’s chill, They cast a flame into the skies, in atonement...]), in “Addio” – *marna prawda, popularność bez sumienia* [poor truth, popularity without conscience] (“Ani widzieć chcę tej Prawdy marnéj, / Ni tej Popularności, bez sumienia” [I want to see neither this poor Truth, / Nor this Popularity, without conscience]), in “Klaskaniem” – *katy* [executioners] (“Pytać was – nie chcę i nie raczę: k a t y!” [To ask you – neither I want nor

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23 It seems so on the basis of positive connotations of the words *odkrywać* [discover/uncover] and *serio* [seriousness].

24 Zamaćnińska (*Słynne – nieznanne*, p. 82) writes that “Norwid failed to not so much intellectually, but ‘practically’ reconcile in his own poetry the contradictions between his own concept of poetic language and his teaching passion.” The author says that in Norwid’s work the tendency to understatements coexists with the tendency to additions, some of which she considers poetically false (e.g. the ending of “Ruszaj z Bogiem” [“Go with God”] or “Larwa”). By contrast, R. Jaskierny believes that the whole poetics of *Vade-mecum*, together with its dialogicity, parabolicity and paradoxes, serves conveying the unambiguous, sometimes brutal message of Norwid’s truths (“Diatryba,” pp. 30–51).

25 Cf. Radosław Pawelec, “Językowe sposoby oceniania w pismach publicystycznych Norwida,” in: *Język Cypriana Norwida. Materiały z konferencji zorganizowanej przez Pracownię Słownika Języka Norwida w dniach 4–6 listopada 1985 roku*, ed. Krzysztof Kopczyński, Jadwiga Puzyńska (Warszawa: UW, 1990), pp. 71–86.

deign: e x e c u t i o n e r s ! ...]), etc. Of course, this applies even more to evaluative vocabulary based on connotation. And perhaps it is precisely owing to the low frequency of such vocabulary in the text, written generally indirectly, full of presuppositions and expressive feelings, that Norwid's messages and strong assertions, often of aphoristic nature, make such an impact on readers and listeners.

## 6.1

Norwid speaks of values in *Vade-mecum* by referring them to each other, to the human world (individuals and communities), and to God. They appear to him in a system of various relations and transformations.

Norwid differentiates what he believes should be differentiated: true and untrue poetry in "Liryka i druk," human compassion for physiological and spiritual suffering in "Litość" ["Mercy"], two types of enslavement in "Syberie" ["Two Siberias"], and various types of human closeness in "Bliscy" ["Loved Ones"]. When differentiating certain notions, he usually contrasts them based on some principle. Norwid also contrasts with emphasis things we basically know that are different: the values of the heart are juxtaposed with the values of the intellect in "Specjalności" ["Specialties"], success with victory in "Omyłka" ["Mistake"], pleasant feelings and the values of progress with the values of the human person in "Sieroctwo" ["Orphanhood"], *panowanie nad wszystkim na świecie i nad sobą* [rule/control over everything in the world and over oneself] with commonly understood *wolność* [freedom] and *niewola* [enslavement] in "Królestwo" ["Kingdom"], etc. Sometimes Norwid compares what is worse with what is better or best; e.g. in "Ogólniki" ["Generalities"] "Ponad wszystkie wasze uroki ... Odpowiednie dać rzeczy słowo!" [Above all your charms, ... To give the thing an appropriate word!], in "Harmonia" ["Harmony"] he says loneliness is many times better than parting with someone close to us due to differences in attitudes, in "Obojętność" ["Indifference"] he writes about different degrees of pain experienced as a result of human treachery, and in "Saturnalia" he (indirectly) expresses a thought that the division of competences between morality and philosophy is less important than shaping the attitudes of the young generation.

Norwid also notices the co-existence of values with anti-values in people, e.g. about "Larwa," i.e. the fallen man, he says it is *Biblii księga zataczająca się w błocie* [that book is the Bible rolling in the slime]; about the man in "Sfinks," that he is *kapłan bezwiedny i niedojrzały* [the man is a high priest unaware and unformed]; in "Specjalności" ["Specialties"] the one who "Najlepsze

serce miał na świecie!” [Had the best heart in the world!], at the same time “Pił, klął, żył w kości graniem” [Drank, cursed, lived by playing dice].

## 6.2

Speaking about the relationships between people and values,<sup>26</sup> Norwid first and foremost points to the misrecognition of values by humans. Thus, for example, the Athenian shoemaker in “Posąg i obuwie” does not recognise the value of thinking. *Pokolenia na wyspach zdziczałe* [the generations going wild on islands] from “Centaury” [“Centaurus”] “Wszystko, co nie jest, jak poziom ich, małe, / Umieją tylko zwać Pa n e m ! zwać B o g i e m ” [Everything that is not as small as their level / They can only call the L o r d ! call G o d ], the adversary from “Cenzor-krytyk” [“Censor-Critic”] does not understand “nawet różnicy / Między Krytyką a Cenzurą” [even the difference / Between Criticism and Censorship], and *człek dziki* [the wild man] from “Dwa guziki” assesses the usefulness, but “harmonii ogólnej ... pojąć nie może” [cannot understand ... the general harmony].

The poet also frequently writes about interpersonal conflicts related to different perceptions of values (cf. “Harmonia,” “Addio,” “Saturnalia”), as well as about the conflicts of values and attitudes within the human being: “Trudne z łatwym w przeciwne dwie strony / Rozerwą wpierw człowieka, / Nim harmonii doczeka” [Difficult with an easy in the opposite directions / Will first tear the man, / Before he achieves harmony] (Poem V); “Jak dziki zwierz przyszło Nieszczęście do człowieka ... Lecz on odejrzał mu” [Like a fierce beast, Misfortune came to man ... But he gazed back in the eye] (Poem XXX). In “Idee i prawda” we read about the conflict between earthly reality and escaping into the world of ideas; in “Spowiedź” the gladiator speaks about the conflict between instinct and skill and the desire to serve God in the best possible way.

Spiritual anti-values destroy people, while values give them brilliance. The power of destructive anti-values is addressed in “Larwa,” “Omyłka,” “Purytanizm,” “Kółko,” “Nerwy,” and “Początek broszury politycznej;” while the positive effect of recognised and practiced spiritual values in “Omyłka,” “Bohater,” “Pamięci Alberta Szeligi” [“In memory of Albert Szeliga”], “Na zgon śp. Józefa Z.,” “Fortepian Szopena.”

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26 In this study I omit – treating them as obvious – the mere attribution of (anti-)values to people and objects.



And finally, another important type of relationship between the man and the value, often found in *Vade-mecum*, is the human longing for different types of values. In Poem I “Znudzony pieśnią, lud wołał o czyny” [Bored by chants, people called for action], the lyrical subject of Poem V clearly longs for harmony; *wszystkie ludy* [all peoples] in Poem XXXIV want to be *nad wszystkie... pierwsze* [first... above all the others]; the lyrical subject of Poem XXXV wishes “Żeby to można arcydzieło / Dłutem wyprowadzić z grubych brył – / I żeby dłuto nie zgrzytnęło, / Ni młot je ustawnie bił a bił!” [That the masterpiece could be / Brought out of thick lumps with a chisel – / And that the chisel would not creak, / Nor would the hammer hit it and hit!...], and for all of us *czoła się mojąszą* [our faces are like Moses’s], in order to *od-calić* [dis-join] the second tablet of Lord’s commandments from Poem LI (“Moralności” [“Moralities”]).

### 6.3

Showing values in motion seems very important in *Vade-mecum*. Norwid speaks of how values degrade and deteriorate – through haste or recklessness (“Zawody”), through pragmatism and desacralization of culture (“Zapał” [“Fervour”] and “Naturalia”), through human misunderstanding and parochialism (“Do Walentego Pomiana Z.” [“To Walenty Pomian Z.”]), through falsehood and hypocrisy (“Kółko”), through the fact that “piętnem globu tego niedostatek: Dopełnienie go boli” [Privation is this globe’s stigma: / Fulfilment?... pains it!...] (“Fortepian Szopena”). On the other hand, we see in *Vade-mecum* how lower values are transformed into higher ones – vital anti-values into spiritual values – and how even spiritual evil can give rise to goodness (“Ciesz się późny wnuku!” [“Enjoy, grandson yet to come!”]).

### 6.4

Norwid’s world of values in *Vade-mecum* is dynamic – similarly to the language of *Vade-mecum*. Below I present the directions of action and change that seem most important in that world.

Norwid’s man experiences vital values or anti-values; he is pleased with success and suffers misery, persecution, rejection, and pain. These experiences may not lead any further, as in the poems “Czemu” [“Why”] or “Czemu nie w chórze” [“Why Not in Chorus”], but they may lead him along the path of destructive values, such as success, which *rozpaja* [makes sb drunk] (“Omyłka”) and suffering associated with fear, which leads to conscious, painful phariseism

(“Nerwy”).<sup>27</sup> However, the experience of vital anti-values, suffering, may guide a man towards spiritual values, help him recognise them intellectually and, above all, to live according to them and create them.

Norwid’s man returns to the lost Eden by waiting and, at the same time, seeking the truth (“Idee i prawda”), through control over everything and himself (“Królestwo” [“Kingdom”]), through work *z potem czoła* [by the sweat of his brow] and achieving *umysłu-stałość* [stability of mind] (“Prac czoło”), through *samodzielne boje* [independent battles] from “Laur dojrzały” [“Mature Laurel”], with the help of *cnoty, od których cofa strach śmieszności* [virtues from which we withdraws out of the fear of ridicule] (“Ironia” [“Irony”]), through *bolesć, która zwycięża siebie sama* [the pain that overcomes itself] (“Na zgon śp. Józefa Z.”), and martyrdom combined with faith (“Początek broszury politycznej”), by the way of conscience and struggle (“Harmonia”). The human being returns through love and the beauty that is its fruit, the beauty of art (“Fortepian Szopena”) and the beauty of forgiveness (“Ruszaj z Bogiem” [“Go with God”]), the beauty of mature life and death that completes this life (“Na zgon śp. Józefa Z.”). This is the way of the human being to the sacred, from which he or she originated and which he or she betrayed, it is *wspólna kraina słów wielkich* [the common land of big words] (Poem LXXX), it is *uspokojona na skroś głębia* [a thoroughly soothed depth] (Poem LXXXI), it is *Góra Tabor* [Mount Tabor] (from “Fortepian Szopena”).

This human struggle back to the sacred is facilitated by the action of God in the world, God who gives Moses the tablets of his commandments (Poem LI), rescues humanity from the tragic consequences of two still valid civilizations – covering and discovering (Poem XXIV) – completes human heroism (Poem LXXIV), *ociera łzy, co sączą się pod uciskiem* [wipes away the tears that seep under oppression] (Poem XIV), and *kroplę rosy upuszcza, skoro się gdzie nadłamię trawa polna* [releases a drop of dew, where field grass breaks off] (Poem C).

Both in the content and in the form of *Vade-mecum*, if there is invariability, static persistence, it has a movement, a change in the background and is either the result of intentional irony or disgust – as in “Czynownicy” [“Chinovniks”] or “Kłaskaniem” or of the desire to indicate what in the world of *dwóch konwulsji* [two convulsions] from “Stolica,” *pojedyneków, heroicznych rejtard* [duels, heroic retreats] from “Początek broszury politycznej” and *rwących się koni kaukaskich*

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27 However, one’s own phariseism – if recognised, suffered – can be a path to the good, to the sacred. Cf. Jacek Leociak, “*Vade-mecum*, czyli wędrówka przez świat mylnego zamętu,” in: *Język Cypriana Norwida*, pp. 105–124.

[Caucasian horses tearing forth], from “Fortepian Szopena” – persists – like *szlachetny marmur* [noble marble], like *odłamy Prawa między Ludów Ludami* [factions of Law among Peoples of Peoples], and from “Moralność” [“Morality”], like *stanów-stan* [state-of-states] of Norwid’s “Piełgrzym” [“Pilgrim”]. It persists to change, or rather to give opportunities for the transformation of human conflict into a fight, failures – into fulfilments and anger – into fervour that can create.

## Appendix

The classification of expressions denoting (anti-)values in Norwid’s *Vade-mecum*:

expressions							
referring to the elements of reality as specific types of (anti-)values						referring to the elements of	
spiritual (anti-)values				vital and emotional (anti-)values		reality presented as (anti-) values in a syncretic way (or contextually specified)	
the sacred	the profane						
sacred (anti-) values	moral (anti-) values	aesthetic (anti-) values	cognitive (anti-) values	state of things	human emotions	designating (anti-) values directly	designating (anti-)values based on negative connotations of dullness
świętość [sanctity] 1	dobro [good] 3	piękny [beautiful] 8	prawda [truth] 11	życie [life] 13	szczęśliwy [happy] 17	ideał [perfection] 22	czczy [empty] 27
bez-Boży [Godless] 2	heroizm [heroism] 4	kształtny [well-formed] 9	falsz [falsehood] 12	zdrowy [healthy] 14	boleść [pain] 18	harmonia [harmony] 23	nijaki [non-distinctive] 28
	szlachetność [nobleness] 5	brzydki [ugly] 10		śmierć [death] 15	cierpienie [suffering] 19	wielki [big] 24	żadny [dull/bland] 29
	zło [evil] 6			nędza [misery] 16	przyjemny [pleasant] 20	brak [lack] 25	
	zdrada [betrayal] 7				miło [nice] 21	niedostatek [privation] 26	

1. For example: “przenosić w drugich swą własną zawziętość / Godzi się tyle... ile czcisz ich świętość” [to transfer one’s own obstinacy onto others / Befits as much... as to honour their sanctity], Poem LXIX, “Początek broszury politycznej” [“The Beginning of the Political Pamphlet”].
2. “i szedłem dalej w powietrzu i porze / I świetle, które były rzetelnie b e z - B o ż e !” [so now I walked through air / And season and light that were truly God-less!...] Poem XCIII, “Źródło” [“The Source”].
3. “gdyby ... / I zło się zbytkiem dobra prostowało” [If ... / Even evil were to be straightened with an excess of good], Poem LXXV, “Ideal i reformy” [“The Ideal and Reforms”].
4. “Heroizm będzie trwał dopóki praca” [Heroism will continue as long as the work does]. Poem LXXIV “Bohater” [“Hero”].
5. “Uszanujcież ten kwiat sercowy, / Tę szlachetność” [Respect this flower of the heart, / This nobleness], Poem XXXVIII, “Zawody” [“Occupations”].
6. See ex. 3.
7. “Lecz kto nie doznał, jak zdrad, / Męczeńskich nie dość mu palm” [Yet whoever has not suffered but betrayal, / Has not had enough of martyr’s palms], Poem XXIX, “Obojętność” [“Indifference”].
8. E.g., “I pięknym będąc, nie jest ukochan od onej” [And being beautiful, he is not beloved of hers]; “Do Walentego Pomiana Z.” [“To Walenty Pomian Z.”].
9. E.g. “od Wirgiliusza kształtnych pień” [from Virgil’s well-formed chants], Poem LXI, “Bogowie i człowiek” [“Gods and Man”].
10. “Jak muchy brzydkie, które ze skwarów szaleją.” [Like ugly flies mad from the heat], Poem XCIII, “Źródło” [“The Source”].
11. E.g. “W każdym kraju inaczej Prawda się udziela” [In each country, the Truth is different], Poem LXXI, “Czas i prawda” [“Time and Truth”].
12. “Dekoracje zdają się być zawsze dowodem braku albo fałszu jawności w społeczeństwie” [Decorations always seem to be the evidence of a shortage or falsehood in openness in society]. Poem XII, “Szczęście” [“Happiness”].
13. “Dłonią czujesz, że tknąłeś życie... / Podejmując Prawa odłamy” [With your hand, you feel you have touched life... / Taking factions of Law], Poem LI.
14. “Nie ma już więcej nic za powołanie / Nad sprawność dobrą? byt zdrowy?” [Is there nothing more to vocation / Beyond good skill? healthy existence?], Poem LXXIV, “Bohater” [“Hero”].

15. "Nie Bóg stworzył p r z e s z ł o ś ć i śmierć, i cierpienia." [God did not create t h e p a s t , nor death nor pain,] Poem II, "Przeszłość" ["The Past"].
16. "przestąpiłem nędzy-próg, kłamstwa-podwoje" [I have crossed the threshold of misery, the doorway of lies], Poem XCIII.
17. "Szczęśliwi przyjdą, jak na domiar złemu" [The happy ones will come, on top of all that evil], Poem LXXXIV, "Czemu" ["Why"].
18. "Przedwieczny nie pragnie boleści tej / Która osłupia serce ludzkie" [The eternal one does not want the pain / Which dazzles the human heart], Poem C, "Na zgon" ["On the Death of"].
19. See Ex. 15.
20. "co? Jasne / A co ciemne? – On ledwo że wie, co przyjemne!" [What? Light / And what dark? – He barely knows what is pleasant!], "Do Walentego Pomiana Z." ["To Walenty Pomian Z."].
21. "Mówią, że Postęp nas bogaci co wiek; / Bardzo mi to jest miło i przyjemnie" [They say that Progress makes us richer each century; / It is very nice and pleasant to me], Poem XXIV, "Sieroctwo" ["Orphanhood"].
22. "Czemu? ten świat ... nie Ideałem?" [Why? this world ... is not a Perfection?], Poem XX, "Specjalności" ["Specialties"].
23. E.g. "Trudne z łatwym w przeciwne dwie strony / Rozerwą wprzód człowieka, / Nim harmonii doczeka" [Difficult with easy in the opposite directions / Will first tear the man, / Before he achieves harmony], Poem V, "Harmonia" ["Harmony"].
24. E.g. "Wielkie-słowa" [Big-words] (the title of Poem LXXX).
25. "Zawsze – zemści się na tobie: BRAK!" [Always – you'll be revenged by: LACK!...], Poem XCIX, "Fortepian Szopena" ["Chopin's Grand Piano"].
26. "Piętnem globu tego niedostatek:" [Privation is this globe's stigma:], Poem XCIX, "Fortepian Szopena" ["Chopin's Grand Piano"].
27. "[Felieton] czytać będzie dobry Obywatel / Także – przez poświęcenie... nie dla czczych bagatel" [a good Citizen will read [a column] / Also – by sacrifice... not for empty trivialities], Poem LXXI, "Czas i prawda" ["Time and Truth"].
28. E.g. "Styl nijaki" [Bland style] (the title of Poem LXXVIII).
29. "Stawszy się ku nim, jak one, bezwładny, / Tak samo greczny i zarówno ż a d n y ." [And became toward them, as they were, inert, / Courteous, as they were, and equally d u l l . ], Poem I, "Klaskaniem mając obrzękłe prawce" ["Their Hands Swollen from Clapping"].

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Elżbieta Dąbrowicz

## Sentences and Events

**Abstract:** Zygmunt Krasiński as a letter-writer endeavoured to recount the intensely personal world of experience he lived in. By contrast, Cyprian Norwid sought to build in letters transactional episodes readjusting his affinity with the addressee. In his early years of exile, Norwid was keen to reprimand the people he wrote to. His letters then were thought of and written as a sequence of benchmark events widely transcending his private domain. The excerpt taken from the letter to Jan Koźmian epitomises this attitude: “Piszę tak – bo tak jest” [I am writing this – because it is so]. In the aftermath of his American trauma, Norwid the correspondent ceased to try influencing people. Henceforth he needed the exchange of letters to make the best possible use of the opportunity to run his shattered self via exerting control over his social profile. The focus of this contribution is on Norwid’s letters to Teofil Lenartowicz and Karol Ruprecht as instances of the pragmatic game conducted by the author.

**Keywords:** Cyprian Norwid, Zygmunt Krasiński, epistolography, biography, nineteenth century epistolography

write to both of us

“Zresztą szczęście jest wielkie ta różnica pomiędzy listem a książką”<sup>1</sup> [Besides, this difference between a letter and a book is immensely fortunate]. Unlike Maria Trębicka, the addressee of the above words excerpted from the letter of “21 February 1854,” the readers of Norwid’s published correspondence do not experience this difference. They go from one fragment to the next, from the beginning to the end of the volume, involuntarily or deliberately trying to embrace the whole. Of course, the print favours this type of wandering and facilitates the reader’s orientation in the cluster of sentences. At the same time, however, it makes it impossible to understand each individual letter separately, the letter as a biographical fact. Once printed, placed in the company of other letters in chronological order, next to literary works, the letter says nothing about the event that occurred between the author and the addressee. Each of these letters occurred between two people, even if a letter was put in a drawer instead of being mailed. Each one came into being for some reason, which was sometimes stated explicitly. In order to enjoy this difference “between a letter and a book,” one must abandon for a while the giant library of a Polish studies

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1 A letter to Maria Trębicka from 21[–23] February 1854 (DW X, 485).

expert, and instead think back to the “scribbled” manuscript that remembers who, one day and at a certain address, reached for the pen.

Much to the concern of an outside reader, for Norwid the letter was primarily an event. Norwid did not savour his own epistolary art, but used it for specific purposes. Diametrically opposed in this respect, Krasiński did not care much about this conceived eventualization of the letter, because it was to the letters that he was fleeing from the nightmare of the world and body. He wrote every day and in large volumes. With his pen, he turned the kaleidoscope of events. He told the story, and by taking the role of the narrator, he dominated over the protagonists. He did not stand face to face with the addressee. Instead, he had for him this presented world, the history of thought. At the same time, by writing for himself, he proved that he was still what he was. The subject of the story embraced the experiencing “self.”<sup>2</sup>

Norwid’s letters were directly related to the decisions he made with regard to himself and others in his own affairs. Through letters, he influenced his addressees, trying to win them over, instruct them, or make them aware of something. However, his trust in the power of persuasion was waning over time. In 1868, he corrected his former delusions:

Kilkanaście temu lat mniemałem był, że wszystko z ludźmi zrobić można – że przekonywające jest obowiązujące, a obowiązujące nieledwie panujące – dziś – – niejaki odsyłacze i omówienia, i liczne wyjątki w tej mierze znajduję i poczuwam. Człowiek jest tak dalece wolny w osobistości swojej, iż może nawet nie widzieć, gdy patrzy. (PWsz IX, 334)

[More than a dozen years ago I thought that anything could be done with people – that what is convincing is binding, and what is binding is almost a rule – today – – some references and discussions, I also find and experience many exceptions to that. Man is so free as a person that they may not even see while looking.]

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- 2 In a letter to August Cieszkowski from 8 April 1841, Krasiński encouraged the addressee to react quickly in his typical way: “I look forward to receiving your promised letter with utmost impatience. It will find me at Via Sacra – the ruin is standing amidst the ruins and does not move, and soon it will crumble to dust, thus write while the spark is still waiting for you, capable of understanding you, as later only ashes will receive your letter and having scattered it with themselves, or maybe, without understanding it, they will be lying along with it among the rubble and ivy until the day when the words of the apostle come true: A new heaven and a new earth.” Zygmunt Krasiński, *Listy do Augusta Cieszkowskiego, Edwarda Jaroszyńskiego, Bronisława Trentowskiego*, compilation and introduction by Zbigniew Sudolski, Vol. 1 (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1988), p. 39.

Arguments connected with logic met with the resistance of human will. A faultless series of premises and conclusions was torn to pieces when he was met with a firm refusal.

Several years earlier, Norwid believed in the influence of the revealed truth. He wrote to the Koźmians: “Piszę tylko, ażeby oczy *wam* otworzyć” (DW X, 225) [I am only writing to open *your* eyes]. He maintained that if they could not see, it meant they were not looking. Norwid did not think about the difference of opinions resulting from different points of view. He defined himself as the one who sees; he told his addressees they were blind.

“Piszę tak – bo tak jest” (DW X, 266) [I am writing this – because it is so] – this was the final argument in his disputes with the recent protectors. Norwid did not leave his addressees any place for criticism. He did not envisage compromises and he did not intend to follow the remarks. By categorically stating “yes, because yes,” he decided not only his attitude, but also the behaviour of the correspondence partners. The concerned critics of the letters were left no other choice but to switch their position to enemies.

In 1871, Norwid did not remember the formula “I am writing this – because it is so.” He regretted that “Na całym europejskim stałym lądzie (kontynencie) jest tylko jeden liczebnie duży naród, starożytny, szczerze przyjętego obyczaju; nie można jemu nic a nic ściśle prawdziwego odkryć i powiedzieć” (PWsz IX, 485) [There is only one ancient nation with large population on the entire European mainland (continent) with tight customs; it cannot be revealed or told absolutely nothing exactly true]. In the general world of “lie and hypocrisy,” the boundary between truth and falsehood is fuzzy. The lie has run wild and become impertinent, but also ended up in the gutter of fabrication – a fabrication that is simply woven, not intricate at all, not enticing. The spokespersons for truth in such a “Polish world”<sup>3</sup> could only choose to remain silent instead of speaking; they could try to suggestively remain silent.

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3 I borrow this term from Stanisław Tarnowski: “This novel, terribly sad in its plot, would be even sadder if it were an expression of the author’s honest and constant views on our Polish world, on the world in general. For if the world were similar to it, in the world ... there would be no God and his Providence; and if the Polish world were like this, what could be there in store for it?” Stanisław Tarnowski, “Małe powieści (1881),” in: *Studia do historii literatury polskiej. Wiek XIX. Rozprawy i sprawozdania*, Vol. 5: *Henryk Sienkiewicz*, ed. Stanisław Tarnowski (Kraków: Spółka Wydawnicza Polska, 1897), p. 16. What if the “Polish world” is like that? Norwid did not dismiss the question.

Letters failed as a method of persuasion. The addressees remained indifferent to Norwid's truths. They had their own truths to offer. Forced to choose from among the truths of others, from among "tysiąca drobnych fanatyzmów" (DW X, 51) [a thousand petty fanatisms], Norwid chose to travel overseas. The American attempt at solitude and self-fulfilment, which ended in defeat, made him clearly see a less ambitious function of the letter, formerly reserved for the private sphere. He did not want any more to influence the addressees but – through them – himself. In 1869, he wrote: "Albowiem nikt profilu swego naturalnym sposobem obejrzyć bez zwierciadeł nie potrafi... tak dalece i ku społecznemu obcowaniu utworzony jest człowiek" (PWsz IX, 409) [Nobody can naturally see their profile without using mirrors... thus to such a high degree the man is created for social contact]. The letters allowed the author to see himself from a social perspective and to mark boundaries between him and the world. Almost every letter spoke about the difference between the writer and the correspondence partner.

"Ja się różnię!... i czasem do dnia sądnego różnię" (PWsz IX, 381) [I differ!... and sometimes until the judgement day I will differ], he explained to his addressees. His being "different" did not depend on the mood or on changing circumstances. Being himself meant as much to Norwid as experiencing the difference between himself and the others. Thus he assured Zygmunt Sarnecki: "ja się nigdy z nikim nie kłócę" (PWsz IX, 381) [I am never arguing with anyone], and then, logically "ja nigdy z nikim nie godzę się" [I never agree with anyone]. A dispute resulting from the difference of opinion or mutual misunderstanding led to a temporary or permanent break of contact. After an argument, there could always be a consensus. Norwid avoided arguments in order to evade the pressure to agree. He did not want to argue, but he had to differ, if possible, he would do so "nobly,"<sup>4</sup> so as not to deviate from his path or get lost in the chaos of difficult everyday life. By experiencing differences, he became more consistent; he strengthened himself in his conviction.

With almost every letter, he opposed himself to the addressee, or rather he confronted his true "himself," his "Norwid" with his addressee's "Norwid." The basic sentence of his letter adhered to the schema: "You should know that I am

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4 Following Krasiński's death, Norwid wrote: "Wielki to jest szwank postradać szlachetnie różniącego się przyjaciela, w tej epoce zwłaszcza, w której łatwiej może napotkać ludzi pamiętające się kochających, niż umiejących szlachetnie i z miłością różnić się" [It is a great harm to lose a *friend that could differ so nobly*, especially in this epoch when it is easier to meet people who passionately love each other than those who know how to nobly and with love differ from one another] (DW XI, 315).

not as I know you see me.” Within the limits of a sentence, a meaningful choice was made from the perspective of an entire life.

Norwid rarely wrote to inform the addressee, “dać wiadomość o tym, co dzieje się” (DW X, 364) [to give a message about what was happening]. When it came to confessing the reason for writing, he eagerly resorted to negation. He explained to Bohdan Zaleski: “piszę to więc, aby nie wyobrażać sobie, że mię posądzacie tam niesłusznie, iż mniej Was kocham” (DW X, 219) [I am thus writing this in order not to imagine that you wrongly suspect me that I love you less]. He warned Jan Koźmian: “Nie myśl, proszę, że choćby najlżej obrażony jestem” (DW X, 225) [Please, do not think that I am offended at the slightest]. At other times, he extensively argued with the predicted reaction of the addressee:

Wiem, że sobie za żarcik weźmiesz to, zapewne z powodu, iż każdy wiersz żarcika tego krwią i cało-żywołotami ludzkimi pisany. ... Jeśli zaś za żart weźmiesz, to wiem za co, oto za tę macochę moją, za *Ironię!* (DW X, 448)

[I know that you will take it for a little joke, probably because every line of this little joke is written by blood and human live-wholeness. ... If you do take it for a joke, then I know what for, for this stepmother of mine, for *Irony!*].

And finally, a sentence with simple negation: “Bracie mój – nie wiesz, co jest ironia” (DW X, 449) [My brother, you do not know what irony is]. Each of the three statements emphasised the decision to write a letter and, moreover, it offered a look into the field of possibilities, from which the decision was made. Norwid’s sentence grew out of the negation of someone else’s sentence, which had not yet been uttered. Only then, when the latter had finally been expressed under the pressure of negation, Norwid’s sentence found its author’s internal conviction.

The letter required a decision, and thus a clear mind, capable of embracing the whole field of possibilities with one sentence or paragraph. It’s no wonder that Norwid avoided writing in illness (less so about the illness) or, more generally, in suffering. If he wrote, “I am suffering,” it was only with the purpose of removing himself from his addressee’s eyes.

Krasiński’s epistolary activity was connected with the belief that “our whole being ... is one instance of pain.”<sup>5</sup> Pain made him a philosopher, epistolographer, “unnamed poet.”<sup>6</sup> Norwid, on the contrary, did not submit painful experiences

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5 Zygmunt Krasiński, *Listy do Stanisława Małachowskiego*, compilation and foreword by Zbigniew Sudolski (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1979), p. 42.

6 In his monograph entitled *Zygmunt Krasiński. Dzieje myśli*, Vols. 1–2 (Lwów: Towarzystwo Wydawnicze E. Wende, 1912), Juliusz Kleiner described Krasiński’s “philosophy of suffering.”

to an epistolary analysis. Suffering hit him all of a sudden. He once complained to Zaleski: “Tyle w tym roku niespodzianych ciosów odebrałem!” (DW X, 190) [I have received so many surprise blows this year!]. As long as he could, he proved with the use of letters that he was standing firmly on his feet, or at least that he was defending himself against helplessness. He wrote to Piotr Semeneko: “Nie mówię, iżbym stał przeto abym *nie upadł* – ale nie mówię, iż upadłem i leżę, aby wstać – ten wstęp niechaj mi służy do powiedzenia, co nastąpi, to jest – żem jest spokojny” (DW X, 183) [I am not saying that *I am standing* so that *I will not fall* – but I am not saying that I have fallen and I am lying down to rise – I use this introduction to say what will happen – that is, that I am calm]. After all, he finally managed to find his way out of the entangled sentence.

The series of misfortune did not bring Norwid to conclusions in the style of Krasiński. On the contrary, dismantled from all illusions, from America he took away the discovery of “what God’s gift is:”

Skoro rękę moją prawą zachował mi Bóg, w dniach pierwszych, kiedy rysować mogłem, uczułem, że nic mi nie brak, że jestem bogaty!... Człowiek, kiedy niebezpieczeństwa prawdziwego ujdzie, dopiero wie, co jest dar Boży. (DW X, 520–521)

[Since God spared my right hand, in the first days when I could draw, I felt that I missed nothing, that I was rich!... man, when he escapes a real danger, only then does he know what God’s gift is.]

Suffering allowed him to feel and comprehend himself, his talent, his body, and finally his faith; all of these were gifts from God. Afterwards, having come back to Europe, he no longer needed to look for evidence of divine mercy. He met it everywhere on his way, also while traversing the Polish world. About his fellow countrymen of patriotic disposition, he wrote:

Oni kochają Polskę jak Pana Boga, i dlatego zbawić jej nie mogą, bo cóż ty Panu Bogu pomożesz? Zaiste, że *Najmiłosierniejszy-miłosiernik jest On, który widzi to wszystko, oczekiwając*. (DW XI, 42)

[They love Poland as they love God and for this reason they cannot save it, because how can you help God? Indeed, *the most Merciful one is He who sees all this while waiting*.]

Being a believer in merciful God, Norwid did not shun the role of a comforter. In his consolatory reflections sent to Konstancja Górńska, he explained where the intensity of pain comes from:

jak doczekamy się w boleściach odkrycia konsekwencji boleści naszych: widzimy jasno, że tak jest dobrze i że inaczej być nie mogło, ale póki oczekujemy na to jasnowidzenie, póty nam się wydaje, iż mogłoby być coś lepszego, i kłócimy się w duchu z Panem Bogiem, i cierpimy naszą niecierpliwość. (PWsz VI, 618)

[when we can discover the consequences of our pain we see clearly that this is good and that it could not have been otherwise, but as long as we are awaiting this clear vision, it seems to us that there could have been something better, and we are arguing internally with God, and we are wrestling with our restlessness.]

Thus, suffering comes from a lack of patience. Using wordplay, Norwid indicated that the real source of unbearable pain lies in the suffering persons themselves. People suffer from the loss – of something or someone – forever. They suffer because they cannot bear the fact they have irretrievably lost something or someone. Alone, detached from the world, they are unable to cope with their suffering. To get the world back, one must first learn to pray. Norwid's letter to Górska, who was depressed about the death of her sister, treated prayer as an "almost omnipotent" way of relieving pain. The writer paraphrased the teachings of Christ, emphasising how important it is to know what to ask for, and how rare a skill it is, a skill that requires practice and experience, not just determination.

Although Norwid advised her to seek peace in prayer, he did not recommend that his "troubled" addressee succumb to palliative loneliness. However, one should be on guard when dealing with one's surroundings. Norwid suggested the addressee take another step as part of his therapy: "Druga rzecz jest znalezienie stosunku naszego z ludźmi i użycie go tak, ażeby tamtego pierwszego nie popsuł" (PWsz VI, 620) [The second thing is to find our relationship with people and use it in such a way that it does not spoil the first one.]

She had to learn to speak about her suffering, remembering that "główną rzeczą jest nie-komunikowanie utrapienia swojego z jego strony czasowej, ale ze strony wiecznej" (PWsz VI, 620) [the main thing is to not communicate one's worry from its temporal perspective, but from the perspective of eternity], and thus including the moral and providential dimensions. Those who respected this principle spared themselves additional suffering relating to others' reactions to one's confessions. Pain grew along with the loss of trust in God; the less the suffering persons trusted God, the more understanding they demanded of people and the more painful disappointment awaited them. Norwid suggested that no one can comfort a suffering person unless the consoler can comfort themselves by praying. Prayer brought calmness. Relations with people, including via letters, put this calmness to the test, which was desirable.

As a comforter, Norwid spoke in a factual way, it would even seem without compassion. Being aware of his own helplessness, in a letter of condolence to Michalina Zaleska née Dziekońska, he wrote:

Cieężkie jest życie – Szanowna Pani! – pocieszać nie myślę – a widzieć Ją dopiero, kiedy Pani będziesz swobodnie mogła widzieć obcych. (DW XI, 508)

[Life is hard – Dear Lady! – I will not try to comfort you – and I will see you only when you are ready to comfortably see strangers.]

From the tone of Norwid’s letter it appeared that not only the experience of a loss makes the world strange, the mourner also becomes a stranger to the world. Norwid gave the addressee a sign that he is waiting “aby ustąpił cień z miejsca, na które padnie” (DW XI, 508) [for the shadow to recede from the place where it fell]. After all, the shadow has to recede, because the Earth rotates as usual.

In a reply to Teofil Lenartowicz, Norwid wrote a sentence that could not be attributed to anyone else: “Piszę więc nie dlatego, iż mnie co boli” (DW XI, 212) [I am thus writing not because something is hurting me.] Especially for suffering Krasiński, such a formula would not have any benefit. He rather resorted – not without exaggeration – to sentences similar to the one from a letter to Delfina: “I am the same, only with the difference that it is worse – it is blood, it is nerves that shatter me.”<sup>7</sup> Lenartowicz also did not hide pain in his letters; he even encouraged Norwid to write when he would be “affected by pain.”<sup>8</sup> The latter, however, did not see any reason to do so. He claimed that after his return from America, nothing could affect him. In order not to fall into the interpretative mistake of affectionate Lenartowicz, right at the very beginning of the letter, Norwid destroyed his friend’s expectations: “I am thus writing not because something is hurting me.”

Besides, he contradicted not only the expectations. An unforewarned reader could easily take the letter for a reaction of the one “affected by pain.” The whole was filled with the addressee’s negligence with respect to the author of the letter – Lenartowicz did not obey him, disregarded him, did not keep his promise, and gossiped about it. This was – it must be repeated – the addressee’s negligence, not the writer’s grievances. Norwid categorically did not wish for them to be confused. More than half of the non-lengthy letter was filled with more or less accurate quotations from past meetings of these poets and friends. From the adduced list, it could be concluded that whatever Norwid had told Lenartowicz, it was for nothing. Lenartowicz’s offer to publish Norwid’s *Cienie* [Shadows] was also empty.

By reproducing fragments of the past, the author of the letters at least did not invite the addressee to recollect the past. A glance back revealed the

7 Krasiński, *Listy do Augusta Cieszkowskiego*, p. 137.

8 Krasiński, *Listy do Augusta Cieszkowskiego*, p. 137.



superficiality of their mutual relationship. The three paragraphs with the anaphora “mówiłem Ci” [I have told you] corresponded to Norwid’s three attempts to change the position of Lenartowicz – the poet and the public figure. As all three attempts had been unsuccessful, common sense dictated that he should stop. Norwid wrote not because he felt offended, but because he had previously spoken without success – without success, but not without reason. “I have told you” also meant “I have predicted.” Thus Lenartowicz did not so much offend Norwid as he hurt himself. If he had listened to his friend, he would have avoided criticism. Norwid was willing to admit that his persuasion had been unsuccessful, but he insisted he had been right. By quoting exactly what he had said and repeated before, he also made it clear that he knew what he had been saying.

The firm tone of the letter might have been perceived by Lenartowicz as provocative. He could have responded with insult or showed generosity to his friend’s bizarre claim. However, if he wanted to keep in contact with Norwid – he learned from the letter – he would have to comply with a few prohibitions. Before Norwid enumerated them, he said – just in case – his farewells to the addressee, just like Byron did to his wife and Słowacki to Mickiewicz: “Bądź zdrów” [Farewell]. Only then – in case the correspondence was not to be broken off – he asked and demanded:

zrobisz mi wielką łaskę (i proszę Cię o to), abys nigdy mi o tym nie wspominał, nigdy się mnie nie radził, a gdy poradzisz się, słuchał, i ażebyś, o ile jesteś w stanie nie zaprzeczyć tego, uważał mię za Twego tego samego, co lat trzydzieści kilka, albowiem, jako widzisz, ten sam jest. (DW XI, 212, 215)

[you will do me a great favour (and I ask you to do so) if you never mention it to me, never ask for my advice, but when you do, you will listen to it and, if you cannot deny it, you will consider me as the same as I was thirty-something years ago, because, as you can see, I am still the same.]

First of all, Norwid forbade Lenartowicz from thinking that this letter was triggered by a grudge. Then he challenged another interpretation of the letter, convenient for the addressee, as a testimony to irreversible changes in the personality of the writer. The addressee should feel that he was the co-author of the letter, as he, in the end – through his light-hearted behaviour – provoked it.

The writer, using an explicitly admonitory tone, delivered a blow to his friend’s lyricism. He defended the solemnity of the word against the dictate of emotionality. The letter was not an expression of a momentary feeling, but a consequence of everything that had happened between him and his correspondence partner. The sentences making up this last letter had to refer to sentences

that had been exchanged between the corresponding partners before. Because he knew what he had said in the past, Norwid now remembered his past words well. Once uttered, he would also never withdraw his words, of which he one time assured Bronisław Zaleski:

Do moich pism zawsze każdemu wolno – czy to w introdukcji osobnej wydawniczej, czyli w odsyłaczach – wszystko, co kto uzna za słuszne, dopowiedzieć, zaprzeczyć, uwątpić etc. ... wszystko zawsze – i dlatego to ja słów mych nie cofam. (PWsz X, 24–25)

[To my writings everyone is always free – whether in the separate editorial introduction, or in footnotes – everything that one considers right, to add, to negate, to doubt etc. ... everything always – and that is because I do not take back my words.]

Therefore, he was not afraid to differ from others in his opinion. However, he was careful not to contradict himself. Since Norwid cared about the consistency and coherence of his statements, it is no wonder that he recommended that Lenartowicz control his impatient impulses or the defensive negation of Norwid's efforts.

In the postscript to his letter, the addressee could find the most important clue that he should respect in his correspondence: “pisze się prosto do osoby, której się należy [a nie do trzech postronnych – E. D.], i pisze się: *tak, tak; nie, nie.*” (DW XI, 215) [one should write directly to the person to whom it concerns [and not to three others – E. D.], and one should write: *yes, yes; no, No.*] This rule was accompanied by a letter template:

Pisze się np.: “Kochany Cyprianie – miałeś słuszność nie wierzyć mi – lepiej znasz, czego dopiąć można pomiędzy umarłymi – nie zrobiłem – zawiodłem cię – ściskam cię serdecznie – i koniec.” (DW XI, 215)

[One should write, for instance, “Dear Cyprian – you were right not to believe me – you know better what can be completed between the dead – I haven't done it – I have let you down – I send you my kind regards – and this is the end.”]

The farewell advice sounded almost like a threat: “Radzę Ci tak mniej więcej postępować ze mną, bowiem zasłużyłem na to i chrześcijaninem jestem przez Łaskę Boską – bądźże zdrow” (DW XI, 215) [I advise you to treat me more or less in this way, because I deserved it and I am a Christian by God's grace – be well.] Norwid thus expected letters he deserved, and not just those dictated by the mood or breakdown of their author. In other words, he criticised lyrical enchantment in itself. And he also reminded a biblical order: “Instead, let your message be ‘Yes’ for ‘Yes’ and ‘No’ for ‘No.’ Anything more than that comes from the evil one” (Matthew 5, 37), which is binding for Christians more than the rules of letter-writing.

He himself wrote in his poetry “yes, yes – no, no,” which this time boiled down to a relentless reprimand levelled at Lenartowicz. Norwid’s harshness was supported by Christ’s authority. The border between the truth and error must not be blurred according to one’s own or someone else’s convenience. When asked if one is a Christian, a follower of Christ, the answer can be either affirmative, without any reservations, or negative.

Norwid did not take back his words because he knew that he could not withdraw them. He could only follow them, remembering that these are all words kindly lent to him, since “Pan Bóg pożyczył nam nas samych” (DW X, 498) [God has lent us ourselves]. Because of that he also maintained that “nie są nasze – pieśni nasze” (“Kolebka pieśni” [“The Cradle of Songs”], PWsz II, 115) [our songs – are not ours]. Whatever is said by the man starts with the Word of God.

Lenartowicz, on the other hand, as “spółczesny ludowy pieśniarz” (PWsz II, 114) [a contemporary folk songwriter] disposed of the borrowed word as of his own. In his 1863 preface to *Poezje*, he confessed where his poems came from: “I wrote what I was feeling, what I had to say, and I wrote only when my eyes were full of tears and my heart was longing for the homeland.”<sup>9</sup> And so he wrote under the surge of emotions when he looked through the childlike naive tears at his “green homeland.” However, in his correspondence he enjoyed far greater freedom. The letters to friends written by the Mazovian lyricist were often full of bitterness. The poet only missed his homeland, the author of letters – sometimes – was in doubt about his homeland. In a letter to Józef Ignacy Kraszewski from 1872, he complained:

Muscoviteism is also spreading not so slowly, the emigration is returning and the Polish Odyssey ends fatally, not with the victory over Penelope’s suitors, but with the bone which the new Odysseuses will have to bite along with the dogs at the threshold of the queen of Ithaca, who is indulging in debauchery with the enemy.

The myth of the return, which here was completely depleted, could no longer account for the catastrophic state of the nation and society. Lenartowicz, with disgust, enumerated the symptoms of the final degeneration:

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9 Teofil Lenartowicz, *Poezje*, selected and compiled by Jan Nowakowski (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1968), p. 1011.

Oppression, poverty, lasciviousness, thousands of divorces, families in decline, wives wandering around on their own. Young people have their chance to show at seducing other people's wives, this is how we stand in the 100th year of captivity.<sup>10</sup>

Of course, the lyricist remained silent about the ignominious end of the Polish odyssey. Although Lenartowicz himself never abandoned his returns to the homestead “on the shore of silent waters,”<sup>11</sup> where Polish songs always resounded, he did not advise Felicjan Faleński to take the same path:

God save you from my note  
                     Of successful silence:  
 Blood was falling onto the strings  
                     From more than one wound,  
 And I pretended blue silence,  
                     I recommended silence...<sup>12</sup>

Norwid would have probably reacted to this untimely remorse of the lyricist as sceptically as he did to his enthusiasm for financing *Cienie* [Shadows]. He would have said briefly: “I don't believe it.” Lenartowicz was extravagantly sincere towards his trustworthy audience. Norwid demanded to behave accordingly to one's own words, regardless of the audience.

The author of sincere letters was a strong opponent of their publication. They were so sincere that they were not suitable for printing. He asked Tekla Zmorska: “My dear Friend, burn my letters, let no one come up after my death with the ungodly idea of printing these confessions of my heart.”<sup>13</sup> At another time, he reprimanded the addressee for her abuse of licence: “You sent my letter to the newspaper too hastily. When one is writing for the public, one has to be more reserved with words.”<sup>14</sup>

It was necessary to write in moderate terms for the audience, making sure that the author is not exposed completely through the words used. “Pretending to be silence” – in noble intentions – did not come easily. It required a sort of cleansing practice. Lenartowicz valued correspondence as a way of relieving tension and as an outlet for bitterness. To Zmorska's doubts he answered: “And

10 Józef Ignacy Kraszewski and Teofil Lenartowicz, *Korespondencja*, compiled by Wincenty Danek (Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1963), p. 236.

11 Teofil Lenartowicz, “Zaproszenie,” in: Lenartowicz, *Poezje*, p. 829, l. 1.

12 Teofil Lenartowicz, “Bieda mnie była,” in: Lenartowicz, *Poezje*, p. 685, ll. 21–26.

13 Teofil Lenartowicz, *Listy do Tekli Zmorskiej*, compiled by Jadwiga Rudnicka (Warszawa: PWN, 1978), p. 169.

14 Lenartowicz, *Listy do Tekli Zmorskiej*, p. 22.

the letters, and the friendship – what for – to breathe a sigh of relief, to relieve oneself in speech.”<sup>15</sup> In order for the lyricist to sing in a pure voice, the epistolographer cursed, grumbled, did not spare his imperfect neighbours. In order to fulfil their role, the addressees should similarly define the purpose of friendly correspondence. Lenartowicz simply did not need the addressee who is a polemicist, mentor, or comforter. His letters should be read once and then burnt, not analysed word by word. After all, he was writing to free himself – at least for a moment – from the written content.

Norwid, as the addressee, did not make Lenartowicz’s life any easier. In his reply from January 1859, he commented on every sentence and even every sigh of his friend. Meticulous to a fault, he did not miss the hardly apparent question: “*cóż ja Ci więcej napiszę?*” (DW XI, 291) [*what more can I write to you?*]. The trite signal that the topic of the letter conversation had been exhausted was taken literally and triggered an inappropriately factual reply:

Pytasz nareszcie: “*cóż ja Ci więcej napiszę?*,” albowiem nie wiedziałeś, czy pisać do mnie, czy do korespondenta z miejsca tego – pisz do nas obydwóch. Ja Ci tak piszę: i jako ja, i jako korespondent, stąd masz treści różne, które mogą Cię obchodzić. (DW XI, 291)

[Finally, you are asking: “*what more can I write to you?*,” since you did not know whether to write to me or to a correspondent from this place – write to both of us. I write to you in this way: both as myself and as the correspondent, thus you have different contents you may care about.]

Again, as in the letter quoted earlier and preceding this by almost a year, it was a lecture on how to correspond.

By responding with extreme pedantry to Lenartowicz’s letter, commenting point by point on each paragraph, Norwid explained to the addressee the difference between “active” and “passive” writing. “Passive” Lenartowicz evaded the assessment of the booklet *O sztuce* [*On Art*] sent to him. He deplored Norwid’s loneliness, complained about his own health, and nostalgically longed for the country of his childhood. He thus did not use the letter to convey or understand anything. With regard to *O sztuce*, he surrendered. He was sympathetic to Norwid’s loneliness, but failed to notice its most important, intentional aspect. He asked without expecting an answer: “*czemu my tak daleko i czemu lipy ojczyste nie nad nami*” [why are we so far away and why are there no linden trees above us] (DW XI, 290). He was wrong in his assessment of Koźmian’s

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15 Lenartowicz, *Listy do Tekli Zmorskiej*, p. 113.

poem, and most probably he also misinterpreted the silence of Panusiewicz, who was a friend of his.

An “active man” answered all questions, even if they were not questions. In particular, the latter irritated him as idle and pointless, replacing a judgement, opinion, or information. After all, the question stems from the unsatisfied thirst of knowledge. Whoever asks wants to know more than they know. When asked about linden trees, Norwid responded like a bookkeeper:

Lipy ojczyste nie nad nami, albowiem roku zeszłego siostra moja *sprzedała wioskę i pół*, to jest *Głuchy* i *Wseborny*, gdzie rodziłem się, a tam była jedna lipa – sprzedała Deskurowi, bratu tego, co na Syberii był – i w izbie wielkiej niebieskiej, gdzie na świat wyjrzałem, młode małżeństwo dziś mieszka. – A Dembinki, gdzie było lip parę-set, od dawna czyjeś. (DW XI, 291)

[The homeland linden trees are not above us, because last year my sister *sold a village and a half*, that is *Głuchy* and *Wseborny*, where I was born and there was one linden tree – she sold them to Deskur, the brother of the one who was in Siberia – and in the big blue chamber, where I looked out to the world, today lives a young couple. And Dębinki, where there were a few hundred linden trees, has long belonged to someone else.]

It is not worth talking about returning to the past, under linden trees, because there is no place to come back to. The places that both poets have long since left are not empty. Under linden trees, just like everywhere else, time moves forward. For Norwid, years have passed between the day that he “looked out to the world” and the one when he wrote to Lenartowicz. He was no longer a child and “a nice boy.” He had crossed the ocean. “Passive” Lenartowicz complained about his blind fate: “why are we so far away?” Norwid noted: “*każdy kto serio kilkanaście kroków w życie polskie postawi, znajdzie się w takiej samej samotności.*” (DW XI, 290) [*whoever makes a few footsteps into the Polish life will find himself in the same state of loneliness*]. He did not ask about the reason – there is a small distance between the question and the complaint or curse. He formulated a principle, the working of which he experienced himself. The “active man” brought everything upon himself. Loneliness was the price for a serious life.

Whoever wanted to avoid it had to play “a nice boy” or an orphan until old age. Whoever wanted to be loved had to seek it. Norwid chose a different path. He asked Lenartowicz a question that he – thinking about his friend – did not ask himself: “Czy ja byłbym tak, jak jestem w każdej osobie mojej, czy to człowieka, czy pisarza, czy sztukmistrza, żeby mię kto kochał?” (DW XI, 291) [Would I be, as I am in every person of mine, be it a man, a writer, or a

master of arts, so that someone loved me?]. Furthermore, Norwid did not write letters in order to be favourably received by the addressee.

Norwid was against worshipping someone – privately, in letters, or publicly. He also refrained from the other extreme – from rejecting every attitude and poetry of the addressee. He emphasised the difference of opinion. One can deny something just because one does not understand it, but in order to talk about a difference of opinion, one needs to know the other party's position almost as well as one's own.

“Passive” Lenartowicz was no mystery for Norwid. It was equally easy for him to identify the opposing position, for instance, that of “active” Karol Ruprecht. Norwid fell out with him as an “active” man over the events of the year 1863. He contradicted the man calling to new faith: “Ja (jak wiesz) nie wierzę, ażeby *rew* zdobywała przyszłość (mianowicie od 19-stu wieków). Ja wierzę, że *pot* czoła, ale nie *rew*!!” [I (as you know) do not believe that *blood* has been conquering the future (namely for nineteen centuries). I believe that is the *sweat* of one's brow, but not *blood*!!] And the final sentence: “Kapitałna to różnica pojęć, która nie dopuszcza obcowania użytecznego” (DW XII, 240) [It is a fundamental difference of viewpoints that does not allow for useful contact]. It was rather difficult to reach a conclusion of this kind in direct contact. Emotions would have probably not allowed any of the parties to clearly express themselves. By writing sentence under sentence, taking the viewpoint of each party in a separate line of the letter, Norwid showed that there is no way to get these positions together. The “fundamental difference” was visible to the naked eye.

“Mam *inny patriotyzm*” (DW XII, 227) [I have a *different sense of patriotism*], he had written to Ruprecht even earlier. And then he added: “Patriotyzm mój nie jest z *tego* świata” [My patriotism is not from *this* world], and at the very end he quoted Christ's words: “Królestwo moje nie jest z *tego* świata” [‘My kingdom is not of this world’]. In Norwid's dispute with the addressees, the last word was uttered by Christ. Indignant over Norwid's “patriotism,” Ruprecht would thus need to argue with Christ himself.

Norwid knew very well why he could not agree with the addressee. The latter expounded the thing “wedle sentymentów, nerwów i przyzwyczajzeń” [based on sentiments, nerves and habits], Norwid himself was “wedle przekonani i idei” (DW XII, 224) [based on convictions and ideas], supported by experience. For this reason, they could not agree on Poland, the American Republic, or Russia. From Norwid's point of view, Ruprecht the conspirator was upholding – without knowing anything about it – the act performed according to the Asian fashion. The sincere Pole, although a Protestant, crying for blood, seemed to Norwid to be a Tartar (DW XII, 225). There was no question about an agreement with

a Tartar who was not aware of himself. Besides, there was no one who could undertake such an attempt. Norwid wrote letters to Ruprecht, being aware that his effort means “nic a nic” [absolutely nothing], because “Od wieku blisko cała inteligencja polska nic a nic w narodzie nie znaczy, jeśli mu nie basuje – naród opiera się *na samej tylko energii*, aby walczyć ze społeczeństwem azjackim, i dlatego azjackim, iż to społeczeństwo *na samej tylko energii opiera się*” (DW XII, 264–265) [For nearly a century, the entire Polish intelligentsia has meant absolutely nothing in the nation, if they do not nod in agreement – the nation relies *only on energy* to fight against the Asian society, and *it is the Asian society because it relies on energy alone*]. It is impossible to debate with this blind, energetic patriotism, since it knows only two answers to all question “*krewność*” [blood] and “*zwyciężyć albo zginąć!*” (DW XII, 230) [*live or die!*].

“Piszę z największą niechęcią” (DW XII, 241) [I am writing with the greatest reluctance], started Norwid – in his own way – in one of his letters to Karol Ruprecht. And he repeated two more times the same sentence at the beginning of two consecutive paragraphs: “Piszę więc z największą niechęcią” [I am thus writing with the greatest reluctance], “Piszę zatem z największą niechęcią” (DW XII, 241) [I am therefore writing with the greatest reluctance]. And he was writing reluctantly, because he knew he was writing for nothing. How much in vain was shown in the following sentence: “gdyby Elias przyszedł do Polski po pas zakrwawionej, to jeszcze nie tylko nie słuchano by go, ale nawet nie zadano by sobie kłopotu być *dość grzecznym*, aby mu odpowiedzieć” (DW XII, 241) [if Elias came to Poland waist-deep in blood, not only would he not be listened to, but no one would take the trouble to be *kind enough* to answer him]. And Elias would speak in vain, so Norwid’s writing made absolutely no point. Nonetheless, seeing Elias in Poland “waist-deep in blood,” Norwid wrote a letter to Ruprecht. He could not – he did not want to – juxtapose patriotism with energy. He wrote a letter against his unwillingness to write. While writing, he was overcoming this reluctance, until he had finally overcome it.

In a letter to Mieczysław Pawlikowski from 1864, Norwid again diagnosed energetic patriotism – “*tradycyjalny magnetyzm obyczaju lackiego*” (DW XII, 287) [*the traditional magnetism of Polish custom*]. However, this time he admitted the possibility – if only slight – of its fortunate transformation. “Widzę – rozbijanie i poczucie *energii*, nie widzę *sił*” (DW XII, 286) [I can see – the momentum and the feeling of *energy*, I cannot see the *forces*]. With his “I cannot see,” he, paradoxically, referred in the letter to the margin of hope. Maybe that patriotism of the force had set its roots somewhere? If only in himself. He returned to this thought at the end of the letter:



Zapewne są tacy, co *żupan ów orientalny i magnetyczno-elektryczny* nie uważają za *ducha* i zwlec go umieli, ale ja ich jeszcze nie widziałem! (DW XII, 287)

[Certainly there are some who do not take *this oriental and magnetico-electrical jacket* for a *spirit* and they could pull it off, but I have not seen them yet!]

The evasive “certainly” and “have not seen” took this time the place of Cassandra’s “I know” from the letters to Karol Ruprecht. The difference could appear to be non-trivial; but is it long-lasting? Is it real, and not just polite and reaching deeper than the reversal of the formula, a twisted style?

Cyprian Norwid, always “the same” Norwid, wrote in 1871:

przede wszystkim prawda prawdą jest. Można, jak chceć, ją wykręcić i doprowadzić do wzniosłości kolorów, ale ona zawsze sobą zostanie –. (PWsz IX, 486)

[first of all, the truth is the truth. One can, according to wish, twist it and make it more colourful, but it will always remain itself –.]

And fortunately, there is a big difference.

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Joanna Czarnomorska

## In the Shadow of the Angel of Destruction: Norwid's Vision of Europe

**Abstract:** This article describes Norwid's vision of Europe in the context of ideas common about the Old World in the mid-nineteenth century and similar to the catastrophic thought of Oswald Spengler or Ortega y Gasset who proclaimed the decline of the West. When Norwid writes about Europe, he seems always to have in mind its Asian and Mediterranean roots and – at the same time – the European origins of modern American civilization. The oppositions of European civilization vs. Asian barbarity and Europe vs. America, always present in his thought, show all the ambivalence of his vision. Norwid's works from the beginning of the Revolutions of 1848 show Europe in reform. The poet observed those changes with curiosity, full of hope, and with growing anxiety. After the collapse of the Revolutions, his opinions became predominantly critical, resulting in a vision of Europe's end, compared with the fall of the Roman Empire, and the biblical deluge and Apocalypse. Norwid left for the United States in an attempt to free himself from a Europe he did not accept, and as an expression of his belief (similar to those of Chateaubriand, de Tocqueville, and Herzen) that old values had been preserved in America.

The poet's catastrophic presentiments do not represent absolute catastrophism; there is always an alternative – a vision of Europe saved by returning to the basic values of Christian civilization. And even if Norwid heaps reproaches upon the Old World, this is because he identifies himself with the tradition of humanitarian, Christian, and democratic Europe, united – but also respecting the identities of nations.

**Keywords:** Cyprian Norwid, Europe, catastrophism, Christianity

In a letter to Joanna Kuczyńska from around 1 February 1869, Norwid wrote: “Jestem przeciwny systematom społecznym, które głoszą: «*Europe aux Européens!*» *Selon moi – Madame! – il n'y a jamais eu des Européens*” (PWsz IX, 388) [I am opposed to the modern systems which preach: «*Europe for Europeans!*» – *In my opinion – My Lady! – there have never been Europeans, because all of us came here from Asia*]. Also in his *Filozofia historii polskiej* [*The Philosophy of Polish History*] (1870) he emphasised that “ludy europejskie z Azji przecie tu przyszły” (PWsz VII, 65) [after all, European peoples came here from Asia]. Similarly, in one of his *Notatki z mitologii* [*Notes on Mythology*] (dating from around 1867), he wrote:

Z wysokości azjackich płyną ludy i rozdzielają się w dwa pasma: jeden ku środkowi kontynentu, na wschód, i tam przylega ... drugi ku Europie dalej – dalej – w XV wieku pod przywództwem Kolumba dalej jeszcze, i Nowy Świat odkrywa, i obiega glob, i łamie mury chińskie! (PWsz VII, 251)

[From the Asians heights peoples are flowing and they are dividing into two strands: one going towards the centre of the continent, in the Eastern direction, and there it stays ... the other going further towards Europe – in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, led by Columbus, even further, and discovers the New World, and encircles the globe, and breaks the walls of China!]

Already after his return from the United States, in his letters, Norwid refers to America as “zachód–zachodu” (DW XI, 53) [the West of the West] and “Europa–Europy” (DW XII, 76) [the Europe of Europe], he even finishes the poem “Gadki” [“Gabs”] with a well-known verse: “A m e r y k a n i e k t ó ż s ą?... E u r o p e j c z y c y!” (PWsz II, 125) [Who are Americans?... Europeans!].

More such quotes could be given, all referring to a very broad concept of Europe. When Norwid speaks of Europe, he seems to think of its Asian and Mediterranean roots, as well as referring to the European origins of modern American civilization. Norwid most often uses the category of “moralnej całości Europy” (PWsz VII, 86) [the moral integrity of Europe]; commuting with it while preserving one’s own identity is a condition for any European national identity.<sup>1</sup> The “European character” involves feeling for and respecting “individual freedom,” which is according to Norwid, “żywiół nie znany Azjatom” (PWsz VII, 343) [an element unknown to Asians] – and the community of the Christian tradition, and commitment to democracy. The West (this word often replaces the term *Europe*) is “*Cywilizacja obfitująca w jawność wszelaką*” (DW XII, 176) [a civilization rich in openness of all kinds] and has a parliamentary system. For Norwid, more important than the geographical and racial criteria for belonging to Europe or Asia is the community of ideas, a vision of the world respecting people and nations, which defines Europeaness and separate it from barbarism. In *Filozofia historii polskiej* [The Philosophy of Polish History] Norwid wrote:

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1 This was noticed in the articles by Elżbieta Feliksiak: “Naród, ojczyzna, Europa w twórczości i myśli Norwida,” in: *Kategoria narodu w kulturach słowiańskich*, ed. Teresa Dąbek-Wirgowa, Andrzej Zdzisław Makowiecki (Warszawa: Wydział Polonistyki UW, 1993), pp. 111–117, and Mieczysław Ingłot: “Norwidowska Europa,” in: *Kategoria Europy w kulturach słowiańskich*, ed. Teresa Dąbek-Wirgowa, Andrzej Zdzisław Makowiecki (Warszawa: Wydział Polonistyki UW, 1992), pp. 61–68.

Europa przede wszystkim nie krwią, lecz Ideą jest prawomocnie się urzeczywistniająca. Cecha ta jej zaiste że nie na marginesie księgi dziejów ani w odsyłaczu pokątnym swoje ma miejsce, albowiem ta cecha jest na czole Europy i kapitalnie ją wyróżnia. (PWsz VII, 65)

[Europe, first and foremost, is not legally realisable through blood but through an Idea. Indeed, this feature does not belong to the margins of history or is a concealed reference, because this feature is on the forefront of Europe and it splendidly distinguishes it].

In the already quoted letter to Kuczyńska, Norwid tried to convince her: “Moim zdaniem, Europa *nie jest rasą, ale principium!* – bo gdyby była rasą, byłaby Azją!!!” (PWsz IX, 388) [In my opinion, Europe is not a race, but a principle! – because if it were a race, it would be Asia!!!!]. He repeats this very emphatically in “Znicestwienie narodu” [“Annihilation of the Nation”] where he argues with Franciszek Duchyński’s theory of races.

In this context, Norwid’s statements about the European character of America, Russia, and Asia become understandable. For the rest of his life, to recall Andrzej Walicki’s observation, Norwid remained an enemy of the tribal concept of nation and of programmed Europeaness.<sup>2</sup>

When writing about Europe and European civilization, Norwid does not use dictionary definitions based on ethnogeographic criteria. He deliberately distances himself from them, subjecting the adopted stereotypes to historiosophical criticism, which is always performed from the position of a European who knows Europe and is rooted in its tradition. But Norwid remains a European-Pole, despite the fact that – as Zofia Stefanowska has noted – after the Spring of Nations, “the walls of the Polish ghetto in Paris” collapsed and “Norwid started to live like a citizen of a two-million metropolis, like a participant of the nineteenth-century civilizational processes.”<sup>3</sup>

It seems that it was the Polishness of European Norwid that made him again take a closer look at the Poland-West opposition, long present in post-partition historical thought, and try to answer the centuries-old question of the place and role of Poland resulting from its geopolitical location between Europe and Asia, Poland – the dam of Europe, protecting against the barbaric flood. The stereotype of the “Poland-bulwark” met with strong opposition on his part; in *Filozofia historii polskiej* [*The Philosophy of Polish History*] he wrote:

2 See Andrzej Walicki, *Między filozofią, religią i polityką. Studia o myśli polskiej epoki romantyzmu*, (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1983), p. 216.

3 Zofia Stefanowska, *Strona romantyków. Studia o Norwidzie* (Lublin: TN KUL, 1993), p. 47.

Rozpoczynać rzecz dotyczącą całej historii polskiej nawyknięto przez zeznania wstępne, iż Polacy są Słowianami, a Słowianie że a u t o c h t o n y, czyli t u - b y l c y. Następnie: iż granice Polski stanowi kilka rzek i gór nieco, co zarazem od Wschodu i granice między Europą a Azją ustala, zwłaszcza iż powołaniem historycznym tego narodu było zasłaniać europejski rozwój od barbarzyństwa. ... Prawie wszystko to razem ... nie może mieć żadnego uznania i wagi w obliczu filozofii. (PWsz VII, 63)

[It was customary to start the description of the whole Polish history with preliminary statements that Poles are Slavs, and Slavs are a u t o c h t o n s o r n a t i v e p o p u l a t i o n. Subsequently: that the borders of Poland are delineated by a few rivers and some mountains, which, at the same time, from the East mark the border between Europe and Asia, especially since the historical vocation of this nation was to shield the European development from barbarity. ... Almost all this taken together ... cannot have any recognition or significance in the face of philosophy.]

As stated by Zofia Stefanowska:

The juxtaposition of Poland and West, in accordance with the Romantic tradition, for Norwid is no longer an axiologically unambiguous opposition .... The only thing left is the opposition pattern, the associated tendency to a dramatic, conflicting approach to phenomena, but both opposing poles constitute controversial values.<sup>4</sup>

This also applies to other oppositions: Europe-America, Europe-Russia (Asia), and East-West, which are constantly present in Norwid's view of Europe. "The drama of Europe (that organism that incorporates both unity and diversity) is stretched between East and West" wrote Elżbieta Feliksiak, pointing to "Pieśń od ziemi naszej" ["Song of Our Land"]. The side of hope is the South; this is where we look when thinking about the dual sources of European identity: the Antiquity and the Christianity born at the foot of the cross on Golgotha.<sup>5</sup> The cradle of Europe also encompasses that "European Asia." This perspective is constantly present in Norwid's discourse of the Old World.

This view always takes into account the context of Asia and America; European civilization is contrasted with Asian barbarity. The ambivalence of Norwid's judgements applies, in different situations, to each side of these oppositions; it applies equally to Europe as to America compared with the Old Continent, as Wiktor Weintraub convincingly showed in his famous article "Czy Ameryka była dla Norwida infernem?" [Was America an Inferno for Norwid?]. America was not an inferno. Was Europe then?

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4 Stefanowska, *Strona romantyków*, p. 45.

5 Feliksiak, "Naród, Ojczyzna, Europa w twórczości Norwida," p. 115. M. Inglot also wrote about the relation between geography and axiology in Norwid's thought about Europe (see the article referenced above).

The word *Europe* appears in Norwid's writing for the first time in his letter from the end of December 1847, written from Rome to Józef Bohdan Zaleski. The date and place are significant here. At that time, Norwid found himself at the centre of political events preceding the 1848–1849 revolution. He was no longer a political novice by then and had cooperated with the Hotel Lambert faction for several years; it was after the proposal of collaboration with Petersburg and the Berlin prison. Researchers have repeatedly drawn attention to the groundbreaking significance of the Spring of Nations in the work of the author of *Listy o Emigracji* [*Letters on Emigration*], an event that marked the turning point for Polish Romanticism. Norwid began gradually freeing himself from the bonds of Romantic ideology and poetics, with which he had been engaged in dialogue, since his first works, while at the same time, he began to engage more and more with European problems. Even if, as in *Zarysy z Rzymu* [*Sketches from Rome*] or in *Listy o Emigracji* [*Letters on Emigration*] (in the latter case, with one exception in a footnote), the word *Europe* does not appear a single time, the reader feels a permanent presence of the European perspective.

Norwid's texts, written at the beginning of the Spring of Nations, present an image of European transformations which many have read as harbingers of Europe's rebirth. Despite the hopeful curiosity with which the poet observed particularly the Roman events, from the very beginning there is a sense of anxiety and looming threat:

Ilekróć rzeczy tak się dzieją (choćby w zarysach swych największe), że mówiąc o nich więcej będzie o osobistościach niż o treści, to już dowód, że źle jest. A wszędzie dzisiaj łatwiej płakać na ułomność człowieka niż na czasów fatalność (PWsz VII, 15)

[Whenever things like this happen (even if only in their outline greatest) that when talking about them it will be more about personalities than the content, it is already a proof that it is wrong. And today it is easier to cry over human weakness than the doom of the times]

– Norwid wrote in December 1848 in his *Zarysy z Rzymu* [*Sketches from Rome*]. Still from the Roman distance, he welcomed the outbreak of the February Revolution in Paris with hope, which Krasiński, a friend of his, could not understand. He persuaded Norwid that “On 24 February the Kingdom of God in this world did not come any closer but became more distant. ... You expect to see the rainbows of gold from it – he wrote – but you will only see the streams of blood.”<sup>6</sup> The political discussion between the poets (which can be reconstructed today only on the basis of Krasiński's letters) continued until 1851.

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6 Quoted after Stanisław Kossowski, *Krasiński a Norwid* (Lwów: księgarnia L. Chmielewskiego, 1912), p. 48. Norwid's reluctance towards revolutions in

The intensification of reflections on the situation of Europe and the state of European civilization in Norwid's works always coincides with important events, such as the Spring of Nations, the January Uprising, or the Paris Commune. Frequently there appear declarations identifying Norwid with the European tradition, expressed in such terms as "our old Europe" and "our mother Europe."

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general is well known. However, many of his statements – also the sentence from Krasiński's letter: "You expect to see the rainbows of gold from it" in relation to the events of 24 February 1848 – show that the poet did not condemn the Spring of Nations (also known as "the February Revolution in Paris"), at least not immediately and not utterly. However, when the peaceful demonstrations in Rome demanding reforms began to turn into a riot and be directed against the Pope, he spoke decidedly against radicalism. Undoubtedly, the outbreak of the Revolution of 1848 did not trigger in him any euphoria, but as long as it marked some achievements for human freedom and democracy, it aroused his hope. He expressed this in his letters to Józef Bohdan Zaleski, writing about the manifestos placed all around Naples, describing them as "z pewnym rozumem" (DW X, 124) [with a certain dose of reason], writing that "jeżeli temu, co się robi [w Rzymie – J. Cz.], nie przerwie jakie barbarzyństwo lub szalierstwo zewnętrzne, to niezawodnie ... do konstytucji nawet przyjdzie, i to taką mądrością – miarą – estetycznością podwładnych z jednej strony, a świętością władzy z drugiej strony, iż polityczne usposobienia wieku tymże organem politycznym o egzystencji cudów prawie dotykalnie się przeświadczą" (DW X, 130) [if what they are doing [in Rome – J. Cz.] is not interrupted by some barbarism or external insanity, it will surely ... come even to the constitution, and this with certain wisdom – measure – aesthetics of the subordinates, on the one hand, and the sacred power, on the other, so that the political dispositions of the age with this political organ will be almost tangibly convinced of the existence of miracles." He also wrote about "kapłaństwie mas cichym i ... wspaniałości gestów w masie" (DW X, 130) [the silent priesthood of masses and ... the magnificence of the gestures in masses].

Norwid reacted in a similar way to news of the manifestations preceding the outbreak of the January Uprising. For him, they were "a revelation of an original, creative idea." Then "the poet's enthusiasm was also conditioned by the peaceful and religious character ... of patriotic demonstrations, their moral character, congruent with the Christian spirit" (Stefanowska, *Strona romantyków*, p. 89).

The argument supporting the claim that Norwid welcomed the Revolution of 1848 with hope is the fact that he joined the list of members of Mickiewicz's legion; it is true that the poet's name remained on that list for only a short time, but if not for his faith – even if only temporary – in the sense of that revolution, joining the legion would never have crossed Norwid's mind.



Norwid's vision of Europe is actually unchanging – it remains a dream of personal freedom, Christian tradition, and democracy. It is Norwid's assessment of the European reality that evolves, just as does the Old World he observes. The critical view begins to dominate his writing after the failure of the Spring of Nations. The product of this turn in Norwid's attitude is his vision of the end of Europe.

Norwid does not go easy on Europe. Besides the already mentioned “old mother” Europe, there is also an “old lunatic and drunkard” Europe, and also a characterization of her as Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth. The poet often blames the West for Poland's enslavement:

Za dni pierwszych rozbioru Polski – pisał w przemówieniu *W rocznicę Powstania Styczniowego* w 1875 r. – Europa wyrazu stanowczego na sprawę tę nie miała – następnie dostrzegła, że to był błąd; następnie, że błąd wielki, europejski, kardynalny; nareszcie porwała się za włosy i zawołała, że to zbrodnia!... I – jak Szekspirowska słynna niewieścia postać – poczęła ocierać blade ręce swoje z plamek krwawych, niestety przy arcyksiężycowym blasku publicystyki bieżącej i dziennikarstwa, które wielce sobie w romantycznych lubuje półcieniach. (PWsz VII, 97)

[During the first days of the partition of Poland – he wrote in his speech *On the anniversary of the January Uprising* in 1875 – Europe did not have a firm opinion on this matter – then she [Europe] saw that it was a mistake; then that it was a huge mistake, European, cardinal one; finally she grabbed herself by the hair and called out that it was a crime!... And – like Shakespeare's famous female character – she began to rub her pale hands of bloody spots, unfortunately, in the arch-moonlit glow of current journalism, which greatly enjoys Romantic penumbrae.]

This comparison seems to refer primarily to European diplomacy. But the well-known words from the poet's letter to Konstancja Górską in 1881, two years before his death, also concerned the society, civilization, and culture of Europe:

Europa jest to stara wariatka i pijaczka, która co kilka lat robi rzezie i mordy bez żadnego rezultatu ni cywilizacyjnego, ni moralnego. Nic postawić nie umie – głupia jak but, zarozumiała, pyszna i lekkomyślna. Kiedy do innej części świata robiłem wycieczkę, nie wiedziałem, jak listy adresować do Europy, bo adresując do Rz[ecz]y pospolitej – list dochodził do Cesarstwa, do Danii – list szedł do Niemiec, do Austrii – list szedł gdzie indziej, i tak zawsze – a za to kilkadziesiąt milionów trupa, łez i opchnanych worków fałszywą monetą. (PWsz X, 155)

[Europe is an old lunatic and a drunkard, who every few years commits slaughters and murder without any result, either civilizational or moral. She cannot put anything up – daft as a brush, conceited, haughty and reckless. When I went on a trip to another part of the world, I did not know how to address letters to Europe,

because when I addressed one to Poland, the letter went to the Empire, to Denmark – the letter went to Germany, to Austria – the letter went somewhere else, and always so – but instead, tens of millions of corpses, tears and sacks stuffed with fake coins.]

These words, uttered with great passion, reflect the difficult knowledge the poet had collected during his lifetime of observing these “slaughters and murders,” first witnessing the hopes they had awakened, followed by painful disappointments. However, it is worth noting that this critical judgement of European reality and history never changed Norwid’s sense of identity with the value-system of European culture.

In the context of such a critical opinion about Europe, there is a recollection of Norwid’s trip to America, because this event remained in the poet’s consciousness as a gesture against the Old World, for and about Europe’s failure to preserve what, for Norwid, constituted the basis of Europeanness. The decision to travel overseas was – as evidenced by numerous statements of the poet – an attempt to free himself from a Europe with which he could not identify and, at the same time, an expression of the poet’s conviction that certain values had survived in America.

The idea of abandoning the continent was born at the beginning of 1851; at that time, at least, a trace of it could be found in Norwid’s letter to Adam Potocki from 29 January. This was not yet a final decision at the time – the poet also mentions Italy and China.

What prompted Norwid to demonstrate strong disaffection with Europe, by leaving for America? Norwid himself mentions several reasons: “the European air crushing Polish hearts,” a too narrow “human horizon,” a lack of “the ground underneath the feet” and an unwillingness to use the “favour of the Asian embassy.”

Before he left for the United States, in an interview with Rev. Aleksander Jełowicki, Norwid confessed that he “could not ... bear any longer the European ... air crushing Polish hearts.”<sup>7</sup> What was this “European air” like?

Already in the middle of 1849, it was obvious that the beautiful ideals of freedom, equality, and brotherhood were a practical failure. The “European Concert” – to use the expression of the French politicians Guizot and Thiers – ended on false notes. When Norwid arrived in Paris from Rome on 6 February 1849, Louis Napoleon had been the president of the French Republic for over two months already. On 20 December 1848, promising loyalty to the Constitution

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7 Aleksander Jełowicki’s letter to Piotr Semenenko from 15 December 1852. Quoted after Jan Arcab, “Głosy o Norwidzie w korespondencji pierwszych zmarłychwstańców,” *Znak*, Vol. 15, No. 78 (1960), p. 1622.

before the French National Assembly, Napoleon promised to “strengthen the republic.” However he soon strove for dictatorship; the coup d’état of 2–3 December 1851 allowed him to change the constitution and paved the way to imperial power.<sup>8</sup>

The riots of 13 June 1849, started by the Republican petite bourgeoisie in Paris, demonstrating against the military expedition of General Oudinot – sent to Rome to aid the Pope – were bloodily suppressed. The Parisian correspondent of *Gazeta Polska*, published in Poznań, described the situation as follows:

The external physiognomy of the city does not give away the iron jacket that is pressing it – you will not see any great masses of troops, guards or running patrols – people are standing in the streets with impunity in groups of more than 20 – but the harder and more violent, where necessary, reaches and chokes the hand of the government armoured with a state of siege – arrests made on a huge scale. Police officers work hard with their three-colour bands and with the help of the military or the gendarmerie, they bring entire groups into prison – where they are put in the meantime without investigation.<sup>9</sup>

And then, a day later, “Arrests, house searches and expulsion from the city continue in Paris.”<sup>10</sup>

The failure of the 1848 revolution led Norwid to accuse France of “roztrwonienie ostatniego europejskiego ruchu” (PWsz VII, 31) [squandering the last European movement]. In his “Odpowiedź krytykom *Listów o emigracji*” [Reply to the critics of *Letters on Emigration*] he wrote:

Jawności we Francji n a d - u ż y t o ... wszystko, co jest *intime* (co poufne, wewnętrzne), stało się tu publicznym – czego też skutkiem jest, na odwrót, że co publicznym być by winno, w zamian staje się skrytym. ... moralność tego narodu polityczna szumnymi tylko frazesami albo interesem się steruje, a stąd nie-energia, sen i chaos. (PWsz VII, 31–32)

[Transparency was a b - u s e d in France ... everything that is *intimate* (confidential, internal), has become public here – which also, in reverse, results in that what should be public is instead becoming secret. ... the political morality of this nation is guided only by high-flown platitudes or interest, and hence non-energy, dream and chaos.]

Many reports from that time compare the situation in Europe after the Spring of Nations to the fall of ancient Rome, the biblical flood, or the apocalypse. In

8 See Józef Dutkiewicz, “Wiosna Ludów we Francji,” in: *W stulecie Wiosny Ludów 1848–1849*, Vol. 2.: *Wiosna Ludów w Europie*, ed. Natalia Gąsiorowska (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1948), p. 179.

9 *Gazeta Polska*, No. 141 (1849, 23 June), p. 583.

10 *Gazeta Polska*, No. 141 (1849, 23 June), p. 583.

numerous statements from 1848 to 1849, these associations are replaced by an extremely rich catalogue of positive and hopeful (perhaps, except for Krasiński) expressions in which “the epiphany of the revolution has obtained a peculiar ‘electrical’ or ‘explosive’ interpretation.”<sup>11</sup> In her letter to Ludwik Orpiszewski from Paris on 25 March 1850, Anna Sapieżyna wrote:

France presents us with a sad picture of a society collapsing through decay. Everything that raises and feeds souls has been destroyed, thus nothing but fleshly passions are left for the people on this earth; but to attain these fleshly pleasures, one needs money, and people struggle with that and match with one another, so that they can seize one another’s money. Socialism, as a filthy vermin, undermines and eats the foundations of the society so that it may rise on its ruins. We have reached the time when God sent the flood to destroy the corrupt humankind.<sup>12</sup>

While characterising the situation of contemporary Europe after World War Two, *Przegląd Poznański* [*Poznań Review*] referred to Hoene-Wroński and his pessimistic vision of the moral fall of the Old World “through stupefying reason brought about by civilizational excesses.” The West, France, and the civilised world in general, wrote Wroński, “is threatened by imminent moral loss if, which is quite likely, the West continues in its present fatal aspiration, which is the result of the abused wilfulness of reason.”<sup>13</sup>

The comparison of the situation in post-revolutionary Europe (especially Paris) to the fall of Rome can be found in numerous statements of the poet from the end of 1851, *among others*, in the poem “Odpowiedź do Włoch” [“A Response to Italy”].<sup>14</sup> Juliusz W. Gomulicki rightly sees in it a description of the atmosphere in Paris shortly before the coup d’état of December (see *PWSz* II, 352). In this poem Norwid evokes the story, known from Krasiński’s drama, about Iridion deceitfully fighting against Rome and the immortal Satan Masinissa, a story that takes place at a time when “the end is already drawing upon the ancient world” and “gods and people are going mad.”<sup>15</sup> But

11 Maria Janion, “Romantyczny teatr rewolucji,” in *Romantycy i rewolucja*, ed. Alina Kowalczykova (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1980), pp. 7–23.

12 Manuscript, the Princes Czartoryski Library in Kraków, item No. XVII/1444.

13 Quoted after Hoene-Wroński, *Przegląd Poznański*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (1852), pp. 141–142.

14 Krzysztof Trybuś emphasised that the work presents an image of the collapse of culture and civilization far from the “political calculations of Mickiewicz and Krasiński.” See Krzysztof Trybuś, *Epopeja w twórczości Cypriana Norwida* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1993), pp. 66–67.

15 Zygmunt Krasiński, *Irydion*, with foreword and explanations by Tadeusz Sinko, 2<sup>nd</sup> revised ed. (Kraków: Krakowska Spółka Wydawnicza, 1923), p. 3.

Norwid performs a kind of reinterpretation of the sense inscribed in the fate of Krasieński's characters. Norwid's Satan dies – thus fulfilling the promise made to Iridion that, in exchange for his soul, he will one day walk on the ruins of the demolished empire. It is worth recalling that the title character's words, addressed to Masinissa, were used by Norwid as the title of an illustration for Krasieński's drama. In paraphrased form: "Kiedy na Forum – będą gruzy tylko, kiedy na Kapitolu będzie hańba tylko!"<sup>16</sup> [When at the Forum – there will only be debris, when on the Capitoline Hill there will only be disgrace!] – the words were featured in a drawing of Iridion and Masinissa, made at the beginning of November 1850 at the latest (Fig. 26).<sup>17</sup>



**Fig. 26.** Cyprian Norwid, *Irydion i Masynissa* [*Iridion and Masinissa*], 1850, pen drawing, National Museum in Warsaw. Photo Piotr Ligier.

16 In Krasieński's drama (*Irydion*, p. 173) the wording was as follows:

Kiedy na Forum będą prochy tylko!.

Kiedy na cyrku będą koście tylko!

Kiedy na Kapitolu będzie hańba tylko!

17 PWSz XI, Fig. 163. Terminus ante quem is the date of the review by Julian Klaczko, published in *Goniec Polski*, Vol. 111 (1850, 10 November), p. 432.

In 1851 Norwid drew *Anioł śmierci* [*The Angel of Death*], which depicted an angel emerging from the sea abyss (Fig. 27).<sup>18</sup> The inscription “Satan” on the right shoulder, a halo of playing cards, and a cup in hand, bring to mind the image of the Great Prostitute from St. John’s Book of Revelations – the symbol of Rome’s idolatrous worship of its emperors. This vision is shown to St. John by one of the seven angels assigned to pour out on Earth the seven cups of God’s wrath (Revelation 17, 1–4). The apocalyptic associations of Norwid’s drawing are complemented by a bat hovering over the cup, an “unclean and detestable bird” (Revelation 18, 2). Krasieński’s statement from two years before could serve as a commentary on this drawing:



**Fig. 27.** Cyprjan Norwid, *Anioł śmierci* [*The Angel of Death*], 1851, pen drawing, National Museum in Poznan. Photo National Museum in Poznan.

The entire world’s hellish position: suspended amidst the abyss. Our greatest feat is not to die as long as this position endures. For although it seemed to smile at us, let us be careful if this smile was not a mocking grimace on the face of the angel of death, which we took for a spring light!<sup>19</sup>

18 *Tygodnik Ilustrowany*, No. 27 (1907), p. 549.

19 A letter by Zygmunt Krasieński to August Cieszkowski from 22–23 January 1849. Quoted after Zygmunt Krasieński, *Listy do A. Cieszkowskiego, E. Jaroszyńskiego, B. Trentowskiego*, compilation and foreword by Zbigniew Sudolski, Vol. 1 (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1988), p. 443.

A direct comparison of the situation in Europe after the Spring of Nations to the end of the Roman Empire can be found in Norwid's letter to Józef Bohdan Zaleski from 6 December 1851, written a few days after Louis Napoleon's coup:

O pięćdziesiąt kroków od padających pod strzałami – relacjonował Zaleskiemu – ludzie w bluzach i niebluzach stoją i prawie poziewają – gwardia narodowa pozwała, aby jej broń brano, a sama siedzi w domu – żołnierz bije się z ludem – można by powiedzieć, że co najprostszego i najpoczciwszego, to rozłamane na dwa obozy eksterminuje się. (DW X, 364)

[Fifty steps away from those shot and falling – he reported to Zaleski – people in uniforms and non-uniforms are standing and almost yawning – the national guard allows for its weapon to be taken and they themselves are staying at home – the soldier is fighting with the people – one could say that what is simplest and most honest, when divided into two camps, is exterminated.]

Characterising the situation in Paris, the poet reflected on the meaning and consequences of the events of which he had become an involuntary participant. He knew that “jeżeli to nie chwilowe osłupienie, to upadek wymiarów wielkich” (DW X, 364) [if it is not a momentary stupefaction, it is a fall of great dimensions]. The course of the events in December indicated rather the second possibility – a crisis of ideals and universal values. To the question he asked himself: “gdzie sanktuarium ... – cóż świętego?” [where is the sanctuary ... – what is sacred?], he answered:

Z bliska patrząc, w twarze blade bijących się patrząc, widać to – gdzieś się to *podziwia*, ale nie *dzieje się*... Coś z upadającego Rzymu tu i owdzie zawiewa – legie sobie celem – imperator *fortuny* próbuje – retorowie wygnani, bo dzienniki zamknięte. My – emigranckie blade twarze, jak nazarejczyków, co wiedzą, co za tysiąc lat, ale co pod rękoma mają, to i im zakłète i nieprzystępne – obozy – ognie pancernymi otoczone. Barbarzyńcy od Newy z dala, z dala... (DW X, 365)

[Looking from a close distance, looking closely at the pale faces of those who are fighting, it can be seen – it is taking place somewhere, but does not occur... Something from the falling Rome is blown here and there – legions are the aim for themselves – the emperor tries the *fortune* – the orators are banished, because the journals are closed. We – the emigrant pale faces, like Nazarenes, who know, what will happen in a thousand years' time, but what is now is secret and inaccessible to them – camps – surrounded by armoured fires. The barbarians from the Neva, from afar, afar...]

With this and other similar statements, Norwid joins the catastrophic trend – particularly strong after the Spring of Nations – in reflecting on the future of Europe and Poland, with many similarities to the twentieth-century

catastrophic view heralding the twilight of Western civilization.<sup>20</sup> Many of Norwid's reflections on the situation of Europe bring to mind much later observations from Oswald Spengler's greatest work. For Spengler, the "twilight of the West" – still compared to the fall of ancient cultures – "means nothing more and nothing less than a *civilizational problem*."<sup>21</sup> Norwid's reflections are also close to the observations made by José Ortega y Gasset concerning the "dehumanization of art."

However, Norwid's catastrophic premonitions are not synonymous with absolute catastrophism; there is a constant alternative – a vision of a Europe saved by a return to the elementary values of Christian civilization. Norwid's predictions of catastrophe sometimes meet with Krasiński's vision, who feared that Europe would not see the threats posed by social revolution and Russian despotism.<sup>22</sup> Norwid was aware of them when he wrote about "współczesny chaos" [contemporary chaos] and "barbarzyńskie przestawanie Rządu Petersburskiego" (PWsz VII, 163) [the barbaric actions of the St. Petersburg government]. He never accepted "łaski azjackiej ambasady" [the favours of the Asian embassy] and was a self-declared enemy of pan-Slavism. In his notebook there is a clipping from *Przegląd Poznański* of 1854 featuring a fragment of an article about the Russian threat to Europe.

If we take a closer look at Norwid's concept of Europe in terms of culture and civilization, we can see clearly where its borders lie – and it does not include Russia. This is where Europe ends and Asia begins, this is where the division runs between the civilised world and the barbarians. In all of Norwid's works, there is a conviction that Poland has found itself "m i ę d z y A z j i t c h n i e m a Z a c h o d e m" (PWsz I, 386) [between the breath of Asia and the West]. But this situation led the poet to a reflection on the special role of Poland in the Europeanization of Russia, which is clearly expressed in "Filoktet" ["Philoctetes"]; it resulted, among other things, from the conviction

20 A very popular reading in the nineteenth century was Edward Gibbon's *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (published between 1776 and 1788), which for a long time had been the most important compendium of the history of the Roman Empire. One of Norwid's preserved notes shows that he was familiar with Gibbon's work (see PWsz VII, 427); as J.W. Gomulicki suggests, Norwid could have come across it in the French translation from 1813 (see PWsz VII, 722).

21 Quoted after Andrzej Kołakowski, *Spengler* (Warszawa: Wiedza Powszechna, 1981), p. 184.

22 See Marcin Król, *Konserwatyści a niepodległość. Studia nad polską myślą konserwatywną XIX wieku* (Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy PAX, 1985), p. 112.



(quite common at that time) that Poles are “the children of the Western education”<sup>23</sup> and they should be the ones to contribute to the elimination of what is “Asian” in Russia.<sup>24</sup>

Zdzisław Łapiński pointed out that Russia “in Norwid’s writings is mythologised, it deliberately embodies various negative values, and Russia is understood empirically, as a diversified society, and one should engage in a dialogue with some of its groups and individuals.”<sup>25</sup> It seems that in the poem “Do Moskali-Słowian” [“To Muscovites-Slavs”], this two-dimensional vision of Russia has a more concrete expression. The dividing line here lies between the despotism of the tsarist regime and the Slavic people. Indeed, the poet’s obvious solidarity with the latter is expressed in numerous works from the years 1850–1851. The poem “Do Moskali-Słowian” epitomises Norwid’s thinking about Russia. Norwid’s view of Russia does not evolve as much as, for instance, his vision of Western Europe:

Moskale bracia! Co w was jest sz a t a n e m ,  
Tegośmy na chrzcie polskim się wyrzekli,  
Tego już wasza moc w nas nie rozwściekli;  
Dał Bóg, że widnem to i odpoznanem;  
Dał Bóg, i po to w świat my się rozwlekli... (PWsz I, 151)

[Muscovite brothers! What is d e v i l i s h in you,  
We have renounced at the Polish baptism,  
This power of yours will no longer infuriate us;  
Thanks God we saw and recognised it;  
Thanks God, that is why we went into the world...]

The “dual” vision of Russia presented in this poem is based on the oppositions of Satan vs. God, pride vs. humility, and paganism (atheism) vs. baptism. Norwid sympathises with Russia, the Slavic nation, but he absolutely opposes imperial Russia – or that which is imperialist, pagan, and barbaric about it. But it is also important to know that tsarist Russia, with all that is “devilish” in it is just “zabitego kolano olbrzyma” [a knee of the killed giant]. This encourages the Writer, who is engaged in a dialogue with Satan to formulate an implicit warning; it can be inferred that the text of the poem heralds the defeat of that which is imperial in Russia: “Ale da Pan Bóg, że i to poznamy! Wtedy” (PWsz I, 151) [But with God’s help we shall also see it! Then...]. Then there comes a

23 “Ostatnie wypadki i sprawa polska,” *Przegląd Poznański*, Vol. 14 (1852), p. 115.

24 See Zdzisław Łapiński, *Norwid* (Kraków: Znak, 1984), p. 134.

25 Łapiński, *Norwid*, p. 134.

short exchange of views between the Writer and Satan – the situation is somewhat reminiscent of the last sequences of Mickiewicz’s “Wielka Improwizacja” [“The Great Improvization”], where God is called a tsar (by one of the satans, not Konrad though); in Norwid’s poem, this warning is given about Satan, and the context of the poem allows one to see in this character personification of the Russian ruler, or at least the a spokesperson of his interests. This threat, however, despite Satan’s urging, is not expressed: “Ostatnie słowo... to nie są litery!” [The last word... it is not letters! ...], says the Writer.

Upon citing the poem “Do Moskali–Słowian,” Łapiński emphasises that:

The writer sees the Polish enslavement in relation to our attitude, which unites us in the sphere of morality – with the enemy. This attitude is symbolised by broadly understood ‘vainglory.’ Physical violence is only effective if it is accompanied by spiritual surrender, i.e. the adoption of foreign and destructive values.<sup>26</sup>

When reading this poem, it is probably worthwhile to take the category of “knowledge,” understood broadly also as awareness, as an interpretive starting point. “Widnem ... i odpoznaniem” [we saw and recognised it] refers to what is devilish in Muscovites; the second level of knowledge necessary for Poles hoping to regain their independence is to become aware of the essence of the Russian power – the sin of “vainglory.”

Norwid represents this trend in thought on Russia also reflected in, among others, the book by Henryk Kamiński, entitled *Rosja i Europa. Polska* [*Russia and Europe. Poland*], which was written during the Crimean War and published in Paris in 1857. The author expressed the view that Poland was the only nation that could mediate between Europe and Russia, the only one capable of understanding Russia. Kamiński writes:

The sight of errors committed in our eyes by Europe led us to the conclusion that their only cause was the incomprehension of Russia, this cause that inevitably led to these errors, seemed so clear and simple to us that we could not help being surprised by the fact that it did not hit all of us, ourselves included.<sup>27</sup>

Thinking and writing about Russia as if it were veiled in impenetrable mystery had a long tradition in Europe. Faced with the dilemma “Europe or Asia” when writing about Russia, Western authors such as Astolphe de Custine and August von Haxthausen adopted this viewpoint, making it possible for them

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26 Łapiński, *Norwid*, p. 134.

27 X. Y. Z. [Henryk Kamiński], *Rosja i Europa. Polska* (Paris: L. Martinet, 1857), pp. V–VI. At the time of the January Uprising, in his “Nota o konieczności presji moralnej”

to avoid unambiguous answers. As Irena Grudzińska-Gross rightly points out, “Western people were unable to ‘understand’ the essence of Russia and to assign it either to Europe or Asia. This difficulty in understanding took the form of the inability to classify it.”<sup>28</sup> For Custine, the author of *La Russie en 1839*, and for many other European writers who made trips to Moscow and St. Petersburg, “Russia simultaneously was and was not Asian, at the same time it was and was not European.”<sup>29</sup>

Norwid was also concerned about the disastrous – in his opinion – direction of transformations in Western Europe. He found it symptomatic that after the Spring of Nations in France, European society became increasingly hostile towards Poles; this must have contributed to what he referred to in his conversation with Rev. Jełowicki as “the European air crushing Polish hearts.” Particular aversion began after the appearance of pro-Polish manifestations in Paris in May 1849. After these events, Poles, who had previously been treated favourably by the French authorities, began to be perceived as threats to internal peace and order; hence, at that time, many statements appeared in the French press, full of hostility towards the Polish community. The situation of Poles was extremely complicated by the fact that the French government stopped subsidising them. For the majority of the immigrants, the lack of financial support meant they were forced to seek their livings outside France. A negative stereotype of Poles had also formed in the awareness of the average Frenchman, and it was associated with the image of a pauper and beggar. In July 1850, *Goniec Polski* wrote:

Poles, they [the French] say, are regarded as beggars and vagrants; the Parisians call the side of Paris, where only French beggars live, little Poland (petite Pologne), in the very same way the English refer to this side of London inhabited exclusively by English beggars as little Ireland. ... The most honest Pole does not escape the persecution in a country as viciously harassing as France .... The French say that every Pole is a nobleman and a decorated officer, and that every Pole is a beggar. Things have come to the point where a sigh for the homeland, the admission

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[“Note on the need for moral pressure”], Norwid developed a theory of “the moral influence of Poland over Russia” and proposed to establish a Polish party in Russia.

- 28 Irena Grudzińska-Gross, *Piętno rewolucji. Custine, Tocqueville i wyobraźnia romantyczna*, trans. Bożena Shallcross (Warszawa: PWN, 1995), pp. 64–65. A similar view is represented in the writings of Aleksandr Herzen. The desire to bring Russia closer to Europe stops him from fleeing to the USA.
- 29 Irena Grudzińska-Gross, *Piętno rewolucji*, p. 84. Grudzińska-Gross reminds us that before 1917 the Russians proposed the concept of Eurasia, thus revealing that the Western dilemmas were not completely foreign to them (p. 85).

of sorrow is a title to disbelief. The expression *panore polonais* [Polish ragman, tramp] has become a laughing stock.<sup>30</sup>

Pride and honour made many Polish emigrants in Paris “hide their own poverty from the West.”<sup>31</sup> The French government, trying to get rid of Poles at any price, offered to finance their journeys out of France. In August 1850, “the Minister for Internal Affairs announced to Poles that those who decide to return to their country will receive a free iron road to Warsaw, while those who would like to go to the United States will get a free ship passage once they gather in appropriate number.”<sup>32</sup> As the number of those interested was significant, as soon as 20 December, many Poles left for New York at the expense of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Undoubtedly, attitudes surrounding Poles in Paris had an impact on Norwid. Many of the poet’s statements testify that his trip to America was not a sudden decision; it took many months to mature. It happened at the same time his aversion to Europe was maturing after the Spring of Nations, which, of course, was accompanied by Norwid’s disappointment as a writer who was not understood by critics or the literary public – but the complicated situation of Europe at that time was undoubtedly at the forefront. From the letters of the poet written at that time, emerges a picture of Europe as a tower of Babel, and its time “*jest coraz bliższy*” (DW X, 379) [was drawing closer].

Among the phenomena that disturbed him, Norwid repeatedly mentions the materializations of life and art in the West (DW X, 266). A few years after his return from America he wrote to Kraszewski on 28 January 1859 that “*cała Europa idzie w to, że i inteligencja, i arystokracja ... zamieniają się po prostu w burżuazję pieniężną*” (DW XI, 295) [all of Europe goes in that direction that the *inelligentsia and aristocracy ... simply turn into the financial bourgeoisie*]. He saw signs of Europe’s fall in the indifference to hunger in the French colony of Algiers, and wondered how “*taka ugolinowska tragedia*” (PWsz IX, 337) [[such a Ugolinian tragedy] would be possible in European civilization.

According to Norwid, the crisis of this civilization was manifested in its violation of human rights. This problem emerged in his correspondence just before he left Europe, when the aversion of the French authorities to Poles intensified

30 *Goniec Polski*, Vol. 17 (1850, 21 July), p. 67. It cannot be excluded that the word ‘panore’ was a typographical error, the other possible word could have been ‘panorpe’ – ‘drone.’

31 *Goniec Polski*, Vol. 17 (1850, 21 July), p. 67.

32 *Goniec Polski*, Vol. 52 (1850, 1 September), pp. 207–208.

and a large portion of them found themselves facing humiliating poverty. Norwid did not accept such a Europe; as he wrote to Magdalena Łuszczewska in 1855, he had to “na czas jakiś opuścić Europę i rozszerzyć sobie widnokrąg człowieczości” (DW XI, 21) [leave Europe for some time and expand his horizon of humanity]. The dominance of the material over the humanitarian dimension leads, according to the poet, to the denial of the essence of European civilization that distinguishes it from Asian civilizations; as he tried to convince Charles Ruprecht in March 1869, “czasy, w których przemysł stanowi o pryncypiach, są barbarzyńskimi” (PWsz IX, 393) [the times, in which industry dictates the principles, are barbaric].

The catastrophic themes return as if with double force in Norwid’s journalistic texts and his correspondence from the period of the Paris Commune. Once again, the anti-humanitarian dimension of the nineteenth-century revolutions and the new positivist vision of the world are central topics:

Humanitarnego we wszystkim kształcenia się całe te praktyczne i realne (jak nazywają dzisiaj) pokolenie zaniechało było na wiarę materialnych filozofików, ucząc się specjalnostek mechanicznych... – pisał do Augusta Cieszkowskiego 1 marca 1871 r. – aż oto jednego razu Historia głosem wielkim zapytała o LUDZI! – Zapytała owego, który sprzedał był wielkie tradycje prac za mechaniczne uzdolnienia do robienia wątpliwotrwałych pieniędzy... zapytała go (mówię): “Co zrobiłeś, Kainie, z trupem brata twego, Człowieka?!” – I znalazł się też dużo ludzi? – i znalazłże się człowiek w tej Europie?... (PWsz IX, 477)

[This whole practical and realistic (as they are called today) generation has abandoned the humanitarian education in everything, giving in to the material philosophers, learning mechanical specialties ... – he wrote to August Cieszkowski on 1 March 1871 – then one time History asked in a loud voice about PEOPLE! – It asked the one who had sold the great traditions of works for mechanical talents for making money of questionable durability... It asked him (I say): “What did you do, Cain, with your brother’s dead body, the Man?!” – And were there many people? – and was there a man in this Europe?...]

In Norwid’s prose of that time, one can notice the presence of a biblical style, as if in “Przyczynek do *Rzeczy o wolności słowa*” [“A Contribution to *On the Freedom of Speech*”]:

Kto ma uszy ku słuchaniu, niechże wysłucha, która? godzina na zegarze Europy tej uderzyła – Europy tej (śmiałem rzec) bez pryncypiów i generacji tych obecnych, niespokojnie i źle wychowanych, albo właściwiej powiem: nie wychowanych wcale! (PWsz VII, 83)

[Who has ears, let them hear, what? time on the clock of this Europe has struck – this Europe (I dare say) without principles and generations of those present, turbulently and ill-educated, or, to be more precise: *n o t e d u c a t e d a t a l l !*]

This time, the “landscape of the ruins of Paris” after the Paris Commune finds an analogy in an image of the downfall of ancient Babylonian civilization. There even appears a vision of an “anty-cywilizacyjny kataklizm” [anti-civilizational cataclysm], against which Europe may be protected by “tylko B ó g i p a r l a m e n t a r n y s y s t e m” (PWsz VII, 84) [only God and the parliamentary system]. These catastrophic reflections accompanied Norwid for the rest of his life. From the same time as his famous appellation for Europe – “the old madwoman” – comes a letter to Franciszek Duchński, with whom Norwid once again shared his sinister premonition two years before his death: “Lud Polski rolny abdykuje i do Ameryki wynosi się. Zapewne bystrzy szlachcice wiedzą, iż ten lud ma zawsze profetyzmu-sens, choćby jak ptaki przed burzą” (PWsz X, 154) [The Polish farming people abdicates and moves to America. The clever nobles certainly know that this people always has a prophetic sense, like birds before a storm]. In 1852 America seemed the best solution for Norwid. It is also possible that his decision at that time was influenced by the reports and accounts of those who had already reached the New World and found there ways to live a dignified life:

Many of those who went to America later wrote that “America teaches them work and is an example of what the brave human can do.” In their opinion, the most active Polish work is totally idle as compared with American work.<sup>33</sup>

On 16 June 1850, General Władysław Zamoyski wrote to Captain Łuniewski, who commanded Polish soldiers that who had come from Malta to England, many of whom intended to seek their luck overseas:

In America you will earn your living doing a decent job, and by looking closely at the nation full of life and the future, by taking an active part in its development, you will gain experience, fortitude, and even resources with which, when the time comes, when the homeland calls you, you will honourably stand in the row of its defenders and the most useful citizens.<sup>34</sup>

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33 *Goniec Polski*, Vol. 6 (1851, 9 January), p. 322.

34 Quoted after *Jenerał Zamoyski 1830–1868*, compiled by Jadwiga Zamoyska, Vol. 5: 1847–1852 (Poznań: Biblioteka Kórnicka, 1922), p. 327.

A few months later, on 3 September 1850, Zamoyski reported to Zygmunt Krasiński from Havre, where he was helping emigrants preparing to leave Europe:

I arrange easy crossings to America, from here for our people. It is a sad necessity! I send you my opinion about it and advice to [sic! – J. Cz.] young emigrants. Those who went there write to me from New York that everyone from the day they arrived found a job, each earning one dollar a day.<sup>35</sup>

Norwid must have received these or similar opinions, maybe not directly from Zamoyski, although it is probable – but many such reports were reprinted in the press, which the poet read attentively. It is difficult, of course, to answer the question of to what extent these reports inspired Norwid. In his case, at that time, more important than the chance of finding a job seemed other reasons, resulting from his opposition to Europe and “Asian” Russia. Perhaps the confessor of the poet, Rev. Piotr Semenenko, played a role here. In a letter to Jan Skrzynecki from 3 November 1848, Semenenko commented on contemporary political events:

It would be sad if the Emperor’s Cossacks won in Vienna, and I wouldn’t be surprised if in a few years’ time all the Germans would fall under their laws, because the Germans would throw themselves at that Slavs, and the Slavs would call for Muscovites to help them. Then I wouldn’t be surprised, indeed, I would expect these Cossacks in Paris in a few years, or rather I wouldn’t wait for them, but I would advise everyone to go to America, because maybe America is destined for it – that should freedom and civilization go out on the old land, it will move to the new land and there, for some time, the history of the mankind will continue until everything has been engulfed by the night of disbelief and barbarism before the final judgement. Maybe for this reason God has kept America hidden for such a long time.<sup>36</sup>

Besides, Norwid was not living in a cultural vacuum. He had to be more or less directly confronted with the vision of America (even some stereotypes) shaped by Chateaubriand or Alexis de Tocqueville. Marcin Król believes that “the memorable juxtaposition made by Tocqueville, the juxtaposition of the two great historical powers, Russia and America, was probably not known to the Polish Romantics,”<sup>37</sup> but it seems that the work *De la démocratie en Amérique*,

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35 *Jeneral Zamoyski 1830–1868*, p. 327.

36 Manuscript from the Library of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Kraków 2408, Vol. 2, c. 90–91.

37 Marcin Król, *Podróż romantyczna* (Oficyna Literacka, 1988) (underground edition), p. 23.

published in 1835, could not have been completely unfamiliar to them, even though they did not have a Polish translation.<sup>38</sup>

Norwid might have been drawn to a vision of America that gives everyone equal opportunities, which Tocqueville had already pointed out in his introduction to his work. To both Chateaubriand and Tocqueville, the democracy of the New World seemed an antithesis of the French political regime, while the American wilderness was, on the one hand, a challenge and, on the other hand, a chance to repeat the act of creation *ex nihilo*.

Moreover, “America, unlike Russia, was considered an extension and a part of Europe.”<sup>39</sup> Thus, if “Europeanness” on the Old Continent was degenerate and in decline, maybe America could redeem her? This vision was all the more worth investigating as it was contrasted with images of Russia in terms of freedom vs. slavery and democracy vs. absolutism.

Aleksandr Herzen, whom Norwid knew personally from meeting in the Parisian salon of Emma and Georg Herwegh, believed that “America is the true continuation of the European development.”<sup>40</sup> Andrzej Walicki’s remark on Herzen’s pessimism that it “was the pessimism of an Occidentalist who lost his faith in the future of Europe”<sup>41</sup> also reflects the essence of Norwid’s dilemmas. In many of Herzen’s essays there obsessively recurs the thought of the inevitably approaching end of the Old World. This idea is accompanied by the conviction that European civilization has survived in America. In his 1849 essay entitled *Rosja [Russia]*, Herzen wrote:

How difficult is our epoch. Everything around us is becoming loose .... A brave thinker who does not want to give in to force is left with a single shelter – the deck of a ship sailing off to America.<sup>42</sup>

However, unlike Norwid, he did not decide to leave Europe, although he noticed that “every day it is becoming more and more like St. Petersburg. ... And if here too our lips are sealed, if the oppression forbids us to loudly curse

38 Until 1848, there had been 12 editions of the work and it was translated into English by Krasiński’s friend, Henry Reeve. See Grudzińska-Gross, *Piętno rewolucji*, p. 128.

39 Grudzińska-Gross, *Piętno rewolucji*, p. 195.

40 Aleksandr Herzen, *Pisma filozoficzne*, Vol. 1: *Eseje filozoficzne. Z tamtego brzegu*, trans. Janina Walicka, translation revised and annotated by Andrzej Walicki (Warszawa: PWN, 1965), p. 253.

41 Herzen, *Pisma filozoficzne*, Vol. 1, p. XI.

42 Herzen, *Pisma filozoficzne*, Vol. 1, p. 6.



our oppressors, I will go to America. I am a man, and as a man I will sacrifice everything in the name of human dignity and freedom of speech.”<sup>43</sup>

Juxtaposed with a Europe that “is approaching a terrible cataclysm,”<sup>44</sup> in the case of Norwid, the vision of a free America has been only partly confirmed. While still in New York, Norwid confessed to Rev. Jełowicki in a letter from 18 May 1854:

Zgrzeszyłem zaiste, gdym się uniósł, opuszczając Francję, kiedy nas za niepotrzebny i szkodliwy podrzutek i pasożytnicze ziele uważano – trzeba było nie mieć tej obraźliwości, wszelako mógłbym zgadnąć, iż jeżeli przyjadę tu pracować, skaleczę rękę rąbiąc drzewo, a następnie usychać będę, jako usycham. (DW X, 505)

[I have indeed sinned when I got carried away, leaving France, when we were considered an unnecessary and harmful foundling and a parasitic weed – had I not been this oversensitive, after all I could have guessed that if I came here to work, I would injure my hand while chopping down a tree and then I would be withering as I am now].

But he wrote it from afar, alone in America, and – strikingly enough – his judgement was not less harsh at all.<sup>45</sup>

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43 Herzen, *Pisma filozoficzne*, Vol. 2, pp. 45–46. Herzen also compared the situation of Europe to the fall of the Roman Empire (p. 73).

44 Herzen, *Pisma filozoficzne*, Vol. 2, p. 207.

45 It is worth mentioning at this point a much later poem by Norwid “Praca” [“Work”] from 1864 (the second version, entitled “Prac-czoło” [“Work in Brow’s Sweat”]), was included in the collection *Vade-mecum*), which was a contribution to the lively discussion after the publication of an article by Ludwik Powidaj, entitled “Polacy i Indianie” [“Poles and Indians”], in 1864 in the Lviv *Dziennik Literacki*. The author of the article compared the history of the extermination of Indians to the fate of Poles. The history of indigenous Americans was supposed to be a kind of warning for the Polish nation, but the author did not leave it without hope. He saw a chance for survival in the civilizational development based on work that should lead to material prosperity.

Norwid protested against the Positivist understanding of the role of work, emphasising the creative aspect of human work. Referring to the analogy: wild Indians – civilised Americans, he revealed the falsity of Powidaj’s parallel. Material prosperity does not guarantee survival; this can be guaranteed through work “by the sweat of one’s brow.”

The discussion on Powidaj’s article was extensively analysed in the book by Samuel Sandler *Indiańska przygoda Sienkiewicza* (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1967).

Norwid's attachment to his European roots proved stronger than his repulsion to Europe at that time. And if his statements contain serious accusations against the Old World, it is precisely because they flow from the mouth of a man who until the end identified himself with the centuries-long European tradition, sometimes terrified at the vision of the twilight of the old civilization, so far removed from his own vision of a humanitarian, Christian, and democratic Europe, a united Europe, but also one that respects the identity of its peoples.

Similarly to visions of the biblical Apocalypse, Norwid's vision of Europe is supported by two images – the Angel of Destruction on the one hand (whether the one mentioned in *Zarysy z Rzymu* [*Sketches from Rome*] or the theme of the drawing from 1851), and the image of “mother Europe” on the other.

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## “This-World’s Prince”: Norwid’s Faces of Satan\*

**Abstract:** After analysing Cyprian Norwid’s texts addressing the problem of evil, it must be concluded that the dictionary data given in the introduction fail to capture the richness of the representations of Satan in the work of the author of *Zwolon*. Even though his conventional appellations are fairly infrequent, Satan is a prominent presence in Norwid’s writings. The images of the Prince of Darkness, albeit few in number, have considerable significance for the interpretation of some of Norwid’s important works. Various forms of evil are encountered in *Promethidion*, “Wigilia,” and *Rzecz o wolności słowa*, in Norwid’s uncommonly vivid youthful lyrical poems and the litany “Do Najświętszej Panny Marii,” in the poem “Do Moskali-Słowian,” in the seminal cycle of epigrams, and finally in the poet’s journey through the inferno, the *Vade-mecum* collection.

Norwid linked Satan in a particular way with the multifariously ambiguous concept of *falsehood*, understood as the opposite of the supreme value, truth, which embraces all things that are good, holy, beautiful, and important. Norwid stressed the devil’s presence in civilization and history, where he leaves his mark through his devoted human followers. Enslavement, authoritarianism, and the instrumental treatment of individuals and nations are all the work of the evil spirit. Sometimes, Satan loses his personal traits and turns into an amorphous evil element in humans. His multiple forms and changeability make him very difficult to see. Yet metaphysical evil is present in Norwid’s world.

**Keywords:** Cyprian Norwid, linguistics, Satan in literature, Romanticism, Christianity

### The Romantic Satan

Romanticism revived the old interest in the sphere of evil and its inhabitants. The multitude and richness of Satan’s representations in the literature of that period are striking and probably only comparable to that of the Middle Ages. The character of a fallen angel provided writers with a model of rebellious

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existence that was close to the moods of the epoch. Thus, in European literature, Satan is, to a certain extent, elevated: he receives the mark of tragedy and greatness. The prototype of the monumental, impressive pride and nobility of Satan is Byron's Lucifer, the modern equivalent of Prometheus, the advocate of the discontented, "the great victim,"<sup>1</sup> as he was called by medieval sectarians. Other embodiments of the evil spirit, rooted in medieval folk traditions, is Mephistopheles from Goethe's *Faust*. In accordance with the ironic self-definition, he is a demon of "eternal contradiction," "Part of that Power, not understood, / Which always wills the Bad, and always works the Good,"<sup>2</sup> and, at the same time, a taunter, tempter, and master of refined delusion.

In Polish literature, there are few Baroque-style satanic heroes. The most Promethean type of Satan is the character of Lucifer in Słowacki's drama *Samuel Zborowski*. He acts as Zborowski's attorney before God's court, defending even criminal actions that express a free and creative spirit. Other Luciferic heroes are the altruistic devil from *Anioł upadły* [*The Fallen Angel*] by Mieczysław Romanowski and from Roman Zmorski's drama *Lesław*, and the black spirit from Kraszewski's "Rapsod" ["Rhapsody"].<sup>3</sup> The characters of Mephistopheles's descendants are much more widespread, e.g., the Black Hunter from the first part of Mickiewicz's *Dziady* [*Forefathers' Eve*] and the spirits from Part III, the Doctor from Słowacki's *Kordian*, Pamfil from Słowacki's drama about Beniowski, the Choir of Evil Spirits and Mefisto from Krasiński's *Nie-Boska komedia* [*Non-Divine Comedy*] or Masynissa from his *Irydion*, and the Stranger from Stefan Garczyński's *Wacława dzieje* [*Wacław's History*].<sup>4</sup> Among the protagonists of Polish Romanticism, there are also some comical characters, known from medieval folk demonology. Their best literary epitome is Mephistopheles from Mickiewicz's "Pani Twardowska" ["Mrs Twardowska"]. As jovial, familiar, and usually German-like goblins, they lacked the supreme intelligence and grandeur of Byron's Lucifer, and therefore they often struggled with and were defeated by more clever people.

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1 See Ignacy Matuszewski, *Diabeł w poezji. Studium krytyczno-porównawcze* (Warszawa: Księgarnia G. Centnerszvera i S-ka, 1894), p. 32.

2 Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *Faust* with illustrations by Harry Clarke, translated into English in the original metres by Bayard Taylor (Cleveland, Ohio, New York: The World Publishing Company). <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/14591/14591-h/14591-h.htm#III>.

3 See Matuszewski, *Diabeł w poezji*, p. 131.

4 See Konrad Górski, "Bohater," in: *Słownik literatury polskiej XIX wieku*, ed. Józef Bachórz and Alina Kowalczykowska (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1991), p. 115.

## Norwid’s Satan

The Romantic fascination with evil was foreign to the author of *Promethidion*. In one of his letters, he explained this in the following way:

nie jestem manichejczyk i nie wierzę, że *złe* i *dobrze* równej są długości – pierwsze jest krótsze od drugiego. .... Bo Pan nasz jest nad wszystko dobry. (DW XI, 93)

[I am not a Manichean and I do not believe that *evil* and *good* are of the same length – the former is shorter than the latter. ... Because our Lord is good above all else.]

According to Norwid, evil is a pure negation:

Mam pojęcie o *złości*, że ta nie ma istnienia osobnego i samodzielnej siły, że ta jest tylko brakiem *dobry*, jak cień jest brakiem światła, i nie ma cienia osobnego samodzielnie ciemnego – nie ma słońca-czarnego – stąd też we *złe* nie wierzę, lecz wierzę mocno w *dobrą* *wiarę*. (DW X, 71)

[I believe that *evil* does not have a separate existence and independent power, that it is only a lack of *good*, just as shadow is a lack of light, and that there is no separate shadow that is dark on its own – there is no black sun – thus I don’t believe in *evil*, but I do believe strongly in *good* *faith*.]

Norwid’s definition of the evil spirit is also rooted in the Augustinian tradition:

On jest *nic* oś, a działanie jego – *promiennosc* *nic* ości (próżni) – *dy* *n* *a* *m* *i* *c* *n* *a*, można by powiedzieć. (*Notatki z historii* [*Notes on History*], PWSz VII, 370)

[He’s *nothingness*, and his actions are emanation of *nothingness* (void) – *dy* *n* *a* *m* *i* *c*, one could say.]

The privation theory of evil in the world does not imply that Satan does not exist or threaten humans. However, it is characteristic of Catholic orthodoxy and Norwid to focus attention not on the figure of Satan, who intrigued the Romantics so much, but on the goodness and omnipotence of his victor – Christ.<sup>5</sup>

In light of the data collected by the team working on the *Dictionary of Cyprian Norwid’s Language* at the University of Warsaw, Norwid’s demonology – as

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5 See the decisions of the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, invariably repeated until the First Vatican Council, in *Breviarium fidei. Wybór doktrynalnych wypowiedzi Kościoła*, ed. Stanisław Głowa SJ and Ignacy Bieda SJ (Poznań: Księgarnia św. Wojciecha, 1989); Rev. Ignacy Bokwa, “Szatan jako osoba?” *Przegląd Powszechny*, Vol. 11 (1996), pp. 149–160.

compared with Mickiewicz's – is quite modest.<sup>6</sup> The table below presents a summary of the quantitative data concerning the conventional names of Satan in the idiolects of both writers:

The names of Satan	Norwid			Mickiewicz
	poetry	prose	total	
szatan [Satan]	9	6	15	72
diabeł [devil]	5	8	13	79
czart [devil/fiend]	–	–	–	16 (czart/czort)
bies [demon/fiend]	–	–	–	14 (bies/bis)

When comparing the data above, attention should be paid to the number of uses of all the lexemes in the texts of both writers. The *Słownik języka Adama Mickiewicza* [Dictionary of Adam Mickiewicz's Language] records about 640 thousand uses, whereas the dictionary of Norwid's language lists approximately 600 thousand uses.

*Satan* is a neutral term used in the Scriptures and theology, referring to an angel who rebelled against God. In Mickiewicz's works, it often appears in *Zdania i uwagi* [Sentences and Remarks]. It is worth noting that in Norwid's writings, as many as two out of six uses of this lexeme in prose are quotations from Słowacki's texts. In the drama *Zwolon*, we can also find the diminutive derivative "szatanek" ["little satan"], which refers to a disobedient child (PWsz 4, 55).<sup>7</sup> Norwid used the adjective "szatański" ["satanic"] only three times (once in poetry and twice in prose), while Mickiewicz used it nine times. In the case of marked names, such as "diabeł" ["devil"], "czart," or "bies" ["fiend/demon"], the difference between the writers can be explained by the different genres and styles of their literary output. The word "diabeł" ["devil"], which also appears in the Bible, has a folk connotation – it often appears in idiomatic and swearing expressions. Mickiewicz mainly used this term, like the lexemes "czart" and "bies" ["fiend/demon"] that were absent from Norwid's writings, in texts representing the common worldview, e.g., in ballads. Norwid rarely stylised his texts to resemble folk tales. In his poetry, "diabeł" appears three

6 Data according to *Słownik języka Adama Mickiewicza*, ed. Konrad Górski and Stefan Hrabec, Vols. 1–11 (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1962–1983).

7 See a similar usage in *Słownik warszawski* [The Warsaw Dictionary]: "Z tej dziewczyny prawdziwy szatanek" ["That girl's a real little satan"], "Ten szatanek wyglądający zza pleców księżnej" ["That little satan looking from behind the dutchess's back"].



times in quotations, whereas, among the eight uses of this lexeme in prose, three involve the idiomatic expression “niech (wszyscy) diabli wezmą” [“to hell with it,” lit.: “let the (all) devils take it”]. There is also one quote and four uses that Norwid alone uses, including one in a footnote. Three times, Norwid quoted a fragment of one of the further stanzas of “Bogurodzica” [“Theotokos”]: “diabie potępienie” [“devil’s damnation”].<sup>8</sup>

Apart from the terms that functioned as the proper names of God’s adversary, both authors also used descriptive names, which were often conventionalised. The table below presents a list of these along with respective quantitative data:<sup>9</sup>

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- 8 The discussed usages can be found in the following writings by Norwid: SZATAN: “Marzenie” [“Dream”], PWSz I, 23; “Dumanie” [I] [“Meditation”], PWSz I, 41; “[Od anioła do szatana]” [“From Angel to Satan”], PWSz I, 96; “Do Moskali-Słowian” [“To Muscovites-Slavs”], PWSz I, 151 (two times); “Wigilia” [“Christmas Eve”], DW IV, 12; DW IV, 13 (two times); *Promethidion*, DW IV, 104; “O Juliuszu Słowackim” [“On Juliusz Słowacki”], PWSz VI, 413 (quote), PWSz VI, 426 (quote); “Z za-jawu” [“From a Daydream”], PWSz VII, 226; a letter, DW X, 371 (two times); *Notatki z historii* [Notes on History], PWSz VII, 370.
- SZATAŃSKI: “Wspomnienie wioski” [“Memory of the Village”], PWSz I, 11; *Zarysy z Rzymu* [Sketches from Rome], letters: PWSz VII, 14, DW X, 159.
- DIABEL: “Wigilia,” DW IV, 11 (quote), DW IV, 12, DW IV, 13; *Krakus*, DW V, 230 (quote); “Boga-Rodzica” [“Mother of God”], PWSz VI, 511 (quote), PWSz VI, 515; “[Odpowiedź krytykom...]” [“A Reply to the Critics”], PWSz VII, 38; “Z pamiętnika” [“From the Diary”], PWSz VII, 41 (footnote); a letter, DW X, 422; *Notatki z historii* [Notes on History], PWSz VII, 370.
- NIECH (WSZYSCY DIABLI WEZMĄ (KOGOŚ)): letters: DW XII, 523, DW XII, 528, PWSz IX, 369.
- “DIABLE POTĘPIENIE”/“DIABLE POTĘPIENIE” (quote): “Boga-Rodzica” [“Mother of God”], PWSz VI, 507, PWSz VI, 519, PWSz VI, 522.
- 9 LUCIFER: “Na zgon śp. Jana Gajewskiego” [“On the Death of the Late Jan Gajewski”], PWSz I, 293.
- NIEPRZYJACIEL: “Do Najświętszej Panny Marii” [“To the Blessed Virgin Mary”], PWSz I, 194; “List o stolikach wirujących” [“A Letter about the Spinning Tables”], PWSz VI, 625; “Z pamiętnika” [“From a Diary”], PWSz VII, 42; letters: DW X, 396, DW X, 527 (2 times), DW XII, 508.
- ZŁY: *Listy o emigracji* [Letters on emigration], PWSz VII, 21.
- ZŁY DUCH: *Kleopatra i Cezar* [Cleopatra and Caesar], DW VI, 549 (crossed out); *Białe kwiaty* [White Flowers], DW VII, 65; “List o stolikach wirujących,” PWSz VI, 623; “Korespondencja króla Abgara” [“The Correspondence of King Abgar”], PWSz VII, 432 (translation).

Descriptive names for Satan	Norwid			Mickiewicz
	poetry	prose	total	
Lucifer/Lucyfer	1	–	1	7
nieprzyjaciół [enemy]	1	6	7	4
zły [the evil one]	–	1	1	–
zły duch [evil spirit]	3	1	4	17
zły anioł [evil angel]	2	–	2	–

One of the oldest terms for the Prince of Evil is the name *Lucifer*, used in the Book of Isaiah, which originally meant Morning Star. In the biblical text, it refers to the proud Babylonian monarch who proclaimed himself equal to God and announced his ascension to heaven but eventually was sentenced to be thrown into the depths of hell. From the time of the Vulgate by Hieronymus, the Church Fathers used this term for Satan, thus emphasising his original perfection and exaltation he experienced before his fall. This was the name of the evil demon in the works by Dante and Byron. The author of *Assunta* referred to Satan as Lucifer only once in the poem “Na zgon śp. Jana Gajewskiego” [“On the Death of the Late Jan Gajewski”], where people who observe the Promethean achievements of the civilization seem to think that

Lucifer stary  
 Podchwyci święte wzajemności ludów,  
 Nie: heroizmu i miłości-cudów,  
 Używszy – ale: wyzysku i pary

(PWsz I, 293)

[the old Lucifer  
 will capture the sacred reciprocations of peoples,  
 Not using the miracles of heroism and love,  
 – but: exploitation and steam]

The poem was written after a factory catastrophe in which Jan Tadeusz Gajewski, a distinguished Polish emigrant, died. The quoted fragment refers to the impression that the boiler explosion in Manchester left on “people of simple faith.” This event becomes a myth: the memory of a few people who tried

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ZŁY ANIOŁ: “Idee i prawda” [“Ideas and Truth”], PWsz II, 65; *Promethidion*, DW IV, 122.

the latest technological advances paying the ultimate price evokes Prometheus’ efforts and then conjures up an apocalyptic, terrifying vision of the future. The lexeme “wzajemność” [“reciprocation”] appears in nineteenth-century Polish in two senses: 1) “retaliation, requital, tit for tat,” and 2) in mathematics, “the correspondence between two systems.” Norwid’s use of that lexeme introduces a grammatical modification (plural, which, according to the dictionary, is acceptable only in the second sense) and extends its standard meaning. “Święte wzajemności ludów” [“the sacred reciprocations of peoples”], in this context, refers to all human relations and contacts. The civilizational progress and the change of labour relations (“exploitation and steam”) destroy the natural, altruistic bonds between people, replacing them with a pragmatic sense of community, or, more frequently, with a conflict of interest. In another place, Norwid approves of Byron’s words: “jeden człowiek przez mechaniczne środki zastępuje siedmiu i wraz reszta pozostawiona jest bez pracy; ... nie godzi się, aby machin doskonałość okupywać człowieka degradacją” [“using the mechanical means, one man replaces seven and so the rest is left without a job; ... it doesn’t befit to compensate for the perfection of machines with human degradation”] (“O Juliuszu Słowackim” (PWsz VI, 420) [“On Juliusz Słowacki”]). Therefore, Satan works in the human world using the de-personalised means of industrial civilization. In this context, it is not without significance that he was referred to as *Lucifer*. This biblical name refers to the worldly symbolism (etymologically it means “the light bearer”) and thus perfectly corresponds with the Promethean motif of the poem, which also contains the following interpretation of the wonders of civilization:

to do pochodni  
Skradziony ogień Boga – bez ofiary!

(PWsz I, 293)

[it is the fire to torch  
Stolen from God – without a sacrifice!]

Here, Norwid used the affinity – which was particularly emphasised in Romanticism – between the rebellious son of Iapetus, who stole fire from Zeus, and the rebellious angel. However, in contrast to the tendencies of the age, the poet linked this act with a negative value. Norwid’s Lucifer has nothing of Byron’s great Satan in him – he uses trivial means, and his superiority is only temporary. The eschatological motif appearing in the poem may be related

to the apocalyptic predictions of a thousand-year reign of the dragon freed from slavery or to the announcement of the arrival of the Antichrist. In the Christian tradition, Lucifer was always a spirit who could not live up to his own perfection – a spirit cast out by the angels of God. The finale of the poem clearly expresses the Christian belief that the efforts of the Prince of Darkness are in vain:

Braterstwa-sztandar i tu jeszcze buja,  
Żywot ze skonań tu jeszcze korzysta,

(PWsz I, 294)

[The banner of brotherhood is still flapping here,  
Life is still using deaths here,]

For people of the past, the name had the power to evoke the person bearing it. So as not to pronounce the name of an evil spirit, euphemisms were used, which usually defined the role of the devil in the world, his traits, or his attitude towards people. Norwid sometimes called Satan the *enemy* – he used to be “nieprzyjaciel ludzkości” (PWsz VII, 42) [“the enemy of humanity”], “*nieprzyjaciel dusz, który uciska i otacza*” (DW X, 527) [“*the enemy of souls that oppresses and surrounds*”] and with which one has to fight (DW X, 527). He was also generally an “enemy” of everything and everyone (e.g., PWsz I, 194, PWsz VI, 625, DW X, 396). Therefore, the euphemism discussed points to Satan’s attitudes to the objects to which it refers, or – more broadly – to the entire world.

The term that characterises Satan in the most general way is *evil*. Mickiewicz did not ever use this noun to refer to Satan, and Norwid used it only once, creating an interesting sequence:

zamiast orzec np., iż nadużycie Imienia Bożego z ł e m j e s t , albo iż Imię Pańskie w z ł e g o imię się zmienia, ilekroć bywa nadużytym, albo iż złe jest to nadużycie...  
... przeciw-boży sztandar wzniesić podążą. (*Listy o emigracji [Letters on Emigration]*, PWsz VII, 21–22)

[instead of saying, for instance, that the abuse of God’s Name i s e v i l , or that the Lord’s Name is changed into the e v i l ’ s name whenever it is overused, or that this overuse is evil... ... they will raise the anti-God flag.]

Norwid eagerly used biblical periphrases, e.g., “the evil spirit.” The expression “evil angel” refers to the traditional teaching of the Church about God’s most beautiful creature, the luminous angel who failed to restrain his pride. The

mention of the primary position of Satan in the hierarchy of beings also appears in the periphrasis “Cherub zrzucony” [“the cherub hurled down”] (“Wigilia,” DW IV, 11 [“Christmas Eve”]). In light of a fragment of this poem, the fallen spirit no longer has angelic wings. This interesting and rare information about Satan’s appearance is connected with Norwid’s conviction that only angels could have wings. The poem “Nieskończony” [“Infinite”], in which the hosts of pure spirits “Jeszcze nie są bez-skrzydlate, / Ale patrzą w blasku łono / Przez zasłonę uchyloną” (PWSz I, 201) [“Are not yet wing-less, / But are looking into the luminous womb / Through a slightly lifted veil”], indicates that the redeemed who will be seeing God “face to face” will not have the attributes of heavenly messengers. The angel who had lost his status was also deprived of them. The medieval imagery of Lucifer’s fall sometimes allowed him to retain his angelic form, but more frequently, the fallen rebel transformed into a wingless, deformed demon.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, Norwid also mentioned the wings of the Prince of Darkness and his retinue in a letter to Maria Trębicka from 3 July 1848, in which he bitterly spoke of himself:

Widział[em] kłamstwo na ustach opiewających rzecz anielską i **skrzydła** z pawich piór **szatańskie** do najpiękniejszych wpięte ramion... (DW X, 159)

[I saw a lie on the lips praising the angelic thing and **devilish wings** made of peacock feathers attached to the most beautiful shoulders...]

Peacock feathers are a symbol of pride, vanity, and emptiness, and thus as a fitting building material for Satan’s wings, as they indicate his inherent features. However, this is no longer a remnant of the angel’s primordial perfection, but a peculiar attribute of Satan. It also appears in the finale of “Wigilia,” where the devil boasts of his peacock tail (DWSz IV, 12).

One of the most common periphrastic names of Satan is *the prince of this world*. According to St John’s Gospel, Christ himself defined his adversary in this way:

Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out (John 12: 31);

for the prince of this world is coming (John 14: 30);

the prince of this world now stands condemned (John 16: 11).<sup>11</sup>

10 See illustrations in Katarzyna Zalewska-Lorkiewicz’s book: *Książę ciemności. O średniowiecznych wyobrażeniach szatana* (Warszawa: DiG, 1996).

11 The necessity of quoting the Holy Scriptures is related to philological problems. As Sr. Merdas states, Norwid “quoted from memory and contaminated the texts of

The contrast of the earthly dominion of Satan with God's kingdom, which is "not of this world" (John 18: 36), was strongly stressed in heterodox thought. The power over the world of matter was attributed to the evil spirit in all Gnostic currents, particularly in Manichaeism.<sup>12</sup>

In *Quidam*, Norwid repeated the following comparison twice:

Pomiędzy świtem a nocy zniknięciem  
 Płomienne blaski różowe z mrokami  
 Walczą, jak cnota z *świata-tego księciem* –

(DW III, 125)

Between the dawn and dispersion of night  
 Pink-flaming light wrestles with darkness  
 Like virtue with *this-world's evil prince* –<sup>13</sup>

The use of a hyphen in the phrase "ś w i a t – t e n" ["t h i s – w o r l d"] indicates the need to interpret it as a semantic whole,<sup>14</sup> while the emphasis highlights the limitations of the evil domain and contrasts it with "the other world" – God's

*Biblia Wujka*, *Biblia Gdańska* and the version used in the Catholic Church liturgy. Most of the time, however, clearly dominating over the other versions, we can encounter the *Gdańsk Bible* version." See Alina Merdas RSCJ, *Łuk przymierza. Biblia w poezji Norwida* (Lublin: Redakcja Wydawnictw KUL, 1983), p. 31. In the Polish original version of this article, most Bible quotations were taken from the Gdańsk Bible by Rev. Daniel Mikołajewski (according to the oft-reprinted edition: *Biblia to jest wszystko Pismo Święte Starego i Nowego Przymierza*, Berlin, 1810). The names of the books and sigla are taken from *Biblia Tysiąclecia*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (Poznań, 1810). This edition also contains quotations from the Book of Wisdom, which is absent from the Hebrew and thus also Protestant canon. The English versions of the respective biblical quotations are given after the New International Version (NIV, [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com)).

- 12 See Matuszewski, *Diabeł w poezji*, p. 43; Alfonso Maria di Nola, *Diabeł. O formach, historii i kolejach losu Szatana, a także o jego powszechnej a złowrogiej obecności wśród wszystkich ludów od czasów starożytnych aż po teraźniejszość*, trans. Ireneusz Kania (Kraków: Universitas, 1997), pp. 64–75.
- 13 English translation by Danuta Borchardt in collaboration with Agata Brajerska-Mazur, in: Cyprian Norwid, *Poems* (New York: Archipelago Books, 2011), p. 101.
- 14 See Barbara Subko, "O funkcjach łącznika w poezji Norwida," in: *Język Cypriana Norwida. Materiały z konferencji zorganizowanej przez Pracownię Słownika Języka*

world, which is represented by the “Virtue,” fighting against the ruler of the earthly world.

Norwid sometimes modified the biblical terms for Satan, maintaining only their most general meaning. “Fulminant” offers an easily interpretable periphrasis “kłamstwa–demon” (DW IV, 200) [“demon of lie”], in which the hyphen inextricably links the concept of falsehood with the person of Satan. Satan’s predilection for lies is a motif that appears in the Scriptures. Jesus describes the fallen angel as follows:

... for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lie (John 8: 44).

The self-definition of the evil spirit can be found in the finale of the dialogue “Wiesław:”

– Jam jest, któremu nieraz dzieci uczą  
 Na księży – wdzięczyc nakazując twarze,  
 Stygmatyzować fałszem – bledzić – krasieć...  
 ...  
 Któremu stroją się w ornaty złote,  
 Krok udawając, co nie z tego świata,  
 Albo i w chłopską, dziurawą kapotę,  
 Albo i w mądry biret... i w stygmata...  
 Jam jest – on **wszech fałsz zewnętrznego świata!**

(DW IV, 128)

[– I am the one for whom children are taught  
 To become priests – to coquet faces,  
 To stigmatise with lies – to blather – to adorn...  
 ...  
 For whom they are dressed in golden chasubles,  
 Pretending to make steps that are not from this world,  
 Or in a peasant’s coat full of holes,  
 Or in a smart biretta... and in stigmata...  
 I am – the one **all falsehood of the external world!**

All of the devil’s efforts are blasphemously and derisively similar to the cult of the Lord. Satan has priests, rites, and even gives penance to his followers. He makes considerable use of the false devotion to the Lord. The whole fragment

of the dialogue is reminiscent of Christ's words: "I am the way and the truth and the life" (John 14: 6), both in its structure and, above all, in its contrasting meaning. In the metonymy discussed here, Satan admits to the connections with this earthly "world." The opposition of "the external" and "the internal" probably refers to the culturally embedded conviction that people are sincere and honest only to themselves and to omniscient God, and being in the world inevitably entangles them in the falseness of interpersonal relations and deprives them of authenticity.<sup>15</sup> By isolating the ambiguous prefix with a hyphen, the word "wszech fałsz" ["all falsehood"] carries information about the prevalence of lies or their intensity. The semantics of the lexeme "fałsz" ["falsehood/lies"] here does not limit the scope of Satan's activity to the area of human knowledge alone – it means "that which is at odds with good or contradicts the good, justice, truth; that which is wrong."<sup>16</sup> Therefore, in light of his self-definition, Satan would be either the essence of everything that is inconsistent with the values mentioned above or the element present in every act of evil, or – which is most likely – both.

From the comparison of many conventional names of Satan in the idiolects of Norwid and Mickiewicz, it could be concluded that, in Norwid's metaphysical world, personal evil does not play a significant role. However, such an impression almost completely disappears after a careful reading of his texts. The polymorphic nature of evil perceived by Norwid has led to various ways of naming him. Evil was such an unusual phenomenon for the poet that he searched for unconventional methods of describing it, often resorting to metaphor, metonymy, or antonomasia. These phenomena are strictly textual, occasional, often ambiguous, and can only be interpreted in a given context.<sup>17</sup>

We shall now look at Norwid's characteristic modes of textual personification of the figure that, in the New Testament, appears as "diábolos."

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- 15 Cf. *Listy o emigracji* [*Letters on Emigration*]: "państwo jest z ciała albo raczej z zewnątrz, z tego świata – z niewoli" (PWsz VII, 27) ["the state is from the body or rather from the external, from this world – from enslavement"].
- 16 *Słownictwo etyczne Cypriana Norwida*. Part 1: *prawda, fałsz, kłamstwo*, ed. Jadwiga Puzynina (Warszawa: UW Wydział Polonistyki, 1993), p. 104.
- 17 The examples of such an implicit use of speech are the expressions: "serio-fałszywe" ["false-seriousness"] (*Rzecz o wolności słowa* [*On the Freedom of Speech*], DW IV, 253, 254) and "niewoli-hijena" ["slavery-hyaena"] (*Rzecz o wolności słowa*, DW IV, 238). Both constructions describe certain aspects of evil in the world, although none of them brings Satan directly to mind. See Aleksandra Zawłocka, "O jednej norwidowskiej metaforze niewoli," in: *Język a kultura*, Vol. 3: *Wartości w*



An interesting name for the devil can be found in a fragment of the dialogue “Wiesław:”

Oto – patrzajcie tam – stoi ten **krwawiec**  
 I mówi: “Jam jest, który Pana strąci  
 Z wysoka”

(DW IV, 128)

[Here – look over there – there stands this **bleeder**  
 And he says: “I am the one who will hurl down the Lord  
 From high above”]

The lexeme “krwawiec” [lit. “bleeder”] was used in nineteenth-century Polish to refer to a type of semi-precious stone, a flower, and a person suffering from haemophilia. The word appearing in *Promethidion* is a homonymous derivative created from the adjective “krwawy” [“bloody”] meaning “drawing blood, bloodthirsty,” but also “terrible, cruel, lethal, harsh, merciless.” The word thus provides information about the nature of Satan’s activity in the world and his “disposition.”

In his search for ways to describe personal evil, the poet also resorted to giving Satan an occasional proper name. Consider an excerpt from the poem “Wigilia:”

– Idź precz, diable, co kamień  
 Panu dałeś – i “zamień  
 W chleb” wołałeś – nazowiesz się **Zyskiem**.

(DW IV, 12)

[– Go away, devil, who gave Lord  
 The stone – and shouted “turn it  
 Into bread” – you will be called **Profit**.]

The original name of the evil spirit uses the mechanism of metonymy and simultaneously determines both Satan’s primary purpose and method of gaining his supporters. This passage refers directly to the evangelical scene of the temptation of Christ (see Matthew 4: 1–11; Luke 4: 2–13). In the poem discussed, the human

hero is also tempted, as his fall would be profitable for the ruler of darkness. On the other hand, Satan suggests a solution to the tired man that is very beneficial from the human point of view. His deviousness is based on the fact that he suggests something that is apparently good for both parties. However, Satan's action is only temporary and provisional.

In Norwid's texts, we can find many ambiguous and problematic periphrases. A classic example is the expression "ów, co prawa rwie" (PWsz II, 18) ["he who breaks the laws"] from "Przeszłość" ["The Past"], which is believed to refer to Satan or to man.<sup>18</sup> Similar ambiguous fragments are quite frequent. Another example is the expression "Pyton-stary" ["old Python"] ("Socjalizm" (PWsz II, 19) ["Socialism"]) – can it be considered a periphrasis relating to the Prince of Darkness? Here, Norwid used the Greek myth in which Apollo, upon capturing the temple in Delphi, killed the dragon Python and hurled him into the crevice

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18 Disputes over this problem seem to have no end. According to Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki's commentary, Norwid refers here to Satan (see the critical supplement in Cyprian Norwid, *Dzieła zebrane* [Collected Works], ed. Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki, Vol. 2, Warszawa: PIW, 1966, p. 757); this opinion is shared by Józef Fert, the publisher of *Vade-mecum* (see the commentary on "Przeszłość" ["The Past"] in Cyprian Norwid. *Vade-mecum*, compiled by Józef Fert, Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1990, p. 20). Also for E. Czaplejewicz, the protagonist of the poem is Satan, who established "niektóre zjawiska" ["some phenomena"] in the world ("Przeszłość") (*Cypriana Norwida kształt prawdy i miłości. Analizy i interpretacje*, ed. Stanisław Makowski, Warszawa: WSiP, 1986, p. 157). "The evident connotation of «tego, co prawa rwie» [he who breaks the laws] ... with the devil" was noticed by Agata Brajerska-Mazur ("Norwid w tłumaczeniach Adama Czerniawskiego," *Studia Norwidiana*, Vols. 9–10, 1991–1992, p. 271). By contrast, the supporters of the view that the mysterious "ów" [he/the one/that person] is a man – Adam, the creator of time as a deformation of Divine eternity, are: Antoni Dunajski (*Chrześcijańska interpretacja dziejów w pismach Cypriana Norwida*, Lublin: Redakcja Wydawnictw KUL, 1985, pp. 209–210), Mieczysław Jastrun (*Gwiazdzisty diament*, Warszawa: PIW, 1971, p. 231), Stefan Sawicki ("Norwida wywyższenie tradycji," *Studia Norwidiana*, Vol. 8, 1990, p. 7), Henryk Siewierski ("Architektura słowa. Wokół Norwidowskiej teorii i praktyki słowa," *Pamiętnik Literacki*, Vol. 1, 1981) and Jacek Trznadel (*Czytanie Norwida. Próby*, Warszawa: PIW, 1978, p. 90). W. Rzońca, to whom this discussion serves as an argument to abandon the concept of *completeness* in relation to Norwid's texts, does not take a clear stance, although he claims that "the resolution of the dispute in favour of Satan contradicts Norwid's perceptible predilection to present the issues of faith in ethical rather than metaphysical terms" (Wiesław Rzońca, "Całość w 'Przeszłości,'" in: "Całość" w twórczości Norwida, ed. Jadwiga Puzyrnina and Ewa Teleżyńska, Warszawa: UW. Wydział Polonistyki, 1992,

in the earth.<sup>19</sup> Norwid’s knowledge of this story is confirmed by a fragment of *Notatki z mitologii* [*Notes on Mythology*], where the gloomy chthonic deity takes the form of a serpent (PWSz VII, 303). Undoubtedly, the statement that the dangerous monster has been “**zrzucen do otchłani**” [“**hurled down** into the abyss”] also brings to mind the fragments of the Revelation of St John:

The great dragon was hurled down – that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray (Revelation 12: 9);

He [an Angel] seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore ... (Revelation 20: 2–3).

However, it is difficult to determine conclusively whether this fragment is really about Satan, as Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki believes,<sup>20</sup> or whether it is the personification of the evil of our world, especially the evil in social life, as the context and title of the poem seem to indicate.<sup>21</sup>

A similar construction is present in the epigram “Odpowiedź do Włoch” [“A Response to Italy”]:

Och! Irydiona – Irydiona  
 O potęgi drugiej, wyższej, skrzydle,  
 Bo **Masynissa-dziejów** kona  
 I s a m o **s i d ł o** w s i d ł e ...

(PWSz I, 184)

[Oh! Irydion – Irydion  
 Of the secondary, higher wing power,

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p. 181). Among the interpreters of the poem, only R. Jakobson did not express his opinion on the expression “ów, co prawa rwie” [“he who breaks the laws”], but his discussion of the work focuses on the analysis of the phonetic and semantic structure (“Przeszłość Cypriana Norwida,” in: Roman Jakobson, *W poszukiwaniu istoty języka*, Vol. 2, Warszawa: PIW, 1989, pp. 251–260).

19 See Pierre Grimal. *Słownik mitologii greckiej i rzymskiej* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1990), pp. 308–309.

20 Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki, in: Norwid, *Dzieła zebrane*, Vol. 2, p. 753.

21 The author is far from a definitive conclusion on whether the mythical monster symbolises “a political system that has paralysed society for centuries,” as is believed by Antoni Chojnacki (“Socjalizm” [“Socialism”], in *Cypriana Norwida kształt prawdy i miłości*, p. 75), but it is hard not to notice that Norwid put the statement about the Python in the mouth of naïve “people” intoxicated with optimism.

Since **Masynissa's history** is dying  
And the **t r a p** itself in the trap...]

It is relatively easy to understand the metonymic term “sidło” [“trap/snare”], associated with the deceptive activity of the evil spirit. The semantics of the periphrasis “Masynissa-dziejów” [“Masynissa’s history”] is much more complicated. Gomulicki is quick to interpret it as “Satan, who wanted to shape the course of the latest political events in France, resembling one of the protagonists of *Irydion* – the old African man Masynissa.”<sup>22</sup> The name of Masynissa, known from history as a Numidian king and traitor of Rome, is used by a devilish character in Krasieński’s drama. He fights with God by seeking the corruption of the idea of Christianity and wants the followers of Christ to commit crimes in his name. He is not interested in tempting individual people; Irydion is only an additional conquest for him. The main goal of that character amazes with its enormous degree of ambition and universality, but also with the perverse nature of the idea that it could possess all of Christianity. But even so, is he a devil? In a letter to Konstanty Gaszyński, Zygmunt Krasieński himself described Masynissa as follows:

it is the element of all evil that constantly transforms itself to good by the pure necessity of creation; it is the darkness for today, which will cease to be darkness tomorrow; it is n o t h i n g, this inconceivable, horrible, terrible, devilish z e r o, until we know it, until it surrounds us with the mystery of infinity, and which every now and then transforms into s o m e t h i n g: as soon as something is created, there is light, sound, harmony. In a word, it is Satan of all centuries and societies, eternally fighting, eternally defeated, vanishing in a fog, yet having his hellish, criminal and malicious moments.<sup>23</sup>

Krasieński’s self-commentary is strikingly optimistic about the fact that all the triumphs of evil are temporary and that evil itself constantly transforms into good. The author of *Irydion* refers here to the Augustinian concept that identifies good with existence and grants some good even to Satan, who, after all, is also God’s creation. The traces of the belief in the ineffectiveness of evil and the victory of good, which is the ultimate foundation of being, can be found both in *Faust*, where Mephistopheles still unintentionally “does good,” and in Norwid’s epigram, where Satan “dies.” This poem, full of allusions to Krasieński’s texts,

22 Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki, in: Norwid, *Dzieła zebrane*, Vol. 2, p. 409.

23 Zygmunt Krasieński, “List do Gaszyńskiego z 30 IV 1837” [Letter to Gaszyński from 30 April 1837], in: *Listy do Konstantego Gaszyńskiego* [Letters to Konstanty Gaszyński], compiled by Zbigniew Sudolski (Warszawa: PIW, 1971), pp. 160–161.

refers to the events in France in 1851, immediately before the December *coup d’état* by Louis Bonaparte, but – in accordance with Norwid’s custom – it is not limited to a diagnosis of the current situation. This can also be seen in the generalization of the demonic character’s name – “Masynissa-dziejów” is a modification of the name suggesting the personification of evil as such, the evil manifested in history, “the Satan of all centuries and societies.” There is also an allusion to an event supporting the belief in the victory of good. In the last stanza, the text refers to the meeting of Pope Leo I with Attila in 452, when the Huns’ invasion was stopped by the power of spiritual persuasion. It also underlines the historical dimension of the presence of evil in the world. Thus, starting with the name of the protagonist of a particular literary work, Norwid relates it to contemporary political events, as well as to the universal laws of history.

### Satan’s Incarnations

The Romantic Satan usually acts through his earthly supporters. In the discussion of nineteenth-century literature, it is justified to use the category of a “satanic hero,” whose ontic status remains unclear. According to the Romantic vision, the world is a battlefield for God and Satan, where Satan takes a concrete form. The specific situation of Poles caused frequent identification of the actions of the Tsarist regime with Satan’s doings. In the epigram “Przeszość i przyszłość” [“The Past and the Future”], Norwid called upon “biedne pokolenie” [“the poor generation”]:

Michała-Anioła

Z ogromnym mieczem smoki trzaskącym wywołaj.  
Niech tnie, gdziekolwiek jaki przebłyśnie **M i k o ł a j**:  
Wokoło siebie – w sobie – nad sobą – pod sobą.

(PWsz I, 177)

[Call upon Michael-Angel

Smashing dragons with a giant sword.  
Let him cut wherever there flashes any **N i c h o ł a s**:  
Around him – within himself – above him – below him.]

The situation outlined here refers to the scene of the battle between angels and the dragon – Satan (cf. Revelation 12). However, the biblical *topos* has been modified to a large extent. It is hard to say that in this poem, Archangel Michael is the leader of the heavenly army. “Niech tnie, a kocha – kocha, a jednakże

wierzy!” [“Let him cut, but love – love, and yet believe!”] seems to refer rather to someone imperfect, who has to track “Mikołaj” [“Nicholas”] in himself as well. In this case, “Michał-Anioł” [“Michael-Angel”] probably refers to a person struggling with evil, while “Mikołaj” should be treated in a similar way to the apocalyptic dragon that was hurled down from the sky by the archangel. The Bible actually speaks about only one dragon, and here, we have more of them. It is also possible that there may be more than one “Mikołaj,” which is suggested by the determiner “jaki” [“any/some”]. According to Gomulicki, the name of the tsar was used by Norwid as a term for the ruler of Russia – and Poland – in general.<sup>24</sup> However, the unusual spread of “Nicholas” is noteworthy, as he can “flash” everywhere – Michael is supposed to look for him “around him – within himself – above him – below him.” It seems that the name of the tsar, used descriptively as an antonomasia and connected to several possible objects, is a metaphor of evil in the form of authoritarianism. It does not so much denote Satan himself as the activity of people inspired by him, his followers. Norwid’s poem also offers the image of an individual fight against evil: authoritarianism symbolised by the name of the Russian tsar is born – perhaps primarily – within a person.<sup>25</sup>

The fragment of the poem “Do Moskali-Słowian” [“To Muscovites-Slavs”] evokes a similar thought:

Moskale bracia! co w was jest s z a t a n e m ,  
 Tegośmy na chrzcie polskim się wyrzekli,  
 Tego już wasza moc w nas nie rozwściekli;  
 Dał Bóg, że widnem to i odpoznanem,  
 Dał Bóg, i po to w świat my się rozwlekli...  
  
 Ale c o p y c h ą j e g o , to nas trzyma,  
 Jak zabitego kolano olbrzyma,

(PWsz I, 151)

[Muscovite brothers! what is s a t a n i c in you,  
 We have renounced at the Polish baptism,  
 This power of yours will no longer infuriate us;

24 Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki, in: Norwid, *Dziela zebrane*, Vol. 2, p. 404.

25 For the interpretation of this epigram, see Piotr Matywiecki. “Przeszłość i przyszłość (Fraszka),” in: *Norwidowskie fraszki (?)*, ed. Jacek Leociak (Warszawa: Energeia, 1996), pp. 90–109, and the gloss written by Jadwiga Puzynina (pp. 110–113).

Thanks God we saw and recognised it;  
Thanks God, that is why we went into the world...

But what is his vain glory, it holds us back,  
Like a dead giant’s knee,]

The metonymic expression “co w was jest sz a t a n e m” [“what is s a t a n i c in you”] deprives the ruler of the darkness of his personality and individuality – he becomes part of people, the essence of their darkest tendencies and temptations. In this text, Norwid ascribes the ability to resist or succumb to them to whole nations – Satan lives not in people as such, but in people representing individual nations. It reveals Satan’s entanglement in human history; using the hubris of individuals, he manipulates communities and nations. In the finale of the poem, it becomes clear that Satan is not only the name of human weaknesses – upon the triumphant announcement by the writer: “Ale da Pan Bóg, że i to poznamy!” (PWSz I, 151) [“But with God’s help we shall also see it!”] the Prince of Darkness appears as a *dramatis persona* to mark his presence ironically.

Hubris is Satan’s most fundamental characteristic. According to the Christian tradition, it triggered Lucifer’s rebellion. Therefore, every act of hubris is a manifestation of specifically satanic worship:

[szatan] mówi: “Jam jest, który Pana strąci  
Z wysoka, jako zepsuty latawiec –  
Jam jest, któremu *m s z e* się także mruczą  
W każdym pochlebstwie sobie, każdym swarze,  
W teatrze pychy własnej, w pychy farze”

(DW IV, 128)

[[Satan] says: “I am the one who will hurl down the Lord  
From high above like a damaged kite –  
I am the one – to whom *m a s e s* are also murmured  
In every self-flattery, every strife,  
In the theatre of own pride, in the parish church of hubris”]

Often the only sign of the affinity of a character with hellish powers is the demonic scenery in which they are presented. It sometimes accompanies anonymous, nameless, and mysterious personalities, about whom we can only say that their actions are definitely against good. Such heroes include Mąż [Man]

from “Źródło” (PWsz II, 132) [“The Source”] and “dziwaczny pielgrzym” (PWsz I, 11) [“the bizarre pilgrim”] in “Wspomnienie wioski” [“Memory of a Village”].

One of the oldest ways of depicting Satan is zoomorphization. Even in the Bible, the Prince of Darkness was represented as various animals – the Apocalypse states clearly: “The great dragon was hurled down – that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan” (Revelation 12: 9). The dragon motif symbolising Satan was continued in Christian iconography<sup>26</sup> and the literary tradition of Church writers, starting with Eusebius of Caesarea (e.g., *Praeparatio evangelica* I 10). The biblical scene with the serpent tempting first people in paradise (Genesis 3: 1–5) is also usually interpreted as Satan’s first entry into human history, in accordance with the statement: “but through the devil’s envy death entered the world” (Wisdom 2: 23–24) and with the testimony of apocryphal writings. Besides the dragon and the serpent, Satan’s bestiary includes wolves (John 10: 11–13; Matthew 7: 15; Acts 20: 29), a lion (1 Peter 5: 8), and animals associated with darkness and death: bats, vultures, hyaenas, mice, jackals, and even hedgehogs.<sup>27</sup> As visual arts have developed, the Christian tradition has multiplied the repertoire of Satan’s symbols – demons and monsters from the beliefs of ancient peoples were associated with his images. The bearer of the devil’s power was the basilisk, while the names of the mythical sea creature, Leviathan or Behemoth (Psalm 104: 26; Job 40: 15–25) became the names of Satan.

It is not known exactly how the relationship between these creatures and Satan should be understood. It seems that for the authors inspired by the Bible, the fallen dragon and the serpent “more crafty than any of the wild animals” (Genesis 3: 1) are symbols of the ruler of evil spirits. On the other hand, descriptions and images of the other representatives of Satan’s menagerie should be recognised as the members of Satan’s retinue that accompany the devil rather than his incarnations.

Norwid used only three animal symbols for Satan. Sometimes, their interpretation is not problematic – this is the case with the poem “Nieskończony” (PWsz I, 200) [“Infinite”], where the simplicity of the state of “przed-grzechowe zachwycenie” [“pre-sin admiration”] is contrasted with “wiedzenie węża” [“serpent’s tempting”]. It is easy to notice an allusion to the promise made by the serpent to Eve: “your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God,

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26 See Piotr Chlebowski, “Odpowiedź do Włoch... (Fraszka),” in: *Norwidowskie fraszki* (?), footnote on p. 132.

27 See Zalewska-Lorkiewicz, *Księżę ciemności*, pp. 76–78.



knowing good and evil” (Genesis 3: 5). A similar situation occurs in the litany “Do Najświętszej Marii Panny” (PWsz I, 195) [“To the Blessed Virgin Mary”], where the Blessed Virgin “grinds” the serpent’s head, or in the comparison in “Dedykacja” [I] (PWsz I, 298) [“Dedication I”] using the motif of the “footwear” of the Virgin falling onto the serpent’s forehead. Both passages refer to God’s proclamation from Genesis:

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel (Genesis 3: 15).

However, it is often difficult to determine whether an animal traditionally associated with Satan in a given text retains its symbolic meaning. In the work “Adam Krafft,” there is an ambiguous juxtaposition: “Cherubinowymi wznosząc się skrzydłami / Nad liść wawrzynu, łzę i szyderstw węża” (PWsz I, 60) [“Rising up with cherub wings / Above the laurel leaf, tear and serpent’s derision”]. Gomulicki interprets this as a symbolic image of “earthly fame, suffering and sin.”<sup>28</sup> The relevant expression “szyderstw węży” [“serpent’s derision”] can be recognised as an anacoluthon, or “derision” can be understood as a feature of that serpent, which can denote either Satan, evil in other people, or evil in the subject himself. Apart from the iconographic tradition discussed above, the association of this symbol with Satan is supported by the juxtaposition of this expression with “cherubowe skrzydła” [“cherub wings”], which allows one to overcome evil, and the popularity of the motif of Satan, the mocker in the European literature of that period.

The semantics of the expression “smocze garła” [“dragon throats”] from the epigram “Odpowiedź do Włoch” (PWsz I, 185) are fairly complicated. In a footnote, Norwid explained that “hufce Atylli prowadzone były przez chorążych znaki smoków z rozwartymi paszczami noszących” [“Atilla’s troops were led by the standard-bearers having signs of dragons with open jaws”]. The synecdoche used in the poem is very characteristic – the open jaws of monsters define their aggressive, possessive, apparently “voracious” attitude towards reality. Here, dragons are an element of pagan iconography – they are a symbol of evil present in many cultures. It is only by juxtaposing them with the power of young Christianity that the satanic associations can be revealed. The passage on the superiority of “moc młodzięcza” [“the youthful power”] over the Huns’ emblems refers to the meeting of Pope Leo I with Attila, as presented by

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28 Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki, in: Norwid, *Dzieła zebrane*, Vol. 2, p. 328.

Raphael and Delacroix.<sup>29</sup> The monsters from the signs of the barbarian army were given a traditional biblical meaning, which was additionally highlighted in the metaphorical description of the dragons' defeat:

– I moc druga, moc druga, m ł o d z i e ń c z a ,  
Co Atyli znaki, **smocze garła**,  
Wzięła jak nić pajęcza  
I złamała w kręgach, i odparła

[– And the second power, the second power, of y o u t h ,  
Which took Atilla's signs, the **dragon throats**,  
Like a spider's thread  
And broke them in circles, and repelled]

Norwid used a related verb to describe the mission of Christ, who was victorious “przełamawszy moc nieprzyjaciela” [“having broken the enemy's power”] (“Do Najświętszej Panny Marii” [“To the Blessed Virgin Mary”] (PWsz I, 194; cf. also: “Zbawiciel, jak wódz wielki, przełamawszy w kości-pacierzowej nieprzyjaciela, odszedł” (PWsz VIII, 163) [“The Saviour, like a great leader, having broken the enemy's backbone, has gone”]). In the poem “Odpowiedź do Włoch,” we thus observe the identification of the image of pagan demons with the symbols of evil spirits mentioned by the Gospel. This way of thinking was very close to Norwid's. According to him, Satan, like God, had acted among people long before the Revelation, appearing around the world in different incarnations. Hence the feature of Satan, often mentioned in Norwid's poetry, is his *old age* (“Lucifer stary” (PWsz I, 293) [“old Lucifer”]; “Pyton-stary” (PWsz II, 19) [“old Python”]). Here, Norwid refers not only to the age of the devil (who is indeed one of God's first creations) but also to his impotence. The juxtaposition of the old Satan with the young power of Christianity shows the prevailing balance of power in the world. The era of Satan is passing, and he himself is getting older, and even – as in the epigram “Odpowiedź do Włoch” – “kona” (PWsz I, 184) [“he is dying”].

The third creature in Norwid's poetry, considered by Christianity to be the incarnation of Satan, is Leviathan. In Norwid's writing, it appears as an element of comparison:

A Przeszłość jadem upita grzechowym,  
A Przyszłość pusta, a pomiędzy niemi  
Rozpacz by chyba przegonem jałowym  
Jako **Lewiatan** obwiła kłąb ziemi.

“Do Najświętszej Panny Marii” (PWsz I, 191)

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29 Chlebowski, “Odpowiedź do Włoch... (Fraszka),” *passim*.

[And the Past intoxicated with sin’s venom,  
And the Future empty, and between them  
With a barren idle land despair would  
Wrap the ball of earth as **Leviathan**.]

In the quoted text, Norwid’s Leviathan is a serpent or a dragon whose body is entwined with the earth. Originally, it was a sea monster from Phoenician mythology. Leviathan symbolised the chaos and evil fought by the gods. This motif was adopted by Jews: the biblical Yahweh killed the multi-headed Leviathan (Psalm 74: 14) and will do it again at the end of time to strengthen good forever (Isaiah 27: 1). The monster sleeping at the bottom of the ocean was depicted as a whale, a snake, or a crocodile. In the Middle Ages, Satan started to be called Leviathan, and his open jaws often marked the gate of hell. In the iconography, there are images of God catching the monster with a fishing rod made of the tree of Jesse with the Crucified as bait. Romanticism returned to this very vivid metaphor of Satan. In Mickiewicz’s *Dziady*, the Spirit, while introducing himself to Father Peter, mockingly enumerates his names: “Lukrecy, Leviathan, Voltaire, alter Fritz, Legio sum” (Part III, Scene III, v. 104).

## The Acting Evil

Norwid’s Satan is an extremely dynamic creature. Most of its activities are related to movement, often violent movement. This can be seen, for example, in the poem “Przeszłość,” where the mysterious figure “prawa rwie” [lit. “tears the laws”] and wants to “odepchnąć wspomnienia” (PWsz II, 18) [“ward off memories”]. The first action is expressed in the present tense, which may indicate iterativity or habituality. The verb “rwać” [“tear”] assumes a violent movement that either destroys “laws” or merely pulls them without completely destroying them. This expression is a modification of the linguistic metaphor “łamać prawa” [“breaking laws”], which significantly obscures its figurative nature. Equally common seems to be the use of the image of repulsion to another abstract object, which is “spomnienia” [“memories”]. Repulsion is associated with the image of displacement, passing by, which is complemented by the second stanza of the poem.

*Promethidion* features such terms as “mąciiciel” [“stirrer/troublemaker”] and the periphrasis “ten, który mąci” (DW IV, 128) [the one who stirs], which inform one of the basic areas of Satan’s activity:

Prawdy powietrze  
Póki jest czyste, wszystko się rozwija –  
Weselsze kwiaty, liście w sobie letsze,

Jaśniejszy lilii dzban, smuklejsza szyja,  
Wolniejszy człeka ruch i myśli człeka...

\*

To zbrudź – to zamać – liść, kwiat, człowiek – czeka!...

\*

A chcecież widzieć tego – który mąci?

(DW X, 128)

[The air of the truth

As long as it is clean, everything develops –  
Happier flowers, leaves themselves lighter,  
Brighter lily, slimmer neck,  
Slower human movement and human thoughts...

\*

Make it dirty – stir it – the leaf, the flower, the man – is waiting!....

\*

And do you want to see the one who stirs?]

The complicated metaphor “mącenie powietrza” [“disturbing/stirring the air”] is related to the previously discussed affinity of Satan with a lie. The air is transparent, unnoticeable, and, at the same time, necessary for life. The truth is, therefore, an indispensable living environment, which imperceptibly surrounds us. Stirring it interrupts the natural development of the world. In this context, *truth* is the highest ontic, epistemic, aesthetic, and ethical value,<sup>30</sup> contradicted by the spirit of evil.

Satan does not always act alone:

skoczne wasze tany –  
I oczy pełne ognia, i serca bijące,  
W siatkę złośliwych wrażeń plątają **szatany**;

“Dumanie” [II] [“Meditation II”] (PWsz I, 41)

[your lively dancing –  
And eyes full of fire, and beating hearts,  
Are entangled in a net of evil impressions by **satans**.]

The Scriptures often mention many demons, devils, and evil spirits. Based on the biblical texts, there emerges the image of a hellish hierarchy in which

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30 See *Słownictwo etyczne*, pp. 1–76.

the ruler of evil has angels, warriors, and his own servants. After the recognition of pagan gods as demons, the number of devils was further multiplied, which was almost absurd in the Middle Ages, when the ubiquitous goblins that accompanied people in everyday life and even to the very moment of death became creatures that were paradoxically close to them and even sympathetic.

In Norwid’s poem, satans work in hiding – people who are subjects of their actions are not aware of them. Delusion and deception were metaphorised as an act of entangling human senses in “siatka złośliwych wrażeń” [“a net of evil impressions”]. The creation of appearances that entice the tempted, but in fact are perversely “złośliwe” [“malicious”], is Satan’s traditional speciality. The master of illusion was Goethe’s Mephistopheles. His method, which was quite conventional, boiled down to showing Faust the charms of youth, wealth, and love. Byron’s Lucifer, who tempted Cain with the truth about the world, used a far more sophisticated incentive.

We meet mysterious tempters in Norwid’s short piece “Scherzo [I]” (PWsz I, 83), where two beings, referred to simply as “Jeden z nich” [“One of them”] and “Drugi z nich” [“The other”], are trying to win the protagonist for themselves. The first lures the man with beauty and the promise of knowledge:

Dam tobie cały łańcuch chceń i chęci,  
 Promieni siedem tobie dam tęczowych,  
 I tę ogromną księgę – bez pieczęci,  
 Którą przewiewa wiatr...  
 A będziesz z owych,  
 Co jako duchy noszą się osobne  
 Po niedotkliwych falach zaświatowych,  
 Gdzie wszystko takie jest

(PWsz I, 83)

[I will give you a whole chain of wills and desires,  
 I will give you seven rays of rainbow,  
 And this huge book – without the seal,  
 Which is penetrated by the wind...  
 And you will be one of those  
 Who are floating as separate ghosts  
 On untouchable otherworldly waves,  
 Where everything is like this]

Gomulicki rightly observes that the rainbow in connection with seven – the number of completeness – stands here for hope.<sup>31</sup> The book without the seal, penetrated by the wind, refers to the Romantic image of the great book of the world in which a person could read the history of the world and their own fate. The motif of the otherworld, which Norwid described using aquatic metaphors, suggests that the promised knowledge will consist of seeing the world in another, ultimate, and true light. However, the tempted man responds to these assurances with a statement: “niepodobna” [“there is no way”]. This may refer to the incompatibility of this knowledge with reality or the unreal nature of the vision outlined by the tempter. “Drugi z nich” [“The other”] offers the man earthly riches and earthly joy:

A ja dam tobie miast i ziem obfitość,  
 Szalonych koni sto, służebnych chóry,  
 I nade drzwiami ci napiszę: “sytość” –  
 Ażebyś sobie był jako dzień, bez chmury.  
 – I niech ci nektar piwnice wypełnia,  
 Muzyka w krągłych gnieździ się sklepieniach,  
 A kędy stąpisz, szarłat się rozwełnia...

(PWsz I, 83–84)

[And I will give you cities and lands in abundance,  
 A hundred mad horses, a choir of servants,  
 And above your door I will write: “repletion” –  
 So that you could be as a day, without a cloud.  
 – And may the nectar fill your cellars,  
 May music nest in the round vaults,  
 And when you take a step, may the amaranth carpet unfold]

“On” [“He”] rejects the temptation to “być w sieni” [“be in the entrance hall”], in which Gomulicki sees the metaphor of the vestibule (only the vestibule!) of eternal life. The man finally drives the two tempters away to put an end to the paradoxical loneliness he experiences in their company. The mysterious scene, which was apparently taking place in a completely unreal dimension, ends with “biały dzień r z e c z y w i s t o ś c i ” [“the white day of r e a l i t y ”].

The scene of the temptation of Christ presented in the gospels (Matthew 4: 1–11; Luke 4: 1–13) is used extensively in hagiographies as a model for descriptions of all satanic operations. The reminiscences of these descriptions can be found in Norwid’s “Wigilia:”

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31 Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki, in: Norwid, *Dzieła zebrane*, Vol. 2, pp. 345–346.

Szatan przybiegł i prawi:  
 “Oto ogon mam pawi,  
 Cały z ognia, co słońce zapala.  
 Przeto – nie pość już więcéj,  
 Pokarm stracisz zwierzęcy,  
 Młode Jutro zamorzysz uściskiem”

...

Szatan wrócił i woła:  
 “Jutra czekasz Anioła?  
 Cudem k niemu płyńże jak łabędzie.”

Tedy szatan raz jeszcze:  
 “Już nie wołam, a wrzeszczę,  
 Widzisz Jutro? – czy idzie do ciebie?  
 Słońce tylko jak zawsze,  
 I nie bardziej łaskawsze,  
 Globu jedną oświeca półkulę.  
 Tę – Wam oddam w dziedzinę,  
*Lecz przeproście za winę*  
 I do kolan mi stoczcie się czule!”

(DW IV, 12–13)

[Satan came running and says:  
 “Here I have a peacock tail,  
 All of the fire that ignites the sun.  
 Therefore – fast no more,  
 You will lose animal food,  
 Young Tomorrow you will starve with embrace”

...

Satan was back and cries:  
 “Are you waiting for Tomorrow for Angel?  
 With a miracle swim towards it like swans.”

...

Then Satan tried once again:  
 “I’m not crying anymore, I’m screaming,  
 Can you see Tomorrow? – is it coming to you?  
 Only sunshine, as usual,  
 Not more graceful,  
 Illuminates one hemisphere of the globe;  
 This one I will give to you in possession,  
*But apologise for your guilt*  
 And roll down to my knees tenderly!”]

The evil spirit here behaves exceptionally violently – it is running and screaming. “Jutro” [“Tomorrow”], i.e., the human future, plays a huge role in the temptation scene. Satan, allegedly concerned about it, tries to divert the man from penance and fasting. He wants to see a miracle and – as in the meeting with Christ – wants to receive homage or even an apology. The protagonist of this poem resists Satan’s promises, recalling the Saviour’s situation and the two other temptations that the Lord has experienced: the temptation to test the Ultimate’s grace and power over the world.

In a different place, Norwid offers an interesting modification of the biblical scene that took place on the corner of the temple:

Zły anioł jednak uniósł ECCE-HOMO  
 Na opok szczyty,  
 Gdzie, stojąc jeden i patrząc stromo,  
 Człek – gardzi byty.

“Idee i prawda” [“Ideas and Truth”] (PWsz II, 65)

[Yet, the dark angel has lifted *Ecce Homo*  
 to bedrock’s peaks,  
 Where, standing alone, looking steeply down,  
 Man – scorns beings.]<sup>32</sup>

The clear periphrasis of Satan refers to his condition before his fall. The Prince of Darkness is again presented as an agent acting dynamically. The expression *Ecce Homo* (John 19: 5) became the name of the protagonist of the poem, who is not only Christ but also the man – *quidam* – who experiences the fate of the tempted Saviour. However, Norwid’s “Každy” [“Everyman”], contrary to Christ, succumbs to the temptation to look with contempt on what is happening down in the world from the perspective of “wysokość myślenia” [“the realms of highest thinking”]. And yet Satan, who lures him with his lofty intellect, cannot satisfy human cognitive needs because – as Norwid wrote in one of his letters – “Prawda nie jest nigdy tu w całości swojej objęta wiedzą i myślą albo samym uczuciem ... prawda tylko myślą, uczuciem i życiem razem może być objęta – stąd dla samej prawdy trzeba momentu materialnego” (DW X, 467) [“The truth is never embraced here in its entirety with knowledge and thought, or feeling alone ... the truth can only be embraced with thought, feeling and life altogether – thus the truth itself needs a material moment”].

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32 English translation by Danuta Borchardt: Norwid, *Poems*, p. 45.



The most complete catalogue of Satan’s tricks – from vain games and almost courtly entertainments to far-reaching manipulation of human consciousness – is presented in the passage of *Promethidion*:

Ileż to razy za *piękne* on stawił  
*Potworne?* – peruk piętrowaniem bawił,  
 By mu do rogów były podobniejsze,  
 Lub nadętością szat – bo tym *próżniejsze!*  
 Albo wspinaniem się na korki twarde  
 Jak kopyt róg – lub musem na postawy harde  
 I rozrzucenia bohaterskie włosy,  
 Zmrużenia powiek, w górę podrzucenia nosa...  
 Schylenia powiek na kształt dojrzałego kłosa!...  
 To – on – mąciiciel – który *mszy* tych i kantyków  
 Z daleka słucha – póty – póty tuman czyniąc,  
*Aż mają uszy, a nie słyszą* krzyków,  
 Aż Boga sprzedać idą gdzie za pieniądź  
 I przepijają szaty Jezusowe.

(DW IV, 129)

[How many times did he show *horrible as Beautiful?* – enjoyed arranging wigs in tiers  
 To make them look more like horns,  
 Or the excess of robes – because of more *vanity!*  
 Or wearing hard platform shoes  
 Like hoof horn – or forcing proud postures  
 And heroic scattering of hair,  
 Eye squinting, tossing up the nose...  
 Bending the eyelids into the shape of a ripe spike!...  
 It is him – the stirrer – who is hearing these *masses*  
 And canticles from afar – as long as – as long as he makes vortex,  
 Until *they have ears, but do not hear* screams,  
 Until they go sell God somewhere for money  
 And waste Jesus’ robes on drinks]

Strikingly often, Satan is characterised by his mocking laughter. With regard to the gloomy and sophisticated phenomena of “przedsień piekelna zatraty” [“the anteroom of the hellish perdition”], i.e., the city, Norwid said:

O! one mogą na twarz wywlec śmiech szatański,  
 Z jakim się czasem zjawia pośród zabaw głośnych  
 Dziwaczny pielgrzym, i patrzy na gości,  
 I śpiewów słucha donośnych...

Ale ten pielgrzym w chaosie radości  
 Patrzy na ludzi jak ów wąż rzeźbiony,  
 Kształtnie nad czarą wina pochylony,  
 Martwo, lecz chytrze patrzący na muchy,  
 Co się spętały w pijaństwa łańuchy.

(“Wspomnienie wioski,” PWSz I, 11)

[Oh! they can bring out satanic laughter on their faces,  
 With which there sometimes appears among loud parties  
 A strange pilgrim, and he looks at the guests,  
 And listens to sonorous singing...  
 But in the chaos of joy this pilgrim  
 Stares at people like that carved serpent,  
 Shapely bent down over the goblet of wine,  
 Deadly but sneakily glancing at flies  
 Enmeshed in the chains of drunkenness.]

The actual hero in this passage is the pilgrim, who, in the next part of the poem, is compared to a carved serpent lying in wait for his victims, which symbolises Satan. This demonic man “zjawia się” [“appears”] with “szatański śmiech” [“satanic laughter”], “patrzy” [“looks”] and “słucha” [“listens”]. The adjective “szatański” [“satanic”] should be understood here as “resembling Satan’s smile, similar to it.” This action is thus performed by the mysterious newcomer and Satan himself. The demonic hero of “Źródło,” found in the earthly inferno, behaves in a similar way:

Z tejże samej strony  
 Śmiech mię doleciał gorzki i szmer przytłumiony,  
 I obaczyłem Męża z rękoma na głowie,  
 ... ten deptał modrą Ż r ó d ł a ż y ł ę  
 Jakoby wstęgę, która mu sandał oplotła,  
 Lub szargała się w prochu, gdzie ją stopa wgniotła.  
 Śmiech człowieka był wściekły – wymowa odrębna:  
 Coś – jak tętno za trumną noszonego bębna,  
 Którym wybrzmiewał sarkazm, chrypnąc z nienawiści:

(“Źródło,” PWSz II, 133)

[From the same side  
 Came a bitter laughter and dull murmur,  
 And I saw Man with his hands on his head,  
 ... he trod on the blue vein of the S o u r c e

As if it were a ribbon that entwined his sandal,  
 Or as if it were trailing in the dust, where it was trod into by the foot.  
 The man’s laughter was furious – the speech different:  
 Something – like the rhythm of a drum carried behind a coffin,  
 Which resounds with sarcasm, going hoarse out of hatred:]

Byron’s Lucifer was a sarcastic rebel, a mocking critic of God’s reality; Goethe’s Mephistopheles was equipped with a sardonic, perverse sense of humour, revealing his distance from the world. Pamfilus from Słowacki’s drama *Beniowski* also showed a tendency to ridicule widely recognised values. The devil’s laughter is always “gorzki” [“bitter”], “wściekły” [“furious”] (“Źródło”), mocking and malicious, exposing his loathsome attitude towards the world. Perhaps Satan’s mockery may be related to his Old Testament role of the accuser (Job 1: 6–12; 2: 1–7; 1 Kings 22: 19–24) or to the strong Christian conviction that the devil, who is the incarnation of denial, can only ridicule and parody God.

One of the most discussed fragments of Norwid’s poetry is a passage from “Przeszłość.” The problems related to determining the meaning of the periphrasis “ów, co prawa rwie” [“he who breaks the laws”] have already been briefly discussed.<sup>33</sup> Regardless of the accepted interpretation, the fragment refers to some disturbing, ungodly creation:

Nie Bóg stworzył p r z e s z ł o ś ć , i ś m i e r ć , i c i e r p i e n i a ,  
 Lecz ów, co prawa rwie

(PWsz II, 18)

[God did not create t h e p a s t , nor death nor pain,  
 But he who breaks the laws]<sup>34</sup>

If we adopt the hypothesis that the mysterious hero of this poem is Satan, the reference to his creation of “p r z e s z ł o ś ć , i ś m i e r ć , i c i e r p i e n i a” [“t h e p a s t , a n d d e a t h , a n d s u f f e r i n g”] will be close to movements in heterodox thought at the end of the ancient world. They attributed to Satan the creation of the material world with all the consequences of human corporeality, including death and pain. It seems, however, that Norwid was far from such speculations. The verb used in the poem – “stwarzać” [“to create”] – does not have to designate a spontaneous act of creation in which a new entity is born. Even since the time of St Augustine, death and all evil have been considered to be the privation of good, which is its ontological foundation.

33 See footnote 18.

34 English translation by Danuta Borchartd: Norwid, *Poems*, p. 21.

The creation of something that is a deformation of an entity is, in fact, a destructive activity. Satan, who brought death to the world (Wisdom 2: 23–24), is the “twisted” creator; the effects of his actions mock good works of the good Lord. Satan can only create certain caricatures of God’s works: death as a counterbalance to the immortality given to people, suffering that disrupts the state of heavenly happiness, and finally the past and – more broadly – time as a distortion of God’s eternity.<sup>35</sup>

## Conclusion

Satan is a fallen angel, once the greatest creature of God. He sometimes displays imprecise affinity with some animals: his incarnations are mainly the dragon and the serpent. He always remains an “enemy” to Adam’s offspring, even though he can tempt them with a promise of a covenant and seduce them with the illusion of his favour. He often presents matters in a false light. His worshippers surround him with a cult that parodies religion, consisting of cultivating lies, vanity, and hubris. His derisive distance from reality is expressed in sardonic, malicious laughter. Energetic and tireless, he is always ready to act. In the good world established by God, he “creates” suffering, death, and time – a distortion of God’s eternity.

After analysing Norwid’s texts that address the problem of evil, it must be concluded that the dictionary data presented in the introduction do not fully reflect the richness of Satan’s representation in Norwid’s works. Despite the relatively low frequency of conventional names for the evil spirit, his presence in Norwid’s writings is distinct. The images of the Prince of Darkness, although not numerous, are fairly important for the interpretation of Norwid’s salient texts. Various forms of evil can be found in *Promethidion*, “Wigilia” and *Rzecz o wolności słowa* [*On the Freedom of Speech*], in youthful, very picturesque, and vivid lyrical poems, in the litany “Do Najświętszej Panny Marii,” in the poem “Do Moskali-Słowian,” in the seminal collection of epigrams and, finally, in the *Vade-mecum* cycle, which is a record of his wandering through the inferno. Thus, the most important creations of Satan coincide with the years of Norwid’s juvenilia, i.e., the turn of the 1840s and 1850s, and the time when he was working on *Vade-mecum*.

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35 On the concept of time as a distortion of eternity, see Dunajski, *Chrześcijańska interpretacja dziejów w dziełach Norwida*, pp. 145–162.

In a special way, Norwid associated Satan with the very ambiguous concept of *lies/falsehood*, understood as a denial of the superior value of truth, which encompasses all that is good, sacred, beautiful, and important. Norwid stressed the presence of Satan in civilization and history, which are influenced by him through his adherents. The work of the evil spirit is enslavement and all authoritarianism, instrumental treatment of individuals and nations. Sometimes Satan loses his personality and becomes an unspecified element of evil in people. His polymorphism and variability make it extremely difficult to discern him. However, problems with his identification do not mean that, in Norwid’s world, there is no personal evil.

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Piotr Chlebowski

## Romantic *Silvae Rerum*:<sup>1</sup> On Cyprian Norwid's Notebooks and Albums

**Abstract:** This article considers Norwid's notebooks and albums, an important part of his oeuvre which was long overlooked by commentators and scholars. The author of the article emphasises the important role that these "portfolios" (Norwid's term) played: the author of *Vade-mecum* compiled them throughout his entire life (writing, pasting, drawing, noting, etc.) and, importantly, held on to them his whole life, although a significant portion of them has been lost. Chlebowski criticises the way Gomulicki edited the notebooks and *Album Orbis* in his publication, accusing the publisher of limiting our introduction to the whole work by only including his manuscripts, and excluding the drawings, engravings, and photographs. The author proposes an edition of the notebooks and albums which would fully respect their integrity and the multi-facetedness of their author's message while reflecting their original composition.

The author also considers the genre of Norwid's portfolios, situating them within the seventeenth-century tradition of the nobility's commonplace book: the raptularius or *silvae rerum*. Norwid's collections are similar in their multitude and variety of structural forms, resulting in the open form of this body of work. Chlebowski points out, however, that in each of the collections there is a clear, though sometimes difficult to precisely define, ordering principle. This fact distinguishes Norwid's portfolios from Old Polish *silvae* and their Romantic counterparts, while bringing them closer to the so-called contemporary styles, represented by, for example, Miłosz's *Road-side Dog*, Czapski's *Diary*, Różewicz's *Birth Rate*, and Białoszewski's small narrative forms.

**Keywords:** Cyprian Norwid, album, notebook, silva rerum, raptularius

In Cyprian Norwid's work we can distinguish two different, one could even say diametrically opposed, attitudes which define all of his activities. I would call the first one extroverted, open, and focused on dialogue with reality. In turn, I would call the second one introverted, and thus closed, and focused inward. The first is expressed in his pursuit of actualization, his discussion of the present, but also in Norwid's endeavour to publish his works, receive recognition, and be understood by his audience. The second is expressed in his conscious

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1 This article is an outline of a work-in-progress considering the poet's notebooks and albums.

choice of difficult language, complicated messages and, above all, his escape into the world of his own portfolios – as the poet called the texts he wrote only for himself.

Indeed, Norwid was inclined to practice various literary forms associated with the old manuscript tradition. This phenomenon is a constant throughout Norwid's writing career; it intensifies in the final phase, which may be indirectly related to the fact that during this period – I am thinking of the years following the January uprising – the poet was unsuccessful in publishing much. Norwid became interested in this form of artistic expression quite early on. The illuminated manuscript of *Modlitewnik* [*Prayer Book*] that he prepared in 1846 – presumably in the Berlin prison clinic – and then offered to Włodzimierz Łubieński, is a prime example of this:

Norwid made for me a souvenir to commemorate the seven days that he spent *in that harsh prison*, in perpetual uncertainty, whether they would at any moment send him to Russia, a kind of prayer book, i.e. a Psalm of David for every day, rewritten to include a vignette corresponding to each object of faith, that was intended for each day of the week – as you know, Mum – e.g. Saturday to the Mother of God, Sunday to the Holy Trinity etc. It is a small *masterpiece*, so beautifully made, and what is so interesting about it, is that it is all in some pitiful notebook, that he was able to smuggle into the prison.<sup>2</sup>

This is how Łubieński described Norwid's gift to his mother. It is worth noting that, in addition to the Polish translations of seven penitential psalms mentioned in the letter, this “small masterpiece” included: a motto from Dante, two antiphons, a list of days of particular religious reverence, two passages from the Acts of the Apostles, two passages from the Gospel of Saint John, a translated fragment of part VIII of the *Monolog* [*Monologue*], and finally, a dedication to Łubieński.

Another example comes from Dante's *Purgatory* and the author's original texts; it is a commentary in verse on the translated fragment of Dante, a unique mid-1850s poetic literary “montage” which Gomulicki called *U kolebki narodu* [*At the Cradle of the Nation*]. It consists of Norwid's tracing of a fragment of Trajan's Column, a clipping from Joachim Lelewel's work about Ovid's sojourn among the Getae, and two excerpts from *Tristia*. The poet presented those texts in Latin along with his own Polish translations. And that is not all; we cannot, of course, overlook his painter's albums and sketchbooks. They, too, refer to a

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2 W. Łubieński; quote based on: Zenon Przesmycki, “Przypisy wydawcy,” in: *Cypriana Norwida Pism zebranych tom A*, part II (Kraków: Jakub Mortkowicz, 1911), p. 769.



similar tradition and communicative strategy, though they use a different kind of language, so to speak. Of primary interest is *Album ofiarowany Teodorowi Jełowickiemu* [*The Album Gifted to Teodor Jełowicki*] (currently in the National Library) and his earlier, so-called, *Album berliński* [*Berlin Album*] (currently at the National Museum in Warsaw) which includes over a hundred drawings, as well as three sketchbooks which the National Museum in Kraków acquired as a gift from the Sternschuss family in 1916.

In addition to the aforementioned works composed and arranged in private books, we also have a large collection of notebooks and scrapbooks, on whose pages Norwid included hastily written notes, excerpts from his reading, printed bits and pieces of texts clipped from magazines, travel guides, calendars, books, etc. He collected them for years – systematically – with the tenacity of a bibliophile. Most often he procured these materials from libraries, which were already numerous in Paris in those days. In addition to the Bibliothèque Nationale, where Norwid would often sit in the reading room on rue Richelieu, the collections in Bibliothèque Saint-Genevieve (next to Place du Pantheon) and Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, which had impressive theatre-related collections, were also available to him:

This is how the most private – says Gomulicki – of Norwid's book collections came to be. It consisted of two main parts: notebooks in the strict sense, in which the handwritten and printed text was only rarely supplemented with illustrations, and albums, which, in turn, were rich in illustrations (original and reproduced drawings) and only every so often furnished with longer (we are not talking about simple captions) handwritten or printed explanatory texts (marginalia). (PWsz VII, 687)

This is a fragment of the poet's *oeuvre*, which remains peripheral not only in relation to his main work, but also to its other categories such as journalism or epistolography – and thus, genres bordering the realms of the documentary.<sup>3</sup> Portfolios, notebooks, notepads, drafting books, marginalia, and even old papers – these are the terms that existing literature most often uses to describe the collections of Norwid's notes: they are uttered casually, in passing – because, so far, no one has studied this quite considerable portion of the author's work.<sup>4</sup>

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3 Małgorzata Czermińska, *Autobiograficzny trójkąt. Świadectwo, wyznanie i wyzwanie* (Kraków: Universitas, 2000), p. 243.

4 Włodzimierz Szturc is the only researcher to have written about Norwid's notebooks. Cf. Włodzimierz Szturc, *Zasady antropologii kulturowej Cypriana K. Norwida (o notatkach poety)*, in: Włodzimierz Szturc, *O obrotach sfer romantycznych. Studia o ideałach i wyobraźni* (Bydgoszcz-Kraków: Wydawnictwo Homini, 1997), pp. 139–147.

Gomulicki maintains that most of Norwid's "portfolios" disappeared or were irretrievably lost. It is difficult to determine today how many such notebooks or albums the poet accumulated throughout his life. We encounter traces of their existence in his writings; even just in *Notatki z mitologii* [*Notes on Mythology*] there is an auto-reference to another, probably similar, collection of notes: "Zobaczyć w mojej książeczce zielonej" [See in my little green book] (PWsz VII, 287). The information we have on the legacy of his notes and memoirs come mainly from those who knew the author of *Vade-mecum* personally. We are often able to recognise them from Przesmycki's accounts.

One example is the news Miriam received from Michalina Dziekońska about the existence of voluminous notes on the Eternal City – "stanowiących coś w rodzaju szczegółowego *cicerone* wśród starożytnych i zwłaszcza starochrześcijańskich jego zabytków"<sup>5</sup> [which are kind of like a detailed *cicerone* through antiquity, and especially Christian artifacts] – who, in turn, had received the manuscript from the poet when she left Paris for Rome in 1851. The autograph, as well as the text (Gomulicki supposes that it was written between 1847–1848, see PWsz VII, 465), was irretrievably lost, most likely in Paris, at the E. Lencz courier service (on rue Louis le Grand), where in 1868 (or 1869) Emma Koenig – Dziekońska's chaperone – had left it for safekeeping along with two packages of books and papers, at Dziekońska's request, when she was leaving the country. This deposit, which included a separate "pudełko z wysuwany mierzchem" [box with a sliding top] containing those notes about Rome and the poet's later letters to Dziekońska, was unfortunately never collected. In 1908, Przesmycki, with the help of Wellisz, attempted to recover these packages, specifically, the box, but was unsuccessful.<sup>6</sup> Another example is the diary notes that Reverend Jan Tański, a priest at the church of Notre Dame des Batignolles, saw at Norwid's place. He told Wellisz about them in 1908:

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5 Zenon Przesmycki, "Przypisy wydawcy," in: *Cypriana Norwida pisma zebrane*, Vol. F: *Pism prozą dział drugi: o sztuce i literaturze*, introduction by W. Borowy (Warszawa-Kraków: Jakub Mortkowicz, 1911, recte: 1946), p. 420.

6 Zenon Przesmycki, "Przypisy wydawcy," p. 421. I have provided the information regarding the lost notes about Rome based on Z. Przesmycki. Cf. as above, pp. 420–421. It is worth adding that Wellisz, having found "the E. de Lenz house, which existed, but had transformed into the Franco-Russian Bank, and relocated to No. 12 rue de la Chaussée d'Antin – received the following answer when he asked about the packages: 'Ces papiers ont du être détruits depuis 35 ans' [These papers have been destroyed for 35 years]" (as above).

He kept diaries in the last years of his life at Saint Casimir's Poorhouse – two large *folio* books – where he wrote everything down. I don't know what happened to them. I found out about his death too late, I searched for them in vain. I was told that they were supposedly in Kraków. I do not know. I have a feeling that the nuns took them.<sup>7</sup>

A few years later he also told Przesmycki, who had the following to say about Tański's statement:

When we had the opportunity to speak with the honourable priest personally a few years later, he confirmed these words again and remembered an additional detail proving that the existence of these notes was known to more than one person. Namely, he claimed that when he met Adam Asnyk in Kraków in 1878 or 79, he inquired him with great interest whether Norwid still kept his diaries.<sup>8</sup>

Gomulicki asserts that, assuming Asnyk met the author of *Vade-mecum* “during his second stay in Paris, so, in 1867 [sic],” then “we will know at least one date regarding these diaries, which had to have been at an advanced stage, since even a guest from his country, who did not enjoy the elder poet's confidence, was able to find out about them” (PWsz VII, 462). This manuscript, just like the notes about Rome, has also presumably been lost forever.<sup>9</sup>

Three of Norwid's notebooks have survived to this day: the collection *Notatki z mitologii*, as well as two other, untitled ones, which in *Pisma Wszystkie* [*Collected Writings*] are called: *Notatki z historii* [*Notes on History*] and *Notatki etno-filologiczne* [*Ethno-Philological Notes*] (in the National Library catalogue, where their manuscripts are held, the titles are slightly different: *Notatnik historyczny* [*Historical Notebook*] ref. no. 6298 and *Notatnik filologiczny* [*Philological Notebook*] ref. no. 6297, respectively). On the other hand, when it comes to his albums, three volumes of the so-called *Album Orbis* (or, if you prefer, three *Albums Orbis*)<sup>10</sup> have been preserved, as well as the so-called *Książka pamiątek*<sup>11</sup> [*The Scrapbook*], a peculiar collection of calling cards

7 From the notebook of Leopold Wellisz; Biblioteka Narodowa, ref. No. III 6321, Vol. 5; cf. the reprint in: Zenon Przesmycki, “Przypisy wydawcy,” in: *Cypriana Norwida pisma zebrane*, Vol. F, p. 435.

8 Przesmycki, “Przypisy wydawcy,” pp. 435–436.

9 A similar fate met the 1852/53 (see PWsz VII, 466) [*Dziennik żeglugi do Ameryki*], which we know from Józef Ignacy Kraszewski's account: *Kartki z podróży 1858–1864 roku* (Warszawa: Gustaw Sennewald, 1874), pp. 316–317.

10 The first and second volumes of *Album Orbis* are in the Graphic Collection at Biblioteka Narodowa: ref. No. AFR.1591 and AFR.1592; the third volume is in Biblioteka Jagiellońska in Kraków, ref. No. Drawing 37.

11 The manuscript is in Biblioteka Narodowa, ref. No. 6296.

and letters from friends and acquaintances, photographs, newspaper clippings, obituaries, his own watercolours and drawings, as well as short notes, and even objects such as dried flowers.

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Apart from a brief, albeit interesting text by Włodzimierz Szturc,<sup>12</sup> it was Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki who wrote the most about Norwid's "portfolios;" he was primarily interested, of course, in the editorial aspect – meaning his little comments and explanations accompanying the first published excerpts of the poet's notebooks and albums, as well as the more extensive editorial indexes in *Pisma Wszystkie*. These included not only descriptions of the manuscripts, but also the general characterization of the documents, attempts to determine their date of creation, a detailed timeline of the original entries (made by the poet), as well as those that were pasted in, both those handwritten and printed, or, in the case of Norwid's albums, also his drawings and the illustrations he clipped from newspapers, books, and various encyclopaedic publications, etc. However, despite Gomulicki's tremendous efforts to prepare Norwid's notebooks and albums for publication in *Pisma Wszystkie* [*Collected Works*], this edition cannot be considered either complete, or accurate. Gomulicki limited the texts to those that had been handwritten by Norwid (regardless of whether they were determined to be copies, excerpts, or Norwid's very own); he writes that, in the book, "almost all of the captions, inscriptions, and explanations concerning the drawings, engravings, and photographs contained therein were omitted" (PWsz XI, 517), as well as the printed texts in the clippings from magazines and books that had been pasted onto the pages of those "portfolios," "on account of their large volume" (PWsz VII, 688). Although Gomulicki does not explicitly admit it, his decision was probably influenced by the technical difficulties associated primarily with matching the text and images in Norwid's notebooks, differentiating between the handwritten and printed text, and also a lack of editorial tradition – besides financial constraints which were substantial in the days of the Polish People's Republic. At that time, Gomulicki was the only one who had attempted to publish these texts (they were not included in Przesmycki's Norwid-related plans). All of these negative factors contributed to an edition condemned to be fundamentally lacking "wholeness." Although the excluded drawings, illustrations, and printed texts were registered with either appropriately placed notes (including their title and contents), or in the printer's index attached to the editorial comments, even the best description

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12 See footnote No. 4.

or publisher's note could not replace the original text. In turn, in the case of *Książka pamiątek*, which was mainly composed of foreign texts (letters to Norwid from his friends and acquaintances, calling cards, some prints, etc.), Norwid's drawings and watercolours, and a very few original fragments, it was decided that only the poet's texts would be published, and these were scattered liberally throughout the chapter: "Różne napisy i notatki" ["Various Notes and Comments"]. In so doing, the publisher dismantled the comprehensiveness of the souvenir-album.

Both in the case of *Książka pamiątek*, as well as the notebooks and *Albumy Orbis*, an entirely different approach is required – one in which the editor would endeavour to unite and reproduce all the details: brief, cursory, and concise entries alongside the poet's drawings or illustrations and articles clipped from magazines. It is important to preserve their multi-layered and multidimensional diversity, illuminate the coexistence of heterogeneous fragments, and save the draft construction of their message. Given these guidelines, which often lead to error and interpretational excess – which is not mentioned at all by the editor of *Pisma Wszystkie* – the dissolution of the abbreviated forms of Norwid's notes seems to be as erroneous (from the point of view of the essence of the work, with which the editor was dealing), as it is devastating to its structural foundation. The aforementioned diversity is revealed in the combining of the text's various materials at will (e.g. a note handwritten by Norwid beside a pasted article), and the varied coherency of individual phrases. For example, next to entries such as the one in *Notatki z historii* [*Notes on History*], on page three *verso* of the autograph (National Library ref. no. 6298), we read:

Z zamieszczonego opisu kościelnych sprzętów w *Liber pontyficalis* wypisuję te przedmioty, które objaśniają symbolikę pierwotną chrześcijańską:

*Agni* – baranki złote

*Cervi* – jelonki

*Claves ex auro* – klucze

*Columbae* – gołębie – *custodes pour l'Eucharistie*

*Cygnus* – łabędź

*Delphini* – przy świecznikach i lampach

*Turris* – wieże przy Eucharystii.

[From the attached description of church artifacts in *Liber pontyficalis*, I am listing the objects which explain original Christian symbolism:

*Agni* – golden lambs

*Cervi* – fawns

*Claves ex auro* – keys

*Columbae* – pigeons – *custodes pour l'Eucharistie*

*Cygnus* – swan

*Delphini* – with the candlesticks and lamps  
*Turris* – towers surrounding the Eucharist.]

This is legible, characterised by full syntax and a significant degree of completion, with typically utilitarian, fragmentary, descriptive, abbreviated kinds of ideas. Two pages earlier in the autograph we read:

Zstąpienie Ducha S-o – Partowie, Medowie, Elamitowie, w Mezopotamii, [nie odczytany jeden wyraz] w Judei, Kapadocji, Poncie, w Azji – w Frygii, w Pamfilii, w Egipcie (w Libii opodal Cyreny), Rzymianie, Żydowie nowo nawróć[eni], Kreteńczycy, Arabczycy.

[The descent of the Holy Spirit – Parthians, Medes, Elamites, in Mesopotamia, [illegible word] in Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, in Asia – in Phrygia, in Pamphylia, in Egypt (in Libya near Cyrene), Romans, newly converted Jews, Cretans, Arabs.]

This note alludes to one of the passages in the Acts of the Apostles (1, 1–12), which talks about how the apostles spoke in tongues in Jerusalem after the Pentecost. The entry is minimalistic, essentially limited to names, like a rough draft, without any Biblical context to decipher it, and thus remains virtually illegible. Norwid made many more of these types of notes – this is just a small sample. In fact, his notebooks are full of incomplete sketches and fragments. But even the first of the cited quotes, which we just established was an example of a complete and legible note, reveals its sketch-like and fragmentary character when compared to the text (direct or indirect) of the entry it was taken from. The Latin names listed therein are iconographic motifs of liturgical objects such as chasubles, patens or chalices, which appear – alongside descriptions of the church artifacts used to construct and furnish Saint Peter’s Basilica in Rome – in *Liber pontificalis*, an anonymous collection of schematic Papal biographies written between the sixth and fifteenth centuries.<sup>13</sup>

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13 The richest such description (several pages long) is the biography of Sylvester I who initiated the construction of the new temple. It is difficult to unequivocally determine which of the then available editions the poet may have had. Maybe he was using the most up-to-date one, which had been published as volumes CXXVII and CXXVIII (Paris, 1866) in the French series: *Patrologiae cursus completus* (ed. Jacques Paul Migne) in the section: *Patrologiae latinae*. We cannot exclude the possibility that his source was one of two Italian editions: ed. Francesco Bianchini (as *Vitae romanorum pontificum ... ad Nicolaum I ... Anastasii Bibliothecarii*, Vol. 3, Rome, 1718–1728, Vol. 4, Rome, 1735, ed. Giuseppe Bianchini and Gaetano Cenni) and Joannes Vignolius (*Liber pontificalis seu de gentis Romanorum pontificum*, Vol. 3, Rome: Typis Rocchi Bernabò, 1724–1755).

The main feature of these notes, as well as the illustrated sketches which filled Norwid's "portfolios," is their reading-note status. Even if the texts were in French (less frequently other languages, e.g. Latin or German), Norwid often decided to translate them – only in a few instances did he keep them in the original language. These kinds of entries are almost always abbreviated, feverishly-noted thoughts, sometimes accompanied by the poet's commentary. This is how, for example, *Album Orbis* paraphrases or quotes fragments of *Voyage en Orient* by Gerard de Nerval.<sup>14</sup> In *Notatki z mitologii* we see substantial excerpts from the book *Du rationalisme et de la tradition* by the French historian of philosophy and philosopher Jean Baptist Claude de Riambourg (1776–1837), and in *Notatki z historii*, notes on his reading and excerpts from Alfred Maury's *La Magie et l'Astrologie dans l'Antiquité et au Moyen Age* (Paris 1860). This is also the case with the aforementioned works of art filling the pages of *Albumy Orbis*. For example, the well-known watercolour in the first *Album*, entitled *Dziewczynna z tabliczką i rysikiem* [*Girl with a Tablet and Stylus*], also called *Medytacja* [*Meditation*], signed (or given the title) *Sapho* by Norwid, is a copy – which we know from the signature caption: "d'après le fresque d'Herculanum C. NORWID" [from the Herculaneum fresco C. NORWID] – of what he had either seen and sketched, or reproduced from a book or magazine. Similarly, clothing and weapon studies, or character sketches – at least those in the third volume of *Album* – clearly indicate foreign, even encyclopaedic or textbook sources. If we understand Norwid's "portfolios" as reading lists or artistic and material culture inspirations, we cannot take every bibliographic note that appears therein to mean that he had had direct contact with the described object. A good example here might be one of the entries in *Notatki z mitologii*:

W Nablus i w Jafie są jeszcze Samarytanie, którzy *Pentateuque* stary zachowują – *Mémoire sur l'état actuel des Samaritains*, Sylvestre de Sacy: Vol. XIX *Annales des Voyages*.<sup>15</sup>

[There are still Samaritans in Nablus and Jaffa who keep the old *Pentateuque* – *Mémoire sur l'état actuel des Samaritains*, Sylvestre de Sacy: Vol. XIX *Annales des Voyages*.]

Anyone who might think that Norwid personally studied Sylvestre de Sacy's entire oeuvre on the basis of this note would be mistaken, because it is a rather

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14 Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki even determined the edition that the poet used: Gérard de Nerval, *Voyage de Orient*, Vol. 2 (Paris: Charpentier, 1851), cf. PWSz XI, 519.

15 The text is supplied according to the autograph: Biblioteka Narodowa ref. No. 6299 sh. 2 *recto*.

faithful Polish version of a note on page 31 of the aforementioned work by Riambourg:

*Il y a encore aujourd'hui a Naplouse et a Jafa des Samaritains qui conservent religieusement leur Pentateuque. (Voir le "Mémoire sur l'état actuel des Samaritains" par M. Sylvestre de Sacy, inséré dans le XIX volume des "Annales des voyages.")*

*The Zendavesta, Ramayana and Mahabharat*, or the works of the Jewish Kabbalah: *The Zohar* and *Sefer Yetzirah*, appear in Norwid's notebooks following the same rule.

Norwid's *cahiers*, modelled after Leonardo da Vinci's *Cahiers* or Montesquieu, reveal his writer's craft: they simultaneously show the poet-reader, and the poet-creator because they are a collection of records filled with the first glimpses of his future works. His notebooks and albums are not only the source of quotes, but also a record of the casual thoughts, ideas, thematic outlines, and even maxims that he would later develop in his artistic creations. In addition to their storage function, they serve a generative function. Thus, for example, Onias' words in *Notatniki z mitologii* are repeated in *Rzecz o wolności słowa* [*On the Freedom of Speech*] (part VIII v. 67–70). In the poems "Zdawa się mnie niekiedy" ["It Sometimes Seems to me"] (see PWSz II, 261) and "Mój łaskawy Panie" ["My Gracious Lord"] (PWSz II, 198) we find reminiscences from the same French version of *The Odyssey*, which Norwid had clipped from an unidentified book, along with comments about Odysseus's stint in Hades. The "miracle" of Saint John recorded in *Notatki z historii* is reflected in the poem "Na zgon ś. p. Jana Gajewskiego" ["On the Death of the Late Jan Gajewski"], and the anecdote about the Celts, which was originally found in *Notatki Etno-Filologiczne* (as a cut-out from some French textbook) – in "Tajemnica lorda Singelworth" ["Lord Singelworth's Secret"]. These are, by way of example, small motifs and themes, references on a microscopic scale. But we also have those of a more general nature, of a much broader scope and more serious structural consequence. I am thinking here mainly of *Notatki z mitologii*, which resembles the outline of *Rzecz o wolności słowa*, where the thematic scope and span of events described, mainly in the ethical and religious aspect, outlines a great epic form on the horizon of creative expectations.

The mosaic formed by the various elements comprising the collections of notes, albums, or *Książka pamiątek*, requires a particular sensitivity from the reader, the capability of discerning and integrating the recurring motifs and themes, comprehending the various means of expression and ways of displaying content, as well as the creative activities that fill undefined places. Especially if we are dealing with the original presentation of the collections, we are



almost forced to read with this sensitivity. Not only the abbreviations, broken sentences, crossed out fragments, underlined fragments of pasted printed texts or Norwid's handwritten comments and additions in the margins, but even the empty spaces on the page, free from any text or drawings, require dialogue, and the reader's active engagement. Norwid himself confirms this. When in 1872 he lent Bronisław Zaleski his "zbiór motywów, obejmujący od początku c a ł y p r z e b i e g c y w i l i z a c j i ś w i a t a" [collection of motifs, spanning the entire course of world civilization from the beginning] (PWsz IX, 513), he encouraged him directly to read them in the same creative way:

Jeżeli przypadkiem ... zdarzyłoby ci się pokazywać mój *Album Orbis w szkicu*, to jest mój portfel artystyczny, której naturze idealnej i zasłyszalbyś słowa w tej mierze, to tam tyle papieru białego jest, że ołówkiem napisać możesz i można. (PWsz IX, 514)

[If by chance you ... would be showing my *Album Orbis w szkicu* [*Album Orbis Sketches*], that is, my artistic portfolio, to some worthy person and you should hear comments in this respect, there is so much white paper that you could and should write there in pencil.]

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We have talked about the rough draft nature of Norwid's portfolios, about their thematic and compositional disarray, about the heterogeneity of their form, visible even at the level of the poet's building blocks: here a magazine article, there an original drawing, over here an illustration, and over there handwritten remarks and notes, yet somewhere else calling cards from acquaintances, old photographs, letters from friends and family, etc. However, it is difficult to deny, even upon a superficial review of the manuscripts, that the notebooks of the author of *Rzecz o wolności słowa* constitute a sort of semantically defined form of expression, even if they are exclusively comprised of loosely related elements. Both the additive composition of the notebooks, as well as the collage or montage arrangement of the items filling the pages of the albums, reveal the idea behind the whole thing.

The category of wholeness, which was so important to Norwid, as research from recent years reveals,<sup>16</sup> plays just as important a role here as it does in his literary works. But in respect to the literary works – as Włodzimierz Szturc

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16 Cf., e.g., the collection "*Całość*" w twórczości Norwida, ed. Jadwiga Puzynina and Ewa Teleżyńska (Warszawa: Wydział Polonistyki UW, 1992) and Grażyna Halkiewicz-Sojak, *Wobec tajemnicy i prawdy. O Norwidowskich obrazach "całości,"* (Toruń: Uniwersytet Mikołaja Kopernika, 1998).

rightly claims – his notebooks and albums are situated as “dzieło osobne” [a separate body of work].<sup>17</sup>

The genre of Norwid’s portfolios directs our attention towards the seventeenth-century tradition of the nobility’s commonplace book, known as *raptularius* or *silva rerum*.<sup>18</sup> True, there is no evidence that Norwid knew about this type of medium, but the presence of the Baroque tradition in Romanticism is so strong and versatile that the consideration of Norwid’s notebooks and albums in the context of this form of literature cannot come as a surprise. Evidence that the *silva rerum* form was deeply-rooted in nineteenth-century culture is found not only in the extreme popularity of sketches and pictures, but above all in the numerous Romantic notebooks, such as Lenartowicz’s album *Żywi i umarli* [*The Living and the Dead*], or Słowacki’s famous *Raptularz* [*Raptularius*] (about which Marek Troszyński, Słowacki’s first publisher, said explicitly that it “reprezentuje romantyczną sylwę”<sup>19</sup> [represents a Romantic *silva rerum*]), not to mention hundreds or thousands of notes and different types of diaries.

Even an initial juxtaposition of *silvae rerum* with Norwid’s notebooks brings out a number of similarities. The most important are two characteristic structural properties, which – according to Stefania Skwarczyńska – are at the forefront of the set of handwritten and printed texts from the *silva rerum* genre: namely the variety and multitude of structural elements, which lead to an open form.

The first property determines the multitude, diversity, and incomparability of the units comprising the *silva rerum*; the second dictates the whole of the

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17 Włodzimierz Szturc, “Zasady antropologii kulturowej Cypriana K. Norwida (o notatkach poety),” in: Włodzimierz Szturc, *O obrotach sfer romantycznych. Studia o ideach i wyobraźni* (Bydgoszcz: Wydawnictwo Homini, 1997), p. 139.

18 Cf. Mirosław Korolko, “Sylwa jako prototyp eseju,” in: Mirosław Korolko, *Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski. Humanista, pisarz* (Warszawa: Wiedza Powszechna, 1978), pp. 148–162 and Maria Zachara “Twórca – odbiorca sylw szlacheckich w XVII wieku,” in: *Publiczność literacka i teatralna w dawnej Polsce*, ed. Hanna Dziechcińska (Warszawa-Łódź: PWN, 1985), pp. 117–129, and Maria Zachara, “Sylwy – dokument szlacheckiej kultury umysłowej w XVII,” in: *Z dziejów życia literackiego w Polsce XVI i XVII wieku*, ed. Hanna Dziechcińska (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1990), pp. 197–219.

19 Marek Troszyński, “Raptularz jako dzieło literackie,” in: Juliusz Słowacki, *Raptularz 1843–1849*, ed. Marek Troszyński (Warszawa: Topos, 1996), p. IX.

plan to organise these units, in which their order is not a closed order.<sup>20</sup> It is worth noting that the structure of the genre of Norwid's *cahiers* embodies all the meanings of the very Latin word: *silva* (Greek: *he hyle*). The first of these is "forest." Both in quantitative and qualitative terms, individual entries, thematically different and unrelated to each other in a cause-and-effect or rhetorical-logical way (including in terms of timelines, as in memoirs), form a set of scattered fragments, deprived of a unified and articulated continuity. Here is a small example – a note from *Notatki z historii*:

*Karol Wielki z częstek dwudziestu królestw barbarzyńskich składa całość.*  
[Charlemagne takes the parts of twenty barbaric kingdoms and makes a whole.]

It is preceded by a note referring to the text of Saint Matthew 10, 1–4 about the Saviour sending twelve apostles – and before that, Norwid placed a draft of the story about Philemon and Baucis taken from chapter 8 of Ovid's *Metamorphosis*. In turn, after his comment on the structure of the French nation, we have a fragment about the Arab caliphates, followed by a sentence about the Normans, and then a note about Hungarian history. The dominant feature here is the diversity and relative autonomy of the components. The next senses: "building blocks" and "substance" emphasise the spontaneity of the subject's creative activities, as well as the rough draft and sketch-like nature of individual notes. And finally: "great stock" and "abundance;" after all, Norwid's portfolios have – as mentioned – the possibility and capacity to generate other texts.

We are easily persuaded, therefore, that the distinctive character of Norwid's notebooks and albums is based on their negative reference to the rhetorical model of literature. The juxtapositions made here of the previously highlighted features and properties of his texts with the features and properties of *silva rerum* indicate we are on the right path. However, this ascertainment does not exhaust the complexity of the entire issue. The notebooks of the author of *Vade-mecum* exist as an oeuvre, not because the selection of their elements (entries) was made by their author, but because there is a certain order in these collections. It is not a natural course of entries that follows the course of Norwid's readings. The free course that is reflected by the order of individual reading notes dispels this interpretation; the poet unceremoniously changes the order of particular elements of the studied text. It does not matter whether it is Riambourg's philosophical work, or Nerval's fictional account – the free

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20 Stefania Skwarczyńska, "Kariera literacka form rodzajowych bloku silva," in: Stefania Skwarczyńska, *Wokół teatru i literatury. Studia i szkice* (Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy PAX, 1970), p. 185.

browsing of the book's pages, the sources of the entries, seems to be the rule here. Where do we look for wholeness, then? First of all, we need to realise, that – unlike in the case of proper works of literature, where the whole is given from the start – we have to look for it in the notebooks. Therefore, it is not readily and easily grasped, if only because the sum of the meanings of individual fragments does not add up to its overall meaning. But despite the lack of logical-rhetorical justification, certain specific shapes emerge from the *silva rerum* order of the individual fragments in Norwid's *cahiers*. The material collected in *Notatki z mitologii* and the directly related *Notatki z historii* keeps – of course, not without deviations and departures from the mainstream – a chronological order. The same applies to *Albumy Orbis*, about which Norwid himself said that they are a unique “zbiór motywów, obejmujący od początku c a ł y przebieg cywilizacji świata” [collection of motifs, spanning the entire course of world civilization from the beginning] (PWsz IX, 513). Conversely, in *Notatki etno-filologiczne* and *Książka pamiątek*, the arrangements of fragments are treated as free variations: on the subject of the essence and phenomenon of language in the first and, in the second, on the subject of Norwid himself. That is not all. These ways of arranging the fragments that comprise individual collections generate specific meanings, or rather – given the *silva rerum* nature of the text – certain types of meaning. And so, in the aforementioned mythological and historical notebooks, the rhythm of the arrangement is determined by historiosophy. It is historiosophical code that, on the one hand, defines the timeline and, on the other, allows great freedom in the selection of trains of thought, recalled events, etc. It is, of course, clearly in a draft state, a rough outline, which means that in comparison to literary works, even those such as *Rzecz o wolności słowa*, whose structure gravitates towards heterogeneous forms, the degree of coherence and thought flow is much less stable. Either way, the text of the poem cited here, which relates not only temporally, but also genetically with *Notatki z mitologii* and *Notatki z historii*, which can be regarded as its loose draft, only confirms the interpretative thesis. Historical order also determines the compositional sequence of *Album Orbis*, in which Norwid also endeavours – though maybe not as clearly – to synthesise, and to point out universal values in art and culture. It is about the search for what unites and brings together individual nations and civilizations, what makes them one human race. Furthermore, *Notatki etno-filologiczne* attempts to discover the phenomenological essence of language through different points of view: philosophical, physiological and psychological, linguistic, comparative grammar, etc. – based somewhat on Norwid's “approximation epistemology.” When it comes to *Książka pamiątek* – the most complex collection, in terms of

material – the arrangement of documents and trinkets (from the blue one-way ticket from New York to Liverpool dated 1854 and the poem “Ale Ty, Jeden-dobry i Jedyny” [“But You, the All-good and Only One”], to the photograph of Ksawery Norwid and two excerpts from his letter) creates a kind of multi-voiced autobiographical suite.

The degree of focus within the semantic structure clearly distinguishes Norwid's *silvae rerum* not only from their Old Polish models, but also from similar works of the Romantic era. It suffices to compare them with, for example, Słowacki's aforementioned *Raptularz* or Lenartowicz's album – which exist as works mostly because of the authors that were behind the selection of their elements, and not because of (the more or less clear) determining order of these selections. Furthermore, the presence of fragments with a clearly poetic (literary) provenance, like poems or fictionalised accounts, is negligible in comparison to *Raptularz*, to take one, where we encounter this type of form over and over again, most often in rough-draft. A note from a fiery vision, and the corresponding poem “Wtenczas mię zdjęła wiekuista trwoga” [“And then Eternal Fear Came Over Me”], a rewritten Psalm 55, *List do Księcia A.C.* [A Letter to Prince A.C.], the poem “Anioł ognisty, mój anioł lewy” [“A Fiery Angel, Angel at My Left Side”], dramatic writing samples from *Walter Stadion*, a letter to Ludwik Norwid – these are just a few examples of the scarce and randomly chosen excerpts. Despite the greater number of literary fragments in Słowacki's work, it is not his *Raptularz* that constitutes a more definite sensical order, but Norwid's notebooks. Their individual fragments in and of themselves would be difficult to consider literary texts, but the relations between these fragments and the qualities extracted therefrom lead the works towards an outline of wholeness. This separates Norwid's notebooks and albums from the Baroque *silva rerum* tradition and its Romantic counterpart, and brings it closer to contemporary literature, especially to that type whose main feature is the poly-morphic and hybrid construction of the text of a literary work.

Miłosz's myriad ways of expressing himself lead to a completely free transition from one genre to another (e.g. *Ogród Nauk* [The Garden of Science] or *Piesek przydrożny* [Road-side Dog]) and sometimes also to the indefinability of the genre, like in *Zdania* [Sentences]. In Czapski's *Dziennik* [Diary] (still awaiting full publication), the text and images not only complement and comment on one another, but also correspond with the semiotic nature: the text becomes a supplement to the “freeze-frame” recorded in memory, and the drawing, contemplating still life, candidly capturing “everyday theatre” – to the textual comments on reality. Buczkowski's work, which simultaneously observes and records, culminates in a cornucopia of genre forms and style changes. It is a

mixture of thoughts and perceptions, and numerous crypto quotes from both his own and foreign works (*Pierwsza świetność* [*The First Grandeur*], *Kąpiele w Lucca* [*Bathing in Lucca*]). The narration of the act of writing in Różewicz's *Przyrost naturalny* [*Birth Rate*], which is a meticulous description of the creation of a new work, describes (as we well know) "proces wyłania się nowego utworu z kulturowego pola wypowiedzeniowego" [the process of a new literary work emerging from the field of cultural expression]. In the text:

the author explains in general terms the number and variety of materials he has collected, listing and discussing some of them in greater detail – like, for example, excerpts from the writings of the Church Fathers, made into part of a script for one of the characters .... New semantic systems, resulting from the transformation of collected verbal material, were not organised here according to the rules of one of the genre codes; the natural, as it seemed to the writer at first, acceptance of a given convention ("I will write a comedy") or the choice of another ("I feel that the 'spirit of the times' calls for drama [maybe a tragedy], not a comedy" ...) has become problematic due to the simultaneous recognition of the principle of immanent development of forms.<sup>21</sup>

And finally, we come to Białoszewski's small narrative forms, which use directly-recorded speech patterns, and forms of colloquial literary genres – today's equivalent of old pictures and sketches. Here are just some of the wider contemporary frames of reference for Norwid's notebooks. Especially wherever there are various ways of integrating and crystallising the thematic course of the text, while preserving all of the elements of its openness – a separate interpretative text should be devoted this – we can talk about the particular similarity of contemporary *silvae rerum* to the drafts of the author of *Rzecz o wolności słowa*.

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21 Ryszard Nycz, *Sylwy współczesne* (Kraków: Universitas, 1996), pp. 155–156.

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Jadwiga Puzyńska

## Norwid's *Silence*

**Abstract:** The considerations presented in this study focus on Cyprian Norwid's understanding of the word "silence" and its functions in Norwid's literary output. In particular, the article analyses the content of Norwid's late essay "Milczenie" ["Silence"] (1882), as well as epistolographic references in which the poet writes about his own experience of silence. The article also examines how silence functions in the poetic texts of the author of *Vademecum*, noting the multidimensional nature of the perspectives drawn thence: silence as a theme of a work or its part, silence of the subject of a poem or a lyrical hero (often expressed through very specific punctuation), silence of objects, and silence of supernatural beings. Among the recognised functions of silence, the researcher mentions, *among others*, seeking contact with the sacred, a sign of mental work, a sign of ignorance, distance (often ironic) from the subject of conversation, a sign of respect and solidarity. The author concludes that a specific feature of Norwid's silence (although not without exception) is its positive character.

**Keywords:** Cyprian Norwid, poetry, linguistics, silence

The problem of *silence* in Cyprian Norwid's writings has been noticed by many Polish researchers studying this author. Several articles within Norwid Studies from different periods have been devoted to the topic.<sup>1</sup> There are also shorter or longer statements about Norwid's silence in general discussions of the poet's

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1 Cf. Zygmunt Lubicz Zaleski, "Norwidowa poetyka i dialektyka milczenia," in: *Norwid żywy* (London: B. Świderski, 1962). In 1963, the Library of Polish and Foreign Classics PIW published for the first time *Cyprian Norwid. Białe kwiaty*, with a preliminary study by Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki, entitled "Patos i milczenie" (subsequent expanded editions published in 1973 and 1977). In 1964, Maria Straszewska published a study, "O milczeniu i ciszy u Norwida (szkic)," in: *Przegląd Humanistyczny*, Vol. 4. In 1984, the collective volume published in Opole, entitled *C.K. Norwid. W setną rocznicę śmierci*, featured an article by Marek Adamiec, "Paradoksy 'Milczenia.'" The essay "Milczenie" was also discussed by Stefan Sawicki in his study "Norwid o nieujawnionym wymiarze zdań," in: *Nie tylko o Norwidzie*, eds. Jolanta Czarnomorska, Zbigniew Przychodniak and Krzysztof Trybuś (Poznań: Wydawnictwo PTPN, 1997). Each of these articles brings many important insights and observations concerning Norwid's silence in its various dimensions and functions. This text should be treated primarily as a supplement to my earlier works, written as a philologist-linguist (i.e., from a slightly different standpoint), which involve the classification of the problems of Norwid's silence from the

work and in articles on silence itself. The most frequently quoted work in this regard, although it has yet to be interpreted in an exhaustive manner, is the essay entitled “Milczenie” [“Silence”], written in 1882, about a year before Norwid’s death, and printed for the first time by Zenon Przesmycki in the fifth volume of *Chimera* in 1902. I believe that the discussion on the understanding of the word “milczenie” [“silence”]<sup>2</sup> and its functions in Norwid’s work should begin with the presentation of the main thoughts of this work, which are intertwined with a number of other important reflections of the poet.

## 1. Silence in “Milczenie”

1.1. “Milczenie” does not appear to be a coherent text. It gives the impression of being comprised of several separate essays or feature articles. It is divided into

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linguistic point of view. From the perspective of the material, this study is basically limited to the description of the functions of lexemes derived from the verb “milczeć” [“be silent”] in Norwid’s writings (with particular emphasis on the semantics and pragmatics of the words “milczeć” [“be/remain silent”], “milczenie” [“silence”], and “przemilczenie” [“concealment/the act of remaining silent”], and Norwid’s essay, “Milczenie”).

- 2 More specifically – as can be inferred from footnote 1 – a family of words with the stem *milck-/milcz-*. In more distant uses, when speaking generally about the problem of silence, this word will often stand for the entire family of expressions derived from it.

[translator’s note: The main subject of the linguistic analysis presented in this work – the Polish concept and word *milczenie* and its derivatives – are particularly problematic in translation into English, primarily due to huge differences in the derivational productivity of that word in Polish (as opposed to English), which results in a vast network of Polish concepts and words (belonging to different parts of speech) clearly related to one another at the morphological level, which is not the case in English. For instance, the article mentions the noun “milczenie” [“silence”], the verbs “milczeć/milknąć” (along with their many variations with different prefixes) [non-existent in English or can be only rendered using a periphrastic expression such as “be/remain/fall silent”], another noun, “przemilczenie,” which is derived from the verb “przemilczeć” [“leave something unsaid”], but can also mean “concealment” (which is also the equivalent adopted here); finally, the article also mentions another concept/word, “cisza,” which is commonly translated as “silence” (cf. “milczenie”), but in fact is both morphologically and conceptually related to the adjective “cichy” [“quiet”]. This may be quite confusing for the English reader, but I note it to emphasise that given the specificity of the analysis presented in this study, it was impossible to render all the semantic nuances in translation of the examined concepts nor was it possible to consistently use the same translation equivalents in the entire text.]

three main parts. The introductory part consists of three separate fragments, as is the second part, entitled "Druga część, właściwa: gramatyczna, filozoficzna i egzegetyczna" ["The second, main part: grammatical, philosophical and exegetic"]. The third part, devoted to "przemilczenia" ["concealments"] in literary epochs and genres, forms a single whole.

At the beginning of his deliberations, Norwid argues with those who think that "nie ma nic nowego pod słońcem" ["there is nothing new under the sun"]; he says that very often, in various situations, we get new information, often "brutally" shocking. These words are an announcement of new (and also perhaps shocking) things that the author intends to present to readers in his essay. The first is a strong criticism of all those who, while dealing with particular fields of knowledge, remain silent, i.e., through their silence, they ignore basic, vital truths and even consider the questions concerning them as inappropriate. Undisclosed and pushed into the distance, these truths simultaneously become "nie-do-głębi" [lit. "un-deepened, not sufficiently explored"]. The author juxtaposes the attitude of his contemporaries described in this way with what, in his opinion, was proper to the heroic, pre-Aristotelian era, when "niedawie że na ulicy zapytać było przecie można, co jest dusza? jak i ile nieśmiertelna? co życie i żywot? na co i dla czego filozofia?" (PWsz VI, 223) ["it was almost possible to ask in the street what the soul is? how and how much immortal? what life and living is? for what and why philosophy?"]. Stefan Sawicki describes this type of silence as the "manifestation of a taboo in a given culture" – in this case, a taboo that is unfavourable for that culture.<sup>3</sup>

According to Norwid, a modernity that is not open to basic questions is characterised by inappropriate choices of cognitive values, which the author illustrates with a story about a man who has spent several years in "one of the most splendid capitals of Europe" and who is so absorbed in unidirectional reading and social encounters that he does not manage to enter the interior of the capital's library, being content with viewing the outside of the building (PWsz VI, 228). Norwid continues this story in further fragments of "Milczenie," reflecting on the hustle and bustle of the city, which he hears walking uphill "daleko poza miejsce dla Biblioteki okoliczne" (PWsz VI, 238) ["far beyond the vicinity of the Library"]. In his opinion, in this hubbub "nie napotkasz nic innego, oprócz monologu pasji swojej i swego tylko interesu" ["you will encounter nothing more than a monologue of your own passion and your own interest"], and also "ażebym był upodobanym względem mody czasu swojego i

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3 Sawicki, "Norwid o nieujawnionym wymiarze zdań," p. 261.

ażeby podobać się” (PWsz VI, 240–241) [“in order to follow the fashion of your time and to be liked”]. Norwid finishes this reflection with the following words:

Zaiste, nie nazbyt wysoko potrzeba się wznieść, ażeby, nie usłyszawszy tam ani jednego słowa dla prawdy bez-względnej i dla bezinteresu uczucia ... pomyśleć słusznie: jakże wielkim jest albo bywa m i l c z e n i e m ten, lubo taki ogromny, gwar i zamęt?! (PWsz VI, 241).

[Really, you don't have to get too high, without hearing there even one word for the absolute truth and for the selfless feeling ... to think rightly: what a great *s i l e n c e* is or sometimes is such immense hustle and bustle?!]

These words encapsulate a paradoxical understanding of *silence* as a human speech behaviour (“gwar i zamęt” [“hustle and bustle”]), in which the fundamental values of truth and solidarity with other people, linked to selflessness (this is how I understand “bezinteres uczucia” [“selfless feeling”]), are omitted.<sup>4</sup>

However, Norwid is well aware of the fact that *silence* – as Izydora Dąmbska<sup>5</sup> and many other authors wrote – is an ambiguous word that has many functions. The central position in this essay is taken by silence, as shown by the example of Pythagoras's students, who had not used speech for many years. The positive evaluation of Pythagorean silence is built into Norwid's views on human cognition, which are presented in this essay. Here, the poet expresses his disbelief in the possibility of reaching fundamental truths by building systems within the framework of specific sciences. He considers the approximate nature of human cognition (especially in terms of core values and the search for the meaning of life) to be an important feature of human cognition, which is based, on the one hand, on “rozważa umiejętności” [“the prudence of skill”] and, on the other, on intuition referred to as “nierozważa instynktu przyrodzonego” [“the imprudence of natural instinct”].<sup>6</sup> At the same time, he says that people

4 Such a semantic shift in the concept of silence is linked to the limitation of the notion of speech, which excludes thoughtless “chatter.”

5 Cf. Izydora Dąmbska, “O funkcjach semiotycznych milczenia,” in: Izydora Dąmbska, *Znaki i myśli* (Warszawa, 1975), *passim*.

6 Norwid writes: “co do działania przez przybliżenie (*approximative*), te – wydawa mi się być najwłaściwiej doniosłym atrybutem ducha ludzkiego. Nie wiem, zaprawdę, czyli jest jaka forma działalności umysłowej odpowiedniejsza położeniu naszemu, jak przybliżenie! Jesteśmy w każdym zmyśle i rozmyśle naszym otoczeni kryształem przezroczystym, ale uobłędniającym poglądy nasze. Podobno że cokolwiek bądź czynimy, zagaja się albo uzupełnia przez przybliżenie. ... można by nawet rzec, iż działanie przez przybliżenie nie jest dla nas przypadkiem, lecz podbitym sobie warunkiem. Stąd to, obejmując one – i jednocząc – dwa wielkie klejnoty umysłowe, czyli: rozważę umiejętności i nierozważę

need knowledge in life, which could be described as situational and, at the same time, supra-scientific. As he writes:

Człowiek potrzebowałby (mówię) wiedzieć, każdej pory, doby, i chwili, i okoliczności, wszystko to, co w tych razach i względach wiedzieć on, jako on, powinien, i jako społeczeństwa ludzkiego członek.

To zaś wydawa mi się być więcej niż wszystko, albowiem toć jest wszystko więcej znajomością i samejże niewiedzy, i jej pomiaru. (PWsz VI, 235)

[The man would need (I say) to know every time, day, and moment, and circumstance everything that he, as he, and as a member of the human society, should know in these times and circumstances.

This, in turn, seems to me to be more than everything, for this everything is more the knowledge of ignorance itself, and its measurement.]

According to the poet, this is precisely the kind of knowledge that can be gained through silence because one of its important sources is the sensitivity to parabolicity – as Norwid puts it – of the external reality surrounding the man, and silence, accompanied by inner calm, allows for noticing and interpreting this parabolicity.<sup>7</sup> Norwid uses the term “monologści milczenia” [“monologists

instynktu przyrodzonego, jest zupełnie człowieczym” (PWsz VI, 226–227) [“as for the action through approximation, this – seems to me to be the most appropriate momentous attribute of the human spirit. I do not know truly whether there is a form of mental activity that is more appropriate to our position than a p p r o x i m a t i o n ! In our every sense and purpose we are surrounded by a transparent crystal, but this makes our views insane. Supposedly, whatever we do is started or complemented by a p p r o x i m a t i o n . . . . one could even say that acting by a p p r o x i m a t i o n is not an accident, but a conquered condition. Hence this, embracing – and uniting – the two great gems of the mind, i.e. the prudence of skill and the imprudence of the natural instinct, is entirely human”]. In the light of these words by Norwid, who treats this kind of cognition as an important attribute of the human spirit, it is difficult to fully agree with Stefan Sawicki (“Norwid o nieujawnionym wymiarze zdań,” p. 261) who, leaving aside the “prudence of skill” (*skill* understood at that time as ‘knowledge, learning’) in his interpretation of Norwid’s approximation, writes: “we come closer to learning reality (according to the author of “Milczenie”) intuitively, aspectwise, through parables.” Intuition and parables – yes – but also knowledge, learning, and in fact, reasoning were highly valued by Norwid.

7 According to Norwid, since the dawn of time, people who have been silent and, at the same time, who have highly regarded the parable as a tool of cognition, have said far more than in words “przez lada drobny, potoczny gest: przez upuszczenie lub

of silence”] several times, referring not so much to those who by remaining silent themselves make monologues, but above all to those who listen to “monolog-nieustannie-się-parabolizujący” [“a monologue that is constantly parabolising itself”]; they can hear “nieustanny w harmoniach stworzenia monolog-wieczny” [“an eternal monologue that is incessant in the harmony of creation”], which is “jednym ze źródełk żywych prawdy” (PWsz VI, 236) [“one of the living springs of the truth”].

The poet does not say directly in “Milczenie” whose monologue it is. All of his late work, including the essay examined here, is characterised by a high degree of restraint in revealing the confessional basis of his views.<sup>8</sup> There is a clear desire to speak in a language common to Christians and non-Christians, believers and non-believers, to convey thoughts worthy of attention to people with different worldviews, and perhaps to think in such supra-confessional categories.

In the essay, apart from the (negative and positive) meanings of *silence* and the negative senses of *concealment*, Norwid gives the nineteenth-century reader a new, axiologically neutral meaning of *concealment*, understood as “a part of speech.”

1.2. At this point in our interpretation of this essay, we should reflect on the meaning of *silence* and *concealment* in general and on their mutual relations.<sup>9</sup>

podjęcie kamyczka z ziemi, uszczknięcie listka, dotknięcie jednym palcem rzeczy jakiej pobliskiej” (PWsz VI, 236) [“through any small, common gesture: through dropping or picking a pebble from the ground, through plucking a leaf, through touching a thing nearby with one finger”]. This reflects the important evaluation of gesture, which was noticed by Norwid Studies scholars, and this has an important role in many of Norwid’s works.

- 8 According to S. Sawicki, since the time of *Vade-mecum*, there had been an increase in the number of works “the surface of which does not reveal a completely Christian system of values or reveals it very poorly. They also interpret the world in a Christian spirit, but they do it very discreetly” (Stefan Sawicki, “Nie są nasze – pieśni nasze. O poezji religijnej Norwida,” in: Stefan Sawicki, *Wartość – Sacrum – Norwid*, Lublin: RW KUL, 1994, p. 203).
- 9 Both of these lexemes, especially “milczenie,” have been the subject of semantic interpretation in many previous works, including the aforementioned article by Izydora Dąmbska; cf. also: Krystyna Pisarkowa, “O komunikatywnej funkcji przemilczenia,” *Zeszyty Prasoznawcze*, Vol. 1 (1986), pp. 25–34; Jolanta Rokoszowa, “Język a milczenie,” *Biuletyn Polskiego Towarzystwa Językoznawczego*, Vol. 40 (1983), pp. 129–137; Jolanta Rokoszowa, “Milczenie jako fakt językowy,” *Biuletyn Polskiego Towarzystwa Językoznawczego*, Vol. 50 (1994), pp. 27–47; Kwiryna Handke,

*Silence* is an expression understood prototypically as a denial of the activity of speaking, as “non-speaking.” However, this word has a fuzzy meaning, the semantic potential of which can be expanded in different directions. Although we can say that someone “writes, while being silent,” we can also say that someone “remains stubbornly silent, does not answer letters.” Thus, *silence* can also sometimes refer to denying the use of the written form of language (for communicative purposes).<sup>10</sup> We can say that someone “hums, while being silent,” but it can also be a denial of humming (i.e., wordless singing) or purring;<sup>11</sup> we can say, for example, that “the general silence is disturbed by the sound of a song hummed by one of the participants of a meeting.” In such uses, *silence* is a denial of producing any sounds by human speech organs.<sup>12</sup>

*Silence* (as a negation of an action) is a certain state of the subject,<sup>13</sup> but it does not determine what happens in the mind and soul of the silent person. This person can completely turn off thinking and feeling; he/she can also (sometimes especially intensively) think, remember, grieve, enjoy, etc. Reading the texts of the mystics of silence, the fathers of the desert, *among others*, we

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“Między mową a milczeniem,” in: *Semantyka milczenia. Zbiór studiów*, ed. Kwiryna Handke (Warszawa, 1999), pp. 9–16; Jacek Juliusz Jadacki, “O pojęciu milczenia,” in: *Semantyka milczenia*, pp. 17–32, as well as articles by Jerzy Faryno, Ryszard Handke, Zdzisław Najder and others in the same volume. My study does not introduce significant changes to the existing interpretations of “milczenie” and related words. Instead, I try to emphasise what seems to be important for understanding of the use of these words in Norwid’s writings.

- 10 In the sense of communication via writing (and other sign systems excluding speech), the verb “milczeć” [“be silent”] can only be used in iterative or durative functions, not the actual one.
- 11 Cf. Zdzisław Najder, “Cisza i milczenie w dziełach Conrada,” in: *Semantyka milczenia*, p. 190: “If someone is silent, not only does he not speak, but also he does not sing, purr, or shout in pain.”
- 12 However, it is not a complete synonym of *cisza* [“silence/quietness”], which presupposes the absence of all sounds, not only those produced by people. One can say, for example, that “ogólna cisza” [‘general quietness’] (but not ‘ogólne milczenie’ [‘general silence’]) was disturbed by the sounds of music.”
- 13 Norwid says twice that “milczenie się stało” (PWsz III, 495 and PWsz V, 299) [“silence happened”]. This phrase, similar to frequent phrases such as “stać” [“stand”], “trwać” [“remain/stay”], “cofać się w milczeniu” [“going back in silence”], confirm that *silence* is a state.

come across a silence that clearly excludes independent thinking.<sup>14</sup> It is a silence aimed only at receiving what God has to say to the silent person.<sup>15</sup> It seems that the Pythagorean silence aimed at the reception of transcendence in Norwid's description does not exclude certain areas of thinking, except that the author of *Promethidion* narrows it down to a parabolic reception of reality, without other possibilities for mystical contact with the transcendence.

The form of conscious refraining not from speaking entirely but from the excess of words is "laconism," which is positively evaluated by Norwid, and "monumentalny rzymski styl" (PWsz VI, 238) ["the monumental Roman style"] associated with it. The poet links both with parabolicity, with the desire to express with a gesture and an arranged situation that could be expressed in words. The connection between "laconism" and parabolicity would probably consist of supplementing with a gesture that is concisely expressed in words (or in reading the concealed content in such a text).

In Norwid's negative meaning of *silence*, discussed above, which is construed as a denial of communication in matters important to people, the lack of a certain type of content in what is communicated becomes a distinguishing feature. Such a shift in the meaning of the word *silence* is based on Norwid's inherent limitation of the semantic content of *speech*. Of course, we are dealing here with a poetic neosemanticism, aimed at emphasising Norwid's high opinion of speaking about important things, and a negative attitude towards thoughtless speech, babbling, and garrulousness,<sup>16</sup> which do not deserve to be referred to as *speech* and are treated as its opposite, i.e., *silence*. It should be added that this is unintentional silence as experienced by the receiver of such garrulousness.

14 Cf., e.g., Anselm Grün OSB, *Potrzeba milczenia*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Tyniec: Wydawnictwo Benedyktynów, 2001), where we can read, *among others*, that "silence is about getting rid of all thoughts and feelings so that we do not block for God the way to us" (p. 88).

15 Izydora Dąmbska describes such silence as "turning off the internal speech" and points out that "it is not a sign in the intersubjective sense" (*Znaki i myśli*, pp. 78–79).

16 Cf. in this context, see the text from *Kleopatra i Cezar* [*Cleopatra and Caesar*]. Cf. see also the couplet from *Assunta* (DW III, 328): "Zbyt popularnym afiszów językiem / Gada się z każdym, lecz nie mówi z nikiem" ["Using the too popular poster language / One talks to everyone, but speaks to no one"] and an excerpt from *Rzecz o wolności słowa* (DW IV, 219) [*On the Freedom of Speech*], where we read: "Najmniej-bo znaną rzeczą, lub znaną najbłędniej / Bywa Słowo -- -- Nałóg je codzienny podrzędni / I rozlewa jak wodę" ["The least known thing, or the most incorrectly known one / Is the Word -- -- The everyday habit makes it subordinate / And spills it like water"].



Many authors writing about *silence* emphasise its ambiguity (as has already been mentioned). I think that in the conventionalised uses (which do not include this neosemanticism used by Norwid!), it is an expression in which one can distinguish a solid semantic core – i.e., “non-speaking” – and a largely conventionalised periphery (i.e., not producing inarticulate sounds by means of the human speech apparatus, and – apart from current uses – not writing). Conversely, the motives and functions of silence are contextually conditioned semantic connotations of the word *silence*, and thus they obviously belong to the scope of pragmatics. Hence, the frequent uncertainty about the reading of many messages that the sender wants to convey using the words derivationally related to the word *silence*. The same difficulties accompany the interpretation of synonyms and differently signalled situations of silence.<sup>17</sup>

Unlike “milczenie” [“silence”], which is basically the name of a state (which may or may not be a state consciously caused by the subject), “przemilczanie” [“being/remaining silent” – imperfective] and “przemilczenie” [“concealment, leaving something unsaid” – perfective], derivatives from the verbs “przemilczać” [“be/remain silent” – imperfective] and “przemilczyć” [“remain silent/leave unsaid” – perfective], designate actions that always consist in omitting certain elements of the content in a statement. Even if, on the part of the sender, it is an unconscious activity, it is called *concealment* when at least the recipient considers it conscious and intentional.<sup>18</sup> This is how we understand the negatively charged *concealment* in the essay examined here, which was mentioned in Norwid’s criticism of contemporary people who omit essential problems in dialogues.

However, the situation is different with the *concealment* described by Norwid as “a part of speech” abandoned by grammarians. It can have both the meaning of the action and of the object of the action, “what is silent,” i.e., the content of the statement which was not expressed linguistically; further, it is not negatively charged. The poet’s reference to it as a *part of speech* is a terminological

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17 In the case of their debatable or punctuational signalling, we are dealing with semantic implicatures (i.e., optional inferences concerning the content of statements in texts), not connotations (i.e., optional content elements associated with specific words). Such implicatures (or connotations of words derived from “milczenie”) include, among others, the semantic component of “consciously refraining from speaking,” which is important for the typology of silence in the view of Izydora Dąmbska (*Znaki i myśli, passim*).

18 Zdzisław Najder (“Cisza i milczenie,” p. 188) refers to concealment as “an addressed, targeted” form of silence.

misunderstanding because (also in the nineteenth-century tradition) *parts of speech* are classes of words, important mainly for the description of the linguistic system, the word code, while the poet himself says that he is talking about “dramatic” speech, i.e., occurring speech, about speaking. He rightly and innovatively attributes to such a speech concealments, which – as evidenced by his examples – include both presuppositions<sup>19</sup> and implicatures.<sup>20</sup> Norwid wrongly believes that what is concealed in the first sentence must always be said in the next. This may be so but is not obligatory. It is not yet clear to him that while presuppositions are implied and necessary for the content, implicatures are optional; they may be different for different recipients or may not be perceived at all. However, the fact that the poet discerned the mechanisms of presuppositions and implicatures in utterances, which he collectively called *concealments*, thus emphasising their important place in human communication, was in itself undoubtedly revealing for that time.<sup>21</sup>

In the third part of “Milczenie,” Norwid tries to apply his “prawo przemilczeń” [“law of concealments”] to successive literary epochs and genres. He says that what is left unsaid in the legend finds its “wygłos” [“voice”] in the epic, what is

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19 In the example given by Norwid: “Nie należy być o wiele jaśniejszym od przedmiotu” [“One should not be much brighter than an object”], the concealed sentence “Przedmiot każdy ma sobie odpowiedni stopień światła” [“Every object has an inherently appropriate degree of light”] is – according to the poet – a presupposition (necessary conclusion) of the first sentence.

20 In the example: “Jakże mi się miewasz przyjacielu?” [“How are you doing, my friend?”], Norwid’s concealment: “Dość dawno nie widziałem ciebie, ażeby tym żywiej o to pytać” [“It’s been a long time since I last saw you, so I ask this question so vividly”] is the implicature (possible but not necessary conclusion) of the first sentence. Depending on the situation, we might as well consider its implicatures to be the following sentences: “Cieszę się, że cię spotykam” [“I’m glad to see you”] and/or: “Słyszałem, że miałeś kłopoty ze zdrowiem” [“I’ve heard you had some health issues”].

21 Stefan Sawicki (“Norwid o nieujawnionym wymiarze zdań,” p. 262) rightly points to pragmatics as a field of linguistics manifested in Norwid’s thinking about language and his general innovativeness in relation to twentieth-century linguistics dealing with the “deep structure” of sentences. However, Norwid’s pioneering work concerns contextual (and thus pragmatic) interpretations, while the deliberations of A. Bogusławski and A. Wierzbicka quoted by S. Sawicki concern the semantic analysis of sentences, omitting possible implicatures and so-called pragmatic presuppositions related to the context of the statement.

left unsaid in the epic is articulated in the historical prose, etc. This clearly literary topic will not be further addressed here.

## 2. Silent Norwid

Norwid's profound reflections on silence, its functions, causes and effects, scattered throughout his work, are based, *among others*, on his own experiences and practice. This can be discovered in the poet's letters, in which he repeatedly writes about his silence.

As early as 1850, from a letter to Lenartowicz, we learn about long periods of Norwid's silence, when he says:

więcej nie mogę pisać – znowu czas jakiś książki nie będę widział ani listu, ani pióra, jak to czasem rabiam – muszę robić – zamykam książki i papiery i klucz rzucam przez okno w ogród cudzy, gdzie już trzy moje klucze leżą w trawie ....

Bóg z Tobą – kto by pytał o mnie, toż mu powiedz – na długo milczę. (DW X, 253)

[I cannot write any more, again for some time I won't be able to see either a book, or a letter, or a pen, as I sometimes do – I have to – I close books and papers and throw the key through the window into someone else's garden, where three of my keys are already lying in the grass ....

God bless you – whoever would ask for me, tell them – I remain silent for a long time.]

Thus, more than 30 years before writing "Milczenie," the poet used to remain silent in a Pythagorean manner for long periods. Periods of what? Meditation? Prayers? Listening to "the monologue that is constantly parabolising itself?" – We do not know.

In 1852, Norwid wrote to Józef Bohdan Zaleski:

Oto na teraz, jak jestem – nieprędko znów powiem parę słów, bo postaciować muszę, a więc milczę – miałem chwilę na kawie po obiedzie i nabazgrałem to. (DW X, 374)

[Here's how I am now, I'm not going to say a few words again that quickly, because I need to create – so I'm silent – I had a moment during a coffee break after the dinner and I scribbled this.]

Here, the reason for the long silence is "postaciowanie" ["creating/forming/giving a shape"], by which the poet refers to his plastic activities or writing poetry.<sup>22</sup> This is the year in which many of Norwid's poems and narrative

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22 In Norwid's writings, the verb "postaciować" refers to pictorial representation of concepts (both in plastic arts and in literature) and thinking through pictures. In his works, also "postać" ["figure/shape/form"] can mean a pictorial metaphor or pictorial comparison; cf. the words from *Promethidion's* Epilogue (DW IV, 137): "Lud – ręczną

poems are written, such as “Do Najświętszej Marri Panny Litania” [“A Litany to the Blessed Virgin Mary”], “Nieskończony” [“Infinite”], “Salem,” “Ziemia” [“Earth”], “Legenda” [“Legend”], and others. However, in the context of the letter quoted above, it seems more probable that he meant his plastic activities (drawing or painting).

The surviving fragment of a letter to Józef Reitzenheim from 1877, which was written from St. Casimir House, ends with the words: “Żyję – milczę – pamiętam – Vale –” (PWsz X, 100) [“I’m alive – I’m silent – I remember – Vale –”].

Thus, silence is a constant, recurring practice in Norwid’s life. It is often associated with suffering. For example, in 1867, the poet complained in a letter to Konstancja Górka: “jestem tak wieloracznie nieszczęsny i utrapiony, że mogę tylko m i l c z e ć albo ż a r t o w a ć” (PWsz IX, 305) [“I’m miserable and distressed in so multiple ways that I can only be silent or joke”]. In 1878, writing from the St. Casimir House to Mieczysław Geniusz (PWsz X, 113), he states: “Trzeba to przechodzić milcząc” [“One has to go through this in silence”]. “This” means “ciemność dni, wilgoć, ból organu-serca i ból moralny serca” [“the darkness of the days, moisture, the pain of heart-the organ and the moral pain of heart”] – he talks about all these things in his letter.

There are other motives for Norwid’s silence. In one of his letters, the poet says that he is silent because he knows that he will not be understood or listened to (PWsz IX, 469). In another letter, he says he is silent when he “zrobił co byłym i niemożliwym” [“did what was possible and impossible”] (in individual people’s affairs and in the Polish affairs) and no one thanked him, not even with a single word.

That Norwid linked speech with what is important and meaningful is highlighted by his statements that “nikczemnością jest milczeć” [“it is wicked to remain silent”] (though “wstyd pomyśleć” [“it is a shame to think”] and “obrzydliwość mówić” [“it is disgusting to speak”]) about his misery as a writer, poet, artist (PWsz X, 126). It is well known that Norwid always insisted that society should take care of artists and writers. It was one of the things to which

*pracą* zdobywa wiedzę i dlatego nie potrzebuję już tłumaczyć, czemu on *myśli postaciami*” [“The people – gains knowledge through *work* and therefore I no longer need to explain why they *think in figures*”]. Cf. also the numerous uses of the adjective “postaciowy” [“figural”] (*among others*, PWsz I, 156, PWsz III, 445, PWsz VIII, 433). According to Norwid, poetry must be parabolic in nature (in this sense, pictorial) – hence the possibility of interpreting “postaciowanie” as writing poetry. However, the letter to Zaleski quoted above mentions that Norwid “zamknął się na czas” [“isolated himself for a time”] and is urgently preparing some work for the Paris Exhibition.

he attached great importance, not only because of his own privation – hence the strong words from that letter.

The last of Norwid's epistolary statements on silence is connected with a request addressed to Kraszewski in 1882 to include “Żydy’ i mechesy” [“Jews and meches”] in one of the national magazines. Norwid writes that although “wygodniej ... byłoby milczeć” [“it would be more convenient ... to remain silent”], he believes that the text “godzi się, aby pod te czasy publikowanym był” (PWsz X, 178) [“befits to be published in these times”]. This is related to the general idea expressed at the beginning of the letter: “skoro kto jakie lat kilkadziesiąt ma zaszczyt być politycznym wygnańcem narodowym, jużci że udział bierze we ważniejszych przynajmniej porach wyrabiania się opinii” (PWsz X, 177) [“if anyone has the honour of being a political national exile for dozens of years, he can at least participate in more important times of opinion-forming”].<sup>23</sup>

The last two statements express the poet's views on why and when silence is not appropriate, when silence is an expression of comfortable passivity. This aspect of silence repeatedly appears in Norwid's work.<sup>24</sup>

### 3. The poetic image of silence

3.1 Norwid has often been referred to as the poet of silence, partly in connection with the essay analysed here, but probably prominently because of the importance of silence and concealment as elements of his poetry imposed on the reader. This importance is also manifested in the frequency of lexemes deriving from the verb “milczeć” [“to be silent”].<sup>25</sup> Much has been said about the silence of the characters of Norwid's poems and narrative poems. Some of them are

23 The negative assessment of silence in matters that one should not be silent about is contained in fragments of texts by S. Kisielewski and A. Niemojewski, quoted by Jacek Juliusz Jadacki in his article “O pojęciu milczenia,” p. 18.

24 Cf. examples of use listed in footnote 39, cf. also Norwid's statements in prose: PWsz VII, 14, 18; PWsz IX, 23, 181.

25 Below the quantitative data demonstrating the frequency of those words:

words	poetry	prose	total
milczeć	87	68	155
milczenie	42	83	125
domilczeć	-	1	1
przemilczać	-	19	19
przemilczanie	-	2	2

clearly characterised as silent characters or communities. This most obviously applies to *Assunta*, but also, for example, to Barchob and Jazon and the entire Jewish community in *Quidam*. It is also possible to indicate works in which silence plays a particularly important role, though it can be manifested in various ways. Besides *Quidam* and *Assunta*, these are narrative poems: *Wędrowny sztukmistrz* [*The Wandering Magician*] and *Rzecz o wolności słowa* [*On The Freedom of Speech*], dramas: *Krakus* and *Kleopatra i Cezar* [*Cleopatra and Caesar*],<sup>26</sup> poems: “Wieczór w pustkach” [“An Evening in Wilderness”], “Toast” and [“Ty mnie do pieśni pokornej nie wołaj”] [“Do Not Summon Me to a Humble Song”].<sup>27</sup>

words	poetry	prose	total
przemilczeć	5	15	20
przemilczenie	1	30	31
przemilkać	1	-	1
milknąć	6	3	9
przemilknąć	8	2	10
umilknąć	6	3	9
zamilknąć	12	4	16
zamilczeć	-	3	3
zamilczenie	-	1	1
zmilknąć	8	9	17
zmilknienie	-	1	1
spół-milczenie	-	1	1
milczkiem	5	1	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>427</b>

The Dictionary of Adam Mickiewicz’s language registers a total of 330 uses. The main quantitative differences concern the subcluster of the verb “przemilczeć:” the only lexeme from this subcluster used in that dictionary is “przemilczeć” (6 uses).

- 26 In Norwid’s dramas, attention is drawn to the frequent appearance of the verb “milczeć” and the noun “milczenie” in *didaskalia*. This applies especially to Norwid’s works: *Wanda*, *Krakus*, *Zwolon*, *Noc tysięczna druga* [*The Thousandth and Second Night*], *Kleopatra i Cezar* [*Cleopatra and Caesar*].
- 27 In this article I resign from characterising the role of silence (including derived words) in particular works and particular periods of Norwid’s work. This would be related to a more literary perspective on this analysis and would require a far-reaching expansion of its volume.

3.2 Norwid's poetry does not only speak about silence. Often – as it has been pointed out many times – the subject of Norwid's poem (or its protagonist) falls silent, also imposing a thoughtful or emotional silence on the reader. This silence of the subject is expressed by the author, *among others*, through the use of specific punctuation and graphic signs: ellipsis, dashes (and “wielomyślniki” [“multi-dashes”]), verse breaks, whole lines of ellipsis, dashes, or asterisks.<sup>28</sup> Below, I present two examples of such signs of silence.

The first is a passage from the poem “Fortepian Szopena” [“Chopin's Grand Piano”]:

Patrz!... z zaułków w zaułki  
 Kaukaskie się konie rwą  
 ...  
 P o s t o – p o s t o --  
 – Gmach zajął się ogniem, przygaśł znów,  
 Zapłonął znów – – i oto – pod ścianę  
 Widzę czoła ożałobionych wdów  
 Kolbami pchane – –

(PWsz II, 146)

[Look!... from alleys to alleys  
 Caucasian horses tear forth  
 ...  
 H u n d r e d -- b y h u n d r e d --  
 -- A house engulfed by fire, which dims,  
 Flares up again -- and there – to a wall  
 I see the widows' mourning brows  
 Pushed by rifle butts --]<sup>29</sup>

This was a description of the action interrupted by the breaks of the emotional silence of the observer.

28 Punctuation marks also perform completely conventional functions in the text, signalling pauses (in spoken language: breaking off) between sentences and words. In this case, this refers to a clearly poetic function of punctuation in a text.

29 English translation by Danuta Borchardt in collaboration with Agata Brajerska-Mazur, in: Cyprian Norwid, *Poems* (New York: Archipelago Books, 2011), pp. 75–77.

The second example comes from *Quidam*:

I spotkał się mistrz z uczniem oko w oko,  
– Milcząc – – – – –

(DW III, 203)

And the master met the student eye to eye,  
Silently – – – – –

This is an example of the concealment of what is hidden in the wordless contact between Jazon and Barchob.

The silence is also expressed with the use of synonyms for the words derived from the verb “milczeć” as discussed above (these include primarily: “cisza” [“silence”], “bezmowność” [“speechlessness”], “niemota” [“muteness”], “niemowlęctwo” [“infancy”] and the vocabulary derived from these), as well as expressions and phrases periphrastically (sometimes allusively) describing the situation of being or falling silent,<sup>30</sup> and texts which signal the author’s concealments with their content itself (sometimes also with anaphoric indicators).<sup>31</sup> However, in this article – as mentioned above – I limit myself to discussing the function of the verb “milczeć” [“be silent”] and its derivatives.

3.3 The subjects of Norwid’s poems or narrative poems, the protagonists of his dramas, narrative poems and poems (including the lyrical “I”) sometimes speak of silence in general,<sup>32</sup> more often of someone’s silence (including their own). They usually speak using object language, mostly assertive or directive speech acts. Of course, the latter are less frequent and are expressed in imperative forms, sometimes also reported through assertives.<sup>33</sup>

30 Among others, Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki, in the above-mentioned Introduction to his edition of *Białe kwiaty*, treats the metaphorical and allusive expressions hiding patriotic content in Norwid’s youthful poetry as manifestations of silence.

31 Numerous examples of such “text-initial, mid and final” concealments in his poems can be found in the article by Ryszard Handke, “Milczenie w perspektywie oczekiwania,” in: *Semantyka milczenia*, pp. 47–57.

32 Cf. the words about “wniebogłosy” [“heavenly voices”] associated with concealments in the ending of *Assunta* (DW III, 336), an excerpt from *Quidam* (DW III, 145–146), containing the metaphor of silence as lava, an excerpt from *Kleopatra i Cezar* [*Cleopatra and Caesar*].

33 cf., e.g., the words addressed to Philosophy and Morality: “Milczcie! ... kijem zgodzę” [“Be silent! ... with a stick I will make you reconcile”] (“Saturnalia,” PWSz II, 47),



Individuals and communities are silent,<sup>34</sup> as are various inanimate objects upon which Norwid often – though not always – bestows human qualities. Undoubtedly he personifies figures from works such as “Toast,” where “Kocioł osmalony / ... tudzież wody czystej Wiadro / Milczały w sieni, z dala rozprawy uczonej” [“The scorched kettle / ... or the Bucket of clean water / Were silent in the hallway, away from the scholarly dispute”], and later “Wiadro, jako tryumfator, / Poważnie milcząc, swoje sprawowało szyki” (PWsz I, 275–276) [“The bucket, as a triumpher, / Seriously silent, introduced its order”] and as in the poem “Na ‘Kazanie Skargi’ Jana Matejki” (PWsz II, 221) [“On Jan Matejko’s ‘Sermon of Piotr Skarga’”], where “Futurałna-kapelusz z Pochwą-parasola / Mówiąc o rzeczach, które by mogły być ... / Radzi milczeć, aż fakta urosną na grzyby” [“A hat case with an umbrella sheath / talking about things that could be ... / Advises to remain silent until the facts grow as mushrooms”].<sup>35</sup>

By contrast, the *silent cypresses* and “zamknięte ... kupczących szałaszy” [“closed ... merchants’ cabins”], which “stały szeregiem milczącym i czarnym” [“stood in a silent and black row”] from *Quidam* (DW III, 83 and 213), “brązy milczące” (PWsz II, 212) [“silent bronzes”] from “Spółcześni”

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a sharp reply of Szolom to Rakuza: “Milczenie!” (Krakus, DW V, 225) [“Silence!”], a fragment of “Fulminant” (DW IV, 195): “Skazanej pieśni próżno człowiek rzecze: / ‘Milcz! jestem czynu-mąż, bo tobie przeczę –’” [“The man says in vain to the condemned song: / ‘Be silent! I am a man of action, for I deny you Milczenie w perspektywie’”]. An example of the reported directive can be a fragment from *Quidam* (DW III, 253): “Rota ... / Kazała milczeć lub z placu uchodzić” [“The rota ... / Made me remain silent or leave the square”]. As can be seen based on these examples, the senders and the recipients are very different, this applies also to the situations in which the directives of silence appear. Of course, most of them can be found in dramas; cf. DW V, 40, 68, 468–469; DW VI, 119–120, 299.

34 The *nation* is silent (PWsz VII, 7 and 8), the *crowd* is silent (PWsz VI, 503) and the *mass* (DW IV, 240).

35 Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki, seeing in this poem another satire on Polish society, proposes to understand the “growth of facts as mushrooms” as their aging obsolescence (cf. *Cyprian Norwid. Dzieła zebrane* [Collected Works], Vol. 2: *Wiersze. Dodatek krytyczny* [Poems. A critical edition], ed. Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki, Warszawa: PIW, 1966, p. 926). In the context of the whole poem, this interpretation seems convincing. It is supported by the phraseological expressions listed by Linde and later dictionaries: “posłać kogoś na grzyby” [“to send somebody for mushrooms”] “remove somebody, destroy somebody,” and “pójść na grzyby” [“go for mushrooms”] “to be removed, destroyed; the abyss.”

["Contemporaries"], or "gwiaździste cienie liścia wachlarzowego" ["star-shaped shadows of the fan-shaped leaf"] from "Podróż po wystawie powszechnej" ["Journey of the Universal Exhibition"], which do not show any proper human behaviour except silence, do not have to – as it seems – be treated as examples of anthropomorphization. If we recall how Norwid treats objects expressing silence in the dedicated fragment of "Wieczór w pustkach" (PWsz I, 30), we can assume that similar to the "flat" and the devices that in this poem fill it with their "voices," the silent cypresses, cabins, bronzes, and leaf shadows take part – by what they express – in the polylogue of the world without losing their objectivity. This is in line with the principle of parabolic treatment of the surrounding reality, which is so important to Norwid's thought.<sup>36</sup>

It is also worth noting a few contexts in which supernatural beings *remain silent*. In "Do najświętszej Panny Marii Litanii" ["A Litany to the Blessed Virgin Mary"] there appears "Anioł milczący i patrzący w stronę, / Kiedy mię zamęt porywa światowy" (PWsz I, 188) ["A silent angel looking sideways, / When I'm being taken by the world's confusion"]. Twice, the metonymy of *silent heaven* refers to God. In "Dumanie" (PWsz I, 17) ["Meditation"], we read: "A niebo, tak jak dawniej milczące, zamknięte, / Ani płacze, ani się śmieje" ["And the sky, silent as it used to be, closed, / Neither cries nor laughs"], and in the late poem, "Do wielmożnej pani I." ["To the Honourable Ms. I.," "milczało niebo błyskaniem i grzmotem" ["the sky was silent with lightning and thunder"] when Cicero's hands were nailed to the boards of the podium (Norwid considered him the precursor of Christianity).

3.4. The silence of objects in Norwid's works falls into the category of signs (symptoms),<sup>37</sup> as does the human silence frequently reported by the poet, most often expressing suffering and sadness<sup>38</sup> or the moments of reflection and

36 Jolanta Rokoszowa ("Język a milczenie," p. 229) writes about the transcendent silence of the world. She believes that it has "a natural character, it is a neutral, uncharacteristic silence," identifies it with quietness and distinguishes it from significant silence. (This thought is also picked up and expanded on by Ryszard Handke, "Milczenie w perspektywie oczekiwania," pp. 9–11.) This does not seem to correspond to Norwid's conception, as he wants to read the "speech" of silent objects which is rich in meanings.

37 On the subject of silence as a symptom and as a sign, cf. Dąbska, *Znak i myśl*, p. 81 f.

38 Cf., e.g., "I ja wiedziałem wszystko, acz daleki, / Milcząc, jak czynią od bólu kaleki" (DW III, 111) ["And I knew everything, albeit far away, / Remaining silent, as cripples do from the pain"]; "Cóż mię tak pali, cóż tak piersi wzdyma, / Że tylko milczeć – tylko płakać muszę?" (DW V, 11) ["What is burning me so much, what is bloating

thoughtfulness,<sup>39</sup> sometimes fear,<sup>40</sup> restlessness of conscience,<sup>41</sup> uncertainty,<sup>42</sup> passive attitude,<sup>43</sup> but also modesty,<sup>44</sup> astonishment,<sup>45</sup> and admiration.<sup>46</sup>

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the breast so much, / That only be silent – only cry I must?”. Cf. excerpts PWsz III, 518; PWsz I, 8; PWsz III, 294; PWsz II, 214; PWsz I, 231; PWsz IV, 19; cf. also PWsz I, 33; PWsz IV, 132 and PWsz 177; PWsz VI, 16; PWsz X, 988.

- 39 Cf., e.g., the words of the lyre player from “Wzroki” (PWsz I, 325) [“Eyesights”]: “Dałem im wreszcie chwilę na milczenie” [“I finally gave them a moment of silence”] (after hearing the inspired words); in *Pięć zarysów* [Five Sketches], (DW IV, 165) we read: “Ach! drogi mój – i gdyby spytał o krwi morze / Wylane za nas – / Tutaj stało się milczenie –” [“Ah! My dear – and if he had asked about the sea of blood / Poured out for us – / Here silence happened –”].
- 40 Cf. the words of Wiesław from *Promethidion* (DW IV, 123): “To strach! – – milczycie teraz – strach to wielki: / Ten głos [opini], przez potów, krwi i łez kropelki / Ociekający w sumienia naczynie” [“It is fear! – – You are silent now – a great fear it is, / This voice of opinion, through sweat, blood and tears drops / Dripping into the vessel of conscience”].
- 41 Wiesław, in *Promethidion*, asks his listeners: “– Panowie! ... – czemu milczycie? / ... Czemu ta cichość, jakby po przestępstwie? / Otóż znów powiem wam, ja, *natręt nudny*, / Że to po drwinach z prawdy – po odstępstwie!” (DW IV, 121) [“– Gentlemen! ... – why are you silent? / ... Why this silence, as if after a crime? / Well, I’ll tell you again, I, *the intruder, boring*, [that it’s after the mockery at the truth – after the deviation!”].
- 42 Cf., e.g., the words: “Milczano z pół-uśmiechem” [“They were silent with half-smile”] describing the behaviour of the company reading Shakespeare, plagued by the appearance of an “uninvited guest” who describes himself as “Zwątpienie rzeczywistości” [“Doubt of reality”] (*Pięć zarysów* [Five Sketches], DW IV, 150).
- 43 Cf. the silence of the Academy in the epigram “Posiedzenie” (PWsz I 171) [“Meeting”] and the words of the subject of the poem “Nerwy” (PWsz II, 136) [“Nerves”]: “I wróczę milczącym faryzeuszem / – Po zabawie” [And I will return as a silent Pharisee / – After the party].
- 44 Cf. the silence of “kocioł osmolony” [“charred kettle”] and “wiadro pełne wody czyste” [“bucket full of clear water”], not daring to speak in the dispute between the daguerreotype, the candlestick and other presumptuous objects from the poem “Toast” (PWsz I, 275).
- 45 Cf. the words of the Countess when she gave the found ring to Mak-Yks (*Pierścień Wielkiej-Damy* [The Ring of a Grand Lady], DW VI, 232):  
 “Ja – ci – tak – go daję... ludzie zamilkną  
 -----  
 Słyszysz? – jakie milczenie stało się.”  
 [I – give – it – to you this way... people will fall silent  
 -----  
 Can you hear that? – what silence has fallen.]
- 46 Cf. the silence of the lyrical “I” in *Assunta* (DW III, 314) during the meeting with “wtóry mnich biały” [“the second white monk”].

More often, Norwid speaks of intentional silence, although it does not necessarily stand for a sign in the communicative sense. For instance, intentional silence can be found in the silent monks from *Assunta* (DW III, 314), “*Benedyktyn ... w jaworowym lesie*” [“*Benedictine ... in the sycamore forest*”] from *Rzecz o wolności słowa* (DW IV, 261), the threshold from “*Krakus*” (DW V, 182–183), the silent sister from “*Wędrowny Sztukmistrz*” (DW III, 94–95) [“*The Wandering Magician*”] or the lyrical “*I*” from the poem “*Modlitwa*” (PWsz I, 135) [“*Prayer*”]. Such silence is also advised to Poland by the subject of the poem “*Co robić?*” [“*What to Do?*”]:

Jeżeli przeto ta ojczyzna Twoja  
 Jest h i s t o r y c z n a ... (a nie jest, jak Troja!),  
 Niech jak Rzym będzie i M s z y - d z i e j ó w s ł u c h a ,  
 Tak, jak on, perląc rożaniec łańcucha,  
 Milcząc, jak milczą, trwając, jak tam trwają,  
 Pokąd się harfy nie ponastrajają...

(PWsz II, 214)

[If, therefore, this homeland of Yours  
 Is h i s t o r i c a l ... (and is not like Troy!),  
 Let it be like Rome and listen to the M a s s o f h i s t o r y  
 Just like it pearling a rosemary of a chain,  
 Being silent, as they are silent, remaining as they remain there,  
 Until the harps tune in...]

This, of course, is a suggestion made by Norwid himself, who disapproves of military interventions and, at the same time, believes in the power of silence, especially connected with waiting for the moment of “*wczesność*” [“*earliness*”] and prayer.

Such silence, which is not indicated by the senders with signs, is related to specific situations or internal states that cause them deliberately to refrain from speaking or to their objectives. The monks from *Assunta* or “*benedyktyn w jaworowym lesie*” [“*the Benedictine in the sycamore forest*”] remain silent – similar to Pythagoras’s students from the essay “*Milczenie*” – thus seeking closer contact with the sacred. Norwid’s protagonists – similar to him – can also remain silent in connection with intensive mental work. In *Rzecz o wolności słowa*, we can read:

Człowiek – który na wstępie nieustannie mówił,  
 Milczy i pisze naraz, gdy się zastanowił,

Naraz milczy i pisze, bo zastanowienie  
Ogółu jest objęciem ...

(DW IV, 256)

[A man – who spoke constantly in the beginning,  
Is silent and writes all at once when he has contemplated it,  
All at once is silent and writes, because contemplating  
Is grasping the whole]

A common reason for silence is that one does not know what to say to make an appropriate statement. “Papa dlatego milczy, że wie, iż nie zgadnie” (DW V, 434) [“Papa is silent because he knows that he will not guess”], says Felcia in *Aktor* [*Actor*]. The reason for the silence of the lyrical “I” in “Modlitwa” is a sense of inability to give a worthy answer to the partner of the dialogue. The participants of the dialogue can also remain silent when they believe they are unable to communicate, as is the case of Artemidor’s contact with Jazon in *Quidam* (DW III, 165).

The purpose of silence of Norwid’s heroes may be different. Herkules in “Epimenides” (DW III, 87) “zamieszkał w pochylonej chacie / I milczy, aby ustrzec się ludzkiego oka” [“settled in a leaning cottage / And kept silent to avoid the human eye”]; “Trzeci obywatel” [“the Third citizen”] from “Juliusz Cezar” (DW V, 248) [“Julius Caesar”] says that “przemilczyć lepiej” [“it is better to remain silent”] as “przedmiot lepiej niech zostanie niejasnym” [“the object better be unclear”], and the silence of “zapałka chemiczna” [“the chemical match”] from “Toast” (PWsz I, 276) hides “sens dyplomatyczny” [“the diplomatic sense”] revealed by the poem’s subject. “Dzicy Indianie” [“Wild Indians”] from the poem “Praca” [“Work”] (whom Norwid treats with clear reluctance) speak

Językiem ... pokoleń nieżywych,  
Mową, co w własnej się spętała dumie,  
Podstępnie milcząc o prawdach drażliwych,  
Dlatego, że ich wyrażać nie umie.

(PWsz I, 389)

[In a language ... of the dead generations,  
Using speech that entangled itself in its own pride,  
Being deceitfully silent about sensitive truths,  
Because it cannot express them.]

From this seemingly contradictory statement, it can be concluded that the Indians are, in fact, silent because they cannot speak about “sensitive truths,” but they “deceitfully” give their silence some other sense, probably related to the pride of which the subject of the poem accuses them.

Rarely does Norwid speak of silence explicitly intended as part of human communication. It may be a sign of solidarity and respect – this is how we read the message of the poem “Improvizacja na zapytanie o wieści z Warszawy” (PWSz I, 338) [“Improvization on Inquiry about the News from Warsaw”]: “Milczę przynajmniej... mam uszanowanie / Dla Achilleśa kolebki!” [“At least I am silent... I have respect / For Achilles’s cradle!”]. The silent manifestation of the Roman people, who “uwidomił ... / Na Monte-Sacro idąc w porządku i grozie” [“made it clear ... / At Monte-Sacro, walking in order and horror”], “że jest także i WOLNOŚĆ MILCZENIA, / Nie tylko wolność-słowa” [“that there is also the FREEDOM OF SILENCE, / Not only the freedom of speech”], was a sign of powerful opposition, reported in the passage of *Rzecz o wolności słowa* (DW IV, 240), in which the author incorporates silence into the broadest sense of the word as a means of interpersonal communication.

Of course, there are many such uses of “silent” vocabulary, where it is not clear whether we are dealing with intentional or unintentional silence. *Inter alia*, this concerns fragments where it is difficult to discern any cause or function of silence, except that it signals something caused by a break in speaking or writing, as when “Florus z Pulchrem milczeli” [“Forus and Pulcher were silent”], while Zofia nervously “rzuciła słowa” (DW III, 241) [“threw words”] or when “(cesarz) przemilkł – rękę wyciągnął ku tacy, / Bawiąc się jadłem” (DW III, 218) [“(the emperor) fell silent – he stretched out his hand to the tray, / Playing with victuals”].

3.5 The quoted statements by Norwid and his protagonists testify to the fact that the poet perceived silence as an instrumental value that can serve very different purposes, both good and bad. He understood that it could be “niezwykłej piętnem mocy” [“an extraordinary stigma of power”], but also – for the nation – a tragic result of violence, when “przemilka jedno pokolenie / W bezjawie – prute w pierś zamkniętym grzmotem” (DW IV, 191) [“one generation falls silent / In non-wakefulness – blasted in the breast by a closed thunder”]. Bad is “twarde milczenie” [“hard silence”] of the people in response to the good of the words and sacrificial life of the prophets (DW IV, 238); the poet refers to the silence of Roman deputies after the murder of Pellegrino Rossi as *reprehensible* (PWSz VII, 14). Similarly, negatively assessed silence, which we know from the essay discussed in the first part of this study, appears in the words of Olymp from *Kleopatra* [*Cleopatra*]:

Rzadkim jest, arcyrzadkim człek, co mówi z człkiem  
 Tak, iż słyhać mówienie treść powiadające – –  
 Jedni albowiem, mówiąc z kimś, na przykład z księciem,  
 O ostrodze książęcej, będą blask jej głosić  
 Jak słońca tarcz, a przeto oni nic nie mówią  
*I tylko z kimś gadają*, sami nie mówiąc nic.  
 Przeciwnie, drudzy, nie bądź z kim gdy mówią, zawsze  
 Ze sobą są jedynie w gwarze, nic nie biorąc  
 Do nich idącej treści ni prawdy, a przeto  
*I ci milczą...* i oto milczenie jest wielkie,  
 I oto, mówię, cisza jest na świecie –

(DW VI, 410)

[Rare, extremely rare is a man speaking to a man  
 So you can hear the speaking saying the content – –  
 For some, speaking to somebody, for example, a prince  
 About the prince's spur, they will be proclaiming its brilliance  
 Like a disc of sun, but they say nothing  
*And they just talk to somebody* without saying anything themselves.  
 On the contrary, the others, whoever they talk to, always  
 They converse just with themselves, taking no  
 Content or truth conveyed to them, and therefore  
*They are also silent...* and the silence is vast,  
 And there, I say, silence is in the world –]

In addition, Norwid attributes a negative value to silence as an expression of passivity, which he repeatedly condemns and which often is an expression of the lack of commitment to socially important matters.

3.6 The message expressed by Norwid with particular strength is good silence. This can be inferred from many statements of the poet (besides the fragments of *Rzecz o wolności słowa* and “Salem” quoted here). The first of these comes from Norwid's youthful poetry, from his poem “Sieroty” [“Orphans”] – its hero (lyrical “I”), after meeting a suffering man who has restored his contact with God, utters the well-known words:

I wtedy to ja, wzięwszy mój łzawy różaniec,  
 Zmówiłem na nim pacierz – potężnym milczeniem.

(PWsz I, 8)

[And then I, taking my tearful rosary,  
 Said a prayer – with powerful silence.]

The power of this silence must be seen in suffering and the accompanying power of faith that can overcome it.

In the final verses of *Assunta*, we read:

*I w górę patrzę... nie tylko wokolo:*

...

Pomnąc, że gdzie są *bezmowne*-cierpienia,  
Są wniebogłosy... bo są – *przemilczenia*...

(DW III, 336)

[*And I look up, not just around*

...

Remembering that wherever there are *speechless* sufferings,  
There are heavenly voices... because there are – *concealments*.]

The metaphysical, sacred power is given here to silent suffering (as in “Sieroty” [“Orphans”]) by “spojrzenie w górę” [“looking up”], which is so important for Norwid, and bearing one’s fate without complaints, but in contact with heaven. The power of suffering, accompanied by silence, is also expressed in the words from the poem “Co robić?” (PWsz II, 214) about those who “cierpią czujni – i milczą wielmożnie” [“suffer vigilantly – and are silent honourably”].<sup>47</sup> The power of silence connected with waiting for the right time<sup>48</sup> and with prayer is also suggested by a further fragment of this poem.

In a letter to Maria Trębicka from 1856, (DW XI, 102) Norwid writes: “To, właśnie, najpiękniejsza rzecz jest w prawdzie, że i samo milczenie powiadać o

47 The Warsaw Dictionary describes “Wielmożny” [“Honourable”] in the first sense as “wielce możny, potężny, przemożny, silny” [“very mighty, powerful, overpowering, strong”].

48 The importance of the notion of “właściwy czas” [“the right time”] in Norwid’s work (most often referred to by the poet as “wczesność” [“earliness”]) was analysed by Fr. Antoni Dunajski and Piotr Matywiecki. In the book by Antoni Dunajski, *Chrześcijańska interpretacja dziejów w pismach Cypriana Norwida* (Lublin: RW KUL, 1985), p. 211, we read: “A particularly important figure of time in Norwid’s writings, which corresponds to the biblical concept of *kairos*, is the “striking of the hour,” i.e., the appearance of a time or a moment of exceptional significance .... As a rule, it means the time of God’s visitation, time that is simultaneously a gift, a sign and a task.” Piotr Matywiecki, in his article “Przeszłość i przyszłość (Fraszka)” (in: *Norwidowskie fraszki* (?), ed. Jacek Leociak Warszawa: Energeia, 1996, pp. 98–108), following various authors, multilaterally expands the connotations of the word *kairos*, linking it, *among others*, with the concepts of human presence and conscience.



niej może” [“It is the most beautiful thing in the truth that silence alone can tell about it”], and in the essay “O idei reprezentacji” (PWSz VII, 54) [“On the Idea of Representation”], we read that “ten prawdziwie mędrcom jest, czyje nie tylko słowa i okrzyki, ale i milczenie nawet głos ma i mówi” [“this is a true wise man, whose not only words and shouts but also silence has a voice and speaks”]. In the view of the poet, silence can thus serve the truth and wisdom on a par with words.

Norwid's most famous “winged words” about the power of silence come from *Quidam*. We can read there:

Słowo jest ogień – milczenie jest lawa –  
 Jakoż szczęśliwy, kto wstawszy, gdy ciemno,  
 Nie dotknął liry swojej nadaremno;  
 Przedświtu blasków doczekał, a potem  
 Wytwał

(DW III, 183)

[The word is fire – silence is lava –  
 How lucky is the one, who having got up when it was dark,  
 Did not touch his lyre in vain,  
 He lived to see the dawn of the light, and then  
 He persisted]

These verses, referring to the third part of *Dziady* [*Forefathers' Eve*], concern not the nation (as in Mickiewicz's poetic drama), but the individual, the man – it is he who, owing to both word and silence – and here (as in “Co robić?”) connected with waiting for the right time – is to endure, withstand the storm, wait until the rainbow and (as the poet goes on to say) “siać gorczyczne ziarno” [“sow the mustard seed”].

The quoted verses from *Quidam* deal with the potential impact of silence on its subject. By contrast, the protagonist of *Assunta* is an example of the inner transformation that takes place within him owing to the unusual significance of the silence of the title character (cf. DW III, 334–335).

The silence of a character whose personality has been rendered with a paintbrush can also have good power. In his poem “Na portret Generała Dembińskiego” [“On the Portrait of General Dembiński”], Norwid writes:

Jest ci to on, kiedy słuchając-każe –  
 Za wzroku patrząc kres, milczy, i milcząc, uczy

(PWSz I, 253)

[It is him when while listening he orders --  
Looking beyond the limits of vision, he is silent and being silent, he teaches]

He teaches simply through being silent in a world full of unproductive hustle and bustle,<sup>49</sup> or perhaps through all that can be read from the silence of this widely experienced, thinking man.

3.7. The reasons and goals of someone's silence often remain unclear to Norwid's heroes.<sup>50</sup> This can lead to misunderstandings, especially when the observer lacks imagination and compassion. In the preserved fragment of the play *Dobrzy ludzie* [*Good People*], we can read:

Kto milczącego człeka suchym śledząc okiem  
Chce rozerwać, ażeby mu się nie nudziło,  
Ten rozerwie... lecz serce –

(DW V, 21)

[Whoever, following a silent man with a dry eye,  
Wants to entertain so that he doesn't get bored,  
Then he will tear... but the heart –]

The reader may also find it difficult to understand the sense or nature of silence in some contexts of Norwid's poems. For example, how should we understand the *royal silences* of those who are "smutni, że aż Bogu smutno" ["so sad that God is sad"]? Are they expressions of pride and impertinence referred to in this poem?<sup>51</sup> Or loneliness, which is the hallmark of the rulers' lives? Or the dignity or power that comes with "royalness?" Or maybe all these connotations should be activated when interpreting this verse?

The words of the third song from *Rzecz o wolności słowa* are not entirely clear:

Tu – należy znać, co? jest wygłos i milczenie...  
Spomnieć: że istnieje *nie ma strun!*  
raczej – strun drżenie  
Nieustanne istnieje ...

49 This is how J. W. Gomulicki comments on this fragment of the poem in Vol. 2 of Norwid's *Dzieła zebrane*, p. 498.

50 cf., e.g., "Syn Aleksandra schmurzył blade czoło, / Nie mogąc pojąć milczenia Barchoba" (DW III, 250) ["Alexander's son darkened his pale forehead, / Not being able to understand Barchob's silence"].

51 J.W. Gomulicki writes in his commentary to these words: "‘royal’ in the meaning: elevated, proud with noble pride" (Cyprian Norwid, *Dzieła zebrane*, Vol. 2, p. 463).

Tak słowo jest w człowieku... *Akordem atomu*  
*Nieustannie człek mówi!*... jak milczy? to komu:  
*Nie duchowi, ni sobie, ni wewnętrznej pieśni!*  
 – Słowo, niżli narzędziem, celem było wcześniej!

(DW IV, 226)

[Here one should know, *what?* is speech and *silence*...  
 Remember: that indeed *there are no strings!*...

but rather – *a vibration of strings*

There exists constantly ...

Such is the word in the man... *An atomic chord*

*The man keeps saying!*... when he is silent? then to *whom*:

*Not to the spirit, not to himself, not to an inner song...*

– The word, instead of a tool, *was the aim earlier!*

The difficulty in deciphering the meaning here is the non-standard indirect objects for the verb “milczeć” [“be silent”] in the penultimate verse. Dative objects used with the verbs of speaking refer to the addressee (cf. “opowiadać komuś” [“tell somebody”], “relacjonować” [“report to somebody”], “głosić” [“say/preach to somebody”], “mówić komuś” [“tell somebody”]). Thus, it would seem that here “duch, ja sam, wewnętrzna pieśń” [“the spirit, myself, the inner song”] are also the addressees of silence. However, it would be strange to have *the inner song* as an addressee of silence, and it would be unclear how this sentence relates to the last verse quoted above. It seems that in the poet’s understanding, silence is here an expression of the spirit, one’s own self and this inner song which, at the same time, is the aim of the broadly understood word. Through this song, the *spirit* and *himself* also become the aims. From many statements by Norwid, we can conclude that in his opinion, both speech and silence are primarily meant to build the human interior, and the service of interpersonal communication is their secondary function.<sup>52</sup>

3.8. The word “milczenie” [“silence”] and its derivatives are an element of poetic speech, not only because of the content that is directly linked with these lexemes but also because of the uniqueness of the forms in which they occur,

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52 This is how one can understand Norwid’s repeated statements, in which he emphasises that the word is to be “pierwej celem niż środkiem” [“first an aim rather than a means”]. This is also connected to what he says about the *internal* word. A deep interpretation of this issue in connection with the quote analysed here is presented in a fragment of Piotr Chlebowski’s book, *Cypriana Norwida “Rzecz o wolności słowa.” Ku epopei chrześcijańskiej* (Lublin: TN KUL, 2000), pp. 180–184.

the poetic function of the associated collections and tropes. Section 3.2 mentioned numerous personifications and anthropomorphizations, as well as the attribution of silence to inanimate objects. Sections 3.5–3.7 quoted fragments with metonymic epithets: “poważnie milczące wiadro” (PWsz I, 276) [“seriously silent bucket”], “podstępnie milcząca społeczność Indian” (PWsz I, 389) [“deceitful silent Indian community”]; there was also a prayer said with “potężne milczenie” (PWsz I, 8) [“mighty silence”], and passages where “wielmożni milczą” [“the honourable are silent”], “cierpią czujni” (PWsz II, 214) [“the vigilant suffer”], and those who are “smutni, bo aż Bogu smutno” [“so sad that God is sad”] have “królewskie milczenia” [“royal silences”] (PWsz I, 231). It is also worth noting Barchob, who is “szczelnie milczący” (DW III, 157) [“tightly silent”].<sup>53</sup> Norwid goes beyond the limits of standard collocations also in his first printed poem “Samotność. Sonet” (PWsz I, 3) [“Loneliness. A Sonnet”], where we read: “Tak ja, na chwilę zwolnion z natrętnych katuszy, / Wdzięk i urok milczenia czuję i pojmuję” [“And thus, for a moment free from the intrusive torture, / I feel and understand the gracefulness and charm of silence”].

Among the numerous uses of the participle “milczący” [“silent”] in the function of an attribute, attention is drawn to “milcząca szykanka” [“silent insult”] – this is how the author describes “głuchą, niemą podejrzliwość” [“deaf, mute suspicion”] in *Rzecz o wolności słowa* (DW IV, 253). “Milcząca mowa” (PWsz I, 9) [“silent speech”] as a term for memories is one of the paradoxes (related to the fuzzy meanings of *speech* and *silence*, extended in the opposite directions). These also include the aforementioned “pacierz zmówiony potężnym milczeniem” [“a prayer said with mighty silence”], the sky that “milczało błyskaniem i grzmiotem” [“was silent with lightning and thunder”] after the murder of Cicero (PWsz II, 206), and the two verses from *Assunta*:

[Stałem] Czując, że można i milczeć z zapalem  
I że to jedna rozmowa – szczęśliwa!...

(DW III,318)

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53 In his prose, attention is drawn to “samotne milczenie” [“lonely silence”] in the school abandoned by its pupils (PWsz VI, 9) – we deal here with a metaphorical epithet, as well as “milczenie złowróźbne” (PWsz VI, 17) [“sinister silence”], “soleenne” (PWsz VI, 346) [“solemn”], “naganne” (PWsz VII, 14 and 18) [“reprehensible”], and “umiejętne” (PWsz VI, 503) [“skilful”].

[[I stood there] Feeling that one can be also silent with enthusiasm  
And that this one conversation is – happy!...]

Spatial metaphors of silence appear in Norwid's works several times. In "Boga-Rodzica" (PWsz VI, 501) ["Mother of God"], the poet talks about "otworzenie mnogich a wielkich milczeń przedkronikarskiej historii polskiej" ["the opening of multiple and great silences of pre-chronicle Polish history"]. The left choir in *Tyrtej* (DW IV, 30) says that "widnokrąg myśli człowieka zaokrąglony jest milczeniem i melancholią" ["the horizon of man's thoughts is rounded by silence and melancholy"]. In a letter to Bronisław Zaleski from 1877 (PWsz X, 109) the author asks: "chciej, Kochany Bronisławie, otoczyć mię milczeniem, którym się sam otaczam" ["May you, Dear Bronisław, surround me with the silence with which I surround myself"]

The puzzling metaphor of silence can be found in the poem "Na zgon poezji" ["On the Death of Poetry"]. The subject of the poem describes, among others, what he does after the death of personified poetry:

Odtąd w przestronnym milczenia kościele,  
Po brukowaniu się przechodząc płaskiem,  
Nie jej ja depcę grób... lecz po tych dziele  
Stąpam, co cmentarz wyrównali piaskiem.  
A ż się zamyślą myśli niszczy cie le,  
I grom zawołam, by uderzał z trzaskiem,

(PWsz II, 201)

[Since then, in the spacious church of silence,  
Walking on the flat cobblestones,  
It's not her grave on which I'm trampling... but on the work of those  
I'm treading who have levelled the graveyard with sand.  
The destroyers of thought will ponder,  
When I call upon the thunder to strike with a clap,]

"Przestronny kościół milczenia" ["the spacious church of silence"], in this poem, seems to be not so much a place to remember the deceased and pray for her,<sup>54</sup> but a place of an angry thought about those "co cmentarz wyrównali z piaskiem" ["who have levelled the graveyard with sand"]. Their destructive work, which is trodden on by the subject of the poem, has been of no use: Poetry

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54 As we know, in this poem "Poezja" ["Poetry"] refers both to itself and to Zofia Węgierska, who was close to Norwid. Cf., *among others*, J. W. Gomułicki's explanations to this poem (PWsz II, 400).

is not in the grave covered with sand, she – as it might be inferred – “uszła cało” [“has escaped”].

The second metaphor of silence discussed above – “milczenie jest lawa” [“silence is lava”] does not create such controversies. The main theme of this metaphor does not overlap with Mickiewicz’s (*silence in lieu of the nation*), while the predicate linking *lava* with the *nation* and the *silent man* remained the same – it is the “internal fire” mentioned directly by Mickiewicz, with which both poets have great hopes for the future.

\*

This text was intended as a work of a linguist trying to sketch an image of the word “milczenie” [“silence”] (to be more precise – this word together with its derivatives) as it is outlined on the basis of its textual uses in Norwid’s writings. From among Norwid’s works, I gave particular emphasis only to the essay “Milczenie,” devoted especially to the functions of silence and concealment. I tried to bring out all the important connotations of the uses of analysed lexemes, to point out various subjects of Norwid’s silence, to separate the functions of marked silence from the one intended as a means of communication or in other purposes set by the subjects, to show the differences in axiological features, as well as metaphorical contexts, with attempts at commenting on those uses that pose difficulties in interpretation. I believe that this work can be of interest to humanists interested in the issues of silence and can familiarise them with the understanding and functions of this word (and words related to it) in Norwid’s work, while for researchers of Norwid’s work, it may serve as an analytical study useful for a future literary-oriented monograph on Norwid’s silence.

Anyone looking at and reflecting on Norwid’s silence is struck by the multiplicity of its forms and functions and its continuous presence in the writings and in the life of the poet. In his writings, it is manifested graphically, in punctuation, in his talking about his own silence and reporting on the silence of others, and in the general reflections on the meaning and functions of silence and concealment. In the life of the poet, silence was present as a time for calming down, reflection, writing, and as an expression of sadness. The semantic contents of silence in Norwid’s works are, as I have tried to show, extremely varied and sometimes not entirely clear. They can be negative, similar to the functions of the word, on which silence is dependant, but more often, those senses are positive – even when silence is an expression of suffering, it is one to which the suffering person can give meaning.

The thought of silence is incorporated into many important issues addressed by Norwid in his writings. These are, above all: the problem of ways of understanding the truth in its broadest sense, looking for the “sequence” and the whole, thinking about man’s ethical obligations, the problem of the essence, the function of the word and its freedom, the general interest in language and interpersonal communication, the problem of suffering and the way of experiencing it, and the thought of the need to wait for the “right time” in big and small matters. Thus, Norwid is not only a “poet of silence,” but he is also a thinker who approaches this instrumental value with full awareness of its importance in the life of an individual and society.

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Elżbieta Lijewska

## Chivalric Order, or “Penal Colony?” Norwid in the Saint Casimir House

**Abstract:** The article is about the last years of Norwid’s life, namely his six-year stay in Saint Casimir House. The author challenges the established opinion that this was a decidedly dark time in Norwid’s life. She points out the positive aspects of Norwid’s stay at the House, most notably his relief from previously unrelenting material concerns and the time and freedom he gained for his art. The author notes that the contemporary assessment of the conditions of Norwid’s last years in the House is shaped by two, fundamentally different, legends about this place, both of which come from the poet himself: one representing the House and its inhabitants as a Chivalric Order, and the other portraying it as Ovid’s place of exile, hurt, and humiliation. According to Lijewska, Norwid’s later reception exaggerated this second depiction, disregarding the numerous positive assessments found in his correspondence, as well as the favourable portrayal conveyed by his late lyrical masterpiece – the poem “Do Bronisława Z.” [“To Bronisław Z.”].

**Keywords:** Cyprian Norwid, biography, Saint Casimir House, epistolography

Norwid-related studies generally characterise Cyprian Norwid’s stay at Saint Casimir House in a similar way: as “a six-year period of slow dying,”<sup>1</sup> when “Norwid was literally falling apart physically,”<sup>2</sup> and “expressed [his] humiliation and sense of confinement in a desperate comparison of the institute to a penal colony.”<sup>3</sup> The positive aspect of this situation, namely, the artist’s freedom from excessive worry over his everyday existence, and the time he gained for his creative work, are rarely mentioned.<sup>4</sup>

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- 1 Jan Witan, “‘Dom św. Kazimierza’ Józefa Czechowicza,” in: *Cyprian Norwid. Interpretacje*, ed. Stanisław Makowski (Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne, 1986), p. 249.
  - 2 Alina Witkowska, *Cześć i skandale. O emigracyjnym doświadczeniu Polaków* (Warszawa: Słowo/Obraz Terytoria, 1997), p. 93.
  - 3 Zofia Stefanowska, “O wierszu ‘Do Bronisława Z.’” in: *Rozjaśnianie ciemności. Studia i szkice o Norwidzie*, ed. Jacek Brzozowski and Barbara Stelmaszczyk (Kraków: Universitas, 2002), p. 144.
  - 4 Cf. Jan Górski [Zygmunt Falkowski], “Rezydent św. Kazimierza,” *Dziś i Jutro*, No. 21 (1953), p. 5; Krzysztof Trybuś, *Stary poeta: studia o Norwidzie* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, 2000), p. 161. J.W. Gomulicki provides the most objective description

The grim portrayal of the institute does not exactly match the artist's own impressions, especially his depiction of the House in the poem "Do Bronisława Z." ["To Bronisław Z."] from 1879. Zofia Stefanowska pointed out his surprisingly positive evaluation of the House in comparison to the negative assessment of Paris in this poem.<sup>5</sup> The institution run by the Sisters of Mercy is depicted as a place where one meets with goodness and holiness, in contrast to Paris – a place of crime and death:

Ty myśliłbyś, że z Paryża teraz do Ciebie piszę,  
 Tą przepłynionego Sekwaną, która co noc  
 Samobójstwo lub zbrodnię falami swymi  
 W płachty chłodne otula przy drżącym blasku gazu –  
 Patrz – oto tam i owdzie mało okazałe mury.  
 Wnijdź – ma się pod wieczór, mniemałbyś może,  
 Iż na Malcie w zakonu gdzieś rycerskiego ostatku  
 Zatułałeś się

(PWsz II, 238)

[You might think I'm writing from Paris,  
 That city watered by the Seine,  
 Which by flickering gas-lamps every night  
 In its waves enfolds into cool shrouds a suicide or crime...  
 Look – here and there you see unremarkable walls.  
 Enter – it's late afternoon, you might think perhaps  
 You've strayed into remnants of a knights' monastery  
 Somewhere on Malta]<sup>6</sup>

So was it a Chivalric Order, or a "Penal Colony?"

This is the question we must ask about the origins of such contradictory accounts of Norwid's last dwelling place, as we cannot possibly know the psychological truth about how Norwid experienced his stay at the charitable institution. Our contemporary ideas about Norwid's stay at Saint Casimir's are shaped more by the legend of this place than by biographical facts from the last few years of the writer's life. In *Prywatne obowiazki*

of Norwid's stay in the Saint Casimir Institute in his article "Między 'Scytami' a 'świętymi,'" *Poezja*, No. 1 (1970).

5 Stefanowska, "O wierszu 'Do Bronisława Z.,'" p. 150.

6 English translation by Adam Czerniawski in: Cyprian Norwid, *Selected Poems* (London: Anvil Press, 2004), p. 92.

[*Private Obligations*], Czesław Miłosz lists Saint Casimir House among the places most “hereditarily tainted” by legend – alongside Czarnolas, Wawel, Vilnius, and Sopliców.<sup>7</sup>

There are actually two fundamentally different legends. And Norwid is the author of both. One of them is the representation of Saint Casimir House and its inhabitants as a Chivalric Order. This all pertains to the first representation. In this representation, the poet, on the one hand, refers to the family legend of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, and, on the other, subscribes to the lofty ideology of *Księgi narodu polskiego i pielgrzymstwa polskiego* [*The Books of the Polish People and of the Polish Pilgrimage*], which depicts *émigrés* as knights of freedom:

tu, tam – uchylone Ci drzwi okażą  
 Rdzawą na murze szablę albo groźny i smętny profil:  
 O mało nie stuletni ówdzie mąż w konfederatce, jak cień  
 Nie dołamanej chorągwi przy narodowym pogrzebie,  
 Przeszedł mimo i zagaśł w długim jak nicość korytarzu – –  
 Czujesz dzieje, jak idą, niby stary na wieży zegar,  
 Nie pytający się o miasto, któremu z chmur bije godziny.  
 Wiek tu który? który rok? niedola która?  
 Tacyt stary mógłby z mężami tymi rozmawiać,  
 Nauczając się, jak nauczać niefortunnych-rzeczy morału.

(*Do Bronisława Z.*, PWSz II, 238)

[and here or there through doors ajar  
 You'll have revealed a rusty sword hung from a wall,  
 Or a fierce and melancholy profile:  
 Like the shadow of a broken banner at a national funeral,  
 A near-centenarian in a confederate's cap  
 Has passed and faded into a corridor as long as nothingness – –  
 You sense the ages ticking by like an ancien tower-clock,  
 Uncurious about the town for which from the clouds it strikes the hours.  
 Which century? Which misery? Which year?  
 Old Tacitus could hold a discourse with these men,  
 Learning how to draw morality from catastrophes.]<sup>8</sup>

7 Cf. Witan, “‘Dom św. Kazimierza’ Józefa Czechowicza,” regarding the Saint Casimir House legend.

8 English translation by Adam Czerniawski, *Selected Poems*, p. 92.

Norwid, as usual, transformed Mickiewicz's tradition; national misery is not absolute but rather ascribed to general history. "Mąż w konfederatce" ["A near-centenarian in a confederate's"] hung a "rdzawa" ["rusty"] sabre on the wall, which had perhaps seen more than one crusade of the knights of freedom,<sup>9</sup> and now wastes away, "w długim jak nicość korytarzu" ["in a corridor as long as nothingness"]. The corridor represents not only the depressing atmosphere of the nursing home (although it, too, was probably meaningful) but also the inevitability of the passing of certain traditions and forms of the national imagination.

When Norwid situates the institute "na Malcie z zakonu gdzieś rycerskiego ostatku" ["in remnants of a knights' monastery somewhere on Malta"], he is not referring to the tradition of the Crusaders, but to the Knights of St John, the Order of the Knights of Malta. The order was founded in the Middle Ages to care for the poor, sick, and pilgrims also needed knights, i.e., cavaliers, to defend the hospitals during turbulent times. When Norwid added himself to the list of veterans at the Saint Casimir Institute, he noted that he was the son of Jan, a Knight of Malta, and explained in his letters that: "mieszkam przy Zakonie, jak maltańscy dziadowie moi" (PWsz X, 95) ["I live by the Order, like my Maltese grandparents"]. This is how he wished to see his stay at the institute – as a defender of the weak, the sick, and even the Sisters of Mercy – not just as a boarder in need of help. This knightly legend of Saint Casimir House was forgotten in the reception of Norwid's work and life story, and it did not shape the national imagination.

The fate of the second legend about this place is entirely different. In the poem "Do Bronisława Z.," Norwid referred to Ovid's life in exile – but transformed this image at the same time. Elżbieta Nowicka wrote about this in a book about Romantic poetic letters, *Postylion niesie pisanie* [*The Postilion Carries the Written Word*] when she tried to answer why Saint Casimir House, the world's p e r i p h e r y, was perceived positively, while the c e n t r e of the world, Paris, was viewed negatively (the internalization of exile, the transformation of necessity into the category of acceptable loneliness): "'Here' on the 'periphery,' all values are concentrated: the universal dimension of history (Tacitus), the Christian ethics realized in everyday life, the non-self-aware

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9 Cf. Janusz Ruszkowski, *Adam Mickiewicz i ostatnia krucjata. Studium romantycznego millenaryzmu* (Wrocław: Fundacja na Rzecz Nauki Polskiej, 1996), p. 88.

depth of seemingly naive art. ‘There’ in the ‘center’ – the existential despair of ‘two million mortals.’”<sup>10</sup>

Norwid also quotes Ovid’s formula in his private letters, where he calls the co-inhabitants of the institute Getae and Scythians. However, the context of these statements testifies to his light-hearted attitude towards human imperfections. It is in this spirit that we should understand the comparison of Saint Casimir House to Botany Bay – a penal colony.

This image of the Saint Casimir Institute as the place of the poet’s exile turned out to be extremely vital in the process of understanding Norwid’s biography, but it also deviated far from the author’s intentions. It has been represented literally and distorted because, at this point in the story, the Sisters of Charity burn the manuscripts of the genius poet,<sup>11</sup> like true barbarians, and keep his work from the world by closing the institute’s gates prematurely. The black legend of the Saint Casimir Institute developed alongside the Young Poland generation’s legend of Norwid as an unacknowledged genius or even cursed poet, and was incorporated into the Polish poetry of the interwar period, for example, in Józef Czechowicz’s poem, which mentions the “painful house.” Sometimes the legend has been made drastically specific, for example, in Stanisław Grochowiak’s or Zbigniew Herbert’s essays.<sup>12</sup> Saint Casimir House became a symbolic place for

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10 Elżbieta Nowicka, “*Postyilon niesie pisanie*” *Szkice o romantycznym liście poetyckim* (Poznań, Wydawnictwo WiS, 1993), p. 115.

11 There is contradictory information about the Sisters of Charity burning Norwid’s manuscripts after his death. According to Waclaw Gasztowtt, all of the possessions left behind by the deceased – manuscripts, sketchbooks, paintings, drawings, correspondence, and other personal papers, were given to Józef Dybowski, the half-brother of Norwid’s mother (Waclaw Gasztowtt, “Nota,” *Bulletin Polonais: Littéraire, Scientifique et Artistique*, No. 204, 1905, p. 181). At least some of this material wound up with Zenon Przesmycki, and is now at the National Library (in the Przesmycki collection). However, there is information from around 1907 that a large number of Norwid’s manuscripts and drawings were burned, “because their content blasphemed God.” This news was received on an individual basis by Leopold Welisz, Euzebiusz Balicki, and Władysław Arcimowicz when they inquired about Norwid’s manuscripts at the institute. They were supposedly destroyed by Sister Katarzyna (but there was no such Sister at the institute) (cf. Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki, “Między ‘Scytami’ a ‘świętymi,’” pp. 18–19). Tadeusz Hiż has a different story: after Norwid’s death, two trunks full of his papers were sent to his family in Poland, to Pałtacz, the Radwan estate. There, the papers were burned to empty the trunks “which could still be useful” (Tadeusz Hiż, “Wielcy ludzie w szlafroku,” *Głos Prawdy*, No. 190, 1929).

12 One does not know what to think about a certain poetic idea of Zbigniew Herbert, who painted a very original picture of Norwid’s stay at the Saint Casimir Institute: “Pewnej

twentieth-century poets – a visual representation of the fate of the rejected artist, isolated from society, experiencing the cruelty of evanescence and death. We need only remember that the poetic images of Norwid's final abode tell us more about their authors than about Norwid and the Saint Casimir Institute.

What can the testimonies of his contemporaries in *Kronika życia i twórczości Cypriana Norwida* [*The Chronicle of Cyprian Norwid's Life and Work*] tell us about the poet's stay at the charitable institution? Let us first ask about the real reasons he was living there. In 1876, Norwid was involved in the fundraiser for the painter Józef Szermentowski, who was gravely ill. He was on the fundraising committee with Aleksander Cetner, Cyprian Godebski, Jan Rozen, and Pantaleon Szynkler. The income from the fundraiser yielded over five thousand francs. They were given to the painter's widow because he did not live to spend it. This is what Norwid had to say about the situation:

Szermentowski był ku temu zrodzony, aby ... siedział w H y è r e s , P a u , N i c e , patrzył na palmy, grzał się na słońcu i malował. Jeżeli społeczeństwo polskie jest Matką, Siostrą, a nie jędzą piekielną, płaczącą nad umierającymi, gdy umierają, i odmawiającą im kruszyny życia i chleba, i uznania, nim umarli.

... Pan Szermentowski powinien jeszcze dziesięć lat żyć, siedzieć na południu i malować dla chwały Ojczyzny. ...

Ale aby Szermentowski tak był, trzeba było, aby nie za 80 franków sprzedawał płótna swoje, bo za 80 fr. nikt na czasie do Nicei nie wyjedzie .... Alić, skromny będąc nie zażądał dwóch tysięcy franków za płótno, jak powinien był. (PWsz X, 78–79)

[Szermentowski was born to ... sit in H y è r e s , P a u , N i c e , look at palm trees, sunbathe and paint. If Polish society is a Mother, Sister, and not an infernal witch, weeping over the dying, when they die, and denying them the crumbs of life and bread and recognition before they die.

... Mr. Szermentowski should live many more decades, sitting in the south and painting for the glory of his homeland. ...

nocy siostra, nazwijmy Gugula, zwraca mu uwagę na niestosowne zachowanie. Bez słowa namysłu Norwid wsadza jej urną na głowę. – Jak myślisz, czy był pełny? – pyta Józef Czapski, mój przyjaciel malarz. – Z pewnością. – A jak postawił, dnem do góry? – Z pewnością. Był przecież człowiekiem prawdomównym.” [“One night a sister, let's call her Gugula, points out his inappropriate behavior. Without a second thought, Norwid puts a chamberpot on her head. – Do you think it was full? – asks Józef Czapski, my painter friend. – Certainly. – Did he place it upside down? – Certainly. He was a truthful man, after all ”] (Zbigniew Herbert, “Słowo na wieczorne poetyckim w Teatrze Narodowym 25 maja 1998 roku,” in: Zbigniew Herbert, *Węzeł gordyjski oraz inne pisma rozproszone 1949–98*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Więź, 2001, pp. 96–97).

But for Szermentowski to have done so, he would have had to not sell his canvas paintings for 80 francs a piece, because no one can vacation in Nice for 80 francs .... Alas, modest as he was, he did not ask two thousand francs for a canvas painting, as he should have.]

Szermentowski's situation made Norwid aware that he needed to preserve his own health. For many years, he confided in his letters to his friends (Bronisław Zaleski, Konstancja Górka) that he believed a trip south would prolong his life; he claimed a thousand francs would allow him to travel to Italy or the south of France. He wrote to Bronisław Zaleski on a piece of paper bearing the inscription "ZNISZCZYĆ" ["DESTROY"]:

Ja po prostu coraz jaśniej, co jesień i co zima, widzę, że się gubię tu – powietrza zmienić nigdy nie mogłem dla lichego braku około tysiąca franków, które robię częściowo, i podobno że nie częściowo zrobię wtenczas, kiedy przyjdzie skronie oprzeć w piasku –

Co 24 godzin to jaśniej widząc nie chcę tego dotykać myślą moją! (PWsz X, 109)

[It's just that with every autumn and every winter I see more clearly, that I am w a s t i n g away here – I could never change the air for the shameful lack of about a thousand francs, which I partially have, and apparently will partially not have when my temples rest in the sand –

Every 24 hours, seeing this more clearly, I don't want to think about it!]

The writer made one more effort – he decided to cash his manuscripts (significantly lowering the original price), including translated fragments of the *Odyssey*. The resultant income from the sale to Zygmunt Sarnecki, mediated by Józef Ignacy Kraszewski, was insufficient (132 francs for the *Odyssey* rhapsody). In the meantime, Norwid had already sent his collection of books to Rome, liquidated his apartment, and since he had not received the necessary amount of money, he turned to Władysław Czartoryski with the dramatic request for a loan of 800 francs (or at least 500). He received 100 – and his plans to leave Paris were aborted. The return of his library and repayment of the debt left Norwid destitute at the beginning of 1877.<sup>13</sup> It was then that the poet's cousin, Michał Kleczkowski, secured a place for him at the institute. According to

13 An example of the irony inherent in Norwid's fate was the fact that at the same time as he moved into the institute, he gave up the fundraiser profits for Szermentowski's sake: "musiałem być w deputacji z hr. Cet[nerem], Szyndl[erem] etc., aby nasze rachunki U WIDOWY dopełnić z tych lichych kilku tysięcy franków, które mieliśmy zaszczyt ofiarować (my, nie księżęta!)" (PWsz X, 94) ["I had to pool together with Count Cet[ner], Szyndl[er] etc. to settle our account WITH THE WIDOW with those few thousand francs that we had the honor to offer (we, not the princes!)"].

Sister Mikułowska's testimony, Norwid arrived there on 9 February 1877 at three o'clock, "with a sad look on his face."<sup>14</sup>

And so, the essential reason Norwid lived at the charitable institution was on account of his failed attempt to go to Italy to save his health and, consequently, life. He briefly summarised his efforts when he was already at Saint Casimir House:

Co zima gorzej tu jestem. Zmienić klimatu nie starczy mi środków. Tu bajecznie tanio płacę,<sup>15</sup> a zrobiłem to, aby nic od rodaków nie potrzebować. (PWsz X, 138)

[Every winter here I get worse. I can't afford to change climates. I pay fabulously cheap here, and I do it so that I don't have to ask anything of my countrymen.]

An important, fundamental reason the Polish writer lived at the charitable institution was that he was unable to gain recognition in Polish society, i.e., he was simply unable to sell his works to booksellers at a fair price. And he did not want to give up his independence: "pisarze sprzedają im [księgarzom] ich upoważnienia i uznanie publiczne, za co oni im odprzedają czas społeczny" (PWsz X, 106) ["writers sell them [booksellers] their authorizations and public recognition, for which they [booksellers] sell them back social time"], Norwid wrote to Józef Ignacy Kraszewski in autumn 1887. He also often repeated this in his letters:

Ja miałem do zarzucenia ś.p. Zygmuntovi, iż swym kosztem drukował, i ś.p. Adamowi Mickiewiczowi, że źle lub wcale płacony nie był, i ś.p. Słowackiemu – zawsze im to mawiałem. Sam też przez edytora mego (Niemca – Brockhousa lipskiego) płacony byłem pięćset franków za rękopism.<sup>16</sup> Atoli teraz cudzoziemców edytorów na rzeczy polskie nie ma – Polaków nie znam – lub może nie znają mię. (PWsz X, 118)

[I was not at all pleased that the late Zygmunt printed at his own expense, and that the late Adam Mickiewicz, was paid poorly or not at all, as well as the late Słowacki – I always told them that. I, too, was paid five hundred francs a manuscript by my editor (Brockhaus-the-German from Leipzig). But now there are no foreign editors for Polish works – I don't know any Poles – or maybe they don't know me.]

Norwid's isolation from society was caused by a lack of "social time," and not by the infrequent steamship courses down the Seine or the closing of the

14 Sister Teofila Mikułowska's letter to Michał Kleczkowski, Paris, 10 February 1877, in: Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki, "Między 'Scytami' a 'świętymi,'" p. 12.

15 He paid 50 francs a month. Michał Kleczkowski, Norwid's cousin, paid the downpayment fee. Cf. also Aleksander Syski, *Zakład Św. Kazimierza w Paryżu. Szkic historyczny* (Łuck: Księgarnia św. Wojciecha 1936), pp. 381–383.

16 This was the sum that Norwid received in 1862 for the manuscript of *Poezje* [Poems], published in Leipzig by Brockhaus.



house gate at eight o'clock.<sup>17</sup> He navigated such limitations perfectly: “kto ongi parę miesięcy tułał się po morzach, spać może na dwóch krzesłach” (PWsz X, 120) [“he who has wandered the seas for a few months, can sleep on two chairs”] – he explained, planning an overnight trip to Paris.

Of course, for many years, Norwid resisted having to make the decision to enter Saint Casimir House. Michał Kleczkowski and Reverend Aleksander Jełowicki encouraged him to do so as early as 1868. The poet firmly refused then. In 1877, when he was left without a roof over his head, he expected that his cousin would simply arrange a new flat for him. The letters exchanged at that time between Kleczkowski, Sister Mikułowska, and Norwid suggest that the poet only learned a few days before he moved in that he would become a resident at the institute. Voluntarily paying taxes for the elderly and orphans,<sup>18</sup> he was now to join those “elderly” who needed help. His identity as an artist was irreconcilable with this situation. We should remember that although he was sick, he wrote up until the last months of his life – great texts such as *Milczenie* [*Silence*], *Ostatnia z bajek* [*The Last of the Fables*], *Stygmat* [*Stigma*], *Ad leones!*, and *Tajemnica lorda Singelworth* [*Lord Singelworth's Secret*] were all written at the institute, and the composition of the latter three was associated with one last attempt to go to Italy.<sup>19</sup> Norwid's complaint that society, after years of humiliation, could only offer him alms and a “hospital” (meaning: shelter), however, was not directed towards the institute run by the Sisters of Charity of

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17 It is sometimes emphasised that the reason for Norwid's isolation from society was the distance of Saint Casimir House from Paris, which prevented him from returning from the city by nightfall on the same day.

18 In the 1860s, Norwid paid “emigration taxes” to the Polish Emigré Taxation Association (later the “Worship and Bread” Institution): “myślę, że nie zapyta mnie kto: ‘Czemuż ty płacisz? – czyliż twoje złotówki drobne coś zrobią?’ / Płacę – bo tak się należy. / Robię to: *par principe*” (PWsz IX, 300) [“I think no one will ask me: ‘Why are you paying? – what good are your zlotys?’ I pay – because one should. I do it: *par principe*”].

19 In mid-March 1883, he wrote to a friend who had promised him invitations to Italy: “mam skończonych troje małych rękopismów, z których każdego ja sam i przyjaciele sprzedać możemy 1000 egzemplarzy, ... po franku 1. ... ja sam będę miał nakład i sam bez księgarzy wydám” (PWsz X, 200) [“I have three small manuscripts finished, each of which my friends and I can sell 1000 copies of for 1 franc each. ... I will edit it myself and publish it without any booksellers”]. *Stygmat* ends with the disclaimer that this novella “sprzedaje się w mieszkaniu Autora po cenie 1 fr. bez przesyłki” [“is sold at the author's apartment for the price of 1 franc not including delivery”].

Saint Vincent de Paul. In fact, the artist was their benefactor – he was the creator and donor of the large altar painting *Widzenie św. Stanisława Kostki* [*The Vision of Saint Stanisław Kostka*], which was displayed in the chapel of the other institute run by the Grey Sisters in Juvissy.

In this light, where does the legend of Saint Casimir House as a “penal colony” come from? Its source is Norwid’s opinion that: “teraz jest TU lepiej, ale gdy przybyłem była to Botany-Bay” [“now it is better HERE, but when I arrived it was Botany-Bay”]. The most dangerous criminals in Great Britain used to be deported to Botany Bay, a penal colony in Australia. The comparison of hot-blooded old folks – veterans of the November Uprising – to dangerous criminal offenders needs to be considered from the proper perspective. A letter from Teofila Mikułowska, the Superior General and Director of the institute, to one of the members of the Administrative Council, can help us understand the atmosphere at the Saint Casimir House:

Apparently, it is you, our venerable benefactor, who is sending our veterans Polish newspapers through Mr. Grudziński – well, Mr. Grudziński, as a man – is most honest, but he is not the sharpest tool in the shed, and he takes these newspapers for himself and does not let others read them, hence the various misunderstandings between them, and because we have some malicious ones, troublemakers, who harass others for no reason, among them Kozłowski, an enthusiast of all that is wrong, this is why there are quarrels and shouting in the House, as if it were a common pub, to the detriment of everyone, so that there are even some who are already planning to leave the House because of these disturbances [!] and some, who don’t want to come to the table anymore, because they can’t eat dinner or supper peacefully; kindly send the newspapers directly to me, because these gentlemen have to be treated as if they were children, or even, crazy: I’ll give them to one, then collect them and lend them to another, until everyone has had their turn. As proof of what I write, I am writing this letter on the same paper on which Norwid asks that he might be allowed to eat alone, on account of these disturbances, because although he cannot hear, he sees these scuffles that nearly turn into full-blown fights.<sup>20</sup>

And indeed, on the back of this letter, we can read Norwid’s letter to Sister Bronisława Studniarska:

Niech Czcigodna Siostra raczy najlaskawiej powiedzieć służącemu, że na przykład: mój rodzaj pracy jest taki, iż będę musiał spóźnić się do stołu o kilka minut – tym sposobem ja będę mógł jeść wtenczas, kiedy on sprząta ze stołu, a że jem prędko, więc to nic służącemu nie przysporzy roboty – ja zaś będę wolnym od znajdowania się nietrafnie.

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20 Quote based on: Gomulicki, “Między ‘Scytami’ a ‘świętymi,’” p. 14.

Resztę Siostra zapewne zrozumie.

Myślę, iż nie można zaczynać dobrego wychowania w sześćdziesiątym roku życia lub później – a należy unikać wielu nietrafności.

Jadłbym chętnie z Waszymi służącymi, którzy jedzą spokojnie, ale gdybym to zrobił, byłoby złem – najlepiej, że się spóźniac będę o 10 minut. (PWsz X, 152)

[I am asking you, Venerable Sister, to kindly tell the servant that, for example: my line of work is such that I will have to be a few minutes late to the table – this way I will be able to eat while he clears the table, and because I eat quickly, it will not inconvenience the servant's work – and I will be free from finding myself in the middle of the trouble.

You will surely understand the rest, Sister.

I think it's impossible to learn good manners at the age of 60 or older – and troubles should be avoided.

I would gladly eat with your servants, who eat quietly, but to do so, would be wrong – it will be best, if I just eat 10 minutes late.]

These two letters say a considerable amount about Norwid's neighbours in Saint Casimir House. However, they included not only eccentric old men who thought they were still on the battlefield. Among them, there were also Norwid's friends, writer Tomasz August Olizarowski, member of the Belvedere plot Leonard Rettel, and Michał Zaleski, who kept vigil at the poet's deathbed. However, Norwid's records of the troublesome co-habitants of the Saint Casimir House are usually characterised by a sense of humour that allows us to discern human flaws (like in the drawing *Sąsiedzi* [*Neighbors*]) but ultimately accepts this world and smiles upon human weakness.

Kończę, bo oto widzę Getów i Scytów zabierających się do śniadania. A nie zawsze leżąc nad Dunajem mogę myśleć swobodnie o siedmiopagórkowej okolicy i o cieniach oliwek i cyprysów, bo oto Scyty już do jadła siadają – (PWsz X, 150)

[I must finish, because I see the Getae and Scythians getting ready for breakfast. And it's not always that I can think freely about the city of seven hills and the shades of olives and cypresses while lying along the Danube, because the Scythians are already sitting down to eat –]

The functioning of the institute was nevertheless met with criticism among the *émigrés*. The Administrative Board of Saint Casimir House did not fulfil its obligations. We learn from Sister Teofila Mikułowska's letters that the institute was almost shut down due to a lack of maintenance funds and that she repeatedly had to ask powerful members of the *émigré* community for support.<sup>21</sup>

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21 *Korespondencja siostry Teofilii Mikułowskiej*, The Princes Czartoryski Museum in Kraków, item No. 6653 IV. As early as in 1954, Maria Czapska wrote that "it has never

It was Norwid who soberly assessed the situation and pointed out where the problem lay:

Skarżyć się na Siostry –

Skarżyć się na prostego żołnierza na polu bitwy, a w narodzie, w którym nikt podatków nie płaci, i nikt się publiczną rzeczą nie interesuje. ...

Zakład jest instytucją. Instytucje nie tylko są dla wyręczenia czynności obywateli, ale i dla przykładu czynności obywateli. ...

Zakład więc, będąc instytucją, powinien być przez społeczne siły asystowanym. Oto grunt rzeczy. (PWsz X, 132)

[Complain about the Sisters –

Complain about a simple soldier on the battlefield, and in a nation where nobody pays taxes and nobody is interested in public matters. ...

The house is an institution. Institutions serve not only to relieve citizens from certain activities, but also to set an example of what activities they should be engaging in. ...

The house, then, being an institution, should be supported by social funds. This is the basic issue.]

The institute's residents held the work and dedication of the Sisters in high esteem. This is best illustrated by the occasional poems and skits, written for various celebrations at the institute by the "court" poet, Tomasz August Olizarowski.<sup>22</sup> Norwid was also grateful and caring towards the Sisters of Charity. Even as he himself suffered, he discerned and tried to alleviate their problems with remarkable delicacy:

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been financially stable in the century of its existence." Maria Czapska, *Miłosierdzie na miarę klęsk* (London: Veritas, 1954), p. 66.

22 These pieces were published in Syski, *Zakład Św. Kazimierza w Paryżu*, pp. 246–307. Olizarowski wrote about the well-educated and musically talented Studniarska sisters, among other things, that:

“Sister Stanisława and Sister Bronisława,  
Are deserving of my song ...  
Sister Bronisława knows, what work is simple,  
And not every working girl is her equal.  
Sister Stanisława arduously looks after children.  
The angels are pleased with one and the other.  
Sisters by birth, sisters by the Order,  
You will be sisters also in heaven” (p. 246).

Mój drogi! Trzeba niezwłocznie dać wiedzieć (ale komu??), że siostra Bronisława udaje zdrowie – porwała się na zawołanie w nocy i zwichnęła coś w nodze – może nawet to pękło?

Włóczy tę nogę martwą i uśmiecha się. Trzeba niezwłocznie zakazać Jej się ruszać i niezwłocznie słuchać lekarza – myślę, że to należy Generałowej Zamoyskiej powiedzieć – tak myślę – lecz zrób, jak uznasz – trzeba komu serce żywe mającemu niezwłocznie to odkryć. (PWsz X, 129)

[My dear! We have to immediately notify someone (but who??) that Sister Bronisława is only pretending to be healthy – she was answering a call at night and dislocated something in her leg – maybe even broke it?

She drags this limp leg and smiles. It is necessary that she immediately be forbidden to move and listen to the doctor at once – I think we should tell Mrs. General Zamoyska – this is what I think – but do as you see fit – any living soul immediately needs to find out.]

Norwid's penultimate letter (of which we know) from 15 March 1883 is about the sisters' hard work, or rather, their lack of tools for this work. It contains neither knightly self-identification as a Maltese cavalier nor idealization of Saint Casimir House, but simply a plea for human dignity. When looking at the autograph of this letter, the handwriting is striking: the upper-case letters are penned with difficulty, with a trembling hand, in contrast to the surprisingly matter-of-fact content:

Za czasu, gdy ś.p. Bronisław Zaleski żył, zrobiłem z nim razem krok korzystny o otrzymanie dla Sióstr narzędzi dobrych i całych, jako to szczotek, mioteł etc...

Dziś, przy myciu całego domu, jest toż samo, czyli że myją paznokciami rąk słabych, bo szczeci w szczotkach nie ma. Egipcjanie tak robili z Żydami, iż im usuwali ułatwienia pracy, do której ich zaprzęgli.

Widoczna z tego, że co innego jest praca, a co innego przesładowanie – i że jednym z najświętszych względem Sióstr obowiązków, ażeby miały ucivilizowane i odpowiednie pracy narzędzia. (PWsz X, 201)

[When the late Bronisław Zaleski was still alive, he and I took a profitable step together towards getting good and whole tools for the Sisters, such as brushes, brooms etc...

Today, when washing the whole house, it is the same, that is, they wash it with the nails of their weak hands, because there are no bristles on the brushes. The Egyptians did this to Jews; they removed the conveniences needed for the work they were hired to do.

We can see, that work is one thing, and persecution another – and that one of the holiest duties we have towards the Sisters, is to ensure they have civilized and appropriate work tools.]

In view of Norwid's allegiance to the Grey Sisters, both in the poem "Do Bronisława Z." and in his private letters, the black legend of Saint Casimir House, which also affected the nuns working there, seems very unfair. It is as if they were being blamed for not proclaiming Norwid's genius to Polish society, whereas Zygmunt Krasiński, Józef Ignacy Kraszewski, Julian Klaczko, and many other competent writers and critics were guilty of this before them. They respected Norwid as a man, but they did not know anything about pioneering poetry. We have Sister Mikułowska to thank for a credible account of Norwid's death in her letter to Michalina Zaleska née Dziekońska:

I thank you most cordially for your donation, which will be used for poor orphans, abandoned as was poor Norwid, who more so on account of sadness, longing and His having been forgotten by many people, that He carried in his heart, caused him the melancholy, which in the end brought about his death, to which his complete deafness also contributed, it separated Him even more from the whole world. His last moments were very peaceful: it was more like he fell asleep than died; he was contemplative, he often cried, but he never appeared before anyone with the feelings in his heart, and it seems to me that it was this that killed him.<sup>23</sup>

And so it happened that Cyprian Norwid, a descendant of the Sobieskis, died in oblivion the same year all of Europe was celebrating the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Vienna. His loneliness was mollified only by the presence of a neighbour from Saint Casimir House, Michał Zaleski, and by the Grey Sisters.

And one more thing. In the summer of 1883, after Norwid was already dead, a bold initiative appeared that was to combine the promotion of Polish art with aid for Saint Casimir House:

The Guardianship Council of the Saint Casimir House ... appeals to the Honorable Representatives of Polish Art and demands their noble help, asking that each of you, Dear Gentlemen, donate a work of your art to the Saint Casimir House. ... As of now, Polish art is known abroad for excellent, albeit individual paintings scattered here and there in foreign, international Exhibitions – with the project we are planning, we would have the opportunity to present it to foreign audiences for the first time collectively and especially in its own individual character.

The call was directed towards Polish artists whose "exalted calling is to cultivate the ideal of Truth, Goodness and Beauty." The intended fundraiser and exhibition was to take place in Paris in April or May, and in London in June or July of 1884. The works intended for the exhibition were to be collected by Henryk Siemiradzki in Rome, Henryk Rodakowski in Lviv, Juliusz Kossak in Kraków,

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23 Quote based on: Gomulicki, "Między 'Scytami' a 'świętymi,'" p. 18.

and Józef Brandt<sup>24</sup> in Munich. According to preserved archival materials, these plans were never realised. But it is worth recalling this initiative, especially since it could not have been conceived of without the previous experience of a successful fundraiser on behalf of Józef Szermentowski.

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24 Cf. *Akta wystawy i loterii prac artystów polskich*, The Princes Czartoryski Museum in Kraków, item No. 6653 IV.

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Agata Brajerska-Mazur

## Ten Commandments for the Translation of the Works of Cyprian Norwid (And What Came From Them; or, on the Translations of Danuta Borchardt)

**Abstract:** The idea that each translator should know their author thoroughly is particularly essential to translators of Cyprian Norwid, a profoundly demanding and difficult nineteenth-century Polish poet. Hence, cooperation between translators and Norwid scholars is highly desirable. This article describes one such cooperation, undertaken in 2006, by Danuta Borchardt (a translator) and Agata Brajerska-Mazur (a Norwidologist). It focuses on difficulties posed by particular texts and describes successes and failures of translation, drawing on Borchardt's translation of Cyprian Norwid, *Poems*, forthcoming from Archipelago Books (USA) in 2011.

**Keywords:** Cyprian Norwid, translation, difficulties of translation, linguistics, polysemy

For a good translation of Norwid's works, one needs extensive knowledge – not only of the translated text but also the whole of the author's works and ideas. Norwid might well be the world's only writer whose language is described in specialist dictionaries and whose works and thoughts have been and still are being researched by successive outstanding Norwidologists,<sup>1</sup> supported since the 1980s by various research institutions and a devoted scholarly journal.

In 1983, the annual *Studia Norwidiana* was born, which became “the organ of all Norwidologists” and which contributes to a “deepening of the knowledge of the works of one of the greatest, but also most difficult Polish writers, continually elaborating neglected research areas and displaying the universal values of his so original ... writing.”<sup>2</sup> Similar aims, as well as the preparation of a complete critical edition of Norwid's works and the compilation of a specialist

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1 Among others: Jan Błoński, Waclaw Borowy, Józef Franciszek Fert, Michał Głowiński, Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki, Mieczysław Ingot, Mieczysław Jastrun, Zdzisław Łapiński, Tadeusz Makowiecki, Jadwiga Puzynina, Stefan Sawicki, Irena Sławińska, Zofia Stefanowska, Zofia Szmydtowa, Zofia Trojanowiczowa, Jacek Trznadel, Kazimierz Wyka, Zbigniew Zaniewicki, Maciej Żurowski, and others.

2 *Studia Norwidiana*, Vol. 1 (1983), p. 3.

library,<sup>3</sup> were the goals of the Ośrodek Badań nad Twórczością Cypriana Norwida [Institute for the Study of Cyprian Norwid's Literature], founded at the Catholic University of Lublin in 1985. The Pracownia Języka Cypriana Norwida [Cyprian Norwid Language Dictionary Division], brought to life at the University of Warsaw in 1983, undertook the task of a full lexicographical compilation of the poet's language,<sup>4</sup> while the Pracownia Kalendarza Życia i Twórczości Norwida [Chronology of the Life and Work of Cyprian Norwid Division] in Poznań assumed the task of creating a detailed chronology of the poet's life.<sup>5</sup>

All these institutions, plus international Norwid-centred conferences organised every two years by the Institute for the Study of Cyprian Norwid and the Fundacja Norwidowska [Norwid Foundation] and numerous (ever more complete and detailed) critical editions of Norwid's works<sup>6</sup> show that to understand his works, one needs extensive knowledge.

Norwid is a profound and difficult author. The words he uses acquire new meanings in the world of his texts. Thus, you cannot translate this poet's writings without a knowledge of his works and views. During my research on

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3 Cf. *Studia Norwidiana*, Vol. 8 (1990), pp. 171–172.

4 *Pracownia Języka...* issued among others: *Słownik języka Cypriana Norwida* (Warszawa: UW Wydział Polonistyki, 1988), and in the series of thematic dictionary booklets: *Słownictwo etyczne C. Norwida*, ed. Jadwiga Puzynina (Warszawa: UW Wydział Polonistyki, 1993); Ewa Teleżyńska, *Nazwy barw w twórczości C. Norwida* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo UW, 1994); *Słownictwo estetyczne C. Norwida*, ed. Jolanta Chojak (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo UW, 1994); Tomasz Korpysz and Jadwiga Puzynina, *Wolność i niewola w pismach Norwida* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo UW, 1998).

5 Zofia Trojanowiczowa and Zofia Dambek, *Kalendarz życia i twórczości Cypriana Norwida 1821–1860*, Vol. I (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 2007); Zofia Trojanowiczowa and Elżbieta Lijewska, *Kalendarz życia i twórczości Cypriana Norwida 1861–1883*, Vol. II (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 2007); Zofia Trojanowiczowa, Zofia Dambek, and Iwona Grzeszczak, *Kalendarz życia i twórczości Cypriana Norwida. Aneks. Bibliografia. Indeksy*, Vol. III (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 2007).

6 Among others: Cyprian Norwid, *Pisma wszystkie*, collected, compiled, introduced and critically annotated by Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki, Vols. I–XI (Warszawa: PIW, 1971–1976); Cyprian Norwid, *Vade-mecum*, prepared by Józef Franciszek Fert (Lublin: TN KUL, 2004) (hereafter, *Vade-mecum*); Cyprian Norwid, *Dzieła wszystkie*, Vol. VII, *Proza*, prepared by Rościśław Skręt (Lublin: TN KUL, 2007) (the first from an intended set of 17 volumes of a full critical edition of Norwid's writings prepared by the *Institute for the Study of Cyprian Norwid's Literature*, hereafter, *DW*).

numerous translations<sup>7</sup> of Norwid's texts into English, however, I found that he was often corrected, simplified, and stripped of originality by his translators, mainly due to their being unaware of certain crucial facts, and thus, ignorant of the "ten commandments" of translating this poet's works. What are these commandments? I shall try to demonstrate them with a few select examples:

1) Not all translators know that one must beware of UNRELIABLE EDITIONS of Norwid's works, which are full of editorial errors. The worst of these is likely Tadeusz Pini's edition,<sup>8</sup> where, e.g., the key point for "Ad Leones!" "REDAKCJA JEST REDUKCJA"<sup>9</sup> ["Redaction is reduction"] is written as: "Redakcja jest redakcją"<sup>10</sup> ["Redaction is redaction"], which destroys the whole tenor of thought in the story. By choosing this particular edition for their translation, translators automatically (although not consciously) introduce errors into their translations.<sup>11</sup>

Sometimes the matter of selection is made more complicated by the existence of several versions of the same original since Norwid corrected and changed some of his works several times.<sup>12</sup> Thus, Teresa Bałuk<sup>13</sup> has chosen

- 7 Agata Brajerska-Mazur, "Bibliografia przekładów utworów Norwida na język angielski," *Studia Norwidiana*, Vols. 17–18 (1999–2000), pp. 385–393. Supplemented, updated and with references to websites, the bibliography was published in *Studia Norwidiana*, Vols. 24–25 (2006–2007), pp. 387–391.
- 8 Cyprian Norwid, *Dzieła*, edited, commented on, critical introduction added by Tadeusz Pini (Warszawa: Parnas Polski, 1934).
- 9 Cited after the edition of Zenon Przesmycki (Cyprian Norwid, *Pisma zebrane*, Vol. E, Warszawa: Jakub Mortkowicz, 1911, p. 147), which was the basis for the work of Norman Brooke Jopson (*Slavonic Review* XI, London, July 1932, pp. 163–172). Ilona Ralf-Sues (*Polish Short Stories*, Warszawa: Polonia Publishing, 1960, pp. 15–28) most probably used a later edition of Przesmycki (Cyprian Norwid, *Wszystkie pisma*, Warszawa: Kasa im. Mianowskiego, 1937), where the text of "Ad Leones!" shows almost no difference in relation to the edition of 1911. In his autograph (BN II 6312), Norwid underlines both these sentences, starts "Redakcja" and "Redukcja" with capital letters and thrice underlines the "u" in the word "Redukcja."
- 10 Cyprian Norwid, *Dzieła*, p. 478.
- 11 It happened so with, e.g., Charles S. Kraszewski ("Norwid's *Quidam* as Heroic Literature," *The Polish Review*, Vol. XXXVI, No. 3, 1991, pp. 309–322). I discuss that translation in: "'*Quidam*' w przekładzie Charlesa S. Kraszewskiego," in: "*Quidam*." *Studia o poemacie*, ed. Piotr Chlebowski (Lublin: TN KUL, 2008).
- 12 Cf. *Vade-mecum*, where all varieties and versions of the poems from *Vade-mecum* have been listed.
- 13 "Cyprian Kamil Norwid w przekładzie Teresy Bałuk," *Przekładaniec*, No. 6 (1999–2000), pp. 10–31. I discuss these translations in: "Norwid w tłumaczeniu Teresy Bałuk," *Przegląd Humanistyczny*, No. 3 (2008), pp. 41–60.

as the basis for her translation of the poem “W Weronie” [“In Verona”] the atypical, two-part version, which was not included in the *Vade-mecum* cycle. Gomulicki states that the poem “W Weronie” was “preserved in eight different records (4 autographs, 1 copy, 3 prints) ... – and what’s more, the texts of those records in no case overlap, forming thus eight separate redactions.”<sup>14</sup> The original of Teresa Bałuk’s translation was, however, semantically the least fruitful and graphically the poorest redaction of the lyric, which is inevitably reflected in the translation.

The four-part version reads:

1  
Nad Kapuletich i Montekich domem,  
Spłukane deszczem, poruszone gromem,  
Łagodne oko błękitu –

2  
Patrzy na gruzy nieprzyjaznych grodów,  
Na rozwalone bramy do ogrodów,  
I gwiazdę zrzuca ze szczytu –

3  
Cyprysy mówią, że to dla Julietty,  
Że dla Romea, ta łąza znad planety  
Spada – i groby przecieka;

4  
A ludzie mówią, i mówią uczenie,  
Że to nie łązy są, ale że kamienie,  
I – że nikt na nie nie czeka! (PWsz II, 22)

This is the two-part poem, used as basis for the translation:

Nad Kapuletich i Montekich domem,  
Spłukane deszczem, poruszone gromem,  
Łagodne oko błękitu  
Patrzy na gruzy nieprzyjaznych grodów,  
Na wywrócone bramy do ogrodów,  
I gwiazdę zrzuca ze szczytu.

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14 PWsz II, 380–381. In Cyprian Norwid, *Dzieła zebrane*, Vol. I (Warszawa: PIW, 1966), pp. 857–860, J. W. Gomulicki states it somewhat differently: “A much more complicated situation occurs in the case of the famous poem ‘W Weronie’ ... which reached us in four different printed versions (from the years 1854–1901), as well as in four autographs, one copy authorised by the author and in Lenartowicz’s copy.”

Cyprysy mówią, że to dla Juliety,  
 I dla Romea łąza ta znad planety  
 Spada i w groby przecieka;  
 A ludzie mówią, i mówią uczenie,  
 Że to nie łązy są, ale że kamienie,  
 I że nikt na nie nie czeka! (Cyprian Norwid, *Pisma wierszem i prozą*,  
 Warszawa: PIW, 1970)

The translation by Teresa Bałuk reads:

Above the seat of Capulet and Montague  
 The rain-rinsed sky, perturbed and thunder-hewn  
 Casts down in grief its limpid eye  
 On scattered ruins of rival dynasties:  
 On wrecked remains of garden gates seems to release  
 A star that tumbles from the sky.

“For Juliet, for Romeo,” the cypress says,  
 “The sorrowing heavens shed their tearful rays  
 That permeate into their graves.”  
 But men maintain – wise men, of great *renom* –  
 These are not tears, these are of course but stone,  
 And – no-one waits for them to come.<sup>15</sup>

Subsequent redactions of the poem “W Weronie” are different from one another,<sup>16</sup> among other things, in respect to the words Norwid uses (e.g., “splakane deszczem” (1850), “splakane deszczem” (1860), where *splakane* introduces a theme of weeping; “rozwalone bramy” [“tumbled gates,” 1850], “otwarte bramy” [“open gates,” 1869], “obalone furtki” [“gates knocked down,” 1873]) and punctuation. However, the greatest difference between the various versions is their division into two or four parts, which greatly affects the deepening or weakening of the semantic contrast between the culminating three-line part of the poem and the descriptive parts preceding it. In the four-part version, that last triplet brings a contrast (deepened with a dash, punctuation, and the numbering of stanzas) between the previously described “feeling” and the image of rational thinking. The two-part version weakens the climactic meaning brought by the three last lines of the poem by not structurally separating the arguments

15 *Przekładaniec*, No. 6 (1999–2000), p. 11. From here on, the provenance of the texts will be noted directly following the translations.

16 Differences between the particular versions of the lyric are discussed in great detail in: Agata Brajerska-Mazur, *O angielskich tłumaczeniach utworów Norwida* (Lublin: TN KUL, 2002), pp. 107–113.

expressed by the cypresses and learned people. Pauses and punctuation signs separating the particular stanzas thus cause vital differences among the various versions of the same text. Hence, the very choice of one of the redactions of the original work is fundamental. However, as mentioned, Teresa Bałuk chose as the basis for her translation the semantically and graphically poorer redaction of the lyric – thus, her translation lacks the four-part version's force of expression of Romanticism's programmatic belief in the superiority of "feeling" over the scientific "lens and eye."<sup>17</sup>

2) Translators should reach for acknowledged editions of the poet's works (e.g., those of Przesmycki, Sowiński, Gomulicki, and Fert), and beware of unreliable editions (like Pini's), also in order to grasp the role of GRAPHIC SIGNS fully in the texts to be translated. The very notation of Norwid's works expresses and emphasises their semantic layer and originality. Therefore, it is enough for translators to graphically distinguish words and expressions crucial for the semantics of the text and not deprive the expression signs of their specific function bestowed on them by Norwid.<sup>18</sup> Yet in an analysis of translations of many of Norwid's works, I proved that regardless of which edition of his works (and even which redaction of a particular work) the translators used, they did not adopt Norwid's manner of placing question marks, corrected his punctuation, hardly ever distinguished words emphasised by him,<sup>19</sup> and sporadically marked (e.g., with asterisks) his structural ellipses. In such a way, not only was the originality of the texts' notation lost, but their semantic layer was also weakened.<sup>20</sup> I have never called for the translators' absolute faithfulness

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17 Perceiving the tenor of thought of "W Weronie" as a romantic praise of feelings, as in Mickiewicz's "Romantyczność" is one of many interpretational possibilities that comes to mind after reading the poem. I list others in: Agata Brajerska-Mazur, *O angielskich tłumaczeniach*, pp. 104–107 and "Norwid w tłumaczeniu Teresy Bałuk," p. 43. The difficulty is for the translator to convey ALL possible interpretations of the poem's meaning, not weakening (like Teresa Bałuk) or omitting some of them.

18 The problem is discussed in great detail in: Brajerska-Mazur, *O angielskich tłumaczeniach*, pp. 366–374.

19 Instead of Norwid's underlining, editors of various editions used either italics (e.g., Sowiński), or spaced-out characters (e.g., Gomulicki).

20 The role of specific graphic solutions in Norwid's writings was discussed, among others, by Edward Kasperski, "Problem pytań w twórczości Norwida," in: *Dialog w literaturze*, ed. Eugeniusz Czapplewicz and Edward Kasperski (Warszawa: PWN, 1978) pp. 117–162; Barbara Subko, "O funkcjach łącznika w poezji Norwida," in: *Język Cypriana Norwida*, ed. Krzysztof Kopczyński and Jadwiga Puzyńska (Warszawa: UW, 1986), booklet 1, pp. 34–49, Zofia Mitosek, "Przerwana pieśń. O funkcji podkreśleń u

towards Norwid's notation – if only because they did not refer to the autographs of Norwid's texts but to the versions that were more or less modernised by the editors. The fact that translators had to comply with the requirements of English punctuation was also obvious. However, I think that suitable graphic notation and punctuation (i.e., not necessarily in unison with the original, but necessarily distinguishing the meanings emphasised by Norwid and stressing the text's intonational-rhetorical characteristics) do not pose an insoluble problem and, with some effort, they can be adapted. Hence, it seems such gross neglect when, e.g., Keith Bosley, does not distinguish the expressions emphasised by Norwid in the conclusion of "Fortepian Szopena" ["Chopin's Piano"]:

Norwid:

Lecz Ty? – lecz ja? – uderzmy w sądne pienie,  
 Nawołując: "Ciesz się, późny wnuku!...  
 Jękły – głuche kamienie:  
 Ideał – sięgnął bruku --" (PWsz II, 147)

K. Bosley:

But you? But I? We will sing a doomsday song:  
 "Rejoice, O generations coming later!  
 The silent stones have given tongue:  
 The Ideal has hit the gutter!"

(Comparative Criticism, No. IV, 1984, p. 312)

I believe one could graphically mark the sentences distinguished in the original even by simple, bold lettering, additional spacing, or using italics.<sup>21</sup> Without the graphic distinction, they became "quieter," with less semantic bearing, less emphatic, less noticeable, and, perhaps more to the point, more facilitating of quick reading. Regardless, in the fragment of "Fortepian Szopena," translated by Bosley, there is almost nothing to force the reader to halt in his reading and

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Norwida," in: *Dziewiętnastowieczność. Z poetyk polskich i rosyjskich XIX wieku*, ed. Eugeniusz Czaplejewicz and Wincenty Grajewski (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1988), pp. 275–286; Sławomir Rzepczyński, *Wokół nowel "włoskich" Norwida* (Słupsk: Wydawnictwo WSP, 1996), pp. 89, 143, and 146–147; Cyprian Norwid, *Vade-mecum*, prepared by Józef Franciszek Fert, "Wstęp," pp. CVI–CXXXIII; Brajerska-Mazur, *O angielskich tłumaczeniach*, pp. 366–374.

21 Norwid underlines them in the autograph (*Vade-mecum. Podobizna autografu*, with introduction by Waław Borowy, Warszawa: Towarzystwo Naukowe Warszawskie, 1947, p. 112).

ponder the text. Not only are the important words not distinguished, but the poem also lacks punctuation signs that would indicate pauses in the text.

Similarly glaring is the lack of the graphic notation in the translation of “Fatum” [“Fate”] by Jerzy Peterkiewicz and Burns Singer,<sup>22</sup> while in the original, the graphical layout of the text presented a full gamut of emotion connected with the plot: surprise, tension, anticipation, reflection, fear, and relief:

N:

I

Jak dziki zwierz przyszło N i e s z c z ę ś c i e do człowieka  
I zatopiło weń fatalne oczy...  
– Czeka – –  
Czy, człowiek, zbczy?

II

Lecz on odejrzał mu, jak gdy artysta  
Mierzy swojego kształt modelu;  
I spostrzegło, że on patrzy – c o ? skorzysta  
Na swym nieprzyjacielu:  
I zachwiało się całą postaci wagą  
– – I nie ma go! (PWSz II, 49)

P/S:

[*Mischance*, ferocious, shaggy, fixed its look  
On man, gazed at him, deathly grey,  
And waited for the time it knew he took  
To turn away.

But man, who is an artist measuring  
The angle of his model’s elbow joint,  
Returned that look and made the churlish thing  
Serve his aesthetic point.  
Mischance, the brawny, when the dust had cleared  
Had disappeared.]

(*Five Centuries of Polish Poetry*, London 1960, p. 81; hereafter, *FC*)

With the poem’s great conciseness, substantial meaning is attached to its graphic notation, which somehow completes for the reader what was suggested by the words. Punctuation and the graphical layout of the text (just like the

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22 I discuss this translation in more detail in: “Trzy tłumaczenia ‘Fatum’ na język angielski,” *Studia Norwidiana*, Vol. 14 (1996), pp. 65–94 and “Katena and Translation of Literary Masterpieces,” *Babel*, Vol. 51 (2005), pp. 16–30.



rather scant text of the poem) show the whole story of misfortune's attack on man and man's reaction to that attack. First, quickly and suddenly, man is surprised by "N i e s z c z ę ś c i e" [ "M i s f o r t u n e" or even "D i s a s t e r" ] (and not just any misfortune – it starts with a capital letter and, in Gomulicki's edition, in spaced-out characters<sup>23</sup>). Then comes a moment of tension-filled anticipation of the further course of events (shown with an ellipsis after the second line, dashes dividing the third line, and the question mark closing the stanzaic unit). In the second part of the poem, man's reflection, the moment of his conscious consideration of how to control or even take advantage of the situation, is rendered not only by the parenthetical comparing man to an artist but mainly by the notation of the fragment: "– c o? s k o r z y s t a." That one short word "what," distinguished graphically by spaced-out characters and rounded up with a question mark, holds the reader's attention and makes him ponder, together with the protagonist, any potential benefits to be gained in the described situation. The conclusion of the fight between Misfortune and man is shown by the last line – shortened in its rhythm, deprived of a noun, separated from the rest of the text by two dashes, which lengthen the moment of anticipation of the fight's outcome and intensify the surprise in that result's simplicity. The dashes also strengthen the effect of the "relief" brought after the described danger by the words: "– – I n i e m a g o!" [ "a n d i t ' s g o n e!" ]. However, the graphic layout and punctuation of Peterkiewicz and Singer's translation do not perform the same function as in the original – they do not show the emotions connected with the drama happening in the text, do not suggest the interpretation of that drama to the reader, and do not draw his or her attention to the essence of the words emphasised in the text's notation. Only Norwid's "N i e s z c z ę ś c i e" as "mischance" (the English word meaning bad luck rather than misfortune or disaster) was granted in the translation a single distinction with italics. However, one cannot detect the purposefulness of such treatment since, in the translation, that "bad luck" invariably remains only a "churlish thing," which does not seem worthy of starting its name with a capital letter or putting it in italics. Even if you consider the fact that Peterkiewicz and Singer most probably used the text of "Fatum" found in the 1953 London edition of *Vade-mecum*,<sup>24</sup>

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23 PWsz II, 49. In the autograph Norwid underlined the words: "Nieszczęście" and "co?" See Norwid, *Vade-mecum. Podobizna autografu*, p. 35.

24 Cyprian Norwid, *Vade-mecum*, published by Kazimierz Sowiński (London: Oficyna Poetów i Malarzy, 1953), p. 46. "Nieszczęście" is written here in italics and is not capitalized, after "c o" in italics, there is no question mark, in the fourth line of the

you cannot justify their translation's lack of the graphic presentation of the fight taking place in the text.

3) Norwid was a nineteenth-century writer who used nineteenth-century language and old-fashioned syntax, patterned upon the old-Polish (called "latinising,"<sup>25</sup> and sometimes archaized on purpose<sup>26</sup>). Most translators, however, focus only on conveying Norwid's innovations in the area of poetic structures and word-formation, so they modernise the poet's style and language. Unfortunately, some nineteenth-century words have changed their meanings, and the translators sometimes seem oblivious to that fact and translate them as modern ones, thus ascribing to them meanings other than those they have in the original. For example, examine words like *organizacja*, used by Norwid in "Ad Leones!" and "Emancypacja kobiet" ["The Emancipation of Women"] in the sense of "organism, condition,"<sup>27</sup> yet translated by Czerniawski as "organization"<sup>28</sup> (!), and "stręczyć" in the letter to Józef Bohdan Wagner from 1881, meaning there "to recommend, suggest, advise the purchase of something,"<sup>29</sup>

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first unit, there are no commas after "czy" and "człowiek," and after the fourth line of the second unit, there is a dash.

- 25 Cf. Brajerska-Mazur, *O angielskich tłumaczeniach*, pp. 196–208 and 334–338; Teresa Skubalanka, "Styl językowy 'Ad leones!'" in: Teresa Skubalanka, *Mickiewicz, Słowacki, Norwid. Studia nad językiem i stylem* (Lublin: UMCS, 1997), pp. 211–223.
- 26 Jadwiga Puzynina, "Z problemów składni w tekstach poetyckich Norwida," in: Jadwiga Puzynina, *Słowo Norwida* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1990), p. 113. A similar opinion on archaization in Norwid's works ("it serves not archaization proper, but poetic hieratization of style") is expressed by Teresa Skubalanka ("Styl poetycki Norwida ze stanowiska historycznego," in: Skubalanka, *Mickiewicz*, pp. 157, 162). However, both researchers note that Norwid's language is characterized by many features that commonly appear in the first half of the nineteenth century, thus "the whole of his style is overlapped by the patina of archaization specially prepared or natural for us" (Skubalanka, *Mickiewicz*, p. 162).
- 27 Cf. Samuel Bogumił Linde, *Słownik języka polskiego*, Vols. 1–6, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Lwów: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1854–1860); Aleksander Zdanowicz, Michał Bohusz Szyszko, and January Filipowicz, *Słownik języka polskiego*, Vols. 1–2 (Wilno: Maurycy Orgelbrand, 1861) (hereafter, SWil); Jan Karłowicz, Adam Kryński, and Władysław Niedźwiedzki, *Słownik języka polskiego*, Vols. 1–8 (Warszawa: Kasa im. Mianowskiego, 1900–1927) (hereafter, SWar).
- 28 Cyprian Norwid, *Poezje/Poems*, trans. Adam Czerniawski (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1986), p. 111 (hereafter, CKNP/Ps).
- 29 Cf. Linde, *Słownik języka polskiego*; SWil; SWar.

but rendered by the same translator as “taunting.”<sup>30</sup> A similar mistake was made by Charles Kraszewski in the translation of the expression “usadzić się” from line 221 of song XIII of *Quidam*: “Którą odnaleźć gdy się człek usadzi.” The translator did not realise that, in the poem’s context, Norwid meant not “to sit” or “to seat,” but rather “to have designs on something, be after, watch for something.” All dictionaries of nineteenth-century Polish actually give that latter meaning of “usadzić się” as the first one:

**SWar:** *uwziąć się, nastawać, uprzeć się, czyhać, dybać* – “to be bent, have designs, insist on, watch for, be after”

**Linde:** *sadzić się, napinać, nalegać natarczywie* – “go out of one’s way, make an effort, be insistent”

**SWil:** *usiłować czegoś dokonać, dokazać, dopinać* – “strain to achieve something accomplish, get one’s own way”

The latter two dictionaries also give examples of sayings with that word. However, Norwid’s original line: “Którą odnaleźć gdy się człek usadzi” is mistakenly rendered by the translator as: “Which one finds by hapchance, sitting down.”

Another word that changed its meaning was “bezwiedny,” the sense of which is additionally made up by the words coupled with it in Norwid’s poem “Sfinks” [“The Sphinx”]. In that poem, Norwid builds tension between the words of the text through their paradoxical juxtaposition. A traveller assailed by the beast gives it an answer to the question of who is man:

– “Człowiek? ... jest to kapłan bezwiedny  
I niedojrzały” – (PWsz II, 33)

In that short gnomic definition, the author puts together words of positive and negative connotations – “kapłan” [“priest”] next to “niedojrzały” [“immature”] and the above-mentioned “bezwiedny.” Thus, it is of particular importance in the translation of this maxim to appropriately juxtapose correctly understood, correctly connoted, and correctly contrasted words.<sup>31</sup> Here, the additional difficulty in translation lies in the fact that “bezwiedny” has a different meaning in contemporary Polish than it used to have in Norwid’s time, when it meant

30 Adam Czerniawski, “Polish Poetry Supplement No. 7,” *Oficyna Poetów*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (London, May 1973), p. 10 (hereafter, *OP*).

31 Cf. Stefan Sawicki, “Z zagadnień semantyki poetyckiej Norwida,” in: Stefan Sawicki, *Norwida walka z formą* (Warszawa: PIW, 1986), p. 29; Jadwiga Puzynina, “Problem rozumienia tekstu,” in: Puzynina, *Słowo Norwida*, p. 10; Brajerska-Mazur, *O angielskich tłumaczeniach*, pp. 351–353.

“unaware, not realising something” – “bezświadomy, nieświadomy, nie zdający sobie sprawy.”<sup>32</sup> But translators are not always aware of the nineteenth-century sense of that word and render it as “ignorant” or “un-knowing:”

“Man is an ignorant adolescent priest” (A. Czerniawski, *OP*, p. 16)

“Man?... he’s a priest ignorant  
And green” (A. Czerniawski, *CKNP/Ps*, p. 43)

“Man?... he is an un-knowing  
And immature priest” (S. Barańczak, in: B. Mazur, G. Gömöri, *Norwid. Poet-Thinker-Craftsman*, London 1988, p. 138)

Here, a better equivalent of the nineteenth-century “bezwiedny,” more in accordance with the original, would be simply “unaware.” “Lacking knowledge” (*ignorant, un-knowing*) and “lacking awareness” (*unaware*) in the world of Norwid’s Christian values are two different things. Knowledge focuses on richness (or poverty) of the mind, while awareness also concerns will and action.

4) Norwid’s originality consists of the fact that he is a poet of contradictions. In his works there meet and intertwine extremes relating to various areas of life – e.g., faith, manner of writing, or attitude to tradition and culture. Norwid can be both orthodox in his views on the Christian faith<sup>33</sup> and very bold and revolutionary towards commonly acknowledged truths of the Catholic Church of his time.<sup>34</sup> As far as the writing manner is concerned – he is at the same

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32 *SWar*, p. 137.

33 See, e.g., Ryszard Zajączkowski, “*Głos prawdy i sumienie.*” *Kościół w pismach Cypriana Norwida* (Wrocław: Leopoldinum, 1998); Jacek Leociak, “Strzaskana całość. Norwid o Żydach,” in: “*Całość*” w twórczości Norwida, ed. Jadwiga Puzynina and Ewa Tełężyńska (Warszawa: UW, 1992), p. 121; Alina Merdas, “‘Dochodzić – trud’ czyli o problemach badań nad chrześcijaństwem Norwida,” in: *Norwid a chrześcijaństwo*, ed. Józef Franciszek Fert and Piotr Chlebowski (Lublin: TN KUL, 2002), pp. 105, 111.

34 See, e.g., Krzysztof Baliński, “Norwidowska krytyka negatywnych zjawisk w Kościele,” *Poznańskie Studia Polonistyczne. Seria Literacka* IV (XXIV), 1997, pp. 179–191; Merdas, “‘Dochodzić – trud,’” p. 113; Ryszard Zajączkowski,

time innovative, enchanting his readers with his open style, and an author perceived by his readers as difficult and hermetic. Among the multiple voices on Norwid's style, I shall mention, as examples, the two of the most extreme views, represented by Mieczysław Jastrun<sup>35</sup> and Julian Przyboś.<sup>36</sup> The former, in 1947, marvelled at the openness of Norwid's style – his colloquial, discursive manner, irony, paradoxicality, and polysemy. The latter described him as non-transparent, impenetrable, obstructive, difficult, and “carrying on an offensive fight with the common, living, everyday word.”<sup>37</sup> “As to literary tradition: I think that Norwid's works were drawing from the main streams of Western thought, and at the same time had their source in the native tradition; they were rooted in the past, and at the same time remained a constant, living inspiration of innovativeness for the modern times.”<sup>38</sup> Norwid is thus perceived as both an old-fashioned writer, going back not so much to Romanticism as to even earlier periods – particularly when it comes to his syntax, referring to the old-Polish structures<sup>39</sup> – and as a modern writer, extending his epoch through his manner of writing and thought formulation by at least a century. The trouble with Norwid – in particular for translators – consists mainly in the fact that you do not know in what period, in what style of European literature to put him. In every translation (whichever translation method it represents), the binding rule is faithfulness towards the period's most generally understood style.<sup>40</sup> Norwid, despite living in the age of Polish Romanticism, often does not fit into the framework of romantic conventions and is even deemed a forerunner of modern Polish poetry. A translator of Norwid's writings into English faces a dilemma: which poetic style, which literary convention to choose in order for it to reflect both the romantic roots and the pioneering character of Norwid?

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“Kościół – naród – ludzkość,” in: *Norwid a chrześcijaństwo*, pp. 139–160; Tomasz Korpysz, “Chrześcjanin w pismach Norwida,” in: *Norwid a chrześcijaństwo*, pp. 371–402.

35 Mieczysław Jastrun, “Norwid – poeta nieznany,” *Kuźnica*, No. 21 (1947). This and other articles are collected in: *Gwiazdzisty diament* (Warszawa: PIW, 1971).

36 Julian Przyboś, “Próba Norwida,” in: *Nowe studia o Norwidzie*, ed. Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki and Jan Zygmunt Jakubowski (Warszawa: PWN, 1961).

37 Przyboś, “Próba Norwida,” p. 76.

38 Stanisław Barańczak, “Norwid: obecność nieobecnego,” in: Stanisław Barańczak, *Tablica z Macondo* (London: Aneks, 1991), p. 93.

39 Cf. Skubalanka, *Mickiewicz*.

40 Stanisław Barańczak, *Ocalone w tłumaczeniu* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo a5, 1994), p. 19.

Should this be the style of Gerard Manley Hopkins, repeatedly compared to Norwid by critics,<sup>41</sup> or maybe of one of the modern English-language poets?

You should show the *o r i g i n a l i t y* of Norwid. But how to show it without falling into ridicule and eccentricity? After all, to Poles he seemed, and sometimes still seems, ridiculous and eccentric. The answer, in short, must be that he cannot come out like some second-rate Hopkins, Browning or Clough, like an imitation of Emily Dickinson, or like one more average craftsman of the Victorian era. What a task! Who shall cope with it!<sup>42</sup>

I think that the answer to the question posed by a translator of Norwid – Adam Czerniawski, is as follows: You should show that the essence of Norwid’s poetry is spread between two interpretational poles, that the true value of his writing consists in contradiction, in the dynamics among extreme values. Mostly, however – particularly as far as the poet’s language and style are concerned – translators render only one aspect of Norwid’s manner of writing. Either they over-archaize the translation or (as is much more common) over-modernise it.<sup>43</sup> Meanwhile, the style’s simultaneous modernity and archaic character, achieved, e.g., by juxtaposing colloquialisms with sophisticated wording, usually performs some vital role in Norwid’s texts, and tipping their proportions to one of the sides ruins an important element of both the linguistic and semantic layers of the work. A very pronounced example of the above is the translation of the speech of the Venetian improviser from “Tajemnica Lorda Singelworth” [“Lord Singelworth’s Secret”], where the original the speaker plunges into the pathos-filled course and rhythm of the speech of Cicero against Cataline while at the same time entangling such colloquialisms into it as “s p l u n ą ć z g ó r y” or “wczora i w różne onegdaje.” Yet the translator keeps in mind only the elevated style of that utterance and, so as not to disturb it, she changes “s p l u n ą ć” [“to spit”] into [“expectorate”] and “różne onegdaje” [“various before-yesterdays”] into [“by-gone years”]:

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41 Barańczak, *Ocalone w tłumaczeniu*, p. 95; Adam Czerniawski, “A Flawed Master,” “Wstęp,” in: *OP*, p. 5; Adam Czerniawski and George MacLennan, “Norwid: Time for Discovery,” *Modern Poetry in Translation. New Series*, No. 5 (Summer 1994), p. 77; Jerzy Peterkiewicz, “Introducing Norwid,” *Slavonic Review*, Vol. 27 (1948/1949), pp. 244–246.

42 *CKNP/Ps*, p. 127.

43 Examples of both kinds of translation are given in: Brajerska-Mazur, *O angielskich tłumaczeniach*, pp. 334–362.

– Dopokądże – mówił Tony di Bona Grazia – dotykać będą nierozważnie latającego na powietrzu, którego dotknąć niepodobna? I do myślenia będą dawać: jakoby ktoś nad najznakomitszymi na świecie miejscami dlatego tylko unosił się, ażeby tam warunków poziomych higieny dopełniał ... ażeby (mówię) splunął z góry! ... Jestże podobieństwem, ażeby sam widok monumentów stolicy jakiej nie poruszał ducha i serca? Wież-wysokie świątyni, łuki tryumfalne, kolumny zwycięskie nie mająż uroczystej siły zachwytu? ... Wprawdzie ... należałoby usilnie zapomnieć, iż z tych gotyckich wież, z tych tryumfalnych łuków i kolumn, tego rana, wczora i w różne onegdaje, zrzucali się rozpaczą gnani śmiertelnicy nieszczęśni .... (PWsz VI, 150)

[– How much longer – Toni di Bona Grazia said – will unreasonable mortals *touch* the one flying in the air, the one whom it is impossible to *touch*? And they imply that a person rises above the most illustrious places only to *expectorate*! ... Is it in any way possible that the very sight of a capital's monuments would not move his heart and soul? Do not the tall towers of the churches, the arches of triumph and the columns of victory possess a solemn power of delight? Even though ... one should entirely forget that from these towers, from these triumphant arches and columns, this morning, yesterday and on days of by-gone years, unfortunate mortals, pursued by despair, jumped to their death] (O. Scherer-Virski, *The Modern Polish Short Story*, Hauge: Mouton, 1955, p. 56)

In the original text, the colloquial expressions brought an atmosphere of farce or foolery<sup>44</sup> to the Venetian improviser's speech. In translation, the specific tangle of pathos and mockery in his harlequinade is lost, as is some of the story's Venetian touch.<sup>45</sup>

5) Translators also do not always realise that Norwid used the so-called "formy poruszone"<sup>46</sup> ["stirred forms"], i.e., he intentionally made grammatical or stylistic mistakes as a means to gain additional senses. For example, in the poem "Stolica" ["Capital City"], besides the nineteenth-century grammatical construction "wytchnę o k u," we meet a range of modifications of syntactic ("gestem wypocząc, iść z ruszeniem głowy, utonąć wzwyż, ożałobionych czarno"), lexical ("ożałobionych, niedobliźnionych") and phraseological ("fabryczna ekstaza, chmurny tłok") structures.<sup>47</sup> According to Puzynina,

44 Zofia Szmydtowa, "Nowele weneckie Norwida," *Przegląd Współczesny*, No. 1 (1969), p. 37.

45 Szmydtowa, "Nowele weneckie Norwida," p. 36; Cyprian Norwid, *Pisma zebrane*, publ. by Zenon Przesmycki, Vol. E (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Jakuba Mortkowicza, 1911), pp. 279–282.

46 Definition by Michał Głowiński, "Ciemne alegorie Norwida," in: *C. Norwid. W setną rocznicę śmierci poety* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1991), p. 194.

47 Cf. Puzynina, "Z problemów," pp. 97–98; Stefan Sawicki, "Czy błąd Norwida?" in: Stefan Sawicki, *Wartość – Sacrum – Norwid 2* (Lublin: Redakcja Wydawnictwa KUL, 2007), pp. 159–165.

these are innovative in relation to the general language and serve to “build the whole of the poem from the stirred forms.”<sup>48</sup> The wrong constructions, in short, perform a specific semantic function in the poem, giving it new meanings.

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|---|--|
| <p>1<br/>O! ulico, ulico...<br/>Miast, nad którymi k r z y ż ;<br/>Szyby twoje skrzą się i świecą<br/>Jak źrenice kota, łowiąc mysz.</p>  | <p>[This street – a street<br/>In any city: over them all the <i>cross</i>.<br/>Windows-panes, juggling<br/>sunlight, sometimes cheat:<br/>Twinkling like cat’s eyes but<br/>no mouse to toss.</p> |
| <p>2<br/>Przechodniów<br/>tłum, ożałobionych czarno<br/>(W b a r w i e s t o i k ó w),<br/>Ale wydadzą każdy, że aż parno<br/>Wśród omijań i krzyków.</p>                             | <p>Pedestrians, in mournful black, go by:<br/><i>The stoic’s colour</i>, but<br/>They shout, rush, crush,<br/>stifle each other, cry,<br/>Each in his jostled rut.</p>                             |
| <p>3<br/>Ruchy dwa, i gesty dwa tylko:<br/>Fabrykantów, ścigających<br/>coś z rozpaczą,<br/>I pokwitowanych z prac,<br/>przed chwilką,<br/>Co – tryumfem się raczą...</p>             | <p>Two forces only, and two gestures here:<br/>Factory owners search<br/>despair– (<i>for fun?</i>)–<br/>Then those who work, and<br/>fifty times a year<br/>Gloat over what they’ve won.</p>      |
| <p>4<br/>Konwulsje dwie, i dwa obrazy:<br/>Zakupionego z góry n i e b a ,<br/>Lub – fabrycznej e k s t a z y<br/>O – kęs chleba.</p>  | <p>Two tremors and two images, just two:<br/>Buy property in heaven<br/>before you’re dead<br/>Or manufacture e c s t a s y, with a few<br/>Crusts of stale bread.</p>                             |
| <p>5<br/>Idzie Arab,<br/>z kapłańskim ruszeniem głowy,<br/>Wśród chmurnego<br/>promieniając tłoku;<br/>Biały, jak statua<br/>z kości słoniowej:<br/>Pojrzę nań... wytchnę o k u !</p> | <p>An Arab, in his priestly clothes, goes by,<br/>A ray of stillness in the rush of clouds.<br/>He is carved ivory.<br/>My eye can rest. Let its repose be proud.</p>                              |

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48 Puzyrnina, “Z problemów,” p. 98.



<p>6          Idzie pogrzeb, w ulice          spływa boczne          Nie-pogwałconym krokiem;          W ślad mu pójdę,          g e s t e m wypocznę,          Wypocznę – o k i e m !...</p>	<p>And then a funeral. At last no rush.          The side-street crowd          respects death's dignity.          I follow it. My fretful gestures hush.          Here let me rest my eye.</p>
<p>7          Lub – nie patrząc na niedo-          bliźnionych bliźnich lica,          Utonę myślą wzwyż:          Na lazurze balon się rozświeca;          W obłokach?... k r z y ż !          (PWsz II, 38)</p>	<p>O fellow creatures with no fellows, I          Plunge through my thoughts          above you--no great loss.          A small balloon glints in the blue sky.          And through the clouds?          Yes. Yes. It <i>is</i> the cross,          (FC, p. 82)</p>

As one can see, all the linguistic mistakes of the poet, all lexical, syntactic, and phraseological modifications have been corrected in Peterkiewicz and Singer's translation.<sup>49</sup> As a result, the text of the translation is clear, simple, and understandable. It reads smoothly and quickly, without making the reader ponder the meaning of the smoothed-out words used in it. One does not have to consider whether, e.g., the mouse-catching ("łowiąc mysz") refers to the windowpanes, as the Polish syntax would suggest, or (as would be more logical) to the cat? There is no need to puzzle over what it means to "iść z kapłańskim ruszeniem głowy" ["walk with a priestly head gesture"] or to "g e s t e m wypocznę" ["relax by a g e s t u r e"], for these (as all the other ambiguities) have also been neatly explained in the translation.

6) Sometimes translators omit or distort only one crucial word in the translation, not realising that it is fundamental for the expression of Norwid's reflections. Here, I mean, e.g., *Dopełnienie* and *Brak* – literally: "Complementation" and "Lack" – from "Fortepian Szopena," "which

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49 The translation is more broadly discussed in: Brajerska-Mazur, *O angielskich tłumaczeniach*, pp. 359–361.

constitute a connotation knot, difficult through its contextual polysemy, from the areas of ethics, aesthetics, philosophy, metaphysics.”<sup>50</sup> It also seems that they form a key to understanding the sense of not only the poem “Fortepian Szopena” but also Norwid’s philosophy of life.<sup>51</sup> Similarly, in translation, one cannot overlook the rendering of the word “człowiek” [“man”], so very important in Norwid’s writing,<sup>52</sup> denoting an ordinary mortal but at the same time someone unusual: a priest, be he a “bezwiedny” and “niedojrzały” one. As Stefan Sawicki writes,<sup>53</sup> in a in Norwid’s view is

Widely perceived, deeply understood, portrayed in various dimensions, aspirations and entanglements. Most concisely ... is Norwid’s comprehension of man put in the formula from the story “Bransoletka” [“The Bracelet”]: he is “doczesny jest co chwila, a wieczny zawsze,” [“earthly every minute, and eternal always”] ... The time of the man ... is continuous, it has in fact no fundamental caesura. He lasts, inscribed into eternity since the beginning. ... Earthliness means also limitation. The man is limited in his actions and thinking, despite victorious achievements and great discoveries. Limited with everything that surrounds him, and then with himself. And at the same time he has a part in God’s eternal intelligence, he is its trace, someone nearly angelically elevated. “Pył marny i rzecz Boża” [“wretched dust and a thing of God”] – is again an expression of Norwid’s indicating the need for balancing the two points of reference, which balance allows him to maintain the humanity characteristic of us, humble, thus true, awareness of ourselves. Earthly also means participation in

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50 Jadwiga Puzynina and Barbara Subko, “O francuskich przekładach ‘Fortepianu Szopena,’” *Studia Norwidiana*, Vols. 15–16 (1997–1998), p. 156.

51 Cf. Jacek Trznadel, “Brak i dopełnienie. ‘Fortepian Szopena’ i ‘Ad Leones!’ w świetle problematyki dobra i zła u Norwida,” *Pamiętnik Literacki*, booklet 4 (1975), pp. 25–71; “*Całość*” w *twórczości Norwida*, ed. Jadwiga Puzynina and Ewa Teleżyńska (Warszawa: UW, 1992); Władysław Stróżewski, *C. Norwid o muzyce* (Kraków: UJ, 1997), pp. 67–76.

52 Cf. Irena Gałęzowska, “Norwida myślenie o człowieku,” in: *Norwid żywy*, ed. Władysław Günther (London: B. Świdorski, 1962), pp. 287–309; Zdzisław Łapiński, *Norwid* (Kraków: Znak, 1971), p. 53 ff.; Antoni Dunajski, “Człowiek – ‘Boga żywego obraz,’” *Studia Norwidiana*, Vol. 1 (1983), pp. 81–88; Mięczysław Ingłot, “Norwidowski ‘człowiek,’” *Pamiętnik Literacki*, booklet 4 (1983); Piotr Chlebowski, *Cypriana Norwida “Rzecz o wolności słowa.” Ku epopei chrześcijańskiej* (Lublin: TN KUL, 2000).

53 S. Sawicki, *Norwidowy człowiek*, a fragment of speech delivered on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2007 during the ceremony of unveiling the monument of Cyprian Norwid in front of the building of Collegium Norwidianum of the Catholic University of Lublin.

everything earthly: in the life of a family, society, nation, nature. One creating culture. One wisely subduing the earth. One creating today with faithful memory of the past and responsibility for tomorrow. One acting on the basis of one's own decisions, yet subject to eternity in estimates and judgments, dependent on it in his conscience. Norwid's earthliness in human life is also weakness, liability to err, slip into or immerse in sin "co chwila" ["every minute"]. But the committed evil, sometimes humiliating or terrifying, can be in consequence a realization of weakness, a beginning of inner transformation. Divine eternity is – in the words of St. Paul, the Poet's favorite – a source of "siły, która się w słabości doskonali" ["new power made perfect in weakness"], which awakens and nurses awareness.

Meanwhile, in translating a fragment of the poem "Do obywatela Johna Brown" ["To Citizen John Brown"], Stanisław Barańczak changed the words "człowiek" ["man"] and "naród" ["nation"] into ["people"] and ["peoples"], gaining additional word-play, but abandoning the reference to Norwid's philosophy:<sup>54</sup>

N.:

Bo pieśń nim dojrzy, człowiek nieraz skona,  
A niżli skona pieśń, naród pierw wstanie.  
(PWsz I, 303)

S. Barańczak:

[People may die before the song's complete,  
Yet peoples may rise up before it dies.]  
(S. Barańczak, *Wybór wierszy i przekładów* (Warszawa: PIW, 1997, p. 595)

The change of a single man into people brings with it also a change in perspective. Norwid becomes an advocate of broadly understood humanity instead of an individual man. There is no humble and merciful consideration of a person in the spirit of Christian personalism, but instead, there suddenly appear... "Generalities!"

7) Sometimes translators entirely omit or twist Norwid's reflections on man and everything human: faith, work, art, and society. Let us take as an example the idea of Polishness and Polish national art from "Fortepian Szopena." Norwid meant not so much a transformed idyllic Poland of ancient Piasts to be the source of national art (as in the translations by Michael M. Michael<sup>55</sup> or

54 Other translations of this poem are discussed in: Brajerska-Mazur, *O angielskich tłumaczeniach*, pp. 325–327.

55 *A Polish Anthology*, selected by T.M. Filip [Tytus Filipowicz], trans. Maurice Albert Michael (London: Duckworth, 1944), p. 285 (hereafter, *PA*).

Teresa Bałuk<sup>56</sup>) as a Poland transfigured – i.e., divinised by Christian values since the dawn of its history:

N.:

IV

A w tym, coś grał, taka była prostota  
 Doskonałości Peryklejskiej,  
 Jakby która starożytna Cnota  
 W dom modrzewiowy – wiejski – –  
 Wchodząc, rzekła do siebie:  
*“Odrodziłam się w Niebie,  
 I stały mi się Arfą – wrota,  
 Wstęgą – ścieżka...  
 Hostię, przez blade widzę zboże...  
 Emanuel już mieszka  
 Na Taborze!”*

V

I była w tym Polska – od zenitu  
 Wszchedoskonałości Dziejów  
 Wzięta pieśnią zachwytu –  
 – Polska – *przemienionych kołodziejów!*  
 Taż sama – zgoła  
 Złoto-pszczoła...  
 (Poznał-ci-że-bym ją – na krańcach bytu!...) (*Vade-mecum*, pp. 126–127)

[M. A. M.:

in what You played was the very simplicity of Periclean perfection, as though some Virtue from the ancient world, crossing some yeoman's threshold, had said to herself: *“In heaven have I been reborn, and these doors have become my harp, this path my girdle; through the paleness of the corn I see the Host. Abides Emmanuel now on Tabor!”*

(v) And in that music was Poland, caught in iridescent ecstasy from the zenith of the ages – the Poland of the *wheelwrights, whom God had called to greatness* – the very essence of her, abask in the golden hum of bees... (whom I should recognize though at creation's very rim!...)]

[T. B.:

And when you played, there was such simplicity –  
 Periclean – perfection – sublime  
 As if some Virtue from Antiquity

Stepped into a country cottage's confine  
 And on the simple threshold swore:  
*"This day in Heaven I was reborn:  
 The cottage door – a harp to me;  
 My ribbons – the winding lane;  
 The Holy Host – in the corn I venerate  
 And Emmanuel will reign  
 On Tabor incarnate!"*

VAnd therein was Poland – to the crown  
 Of Omniperfection's reign restored.  
 Dazzled – in delights that drown  
 Despair – Poland – the Wheelwright's House transformed!  
 The same dear Poland  
 Honey-golden!...]  
 (I could ne'er mistake her – though at life's brow...)]

"Dom modrzewiowy wiejski" ["the country larch house"], a symbol of the Polish gentry manor house, was changed by both translators into a peasant's cottage. The dynasty of Piasts, to whom the line "Polska – *przemienionych kołodziejów*" refers, was not even mentioned in the first of the translations, and I do doubt that a reader without knowledge of Polish history will associate the phrase: "Poland of the *wheelwrights, whom God had called to greatness*" with the origin of a royal dynasty. Finally, "Złoto-pszczoła" is not the same as "abask in the golden hum of bees," is it? Instead of a *transfigured* (not transformed!) Poland, sanctified by Christian values, both translations thus portray a picture of a rural idyll, which certainly was not, in Norwid's view, a source of Polish national art.

8) Sometimes, translators also omit semantic techniques Norwid uses to achieve ambiguity and express his reflections. I shall again use an example from "Fortepian Szopena." Teresa Bałuk's translation conveys only Norwid's irony in the poem's ending:

N.:

Lecz Ty? – lecz ja? – uderzmy w sądne pienię,  
 Nawołując: "*Ciesz się, późny wnuku!*...  
*Jękły głuche kamienie:  
 Ideal – sięgnął bruku – –*" (*Vade-mecum*, p. 129)

[T. B.:

But you? – But I? Let us sound judgment tones,  
 Call forth: "*Rejoice, late-coming posterity!*  
*The vulgar street – screech muted stones –  
 The Ideal – has inherited.*" (*Przekładaniec*, No. 6, p. 21)

*Screeching muted stones* seem to mock at the Ideal, which the *vulgar street* has inherited. There is no possibility to read the sense of the poem's translation otherwise, for the translation contains none of the semantic techniques used by Norwid in the original. In the Polish version, the word *bruk* had its literal meaning: "solid surface laid of stones" and the metaphorical one – "lowliness, meanness, ordinariness, vulgarity, commonness." The first, literal meaning of the word is important in the poem because it refers to a concrete situation – throwing the piano out on the street; the other – shows the clash of the sphere of ideal art with brutal, harsh, and vulgar reality. In Teresa Bałuk's version, a word denoting "bruk" does not appear at all in the last line of the text. Thus one cannot talk about its semantic ambiguity. In the last but one line, there are only the *muted stones*, *screeching* and sneering at the Ideal's vulgar heritage. Also, her translation lacks the specific usage of the word "sięgnął" ["reached"], which usually means a motion upwards ("sięgać szczytów, sięgać chmur" ["to reach the peaks, the clouds"]) – in Norwid's poem, it was, however, joined with lowness.<sup>57</sup> The translator has thus deprived the text of the paradox Norwid built with that word, and, as a result, she has deprived the translation of the expression of hope that the Ideal's fall becomes a symbol "not so much of desecrating sanctity as of Passion, which is a necessary condition for resurrection."<sup>58</sup>

9) A separate problem is the unawareness of some translators of what is possibly the most important feature of Norwid's writing – its Christian character. That is the most essential, almost ever-present, context,<sup>59</sup> to which, to a greater or lesser extent, Norwid's works refer. Without it, it is impossible to interpret and correctly translate them. However, e.g., in the translation of "Fatum" ["Fate"] by Peterkiewicz and Singer,<sup>60</sup> the translators lost a whole network of reference

57 Cf. Stróżewski, C. *Norwid o muzyce*, pp. 69–75 (particularly 72–73). In note 92, the author also gives a bibliography and a brief outline of the most important interpretations of the ending of "Fortepian Szopena."

58 Artur Sandauer, "Pasja św. Fortepianu," *Matecznik Literacki*, 1972, p. 26.

59 Cf. Alina Merdas, *Łuk przymierza. Biblia w poezji Norwida* (Lublin: RW KUL, 1983); Antoni Dunajski, "Człowiek," Antoni Dunajski, *Chrześcijańska interpretacja dziejów w pismach Cypriana Norwida* (Lublin: RW KUL, 1985); Sawicki, *Norwida walka z formą* (in particular, the chapter *Religijność liryki Norwida*); Józef Franciszek Fert, "Wstęp," in: Cyprian Norwid, *Vade-mecum*, pp. LXVIII–XCII.

60 *Five Centuries of Polish Poetry*, trans. Jerzy Peterkiewicz, Burns Singer (London: Secker & Warburg, 1960), p. 81.

of the poem's tenor to Christian<sup>61</sup> and pre-Christian<sup>62</sup> thoughts "o panowaniu nad fatalnością położenia" ["on controlling the fatality of situation"] (PWsz III, 366). The poem's sense was changed by the translators – they narrowed the thought of benefiting from the misfortune solely to the sphere of art:

N.:

Lecz on odejrzał mu, jak gdy artysta  
Mierzy swojego kształt modelu;  
I spostrzegło, że on patrzy – co? skorzysta  
Na swym nieprzyjacielu:

[P./S.:

But man, who is an artist measuring  
The angle of his model's elbow joint,  
Returned that look and made the churlish thing  
Serve his aesthetic point.]

It does not refer to the moral or spiritual sphere of human activity anymore, though if one considers what the concept of art was for Norwid, one could argue here whether the aesthetic point from the translation is not connected with morality or even religion. However, since the authors of the anthology "did not expect of their readers a knowledge of the tradition of Polish literature,"<sup>63</sup> they could not assume the readers would know what Norwid's conception of art was.

Another translator of that lyric into English notes that

the poem raises two issues: one is maintaining brave ethical conduct, the other is connected with the artist's fight for the work's aesthetic shape. In Peterkiewicz and Singer's translation, the two issues have been connected in one dry utterance on artistry, while the ideological part of the work was shortened by half.<sup>64</sup>

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61 Cf. Zbigniew Jerzy Nowak, "Jeszcze jeden kontekst do *Fatum Norwida*," *Studia Norwidiana*, Vols. 9–10 (1991–1992), p. 130; Marian Maciejewski, "Fatum ukrzyżowane," *Studia Norwidiana*, Vol. 1 (1983), pp. 42–46; Merdas, *Łuk przymierza*, p. 31.

62 Cf.: Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki, "Komentarz do *Fatum*," in: Cyprian Norwid, *Dzieła zebrane*, Vol. II: *Wiersze. Dodatek krytyczny* (Warszawa: PIW, 1966), p. 184; Aniela Kowalska, *Wiersze Cypriana Kamila Norwida* (Warszawa: WSiP, 1978), pp. 56–59.

63 *Five Centuries of Polish Poetry*, p. 24.

64 Edmund Ordon, "O tłumaczeniu 'Vade-mecum' C.K. Norwida," trans. by Zofia Sroczyńska, in: *Przekład artystyczny*, ed. Seweryn Pollak (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1975), pp. 242–243.

The translation of the final fragment of the story “Ad Leones!” done by Ilona Ralf Sues<sup>65</sup> lacked most of the Biblical references – even the reference to Job was left out:

N.:

Serce miałem obrzmiałe i ciężkie, ducha czułem poniżonego... powiew jakiś, czy jęk, Hiobowym nastrojem szemrał mi w ucho:

“Tak to więc wszystko na tym słusznie przekłętym świecie, wszystko, co się poczyna z dziewiczego natchnienia myśli, musi tu być sprzedanym za 6 dolarów!... (30 srebrników!)”

I jakkolwiek obiecywałem sobie nic wcale nie powiedzieć – nic dodać, nic nie powtórzyć, jednakowoż przenieść na siebie nie mogąc całego ciężaru moralnego, rzekłem do Redaktora:

– Jak to jednak daleko od wyznawców i *dla wyznania* lwom rzuconych – do *Kapitalizacji!* (DW VII, 215)

[R.-S.:

My heart was full and heavy and I felt humiliated... A wind or a moan was dismally whispering in my ear “And thus everything, in this justly cursed world of ours, has to be sold for six dollars!... (30 pieces of silver)”

And although I had promised myself not to say anything, not to add anything nor repeat anything, I could not bear all that moral burden. I told the editor:

How far remote are faith and the faithful thrown to the lions from capitalization!...]

Simplifying the language of the translation and leaving out expressions associated with the world of faith (“*duch poniżony*” [“*humiliated spirit*”], “*Hiobowy jęk*” [“*Job’s (woeful) moan*”], “*dziewicze natchnienie myśli*” [“*virginal inspiration of thought*”]) make the characters appearing in the translated story less exalted and less serious than in the original, which, in turn, deprives the general tenor of the story of its seriousness and pathos. What is more, in Ilona Ralf Sues’s translation, the tragedy of the author, who, persuaded by the tradesman, changes his sculpture from the figures of Christians thrown to the lions into a group symbolising capitalization, is different than in the original. In Norwid’s version, the sculptor yields to stupidity and money. In the translation, the venality of ideals and wastage of talent follow from not perceiving God and the world of values.

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65 *Contemporary Polish Short Stories*, selected by Andrzej Kijowski (Warszawa: Polonia Publishing House, 1960), pp. 15–28. A detailed discussion on the translation can be found in: Brajerska-Mazur, *O angielskich tłumaczeniach*, pp. 195–235.



All the oversights of translators mentioned above stem from the lack of very wide and, at the same time very specialised, knowledge of Norwid, despite the fact that, generally, most translations are reliable and conscientious. There are also good translations, some of them even optimal or near optimal.<sup>66</sup> Besides, one cannot expect translators to know as much about Norwid as Norwidologists. Access to materials on Norwid, which are infinitely more numerous in Poland than abroad, is also important here. Therefore, the cooperation of good translators with Norwidologists is very desirable.

Such cooperation was undertaken in 2006 by the author of this article and Danuta Borchardt. My role in this partnership was limited to indicating what absolutely needed to be saved in a particular translation (often the directions were given in the form of points created with the *katena* method),<sup>67</sup> supplying materials concerning the works in translation, and indicating pitfalls in the concrete texts. To maintain the highest possible fidelity towards Norwid's works, we strived to comply with the following commandments:

1. Use a good edition of Norwid's works.
2. Pay attention to the graphic aspects (if possible, copy them accurately).
3. Pay attention to the changes in meaning of nineteenth-century words (use dictionaries of nineteenth-century Polish).
4. Try to show Norwid's originality, consisting among others in the coexistence of old, nineteenth-century features of his writings with their linguistic and formal pioneering character.
5. Pay attention to the stirred forms – some mistakes are deliberate and must be retained.
6. Do not omit words essential for Norwid (e.g. "człowiek," "brak," "dopełnienie").
7. Do not twist Norwid's ideas.
8. Try to reproduce semantic techniques used by the poet.
9. Do not ignore the Christian aspects of his works.

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66 In my opinion, these are some of A. Czerniawski's translations ("Nerwy," "Ostatni despotyzm," "Do zeszelej," "Litość," and "Marionetki"), translations of fragments of *Promethidion* done by J.A. Laskowski, of *Ogólniki* by T. Karpowicz, of "Moja piosnka [II]" by J. Płazkiewicz-Pulc, of fragments of *A Dorio ad Phrygium* by Peterkiewicz and Singer, and translations of "Moja piosnka [II]," "Fatum," "W Weronie," "Jak" by M. Mikoś.

67 I have written more extensively about this method in: Brąjska-Mazur, *O angielskich tłumaczeniach*; pp. 9–14, "Katena and Translation of Literary Masterpieces," *Babel*, Vol. 51 (2005), pp. 16–30, and "O przekładzie na język angielski wierszy Norwida 'Śmierć,' 'Do zeszelej,...' 'Finis,'" *Pamiętnik Literacki*, XCVII, booklet 4 (2006), pp. 229–237.

10. Retain the plurality of interpretations suggesting themselves while reading a given text.

We also assumed that the reader of a translation of Norwid's writings – which can almost always be understood in several different ways – should have the same possibility of finding MULTIPLE interpretations of Norwid's text as he or she would have when reading the original. Thus followed the most important (and possibly most difficult to attain) tenth commandment – not to be guided by only one (usually simply one's own and subjective) interpretation of the work's sense, but to notice and offer to the readers precisely as many as are offered in the original.<sup>68</sup>

Showing the results of the work of Borchardt on selected examples from the volume *Cyprian Norwid. Selected Poems*, currently being prepared for print by Archipelago Books, I shall focus mainly on the difficulties posed by the particular texts and describe successes or failures of the translator in surmounting them. As to the quality of those translations and the usefulness of the ten commandments, I shall leave that for the readers to judge.

To retain fidelity towards Norwid's works, one should always observe several or all these commandments at once. The easiest to observe are the first two concerning the edition and notation of the original. As the original for her translations, Borchardt has chosen the *Vade-mecum* edition of 2004, prepared by Józef Fert, and (in the case of poems not included in the cycle) *Pisma Wszystkie [The Complete Works of Cyprian Norwid]* edited by Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki, and she tried to reproduce or find American equivalents for the graphic solutions used in those editions. The other commandments are much more difficult to observe. In addition, even they will often not protect the translator from the pitfalls in the text – particularly if those pitfalls represent so-called general or systemic translation difficulties.<sup>69</sup>

In the translation of the poem “Do obywatela Johna Brown” [“To Citizen John Brown”], particularly important and thus sometimes problematic are not only commandments No. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, but also overcoming the difficulties

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68 I have devoted almost the whole book *O angielskich tłumaczeniach* from p. 71 onwards (particularly pp. 347–362) to the problem of retaining many interpretations of Norwid's texts in translation.

69 Detailed classification and description of the difficulties can be found in: Brajerska-Mazur, *O angielskich tłumaczeniach*, pp. 304–376 and Agata Brajerska-Mazur, “Trzy poziomy trudności w przekładzie z języka polskiego na angielski,” in: *Workshop on Translations III*, ed. Henryk Duda and Richard Sokolowski (Lublin-Ottawa: TN KUL, 2003), pp. 31–50.

connected, among other things, with the transfer of cultures and differences between English and Polish grammar.

Przez Oceanu ruchome płaszczyznyPieśń Ci, jak m e w ę, posyłam, o! Janie...  
Ta lecieć długo będzie do ojczyznyWolnych – bo wątpi już: czy ją zastanie?... – Czy też,  
jak promień Twej zacnej siwizny,Biała – na puste zleci rusztowanie:By kata Twego syn  
rączką dziecinnąKamienie ciskał na mowę gościnną!

\*Więc, niżli szyję Twoją obnażonąSpróbują sznury, jak jest nieugięta;  
Więc, niżli ziemi szukać poczniesz piętą,By precz odkopnąć planetę spodloną –A  
ziemia spod stóp Twych, jak płaz złękniiony,Pierzchnie --  
więc, niżli rzekną: “Powieszony” – --Rzekną i pojrzą po sobie, czy kłamią? – --  
Więc, nim kapelusz na twarz Ci załamiał,  
By Ameryka, odpoznawszysyna,Nie zakrzykneła na gwiazd swych dwanaście:“Korony  
mojej sztuczne ognie zgaście,Noc idzie – czarna noc z twarzą Murzyna!”

\*Więc, nim Kościuszki cień i WaszyngtonaZadrzy – p o c z ą t e k p i e ś n i p r z y j m,  
o! Janie...

B o p i e ś Ń n i m d o j r z y, c z ł o w i e k n i e r a z s k o n a,  
A n i ż l i s k o n a p i e ś Ń, n a r ó d p i e r w w s t a n i e.

(PWsz I, 302–303)

Norwid's poem “Do obywatela Johna Browna” was translated by seven different translators. All of them, except Professor Mikoś and Jerzy Peterkiewicz, corrected Norwid's mistake as he wrote about 12 instead of 13 stars then placed in the American flag. Even though it was an involuntary oversight of Norwid's, Borchardt did not correct the original, guided by the so-called quality maxim, formulated by H. P. Grice,<sup>70</sup> which requires the translator to speak the truth – which is not so much the objective truth as the truth of the source text. In other words: one may not correct the original. Stanisław Barańczak also wrote about this, stating that “correcting the author, or improving the work turns out, as a rule, to be one of the most disastrous errors which can be made by a poetry translator.”<sup>71</sup> Borchardt, in turn, introduced a change in the translation of the word “Murzyn,” which has been wrongly rendered by all previous translators as “Negro,” forgetting the differences between Polish and American culture:

70 Herbert Paul Grice, “Logic and Conversation,” in: *Syntax and Semantics*, ed. Peter Cole and Jerry L. Morgan, Vol. 3: *Speech Acts* (New York, San Francisco, London: Academic Press, 1975), pp. 42–58.

71 Stanisław Barańczak, “Przekładanie nieprzekładalnego,” *Zeszyty Literackie*, No. 45 (1994), p. 122.

Norwid (PWsz I, 303):

Noc idzie – czarna noc z twarzą Murzyna!

[G. Kliger i R. Albrecht:<sup>72</sup>

Night advances – black night with a Negro’s face!

J. Strzetelski:<sup>73</sup>

The night is coming, a black night with the face of a Negro!

S. Dickinson:<sup>74</sup>

Night comes – black night with the Negro’s face!

S. Barańczak:<sup>75</sup>

Night comes – a night with a black Negro face!– –

J. Peterkiewicz:<sup>76</sup>

Night falls, the black night with a Negro’s face!

M. Mikoś:<sup>77</sup>

Night advances – black night with a Negro’s face!

W. Whipple<sup>78</sup>

Night falls – – a black night with the face of a Negro!]

In nineteenth-century Polish – just as in contemporary Polish, as a matter of fact – that word has neutral emotional and semantic tone (and not a pejorative one like the disdainful “Negro”). Hence its best equivalent is “Black man,” used by Borchardt (and also neutral in American English).

While speaking about that case, it is worth mentioning that so far, none of the translators have rendered Norwid’s neologism “odpoznawszy” well, which does not mean “recognising,” but quite the opposite: “rejecting,” “forgetting.” Borchardt decided on “dis-favoring,” using Norwid’s common practice of creating neologisms with separating hyphens.<sup>79</sup>

The most problematic part, however, turned out to be the poem’s ending, not only due to the word “człowiek” used there but also because of the differences

72 George Kliger and Robert C. Albrecht, *The Polish Review*, Vol. VIII (1963), p. 82.

73 Jerzy Strzetelski, *An Introduction to Polish Literature* (Kraków: UJ, 1977), p. 146 (hereafter, *IPL*).

74 S. Dickinson, *The Polish Review*, Vol. XXXV (1990), p. 229.

75 Stanisław Barańczak, *Wybór wierszy i przekładów* (Warszawa: PIW, 1997), p. 593.

76 Cyprian Norwid, *Poems, Letters, Drawings*, ed. and trans. Jerzy Peterkiewicz (Manchester: Carcanet Press Ltd, 2000), p. 33 (hereafter, *PLD*).

77 Michael J. Mikoś, *Polish Romantic Literature. An Anthology* (Bloomington, Indiana: Slavica, 2002), p. 141 (hereafter, *PRL*).

78 Walter Whipple, <http://www.mission.net/poland/warsaw/literature/poems/citizen.htm>.

79 This method was described in more detail in: Brajerska-Mazur, *O angielskich tłumaczeniach*, pp. 330–333. See also: Subko, “O francuskich przekładach.”

between two linguistic systems. Similarly to other Slavic languages, Polish does not have the definite and indefinite articles found in Germanic languages. Thence arises a considerable difficulty for translators, particularly those working from Polish into English, because the choice between “a,” “the,” and no article at all always entails semantic consequences. That brings with it the threat of overinterpreting the original, and, in the case of Norwid, it most often has a negative influence on conveying the content of his poems, which are so polysemic and full of obliqueness. In selecting appropriate articles, translators of “Do obywatela Johna Browna” must decide whether Norwid’s “pieśń,” “człowiek” and “naród,” [“song,” “man,” and “nation”] refer to individual, concrete beings, or whether they might belong to more universal concepts:

N.:

Bo pieśń nim dojrzy, człowiek nieraz skona,  
A niżli skona pieśń, naród pierw wstanie.

[S. Dickinson:

For before the song ripens, a man may die,  
But before the song dies, a nation may first rise.

G. Klinger and R.C. Albrecht:

For before the song ripens, a man will sometimes die,  
But, before the song dies, the nation will first arise.

J. Strzetelski:

For before a song ripens, a man often dies,  
And before a song dies, a nation first rises.

S. Barańczak:

People may die before the song’s complete,  
Yet peoples may rise up before it dies.

J. Peterkiewicz:

Since before song matures man often dies,  
Before song dies, nation must first rise.

M. Mikoś:

For ere the song ripens, man sometimes dies,  
And before the song dies, a nation will rise.

W. Whipple:

For while the song matures, sometimes a man will die,  
But before the song dies, a nation will first arise.]

As one can see, “song,” “man,” and “nation” were all preceded by various articles (or with “the gap,” which also has its meaning) and there is no consensus

among translators as to the specific or universal character of the “pieśń,” “człowiek,” and “naród.” It seemed to us that “pieśń” [“song”] (as a song of liberation) should be specific here – i.e., preceded by the definite article, and “człowiek” and “naród,” in turn, should maintain their universal character, for they refer to every man and all nations in general. Hence, in the final version of Borchardt’s translation, the word “pieśń” was preceded by an article, “człowiek” was left without any article, and “naród” was changed into the more general “people.” A substantial difficulty in translation was also the old-fashioned nature of Norwid’s text, which is perceived by contemporary Polish readers as rather archaic – mainly because of its antique syntax and vocabulary. That archaic nature of language and style had to be conveyed in the translation, and, at the same time, one had to maintain its intelligibility. For those reasons, the final shape of the translation was as follows:

Over the Ocean’s undulant plain  
A song, like a seagull, I send you, oh! John...

To the land of the free maybe in vain  
It will fly – for it doubts: is that land gone?...  
– Or, like a ray of your hair gray and noble  
White – on an empty scaffold will land:  
So Your hangman’s son, with his little boy’s hand  
At the visitor gull will throw stones!

\*

Thus, ere Your bared neck the ropes will try  
To see if it remains unyielding;

Thus, ere you will seek the ground with your heel,  
To kick the disgraced planet aside  
And the earth under Your feet, like a panicked reptile  
Shall flee –

        thus, ere they’ll say: He’s hanged... –  
They’ll say and stare, are lies being told? – –

Thus, before o’er Your face a hat they fold,  
So America, dis-favoring her son,  
To its twelve stars wouldn’t shout:  
The fireworks on my crown put out,  
Night comes – a black night with the face of a Black man!

\*

Thus, before Kościuszko’s shadow and Washington’s  
Will tremble – accept the start of this song, oh! John...

Before the song matures, man will die oft-times,  
 Yet ere the song dies, people will rise.

What is most often particularly difficult to render are Norwid's plays on word meanings. On the one hand, this is connected simply with non-coinciding lexical equivalence of a given word in two languages, which is a translation difficulty of general nature, faced by all translators into all languages. On the other hand, Norwid's specific use of polysemic words forces one to deal with the use of semantic techniques. Here, fidelity towards the eighth commandment becomes crucial and, at the same time, problematic.

In "Mistycyzm" ["Mysticism"], the poet refers to two different current meanings of the word "błądzić" – once understood as "to be mistaken," and then as "to be lost:"

Mistyk? jest błędnym – pewno!  
 Więc i *mistycyzm* nie istnieje?  
 Tylko jest próżnią rzewną,  
 Snem – nim roz-dnieje!...

Góral? na Alpów szczyt  
 Jeżeli się zabłąka w chmurę –  
 – Czy wątpi o jej bycie  
 \* \* \* \* \*

Błądząc – po wtóre? (Vade-mecum, p. 40)

The first translator of that poem was able to retain the semantic tension between "zabłąka / błądząc – po wtóre" ["lost / lost – again"] but has not retained the direct semantic and phonetic connection between *jest* "błędnym" and "błądzić" ["He's wrong / When lost"].<sup>80</sup>

A mystic? He's wrong – for sure!  
 Is there no mystic way?  
 It's a melancholy void,  
 A dream – till break of day!...

Does a highlander,  
 Lost in cloud and rain,  
 Doubt the cloud's there  
 \* \* \* \* \*

When lost – again?

(A. Czerniawski, *CKNP/Ps*, p. 49)

80 A. Czerniawski has improved on this translation in: Cyprian Norwid, *Selected Poems* (London: Anvill Press, 2004), p. 66. See: Agata Brajerska-Mazur, "Adam Czerniawski i 'Selected Poems' Norwida," *Studia Norwidiana*, Vols. 22–23 (2004–2005), pp. 293–308.

Borchardt, to show the play upon words used by the author, fortunately, managed to find expressions that sounded similar and convey the original meanings:

A mystic? he's astray – of course!  
 So mysticism doesn't exist either?  
 It's only a piteous void,  
 A dream – til dawn's dispelling!...

A highlander? on Alps summit  
 If he goes astray in a cloud –  
 Does he doubt its existence  
 \* \* \* \* \*

When straying – again?

Here, it poses no difficulty, as in Norwid's text, to notice the semantic connections between "be astray," "go astray," and "straying," and it is easier to interpret the sense of the whole poem.

Where Norwid not only uses polysemic words but also couples them together in a paradoxical manner, one can expect considerable difficulties in translation. That was the case with the pairs "kapłan / niedojrzały" from "Sfinks" and "Ideal / bruk" from "Fortepian Szopena:"

Lecz Ty? – lecz ja? – uderzmy w sądne pienie,  
 Nawołując: "Ciesz się, późny wnuku!...  
 Jękły głuche kamienie:  
 Ideal – sięgnął bruku – –"

(*Vade-mecum*, p. 129)

The issue here is to make the translation of the poem's ending as ambiguous as in the original,<sup>81</sup> to associate opposing words in the same way, between which an additional semantic game was introduced, "leading to the discovery of various semantic layers of particular words."<sup>82</sup> One should remember that, in the original, Norwid joined two pairs of contradictions: "Ideal / bruk" and "sięgać / bruku," Norwid's "bruk" can moreover be read in two ways – literally, in the sense of stone pavement, and metaphorically, as: "ordinariness," "commonness," "meanness," "roughness," or "vulgarity."

81 Cf. Brajerska-Mazur, *O angielskich tłumaczeniach*, pp. 146–147; Stróżewski, *C. Norwid o muzyce*, pp. 69–71.

82 Stefan Sawicki, "Z zagadnień semantyki poetyckiej Norwida," in: Sawicki, *Norwida walka z formą*, p. 39.



Contrary to Bałuk, quoted above, Borchardt retained both paradoxes and the ambiguity of “bruk.” Her “street” admittedly conveys more the basic sense of the word (hence it refers to the concrete situation – throwing the instrument out onto the street), but it also means “profanation of art”<sup>83</sup> or its popularization. “The Ideal has reached – the street – –” can thus be read both as bitter irony and as hope for the art “sztuka zejdzie i przeniknie w lud” [“to descend and permeate the people”]:

But You? – but I? – let’s break into judgment chant,  
 And exhort: Rejoice, our grandson yet to come!...  
 Groaned the hollow stones:  
 The Ideal has reached – the street – –

In the poem “Idee i prawda” [“Ideas and Truth”], the most difficult part to translate is the polysemic conclusion of the work:

## I

Na wysokościach myślenia jest sfera,  
 Skąd widok stromy –  
 Mąci się w głowie i na zawrót zbiera,  
 W chmurach – na gromy.  
 – Płakałbyś może, lecz łzę wiatr ociera  
 Pierw, nim błysnęła –  
 Po cóż się wdzierać, gdzie światy są zera,  
 Pył – arcydzieła?!...

## II

Zły anioł jednak uniósł Ecce-Homo  
 Na opok szczyty,  
 Gdzie, stojąc jeden i patrząc stromo,  
 Człek – gardzi byty.  
 – Jakoby wyrwał się z jawa, kryjomo,  
 Skrzydły nikłými,  
 I mierzyć chciał się sam z swoją widomą  
 Wagą – na ziemi.

## III

I ściągają go magnetyzm globowy  
 W sfery dotkliwe,  
 Gdzie nie doświadcza nic zawrotów głowy –

---

83 It is sometimes applied to prostitution: “go on the streets” = “earn one’s living by prostitution;” “street-girl,” and “street-walker” = “prostitute” (cf. *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*, A.S. Hornby, Oxford, 1984).

Nic!... co – szczęśliwe.  
 – Aż wielki smętek lub kamień grobowy  
 Z tych sfer, bezpiecznych,  
 Wypchnie znów na szczyt myślenia budowy  
 W obłąd dróg mlecznych.

## IV

Bo w górze – *grób jest Ideom* człowieka,  
 W dole – *grób-ciało*;  
 I nieraz *szczytne* wczorajszego wieka  
 Dziś – tycze kału...

\*\*\*\*\*

Prawda się *razem* *dochodzi* i czeka!

(*Vade-mecum*, pp. 56–57)

In the last line of the text, there appear two ambiguous words coupled together: “razem” and “dochodzi.” “Razem” can be understood in two ways – either as “together” or “at the same time.” Also, the word “dochodzi” has double meaning: “to inquire” and (in the light of the whole poem, speaking about different paths to the truth) “to meet.” The translator must also take into account the old-fashioned syntax of Norwid’s sentence. How can this be achieved? How can one translate that one line in a way that conveys *all* the meanings contained therein? I shall give here several versions, which have been taken into account (some of which disturb, as in the original, grammatical norms):

Truth both enquires and waits!  
 Truth reaches both ideas and waits!  
 Truth both considers it all and waits!  
 Truth altogether arrives at and waits!  
 Truth contemplates all and waits!  
 Truth ponders, while awaiting!  
 Truth waits, while arriving!  
 Truth, while arriving, awaits!  
 Truth, while arriving within, awaits!  
 Truth reaches both and waits!  
 Truth both reaches all and waits!  
 Truth both thrashes out and waits!  
 Truth both finds out and waits!  
 Truth both gets at and waits!  
 Truth both evolves and waits!

For the final version of the translation, Borchardt chose the following redaction of the line: “Truth both arrives at this and waits!” where “arrives at”

retains the double meaning of Polish “dochodzić,” although the ambiguity of the word “razem” is unfortunately not rendered. However, it was possible to convey the ambiguity of the word “obłąd” in translation, where Borchardt chose “lunacy” as its equivalent. The word does not only mean “madness,” but also has connotations in English with “erring” and “being wrong,” and it is thus probably the best equivalent of the polysemic original.

## I

On the heights of thinking is the realm  
 Whence the view is steep –  
 Dazed, one’s head is about to spin,  
 In the clouds – its about to thunder.  
 – You might weep perhaps, but the wind wipes your tear  
 Before it glints –  
 Why clamber where worlds are zeros  
 And masterworks are – dust?!

## II

Yet the bad angel lifted Ecce-Homo  
 To bedrock’s peaks,  
 Where, standing alone, looking down – steep,  
 Man – scorns beings.  
 – As if he’s escaped reality, in secret,  
 On frail wings,  
 And wished to compete with his own evident  
 Weight – on earth.

## III

And the globe’s magnetism would pull  
 Him into painful realms  
 Where nothing feels its head spinning –  
 Nothing!... that is – happy.  
 – til great dolor or a grave stone  
 From these safe realms  
 Will thrust him again to the peaks of thought construction  
 Into the lunacy of milky ways.

## IV

For in those heights – is the grave of man’s Ideas,  
 Down in the depths – his body’s grave;  
 And often what’s lofty in yesteryear  
 Today – touches excreta...  
 \* \* \* \* \*

Truth both arrives at this and waits!

Conveying Norwid's philosophy, which is sometimes expressed in a polysemic, or rather purposefully ambiguous manner, is the most difficult problem to overcome in the translation of, e.g., "Przeszłość"<sup>84</sup> ["The Past"]:

Nie Bóg stworzył *przeszłość* i śmierć, i cierpienia,  
Lecz ów, co prawa rwie,  
Wiec nieznośne mu – dnie;  
Wiec, czując złe, chciał odepchnąć *spomnienia!*

Acz nie byłże jak dziecko, co wozem leci,  
Powiadając: "O! dąb  
Ucieka!... w lasu głąb"  
– Gdy dąb stoi, wóz z sobą unosi dzieci.

*Przeszłość* jest i *dziś*, i te *dziś* dalej:  
Za kołami to wieś,  
Nie – jakieś tam *cóż*, *gdzieś*,  
*Gdzie nigdy ludzie nie bywali!*...

(*Vade-mecum*, p. 15)

This poem expresses Norwid's attitude towards tradition, Christian faith, the conceptions of time, man, and completeness.<sup>85</sup> Hence it is vital here to analyse the poet's thought carefully – even if that thought is (purposefully) ambiguous. This needs to be done so as not to lose any possible interpretations of the text and not decide in favour of any of them. A particularly ambiguous fragment of the poem is the second line of the first stanza. "*Przeszłość* i śmierć, i cierpienia" ["*Past* and death, and suffering"] are, in Norwid's view, not the creation of God but of the One who breaks [literally: "rends"] the laws – "Tego, co prawa rwie" – i.e., either Satan or man – Adam, a creator of time as a deformation of Divine

84 Difficulties with overcoming problems posed by Norwid's other ambiguous poems are discussed in: Brajerska-Mazur, *O angielskich tłumaczeniach*, pp. 357–361.

85 Cf. Roman Jakobson, "*Przeszłość* Cypriana Norwida," *Pamiętnik Literacki*, booklet 2 (1963), pp. 449–456; Mieczysław Jastrun, "Interpretacje," *Poezja*, No. 6 (1970), pp. 6–16; Jacek Trznadel, *Czytanie Norwida. Próby* (Warszawa: PIW, 1978), p. 90 f.; Eugeniusz Czapplewicz, "Dialog Norwida w '*Przeszłości*,'" *Poezja*, No. 1 (1979), pp. 3–14; Henryk Siewierski, "Architektura słowa," *Pamiętnik Literacki*, booklet 1 (1981), pp. 206–207; Antoni Dunajski, *Chrześcijańska interpretacja*, pp. 209–210; Stefan Sawicki, "Norwida wywyższenie tradycji," *Studia Norwidiana*, Vol. 8 (1990), pp. 6–7; Wiesław Rzońca, "Całość w '*Przeszłości*,'" in: "*Całość*" w *twórczości Norwida*, pp. 177–187; Agata Brajerska-Mazur, "Norwid w tłumaczeniu Adama Czerniawskiego," *Studia Norwidiana*, Vols. 9–10 (1991–1992), pp. 270–272.

eternity.<sup>86</sup> As Anna Kadyjewska notes, “disputes about the problem seem never-ending.”<sup>87</sup> The issue is to give the reader of the translation the possibility to settle that dispute so that he or she might, like the reader of the original, ponder on the identity of the creator of evil on his own. However, Adam Czerniawski explicitly indicated who has brought suffering to the earth:

The p a s t, death and pain are not acts of God,  
 But of law-breaking man,  
 Who therefore lives in dread  
 And sensing evil, wants o b l i v i o n !

(CKNP/Ps, p. 37)

Borchardt, translating that line as “But he who breaks the law,” retains here the ambiguity of the original. More problematic for her is another famous fragment of the poem, presenting Norwid’s understanding of time: “Przeszłość jest i dziś, i te dziś dalej.” Stefan Sawicki explains that statement thus:

The past lasts, is present in a vital way, as if contradicting itself, in every consecutive today, which only modifies it, even if it contradicts the past. Without the past, today is unthinkable. Thus, unthinkable is also the man of each today without his own tradition, in particular without a tradition that he is aware of. How far back that tradition goes, a tradition by no means limited to the literal yesterday, is indicated by the poem’s beginning. It recalls man’s genesis, his original destination to complete happiness – without death, suffering and ... a past. Today’s *condition humaine* is conditioned by breaking the law in the beginning, something that constitutes an archetype of human *hubris*. Recollections of the lost paradise and the awareness of all consequences of that loss cannot be repelled by man, for that would be an attempt to close his eyes on his own ontological reality. No escape will change our status: that of man incomplete, man marked by the stamp of lack, suffering and passing. Escaping, we only withdraw from our own reality, but we do not change it. The oak stands, it is only the cart that “whisks the children away with it” – *wóz z sobą unosi dzieci*. The word “children” is naturally not coincidental. Each attempt at escaping the truth about oneself is childishness. We were in the past and we must be aware of its presence in each of our todays.<sup>88</sup>

Thus, it is necessary to render Norwid’s thought precisely, yet here, English syntax stands in the way, for it does not allow such emphatic repetition as

86 Dunajski, *Chrześcijańska interpretacja*, pp. 209–210.

87 Anna Kadyjewska, “‘Św i a t a - t e g o K s i ą ż ę’; O Norwidowskich obliczach szatana,” *Studia Norwidiana*, Vols. 17–18 (1999–2000), p. 40. The author gives bibliography related to this dispute in the extensive note 17.

88 Sawicki, “Norwida wywyższenie,” p. 7.

the Polish: “jest i *dziś*, i te *dziś*.” Borchardt inevitably had to abandon the emphasis.<sup>89</sup> She managed, however, to show the cohesion of the poem,<sup>90</sup> created by the images presented in all stanzas. The first and third stanzas are connected both in Norwid’s and in the translator’s texts with the motif of the past. The first and the second, as well as the second and the third ones, in turn, are connected with the motifs of repulsion and drive forwards:

God didn’t create the past, not death, not suffering,  
But he who breaks the laws;  
Thus his days are – woes;  
Thus, sensing evil, fends off remembering!

Wasn’t he like a child that flies by in a dray  
Saying: “O! An oak tree  
Deep into the woods... it flees!”  
– The oak stands still, the cart whisks the kids away.

The past is today, today but farther:  
Past the wheels the village’s there,  
Not – some this, or somewhere,  
Where people never gathered!...

In the translation of “Bema pamięci żałobny-rapsod” [“A Funeral Rhapsody in Memory of General Bem”], it is not the semantic techniques (as with “Mistycyzm,” the ending of “Fortepian Szopena,” and the poem “Idee i prawda”), not the poem’s ambiguity (as in the endings of “Fortepian Szopena” and “Przeszłość”), and not difficulties of general or systemic nature (as with “Do obywatela Johna Browna”) which cause the greatest problems. Here, the most difficult issue is to choose a suitable equivalent for the poem’s structure, to render the archaic character of language and style together with the word-formative innovation and its interpretative polysemy. The poem is written in a regular hexameter – it has six feet and 15 syllables in every verse. By choosing such a meter, Norwid wanted to refer to the tradition of the ancient epic. The rhapsody from the title is, in other words, a song of a hero-knight, used by Homer as he was praising Odysseus and Achilles, and by Virgil for the praise of Aeneas. The hexameter thus fulfils a semantic role. Through reference to ancient tradition, Norwid places Bem among the greatest heroes of European civilization and makes Poland a land of myth:

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89 It is absent in this poem’s other editions. E.g., Juliusz Wiktor Gomułicki’s edition gives: “*Przeszłość* – jest to *dziś*, tylko cokolwiek dalej,” cf. Józef Franciszek Fert, “*Vade mecum*” jako problem edytorski,” *Studia Norwidiana*, Vol. 2 (1984), pp. 55–56.  
90 Cf. Brajerska-Mazur, “Norwid w tłumaczeniu,” pp. 271–272.

Czemu, Cieniu, odjeżdżasz, ręce złamawszy na pancierz,  
 Przy pochodniach, co skrami grają około twych kolan? –  
 Miecz wawrzynem zielony i gromnic płakaniem dziś polan,  
 Rwie się sokół i koń twój podrywa stopę jak tancerz.  
 – Wieją, wieją proporce i zawiewają na siebie,  
 Jak namioty ruchome wojsk koczujących po niebie.  
 Trąby długie we łkaniu aż się zanoszą, i znaki  
 Poklaniają się z góry opuszczonymi skrzydłami,  
 Jak włóczyniami przebite smoki, jaszczury i ptaki...  
 Jako wiele pomysłów, któreś dościgał włóczyniami...

## II

Idą panny żałobne: jedne, podnosząc ramiona  
 Ze stopami wonnymi, które wiatr w górze rozrywa;  
 Drugie, w konchy zbierając łzę, co się z twarzy odrywa,  
 Inne, drogi szukając, choć przed wiekami zrobiona...  
 Inne, tłukąc o ziemię wielkie gliniane naczynia,  
 Czego klekot w pękaniu jeszcze smętności przyczynia.

## III

Chłopcy biją w topory pobłękitniałe od nieba,  
 W tarcze rude od światła biją pachołki służebne,  
 Przeogromna chorągiew, co się wśród dymów koleba,  
 Włóczni ostrzem łuki, rzekłbyś, oparta pod-niebne...

## IV

Wchodzą w wąwóz i toną... wychodzą w światło księżycy  
 I czernieją na niebie, a blask ich zimny omusnął,  
 I po ostrzach, jak gwiazda spaść nie mogąca, prześwieca,  
 Chorał ucichł był nagle i znów jak fala wyplusnął...

## V

Dalej – dalej – aż kiedy stoczyć się przyjdzie do grobu  
 I czeluście zobaczymy czarne, co czyha za drogą,  
 Które aby przesadzić Ludzkość nie znajdzie sposobu,  
 Włócznią twego rumaka zeprzem, jak starą ostrogą...

## VI

I powleczem korowód, smęcąc ujęte snem grody,  
 W bramy bijąc urnami, gwizdając w szczyby toporów,  
 Aż się mury Jerycha porozwalają jak kłody,  
 Serca zmdlałe ocucą – pleśń z oczu zgarną narody...  
 .....  
 Dalej – dalej – –

Norwid's rhapsody has been translated as many as 14 times (I also know of a translation by Anita Jones-Dąbska, but I do not think it was published anywhere) – including eight times by A. Czerniawski, who constantly corrects his versions of the translation. Only two translators (Kirkconell<sup>91</sup> and Mikoś<sup>92</sup>) decided to translate the text in hexameter. Unfortunately, in the case of Kirkconell, it was done at the expense of the original sense. Other translators abandoned the antique meter, either translating the poem in blank verse (Czerniawski)<sup>93</sup> or bringing it closer to a narrative through prose descriptiveness (other translators). On the one hand, focusing on the poem's meter inevitably results in semantic changes to the text (which can be seen in the example of Kirkconell's translation). On the other, one cannot abandon the meter completely because it also fulfils a semantic function. The best solution would be to use at least six accents in the lines of the translation and try to reproduce their equal length, which Borhardt, unfortunately, does not attempt. One could probably also abandon rhymes (again, only Kirkconell and Mikoś tried to retain them), in order to bring the poem closer to an epic narrative and, at least in that way, convey the reference to the antique tradition of heroic praise. Borhardt rarely keeps the rhymes, but internal rhymes occasionally appear in her translation. In the title, she is right to use the word rhapsody instead of dirge to show the poem's affinity with the epic. The translator also attempts to reproduce the onomatopoeia and the whole musicality of Norwid's text,<sup>94</sup> not forgetting about such onomatopoeic effects, as, e.g., "Wieżą, wieją proporce i zawiewają na siebie; Idą panny żałobne: jedne podnosząc ramiona / Ze snopami wonnymi...; klekot w pękaniu; Czemu, Cieniu, odjeżdżasz, ręce" etc.

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91 Watson Kirkconell, *Golden Treasury of Polish Lyrics* (Winnipeg: Polish Press, 1936), pp. 59–61 (hereafter, *GT*).

92 *PRL*, pp. 139–140.

93 *OP*, p. 8.

94 The "musicality" of this poem was mentioned, among others, by: Stefan Żeromski, *Snobizm i postępek* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo J. Mortkowicza, 1923), p. 85; Maria Straszewska, "O poezji emigranckiego losu," *Przegląd Humanistyczny*, No. 6 (1964), p. 9; Artur Sandauer, "Wyprawa trzecia," *Kultura*, No. 3 (1978), p. 3; Ireneusz Opacki, "Rapsod ostatni, rapsod pierwszy," in: *Prace ofiarowane Henrykowi Markiewiczowi*, ed. Tomasz Weiss (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1984), p. 164; Anna Kamińska, "Bema pamięci żałobny-rapsod," in: *Cypriana Norwida kształt prawdy i miłości. Analizy i interpretacje*, ed. Stanisław Makowski (Warszawa: WSiP, 1986), p. 41.



The style of *Bema pamięci...* is, on the one hand, elevated and archaic (“*polan*,” “*zemdlałe*,” “*powleczem*,” etc.), on the other, innovative in discovering new meanings (“*topory poblekitniałe od nieba*,” “*łuki pod-niebne*,” etc.). Hence it is easy to fall into the trap of either excessively archaizing the poem, as did Watson Kirkconnell, or modernising its style, as did Jerzy Strzetelski:

WK:

I.

Wherefore departest thou, Spirit, with hands on thy mail'd bosom folded,  
Carried with torches aflare, round thy knees, as thou journeyest sleeping?  
Green is thy sword, set in laurel, and wasted our tapers with weeping;  
Grieved is thy falcon; thy charger his prancings in grief has withheld.  
Weaving and waving, the fluttering banners out-fly,  
Spread like a wandering army with tents in the blue of the sky;  
Long sob the trumpets in mourning; and standards in trembling remembrance  
Drift on the hills with a drooping of reverent wings,  
Dragons and lizards and birds pierced with spears is their semblance,  
Each like a dark fatal fantasy pierced with a spear where it clings...

...

III

Boys beat in mourning with axes, by blue of the sky made cerulean;  
Serving-grooms clang upon shields, by the shafts of the sunrise made ruddy;  
Over the cottages yonder there floats a broad banner Herculean,  
Held, you might say, like the shaft on a bow, for an enterprise bloody.

(*GT*, p. 59)

JS:

I

Why, Shade, with hands crossed on your breastplate, are you riding away  
By the light of torches, which play with sparks about your knees?  
Your sword is green with laurels and today sprinkled  
with the weeping of funeral candles;  
Your falcon tries to fly away and your charger raises its foot like a dancer.  
The ensigns stream, stream out and one on another,  
Like moving tents of armies taking rest in the sky,  
The long trumpets sob and the standards  
Bow from above with their drooping wings,  
Like dragons, griffins and birds wounded by spears...  
Like the many ideas you were ever pursuing with your spears.

...

III

The boys clang on their battle-axes blue with the blue of the sky,

The serving-boys beat on shields rust-red in the torches glare;  
 The huge flag billowing among the smoke,  
 Leans, as if with the point of its spear against the arches of heaven.

(*IPL*, p. 138)

The difficulty consists in rendering both aspects of Norwid's text: its linguistic archaism and modernity (the fourth commandment). The style is also very vivid. Some researchers have even described that work as a relief, on which the slowly proceeding mourners are presented with enormous meticulousness (a tear, fluttering pennants, etc.). When the poem is treated narratively (e.g., by Strzetelski), it is, unfortunately, easy to form constructions expanded with prepositions (leaning, as if with the point of its spear against the arches of heaven) or to complete the poem with relative pronouns (e.g., "the clatter of which, torches, which play with sparks"), which spoils the poetic character of the image. I have the impression that in the translation by Borchartd, the description is both vivid and poetic, although it could be even more vivid and more poetic (as was done, e.g., by Mikoś). Fortunately, the translator carefully retains the graphic solutions, which, as usual in Norwid's writings, fulfil a vital role in enhancing the poem's content.

Vital in the poem are the attributes that change Bem from a soldier into a knight, and an old-Polish knight at that. Hence the character is archaized and mythologised through the elements of his armaments (the sword, although in reality, he wielded a sabre), animals accompanying him (a steed, a falcon), and banners and flags. Like most translators, Borchartd has little trouble with the precise reconstruction of those attributes – she uses, e.g., the word "steed" instead of "horse." Unlike the others, she has equally little trouble rendering the essential feature of the poem – i.e., its vagueness with respect to the specification of the poetic vision. One thing that is not known is in what rite (Christian, old-Polish, Islamic?) the funeral ceremony presented in the poem is held (Bem was an Islamic convert), and further, it is very difficult to imagine how the knight is being buried. Is he riding on horseback? Carried on a chariot? Was he placed on a funeral pyre? Arms folded on the chest in "Ręce złamawszy na pancierz," like a figure on a sarcophagus, suggest he was carried. In turn, sparks from torches near the knees in "skrami grają około twych kolan" indicate rather an erect figure riding a horse. "Odjeżdżasz" ["you are riding away"] also suggests the knight's vertical pose, yet the reference to falling into the grave in "aż kiedy stoczyć się przyjdzie do grobu" may relate not only to falling from a horse but also throwing a corpse down from the pyre. All these specifications of Norwid's poetic vision have been and still are battled over by Norwidologists. I am

certain that all of them are justified because all have been inscribed in a poem that is purposefully vague. Meanwhile, some translators are either too detailed (Czerniawski) or too general (Kirkconell, Michael,<sup>95</sup> Strzetelski, Dębska) in rendering Norwid's vision. The issue is for the translation to give its reader the same possibility of many specifications of the portrayed world as does the original (see the most important commandment in translating Norwid). I think that Borchartd managed to observe it. In any case, this will be judged by the reader, as will all her other translations of Norwid. To remain objective, I am confronting her work with a translation of "Bema pamięci żałobny-rapsod" by Adam Czerniawski, which I judge to be the best one so far.

DB: TO BEM'S MEMORY A FUNERAL-RHAPSODY

*...Iusiurandum patri datum usque  
ad hanc diem ita servavi...*

...The oath given to my father I have kept to this day...

Hannibal

I

Why depart, o Shadow, arms folded on armor,  
While torches play with their sparks round your knees? –  
Your sword greened with laurel, wet from candles weeping,  
Falcon takes flight, your horse kicks its foot like a dancer.  
–Pennants sway, sway, be-swaying each other,  
Like mobile tents of armies encamped in the skies.  
Long trumpets choking with sobs, and banners  
Bow with their wings down-cast from above,  
Like spear-pierced dragons, lizards and birds...  
Like scores of ideas you caught with your spears...

II

Maidens in mourning are walking: some raise in their arms  
Fragrant sheaves that the wind tears apart high above;  
Others collect in conches each tear that falls from each face,  
Others, still seek the road built ages ago...  
Others smash to the ground huge vessels of clay,  
Whose clatter, while cracking, engenders distress.

III

Boys strike with their axes blued by the sky,  
Soldier youths bang shields russet from lights;  
A banner, enormous, that sways in the smoke,  
The point of its spear, you'd say, leans on the sky's dome...

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95 Maurice Albert Michael, *PA*, pp. 317, 319.

## IV

They enter a gorge and descend... then emerge into moonlight,  
 Turn black against the sky and are brushed with cold glitter  
 Which like a star, unable to fall, skims their blades.  
 Their chorus went silent, then splashed out like a wave...

## V

On – and on – til it's time to tumble into the grave  
 That lurks cross the road, and black chasms we shall see,  
 Which to cross, Humanity will not find a way,  
 With a spear, like old spur, we'll push your steed there...

## VI

And we'll drag the cortege, troubling sleep-laden forts,  
 Hitting their gates with urns, whistling through notches in axes,  
 'til Jericho's walls go tumbling like logs,  
 Swooned hearts will revive – nations cleanse mold from their eyes...  
 .....  
 On – and on – –

ACz: *A FUNERAL RHAPSODY IN MEMORY OF GENERAL BEM*  
*Iusiurandum patri datum usque ad hanc diem ita servavi...*  
 Hannibal

## I

– Why ride away, Shadow, hands broken on the mail,  
 Sparks of torches playing around your knees –?  
 The laurel-green sword is spattered with candle tears,  
 The falcon strains, your horse jerks its foot like a dancer.  
 – Pennons in the wind blow against each other  
 Like moving tents of nomad armies in the sky.  
 Long trumpets shake in sobbing and banners  
 Bow their wings which droop from above  
 Like spear-pierced dragons, lizards and birds...  
 Like the many ideas you caught with your spear...

## II

– Mourning maidens go, some lifting their arms  
 Filled with scent-sheaves torn apart by the wind;  
 Some gather into shells tears breaking from the cheek,  
 Some still seek the road that was built centuries ago...  
 Others dash against the ground huge pots of clay  
 Whose clatter in cracking yet adds to the sorrow.

## III

– Boys strike hatchets blue against the sky,  
 Serving lads strike light-rusted shields,

A mighty banner sways amid the smoke, its spear-point  
Leaning, as it were, against the arcs of heaven...

## IV

They enter and drown in the valley... emerge in the moonlight  
Blackening the sky, an icy glare brushes them  
And glimmers on blades of spears like a star unable to fall,  
The chant suddenly ceased, then splashed out like a wave...

## V

On – on – till it's time to roll into the grave:  
We shall behold a black chasm lurking beyond the road  
(A n d t o c r o s s i t h u m a n i t y w i l l n o t f i n d a w a y )  
Over the edge we shall spear-thrust your steed  
As though with a rusting spur...

## VI

And we'll drag the procession, saddening slumber-seized cities,  
Battering gates with urns, whistling on blunted hatchets,  
Till the walls of Jericho tumble down like logs,  
Swooned hearts revive – nations gather the must from their eyes...

.....  
On – on – – (CKNP/Ps, 11–13)

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Tomasz Korpysz

## Cyprian Norwid: On Definitions and Defining

**Abstract:** Referencing Stefan Kołaczkowski's well-known phrase about Norwid being a "poet of definitions," the author of the article notes that poetic definitions are in fact one of the more characteristic linguistic devices Norwid enthusiastically uses, as evidenced by, for example, their frequency (around 300 definitional phrases in Norwid's broadly understood poetic *oeuvre*). The body of the article, however, is devoted to Norwid's theoretical statements on definitions and defining, which are a testament to his metalinguistic and metatextual awareness. Korpysz's analyses lead to the conclusion that Norwid was aware of the diversity and variability of definition types and their dependence on various external factors, including the subject constructing them. Another characteristic feature of Norwid's reflection on definitions and defining is his emphasis on the incompatibility of many objective definitions with the everyday use and understanding of words, as well as his critical sensitivity to the many inadequate, general, or narrow definitions functioning in the linguistic sphere.

**Keywords:** Cyprian Norwid, poetry, definition, defining in poetry, linguistics

An artistic text is almost always not only a reflection of its author's unique worldview, but also an example of a non-standard, specific use of language. This is especially true of texts by writers who have an advanced linguistic awareness, who are known for their exceptionally creative approach to language – like Cyprian Norwid. The author of *Assunta* "consciously crosses the boundaries of linguistic norms,"<sup>1</sup> and has an authentic interest in language, linguistic innovation and creativity, as well as the tendency to challenge the thoughtless use and abuse of language.<sup>2</sup> His criticism of the semantic and axiological devaluation of words and the "simply passionate reinterpretation of concepts related to

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1 Jadwiga Puzynina, "Prace nad słownikiem języka Norwida," in: Jadwiga Puzynina, *Słowo Norwida* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1990), p. 17.

2 As Stefan Sawicki writes, Norwid "was outraged ... by the semantic deviation of a word, the pressure to give it a superficial and false meaning, and the heedless acceptance and preservation thereof." Stefan Sawicki, "Norwida walka z formą," in: Stefan Sawicki, *Norwida walka z formą* (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1986), p. 9.

individual words”<sup>3</sup> is a common good both in the context of Norwidology and, more broadly, the history of Polish literature.<sup>4</sup>

Norwid’s attitude towards language is revealed in his peculiar orthography, numerous and multi-level emphases, his characteristic hyphenated constructions, his word-forming neologisms, different types of word-play, his use of polysemy and homonymy, evocation of subtle phraseological connotations, shifting accentuations and style characteristics, neo-semanticisms, delexicalization of phraseological relations, archaization and colloquialization (inflectional, syntactic and semantic), etymologization, creation and use of significant onomastics, his violation of established syntactic structures and, finally, his frequent use of silences, allusions, parables, and irony. It is also visible in different types of metalinguistic and metatextual expressions – numerous musings on words, texts and languages, including questions about meaning and considerations of the meanings of terms and expressions.

Within the realm of Norwid’s semantic explorations (he was once rightfully called “the poet of definitions”),<sup>5</sup> his so-called poetic definitions occupy a special place, which directly (albeit in an abbreviated and fragmentary, even metaphorical way) point to his – generally atypical, subjective and contextual – way of seeing some element of reality or language. Critical treatments of Norwid’s work often use the concept of *definicja*<sup>6</sup> [definition], or even *wiersz-*

- 3 Stefan Sawicki, “O ‘Śmierci’ Cypriana Norwida,” in: Sawicki, *Norwida walka z formą*, p. 88.
- 4 Radosław Pawelec points out that: “One of Norwidology’s oldest and least controversial theses is that for the author of *Rzecz o wolności słowa* [On the Freedom of Speech], language itself was ... the subject of art.” Radosław Pawelec, “Część prawdy o słowie ‘cały,’” in: *Studia nad językiem Cypriana Norwida*, ed. Jolanta Chojak and Jadwiga Puzynina (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 1990), p. 63.
- 5 Cf. Stefan Kołaczkowski, “Ironia Norwida,” *Droga*, No. 11 (1933): *Pamięci Cypriana Norwida*, p. 1009.
- 6 One of the first uses of the term *definicja* with regard to Norwid’s texts can be found in W. Gomulicki’s review in “Kurier Codzienny” from 1885 (No. 331–334) [quoting: Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki, “Pierwszy ‘odkrywca’ wielkości Norwida (Norwidowska ‘podróż’ Wiktora Gomulickiego),” in: *Norwid z perspektywy początku XXI wieku*, ed. Janusz Rohoziński (Pułtusk: Akademia Humanistyczna im. A. Gieysztor, 2003), p. 236]. It is worth noting that, in the series of dictionaries compiled by the Cyprian Norwid Language Dictionary Division at the University of Warsaw, the subject entry “(POETIC) EXPLICATIONS” identifies “statements in the form of definitions, in which the lexical entry appears as the core element being defined, regardless of whether these statements meet the criteria for a proper definition” (*Słownik języka Cypriana Norwida. Zeszyt próbny*, ed. Jolanta

*definicja*<sup>7</sup> [*poem-definition*]. Nevertheless, scholars employ those terms rather freely, figuratively even, to describe very different poetic expressions (both content-wise, and in terms of function and form). As Józef Fert writes, in these types of expressions “the act of defining appears to be subject to special rules which prioritise literary significance (expression) over methodological precision.”<sup>8</sup> In more recent studies, the expression *definicja poetycka* [*poetic definition*] is the term used to describe only select examples that have the characteristics of a definition.<sup>9</sup>

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Chojak, Jadwiga Puzynina, Ewa Teleżyńska, Ewa Wiśniewska (Warszawa: UW Wydział Polonistyki, 1988), p. 28. Cf. also: *Słownictwo etyczne Cypriana Norwida. Część 1.: Prawda, fałsz, kłamstwo*, ed. Jadwiga Puzynina (Warszawa, UW Wydział Polonistyki, 1993); *Słownictwo estetyczne Cypriana Norwida*, ed. Jolanta Chojak (Warszawa: UW Wydział Polonistyki, 1994); Ewa Teleżyńska, *Nazwy barw w twórczości Cypriana Norwida* (Warszawa, UW Wydział Polonistyki, 1994); Tomasz Korpysz, Jadwiga Puzynina, *Wolność i niewola w pismach Cypriana Norwida* (Warszawa, UW Wydział Polonistyki, 1998); Anna Kadyjewska, Tomasz Korpysz, Jadwiga Puzynina, *Chrześcijaństwo w pismach Cypriana Norwida* (Warszawa, UW Wydział Polonistyki, 2000).

- 7 Cf., e.g.: Ewa Wiśniewska, “Autorski metatekst w ‘Vade-mecum,’” in: *Studia nad językiem Cypriana Norwida*, p. 159.
- 8 Józef Fert, *Poeta sumienia. Rzecz o twórczości Norwida* (Lublin: TN KUL, 1993), p. 10. His attitude towards the listed concepts is visible also in the fact that they are often set off by disapproving quotation marks; writers use terms such as: “unique definition,” “pseudodefinition,” “quasi-definition” or “definition attempt” just as often. The adjective *poetycki* does not indicate the source from which a given phrase is taken (Norwidologists occasionally write about poetic definitions in prose and dramatic texts – cf., e.g., Irena Sławińska, “‘Ci gît artiste religieux,’” *Znak*, No. 7–8 (1960), p. 915) as much as it suggests the non-literal use of the noun *definicja*. Stefan Sawicki, in commenting on a well-known phrase from *Promethidion* about beauty, which is “the shape of love,” pointed out that, for example: “This definition is naturally metaphorical, poetic, and thus, ambiguous” (Stefan Sawicki, “Wstęp,” in: Cyprian Norwid, *Promethidion. Rzecz w dwóch dialogach z epilogiem*, introduction and ed. Stefan Sawicki (Kraków: Universitas, 1997), p. 14.
- 9 Cf. Tomasz Korpysz, “Definicje poetyckie jako problem badawczy (na przykładzie pism Cypriana Norwida),” in: *Semantyka tekstu artystycznego*, ed. Anna Pajdzińska, Ryszard Tokarski (Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS, 2001), pp. 333–346; Korpysz, “‘Człowiek bowiem cóż jest?... Cóż jest człowiek?’ O wybranych definicjach poetyckich Cypriana Norwida,” in: *Czytając Norwida 2*, ed. Sławomir Rzepczyński (Słupsk: Pomorska Akademia Pedagogiczna, 2003), pp. 175–186; Korpysz, “Norwida ‘wiersze-definicje,’” in: *Genologia Cypriana Norwida*, ed. Adela Kuik-Kalinowska (Słupsk: Pomorska Akademia Pedagogiczna, 2005), pp. 73–92; Korpysz, “Kilka uwag

There is no need here for a more precise analysis of the described phenomenon, but it is worth noting that Norwid's poetic definitions do not serve to objectively explain the meaning of a word unknown to the reader, or to familiarise him or her with some element of reality. Rather, their purpose is to redefine well-known words and point out their unobvious and/or original, long-forgotten (sometimes also obscured or deliberately manipulated) semantic aspects of which we are generally unaware.<sup>10</sup> The underlying purpose of poetic definitions, then, is cognitive and communicative, but they are simultaneously expressive and impressive, while ordinary definitions are usually of a stipulative or regulatory character. The elements that make up a poetic definition and its structure often also depend on the immediate syntactic and semantic context (and also on the rhythm and rhyme), which results in a great variety of the forms of these expressions. The scope of what is included within *definicja poetycka* is therefore not entirely clear. We can nevertheless ascertain that in the author's broadly understood poetic oeuvre (poems, narrative poems, and dramatic verse), there are nearly 300 different types of definition, many of which are definitions by negation. A little over 60 of them come from dramas, close to 100 from narrative poems, and around 130 from poems.

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As we can see from the brief observations above, Norwid's definitions, and especially his poetic definitions, are an interesting example of his thoughts on language, and are of much importance to scholars. We should nevertheless emphasise that the author of *Rzecz o wolności słowa* [*On the Freedom of Speech*] not only created poetic definitions and (less often) dictionary definitions as

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o definicjach poetyckich Cypriana Norwida (na przykładzie 'Sfinksa [II]'), "Poradnik Językowy, 2006, NB. 10, pp. 77–85; Korpysz, "Cyprian Norwid – 'poeta definicji.' Kilka problemów teoretycznych," in: *Poeta i sztukmistrz. O twórczości poetyckiej i artystycznej Norwida*, ed. Piotr Chlebowski (Lublin: TN KUL, 2007), pp. 249–286.

- 10 Stefan Sawicki points out that redefining is "Norwid's most radical semantic device" (Stefan Sawicki, "O 'Śmierci' Cypriana Norwida," p. 88). Of course, the poet does not change the original meaning in order to consolidate the new meaning in colloquial language, but rather, he does this so that a specific "poetic text, dulls the reader's vigilance and steers his thoughts, more effectively than through a different word choice, in the direction quite opposite than the one the commonly-accepted use of the word would indicate" (Stefan Sawicki, "O 'Śmierci' Cypriana Norwida). These types of structures are a result of Norwid's aforementioned disapproval of what happens with language and in language because of "constant stumbling upon dependency, a compulsion-based way of seeing things" (Sławińska, "Ci gît artiste religieux," p. 913).

well as other types of definition-like constructions, but also wrote theoretically about defining and definitions. In Norwid's writings, the noun *definicja* appears 16 times, the verb *definiować* [*to define* (imperfective)] – 3 times, *zdefiniować* [*to define* (perfective)] – twice, and the participle *zdefiniowany* [defined] – once (all of these uses, which are characteristic, come from prose texts).<sup>11</sup> Thus, although there are not very many critical analyses of this concept, they nevertheless constitute an interesting part of Norwid's metalinguistic and metatextual awareness – and at least for this reason they are worth mentioning and briefly describing.

The poet was aware that there are definitions that are, as it were, objective, formulated by authorities and reflecting the state of scientific knowledge of some field of study – what today we would call “encyclopaedic” definitions. In his essay “*Boga-Rodzica*” *pieśń ze stanowiska historyczno-literackiego odczytana* [“*Mother of God*” *A Song Read from a Historico-Literary Standpoint*], Norwid appears to have called them, with a slight hint of sarcasm, “definicje akademickie” (PWsz VI, 504) [academic definitions] – but he pointed out that they often do not correspond with contemporary world knowledge and the convictions of ordinary language users.<sup>12</sup> Consequently, they do not always become an element of collective consciousness, and theoretical knowledge of a definition does not translate into an everyday understanding and usage of the term, and, indirectly, has no effect on man's worldview and self-conduct. A definition that is too theoretical and unrelated to general life experience is not necessarily at fault for this disparity;<sup>13</sup> more often, the blame should be assigned to those who do not try to expand their objective knowledge, do not know how to, or do not want to adhere to it in their conduct. In a letter to Maria Trębicka from 2[–3] January 1846, the poet writes: “to jedna szkoda, że *definicja* nie jest jeszcze przekonaniem i sądem!” (DW X, 69) [it is a pity that a *definition* is not yet conviction and judgement], emphasising the difference between objective knowledge, symbolised by the definition, and the colloquial, subjective one, which influences human convictions and attitudes in a much more powerful

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11 The noun *definicja* is often not strictly terminological, and only means “description, characteristic.” Similarly, the verbs (*z*)*definiować* sometimes only mean “to describe, specify, interpret, explain, elaborate.”

12 This does not mean, however, that Norwid did not value definitions based on objective scientific knowledge. We can deduce from his relatively frequent remarks on the topic of definitions, deemed inadequate for different reasons, that he appreciated the importance and value of definitions that properly convey the essence of things.

13 See *infra* for the discussion of such “academic” definitions.

way. The phrase “to jedna szkoda” [it is a pity] is characteristic here, suggesting a negative assessment of the *status quo*.

As we can see, Norwid took notice, emphasised, and occasionally negatively assessed the difference between the objective, scientific definition of concepts, and their common understanding and use. Moreover, he pointed out that, in certain texts and situations, such differentiation – in particular, refraining from making clear distinctions which are based on unequivocal scientific definitions – is quite necessary. In his lectures on Juliusz Słowacki, for example, Norwid writes: “Umysł francuski ma do siebie, iż wyściga się, nie powiedziałbym: czynem, lecz praktyką” (PWsz VI, 423) [The French mind has a way of competing I would not say: with action, but with practice], after which he cuts this topic of discussion short and concludes: “Czyn a praktyka to dwie rzeczy, których definicje i różnica nie obowiązują nas w tym momencie” (PWsz VI, 423) [Deed and practice are two things, whose definitions and differences do not bind us at the moment].

The author of *Quidam* was aware that every person has a somewhat different view and understanding of the world and, as a result, understands and defines the words that comprise this world differently. What is interesting is that he also stressed a concept which is relevant to contemporary cognitive linguistics – namely, that understanding is clearly subject-oriented, individual and subjective; it is influenced by such factors as broadly understood cultural contexts, communicative situations, as well as level of education, knowledge, personal experience with the subject, linguistic competence, unique point of view, and even social status, position held, or profession. In one of his letters to Michał Kleczkowski from 1858, the poet writes: “Talenta Twe praktyczne, i doświadczenie, i stopień Twój każą Ci inaczej definiować życie, mnie inaczej.” (DW XI, 222) [Your practical skills, experience and your rank compel you to define life differently than I define it]. In order to construct proper definitions, however, a certain degree of objectivity, or at least a certain perspective with regard to the object of definition is required, for, as he points out in the lectures on Juliusz Słowacki: “najłatwiej definiować to, co w oddali” (PWsz VI, 408) [it is easiest to define that, which is at some distance].

In a few, “metadefinitional” quotes – so to speak – the poet indicates that a definition can be correct, or incorrect; it can adequately convey the actual state of things, but it can just as well not at all or only partly capture it, and as a result, falsify language, and obstruct the true, full picture of reality, making communication between people more difficult. In the essay *Prototypy Formy* [*Prototypes of Form*], when considering the question of squaring the circle, a problem proposed by ancient geometers, the poet writes, for example, that



the definition of the circle used thus far is “jednostronna” [“one-sided”] and “niedokończona” [“unfinished”]. It is the resulting insufficient understanding of the essence of the circle (and not any objective, mathematical, or geometric obstacle) that is “powodem niemożebności rozwiązania kwadratury koła” (PWsz VI, 302) [the reason it is impossible to solve the circle’s square]. Because of this, “postać koła w następstwie takiej definicji albo w swoim promieniu tracić musi tam, gdzie ten się w atom prawie zlewa” (PWsz VI, 302) [the form of a circle must be lost either as a result of such a definition, or in its radius, where it nearly merges into atom]. Similarly, according to Norwid, grammatical definitions of parts of speech which are incorrect or recalled too rarely to be common knowledge are the reason it was never taken into account that silence should be considered a separate part of speech. In his essay *Milczenie* [*Silence*], the poet asks: “jak się to zrobiło, że cała jedna część - mowy jest opuszczoną we wszystkich gramatykach języków wszystkich?” (PWsz VI, 231) [how did it happen, that a whole entire part-of-speech was abandoned in all grammars of all languages?] and simultaneously answers his own question: “Czy nie byłoby to z przyczyny, iż nie nazbyt często oneż gramatyki dają definicję - części - mowy?”<sup>14</sup> (PWsz VI, 231) [Could it be because those same grammars all too often define - parts - of - speech ?].

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14 Here we should emphasise that Norwid makes a meritorious error, because *część mowy* [*part of speech*] already had an exclusively terminological, grammatical meaning in the eighteenth century (cf. Jadwiga Puzynina, “‘Milczenie’ Norwida,” in: *Semantyka milczenia 2. Zbiór studiów*, ed. Kwiryna Handke (Warszawa: Slawistyczny Ośrodek Wydawniczy, 2002), p. 24; however, in his work, the poet consciously and rather consistently elaborates (not only in the essay *Milczenie*) on his understanding of the concept of *mowa* [*speech*]. In his opinion, it encompasses different types of communication and transmission of information – also non-verbal communication. As a result, in the sphere of what we might call “speech,” silence (leaving things unsaid) and quiet are also somewhat paradoxically included. The important phrases: “I wtedy to ja, wzięwszy mój łzawy różaniec, / Zmówiłem na nim pacierz – potężnym milczeniem” (*Sieroty*, PWsz I, 8) [And then it was I, taking my tearful rosary, / who said a prayer over it – with mighty silence] and “to nie dla ciebie ta milcząca mowa” (*Noc*, PWsz I, 9) [this silent speech is not for you] already appear in two of Norwid’s early poems. In the essay *O idei reprezentacji*, in turn, Norwid writes: “ten prawdziwie mędrce jest, czyje nie tylko słowa i okrzyki, ale i milczenie nawet głos ma i mówi” (PWsz VII, 54) [truly wise is he, whose not only words and cries, but even silence has a voice and speaks]. It is worth adding that the author of *Assunta* – again, paradoxically – occasionally writes about speech that does not communicate anything

In a letter to Ludwik Mierosławski (from April 1856), Norwid writes with a distinctly critical reserve about how Polish society (specifically, Polish émigré society) does not take the trouble to refine or elaborate on the precise meaning, or define important words and concepts, and thus misses the correct, in-depth analysis and understanding that would have allowed them to accept a single, common interpretation and resulting homogeneous vision of the world and attitude towards it. This causes unnecessary arguments and divisions and, above all, an improper approach to certain phenomena, for example, requiring “*uszanowania a priori rzeczy, których się nie dało sobie trudności zdefiniować i podciągnąć pod czytelne prawa litery*” [an *a priori* respect for things that one could not be pained to define and bring within the clear rule of *letters*] (DW XI, 57). When writing about the amnesty announced by the Russian Embassy and commenting on the reaction to it in a letter to Michał Kleczkowski from 1856, the poet again returns to the Polish émigrés who are divided and incapable of uniting, even in the name of higher goals. This time not just with reserve, but even with a palpable resignation he claims:

*Amnestia* tak nazwana jest formalnym na piśmie ogłoszeniem tego, co było od lat tyłu – kto prosi – ambasada daje lub nie daje – jak chce. Nie jest to polityczne uznanie całości jakiejś, przebacząc całości. ... Emigracja że nigdy nic, więc i tu jako *ciało zbiorowe* nie odparła tego ani zdefiniować nawet zdobyła się – tylko tak, jak to u nas wszystko!... (DW XI, 125)

[So-called *amnesty* is only the formal announcement in writing of what has been going on for so many years – when one asks for it – the embassy grants or does not

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important, and so... is silent, for example: “Rzadkim jest, arcyzadkim człek, co mówi z człekiem / Tak, iż słyhać mówienie treść powiadające – / Jedni albowiem, mówiąc z kimś, na przykład z księciem / O ostrodze książęcej, będą blask jej głosić / Jak słońca tarcz, a przeto oni nic nie mówią / I t y l k o z k i m ś g a d a j ą , sami nie mówiąc nic. / Przeciwnie, drudzy, niebądź z kim gdy mówią, zawsze / Ze sobą są jedynie w gwarze, nic nie biorąc / Do nich idącej treści ni prawdy, a przeto / I ci milczą... i oto milczenie jest wielkie, / I oto, mówię, cisza jest na świecie” (*Kleopatra i Cezar*, PWSz V, 162) [Rare, very rare, is a man, who speaks with another man / in a way, that you can hear the content of what he says – / Because some, when speaking with someone, for example with a prince / About the prince’s spur, will proclaim it shines / Like the sun’s shield, and therefore they do not say anything / A n d t h e y o n l y t a l k t o s o m e o n e , without saying anything themselves. / Conversely, others, regardless of with whom they speak, always / Are themselves only in the din, taking nothing away / Of the content and truth spoken to them, and so / They, too, say nothing... and here their silence is great, / And this I say, is the silence in the world].

grant it – as they wish. It is not the political recognition of a whole, or forgiveness of a whole. ... Émigrés treat it casually, so they, too, as a *collective body* do not refute or attempt to define it – like everything, when it comes to us!...]

In Norwid's opinion, definitions are often quite narrow and/or quite simple, based on a superficial look at elements of reality, which does not allow them to grasp the essence of phenomena. In the essay *Do krytyków* [*To the Critics*], which served as the introduction to the mystery *Krakus*, Norwid wrote the following about his contemporary literary critics:

to, co podają oni za definicję tragedii starożytnej, jest tylko po prostu znajomością warunków r o z k ł a d u tragedii, ale bynajmniej odpowiedzią na pytanie zarówno szanowne, jak nieakademickie, czyli na pytanie: 'c o t o j e s t t r a g e d i a ?' (PWsz IV, 161)

[what they give as the definition of ancient tragedy is simply knowledge of the rules that govern its c o m p o s i t i o n, but it is by no means an answer to the both excellent and non-academic question: 'w h a t i s a t r a g e d y ?'].

Similarly, the fact that some nineteenth-century literary works are considered to be epics is, according to Norwid, a result of the general use of an improper definition of this genre. Meanwhile, as he writes directly in his already partially quoted "Boga-Rodzica," "sens potoczny" [the colloquial sense], the ordinary, everyday understanding and use of words, is one thing, and their more profound contemplation, a different thing ("ścisłejszy sąd" [closer scrutiny]):<sup>15</sup>

Mniemanie jest moje, iż pomimo akademickich definicji i skrzętnych poszukiwań, nie ma jednak lud żaden onej właściwej Epopei, która skarbem jest Greków. Są zaprawdę arcypiękne i na pozór podobne do Epopei twory, to późniejsze, to starożytne, tak iż one, w sensie potocznym mówiąc, za należące do tegoż samego dzieła rzędu liczy się. Nie przyjmuje ich jednakże ścisłejszy sąd. Obraz z nich literacki złożyć można, lecz poddać pod krytykę niebezpieczna. (PWsz VI, 504)

[It is my opinion, that despite academic definitions and diligent searches, humanity has no proper Epic, that treasure of the Greeks. There are indeed works that are very beautiful and seemingly similar to the Epic, some more modern, and others ancient, and they thus, in the colloquial sense, belong to the same order of works. However, they are not accepted under closer scrutiny. They can be assembled into a literary picture, but it would be dangerous to submit it to critical review].<sup>16</sup>

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- 15 Once again, we see Norwid's critical thoughts on how objective, accurate knowledge does not match up with the view of reality and resulting attitude towards the world which is subjective, emotional, and based on not entirely rational premises.
- 16 It is worth noting the indirect criticism of "akademickość" [academicism] in both of the above quotes, which is understood, it would seem, as sterile speculation which is quite out of touch with life, and purely theoretical. In the second example, an

According to Norwid, the inadequacy of the definitions established by language users could also be related to the altering of non-linguistic reality and especially the natural development of literature and genre forms. Norwid writes about this in a later part of the above-quoted fragment of his musings on epic poems. Namely, he reconstructs the following characteristic of this genre: “Epopcja jest utworem nastroju wysokiego opiewającym bohaterstwo o c z y n n o ś c i j e d n e j i wybranej jako określnik całości jakiej sprawy obchodzącej naród i epokę” (PWsz VI, 505) [An Epic is a work which highly extols the heroism of o n e a c t i v i t y chosen to determine the whole of some matter relevant to the nation and era], after which he claims: “powyższa definicja znacznych rozszerzeń dziś wymaga” (PWsz VI, 505) [the above definition requires considerable expansions today]. One such “expansion” is the stipulation that the term Epic also be applied to works “extolling:” “dzielność jakowego ludu, a dzielność jest to jego praca i nabożeństwo” (PWsz VI, 505) [the bravery of the people, bravery being their work and devotion].

The poet also points out that occasionally an incorrect definition of some concept or term is simply the result of an improper understanding and definition of discreet words, or words that are otherwise semantically related to them. In the essay *O deklamacji* [About Declamation] he writes:

Mniemano – śmiem dodać: m n i e m a n o d o t ą d – iż tak nazwana deklamacja jest jakowymś umiejętnym wygłaszania-sposobem, i wystarczającej przeto d e f i n i c j i tej pracy napotkać trudno. Poszło to z błędnych o s ł o w i e , r y t m i e i o p r o z i e p o j ę ć . (PWsz VI, 482–483)

[It was alleged – I might add: it was a l l e g e d t h u s f a r – that the so-called declamation is somehow a skilful way-of-delivering, and therefore it is difficult to find an adequate d e f i n i t i o n of this activity. This is on account of misconceptions about words, rhythm and prose].

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additional sign (besides the interpretation of the entire fragment) of ironic scepticism could be the emphasis on the phrase *akademickie definicje* [academic definitions] – a relatively frequent indication of Norwid’s irony (cf. for example Barbara Subko, “O podkreśleniach Norwidowskich – czyli o podtekstach metatekstu,” *Studia Norwidiana*, Vols. 9–10 (1991–1992), pp. 45–64). Norwid also wrote a few times about “akademiki” [academicians] and “akademickość” [academicism] with distinct critical detachment. For example, in the well-known poem “Posiedzenie” (“Fraszka”) [“A Meeting”] (“A Bagatelle”) he presented the meeting of the “akademiki” [academicians] as unproductive and in no way pertaining to reality (PWsz I, 171).

Sometimes Norwid also criticises what he simply considers to be a linguistically incorrect way of constructing a definition. In a letter to Karol Ruprecht from [October? 1867] he points out with a clearly ironic reserve that: “Definicja, jaką Minister daje co do przeszłości Narodu polskiego, że ‘to był sobie szelm a tęgi,’ może słuszna, ale złożona z wyrazów cudzoziemskich: ‘tęgi’ z łaciny, a ‘szelm a’ od Niemców” (PWsz IX, 314) [The definition the Minister gives to the past of the Polish Nation, that ‘it was a burly-rogue,’ may be correct, but it is composed of foreign words: ‘burly’ from Latin, and ‘rogue’ from the Germans].<sup>17</sup>

In [*Notatki etno-filologiczne*] [*Ethno-Philological Notes*] one can find Norwid’s thoughts on his era’s rejection of the sacrum, and in general all that is immaterial, which exceeds the earthly realm of here and now. The poet clearly defies such an attitude and on the one hand suggests that those who do not outright reject the idea should specify, or define exactly what “nadnaturalne” [supernatural] is; on the other hand – he talks ironically about the limitations of “naturalizm” [naturalism] and appeals to the supporters of the idea to precisely define its basic concepts. It is worth quoting this entire fragment:

Nadnaturalne – które ze scenerii wyłączają, a wyłączają przez obronność swojego serio – nadnaturalne (o ile do sumień należy, a należy) zdefiniowane być winno, skoro kto, jak niżej podpisany, policza nadnaturalność w pracę scjencyficzną. Nadnaturalne – ‘le surnaturel’ – istnieje w tym, iż wszystko, co jest naturalne, jest we względzie swoim doskonałe.

Stąd to naturalizm odsyła do kontemplacji natury i do rekreacji umysłu, ale nie definiuje, ani gdzie odsyła, ani po co? (PWsz VII, 382–383)

[The supernatural – which they exclude from the picture, and exclude to preserve the appearance of dignity – supernatural (if it belongs to the conscience, which

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17 In light of Norwid’s well-known critical remarks about “purytanizm” [puritanism] (also linguistic [puritanism] – see, for example PWsz IX, 95 and 131), the quoted fragment might be somewhat surprising. We should nevertheless remember the poet’s polemic temperament, which resulted in many inconsistencies in his expressions – sometimes very clearly functionalised based on contextual circumstances. The quoted fragment is also an emotional polemic expression. It is worth noting, by the way, that Norwid improperly indicates that *tęgi* comes from Latin. This expression comes from the Proto-Slavic *\*tęgb* ‘hard, stiff, taut,’ which comes from the verb *\*tęgti*, *\*tęgo* ‘to pull,’ which is a continuation of the Proto-Indo-European *\*tengh* ‘to pull, stretch, strain.’ Cf. Wiesław Boryś, *Słownik etymologiczny języka polskiego* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2005), p. 631; cf. Krystyna Długosz-Kurczabowa, *Nowy słownik etymologiczny języka polskiego* (Warszawa: PWN, 2003), p. 77.

it does) should be defined, if one, like the undersigned, considers the supernatural to be in the sphere of science.

The supernatural – ‘le surnaturel’ – exists in that everything that is natural is perfect in its own right. Hence it is naturalism that directs us towards the contemplation of nature and recreation of the mind, but does not define where it directs us, or why?].

We should add as a sidenote that in Norwid’s writings he is often critical of those, who limit their horizons to only material, sensual reality. In *Promethidion* one of the interlocutors – “generał jazdy” [the general of the cavalry] – calls mysticism “urojenie głów beczynnych” (DW IV, 120) [the phantasm of idle heads], which is decidedly opposed by Wiesław and Konstanty, who says: “– Jeżeli mistycyzm jest to urojenie / Lub urojenie tylko mistycyzmem, / To nie wiem, za co słowo to: *sumienie* / Miałby dotyczyć kto z was ostracyzmem” (*Promethidion*, DW IV, 120) [If mysticism is phantasm / Or phantasm merely mysticism / Then I don’t know why the word *conscience*: / Would evoke ostracism for any of you]. In the footnote to this fragment Norwid ironically claims, among other things, that: “Są ludzie, którzy wszystko, co jest *nad* rozum, za *przeciw*-rozumne biorą – tym sposobem nazywawszy mistycyzmem wszystko, czego się zgłębić nie chce (bo to praca) ani przyjąć (bo to pokora), są już na szczycie doskonałości” [There are people who consider everything that is *beyond* reason, to be *counter*-reason – this way, having labelled “mysticism” everything they do not want to explore (because of work) or accept (because of humility), they are already at the zenith of perfection] (*Promethidion*, DW IV, 120, footnote).<sup>18</sup>

To understand Norwid’s often-stressed idea of language as a semi-divine creation and the related ethical aspect of the word (and the Word),<sup>19</sup> there is

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18 Elsewhere the poet writes: “Nie wszystko co *nad*-logiczne jest *przeciw*-logicznym” (DW X, 264) [Not everything that is *beyond*-logical is *counter*-logical]. A well-known example of the poet’s critical assessment is the polemic and ironic poem “Mystycyzm” [“Mysticism”] (PWsz II, 46).

19 It is worth recalling three characteristic poetic quotes illustrating Norwid’s convictions about the sacred origins of language: “Słowa człowiek nie wywiódł ze siebie sam – ale słowo było z Człowieka wywołane i dlatego dwie przyczyny tam uczestniczyły: jedna – w *sumieniu* człowieka, druga – w *harmonii* praw Stworzenia” (*Rzecz o wolności słowa*, DW IV, 213) [Man did not derive *the word* from himself – but the *word* was brought out of Man and this is why two reasons participated therein: *one* – in the *conscience* of man, the other – in the *harmony* of the laws of Creation]; “Stąd to nie są nasze – pieśni nasze, / Lecz Boskiego coś bierą w się” (*Kolebka pieśni*, PWsz II, 115) [Hence, these are not ours – our songs, / But they have something of the Divine]; “Sam głosu nie mam – Panie – dałeś słowo, / Lecz wypowiedzieć któż ustami zdoła?” (“Modlitwa,” PWsz I, 136) [I myself have no

an essential fragment from his lectures on Juliusz Słowacki, where the author of *Rzecz o wolności słowa* writes: “Definicja słów, iż te są, aby wyrażały ludzi: niewystarczająca!” (PWsz VI, 405) [The definition of words, that they exist to express people: insufficient!]. In a later part of the text – emphasising man’s responsibility for the language that he uses, and the important consequences that this language has for interpersonal exchange and non-linguistic reality in general – this is how he explains his view: “wyrazy i słowa nasze są także i na to, że nas sądzą, nie tylko że nas wyrażają” (PWsz VI, 429) [our expressions and words are not just used to express ourselves, but also to judge us]. In this same quote he emphasises that language is not only a communication tool, a means of expressing thoughts and feelings; it is also that, which in some way defines every person. The way language is used says much about the sender of a given message, about his vision of the world, value system, attitude towards other people; the language, that a person uses, can be the basis on which he is judged (after a certain time by other people, as well as by God – who makes the last judgement).<sup>20</sup>

Interestingly, Norwid was aware that there was definition by negation, which by enumerating what (how) an object is not, can also – at least, partially – indicate, what (how) it actually is. In the essay *O broszurze “Polska i panslawizm”* [On the Brochure “Poland and Pan-Slavism”] the poet quotes (or rather, paraphrases) a fragment of the article by Dionizja Poniatowska née Iwanowska *Polska i panslawizm* [Poland and Pan-Slavism]: “Niepodległość Polski jest to?... wolność nie -należenia do zbrodni międzynarodowych i nie -pomagania... nie -podnoszenia... nie -podwajania... nie -przeistaczania... nie -roztaczania... i nie -przyłożenia ręki” (PWsz VII, 188) [Poland’s independence is?... the freedom of not-taking-part in international crimes and not-helping... not-raising... not-duplicating... not-transforming... not-spreading... and not-lending-a-hand...], and then, commenting on it, points out that even “z definicji negatywnej” [from the negative definition] one can introduce something “na pole twierdzącego pojęcia wolności” (PWsz VII, 188) [to the area of the affirmative concept of freedom].

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voice – Lord – you created the word, / But who can express it using their mouth?]. A rich bibliography of works on sacredness and linguistic ethics in Norwid’s writing can be found in: Jadwiga Puzynina, “‘Słowo’ Norwida,” in: Puzynina, *“Słowo” poety*.

20 The quoted fragment echoes Norwid’s views on the sanctity of language and explicit objection to the behaviour of people who forget about this sacredness or consciously and intentionally disturb it.

Lastly it is also worth recalling two, not entirely clear, uses of the noun *definicja*. The first comes from a letter to Bronisław Zaleski from [after 15 June 1874]. Among other things, Norwid writes: “Jaka piękna myśl Goszczyńskiego funduszu Goszczyńskiego! / I jak pięknie postąpiła treść konkursu dramatycznego w definicjach swoich! / Pracując – postępują” (PWsz X, 27) [Goszczyński’s Goszczyński fund is such a beautiful idea! / And how beautifully the content of the dramatic competition advanced its definitions! / By working – they advance]. Neither the immediate context in the letter, nor the poet’s entire correspondence from this period provide an unambiguous interpretation of the quoted fragment. It could be that Norwid is referring to the events of two years prior, when he participated in the dramatic competition organised by Stanisław Koźmian – who was then the theatre director in Kraków. The poet received the information about this competition, its terms, the jury composition and prize amounts precisely from Bronisław Zaleski. Norwid returns to this competition, for which he wrote his light drama – *Pierścień Wielkiej-Damy* [*The Noble Lady’s Ring*], many times more in his correspondence: he bitterly laments the very fact that there is a competition with monetary prizes for the winners (cf. PWsz IX, 51), and he criticises the selection and competence of the jury members (cf. PWsz IX, 521). It could also be that the fragment actually refers to some other, yet unknown literary contest from a period closer to the time that the letter was written.<sup>21</sup> Regardless, in light of the poem attached to the letter “Spółcześni (odpowieź)” [“Contemporaries (A Reply)”] (cf. PWsz II, 211–213), his expressed opinion about the definitions of the “content” of the competition appears to be entirely ironic (and therefore his use of the adverb *pięknie* [*beautifully*] is also ironic) and those definitions (which Norwid is likely criticising) probably provide the exact terms of the competition.

In [*Notatki etno-filologiczne*] [*Ethno-Philological Notes*]], in turn, the author of *Wędrowny sztukmistrz* [*The Wandering Magician*] writes: “Bałwochwalstwo – uwielbienie jednego z przymiotów Bożych i właściwości Bożych, i uwylączniecie personalne. / (Złość i tego używała, ale to nie jest definicją)” (PWsz VII, 415) [*Idolatry* – the worship of one of God’s attributes and God’s qualities, and personal detachment. / (Anger employs this too, but this is not the definition)]. It is hard to say exactly, whether the noun *definicja* refers directly to the sentence

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21 In a comment on the quoted letter, Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki writes: “The ‘dramatic competition’ mentioned by the poet was launched in the spring of that year by the management of the Kraków theatre.” (PWsz X, 217).



about idolatry; but it most likely does. He may be referring to the charges against Christianity by different types of reformation movements and sects. They often exaggeratedly picked on some fragment of the Church's doctrine, some particular cult, some personification of God's name that originated from focusing on a chosen feature (Love, Truth, Justice, Mercy, etc.) and suggested that Christianity is, in fact, idolatry, because it worships a false God created in the bosom of the Church (an "idol") and not the real one-and-only Creator who transcends all definitions. "Złość" [Anger] would then be the metaphorical, or rather metonymic name of such "bad" theories based on false premises of the accusations, while Norwid's parenthetical remark would point to a sort of semantic abuse, because the quoted phrase (as we can suppose, sometimes raised as an argument against Christianity, and therefore a quasi-quote) is not a proper, adequate definition of "idolatry."<sup>22</sup>

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As we can see from the above considerations, Norwid not only created different types of definitional structures – which included, besides numerous poetic definitions, also unique, sometimes very arbitrary dictionary definitions (often found in his footnotes), such as: "Drumla – instrument brzęczący, na którym pospolicie grywają Cygani" [Drumla – a buzzing instrument commonly played by Gypsies] (*Wieczór w pustkach* [An Evening in Wilderness] PWSz I, 29 footnote), "Fibule, czyli upięcia szat" [Fibulae, or clothes pins] (*Dwa męczeństwa* [Two Martyrdoms] PWSz I, 120 footnote), "Daga – krótki miecz rzymski" [Daga – a short Roman sword] (*Juliusz Cezar* [Julius Caesar], PWSz IV, 245) – but he also theoretically considered the question of defining. In doing so, he noticed the variety and variability of the many types of definitions and their dependence on different kinds of external factors, including subject matter, the disparity between many objective definitions and the everyday understanding and use of the corresponding words, as well as the very existence of many inadequate definitions in common use. He devoted a considerable deal

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22 According to nineteenth-century dictionaries, *bałwochwalstwo* [idolatry] is "czczenie bałwanów, poganizm, pogaństwo ... przen.: ubóstwianie, niewolnicze uwielbienie" [the worship of idols, heathendom, paganism ... fig. worship, servile adoration] (Jan Karłowicz, Adam Kryński, Władysław Niedźwiedzki, *Słownik języka polskiego*, Vol. I: A–G, Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1900, p. 91); "służenie bałwanom, bożkom; cześć im oddawana" [serving effigies and idols; worship thereof] (*Słownik języka polskiego* ... ed. Aleksander Zdanowicz [et al.], Part I: A–O (Wilno: M. Orgelbrand, 1861), p. 47.

of attention to these incorrectly constructed, overly narrow or superficial definitions, pointing out certain reasons for their inappropriate construction (and, therefore, meaning). There is no way, of course, to draw any broad general conclusions about Norwid's practice of defining from the above-quoted "metadefinitional" remarks, but they are nevertheless interesting as yet another example of the poet's (meta)linguistic awareness and his established interest in his own and others' language, as well as his sense of responsibility for his words (and the Word).

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Agnieszka Ziółowicz

## The Aesthetic of Form in Norwid's Dramas

**Abstract:** Referring to Stefan Sawicki's findings, the author of the article notes that Norwid's contentions with form in his dramatic works are of two kinds: the poet rejects conventional, outdated forms, while constantly seeking a form of dramatic expression that would be capable of communicating authentic, profound content. As an example of this type of activity, she discusses Norwid's generic categories, characterised by substantial innovation, often combining, contrary to tradition, conflicting elements of dramatic expression. According to the author's findings, although it draws on various strains of the theatre tradition, it carries all the hallmarks of a creative experiment and does not fit into any of drama or theatre's known development paths. To better capture the nature of this experiment, the scholar proposes, in addition to other things, approaching his dramaturgy from a historical and chronological perspective, which is rarely done in Norwidology, but which allows the reconstruction of the evolution of Norwid's dramatic form. The author's diachronic view of Norwid-the-playwright's artistic path reveals certain regularities: Norwid's drama evolves on several planes simultaneously: from small dramatic forms to full-length works, from respecting the boundaries between comedy and tragedy, to their synthesis in the form of a "white tragedy," from forms rooted in the romantic convention to original solutions; from drama as a carrier of national ideas to drama, whose aim is civilizational synthesis.

**Keywords:** Cyprian Norwid, dramatic works, form of drama, theatre tradition, literary genetics

In Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Judgement* we read:

Yet in all beautiful art the essential thing is the form... .. hence this form is not, as it were, a thing of inspiration or the result of a free swing of the mental powers, but of a slow and even painful process of improvement, by which he seeks to render it adequate to his thought, without detriment to the freedom of the play of his powers.<sup>1</sup>

These words, which are the quintessence of Kant's aesthetic formalism – that is, his belief that the formal moment is constitutive for a work of art, because only form allows the work to be considered an artist's creation – have been cited for

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1 Immanuel Kant, *Kant's Critique of Judgement*, translated with introduction and notes by J.H. Bernard, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. revised (London, UK: Macmillan, 1914), p. 196, <https://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/1217>.

a reason, at the risk of ahistorical argumentation. In the context of Norwid's deliberations on the indicators of creativity as such, on the process of the creative act, its determinants, and finally its result – the form of a work of art (and this, as we know, is a very important theme of the writer's aesthetic reflection and creative practice)<sup>2</sup> – we cannot deny the vitality and relevance of the cited statements, although they are obviously not a direct commentary on Norwid's work. They are nevertheless an attempt to articulate and explore similar issues to those that were of interest to the author of *Vade-mecum*. Norwid's thoughts on form fall under two categories: critical and establishing. The first, which is undoubtedly more pronounced in his discursive works, shows us the poet's struggle with existing forms, a struggle characteristic of all of Norwid's works, in which, as Stefan Sawicki wrote: "we are dealing with the spirit of opposition and struggle: in relation to everything that is branded by perfunctory tradition, vapid convention, fascination with the external, passive submission to custom, the stigma of narrow social or national structures. Norwid's work is a great *non possumus* with regard to what limits the development of and enslaves man."<sup>3</sup> "Counter-formalism," seeking to reinterpret and re-evaluate, not only applies to the ideological sphere of the writer's works, but also determines their poetics, and even, according to Sawicki, determines the specific poetics of his fight against form. Norwid's negative attitude toward obsolete forms becomes an element of his unique anthropology of creativity, generally understood as a way of life, and in particular, an artist's life. In the rhapsody "Niewola" ["Enslavement"], these well-known gnomic phrases reflect the foundations of this anthropology:

*Niewola – jest to formy postawienie  
Na miejsce celu. ... (DW IV, 49)*

*Więc jej używam ja, nie mnie używa; (DW IV, 50)*

*[Enslavement – is the setting of form  
In place of the purpose.]*

[So I use it, it doesn't use me;]

And freedom:

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- 2 This is indicated by the poet's frequent use of the word "form." Cf. *Słownictwo estetyczne Cypriana Norwida*, ed. Jolanta Chojak (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 1994), pp. 40–49. J. Maciejewski's semantic analysis of this concept confirms the term's rank in Norwid's system of aesthetic concepts: cf. Janusz Maciejewski, *Cyprian Norwid* (Warszawa: PEN KOS, 1992), pp. 55–65.
  - 3 Stefan Sawicki, *Norwida walka z formą* (Warszawa: PIW, 1986), p. 15.

*jest to celem przetrwanie  
Doczesnej formy.* (DW IV, 50)

[is the permeating with purpose  
Of temporal form.]

Bearing in mind Norwid's "counter-formalism," we must nevertheless not forget that his criticism of petrified forms is associated with the constant search for and diligent development of a new, more perfect form, i.e., better suited to the intended purpose, more internally differentiated, more fully expressed, cognitively and axiologically more mature, and finally, open to the sphere of transcendence, whose reference ultimately determines the validity of each form. We should start by noting that within Norwid's dramatic works, this effort to combat a vapid,<sup>4</sup> mechanical, conventional form and create a new, one might say "live," form, forcefully shines through with exceptional consistency.

In philosophy and aesthetics, "form" is treated as an ambiguous concept (Tatarkiewicz lists five concepts of form, Ingarden ten).<sup>5</sup> Without going into too much detail,<sup>6</sup> we can group the existing theories of form into three basic concepts:

1. an objectivist approach to form (Aristotelian tradition) – form as the system of elements, structure, internal organization of a work, unity in its whole; its essential property is a realistic, objective way of existence; it is described by means of oppositional concepts: mechanical – organic, static (eidetic) – dynamic, open – closed, contained – loose, pragmatic – autonomous (aesthetic), etc.;
2. a subjectivist concept of form (Kantian tradition) – subjective form, whose function is to capture reality through a sign, a symbolic function; it is both expressive and dynamic, because it is rooted in the subject;
3. form as the basis and condition of value, axiogenic form, form capable of expressing non-formal content.

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4 Certainly, the category of effort, thus far interpreted based on the artist's poetry, can also be used to characterise Norwid's dramas. Cf. Bernadetta Kuczera-Chachulska, "Czas siły – zupełnej." *O kategorii wysiłku w poezji Norwida* (Lublin: RW KUL, 1998).

5 Cf. Władysław Tatarkiewicz, *Dzieje sześciu pojęć* (Warszawa: PWN, 1975), Chapter VII; Roman Ingarden, *Studia z estetyki*, Vol. II (Warszawa: PWN, 1958), pp. 319–421.

6 A detailed presentation and interpretation of the concepts of form in philosophical literature can be found in W. Stróżewski's study "O formie," in: Władysław Stróżewski, *Wokół piękna. Szkice z estetyki* (Kraków: Universitas, 2002), pp. 47–69.

It is worth recalling that in the Romantic philosophy of art, despite the superiority of the idea of aesthetic anti-normativism and the primacy of the creative subject, a work's form is nevertheless extremely important. It is the answer to the pursuit of expressive individualization in art; it is a fundamental factor in the unification of its products. We should emphasise that for the Romantic artist, the medium is as important as the message, because the medium of expression is an integral part of the work and an equal participant in the constitution of its meaning. Form is the expression of the subject, the subject manifests itself in a work of art and through the work of art in a specific form, and this in turn requires the creation of ever new forms, which can adequately express the Self. Thus, form and content ultimately constitute an organic whole (A.W. Schlegel's concept of organic form), permeate one another, and are qualitatively indistinguishable "ingredients" of a work. A Romantic work of art in which "the body is the soul" creates a perfectly integrated whole, and can thus aspire to be a symbol of the universe.

So how should one read, or interpret the form of Norwid's drama? I believe that one should go against the current of scholarly tradition, in which drama is pushed to the sidelines, outside the main stream of the poet's achievements. Today, it is difficult to agree on the type of valuation behind Norwid-the-playwright's work. It is especially difficult following such important publications as those by Irena Sławińska, which are practically the foundation of this field of Norwidology,<sup>7</sup> as well as those by Zofia Szmydtowa, Bronisław Nycz, Sławomir Świontek, Joanna Zach-Błońska, and Elżbieta Żwirkowska (of course, I am only mentioning those scholars whose studies on Norwid's dramaturgy were developed into full-length books).<sup>8</sup> The exceptional rank of drama within Norwid's work is apparent in that the writer expressed himself using dramatic forms consistently throughout his life, starting with *Dobrzy ludzie* [*Good People*] and

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7 Especially *O komediach Norwida* (Lublin: TN KUL, 1953); *Reżyserska ręka Norwida* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1971), but it is impossible not to mention Irena Sławińska's numerous studies and articles published in collections and academic journals.

8 Cf. Zofia Szmydtowa, *O misteriach Norwida* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Kasy im. Mianowskiego, 1932); Bronisław Nycz, *Norwidowa monologia "Zwolon"* (Kraków: Kasa im. Mianowskiego, 1937); Sławomir Świontek, *Norwidowski teatr świata* (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Łódzkie, 1983); Elżbieta Żwirkowska, *Tragedia kultur. Studium o tragedii historycznej C.K. Norwida "Kleopatra i Cezar"* (Lublin: RW KUL, 1991); Joanna Zach-Błońska, *Monolog różnogłowy. O dramatach współczesnych Cypriana Norwida* (Kraków: Universitas, 1993).



*Chwila Myśli* [A Moment of Thought] from 1840–1841, up until *Miłość-czysta u kąpieli morskich* [Pure-Love at Sea Baths] from late 1880. Moreover, many of his dramas' prefaces, author's notes, and dissertations on dramatic history and aesthetics (*Widowiska w ogóle uważane* [Spectacles in General] and to some extent *Białe kwiaty* [White Flowers] and lectures *O Juliuszu Słowackim* [On Juliusz Słowacki], which include an analysis of *Balladyna*) prove that as a playwright he was constantly deepening his knowledge of the craft, and that he had a strong sense of his own creativity and innovation in this field. Norwid's dramaturgy is characterised by a large variety of forms that are a testament to the poet's creative approach to dramatic tradition, especially to the tradition of tragedy, to the tradition of the Romantic drama of his time, and to the tradition and modernity of comedy. The playwright's generic inventiveness is impressive indeed. We can see how far the poet's inclination to transcend the existing repertoire of dramatic genres goes by looking at the genre qualifications that appear in the subtitles or author's comments of his dramas. These terms are always indicative of the intended modification of the form, although in the analysis of individual works it is difficult to stop at the author's genological suggestions alone. Although Norwid points to the dominant semantics of the dramatic form using innovative terminology, he does not describe its complexity. Let us recall some of the poet's original generic terms whose equivalents appear in the poetics of the works: *Chwila myśli* is a "fantasy," *Zwolon* is a "monologue," *Wanda* is "a play in six scenes," *Słodycz* [Sweetness] is "a one-scene tragedy," *Krytyka* [Criticism] is "a dramatic poem in three scenes," *Aktor* [The Actor] is a "comedic drama," *Tyrtej* [Tyrtæus] is "a fantastic tragedy," *Za kulisami* [Backstage] is a "fantasy," *Pierścień Wielkiej-Damy* [The Noble Lady's Ring] is a "white tragedy," and *Kleopatra i Cezar* [Cleopatra and Caesar] is a "historical tragedy, technically, written equally for performing [on stage] as well as for reading: emphasising dramatic gestures and their sequence." Norwid exhibited his generic creativity in all the types of drama he created. In *Kleopatra i Cezar*, which is a historical tragedy, he honoured the requirement of historicity associated with the form, while transcending the boundaries of history set by the timeline of events and constructing a historiosophic synthesis of the European civilization somewhere between drama, treatise, and an essay, and focusing primarily on the clash of cultures and the outstanding individual's place within this context. In *Wanda* and *Krakus*, the form of the mystery, thanks to the multifaceted dimensions of the depicted world, builds upon and at the same time goes beyond the form of tragedy, while coexisting with the poetics of legendary drama. In *Pierścień Wielkiej-Damy* we observe the creation of a completely new dramatic form. Norwid creates "a new kind of tragedy" by weaving the poetics

of an already transformed comedy (high comedy) with the poetics of modified tragedy (white tragedy). In doing so, he presents a counterpoint to the dramatic forms he disproves of, i.e., the opera buffa, Romantic “fantasy-philosophy dramas,” and the *pièce bien faite* that was so popular in France at the time, although the term is not mentioned in the preface to the drama.

Norwid’s strategy of generic transformation and semantic redefinition is not only the result of his own creative originality, but also a consequence of the historical timing of his dramatic output, which began towards the end of Romanticism, and then developed in the post-Romantic era, whose current or style is very difficult to decisively classify, both in the Polish cultural context and in the French, which was, of course, also relevant for Norwid. During this “inter-epoch,” the tradition of the great dramatic poem, considered to be one of the most prominent literary forms of Romanticism, gradually fades. It was gradually replaced by drama, which satisfied the new aesthetic and literary ideals, and a new understanding of drama and theatre’s cultural and social functions. The artistic tendencies that arose in drama at that time were most often various types of comedy, and culminated in the poetics of well-tailored art. Admittedly, Norwid was a close observer of, and even an active participant in, his era’s search for new dramatic forms, although more so on the basis of polemicism or strong criticism of those that were proposed. Thus, it would seem that the poet’s diagnosis that contemporary literature is in crisis also applies to dramatic literature.

Certainly, the poet’s dramatic work bears all the hallmarks of a creative experiment and does not fit – as has always been rightly emphasised – within any of the known developments of drama and theatre, although it had to have come from somewhere. It would be worth it therefore to re-examine Norwid’s drama considering its historical contexts, as even the phenomena he negated indirectly affected his creative decisions. Especially when we consider an author such as Norwid, who tirelessly polemicised in his era, and wrote this dialogue into his works. However, we still know too little about the immediate and wider contexts of Norwid’s dramas. A thorough and comprehensive analysis of how they contribute to this area of the writer’s work has yet to be undertaken. According to Norwid himself, and to previous studies, the range of references in his dramas is very rich. It includes the tradition of ancient tragedy and Shakespearean tragedy, medieval dramatic and theatrical forms, Calderon’s and Schiller’s dramas, the lyrical scene, the Romantic dramatic poem, Musset’s dramatic works, and the Second Empire’s comedy of manners. Undoubtedly, each of these traditions has left its mark on the form of Norwid’s drama, yet it seems that the question about the scope and depth of their impact

still cannot be answered fully. The strictly dramatic contexts of Norwid's work require more thorough and detailed research.

The discernment of Norwid's innovation in the realm of dramatic forms caused the research thus far to focus on either the writer's individual dramas – unique artistic creations (e.g. *Zwolon*, *Kleopatra i Cezar*) – or on groups of works belonging to the same class of genre (Zofia Szmydtowa interpreted Norwid's mysteries, Irena Sławińska dealt with his comedies, and Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki made separate publications and comments on the poet's dramatic miniatures).<sup>9</sup> A summary of the achievements of these kind of interpretations, which is also the culmination of Irena Sławińska's long-term Norwidological studies, is the proposed typology of the playwright's entire oeuvre, whose key was Norwid's specific understanding of the genre – an aesthetic and simultaneously superaesthetic category. The scholar identified Norwid's drama on account of his concept of the hero, model dramatic situation, and worldview, as a kind of "Christian drama," which takes three basic forms: a mystery of passion (*Zwolon*, *Wanda*, *Krakus*, and *Słodycz*), a white tragedy (*Aktor*, *Za kulisami*, *Pierścień Wielkiej-Damy*) and a super-Shakespearean tragedy (*Kleopatra i Cezar*).<sup>10</sup>

In addition to the research focused on describing the genres of Norwid's dramaturgy, it seems equally important to place it in historical or even strictly chronological categories, although Norwidologists have not been keen on exploring this perspective. Yet the resulting knowledge would complement our understanding of his typological decisions, the study of his subsequent stages of playwriting, to the evolution of his forms of this work, to the internal logic and changing dynamics thereof, and to the changes in the author's perception of the world, his important artistic milestones and the extended duration of some of his artistic choices.

It is worth recalling that after the short-lived phase of Warszawa juvenilia (*Chwila myśli*, *Dobrzy ludzie*), Norwid did not return definitively to dramatic work until the turn of the 1840s and 1850s, and in the 1850s, he developed it in different, seemingly even divergent, directions. At that time, he opted for the dramatic form, recapitulating the achievements of the Romantic dramatic poem (*Zwolon*) and for the form of mystery that was influenced by

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9 Cf. Cyprian Norwid, *Miniatury dramatyczne*, edited and with introduction by Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki (Warszawa: PIW, 1968).

10 Cf. Irena Sławińska, "‘Chrześcijańska drama’ Norwida," *Studia Norwidiana*, Vols. 3–4 (1985/1986).

the traditions of medieval religious drama and Romantic tradition (*Wanda, Krakus*). Simultaneously, he tried his hand at comedy (*Noc tysięczna druga* [*The Thousandth and Second Night*]) and tragedy (*Słodycz*). He wrote his metaliterary dramatic miniatures (*Teatr bez Teatru* [*Theatre-less Theatre*], *Krytyka*, *Auto-da-fé*) during the same period. This unique creative expansiveness is a testament to the great ambitions of the novice playwright who, with the passion of a brave experimenter, sought the right form of expression for himself. All the dramatic works written in the 1850s bear the distinct mark of their author and are, as far as their form is concerned, an element in their own right of the poet's dialogue with the most important dramatic and theatrical traditions. In *Zwolon*, Norwid conducts a particularly intense dialogue with the creators of the most popular Polish Romantic dramas.<sup>11</sup> He does this as well in *Słodycz*, which is a very interesting example of a miniature, lyricised tragedy.

In the 1860s, Norwid-the-playwright's interests stabilise and deepen. He focuses on high comedy (*Hrabina Palmyra* [*Countess Palmyra*], *Aktor I*, *Aktor II*, *Za kulisami*)<sup>12</sup> and tragedy (*Tyrtej*), which, unlike the lyricised *Słodycz*, is now subject to experimental efforts meant to make the tragic form epic. His attempts to combine *Tyrtej* and *Za kulisami* into one organic whole, in turn, reveal the author's desire to boldly use aesthetic dissonance in the dramatic sphere (which he already dauntlessly did in *Zwolon*, by the way). They also make us realise how important in Norwid's concept of drama at the time was the idea of the confrontation of cultures, and the possibility of making it work in a dramatised parable. Despite Norwid's constantly deepening understanding of select forms of drama, the 1860s do not yield dramatic works that could be considered complete. The writer did not finish any of the dramas that he wrote at that time, which could be considered a sign of a creative crisis (as in the 1850s, Norwid did finish his dramatic works), the root of which was probably the experimenter's uncompromising nature.

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11 Cf. Alina Kowalczykova, "O reinterpretacji romantycznego kształtu dramatu w 'Zwolonie,'" *Studia Norwidiana*, Vols. 15–16 (1997/1998).

12 Of course, *Za kulisami* is a very specific variety of the high comedy, as the author himself emphasises in the subtitle: "fantazja" [fantasy], which is already a reference to generic nomenclature that Norwid had used before (*Marzenie* [*A Dream*], *Wieczór w pustkach* [*An Evening in Wilderness*], *Chwila myśli*, *Echa* [*Echoes*], *Toast* [*A Toast*]). Cf. Grażyna Halkiewicz-Sojak, "Młodzieńcze 'fantazje' Cypriana Norwida," in *Czytając Norwida 2*, ed. Sławomir Rzepczyński (Słupsk: Pomorska Akademia Pedagogiczna w Słupsku, 2003).

If we consider the 1870s from the perspective of the preceding period, they were a fulfilling time for Norwid. He completed two out of the three pieces created during that time (*Pierścień Wielkiej-Damy*, *Miłość-czysta u kąpiel morskich*). Moreover, two out of the three plays were meant to be full-length plays (*Pierścień Wielkiej-Damy* and the unfinished tragedy *Kleopatra i Cezar*). In the mid-70s, Norwid finally comes up with the concept of a white tragedy, whose poetics he implements in *Pierścień Wielkiej-Damy*, and whose program in the preface to this drama sheds light on the poet's earlier attempts at comedy and tragedy. During that same period, in *Kleopatra i Cezar*, Norwid's idea of historical tragedy, which he referred to as super-Shakespearean tragedy, comes to fruition in its most mature form. Finally, Norwid's one-act play from his late career takes on the most complex artistic shape: *Miłość-czysta u kąpiel morskich*, while preserving the characteristic features of this form of drama, also turns out to be a deeply nuanced play on the traditional elements of a "genre masquerade," disguised as comedy.<sup>13</sup> That Norwid reached dramatic maturity in the 1870s is also evidenced by the fact that the dramas he created during the last phase of his artistic career are characterised by symbiotic harmony and mutual specification of the overarching perspectives of the imagery and interpretation of the presented world. Interpersonal relations perceived on a micro-scale, which Norwid would call *zbliżenia-dramą* [close-ups through drama] in *Miłość-czysta u kąpiel morskich*, resonate and are ideologically complemented in the civilizational aspect of those dramas; the world depicted in them, this time on a macroscale, turns out to be a heuristic tool for exploring the essence of various cultures (Egyptian, Roman, nineteenth-century) and a situational register of universal truths that are particularly closely related to the world of his literary works, which above all concern the mechanisms behind the functioning of human nature in general.

Even in this cursory historical approach to Norwid's dramaturgy, we can discern some creative patterns. Norwid's drama evolves simultaneously on several planes: from small dramatic forms to full-length spectacles, from generally respecting the boundaries of comedy and tragedy, to completely merging them into the form of white tragedy; from forms gravitating towards the Romantic tradition, to those that constitute their own, completely original genres; from treating drama as a potential platform for national issues, to drama as the stage for civilizational synthesis.

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13 Cf. Dobrochna Ratajczakowa, "Małe Zwierciadło' Cypriana Norwida," *Poznańskie Studia Polonistyczne*, Seria Literacka IV, No. XXIV (1997), p. 144.

When it comes to the form of Norwid's drama, we should not overlook the fact that the poet probably wrote those works with the stage in mind. This is evidenced both by his ever-developing interest in declamation, confirmed by his formal reflections on the topic (*O deklamacji* [*On Declamation*], remarks in the preface to *Pierścień Wielkiej-Damy*) and the writing style of his dramas, and by his participation in drama competitions; he sometimes wrote dramatic pieces specifically for a contest. The intentional theatrical dimension of Norwid's dramatic works is also evidenced by the properties of the poetics of these works: the theatrically significant role of the stage movements, gestures, props, costumes, and space management subordinated to a specific artistic and architectural vision, which presumed the possibility of staging.<sup>14</sup> This does not mean, however, that the author yielded to the repertoire preferences of the theatres at that time, or that he adopted their aesthetics of theatrical staging. Although the theatrical vision contained in Norwid's drama generally falls within the range of what was acceptable on the stage of the latter half of the nineteenth century, it is nevertheless drama created by a poet, a body of work shaped by decidedly poetic methods. It should therefore be read in conjunction with Norwid's lyrical and epic poetry, and seen specifically as Norwid's dramatic poetry. Norwid's drama maintains, as we know, close ties with the world of his lyrical works. This is apparent in the analogies of thematic and poetic reflection, the way in which his poetic imagination works, his selection of artistic means, etc., as well as his general dramatic form, which shows numerous signs of lyricality. Among these are, for example, lyrical inlays, which are such an integral part of some of the dramas that they seem to govern their semantics. This is the case with *Noc tysiączna druga* ("W Weronie" ["In Verona"]), *Miłość-czysta u kąpieli morskich* ("Czemu?" ["Why?"]), or *Tyrtej-Za kulisami*, i.e., a drama preceded by a metatextual frame, which includes the poem ("W pamiętniku" ["In a Diary"]), the lyrical "Dedykacja" ["Dedication"], and a series of lyrical inserts in *Za kulisami* that originally belonged to the poetic "code" from around 1861. But the lyrical aspect of this dramaturgy reaches much further, because it permeates the very foundation of the dramatic form. We can undoubtedly trace the source of Norwid's drama structure patterns to his poetry. The convincing evidence of that is the overriding role of the metaphor in the poetics of these works, whose significance is not in the least local or limited to a particular segment of the text, but spans the whole world of his drama. One could even say

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14 Irena Sławińska often wrote about Norwid's theatrical vision, especially in her book *Reżyserska ręka Norwida*.

that the dramatic action in Norwid's works is devoid of the autonomy of the events happening onstage, because the logic of an extensive lyrical metaphor that has been set in motion is more important.

The above point of view gains legitimacy especially when we also take into account the fact that the dramatic element in Norwid's work demonstrates a unique expansiveness and penetrates other non-dramatic areas of the writer's work. Norwid's lyrics, as we know, are dialogic, focused on interaction with "you." The polyphonization of poetic speech, its dramatization and theatricalization, make it so that many of the writer's lyrical works resemble monodramas or even miniaturised dramas, and we should also note that the writer's oeuvre contains dialogues.<sup>15</sup> A similar phenomenon of the expansive influence of dramatic form has been perceived in the poet's epic works. Irena Sławińska thoroughly described the traces of the author-playwright, or even the "theatre correspondent" in Norwid's narrative prose.<sup>16</sup>

The expansion of drama, its penetration into other literary genres, has an obvious explanation in the syncretism that characterises Romantic expression and as in the creation of works that implement the idea of the great Romantic form, which was an undoubtedly important context for Norwid. In this sense, Norwid inherited the Romantic concept of open form, which was realised in the dramaturgy of the era with such great momentum, although it is impossible to talk about its direct continuation.<sup>17</sup> The author of *Krakus* also has the specific dramatic and theatrical awareness of an artist who has grown accustomed to treating drama and theatricality as an immanent feature of the world. That is why he willingly used the *theatrum mundi* metaphor in literary interpretations of reality; he presented social life in terms of theatre, and in man he saw an actor performing the drama of his individual fate and the history of

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15 For example, "Dialog umarłych" ["Dialogue of the Dead"], "Vendôme," "Scherzo I," "Scherzo II," and "Malarz z konieczności" ["Painter out of Necessity"]. A dialogic structure can also be observed in larger and more generically complex works: *Promethidion, O historii [On History]* and *Pięć zarysów obyczajowych [Five Moral Sketches]*.

16 Cf. Irena Sławińska, "O prozie epickiej Norwida. Z zagadnień warsztatu poety-dramaturga," in Sławińska, *Reżyserska ręka Norwida*, pp. 277–320. This also applies to Norwid's epic poems. Of course, the question arises as to how epic (prose and poetic) patterns co-shape the form of Norwid's drama, and especially the form of his tragedy.

17 This complicated issue requires an analytical approach that would also take into account the range of form encompassed by Norwid's work, and the coherent mechanisms characteristic of his work.

civilization on the stage of that theatre. According to Norwid, every process of learning and reaching the truth was marked by drama. Interpersonal relations were dramatic, if only because language was their medium. Speech, according to Norwid, “dłatego, że jest mową, musi być nieodzownie dramatyczną! I jakże byłaby inaczej mową? Monolog nawet jest rozmową ze sobą albo z duchem rzeczy” [because it is speech, must be necessarily dramatic! How else would it be speech? Even the monologue is a conversation with one’s self or with the spirit of things<sup>18</sup>]. The dramatic nature of speech influences the course of human history, because in Norwid’s thought its course determines the drama of the incarnation of the Word of God.<sup>19</sup>

Thus, in the poet’s texts, his concept of drama functions simultaneously in the generic, anthropological, epistemological, historiosophical, and theological aspects, which makes Norwid’s theory of drama, as Sławomir Świontek wrote,

to some extent his theory of reality, an expression of the writer’s worldview, his ... philosophy of life and means of describing and understanding the world, a kind of artistic “ontology” and “epistemology” at the same time.<sup>20</sup>

In light of the above conclusions, we may venture to claim that drama, which is often marginalised when discussing Norwid’s work as a whole, is actually at the very centre of the artist’s creative imagination, and that it has an equal share of his poetic universe, one of the basic categories of his worldview and worldsense, and even a form of their expression, because it is the form best suited to the author’s vision of world and man.

However, if Norwid’s drama is not just an objectively existing genre, but also a form of consciousness – one of the key instruments for understanding reality and humanity, then the question of how to subjectify Norwid’s dramatic form arises. In subjectifying Norwid’s drama, of course, one should treat it as the extension of a Romantic experiment with the subject that thoroughly transforms the dramatic form. At the same time, one should keep in mind that the poet subordinated this phenomenon of Romantic provenance to his own ideas and aesthetic and ideological aims. The outcome was significant, especially when we consider Norwid’s concept of drama as a cognitive structure leading the way

18 Cyprian Norwid, *Milczenie* (PWsz VI, 232).

19 The categories of drama and theatre are indispensable in the reconstruction of Norwid’s thoughts on Christianity. Cf. Antoni Dunajski, *Chrześcijańska interpretacja dziejów w pismach Cypriana Norwida* (Lublin: RW KUL, 1985), pp. 111–120.

20 Sławomir Świontek, “Wstęp,” in Cyprian Norwid, *Pierścień Wielkiej-Damy*, ed. Sławomir Świontek (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1990), p. XV.



towards the truth, aligned with the writer's well-known thoughts on "dramat życia prawdę wyrabiający" [the drama of life producing the truth]. In pointing to the truth as the aim of his art, dramatic art included, Norwid knows perfectly well that the truth is difficult to achieve; modern civilization distances man from the truth, from its sources and measures, because truth itself is generally revealed in only approximate bits and pieces, it must be gradually discovered, and extracted from various judgments and attitudes. It also cannot be conveyed "okrągło i zupełnie" [wholly and completely] because it immediately becomes false. An awareness of the limitations in perceiving and communicating the truth harmonises with the principle of multi-perspectivity in Norwid's work, about which Zdzisław Łapiński wrote years ago:

Because the truth cannot be grasped once and for all in all its fullness, but is rather revealed in a continuous process (dramatic by nature!) – only a multi-faceted vision, the intersection of several points of view, can reflect the pluralism of the reality accessible to us.<sup>21</sup>

I wrote in detail about how multi-perspectivity functions in Norwid's dramaturgy in *Dramat i romantyczne Ja* [*Drama and the Romantic "I"*] (Kraków 2002), where I analysed two works that are particularly representative of this phenomenon: *Zwolon* and *Tyrtej-Za kulisami*. Generalising the observations I made therein, and transferring them from the area of the poetics of a specific drama to the aesthetics of form in Norwid's dramas as a whole, I would like to note a number of artistic solutions the poet used that were often characteristic of his general poetic craft, which contribute to the multi-perspective effect. These include:

- his aforementioned crossing of different genre and style conventions in the same work, especially exposing the lyricism of the drama (by creating a hero – an artist or poet, the lyrical stylization of monologues, the poetic dialogues, the use of lyrical inlays in the form of quotes from his own poems, the lyrical organization of the dramatic action);
- his use of the parable technique, which promotes multi-perspectivity because it itself assumes the co-existence of two perspectives corresponding to the two-dimensionality and ambiguity of the world the parable encompasses;
- Norwid's irony, manifesting itself as an objective feature of the depicted reality within the dramatic action (ironic – times, events, things), as a factor

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21 Zdzisław Łapiński, *Norwid* (Kraków: Znak, 1971), p. 26.

valorising the world of the drama from the point of view of the heroes and, finally, the author's direct irony;

- the metapoetic dimension of Norwid's drama, which is particularly expansive and cooperates closely with the principle of multi-perspectivity, and is indicated by numerous introductions, author's prefaces, lengthy subtitles, the author's discourse in the speech of his dramatic characters, which sometimes shapes the drama into a "polyphonic-monologue," also consisting of literary allusions, structure quotes, self-citations, and interstylistic dialogue;
- the metatheatrical dimension of the drama: the presented world may have an explicitly innovative character through the very theatricalization of the depicted reality (in terms of the great metaphor of the world as a stage), and as the artist's synthesis of the arts before our eyes – the painted-like image of the stage, the sculptural pose of the character ("drama w rzeźbę przechodzi" [drama turns into sculpture] – *Białe kwiaty*, VI, 190–191), the premeditated "ciąg scenicznych gestów" [series of stage gestures], the selection of symbolic objects as props, and the vocal realization of the dramatic work written into the text.

The simultaneous destruction and reconstruction of dramatic forms, characteristic of Norwid's work, is primarily meant to preserve the cognitive and cathartic function of dramatic and theatre art. The poet's strenuous artistic efforts to transform drama aim to ensure that its transformation can remain a live form, and thus meet the requirements of eternal tradition, while still carrying authentic cultural value. This is best demonstrated by the writer's many years of reflection on the main forms of drama: tragedy and comedy, considered in terms of their social axiogenic impact. Let's recall a select few of Norwid's definitions of tragedy. In *Do krytyków*, the preface to *Krakus*, he says:

Co do mnie, mniemam, iż *tragedia* jest to *uwidomienie fatalności historycznej, albo socjalnej, narodowi albo wiekowi jakowemu wyłącznie właściwej* – a przeto, zważając ją tak, to jest jako pomocniczą w postępie moralności i prawdy pracę, nie dziwi mię bynajmniej, iż *tragedia* mieć mogła i musiała powagę nieledwie obrządkową. (DW V, 167)

[As for me, I think that *tragedy* is a *visualization of historical or social fatality, specific only to one or another nation or age* – and therefore, in considering it as such, as an auxiliary work in the progress of morality and truth, it is not surprising that tragedy could have been and had been almost a ritual.]

A distinction that is important to Norwid appears in the main text of *Aktor* (there is an earlier version in *Widowiska w ogóle uważane*):

Tragedia jest w historii, a w życiu jest drama  
Z komedią... (DW V, 389)<sup>22</sup>

[In history, there is tragedy, and in life there is drama  
With comedy...]

Finally, this idea culminates in the thoughts expressed in the introduction to *Pierścień Wielkiej-Damy*:

Co do moralnego zadania, mniemam, iż strona *święta, budująca, religijna* starożytniej tragedii nie ustała wcale ani może ustać, ale że gdzie indziej pośród utworów dramatycznych główne obrała miejsce swoje. – Myślę, że ten rodzaj, na nazwanie którego nie mamy polskiego wyrazu (bo *rzeczy* jeszcze nie ma), to jest "*la haute-comédie*," główne otwiera pole do budującego działania wobec chrześcijańskiego społeczeństwa. Tak przynajmniej zdaje się, że być winno, skoro ma to być periodem *obejrzenia-się-społeczności* całej i z jej najstuszej wyżyny na *samą siebie*.

*Całej!*... mówię, społeczności: bo tu, ... *cywilizacyjna-ciałość-społeczna*, jakoby ogólnego sumienia zwrotem, pogląda na się. (DW VI, 110)

[As for the moral prerogative, I believe that the *holy, edifying, religious* side of ancient tragedy has not ceased at all, nor can it cease, but that it has taken its main place elsewhere among dramatic works. – I think that this genre, for which we do not have a Polish *word* (because *it* does not yet exist), that is "*la haute-comédie*," opens the door for constructive action with regard to Christian society. At least, it seems that it should, since it is to be a period of looking-at-the-community as a whole, looking at itself, from its fairest heights.

*As a whole!*... I say, community: because here, ... the *civilizational-social-whole*, looks at itself, as if at a reflection of conscience.]

Confrontation with the truth, self-reflection and profound moral experience – this is the contemporary dimension of traditional comedy anagnorism and tragedy cleansing, which in accordance with Norwid's intentions are culturally preserved thanks to his modernization of the dramatic form, and above all thanks to his creation of a *nowy tragedii rodzaj* [new kind of tragedy].

This attempt to answer the question of how to study the form of Norwid's drama, outlined very synthetically, inevitably leads to the conclusion that the three ways of understanding presented at the beginning of these considerations

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22 In *Widowiska w ogóle uważane*, Norwid wrote: "jedną i też samą prawdę tragedia i drama przedstawiały w jej charakterze mistycznym, a komedia w jej stronie obyczajowej. Pierwsza – ideał, druga – realizację ideału i jej zdrożności krzywe" (PWsz VI, 394) [tragedy and drama presented one and the same truth in its mystical character, and comedy in its moral aspect. The first – the ideal, the second – the manifestation of the ideal and its perverseness].

must be treated collectively, while, of course, respecting their autonomy and mutual irreducibility. In the case of the author of *Zwolon*, only the integral aesthetics of form and the integral aesthetic-generic interpretation of a dramatic work, respecting the historical context of artistic phenomena, allows mutual relations between the objective structure of the drama and its subjective dimension as a form of learning the truth: expressive, symbolic, and axiogenic.

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Zofia Dambek-Giallelis

## Norwid and the Chinese

**Abstract:** In the chapter of her book on Norwid's attitude towards the noble tradition, the author notes that the poet uses the language of the knightly tradition to comment on political events such as the French colonization of the Far East. Norwid's interest in Chinese affairs was inspired, among other things, by the activities of his cousin, Michał Kleczkowski, who was the secretary of the French delegation starting in 1847, and who with time advanced his diplomatic position to take independent command of several military expeditions. In the mid-nineteenth century, French interference in Chinese affairs was meant to, at least officially, protect the Catholic clergy persecuted by Chinese mandarins. However, as the author points out, France exploited the rhetoric evoked by the crusades in order to colonise the Far East. This rhetoric roused enthusiasm in Norwid who, emphasising Kleczkowski's involvement, saw it as a part of the traditional idea of Poland as a bulwark of Christianity, as evidenced by the poet's letters to his cousin from that period, which include many references to the tradition of knightly Poland.

**Keywords:** Cyprian Norwid, Michał Kleczkowski, Far East, nineteenth century China

In Cyprian Norwid's mind, the knights' ethos organised reality, and made it possible to keep matters of varied luck and fate in perspective. It was a sort of bridge between foreign cultures and societies. The poem "Do emira Abd el Kadera w Damaszku" ["To Emir Abd el-Kader in Damascus"] is not only a poetic attempt to lend loftiness to reality, but also, above all, an attempt at cross-cultural dialogue. Norwid also used the language of knightly tradition to make sense of political situations, such as the colonization of the Far East.

When it came to China, mid-nineteenth century public opinion was shaped by the persecution of Christians in the Far East, the Taiping Rebellion, and China's introduction into the global economy. I identified these topics based, in part, on Polish press from those times, in which articles from French and English newspapers were reprinted. Norwid's own interest was not limited to reading newspapers and taking part in café discussions. He was somewhat personally involved in the Chinese mission: starting in 1847, the poet's cousin Michał Kleczkowski spent time in the Middle Kingdom as the French delegation's translator. They were practically the same age (Kleczkowski was born in 1818) and for some time their "careers" followed the same path: they both started off as civil servants in Warsaw, then later emigrated; Kleczkowski, however, emigrated

earlier, in 1841.<sup>1</sup> In Paris, he mingled with the Resurrectionists and Stanisław Egbert Koźmian and his brother Jan's social circle, just as Norwid would several years later. Norwid and Kleczkowski both associated with the Hotel Lambert social milieu.<sup>2</sup> Then their roads slowly diverged. In 1847, Kleczkowski's degree in sinology opened the door to his career in diplomacy, which involved obtaining French citizenship. Norwid's interest in China never materialised in the form of any specific enterprises, although he did make tentative plans to go to China. We know from what Norwid told Jan Koźmian that his cousin proposed an excursion to the "Red Sea" with him in 1852, and in 1859 the poet attempted to secure a position as a draftsman in General Montauban's expedition to China.<sup>3</sup>

For the Middle Kingdom, the mid-nineteenth century was the time of the Opium Wars with Europe, which lasted from 1839 until 1860, at which time the humiliated emperor of the Manchurian dynasty was forced to accept the terms of the European nations and United States. From then on, China became wide open to colonial nations.<sup>4</sup> In his notes from the International Exhibition of 1867 in Paris, Norwid wrote the following: "Ekspozycja 1867. Chiny: 'Monitor' pekiński (traktat 1859) i *Y-king*, dzieło, którego pismo z czasów 1500 przed naszą Erą." (PWsz VII, 297) [Exposition 1867. China: Beijing "Monitor" (treaty 1859) and *Y-king*, a work recorded in the system of writing that dates back to the 1500s before our Era.] It is remarkable that Norwid noticed the treaty,

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- 1 See Zofia Trojanowiczowa, Zofia Dambek, in collaboration with Jolanta Czarnomorska, *Kalendarz życia i twórczości Cypriana Norwida*, Vol. 1 (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 2007), p. 108.
  - 2 Starting in the mid-1840s Leonard Niedźwiecki began introducing Kleczkowski into the French and English social circles of the Czartoryskis: see "Dziennik," ms. Kórnick Library 2416, sh. 221.
  - 3 Trojanowiczowa, Dambek, in collaboration with Czarnomorska, *Kalendarz życia i twórczości Cypriana Norwida*, Vol. 1, pp. 757, 760. Recently, certain similarities between Norwid's poetics and the poetics of Chinese poetry have been pointed out, see Krzysztof Jeżewski, *Cyprian Norwid a myśl i poetyka Kraju Środka* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2011); Bogusław Biela, "Czy Norwid współpracował z Hyacinthe de Charencey przy pisaniu *Syna Panny?*," *Studia Norwidiana*, Vols. 27–28 (2009–2010), p. 154.
  - 4 Based on: John King Fairbank, *Historia Chin. Nowe spojrzenie*, trans. Teresa Lechowska, Zbigniew Słupski, introduction Piotr Gillert, afterword Roman Maria Sławiński (Warszawa-Gdańsk, 2003), pp. 188–197 [John King Fairbank, *China: A New History* (London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1992)]; Witold Rodziński, *Historia Chin* (Wrocław-Warszawa: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1974), pp. 404–450.



which had been responsible for making China and the seventeenth-century Manchurian dynasty dependent on western powers – France and England. To the average Parisian or exhibition attendee, this treaty symbolised the triumph of European civilization.

During the eighteenth century, China continued to remain isolated from the outside world. Missionary work was prohibited there from 1724 on. European and American merchants were subject to countless restrictions. They had no legal basis for their activities, because the emperor's government did not wish to make agreements with white barbarians, as the official Chinese diplomatic language called Europeans. It slowly became clear, however, that China could not be self-sufficient. The first sign was the growing dependency of a portion of the empire's population on opium, a narcotic that was produced in India and sold by the English in China. It was written at that time:

Today, although both Europe and North America are trying to draw the Heavenly State into general countertrade, it is doubtful whether China will voluntarily allow its domestic industry to face foreign competition. Thus, if the widening stand in this country does not break down its walls, it is possible that this important issue will require an armed resolution in the near future.<sup>5</sup>

The treaties made between China and England in Nanjing (1842) had no effect on the situation described above by the anonymous author. In 1844, France joined England by signing a treaty with the Chinese which, first and foremost, guaranteed the freedom of all missionary activities. From that time on, France, first under Louis Phillip, and then Napoleon III, took over the role of *defensor fidei* in the Far East, and with the Pope's blessing (who was, at that time, Gregory XVI) began to colonise the Far East.<sup>6</sup>

In the 1850s France intervened in China and Cochinchina (modern-day Vietnam and Cambodia) several times, for example, following the execution of French missionary Auguste Chapdelaine. His death and the robbery of English merchants' goods from the ship *Arrow* motivated the Anglo-French expedition to Canton in 1856.<sup>7</sup> France took its role as *defensor fidei* very seriously: when news reached Paris in November 1857 that the Spanish missionary Jose Francisco Diaza<sup>8</sup> had been imprisoned, another expedition, under Michał

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5 "Dzieje herbaty chińskiej," *Księga Świata* (1857), p. 21.

6 Wiesław Olszewski, *Polityka kolonialna Francji w Indochinach w latach 1858–1908* (Warszawa-Poznań: PWN, 1983), p. 64.

7 Henri Cordier, *La Chine* (Paris: Payot, 1921), p. 117.

8 Trojanowiczowa, Dambek, in collaboration with Czarnomorska, *Kalendarz życia i twórczości Cypriana Norwida*, Vol. 1, pp. 681–682.

Kleczkowski's command, was organised. The journalists who accompanied the military expeditions sent reports to Europe and the United States<sup>9</sup> describing the cruelty of the mandarins, the lowly status of women in their society, and their lack of freedom of speech. When the allied forces seized Beijing, the European press was teeming with triumphant phrases about the "breach in the Chinese wall," although the French took this expression to mean something else. In 1862, Proudhon wrote in his brochure *La fédération et l'unité en Italie*:

Oui, je suis, par position, catholique, clérical, si vous voulez, parce que la France, ma patrie, n'a pas encore cessé de l'être ... tandis que nos missionnaires se font martyriser en Cochinchine, ceux de l'Angleterre vendent des bibles et autres articles de commerce.<sup>10</sup>

[Yes, by necessity, I am a Catholic, even clerical, if you will, because France, my homeland, has not ceased to be [Catholic] ... while our missionaries let themselves to be murdered in Cochinchina, the English ones sell Bibles and other merchandise.]

In 1859, while preparations for the third Anglo-French expedition were being made, the Parisian newspaper *Constitutionnel* responded to the English *Morning Herald*: "France went to China to avenge the spilled blood of its missionaries. The tri-coloured emblem of France represents civilization, humanity and the expansion of Christianity. The whole world places its hopes on [France], which is why [France] must go to China."<sup>11</sup> It looked as though France had rekindled the spirit of the crusades. Could it be? Could the spirit of the Middle Ages – the fervour of the crusaders – be revived in a Europe that was questioning the Pope's secular power and predicting the imminent fall of the Papal states?

France took the rhetoric of the crusades and harnessed it towards the colonization of the Near, and then the Far East.<sup>12</sup> French historians, who had previously defined France's mission of Christianization, once again reexamined

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9 Information about the Tibetan, Mongolian, and Chinese civilizations were partially provided by the travel accounts of French Lazarist missionary Évariste Huc: *Souvenirs d'un voyage dans la Tartarie et le Tibet*, (Paris: Librairie de Gaume Frères, 1854); *L'empire Chinois* (Paris: Librairie de Gaume Frères, 1854). The first title was available to Polish readers as early as in 1858 in the translation by Aleksander Kremer: *Wspomnienia podróży po Tartarji, Tybecie i Chinach w latach 1844, 1845 i 1846 odbytej przez księdza Huc, misjonarza Zgromadzenia S-go Łazarza* (Warszawa: S. Orgelbrand, 1858). Norwid read Huc's first work while he was still in the United States.

10 Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *La fédération et l'unité en Italie* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1862), p. 52.

11 *Gazeta Wielkiego Księstwa Poznańskiego*, No. 265 (1860).

12 Janusz Ruszkowski, *Mickiewicz i ostatnia krucjata. Studium romantycznego millenaryzmu* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Leopoldinum, 1996), pp. 27–28.

the significance of the crusades, as did François Michaud in his *Historie des croisades* [*A History of the Crusades*], for example. Norwid appears to use the same rhetoric when he writes about his cousin's role in the colonization of Indochina.

### Kleczkowski the Knight

Michał Kleczkowski, who we have already introduced, played a part in this grand French policy in the Far East starting in 1847, wherein he assumed increasingly important roles. He was promoted from a translator to the secretary of the French delegation, and in time led two military expeditions by himself. When the expedition to rescue the imprisoned Bishop Diaz was being organised in 1857, *Moniteur de la Flotte* reported:

According to reports from the "Fleet Monitor," Mr. Kleczkowski, the secretary of the French mission in China, was sent from Macau to Tonkin on the ship "Catinat" to rescue Bishop Diaz – an apostolic vicar who has been sentenced to death by the infidels – from imprisonment, and, to the extent possible, help persecuted Christians seek shelter.<sup>13</sup>

France took advantage of its prerogative to defend Christianity to mark its territory in the East, as well. At that time, an enthusiastic Norwid wrote to his friends:

Odebrałem właśnie wiadomość, że jeden z najbliższych krewnych mych, niejaki Michał Kleczkowski, który od lat wielu uczestniczy poselstwu Francji w Chinach, wysłany został na wycieczkę morską odstu-pięćdziesięciu lat niepraktykowaną i w czas najburzliwszy... ale z dwoma zbrojonymi okrętami na poratowanie najmłodszych Chrześcijan za wiarę ś[wię]tą męczonych i okutego za szyję żelaznym pierścieniem biskupa tej katakumbowej garstki braci naszych. ... Ten – doprawdy widzę, iż z Sobieskiej rodzi się. (DW XI, 191)

[I just received news that one of my closest relatives, Michał Kleczkowski, who has been a member of the French delegation in China for many years, has been sent on a sea excursion such as has not been undertaken in one hundred and fifty years, and at a most turbulent time...but with two armored ships to rescue the most recent Christian converts, who are tormented for their faith, and the Bishop with a wrought-iron ring around his neck in the midst of this handful of our brothers in the catacombs. ... He – I see, is truly born of Sobieska.]

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13 *Gazeta Wielkiego Księstwa Poznańskiego*, No. 273 (1857); cf. Trojanowiczowa, Dambek, in collaboration with Czarnomorska, *Kalendarz życia i twórczości Cypriana Norwida*, Vol. 1, pp. 681–682.

He also informed Kleczkowski:

Podzieliłem także radość moją z Twojej misji z tymi, których uczęszczam, a mianowicie dałem to wiedzieć synowicy generała Dziekońskiego, pannie Michalinie, gdzie prezentowałem Cię był. ... Dalej – pisałem z depeszy wiadomość do Łochowa, do Hornowskich .... Dalej – udzieliłem wiadomość o tym synowicy pani Stasiowej Potockiej, pannie Górskiej, iż te damy obchodzą się misjami chrześcijańskimi .... Dalej – hr[abie]mu Montalembert. (DW XI, 193–194)

[I also expressed my joy over your mission with those whom I frequently visit, namely, I let it be known to General Dziekoński's niece, Miss Michalina, where I had talked of you. ... Then – I sent a telegram to Łochów, to the Hornowskis .... Next – I informed Stasia Potocka's niece, Miss Górka, as these ladies take interest in Christian missions .... And also – Count Montalembert]

For Norwid, this expedition had a great significance. He wrote to his cousin:

O misji Twojej przeto właśnie kiedy pierwszą depeszę czytałem w “Constitutionnel” – zdarzyło mi się, iż przyjechał mię w kawiarni mojej szukać jeden młody książę z Polski ... i jeden agent dziennika z jednej części Polski. Łzy mając w oczach, iż tak czysto-polską masz misję (bo na pomoc chrześcijanom i męczennikowi), podzieliłem z tymi gośćmi radość moją .... (DW XI, 193)

[Precisely as I was reading the first news of your mission in the “Constitutionnel” – it just so happened that a young prince from Poland came to look for me at my café ... as well as a newspaper agent from one Polish region. With tears in my eyes at the prospect of your purely Polish mission (because it helps Christians and a martyr), I shared my joy with these guests]

We should make note of the concepts that appeared in this correspondence – the purely-Polish mission and the defence of Christianity. Norwid placed Kleczkowski's activities in accordance with the traditional view of Poland as an outpost of Christianity. The letters to his cousin from that period are full of references to the Commonwealth's knightly tradition. This is not the tradition of the assemblies and conventions of the Polish nobility, but rather the legacy of Waclaw and Miecznik, the protagonists of *Maria* – the conquerors of the Tatars at the borders of the Republic. Kleczkowski was defending these values in distant borderlands like a knight-errant. The aforementioned expedition was too late, however, for they did not find Bishop Diaz alive. Norwid wrote to Kleczkowski:

2-gi ustęp z “Moniteur de la Flotte” – w tym ustępie nie było nawet wzmianki nazwiska Twego, tylko że przybyli po męczeństwie, ciała nawet znaleźć i szukać nie mogli – zabrali neofitę księdza Andrzeja i garstkę chrześcijan. *Oto wszystko*. (DW XI, 222)<sup>14</sup>

14 It is worth noting additional descriptions from the press: “Macao received news from Tonkin that the Catholic Bishop Diaz had been murdered ...; after several months in

[the second passage in “Moniteur de la Flotte” – your name was not even mentioned in this passage, only that they had arrived after the martyrdom, they could not even find or look for the body – they took the neophyte priest Andrzej and a handful of Christians. *That is all.*]

And in this same letter, Norwid reassured his cousin that:

Talenta twe praktyczne, i doświadczenie, i stopień Twój każą Ci inaczej definiować życie, mnie inaczej. – To, co z rozrzewnieniem czytałem wielkim w liście Twym, iż zaprawdę Opatrzność z całej rodziny nas dwóch w dramę wprowadza razem, dziwnie, nieprzewidywanie – to jest także i z tej przyczyny, że *najzupełniej różne jesteściemy charaktery i energie.* (DW XI, 222)

[Your practical skills, experience and your rank compel you to define life differently than I define it. What I read with great tenderness in your letter, that the Providence of our whole family truly brings the two of us together into the drama, strangely, unexpectedly – it is also because, *our characters and energies are completely different.*]

In spite of the differences in opinion, Norwid still considered his correspondent a representative of specific values, and consistently placed his activities in the current of Christian missions:<sup>15</sup>

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prison, he was murdered in Tong-king (a northern province of China, on the border between the Kingdom of Aman and the Chinese province of Kwang-si). After the murder on July 20, the earth was dug over, so that Christians would not be able to collect the blood. The mandarins then ordered that the corpse to be taken around the streets, wherein many soldiers and elephants were parading. Then they threw the corpse into the river, having tethered it with rope to a large barge, which the rowers immediately pushed out to sea. ... This case will induce a vigorous reaction from France, and prompt it to stand up against China with the energy equal to that of England,” *Gazeta Warszawska*, No. 321 (1857).

- 15 In one of his letters to his cousin, the poet mentions a Chinese Christian: “Jeśli mi przyslesz chrześcijański obrazek przez Chińczyka chrześcijanina, będę go drogo cenił.” (DW XI, 172) [If you send me a Christian drawing by the Chinese Christian, I will treasure it dearly]. The story of this Chinese man was prosaic: “Michał owns the little Chinese boy Amoi. His parents, who were blessed with many children, condemned the poor boy to drown, and just as his father was about to do the deed, Michał was passing by and bought him for 120 francs. He then baptised him, had him raised, and finally, made him his servant.” Zofia Komierowska, “Dziennik paryski z roku 1853,” *Wiadomości*, No. 768/769 (1960), cf. also Trojanowiczowa, Dambek, in collaboration with Czarnomorska, *Kalendarz życia i twórczości Cypriana Norwida*, Vol. 1, p. 669.

Ojciec Św. raczył mu łaskawie komandorat wielkiego orderu swego przysłać. Jedno mię w tej karierze lubo krewnego cieszy, iż wierny jest przy misjach chrześcijańskich – zresztą fraszki konieczne tego świata. (DW XI, 401)

[The Holy Father, in his magnanimity awarded him commandership of the great order. One thing about this career, of my dear relative, makes me happy: that he is faithful to Christian missions – the rest are trivial matters deemed necessary in this world.]

For Norwid, Kleczkowski did not represent the French nation, but he represented and defended certain values; he became a soldier of the faith, in a way, in distant China. For this world – a Christian one, I might add – it was worth building a community, because Kleczkowski and Norwid – at least, this is what the poet wanted – belonged to a primeval, superhistorical “common cause.” In 1857, when national newspaper correspondents contacted Norwid to ask about his cousin, he told them:

*Michał Klecz[kows]ki*, “*his omnibus par*” – sam bowiem mam od Ojca Św[iętego] papieża GrzegorzaXVI adres: *al. I.S. Conte Norwid*, ale na Emigracji trzymam się zaszczytów tradycji poważniejszej, czyli klejnotu Rz[eczy]p[ospo]litej Ojców naszych. (DW XI, 195)

[*Michał Kleczkowski*, “*his omnibus par*” – for the Holy Father Pope Gregory XVI addresses me *al. I.S. Conte Norwid*, but in exile I adhere to the honors of a more serious tradition, that is, the jewel of our Fathers’ Republic.]

The poet’s enthusiasm for his cousin’s mission seems naïve. Was it possible that Norwid took the French political rhetoric seriously? We cannot answer this question in the affirmative. The poet’s attitude towards international French politics is exemplified in reference to the Taiping Rebellion, which lasted thirteen years (1851–1864). At the same time as Kleczkowski arrived in China in 1847 and began his correspondence with Norwid, writing from Macau about “umarłość ducha społeczeństwa polskiego, rodziny i narodu” (PWSz VIII 322) [the death of the spirit of Polish society, family and nation], the would-be clerk Hong Xiuquan was learning about the fundamentals of Christian faith from the Baptist missionary Issachar Jacox Roberts. Hong Xiuquan’s knowledge was superficial, because it was limited to basic prayers and the Old Testament, but it was enough for him to found the God Worshipping Society. This is how a unique mix of Christianity, Chinese philosophy, and culture came into being. The God Worshipping Society believed that all human beings were brothers and sisters, and called for a fight against the Manchurian Dynasty.<sup>16</sup> Rebellion soon

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16 I am summarising the views of the Taipings based on: Fairbank, *Historia Chin*, pp. 189–194.

overtook South-East China, where the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom was established. This gave rise to a strange situation: the Kingdom's authorities, concerned with their Christian cause, sought support from European countries – but they did not find any. France and England decided to help the Manchurian Dynasty suppress the rebellion in return for trade concessions. The Taiping organization of rebels presently fell apart on account of the indulgence and arrogance of its leaders. According to historians' estimations, "Christianity was then disgraced, and China lost its chance to adapt elements of Christian culture."<sup>17</sup> However, Norwid did not pay any attention to these economic and political aspects of contact, but rather only to the Christian element which he believed could have fostered a common understanding between the cultures. His harsh assessment of French foreign policy is not surprising. He wrote to Konstancja Górska in 1862:

Dyplomatą nie jestem i, kiedy zdanie moje w rzeczach historii objawiam, zapewne nie idzie mi główne o bawełnę, opium albo herbatę, ale idzie mi głównie o treść główną. Jakoż nie ukrywałem tego wcale, że *obstawanie przy dynastii chińskiej w Azji, a lekceważenie praw papieskich w Europie* wygląda zupełnie tak, jakby Pani kazała spowiednikowi swojemu czekać za drzwiami, dlatego że się przyjmuje w salonie na pierwszym miejscu Roberta-Houdin albo Home'a, albo kupca-zabawek. ... Wierzę bardzo, że buntownicy w Chinach nie są to najczystszy chrześcijanie i tacy święci jak wszyscy w Europie, i że często krzyż biorą w rękę jak miecz wojny domowej – są to jednym słowem na pół chrześcijanie, na pół zbrojcy; ale jeżeli dyplomacja myśli, że kiedykolwiek było inaczej na świecie, i że, ilekroć gdzie z pogaństwa do Chrześcijaństwa się przechodzi, można było to przejście uczynić tak płynnym i grzecznym jak w salonie – to chyba że dyplomacja historii nie zna! (DW XII, 111)

[I am not a diplomat – and when I give my opinion on historical matters, my main interest is surely not cotton, opium, or tea, but rather the heart of things. I was not shy about my opinion that *protecting the Chinese dynasty in Asia, and disregarding the Papal rights in Europe*, would be the same as telling your confessor to wait outside the door, because you have to accept Robert- Houdin or Home, or a toy-merchant in your salon first. ... I believe that the rebels in China are not the purest Christians or as saintly as everyone in Europe, and that they often wield the cross like a civil war sword – they are, in a word, half-Christians, half-robbers; but if the diplomats think, that the world has ever been any different in this respect, and that, whenever you convert from paganism to Christianity, you can make this transition as smooth and as polite as in a salon – then maybe the diplomats do not know history!]

Norwid's opinion in the quoted fragment is clear and relates to the contradictory nature of French policies in Europe and China. The compassion with which he

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17 Fairbank, *Historia Chin*, p. 193.

writes about the Chinese rebels is surprising, all the more so, because European public opinion was not sympathetic to the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom.<sup>18</sup> To sum up, Norwid's interest in China is not that of a historian, traveller, gatherer of peculiarities, or collector of Chinese art. He did not share the European and American enthusiasm for advancing "progress and civilization" with the help of the military, diplomatic missions, and trade merchants. He attributed a greater role to the individuals who personally testified to the existence of the "Commonwealth" – the great Christian community.

### Towards the Fifth Empire

In Norwid's opinion, Kleczkowski was following in the footsteps of the crusaders and great explorers. Before the planned war with China in 1858, Norwid wrote to his cousin:

Ile razy myślą przeniesiesz się w średnie wieki, w czasy krucjat, w czasy Kolumbów, Korteżów, wszystko obok siebie w miejscu znajdziesz, bo tak wy tam jesteście, oprócz że we frankach zamiast zbroi i kaftanów ze skóry łosiej. (DW XI, 232)

[If you let your mind transport you to the Middle Ages, the times of the crusades, the times of the Columbuses and Cortéses, you will find everything just as it is now, because that's how it is where you are, except that you are wearing tail-coat jackets, instead of armor and kaftans from moose hide.]

This comment reveals Norwid's unremarkable understanding of the idea behind the crusades, and their continuation – the expeditions to India. In this same letter he expressed his views on the nature of his cousin's mission:

O Tobie, mój drogi, często myślę. Jesteś, moim zdaniem, prawie Jedynym Polakiem dziś, który na właściwym stanowisku zostaje.

Straż duchem i czynem między poganami trzymasz na rzecz rozprzestrzenienia wiary ś[więt]ej i oświaty. – To tak jak cała święta starej Rzeczy-pospolitej przeszłość nakazywała i czyniła! (DW XI, 232)

[I often think about you, my dear. *You are, in my opinion, almost the only Pole today who is doing the right thing.*

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18 Press correspondence attests to this: see *Dziennik Poznański*, No. 255, 256 (1862); accounts from travels to China, e.g. Count Ludovic de Beauvoir, *Podróż naokoło świata*, Vol. 3: *Pekin, Jeddo, San Francisco* (Warszawa: Drukiem Józefa Ungra, 1873), pp. 13–16.



You keep Guard in spirit and deed amidst the heathens for the sake of spreading the holy faith and education. – It is just as the whole holy history of the old republic ordered and did!]

In the poet's view, Kleczkowski is upholding the tradition of the Polish Commonwealth as an *ante-murale*, only this time its identity as an outpost is not an idea, territorial definition, or policy. It is embodied by an individual at the edge of the globe, representing the world of law and order. For the knights' and travellers' expeditions were motivated by the need to spread Christianity:

Biedne braciszki mnichy, bez kart geograficznych, palcem Papieskiem posłane, aby Dżengischanowi w czoło kazać prawdę. W ich ślady Marco Polo (za nim Kolumb). (PWsz VII, 353)

[Poor little monk brethren, without maps, sent at the Pope's beckoning, to tell the truth to Genghis Khan's face. And in their footsteps Marco Polo (followed by Columbus).]

– the poet wrote in his *Notatki z historii* [*Notes on History*]. Indeed, both Marco Polo and Christopher Columbus benefited from the accounts of the travels to the Mongolian nation recorded by the Franciscans Giovanni da Pian del Carpine and Benedict of Poland in the seventeenth century. Their expeditions to the East provided the impetus for civilizational development in Europe:

krzyżowcy (ów n a r ó d podróżny, tak z moralnego źródła jak barbarzyńcy koczujący przez zwichnięcie celów) za zetknięciem się ze społeczeństwem greckim i arabskim przynieśli z sobą. Nauki więc na nowo kwitnąc zaczynają w XIII wieku Ery. (PWsz VII, 359)

[the crusaders (this n a t i o n of travellers, with moral origins, who became barbarian-like nomads when their plans were thwarted) having come in contact with Greek and Arab society brought [their culture] with them. Thus, the sciences began to flourish again in the thirteenth century.]

The idea in the poet's notes of the beneficial influence of the crusades on European civilization was nothing new. Norwid was referring to the hundred-year-old interpretation of William Robertson, according to whom the unintended effects of the crusades included the development of trade, the consolidation of royal power, and positive changes in property relations.<sup>19</sup> Geographical discoveries were considered a natural consequence of the crusades.

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19 We are talking about William Robertson's book *The History of the Reign of the Emperor Charles the Fifth* (1769); referenced based on: Ruszkowski, *Mickiewicz i ostatnia krucjata*, pp. 16–17.

This is how Norwid presented the sequence of historical events as well, in his poem “Pokój” [“Peace”] from 1856, which he wrote after the Congress of Paris came to a close. This parable was based on a historical anecdote sent to Ludwik Mierosławski and Konstanty Linowski, among others, a commentary on the terms of peace set after the Crimean War. During the meeting of French and Russian Monarchs, the Polish question was raised *ad acta* and, it seemed to many, buried for good. In this short poem Norwid referred to the culminating moment of re-conquest on the Iberian peninsula: the takeover of Granada in January 1492, as well as to the fact that the future discoverer of America accompanied the Spanish Kings on the celebratory entrance into that conquered city.<sup>20</sup> It was not until then that the royal court gave Columbus the support for his plans that he had been trying to obtain for seven years. The poem is a sort of riddle, in which one is supposed to decipher the name of the “człek z Ligurii” [“man from Liguria”] pacing behind the procession of victors. It is precisely this insignificant individual, whose name no one even remembers, who heralds the coming of a new Era. The title – “Pokój” – refers to this anecdote: the end of each era provides clues about the next.

Norwid’s portrait of Columbus was a reinterpretation of the Genoese’s accomplishments, in the Romantic tradition. During his overseas travels he witnessed the revival of chivalry, just as, for example, Michał Wiszniewski described in his *Historia literatury polskiej* [*History of Polish Literature*]: “[After the discovery of America] Ever since that time, the knightly spirit that had been suppressed on land took to the sea.”<sup>21</sup> The religious motivations behind Columbus’s activities<sup>22</sup> were pointed out in this [Romantic] tradition; to him, his voyage to India was part of God’s plan for Christianity to return to Jerusalem. This detail was included by Washington Irving in his biography of Christopher Columbus,<sup>23</sup> in which he quoted Columbus’s letter listing the reasons for undertaking his journey:

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20 Siegfried Fischer-Fabian, *Krzysztof Kolumb. Bohater czy łotr?*, trans. Maciej Nowak-Kreyer (Warszawa: Amber, 2006), pp. 67–69.

21 Michał Wiszniewski, *Historia literatury polskiej*, Vol. 3 (Kraków: Drukarnia Uniwersytecka, 1841), p. 114.

22 Cf. Janusz Tazbir, *Polska sława Krzysztofa Kolumba: 500-lecie odkrycia Ameryki* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Spółdzielcze, 1991).

23 The reception of Irving’s work was discussed by Janusz Ruszkowski in: *Mickiewicz i ostatnia krucjata*, pp. 78–80.

In executing my trip to India, I was aided by neither reason – wrote Columbus – nor mathematics, nor maps; that which the prophet Isaiah foretold fulfilled itself. Before the end of the world all the prophecies must come true – the Gospel will be taught all over the world – the holy city will be returned to Christ’s church, and all nations, all forms of speech and languages gathered under the holy sign of the one and only Savior.<sup>24</sup>

As a result of the dissemination of this letter, the Romantics perceived Columbus as a visionary and crusader.<sup>25</sup> Maybe this kingdom was meant to be the republic that Norwid called for in his letter to Teofil Lenartowicz from 1856 (mentioned several times in this work):

gdybym nie miał republikańckich dziadów moich, tych, których pochodzenia są niejasne, jako to Sokratesa, Danta, Krzysztofa Kolumba, Michała Anioła, Kopernika, Kościuszki itd., tych, mówię, co stanowią poczet familijny nasz demokratyczny w Rzeczpospolitej, o których ojcach mówią, że podobno pochodzili tam skądśiś, a o matkach, że pono się tak nazywały – *homo-quidam* – *homo-novus* – a jak Tertulian ś[wię]ty pisze, “z nieba spadły” (DW XI, 45)

[if I did not have my republican grandfathers, those, whose origins are unclear, such as Socrates, Dante, Christopher Columbus, Michelangelo, Copernicus, Kosciuszko etc., those, I mean, who constitute our democratic family of the Commonwealth; they say that their fathers, supposedly came from somewhere-there, and that their mothers, were supposedly called thus – *homo-quidam* – *homo-novus* – or, as Holy Tertullian writes, “they fell from heaven”]

It seems that this was the point of view by which Norwid judged Kleczkowski’s achievements. If we wanted to describe the expeditions to China from the perspective of civilizational development, we could talk about the colonization tied to the globalization of commerce, industry, and cultural exchange. In Norwid’s view, economic factors and political decisions were secondary, while man’s motivations for entering the world unknown to him were the most important. The whole world belonged to Kleczkowski-the-knight, for he was his own foundation and fortress. Norwid discerned the source of this strength in Christian civilization, which transcended borders, and connected lands separated by seas. The reference to the prophecy about God’s Kingdom only appeared in Norwid’s

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24 Jan Nepomucen Leszczyński, *Rozprawa historyczna o Kolumbie, czyli o źródłach jego głównej idei robienia nowych odkryć na Zachodzie Europy* (Warszawa: Drukarnia Banku Polskiego, 1843), p. 22.

25 Ruskowski, *Mickiewicz i ostatnia krucjata*, pp. 80–84.

work indirectly. It was no accident that the Fifth Kingdom predicted in the *Book of Daniel* became popularised by Luis Camões's poem "The Lusiads:" Vasco da Gama was motivated by the cause of expanding God's Kingdom in trying to discover a new path to India.<sup>26</sup> Norwid clearly referenced this theme from the Portuguese national epic poem in his own fragmentarily preserved poem from the *Vade-mecum* cycle:<sup>27</sup>

Trwał taki zamęt sto lat... Lecz znów wróci.  
 Nim w Chrześcijaństwie zaświta wiek-złoty  
 I ponad drobiazgi herbów-narodowych  
 Herb-Portugalii w obłokach umieści... (PWsz II, 109)

[This confusion lasted a hundred years... But it will return.  
 Before a golden-age dawns on Christianity  
 And above the trifles of national-coats-of-arms  
 Will place the Portuguese-coat-of-arms in the clouds...]

The next historical form that will become obsolete is the nation-state, and the kingdom dreamed up in the poem will never become a reality. This is indicated by the poetic imagery: it will be up above, in the clouds. Only solitary knights at the world's edge will attest to its existence.

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26 Ewa Łukaszyk, *Terytorium a świat. Wyobrażenie konfiguracji przestrzeni w literaturze portugalskiej od schyłku średniowiecza do współczesności* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2003), pp. 88–95.

27 Henryk Siewierski mentions this poem in relation to *The Lusidas* in: *Jak dostałem Brazylię w prezencie* (Kraków: Universitas, 1998), p. 44; cf. also Cyprian Norwid, *Vade-mecum*, ed. Józef Fert (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1990), pp. 136–137 (editor's comment).

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Włodzimierz Toruń

## Norwid's Thoughts on Russia

**Abstract:** Nowhere in Norwid's works did the poet's thoughts on Russia take the form of an extensive systemic lecture, but they can be reconstructed from scattered remarks, mainly throughout the poet's letters, and in journalistic comments, more frequent under certain political and historical circumstances, e.g., in connection with the events of the January Uprising. Norwid's reflections on Russia seem pervasively motivated by a recognition of, and the need to learn from, Poland's geopolitical conditions, and an awareness of its untenable position in the neighbourhood, and the resulting need for an action plan to make the neighbourhood more hospitable to Poland's health. Norwid boldly calls for such a strategy, including both political actions (for example, the creation of a Polish "party" in Russia, which could also function as an influence group within the Russian Empire), and big ideas – above all, the concept of "moral pressure," laid out in *Memoriał o prasie*, an ideal of Poland's civilizational impact on Russia, leading the empire towards democratization, broadly understood, and thus drawing it into the value-system of Western Europe.

**Keywords:** Cyprian Norwid, Russia, Poland, January Uprising, Polish-Russian relations, historiography

The theme suggested by the title of this paper requires a few clarifications. First of all, Cyprian Norwid was not a politician, from whom we should expect systematised views on Russia. Systematised thinking was foreign to his approach to truth. The opinions Norwid expressed about the Eastern Empire on different occasions throughout his life constitute loose remarks, which can only be reconstructed into a somewhat comprehensible whole through research.

Secondly, Norwid rarely engaged directly in political activities, which at that time inevitably involved the topic of Russia. It was rather life-events, and ongoing political events, that forced the poet to take a stand and formulate opinions about them.

In Polish Romantic thought about independence in the nineteenth century, many stereotypes and thought patterns difficult to overcome revolved around Russia.<sup>1</sup> National subjugation and partitions clearly limited the horizons of

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1 Cf. Andrzej Kępiński, *Lach i Moskal. Z dziejów stereotypu* (Warszawa-Kraków: PWN, 1990); Antoni Giza, *Polaczkowie i Rosjanie. Wzajemny ogląd w krzywym zwierciadle*

reflection, and cast the Polish people and nation as victims unable to go beyond animosity, regrets, and constant reminders of its need for vindication.

The fundamental principle of Norwid's reflections on Russia is his recognition of its problematic geopolitical conditions.<sup>2</sup> During the January Uprising, in the political note *Philoctet* addressed to August Cieszkowski, the poet wrote:

Margrabia np. ma tę prawdę, którą wszelki patriota odepchnął od kolebki swojej jeszcze dziecięcą nóżką – prawdę tę, ŻE CHOĆBYŚMY DZIŚ ZWYCIĘŻYLI MOSKWĘ, TO JUTRO BĘDZIEMY Z NIĄ W STOSUNKACH, I NAWET WE WSPÓŁDZIAŁANIU – bo nie jesteśmy wyspą morzem opasaną, ale musimy przyjąć warunki globalowe, które tak postawiły nas.

... My będziemy w stosunkach sąsiednich z Moskalami i z Niemcami – prawda, którą absolutnie odepchnąwszy, wielu zyskuje moc podobną do patriotyzmu... (PWsz VII, 129)

[A margrave, for example, knows the truth that every patriot has pushed away from his cradle with a child's foot – the truth that EVEN IF WE WERE TO CONQUER MOSCOW TODAY, TOMORROW WE WOULD HAVE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH HER, AND EVEN ENTER INTO COOPERATION – because we are not an island surrounded by sea, rather, we must accept the global conditions which have placed us where we are.

... We will have neighbourly relations with Muscovites and Germans – a truth which, completely pushed aside, gives many a power similar to patriotism...]

(1800–1917) (Szczecin: Polskie Pismo i Książka, 1993); *Polacy i Rosjanie. Czynniki zbliżenia*, ed. Michał Dobroczyński (Warszawa-Toruń: Adam Marszałek, 1998); *Polacy w oczach Rosjan – Rosjanie w oczach Polaków*, ed. Roman Bobryk, Jerzy Faryno (Warszawa: Slawistyczny Ośrodek Wydawniczy, 2000); Włodzimierz Suleja, *Rusofobia po polsku*, in: *Zagadnienie rosyjskie. Myślenie o Rosji: Oglądy i obrazy spraw rosyjskich*, ed. Michał Bohun, Janusz Goćkowski (Kraków: Secesja, 2000), pp. 11–22; *Россия – Польша. Образы и стереотипы в литературе и культуре* (Москва: Индрик, 2002); Aleksander Lipatow, *Rosja i Polska: konfrontacja i grawitacja. Historia. Kultura. Literatura. Polityka* (Toruń: Adam Marszałek, 2003); *Katalog wzajemnych uprzedzeń Polaków i Rosjan*, ed. Andrzej de Lazari (Warszawa: Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych, 2006); *Polacy i Rosjanie. Przewyciężanie uprzedzeń. Поляки и Русские. Преодоление предубеждений*, ed. Andrzej de Lazari, Tatiana Rongińska (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 2006); Andrzej de Lazari, *Polskie i rosyjskie problemy z rosyjskością* (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 2009).

- 2 Cf. Andrzej Waśko, *Geopolityka i literatura romantyzmu*, in: *Przekłęte miejsce Europy? Dylematy polskiej geopolityki*, ed. Jacek Kloczkowski (Kraków: Ośrodek Myśli Politycznej, 2009), pp. 92–111.



Norwid included a similar sentiment in a letter to Łucja Rautenstrauchowa from November 1863: “Margrabia W[ielopolski] pojął Polskę jak człowiek umiejący geografję, to jest nie zakrywający sobie oczu, że my, czy zwycięzcy, czy pobici, będziemy graniczyć z narodem moskiewskim” (DW XII, 247) [Margrave W[ielopolski] understood Poland as a man who knows geography, he was not blind to the fact that, conquerors or conquered, we will border the Muscovite nation].

According to Norwid, acknowledging the geopolitical reality was, of course, only a starting point for future international politics. The *modus vivendi* in neighbourly relations was the desired state of coexistence:

Powiedziałbym i napisałbym, że jeżeli Polacy nie mają i nie chcą uprawiać zdolności podniesienia nieprzyjaciół Ojczyzny do godności znośnych sąsiadów, to wszystko na nic się nie zda. (Letter to K. Ruprecht, September-October 1863, DW XII, 230)

[I would say and write, that if Poles do not have and do not want to cultivate the ability to grant enemies of the Homeland the dignity of tolerable neighbours, then all will be of no avail.]

However, Norwid's thoughts on the future security of Poland's borders would remain purely theoretical speculations, for several reasons – and not only due to Poland's own choices. It is true that the demand for reinstatement of the Commonwealth's pre-1772 borders was already anachronistic in the nineteenth century, in a way, but it had a logical justification; it was an attempt to re-instate stable foundations and return to the international status quo.<sup>3</sup> This inevitably antagonised Poland's closest neighbours, and not only Russia. For the sake of clarity, it is worth recalling the thoughts of Nikolai Karamzin, the official tsarist historiosoph who advised Tsar Alexander I against the plan to extend the borders of the Kingdom of Poland to the Western Krai. In the memorial *Мнение русского гражданина*, read by the author himself to the emperor in Tsarskoye Selo on 17 October 1819, Karamzin urged:

You are considering, Your Majesty, rebuilding the ancient Polish Kingdom; however, is this reconstruction compatible with the good of the Russian nation? Is it compatible with your sacred duty, with your love for Russia and with justice itself? First, (Prussia

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3 The manifesto of the Polish Democratic Society stated: “Not one part, not one fraction of the great nation, but the whole Poland contained in its pre-partition borders is able to maintain alone its own existence and to fulfill its mission.” *Manifest Towarzystwa Demokratycznego Polskiego*, quote after: *Towarzystwo Demokratyczne Polskie. Dokumenty i pisma*, selection, introduction Bronisław Baczek (Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1954), p. 93.

aside) will Austria voluntarily give up Galicia? Second, can you, Your Majesty, with a clear conscience give away Belarus, Lithuania, Volhynia, Podole, established to be property of Russia even before your reign! ... Will they say that she [Catherine – W.T.] unlawfully divided Poland? But You, Your Majesty, will have acted even more unlawfully if you intend to redeem her injustice by partitioning Russia itself. We took Poland by sword: this is our right, to which all countries owe their existence; for they all arose from conquest. Catherine is accountable to God, she is accountable to history for her actions, but what has been done is sacred to you: to you Poland is a legitimate Russian property. Former property rights have no place in politics .... Until now, our state policy has been: not an inch of land, to neither enemy nor friend. ... No, Your Majesty, Poles will never be honest brothers or faithful allies to us. Now they are weak and powerless; the weak do not like the strong, and the strong despise the weak; when you strengthen them, they will seek independence and their first attempt will be to leave Russia, of course not during your reign, Your Majesty, look beyond your era and if not immortal in its goals, then immortal in its fame.<sup>4</sup>

Over a hundred years after this speech in Tsarskoye Selo, Karamzin's words came true to some extent. After World War I, the Second Polish Republic was revived on the ruins of the partitioning powers. The dramatically reclaimed borders, however, aroused the hostility of not only their recent invaders, but also of other Eastern nations, who were claiming their own political recognition. As history shows, good, exceptionally close neighbourly relations are a very difficult matter, and so enemies must be – as Norwid wrote – “*przemieniac na sąsiadów możebnych i znośnych*” [transformed into capable and tolerable neighbours].<sup>5</sup>

According to Norwid, one of the conditions for good neighbourly relations would be to have a political party in Russia to represent and defend Polish interests. As the poet reminds us, Russian policy in this respect turned out to be much more foreseeing and far-sighted. On the Polish side, merely applying the principle of symmetry could have improved the situation. To do this, however, it was necessary to overcome stereotypes and expand the horizon of patriotic activities. In a letter to Karol Ruprecht from September 1863, Norwid wrote:

*Tylko wolni ludzie, tylko ci, co nie są od kolebki żelazem napiętnowani jako niewolnicy, wiedzą o tym: że granicząc z Rosją trzeba w niej mieć swą partię – inaczej albowiem spotykają się zawsze dwa monolity, nic pośredniego nie mające – a skoro dwa monolity*

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4 Николай Карамзин, “Мнение русского гражданина,” *Старина и новизна. Исторический сборник издаваемый при обществе ревнителей русского исторического просвещения в память императора Александра III*, Vol. 2 (Санкт-Петербург, 1898), pp. 14, 15, 16.

5 Letter to Karol Ruprecht, September-October 1863, DW XII, 230.

się zetrą z sobą, zostaje nicstwo I trzaskanie się sił ostateczne. *Moskwa mogła mieć swą partię w Polsce Republikańskiej... ale Polacy w Rosji nigdy się o to nie pokusili* – – sensu tyle politycznego nie mając! Polakom ubliżałoby to, aby tyle sensu politycznego mieli, żeby stworzyć sobie partię swą w Rosji, z którą graniczyć na wiek wieków muszą; albowiem Polacy rachują raczej na (jak to mówią) *poświęcenie krwi pokoleń co 15 lat* – na periodyczną rzeź niewiniątek, aż Bóg z obłoków wyjrzy, co też i prorocy polscy zapowiedzieli dawno – *wiedząc co nastąpi*. (DW XII, 224–225)

[*Only free people, only those who are not branded as slaves from birth, know that when you border Russia you need to have your party in it – otherwise there will always be an encounter of two monoliths, with no in-between – and since the two monoliths will collide, nothingness and the ultimate clash of forces is left. Moscow could have had its party in Republican Poland... but Poles in Russia have never attempted that – they don't have that much political sense! Poles would find it offensive to have enough political sense to create their own party in Russia, which they have to border for ages to come: because Poles more often count on (as they say) sacrificing the blood of a generation every 15 years – on the periodic slaughter of the innocent, until God looks out from the clouds, as the Polish prophets also foretold long ago – knowing what happens next.*]

If we understand the word “party” as a political party bringing together people with similar views and a shared plan of action, then Norwid’s 1863 demand to create a Polish party in Russia, as we know, took a long time to realise. Unlike the Austrian or Prussian partition, Russia remained an empire immune to the progressive processes of democratization. It was not until May 1906 that a representative legislature was appointed, i.e., the First State Duma.<sup>6</sup> There were 55 Poles within that institution trying to represent the interests of their enslaved homeland.

As we know, the word “party,” and this was more so the original meaning, also meant a group, a division of people. In this sense, Poles were somewhat present in Russian life. As officers in the tsarist army, and clerks, scholars, clergy, artists, and students in the Eastern Empire, they co-formed not so much a representation, as they did groups of limited influence, defending Poland’s national interests as much as possible.<sup>7</sup> Even convicts

6 Cf. Василий Маклаков, *Первая Государственная Дума*, Paris 1939.

7 Cf. Jan Tabiś, *Polacy na Uniwersytecie Kijowskim 1834–1863* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1974); Ryszard W. Wołoszyński, *Polacy w Rosji 1801–1830* (Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1984); Ludwik Bazyłow, *Polacy w Petersburgu* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1984); *Polacy w życiu kulturalnym Rosji*, ed. Ryszard Łużny (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1986).

carried out this mission in exile, as propagators of Western culture in Siberia.<sup>8</sup>

Norwid's significant attempt to penetrate the essence of autocracy is his analysis of *Kodeks kar głównych i poprawczych* [*The Code of Principle and Corrective Punishments*] from 1847.<sup>9</sup> The poet included it in a letter to Juliusz Michelet from October 1851. The renowned French historian was working on *Légendes démocratiques du Nord* [*Democratic Legends of the North*] at the time, and collecting information about the situation of the Polish population under the Russian partition. Norwid's letter is almost entirely devoted to the analysis of the code:

Duch Kodeksu

Pewnego dnia, na rozkaz panującego, zebrali się prawnicy i ludzie o wyższej inteligencji wokół stołu pokrytego papierami i naradzali się, ile uderzeń *knuta*, ile lat przymusowej pracy na Syberii należy wymierzyć za taki czy inny występpek? – z tej narady zrodził się *Kodeks* obowiązujący i w Polsce, i na Syberii.

\*

Jeśli zastanowić się, bez *jakiegokolwiek* emocji, jaka jest podstawa tych praw? – nikt jej nie zna, można się tylko domyślić, że jest nią *wola panującego*.

\*

Wynika stąd nieuchronnie, że nie ma żadnej różnicy pomiędzy *wykroczeniem a zbrodnią*.

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8 Cf. Jerzy Fiećko, *Rosja, Polska i misja zesłańców. Syberyjska twórczość Agatona Gillera* (Poznań: Wydawnictwa WiS, 1997).

9 Compiled from Russian materials, the code was announced in Russia in 1845. It was given to the Kingdom of Poland in an abbreviated and reworked form (reduced from 2224 to 1221 articles) in 1847. The Code was the product of the work of the Codification Committee, which included, among others, Romuald Hube – a criminal law specialist and law historian, a professor at the University of Warsaw and later at the University of Saint Petersburg. The main purpose of the code was to bring criminal law in the Kingdom closer to Russian legislation. It remained in effect in the Kingdom of Poland until 1876, when the Russian Penal Code was introduced. Cf. Николай Таганцев, *Курс русского уголовного права*, Vols. 1–4 (Санкт-Петербург: Тил. М.М. Стасюевича, 1874–1880); Wiesław Daszkiewicz, “Próby reform procesu karnego w Królestwie Polskim,” *Czasopismo Prawno-Historyczne*, 1956, Vol. 8, No. 1, pp. 209–254; Władysław Ćwik, “Введение русского уголовного права в Царстве Полском,” *Archivum Iuridicum Cracoviense* 1975, Vol. 8, pp. 91–98; Elżbieta Kaczyńska, *Człowiek przed sądem. Społeczne aspekty przestępczości w Królestwie Polskim 1815–1914* (Warszawa: PWN, 1982), pp. 154–163; Elżbieta Kaczyńska, *Ludzie ukarani. Więzienia i system kar w Królestwie Polskim 1815–1914* (Warszawa: PWN, 1989), pp. 46–54.

\*

Człowiek, który pali cygaro na ulicy Warszawy, nie różni się wcale od tego, który zabija bliźniego – gdyż i ten, kto pali, i ten, kto zabija, są *karani tylko z tej przyczyny, że sprzeciwiają się woli panującego*.

\*

Otóż, człowiek nie ma prawa do życia, lecz jedynie, z woli panującego, ma prawo nie być zabity.

\*

Otóż, to nie *kara śmierci* jest zniesiona, lecz *zbrodnia jest źle pojmowana*, ponieważ monopol zbrodni tkwi w samej postawie prawa – wszystko tu może być przestępstwem.

\*

Ach! gdyby *kara śmierci* miała miejsce w tym niewinnym Jerozalem, *byłyby tam przynajmniej zbrodnie* – przynajmniej formalne możliwości egzekucji, a wraz ze zbrodniami i formalnymi możliwościami egzekucji kształtowałaby się nieuchronnie pewna świadomość w masach. Lecz *właśnie dlatego kara śmierci została definitywnie zniesiona*.

\*

Ach! gdyby istniała kara śmierci, wynikałoby z niej przynajmniej w sposób bierny prawo do życia!

#### Wykonanie

Po osiemnastu wiekach Cywilizacji Chrześcijańskiej nie można już egzekwować takiego prawa, bo są także siły wewnętrzne w społeczeństwie, siły wypływające z naturalnej solidarności narodów Europy. *Oto dlaczego Kodeks nie jest w istocie egzekwowany i dlatego on istnieje*. Tak więc *arbitralność władzy wykonawczej spełnia się w imię kodeksu bezprawnego* i to jest to, co podtrzymuje ten kodeks, którego nie da się obronić, ponieważ nie znajduje żadnego oparcia w naturze rzeczy. *To monstrum podwójnie samowolne służy za punkt wyjścia dla osobistych interesów wykonawców, egoistów i zdeprawowanych umysłów, ludzi, którzy starają się zasłonić pozorem prawa*.<sup>10</sup>

#### [*The Spirit of the Code*]

One day, at the command of the ruler, lawyers and highly intelligent people gathered around a table covered with papers and conferred over how many blows of the *whip*, how many years of forced labour in Siberia should be given for this or that offense? – this meeting gave rise to the *Code* that is enforced in Poland, as well as Siberia.

\*

If we were to consider, without *any emotion at all*, what basis these laws have? – no one knows, we can only guess that it is the *will of the ruler*.

\*

It follows inevitably that there is no difference between *a misdemeanour and a crime*.

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10 Letter to Jules Michelet, after 9 October 1851, transl. Władysław Kwiatkowski, Szczepan Babiński, in: DW X, 352–354.

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A man who smokes a cigar on the street in Warsaw is no different from a man who kills his neighbour – for both the one who smokes and the one who kills *are punished only because they oppose the will of the ruler.*

\*

And so, man has no right to life, but, only by the will of the ruler, he has the right not to be killed.

\*

And so, it is not the *death penalty* that is abolished, but *crime that is misconstrued*, because the monopoly of crime lies in the very basis of the law – everything can be a crime.

\*

Ah! if the *death penalty* had a place in this innocent Jerusalem, *there would at least be crimes there* – at least formal possibilities of execution, and with the crimes and formal possibilities of execution inevitably a certain consciousness would take shape among the masses. But this is *exactly why the death penalty has been definitively abolished.*

\*

Ah! if there were a *death penalty*, it would at least indirectly imply a *right to life!*

#### *Execution*

After eighteen centuries of Christian Civilization, it is no longer possible to enforce such a law, because there are also internal forces in society, forces flowing from the natural solidarity of the peoples of Europe. *This is why the Code is not actually enforced and why it exists.* Thus, *the arbitrariness of executive power is carried out in the name of an unlawful code*, and this is what upholds this code, which cannot be defended because it has no basis in the nature of things. *This doubly-lawless monster* serves as a starting point for the personal interests of executioners, egoists and depraved minds, people who try to hide behind the pretence of *law*.]

Norwid's detailed comments on *Kodeks kar głównych i poprawczych* contain some inaccuracies and errors. His claim that in the code "there is no difference between a *misdeemeanor and a crime*" has no merit. In the discussed text, chapter I, *O istocie przestępstwa i wykroczenia, i o stopniach winy* [*On the Essence of Crime and Offenses, and Degrees of Culpability*], Article 1 reads: "Any violation of the laws, which compromises the inviolability of the rights of the Supreme Authority and the authorities appointed thereby, or the rights or security of society and individual persons, is a crime."<sup>11</sup> Whereas Article 2 states: "Any violation of the provisions issued for the purpose of preserving the

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11 Уложение о наказаниях уголовных и исправительных – *Kodeks kar głównych i poprawczych* (Warszawa: Drukarnia Komisji Rządowej Sprawiedliwości, 1847), p. 7.

laws of established rights, as well as the general and personal security or good, shall be called a misdemeanor.”<sup>12</sup>

It is also not true that in this document, “the death penalty has been definitively abolished.” This penalty – in Article 19 – as the highest among the main penalties, was fully upheld.

Norwid's commentary, although amateurish and not very precise, nevertheless attempts to capture the essence of Russian autocracy. The power structure of the Romanov empire was alien to the European tradition, founded on the basis of Roman law:

We have here [in Russia – W.T.] neither the principle of national sovereignty (as in the Latin tradition), nor the principle of state sovereignty (as in German countries), but rather the principle of tsarist-theocratic sovereignty. Here, the law as decree (“act”) is an expression of the will of the monarch, raised all but to the zenith of earthly deity, according to the well-known Russian proverb – ‘God in heaven, tsar on earth.’ Russian law, therefore, derives its binding power from the will of the Supreme Being, whom the subjects are obliged to obey, and the religious sanction of state laws is further strengthened by the ambiguity of the word “act,” which is also a synonym for divine law and religion in general (in compound form: “act of God”).<sup>13</sup>

Poland was exposed to many perils from the eastern totalitarian monolith. This was confirmed by subsequent partitions, as well as failed attempts to settle the so-called Polish question. The neighbourly relations were usually painful, but also provided opportunities to react. Norwid, rather far from hegemonic “temptations,” seemed to believe in the possibility of Polish models having an influence on Russia. In March 1863, this is what he wrote about the official representatives of the Kingdom of Poland, Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolaevich Romanov, brother of Tsar Alexander II and Viceroy of the Kingdom of Poland, and margrave Aleksander Wielopolski, head of the Civil Administration:

Książę Konstanty, chociażby najlepsze w świecie miał życzenia, pozostaną one w sferze Rządu najzupełniej źle uplanowaną rzeczą, dlatego iż książę Konstanty w miarę spotykanych trudności czy się i postępuje, a przeto najlepsze życzenia jego są fatalnie na końcu ariergardy i są zawsze

12 *Уложение о наказаниях уголовных и исправительных – Kodeks kar głównych i porprawczych*, p. 9.

13 Bogumił Jasinowski, *Wschodnie chrześcijaństwo a Rosja. Na tle rozbioru pierwiastków cywilizacyjnych Wschodu i Zachodu* (Wilno: Drukarnia “Pax,” 1933), p. 132. Cf. also Boris Andriejewicz Uspienski, Wiktor M. Żywow, *Car i Bóg. Semantyczne aspekty sakralizacji monarchy w Rosji*, transl. and introduction Henryk Paprocki (Warszawa: PIW, 1992).

post-scriptami faktów ciągle go wyprzedzających (*par la raison de la supériorité historique de la nation où il s'érige en régnant*).

Dlatego to, ściśle rzecz biorąc, jest to tylko młody książę młodego państwa, który, przyszedłszy do narodu starego, coraz to coś zyska i postąpi, ale bez gubernera swego, bez mentora, nawet i postępu prywatnego w kształceniu się swoim prywatnym nie zyskałby. Dziś margrabia Wielopolski jest tym gubernierem i mentorem księcia rosyjskiego doganiającego postępy cywilizacyjne, jakoby mówiąc o Narodzie Polskim: '*faciamus experimentum in anima vili*.' ...

My wiemy na pewno, że:

1. Skoro z narażeniem życia damy inicjatywę kwestii włościańskiej – zajmą się nią.
2. Skoro wielki obywatel, pozwany do Petersburga, da uczuć, co to jest charakter patrioty... zastanowią się nad tym.
3. Skoro zamkną nam obywatelską instytucję, a lud wystąpi masami na ulicę – wtedy nauczą się pojmować, że lud jest coś.
4. Skoro strzelać do bezbronnych poczną, a ci z radością padać będą lub modlić się w kościołach, wtedy odgadną, że człowiek jest rzecz święta, a Bóg nie jest tajny radca państwa!...
5. Kiedy w nocy proskrypcją porywać będą braci za braci po domach, a ludzie szlachetni mieczem tną po uszach, jak Piotr Świąty w Ogrójcu – wtedy nauczą się szanować obywatela.

Słowem:

Dokonawszy trzydziestu rzezi na dwa lata, nauczymy młodego-księcia-młodego-cesarstwa trzydziestu praw stanu, i tym sposobem kształcenie jego skuteczni się w zupełności.

Przez ten czas Europa będzie nas uważać za burzycieli niespokojnych, dlatego że cały alfabet elementarnej-wiedzy-stanu musimy krwią pisać. (*Opinia względem polityki europejskiej*, PWSz VII, 126–127)

[Even if Grand Duke Konstantin had the best intentions in the world, they would, in the Government's sphere, remain the most poorly planned things, because Grand Duke Konstantin learns and acts as he encounters difficulties, and therefore his best intentions are terribly at the end of the rear-guard and are always post-scripts of the facts that constantly precede him (*par la raison de la supériorité historique de la nation où il s'érige en régnant*).

Therefore, strictly speaking, he is only the young duke of a young state who, having gone to the well-established nation, will maybe gain something and do something, but without a tutor, without a mentor, he cannot even make personal progress in personal education. Today, margrave Wielopolski is this tutor and mentor to the Russian Duke catching up on the progress of civilization, as if saying about the Polish Nation: '*faciamus experimentum in anima vili*.' ... We know for sure that:



1. If, risking our lives we raise the peasant issue – they will consider it.
2. When the great citizen, called to St. Petersburg, will let them see, what a patriot is... they will think about it.
3. When they close the civic institution, and the masses take to the streets – then they will learn to understand, that people matter.
4. When they start shooting the defenceless, and [the defenceless] happily fall or pray in churches, then they will fathom that man is a holy thing, and that God is not the secret counsellor of the state!...
5. When they condemn and come in the night to take from their homes brothers for brothers, and noble people cut off their ears like Saint Peter in the Garden of Gethsemane – then they will learn to respect the citizen.

In a word:

After thirty massacres over two years, we will teach the young-duke-of-the-young-empire thirty laws of the state, and thus his education will be fully completed.

During this time, Europe will consider us troubled instigators for having to write the whole alphabet of elementary-state-knowledge with blood.]

Norwid's ideas about Wielopolski's role as a tutor or even mentor in relation to Grand Duke Konstantin is very suggestive; it may even flatter Polish national sentiments. However, this does not change the fact that Konstantin personified Russia, a fully independent political entity, while Wielopolski was only a subordinate governor of the Russian conferral. The level of civilization is one thing, and the pragmatism of power another. It is also surprising that Norwid seems almost certain that Russia, in response to bloody events in the Kingdom of Poland, would willingly enact reforms to make up for civilizational backwardness. Russia in fact often treated the Kingdom as a testing ground for reforms, but it ultimately depended on the balance of political forces within the empire itself.

In a letter to Ruprecht from 1 September 1863, Norwid made historiosophical generalizations using summarised arguments from his *Memoriał o prasie* [*Memorial on the Press*]. The poet's conviction about enslaved Poland's historical role with regard to the Eastern Empire clearly shows through in them. The metaphor of the source from which one draws, and simultaneously tramples, is very eloquent:

4. Zawezwany archeolog Duchiniński powinien datami i źródłami wykazać, że wszelaki Państwa Petersburskiego postęp, czy to w pojęciu *człowieka*, czy to *obywatela*, czy to *Kościola*, czy to *ducha*, czy to *władzy* (I JEJ RÓŻNICZY OD DOMINACJI MAGNETYCZNEJ), czy to *wolności ludu*, czy *własności*, czy *bezzstronności-policji*,

*czy wolności słowa, czy wolności zapалу patriotycznego... czy pojęcia instytucji parlamentarnych – czy uszanowania chorągwi i żołnierza... – że wszelki postęp dla Rosji jest tylko zawsze koncesją jej monarchów, wydobytą NA NICHŻE SAMYCH I DLA NICHŻE SAMYCH PRZEZ KREW POLSKĄ!*

5. Słowem – że Polska jest dla Moskwy jakoby źródłem, *które ona depce nogami, pijąc z niego.*  
(DW XII, 208–209)

[4. The summoned archaeologist Duchński should demonstrate, using dates and sources, that all of Saint Petersburg State's progress, be it in the understanding of *man*, or *citizen*, or *the Church*, or *the spirit*, or *power* (AND ITS DIFFERENCE FROM MAGNETIC DOMINATION), or *the freedom of people*, or *property rights*, or *police-impartiality*, or *freedom of speech*, or *freedom of patriotic enthusiasm...* or *the notion of parliamentary institutions – or respect for the flag and soldier...* – that all of Russia's progress is *only the concession* of its monarchs, extracted BY THEMSELVES AND FOR THEMSELVES THROUGH POLISH BLOOD!

5. In a word – that Poland is for Moscow some kind of source, *which it tramples, while drinking from it.*

The image of Russia as “a huge sensuous force uninspired by spirit” is one of the more established stereotypes in political thought, not only in the nineteenth century.<sup>14</sup> Certainly, even in Norwid's work we can find opinions on the amorphism, the primitivism of the Eastern Empire. In the poem “Do wroga” [“To the Enemy”] (v. 9–12; 17–20), the poet writes:

Czyż nigdy z siebie ty nic, własną siłą  
Nie poczujesz nigdy: boś wszystko zabierał;  
Cofnij się! – wołam – głucha lodu-bryło:  
Dopókiż będę pod tobą umierał?...  
...  
Niechże wam szron raz roztaje u powiek,  
Niech roz-niewoli się ta ciemna góra;  
Wrogi!... do nogi broń!... kto jeszcze człowiek,  
A bryłę-lodu na kosi!... i hurraa!...

(PWsz I, 373, 374)

14 Cf. Henryk Kamieński, *Rosja i Europa. Polska. Wstęp do badań nad Rosją i Moskalami*, introduction Bronisław Łagowski (Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1999); Zbigniew Opacki, *Barbaria rosyjska. Rosja w historiozofii i myśli politycznej Henryka Kamieńskiego* (Gdańsk: Marpress, 1993).

[Will you never of yourself nothing, with your own strength  
 Never begin anything: for you have been taking everything;  
 Step back! – I yell – you deaf ice-block:  
 How long will I be dying beneath you?...  
 ...  
 Let the frost thaw from your eyes once,  
 Let this dark mountain be un-bound;  
 Enemy!... order, arms!... who is still a man,  
 Charge the ice-block with your scythes! ... and hurray!...]

The static, shapeless image of a dead, frozen mass, probably derived from the conventional image of Russia as the “land of ice,” appears many more times in Norwid’s work. For example, in a letter addressed to Ruprecht from 1 September 1863, Norwid, justifying the position of the Polish side in the protracted January Uprising, said:

Że jeżeli Polska autonomii i niepodległości chce, to wcale nie przez *dominacyjny egoizm*, ale dlatego, iż wykazana inicjatywa jej względem Rosji, która *sama z siebie dla swojego postępu nic nie robi*, że inicjatywa Polski, mówię, wobec takiej nieruchomej bryły lodu martwego osłabia ją – że, jednym słowem, *źródło, które Moskwa depce pijąc-z-niego*, gdyby o sobie samo nie dbało, zatraciłoby nareszcie swoją oną źródłową siłę i wartość. (DW XII, 209)

[That if Poland wants autonomy and independence, it is not on account of *dominant egoism*, but because it shows initiative with respect to Russia, which *in and of itself does nothing for its progress*, that Poland’s initiative, I say, against such a still lump of dead ice weakens it – that, in a word, *the source that Moscow tramples drinking-from-it*, if it did not look after itself, would eventually lose its source strength and value.]

Significantly, it is difficult to find direct references to the myth of Russia as an Eastern Empire threatening Europe in Norwid’s work.<sup>15</sup> If anything, he saw this type of threat rather in distant Asia, in which case Russia would play a considerable geostrategic role. In the political note *Philoctet*, polemicalising with the

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15 The Marquis Astolphe de Custine warned: “Russia is looking at Europe as if it were loot, which will sooner or later fall under its influence. It fuels our anarchy in the hope that it will be able to use it for its own purposes: what has happened in Poland, is happening to us on a larger scale. Paris has long been reading Russia’s seditious newspapers of various shades. ‘Europe – they say in St. Petersburg – has taken the same path that Poland followed. It is exhausted by empty liberalism, while we, meanwhile, precisely because we are not free, hold on to our power: let us patiently bear our yoke, we make others pay for our shame.’” Astolphe de Custine, *Rosja w roku 1839*, transl., annotations, afterword Paweł Hertz, Vol. 2 (Warszawa: PIW, 1995), p. 424.

views of General Ludwik Mierosławski and margrave Aleksander Wielopolski, Norwid wrote:

Następnie – Wielopolski ma jeszcze tę prawdę, że TRZEBA ROSJI ZOSTAWIĆ NIECO EUROPEJSKIEGO CHARAKTERU: odepchnąć ją do Azji jest to zrobić ją czołem milionów Chińczyków, którzy zaleją świat. I zaleją świat dlatego, że nikt tak IMITOWAĆ niczego nie potrafi, jak to umieją barbarzyńcy, a głównie Chińczycy, trzeba było więc tu stworzyć cywilizację *moins imitable, moins vendable qu'elle n'est celle de l'Occident – hélas!!...*

Oto, czego patrioci polscy nie chcą wiedzieć – tak iż gdyby się nie zostawiło niejakej europejskości Rosji, to trzeba by na drugi dzień po zwycięstwie nad Moskalami w ten moment przygotować się do możliwości wystawienia 300 000 armii i potężnego skarbu – i rozpoczęcia walki z milionami, osłaniając Europę, sprzedając armaty, koleje żelazne i pancerne statki każdemu barbarzyńcowi, który więcej zapłaci. (PWSz VII, 129, 130)

[Next – Wielopolski also believes, that WE NEED TO LEAVE RUSSIA A SOMEWHAT EUROPEAN CHARACTER: to push her back to Asia is to put her in front of millions of Chinese who will flood the world. And they will flood the world because no one can IMITATE anything like the barbarians, especially the Chinese, so it is necessary to create a civilization *moins imitable, moins vendable qu'elle n'est celle de l'Occident – hélas!!...*

Here is what Polish patriots do not want to know – that if we do not leave Russia any Europeanness, then the day after a victory over the Muscovites, we would have to prepare 300,000 armies and an enormous treasury – and start fighting with millions, shielding Europe, selling cannons, iron railways and armoured ships to any barbarian who makes the best offer.]

Norwid's analysis of the spiritual conditions of each nation in the poem "Do Moskali-Słowian" ["To Muscovite-Slavs"] is a notable attempt to explore the roots of the differences between Poles and Russians. The reference to brotherhood ("Muscovite brothers!") may be justified on the basis of common Slavic roots, and through membership in the tribe of Christians. A juxtaposition of the dogmas of faith becomes the basis for meaningful comparisons (v. 1–13):

Moskale bracia! Co w was jest szata n e m ,  
Tegośmy na chrzcie polskim się wyrzekli,  
Tego już wasza moc w nas nie rozwściekli;  
Dał Bóg, że widnem to i odpoznanem;  
Dał Bóg, i po to w świat my się rozwlekli...

Ale co pyc h ą j e g o , to nas trzyma,  
Jak zabitego kolano olbrzyma,  
W miedź rudą zbroi zakowane trwałe;

Jak wielki odłam w drzewi zwałonej skały  
 Trzęsieniem ziemi o dobie północnej;  
 Jak grzech, co, póki nie wyjawion... mocny!  
 Ale da Pan Bóg, że i to poznamy!  
 Wtedy...

(PWsz I, 151)

[Muscovite brothers! What is Satan in you  
 We have renounced at Poland's baptism,  
 Your power can no longer provoke it in us;  
 By the grace of God, it is visible and known;  
 By the grace of God, this is why we have dispersed into the world ...  
 But what his pride is, sustains us,  
 Like the knee of a dead giant,  
 Encased in durable copper armour;  
 Like a big split in the door of a fallen rock  
 Midnight earthquake;  
 Like a sin, that, until it is revealed... is strong!  
 But God willing, we will come to know this too!  
 Then...]

Seeing in his "Muscovite brothers" the marks of Satan, which the Polish nation had denounced at baptism, is at least – for Norwid – a surprising manifestation of a steadfast attitude. Even at the expense of his opponent, the poet valorises the virtues of his own people. However, this process is somewhat weakened by the claim: "But what his pride is, sustains us." Pride, the source of which is Satan himself – according to the poet – does not allow our nation to develop spiritually. Feelings born of pride, such as contempt and the desire for revenge, retaliation, and glory, attack the enemy but destroy the proud themselves spiritually and morally. Such sentiments undermine Poland's baptismal commitment to renounce evil and Satan.

Mutual distrust and hostility are ongoing challenges in Polish-Russian relations. History and past partitions have only deepened bad relations. Norwid, at what seems to have been the least opportune moment, because the January Uprising was still taking place, spoke out against ongoing hostility, in a way, in *Memoriał o prasie*:

Do słowa Mosk a l, do słowa Mosk wa przywiązywanie ohydy jest zarazem przeciw-historyczną i przeciw-polityczną działalnością. Zdaje się, iż natomiast obowiązani jesteśmy używać określników, jako to: Rząd Petersburski,

Państwo Petersburskie, ludność Państwa Petersburskiego, poniekąd rosyjską zwana... patriotyzm Państwa Petersburskiego itp. (PWsz VII, 136)

[Attaching monstrosity to the word *Muscovite*, to the word *Moscow*, is both an anti-historical and anti-political act. It seems that instead, we are obliged to use terms such as: *Saint Petersburg Government*, *Saint Petersburg State*, *Saint Petersburg State Population*, *Russian so-called... patriotism of the Saint Petersburg State*, etc.]

The above passage is important for several reasons. It appears to concern mainly terminology, but the essence of the matter is much more profound. First, Norwid opposes the negative connotations of the words “Muscovite” and “Moscow,” believing they are contrary to the principles of political and historical action. In this case, he alludes to a specific situation, the neighbour who, since the eighteenth century, had so tragically determined the fate of the First Polish Republic. Secondly, Norwid’s attempt to change the linguistic practices underpinning the ideological context is interesting. By proposing terms such as: “Saint Petersburg State,” “Saint Petersburg Government,” “Saint Petersburg State Population,” the author of *Vade-mecum* in a way recalls the division between pre-Peter and post-Peter Russia. The spiritual divide between “old” and “new” Russia, imposed by the reforms of Tsar Peter I, marked the beginning of a new era in the history of the nation and state.<sup>16</sup> Dominated by foreigners, mainly Germans, the clerical-military apparatus of the reformed empire was decidedly different and foreign to the previous tradition of Kievan Rus’ or the Grand Duchy of Moscow. The assessment of this turning point was a frequent topic of discussion among Slavophiles and Occidentalists. Konstantin Aksakow, co-creator of the Slavophilic philosophy, claimed in the 1855 article *O stanie wewnętrznym Rosji* [*On the Internal State of Russia*] that:

In the West, we are dealing with constant hostility and conflict between the state and the people, who mutually misunderstand the nature of the relations that exist between them. There was no such hostility and conflict in Russia. The people and the rulers, without mixing with each other, lived in a benevolent alliance .... The Russian people remained faithful to their views and did not focus on the state; meanwhile, the state under Peter attacked the people, invaded their lives, their existence, and forcibly changed their principles, their customs, even their clothes .... In Russia, there was a breakdown of society. Servants and upper classes broke away from Russian principles, concepts, customs, and thus from the Russian people – they began to live, dress, and speak according to foreign rules. Moscow was no longer enough for the ruler;

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16 Cf. Paul Hazard, *Kryzys świadomości europejskiej 1680–1715*, transl. Janusz Lalewicz, Andrzej Siemek, introduction Maciej Żurowski (Warszawa: PIW, 1974).

he moved the capital to the end of Russia, to a new city that he built himself, Saint Petersburg, to which he gave a German name. ... This is how the tsar broke away from the people, this is how the former relationship between land and state was destroyed; this is how the long-standing alliance was replaced by a yoke imposed on the earth by the ruler. The Russian land was as if conquered, and the state became its conqueror. This is how the Russian monarch became a despot, and the people who had thus far willingly served him, oppressed slaves on their land. ... Contempt for Russia and the Russian people quickly became the typical trait of any educated Russian who now sought to imitate Western Europe.<sup>17</sup>

Aksakow's criticism of Germanism overlaps with criticisms of Western civilization. However, the revolutionary anarchist activist Mikhail Bakunin also criticises the influence of the Germanic element on Russia as a legacy of the reforms of Peter I in the period preceding the January Uprising. In his *Appeal* in the magazine "Колокол" from 15 February 1862, he wrote:

As long as we rule in Poland, we must be slaves to the Germans, forced allies to Austria and Prussia, with whom we have viciously torn it apart. Only the combined efforts of the three German states can keep [Poland] under the hated yokes of Vienna, Berlin and Saint Petersburg. If any one of these countries backs out of this band of thieves, Poland will be free. The Germans will not back out, but we should, we should stop being Saint Petersburg Germans.<sup>18</sup>

Alexander Herzen, an outstanding journalist, philosopher, publisher, and supporter of Western civilization, went equally far in criticising the influence of Germanism on Russia's political reality. During the fighting in the Kingdom of Poland, in his article *Плач* from the 8 March 1863 "Колокол," he dramatically asked:

Brothers, brothers, what are these people doing to us, these Germans? What are they doing to our soldiers, what are they doing to our homeland? Will you really hush this all over with petty silence – the silence of slaves – these killings, these fires, these plunders... after this l o o t i n g ? ... Do you see how we were right in saying that t h e y have no moral principles; Nikolai, who cynically placed a u t o c r a c y on his banner, was only naively honest.

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17 Siergiej Aksakow, "O stanie wewnętrznym Rosji. Memoriał przedłożony Monarsze Cesarzowi Aleksandrowi II w 1855 roku," transl. Janusz Dobieszewski, Kazimierz Stankiewicz, in: *Wokół słowianofilstwa*, ed. Janusz Dobieszewski (Warszawa: Wydział Filozofii i Socjologii Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 1998), pp. 145–146.

18 Michał Bakunin, "Odezwa," *Przegląd Rzeczy Polskich* 1862 (24 March), p. 7.

The historically obsolete Merovingians must fall or else Russia will fall. Only the fall of this dynasty of German Tatars can wash away soot of our fires, innocent blood and subordination full of guilt.<sup>19</sup>

An important aspect of Norwid's thoughts on Russia was his attitude towards the ideas of its leadership and the unity of the Slavs.<sup>20</sup> These were ever-vital concepts which arose in the eighteenth century. The historical conditions themselves indicated the solutions, in a way. Apart from the specific Polish perspective, we should remember that in the nineteenth century Russia was probably the only Slavic state that maintained its independence. Thus, its leadership seemed pre-determined, but it was difficult for Poles to accept; they had always associated it with pan-Slavism. In addition, the *antemurale* ideals<sup>21</sup> and Polish attempts to unite the Slavs since the glory days of the First Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, were still very much alive. However, the Russian side perceived these matters very differently. Norwid aptly captured this awareness in the semi-ironic satirical epigram "*Confregit in die irea suae*," in which he wrote (v. 1–13):

Zarazy wszystkie przez tę Polskę wchodzą  
Do Słowiańszczyzny naszej prawosławnej,  
Francuzi siebie, a potem ją zwodzą,  
Stąd konwulsyjny ruch – i tak już dawny!  
Gdyby skończyli tę dziecinną kłótnię,  
To ten lub przyszył może Imperator,  
Jak drugi Nero nastroiwszy lutnię,  
W Warszawie bawiłby się jak amator.  
– Któż bo rad rządzić krwawo i okrutnie,  
Ileć Boża tego nie chce sprawa,  
Złamanie przysięg lub herezje nowe,  
Co Chrześcijaństwa obrażają głowę,  
Albo ustawny dzieci bunt – Warszawa!

(PWsz I, 127)

19 Quote after: Aleksandr Herzen, *O powstaniu styczniowym. Wybór pism*, trans. Ludwik Bazyłow, Mirosław Wierchowski, Mieczysław Tanty, ed., introduction Ludwik Bazyłow, Mirosław Wierchowski (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Ministerstwa Obrony Narodowej, 1962), pp. 168, 169.

20 Cf. Wojciech Karpiński, *Polska i Rosja. Z dziejów słowiańskiego sporu* (Warszawa: PWN, 1994).

21 Cf. Janusz Tazbir, *Polska przedmurzem Europy* (Warszawa: Twój Styl, 2004).



[Through this Poland all the plagues enter  
 Into our Orthodox Slavicness,  
 The French deceive first themselves, then her  
 Hence the convulsive gesture – and so old!  
 If they laid to rest their childish quarrel,  
 Perhaps this or the future Emperor,  
 Having tuned his lute like another Nero,  
 Would enjoy himself in Warsaw like an amateur.  
 – Then would gladly rule bloodily and cruelly,  
 Whenever God's cause does not warrant it,  
 Broken oaths or new heresies,  
 Which insult the Head of Christianity,  
 Or the persistent rebellion of children – Warsaw!]

We are convinced of the validity of Norwid's comments by his reference to the views of certain Russian Slavophiles. For example, Yuri Samarin, expressing a clearly Slavophilic position, in his article *Современный объём польского вопроса* published in the newspaper "День" from 7 September 1863, wrote: "Poland is a sharp wedge, driven by Latinism into the heart of the Slavic world, in order to shatter it into splinters."<sup>22</sup> And that is why "*polonism* – as an educational foundation, as a representation and armed propaganda of Latinism at the centre of the Slavic world"<sup>23</sup> – according to the article's author – is the idea most hostile to Slavic unity under Russia.

A few years later, on 12 May 1867, during the Ethnographic Exhibition and the Slavic Congress in Saint Petersburg,<sup>24</sup> in light of the "glaring absence" of the Polish delegation, the outstanding Russian poet Fyodor Tyutchev read the poem "Славянам ([Привет вам задушевный братья])" ["To the Slavs ([Sincere Greetings, to You Brothers)"] in honour of the congress guests, in which he described Poland as "the Slavic Judas." At the reception in Sokolnicki Park outside of Moscow on 2 June 1867, a follow-up event to that Congress, an abundance of controversial opinions were expressed. Ivan Aksakow, publicist and Slavophilic activist, said:

Russia's mission is to realize the Slavic brotherhood in freedom; all Slavic people who betray this common mission, who turn away from their brothers and deny them, in

22 Юрий Самарин, "Современный объём польского вопроса," in: *Сочинения*, Vol. 1 (Москва: Д. Самарин, 1877), p. 333.

23 Самарин, "Современный объём польского вопроса," p. 325.

24 Cf. Mieczysław Tanty, *Panslawizm, carat, Polacy. Zjazd Słowiański w Moskwie 1867* (Warszawa: PWN, 1970).

doing so deny their very own existence and must die! Such is the unshakable law of Slavic history...<sup>25</sup>

Mikhail Pogodin, another Russian journalist, historian, and Pan-Slavist activist, although he was not immune to the attitude of the empire's paternalism and did not go beyond the typical Russian stereotypes about Poles, tried to show a more open attitude, promising some hope for the future:

I don't see the Poles... Where could they be? Alas! They alone among the Slavs keep their distance, and while all the children of one homeland embrace one another here, they remain allies with the eternal enemies of our tribe. However, let us not exclude them from our family forever, and rather wish that they be healed of blindness and recognize their mistakes. Ah! If only they wanted to, forgetting the past, renouncing hatred, know the grace of our beloved monarch! The joy of Russians and Slavs would then be supreme!<sup>26</sup>

Guided by good will, but simultaneously revealing his political naivety, the Czech politician and leader of the Old Czech party, František Rieger, also expressed his thoughts. Although he showed a great deal of compassion for his kinsmen from the Lech generation, he nevertheless had to adapt his tone to that of the hosts of the Slavonic Congress:

I want to believe that Poles will confess to all their mistakes, and all of the injustices they have committed against you, that they will declare that they regret it, and then you... I know that your heart is still full of bitterness, *that your wounds are still bleeding*... but when Poles sincerely recognize the laws of Russia, then I expect that you too, as good Slavs, as a generous people aware of their strength, as good sons and faithful students of our holy apostles, will show them love and forgiveness!<sup>27</sup>

In a certain sense, Franciszek Duchiniński's theory attributing non-Slavic, Turanian origins to the Russians, was one attempted Polish defence against Pan-Slavism.<sup>28</sup> Norwid was familiar with these views but tried to keep them

25 Quote after: Julian Klaczko, *Kongres moskiewski i panslawistyczna propaganda* (Kraków: Drukarnia "Czasu" Kirchmayera, 1867), p. 70.

26 Klaczko, *Kongres moskiewski i panslawistyczna propaganda*, pp. 69–70.

27 Quote after: Klaczko, *Kongres moskiewski i panslawistyczna propaganda*, p. 72.

28 Cf. Andrzej F. Grabski, "Na manowcach myśli historycznej. Historiozofia Franciszka H. Duchinińskiego," in: Andrzej F. Grabski, *Perspektywy przeszłości. Studia i szkice historiograficzne* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Lubelskie, 1983), pp. 221–278; Andrzej F. Grabski, "U początków euroazjatyckiej koncepcji dziejów Rosji: Franciszek H. Duchiniński," in: *Centrum i regiony narodowościowe w Europie od XVIII do XX wieku*, ed. Edward Wiśniowski (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 1998), pp. 43–58; Zbigniew Opacki, "Turańsko-azjatyckość Rosji w polskiej i rosyjskiej myśli społeczno-politycznej XIX-XX wieku," in: *Zagadnienie rosyjskie. Myślenie*

at a healthy distance. He was well aware that given Poland's circumstance as a conquered nation, these theories could be used instrumentally to incite "unenlightened patriotism." In a letter to Marian Sokołowski from 6 February 1864, he ironically wrote: "Jak Duchiniński im wyróżnie krzepko: 'Moskal-Chińczyk,' to będą uradowani." (DW XII, 258) [If Duchiniński strikes them robustly with: 'Muscovite-Chinese,' they will be delighted].

However, in a letter to Bronisław Zaleski from between October and November 1867, he said outright:

Rosjanie są tacyż sami Słowianie jak Polacy – tamci z azjackimi, ci z europejskimi ludami pomięszani: bo tak być powinno!...

Jużcić oni Słowianie są, i dali tego dowód od początku: 1° bo się sami rządzić nie umieli I zawezwali Waregów; 2° bo się upijają-łatwo i ściskają się i płaczą-łatwo; 3° bo nic oryginalnie sami z siebie postawić i wywieść nie umieją bez zuchwalstwa lub naśladownictwa. Wszystko to dowodzi, że są Słowianie. (PWSz IX, 321)

[Russians are Slavs just as much as Poles are – the former mixed with Asian, the latter with European peoples: because this is how it should be!...

They are indeed Slavs, and they proved it from the beginning: 1° because they couldn't govern themselves and called in the Varangians; 2° because they get-drunk-easily and embrace and cry-easily; 3° because they cannot come up with and develop anything themselves unless it is through insolence or imitation. All this proves that they are Slavs.]

Somehow Norwid's argument for the Slaviness of the Russians seems a little strange. While the invasion theory linking Russia's history with the Varangians is considered likely to be true, Norwid's remaining two arguments should be taken with a grain of salt.

As for the unity of the Slavs, however, Norwid did not see Russia as a country that could unify Slavic countries. Probably influenced indirectly by Austro-Slavism and adhering to the political attitude of Hotel Lambert society, he perceived the leader of the Slavs to be Austria.<sup>29</sup> In the essay *Récit d'une peinture d'histoire* [*The Story of a Historical Painting*] he wrote:

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*o Rosji: Oglądy i obrazy spraw rosyjskich*, ed. Michał Bohun, Janusz Goćkowski (Kraków: Secesja, 2000), pp. 239–252.

29 Around the time of the January Uprising Norwid wrote: "Nikt z nas nie myśli oszukać Austrii, ale my nie jesteśmy *publicyści-ateusze*, którym się zdaje, iż wszystkie powagi państw i czasów od naszego kieszonkowego zegarka zależą. My widzimy, iż Austria

Rosja n a t u r a l n i e ofiaruje Polsce ościenny, pokrewny i znakomity alians. Rosjanie są Słowianami, jak Polacy, Czesi etc. W Rosji jest uczucie patriotyczne, lubo nie ma uszanowania dla patriotyzmów. Rosja więc ma względem Polski element historyczny – prawie że przyszłość Słowiańszczyzny.

Ale człowiek ma dwa charaktery prawa i potrzeby: historyczne i społeczne, Rosja zaś dla społeczności polskiej nic a nic nie ofiaruje. Religię, język (choć to ten sam język!) niszczy. Wszyscy jej inteligentni mężowie są albo a t e u s z e, albo religii powierzchownie udanej, a jednak przy tym arcybiskupów wędzi i niweczy Religię. Skąd weźnie potem posłuszeństwo??? Jak płomienie się rozdmuchają – na górze ateizm, na dole fanatyzm, a Religia znieważona! Rosja więc nic i nic jako s p o ł e c z n o ś ć nie ofiaruje.

Natomiast też potrzebę bierze Austria i (nic nie ofiarując jako historyczny element cało-słowiański) o f i a r u j e w s z y s t k o j a k o s p o ł e c z e ń s t w o... Dnia, którego Austria weźnie chorągiew słowiańską, albo dnia, którego Rosja weźnie system parlamentarno-autonomijny austriacki... jedno z tych ciał usunie się, albo wielki i piękny kongres powstanie.

Ale czy jest dość ludzi bezstronnych i mających miłość?? (PWSz VII, 93, 94)

[Russia n a t u r a l l y offers Poland a neighbourly, kindred and excellent alliance. Russians are Slavs, like Poles, Czechs etc. There is patriotic feeling in Russia, though there is no respect for patriotism. And so Russia has a historical element in relation to Poland – almost the future of Slaviness.

But man has two types of law and needs: historical and societal, and Russia offers nothing at all to the Polish community. It destroys religion, and language (though it is the same language!). All of [Russia's] educated members of the upper class are either a t h e i s t s, or superficially religious, yet at the same time archbishops bind and destroy religion. Where then does obedience come from? When

dopełnia *humanitarnych* względem nieszczęśliwej Ojczyzny naszej obowiązków i sprawiedliwość tę jej oddajemy. Pod żadnym warunkiem nie wolno nam jest zapomnieć, iż bywają zbawieni nawet za to, że szklankę wody podali pragnącym w Imię Boże, a czym Im to według czystości ich rąk podających tę szklankę wody będzie policzone?... to właśnie że nie nasza rzecz o tym wyrokować, lecz *rzecz czasu*” [None of us are thinking of deceiving Austria, but we are not *atheist-journalists*, who seem to think that all the gravity of countries and times depend on our pocket-watch. We can see that Austria is fulfilling its *humanitarian* obligations towards our unhappy Homeland, let us give [Austria] credit for that. Under no circumstances must we forget that even those who give a glass of water to the thirsty in the name of God may be redeemed; will they be judged according to the cleanliness of the hands offering this glass of water?... it is not for us to determine, but for *time*]. Letter to H. Dembiński, after 13 May 1863 (DW XII, 170).

the flames spread wide – atheism above, fanaticism below, and Religion insulted! And so Russia offers nothing at all as a s o c i e t y .

However, Austria takes this need and (without offering anything as a historical all-Slavic element) o f f e r s e v e r y t h i n g a s a s o c i e t y . . . The day that Austria flies the Slavic banner, or the day Russia adopts the Austrian parliamentary-autonomous system... one of these bodies will be removed, or a great and beautiful congress will be formed.

But are there enough impartial and loving people??]

Norwid, probably realising how difficult it would be to unite the Slavs on a political level, tried to look for unity at a religious level. In the poem “Bądź wola Twoja” [“Thy Will Be Done”] published in *Goniec Polski* in February 1851, he says (v. 1–2, 13–18):

Bądź wola Twoja, nie tak, j a k n a z i e m i  
 (Więc nie w y g o d n i e j j a k . . . l e c z j a k j e s t g o d n i e ),  
 ...  
 Potem na wszystkiej z i e m i - z i e m , jak w niebie,  
 Gdzie Polską, Rusią, Litwą, Ukrainą,  
 Cało-Słowiaństwem wracają do Ciebie,  
 Jako sztandary, kiedy się rozwiną,  
 Sny, czucia, pieśni, i myśli, i czyny,  
 Do Ciebie, pieśni i czynów p r z y - c z y n y ! . . .

(PWsz I, 150)

[Thy will be done, not, a s i t i s o n e a r t h  
 (So not what is c o n v e n i e n t . . . b u t w h a t i s d i g n i f i e d ),  
 ...  
 Then on all e a r t h l y - l a n d , as it is in heaven,  
 Where Poland, Rus,' Lithuania, Ukraine,  
 In All-Slavism return to You  
 As banners, when they unfurl  
 Dreams, feelings, songs, and thoughts, and deeds,  
 To You, the reason for the songs and deeds! . . .]

As Anna Kadyjewska emphasised, “‘All-Slavism’ is therefore not only the complete set of Eastern European nations, but above all an ideal and dream community of communities that complement each other on their way to the Heavenly Father.”<sup>30</sup> In the above fragment of Norwid’s poem, his placement of

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30 Anna Kadyjewska, “Modlitwa bardzo Norwidowska (komentarz do wiersza Cypriana Norwida ‘Bądź wola Twoja’),” *Prace Polonistyczne*, 1998, Vol. 43, p. 521.

Lithuania alongside Poland, Rus,' and Ukraine, which return to God in "All-Slavism" is surprising. As we know, Lithuanians are not a Slavic people, but perhaps Norwid, thinking of the First Polish Republic as a whole, subconsciously counted them among the family of Slavs. Pre-partition Poland, as a unified state, was comprised mainly of Slavs.

This essay, limited to only a few select issues, demonstrates the significance of Norwid's thoughts on Russia. These considerations, in the context of Polish, Russian, and Western European thought, appear valuable not only to Norwidologists and literary historians, but also to historians of ideas and political scientists. In speaking publicly about historical or current affairs, Norwid usually strove to form his own independent opinion. Originality of thought was a constant imperative for him. This usually yielded insightful judgments, although he naturally also had misunderstandings or misconceptions. Even in his confusion on certain matters, Norwid felt entitled to speak on issues relevant to his country. The details of the events were less important than their substance to him. These words from a letter to Konstancja Górską – explaining some of the poet's misunderstandings with Michał Kleczkowski – can be taken as a demonstration of this: "Dyplomatą nie jestem i, kiedy zdanie moje w rzeczach historii objawiam, zapewne nie idzie mi głównie o bawełnę, opium albo herbatę, ale idzie mi głównie o treść główną"<sup>31</sup> [I am not a diplomat and, when I give my opinion on historical matters, my main interest is surely not cotton, opium, or tea, but rather the heart of things].

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Edyta Chlebowska

## Norwid's Watercolour Contrasts

**Abstract:** The author draws attention to Norwid's special penchant for the watercolour technique that spanned his entire artistic career, emphasising, however, his particular affinity for this medium during the later stages of his work. Tracking the development of Norwid's watercolour technique, the author notes its clearly defined evolution. Although in his conventional treatment of the watercolour, it was strongly associated with and subordinated to drawing, with time, the artist adapts this art form to suit his own creative philosophy (the scholar indicates the early 1870s as a breakthrough) and actually goes against the watercolour convention and its natural properties. He does this by using a dense, grainy texture and muffled, heavy tones, among other things. This is a conscious evolution confirmed by Norwid's creative philosophy, as evidenced by his programmatic declarations about watercolour, which he wants to "take ... where it has never gone before" so that it might help one to "think freely."

**Keywords:** Cyprian Norwid, watercolour, drawing, XIX-century polish art

"Norwid was truly in his element when it comes to drawings and watercolour studies" – we can easily agree with the opening statement in Aleksandra Melbechowska-Luty's review of the most extensive area of Cyprian Norwid's art.<sup>1</sup> While every other domain of artistic activity, whether it be graphic art, oil painting, or sculpture, is represented in Norwid's *oeuvre* by a relatively small number of works, the number of his drawings and watercolours is incomparably greater. Moreover – largely as a result of that sheer volume – it presents a great "range of technical means and artistic expression."<sup>2</sup> In analysing this part of Norwid's work, the author of *Sztukmistrz* did not explore its division into further sub-genres but rather considered the whole in iconographic terms.<sup>3</sup> This approach seems entirely justified if we consider the fact that a strict separation of Norwid's watercolour compositions from his drawings is problematic. After all, the artist's established practise was to fill in his pencil and pen drawings with one or more watercolours, which is why, next to his "clean" drawings and

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1 Aleksandra Melbechowska-Luty, *Sztukmistrz. Twórczość artystyczna i myśl o sztuce Cypriana Norwida* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Neriton, 2001), p. 153.

2 Aleksandra Melbechowska-Luty, *Sztukmistrz*, p. 153.

3 Aleksandra Melbechowska-Luty, *Sztukmistrz*, pp. 153–212.

purely painted compositions, we find a variety of intermediate techniques in the poet's *oeuvre*. The role of watercolours in shaping the visual layer of Norwid's drawings and paintings takes a variety of forms: from small, isolated colour accents within the drawing, to larger painted portions, to the compositions in which line and colour seem to be equal means of artistic expression.

The observation above, pointing out the multitude and variety of uses of the watercolour technique, which served the artist not only as a means of finishing his pencil and pen drawings but also as an independent medium of artistic creation, tempts us to expand and systematise our knowledge of Norwid's watercolours. I think that despite the difficulties mentioned in distinguishing the bodies of work that we could define using this term, it is worth pursuing the temptation if only to deepen our knowledge of the unique artistic craft of the author of *Promethidion*. Perhaps, as a result, we will be able to explain, or at least come closer to knowing, the artistic and non-artistic conditions which nurtured Norwid's special affinity for the watercolour technique in the last years of his life.

Let us start with some general observations that can be made upon cursory consideration of Norwid's artistic *oeuvre*. Without a doubt, the creator of *Solo* reached for watercolours often and enthusiastically throughout virtually his entire artistic career. It is probably a matter of chance, but let us note for the sake of order, that his first (*Za mną dzieci!* [*Follow Me, Children!*], 1837, Fig. 28), as well as his last (*Muza ukraińska* [*Ukrainian Muse*], 1882, Fig. 29) dated works, were made using this technique. One of the basic features of Norwid's watercolours is a strong connection with his drawing technique. Although this relationship assumes various forms and degrees of formal connection between the two ways of organising artistic compositions, it is nevertheless based predominantly on watercolour being subordinate to drawing, which remains the main compositional value. The watercolour technique, as a medium supporting or supplementing pencil or pen drawings, takes absolute precedence in Norwid's *oeuvre*. This primacy of drawing, however, cannot be reduced to the simple act of colouring spaces between the lines, as in the traditional method of employing watercolours. In this regard, Norwid – in his usual way – approaches the artistic convention, preserved by the practice of many generations of predecessors, with a hefty dose of freedom. On the one hand, he does not entirely sidestep traditional solutions, but on the other, he is not afraid to go beyond them in the search for new effects and his own form of artistic expression.



**Fig. 28.** Cyprian Norwid, *Za mną dzieci!* [*Follow Me, Children!*], 1837, watercolour, National Museum in Warsaw. Photo Piotr Ligier.



**Fig. 29.** Cyprian Norwid, *Muza ukraińska* [*Ukrainian Muse*], 1882, watercolour, Jagiellonian Library. Photo Jagiellonian Library.

Determining a consistent chronology of the watercolour creations Norwid cultivated over four decades is not a particularly easy task, nor is it without the risk of error. The fundamental difficulty lies in the varied, and often difficult to determine, status of the compositions made using the technique in which we are interested. Due to the overwhelming majority of small, intimate artistic works in Norwid's legacy, the basic distinctions generally used to describe and classify paintings do not apply or apply only to a very limited extent. In the work of most artists, we can easily distinguish the body of finished and refined works, made in accordance with academic rules, from the collection of rough, incomplete works, which are – in the simplest terms – a documentation of the creative process, the final result of which are their finished paintings. Norwid, however, left us a large collection of “notes and fragments,” which, in spite of their sketch-like or outline-like character, cannot be assigned to this initial, preparatory phase of creating a “ready” or “finished” work.<sup>4</sup> This does not mean that the relation between the initial sketch and the final product is entirely absent from Norwid's work. Undoubtedly, the pen drawing known as *Szkic do ilustracji* [*Sketch for an Illustration*], also known as *Zwycięzca* [*The Victor*], is the rough draft of the composition *Dawid przed Saulem* [*David before Saul*], found in Maria Wodzińska's album,<sup>5</sup> while his *Studia zamysłonych* [*Pensive Studies*] (Fig. 30), shaded with a watercolour wash, were created when he was working on *Handlarz laurów* [*The Laurel Trader*] (Fig. 31). The preparatory study of the character in a melancholic pose on the lithograph of *Solo* is also well-known. Nevertheless, the examples listed above are rather isolated and do not have many analogies. The artistic trifles that constitute the main body of Norwid's work, both on their own and as parts of greater wholes (that is, albums (his own and others') or sketchbooks), are, in spite of their incomplete, fragmentary form, usually independent, original items, that are the expression of an artistic principle that the author of *Vade-mecum* captured with this concise formula:

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4 Cf. Maria Poprzęcka's remarks in the article “Złudzenia szkicu,” in: Maria Poprzęcka, *Pochwała malarstwa. Studia z historii i teorii sztuki* (Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo słowo/obraz terytoria, 2000), pp. 49–61.

5 Cf. my comments in: Edyta Chlebowska, “Norwidowski Dawid w albumie Marii Wodzińskiej,” in: *Strona Norwida. Studia i szkice ofiarowane profesorowi Stefanowi Sawickiemu*, ed. Piotr Chlebowski, Włodzimierz Toruń, Elżbieta Żwirkowska and Edyta Chlebowska (Lublin: TN KUL, 2008), pp. 29–48.



**Fig. 30.** Cyprian Norwid, *Studia zamyślonych* [*Pensive Studies*], pencil drawing, watercolour, National Library in Poland. Photo National Library in Poland.



**Fig. 31.** Cyprian Norwid, *Handlarz laurów* [*The Laurel Trader*], 1869, pen drawing, watercolour, National Library in Poland. Photo National Library in Poland.

Cała plastyki tajemnica  
 Tylko w tym jednym jest,  
 Że duch – jak błyskawica,  
 A chce go ująć gest –

(*Lapidaria*, PWsz II, 223)

[Fine arts'  
 Whole secret:  
 A spirit – like lightening  
 In gesture caught – –]<sup>6</sup>

This situation, in turn, creates the temptation to treat every work, even the most inconspicuous one, as a full form of artistic expression.<sup>7</sup> Meanwhile, among the great variety of Norwid's sketches, studies, and drawn notes, there are not only works which express active cooperation between creative thought and the hand, as well as sensitive artistic reaction, but also sketches – among which there are, above all but not only, notes and tracings of other artists' works. These should rather be considered as direct and only minimally transformed traces of stimuli and inspiration for Norwid, the artist, thinker, poet, and erudite (and even researcher of old eras, when it comes to the various manifestations of material culture). This type of work, of a mainly documentary character, and most frequently represented in the three volumes of *Album Orbis w szkicu* [*Album Orbis in Sketches*] (hereafter: AO), contains – according to their author – “cały przebieg cywilizacji świata” [“the entire course of world civilization”],<sup>8</sup> starting with the ancient cultures: Greek, Mesopotamian, Chinese, Egyptian, and Roman, through early Christianity and the Middle Ages, up until modern times.<sup>9</sup> Norwid's artistic compositions, coexisting on the pages of this impressive collection alongside the author's handwritten notes, tracings, and excerpts from books and magazines, are subordinated to the overarching idea behind the entire creative enterprise. In accordance with Norwid's postulate of faithfulness

6 English translation based on Adam Czerniawski's in: Cyprian Norwid, *Selected Poems*, (London: Anvil Press, 2004), p. 87.

7 Jerzy Sienkiewicz was one of the first to point out the dangers of this in his synthetic study, which nevertheless contained a number of fundamental findings: “Norwid malarz,” in: *Pamięci Cypriana Norwida*, a collected work (Warszawa: Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie, 1946), pp. 69, 74.

8 Letter from Norwid to B. Zaleski from 1 July 1872 (PWsz IX, 513).

9 Numerous analyses of Norwid's works in the album are presented in the collection: Piotr Chlebowski, *Romantyczna silva rerum. O Norwidowym “Albumie Orbis”* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2009).



to the source, these works usually refer to cultural and artistic artefacts from the eras and cultures that interested him most; their relationships to those sources assume various forms. Therefore, among the drawings and watercolours pasted onto the album's pages, we find both relatively faithful copies of motifs taken, e.g., from paintings or sculptures of bygone eras and sketches whose sources are difficult to discern. It should be emphasised here that there are relatively few "photographic" images in the collection because the work of Norwid's brush and pencil are decidedly dominated by the latter practice, which results in far-reaching transformations of the initial image. Undoubtedly, Norwid used illustrated publications, which taught their contemporary audience about past or distant civilizations, and which were, after all, common on the European publishing market, and which he could easily access during his frequent visits to the National Library in Paris. As Piotr Chlebowski rightly noted, in those "notes and fragments," "the need to convey the truth about an object or issue becomes more important than the contemplation of beauty" because "the artist focuses primarily on reality here, on its objective aspect, on its almost verse-like description of phenomena."<sup>10</sup>

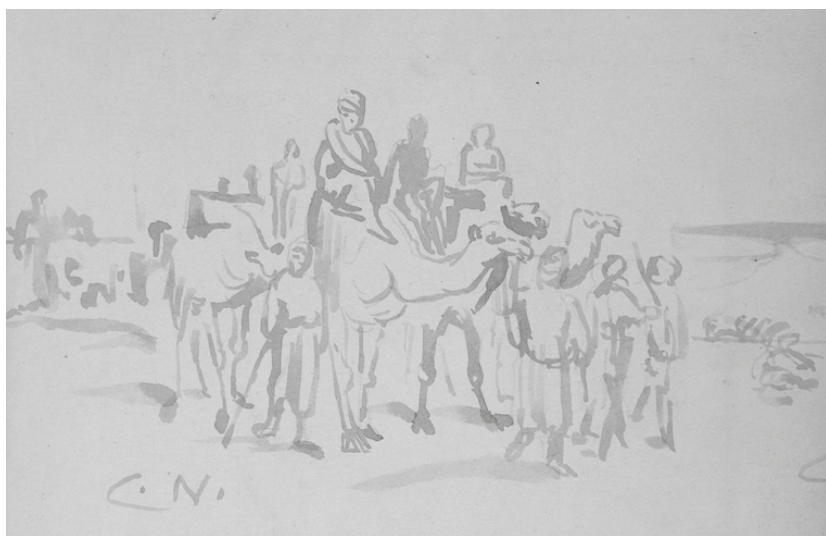
Considering the observations above, it is impossible to ignore the blurriness of the distinctions, the fluidity and, in fact, our limited ability to recognise the artistic and extra-artistic intentions that guided the pencil, pen, or brush. Therefore, in analysing any given composition, we often encounter an apparent difficulty in explicitly confirming or repudiating its autonomous artistic values. Let us take, for example, the famous *Karawana* [*Caravan*] (Fig. 32) – a monochromatic, modest, watercolour sketch from the first volume of *Album Orbis*. It is indisputably the general outline of Léon Belly's canvas painting *Pèlerins allant à la Mecque* (Fig. 33).<sup>11</sup> The crowded scene, filled with an abundance of academic details in the original work, is replaced in Norwid's "copy," with a summarily-treated group brought to the surface of the paper with light brush strokes, under which even more subtle pencil strokes are discernible here and there. In borrowing someone else's work, then, Norwid was able to utterly transform the original. We might even say that as a result of his methods – the reduction and simplification of the elements comprising the scene, and the depiction of a mass as opposed to individualised figures – we gained a "new" work of art. Despite the distinct *indicia* of the watercolour note, which replicates the main features of Belly's concept, it is hard to deny Norwid's *Karawana* its artistic

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10 Piotr Chlebowski, *Romantyczna silva rerum*, p. 42.

11 Piotr Chlebowski, *Romantyczna silva rerum*, p. 35.

values completely. The delicacy of the pastel watercolour stroke, which in places virtually blends with the colour of paper, as well as Norwid's ability to give the impression of multitude within the depicted group using uncommonly modest means, are prepossessing. The unpainted surface of the paper, which is, of course, predominant in this work, also plays a significant role in building the composition, suggesting that the contours and details of the scene are lost in the harsh desert sun. Note also that the issue of chiaroscuro modelling in the original oil painting was treated differently; the group of pilgrims under the strong light have the sun behind them and remain in the shade, for the most part. No less interesting is the phenomenal view of the Acropolis, which Norwid probably based on some photograph or drawing (AO I, sh. 28 recto). As in the case of *Karawana*, the question of reflecting reality comes second to the overall impression. The bright silhouette of the temple crowning the hill rises up through the endless, undulating, sepia green landscape like a ship sailing over high seas.



**Fig. 32.** Cyprian Norwid, *Karawana* [*Caravan*], watercolour, National Library in Poland. Photo National Library in Poland.



**Fig. 33.** Léon Belly's *Pèlerins allant à la Mecque*, 1861, oil on canvas, Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Photo: Wikipedia, CC BY-SA 3.0.

These watercolours undoubtedly stand out from the rest of the works in which the documentary function is clearly in the foreground and determines the scope of the picture. Contoured drawings, tightly filled with unvaried colour, devoid of distinctive values, appear relatively rarely in these works. We can use two motifs from Egyptian paintings placed side by side on a single sheet as an example: a mummy on an embalmer's table and the image of a soul (ba) beneath a bird with a woman's head (AO I, sh. 91). Norwid used this technique to create several images of saints from medieval miniatures, copied using tracing paper (AO III, sh. 9), silhouettes of horses covered with decorative caparisons (also redrawn on tracing paper, AO III, sh. 82 verso), and monochromatic copies of motifs from Assyrian bas-reliefs, painted using bluish paint (AO I, sh. 55 recto, sh. 56 recto). In his documentary copies, the artist more often uses the technique of spontaneous wash with diluted watercolours to fill in fragments of an outline originally made in pencil or pen. The compositions made this way are just as often multi-coloured as they are monochromatic, usually sepia or grey, and sometimes having bluish tones. At times, the brushwork only serves to embolden parts of the contour, without spreading at all, or just minimally, onto the surface of the space it defines. We can observe this strategy, for example, in

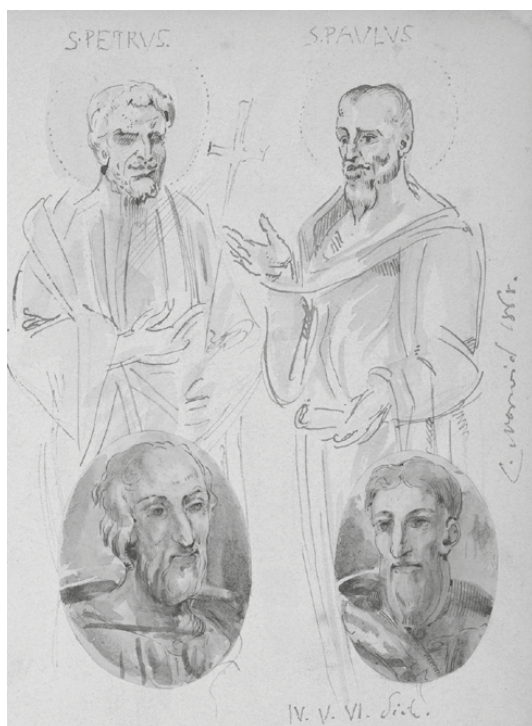
the image of an Egyptian soldier wielding a spear (AO I, sh. 78 recto), a male figure with a bucket and sack over his shoulder, bearing the caption “Israel” (AO I, sh. 81 recto), in copies of motifs from the Roman Christian catacombs (AO II, sh. 45 recto, Fig. 34), and in the bust of Nero with a laurel wreath (AO II, sh. 59 verso). Another variant of the fragmentary colouration of a drawing is using a wide, free splash of colour to fill a substantial part of the presented surface. This was how Norwid created the image of *Sapho*, a copy of the famous Pompeiian painting (AO I, sh. 23 recto), in which the monochromatic watercolour achieves the effect of the chiaroscuro model used in the original work, and the image of the Greek soldier bearing a shield (AO I, sh. 6 recto), retaining pastel tones, with grey and reddish ones prevailing, and the subtle presentation of crowds of angels and saints with palm branches in their hands (AO II, sh. 54 recto).



**Fig. 34.** Cyprian Norwid, copies of motifs from the Roman Christian catacombs, pen drawing, watercolour, National Library in Poland. Photo National Library in Poland.

Until now, we have been discussing those of Norwid’s drawings that only used watercolour to a limited degree. In his albums, there are also tracings and copies in which the autonomous properties of the watercolour technique are more pronounced. Let us take a look at the busts of the apostles included in the *tondi*: Saint Peter and Saint Paul (AO II, sh. 34 recto) (Fig. 35). Whereas the accompanying sketches of their images are only delicately painted over with pastel watercolours, the “tarnished” brownish-green tone of the busts

demonstrates a clear shift from the total dominance of colour's structural function in the drawing towards a more important role in building the composition. The bust of Nero in a rose wreath (AO II, sh. 58 recto), the image of an oracle sitting on a tripod (AO I, sh. 46 recto, Fig. 36), the landscape of the ruins of an Egyptian temple (AO I, sh. 69 recto), or, to an even greater degree, the "biblical landscapes" in the second volume of *Album Orbis* (*Synaj* [*Sinai*], *Tabor*, [*Tabor*] and *Siloe* [*Siloam*] sh. 3 recto, 6 recto, 24 recto), all show the painted layer gaining independence from the underlying drawing.



**Fig. 35.** Cyprian Norwid, *Święty Piotr i święty Paweł* [*Saint Peter and Saint Paul*], 1868, pen drawing, watercolour, National Library in Poland. Photo National Library in Poland.



**Fig. 36.** Cyprian Norwid, *Ecce Deus*, 1868, pen drawing, watercolour, National Library in Poland. Photo National Library in Poland.

The list of examples of Norwid's works above, created with the watercolour technique and included in *Album Orbis*, which was compiled based on the way in which he used that technique, allowed us – I believe – to discern the considerable inventiveness of Norwid's brush in this regard, which used quite liberal strokes of colour and was not limited to just one convention established by practice. Because most of the compositions mentioned here were created in the 1850s and 1860s, we can assume that their diversity was not so much due to the chronological changes in artistic language as a consequence of Norwid's open and flexible attitude towards the medium. We can also safely say that the analysed works, which, to a large extent, serve a documentary function, are related not only to the artistic but to an equal extent also the scholarly or, in broader terms – cognitive – aspect of Norwid's activity; they are not necessarily



limited to documentary functions. Even when Norwid reached for someone else's compositions or when he copied certain motifs from a photograph or drawing, he usually radically transformed them, bestowing his own unique mark on the notes he made on their basis. As a result, we are more often dealing with works that were inspired by some iconographic source or another, not strictly copies.

In *Album Orbis*, the main distinguishing feature was the focus on fragments isolated from their original context (paintings, drawings, or sculptures), registered by the artist in sketch or watercolour notes. But there are also works of a similar, exemplary nature, as well as proper copies of paintings, scattered among Norwid's loose works that constitute a unique supplement to Norwid's "imagination museum." The artist also eagerly applied the watercolour technique to these "larger" realizations as well, though it should be noted that they are relatively few in his artistic *oeuvre*. As examples, let us use his copies of two of Eustache Le Sueur's canvas paintings in the Louvre from his series on the life of Saint Bruno,<sup>12</sup> as well as Albrecht Dürer's well-known drawing *Arion*<sup>13</sup> in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna. As in the case of the watercolours, Norwid based these works on reproductions, as evidenced by the reversal of the compositions in relation to the original works. The pencil-drawn image of Arion on a dolphin's back was painted in a uniform, bluish-brown tone, while the copies from Le Sueur's work are in sepia-brown, except that the scene of [Saint Bruno's] dream has distinct blue accents, which reflect the colouring of the original painting.

The variety of the watercolour technique we can observe in the collection of album entries is no less evident in Norwid's compositions, which he was creating – as I have already mentioned – from the time he was in school until the

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12 We are talking about the paintings *Le songe de saint Bruno* and *Mort de saint Bruno* (1645–1648). Le Sueur's influence on Norwid's art was written about by: Dariusz Pniowski, *Między obrazem i słowem. Studia o poglądach estetycznych i twórczości literackiej Norwida* (Lublin: TN KUL, 2005), pp. 125–138 and *passim*; Jan Zieliński, *Pieszczota piórka. Nota w sprawie rzekomych aniołów Norwida wedle Le Sueura*, "Studia Norwidiana," Vols. 22–23 (2004–2005), pp. 139–144 and Jan Zieliński: *Obraz pogodnej śmierci. Norwid – Rafael – Maratti i "Śmierć świętego Józefa"* (Lublin: TN KUL, 2010), pp. 58–59.

13 The original drawing, with Dürer's caption: "pisce super curvo vectus cantabat Arion," can be found in the Kunsthistorischen Museum in Vienna (in the collection Ambraser Kunstbuch). Cf. *Die Zeichnungen Albrecht Dürers von Friedrich Winkler*, Vol. III, 1510–1520 (Berlin: Deutscher Verein für Kunstwissenschaft, 1938), item 662, pp. 77–79.

last years of his life. Thus, keeping in mind the caveat expressed at the onset, it seems worthwhile to attempt to place Norwid's watercolour *oeuvre* in some sort of chronological order.

Two watercolour works from the late 1830s – *Za mną dzieci!* [*Follow Me, Children!*] (Fig. 28) and *Dworek Norwidów w Laskowie-Głuchach* [*The Norwid Manor in Laskowo-Głuchy*] (Fig. 37) – have been preserved at the National Museum in Warsaw. The lack of confidence in using the line and watercolour stain points to an amateur hand, not yet proficient in handling the medium and having difficulty with the composition. The stiff, schematic outlines and numerous errors visible both in the way the figures are represented and in the completely flat treatment of the landscape are quite off-putting in these works. Nevertheless, the subdued hues of these watercolours herald Norwid's later preference for tones devoid of sharp colour contrasts, to some extent.



**Fig. 37.** Cyprian Norwid, *Dworek Norwidów w Laskowie-Głuchach* [*The Norwid Manor in Laskowo-Głuchy*], 1839, watercolour, National Museum in Warsaw. Photo Piotr Ligier.

A few years later, in 1843, Norwid created one of his more conventional watercolours. He painted it as a young artist in Venice for a keepsake album dedicated to Alefityna Gościńska. The image of Krakus in traditional dress,



with a banner bearing the coat of arms of the Kingdom of Poland picturing the Eagle and Chase, looks almost like an illustration taken from some iconographic portfolio. The richness of detail in the rather precise (even for Norwid) pencil drawing was additionally brought out by the realistic colours of the thin, equally careful layer of paint. We consider this work, very rare in Norwid's collection in the strictly artistic as well as thematic aspect, to be an expression of the spirit of the times as well as the conventional notebook practice of that time, rather than a representation of his own artistic preferences. Thus, Norwid's creative output in the 1840s remains the domain of pencil and pen drawings. They fill the pages of his own notebooks and make guest appearances in those of others. Even among his loose-leaf works from this decade, unadulterated drawings are predominant. As a result, the time of Norwid's travel around Europe is decidedly the most poorly documented time of his watercolour creations. Four examples of watercolour compositions from this period – *Głowa kobiety z wysoko upiętymi włosami* [*The Head of a Woman with a High Up-do*] *Plotki u cysterny* [*Gossip by the Water-tank*], *Świt – portret Zygmunta Krasińskiego* [*Dawn – a Portrait of Zygmunt Krasiński*], and *Pejzaż z laskiem* [*Landscape with a Small Forest*] – reveal the artist's flexible approach towards the technique, which blossomed into creations of an unprecedentedly diverse character throughout the following two decades. The first of these works presents a spontaneous, transparent wash of colour, which completes an equally light pencil sketch. The second is a dynamic, densely drawn scene painted over in relatively homogeneous dark tones. Krasiński's portrait is composed of many sepia-brownish watercolours, while the landscape study represents an original watercolour work that only minimally relies on the preliminary sketch.

However, starting in the early 1850s, we see a remarkable expansion of the watercolour technique in Norwid's works. To start, let us take a look at the drawings filled with transparent splashes of colour, typical of watercolours, which are wonderfully exemplified, for instance, by the marine compositions from the first half of the 1850s that he created *en route* to America. At the National Library, there are two fragmentary shots of the ship's deck complete with sails and silhouettes of sailors and a glimpse of the gloomy interior below deck, giving us some insight into the most substantial collection of works from Norwid's lost travel diary, which is "przeplatany słowy i szkicami" ["interspersed with words and sketches"]. Back in its day, it was praised by Józef Ignacy Kraszewski, who wrote: "this scrapbook is extremely engaging. Norwid's pen sketches tend to be excellent at times, his comprehension of the subjects, the

very successful way he captures their expressions.”<sup>14</sup> In the preserved works, we can perceive Norwid’s characteristic use of the colour red – it appears in small parts of the work but is clearly distinguishable from the dominant tones. Red, functioning as a strong colour accent and, even more so, a semantic tone, appears in the “ipse ipsum” self-portrait from 1857, in which Norwid uses precisely this colour to mark the outline of Poland on the map of the world at his feet. This painting, which is one of Norwid’s more interesting, if not the most interesting, self-portrait,<sup>15</sup> is also worthy of our attention because the artist made the watercolour- and gouache-coated drawing on blue paper, which of course was not the best base for the colourful composition.<sup>16</sup> Norwid left behind a number of female portraits using the technique of a sketch with a transparent wash – busts, nudes, and idealised “pretty little heads” and silhouettes of sea nymphs – mainly from the second half of the 1850s.<sup>17</sup> Jerzy Sienkiewicz noticed the remarkable subtlety of these small colourful sketches and wrote that Norwid “studies the expression of the womanly smile in the outline of the nose and eyes, he tries to decipher a female facial expression, and finally gives an impression of the love between woman and child and her heroism.”<sup>18</sup> He added that “in Polish painting at that time, Teofil Kwiatkowski was perhaps the only of Norwid’s comrades, who addressed this female theme in his art with equal subtlety”<sup>19</sup> Years later, Aleksandra Melbechowska-Luty referred to Sienkiewicz’s observation in her book on Kwiatkowski’s art. In addition to the analogies that are discernible in their depiction of women, the scholar pointed to other qualities that the artists had in common: the similar sensitivity and feel for small, intimate forms, “the element of idealism constantly appearing in both [of their works],” and also purely technical connections, equally visible in their drawings and in

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- 14 *Kartki z podróży, 1858–1864*, Vol. 2 (Warszawa: Gustaw Sennewald, 1874), p. 318.
- 15 I wrote more broadly on the subject in: *Ipse ipsum. O autoportretach Cypriana Norwida* (Lublin: TN KUL, 2004), pp. 79–83 and passim.
- 16 Norwid also drew the bust of a man in a laurel wreath, painted over with watercolour, on blue paper: *Laveuglement (Album dla Teodora Jełowickiego)*.
- 17 See: *Akt kobiecy [Female Nude]*, *Akt kobiecy stojący [Female Nude Standing]*, *Najady [Naiads]*, *Część twarzy kobiecej [Part of Female Face]*, *Głowa młodej kobiety [Young Woman’s Head]*, *Zakonnica i dziewczyna [Nun and Girl]*, *Święte [Saint Women]*, and *Panienka [Maiden]*.
- 18 Jerzy Sienkiewicz, “Norwid malarz,” p. 72 (in this edition published as: “Norwid the Painter,” Vol. 1, p. 118 – editor’s notes).
- 19 Jerzy Sienkiewicz, “Norwid malarz,” p. 73 (in this edition published as: “Norwid the Painter,” Vol. 1, p. 118 – editor’s notes).

their use of watercolours.<sup>20</sup> These observations led Melbechowska-Luty to the conclusion that Norwid is the artist with whom Kwiatkowski is most tangibly related as far as Polish painting is concerned.

Norwid's later works from the late 1860s – *Dwie kobiety z dzieckiem* [*Two Women with a Child*] (Fig. 38) and *Matka z dzieckiem* [*Mother and Child*] drawn “from life,” as well as *Hagar*, from the lost Rapperswil collections – are extraordinarily moving depictions of maternal love. In the first of these works, the woman's tender gaze towards the child playing on her knees, as well as the simple gesture of her hand reaching for its little head, were included in a scene that is devoid of the excessive pathos reminiscent of the period's moral drawings. The subdued, matted tone of the watercolour, in turn, gives the whole picture an unreal, dreamy aura, which partly blurs the contours of the drawing. Only the child's silhouette, barely touched by the transparent sheen of colour, resonates in a bright tone, complemented by the luminous reflections that brighten the mother's silhouette. It is not difficult to see that the watercolour stain in the aforementioned studies, even though it is subordinated to the drawing composition, eludes the contour that delineates its range. On the one hand, it finishes the work of the pencil or pen (often in a literal sense, as an extension of the drawing line), and on the other, gives the whole a new quality that is largely independent of the drawing. We also note that the washes of watercolour are in no way used to reflect reality and that the colour choice has little to do with direct observation. In Norwid's work, the veristic depiction characteristic of the watercolour sketches, whose task is generally to preserve the initial idea or project and assist the artist's memory, is replaced by the composition of values, transformed by the interaction between eye and mind, far from the “photographic” record, accenting meaning, not just purely visual aspects.

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20 Aleksandra Melbechowska-Luty, *Teofil Kwiatkowski 1809–1891* (Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1966), pp. 60–61, 86, 88, 121.



**Fig. 38.** Cyprian Norwid, *Dwie kobiety z dzieckiem* [*Two Women with a Child*], 1867, pen drawing, watercolour, National Library in Poland. Photo National Library in Poland.

In addition to the smaller studies of select fragments, like those images of the women we have just discussed, Norwid also willingly used subtle watercolour washes in his larger drawing compositions, which touched upon a variety of themes. The visional scenes depicting souls rising from their graves during the resurrection that the artist created during his stay in America,<sup>21</sup> as well as two works from the National Art Collections at the Wawel Castle (*Ecce Homo* and *Klemens Platnerz* [*Clement's Psalter*]), stand out among them. These are pen or pencil sketches, supplemented with diluted watercolours of sepia-brownish

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21 *Dusze ulatujące z grobów I and II* [*Souls Rising from Tombs I and II*]; *Alegoryczna scena na cmentarzu* [*Allegoric scene in the Graveyard*].

tones (and, in the case of the Cracovian works, also bluish and red tones), with a splash of colour spreading softly, devoid of any clear transitions or contrasts.

The colour value in brownish-sepia tones is also the basis for many of Norwid's original watercolours, still closely related to the drawings, the preview of which was Zygmunt Krasieński's portrait from the late 1840s. One of the most interesting works of this type is *Krzysztof Kolumb w pracowni* [*Christopher Columbus in the Studio*], which Norwid also called *Kolumb patrzący na kajdany, które zwykł był mieć w gabinecie swoim zawieszane* [*Christopher Columbus Looking at the Shackles that used to Hang in his Office*]. The watercolour depicts the corner of a room with an entrance on the right side, which is framed by whimsically drawn red curtains. There are two people standing in the entrance: a man and a woman emerging from behind his shoulder, who are looking into the room. The left side of the foreground is filled with piles of documents, papers, books, maps, sailing equipment, and fragments of folded clothes on the table, above which there are two narrow shelves on the sidewall, as well as another shelf lined with boxes marked "COLUMB / 1403."<sup>22</sup> On the right side, we can see the corner of a second table, on which there is also a pile of papers, with a chair next to it. Thus, the greater part of the scene is filled with souvenirs from Columbus's expeditions, which lie in disarray throughout the studio, among them the shackles from the watercolour's title – a keepsake of his third expedition to America, during which the explorer was arrested by the procurator of the royal court (1500). Norwid did not, however, designate any special place for these shackles in the composition itself, and their very location in the work raises certain doubts. They are most likely the thick chain hanging down from between the shelves in the upper left corner of the painting.

As we recall, Norwid sent this watercolour, along with his drawing *Chrystus i Barabasz w pretorium Piłata* [*Christ and Barabbas in Pilate's Pretorium*] (Fig. 39), to the annual exhibition of the Society of Friends of Fine Arts (TPSP) in Kraków at the beginning of 1856. At that time, it was displayed under a different title: *Syn Krzysztofa Kolumba pokazuje żonie swej kajdany ojca*<sup>23</sup> [*The Son of Christopher Columbus Shows his Wife his Father's Shackles*], but this title change seems quite understandable if we take a closer look at the figures depicted in the watercolour.

22 It is difficult to determine what the number on the side of the boxes could have meant.

23 An analogous situation took place the following year, when Norwid's *Jutrznia* [*Matins*] was displayed at the Society of Friends of Fine Arts exhibition in Kraków under the title *De profundis*. Cf. Zofia Trojanowiczowa, Zofia Dambek, in collaboration with Jolanta Czarnomorska, *Kalendarz życia i twórczości Cypriana Norwida*, Vol. 1 (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 2007), pp. 657–658.

The image of Columbus, wearing a characteristic hat recognisable from perhaps the most popular of the discoverer's portraits – the one by Sebastiano del Piombo<sup>24</sup> – is youthful, as is the woman accompanying him. Meanwhile, the scene immortalised in Norwid's watercolour is associated with the last years of Columbus's life, with the time in the discoverer's life when he – ailing and embittered – is remembering the years gone by. The inexplicable disparity between the watercolour figures and the subject of the depicted scene probably raised the doubts that led the organisers to “change the identity” of the characters. They must have thought that it could not possibly be Columbus himself standing at the threshold of his studio but rather his son Diego with his wife.



**Fig. 39.** Cyprian Norwid, *Chrystus i Barabasz w pretorium Pilata* [*Christ and Barabbas in Pilate's Pretorium*], lost drawing. Photo in National Library in Poland.

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24 1519, oil on wood, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



The exhibition of Norwid's watercolour at TPSP aroused the interest of an anonymous correspondent at the Cracovian "Times," who devoted a comprehensive note on the composition in the journal:

Mr. Norwid also sent a watercolour depicting the son of Christopher Columbus showing his wife the shackles that his father wore when the Spanish court questioned the accuracy of his discoveries in the New World. In this composition, the artist showed a desire to convey deep and doleful reflection. The tearful eye of Columbus's son moves from the pile of atlases, maps and sailor's tools to the shackles hung on the wall – and he was probably remembering that the one who gave Europe a fourth part of the world suffered like a simple fraud .... This is the Nemesis of a genius forgotten by his own. It is regrettable, however, that the otherwise insightful artist did not relegate the stack of maps and papers to the depths of his composition, because their presence in the foreground makes them out to be more important than the two people pulling aside the curtain. I found the idea for this composition so beautiful, that even the less than successful execution of the watercolour does not take away from it. Mr. Norwid was probably just casting the first word here, which only as a larger oil painting will speak its full truth.<sup>25</sup>

I decided to quote the review above for two reasons. First, it is one of only a few statements in the national press that gives an idea of how Norwid's art was received by his contemporaries, and second, it clearly shows that Norwid's works of art were defenceless against the prevailing style of reception, which was based on aesthetic norms taken from the academic tradition. Norwid's artistic output remained virtually unknown in Poland during his lifetime; only a few of his works were displayed in national exhibitions (in 1856 and 1857 at the Society of Friends of Fine Arts in Kraków,<sup>26</sup> and in 1877 and 1879, in turn, at the Warsaw Society for the Encouragement of Fine Arts).<sup>27</sup> Additionally, *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* [*The Weekly Illustrated*] published drawings in the form of woodcut reproductions in the early 1860s,<sup>28</sup> and the artist made several

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25 [N.N.], "Wystawa Sztuk Pięknych w Krakowie," *Czas*, No. 105 (1856).

26 In 1857, *Jutrznia* was exhibited there under the changed title *De profundis*. Cf. [N.N.], "Korespondencja z Krakowa," *Dziennik Literacki*, No. 54 (1857), p. 472; Emmanuel Swieykowski, *Pamiętnik Towarzystwa Sztuk Pięknych w Krakowie, 1854–1904* (Kraków: Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Sztuk Pięknych, 1905), p. 114.

27 In 1877, TZSP exhibited a sketch for the oil painting *Rusałka* [*Naiad*] and, two years later, the watercolour composition *Chrystus i kobieta chanaanjska* [*Christ and Canaanite Woman*]. Cf. Janina Wiercińska, *Katalog prac wystawionych w Towarzystwie Zachęty Sztuk Pięknych w Warszawie w latach 1860–1914* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1969), p. 250.

28 In 1860, it was reproduced in the weekly *Zoilus*, as was *Mecenas otoczony klientami* in the following year, and *Lokaj spanoszony* in 1862.

subsequent graphic designs for Polish publications.<sup>29</sup> Let us note that while the “Times” reviewer praised the theme of the *Columbus* painting, he nevertheless considered its execution “unsuccessful.” The protagonists’ placement in the background, against the display of disorderly piles of papers, which take up most of the composition space, seemed utterly inappropriate to the writer. Such an assessment, made in accordance with the canon applicable to “official” paintings, inevitably disregarded the creator’s intentions, which he expressed through this specific, and not any other, compositional arrangement. Norwid places before his viewers’ eyes souvenirs of the explorer’s expeditions, which represent the achievements of his four expeditions to the New World and confirm his magnanimity and unquestionable place in history. Thus, we can and should consider these tangible testimonials, in a way, as the main “characters” in the scene. The motif of Columbus’s shackles also appears, we might recall, in the famous poem laying out the tragic histories of the greats (*Coś ty Atenom zrobił, Sokratesie* [What Have You Done to Athens, Socrates]), in which the poet asks:

Coś ty, Kolumbie, zrobił Europie,  
 Że ci trzy groby we trzech miejscach ... kopie,  
 Okuwszy pierwej?... (PWsz I, 235)

[What have you done to Europe, oh, Columbus,  
 That she dug three graves for you in three places,  
 Shackling you first?...]<sup>30</sup>

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- 29 The woodcut *Obrona Częstochowy* in [Eustachy Iwanowski], *Matka Boska na Jasnej Górze Częstochowskiej, Królowa Korony Polskiej. Pamiątka z pielgrzymki odbytej w R. P. 1848 przez Eu...go Helleniusza* (Paris: L. Martinet, 1852), up to p. 144. Several years later, Norwid designed the cover of Teofil Lenartowicz’s poetry collection *Lirenka* (Poznań: Jan Konstanty Żupański, 1855) and in 1860, he made a steel engraving frontispiece on the basis of Antoni Zaleski’s drawing for Teofil Lenartowicz’s *Zachwycenie i Błogosławiona* (Poznań: Jan Konstanty Żupański, 1861). I am excluding *Łapigrosz. Szkice obyczajowe*, a portfolio of 15 lithographic tablets, with drawings and explanatory texts by Artur Bartels, Paris [1857], published as part of Jan Kazimierz Wilczyński’s *Album de Wilna*, because Norwid’s work consisted of making lithographs from Bartels’ drawings, in essence, anonymously. I write about Norwid’s illustrations in more detail in article: “Norwid wobec ilustracji i ilustratorstwa,” *Sztuka Edycji*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (2013), pp. 39–50.
- 30 English translation by Danuta Borchardt in collaboration with Agata Brajerska-Mazur in: Cyprian Norwid, *Poems* (New York: Archipelago Books, 2011), p. 105.



According to Jacek Trznadel, this poem constitutes “a reflection of Norwid's beliefs about the ‘eternal’ Passion, fulfilled by select, outstanding individuals,”<sup>31</sup> who pay the price for their nonconformity and originality of thought. The watercolour interior of the explorer's studio, marked by the presence of the chains that bound him, expresses, I believe, the same reflection about his tragic biography through artistic means.

The image of a sleeping child at the museum in Béziers, created in 1859, although different in its expression and replete with lyricism, represents the same vein of watercolours in terms of their technical aspects.<sup>32</sup> The interior of the room, separated by a curtain behind which we see the silhouette of the watchful mother, is almost entirely taken up by the child's crib, and above the sleeping child's head, there is a portrait of the Holy Mother hanging on the wall. The different shades of blue that Norwid used to complete his composition, uniform in colour and value, and especially the light-blue shading of the curtain that frames the space, somewhat soften the ostensible lack of depth.<sup>33</sup> The artist also used the same tint to serve as a dominant colour scheme in a narrowly framed watercolour that shows *Zdjęcie z krzyża* [*The Descent from the Cross*] (1861) (Fig. 40). This work is characterised by a slightly greater variation in the value of its brown tones, although, taking into account the fact that the scene is set in the dark (which the lit oil lamp held by the older man clearly indicates), it is surprising that the characters in the foreground, whose faces were shown in a uniform, diffused light, lack a distinct chiaroscuro lighting. The blue veil covering the head of the Mother of God in the centre of the composition, despite its pastel tone, clearly stands out against the background of the scene. This is likely

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31 *Czytanie Norwida. Próby*, p. 155. Cf. also the interpretation of Andrzej Fabianowski, “Coś ty Atenom zrobił, Sokratesie,” in: *Cypriana Norwida kształt prawdy i miłości. Analizy i interpretacje*, ed. Stanisław Makowski (Warszawa: WSiP, 1986), pp. 56–62. Norwid included the following characters in his poem in addition to Columbus: Socrates, Dante, Camões, Kościuszko, Napoleon, and Mickiewicz.

32 Cf. Edyta Chlebowska, “Enfant endormi,” *Studia Norwidiana*, No. 19 (2001), pp. 137–145.

33 Hanna Widacka addressed the issue of the lack of spatial depth in Norwid's compositions in the context of his engravings: “Grafika Norwida,” *Studia Norwidiana*, No. 3–4 (1985–1986), pp. 158–160. In analysing the etching *Wskreszenie Łazarza* [*The Raising of Lazarus*], the scholar expressed doubt whether, “these are only certain technical deficiencies, or the artist's conscious concept, in which the dramatis personae, and not their surroundings, are the most important” (p. 160).

an artistic device largely related to the subject depicted in the watercolour. We can presume that this is the way in which the artist wanted to expose the suffering of Mary, the mother of the Saviour, in the scene from the Passion of Christ. Recall that a few years earlier, in a posthumous memorial dedicated to Paul Delaroche, recorded in the poem *Czarne Kwiaty* [*Black Flowers*], Norwid devoted considerable attention to the painting *Le Vendredi Saint*,<sup>34</sup> which he had seen in the painter's studio. In this canvas painting, Delaroche depicted the Mother of God surrounded by the Apostles and Holy Women kneeling inside a small room, observing the tragedy of her son's Way of the Cross through the window.

Oto obraz cały z męki Pańskiej – pisał poeta – w którym osoby Zbawiciela *widocznej nie ma*, ale jest ona tylko w *gamie-wyrazów-twarzy* osób, mękę Pańską widzących, wyrażona. (DW VII, 56)

[This is the whole painting from the Passion of Christ – wrote the poet – in which the person of the Savior *is not visible*, but it is only expressed in the *range-of-facial-expressions* of the persons, witnessing the Passion.]

In describing the Frenchman's work, Norwid was particularly captivated by the artistic device that was close to his own practice of "silencing," that very shift of emphasis, as a result of which the Passion of Christ "w zaułku jerozolimskim dało się więcej czuć niż widzieć" (PWsz 6, 185) ["could be felt more than it could be seen in that Jerusalem alley"]. The element that seems to connect Norwid's watercolour to Delaroche's painting is the featured aspect of human suffering at Christ's Passion, which is personified by the Mother of God. Although there may not be any closer analogies between these paintings, both artists undoubtedly marked their works with deeply religious experiences. Moreover, in both Delaroche's late works, culminating in the Marian cycle, which included the aforementioned painting, and Norwid's sacral-themed artistic works, we are able to discern a similar attitude towards the iconographic tradition, expressed in their pursuit of new takes on established themes.<sup>35</sup>

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34 Norwid's attitude towards Delaroche's painting was discussed at length by Dariusz Pniewski, *Między obrazem i słowem*, pp. 154–179. He pays the most attention to the mentioned fragment of *Czarne kwiaty*, comparing Norwid's observations to the Frenchman's painting. He also includes a wealth of information about the cycle to which *Le Vendredi Saint* belonged.

35 In *Czarne kwiaty*, Norwid recalled that Delaroche's *Le Vendredi Saint* was supposed to be included in an unrealized triptych. In reality, the cycle the artist was working on towards the end of his life was composed of four paintings: *Le Vendredi*



**Fig. 40.** Cyprian Norwid, *Zdjęcie z krzyża* [*The Descent from the Cross*] 1856–1857, watercolour, National Museum in Warsaw. Photo Piotr Ligier.

Until almost the end of the 1860s, Norwid's watercolours, although pursuing several paths, succumbed to the primacy of his drawings, invariably merging with the pencil and pen lines, complementing their work either through subtle toning or more saturated colour patterns. The watercolour, still present

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*Saint, L'évanouissement de la Vierge, La Vierge en contemplation devant la couronne d'épines, and Retour du Golgotha.* Cf. Norman David Ziff, *Paul Delaroche. A study in Nineteenth-Century French History Painting* (New York: Garland Publ., 1977) pp. 261–263. Based on: Dariusz Pniewski, *Między obrazem i słowem*, p. 164.

and constantly used, nevertheless remained the medium subordinate to the idea expressed through a grid of lines. At most, it helped to clarify that idea through the proper placement of accents and tones, highlighting and muting. It would seem that this hierarchy, established by several decades of Norwid's artistic struggles, remained in place until the end of his creative career. Alas, in the last decade of the poet's life, the watercolour technique unexpectedly "emerges from the shadow" of his drawings. Jerzy Sienkiewicz was the first to notice this significant change in Norwid's watercolours. In connection with the first monographic exhibition organised on the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of the author of *Vade-mecum*, he published a study on the artistic profile of "Norwid the Painter." "It wasn't until the seventh decade of the century," the outstanding expert on the history of Polish and European drawing wrote, that "watercolour becomes competitive and merges with the old direction of his artistic path."<sup>36</sup> This does not mean, however, that Norwid had abandoned the pencil on which he relied in his previous work and which was immortalised in the "ipse ipsum" self-portrait from the 1850s. To the contrary, there are a number of uncommonly interesting sketches created in the 1870s, mostly representative of the satirical current of Norwid's art, for example, the collection of works which formerly belonged to Mieczysław Geniusz (and which are now at the National Library), works in *Album dla Teodora Jełowickiego* [*The Album for Teodor Jełowicki*], nobleman studies – "the lover" of art, and the "comic book" story about Klara Nagnioszewska. What makes his later watercolours different from his earlier works? Undeniably, the essence of the transformation of Norwid's artistic profile that Sienkiewicz pointed out was that his late watercolours became independent from his sketches. Although they were still present in the creative process, their importance was significantly diminished in comparison to earlier works. This change can be observed in both his small, fragmentary studies (hands, wings, books, or feathers) in the National Library, as well as in larger compositions. Among the latter, there are several works that are a thematic continuation of the images of women from the 1850s and 1860s – *Opowiadanie* [*A Story*], *Babka i wnuczka przy oknie* [*Grandmother and Granddaughter at the Window*] (Fig. 41), and *Dziewczynka podająca bukiet babce* [*Girl Giving Grandmother a Bouquet*] – in dark colours, predominantly brown, dark blue, and reddish.<sup>37</sup> The scenes could be found in the portfolios of many

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36 Jerzy Sienkiewicz, "Norwid malarz," p. 69 (in this edition published as: "Norwid the painter," Vol. 1, p. 116 – editor's notes).

37 Cf. Melbechowska-Luty, *Sztukmistrz*, pp. 209–210.

a realist-artist: everyday moments, simple gestures made in quiet rooms, ordinary objects, or a window, through which a stream of light pours into the living room. Meanwhile, in Norwid's watercolours, all of these prosaic (though not devoid of lyricism) fragments form compositions that are so far removed from this realism. The thick, softly spreading, saturated wash of colour makes the colours overlap and nuance one another; the contours fade and the whole piece takes on a sleepy, unreal aura.<sup>38</sup> Jan Cybis once claimed that these watercolours could be seen as an expression of the unfulfilled desires and longings of a disappointed man.<sup>39</sup> One of these works, *Babka i wnuczka przy oknie* (Fig. 41), was not completed by the artist. The images of the characters were left almost untouched by the brush, and thus the initial sketch remained perfectly visible in this piece. The fluid contour line, only generally outlining the silhouettes of the older woman and young girl on her knees, signals and heralds the qualities that watercolours bring to life in this work, as well as the others that have been mentioned. It also reveals how far removed these works are from those of previous years when colour was only used to complement the drawings. The unreal aura, along with the accompanying disquieting atmosphere, also radiates from other works created during the last years of Norwid's life, such as *Para w ogrodzie* [*Couple in the Garden*] (Fig. 42), *Dzwonnica w czasie burzy* [*Bell Tower During a Thunderstorm*], or *Upiory* [*Phantoms*], to name only a few. This last work, depicting a knight in full armour carrying a child on a horse through the woods and a female figure floating like a nymph on the surface of a lake hidden among the trees, is surely an illustration for some as yet undiscovered work of literature. This is also the case with the series of four chamber watercolours conventionally called *Opowieści w ilustracji* [*Illustrated Stories*] (Figs. 43, 44), depicting the mysterious trials and tribulations of two men in a cramped, box-like interior, resembling a stage.<sup>40</sup> It is not without reason that

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38 Jan Zieliński raised the matter of the value of Norwid's watercolours, claiming that this portion of Norwid's artwork constitutes "an artistic revelation because of its high quality and, most of all, its pioneering character" ("Malarstwo. Niedoceniona twórczość Norwida," *Życie i Myśl*, No. 3–4, 1962, pp. 168–174).

39 *Norwid jako plastyk*, manuscript in the National Library (reference number IV 6336, p. 6).

40 The series of watercolours in the National Library is incomplete, as four other works intended for this series were formerly in the Rapperswil collection. They were initial sketches, never completed by Norwid (the theme of the works, as well as their dimensions, which are analogous to the watercolours at the National Library, attest to this). One of these sketches was subsequently acquired by the National Museum in Warsaw (Rysunek Polski (collection), item No. 11724).

J. W. Gomulicki noticed the mark of “theatrical grotesque”<sup>41</sup> in these works. The dramatic poses, meaningful gestures and glances, and violent movements of figures attacking or dodging their advances all contribute to the theatricalization of these little scenes. Limiting the performances almost exclusively to the character profiles does not make it any easier to identify them, although their historical dress gives us a clue.



**Fig. 41.** Cyprian Norwid, *Babka i wnuczka przy oknie* [*Grandmother and Granddaughter at the Window*], watercolour, National Library in Poland. Photo National Library in Poland.

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41 PWSz XI, 374, item 242.





**Fig. 42.** Cyprian Norwid, *Para w ogrodzie* [Couple in the Garden], watercolour, National Library in Poland. Photo National Library in Poland.



**Fig. 43.** Cyprian Norwid, *Opowieść w ilustracji* [Illustrated Story], ca 1880, watercolour, National Library in Poland. Photo National Library in Poland.



**Fig. 44.** Cyprian Norwid, *Opowieść w ilustracji* [*Illustrated Story*], watercolour, National Library in Poland. Photo National Library in Poland.

In writing about Norwid's late watercolours, one cannot omit his commentary concerning these works, as I believe two references in Norwid's letters to his own watercolours should be interpreted. During the last year of his life, the author of *Solo* wrote to Teofil Lenartowicz (in June 1882) that he paints "głównie akwarelą, bo o wiele wieków od olejnego starsza i większą gamę obejmuje" (PWsz X, 179) ["mainly using watercolours, because they are centuries older than oil [paints] and have a broader range"]. A few months later, in early 1883, when he wanted to sell one of his works to Franciszek Duchński, he added the following comment to the "malenieczką rzecz, jak garść fiołków" ["tiny little thing, like a handful of violets"] (in a letter from 22 February 1883):

chcę tam doprowadzić akwarelę, gdzie jeszcze nie była, to jest, aby po równi i więcej niż olejne wyrażać mogła wszystko. Czyli nie żeby były "sujets d'aquarelle," ale żeby nią swobodnie myśleć można było. Otóż to w tym kierunku jest robione. (PWsz X, 197)



[I want to take watercolour where it has never gone before, that is, have it express just as much or even more than oil [painting]. So that it would not just be “sujets d'aquarelle” [watercolour studies] but could express thoughts freely. Well, I am moving in this direction.]

This statement contains, of course, only a part of the argument in favour of Norwid's artistic choices and priorities in his late works of art. It reveals the auto-creative aspect of these choices, above all, if we disregard the situation of his life and his previous artistic experience. Nevertheless, it contains a grain of essential truth, largely reflecting the convictions and intentions of an artist who expected watercolour “żeby nią swobodnie myśleć można było” [“to think freely”]. One can also venture to say that both Norwid's creative practice and his reflection on painting techniques attest to his original and inventive artistic attitude. In comparing his first watercolours to those created towards the end of his life, we can easily see how far the creator of *Solo* deviated from the conventional works, using watercolour as an enhancement, an artistic device subordinate to and dependent upon drawing. For the artist who was fully aware of his own creative potential and focused on emphasising his own artistic style and personal priorities to the fullest, the breakthrough that occurred in this field at the beginning of the 1870s reveals his perpetual readiness to exceed both his self-defined strategies and those of general convention, as well as to transcend the confines set by the technique itself. By using a dense, granular texture and muffled, heavy tones, Norwid was able to create a new artistic quality in his late works that was, in a way, contrary to watercolour's apparent properties. In this sense, the artist's ambition to take watercolour “where it has never gone before” finds some justification, even though later masters of this technique followed an entirely different path and sought different qualities in this medium. In his quest to allow watercolour “to think freely,” which is very close to the aforementioned artistic credo expressed in *Lapidaria*, Norwid stands out from the later artistic trends. Thus, he expresses his own artistic vision independently of the main currents of painting in the second half of the nineteenth century and of the needs and patriotic obligations of his time.<sup>42</sup>

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42 Cf. Jerzy Sienkiewicz, “Norwid malarz,” pp. 76–77; Aleksandra Melbechowska-Luty, *Sztukmistrz*, pp. 211–212.

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Łukasz Niewczas

## A Concert of Forms: Metaphor with Regard to Polysemy and Simile in Norwid's Poetry

**Abstract:** The author undertakes a polemic with the theses of Stefan Sawicki and Michał Kuźniak, who have suggested that metaphors play an insignificant role in the repertoire of Norwid's poetic devices. Using a series of analysed fragments of Norwid's poems, the author demonstrates where metaphor stands with regard to polysemy, and semantic play based on allusions and simile. The scholar concludes that metaphor, despite being obscured by other more expounded rhetorical figures of speech, plays an important role in Norwid's poetry: it broadens the ranges of meanings, enhances the semantic multi-dimensionality of the text, and makes the poetic situation more active and dynamic. Niewczas calls such metaphors those in which the semantic aspect prevails over the stylistic effect, "invisible," and recognises them as characteristic of Norwid's poetic idiom.

**Keywords:** poetry of Cyprian Norwid, poetics, metaphor, simile, rhetorical structure, polysemy

Metaphor belongs to the repertoire of tropes whose aim is to create new meanings. Besides metaphors, we could list symbolism, allegory, and simile, although the latter with some caveats.<sup>1</sup> If we consider Norwid's poetry, the set expands to include the semantic devices described by Stefan Sawicki, which are generally based on polysemy, homonymy, association, or allusion. In poetics textbooks, these devices are generally not emphasised as much as those first listed above, but in Norwid's poetry they assume the main burden of the text's multiple meanings. Due to the lack of a single overarching term for these devices, I call them 'semantic play.'<sup>2</sup>

It seems, arguably, that Norwidologists have studied all of the above-mentioned phenomena more closely than metaphor, because their integral presence in Norwid's works attracted more attention from scholars. This could

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- 1 Because simile is focused primarily not on creating meanings, but on expanding them through associations.
  - 2 I am aware of the imprecision and vagueness of this term. The decision to use it is dictated by the legibility of the argument – it is a concise name by which, without having to use extensive descriptions, it is possible to distinguish these devices from the others.

also be due to the minor role metaphor plays in the poetics of the author of “Fatum” [“Fate”]. However, I argue that, in fact, the peculiarity of Norwid’s use of metaphor lies precisely in the characteristic delicacy of its expression or, in other words, its specific invisibility. We begin by considering metaphor’s place within the rhetorical structure of Norwid’s texts in relation to two other ambiguous devices: “semantic play” and similes.

### On Semantic Play

In a now classic text, devoted to Norwid’s semantic devices in the areas of polysemy, homonymy, synonymy, and semantic associations, the author clearly separates these phenomena from metaphor, recognising that they are – as far as Norwid’s poetics are concerned – more important than metaphor, however with some caution.<sup>3</sup> And yet he points out that, from a certain perspective, the principle of their operation is similar to that of metaphORIZATION, creating tension between the meanings of words, problematising the relationships between names and designations, increasing ambiguity, and creating new meanings. Similarly, the goals of the devices Sawicki discusses, seem related to the goals of metaphORIZATION. When Sawicki summarises that the aim of these operations is to create a “a new relation [between meanings] that draws one’s attention, surprises, amazes, worries, gives the words a sense of freshness, and eventually, leads to a new, deeper and reenvisioned outlook on reality”<sup>4</sup> it can be assumed Norwid’s metaphors fulfil a similar function.

Maryjo, Pani Aniołów! – u Ciebie  
O Twej korony prosim zmartwychwstanie – –

\*

A niech się wola Syna Twego stanie  
N a z i e m i - n a s z e j , tak, jako jest w Niebie.

\*

I niechaj wielkie będzie zmiłowanie  
O d g ó r y - j a s n e j k u b i e g u n o m - n o c y :

\*

Bo zapatrujem się na krzyżowanie  
I E l o j - l a m m a !... – wołamy – pomocy!...

(PWsz I, 75)

3 Stefan Sawicki, “Z zagadnień semantyki poetyckiej Norwida,” in: Stefan Sawicki, *Poetyka. Interpretacja. Sacrum* (Warszawa: PWN, 1981), p. 81.

4 Sawicki, “Z zagadnień semantyki poetyckiej Norwida,” p. 75.

[Mary, Lady of Angels! – you  
We beg for the resurrection of Your crown – –

\*

Thy Son's will be done  
O n o u r - e a r t h , as it is in Heaven

\*

May the mercy be great  
F r o m t h e l u m i n o u s - m o u n t t o n i g h t - p o l e s :

\*

Because we are looking at the crossing  
A n d E l o i - l a m a ! ... – we call – help!...]

Sawicki's commentary reveals that in each of the cited stanzas there is a word, which is "at the core of semantic, allusive play."<sup>5</sup> These words: "crown," "earth," "mountain," and "Eloi-lama," respectively, activate two fields of meaning as a result of the contextual shifts. The first, expressed explicitly, is of a religious nature: "crown" is a common attribute of Marian representations. "earth," together with the elaboration "as it is in Heaven" is a transparent reference to the Lord's Prayer, "mount," alongside the epithetical "luminous" is associated with the sanctuary in Częstochowa, and "Eloi-lama" is a slightly altered quote from Jesus' suffering on the cross. However, the allusion also brings out a second semantic layer – a hidden layer in which each word takes on an additional meaning:

Besides the religious sequence of meanings, an allusive sequence of national meanings appears as well. The crown is Poland (the Crown and Lithuania), earth – Homeland, luminous-mountain – the border of Polishness, and "Eloi-lama!" – the cry of an exhausted nation. Norwid's entire poem is based on the constant tension between these two sequences of meanings, or rather their designata. It is a crypto-patriotic prayer veiled in religious meaning.<sup>6</sup>

Sawicki affirms that the four words / phrases in the four stanzas of the poetic prayer discussed above are the central loci of semantic play. This conclusion may raise some doubts, because it seems that there are actually five words, and the last – omitted, notably, by the scholar – is "crossing" from the fourth stanza. Here it is again:

5 Sawicki, "Z zagadnień semantyki poetyckiej Norwida," p. 63.

6 Sawicki, "Z zagadnień semantyki poetyckiej Norwida," p. 64.

Bo zapatrujem się na krzyżowanie  
 I E l o j - l a m m a !... – wołamy – pomocy!...

(PWsz I, 75)

[Because we are looking at the crossing  
 And E l o i - l a m a !... – we call – help!...]

What does the phrase “we are looking at the crossing” mean? It is entirely unclear, and today’s linguistic norms probably lead us towards an incomplete understanding. In Norwid’s times, “zapatrywać się” was understood, among other things, as “taking something as an example, trying to imitate someone.” This meaning, the figurative one, is listed second in *Słownik wileński* [*The Vilnius Dictionary*]. This verb, with this exact meaning, appears only once in all of Mickiewicz’s work, in *Pisma Filomatyczne* [*Philomatic Writings*] (“Drudzy, powodowani przykładem, zapatrują się na starszych” [Others, driven by example, look to the elders]). If we follow this lead, we will find that the “crossing” in Norwid’s prayer should be treated literally and unambiguously: it refers to the Passion. The community in Norwid’s poem, imitating Jesus’ suffering on the cross, repeats the words of his complaint, crying “Eloi-lama!” This interpretation legitimises Sawicki’s decision not to ascribe to “crossing” the same allusions as to “crown,” “our-earth,” or “luminous-mount.”

But in the nineteenth century, the verb “zapatrywać” also had another meaning, etymologically related to “patrzeć” [to look] – which was certainly stronger than “to imitate.” It is this meaning: “to look at someone, stare at something, study something with great care” that *Słownik wileński* lists first. If we take this into consideration, the interpretation of the stanza would be slightly different. Its meaning would be understood as follows: we look at the “crossing” and cry, “Eloi-lama!” “Crossing” takes place here and now, and we, suffering, repeat the words of Jesus, which express our historical situation.

And so we observe yet another instance of polysemy in the poem. Depending on how we interpret the verb “zapatrujem,” there are two possible meanings we can ascribe to “crossing” – literal or figurative. Today’s linguistic tendencies favour a metaphorical reading that simultaneously diminishes its association with “imitation.” All the more so, because considering the semantic devices used in the preceding stanzas, which prompt us to look for multiple meanings, this “crossing” presents itself first and foremost as a metaphor for the situation of the Polish nation, which would explain the use of the present tense, as well as the complaint expressed. The application of religious metaphor, however simple, fits into the poem’s overall semantic scheme; it supports the superficial



prayer context, which disguises hidden patriotic meanings. From a historical point of view, however, both ways of reading the poem, literal and metaphorical, are legitimate, in my opinion.

The ambiguity of the semantic structure of the poem "Maryjo, Pani Aniolów!" ["Mary, lady of Angels!"] means that, in the four quoted stanzas, we can identify five words (or phrases) that allude to more than their superficial meanings. Three of them – "crown," "our-earth," and "luminous-mount" – do this by using quite specific, individualised polysemy, referring to unusual uses of the words. The fourth is a quote from the New Testament, which, together with the fifth, the metaphor of "crossing," redefines the biblical context. The semantic devices of the first three cases seem most interesting; their allusions are more subtle and more difficult to discern, which means that, after they've been properly identified, they emerge as the main players. The metaphor of "crossing" is a bit different; its most interesting aspect seems to be the way it is introduced, in which the metaphorical or non-metaphorical nature of the word is determined by the adoption of one of the meanings of the polysemic verb *zapatrujem*. The metaphor itself, however – if we decide to consider it a metaphor – seems relatively simple and stylistically discrete, all the more so because a variation of it appears *in absentia*, without verbalising the basic theme, which weakens its linguistic clarity.<sup>7</sup>

As we can see, one can read Norwid's poem, and see a direct, non-allusive, reference to the Gospel-context of the Passion in the "crossing." One can also, following the cryptopatriotic meanings of earlier stanzas – which lay the groundwork for a properly directed explication – discern in the "crossing" only a metaphor for the nation's state of affairs, which is almost completely detached from the literal biblical grounding.

But one can – and probably should – also look at this phenomenon in a different way, that assumes "crossing" is meant to equally evoke both meanings, literal and metaphorical, which are constantly in flux. It is a metaphorical description of the situation of the Polish nation in the mid-1840s; this is the situation upon which the praying people "zapatrują się." But it is also a metaphysical manifestation of suffering, in connection with which one can "zapatrywać

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7 The *in absentia* metaphorical structure is based on omitting the main theme of the metaphor. One of the effects of this approach is the elimination of the linguistic tension of the metaphor's themes, thus weakening the style of the expression. Cf. Teresa Dobrzyńska, *Metafora* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich) 1984, pp. 35, 49, 50 n.

się” – imitate – the suffering of the Son of God. As a result of the tension between these literal and figurative senses, a third hue of this verb’s meaning appears (identical to the most popular of its present-day uses), and defined by *Słownik Warszawski* [*The Warsaw Dictionary*] as “a way of looking, seeing, comprehending a thing, view, concept, opinion.” Because those who see (first meaning) a modern crucifixion, simultaneously consider it (second meaning) in the context of the significance of Christ’s Cross. And although they may imitate Jesus (the third meaning) in his doubt, by crying “Eloi-lama,” they know that God the Father ultimately did not abandon the Son of Man. In this fourth stanza of the poem, where despair and suffering resound most strongly, innate hope is also possibly visible, motivating the prayer and plea for help. The metaphor of “crossing,” unusual, because its identity is uncertain, plays a significant role in building these tensions throughout the poem, but is overshadowed by the polysemic devices more characteristic of Norwid’s work.

Let us now look at two more of Sawicki’s examples. They belong to the group of instances in which Norwid introduces semantic tension within linguistic clichés, established expressions, thus re-creating them, giving them poetic value, and endowing them with significant meanings. The first example is from the poem “Prac-czoło” [“Work in Brow’s Sweat”]:

In another poem from the collection *Vade-mecum*, “Prac-czoło,” [“Work in Brow’s Sweat”] Norwid reinterprets the popular phrase “z potem czoła” (“w pocie czoła”) [by the sweat of one’s brow] and makes it the structural framework of his poem. The reinterpretation involves shifting the stress. In popular understanding, “sweat” is emphasised as a symptom of being tired, the brow is just the place where it is visible. Yet, Norwid stresses the “brow,” the mental effort, which manifests itself in the proverbial “sweat of one’s brow,” the effort without which there is no intellectual – and thus human – work. The juxtaposition of both meanings of the fixed phrase (“z potem czoła” – “z potem - C Z O Ł A” [with the sweat of one’s brow – with the sweat of one’s B R O W]) is the juxtaposition of two styles of work; it mediates poetic polemics with the poetic programme of efficient work.<sup>8</sup>

Here, we are dealing with the double meaning of the poem’s key phrase “sweat of one’s brow.” The assertion that the reinterpretation, which in this case implies a different understanding of the phrase, consists in changing the accent, is correct. However, this shift does not exhaust the rather complicated semantic operation associated with the creation of a new meaning. We must therefore look at how exactly this process works. First of all, the value of “brow,” which

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8 Sawicki, “Z zagadnień semantyki poetyckiej Norwida,” p. 71.

later becomes "BROW," is tied to the transformation of its literal meaning into metonymy. The name of the part of the body on which sweat appears, as a result of effort, comes to symbolise the features of rationality, reflectiveness, and cognitive ability, which are associated with the head. Thus, the first semantic action is metonymic. At this point, however, the phenomenon thus far understood linguistically and biologically as "sweat of one's brow," becomes, "sweat of one's BROW," a metaphor connecting a physiological feature with the power of the mind. Note that the expression has not changed much – we are still dealing with the same two lexemes. The literal expression turns into a metaphor under the pressure of the contextual meanings, which suggest that it concerns primarily mental activity. A strong suggestive force also arises from the graphic aspect; the capital letters suggest that a semantic change has taken place, and moreover, that the new meaning is somehow more important, more significant, i.e., simply "greater." than the first one. The new semantic quality is also emphasised by the hyphenated combination of "sweat" with "BROW."<sup>9</sup>

However, the process of meaning change does not end here. The creation of the metaphor "sweat of one's BROW" (which could also, legibly yet awkwardly, be transformed into "sweat of one's mind" to fit this analysis) also affects the first of the lexemes, "sweat," which also becomes non-literal, a metonym for effort. And so, in the reader's perceptual process, the metaphor "sweat of one's BROW" materialises only for a moment, after which – once it is fully deciphered – breaks down into two metonyms which together point to "wysiłek umysłu" [mental effort]. It seems, however, that even the brief appearance of the metaphor in the reader's perception does not go unnoticed; on the contrary, the ephemerality of the eccentric physiologico-intellectual juxtaposition<sup>10</sup> "radiates" throughout the poem, increasing the distinction between "sweat of one's brow" and "sweat of one's BROW."

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9 Barbara Subko wrote about the role of hyphens in Norwid's poetry ("O funkcjach łącznika w poezji Cypriana Norwida," *Studia Norwidiana*, Vols. 5–6 (1987–1988), pp. 85–100.

10 Interestingly, a similar expression in this respect, which is not caught up, however, as is the case with Norwid, in play with an established formula, appears in one of Mickiewicz's letters, in which we read: "każdy krok będzie cię kosztował kilka kropel potu ducha" [each step will cost you a few drops of your soul's sweat] – quote based on: *Słownik Języka Adama Mickiewicza*, ed. Konrad Górski, Stefan Hrabec, Vol. VI (Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków-Gdańsk: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1971), p. 464.

The second example of re-creating established formulas comes from the poem “Do Wielmożnej pani I.” [“To Her Ladyship I.”], concerning Rome and Cicero. Sawicki says the following about the opening verse:

“Czoło mówcy nie znało kropelki chrztu — wcale” [The speaker’s brow had not experienced a droplet of baptism – at all]. Starting with the first verse, the poet already introduces a new word to the fixed pattern of a popular expression, instead of “pot” [sweat] – “chrzest” [baptism]. This initiates word play between those words and the entire expressions. Cicero’s statement stretches between the ordinary and the supernatural, between a Roman speaker’s composure (routine) and the sacred and prophetic character of the information, that is, exactly between “sweat” and “baptism.”<sup>11</sup>

This is a very interesting and bold interpretation, mainly because the word bearing the significant meanings and poetic burden – *pot* [sweat] – is not verbalised. One might wonder whether the dichotomy of ordinariness and supernaturality the scholar alludes to is actually discernible in the poem. The second argument seems to be much stronger – the “baptism point,” which also appears in Cicero’s prophecy: “przyjdzie człowiek, w boleści i chwale, Sprawiedliwy – i przez to w koronie cierniowej” (PWsz II, 206), [a man will come, in pain and glory, / Righteous – and thus bearing a crown of thorns], as well as in the unusual prefiguration of the Passion (“A ręce obie mówcy, gdy niewiele potem / Białe przybito gwoździ na deskach trybuny” [And both hands of the speaker, not long after / Pale were nailed to the boards of the grandstand]).

Undoubtedly, the “sweat” scheme and the ordinariness and routine implied by Sawicki are much less prevalent in the text. It seems to me that the first verse of the poem may, but does not necessarily, trigger this type of allusion to the cliché language the scholar writes about. It is possible to read it in such a way that the brow is not associated with sweat, but rather with the baptismal rite, which is carried out by pouring water over the head or submerging the head in water.

In the first verse, before we even begin to look for Norwid’s characteristic plays on meaning, the phrase “droplet of baptism” captures our attention. And for an obvious reason – it is emphasised by the author himself. Emphasis on this phrase may initially surprise the reader – after all, its meaning seems clear. Like “brow,” “droplet” fits into the sequence of meanings associated with baptism.

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11 Sawicki, “Z zagadnień semantyki poetyckiej Norwida,” p. 72.

One may be tempted to simply interpret the verse as an elliptical form of the expression “kropelka wody chrztu” [a droplet of baptismal water] (holy water). In the course of an in-depth reading, however, we sense that it is not the ritual meaning of the word “baptism” that is the most important here, but rather the deep, religious sense of the word, its sacramental dimension. “Droplet of baptism” is therefore, a figurative substitution for the sacrament, possible thanks to semantic play between the ritual and spiritual meanings of the word.

In the three instances discussed above, the unconventionality of the metaphor's functions within the texts is not based on the stylistic appeal of the phrase, but – quite contrarily – on its stylistic invisibility. Only a very close reading of the poem reveals that we are dealing with a metaphor. Moreover – its actualization remains ever in a state of partial potentiality. The metaphor may or may not come to the surface of the text. In the prayer “Maryjo, Pani Aniołów!,” its appearance is conditioned by the specific interpretation of the polysemic verb *zapatrujem*. In “Prac-czoło” the metaphor materialises only for a moment in the process of semantically reinterpreting linguistic clichés, and then turns into a metonym. “Droplet of baptism” in the poem “Do Wielomóżnej pani I.” may deceive the reader by implying the literal baptismal water, when, actually, only metaphorical reading captures the proper, profound meaning of the expression.

Among the examples Sawicki discusses, there are, however, also some that are undoubtedly metaphorical – and in which this characteristic is prominent. This is the case, for example, in the second verse of the poem “Pielgrzym” [“Pilgrim”], which has often been the subject of interpretation:

Wy myślicie, że i ja nie Pan,  
Dlatego, że dom mój ruchomy  
Z wielbłądziej skóry...

(PWsz II, 28)

[You think that I am not Lord of land,  
Because my home, forever mobile  
Is made of camel hide...]

Sawicki analyses this image in the context of the associations the text suggests. In referencing the interpretations of other scholars, such as “wielbłąd” [camel] (C. Jellenta), literal “dom” [house/home] (J. Pietrkiewicz, S. Szuman), “namiot” [tent] (J. Przyboś), “sandał z wielbłądziej skóry” [camel hide sandal] (J.W.

Gomulicki), Sawicki above all emphasises this multifunctionality,<sup>12</sup> which conflicts with the need for a conclusive interpretation:

We are dealing with an entire bundle of associations suggesting the lack of a permanent, normal house /home, emphasising mobility, changeability, an unstable situation, being “underway.” Associations are also evoked with regard to the camel – a travelling animal, and the tent – a house typical of nomadic peoples, and the robes worn by biblical prophets, which contribute an additional sacred dimension. Norwid was the master of accumulating mutually interfering meanings, the master of polysemous poetic synthesis.<sup>13</sup>

Norwidology has Sawicki’s text to thank for the most comprehensive analysis of this side of Norwid’s creative profile – as a master of ambiguous poetic synthesis. It is worth mentioning, for the sake of being thorough, that the association reflex the scholar describes takes place on the basis of a metaphor of the *in absentia* variety, because this is exactly what the phrase “my home, forever mobile / Is made from camel hide” is. A metaphor structured in this way does not verbalise the main theme – so it may leave open the question of what it is meant to refer to. As a general rule, the deciding factor in these cases is context. However, context does not help much in “Pielgrzym,” where it suggests that “home” must be characteristic of a pilgrim’s existence in some specific way. It is thus a very general hint, which tells us nothing, actually – as the interpretations of this phrase cited above demonstrate: there is no conclusive interpretation. But we can still talk about the interesting form of the metaphor-riddle.

I would like to end the discussion of ambiguous phenomena generated by polysemy, homonymy, and associations, in the context of their relations to metaphor, by quoting a poem that we will not find in Sawicki’s discussion. It represents yet another type of interaction between metaphor and “semantic play.” I am referring to the 1850 poem “Od rezultatów mylnego zamętu” [“From the Results of Mistaken Confusion”]. We read in the second stanza:

O! tak – WCIELONYM skoro pogardzili,  
 Wcielenie wszelkie – więc: p r a c a wszelaka –  
 Rwie się... a jeśli przędzie się?... omyli!...  
 Wodę by lepiej czerpać do przetaka – –

(PWsz I, 137)

12 At the same time, he emphasises that Przyboś’s understanding seems the most probable.

13 Sawicki, “Z zagadnień semantyki poetyckiej Norwida,” pp. 78–79.

[Oh! Yes – since they rejected INCARNATE,  
 Any incarnation – thus: any w o r k –  
 Is torn... and if it is spun?... it will be wrong!...  
 They may as well draw water with a sieve – ]

The reader's attention is first drawn to the procedures of a polysemic nature that establish the semantic connection between "INCARNATE" as a description of the Son of God, who took human form, and "incarnation" as anything "embodied" – a realised idea. Both of these meanings were used in nineteenth-century Polish – they are accounted for by both *Słownik wileński* and *Słownik warszawski*. The proximity of the two words in the poem results in a contamination of meanings – "incarnation" refers simultaneously to the implementation of an idea, as well as to the act of incarnation. In a way, it becomes a postulate-word. We cannot speak of true "incarnation" unless we acknowledge the religious foundation of all activity; this is how the meaning generated by the above-quoted procedure could be paraphrased.

The second line of the quoted stanza establishes the synonymous relationship between "incarnation" understood as such, and the word *praca*. Thus, through the mediation of the lexeme *wcielenie*, a semantic bond is created, allowing the seemingly incompatible meanings of "INCARNATE" and "work" to be joined together metaphorically. Wojciech Kudyba writes:

The effect of this mediation is, among other things, the sacralization of the concept of work. The fruitful synthesis of the two meanings of "incarnation" means that a certain kind of poetic relationship is born between the INCARNATE, and the concept of work, and a significant displacement of meaning occurs. By virtue of metaphorical comparison, work acquires a religious dimension in the poem. Through its connection to the person of Man-God, it becomes an element of the history of salvation, a means of redemption and saving the world.<sup>14</sup>

Thus, the role of polysemy consists in semantic mediation between distant meanings and entails a metaphorical exchange of meanings.

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As can be seen from the above, Norwid's metaphors are tied to the semantic devices described by Sawicki by much more than similarity of mechanisms and identity of functions. A closer look at individual examples leads us to doubt whether these phenomena are clearly distinguishable. They often have

14 Wojciech Kudyba, *Aby mowę chrześcijańską odtworzyć na nowo. Norwida mówienie o Bogu* (Lublin: TN KUL, 2000), p. 139.

very close dependencies – from being related to being identical. The selection of the examples analysed above was guided by the intention to show representative cases for various categories of relations combining metaphor with polysemy, homonymy, or association.

In the first, the adoption of one of the meanings of the polysemic word determines the metaphorization or demetaphorization of the lexeme, thanks to which the metaphor, muted by the more visible allusive-polysemic play, is able to play a role in building the dual semantic structure of the poem – this is the case in “Maryjo, Pani Aniołów.” In the variants that reinterpret common expressions, the ephemeral metaphor, which materialises only for a moment (“Prac-czoło”) or, as in “Do Wielomożnej pani I.,” is muted by associations referring to the literal sense. It also happens – as in the case of “Od rezultatów mylnego zamętu” – that polysemy builds a meaningful bridge between the lexemes that become the poles of the metaphor. Or finally – this is the last variant – the allusive play is based on an expression that is simply a metaphor, just not in its canonical form (the metaphor *in absentia* in “Pilgrim”).

Despite the stronger relationships than one might expect between phenomena I do not put forth the thesis that they belong to the same group (they do so only rarely). These procedures decidedly differ from one another, and the analyses of their mutual affiliations was aimed primarily at highlighting the fact that in situations where they occur together, the metaphor is prone to dim its presence, and remain obscured. It seems that this is a characteristic feature of Norwid’s metaphor use, discernible also in other fields where it is present.

## On Simile

There are probably just as many studies on simile in Norwid’s poetry as there are on metaphor. And yet, unlike his metaphors, Norwid’s similes are not *terra incognita*; this subject seems more thoroughly researched. This is because in the essays from which we may learn something about Norwid’s similes, they appear – whereas metaphors do not – as an important aspect, or even main point, of scholarly consideration. There are three works in particular that we should mention: the first is an extensive article by Zdzisław Łapiński about the imagery in *Quidam*, in which he analyses, among other things, the role of simile in creating metaphorical – which is important! – images in Norwid’s poetry.<sup>15</sup> The second work – *Norwida wiersze-*

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15 “Obrazowanie w ‘Quidamie,’” *Roczniki Humanistyczne*, Vol. 6 (1956–1957), No. 1, pp. 117–173. It is worth adding that even more so than by scientific conclusions, the



*przypowieści*<sup>16</sup> [*Norwid's Poem-Parables*], by Michał Głowiński, illustrates how often Norwid's allegories and parables arise from elaborate similes – sometimes even to the point that a parable turns out simply to be the rheme of a developed simile. And finally, an essay by Michał Kuziak – *O różnych "jak" w Vade-mecum*<sup>17</sup> [*On Various "Likes" in Vade-mecum*] – is most important for us, because it directly addresses the relationship between simile and metaphor in Norwid's work. It is to this text's conclusions I will primarily be referring later on.

In regards to the situation outlined above, I propose that simile became more attractive than metaphor as a subject of study because it is more noticeable in Norwid's poetry, more visible, than metaphor. It is characteristic that Kuziak's text opens with the following sentence: "Even upon a cursory reading of Norwid's *Vade-mecum*, it is difficult to overlook the simile structures the collection contains"<sup>18</sup> (the emphasis is mine – Ł. N.). However, as it turns out, the unlikelihood of overlooking similes in *Vade-mecum* goes hand in hand with the ease of overlooking metaphors, as evidenced by the scholar's erroneous calculations regarding the quantitative superiority of simile over metaphor in the collection.<sup>19</sup> Additionally, Kuziak's approach seems inappropriate; he attempts to justify Norwid's predilection for simile based on very general structural features of the trope, and moreover, does this in an erratic manner. He initially states that:

"like" illuminates the obscurity of speech and maybe this is why it eclipses metaphor, or rather, positions itself almost halfway between metaphorical and discursive speech, revealing the aim of the simile .... Hence the stereotypical character of the mentioned similes – the person expressing them wants to make an idea more understandable by introducing a context which makes it obvious.<sup>20</sup>

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importance of simile for the process of metaphorical imagery is demonstrated by the fact that the majority of examples Łapiński quotes in this work are actually similes.

- 16 Michał Głowiński, "Norwida wiersze-przypowieści," in: Michał Głowiński, *Intertekstualność. Groteska. Parabola. Szkice ogólne i interpretacje* (Kraków: Universitas, 2000), pp. 256–259.
- 17 Michał Kuziak, "O różnych 'jak' w 'Vade-mecum' Norwida," in: *Czytając Norwida 2*, ed. Sławomir Rzepczyński (Słupsk: Pomorska Akademia Pedagogiczna w Słupsku, 2003), pp. 133–147.
- 18 Kuziak, "O różnych 'jak' w 'Vade-mecum' Norwida," p. 133.
- 19 Michał Kuziak claims that metaphors are fewer than similes in the collection (Kuziak, "O różnych 'jak' w 'Vade-mecum' Norwida," p. 140). However, my own calculations reflect a completely different situation: in *Vade-mecum* there are 152 similes, and almost twice as many metaphors – 281.
- 20 Kuziak, "O różnych 'jak' w 'Vade-mecum' Norwida," pp. 141–142.

The scholar observes, however, that similes in *Vade-mecum*, instead of bringing together the phenomena they compare, actually widen the distance between them, making the relationship between theme and rheme problematic. These similes are, thus, far from stereotypical. He posits that such similes constitute an attempt to indicate a different, symbolic order that connects things. And in this context, Kuziak's explanation for the "advantage" of simile over metaphor is quite different:

It seems that we can consider it to be significant that Norwid suggested the existence of such an order by means of a simile, specifically the aforementioned "distancing" simile, and not a metaphor. Metaphor, as Roman Jakobson argues, connects elements through similarity (just like the "approximating" simile), and hence refers to associations functioning rather on the superficial semantic layer (of course it is different in the case of the so-called bold metaphor). On the other hand, "distancing" similes create metonymic connections, they seem to be measuring up to a "bold metaphor." They have a similar power to question the obviousness of semantic relations, and thus prove the existence of the secret of the universe.<sup>21</sup>

Thus, Kuziak explains the (alleged!) advantage of simile over metaphor as an effect of the transparency of the trope and, at the same time, its complexity. Here, the inconsistency of his conclusion is due to the erroneous assumption that categories such as "boldness" or "stereotypicality," or that actions such as "distancing" and "approximating" can be simply – and universally – derived from the very structure of the trope. Even if textbooks on poetics, in attempting to define some general rules, are sometimes inclined to solve the problem this way, literary empiricism can produce very different results. In short, metaphors, as well as similes, can be both bold and conventional, "approximating" and "distancing." Numerous examples of such can be found in Norwid's poetic oeuvre.

However, in reference to the question of why similes have greater visibility (not: importance!) than metaphors, not only in *Vade-mecum*, but in Norwid's entire poetic oeuvre. I would say on the general structure of both figures of speech, against the backdrop of the various masking procedures to which the poet resorts in creating his metaphors; that similes owe their expressiveness – most banally – to the presence of inalienable textual indicators: the "jak" [like], "jakby," "niby," "jak gdyby" [as if], etc. This is the simplest, and most accurate I believe, explanation for the fact that Kuziak counted more of Norwid's similes than metaphors.<sup>22</sup> This explanation, however, is not at all

21 Kuziak, "O różnych 'jak' w 'Vade-mecum' Norwida," p. 145.

22 It is difficult for me to address Kuziak's remark that Norwid uses simile more often than other poets of his era, because it is not supported by any evidence; the author

satisfactory, because it applies always and everywhere – and says nothing about the specificity of the relationship between the two figures of speech in Norwid's poetry. The answer to the question of why metaphor is less visible in his poetry should not be too general. It certainly should not be derived from theory, but rather from concrete textual examples. Let's move on to the analysis:

## I

Jak dziki zwierz przyszło N i e s z c z ę ś c i e do człowieka  
I zatopiło weń fatalne oczy...  
– Czeka – –  
Czy, człowiek, zbczy?

## II

Lecz on odejrzał mu, jak gdy artysta  
Mierzy swojego kształt modelu;  
I spostrzegło, że on patrzy – c o? skorzysta  
Na swym nieprzyjacielu:  
I zachwiało się całą postaci wagą  
– – I nie ma go!

(PWsz II, 49)

## [ I

Like a fierce beast – *Misfortune* came to man  
And pierced him with its fateful eyes...  
– It waits – –  
Will, man, swerve?

## II

But he gazed back – as an artist would  
Take measure of his model's form –  
And it saw him watching – *what?* will man  
Profit from his foe:  
It reeled – with the full weight of its being...  
– – And was gone!<sup>23</sup>

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himself discloses that he came to this conclusion based on scientific assumption. However, it seems that at least in the context of the awareness of the role of simile in Mickiewicz's poetry, Kuziak's thesis is controversial, although I cannot rule out that it may be correct. Certainly, it requires a more thorough examination. Establishing how frequently simile appears in each poet's works does not seem a very difficult task, especially if limited to poetic material.

23 English translation by Danuta Borchartd in collaboration with Agata Brajerska-Mazur, in: Cyprian Norwid, *Poems* (New York: Archipelago Books, 2011), p. 43.

“Fatum” [Fate], the thirtieth poem in the *Vade-mecum* collection, is a text whose entire structure is based on the parallelism of two similes, and their positions in the poem must therefore be considered key. The rhemes in the similes evoke associations characterising both protagonists of the text: in the first stanza “Misfortune,” is presented in the guise of a “fierce beast,” and in the second, “man” can “gaze back” at Misfortune “like an artist who takes measure of his model’s form.” The parallelism of the similes simultaneously seems – considering the originality of both phrases – asynchronous. The first of the cited associations is rather conventional and typical,<sup>24</sup> the second, original, unobvious, and multi-interpretable.

However, irrespective of whether we are dealing with a bold or derivative expression, the essential fact remains that as long as we are dealing with the simile’s form, we can only talk about associations, and about the images that function within the poem’s reflective layer. Meanwhile, “Fatum’s” powerful impact, which has made it one of Norwid’s most discussed poems,<sup>25</sup> depends, I think, to a large extent on its eventfulness, on the “goings on” full of internal dynamics and tension (although in the literal sense nothing even happens “externally” here after all, which is typical of Norwid). The situation and dynamism are not created in the poem by simile; they are created in a different way.

The word “like” and the following image of “fierce beast” open the poem, hence the pressure of the simile and its visibility. Let us note, however, that the precedence of “like” results from a syntactical inversion here. Reconstructing the logical course of the statement, in accordance with its meaning, one would have to read it differently: “nieszczęście przyszło do człowieka jak dziki zwier” [misfortune came to man like a fierce beast]. This clumsy paraphrase, obscuring the dynamics of the original, however, captures the basic fact that the simile here only supplements the metaphor, which is a stereotypical personification.<sup>26</sup> The situation in the second stanza is similar; the image of the artist

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24 Cf. Marian Maciejewski’s comments (“Fatum ukrzyżowane,” *Studia Norwidiana*, Vol. 1 (1983), p. 36): “Where does the overwhelming power of the Misfortune come from, then, if one considers its coarse stylistic expression: set by the conventional, yet Enlightenment tradition of personification and a very modest comparison to an equally typified animal?”

25 This is attested to by the juxtaposition in *Bibliografia interpretacji wierszy Cypriana Norwida* (ed. Adam Cedro, Piotr Chlebowski, Józef Fert in collaboration with Marek Buś i Jacek Leociak, Lublin: TN KUL, 2001).

26 Maciejewski, “Fatum ukrzyżowane,” p. 36.

who "takes measure of his model's form" extends a metaphor established by the verb *gazed back*.

Similes create a sphere of suggestive associations in "Fatum," but the dynamism is determined by the verbs: Misfortune "przyszło do człowieka," [came to man], "zatopiło weń oczy" [pierced him with its eyes], "czeka, czy człowiek zboczy," [waits, will man swerve], "on odejrzał mu" [he gazed back], etc. The imagery suggested by the simile renders these verbs entirely neutral and literal to the reader. They are consistent with the visual logic of the situation of a man meeting with a wild animal that "walkę na oczy" [stare down] from hunters' stories, as Maciejewski mentions in his interpretation.<sup>27</sup> The meanings they carry create a scene consistent with general experience. But at the same time, they are all also verb-metaphors referring to the existential experience of misery. They depict behaviours and reactions in the face of (potentially) degrading experiences.

The relations between simile and metaphor take two directions in "Fatum." Misfortune's metaphorical "accosting" opens the road to its association with the "fierce beast." In turn, this simile implies the metaphor of a "stare-down." Similes make the lyrical situation more concrete with the help of visual associations, but they are metaphors that carry the associated matter into the poetic ontological space, making it so that misfortune ceases to be "like" a fierce beast, and simply becomes the fierce beast. By using metaphors and discrete and obscured similes, a process takes place in the poem that could be considered the creation of an invisible presence<sup>28</sup> – a subtle transformation of the world of "as if" into a domain of poetic reality.

A similar process of discreetly presenting lyrical action through metaphor – albeit carried out on a slightly smaller scale – can be observed in "Wielkie Słowa" ["Big Words"]. In the third stanza of the poem we read:

Sfera s ł ó w - w i e l k i c h , jakich nieraz parę  
Przez zgasły wieków przelata dziesiątek  
I w pierw uderza cię, niż dajesz wiarę,  
Godząc – jak strzały ordzewionej szczytek –

(PWsz II, 112)

27 Maciejewski, "Fatum ukrzyżowane."

28 It seems suggestive despite the fact that the entire lyrical action is developed using the past tense (apart from the final accent of "Misfortune's" disappearance).

[The sphere of big words, of which a few sometimes  
 Fly through ten extinct centuries  
 They strike you, before you can believe,  
 Aiming – like the remnant of a rusted arrow]

As in “Fatum,” the meanings generated by simile are powerfully imposed on the reader. The visual motif of the “remnant of a rusted arrow” is enhanced by the poetic presentation. Moreover, the simile specifies and develops a metaphorical battle theme, which also gently radiates onto other images captured in the poem, even those that do not trigger this association in and of themselves. For example, the “stack of printed books” in the next stanza becomes – by virtue of these battle associations – a kind of fortification. The hint of war motif also reinforces, allusively, the mention of Absalom in the last stanza, who is fleeing (though it is not explicitly mentioned in the poem) after losing the battle with David’s army. This metaphorical “war” theme, crucial for the poem’s imagery, omnipresent throughout it, though only glimmering beneath the surface, would not exist without simile.

This does not change the fact, however, that the simile in the quoted stanza is subordinate to the metaphors of “striking” and “aiming.” These metaphors, despite their stylistic subtlety, initiate the changes in meaning, and also reveal what is happening in the poem. By evoking the dramatic temporality of events, they depict a peculiar struggle between “big words” and the present like an event taking place in the textual “here and now.”

As we can see, one of the important reasons that simile eclipses metaphor in Norwid’s poetry is the difference in image quality generated by each figure of speech. Proper metaphorical “blurring” and image ambiguity are usually confronted with the clarity and visibility of the simile’s presentation. Juliusz Kleiner has long drawn attention to the different properties of these two figures of speech, differentiating between romantic and classical styles, based on their preference for either metaphor or simile:

In even an undeveloped simile, the isolation of secondary representations means that they can occur with some specificity, and if they are not specific, at least with some conceptual clarity. It is different with metaphor .... The metaphor may be elusive, seemingly unjustified, evading accurate interpretation. Simile generally brings you closer to an object, a metaphor often pushes the object away. Simile essentially helps us visualize – metaphor often only provides some sort of melody, the sense of a key change or musical accompaniment.<sup>29</sup>

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29 Juliusz Kleiner, “Z zagadnień metaforyki Mickiewicza i Słowackiego,” in: Juliusz Kleiner, *Studia z zakresu teorii literatury* (Lublin: TN KUL, 1961), p. 133.

Let's look at the following fragment from this angle:

Litwo! dlaczegoż Ty, a nie Warszawa,  
Pieśń mą, podartą jak chorągiew starą,  
Składasz?

(“Słówko” [“A Quick Word”], PWSz I, 297)

[Lithuania! Why is it that You, and not Warsaw,  
Lay down my song,  
Torn like an old banner?]

It seems that we are dealing with a weakening of the metaphor, based on its suppression by the clear image which appears in the simile rheme. We could say this is on account of the double meaning of the rheme: it makes sense for both the literal and metaphorical meanings of the word or phrase that appear in the simile's theme. Let us explain the meaning of these observations using an example: the term “torn song” from “Słówko” can be understood literally, as a damaged record (e.g., on paper) of a poetic work: this is a specific image that the reader could perceive – and the poem encourages it. What's more, we can dare to hypothesise that the comparison to an “old banner” supports such a reading more strongly than any other [reading]. We know, however, because the greater context of the poem suggests it, that the more important – and ultimately proper – metaphorical meaning is actually “torn song” as the poet's scattered and disregarded output. The fact that the metaphorical interpretation turns out to be primary does not, invalidate the first, literal meaning. On the contrary: both meanings remain suspended in tension, while that which is concrete and pictorial, blurs the metaphor's clarity.

A similar approach can be seen in the penultimate stanza of the poem “Czy podam się o amnestię?” [“Shall I Request an Amnesty?”]:

I każdy wiersz ten miałem w mojej dłoni,  
Jak okrętową linę w czasie burzy,  
Kiedym się do was uśmiechał znad toni;  
A wy mnie nęcić chcecie l i s t k i e m r ó ż y ? . . .

(PWSz I, 260)

[And I held every poem in my hand,  
Like a ship's rope during a storm,  
When I smiled at you from above;  
And you think you can tempt me with a rose p e t a l ? . . .]

The mechanism is similar to that of “Słówko,” but it is presented in an even more interesting way. One might say that the second part of the simile (“like a ship’s rope during a storm”) not only overshadows the metaphorical nature of the first part (“And I held every poem in my hand”) but also, almost inadvertently, creates this metaphor. Two seemingly contradictory actions are carried out here in a way. Let us attempt a reading experiment in which we leave out the second line containing the simile from the above-quoted stanza. Would we still be inclined to search for a deeper meaning in the first line? Perhaps, but it would be almost completely invisible, imprecise, and elusive. The simile transforms this verse into a metaphor: it allows one to perceive the image of authentic, vivid, redeeming poetry in those “poems held.” And at the same time, it blurs these meanings, reinforcing the “artistic” representation of a hand holding a poem (a card with a poem).

In Norwid’s poetry, we can often observe yet another type of interaction between simile and metaphor, which results in, at least partially, the weakening of the metaphor. To illustrate it, I present a fragment from the poem “Quidam.” In one of the first scenes of this piece we come across the following characterization of Zofia from Knidos:

Pod tymi laury, których liść szeroki  
Lamp różnofarbnych złamały promienie,  
Szaty ją wiewne tułą jak obłoki  
I układają na ciche kamienie –  
Z rzeźbą ich łącząc tak żywą naturę,  
Jak rzeźba wpaja się w architekturę.  
Zaiste, odłam to jakiejś świątyni,  
Gdzieś barbarzyńskim rozartanej obuchem –  
Nikt zeń całości nowej nie uczyni,  
Ni ją spokrewni z cudzoziemskim duchem:  
Zawsze to będzie pamiątka bez-łzawa  
Czegoś, co nie ma istoty ni prawa.

(DW IV, 10)

[Under those laurels, whose broad leaves  
The rays of multicoloured lamps broke  
The flowy robes envelop her like clouds  
And lay her down onto silent stones –  
Joining their lively nature with sculpture,  
Like sculpture blends into architecture.  
Indeed, it is a fragment of some temple,  
Crushed somewhere by a barbarian mallet –



Nobody will make of it a new whole,  
 Nor bind it to a foreign spirit:  
 It will forever be a tear-less token  
 Of something that has neither essence nor a right.]

The characterization opens with a description of the heroine's appearance, which culminates in a simile introducing a sculptural theme ("like a sculpture embedded into the architecture"). It has a clearly visual aim: Zofia's ethereal robes against the backdrop of stone pavement give the impression of architectural unity, created by the sculpture decorating the building. At the same time, in a way that is barely indicated,<sup>30</sup> the simile turns into an architectural metaphor ("Indeed, a fragment of some temple" – about Zofia), which is very characteristic of Norwid, as also seen in *Promethidion* and – especially – in "Rzecz o wolności słowa" ["On the Freedom of Speech"].<sup>31</sup> The surprising description, as a result of which Zofia "becomes" (figuratively) a temple destroyed by barbarians, is an attempt to capture the essence of the heroine's personality and character. This is characteristic of the entire poem, in which the bold imagery does not refer to external similarities, but rather a reflective and intellectual basis.<sup>32</sup>

It should be emphasised once again that the transformation of simile into metaphor is hardly indicated (as is the case in *Quidam* sometimes). In fact, an initial reading of the fragment makes us think that we are talking about a building the whole time, and that the development – in accordance with the Homeric pattern – is subordinated to the second part of the simile, creating the image of a destroyed temple. It is only when we read into the text carefully that we perceive the bold metaphor. The simile turns out to be even more expressive in both tropes.

This sort of transformation, of simile into metaphor, can also be observed in poetry. We find it in both Norwid's early (e.g., "Noc" ["Night"]) as well as mature (e.g., "Do obywatela Johna Browna" ["To Citizen John Brown"]) poems. In both of these poems, simile transforms into metaphor, but the nature of the process is somewhat different than in *Quidam*. The change has a slightly more pronounced character, and the moment of transition from one form to the

30 Only the word "indeed" suggests the emergence of some new quality.

31 Interestingly, this architectural imagery describing Zofia is also developed in the letter *Do ZK* [*To ZK*], which is the introduction to *Quidam*, where Norwid wrote: "Serce tej Zofii, tak czarującej talentami, a tak nerwami i wolą do siebie nienależnej, może właśnie całej jednej *świątyni-wiedzy* jest ruina?" (DW IV, 115) [This Zofia, who so charms with her talents, but whose nerves and will do not belong to her, is perhaps the ruin of this entire *temple-of-knowledge*?].

32 Cf. Zdzisław Łapiński, "Obrazowanie w 'Quidamie,'" p. 135.

other takes place in the context of more easily identifiable textual indicators of each figure of speech:

Chmurne niebios sklepienie, szaro cieniowane,  
Rozjaśnia się, a księżyc, niby pająk złoty,  
Wypełznął z pajęczyny, i spłoszył ciemnoty,  
Które lecą w otchłanie okien nie zbadane!  
On zaś, jak pogromiciel, ciągle z dumą kroczy,  
I buńczuk złotowłosy poza sobą toczy ...

Ej! pająku złocony, wstąpże przecie do mnie ...  
(*Noc*, PWSz I, 9)

[The cloudy sky vault, shaded grey,  
Clears up, and the moon, like a golden spider,  
Crept out of his web, and startled the darkness,  
Which fly into the abyss of windows unchecked!  
And he, like a conqueror, proceeds with pride,  
Rolling out a golden-haired banner behind him ...

Hey! gilded spider, come to me]

Przez Oceanu ruchome płaszczyzny  
Pieśń Ci, jak m e w ę, posyłam, o! Janie...

Ta lecieć długo będzie do ojczyzny  
Wolnych – bo wątpi już: czy ją zastanie?...  
– Czy też, jak promień Twej zacnej siwizny,  
Biała – na puste zleci rusztowanie:  
By kata Twego syn rączką dziecinną  
Kamienie ciskał na mewę gościnną!

(*Do obywatela Johna Brown*, PWSz I, 302)

[Over the Ocean's undulant plain  
A song, like a *seagull*, I send you, o! John...

To the land of the free maybe in vain  
It will fly – for it doubts: is that land gone?...  
– Or, like a ray of your hair grey and noble  
White – on an empty scaffold will land:  
So your hangman's son, with his little boy's hand,  
At the visitor gull will throw stones!]<sup>33</sup>

---

33 English translation by Danuta Borchartd, p. 113.

The development of metaphorical themes into autonomous images, observed in the above examples, brings us closer to the so-called conceit or sustained metaphor.

\*

The examples described above confirm the phenomenon of simile obscuring metaphors, which seem characteristic of Norwid's poetry. The analysis above of the relations between figures of speech characterises a poetic strategy of creating invisible metaphors. The metaphors, despite being subdued by strong similes, sometimes emerge in a barely discernible way, and may even depend on the similes for their identities. Their invisibility" however increases their importance; the submerged metaphors may constitute the "action" and dynamicity of the poetic situation, subtly deepening the semantics of the text, and expanding the scope of its meanings and reflections.

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## List of Illustrations

- Fig. 1. Pantaleon Szyndler, *Portret Cypriana Norwida*, 1882, oil on canvas, National Museum in Warsaw. Photo Piotr Ligier. .... 44
- Fig. 2. Cyprian Norwid, *Św. Maria Magdalena u stóp Chrystusa* [St Mary Magdalene kneeling at the feet of Christ], etching, National Museum in Warsaw. Photo Piotr Ligier. .... 268
- Fig. 3. Cyprian Norwid, *Nie było dla nich miejsca w gospodzie* [There was no Room for them at the Inn], 1850, etching, National Library in Poland. Photo National Library in Poland. .. 270
- Fig. 4. Cyprian Norwid, *Św. Józef z Dzieciątkiem* [St. Joseph with the Child], 1850, soft varnish, National Museum in Poznan. Photo National Museum in Poznan. .... 272
- Fig. 5. Cyprian Norwid, *Wskrzeszenie Łazarza* [The Resurrection of Lazarus], 1852, etching, National Museum in Poznan. Photo National Museum in Poznan. .... 273
- Fig. 6. Cyprian Norwid, *Modlitwa dziecka* [A Child's Prayer], 1855, etching, National Library in Poland. Photo National Library in Poland. .... 276
- Fig. 7. Cyprian Norwid, *Chrystus na krzyżu* [Christ on the Cross], 1856, etching, Scientific Library of the Polish Academy of Art and Sciences and the Polish Academy of Sciences. Photo Scientific Library. .... 279
- Fig. 8. Cyprian Norwid, *Zwiastowanie pasterzom* [Annunciation to the Shepherds], 1856, lithograph, private collection. Photo Edyta Chlebowska. .... 279
- Fig. 9. Cyprian Norwid, *Alleluja*, Version I, 1857, etching, National Library in Poland. Photo National Library in Poland. .... 282
- Fig. 10. Cyprian Norwid, *Alleluja*, Version II, 1857, etching, National Museum in Warsaw. Photo Piotr Ligier. .... 283
- Fig. 11. Cyprian Norwid, *Badania Naukowe Łapigroszów* [Money-grubbers' Scientific Research], 1857, lithograph, National Library in Poland. Photo National Library in Poland. .... 286
- Fig. 12. Cyprian Norwid, *Zachwycenie i Błogosławiona* [Delight and the Blessed], 1861, steel engraving, National Library in Poland. Photo National Library in Poland. .... 287
- Fig. 13. Cyprian Norwid, *Orzeł* [Eagle], lithograph, National Library in Poland. Photo National Library in Poland. .... 289

- Fig. 14. Cyprian Norwid, *Biały orzeł* [*White Eagle*], watercolour, National Library in Poland. Photo National Library in Poland. . 289
- Fig. 15. Cyprian Norwid, *L'Écho des Ruines*, 1861, lithograph, National Library in Poland. Photo National Library in Poland. . 290
- Fig. 16. Cyprian Norwid, *Scherzo*, 1861, lithograph, National Library in Poland. Photo National Library in Poland. .... 291
- Fig. 17. Cyprian Norwid, *Solo or Melancholia* [*Melancholy*], 1861, lithograph, National Library in Poland. Photo National Library in Poland. .... 292
- Fig. 18. Cyprian Norwid, *Sforza w więzieniu* [*Sforza in Prison*], Version I, 1863, lost etching. Photo in National Library in Poland. .... 295
- Fig. 19. Cyprian Norwid, *Sforza w więzieniu* [*Sforza in Prison*] titled *Męczennik* [*The Martyr*], Version II, 1863, etching, National Museum in Warsaw. Photo Piotr Ligier. .... 296
- Fig. 20. Cyprian Norwid, *Pythia*, 1863, etching, National Museum in Warsaw. Photo Piotr Ligier. .... 297
- Fig. 21. Cyprian Norwid, *Sybilla* [*Sibyl*], 1863, etching, National Museum in Warsaw. Photo Piotr Ligier. .... 298
- Fig. 22. Cyprian Norwid, *Muzyk niepotrzebny* [*Le Musicien inutile*] [*The Useless Musician*], 1867, etching, National Museum in Krakow. Photo National Museum in Krakow. .... 301
- Fig. 23. Cyprian Norwid, *Dialog zmarłych* [*Dialogue of the Dead*], 1871, etching, National Library in Poland. Photo National Library in Poland. .... 303
- Fig. 24. Cyprian Norwid, *Lirenka* [*The Small Lyre*], 1855, copperplate from the cover designed for *Lirenka* by T. Lenartowicz, published by J.K. Żupański (Poznań 1855). Photo National Library in Poland. .... 307
- Fig. 25. Cyprian Norwid, *Zoilus*, 1841, pen drawing, National Library in Poland. Photo National Library in Poland. .... 307
- Fig. 26. Cyprian Norwid, *Irydion i Masynissa* [*Iridion and Masinissa*], 1850, pen drawing, National Museum in Warsaw. Photo Piotr Ligier. .... 389
- Fig. 27. Cyprian Norwid, *Anioł śmierci* [*The Angel of Death*], 1851, pen drawing, National Museum in Poznan. Photo National Museum in Poznan. .... 390
- Fig. 28. Cyprian Norwid, *Za mną dzieci!* [*Follow Me, Children!*], 1837, watercolour, National Museum in Warsaw. Photo Piotr Ligier. .. 637



- Fig. 29. Cyprian Norwid, *Muza ukraińska* [*Ukrainian Muse*], 1882, watercolour, Jagiellonian Library. Photo Jagiellonian Library. .... 637
- Fig. 30. Cyprian Norwid, *Studia zamysłonych* [*Pensive Studies*], pencil drawing, watercolour, National Library in Poland. Photo National Library in Poland. .... 639
- Fig. 31. Cyprian Norwid, *Handlarz laurów* [*The Laurel Trader*], 1869, pen drawing, watercolour, National Library in Poland. Photo National Library in Poland. .... 639
- Fig. 32. Cyprian Norwid, *Karawana* [*Caravan*], watercolour, National Library in Poland. Photo National Library in Poland. .... 642
- Fig. 33. Léon Belly's *Pèlerins allant à la Mecque*, 1861, oil on canvas, Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Photo: Wikipedia, CC BY-SA 3.0. .... 643
- Fig. 34. Cyprian Norwid, copies of motifs from the Roman Christian catacombs, pen drawing, watercolour, National Library in Poland. Photo National Library in Poland. .... 644
- Fig. 35. Cyprian Norwid, *Święty Piotr i święty Paweł* [*Saint Peter and Saint Paul*], 1868, pen drawing, watercolour, National Library in Poland. Photo National Library in Poland. .... 645
- Fig. 36. Cyprian Norwid, *Ecce Deus*, 1868, pen drawing, watercolour, National Library in Poland. Photo National Library in Poland. . 646
- Fig. 37. Cyprian Norwid, *Dworek Norwidów w Laskowie-Głuchach* [*The Norwid Manor in Laskowo-Głuchy*], 1839, watercolour, National Museum in Warsaw. Photo Piotr Ligier. .... 648
- Fig. 38. Cyprian Norwid, *Dwie kobiety z dzieckiem* [*Two Women with a Child*], 1867, pen drawing, watercolour, National Library in Poland. Photo National Library in Poland. .... 652
- Fig. 39. Cyprian Norwid, *Chrystus i Barabasz w pretorium Piłata* [*Christ and Barabbas in Pilate's Pretorium*], lost drawing. Photo in National Library in Poland. .... 654
- Fig. 40. Cyprian Norwid, *Zdjęcie z krzyża* [*The Descent from the Cross*] 1856–1857, watercolour, National Museum in Warsaw. Photo Piotr Ligier. .... 659
- Fig. 41. Cyprian Norwid, *Babka i wnuczka przy oknie* [*Grandmother and Granddaughter at the Window*], watercolour, National Library in Poland. Photo National Library in Poland. .... 662
- Fig. 42. Cyprian Norwid, *Para w ogrodzie* [*Couple in the Garden*], watercolour, National Library in Poland. Photo National Library in Poland. .... 663

- Fig. 43. Cyprian Norwid, *Opowieść w ilustracji [Illustrated Story]*,  
ca 1880, watercolour, National Library in Poland. Photo  
National Library in Poland. .... 663
- Fig. 44. Cyprian Norwid, *Opowieść w ilustracji [Illustrated Story]*,  
watercolour, National Library in Poland. Photo National  
Library in Poland. .... 664