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POETS MEETING IN SPACE AND WORD
ON NORWID'S POEMS ADDRESSED
TO JÓZEF BOHDAN ZALESKI

If one searches the map for such meeting places of Polish Romantics that left a lasting mark on their biographies and works, Rome will turn out to be one of the most important sites. It was here that Juliusz Słowacki met Zygmunt Krasiński in the spring of 1836, and the discussions that took place among the ruins and gardens opened up one of the most important strands of poetic and ideological dispute of that time. It was here that Cyprian Norwid hosted Zygmunt Krasiński in his studio on Via Sistina in 1848, and it was in the Eternal City that he met Adam Mickiewicz and Stefan Witwicki in person. And it was also here that he met Józef Bohdan Zaleski, which marked the beginning of a friendship that lasted many years, the literary trace of which is a large block of correspondence¹ and two poems by Norwid – the first, written at the beginning of their acquaintance, entitled *Do Józefa Bohdana Zaleskiego w Rzymie 1847-o* [*To Józef Bohdan Zaleski in Rome, 1847*], the second – written five years later. Reversing the chronological order, I will begin by reflecting on the latter because it is the remarks concerning it that form the compositional frame of this article.

The title of the poem *Na przyjazd Teofila Lenartowicza do Fontainbleau* [*On the Arrival of Teofil Lenartowicz in Fontainbleau*] suggests that the text is an oc-

¹ Norwid corresponded particularly intensively with Zaleski in the years 1847-1852; this period accounts for nearly half of the entire block of 63 letters to this addressee. The exchange of correspondence, resumed in 1856 and continued until the end of his life; the last letter to the poet was written by Norwid on 5 December 1882. See DW X-XII, PWsz VIII-X.

casional trifle stylised according to the classicist model, written perhaps with pastiche intent. On closer reading, however, it turns out that the poem unexpectedly opens up a much wider perspective on Romantic lyricism than the title formula might suggest. The lyrical situation involves a Parisian meeting of three Polish poet-emigrants, belonging to two different Romantic generations – Józef Bohdan Zaleski (1802-1886) and the representatives of a younger generation: Teofil Lenartowicz and the author of the poem, Cyprian Norwid. This meeting actually took place in the mid-19th century and was in various ways part of the biographies of its participants, whose life and artistic paths had already converged earlier, and whose mutual relations had a history of their own.

Let us first look at the circumstances surrounding the poem's composition. Years later – in April 1886, at the request of Adam Pług, Lenartowicz wrote down his memories of Zaleski². There he recalled the episode related to Norwid's recommendation quite extensively, recalling the time when he found himself on the Seine, "alone, without anyone's care [...]," and then, as he recalled:

Cyprian Norwid, who served me as a mahout in Paris – at times insanely prideful, at times as good as an angel, tender-hearted, when I told him about my intended journey to Fontainebleau, he assured me that with his letter I would be well received, and having sat down in front of the easel on which there was a cardboard box of his design, he began to write a recommendation poem to Bohdan, which I did not give away and have kept to this day³.

Lenartowicz arrived in Paris from Brussels at the end of June or on the first days of July 1852, and when he learned that Zaleski was living in a village near Paris, he wanted to meet the poet in person, as he regarded him both as his master and as the second Romantic bard after Mickiewicz (the latter opinion was not isolated at that time).

I have already seen Adam, I saw Brodziński as a small child, then I saw General Morawski, let me now see the author of the dumka about Ruslan and I will reach the peak of happiness...⁴

That dream came true in the summer of 1852.

This interweaving of episodes from the lives of the three poets raises questions, the answers to which are illuminated somewhat by the context and editorial his-

² They were published in *Kłosy* (Issue 1091, May 1886).

³ *Ibid.*, p. 332; see also: PWSz XI, 474 and Z. TROJANOWICZOWA, Z. DAMBEK in collaboration with J. CZARNOMORSKA, *Kalendarz życia i twórczości Cypriana Norwida*, Vol.I: 1821-1860, Poznań 2007, pp. 501-502.

⁴ T. LENARTOWICZ, „Wspomnienie o Bohdanie Zaleskim,” *Kłosy* (see footnote 2).

tory of the work. Why did Norwid think that his recommendation would contribute to the cordial reception of the recommended guest? Did he actually write the poem spontaneously, taking a break from his painting commissions for a while? And finally – why did Lenartowicz not show this poetic letter to the addressee?

The author of the poem was linked to the older poet by memories of Rome that were significant for both of them. Norwid met Bohdan and Zofia Zaleski in the summer of 1847 in Rome, where the couple arrived during their first joint European trip⁵. July walks in the Eternal City in Norwid's company – especially the walk to the Colosseum, later mentioned with nostalgia in his letters – and conversations about history, religion, poetry and politics proved to be the beginning of a friendship. The two poets shared a religious sensitivity, an interest in the Roman origins of Christianity, its persecution and subsequent penetration into Slavic areas, similar assessments of the political situation in Europe, and criticism of Andrzej Towiański's emigration activities⁶. Zaleski soon became Norwid's confidant; it was to him that the younger poet entrusted the manuscript of *Wanda*, asking for help with the publication of the drama, and it is from letters to him that we learn about his work on the next (now lost) dramatic work, entitled *Patkul*, and about the conception of the painterly work, referred to in his correspondence as "wizja nakolizejska" [Nakolisean vision]⁷. The very beginning of his friendship with the Zaleski family found expression in two poems by Norwid: *Do Józefa Bohdana Zaleskiego w Rzymie 1847-o* [To Józef Bohdan Zaleski in Rome, 1847] and in a 'legenda'⁸ entitled *Amen*, offered to the poet's wife with these words: "Pani Zofii Zaleskiej od współ-Mazura (po kądzieli)" [To Mrs Zofia Zaleska from a fellow Masurian (on the distaff side)]. The dedication subtly emphasises the genealogical and generational bond with the addressee. Zofia Zaleska, née Rosengardt, was a contemporary of Lenartowicz (born in 1822), residing in Waraw, a student of Fryderyk Chopin. She was shaped by Romantic Warsaw and the melancholy of Masovia – as were Fryderyk, Cyprian and Teofil. Both younger poets, especially Lenartowicz, would later emphasise the traces

⁵ Bohdan and Zofia married on 26 November 1846; the Italian trip was their postponed honeymoon. They spent almost the entire summer of 1847 in and around Rome.

⁶ See B. STELMASZCZYK-ŚWIONTEK, „Wstęp,” in: J. B. ZALESKI, *Wybór poezyj*, Wrocław – Łódź 1985, BN I, Issue 30.

⁷ See letters to J. B. Zaleski from 1852.

⁸ Such a genealogical categorisation contained in the poem's subtitle appears more frequently in Norwid's lyric poetry and alludes to the medieval, "monastic" semantics of the word 'legenda' (Latin *legere* – 'to read'); during some services and during meals in the monastery refectories, a lector would read passages from Scripture or excerpts from the lives of saints, and this reading was called 'legenda'.

of the manners and cordiality of the Masovian manor transferred to the Zaleski home in Fontainebleau near Paris. The parenthetical interjection in Norwid's dedication also carries something else – a recollection of his mother⁹. During the difficult Paris period preceding his departure for North America, Norwid often found support and family warmth from friends he had met in Rome. So when, just at that time, he recommended the artist and his friend from his Warsaw days to the kindness of the hosts of the house in Fontainebleau, he probably knew that this recommendation would intensify their cordiality and Lenartowicz “would be well received with this letter”.

An analysis of the manuscript¹⁰ of the poem allows us to cautiously accept the hypothesis of it having been spontaneously, hastily written; corrections and deletions support this. However, it remains an editorial mystery as to who made them and when. Zenon Przesmycki speculated that it was most likely Lenartowicz: “It is unlikely that Norwid, giving a poetic letter of recommendation to a friend, erased something in it [...]. Lenartowicz, on the other hand, having performed the operation, would have been handing the addressee the recommendation with the deletions – and that is probably why, not as he himself claims – for undeserved praise, he kept it for himself.”¹¹ The editor's conjecture may be accurate, which is not to say certain. It is possible that Lenartowicz crossed out stanzas 5, 6 and 7, for example, because this fragment already contained minor corrections made by Norwid himself and the work did not look like a clean copy, or maybe he did it as part of the revision of the poem only when he sent the work to the Lviv-based *Strzecha*, where the text was published in an abridged version and without the division into separate parts as in the autograph. We will not be able to resolve this unequivocally, nor will we be able to read the deleted 12 verses in their entirety. Below I present my own editorial work on the text of the poem, prepared on the basis of Norwid's manuscript, marking also all places that could not be read in the autograph in verses 20–26.

⁹ Ludwika Norwidowa, née Zdzieborska, related to the Dybowski and Sobieski families, was born and raised in Masovia. She died in 1825, orphaned four young children; Cyprian was four years old at the time.

¹⁰ The autograph of the poem can be found in Lenartowicz's album *Umarli żywi* and is kept in the PAU Library in Kraków (ref. 2029, p. 75 recto and verso), it bears the signature *Cyprjan* and the date 1852. In 1871, the Lviv-based *Strzecha* published a number of Lenartowicz's poems selected by the poet from this album, including the one analysed here, omitting the fragments that had been crossed out in the autograph. However, there is no indication that Norwid was aware of this edition, let alone that he made an authorial correction to it.

¹¹ Z. PRZESMYCKI, „Introduction,” in: C. Norwid, *Reszta wierszy do dziś odszukanych*, ed. Z. Przesmycki, Warszawa 1933, p. VII.

NA PRZYJAZD TEOFILA LENARTOWICZA DO FONTAINEBLEAU

I

Złoto-struny! – albo ja wiem,
 Jak pisać do Ciebie?
 Choćbym pisał piórem pawiém
 Umaczanym w niebie
 5 I to mało!...

*

Jedwabniejsze piór powianie,
 Błękitniejsze znasz otchłanie
 Z gwiazdą białą!...

*

To – napiszę-ć ja bogaciéj
 10 Posłem dobrym –
 Jednym z młodszych Twoich braci
 Kornie-chrobrym...

*

Gdzieś go znalazł *za-tym-znaniem*
 Lub *nad-znaniem* tym;
 15 Za tym czasów-urąganiem,
 Co nie dzwoni w rym.

*

Za tym dzikim zgrzytem dłuta,
 Co odpryska w pył;
 Ale za to postać kuta
 20 [...?] tyleś żył!”

*

Za tym jawem, który *nocą*
Blizną, [...?] jest [*<znak>?*];
 Za nieznaną tą wszechmocą,

Którą kocham tak!...

*

²⁵ Za tym [<jadem a> ?] miłością
Poplątaną [...?] –
Za tą (mówię) realnością,
Którą gardzę tak!
.....

II

Lepiej, że on w Fonteneblo
³⁰ Niż ja – dzikie ptasze;
Bo strzeliściej się ze-szczeblą
Pogadanki Wasze...

*

Jak orzechu strojną perłą
Z wiatrem igra leszcz,
³⁵ Takie pieśni jego berło,
Taki to on wieszcz.

*

A tak śpiewny, że aż śpiewam,
Dobry, że aż żal
Czysty, że aż się spodziewam.
⁴⁰ Szczery – że choć chwal!
.....

III

Niech Marianka on uściśnie,
Pannie – kwiat zanieśie
I czerwone z Wami wiśnie
Je – i chodzi w lesie.

1852

ON THE ARRIVAL OF TEOFIL LENARTOWICZ IN FONTAINEBLEAU

I

Golden-strings! – Or I don't know,
 How should I address you?
 Even if I wrote with a peacock's feather
 Dipped in the sky
 5 That's not enough!...

*

A silkier stream of feather,
 You know bluer abysses
 With a white star!...

*

Then – I'll write – more lavishly
 10 A good envoy –
 One of your younger brothers
 Humble and brave...

*

Somewhere you knew him beyond this cognition
 Or over cognition;
 15 Beyond the scolding of times,
 Which doesn't hit a rhyme.

*

Behind the wild rasp of the chisel
 That chips away into dust;
 But the chiselled figure
 20 [.....?] you've lived so much!"

*

Behind this apparition, which *at night*
The scar, [.....?] is [*<sign>?*];
 Behind this unknown omnipotence,

Which I love so!...

*

25 Behind this [<venom and> ?] love
Tangled [...?] –
Behind this (I say) reality,
Which I despise so!
.....

II

It is better that he is in Fonteneblo
30 Than I – a wild bird;
Because your talks will merge
More passionately...

*

Like with an elegant pearl of the nut
The hazel plays with the wind,
35 Such a sceptre of his song,
Such a bard he is.

*

And so melodious that I'm singing,
So good that I am sorrow
Pure to the point of expectation.
40 Honest – worthy of praise!
.....

III

Let him hug Marianek,
Give a flower – to the maiden
Eat red cherries with
You – and walk in the woods.

Previous references to Zaleski's friendship with Norwid have emphasised the harmony between the two poets' interests and views. However, this was only one

side of their mutual relationship¹². The fact that they differed in their view on poetry and lyrical diction, and that Norwid perceptively noticed this, was already evidenced in the Roman poem dedicated to the “Ukrainian lirnyk”. The compositional axis of this work constitutes the multi-level contrast between the lyrical, authorial “I” and the lyrical “you” unambiguously associated with the person and work of the poem’s addressee.

DO JÓZEFA BOHDANA ZALESKIEGO

W RZYMIE
1847-o

1

Dobrze tęczy się zielenić,
Błękitnawić i czerwienić,
Tej Wielmożnej Pani!...

5 Ale, chmurki oddalone
By jagnięta pogubione,
Te – kto chce, to gani.

2

Ej – i z lutnią złoto-runą,
Złoto-ustą, siedmiostruną
Nieba obiec sklepy.

10 Lżej – niż piosnkę raz zaczęta
Już we fletnię dąć pęknięta
Jak włóczęga ślepy.

3

Tyś bo wiele odziedziczył,
Tyś bo panie zagraniczył

15 Z niebem – mogiłami;
Więc to Seraf, to Cherubin
Niby wisien spadnie rubin
W ogród twój – skrzydłami.

¹² A multifaceted analysis of the relationship between the two poets, starting with generation alsimilarities and differences, was presented by Elżbieta NOWICKA in her study: „Cyprian Norwid i Józef Bohdan Zaleski, czyli to, co wspólne między pokoleniami,” in: *O Norwidzie komparatystycznie*, ed. M. Siwiec, Kraków 2019, pp. 179-206.

4

A jam chłopię z za ogrodu
 20 Gdzieś u szpary drżące wchodu,
 Gości – strach mnie bierze:
 I strach ciebie, pana sadu
 Co tam z duchy gadu, gadu,
 Jak dzwon na pacierze...

5

25 A jam chłopię z dróg krzyżowych,
 Zza trzęsawisk *olszynowych*,
 Gdzie mdle jęczą cienie –
 I głód zemsty w sercu u mnie
 Już wyrodził się jak w trumnie
 30 Chude lisa szczenię.

6

I wiatr zabrał mię w powicie
 Chmur – by nagle zmarłe dziecię
 Bez chrztu-krwie i walki...
 Tu, na cmentarz poniósł ludów,
 35 Gdzie trzy świecą panie-cudów –
 Gdzie sztuki – Westalki...

7

Gdzie krzyż z włócznią w jednej dłoni,
 Z gąbką w drugiej – z cierniem w skroni,
 Księżyc ma nad sobą;
 40 I kompasu wodząc cienie
 Po otartej z krwi Arenie
 Cieszy nas żałobą.

8

– Kiedyż czasów wypełnienie,
 Kiedyż Polski odkupienie?! –
 45 Wieszczy zanuć słowem:
 A sto wiatrów je rozniesie

Precz po lesie, za po-lesie
Po echu stepowém...¹³

TO JÓZEF BOHDAN ZALESKI

IN ROME
1847

1

It's good for a rainbow to turn green,
Turn blue and red,
For the Noble Lady!...

5 But, clouds away
 To the lost lambs,
 These – whoever wants to, is reprimanding.

2

Hey – with a golden-fleece lute,
With golden mouth, sevenstrings
To run around heaven's shops.

10 Lighter – than a song once begun
 To give in an already cracked flute
 Like a blind vagrant.

3

For you have inherited much,
You have bordered

15 With heaven – through graves;
 So it's Seraph, it's Cherub
 Like a cherry falls a ruby
 Into your garden – with wings.

4

And I am aboy from across the garden

20 Trembling somewhere at the crack of the entrance,

¹³ I cite the text of the poem in accordance with my own editorial work, prepared for the edition of the first volume of *Dzieła wszystkie* [*Complete Works*] by C. Norwid.

Guest – I'm overtaken by fear:
 And you fear, lord of the orchard
 Who chatters with the ghosts,
 As a bell tolling for prayer...

5

²⁵ And I am a boy from the ways of the cross,
 From behind the *alder* moors,
 Where faint shadows are moaning–
 And the hunger for revenge in my heart
 Has already grown up as a skinny fox puppy
³⁰ In a coffin.

6

And the wind took me away in cloud
 Wrapper –a suddenly dead child
 Without baptism of blood and struggle...
 Here, to the cemetery of peoples it carried me,
³⁵ Where the three ladies of wonder are shining –
 Where the arts – Vestals...

7

Where a cross with a spear in one hand,
 With a sponge in the other – with a thorn in the temple,
 The moon overhead;
⁴⁰ And compass shadows sweeping
 On a blood-soaked Arena
 We rejoice in mourning.

8

– When the times are fulfilled,
 When will Poland's redemption come?! –
⁴⁵ Sing with a bard's word:
 And a hundred winds will blow it away
 Through the forest, behind the forest
 Trough the steppe echo...

The different situation of the addressee and the lyrical subject is already fore-shadowed by the image of the sky, which forms a different background for each of

them. The sky of the former is shimmering with the colours of a rainbow, the sky of the latter is marked by clouds battered by the wind. The symbolic attribute of the poetry of the former is a “golden-fleece lute,” of the latter – a “cracked flute”. The rainbow and lute and the royal colours dominating the poetic imagery (gold, red, blue) prepare the climax of the first part of the work – the entrance of “the lord of the orchard” to his homestead. The symbolism of the colours indicates an affinity with the tradition of Eastern icons, and at the same time alludes to traces of the Byzantine-Christian iconosphere in Zaleski’s poetic imagery¹⁴. However, the quasi-paradisiacal space combining features of garden and orchard – an idyllic synthesis of blossoming and fruition – is not limited to its horizontal dimension; it is open both upwards (towards the angels) and downwards (towards the graves). It foreshadows a glimpse into the invisible, it opens up to transcendence. This vertical opening was heralded from the outset by the motif of the rainbow, evoking the biblical symbolism of God’s covenant with man. The plastic excess of colours and motifs and, consequently, the exaggerated idealisation of space and situation here carry ironic suggestions, only slightly weakened by the allusion to the heroic deeds of the addressee (the motif of “baptism of blood”)¹⁵. The lyrical subject is instead presented as a trembling boy, a blind vagabond. The context thus outlined only seemingly depreciates this character. It points to the tradition of ancient rhapsodes on the one hand, and to the theme of Ukrainian lirnyks roaming the steppe on the other. It draws on the archive of poetic motifs of the epic, and on the motifs of the “Ukrainian school,” characteristic not only of Zaleski¹⁶. The child who dares not cross the garden gates and emerges from the degraded, gloomy landscape is given the characteristics of the mysterious Boy from Malczewski’s *Maria* and has something of the ancient tradition of inspired singers. His domain, however, is not the steppe, but the “ways of cross” and “alder” moors of collective suffering. These are already echoes of Romanticism after the November Uprising, in which resounds the tone of Father Piotr’s vision from Mickiewicz’s *Dziady* [*Forefathers’ Eve*], but at

¹⁴ See O. KRYSOWSKI, „Motywy bizantyjsko-chrześcijańskie w poezji Józefa Bohdana Zaleskiego,” in: *“Szkoła ukraińska” w romantyzmie polskim*, eds. St. Makowski, U. Makowska, M. Nesteruk, Warszawa 2012, pp. 81-94.

¹⁵ This is probably an allusion to the insurrectionary acts of Zaleski, a participant in the Battle of Olszynka Grochowska in February 1831, awarded with the Virtuti Militari Cross for his heroism.

¹⁶ Admittedly, the intertextual play with Zaleski’s works is in the foreground, as it is strongly emphasised by the versification and instrumentation of the poem, which refers to the eight-verse form, with a predominance of adjacent rhymes, characteristic of the author of *Rusalka*. See L. PSZCZOŁOWSKA, „O wierszu ‘słowika ukraińskiego,’” in: *“Szkoła ukraińska” w romantyzmie polskim*, pp. 35-52.

the same time, as in Malczewski's work, the openness to the vertical and transcendental dimension of space is not at all obvious. This figure can be read as a poetic figure of the "young emigration"—Norwid's generation, on whose behalf the poet was soon to speak with a fuller voice¹⁷. And these two, so different — "the lord of the orchard" and the trembling boy, meet under the cross in the Roman Colosseum. The younger asks the question about a prophetic word that will perhaps reveal the meaning of collective destiny. While demanding an answer, he suggests that it has not yet been given, and reveals a shadow of doubt in the cognitive power of bardic poetry, still present despite his recognition of its compelling beauty.

One possible symbolic interpretation of the garden/orchard motif is to read it as a symbol of Polish Romantic poetry. A representative of the young generation and at the same time the author's *porte parole* faces the entrance to this poetic world with fear and hesitation. On the one hand, it overwhelms him in its grandeur; on the other, he feels that it is no longer his world, but as yet there is no other world in which he could settle. The poem suspends the question of the possibility of establishing and cultivating another "garden", but at the same time suggests that continued wandering without such rooting is more likely. The subject of the poem stands at a crossroads — he does not want to be a simple-minded heir to the existing heritage, but a different path has not yet been clearly delineated. He is looking for it at the source — under the cross in the Roman Coliseum, in the company of the bard and co-creator of the Romantic landscape of Polish culture, but as if next to him, not with him. At the same time, however, the space of the arena with the centrally placed cross, reminding us of the meaning of Christ's martyrdom and the martyrs who followed in his footsteps, connects the two poets and becomes a bridge between the Romantic generations.

Can a continuation of the poets' suspended dialogue be found in a poem written five years later? The initial question already seems to indicate this, and the epithet "golden-strings," with which the poet describes the addressee, can be read as a self-reference to the 1847 work. The delicacy, richness of colour and vocalicity — suggested by the versifying variations on the octosyllable and the accuracy of the simple rhymes — Norwid continues to point to these as the dominant features of Zaleski's poetics. He demonstrates that, indeed, he is no stranger to this kind of lyrical technique, as he proved earlier as the author of *Częstochowskie wiersze* [*Częstochowa Poems*], but at the same time this style will remain for him an external garment, a stylization indifferent to the internal, subjective truth. The confession in the first stanza, reinforced with an exclamation mark, empha-

¹⁷ Above all, in the drama *Zwolon* and articles published in the Kraków-based *Czas (Listy o Emigracji)* [*Letters on Emigration*]).

sises this authorial awareness from the outset (“Choćbym pisał piórem pawiem/
Umaczanym w niebie/ I to mało!...” [Even if I wrote with a peacock’s feather/
Dipped in the sky/ That’s not enough!...]). At the same time, it becomes the starting
point of an elaborate concept creating the lyrical situation. It takes the shape
of a syntactic neologism and simultaneously an anacoluthon: “To – napiszę-ć ja
bogaciej/ Posłem dobrym –” [Then – I’ll write – more lavishly/ A good envoy –].
If we unravel the semantics of the introductory fragment, it can be reconstructed
as follows: ‘Though my poetry does not harmonise with yours and is from another
poetic realm, I send to you my friend, who is a living word to you, and
corresponds better with you’. Perhaps Lenartowicz did not give the poetic letter
to Zaleski precisely because of this concept, because he felt, despite the praise in
the following stanzas, that he had been instrumentally reduced. This conjecture
is impossible to verify, but if one takes into account the epistolary and lyrical
tensions appearing at different times in the mutual relations between Norwid and
Lenartowicz, it is based on important premises¹⁸.

Before Norwid moves on to the presentation and recommendation of his guest,
he devotes the consecutive stanzas to a reflection on the mysterious bond linking
Zaleski’s muse and Lenartowicz, the consonance of their poetry and its mysterious
sources. Although the two friends had not yet known each other personally at the
time he wrote this poetic letter, he perceived a spiritual kinship existing between
them, some pre-established community of feeling, the sources of which he places
“**za-tym-znaniem/ Lub nad-znaniem**” [**beyond this cognition/ Or above cogni-
tion**]. The preposition “above” points to a divine perspective inaccessible to man,
and the poet does not attempt to reach it, while the preposition “beyond” refers
to human cognition, and the author of the poem tries to decipher this aspect. The
anaphora “Za tym...” [Beyond this...] appears as many as four times, opening the
subsequent stanzas. The effort of poetic reflection thus focuses on pointing out
the veils that obscure cognition. Unfortunately, this is where my interpretation
stumbles over a textological aporia, because the aforementioned anaphora appears
as the initial phrase in three consecutive stanzas that were crossed over (verses
17-29), which can only be read in part, and so interpretive remarks must be sup-
plemented with a question mark¹⁹.

¹⁸ See Z. SZMYDTOWA, „Norwid and Lenartowicz,” *Przegląd Humanistyczny* 1973, Issue 1; J. FERT, *Norwid – poeta dialogu*, Wrocław 1982; M. ADAMIEC, *Oni i Norwid*, Wrocław 1991.

¹⁹ I hypothesise, after inspection of the autograph, that the deletions were made by both poets – by Norwid, who struggled to “give things the right word,” and later by Lenartowicz, who crossed out stanzas with authorial corrections, aiming to make the poem more coherent.

The first use of anaphora (in verse 15) is clear. This stanza can be understood as a suggestion that cognition is obscured by human perception of time, registering in ordinary experience its chaotic, dissonant character, which conceals the inner harmony and divine order of its course²⁰. The sculptural metaphor²¹ in the fifth stanza, in which the last verse is unreconstructible, perhaps warns that effort (“dziki zgrzyt dłuta” [the wild rasp of the chisel]) with no memory of the goal (the shape of the statue) distances one from grasping the meaning and essence of the work, from understanding it. The even less readable next stanza perhaps demands the truth of dreams and dreaming, which is obliterated by expansive reality. The last of the crossed-out stanzas emphasises, as one might guess by juxtaposing the individual words, the cognitive aspect of love, or perhaps of feelings in general.

In Parts II and III, which consist of only one quatrain, the author suspends the subject’s cognitive struggles, returns to the convention of the poetic letter of recommendation, and seems to indicate that his intellectual dilemmas are unimportant, because the “chatter” of the addressee and the poem’s protagonist will “come together” harmoniously without such mediation, and they will effortlessly meet in the poetic word. This will happen primarily because their songs appear to be an extension of the songs of nature, as indicated by the comparison of Lenartowicz’s lyric to the “music” of hazelnuts moved by the wind (verses 33-36)²². This echoes Schelling’s thought, popularised in Polish Romantic criticism by Maurycy Mochnacki and Seweryn Goszczyński²³, which sees a correspondence between the infinite poetry of nature and the poetry-art of words, which reveals the former, although it will never embrace its infinity.

The praise of Lenartowicz in the penultimate stanza evokes yet another reason for his spiritual closeness to Zaleski. Of the epithets that comprise it: “vocal, good, pure, sincere”, only the first refers to an aesthetic quality; the others point to moral

²⁰ See, for instance, M. SZULAKIEWICZ, *Czas i to, co ludzkie. Szkice z chronozofii kultury*, Toruń 2011.

²¹ The sculptural motifs in Norwid’s poetry have repeatedly attracted the attention of interpreters; see, for example, K. WYKA, *Cyprian Norwid. Poeta i sztukmistrz*, Kraków 1948; G. KRÓLIKIEWICZ, *Terytorium ruin*, Kraków 1993; S. SAWICKI, „Wstęp,” in: C. Norwid, *Promethidion*, Kraków 1997, “Biblioteka Polska”; D. PNIEWSKI, *Między obrazem a słowem*, Lublin 2005.

²² It is a poetically fairly unsuccessful passage because of the derivation *leszczyna / leszcz* [hazel / bream] – so that the shortened word could later rhyme with the word *wieszcz* [bard].

²³ Goszczyński in particular emphasised the division into “poetry of nature”, whose creator is God, and “poetry-art”, which is a part of the universe of panpoetry. See S. Goszczyński, *Nowa epoka poezji polskiej*, 1835; I wrote more extensively on this subject in the article: “Liry czność a poznawcze aspiracje podmiotu. Przyczynek do romantycznego kontekstu zagadnienia,” in: *Liry czność*, eds. B. Kuczera-Chachulska, E. Skalińska, Warszawa 2013.

values. The distinction of such qualities of the lyrical protagonist suggests that the source of the fluidity and harmony of his song is the existential order and serenity that allows it to be perceived and shaped. Such an attitude leads towards “pieśń pokorna” [a humble song], as Norwid elsewhere described Lenartowicz’s lyric²⁴. Humbleness comes from the acceptance of one’s place in the universe of existence and one’s spiritual connection to nature. In Norwid’s interpretation, both Zaleski and Lenartowicz are close to the pole of naïve poetry – just as Friedrich Schiller understood it, introducing a distinction between the attitudes of the naïve and sentimental poet²⁵. The author of the poem, having a more acute awareness of the dissonances of existence and the lack of paths to Arcadia, is closer to the model of the latter attitude. However, he does not juxtapose his own experience with that of his friends as strongly as he does in the earlier poem to Zaleski. He stresses the distinctiveness of his own poetic attitude more delicately and does not link it to the situation of his generation. He recognises that Lenartowicz does, after all, belong to the same generation, and is closer to the model of being a poet shaped by his predecessors. In the emotional tone of the poem, one can find a trace of Norwid’s melancholy, stemming from the awareness that something irrevocably separates him from the simple joy of existence. On the path to poetic maturity of the late poems – those from the *Vade-mecum* cycle and onwards – was the lyrical reflection on the poetic attitudes of Zaleski and Lenartowicz important to the author of the poems, and if so, to what extent? In the light of the analysed works, one can see that it was one of the impulses that allowed him to define his own individuality and deepen his artistic self-awareness. As we can see, not only the works of the Romantic “giants” were important points of reference on Norwid’s path to artistic fulfilments.

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²⁴ C. NORWID, „Ty mnie do pieśni pokornej nie wołaj...” [Do Not Summon Me to a Humble Song...], in: C. NORWID, *Dziela zebrane [Collected Works], Wiersze [Poems]*, Vol. I, ed. J. W. Gomułicki, Warszawa 1966, p. 365.

²⁵ See F. SCHILLER, „O poezji naiwnej i sentymentalnej,” in: F. SCHILLER: *Listy o estetycznym wychowaniu człowieka i inne rozprawy*, transl. I. Krońska, Warszawa 1972; M. SIWIEC, *Romantyczne koncepcje poezji. Poeta i Muza – relacja w stanie kryzysu*, Kraków 2012.

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SPOTKANIA POETÓW W PRZESTRZENI I W SŁOWIE – O WIERSZACH NORWIDA DO JÓZEFA BOHDANA ZALESKIEGO

Streszczenie

Tematem artykułu jest interpretacja dwóch wierszy Cypriana Norwida, których adresatem był Józef Bohdan Zaleski: *Do Józefa Bohdana Zaleskiego w Rzymie 1847-o* oraz *Na przyjazd Teofila Lenartowicza do Fontainebleau*. Ten drugi utwór ma charakter poetyckiego listu rekomendującego wizytę Lenartowicza u Zaleskich. Wiersze pozwalają na wgląd w relacje łączące trzech dziewiętnastowiecznych poetów. Artykuł wydobycia aspekty biograficzne, ale przede wszystkim odwołania, w jaki sposób autor wierszy postrzegał różnice między swoją wyobraźnią i postawą poetycką a poezją obu przyjaciół, i jak świadomość tej opozycji prowadziła do rozpoznawania cech własnej sytuacji na mapie polskiej poezji. Mikroanaliza wybranych motywów pozwala również wskazać pewne miejsca wspólne.

Słowa kluczowe: Norwid – Zaleski – Lenartowicz; dialogi poetów; liryka romantyczna, listy poetyckie.

POETS MEETING IN SPACE AND WORD. ON NORWID'S POEMS ADDRESSED TO JÓZEF BOHDAN ZALESKI

Summary

This article offers an interpretation of two poems by Cyprian Norwid, which are addressed to Józef Bohdan Zaleski: *Do Józefa Bohdana Zaleskiego w Rzymie 1847-o* [*To Józef Bohdan Zaleski in Rome, 1847*] and *Na przyjazd Teofila Lenartowicza do Fontainbleau* [*On the Arrival of Teofil Lenartowicz in Fontainbleau*]. The latter is a poetic letter that recommends to Lenartowicz that he should pay a visit to the Zaleski family. These poems allow us a glimpse into the relationship between the three 19th-century poets. The article elaborates on certain biographical elements but primarily reveals how Norwid regarded the differences between his own imagination and poetic stance on the one hand, and the works of his two friends on the other. Further, it shows how the awareness of this opposition led the poet to recognize aspects of his own place on the map of Polish poetry. Microanalysis of selected themes also facilitates indicating certain features they all share.

Keywords: Cyprian Norwid; Józef Bohdan Zaleski; Teofil Lenartowicz; dialogues between poets; Romantic lyricism; poetic letters.

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