

APOLLO NAŁĘCZ-KORZENIOWSKI AND CYPRIAN NORWID: LOOKING FOR COMMON GROUND

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Abstract: The aim of the present article is to determine the extent to which Apollo Nałęcz-Korzeniowski (Joseph Conrad's father) and Cyprian Norwid – both of whom can be linked to the development of European modernism – shared a common approach to literature and the main social questions of their times. To this end I have made an analysis of the translation and metadramatic strategies adopted by both writers, whose approach to the practical problems of translation is modern in every respect. Korzeniowski and Norwid draw attention to the difficulties involved in adapting a writer's natural style not only to a different linguistic context, but also to the specific translatability limitations imposed by a different literary culture. Both authors cite the symptomatic example of the musicality of Shakespearean verse, which Korzeniowski examines in the case of *A Comedy of Errors* and Norwid in *Julius Caesar*. Unlike Korzeniowski, who treats the original text as a literary whole, Norwid strays beyond the bounds of his own theory of translation by adding a philosophical component based on neoplatonism – as well as his own theory of “reading idiolects” – thus assuming the position of a ‘modern fragmentarist’ who makes a creative selection of text to be translated.

Keywords: Cyprian Norwid, Apollo Nałęcz-Korzeniowski, William Shakespeare, metadramatic strategies, translation strategies, modern comedy

The metadramatic ideas of Korzeniowski and Norwid found their fullest expression in the former's *Studia nad dramatycznością w utworach Szekspira (An Enquiry into Shakespeare's Dramatic Art – 1868)* and in the latter's preface to his play entitled *Pierścień Wielkiej-Damy (The Great Lady's Ring – 1872)*. In their reinterpretations of Shakespearean drama, both writers sought to join in the literary ‘revisionism’ that took place in Europe after 1848 (and in Polish literature only after 1863) in order to lay the foundations of ‘modern comedy’. What they came up with was Norwid's concept of the tragicomic (or ‘white tragedy’) and Korzeniowski's concept of ‘flight into the realm of delusion’, both of which relate to the Shakespearean experience of ‘a play within a play’ or ‘theatre within theatre’: in Norwid's ‘actor’ and Korzeniowski's ‘Man being in a state of delusion’ we have two models of a humanity that resorts to internal escapism in reverse, as it were – a Hamlet-like ‘flight into consciousness’. The legacy of the events of the 1863 January Uprising can be seen in the idea – put forward by both authors (albeit from differing standpoints) – of a synthesis of dra-

matic art and the life of the nation, in order that Society may take a long, hard look at itself.

INTRODUCTION

It would seem that there are no substantial links between Joseph Conrad's father Apollo Nałęcz-Korzeniowski (1820-1869) and Cyprian Norwid (1821-1883). All we have are vague suggestions that Korzeniowski might have read some of Norwid's writings, especially in view of the fact that the former's treatise entitled *Polska i Moskwa (Poland and Muscovy)* was published by the Leipzig publishers Brockhaus, who at that time (1864) were engaged in creating the famous *Library of Polish Writers* series and who only a year earlier had published the first volume of Norwid's poetry, containing works which may well have aroused the interest of Korzeniowski the playwright. These included Norwid's treatise entitled *Rzeczywistość (Reality)* – part of the author's *Pięć zarysów* – a leisurely conversation between several people (in the style of a Platonic dialogue) on the subject of Shakespearean drama, a piece on aesthetics entitled *O sztuce (On art)* – also touching on Shakespeare), a tragedy entitled *Krakus* and a poem entitled *Quidam*. In 1864 Brockhaus published two other poems by Norwid – *Niewola (Bondage)* and *Fulminanta* – which were treatises on the nature and origin of war and which drew on the events of the Spring of Nations as well as the Polish January Uprising of 1863.

Anyone wishing to compare the work of these two writers must therefore see to what extent they have a common approach to literature and the main social questions of their times. The existence of such a common ground has been postulated by Roman Taborski, who draws attention to the strong similarity – on the level of ideas – between the plays written by Norwid and Korzeniowski and in particular between the latter's comedy *Dla milego grosza (For Dear Money's Sake)* – 1857-1858) and the former's comedy-drama *Aktor (The Actor)* – 1867). In Taborski's view, what links the plays is above all their "critique of the new social attitudes which accompanied the development of Polish capitalism."¹ Indeed, Norwid's play deals with those very same social issues that so preoccupied Korzeniowski, including industrial speculation and the exploitation of peasant workers in the new beet sugar refineries that were being built by the bigger landowners — something to which Korzeniowski was strongly opposed:

In this respect the play that is closest to Korzeniowski is Norwid's *Aktor (Actor)*, which was written in faraway Paris and which betrays an amazing depth of knowledge about contemporary Polish social and economic issues. Even Korzeniowski's hostility to the beet sugar industry resonates with the words of Norwid's character the Prince, who has been financially ruined by his involvement in capitalist speculation ("So I did as I was advised by my practical friends. You've observed, no doubt, that as soon as someone sets up a sugar refinery, people all around

¹ R. Taborski, *Dla milego grosza*. [In:] *Idem. Apollo Nałęcz-Korzeniowski. Ostatni dramatopisarz romantyczny*. Wrocław 1957, p. 67.

begin planting sugar beet. Everybody does it – and the sourest people of all are the owners of the refineries!”²

Taborski’s comparison has been broadened out and carried further by Grzegorz Zych, who has drawn attention to the similarity of ethical ideas in Korzeniowski’s *Komedia* (*Comedy* – 1854-1855) and *Dla milego grosza* (*For Dear Money’s Sake* – 1857-1858) with Norwid’s modern view of mankind and the world. Zych is of the opinion that Korzeniowski’s plays “resound with echoes of Cyprian Kamil Norwid’s reflections on humanity and the ethos of work.”³ In the opinion of the present author, however, the common artistic ground of both writers is a function not so much of their respective ideas about work and humanity or their critique of new social attitudes and the industrial ventures of big landowners, but rather of their respective attitudes to their own dramatic works, their engagement with the theory of Shakespearean drama and their own respective approaches to literary translation. It is their participation in the ‘debate on Shakespeare’ and the ‘debate on translation’ that most clearly brings out the similarities between the ways in which these two authors practised their literary craft. They shared an entirely modern approach which had a specific goal and postulated a specific means to achieve that goal. Whereas the “critique of new social attitudes” (cited by Taborski) and references to the “ethos of work” (cited by Zych) would appear to situate Norwid and Korzeniowski within the current of positivist thought, a comparison of their metadramatic and translation strategies – as we shall see – would appear to situate them somewhere within the current of modernism. As a translator and theorist of drama, Korzeniowski – like Norwid, who translated the *Divine Comedy* – had a modern, if not modernist approach to art.

A COMPARISON OF TRANSLATION STRATEGIES

Both Norwid and Korzeniowski favoured the modernist approach to translation. In the case of the latter, the main evidence for this is a letter written to Kazimierz Kaszewski on 6th/18th September 1865, which – as Taborski observes – testifies to Korzeniowski’s pioneering approach to the problem of translation, because – in the matter of translating verse – he understood the need to find a verse form that was the true historic counterpart of the original.⁴ Korzeniowski tells his friend about the successive stages of his work on a translation of Shakespeare’s *A Comedy of Errors* and explains the decisions that he has had to make at various junctures. These decisions, he argues, have been dictated by the particular musicality of Shakespeare’s verse:

I have tried to preserve not only the sense, but also – to a certain extent – the same words and the metre. Shakespeare conducts serious dialogues or dialogues full of pathos in non-rhyming

² *Ibid.*

³ G. Zych. “Apollo Nałęcz-Korzeniowski as a playwright?”. Transl. R.E. Pyplacz. *Yearbook of Conrad Studies (Poland)*, 2010, Vol. V, p. 77.

⁴ R. Taborski. “Trud tłumacza”. *Yearbook of Conrad Studies (Poland)*, 2010, Vol. V, p. 81.

verse, with occasional rhymes at more important points. These I have rendered in rhymed verse of 13 syllables. He usually uses prose for lively, witty or wittyish dialogues and I have rendered these in rhymed prose of 13 syllables. For love scenes, Shakespeare uses alternating rhymed verse (short and long) and this is how I have rendered them, alternating lines of 8 and 11 syllables.⁵ [Transl. R.E.P.]⁶

We find a similar, albeit more general observation on the subject of translating Shakespeare in a preface written by Norwid (ten years earlier) to his own translation of two scenes from *Julius Caesar*:

In the original, Brutus speaks in prose, whereas Anthony speaks in verse. Shakespeare sometimes used prose in between rhymed dialogues – not out of lack of care for the form of the play as a whole (as some people think), but because – being the most dramatic of writers and an actor wielding a pen, as it were – he paid more attention to the niceties of rhythm and the weighting of accents than to the appearance of the printed page. (IV 231)⁷ [Transl. R.E.P.]⁸

In Norwid's view, it is this very musicality of Shakespeare's writing that poses the greatest challenge to the translator, who – if he is to meet it – must have a knowledge and understanding of the theory of translation:

A translator is in no way justified in, say, making a word-for-word copy of something that cannot be read smoothly, if this [lack of smoothness] can be rendered by other means. (IV 231)

This reference to theoretical principles on the part of Norwid is definitely a mark of modernity – and the same can be said of Korzeniowski's theory of translation. Norwid goes one step further, however, by constructing his own philosophy of translation. Made up of the conceptual rings of fidelity, harmony, equality and degree of beauty, it has definite Neoplatonic overtones:

And so, if the copier of a painting paid too much attention to the exact nature of the canvas and insufficient attention to the overall impression of the original, he would produce a work that was uneven and incomprehensible precisely because of its continually changing and discordant fidelity to the original. Translations of Shakespeare are obscure not because Shakespeare is obscure (indeed, Shakespeare is as clear as daylight), but – because he is profound on many levels – translators inappropriately switch from one level of profoundness to another, thus creating a work that is uneven as a whole and that is [also] obscure – just because one layer of the beauty of the original has not been rendered. (IV 231)

In Norwid's own translations, however, fidelity to the original proved to be a matter of some dispute. His translation of Dante's *Divine Comedy* is a case in point.

⁵ Apollo Nałęcz-Korzeniowski. [List do Kazimierza Kaszewskiego / Letter to Kazimierz Kaszewski], [Czerniów], dnia 6/18 września 1865 roku // OS 6th September. Rkps BJ (manuscript held by the Jagiellonian Library), sygn. 3057. Cf. R. Taborski, *ed. cit.*, p. 81.

⁶ In the present article all translations of excerpts from the works of Apollo Nałęcz-Korzeniowski have been made by R. E. Pyplacz.

⁷ All quotations from Norwid's works are from: C. Norwid. *Pisma wszystkie*. Ed. J.W. Gomułicki. Warszawa: PIW, 1971, vols I-XI.

⁸ In the present article all translations of excerpts from the works of Cyprian Norwid have been made by R.E. Pyplacz.

As Miriam observes: “In his drive to achieve the most intense succinctness, [Norwid] blithely omits everything that might stand in its way: words, sentences, lines and at times whole tercets.”⁹ Jadwiga Rudnicka for her part observes that Norwid re-metaphorises the original text: “Apart from its succinctness, Norwid’s translation exhibits a greater complexity of metaphor.”¹⁰ Her final conclusion is that “[Norwid’s] characteristic linguistic individualism has left its mark on [this] translation of Dante.”¹¹ The most striking example of this translatorial individualism, however, is Norwid’s paraphrase of Béranger’s *Adieu* – a farewell to one’s country – which Norwid transformed into *Béranger’s last rhapsody*, changing its genre in the process. Comparing it with the French original, Rudnicka notes that Norwid “removed some sentences”, “replaced colloquial words with formal, lofty expressions” and “stacked metaphors as well as making them more elaborate.”¹²

Korzeniowski’s approach to translation differed from that of Norwid. According to Taborski, his best translations – being “fully mature from a technical point of view” – are those of Victor Hugo’s *Hernani* and *Marion Delorme*, which were published in 1861 and 1863 in the *Biblioteka Warszawska* series.¹³ In support of this judgement, Taborski cites the translator’s “flowing, lucid style” and also “the complete rendering of the dramatic dynamism and poetic tone of the original texts.”¹⁴ We know from Korzeniowski’s letters that he translated all of Victor Hugo’s plays (apart from *Cromwell*) and that he intended to publish them in Poland as a complete collection. These plans were thwarted by his premature death in 1869. In the years 1859-1860, together with Adam Pług, Korzeniowski translated the first poems of Victor Hugo’s great national epic *La Légende des siècles*.¹⁵

As a translator – unlike Korzeniowski – Norwid held to the tenets of the modern poetics of fragmentation. No autonomous or collective translation for him, but rather

⁹ It must be said, however, that Miriam’s overall judgment of Norwid’s translation of Dante is positive: “As a whole it is redolent of the purest essence of Dante, which makes this rendering one of the most interesting attempts of its kind.” – C. Norwid. *Pisma zebrane*. Warszawa and Kraków: Wyd. Z. Przesmycki, T.A., 1911 [recte: 1912], pp. 854-6. Years later, Rudnicka concurred with Miriam’s opinion: “One has to admit that the translation of the *Divine Comedy* made by Norwid’s contemporary Julian Korsak in 1860 and that made by Edward Porebowicz at the end of the 19th century (which was later revised and which to this day is published as the best and most complete translation) do not render Dante’s text as expressively as the fragments that Norwid has left us.” – J. Rudnicka. “Norwid jako tłumacz *Boskiej komedii*.” *Studia Norwidiana*, 1991-1992, No. 9-10, p. 123.

¹⁰ J. Rudnicka, *ed. cit.*, p. 117.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

¹² Cf. J. Rudnicka. “Béranger w tłumaczeniu Norwida.” *Studia Norwidiana*, 1985-1986, No. 3-4, pp. 199-200.

¹³ R. Taborski, *ed. cit.*, p. 78.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ In the event only two poems of the series were translated and published: *Le sacre de la femme* (translated by Nałęcz-Korzeniowski) and *Les pauvres gens* (translated by Pług) – V. Hugo. *Legenda wieków: Namaszczenie niewiasty, Ubodzy*. Transl. A. Pług and A. Nałęcz-Korzeniowski. Żytomierz: Nakładem A.N. Korzeniowskiego, 1860. After Korzeniowski’s death the *Kłosy* weekly published *Ewiradnus*: V. Hugo. “Legenda wieków. Błędni rycerze. Ewiradnus”. Transl. A.N. Korzeniowski. *Kłosy*, 1874, No. 483, pp. 222-3; No. 485, pp. 242-3; No. 486, pp. 258-9; No. 487, pp. 279-80; No. 488, pp. 291, 294. Cf. R. Taborski, *ed. cit.*, pp. 79-80.

a creative selection of text to be translated, with the aim of allowing an analysis of the idiolectal structure of the particular literary work in question. Norwid preferred to translate Dante and Shakespeare. His philosophy of translation – connected with the imperative of creative selection – can therefore be seen as yet another variant of his theory of reading – this time connected with his idea of “reading idiolects”.¹⁶ Examples of this are Norwid’s translations of two selected scenes from *Julius Caesar*, which – he declares – were intended to “demonstrate two moments: the lowest and highest [kinds of] Shakespearean dialogue” (IV 249).

Korzeniowski for his part remains faithful to the spirit of the texts he translates and merely adapts them where necessary, without introducing any ideas of his own. Contexts are rebuilt on either general or concrete lines. In Taborski’s opinion, one of Korzeniowski’s greatest achievements as a translator is his rendering of Alfred de Vigny’s *Chatterton* (1857),¹⁷ in which he enhances the clarity of the original subject:

Korzeniowski took a broader view of [the subject of] *Chatterton* than the author himself, who saw it above all as the exemplification of the basically abstract notion that a poet – just because he is a poet – is treated with disdain and made to suffer by all societies, which by their very nature lack sensitivity.¹⁸

This theme, which was popular in poetry written between the two great Polish Uprisings of the nineteenth century – and which finds forceful expression in Józef Ignacy Kraszewski’s novel entitled *Poeta i świat* (*The Poet and the World*), published in 1839 – is rejuvenated by Korzeniowski, who gives prominence to the contemporary background of social change and, instead of concentrating on the dramatic predicament of an individual, highlights the tragic plight of the “poor and humiliated”. In his preface to the Polish edition of *Chatterton*, Korzeniowski explains that his choice of text for translation was governed by his desire to modernize the original play:

Whereas M. Alfred de Vigny’s original play exclusively defends the position of a poet who finds himself in the company of people who are obsessed by money, the Polish translation defends all upstanding people whose principles and ideas are not for sale and who suffer deprivation by being forced to live with money-grubbers. That is why I have translated this play.¹⁹

A COMPARISON OF METADRAMATIC STRATEGIES

The respective metadramatic strategies adopted by both writers came into being more or less at the same time. In 1868 – in the *Biblioteka Warszawska* series –

¹⁶ This idea — reading as a means of artistic creation or autcreation — has been investigated by Marta Gaściewicz. Cf. M. Gaściewicz. “Czytanie immanentne i kontekstowe w wybranych pismach Norwida. Między teorią a praktyką”. *Słupskie Prace Filologiczne*, 2012, No. 10.

¹⁷ R. Taborski, *ed. cit.*, p. 75.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Czatterton, dramat Alfreda de Vigny. Powiedziany po polsku przez Apolla Korzeniowskiego*, Kijów 1857, pp. V-VI (Quoted by R. Taborski, *ed. cit.*, pp. 75-6).

Korzeniowski published his *Studia nad dramatycznością w utworach Szekspira* (*An Enquiry into Shakespeare's Dramatic Art*), based on Gervinus and Kreyssig's *Vorlesungen über Shakespeare: seine Zeit und seine Werke* of 1859. The concept of Shakespearean tragicomedy that emerges from Korzeniowski's study contributes to the elaboration of the principle underpinning the "new comedy", i.e. modernist drama. In the words of Grzegorz Zych: "Nałęcz-Korzeniowski was convinced that nineteenth-century writers of "modern comedy" – whose task was to show various shades of reality – should follow in Shakespeare's footsteps."²⁰ This was to be achieved in accordance with dictums such as "the comic flows from the tragic" or "the tragic wears the motley costume of Harlequin" – which constitute the 'message' of Korzeniowski's study.²¹

In 1872 – barely three years after Korzeniowski's death – Norwid postulated a similar dramatic form in the preface to his play *Pierścień Wielkiej-Damy* (*The Great Lady's Ring*): a dramatic work having both ethical and didactic dimensions. He chose Dante as the 'inspiring patron' for the new kind of play that he had created, describing it as "high comedy-white tragedy":

I think that this genre, for which we have no Polish name (as it does not yet exist), is high comedy. It mainly lends itself to exerting an edifying influence on Christian Society. That, at least, is how I think it should be, given that it is to be an interval of time during which Society can take a long, hard look at its entire self from its highest and most virtuous vantage point. (V 186)

Korzeniowski, who was also of the opinion that one of the most important functions of drama was to hold a mirror up to Society, postulated the creation of a 'national' dramatic form that would be concerned with the community as a whole:

Dramatic art flourishes and grows in strength only when it is intimately tied to the taste, manners and entire life of the nation, becoming a national celebration, a social gathering and a vital need.²²

The obvious similarity of these two writers' views on social matters is revealed by a certain passage in Korzeniowski's study on Shakespeare, where the author presents the anthropological model of "Man in a state of delusion" ("człowiek w urojeniu") – something that is reminiscent of Norwid's model of the "actor", which in turn (as Sławomir Świontek has shown) is but the modification of a Shakespearean model. According to Korzeniowski, in Shakespeare's comedies we can see the playwright's "flight from the terrors of reality into the world of delusion." Shakespearean comedy is "an escape – the exhausted bard's seclusion from the terrifying truth of the human destinies that are re-enacted in the tragedies and the historical plays."²³

²⁰ G. Zych. "Apollo Nałęcz-Korzeniowski as critic and translator". Transl. R.E. Pyplacz. *Yearbook of Conrad Studies (Poland)*, 2010, Vol. V, p. 28.

²¹ *Ibid.* Cf. A. Nałęcz-Korzeniowski. "An Enquiry into Shakespeare's Dramatic Art". Transl. R.E. Pyplacz. *Yearbook of Conrad Studies (Poland)*, 2008-2009, Vol. IV, pp. 97-103.

²² R. Taborski, *ed. cit.*, pp. 119-20.

²³ Taborski's commentary to these words emphasizes their pertinence in the context of twentieth-century Shakespeare criticism: "These are very perceptive and – for their time – ground-breaking observations. We should not fault Korzeniowski for not going on to explain what exactly he meant by

Let us not forget that in his sixth lecture on Juliusz Słowacki Norwid describes Don Quixote as a “collector of bygone delusions” (“antykwariusz urojeń” – VI 454). In one of the *Five Sketches (Pięć zarysów)* entitled *Reality (Rzeczywistość)* – which Korzeniowski may well have read in the Brockhaus edition – during a discussion on truth in Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar* a stranger turns up, introducing himself to the other guests as “Reality’s disbelief in Reality” (“Ja jestem zwątpieniem Rzeczywistości” – III 482). The uninvited guest goes on to recall the context of *Hamlet* and painstakingly elucidates the idea – so close to Korzeniowski’s heart! – of “Man in a state of delusion”²⁴:

„[...] i to, co stanowi
Całą realność, wszystko to równe jest snowi” –
I żeby, mówię, skreślił rzecz każdą prawdziwie,
Jak ona jest – i żeby widział więc królewic,
Jak jest – to: najprzód byłby wariatem u dziewic,
Potem u wszech-pochlebców, potem u dworaków,
Potem u czaszek pustych – potem – i u ptaków
Smętnych, i rzucono-by kośćmi za nim,
Wołając: „Ideolog! – realność popsowa,
Bo wariat jest” [...] (III 483)

“[...] and what makes up
The whole of reality – all of this is as a dream.”
And, as I say, were he to faithfully record each thing
As it is – and were the prince then to see
How things are, he would first be seen as mad by young women,
Then by sycophants, then by courtiers,
Then by halfwits and then – by the birds
That live in cemeteries. People would hurl bones after him,
Crying: “Fantasiser!” – sham reality,
The man’s a lunatic!” [...]

As a subject of Norwid’s plays – and also in accordance with what Korzeniowski saw as the essence of Shakespearean comedy – acting is therefore first and foremost to be a safe “collecting of delusions”. This is a Shakespearean motif, albeit drawn from tragedies (*King Lear* and *Macbeth*) and comedies (*The Tempest*) alike.

“the terrors of reality” and the “flight into the world of delusion” — something that has recently been accomplished by Jan Kott, who in his theatre reviews has been able to refer to the meaning of the metaphor of the forest of Arden(nes). – *Ibid.*, p. 121.

²⁴ As understood by Korzeniowski, “Man in a state of delusion” turned out to be first and foremost an analogue existing in the “universe of eternal tragicomedy”, as Shakespeare “expressed human reality in tragedies, where – as in human life – the tragic and the comic are inextricably linked.” Having “used up human reality,” Shakespeare in his comedies shows us “Man in a state of delusion.” – *Ibid.*, p. 120.

The behaviour of the mysterious uninvited guest in Norwid’s *Pięć zarysów* can also be described as a state of delusion, though it does not qualify as madness in the traditional sense: “This character tells about the process of achieving that sense of distance which Hamlet gains by hearing the words of his father’s ghost, who makes his son aware of the ‘unreality of the reality’ in which he is living. Could it be, therefore, that in Norwid’s play delusion – or rather speaking about delusion – is a means of regenerating an individual’s consciousness?” – cf. S. Świontek. *Norwidowski teatr świata*. Łódź 1983, p. 75.

As Sławomir Świontek explains: “In Shakespeare’s plays, the portrayal of life as a stage often takes the form of a ‘great stage where people fool around’, on which for a few hours a ‘feeble actor’ plays his part in an insignificant, albeit strident ‘idiot’s tale’ before falling back into obscurity.”²⁵

Is not Norwid’s concept of “white tragedy” founded on just such a “flight from the terrors of reality into the world of delusion”? In the preface to his play *Pierścień Wielkiej Damy* (*The Great Lady’s Ring*) Norwid explains somewhat defensively:

[...] I wanted a tragic situation to produce what I would call ‘white tragedy’, without any death or bloodshed. [...] It is an extremely difficult task, because here those heart-rending moments which in a tragedy can be bathed in bright red blood are replaced with sheer, monumental Gravity. (V 185, 187)

In the light of Korzeniowski’s studies on the Shakespearean anthropology of “Man in a state of delusion”, could “white tragedy” be seen as an escapist idea? Not in a negative sense – let us hasten to add – but as a means of salvaging subjectivity. In accordance with the Shakespearean idea of “a play within a play” or “theatre within theatre”,²⁶ Korzeniowski’s “flight into the world of delusion” and Norwid’s “acting” are the only options (in the respective universes of their plays) that are available to those who would prefer to retain their individuality and ‘be themselves’. Such a “flight into the world of delusion” could be one of the utterances of the character Henryk in Korzeniowski’s play *Dla milego grosza* (*For Dear Money’s Sake*), notwithstanding Taborski’s interpretation of his words as testifying to an erosion of values and a radical change for the worse in the character’s life:²⁷

Bo wiedz, bracie, trzy lata lub cztery,
Jak już z nikim nie jestem otwarty i szczery,
Zmieniłem się w żart wieczny: zginąłbym inaczej.
Tu trza śmiać się z wszystkiego albo być w rozpacz:
Więc się śmieję.²⁸

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

²⁶ “Thanks to the ‘play within the play’ the process of the perception of the work becomes a message, causing on-stage behaviour – as well as that of a normal audience – to be recognized for what it is.” – *Ibid.*, p. 123. How does Norwid make use of this broadened and multifaceted way of looking at the world in his plays? “In interpreting the ‘play within the play’ technique used by Shakespeare, Norwid starts with his own diagnosis of Society’s ills and then proceeds to show the social consequences that the sphere of art may bring to the chaos of a world which has ‘shifted from its foundations’.” – *Ibid.*, p. 127.

²⁷ “During the course of the last few years, the former conspirator who once professed to be a revolutionary democrat has changed into an embittered philistine and cynic who panders to wealthy people and seeks their company, despite the fact that he is fully aware of the ignominy of such behaviour and also despite the fact that not too long ago even love was incapable of preventing him from completely severing his ties with his old friends and acquaintances who are now despised.” – cf. R. Taborski, *ed. cit.*, p. 62.

²⁸ A. Nałęcz-Korzeniowski. *Dla milego grosza*. [In:] *Pismo zbiorowe*. Ed. J. Ohryzko, St. Petersburg 1859, vol. 2, p. 140 (Quoted by R. Taborski, *ed. cit.*, p. 62). It is worth comparing the structure and rhetoric of this passage with the monologues (especially in act I) of Mak-Yks in Norwid’s *Pierścień Wielkiej Damy* (*The Great Lady’s Ring*).

Listen, old chum: it's three or four years
 Since I've been open and sincere with anybody.
 I've changed into a never-ending joke: otherwise I'd have gone under.
 Here you have to laugh at everything or give yourself up to despair,
 So ... I laugh.

Certain points must be clarified before the connection between “white tragedy” and escapism can be properly described. In the preface to *Pierścień Wielkiej-Damy* (*The Great Lady's Ring*) Norwid writes that the measure of ‘applying the truth’ ought to be the distinction “between imitation and [moral/spiritual] edification”. In Norwid’s view, imitation “overburdens both the imitated and the imitator, whom it necessarily afflicts with madness” and is “contrary to the very spirit of Nature” (V 188). To be sure, it is a “flight into the world of delusion” (or a flight into fancy), but by no means that connected with the Shakespearean concept of “delusion written into consciousness”. Shakespearean anthropology is to be found elsewhere in Norwid’s plays. The Norwidian-Shakespearean “Man in a state of delusion” (to use the language of Norwid’s preface) “has a clear idea of the difference between [moral/spiritual] edification and imitation” (V 188). For him, therefore, the “flight into the world of delusion” is (as it is for Hamlet) a cognitive category – even a category of consciousness or intellect. Norwid’s “white tragedy” does not end in bloodshed and by that token suspends “the truth of human destinies”, as also (in the opinion of Korzeniowski) do the works of Shakespeare – and his comedies in particular.

CONCLUSION

Apollo Nałęcz-Korzeniowski’s links with Cyprian Norwid would at first sight appear to be non-existent. There is no hard evidence to show that he read the first volume of Norwid’s poetry in 1863 (when it was first published) or later. Despite this, however, the context of Norwid constantly reappears in research done on Korzeniowski and will not go away. Scholars such as Roman Taborski and Grzegorz Zych have located a shared common ground of attitudes to social issues which puts both writers squarely within the current of positivist realism that was then growing in strength in Poland and Europe. Another area of shared common ground – as has been argued in the present article – is a similar approach to playwriting and literary translation, which places them not within the current of positivism or realism, but rather within that of modernism.

The translation strategies of Norwid and Korzeniowski aimed to take into account the natural variants of the writer’s style in the original text by analysing, for instance, the natural variants of Shakespeare’s style in *Julius Caesar* (Norwid) and *A Comedy of Errors* (Korzeniowski). These would then be rendered by a proper choice of meanings and prosodic values within a suitably equivalent historical context in the target language. This pioneering approach largely overlaps with that of modern translators, who during the process of translation refer to a preset theoretical

model. Norwid himself subsequently decided to ‘enhance’ his theory of translation by adding a philosophical component based on Neoplatonism. In the preface to his translation of two scenes from *Julius Caesar* he states that translatability is a function of fidelity, harmony, equality and the differentiation of various kinds of beauty.

Norwid translates in two ways: either choosing to be guided by the principle of creative selection (e.g. a choice of cantos from *The Divine Comedy*) or choosing to be guided by the principle of fragmentarism (e.g. choosing one or two scenes from a play by Shakespeare). Korzeniowski for his part seeks to translate whole works and even whole collections of works (e.g. his planned translation of all the plays of Victor Hugo). Modern as they are, these two strategies ultimately set the translators apart, as Korzeniowski’s holistic approach is incompatible with Norwid’s fragmentarism.

The metadramatic ideas of Norwid and Korzeniowski also have much in common, being the product of a similarly modernist reinterpretation (both in terms of structure and argumentation) of the Shakespearean concept of tragicomedy. This reinterpretation led Norwid to create a new genre which he called “white tragedy”, the meaning and objectives of which he presented in the preface to his play *Pierścień Wielkiej Damy* (*The Great Lady’s Ring*). In his study on Shakespearean drama, Korzeniowski not only reviewed the Shakespearean concept of tragicomedy, but also analysed (or rather reconstructed) the way in which Shakespeare the man and the playwright approached the task of writing comedies. Korzeniowski held that for Shakespeare, writing comedies was a “flight into the realm of delusion”. This kind of spiritual and intellectual escapism can also be seen in the behaviour and life choices of Norwid’s “actors”. Korzeniowski’s “Man living in a state of delusion” and Norwid’s “actor” were modernist analogues of fate and – as both authors believed – prototypes for the theatre of the future. The foundations of a modernist “new comedy” that would judge contemporary reality (and eventually diagnose problems relating to culture and civilization in general, as in the plays of Ibsen, Maeterlinck and Strindberg) could only be laid with the aid of Shakespearean concepts such as “fleeing into the realm of delusion” and “acting” – in other words: “theatre within theatre”.

Translated by R. E. Pyplacz

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