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AN OUTLINE OF CULTURE ANTHROPOLOGY
IN NORWID'S OEUVRE

‘... modernists were much more interested in Norwid-philosopher of culture, the author *Promethidion* than Norwid-lyricist’.

Zofia Stefanowska¹

A great importance, in comments and analyses, is still attached to the great reconstruction of Norwid's thought, his strong relation with the Catholic tradition and the ability to see both a historical dimension of characters and events and their eschatological perspective². It is a common manner to take out sapiential sentences from poets' poems and correspondence about the human nature, nation different from society, the Polish culture and art... Collections of Norwid's thoughts and sayings were often created without providing the sources of quotations. Every educated Pole remembers a certain amount of scattered aphorisms that make up the wisdom of culture. Without a natural context, they are often like a stone which the poet wanted to get out of the ruins of Palmyra, which he finally did not do because the stone with the ruins made a *whole*³ and sense.

From what point of view, however, one would be able to capture the *whole* of Norwid's works to define his type of world view and a sense of the human Fate? Shall one trust his discursive declarations and take his word for it?

¹ Z. STEFANOWSKA, *Pisarz wieku kupieckiego i przemysłowego*, [in:] Id, *Strona romantyków. Studia o Norwidzie*, Lublin: TN KUL 1993, p. 49.

² Cf. id., p. 68.

³ C. NORWID, *Rzecz o wolności słowa*, XVI, verses 45-79, [in:] C. NORWID, *Dziela wszystkie*, oprac. S. Sawicki, P. Chlebowski, v. IV: *Poematy 2*, Lublin: TN KUL 2011 (further quoted as: DWsz IV; page number provided after a comma).

When it comes to the poet who expresses the essence of his thoughts, mainly by metaphors and not by concepts, one can interpret them regardless of the discursive expressions because metaphors or symbols cannot be translated into rationalist language. They are rather to stimulate meaning than contain them. According to Paul Ricœur, they are to give food for thought⁴, and as the time flows, their meaning grows in new civilization contexts. The study of reception often indicates the directions of cultural assimilation of the work⁵; Every epoch imposes new interpretations⁶. We have already conducted studies on implicit theology of Mickiewicz⁷. It seems that one can separate conscious religious discourse of Norwid who had always wanted to be orthodox, from “food for thought” of his metaphors, which even nowadays seem to be revolutionary.

Our primary objective will be an attempt to extract the germ of culture anthropology from Norwid’s astonishingly modern poetic thought, even if it discursively opposed to Darwin’s evolutionism which he probably knew from secondary sources⁸. Norwid’s way of emphasizing the mechanisms of spiritual revolution of humanity, significance attached to gestures and social behaviours, the *praxis* of civilization, emphasis on human work and cultures of the societies and his sensitivity to the ritual interaction and its individualization show a new point of view that developed in interaction sociology and ethology, science of behaviours, as late as in 1950s and 1960s (Lorenz, Goffman, Hall, Berne, Turner...). One should also remember the findings of prehistoric life in which, despite the polemics with Darwin, it is possible to find motifs similar to the achievements of scholars of the 20th century, like Leroi-Gourhan.

It seems that the originality of Norwid, a poet and thinker, is based precisely on an anthropological look at a human being. Here, he reveals the hidden face of reality that is probably its most primeval source of gestures, attitudes and rituals. Discursive order comes later, and interactions are the infrastructure of discourse. We will try to find the elements of specific, anthropological ‘Copernican Revolution’ in his work, starting from two philosophical poems written within the time of 20 years: *Promethidion* (1850) and *Rzecz o wolności słowa* (1869⁹). Finally, we will try to show how much

⁴ „Le symbole donne à penser”, P. Ricœur, *La métaphore vive*, Paris: Seuil 1975.

⁵ Cf. H.R. JAUSS, *Pour une esthétique de la réception*, Gallimard 1978, coll. Tel, 1990.

⁶ P. RICŒUR, *Du texte à l’action. Essais d’herméneutique II*, Paris: Seuil 1986.

⁷ Cf. M. MASŁOWSKI, *Gest, symbol i rytuały polskiego teatru romantycznego*, Warszawa: PWN 1998.

⁸ Z. STEFANOWSKA, *Norwidowski Farys*, [in:] Id, *Strona romantyków*, pp. 132-135.

⁹ It is the publishing date of the poem that was probably written earlier; it could be in the mid-sixties. Cf. editor’s comments of Piotr Chlebowski in: *Dzieła wszystkie*, p. 347.

Norwid's thought is rooted in gesticulation, interactions and spatial situation, not only in dramas but also in diverse 'constellation' of poems.

1. *PROMETHIDION*:
DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN BEING AND EVOLUTION OF CULTURES

The poem of "the son of Prometheus", a man, at first was the object of ridicule¹⁰ but at the beginning of 20th century, it was recognized as a masterpiece. We will not conduct a detailed analysis of this rich-content poem here because there are many interesting research papers on it, especially the outstanding one by Stefan Sawicki from 1997,¹¹ and there is no place for detailed polemics. We will limit ourselves to commenting just some anthropological motifs in the poem

There is no need to remind anyone that despite some genealogical 'dispersion' of 'the two dialogues with one epilogue', which is discussed by Sawicki, one may treat *Promethidion* as a philosophical poem situated in the tradition of dialogues of Plato. We know that its first part is devoted to the art, the second to truth and goodness, and the *Epilogue* sums up the considerations outlining the mechanism of the development of cultures and their consequence. Norwid undertook, in the Christian spirit, the triad of Platonic ideas of Beauty, Truth and Goodness as 'God's profiles', with famous formula that beauty is 'the shape of Love'¹². It should be mentioned that the expression falls from the mouth of the 'eternal man'. This creates the vision compatible with Christianity, in which Love is the basic message,¹³ both very individualistic - because love should be incorporated personally, especially by artists, and general - because it concerns a collective human – eternal human, later called 'Prometej Adam', who embodies God's presence for centuries:

¹⁰ Primarily by Julian Klaczko, then very influential critic, who closed the songs of Norwid with a sarcastic formula of 'times, which only seem *Promethidions*, *Zwolony* and other nonsense' (*Do Teofila L.*, „Goniec Polski” 1851, No 209); cf. Discussion on much deeper controversy in: Z. TROJANOWICZ, *Ostatni spór romantyczny: Cyprian Norwid – Julian Klaczko*, Warszawa: IBL PAN 1981, p. 9; Cf.: J. KLACZKO, *Wzory wydymanej nicości, Pisma czasowe*, „Wiadomości Polskie” 1857, No 18, p. 83, reprint in: INGLOT, *Norwid. Z dziejów recepcji*, ed. M. Ingłot, Warszawa: PWN 1983, pp. 104-105.

¹¹ [in:] *Introduction C. NORWID, Promethidion*, Kraków: pub. Universitas 1997.

¹² *Bogumił*, v. 109, DWsz IV, 106.

¹³ Cf. the recent encyclical of Pope Benedict XVI *Deus caritas est* (2005).

On mi przez Indy – Perrsy – Egipt – Greków –
Stoma języki i wiekami wieków,
I granitami rudymi, i złotem,
Marmurem – kością słońców – czleka potem,
To mi powiada on Prometej z młotem¹⁴.

Beauty incarnates itself by the presence of the Love, i.e., God who appears in the history through three Platonic Ideas and effort of collective work. Art should sublimate the experience of work so as to extract kind of spiritual essence and to mobilize the energy of man:

Bo nie jest *światło*, by pod korcem stało,
Ani *sól ziemi* do przypraw kuchennych,
Bo piękno na to jest, by zachwycalo
Do pracy – praca, by się zmartwychwstało¹⁵.

This famous last verse was understood in various ways. Is it a kind of self-salvation through work? It would not be far from the claims of a well-known theologian Paul Tillich who introduced the term of *self-transcendence* meaning that the finite world transcends itself in infinite infinity, and as a result human spirit ‘ecstatically’ goes beyond its experience of finiteness towards experience of mystery and sacredness¹⁶. According to Husserl, this term appears in a slightly different meaning of self-transcendence of sense, however, John Paul II’s in his encyclical *Laborem exercens*, writes about human participation in the redemption through work: ‘Enduring the toil of work in union with crucified for us Christ, man, in a way, collaborates with Him in the redemption of mankind. He appears to be a true disciple of Jesus when he takes the cross of tasks he was appointed to’¹⁷. If Norwid’s metaphors should be understood in that way, then, he is an age ahead of the modern research. However, many researchers do not agree with this, or form opinions more cautiously, like Stefan Sawicki¹⁸.

¹⁴ verses 110-114, DWsz IV, 106.

¹⁵ verses 183-186, DWsz IV, 108.

¹⁶ Rosino Gibellini Circumlocution *Panorama de la théologie au XX^e siècle*, French trans. Paryż, Cerf 2004, p. 109. It is the study of the most important work of P. Tillich *Systematic Theology* (University of Chicago Press 1951-1963). Tillich introduces, inter alia, the term *God above God*: ‘the power of being, which works through those who have no name for it, not even the name *God*’ (*Systematic Theology*, v. II, p. 12).

¹⁷ JOHN PAUL II, *Laborem exercens*, 1981, 27, Wrocław 1995, p. 96.

¹⁸ S. Sawicki expresses it in the following way: ‘Art being the cradle of beauty contributes

According to biblical tradition, work is a punishment for original sin. But in Norwid's works, one can find immanent presence of God in activities of a human seeking beauty, truth and goodness. Work 'coraz miłością ulżona (alleviated by love)' (verse 348; DWsz IV, 117) gains quite basic and positive anthropological function, because thanks to work civilisations and the humanity of a man come to being and develop.

"Ten sam Prometej, powstając na rękach z ziemi" (The same Prometheus stands up in the arms of the earth) (verse 153; DWsz IV, 107) – which indicates a standing position of a man (through the metaphor Norwid could be considered a disciple of Darwin!) – continues his speech:

Tak i o pracy powiem, że – zguby szukaniem,
Dla której pieśń – ustawnym się nawoływaniem”.
– Więc szukał Ind nurtując granit z lampą w dłoni,
I znalazł to, z *czym szukał* – szukał Pers w pogoni
I dognał to, *czym gonił* – szukał Egipt w Nilu
I złowił to, *czym łowił* – toż Grek i Etruski,
I świata pan – Rzymianin, i Part z koniem w łuski,
I różny inny mąż – których jest tylu!...¹⁹

This is picture of the development of manhood in man through work, which not only leads to the production of objects, but above all, shapes the inside, humanity, of the worker. One becomes a person through work. Norwid extends the idea to the societies in *Epilog* in prose, where he says that 'Każdy naród przychodzi *inną drogą* do uczestnictwa w sztuce (every nation takes a *different path* to participate in art)²⁰. And art is a sublimation of the experience of group work because '*Ze zbudowania w duchu* się buduje (*From building in the spirit*, one starts building)²¹. Whenever high culture loses contact with its nation, the nation falls.

It is the thought known to the modern anthropology. Leroi-Gourhan states: 'If a language is associated with the occurrence of manual tool, then figuration cannot be separated from a common source from which a person creates a figure'²².

together with the beauty of the whole creation to the resurrection of a man: historical one and eschatological one' (*Introduction*, p. 29).

¹⁹ *Bogumil*, verses 159-166, DWsz IV, 108.

²⁰ *Epilog*, II, DWsz IV, 130.

²¹ *Bogumil*, verse 340, DWsz IV, 117.

²² A. LEROI-GOURHAN, *Le geste et la parole*, v. I-II, Paris: Albin Michel, 1964-1965, v. II: *La Mémoire et les rythmes*, p. 206; here and further free translation.

Therefore, art is clearly an emblem of culture, a mission of which is to codify the collective experience of community. Norwid would add: 'so that they could grow up to resurrection'. And „*Narodowy artysta organizuje wyobraźnię, jak na przykład polityk narodowy organizuje siły stanu...*” (*National artist sets up the imagination, like a politician organizes state force...*)²³.

The weight attributed by Norwid to the *praxis* of collective life is an unexpectedly modern feature and may be collated with anthropology and philosophy of religion or theology.

We will start with anthropology and the theory of hominization. Konrad Lorenz, famous biologist, Nobel Prize winner, one of the founders of knowledge about behaviours, ethology, emphasized repeatedly that the process of appearing of intelligence comes from observation of objects in space:

When, for the first time, our ancestor recognized at the same time his own gripping hand and a grasped object as things from real outer world and realized their interaction, his understanding of the process of recognition became comprehension, and the knowledge of significant features of the recognized object - a notion²⁴.

There is no 'thought that would be independent from the central model of space. [...] Actually, an anthropoid ape, *acts* when observing the space around it, but it does so only as part of the central perception of objects. [...] It is the beginning of every thought'²⁵. Thus, we perceive the world inside certain model of space that we carry within us, and which we realize. It could be briefly said that the monkey that jumps from one branch to the other and perceives its hand as a tool has acquired awareness that would become human one. At that moment *praxis* becomes *gnosis*.

There is a consensus among anthropologists that the process of hominization developed together with the awareness of gestures and communication tools that had become a language; later, the process caused the growth of brain volume²⁶. Leroi-Gourhan, who uses also the categories of truth (connected with technique), goodness and beauty in his analyses, emphasizes that not only technique and language counts because aesthetic behaviour regulating relations between individual

²³ *Epilog*, V, DWsz IV, 134.

²⁴ K. LORENZ, *Odwrotna strona zwierciadła. Próba historii naturalnej ludzkiego poznania*, trans. K. Wolicki, Warszawa: PIW 1977, p. 256.

²⁵ Id., *Trois essais sur le comportement animal et humain*, Paris: Seuil, coll. Points 1970, p. 213; free trans.

²⁶ A. LEROI-GOURHAN, *Le geste et la parole*, v. I-II.

and a group²⁷ is also significant. In addition, 'figurative work is an essential element of acquiring individual freedom, while technical and social behaviour is experienced according to collective norms resulting from the performance standard'²⁸.

Culture and complex systems of social communication developed, basically, after the so-called 'Neolithic revolution' associated with the cultivation of land and the sedentarization of a person living, hitherto, from hunting and gathering. It was also the time of the formation of families, communities, villages and cultural systems, which created symbolic references. The relationships between those phenomena, described in detail by the researcher, demonstrate how using farming techniques developed self-awareness of a man²⁹. In other words, the man discovering through work 'what he worked with', constructed himself as a person and as consciousness. We enter into the circle of Norwid's metaphors. But the closest relationship to the mind of the poet should be sought in the philosophy of Karol Wojtyła³⁰ and his first encyclicals, especially *Laborem Exercens*, where he directly stated that "through work [...] man not only transforms nature, adapting it to his own needs, but also realizes himself as a human being as well as, in a way, more 'becomes a man.'"³¹. It is, to some extent, using Norwid's metaphors and his own thoughts from the book *Osoba i czyn*. Wojtyła indicates there the possibility of transcendence that can be accomplished by one's conscious and wanted actions thus showing the prospect of one's 'resurrection'. He writes, moreover, about a vertical transcendence associated with personal dignity, and also about a horizontal transcendence associated with commitment. We will return to these concepts.

For now, let us move in time for nearly twenty years and focus on another philosophical Norwid's poem: *Rzecz o wolności słowa (On freedom of speech)*.

²⁷ Ibid, v. II, p. 80.

²⁸ Ibid, p. 99.

²⁹ 'Approximately in year 10 000 BC, Paleolithic period ended and humanity prepared to transition from the primitive economy of hunting and gathering to the agriculture and livestock economy that would lead directly to the creation of civilization'. (A. LEROI-GOURHAN, *Les religions de la préhistoire*, Paris: PUF, coll. Quadrige 2008, p. 5; here and further free trans.).

³⁰ K. WOJTYŁA, *Osoba i czyn oraz inne studia antropologiczne*, Lublin: TN KUL 2000.

³¹ *Laborem exercens*, 9, p. 33.

2. *RZECZ O WOLNOŚCI SŁOWA*: DUCH I LITERA
(ON FREEDOM OF SPEECH: SPIRIT AND LETTER)

Rzecz o wolności słowa was written much later than *Promethidion*, and was not considered equal to this masterpiece. However, Norwid's thought fascinates, even when he polemicizes with Darwinian evolution. Because for him:

Nie! – Człowiek nie *do-pelzał* z wolna człowieczości
[...]
Nie! – człowiek *całym* powstał, *zupełnie-wytwornym*,
[...]
Bo *cały był i piękny... i upadł...*
Dziś – praca
Coś w nim trawi – kształtuje, i coś mu powraca³².

Norwid defends biblical myth concerning the creation of man and the original sin, but continues to emphasize the importance of work in the development of humanity and its gradual redemption or resurrection. His arguments regarding the sustainability of human nature are aesthetic:

... to czemu *kamiennie-siekiery*,
Naczynia i co tylko z pierwszej mamy Ery
Zebrawszy – nie przedstawia postępu-kształcenia,
Ani się potęguje? [...] ³³.

So, there is no progress in art and there are only succeeding eras; the man is eternal. For us, this reasoning is false, because it opposes the myth to science, not taking into account that both fields can be true, because the myth is to symbolize the essence of man, while science establishes knowledge. Nevertheless, the poet always combined historical approach and the specific eschatological perspective³⁴. 'Norwid meant the development of civilization and not changes in the anatomy of man', concludes Stefanowska³⁵. The poet is a personalist *avant la lettre*, and could

³² *Rzecz o wolności słowa*, DWsz IV, 225, verses 1, 7, 9-10.

³³ *Pieśń II*, verses 74-76, DWsz IV, 223. As for the durability of the shape of the axe, it depends as much on the functionality as the material and 'ethnic style' or culture; cf. A. LE-ROI-GOURHAN, *Le geste et la parole*, v. I: *Technique et langage*, Paris: Albin Michel 1964, pp. 131-133.

³⁴ Cf. Z. STEFANOWSKA, *Norwidowski romantyzm*, p. 68.

³⁵ *Id.*, *Norwidowski Farys*, p. 135.

not imagine the evolution of man, who would have not been *human*. Somehow, a famous anthropologist would confirm his stance when it comes to *homo sapiens*:

[...] One cannot announce the law that a philosophical or religious thought depends on the material evolution of societies. If that had been so, the thought of Plato or Confucius would have seemed so strange and outdated to us as the ploughs of the first millennium BC. The philosophies may seem unsuitable to the social conditions created by material evolution; they contain, however, concepts currently available.³⁶

Norwid rejects biological evolution, while recognizing the individual and collective evolution of men by working, gestures and actions. He identifies the humanity of man with occurrence of word, i.e. language, which is quite in accordance with present anthropology:

[...]... Słowem, że Człek tu przychodniem –
 Nie znał, *gdzie jest?* poglądał *co? nad nim, co? pod nim...*
 A potem – rdzenia własnej samotności szukał,
 A potem – w *wyobraźnię...* potem – w granit stukał:
Aż wyrzwał mu bóg-fetysz z głuchego granitu,
Ten sam, co był w sumieniu i gwiazdach u szczytu;
 Ten sam... CO JEST.

... Nieco poglądając dalej,
 Czas rozwionie! prawda się w źrenicach zapali...
 Otworzy się sklepienia i wzroku budowa,
I oto nagle widzimy: pierwszą kartę słowa –
Pierwszą widzimy literę... z harmonii stworzenia,
*Ogromne A! podziwu świata i sumienia!*³⁷

This brings us to the anthropological schema present in *Promethidion*, but also in modern anthropology: the birth of humanity out of astonishment - that is developing consciousness and experience of physical work - which undergoes sublimation and becomes a word, painting, sculpture. Norwid emphasizes: 'Słowo, niżli narzędziem, *celem było wcześniej!*' (Pieśń III, verse 46, DWsz IV, 226) clearly identifying the occurrence of words with the occurrence of self-awareness and the world, over which man exercises the power to name.

Let us compare this idea with the statements of Leroi-Gourhan, the great anthropologist of prehistory:

³⁶ A. LEROI-GOURHAN, *Le geste et la parole*, v. I, p. 208.

³⁷ Pieśń III, verses 23-38, DWsz IV, 226.

The whole human evolution leads to locating outside man everything that corresponds in the rest of the animal world to the specific adaptation. The most striking material fact is, certainly, the ‘release’ of the tools. However, in reality, the basic fact is releasing the word, and this feature - of locating the memory outside oneself in the social organism - is typical only for men³⁸.

Word-consciousness is born with a gesture at the level of community. Recalling the etymology of the term ‘Słowianin’ related both to Latin *Sclavus* and to *Słowo* or *Sława*, Norwid describes the birth of cultural identity:

Sklavus, gdy słowo uczuł, uznał swą osobę³⁹.

Identity arises at the individual and collective level: the word creates nations and institutions:

A kto by mi zaprzeczył doniosłości słowa,
I że nie wstaje przezeń istność narodowa,
Ni stworzyć to parlament, co historia, zdolny⁴⁰.

If strength became the word before the advent of Christianity, the Word became strength after the coming of Christ (p. 214). Because since that time:

Słowo – wróciło w ducha i stało się *cale*
*W człowieku i w zebraniu równie doskonałe*⁴¹.

Therefore, consensus is possible in the spirit. It is certainly the same principle which the Orthodox call *sobornost*: the presence of the Spirit on the councils. In the second part of *Promethidion* Norwid developed an analogous, but secularized and universalized, concept of intuition of truth. He called it, as we know, ‘opinion’ - of course in a different sense than at present. It meant ethical consensus concerning basic values: ethical universalism. ‘Holiness of the word’ depends on the ‘character’ of man, that is, on his or her holiness. Gesture and word become thus irreversibly intertwined, and it can be assumed that the “sacred word” and a gesture of goodness or truth will bring forth good; rooted in the same elementary gesticulation and attitude they will express it.

³⁸ A. LEROI-GOURHAN, *Le geste et la parole*, v. II, p. 34.

³⁹ Pieśń XIII, v. 115, DWsz IV, 267.

⁴⁰ Pieśń XII, verses 77-79, DWsz IV, 258.

⁴¹ Pieśń IX, verses 77-78, DWsz IV, 244.

Now, it is time to focus on what could be called in Norwid's works a revolution of Polish culture: when after the romantic cult of the 'spirit' the poet stresses the importance of letters, without which the spirit can neither incarnate nor be transferred or spread:

*Tchnąć możesz bez litery i bez jej uznania,
Ale dać nic nie zdołasz: ona rękę skłania*⁴².

Next verses show the opposition between 'inspiration of the volcano' and the image of cereal fields (Pieśń XII, v 172-199, DWsz III, 261-262). So one has to recall a central place of a metaphor of a volcano in Polish Romanticism. Instead of the classical forms of harmony, people began to appreciate the eruption of the underground power of unconsciousness to refer to the modern concepts. An explosion created new forms like lava, unexpected and powerful. This concerned art, but also social phenomena, when „skorupa plugawa” (Mickiewicz) gave its way under the pressure of mass forces of the nation. Norwid admired the beauty and power of an eruption and inspiration, but considered them to be barren in comparison to the work of everyday life. The greatness of culture is based on the letter and persistence:

[...] Języki!
Tych się nie tworzy sennym natchnieniem polotem,
Zboże po burzy wstawa, lecz nie siane grzmotem,
I raczej praca długa a wierna literze
Całokształty takowe urabia i strzeże⁴³.

The letter, therefore, sides with constant effort and transferred testament, incarnation, resurrection, woman, daily routine, work... And the Spirit without the letter can neither incarnate nor last nor be transferred. And that letter, the word incorporated, can bring resurrection.

Standing in front of the ruins of Palmyra, the poet sees and understands «*Całość-SŁOWA I LITERE*»⁴⁴ because even stones, fragments of ruins, cannot be taken away or moved without loss of meaning resulting from their position. By analogy - the remains of prehistory collected in the museum can no longer reveal

⁴² Pieśń XII, verses 133-134, DWsz IV, 260.

⁴³ Pieśń XII, verses 205-209, DWsz IV, 262-263.

⁴⁴ Pieśń XIV, verse 70, DWsz IV, 272.

their secrets, or to be analyzed and understood when they are taken away from the place where he rested - as Leroi-Gourhan⁴⁵ bitterly complained.

3. GESTURES AND THOUGHTS

The next stage of our brief reconstruction of Norwid's anthropological thought relates to the issue to what extent his reflection is associated with gestures and behaviour, which is, as we have seen, favoured material of anthropology: thought arises because of gesture and spatial behaviour.

This theory is already well documented in the field of drama, especially, since the excellent book *Sceniczny gest poety* has been written by Irena Sławinska⁴⁶. The researcher even created a specific typology of significant gestures when she distinguished denouncing, testing and verbal gestures, *habitus* of characters and human groups, gestures provoking dramatic implications, looks, etc. Her discoveries in the sixties became revelation not only in the study on Norwid but also in Polish theatre studies.

But we would like to assume here more broadly that gestures and behaviour play a great role also in Norwid's poetry. Take, for example Promethidion, a philosophical poem from which we started our analysis. In the discussion about Chopin, one of the interlocutors confessed that 'polski ja w nim *zamach* cenię' (v. 3; DWsz IV, 99) - that type of behaviour, a sign of temperament, is clearly ironic or even satirical. Someone else, as if wanted to outbid him, said: „Ho hop – koniku mój, rwij się od złoła... / Ho hop!!”⁴⁷, which again shows thinking through gestures. It was a reaction to the serious statement of Bogumił, *porte-parole* of the poet:

Czy się nie wstydział prawdy i nie stłumił,
Mogąc łatwiejszy oklask zyskać sobie,
[...]
Czy, mówię, prawdę na swym stawiał grobie,
Czy się jej grobem podpierał ciosanym?⁴⁸

These are the questions about the performativity of the artist and about opposing the purely social effects to metaphysical ones. The conversation takes place

⁴⁵ A. LEROI-GOURHAN, *Les religions de la préhistoire*, passim.

⁴⁶ Kraków: WL 1960.

⁴⁷ Bogusław, verses 28-29, DWsz IV, 103.

⁴⁸ Bogumił, verses 13-14, 16-17, DWsz IV, 103.

in the living room at the ritual of tea drinking which suggests living room atmosphere and explains laughter as a kind of ironic commentary to the conversation.

Although working is the basis of civilization, which has been mentioned, we should also raise a whole series of arguments recalling the truth of praxis, gesticulation techniques in accordance with the terms of anthropology⁴⁹:

I stąd największym prosty lud poetą,
Co nuci z dłońmi ziemią brązowemi,
[...]
I stąd najlepszym Cezar historykiem,
Który dyktował z konia – nie przy biurze⁵⁰.

The song born out of the rhythm of work is the base of experience from which the artist will benefit sublimating it. Let us recall the parallel of contemporary anthropology: 'Man cannot understand and govern except through creative symbols' (Leroi-Gourhan)⁵¹. And when it comes to music, the researcher stresses the importance of cultural aesthetics of rhythm from which 'ethnic style' (p.105) derives, i.e., national culture.

Let us take other examples like e.g. a short poem *Fatum*. Let me remind it:

I.
Jak zwierzę dziki – przyszło *Nieszczęście* do człowieka
I zatopiło weń fatalne oczy...
– Czeka – –
Czy – człowiek – zboczy?

II.
Lecz on odejrzał mu – jak gdy artysta
Mierzy swojego kształt modelu –
I spostrzegło, że on patrzy – *co?* skorzysta
Na swym nieprzyjacielu:
I zachwiało się – całą postaci wagą...
– – I nie ma go!⁵²

Abstract interaction is described here in such a way as if the poem was about a specific situation. Internal gestures are analogous to real behaviour. The disap-

⁴⁹ Cf. A. LEROI-GOURHAN, *Les geste et la parole*, v. I-II.

⁵⁰ *Bogumil*, verses 187-188, 193-194, DWsz IV, 109.

⁵¹ *Les religions de la préhistoire*, p. 152.

⁵² *Fatum*, [in:] C. NORWID, *Vade-mecum*, ed. J. Fert, Lublin: TN KUL 2004, p. 43.

pearance of *Nieszczęście* (*Misery*) because of an artist's bearing is logical, because, in the end, it will be used for creating a work of art and then it will no longer be a misery. The attitude of an artist, who would not get intimidated, determines the transformation of the situation; because he, a little like Job, accepts everything that falls on him; tries to make sense of it so that others could benefit. Interaction seems equally true both in the individual and collective plan, and one can understand it also as the image of Poles in response to the partitions and the collapse of the November Uprising, in which, to some point, they 'benefited' by creating a new paradigm of modern national culture.

Another known example of a long poem built around a significant gesture: gaze at the sky is *Assunta*, or a pun in the poem *Rozebrana*, where the title indicates both an undressed woman and the country after the partition. An interesting analysis of the poem presented by Zofia Stefanowska indicates how the association of the partitions with the lady has led to the analogy with the woman from Apocalypse of St. John⁵³. Sense results from the analogy of behaviour that allows one to capture the shocking nature of the partitions and their ideological extrapolation.

The incipit opening the volume of the most important collection of poems *Vade-Mecum: Klaskaniem mając obrzękle prawice* is also famous. The whole work is built on associations of gestures, behaviours and space lighting. What is characteristic, all the elements are in constant motion as in the opening verse of the last part: „Syn – minie pismo, lecz ty wspomnisz, wnuku”⁵⁴ (*My son – will skirt this work, but you, grandson, will note**). 'Skirting' meets 'noting' as if they were complementary.

Rooting Norwid's ideas in gestures, behaviours and interactions provides anthropological foundations of all his ideas, which enables him to complete his philosophy of work, words and letter. A broader study of this kind would certainly be very useful for the studies on Norwid.

FINAL REMARKS

Despite his polemics with the idea of biological evolution we tried to bring out the original anthropological Norwid's thought expressed especially in *Promethidion*, but also in *Rzecz o wolności słowa*. Our fascination with the thought of

⁵³ Z. STEFANOWSKA, *Strona romantyków*, pp. 105-108.

⁵⁴ C. NORWID, *Vade-mecum*, p. 14.

* Translation comes from: C. Norwid, *Poems*, translated from the Polish by Danuta Borchardt in collaboration with Agata Brajerska-Mazur, New York: Archipelago Books, 2011, s. 19.

the poet can be explained by his ability to extract metaphysical dimension from the most concrete behaviours. As noted by Zofia Stefanowska:

[...] Practical activity makes sense in the context of history understood eschatologically, and it is, in fact, the program of restoring expiatory function of work. So the anti-romantic demand in the intention of returning to reality is typically involved in a romantic conception of the final goals of man⁵⁵.

One could say that the metaphysics of work, the messianism of work - and not only of art, as Zofia Trojanowicz and Stefan Sawicki believe (who recalls, however, Norwid's formulation: „kościół pracy” (church of work) and himself speaks of the “theology of work⁵⁶) - have brought revolutionary fruit. Because if the (mostly romantic) sources of the Solidarity movement in the years 1980-1981 and their philosophical foundations such as the *Ethics of Solidarity* by Józef Tischner are very diverse, it is Norwid who is certainly one of their most important references. Polish philosophy of work owes a lot to him with the elaborations of Brzozowski and Tischner, but also - looking at the issue from a different perspective - by Karol Wojtyła. We have already mentioned encyclicals of John Paul II, especially *Laborem Exercens*; Norwid is quoted in the *Letter to Artists*. But a completely different philosophical gravity is included in the Pope's book *Osoba i czyn*.

Analyzing the recognition and creation of a person through acts, Wojtyła thematically approaches to the interests of the poet. One has to recall that in his speech on the occasion of moving ashes from Norwid's grave to Kraków, the Pope emphasized the influence of the poet on his pontificate, especially, its social dimension⁵⁷. In *Osoba i czyn*, its author does not quote poetry, but tries to analyze how to create a personality through actions, that is: gestures and interactions, which are close to the subject matter of *Promethidion* and *Rzecz o wolności słowa*. He presents there, inter alia, thesis about the transcendence of the person in action, and not only vertical but also horizontal transcendence. He explains the difference in the following way:

Crossing the border of the subject to the object, or intentionality, one can describe it as *horizontal* transcendence. However, it is not the main point when talking about the transcendence of a person in action. It is the transcendence which we owe to self-determination, the transcendence by the very fact of freedom, being free in action and not

⁵⁵ Z. STEFANOWSKA, *Strona romantyków*, p. 68.

⁵⁶ S. SAWICKI, *Introduction*, p. 20, 29.

⁵⁷ Reprint [in:] *Norwid bezdomny*, ed. J. Kopciński, Warszawa 2002, p. 10.

only by the intentional directing wishes towards their proper subject, value-purpose. One could define this transcendence as *vertical*, unlike that which we defined as horizontal⁵⁸.

The idea of the transcendence of a person through work- action became a hinge for his later encyclical *Laborem Exercens* (1981). But the category of horizontal transcendence draws, in a special way, our attention because in some previous research papers we tried to reconstruct the forms of horizontal transcendence in Polish Romanticism, especially in metaphors of Mickiewicz as well as in the works of the twentieth century⁵⁹. The matrix of this transcendence was friendship, then cultural bond of the nation, where Sense came from others, from cultural community and a kind of ethical consensus around ethical universals.

In Norwid's works, one can find the same motifs of 'opinion', 'gathering' and 'character' - that is ethical attitude as the foundation of Truth⁶⁰. But, above all, what was the community cultural communion of the nation in Mickiewicz, becomes a community communion of collective human in Norwid's work, and, therefore, societies in space and in time - by participating in work that generates civilizations, and even more: humanity and man. Norwid extends a type of universalization of spiritual intuitions of Mickiewicz to all nations and ultimately the whole humanity from its beginning born through gestures - deeds, birth of words - intonation, the creation of letters - writing and culture. Because man exists only in culture and through culture.

Anchoring the whole poetry of Norwid in gestures and interactions gives it anthropological depth unavailable elsewhere. Spaciousness of the thoughts even determines the content of his reflections, of which Norwid knew very well. Even a fragment from his letter⁶¹ is an evidence of this:

Jednym słowem, protestuje się tylko wtedy, *kiedy się na tym samym co przeciwnik stanęło gruncie* - i to wszech-rzeczywisty jest pewnik. Stań wyżej niż przeciwnik, a nie zapotrzebujesz protestacji - stanąć zaś wyżej jest to właśnie stanąć nie poprzez *nie*, ale

⁵⁸ K. WOJTYŁA, *Osoba i czyn oraz inne studia antropologiczne*, Lublin: TN KUL 2000, p. 164.

⁵⁹ Cf. M. MASŁOWSKI, *Gest, symbol i rytuały polskiego teatru romantycznego*, [in:] ID., *Etyka i metafizyka. Perspektywa transcendencji poziomej we współczesnej kulturze polskiej*, Warszawa: Neriton 2011.

⁶⁰ In the biblical tradition, the word *aman* with the same root as 'amen' is most often translated as 'truth', 'veritas' (cf. Psalm 85 (84), 12). That means 'something that is to last, being solid, sure, trustworthy'. NIV and the Bible, ed., Fr. Michał Peter (Poznań: Księgarnia św. Wojciecha 2009), translates the word as 'faithfulness'.

⁶¹ Letter to Józef Łussakowski, written before 10th November, 1854 (C. NORWID, *Dziela wszystkie*, v. X: *Listy I: 1839-1854*, ed. J. Rudnicka, Lublin 2008, p. 532).

poprzez *tak*. (In a word, one protests only *when he stands on the same ground as his enemy*, and it is all-real certainty. Stand higher than your opponent, and you will not need to protest; standing higher is not to stand by *no*, but standing by *yes*.)

Norwid stood on the same ground as Romantics, and, therefore, he opposed to them by critics⁶². But we are, almost two hundred years after him, and, in a sense, on the ground located higher. Thanks to all the conquests of modern anthropology, we can “from above” say “yes” to his genius and the direction of his universalizing thought, national paradigm of culture born in Romanticism as well as establishing a metaphysical sense inside the anthropology of man.

Translated by Bogdan Malec

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⁶² Cf. Z. STEFANOWSKA, *Strona romantyków*, p. 70.

AN OUTLINE OF CULTURE ANTHROPOLOGY
IN NORWID'S OEUVRE

S u m m a r y

Norwid's reliance on gestures, behaviours and interactions in his poetry unveils the anthropological foundations of his line of thought. These foundations enable our understanding of his working philosophy, words and letters. Interactions make part of his discourse infrastructure, as defined in behavioural research, which developed no sooner than the 1950s and the 1960 (e.g. Lorenz, Goffman, Hall, Berne or Turner). Applying these categories to analyse Norwid's *Promethidion* (1850) and *Rzecz o wolności słowa* [On the freedom of the Word] (1869) as well as such other poems like *Fatum* or *Rozebrana* [Partitioned] helps us observe how humanity emerges out of amazement – that how consciousness and the experience of work undergo sublimation to turn into the word. At the advent of Christ, the Word became power, which resulted in ethical universalism and in the realization of the messianic nature of work, guiding us towards resurrection (self-transcendence). Norwid's thought, situating the metaphysical sense within the realm of anthropology, hugely influenced the theology of John Paul II..

Key words: anthropology; gesture; work; interaction; messianic nature of work; self-transcendence.

Słowa kluczowe: antropologia; gest; praca; interakcja; mesjanizm pracy; samotranscendencja.

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