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ON NORWID'S POEM *POCZĄTEK BROSZURY POLITYCZNEJ...*

The poem, which constitutes Link 69 in the *Vade-mecum* cycle, was probably written between 1862 and 1866, but when exactly – we do not know. It has been the subject of two major comprehensive interpretations, the first by Jadwiga Puzyńska and Barbara Subko, published in 1985 in *Pamiętnik Literacki*¹, and the second by Zofia Trojanowiczowa in the 1987-88 issue of *Studia Norwidiana*². Important, albeit fragmentary remarks on the poem can also be found in Jacek Trznadel's book *Czytanie Norwida: próby*³. However, of key importance in the literature of the subject are the first two studies.

Both comprehensive interpretations question the genetic hypothesis put forward by Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki, according to whom Norwid's text was supposed to be a poetic reaction to some political pamphlet, unidentified by the editor, which “triggered an immediate, as it seems, and truly lightning-like ideological protest by the poet”⁴. Researchers have rightly argued that the position being polemicised in the poem is heterogeneous in nature, the attitudes and behaviours criticised would be difficult to imagine within a single journalistic statement (e.g. the contradiction between preaching “democracy without God and faith” and the

¹ J. PUZYŃSKA, B. SUBKO, „Interpretacja wiersza ‘Początek broszury politycznej,’” *Pamiętnik Literacki* 1985, Issue 2, pp. 135-148.

² Z. TROJANOWICZOWA, „O wierszu Norwida ‘Początek broszury politycznej,’” *Studia Norwidiana* 5-6: 1987-1988, pp. 101-112.

³ J. TRZNADEL, *Czytanie Norwida: próby*, Warszawa 1978, p. 82.

⁴ J. W. GOMULICKI, „Dodatek krytyczny,” in: C. NORWID, *Dziela zebrane [Collected Works]*, Vol. II: *Wiersze. Dodatek krytyczny [Poems. A Critical Supplement]*, Warszawa 1966, p. 818.

attitude metaphorically described as “taking the Gospel by the glove”). The title “pamphlet” is thus, according to Puzynina, Subko and Trojanowiczowa, Norwid’s own pamphlet, captured in the poetic form but still strongly didactic, and is therefore, in Puzynina and Subko’s view, a “clear, declarative” poem in which the poetic function is subordinated to the persuasive one. This theme is developed by Trojanowiczowa, who points out the means of persuasion present in the poem and inherent in the poetics of the political pamphlet, through which the didactic function is realised. She mentions here: the anaphoric, bullet-pointed phrase “nie trzeba” [there is no need to] which begins consecutive stanzas, the impersonal form of the warnings, which gives them the character of general truths, the legibility of the metaphors, the gnomic nature of many phrases, and a clear and distinct system of value judgements, which puts the recipient out of a situation of choice. In this cursory interpretative review I will proceed, however, to the final conclusions; according to Warsaw scholars, the work is a clear lecture on the moral and mental principles which should underlie all politics, the source of which is the Christian *sacrum*. According to Trojanowiczowa, the poem is “a principled dispute with a certain more general model of political propaganda,”⁵ and the principles formulated in it indirectly set impassable boundaries in the shaping of others’ consciousness. Trojanowiczowa also weakens and modifies Puzynina and Subko’s thesis on the semantic simplicity of the poem, noting that the issues it brings out are suggested largely indirectly, by the very way in which the poetic statement is shaped. The repeated “no need” becomes “a non-verbalised expression of unwillingness to impose any political worldview on the recipient”⁶ and opposes the categorical and directive “orders” attributed to propaganda. Norwid’s poem thus presents a different model of persuasion; it does not impose anything, but makes the recipient aware of the conflict between intrusive propaganda and the Christian concept of man⁷.

Norwid’s work⁸ begins with a reflection on the relationship of successive generations. The initial “no need,” later repeated five times in the poem, warns against “making a victim out of generations,” which is done by “transferring one’s own obstinacy onto them”. Such an action, the poet goes on to note, is a usurpation of the divine creative power, the power to create man in his own image and likeness. Man, however, is only man; the aforementioned usurpation does not make him God but rather his caricature. Such an action involves a violation of man’s

⁵ Z. TROJANOWICZOWA, p. 103.

⁶ Z. TROJANOWICZOWA, p. 111.

⁷ Z. TROJANOWICZOWA, p. 111.

⁸ The poem quoted after the edition: C. NORWID, *Vade-mecum*, ed. J. F. Fert, Lublin 2004.

“sacredness,” familiarity with the divine element present in him. It is not only immoral, but also illogical. Shaping man according to one’s own norms and beliefs, all the more so of a negative nature (“obstinacy”), excludes historical progress and the development of phenomena, as the rhetorical questions ending the first stanza of the poem clearly indicate.

The warning against the action described in the first stanza of the poem, and the consequences of that action, is universal. It takes the form of a negative (formulated through negation) historical law, acting not so much *hic et nunc* but rather *hic et ubique*. However, this law, it should be noted, was not formulated by Norwid in a historical vacuum. On the contrary, it was written down by the poet at a very turbulent time, with the events of the January Uprising as the historical background to his reflections, which particularly stirred his temper as a political writer. No wonder, then, that the reflection contained in the first stanza of *Początek broszury politycznej* [*Beginning of a Political Pamphlet*] corresponds very clearly with various statements Norwid made in his journalism and epistolography in the first half of the 1860s. I need to point to the one that was perhaps the most significant. In *Memoriał o prasie* [*Memorial on the Press*], written in 1863, a kind of ideological circular which would apply to all Polish periodicals during the insurrection, Norwid included the following indication in the seventh paragraph:

§ VII. Pokolenia. – **Indywidualność pokoleń** (emphasis added – Ł. N.) i tej onychże inicjatywy, którą takowe wnoszą z sobą, na świat przychodząc, są naturalnie że rzeczami nieznanymi i policzanymi do filozoficznych subtelności, wszelako, po wytraceniu ogniem i mieczem wielu pokoleń w Narodzie Polskim, zaczyna już świtać przekonanie, iż historia nie jest tylko mechaniczną kontynuacją przygotowanej formuły jakowej, z czego zaiste że i uszanowanie indywidualności pokoleń wyrósć musi (PWsz VII, 140).

[§ VII. Generations. – **The individuality of generations** and the initiative they bring with them when they come into the world are, of course, things unknown and counted among the philosophical subtleties, although, after many generations were destroyed by fire and sword, a conviction is beginning to dawn in the Polish nation that history is not merely a mechanical continuation of some prepared formula, from which, indeed, respect for the individuality of generations must also spring.]

Let us emphasise the obvious links between the two passages – they are linked by the motif of sacrifice (“the destruction of many generations by fire and sword”), by the demand to respect the individuality of successive generations and their initiatives, and finally by the conviction that the lack of this respect is closely linked to a lack of understanding of the laws of history, a misapprehension that condemns them to stagnation, the halting of historical development, in a word – to what Norwid elsewhere calls “niehistoryczność” [non-historicity]. Also com-

mon to both texts is the bitter conviction that the proclaimed reflection is by no means a widely shared opinion, but a dawning awareness, a state of affairs still postulated, which in *Memoriał o prasie* is expressed mainly through irony, and in *Początek broszury politycznej* – by way of contradiction – as the implicit antithesis of the disqualified attitude.

However, the issue of disrespect for the individuality of generations, the independence of ideological choice, the recognition of their right to subjectivity, does not appear in Norwid's thought only in the 1860s. It is present much earlier – and returns repeatedly in Norwid's reflection on the nation, constituting its permanent element. In Issue 31 of *Goniec Polski* from 1851, Norwid published a text that was a polemic against Julian Klaczko's article. In it, the well-known critic and Norwid's opponent criticised a pamphlet authored by an unnamed representative of the young emigration protesting against amnesty. Therefore, it concerned a concrete matter, but what is striking in Klaczko's argument is the lack of any substantial polemics with the theses of the evaluated text. The main argument was instead a general evaluation of the whole generation of young emigration:

Każden rozsądny mi przyzna, że [...] inicjatywa powinna wyjść z łona starszej emigracji, która większe już dowody poświęcenia i wytrwałości dała [...]. Bo niech się młoda emigracja nie łudzi! Nie wyobraża ona żadnej nowej, odrębnej myśli w tułactwie, nie ma żadnego prawa przodkowania w niczym, a mimo wszelkich demokratycznych dążeń naszego wieku i czasu, zdrowe uczucie zawsze tym pierwszeństwo przeznaczy, co dali dowody większej pracy i wytrwalszych cierpień⁹.

[Everyone who is sensible will admit that [...] the initiative should come from the bosom of the older emigration, who has already given greater proof of sacrifice and perseverance [...]. For the young émigrés should not delude themselves! They do not present any new, separate thought in exile, they do not have the right to lead in anything, and despite all the democratic aspirations of our age and time, a healthy feeling will always give priority to those who have given evidence of greater work and suffering.]

In the light of such a conviction, and one that can probably be considered representative of the generation of “elders,”¹⁰ the young emigration has no moral or historical right to express its opinion on questions of current politics. By seeing in sacrifice and suffering the guarantee of truth and the privilege of the primacy of political action, the critic formulates a right whose inevitable consequence is to follow the choices and decisions set by the old generation. Norwid's response,

⁹ *Goniec Polski* 1851, Issue 22 (of 28 January), p. 3.

¹⁰ This is mentioned by Norwid in his polemic.

from which I will quote only the most important thought for my analysis, refers instead to religious sanctions. In it we can read:

Każdy człowiek pojedynczy, każdy naród, każde pokolenie mają bez wątpienia strony takie, w których żaden inny człowiek pojedynczy, żaden inny naród, żadne inne pokolenie zastąpić ich nie może. Skutkiem tego to niezaprzeczonego indywidualizmu ludzi, narodów, pokoleń, jest ta jedność i różność, którą organizmem nazywamy”. I dodaje dalej: „Emigracja więc m ł o d s z a tyle tylko indywidualnego prawa ma, ile go ma każde pokolenie. Wszelkie inne byłoby wyłamaniem się z k r z y ż a n a r o d u, byłoby odstępstwem (*Słowo zgody* [*Word of Assent*], PWsz VII, 43-45).

[Each individual man, each nation, each generation undoubtedly have aspects in which no other individual man, no other nation, no other generation can replace them. The result of this undeniable individuality of people, nations, generations is that unity and diversity which we call an organism”. He goes on to add: “The y o u n g e r emigration therefore has only as much individual right as each generation. Anything else would be breaking from the cross of the nation, it would be a deviation.]

Klaczko's statement quoted earlier can be treated as an illustration of the convictions underlying the worldview that is incriminated – and at the same time disqualified – in the first stanza of the *Początek broszury politycznej*. This worldview legitimised and justified the object treatment – as a “continuation” – of the younger generations, which is followed by the deprivation of their “individualism” understood as the right to initiative and their own ideological choice. The generations are thus assigned the role of sacrifice (in the double meaning of the word) on the altar of their own affairs, their own convictions, aspirations, views. In the first stanza of the pamphlet, the nature of this process of “transferring one's own obstinacy onto others” is further specified. How this mechanism proceeds, in the perspective of several generations contemporary to Norwid, is perhaps most fully illustrated in the essay *Z pamiętnika. O zemście* [*From an Album. On Revenge*] from 1851. I will quote the most significant passages from it:

“Pod tak zawichrzonym firmamentem pokolenie rosło, jak to mówią, ‘na Opatrzności Bożej’, nauczone naprzód t r a d y c y j n i e nienawiści do Moskali i do profesorów cudzoziemców, potem l i t e r a l n i e miłości bliźniego w katechizmie najoficjalniej suchym.” (PWsz VII, 40)

[“Under such a turbulent firmament a generation grew, as they say, ‘in Devine Providence’, taught first t r a d i t i o n a l hatred of Muscovites and of foreign professors, then l i t e r a r i l y love of neighbour in a catechism most formally dry.”]

And further:

“Tak więc, gdyby się proces wytoczyło p o j ę c i o m n a s i e n n y m w pokoleniu, które drugą stanowi emigrację, pokazałoby się, że najpierwszym i węgielnym uczuciem i punktem wywodu z e m s t a jest. Słowa te: ‘z kości naszych powstaną m ś c i c i e l e’ (a nie: z b a w c y), przekroplą się w krew pokolenia, coraz nowym morderstwem podniecane. Po uczuciu zemsty, chociażby w piersiach tak skalistych jak Annibala piersi, następować musi osłabienie, bo nasienie zemsty liścia w sobie ani kwiatowego węzła nie ma, ani może dać drzewa z korzeniami, lecz w y k o r z e n i e i perzynę [...] A i dziś tam, w murach szkół tych samych, młodzi nasi bracia serce mają!” (PWsz VII, 41-42)

[“Thus, if one were to put the s e e d n o t i o n s on trial in the generation that constitutes the second emigration, it would turn out that the first and fundamental emotion and point of argument is r e v e n g e . The words: ‘from our bones avengers will arise’ (not: s a v i o u r s) would seep into the blood of the generation, excited with ever new murder. The feeling of vengeance, if only in breasts as rocky as Hannibal’s, must be followed by a weakening, for the seed of vengeance has no leaf in itself, nor a flowering knot, nor can it yield a tree with roots, only u p r o t i n g and ashes [...] And even today there, within the walls of the same schools, our younger brothers have a heart!”]

I have already mentioned what, within the historical process, is the result of the usurping creation of man in one’s own image, realised by “transferring one’s own obstinacy onto him”. The text of the poem gives an answer – it results in generational sacrifices and, in the long term, in a disruption of the laws of historical development, a disruption of “przedział Czasów” [the interval of Times], a halting of progress. Norwid’s journalism and epistolography, however, provide another, more concrete answer that is more closely related to Polish history. In his 1857 treatise *O broszurze “Polska i panslawizm”* [*On the Pamphlet “Poland and Pan Slavism”*], Norwid wrote: “Za mord proroczego słowa, za grzech przeciw duchowi dobremu giną społeczeństwa!... Z a s p r z e d a w a n i e p r a w d y ś r o d k o w i u z e w n ę t r z n i a n i a j e j... za nieusznanie młodości pokoleń popisywanych w niekonsekwencje uprzedzeń własnych. Za Herodyzm” [For the murder of the prophetic word, for the sin against the good spirit, societies perish!... F o r s e l l i n g t r u t h t o t h e m e a n s o f e x t e r n a l i s i n g i t... for disrespecting the youth of generations listed as the inconsistencies of one’s own prejudices. For Herodism] (PWsz VII, 188-189). The death of the nation and society (in the aforementioned treatise Norwid uses these terms interchangeably) is thus the ultimate consequence of the formation of generations in a spirit of revenge, in their own shape and likeness. It is thus not surprising that this issue occupies such a clearly prominent place, opening up the space of reflection in the poem entitled *Początek broszury politycznej*.

In the first stanza of the poem commented on here, we encounter a distich that is perhaps the most semantically ambiguous and to which interpreters to date have paid most attention. These are lines 3 and 4: "Strona jest, z której człek rodzi się stary,/ Choć kształtowanym urasta posągim" [There is a side from which man is born old,/ Though he grows into a shaped statue]. Jacek Trznadel associates the meaning of the epithet "old" with "paradisiacal perfection existing from the beginning,"¹¹ which is one of the dimensions of man's nature as a divine creation. "The instrumental treatment of man as a link to the perfection of the spirit," the researcher adds, "is pointless, this spirit is perfect"¹². In a similar direction, albeit with a certain modification, goes the interpretative argument of Puzynina and Subko, who understand the "old age" of man, also conceived as a divine element, as maturity, "that which is creative in him, not subject to shaping by others"¹³. Trojanowiczowa gives this "old age" of man a meaning close to subjectivity: "man is born equipped with attributes given to him from the beginning, from the creation of man in the image and likeness of God, attributes as old as the world [...] equipped with the possibility of creation, the possibility of transforming the world, with all that we today associate with the concept of human subjectivity"¹⁴. The quoted interpretations, different of course in terms of semantic nuances, nevertheless have much in common, i.e. the reading of the word "strona" [side] as synonymous with the notion of "aspect" or "dimension," relating to human nature. In each of the aforementioned readings, the epithet "old" attributed to "człek" [man] has an unambiguously positive axiology and is associated with the divine element in man. All interpretations see in the examined verse a poetic crystallisation of the Christian concept of man, which in itself constitutes a fundamental argument against those who wish to mould the thus understood man in their own image and likeness.

Without polemicising with these readings, which are both subtle and convincing, and fit well with the work as a whole, I would like to propose the possibility of a slightly different reading. Is it not possible that this "side" about which Norwid writes here has a spatial, geographical character, close to the notion of "country," "land"? Paraphrasing the verse, I would like to propose a following reading: "there is a place, there is a side, from which (originating) man (metonymically – people) is born old". Such a reading does not change the sense of the whole poem, but modifies the understanding of "old". It is imposed by the distich which

¹¹ J. TRZNADEL, p. 82.

¹² J. TRZNADEL, p. 82.

¹³ J. PUZYNIINA, B. SUBKO, p. 142.

¹⁴ Z. TROJANOWICZOWA, p. 109.

begins the entire work: “Nie trzeba robić z pokoleń ofiary/ Iż one nie są tylko dalszym ciągiem” [There is no need to make a sacrifice of generations/ Since they are not just a continuation]. Thus: there is a “side” where the young generations, from their birth, become victims of the attitudes, values, rules imposed on them, inheriting, as it were, the prevailing ideology. Biologically young, “growing into a shaped statue,” they are in fact born “old”. We need to recall the metaphor used in *O zemście* [*On Vengeance*], in which the title category is a “seed concept,” it is from it that the young generation “grows” – “nasienie zemsty liścia w sobie ani kwiatowego węzła nie ma, ani może dać drzewa z korzeniami, lecz wykorzeniecie i perzynę” [the seed of revenge has no leaf in itself, nor a floral knot, nor can it yield a tree with roots, only uprooting and ashes].

Interpretations in which the phrase: “the side from which a man is born old” points to the eternal divine element in man, go in the direction of universalising the content of the analysed pamphlet, leaving aside the political context of the time in which the poem was written and somewhat disregarding the context of Norwid’s discursive utterances from this period¹⁵. This is justified; indeed, the poem lacks specific details that link its content to the incidents of the January Uprising, quite unlike works such as *Improwizacja na zapytanie o wieści z Warszawy* [*Improvisation on a Request for News from Warsaw*], *Buntownicy, czyli stronnictwo-wywrotu* [*Rebels, or the Party of Revolt*] or *Do wroga* [*To the Enemy*]. On the other hand, to someone who is familiar with Norwid’s journalism and epistolography from the 1860s and the assessments, postulates and judgments contained therein, which the poet formulated in connection with the events of the insurrection – almost everything in *Początek broszury politycznej* resonates with familiarity. A reading in which “the side from which a man is born old” points not so much to a certain dimension of human nature, as to a specific, yet unnamed space – still not directly, still allusively, but it definitely links the content of the poem more strongly with a specific moment in history, allowing one to see in the poem a universalised commentary on the observed events of the January Uprising.

In the already quoted *Memoriał o prasie*, in which Norwid made remarks about the need to respect the individualism and initiatives of young generations, so strongly corresponding to the thesis of the first stanza of *Początek broszury politycznej*, we also find a characterisation of a particular model of Polish patriotism, towards which Norwid adopts a polemical stance. It is significant that in describing and evaluating this model, the first epithet characterising it is “old”.

¹⁵ The tendency towards such a universal reading is very clear in Trojanowiczowa’s interpretation; Puzyńska and Subko recall the aforementioned historical context, however, without considering it to be primary.

This is because Norwid described the phenomenon under scrutiny here as “stara szkoła patriotyzmu polskiego, szkoły lacka” [the old school of Polish patriotism, the Lechitic school], and described its actions as “zarówno heroiczne jak jałowe i nieszcześnie” [heroic but barren and unfortunate] (PWsz VII, 139). We should recall that the aim of *Memoriało prasie* was to create a unified propaganda programme that would apply to all Polish periodicals during the uprising. The main point of this propaganda was the question of the “moral pressure” that Poland would exert on Russia (above all on the Russian intelligentsia and authorities, but also on the broad masses of society) leading it towards democratisation in the broadest sense¹⁶. This was Norwid’s central idea at the time of the uprising, which was intended to justify in the eyes of European public opinion the need for the restitution of the Polish state. The very formulation of such an idea and the role the writer attributed to it tell us an important thing about Norwid’s understanding of the problem of Polish independence. Namely, that the right of Poles to a sovereign state should be grounded in a rational political idea of universal scope¹⁷. Poland, in order to exist, should justify the need for its existence to Europe, and should therefore make an important contribution to the history and achievements of all mankind. This contribution should be a moral influence exerted on Russia, radiating on it the universal values of European civilisation, and thus expanding Europe’s influence in the East. Meanwhile, “stara szkoła patriotyzmu lackiego [...] zupełnie inaczej poczynając (albowiem od formalnego-prawa-niepodległości), mogła tylko zwyciężyć lub być pobitą – ale żyć, ale zaręczyć następliwą sprawę, przez onejże samej utwierdzenie, nie było zapewne jej zadaniem” [the old school of Lechitic patriotism [...] starting from a completely different position (i.e. from the formal right to independence), could only win or be beaten – but to live, but to guarantee the succession of the cause, by strengthening it, was probably not its task] (PWsz VII, 139).

¹⁶ Norwid’s formulation of the justification for applying “moral pressure” is the conviction that Poland constitutes for Russia “elementarz krwawy” [a bloody primer] making its authorities aware of the “limits and conditions” of its rule, while conveying to the intelligentsia and the Russian people the duties and obligations of man and a citizen (PWsz VII, 138). Marcin WOLNIEWICZ writes more extensively about the concept of “moral pressure” in: “Historia – polityka – eschatologia. Rosja w projekcie propagandy powstańczej Cypriana Norwida,” in: *Norwid wobec Powstania Styczniowego*, ed. P. Chlebowski, Lublin 2017, pp. 209-225.

¹⁷ Z. Stefanowska put it even more sharply: “Therefore, the right of the Polish nation to independence is not something unconditional and understandable, it does not result from the natural course of things. The justification of the existence of a nation is its mission towards humanity” (“Spór o powstanie,” in: Z. STEFANOWSKA, *Strona romantyków. Studia o Norwidzie*, Lublin 1993, p. 89).

Several key threads of Norwid's characterisation of traditional Polish patriotism converge in this quotation. It is based on the conviction that the independence of the country is a fact that needs no justification, something to which Poland is entitled by virtue of historical necessity alone. This underlies the thinking in terms of "tryumf albo zgon" [triumph or death], resulting in regularly repeated bloodshed, "periodyczna rzeź niewinnych" [periodic slaughter of innocents] (DW XII, 231), and, indirectly, the negation of attempts at meaningful and productive functioning in conditions other than independence. This leads to an involuntary disregard for all activities not directly related to the cause of fighting for the country's freedom, initiatives undertaken and implemented in the situation of captivity, while simultaneously treating them as provisional, transitory, requiring no concern for their course, sustainability and continuation¹⁸.

Patriotism understood in this way is, let us repeat, both "heroic and sterile". This characterisation corresponds to Norwid's remarks on Poles who "umieją b i ć s i ę – t o c z y ć b i t w y – a l e n i e u m i e j ą w a l c z y ć" [know how to scuffle – t o d o b a t t l e s – b u t t h e y d o n o t k n o w h o w t o f i g h t] (PWsz VII, 60). Meanwhile, in Norwid's opinion, the success of political (and any other) interests in contemporary Europe depends less and less on battles, but mainly on work and fight, which Norwid understands as the ability to push through one's own solutions by peaceful means wherever conflicting interests are at stake – of people, social groups, nations¹⁹. In the treatise *Walka-polska* [*Polish Fight*], he adds: "wiem, co jest bitwa, i co jest w a l k a . W a l k a j e s t n o r m a l n y m z a d a n i e m L u d z k o ś c i ; b i t w a – n i e ! O w s z e m : c e l e m j e s t z u p e ł n i e b i t w ę u m o r z y ć

¹⁸ In this connection, it is worth quoting Norwid's position, who, in a letter to Marian Sokołowski of January 1865, wrote about the need for institutional organisation of intellectual work in the reality under the partitions: "Trzeba 80 drukarni – 20 dzienników różnej treści – 15 towarzystw uczonych, i pracy w p o c i e c z o ł a , n a t ę ż o n e j s t a l e i u w a ż n i e . / N a t o z a r a z o d p o w i e d ź M e l a n c h o l i i [. . .] : ' G d z i e ż r o z w i n ą ć t e p r a c e – g d z i e ? / K i e d y m y n i e m a m y p i ę d z i z i e m i ? E t c . e t c . . . ' / N a j p r z ę d : w s z ę d z i e ; p o w t ó r e – m ó j B o ż e ! w A u s t r i i j e s t w i ę k s z a w o l n o ś ć d r u k u n i ż w e F r a n c j i , a w P r u s a c h r ó w n a p a r y s k i e j [. . .] O t o o d p o w i e d ź ! " [We need 80 printing houses – 20 journals of various contents – 15 learned societies, and work in the s w e a t o f o u r b r o w , intensified constantly and attentively. / To this Melancholy's immediate reply [. . .] : ' Where can we develop these works – where ? / When we have not a hectare of land ? E t c . e t c . . . ' / F i r s t l y : e v e r y w h e r e ; s e c o n d l y – m y G o d ! i n A u s t r i a t h e r e i s g r e a t e r f r e e d o m o f p r i n t i n g t h a n i n F r a n c e , a n d i n P r u s s i a e q u a l t o t h a t o f P a r i s [. . .] T h i s i s t h e a n s w e r !] (D W X I I , 3 2 4) .

¹⁹ Cf. E. KASPERSKI, *Norwid jako strateg w kontekście rozważań o walce i wojnie*, p. 25f. For more on the notion of "struggle" and its axiomatisation in Norwid, see Jadwiga PUZYŃNINA, "O 'walce' w pismach Norwida," J. PUZYŃNINA: *Strona Norwida. Studia i szkice ofiarowane Profesorowi Stefanowi Sawickiemu*, eds. P. Chlebowski, E. Chlebowska, W. Toruń, E. Żwirbowska, Lublin 2008, pp. 347-359.

przez doskonałe postawienie planu i prowadzenie walki” [I know what a battle is, and what a fight is. The fight is the normal task of Humanity; the battle – not! Indeed: the goal is to completely discontinue the battle by perfectly planning and leading the fight] (PWsz VII, 60). Norwid does not negate the sheer force of emotions in “Lechitic” patriotism, on the contrary – he treats it as obvious, appreciates it, but also perceives in it a significant threat since he can spot “*rozdmuchanie pasyj i zupełną pogardę wszelką Ideą*” [*inflated passions and utter contempt for any Idea*] (DW XII, 247). He stigmatises unoriginality in political action, the unreflective application of solutions developed by other nations in other historical circumstances. He emphasises the complete unawareness of the role of ideological struggle, which he considers the main or even the only method of acting at many moments in history. He emphasises the “life in phases” peculiar to Polish patriotism – the alternation and isolation of action from intellectual work rather than their interaction and harmonisation²⁰. Moreover, this mechanism usually follows a specific rhythm – as a rule, it is the action that precedes the idea, the thought, the reflection. In a poem addressed *Do współczesnych* [*To My Contemporaries*], Norwid writes the well-known words about a country “gdzie każdy-czyn za wcześniej wschodzi,/ Ale – książka-każda... za późno!” [where every act rises too early,/ But – every book... too late!] (PWsz II, 182).

On several occasions Norwid emphasises that the identity of Polish patriotism is built on falsehood. In a letter to August Cieszkowski, he states: “My będziemy w stosunkach sąsiednich z Moskalami i z Niemcami – prawda, którą absolutnie odepchnąwszy, wielu zyskuje moc podobną do patriotyzmu” [We shall be in neighbourly relations with Muscovites and with Germans – a truth which, absolutely repelled, form any gains a power akin to patriotism] (PWsz VII, 129). And in another letter, addressed to Ludwik Mierosławski, he points out that: “Polacy uważają sobie za patriotyzm słabych stron swoich nie znać, i nie wyrobili sobie nawet języka, aby o nich *bezpiecznie* z sobą mówić” [Poles consider it patriotism not to know their weaknesses, and have not even developed a language to speak of that *safely* among themselves]

²⁰ “Czy należy stracić z oka, że społeczeństwa, które tylko fa z a m i żyją, to jest raz: tylko i tylko myślą i piszą przez kilka lat, potem znowu: tylko i tylko działają, słowem: że społeczeństwa takie niekoniecznie na właściwej są drodze i w pierwszej, i w drugiej fazie” [Should we lose sight of the fact that societies which only live in phases, that is, first: only and only think and write for a few years, then again: only and only act, in a word: that such societies are not necessarily on the right path both in the first and in the second phase] (C. Norwid, [*Noty o konieczności presji moralnej*] [*Notes on the Necessity of Moral Pressure*], PWsz VII, 132).

(DW XI, 73). The nature of this patriotism is thus governed by a mechanism of repression of those truths whose acceptance and reflection might force Poles into a nuanced “triumph or death” attitude. In many places Norwid writes about maturity understood as a complementary awareness of one’s strengths and limitations – both in the dimension of individual and national existence. The model of “Lechitic” patriotism, however, is exclusive – it achieves the distinctiveness of its identity through reduction, through the rejection of those elements that could weaken its uncompromising nature, even if such an attitude – in Norwid’s optics – means missing the facts or a lack of self-awareness. On the ground of concrete political action, an attitude of this kind has the effect of turning falsehood into a “practical system”. Norwid presented its mode of operation, *inter alia*, in the treatise *Poznańskie 1846-1848* from 1861, which presents a synthetic anatomy of the Polish revolt:

Zaczyna się konspiracja w kierunku polskim, a więc poznańskim, bo najbliżej.

Jest konspiratorów 150 – z tych 88 ma za konieczny p r a k t y c z n y system rozgłaszać, że konspiratorów jest 2000.

Najlotniejsze natury, subtelne i rzutkie, najrychlej wierzą [...]. Takim przeto systemem całe parcie skierowane jest na najwięcej barankową krew. Bóg jest w obłokach nad historią.

Niektórzy poetowie czują woń krwi męczeńskiej w powietrzu, ale nie wiedząc, co się święci, wołają: „Tryumf! Tryumf!”

[...] Poruszone jest Poznańskie. Organizatorów jest 500.

System praktyczny i realny każe roztrąbić, że jest legionów sformowanych 10 000. Patriotyzm jest wielki [...] (PWsz VII, 58).

[The conspiracy begins in the Polish direction, which is the Poznań region, because it is the closest.

There are 150 conspirators – of these 88 have the necessary practical system to spread the word that there are 2000 conspirators.

The most volatile natures, subtle and spirited, are the quickest to believe [...]. With this system the whole push is directed at the most lamb-like blood. God is in the clouds above history.

Some poets smell the scent of martyr’s blood in the air, but not knowing what is going on, they cry out: “Triumph! Triumph!”

[...] The Poznań region is moved. There are 500 organisers.

The practical and real system dictates that there are 10,000 legions formed. Patriotism is great [...]

Apparently, we have strayed far from the poem *Początek broszury politycznej*, but only seemingly, because in the characterisation of the “old school of Polish patriotism” reconstructed above, based mainly on Norwid’s journalism and epis-

tology of the first half of the 1860s, reverberate a number of motifs present in Link 69 of the *Vade-mecum* cycle. These are: national egocentrism, which precludes thinking about one's own affairs in the context of universal ideas ("siebie, wciąż siebie mieć środkiem" [oneself, still have oneself at the centre]), and thus the problem of "męczeństwa bez wyznawstwa" [martyrdom without faith] understood as the courage to proclaim the truth, and thus "practical wickedness" illustrated by the example from *Poznańskie*, i.e. the ideological emptiness and neglect of the "fight through ideas" ("meaning vacuum" masked by "skirmish") and, finally, the paradoxical "heroiczna rejterada" [heroic retreat] resounding in the poem's closing. Commenting on the last line of the work in the BN edition of *Vade-mecum*, Józef Fert wrote: "an ironic reaction to the military announcements about the flight from the battlefield"²¹. Thus, the editor concretised and literalised the verse about "rejterada" [retreat]. However, it seems that one can also recognise in it the phenomenon I once described as an invisible metaphor²². Obscured by concreteness, while retaining its clear sense on a literal reading, the verse is at the same time a metaphor that accurately illustrates the consequences of the ideological process of moulding the younger generations in the spirit of the "Lechitic patriotism" of the elders. It is a "heroic retreat" from reality and history, a kind of escapism, an escape from the duties requiring "sweat of one's brow," which may be less heroic, but which make it possible to save the authentic community of the nation in a state of enslavement.

Therefore, I read *Początek broszury politycznej* as a polemic against the old model of patriotism, which proved fatal to the nation. The values and attitudes implied therein, through the denial of what "does not need to be done", in turn lay the foundation for a different, Norwidian understanding of patriotism, characterised by Christian universalism, the source of which is respect for the dignity of man as "God's image". In a specific historical context, however, this patriotism turned out to be "nie z tego świata" [not of this world]²³. It is a poem that universalises the author's specific historical experience and can therefore be read without having to relate it to a historical-political context. But at the same time, the text clearly alludes to this concrete experience. These allusions are mainly intertextual

²¹ C. NORWID, *Vade-mecum*, 2nd revised edition, introduction by J. Fert, ed. J. Fert, Wrocław 1999.

²² Cf. Ł. NIEWCZAS, *Niewidoczna metafora. Strategie mówienia przenośnego w poezji Norwida*, Lublin 2013.

²³ I quote here Norwid's words from a letter to Karol Ruprecht of 30 September 1863 (DW XII, 233).

(I refer here to the relations between particular phrases of the poem and the often twinned remarks from Norwid's journalism and epistolography), but they are also encapsulated in the pamphlet itself (if we accept the previously suggested reading of the verse "strona, z której człek rodzi się stary" [the side from which a man is born old] as constituting an allusion to Poland). The title of the work also provides an important suggestion that the political context should be taken into account.

Finally, we should note that the poem fulfils the project of poetry announced in the preface to the *Vade-mecum* collection – being a political work, it addresses the "side of duties" and undoubtedly presents the statement of a moralist. In the mode of reading I have postulated, the pamphlet allows one to trace the relations between Norwid's treatment of political matter in poetry and discursive prose. It also brilliantly illustrates, on this material, the way in which the antinomy of intellect and emotion functions in Norwid's writing. The journalism, and above all the epistolography of the author of *Vade-mecum* from the period of the January Uprising, is full of ardent emotions, from his emphatic statements when commenting on the first (ideologically close to him) phase of the uprising, to his later anger, sarcasm, biting irony and even outright contempt for the Polish collective. And yet *Początek broszury politycznej* is written by a poet who knows that he is able to fulfil at least the second part of the task formulated in the poem *Królestwo* [Kingdom]: "Udziałem twym więcej!... panowanie/ Nad wszystkim na świecie – i nad sobą" [Your part is more!... dominion/ Over everything in the world – and over yourself].

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WOKÓŁ WIERSZA *POCZĄTEK BROSZURY POLITYCZNEJ...*

Streszczenie

Artykuł stanowi kolejną, po tekstach J. Puzyniny, B. Subko, Z. Trojanowiczowej, J. Trznadla, próbę interpretacji utworu *Początek broszury politycznej*. Na tle wcześniejszych odczytań autor w znacznie większym stopniu uwzględnia historyczny kontekst w jakim powstał wiersz, przede wszystkim wypadki powstania styczniowego. Autor zestawia treść wiersza z publicystyką Norwida z tego okresu i odczytuje w liryku polemikę z tradycyjnym modelem polskiego patriotyzmu, nacechowanym skłonnością do bezrefleksyjnego i nieliczącego się z ofiarami działania.

Słowa kluczowe: *Początek broszury politycznej*; powstanie styczniowe; Norwidowski patriotyzm; historia; propaganda.

ON NORWID'S POEM *POCZĄTEK BROSZURY POLITYCZNEJ...*

Summary

The author of this article attempts to interpret the poem *Początek broszury politycznej...* [*The Beginning of a Political Pamphlet...*] building on readings by J. Puzynina, B. Subko, Z. Trojanowiczowa, and J. Trznadel. In comparison with these earlier interpretations, he emphasises to a greater extent the historical context of the poem's creation, primarily the events related to the January Uprising. To achieve this goal, the poem is read in the light of Norwid's journalism from that period and interpreted as a polemic with the traditional model of Polish patriotism, which was characterised by the tendency to take actions that were not preceded by reflection and would not take into account possible victims.

Keywords: political pamphlets; January Uprising; Norwid's patriotism; history; propaganda.

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