

Magdalena Woźniowska - Działak – DID NORWID THINK
IN A TREATISE-LIKE
MANNER?

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It is difficult not to agree with Anna Roter-Bourkane, the author of the book *Traktat i traktatowość w poematach Cypriana Norwida*¹ [Treatise and Treatiseness in Poems by Cyprian Norwid] that the treatise trend is immensely important to Norwid's poetry. This is best demonstrated by both the artistic significance and the intellectual importance of such works as *Promethidion* or *Rzecz o wolności słowa*. However, the relatively short publication by Anna Roter-Bourkane has not yet managed to become well-known among Norwid Studies scholars; the more so it seems reasonable to present its main themes and observations.

The publication belongs to a series of lively genological studies aimed at identifying the components making up Norwid's work. This research problem – as we remember – was directly addressed in a collective volume edited by Adela Kuik-Kalinowska *Genologia Cypriana Norwid* (Słupsk 2005). In addition, the issue has often been approached while analysing Norwid's poems, which have recently drawn the attention of researchers just as much as Norwid's lyric poetry and drama². But it should be emphasized that Anna Roter-Bourkane tries to base the "catalogue of treatise determinants" (p. 12) mainly on the article by Marek Zaleski *O poezji "traktatowej"*, which focuses on the works by Czesław Miłosz ('Pamiętnik Literacki' 1977, vol. 3). In the following, we shall take a closer look at the contents of the book by the researcher from Poznań.

Anna Roter-Bourkane's book is divided into five chapters preceded by a short introduction *Od autorki* [From the author], and closes with a less than three-page *Zakończenie* [Conclusion]. Unfortunately, the book has no name or subject index. Chapter I entitled *Dlaczego Norwidowski traktat?* [Why Norwid's treaties?] and Chapter II *Norwid a pojęcie i tradycja traktatu poetyckiego* [Norwid and the con-

¹ Poznań: Wydawnictwo Rys, 2014, 163 pages.

² In particular: R. FIEGUTH, *Zaproszenie do "Quidama". Portret poematu Cypriana Norwida*, Kraków 2014; "Quidam". *Studia o poemacie*, ed. P. Chlebowski, Lublin 2011; M. WOŹNIEWSKA-DZIAŁAK, *Poematy narracyjne Norwida: konteksty literacko-kulturalne, estetyka, myśl*, Kraków 2014; P. CHLEBOWSKI, *Cypriana Norwida "Rzecz o wolności słowa"*, Lublin 2000; G. HALKIEWICZ-SOJAK, *Z genologicznej perspektywy*, [in:] *Nawiązane ogniwo. Studia o poezji Cypriana Norwida i jej kontekstach*, Toruń 2010, pp. 35-115.

cept and tradition of poetic treatise] serve as an introduction, as both present the assumptions and the context. The author formulates here the main problems of the dissertation which, according to the title of the book, concern the research on the presence of the form of treatise in Norwid's works (p. 9). At the same time, she makes a reservation that the research is burdened with a basic difficulty related to the lack of a full definition of the main concept. As she writes:

Traktat jest gatunkiem tyleż znanym, co tajemniczym. Literaturoznawstwo operując bezustannie tym terminem, niekiedy dookreślając go jeszcze epitetami: poetycki, filozoficzny, teologiczny etc., rzadko definiuje to pojęcie (p. 9).

[The treatise is a genre as much known as mysterious. Literary studies, constantly using this term, sometimes further specifying it with epithets: poetic, philosophical, theological etc., rarely defines this concept.]

However, etymology and dictionary definitions of the term (including German, French and English), presented further, at least partially suspend the signalled helplessness caused by the absence of definitional order. Ultimately, we read that:

Polskie definicje słownikowe nie odbiegają w znaczący sposób od wyżej omówionych, jeśli chodzi o *meritum* pojęcia traktat, od Lindego po Doroszewskiego wyraz ten funkcjonuje jako synonim rozprawy naukowej (p. 27).

[Polish dictionary definitions do not differ significantly from those discussed above, as for the *essence* of the notion treatise, from Linde to Doroszewski this word functions as a synonym for a scientific dissertation.]

Nevertheless, the author considers her research situation to be pioneering, mobilising to clarify what has not been specified so far. Norwid himself does not come to help. Following Anna Roter-Bourkane, we should notice that Norwid rarely refers to his works as treatise. The contexts in which he uses this term are not related to his works, but they allow the author to conclude that Norwid referred them to the literary tradition of the Church Fathers and that it requires "an attitude full of reverence and precision" (p. 10). The author assures that Norwid's works abound in treatise-like forms (hence the need to limit the research material), because the poet perfectly "felt" the genre of treatise (p. 10), and he had a deep awareness of this form (p. 10) and that "the treatise-like nature of the text was closest to him" (p. 10). Anna Roter-Bourkane describes the poems which she discussed in more detail in further parts of her book as works of a lyrical nature, linked to typical treatise discourse (p. 11). This refers to *Pieśni społecznej cztery stron*, *Promethidion*, *Rzecz w dwóch dialogach z epilogiem*, *Rzecz o wolności*

*słowa*³. The analysis of these works was to show “the immersion of poem in tradition, both ancient and modern” and bring “a series of observations regarding the genealogical awareness of the author himself [...]” (p. 12).

The assumptions of the book include the conclusion (or rather the opinion) that “the difficulty of being confronted with Norwid’s works” results from the “inability to overcome the barrier of intricate discursiveness” of his texts (p. 25). The author links this discursiveness with Norwid’s ambition to speak about important issues – issues of social, political, historical and artistic relevance. At the same time, she points to its relationship with treatise, which here stands synonymously for a lecture, dissertation, dialogue (p. 25). The main issue – I believe – lies in the distinction between treatise poem as a genealogical form from the treatise-ness⁴ understood in this or other way. According to the author, there is a form that can be called treatise poematic form. The presence of its determining features allows to define a work as a treatise poem. Obviously, some irregularities or deviations in the ways it is construed should not be excluded. On the other hand, the author talks about treatise-ness when the form of a treatise poem is not coherently implemented, when it is not dominant, but is a subordinate component of a literary expression. The features that derive from the form of treatise poem in a given utterance (rhetoricity, dialogicity, persuasiveness) constitute a set of subordinate features that allow to associate it with a specific tradition. Thus, in her book, Anna Roter-Bourkane does not make a clear distinction between the genealogical form of treatise and the potential aesthetics of treatise-ness, which should be defined – typically – by certain determinants of the subject strategy and appropriate aspects of the aesthetic valorisation of the presented world⁵. The question about the possible aesthetics of ‘traktatowość’ [treatise-ness] is asked here because in the construction of the term with the characteristic suffix “-ość” (in analogy to ‘dramatyczność’ [dramatic quality], ‘epickość’ [narrative quality]) there is an appropriate suggestion, and the term lyricism becomes an interpretative tool for the author in one of the following chapters (the one dedicated to *Rzecz o wolności słowa*).

³ The author analyses *Pieśń społeczna*, *Promethidiona* and *Rzecz o wolności słowa* using Volume 3 of Norwid’s *Pisma wszystkie* compiled by Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki.

⁴ Translator’s note: due to the lack of a better equivalent of the Polish term *traktatowość*, the neological form *treatise-ness* is introduced here to refer to ‘properties and features typical of treatise understood as a text genre’ or ‘something that is treatise-like in nature, has treatise quality’.

⁵ In a previous publication, Anna Roter-Bourkane refers to treatise-ness as “certain aesthetic value”. See A. ROTER-BOURKANE, *Od “miłości” do “Moralności” – o formie traktatowej w prozie i lirykach Norwida*, [in:] *Genologia Cypriana Norwida*, ed. A. Kuik-Kalinowska, Słupsk 2005, p. 250.

Treatise poem and treatise-ness are not, I think, made distinct in the book. The first one is understood in a way that refers the term “poetic treatise” to old didactic and descriptive literature rather than to modern treatise poetry in a more precise sense. In Chapter IV, there is even a pregnant comparison referring to it: “the more didacticism, the more treatise-ness there is in it”. The latter, however, functions as a subgenre element (the term introduced by Bogusław Doparta) – and this perhaps only in the context of a lyrical work:

Przez traktat poetycki zatem – pisze Anna Roter-Bourkane – rozumieć będę autonomiczne dzieło wierszowane, noszące znamiona wykładu czy rozprawy o charakterze monograficznym, bądź też utwór będący realizacją synkretyzmu traktatu i dialogu, jak ma to miejsce np. w Norwidowskim *Promethidionie*. Wszystkie wymienione wyżej cechy, charakterystyczne dla traktatu jako formy prozatorskiej, można również odszukać w poematach – ich zespół zastosowany w liryce nazywać będę traktatowością (s. 31).

[Therefore, by poetical treatise – writes Anna Roter-Bourkane – I understand an autonomous poetical work, bearing the characteristics of a lecture or monographic dissertation, or a work that is the result of the syncretism of a treatise and a dialogue, as is the case in Norwid’s *Promethidion*. All the above-mentioned features, characteristic of treatise as a prose form, can also be found in poems – the set of such features used in lyric poetry I shall call treatise-ness.]

The declaration that “it is worth pointing to the milestones of genre peregrination” (p. 31), i.e. texts that are not without significance for Norwid’s work and which have a significant impact on shaping of his treatise form, is a direct consequence of the announced presentations of the context. The long review is opened here by Hesiod as the author of didactic and theologico-philosophical poems. Then the author points to Tyrtaeus and Solon, putting an emphasis on ancient didactics as a determinant of poetry undertaking “great” themes. The author sees important “archaic contexts for the issue of treatise-ness” (p. 36) in works by Xenophanes, Parmenides and Empedocles, then Lucretius, Virgil, Horace, Ovid and Dante. In the catalogue of ancient masters’ works, the author looks for what could influence Norwid’s thoughts, worldview, convictions about work, effort, duties towards another man and nation, fight, peace, love etc. and what set the rules for creating a perfect literary work. Thus, in the further parts of the book, the author mentions also the names of Klonowic, Nicolas Boileau, Delille, Alexander Pope, Dmochowski and Rzewuski (as the author of *O nauce wierszopisarskiej*), and Euzebiusz Słowacki. According to Anna Roter-Bourkane, this catalogue strengthens the belief that Norwid knew the theoretical assumptions of the classical school, the extensive knowledge of the rules of practicing verse art, the rigours of didactic poetry and its moralising function. Indeed, Norwid evokes

many of those in his statements and quotes. They are examples of creators striving to achieve in their work (or in recommendations for its creation) the idea of unity and the wholeness of the world. Therefore, the author formulates the fundamentally valid conclusion that:

Rozważania dotyczące cech poematu dydaktycznego uzasadniają ich obecność w poematach Norwida. Mowa tu zwłaszcza o *Pieśni społecznej... Promethidionie* i *Rzeczy o wolności słowa*. Noszą one bowiem wyraźne znamiona dydaktyzmu i moralizatorstwa, które są nieodłącznym elementem poezji poszukującej koherentnej wizji świata (p. 59).

[Considerations regarding the features of a didactic poem justify their presence in Norwid's poems. In particular, this refers to *Pieśni społecznej...*, *Promethidion* and *Rzecz o wolności słowa*. They bear the distinctive features of didacticism and moralising, which are an inherent element of the poetry looking for a coherent vision of the world.]

The above researcher's diagnosis is supplemented in the last passages of Chapter II, where she elaborates on genre syncretism inextricably connected to treatise-ness, implicating the work is a hybrid of different genres. The author concludes that the key to understanding Norwid's poematic form is the ability to reconstruct the genre mosaic of Norwid's work and to capture the poetic ambition of making it attractive in a mixture of genre components – story, dialogue, extended example (p. 60). According to Anna Roter-Bourkane – if I understand the author's idea correctly – this was the path followed by Norwid while perfecting his writing technique, at the same time striving for precision in formulating his own beliefs, which, however, led him as a poet to ruin. We read:

Świadectwem takiego zapomnienia o wskazówkach dawnych mistrzów, wyjścia już na spotkanie poetyki modernistycznej, jest blok tekstów, które myślowo będąc poematami dydaktycznymi, formalnie coraz bardziej oddalają się od tego wzorca. Wraz z dojrzewaniem Norwidowskiej idei, poematy jego ciemnieją, zachowując pewne tylko elementy traktatowości, w swej istocie są logicznym prowadzeniem rozważań, coraz bardziej brakuje w nich przejrzystości słowa (pp. 60-61)

[The testimony of such forgetting about the directions of the old masters, already the approach to modernist poetics, is a block of texts which, while from an ideological perspective are didactic poems, from the perspective of the form are increasingly distant from this model. As Norwid's idea was maturing, his poems were getting darker, retaining only some elements of treatise-ness, in their essence they were a logical way of thinking, and they were increasingly lacking the clarity of the word.]

– writes the author of the book, repeating the heavily overused opinion on the darkness and complexity of Norwid's works, which in contemporary Norwid

Studies is in principle no longer repeated. However, why is this happening here? Perhaps because the author remains on a general level of considerations, reducing the multidimensionality and polytypicality of Norwid's poem to genre syncretism.

Norwid was not just a "technician" or a copyist, he did not aspire only to be a poet-educator, although we know how important it was for him to shape the spirit and conscience through art. The effect of his creative exploration of the poetic form (both narrative and discursive) is not the result of the incautious deviation of an inept creator from the instructions of the masters of verse and erring in the world of his own ideas, but the natural consequence of the post-Romantic experiences of the poet struggling with the word. The turn towards genres defined by classical poetics – which seems obvious – after the Romantic turn is, after all, not a simple return to "writing poems" according to the old pattern and convention. The attachment to classical traditions poses here a problem in the field of aesthetics and philosophy of art, not just genealogy. And these – as I believe – accepted and obvious truths should not be entangled with the thread of alleged Norwid's meetings with modernism. Not in this place and not in this way. The closest and most valid context explaining these complexities is the context closest to the poet, i.e. simply the context of European post-Romanticism, which due to deep anthropological and civilizational reasons restores some pre-Romantic ideas of order and regularity and re-integrates what was split by the Romantic turn.

At this stage, several basic matters need to be sorted out. One may wonder why no attempt was made in the examined publication to classify Norwid's poems according to a key clearly defined for the purposes of the dissertation. Although, as the author claims, the book does not have monographic ambitions, the publication entitled *Traktat i traktatowość w poematach Cypriana Norwida* should have followed such an intention. It seems incomprehensible that there are no arrangements to organise the poetical work of the author of *Epimenides*, even if only on the basis of Barbara Subko's proposal⁶ (though, it would require a thoughtful consideration). This would perhaps allow to better understand what the author understands by a poem "of lyrical nature", which is linked to treatise discourse, especially since the attempt to deal with lyricism as the aesthetic dominant in *Rzecz o wolności słowa* in the research perspective put forward by Piotr Chlebowski – as I have already mentioned – is the main topic of the last chapter of the book. It is also not obvious whether the author from the very beginning decided only to reconstruct the form of Norwid's work endowed with components of treatise understood as a genre, or – as suggested by the use of the term treatise-

⁶ B. SUBKO, *O poematach Cypriana Norwida (próba typologii gatunku)*, "Prace Filologiczne" 43(1998).

ness (“leaning towards treatise-ness”, p. 14) – the researcher is also strongly, and perhaps above all, as it should be, interested in an aesthetic attitude, a treatise-like mode of subjectivity.

The problem is not solved by the author’s explanations regarding the “career of this type of writing” (p. 14) in the second half of the 19th century, although, as it can be supposed, she is concerned above all with poetological reconstructions. Hence probably the search in the early works of the poet (*Sieroty, Dumanie, Pióro, Pismo, Wieczór w pustkach*), as well as in the lyrical poems *Vade-mecum*, for features that can be associated with treatise forms, and in particular, and above all, with the ancient (or wider – classical) didactic, philosophical and descriptive writing. The circle of these features includes, among others, rhetoricity, didacticism, persuasiveness, and moralism. Therefore, it is necessary to return to the lack of certain important distinctions in Anna Roter-Bourkane’s dissertation. One may consider whether the distinction between the old didactic and descriptive tradition and modern treatise poetry, which is usually associated with Alexander Pope, would not be very desirable here⁷. It is impossible not to assume that Norwid directly continues the line of modern treatise poetry; that he perceives the antiquity from the perspective of this modern poetry, embodying a new form of literature and art, new codes, new achievements of intellectual and social culture, new visions of tradition in general and antiquity in particular.

These general methodological issues not articulated in this publication, which do not order the argument, as a result produce simplifications⁸. For example, at the end of Chapter I, where the author puts forward the thesis that the treatise-ness distinguishing Norwid’s works is a privileged way of organising his poetic expression and makes him a master of treatise, unlike for example Mickiewicz. Although, according to Anna Roter-Bourkane, treatise is one of many elements building the format of *Księgi narodu i pielgrzymstwa polskiego*, this is a completely different kind of treatise-ness. The author does not take into account the fact that Mickiewicz’s prose in *Księgi* is biblically stylized and is subject to the principles of the aesthetics of Romantic prophecy.

Pieśni społecznej cztery stron is a work that the author makes the subject of her attention in Chapter III. The ideological charge and the characteristic form

⁷ See: treatise poetry, [in:] M. GŁOWIŃSKI, T. KOSTKIEWICZOWA, A. OKOPIEŃ-SŁAWIŃSKA, J. SŁAWIŃSKI, *Słownik terminów literackich*, ed. J. Sławiński, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków 2000, p. 588.

⁸ And this is the trail suggested in the text by Marek Zaleski, with a very detailed and precise message summing up the attempt presented by the author in the text to describe “treatise poetry”. See M. ZALESKI, *O poezji “traktatowej”*, “Pamiętnik Literacki” 1977, vol. 3, p. 190.

of the work determine, according to the author, its representative role. It is called “a bundle of works”, because it was created in stages, and the consecutive links of *Pieśni...* formed a poem published in 1849. As we read, *Pieśni społecznej...* is a good example illustrating the existence of the treatise form – immature, fragmentary, but undoubtedly present. It is worth noting that the author assumes that the semantic intricacies of the poem cannot be solved. Waclaw Borowy’s consternation mentioned here, caused by the reading of *Pieśni...*, which is to justify the author’s helplessness concerning the text, may turn out to be unconvincing (p. 69). Is it then enough to note the melodious and rhythmical metre of the poem, short verses and simple rhymes, its aphoristic and gnomic nature, in order to be able to determine the didacticity and treatise-ness of the work? According to the author, yes. We read:

[...] dążenie do przejrzystości formy; skłonność do opozycyjnego ujmowania zdarzeń i opisywania rzeczywistości poprzez jasne rozgraniczenia na przeciwne sobie kwestie; stosowanie szeroko pojętych przykładów, mających być dla czytelnika ułatwieniem w postrzeganiu całości myśli oraz charakterystyczny stosunek do odbiorcy właśnie, zakładający przekonanie go jako główny cel utworu (p. 71)

[... striving for the transparency of the form; the tendency to contrast the events in an opposing way and describe reality through clear demarcations of opposite issues; the use of broadly understood examples, intended to be a facilitator for the reader to perceive the whole thought and a characteristic relation to the recipient, assuming that it is the main goal of the work.]

– these are the determinants of the treatise form. Simple, stylized syntax, dominant agricultural metaphor (!), references to the world of animals and plants are for the author an argument in favour of a firm setting of the work outlined in the previous part of the work, at the same time all these efforts are meant to emphasise the poet’s theses. But what are these? What is *Pieśni społecznej...* about? What are the important political and social problems addressed in the poem, about which the author writes – we do not find answers to these questions. Anna Roter-Bourkane points to Norwid’s symbolic ideas, great truths and reasons – but she does not explain them. Exposed superficially, they do not reveal the meaning of the poem, thus what is their purpose? Can the diagnosis of *Pieśni społecznej...* as a case of didactic literature, not without certain “pomp” (p. 88) be satisfactory? Does the conclusion that Norwid, despite numerous efforts and attempts, failed to achieve the intended effect, because “the accumulated considerations have burst the song’s topics”, meet the expected result of research on the form of the work?

One should also consider the author’s distance from the phenomenon of *Promethidion*. Chapter IV entitled *Nie książek, ale prawd* [Not books, but truths] begins

with the statement that it is only one of Norwid's more important works, which results from "the meaning of philosophy of art discussed in the work" (p. 89). The work itself remains for the researcher "as much interesting as it is not easy" (p. 89). It remains a work full of various treatments that serve its treatise-ness. The multi-genre basis of the poem's form allows the author to acknowledge the observations made a dozen years earlier by Stefan Sawicki, who referred to *Promethidion* as a collage⁹. Anna Roter-Bourkane is tracking Norwid's struggle with treatise in the collage-like nature of the work. This is an example of a work in which Norwid experiments with treatise; after his failed experiences with the folk song he turns to a broader genre perspective. As Anna Roter-Bourkane states, even a cursory reading reveals in *Promethidion* the presence of other genres burdened with treatise-ness (p. 91). This is a proof that Norwid consciously studies the specific "endurance" of various genres for the presence of treatise-ness. The introduction of the highest rank topics from the first parts of the poem (motto, introduction *Do czytelnika* [For the reader]), especially the issue of truth (in life and poetry), should confirm the ambition indicated above. Accepting the pose of a teacher and a seeker of truth, putting on the mask (among others) of a martyr for faith allows Norwid to implement the treatise project better than in the case of *Pieśni społecznej...*. The author recognises that in *Promethidion* "Norwid knew how to follow the advice of ancient orators" (p. 98), which he could not do before. Is it not worth asking here about Norwid's actual ambitions? Did the poet really strive to implement the advice of the ancient masters? Should the criterion of searching for the answer to the question about the form of the work really be the rhetorical rules of Aristotle and his followers? Is it methodologically accurate to apply the rules of ancient poetics to Norwid's poetics? Undoubtedly, in *Promethidion* Norwid acts as a mentor, he gives testimony, but it is not only and especially – as Anna Roter-Bourkane notes – about the form and genre. After all, the strength of Norwid's masterpiece, which also derives from its genological diversity, is the metatext. It is fully activated when we consider not the distant rules of ancient rhetoric, but above all the context of the epoch in which the poet lived and created¹⁰.

⁹ See S. SAWICKI, *Wstęp*, [in:] C. NORWID, *Promethidion. Rzecz w dwóch dialogach z epilogiem*, Kraków 1997. Another attempt to very broadly outline the research horizon concerning the genre conventions in the poem *Promethidion* is the dissertation by Agnieszka Ziółowicz, *O "romantyzmu ducha" czyli o dialogach formie "Promethidiona"* ([in:] IDEM, *Poszukiwanie wspólnoty. Estetyka dramatyczności a więź międzyludzka w literaturze polskiego romantyzmu (preliminaria)*, Kraków 2011, pp. 165-196). The disregard for this (after all earlier, preceding the book by Anna Roter-Bourkane by a few years) dissertation is not without effect on the adequacy of interpreting *Promethidion* in the reviewed publication.

¹⁰ In the text important for the author, *O poezji "traktatowej"*, Marek Zaleski writes about the

In the chapter devoted to *Promethidion*, it is proposed that the density of the determinants of treatise-ness of the epilogue should be sought in the number of references of this part of the poem to a dialogue which is easier to receive. The author proposes to measure the level of treatise-ness with the presence of a more readable dialogue. To this end, she briefly verifies the problems addressed in each of them, pointing to the leitmotifs of beauty, national art, and work. She illustrates these motifs with selected fragments of the text, sometimes without presenting ample arguments for her choice. Unfortunately, they do not allow for a comprehensive and, above all, ordered analysis, although they lead the author of the publication to conclusions about the fundamental differences and similarities of both dialogues in the examined work. We shall recall that among the similarities there is an analogical structure based on dialogue, the character of Konstany, frequent exclamations directed at the country, and jokes. As for the differences, the emphasis is put on a “different atmosphere”. *Bogumił* has many intertextual links to *Dziady*. We read that the dialogue “leaves in the recipient the impression of participating in one of the Romantic salon mysteries” (p. 115), while the emphasis is put here on the concept of the poet as a “transmitter” of the higher ideas. In *Wiesław*, it is different. Anna Roter-Bourkane acknowledges that this dialogue meets the criteria of a treatise. Here Norwid reaches for the tradition that is more distant than Romanticism – to the Enlightenment tradition of didactic texts. The clarity of the argument, the ordering of thoughts, the moralising and the educative role of the text (p. 118) determine *claritas* which dominated the Enlightenment argumentation. If this is the case, then *Promethidion* is to be an example of a text that perfectly implements the author’s idea of showing harmony in art on the example of a specific work. *Bogumił*, compositionally weaker, incoherent, immersed in the spirit of improvisation, is the opposite of the perfectly realised classical form in *Wiesław*. It is impossible not to object to these simplifications. The more so, as they lead the author of the dissertation not only to the conclusion that Norwid’s poem presents his concern for the balance and harmony between the form and the content, which we can admit is right, but also to the conviction that Norwid:

W ten sposób daje do zrozumienia, iż nowa sztuka w kraju winna opierać się na obu tych [klasycyzm, romantyzm – M.W.-D.], z obu brać to, co w nich było najlepszego, jednocześnie nie bać się przekraczania ich granic, dzięki czemu sztuka zyska nowoczesny

significance of the widely understood context. For example, he states: “One cannot disregard the cultural situation of an utterance – the proper interpretation structure of a work – determining the principles of its consistency” (p. 174).

charakter. Zabieg to „iście” postmodernistyczny, dziś już zapewne nikogo nie udałoby się nim zdziwić [...] (p. 121).

[In this way, he makes it clear that the new art in the country should be based on both [Classicism, Romanticism – M.W.-D.], derive from both what was best in them, at the same time not being afraid of crossing their borders, owing to which the art will gain a modern character. This treatment is “truly” postmodern, today probably no one would be surprised by it...].

One should not agree with this analogy, Norwid himself would probably never have agreed with it. The reception of the antiquity, the turn towards the phenomenon and the ideals of classical art and, at the same time, the creative reflection on the Romantic scale of redefining the values¹¹ (especially within the form) is not an easy path to post-modernism.

At the end of the chapter devoted to *Promethidion*, we read that Norwid’s treatise-ness is difficult to track (which is surprising when juxtaposed with previous sentences stating its ubiquity already in a cursory reading of the work), because it is “functionalised and subordinated to the role of, as it were, an attribute of the 18th-century mode of writing” (p. 121). And again, one can ask if the author does not generalise the problem too much? Would it not be better to follow the research of Grażyna Halkiewicz-Sojak, which was well-known to Anna Roter-Bourkane? Halkiewicz-Sojak proved how the association of speech patterns, e.g. classical, with various genres can trigger the elements of song, poetic display etc.¹² Would it not be worth looking into such connections, which here, in this particular case, would just trigger the elements of treatise-ness: not a set of components of a specific genre, but the elements of aesthetic solutions stemming from the spirit of Romantic experiences with the open form? After all, Agnieszka Ziółowicz wrote that “in the case of *Promethidion*, what is clearly treatise is just an element of a much more complex artistic whole”¹³.

Chapter V *Autor idzie w ciemność, by wydarł jej światło* [The author goes into the darkness to seize the light from it] does not question the previously proposed observations. Anna Roter-Bourkane reminds here briefly of the fate of the

¹¹ The author is right here to point to the diagnoses made by Krzysztof Trybuś, which he described in: *Pamięć romantyzmu. Studia nie tylko z przeszłości* (Poznań 2011).

¹² See G. HALKIEWICZ-SOJAK, *O autokreacji i koncepcji sztuki w “Promethidionie” Norwida*, [in:] *Z pogranicza literatury i sztuk*, ed. Z. Mocaraska-Tycowa, Toruń 1999; *Norwidowski sposoby kontaminacji gatunków literackich*, [in:] IDEM, *Nawiązane ogniwo. Studia z poezji Cypriana Norwida i jej kontekstach*, Toruń 2010.

¹³ A. ZIÓLOWICZ, *O “rozmowy duchu”...*, p. 166.

poem *Rzecz o wolności słowa*, the circumstances of its creation and reception. She draws attention to the opinions of Norwid's contemporaries about the poem, emphasising the ambivalence of voices accompanying its reception – from applause to criticism¹⁴. From the quoted fragments of reviews there emerges a picture of an intellectually powerful, scientific work, derived from the tradition of the didactic poem, but at the same time intricate, that cannot be submitted to a simple classification. Although the state of research on Norwid's poem is considerable, in the publication discussed here we find an attempt at polemic with one position – research insights of Piotr Chlebowski, published in the monograph on this poem *Cypriana Norwida „Rzecz o wolności słowa”*. *Ku epopei chrześcijańskiej*. Anna Roter-Bourkane reconstructs the course of the researcher's approach, paying particular attention to issues related to the genological features of the work. Thus, the following themes reappear: rhetoricity realised by means of typical linguistic and stylistic procedures, discursive features of the work determining the presence of the treatise form in it, the problematic complexity of the work and a powerful contextual background. For example, the author recognises Piotr Chlebowski's diagnoses of the “incrustation of the discursive text with artistic elements”, but she insists that they serve only as an ornament to the text, preventing the reader from fatigue.

As a result, the author formulates one fundamental objection to Piotr Chlebowski's book. It determines the nature of the last chapter of the publication. We read:

Najbardziej zdumiewającym punktem myślenia Piotra Chlebowskiego jest przyznanie nadrzędnej roli w dziele duchowi liryczności, który istotnie obecny, nie może jednak faktycznie do niej pretendować. Wręcz przeciwnie, dokonana przez samego autora opracowania analiza toku dyskursywnego poematu Norwida wskazuje na zupełnie inne rozwiązanie. Takie mianowicie, które dominantę tekstu widzi jednoznacznie w żywiole perswazyjnym, retorycznym, właśnie – traktatowym, pierwiastek zaś liryczny uważa za niezbędny środek do przeprowadzenia koniecznych zabiegów poetyckich, nie zaś za centrum organizujące tekst (pp. 134-135).

[The most surprising point of Piotr Chlebowski's thinking is the acknowledgment of the supreme role in the work of the spirit of lyricism which, although present, cannot actually aspire to claim this role. On the contrary, the analysis of the discursive course of Norwid's poem made by Chlebowski himself points to a completely different solution. Namely, one that unambiguously sees the text dominant in the persuasive, rhetorical, precisely – treatise-like elements, while considers the lyrical element an indispensable means to carry out necessary poetic operations, not the centre around which the text is organised.]

¹⁴ The reception of the poem *Rzecz o wolności słowa* and the state of research was thoroughly reconstructed by Piotr Chlebowski.

However, the author did not decide to pursue her own in-depth investigation. She decided that all the evidence presented in Piotr Chlebowski's monograph testifies in favour of the treatise, furthermore, they are a perfect proof for Norwid's acting in accordance with the principles of constructing this type of texts that prevailed at that time (p. 138). She proves that lyricism, plasticity and dramatism play in the poem only an illustrating and exemplifying role (p. 139). According to the author, also gnomicity and sententiality are subordinated to the persuasive and didactic function, which she sees¹⁵ as superior in a treatise expression. She also adds to it mnemonics – the art known to former rhetors, which consists in stimulating the associative power of human memorisation process (p. 146).

In *Zakończenie* [Conclusion], Anna Roter-Bourkane calls her book “a map of the concept of treatise-ness” (p. 151) and encourages scholars to continue research into the indicated problems. Upon recognising that treatise was a personal and unique form for Norwid, she summarises her analysis divided into five chapters¹⁶; I shall stress it is an ambitious analysis, often revealing, not lacking in many legitimate observations grounded in the research conducted within Norwid Studies, and yet often simplified. Therefore, one should agree with many of the author's arguments, but additional questions could be asked to some of those, especially since the seriousness of the topic, forcing a kind of restraint and encouraging deep reflection, and thus precise terminology, is the only way to seek the truth about a work.

The book *Traktat i traktatowość w poematach Cypriana Norwida* addresses a significant problem. However, further research must be based on correct findings that distinguish poetological assumptions and Norwid's creative practice, including the pluralism of the form, from the aesthetic problems of a work, which unfortunately are missing in the reviewed book.

Translated by Rafał Augustyn

¹⁵ At this point, following the findings of Dorota Plucińska (p. 144).

¹⁶ It should also be remarked that the manner of expression in the dissertation is not always disciplined, not free from stylistic and linguistic awkwardness, e.g. in the following phrasings: “mystyczna niemal siła oddziaływania tekstu” [almost mystical power of the textual impact] (p. 51), “ewentualna pruderia Norwida” [possible prudery of Norwid] (p. 49), “nuta demiurgiczności” [note of the demiurgicality] (p. 54), “zdanie będące tyleż wróżbą, co konstatacją” [a sentence which is as much a prophecy as a statement] (p. 105), “puryfikacja społeczeństwa za pomocą siły jego proroków” [purification of the society using the strength of its prophets] (p. 113), “teoretyczne dywagacje” [theoretical digressions] (p. 116), “Norwid inny, nie zahukany” [different Norwid, uncowed] (p. 123), “dyskurs krzyżujący się z tkliwością obrazowania” [a discourse intersecting with the tenderness of imagery] (p. 138), “elementy filozofiotwórcze” [philosophy-forming elements] (p. 146).

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CZY NORWID MYŚLAŁ TRAKTATEM

Streszczenie

Artykuł jest recenzją naukową książki Anny Roter-Bourkane *Traktat i traktatowość w poematach Cypriana Norwida* (Poznań 2014). Autorka recenzji dowodzi, że publikacja poznańskiej badaczki stanowi ważny głos ożywionych dziś badań genologicznych, służących rozpoznawaniu gatunkowych komponentów budujących Norwidowskie dzieło. Ponadto zwraca uwagę na warsztat metodologiczny Anny Roter-Bourkane, wskazane przez nią konteksty oraz ambicję definicyjnego rozstrzygnięcia tytułowych pojęć książki. Jednocześnie stawia pytania o estetykę traktatowości, która w opisywanej książce nie zostaje w wyraźny sposób odróżniona od formy gatunkowej traktatu.

Słowa kluczowe: traktat, traktatowość, wiek XIX, poezja, Cyprian Norwid, genologia.

DID NORWID THINK IN A TREATISE-LIKE MANNER?

Summary

This article is an academic review of the book by Anna Roter-Bourkane entitled *Traktat i traktatowość w poematach Cypriana Norwida* [Treatise and its features in poems by Cyprian Norwid] (Poznań 2014). The author of the review proves that the publication of the scholar from Poznań is an important voice in today's intense genological research dedicated to recognising the genre-specific components that make up Norwid's work. Attention is also drawn to

the methodology used by Anna Roter-Bourkane, the contexts she describes and the ambition to define the concepts mentioned in the title of the book. At the same time, the authors raises questions about the aesthetics of the treatise-typical features, which in the examined book is not clearly distinguished from the genre of treaty.

Key words: treatise; features of treatise; 19th century; poetry; Cyprian Norwid; genology.

Summary translated by Rafał Augustyn

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Grażyna H a l k i e w i c z - S o j a k – ON THE HIDDEN
DIMENSION OF THE
ROMANTIC HERITAGE

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Ewa Szczeglacka-Pawłowska has been consistently developing her research methodology for over a dozen years, looking for a research perspective that would allow to read the poetry of Polish Romanticism in exile with respect for the achievements of several generations of editors and historians of literature, but also with emphasis on the researcher's own, if possible original, approach. This is best evidenced by her two books: *Romantyczny homo legens. Zygmunt Krasiński jako czytelnik polskich poetów* [Romantic homo legens. Zygmunt Krasiński as a reader of Polish poets] (Warsaw 2003, 367 pages) and *Romantyzm "brulionowy"* ["Draft paper" Romanticism] (Warsaw 2015, 580 pages). But not only; this direction of the author's search is also indicated in her articles published in journals, as well as scientific reviews¹. The characteristic feature of these articles is the precise

¹ Among others, Ewa Szczeglacka reviewed the works by: Dariusz Seweryn, *O wyobraźni lirycznej Adama Mickiewicza* ("Pamiętnik Literacki" 1998, vol. 1), Anna Kubale, *Dramat bólu istnienia w listach Zygmunta Krasińskiego* ("Pamiętnik Literacki" 1999, vol. 2), Elżbieta Dąbrowicz, *Cyprian Norwid. Osoby i listy* ("Pamiętnik Literacki" 2000, vol. 2), Jarosław Ławski, *Marie romantyków. Metafizyczne wizje kobiecości* ("Przegląd Humanistyczny" 2004/2005).