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## CYPRIAN NORWID IN “NOWA REFORMA”. UNKNOWN DICTA\*

A query of “Nowa Reforma” of 1882-1894 revealed some articles dedicated to Cyprian Norwid. Some of them are known and have been reprinted several times: the obituary (publ. 5<sup>th</sup> June 1883, No. 121) and brief notes on his poetic legacy (1883, No. 124, 126)<sup>1</sup>. Mieczysław Pawlikowski is indicated as the author of those mentions; the poet met him in 1856 in Paris and they stayed in touch for many years. The contact is proven by the publication of the poem *Do wroga* in “Dziennik Literacki”, whose editor was Pawlikowski<sup>2</sup>. The significance of Norwid for the Kraków milieu, who considered themselves progressive and democratic as opposed to the conservative “Stańczyk” faction, is proven by the fact that the poet’s statements, written down years before in Paris, were used by Pawlikowski, who was one of the most important publicists and activists of the group<sup>3</sup>. Their views were convergent with Norwid’s social and political opinions, expressed by him e.g. in *Przyczynek do “Rzeczy o wolności słowa”* in 1871. In 1872, Pawlikowski published the poet’s opinions on the poetry of Stanisław Ostroróg in the “Kraj” weekly he was the editor of, but the majority of the poet’s statements noted by Pawlikowski were made available as late as in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in a publication

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\* The article has been written within grant NPRH0031 Poezja na marginesie cywilizacji 1864-1894. Degradacja i odrodzenie twórczości poetyckiej w latach 1864-1894.

<sup>1</sup> See Z. TROJANOWICZOWA, E. LIJEWSKA with M. PLUTA, *Kalendarz życia i twórczości Cypriana Norwida 1861-1883*, Poznań 2007, pp. 790-792.

<sup>2</sup> Mentions of the poet’s acquaintance with Pawlikowski come from the time of the January Uprising of 1863, see *ibid.*, pp. 180ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Mieczysław Pawlikowski*, [in:] *Słownik literatury polskiej*, vol. II, J. Krzyżanowski, Warszawa 1985, p. 154.

by Jacek Woźniakowski and in the *Pisma wszystkie* edition prepared by Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki<sup>4</sup>.

In 1885, the poet's name reappeared in "Nowa Reforma"<sup>5</sup>, a daily published by Pawlikowski, with Adam Asnyk as the editor. The first of the articles of interest was published in 1885 in No. 78, titled *Ze skarbca poezji*. Below given is the full column, as it has not been reprinted since:

The Polish lyre always sounded the strongest with the tones of love for the homeland. The dominating song of that tone is the outstanding feature of Polish poetry which differentiates it from the poetry of other nations, gives it a character of its very own, as well as a separate, exceptional significance and importance in the life of the nation. Indeed, you shall not find another such huge European literature in which all kinds of poetry: epos, drama, ode, psalm, elegy, draw equal inspiration from the arch-pure spring of patriotic emotion. The satire flogs national flaws; the tale recalls happier times for the nation in its home; the dumka yearns for those happier times; descriptive poems form the "song of our land"; the poet sings of the homeland in a love song to a girl; a child hears of it in a lullaby sang by Ujejski, Lenartowicz, Jabłoński; even in a fairy tale, Krasicki, Morawski, Gorecki invigorate our national feelings.

So it is. That inseparability of love for the homeland from any poetic activity is the most characteristic trait of Polish poetry, and not just today. That feature shows at times already with our poets of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and its development can undeniably be traced in the history of our literature before our loss of existence as a political entity. However, our poetry-writing used to be at that time mostly as it is with happy nations – what Kochowski called "non-dawdling dawdle". Only in the post-Partitions era, that golden cord of love of the motherland, struck with the storm of events and tingling with heartfelt dolour, sounds with a growing power of tone. Washed with tears of misery, it reaches higher and higher notes. If the much-repeated statement be true that a poet needs to experience pain and misery in order to create masterpieces, the more right it is to state the same towards the whole Polish nation. The history of our poetry is a living proof of that sentence. The misery of the motherland is the muse of Polish poets, and writes their inspiration.

Cyprian Norwid, through whose mystic mind flashed many an amazingly clear and deep thought, striking with sharpness of perception, was once witness to an animated discussion on our poets in a circle of younger friends; the greatest were lauded, then came secondary stars of that galaxy. One of the disputants mentioned – if we remember rightly – the name Gosławski...

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<sup>4</sup> C. NORWID, *Pisma wszystkie*, vol. XI, prep. by J.W. Gomulicki, Warszawa 1976, pp. 477-478; J. WOŹNIAKOWSKI, M. PAWLIKOWSKA, *Nieznane dicta Słowackiego i Norwida*, "Tygodnik Powszechny" 1973, No. 30; Norwid's *dicta* used by Pawlikowski in "Kraj" were found and published by R. Okulicz-Kozaryn, see "*Ze zwykłą sobie oryginalnością zdania*". *Dictum Cypriana Norwida w krakowskim "Kraju" z 1872 roku*. "Studia Norwidiana" 32: 2014.

<sup>5</sup> "Nowa Reforma" – Kraków liberal-democratic daily issued in 1882-1928 (in 1882 as "Reforma"), edited in the 1880s by A. Asnyk and T. Romanowicz.

"He is not a poet," Cyprian interrupted. "He is simply a patriot who loved the motherland so much, he became a poet in that love."

"How can that be?" asked some of us. "Does patriotism show in writing poems?"

"However many of you, young men," said Cyprian, "when falling in love for the very first time, have written a song worthy of the greatest poets, had you even never before or after written a poem? And if the love of a maiden makes a poet, how could love of the homeland not make one... *Indignatio facit versum*<sup>6</sup>, said Juvenal, and love is able to achieve greater miracles than indignation... And Rouget d'Isle, and *La Marseillaise*...<sup>7</sup> Poetry is not mere art, nor is it *opera d'inchostro*, as Ariosto called it<sup>8</sup>... Poetry is the nature of human spirit. Wild flowers sometimes more beautiful and fragrant be than those carefully raised in greenhouses. Their seeds sleep in every soil; if it be moistened with tears and warmed with the sun – they shall sprout. After His resurrection, the Lord showed Himself to Magdalena in the shape of a gardener; He is the one to care for those flowers... And we have more of them than anyone. There are many of those wild, fragrant flowers in our literary works, in song-books and manuscripts. And how many of them are forever unwritten, passing from mouth to mouth like relics in family tradition – until their last echoes die off somewhere in exile, or are wiped out with loss of memory in some degraded generation... But why speak of field flowers, when so many of the most valuable jewels of our poetry were irrevocably lost for the very reason of the brilliance of love of homeland which they shone with. Emigrant poets sang to us of Poland, and their works are in everyone's hands today, but those who stayed in the motherland could sing of their most heartfelt dolour only to their families or closest of friends, afraid to entrust their song to writing and thus risk paying for it with a jail sentence. What we have of their works, contains nearly nothing of the songs inspired by that feeling which was superior in their souls and in their lives. Only exceptionally, some patriotic works by Gustaw Zieliński, Syrokomla, Żmichowska, Jaśkowski, Grudziński and so many others, survived<sup>9</sup>. They should have been collected while there was still time.

The commentary on Maurycy Gosławski, previously unknown, matches the opinion of J.U. Niemcewicz as published by J. Woźniakowski and M. Pawlikowski: "Niemcewicz był takim patriotą, że czasem nawet poetą był" (after: PWsz XI, 478) ["Niemcewicz was such a patriot that sometimes he was even

<sup>6</sup> *Indignatio facit versum* – indignation gives inspiration to verse.

<sup>7</sup> Norwid was probably indicating parallels in the biographies of Gosławski and Rouget d'Isle (real name Claude Joseph Rouget de Lisle, 1760-1836), a soldier and army engineer, who is best remembered as the author of lyrics to *La Marseillaise*.

<sup>8</sup> *Opera d'inchostro* (Italian) – lit. work of ink – expression used by Ariosto in the introduction to *Orlando Furioso*.

<sup>9</sup> Norwid obviously meant poets who stayed in Poland (non-emigrants), and whom he knew not just from their writings, but also personally. Stanisław Grudziński (1852-1884), a Positivist poet, could be personally known rather to Pawlikowski than Norwid, as he came from Kraków and stayed in the Lviv milieu in 1870-1877, but it cannot be ruled out that Norwid knew Grudziński's poems.

a poet”]. In “Nowa Reforma”, the comment was developed in a manner. Interestingly, when reading the anecdote, it seems that Norwid did not deny the value of such poetry, which could be called incidental. He actually made poetic records of important figures of his time himself, to name just emir Abdel Kader or John Brown, so he also wrote some incidental works. Yet what seems very Norwid-like in that statement is the awareness of the ephemerality of poetic matter. Pawlikowski’s Norwid speaks in the name of poets staying in Poland, those forgotten and never published ones, because their work, either oral or manuscripted, never survived. Norwid also has awareness of the matter: the written word and print. Hence that anecdote is an introduction to the first printing of the manuscripts of unknown poems by Syrokomla. With his article, Pawlikowski follows a very important tendency of that era, the beginnings of university history of literature, as he publishes *inedita*.

Norwid’s *dicta*, noted by Pawlikowski, are distinct, emphatic, and memorable. The authorship does not seem questionable. Yet it is interesting that Norwid’s statements, his “golden thoughts” were noted down and remembered as *dicta*, like it was e.g. with Mickiewicz. The latter did enjoy fame across Europe and it was obvious that each mention he gave, each word he spoke had value. With Norwid, one may surmise that those maxims and the manner of saying them were part of the poet’s conscious strategy. That aspect of his work has in the recent year become a topic of detailed analyses<sup>10</sup>. In particular in contact with younger fellow writers, the author of *Quidam* used distinct maxims or parables which stayed in the listeners’ memory, thus creating the relations of teacher and students, of master and disciples. That is proven by the recollections of e.g. Józef Tokarzewicz, who “z rozkoszą go zawsze słuchał” (PWsz XI, 489) [“always listened to him in rapture”], and Mieczysław Geniusz quoted a significant anecdote in one of his letters to Przesmycki:

“There was once a hunchback,” said Norwid, “who hid from the world all year long, so that no one knew of him; but he would appear during the carnival and enjoy great popularity with the crowds, who marvelled at how wonderfully he played the role of a hunchback, like no one else in the world could. And when the carnival ended, he hid from the world again. Poland is much like that hunchback”.

And turning to me, he added: “Remember that apologue, for it has not ever been written down” (PWsz XI, 499).

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<sup>10</sup> See e.g. D. PLUCIŃSKA, *Sentencjonalność Norwida. O “Vade-mecum” i trylogii włoskiej*, Lublin 2005; A. ROTTER-BOURKANE, *Traktat i traktatowość w poematach Cypriana Norwida*, Poznań 2014.

Geniusz sent that anecdote to Przesmycki many years later; in the case of the editors of "Kraj" and "Nowa Reforma", it may be assumed that the meeting with Norwid was a source of various inspirations. Norwid's comments on the nature of patriotic poetry could be viewed as variations of the question posed in *Bran-solejka*: "Jestże się poetą, czyli raczej tylko bywa się?" ["Are you a poet always, or only incidentally?"].

Norwid does not always appear in "Nowa Reforma" as an authority. His works are also subjected to some criticism and placed in a certain model of literature history. In that same year, 1885, issue 21 had an article signed with a brief P. (for Mieczysław Pawlikowski), titled *Pogadanka literacka. Poeci i krytycy*, which also mentions Cyprian Norwid. The text is so interesting in itself that it is worth quoting in its entirety, as given below:

After the Renaissance comes Baroque. Experience gained in architecture also functioned in our poetry. It was that very same ornamental overload, the same fragmentation of lines first graceful in their simplicity with curvatures of no meaning or grace, with distasteful coquetry of details, with affectation that was offensive to even the most primitive sense of truth and beauty. After the great era of renaissance of our poetry, such is the most general nature of the following period.

True, the great poets had worthy epigones, but few of even those worthy ones did not later yield to the trend which seems to lie in the very nature of development. After the Renaissance comes Baroque. What is more, out of the triad of our great poets, only Adam alone can be free from charge in that respect, having abandoned the pen too early. In his last works, Zygmunt lapsed into a manner very reminiscent of Baroque, and Juliusz seemed to lean in that same direction with the mis-proportion of episodes.

What is there to say about Pol's last poems, of him whose songs once used to shine with exquisite simplicity? What about Bohdan? about the writings of the unrivalled author of *Lirenka*? The author of *Chorał* fell silent, abruptly ending the last chords of his song with a dithyramb alike the exaggerated pathos of a French poet. Norwid sank in the Sargasso sea of riddles.

Only a few healthy, strong natures survived. The survivors were mainly those who – not locking themselves in a closed circle of Renaissance motifs – opened their minds fully to modern philosophical, scientific, political and social trends and inspired by progressive ideas, felt a new Spring being born in their souls, reaching horizons so far unknown to poetic writings. Those are not epigones of the past era, those are progenitors of a new family of poets.

Indeed, each year the number grows of young songsters who wish to echo their song and stand with them under the same banner. Yet all of them bear all the marks of the transitory era, that turn of events which gives wings to their poetic imagination, but wings which draw them in two directions opposite to each other.

But is this moment still the era of poetry? Or perhaps it is one *again*? ... Is the time of song past? Does it pass forever, or at least for long? ... Does it start anew with a Spring?

Never have any contemporaries given fair judgement on the modern time. Some state the closure of the poetic era too firmly, other deny it too strongly. The former support their views with the fact that today we lack another Mickiewicz or another Słowacki, or Krasiński – as if such giants were born each year like corn in the field. The latter see the great number of poetry published nowadays and the yearly appearance of a new host of young poets as proof that the nightingales have not silenced their songs in our groves yet, and the Spring of national rebirth has not passed. The sowers of the word still throw into Polish hearts that golden seed which will have lush corn shoot into the sky in a hot summer, and from that corn we will reap rich harvest one Autumn...

Die, my songs; rise, my deeds!

Feeling Tyrtæan power in their chests, the poets of our Romantic era, the golden prime of poetry, prophesied an era of deed after the era of song. They had not yet the awareness that their song was that most potent and most momentous deed which the Polish thought was able to achieve at that moment, the greatest victory which could be won in those particular relations, for it brought life and salvation to the national spirit and national hopes. We owe it to their song that we did not grow apathetic to national aspirations, that the Polish thought warms our works and efforts in each area of political, social and scientific activity, and that literature and art breathes with family cordiality and feeling.

After the era of great poets, in all history of literature there usually came the era of thinkers. That is the very logic of things – if the analogy between the development of individual spirit and the national spirit be fitting, the very nature of the human mind involves the necessity of such a succession. After moments of zeal – moments of consideration. After poetry – criticism. Yet we had to wait a long time for critics after the time of our great poets. Mochnecki's brilliant writing lacked worthy successors. In the area of philosophy, our scholars joined the choir of German philosophers. In the area of criticism, literary works were judged by us in a stencilled, cosmopolitan fashion of aesthetic doctrines and precepts; we lacked the ability of deeper insight into the national spirit of the authors. What was in our poets the mark of most independent writing, what was their significance, their main merit and most outstanding feature of originality, that immensely strong national individuality characterising their works – that was what the cosmopolitan nature of our criticism could not raise and present in the right light.

I shall pass over other writers who, rather than critics, ought to be called apologists of our poets. In absolute esteem and homage for the bards, they extolled the nobility of the poets' patriotic feelings, raised their influence and significance in such a manner which would befit a homage to outstanding speakers or statesmen. They appreciated everything but their poetry. The aesthetic and literary worth of a poem was the one side which the critic paid least attention to, viewing it only as a sophisticated frame of the painting. The writings of poets and novelists were classified according to the patriotic thermometer, as if they were political brochures meant exclusively to propagate a national sense of independence.

That was a lowering of the level of criticism which could only be justified to a certain extent by the exceptional situation of the nation. The critical mind became a servant of national propaganda. Yet soon the level of national criticism was to fall even lower; any lower depths were likely not attainable. The pen of the new-school critics, full of bom-

bastianic baroque clichés hiding shallow thought, perfumed with cosmetics of ambiguous elegance and adorned with reliquaries of suspicious sanctimoniousness, committed itself to political service, violating conscientious impartiality. But their predecessors changed criticism into an instrument of national propaganda, while the criticism of this new school became convenient for that or other political faction, party or clique; it became propinatory, offering support to cohorts of mutual admiration, and gall to opponents; it became a servant of private self-interest. A noble turn against that tide occurred only recently: a turn too distinct to fail to assign resounding and excellent significance thereto; a turn which allows to see it as a greatly auspicious symptom of national life, a presage which promises the best of hopes for development in that area of literature, where previously we could not keep pace with our neighbours.

The task was approached differently. You put a different measure to the work of a living poet, and quite different to the literary output of a writer who is part of the history of literature. It must be viewed in its entirety in order to put the poet's name in its rightful place. In order to achieve that aim and pass a fair sentence, one needs thorough knowledge of the time and conditions of the place when and where the writer marked his name; thorough knowledge on the influences which shaped his development and direction. No detail of his life can be indifferent to a critic. After collective issues of our poets' works, scholars set about collecting materials for their biographies. Diligent work ensued: their letters were published, the chronology, dates and succession of works were checked, characteristic recollections of their contemporaries, which could cast light on their lives, were collected. Only such a basis allows critical work. What was done in that respect for Mickiewicz, Słowacki, Krasiński is a lot, but definitely not all. For a whole galaxy of the skies, little was done as of yet.

This past year brought us a few works – fruit of that critical work on Mickiewicz and Słowacki. A splendid work by J. Tretiak (*Mickiewicz w Wilnie i Kownie*) covers a sizable period from Adam's life. The freshly issued worklet by A. Mazanowski (*Adam Mickiewicz od 1829-1832. Życie, rozwój umysłu, geneza dzieł*) is also a very valuable contribution to the field. Finally, in his aesthetic-literary study on *Pan Tadeusz*, H. Biegeleisen provided a remarkable model for any work in that area, which should encourage more studies conducted in that manner. We highly value his merit and would gladly forget the faults of his work, unfortunate opinions on emigrations, etc. It is also worth noting the papers contained in W. Nehring's literary studies, collected and issued for Kochanowski's jubilee. Finally, mentionworthy is W. Bełza's *Kronika anegdotyczna z życia Mickiewicza*, containing many a notable and otherwise unknown detail, which critics of the book could not duly distinguish and appreciate. H. Biegeleisen's studies on Słowacki printed both in various papers and collected in a separate book also give many important materials and many comments valuable for a future biographer and historian of literature. Mr Biegeleisen's credit lies also in the fact that he issued one drama (*Agezylausz*) and many previously unprinted posthumous poems and writings of the poet from the manuscript collections of the Ossolińskis Library and thus sought to supplement the work done in the major part by Prof. Małecki years earlier. But however much still remains to be done in the matter!

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What draws attention in that long article is the very sober judgement of the condition of Polish literature after 1863. To the closed era of great poets, the author adds Norwid, as well, criticising him for “mannerism” or epigonism towards his predecessors. In this study, like in many other literary history syntheses, the poet was placed in the decline of Romanticism, just like J.B. Zaleski, K. Ujejski or T. Lenartowicz. Familiar are the comments on literary criticism, and mainly the charge that it measured the value of poetry with its commitment to patriotic issues. They resemble Norwid’s complaints of lack of professional criticism concerning literature. To quote a fragment from the foreword to *Vade-mecum*:

Taki przeto obecny stan poezji polskiej i takie jej dwukrańcowe położenie powodują, iż znajduje się ona w chwili krytycznej. Ani dziennikarstwo, ani sztuki, ani ludowakwestia nie rozwijają się dość szybko, aby poezję polską zwolnić od służb i atrybutów czasowo jej właściwych, ani znowu jeszcze są tak słabo poczynającymi, aby się jej nie dawały uczuć (PWsz II, 10).

[Such current condition of Polish poetry, and such dipolar situation thereof place it in a critical moment. Neither journalism, nor arts, nor the national-matter develop quickly enough to liberate Polish poetry from the service and attributes temporarily proper to it, and neither are they so weakly developed to not have an impact on it.]

Norwid saw in the new post-insurrection time a chance for a rebirth of literary and cultural life. He saw the dynamically developing post-1863 periodical press movement as a chance, and not the cause of the fall of poetry. Yet it is known from the poet’s biography that his hopes of publishing the whole *Vade-mecum* cycle were in vain. Indeed, Norwid lived between two eras: as a young man making his debut in the press, he was unable to publish a full collection of his poems in Poland (the only authorial edition of his poetry was issued in Leipzig in 1862 by Brockhaus); and after 1864, it was far easier for poets to make a debut and regular appearance in papers, which actually paid poets for that in many cases. It is somewhat justifiable that in that time, his attempts to publish a whole volume of poetry (*Vade-mecum*) failed to gain understanding. It may be surmised that not only the opinion of the poet being a difficult and “dark” writer, but also a different quality and temperature of literary life, as well as the mass character of poetry circulation contributed to that.

The mentions of Norwid indicated in this paper provoke not only to ponder on the social history of literature, but also to consider Norwid’s place in the thought and aesthetics of Positivism. The most urgent of tasks would be another reevaluation and repeated analysis of the poet’s contacts with the milieu of the Lviv “Dziennik Literacki”, and later with the Kraków liberal group, especially Mieczysław



Pawlikowski. That would involve re-studying the works of the latter, and in particular his journalistic writing. Perhaps before Przesmycki's publications, Norwid was present more as a thinker or mentor than a poet, and his thought agreed with the new tendencies in Polish intellectual life and played a significant role.

*Translated by Anna Maria Gernand*

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## CYPRIAN NORWID W „NOWEJ REFORMIE”. NIEZNANE *DICTA*

### S t r e s z c z e n i e

W artykule zostały przedstawione dwa nieznane dotąd w literaturze przedmiotu felietony z „Nowej Reformy”, zawierające wzmianki o Norwidzie oraz cytaty pochodzące z rozmów z nim. Oba teksty są najprawdopodobniej autorstwa Mieczysława Pawlikowskiego. Autorka zwróciła uwagę na zbieżność pewnych idei eksponowanych przez autora (autorów) z poglądami samego Norwida. Pracę kończy postulat dotyczący zbadania związków ideowo-estetycznych środowiska skupionego wokół krakowskiego „Kraju” i „Nowej Reformy” z myślą Norwida.

**Słowa kluczowe:** recepcja; Cyprian Norwid; Mieczysław Pawlikowski; historia literatury XIX w.; czasopiśmiennictwo XIX w.; dzienniki.

## CYPRIAN NORWID IN “NOWA REFORMA”. UNKNOWN *DICTA*

### S u m m a r y

This contribution presents two feature articles from “Nowa Reforma” which are unknown in the literature of the subject and which contain references to Norwid and quotes from conversations with him. Both texts are most likely authored by Mieczysław Pawlikowski. The author drew attention to the convergence of certain ideas proposed by the author(s) with the views of Norwid himself. The article ends with a postulate to examine the ideological and aesthetic relationships of the group centred around Krakow-based periodicals “Kraj” and “Nowa Reforma” with Norwid’s thought.

**Key words:** reception; Cyprian Norwid; Mieczysław Pawlikowski; history of 19<sup>th</sup>-century literature; 19<sup>th</sup>-century periodicals; diaries.

*Translated by Rafał Augustyn*

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