

Musicality as a force shaping literary works : an aesthetic study

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Magdalena Saganiak

Musicality as a Force Shaping Literary Works

An Aesthetic Study

Le sujet de cet article est une théorie de l'acte créateur. Un commentaire sur la Grande Improvisation [*Wielka Improwizacja*], monologue dramatique tiré des *Aïeux* [*Dziady*] d'Adam Mickiewicz (1798-1855), fournira un exemple de l'expression de la force créatrice. Ces réflexions serviront à introduire la thèse suivante sur la nature herméneutique de l'acte de création poétique : au moment de la création poétique, la conscience se développe grâce au pouvoir formateur de l'imagination qui permet aux dimensions sémantique et musicale de l'œuvre de se manifester conjointement. Pour mieux comprendre cette thèse, nous la situerons dans le contexte de la philosophie allemande et polonaise de la langue et de la poésie (Herder, Novalis, Wilhelm von Humboldt, Friedrich Schlegel, Schelling, Libelt). Nous rappellerons quelques concepts clés : la *Besonnenheit* (circonspection) de Herder, la *Selbstdurchdringung des Geistes* (auto-pénétration de l'esprit) de Novalis et l'*Energeia* de Humboldt. Tous indiquent que l'âme peut accéder à la conscience grâce à ses propres actes langagiers créateurs et à la construction de formes musicales.

According to a very old tradition, renewed, for example, by Giambattista Vico in *Scienza Nuova* (1725), Jean-Jacques Rousseau in *Essai sur l'origine des langues* (1781), and Benedetto Croce in *Estetica come scienza dell'espressione e linguistica generale* (1902), poetry is the original language of mankind. This primeval language, which they believed was born from the expression of passions, is defined as a figural, poetical and musical one. According to Rousseau, citing the antique author Strabo, "speaking and singing were once the same thing"¹ and were supposed to have the same function – the expression of the passions of the individual. I aim to show that the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries and the period of Romanticism, which has been seen mainly as one of liberated subjectivity, can be also considered a synthesis of many key themes developed in European thought and rooted in antiquity.²

1 Jean-Jacques Rousseau. *Essai sur l'origine des langues*. Paris: Gallimard, 1990. P. 115: "Dire et chanter étaient autrefois la même chose".

2 René Wellek. "The Concept of Romanticism in Literary History. II. The Unity of European Romanticism". *Comparative Literature*. Vol. 1, No. 2 (Spring, 1949); Meyer H. Abrams. *The Mirror and the Lamp. Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition*. London: Oxford University Press, 1976; Maria Janion. *Gorączka romantyczna*. Warszawa: PIW, 1975; Manfred Frank. "Unendliche Annäherung". *Die Anfänge der philosophischen Frühromantik*. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1997; Maria Janion and Maria Żmigrodzka. *Romantyzm i egzystencja. Fragmenty niedokończonego dzieła*.

Reconstructing the idea of art at that time, I shall analyze these longstanding topics which remain relevant today.

My focus is on the theory of the creative act, which organizes the whole form of a work of art, using the term “form,” with reference to Aristotle’s and Luigi Pareyson’s understanding of the form (*hýlē*) as a Greek *dynamis* (force), influencing the whole *morphē* of a piece.³ This dynamic force, as I shall demonstrate, shapes different levels and components of the work of art, including its emotional, musical and semantic dimensions. In the discussion of this issue, I refer to the theory and literary practice of the Polish romantic poet Adam Mickiewicz (1798-1855). Treating the ability to create a poem as parallel to that of creating language and music, I shall provide a minimal context of German preromantic theory of language (Herder, Humboldt), theory of poetry and language by the Jena Circle (August Wilhelm Friedrich Schlegel, Novalis) and early theory of genius by Schelling. A few crucial categories are recalled from that great tradition: Herder’s *Besonnenheit* (Awareness), Novalis’ *Selbstdurchdringung des Geistes* (Selfpenetration of the spirit) and Humboldt’s *Energeia* (Energy). I use the category of soul and spirit, not in a metaphysical, but epistemological sense. Reconstructing some ideas of the Jena Circle, I shall be interpreting this constellation, according to Manfred Frank, as belonging to romantic philosophical hermeneutics.⁴

Gdańsk: Słowo/Obraz Terytoria, 2004; Bogusław Dopart. “Czym był romantyzm”. *Polski romantyzm i wiek XIX*. Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka, 2013. Concerning inner experience as a source of Romantic poetry: Magdalena Saganiak. *Człowiek i doświadczenie wewnętrzne. Późna poezja Mickiewicza i Słowackiego [Man and Inner Experience. Late Poetry of Mickiewicz and Słowacki]*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo UKSW, 2009.

3 Władysław Tatarkiewicz. *A History of Six Ideas: An Essay in Aesthetics*. The Hague, Boston, London, Warszawa: Nijhoff, Polish Scientific Publishers, 1980. Chapter 7 concerns five different concepts of “form” used in aesthetics. Aristotle’s “form” is characterized by Tatarkiewicz as entity of being, but also: act, energy, aim, active aspect of being (p. 276-278). *Forma formante* (contrary to *forma formativa*) is described by Pareyson as “processo che si arrotonda in sè”. Luigi Pareyson. *Estetica. Teoria della formatività*, Milano: Bompiani, 1991. See Chapter 4 of Part III. Polish translation: *Estetyka. Teoria formatywności*. Trans. Katarzyna Kasia. Kraków: Universitas, 2009. P. 115.

4 Manfred Frank characterizes the hermeneutics of the Jena Circle in contrast to idealism. See Manfred Frank. *The Philosophical Foundations of Early German Romanticism*. Trans. Elisabeth Millan-Zaibert. Albany: SUNY, 2004. P. 178: “Under idealism I understand the conviction – made especially compulsory by Hegel – that consciousness is a self-sufficient phenomenon, one which is able to make the presupposition of its existence comprehensible by its own means. In contrast, early Romanticism is convinced that self-being owes its existence to a transcendent foundation, which does not leave itself to be dissolved into the immanence of consciousness.” For the hermeneutic attitude to German early

Sua sponte action of the soul (Herder, Novalis, Humboldt)

The turn of the 18th and 19th century revived and advanced time-honoured knowledge about the soul. Shaftesbury, Young, Herder, Novalis and others focus on the problem of the action of the soul, which – being naturally active – acts *sua sponte*. This natural capacity of the soul for action is marked both as an ability to think and to find the language that is the basis and guide of thought. Let us begin with the well-known passage from *Treatise on the Origin of Language* [*Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache*, 1772] by Johann Gottfried Herder. Language, according to Herder, was created not by the gift of God, but by human activity itself:

Here is no *organization* of the mouth which produces language, for even a person who was dumb all his life, if he took awareness, had language in his soul! Here is no *cry of sensation*, for no breathing machine but a creature taking awareness invented language! *No principle of imitation* in the soul; the imitation of nature, if it occurs, is merely a means to the one and only purpose which is supposed to be explained here. Least of all is it *common-understanding*, arbitrary societal convention; the savage, the solitary in the forest, would necessarily have invented language for himself even if he had never spoken it. Language was the common-understanding of his soul with itself, and a common-understanding as necessary as the human being was human being. If others found it unintelligible how a human soul was *able* to invent language, then it is unintelligible to me how a human soul was able to be what it is without precisely thereby, already in the absence of a mouth and society, *inevitably* inventing language for itself.⁵

[Hier ist es keine Organisation des Mundes, die Sprache schafft: denn auch der Zeitlebens Stumme, war er Mensch, besann er sich; so lag Sprache in seiner Seele. Hier ist's kein *Geschrei der Empfindung*: denn nicht eine atmende Maschine, sondern ein besinnendes Geschöpf erfand Sprache! *Kein Prinzipium der Nachahmung* in der Seele; die etwaige Nachahmung der Natur ist bloß ein Mittel zu einem und dem einzigen Zweck, der hier erklärt werden soll. Am wenigsten ist's *Einverständnis*, willkürliche Konvention der Gesellschaft; der Wilde, der Einsame im Walde hätte Sprache für sich selbst erfinden müssen; hätte er sie auch nie geredet. Sie war Einverständnis seiner Seele mit sich und ein so notwendiges Einverständnis, als der Mensch war. Wenn's andern unbegreiflich war, wie eine menschliche Seele hat Sprache erfinden können, so ist's mir unbegreiflich, wie eine menschliche Seele, was sie ist, sein

theory of language, see: Viktor Lau. *Erzählen und Verstehen. Historische Perspektiven der Hermeneutik*. Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 1999.

5 Johann Gottfried von Herder. *Treatise on the Origin of Language*. In *Philosophical Writings*. Translated and edited by Michael N. Forster. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. P. 65-165.

konnte, ohne eben dadurch, schon ohne Mund und Gesellschaft, sich Sprache erfinden zu *müssen*.⁶]

About 25 years later, Novalis (Friedrich von Hardenberg) in *Logological Fragments* [*Logologische Fragmente*, 1798] developed a similar thought, showing three possible types of an inner activity which he called *Selfpenetration of the spirit* [*Selbstdurchdringung des Geistes*]. At the first stage of civilisation, there were two absolute divisions of philosophical activity: *discursive thinker* (scholastic), who “built his universe of logical atoms,” and *intuitive poet*, who “hated rules and fixed form.” In the second stage of civilisation, that situation became more complex, but eclectic; the proper activity occurs only at the third stage, which is synthetic:

The ascent to the third stage is achieved by the artist, who is at once tool and genius. He finds that this original division of absolute philosophical activities is a deeper division of his own being – whose survival rests on the possibility of its meditation – its combination. He finds that, no matter how heterogeneous these activities are, there is nonetheless a capacity within himself to move from one to the other, to change his polarity as he will. Thus he discovers in them the necessary elements of his spirit – he perceives that both must be united in a common principle. [...] The complete representation of spiritual life, raised to consciousness through this action, is *philosophy kat exochen*. Here that *living reflection* comes into being, which with careful tending afterwards extends of itself into an infinitely formed spiritual universe – the kernel or germ of an all-encompassing organism. It is the beginning of a true *self-penetration of the spirit* which never ends.⁷

[Die dritte Stufe ersteigt der Künstler, der Werckzeug und Genie zugleich ist. Er findet, daß jene ursprüngliche Trennung der absoluten philosophischen Thätigkeiten eine tiefer liegende Trennung seines eignen Wesens sey – deren Bestehn auf der Möglichkeit ihrer Vermittlung – ihrer Verbindung beruht. Er findet, daß so heterogen auch diese Thätigkeiten sind, sich doch ein Vermögen in ihm vorfinde von Einer zur andern überzugehn, nach Gefallen seine Polarität zu verändern – Er entdeckt also in ihnen nothwendige Glieder seines Geistes – er merckt, daß beyde in einem Gemeinsamen Princip vereinigt seyn müssen. [...] Die vollständige Darstellung des durch diese Handlung zum Bewußtseyn erhobenen ächt geistigen Lebens ist die *Philosophie kat exochin*. Hier entsteht jene *lebendige Reflexion*, die sich bey sorgfältige[r]

6 Johann Gottfried Herder. *Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache*. Berlin: Dearbooks Verlag, 2016. P. 31.

Comment: Lau. Erzählen und Verstehen (as note 4). P. 120.

7 Novalis. *Logological Fragments I*. In *Novalis. Philosophical Writings*. Trans. and ed. Margaret Mahony Stoljar. Albany: SUNY, 1997. P. 50. On this text, see: James Hodkinson. “The Cosmic-Symphonic. Music, Literature and Universal Discourse”. *Music and Literature in German Romanticism*. Ed. Siobhán Donovan and Robin Elliott. Rochester. NY: Camden, 2004. P. 14-15.

Pflege nachher zu einem unendlich gestalteten geistigen Universo von selbst ausdehnt – der Kern oder Keim einer alles befassenden Organisation – Es ist der Anfang einer wahrhaften *Selbstdurchdringung des Geistes* die nie endigt.^{8]}

In the logological fragment from Novalis, I would like to highlight a few points: spirit has capacity for several heterogonous activities – but they all belong to the same principle. The spirit also has the capacity to move freely from one activity to another and to be aware of this movement. It is this awareness, it seems to me, first described by Herder as a source of language and consciousness, which here appears again, described as connected with productive imagination. This productive imagination apparently is not the power to create “pictures,” but is a special capacity of the spirit, which can rule itself and construct its own activity on higher levels than have been achieved already.

Wilhelm von Humboldt later wrote in the treatise *On Language. On the Diversity of Human Language Construction* [*Über die Verschiedenheit des menschlichen Sprachbaues*, 1836]:

Language, regarded in its real nature, is an enduring thing, and at every moment a transitory one. Even its maintenance by writing is always just an incomplete, mummy-like preservation, only needed again in attempting thereby to picture the living utterance. In itself it is no product (Ergon), but an activity (Energeia). Its true definition can therefore only be a genetic one. For it is the ever-repeated mental labour of making the articulated sound capable of expressing thought. In a direct and strict sense, this is the definition of speech on any occasion; in its true and essential meaning, however, we can also regard, as it were, only the totality of this speaking as the language. [...] To describe languages as a work of the spirit is a perfectly correct and adequate terminology, if only because the existence of spirit as such can be thought of only in and as activity.⁹

[Die *Sprache*, in ihrem Wesen aufgefaßt, ist etwas beständig und in jedem Augenblicke Vorübergehendes. Selbst ihre Erhaltung durch die Schrift ist immer nur eine unvollständige, mumienartige Aufbewahrung, die es doch erst wieder bedarf, dass man dabei den lebendigen Vortrag zu versinnlichen

8 Novalis. *Logologische Fragmente*. In *Schriften. Die Werke Friedrich von Hardenbergs*, historisch-kritische Ausgabe in 4 Bänden. Ed. Paul Kluckhohn and Richard Samuel, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1960-2006. Vol. 2. P. 526.

9 Wilhelm von Humboldt. *On Language. On the Diversity of Human Language Construction and its Influence on the Mental Development of the Human Species*. Ed. Michael Losonsky. Trans. Peter Heath. Cambridge University Press, 1999. P. 49. On early German philosophy of language in Polish, see: Zdzisława Kopczyńska. *Język a poezja. Studia z dziejów świadomości językowej i literackiej Oświecenia i Romantyzmu*. Wrocław: “Ossolineum”, 1976; Bolesław Andrzejewski, *Przyroda i język. Filozofia wczesnego romantyzmu w Niemczech*. Warszawa-Poznań: PWN, 1989.

sucht. Sie selbst ist kein Werk (*Ergon*), sondern eine Tätigkeit (*Energeia*). Ihre wahre Definition kann daher nur eine genetische sein. Sie ist nämlich die sich ewig wiederholende Arbeit des Geistes, den artikulierten Laut zum Ausdruck des Gedanken fähig zu machen. Unmittelbar und streng genommen, ist dies die Definition des jedesmaligen Sprechens; aber im wahren und wesentlichen Sinne kann man auch nur gleichsam die Totalität dieses Sprechens als die Sprache ansehen. [...] Die Sprache als eine Arbeit des Geistes zu bezeichnen, ist schon darum ein vollkommen richtiger und adäquater Ausdruck, weil sich das Dasein des Geistes überhaupt nur in Thätigkeit und als solche denken läßt.^{10]}

Language is *Energeia* (*Geist an sich*): it is a formative organ of thought, a movement from the inside to the outside – and also – the mind’s externalization in sound.

Consciousness is the way the soul exists, with its capacity to rise from unconsciousness to consciousness. Otherwise, man himself would not have invented language, as observed by Herder and Humboldt. If God had given man language, it was not a ready gift, but Herder’s judgment (*Besonnenheit*), or Humboldt’s self-efficacy (*Selbsttätigkeit*): an ability to act and to create derived from its own power alone. Language appears as a natural capacity of the soul (spirit), building forms for itself, elevating its own activities to higher levels. Poetry and music can appear within this movement – this is the synthetic activity achieved by the artist, as understood by Novalis.

Poetry and musicality in Romanticism

Spirit is the music of thoughts (Schlegel)

In the well-known *Athenäum Fragments* [*Athenäums-Fragmente*, 1797-1798], Friedrich von Schlegel builds a vision of energy as a universal power and the dominions of the soul that overlap one another without any external stimulus.

375. [...] for energy is really more than mere agility: it is effective, certainly externally effective, but it is also universal power, through which the whole man shapes himself and acts.¹¹

10 Wilhelm von Humboldt. *Über die Verschiedenheit des menschlichen Sprachbaues und ihren Einfluss auf die geistige Entwicklung des Menschengeschlechts* (§8 *Form der Sprachen*). In *Schriften zur Sprachphilosophie*. Ed. Andreas Flinter, Klaus Giel. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2002. Vol. III. P. 368-756.

11 Source of English translations: Friedrich von Schlegel. *Philosophical Fragments*. Trans. Peter Firchow, foreword by Rodolphe Gasche. London, Minneapolis:

[375, [...] denn Energie ist zwar war mehr als bloße Agilität, es ist wirkende, bestimmt nach außen wirkende Kraft, aber universelle Kraft, durch die der ganze Mensch sich bildet und handelt.^{12]}

339. Feeling that is aware of itself becomes spirit; spirit is inner conviviality, and soul, hidden amiability. But the real vital power of inner beauty and perfection is temperament. One can have a little spirit without having any soul, and a good deal of soul without much temperament. But the instinct for moral greatness which we call temperament needs only to learn to speak to have spirit. It needs only to move and love to become all soul; and if it is mature, it has a feeling for everything. Spirit is like a music of thoughts; where soul is, there feelings too have outline and form, noble proportions, and charming coloration. Temperament is the poetry of elevated reason and, united with philosophy and moral experience, it gives rise to that nameless art which seizes the confused transitoriness of life and shapes it into an eternal unity.

[339. Sinn der sich selbst sieht, wird Geist; Geist ist innre Geselligkeit, Seele ist verborgene Liebenswürdigkeit. Aber die eigentliche Lebenskraft der innern Schönheit und Vollendung ist das Gemüt. Man kann etwas Geist haben ohne Seele, und viel Seele bei weniger Gemüt. Der Instinkt der sittlichen Größe aber, der wir Gemüt nennen, darf nur sprechen lernen, so hat er Geist. Er darf sich nur regen und lieben, so ist er ganz Seele; und wann er reif ist, hat er Sinn für alles. Geist ist wie eine Music von Gedanken; wo Seele ist, da haben auch die Gefühle Umriß und Gestalt, edles Verhältnis und reizendes Kolorit. Gemüt ist die Poesie der erhabenen Vernunft, und durch Vereinigung mit Philosophie und sittlicher Erfahrung entspringt aus ihm die namenlose Kunst, welche das verworrene flüchtige Leben ergreift und zur ewigen Einheit bildet^{13]}.

444. Many people find it strange and ridiculous when musicians talk about the ideas in their compositions; and it often happens that one perceives they have more ideas in their music than they do about it. But whoever has a feeling for the wonderful affinity of all the arts and sciences will at least not consider the matter from the dull viewpoint of a so-called naturalness that maintains music is supposed to be only the language of the senses. Rather, he will consider a certain tendency of pure instrumental music toward philosophy as something not impossible in itself. Doesn't pure instrumental music have to create its own text? And aren't the themes in it developed, reaffirmed, varied, and contrasted in the same way as the subject of meditation in a philosophical succession of ideas?

[444. Es pflegt manchem seltsam und lächerlich aufzufallen, wenn der Musiker von den Gedanken in ihren Kompositionen reden; und oft mag es auch

University of Minnesota Press, 1999. URL: http://www.mediastudies.asia/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Friedrich_Schlegel.pdf

12 Friedrich Schlegel. *Athenäums-Fragmente. Lyceums-Fragmente. Ideen*. Ed. Karl-Maria Guth. Berlin: Hofenberg Sondersausgabe, 2016. P. 93.

13 *Ibid.* P. 63.

so geschehen, daß man wahrnimmt, sie haben mehr Gedanken aus über dieselbe. Wer aber Sinn für die wunderbaren Affinitäten aller Künste und Wissenschaften hat, wird die Sache wenigstens nicht aus dem platten Gesichtspunkt der sogenannten Natürlichkeit betrachten, nach welcher die Musik nur die Sprache der Empfindung sein soll, und eine gewisse Tendenz aller reinen Instrumentalmusik zur Philosophie an sich nicht unmöglich finden. Mus die reine Instrumentalmusik sich nicht selbst einen Text erschaffen? und wird das Thema in ihr nicht so entwickelt, bestätigt, variiert und kontrastiert, wie der Gegenstand der Meditation in einer philosophischen Ideenreihe?¹⁴]

What is important for our argument here is the hierarchy of actions and of states of the soul to which Schlegel refers. The soul itself has the capacity to command senses thoroughly. It is an evidence that the soul can transcend its own borders (similarly, consciousness transcends its borders in intentional acts, as was later clearly formulated by Husserl). This ability belongs to its natural primal power: commanding the senses. Also, according to the Romantics, the soul is able to be connected with other souls and spiritual beings: God and nature (if it is taken in its spiritual aspect).

Can the passage where Schlegel speaks about the spirit rising above the senses and the feelings be treated as a moment of passing from pre-reflective consciousness to full consciousness?¹⁵ In his Fragment 339, Schlegel says that the “spirit is like a music of thoughts; where soul is, there feelings too have outline and form, noble proportions, and charming coloration.” It seems here that “music” means a power of giving form to a part of the content of the soul, which has an “outline.” It could be this “energy,” which is “effective, certainly externally effective, but it is also universal power, through which the whole man shapes himself and acts,” which Schlegel addresses in Fragment 344. Music could be one of the possible “structures” which is creatively made by the soul in order to pass from pre-reflective consciousness to full consciousness. This structure could be tied to a semantic one, which expresses and makes a form for the same dynamic state of soul.

Schlegelian “music” can therefore be understood as one of the shapes of a natural energy of the soul tied to another shape: semantics. It is accordingly possible to say that there is semantics in music (idea) and music in semantics. That act of passing from a pre-reflective to a reflective state of the soul must be thought of as creative. It is understandable that the act of speaking is

14 *Ibid.* P. 111.

15 The answer to that question – as we can see – was intensely debated by Herder, Novalis, Humboldt and Schlegel in close connection with the problem of inventing language and the problem of human creativity. It was exhaustively investigated in several works by Manfred Frank, reflecting on past concepts as a perspective for contemporary modern philosophy, as for example in *The Philosophical Foundations* (as note 4).

described by Wilhelm von Humboldt as *Energeia*, a creative use of the inner power¹⁶, and that act of passing from pre-reflective to reflective stages could be explained by Schlegel only in terms of beauty and art – and that it can be an act of art.

In the act of creative expression, according to popular Romantic explanations, the soul “changes the external into the internal,” which can be explained as changing inner pre-reflective content to something which can be communicated. This “something” must transcend the border of inner secret subjective activity, and become objective and possible to be comprehended.

As we can see, according to Friedrich Schlegel, the soul’s own actions rise from a state of simple sensual perceptions and simple feelings to the comprehension of the soul itself and of reality. In Schlegel’s philosophy, all the capabilities of the soul and its rising to higher levels of cognitive ability derive from the soul itself.

Spirit comes from itself (Mickiewicz, Libelt)

The Polish poet Adam Mickiewicz (1798-1855)¹⁷ thought similarly, when he discussed (in French, in his *Cours au Collège de France*) the views of the Polish philosopher August Cieszkowski, contrasting them with the well-known views of Hegel:

Ce *duch* n’est pas le *Geist*; ce n’est pas seulement la conscience: c’est la personnalité développée et poussée à un degré plus haut. L’être organique existe en lui-même, l’esprit existe par lui-même, l’homme spirituel existe de lui-même; celui qui a senti en lui l’esprit, et qui commence déjà une vie divine, existe par lui-même, pour lui-même et de lui-même. Cette formule de lui-même, que Cieszkowski emploie pour la première fois, est très importante. L’esprit tire toute sa force de lui-même. Alors la matière ou les individus extérieurs, la

16 Hans Georg Gadamer, in *Wahrheit und Methode* (Part III) considers Wilhelm von Humboldt’s treatise *Über die Verschiedenheit des menschlichen Sprachbaues* with regard to the power of language which can be observed in every act of speaking and which is conscious of itself.

17 Artur Górski. *Monsalwat. Rzecz o Adamie Mickiewiczu*. Warszawa: “Rytm”, 1998; Alina Witkowska. *Mickiewicz. Słowo i czyn*. Warszawa: PIW, 1983; Wiktor Weintraub. *Poeta i prorok. Rzecz o profetyzmie Mickiewicza*. Warszawa: Biblioteka Narodowa, 1998; Ewa Hoffmann-Piotrowska. *Mickiewicz – towiańczyk. Studium myśli*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwa UW, 2004; Andrzej Walicki. *Mesjanizm Adama Mickiewicza w perspektywie porównawczej*. Warszawa: IBL and IFiS PAN, 2006; Michał Maślowski. *Problemy tożsamości. Szkice mickiewiczowskie i (post)romantyczne*. Lublin: Instytut Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej, 2006; *Liryka Mickiewicza. Uczucia – świadectwa – ekspresje*. Ed. Ewa Hoffmann-Piotrowska and Andrzej Fabianowski. Warszawa: Wydawnictwa UW, 2018.

pensée ou les pensées universelles, ne sont (et Cieszkowski aurait dû exprimer cela avec plus de clarté) que des *moyens* pour l'esprit. Il s'élève, il se répand, il se reconnaît, et il observe la nature. Ce n'est pas seulement pour conquérir contre la matière que l'esprit est créé, comme Fichte le concevait; ce n'est pas pour s'identifier seulement avec la nature dans cet absolu vague, comme le prétend Schelling; ce n'est pas seulement pour jouir, dans sa logique hégélienne, de la circulation qui existe entre la nature et la pensée; mais c'est pour *progresser*, pour marcher vers Dieu, que l'esprit est créé.¹⁸

This passage includes motifs already known from Schlegel's writing (which does not mean that they directly or indirectly depend on them). Spirit "raises," "extends, recognizes and examines nature." As in Schlegel, we see an ability of the spirit to rise to higher levels of existence, to create new skills qualitatively different from those previously possessed, and to show an ability of expansion and development deriving exclusively from its own power.

This primordial creative power of the spirit, given to man by God and leading to God, is a constant source of energy. Cognition is not only the use of the soul's ready powers, it is also its continuous development, the self-shaping of higher forms, providing fuller knowledge. The same capacity of the spirit is the source of art, also being a tool of self-knowledge. Achieving the state in which the spirit acts – in Mickiewicz's understanding – is not very difficult, because it can perceive itself and recognize itself as possessing power. The return to the spirit is a natural return to the creative force that remains its essence. This force cannot fail to recognize itself.

Where does it come from? The resemblance of the spirit to God gives it a natural creative and formative power. Romanticism took over and renewed the idea of the Renaissance and Baroque poets of an *alter Deus*, the other God.¹⁹ In the period preceding Romanticism, this concept had been reawakened by Shaftesbury, who had a great influence upon the German Romantics.²⁰ If to express oneself is the way in which the soul can fully exist, this connects not with *mimesis*, but with the category of *imagination*, including

18 Adam Mickiewicz. *Les Slaves. Cours professé au Collège de France. Paris 1842-44*. Paris: Au Comptoir des Imprimeurs-unis, 1849. P. 438 (vingt-deuxième leçon, 6 juin 1843). Commentary: Marta Piwińska. "Dzieje kultury polskiej w prelekcjach paryskich". In *Adam Mickiewicz. Prelekcje paryskie*. Ed. Marta Piwińska. Kraków: "Biblioteka Polska", 1997; Stanisław Makowski. *Le Romantisme polonais dans "Les Slaves" d'Adam Mickiewicz*. Paris: Institut d'Études Slaves, 1998; Kuziak Michał. *O prelekcjach paryskich Adama Mickiewicza*. Słupsk: Akademia Pomorska, 2007.

19 Maciej Kazimierz Sarbiewski. *De perfecta poesi, sive Vergilius et Homerus* [1626-1627]. Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1954. P. 3-4.

20 Zygmunt Łempicki. "Shaftesbury und der Irrationalismus. Ein Beitrag zur Stilgeschichte der neueren Philosophie". *Studia Philosophica. Commentarii Societatis Philosophicae Polonorum*. Leopoldo: 1937. Vol. II. P. 19-110.

the power of “form building” [*Bildungskraft*]. The soul does not imitate anything here, but creates forms in which it reveals its known truths – and they can be revealed only in this way – by shaping in a creative act. Expressing that thought in language is derived from the Aristotelian tradition; expression is not an imitation of *natura naturata*, of nature already created, but cooperation with *natura naturans*, the creative force of nature. This thought, justified by Schelling in his theory of genius, popularized by Maurycy Mochnacki in Poland, and actively practiced in the literary works of Mickiewicz and Juliusz Słowacki, found theoretical insight in Karol Libelt’s philosophy. In his *System of Knowledge* [*System umnictwa*, 1850], Libelt regards all natural and human creatures as the fruit of the action of imagination. The highest imagination belongs to God, through whom the world came into being.

How is this power imagined, called by Libelt the power of shaping? What is placed inside man, in the soul, is probably not yet formed. In a sense, it does not exist, just as the world had not existed before being created by God. What is conscious must be formed. The act of formation is always creative, but it comes, as Schelling saw it, both from the consciousness and the infinite part, which we call unconscious, which is also the *residuum* of creativity. Poetic speech does not refer to the use of ready-made rules and regulations, because in that case it would involve only consciousness. Creation consists of the expression of a unique spiritual interior, together with providing this expression with unique shape.

Art as synthesis (Schelling)

How is a work of art born? We already know that an inner excitement is sufficient along with its own creative power, which conveys the imagination, which in turn includes the ability to produce form.

What are the transitions from something hidden to something explicit, from unconscious to conscious and from infinite to finite? Schelling put this question clearly and responded to it with a number of paradoxes:

The work of art reflects to us the identity of the conscious and unconscious activities. But the opposition between them is an infinite one, and its removal is effected without any assistance from freedom. Hence the basic character of the work of art is that of an *unconscious infinity* [synthesis of nature and freedom]. Besides what he has put into his work with manifest intention, the artist seems instinctively, as it were, to have depicted therein an infinity, which no finite understanding is capable of developing to the full.²¹

21 Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling. *System of Transcendental Idealism. Part six*. URL: <http://philosophyproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Schelling-Sys1800-Part-6-Art-as-Organ-of-Philosophy.pdf>

[Das Kunstwerk reflektiert uns die Identität der bewussten und der bewußtlosen Tätigkeit. Aber der Gegensatz dieser beiden ist ein unendlicher, und er wird aufgehoben ohne alles Zutun der Freiheit. Der Grundcharakter des Kunstwerks ist also eine *bewußtlose Unendlichkeit* [Synthesis von Natur und Freiheit]. Der Künstler scheint in seinem Werk außer dem, was er mit offenkundiger Absicht darein gelegt hat, instinktmäßig gleichsam eine Unendlichkeit dargestellt zu haben, welche ganz zu entwickeln kein endlicher Verstand fähig ist.²²]

According to Schelling, the act of genius refers to a synthesis of contradictions: unconsciousness (unconscious forces of nature, also working in every human being) and consciousness. It is also a synthesis of craftsmanship and poetry, as well as a manifestation of something infinite in a finite form. This combination would have been impossible without Schelling's discovery of the principle of identity. What is unconscious is in fact identical with what is conscious.²³ Consciousness is only another distant form of unconsciousness, different from it, but identical in its innermost essence.

What is the role of musicality in this transition?

To highlight this problem, let us examine the fragment from Mickiewicz's *The Great Improvisation* which reveals *in statu nascendi* the action of creative forces.

Poet-instrument and poet-singer: illustration with Mickiewicz's Forefathers' Eve

"The Great Improvisation" ["Wielka Improwizacja"], from Mickiewicz's *Forefathers' Eve* [*Dziady*], is a crucial text for Polish literature²⁴, comparable in stature within Poland to Goethe's monologue in *Faust*²⁵ in the German-

22 Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, *System des transzendentalen Idealismus*, *Hauptabschnitt 6*. URL: <http://www.zeno.org/Philosophie/M/Schelling,+Friedrich+Wilhelm+Joseph/System+des+transzendenten+Idealismus>.

23 Wilhelm G. Jacobs. *Schelling lesen*. Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 2004. Chapter 5.2.; Justyna Nowotniak. *Johanna Gottlieba Fichtego poszukiwanie jedności*. Warszawa: Spacja, 1995; recent collection of Polish translations and comments to Schelling in a Polish philosophical journal: *Kronos*. Vol. 1-2 (9)/2009.

24 A few recent publications: Leszek Kolankiewicz. *"Dziady". Teatr święta zmarłych*. Gdańsk: Słowo/Obraz Terytoria, 1999; *"Dziady" Adama Mickiewicza: poemat, adaptacje, tradycje*. Ed. Bogusław Dopart. Kraków: Universitas, 1999; Bogusław Dopart. *Poemat profetyczny. O "Dziadach" drezdeńskich Adama Mickiewicza*. Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka, 2002.

25 As George Sand, who was in that sense an exception among French authors, immediately understood in her "Essai sur le drame fantastique", *George Sand critique 1833-1876*. Ed. Christine Planté. Tussan: Du Lérot, 2006. P. 63-117.

speaking world. Konrad, a young poet imprisoned by the Tsar for his part in the Independence Plot²⁶, left alone in his prison cell, begins a long conversation with a silent God.

According to a biographical legend, but well attested, Adam Mickiewicz wrote *The Great Improvisation*, which is about 300 verses long – in one night.²⁷

A given act of inner experience possesses inner aspects with internal dynamics – such as the awareness of being, combined with inclusions in the existence of the word, oneness with all the past, present and future members of the nation, unity with Nature-Cosmos, and a sense of immortality. What draws attention is the triumphant alertness to the ability to think, leading to a culmination where existence is perceived as the capacity for creation. The poet's power of creation is shown as identical with the cosmic powers. Let us consider one significant fragment in detail:

Ja mistrz!
I – Master
 S S
 (2 syllables, 2 rhythmic groups)²⁸

Ja mistrz wyciągam dłonie!
I – Master, I stretch out my hands!
 S S sSs Ss
 (7 syllables, 4 rhythmic groups)

On this question, see: Corinne Fournier Kiss, “Comparatisme et interculturelité: George Sand et son Essai sur le drame fantastique (1839)”. *Regards sur l’interculturalité*. Ed. Corinne Fournier Kiss, Nadine Bordessoule-Gilliéron and Patrick Suter. Genève: MetisPresses, 2016. P. 201-217.

26 This fictional event, showing a prisoner accused of conspiracy against the Russian ruler, is based on real facts from the life of Adam Mickiewicz (1798-1855), incarcerated (4 November 1823 – 3 May 1824) in Vilnius in the former Basilian monastery. An investigation, supervised by senator Novosiltsev, concerning secret patriotic organizations, resulted in the deportation of Mickiewicz and several others to “provinces remote from Poland”. See Roman Koropeckyj. *Adam Mickiewicz. The Life of a Romantic*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press: 2008. P. 49-53.

27 Stanisław Pigoń. *Adam Mickiewicz “Wielka Improwizacja” z trzeciej części “Dziadów”*. Warszawa: PWN, 1955.

28 Stressed syllables are marked S, and unstressed syllables – s. By rhythmic group I understand a group of syllables with one stress. Rhythmic groups are natural prosodic segments of speech, divided from each other by natural pauses. A metrical foot is an “artificial” metrical unit: a group of syllables combined in one of several fixed patterns. A metrical foot can divide (and be divided) by rhythmic groups.

Wyciągam aż w niebiosa i kładę me dłonie
I stretch them to the sky, I place my fingers on the stars.

sSs S sSs // sSs sSs

(7+6 syllables, 3+2 rhythmic groups)

Na gwiazdach jak na szklanych harmoniki kręgach.

On the stars as on musical amonica glasses

sSs ssSs // ssSs sSs

(7+6 syllables, 2+2 rhythmic groups)

To nagłym, to wolnym ruchem,

Now swiftly, now slowly

sSs sSs Ss

(8 syllables, 3 rhythmic groups)

Kręcę gwiazdy moim duchem.

My spirit turns the stars.

Ss Ss Ss Ss

(8 syllables, 4 rhythmic groups)

Milijon tonów płynie; w tonów milijonie

Millions on millions of tones resound

sSs Ss Ss // Ss [S]sSs

(7+6 syllables, 3+3 rhythmic groups)

Każdy ton ja dobyłem, wiem o każdym tonie;

It is I who called them forth, I know them all;

Ss S S sSs // S sSs Ss

(7+6 syllables, 4+3 rhythmic groups)

Zgadzam je, dzielę i łączę,

I combine them, I separate them, I reunite them,

Sss Ss sSs

(8 syllables, 3 rhythmic groups)

I w tęcze, i w akordy, i we strofy płącę,

I weave them into rainbows, into chords, into strophes,

sSs ssSs // ssSs Ss

(7+6 syllables, 2+2 rhythmic groups)

Rozlewam je we dźwiękach i w błyskawic wstęgach. —

I scatter them in sounds and in ribbons of fire.

sSss sSs // ssSs Ss

(7+6 syllables, 2+2 rhythmic groups)

Odjąłem ręce, wzniosłem nad świata krawędzie,
I raised my hands, I held them high above the ridge of the world,
 sSs Ss Ss // sSs sSs
 (7+6 syllables, 3+2 rhythmic groups)

I kręgi harmoniki wstrzymały się w pędzie.
And the wheels of the armonica suddenly ceased to whirl.
 sSs ssSs // sSss Ss
 (7+6 syllables, 2+2 rhythmic groups)

[...]

Boga, natury godne takie pienie!
My song is worthy God and nature
 Ss sSs Ss Ss Ss
 (8 syllables, 4 rhythmic groups)

Pieśń to wielka, pieśń-tworzenie.
This is a mighty song, a creator-song.
 Ss Ss S sSs
 (8 syllables, 4 rhythmic groups)

Taka pieśń jest siła, dzielność,
Such song is power and deathless energy
 Ss Ss Ss Ss [Ss S S Ss Ss]
 8 syllables, 4 rhythmic groups)

Taka pieśń jest nieśmiertelność!
*Such song is immortality!*²⁹
 Ss Ss Ss Ss [Ss S S [S]sSs]
 (8 syllables, 4 rhythmic groups).

This state is equivalent to a kind of perception, guiding towards certain semantics, and simultaneously taking both semantic and musical forms. The picture (the work of imagination) is in harmony with the developing thought, presented in the form of improvisation. Irregular syllabic and accentual-syllabic verse, various rhythms and chords are born and disappear.³⁰

29 Adam Mickiewicz. *Forefathers' Eve*. Transl. by various hands and ed. by George Rapall Noyes with revisions by Harold B. Segel. In *Polish Romantic Drama. Three Plays in English Translation*. Selected, edited and with an introduction by Harold B. Segel. London and New York: Routledge, 2014.

30 On Polish versification, see: Franciszek Siedlecki. *Pisma*. Ed. Maria Renata Mayenowa, Stefan Żółkiewski. Warszawa: PIW, 1989; Lucylla Pszczółowska. *Wiersz polski. Zarys historyczny*. Wrocław: FNP, 1997; Maria Dłuska. *Prace wybrane*.

There are two typical Polish syllabic verse used in this fragment: 13 (7+6) syllabic verse (used mainly in epics) – and 8 syllabic verse (used mainly in lyrics), but listeners get the impression of great variety because of irregular alternations and different accentuation.

At the beginning there are two opening chords: two one-syllabic key words: “Ja” (I) and “mistrz” (master), which define the position of the artist. These two words – which do not have a rhyme pair – create their own symmetry in which “I” equates “mastery”. If we agree to risk going beyond traditional analysis of versification, we can observe that this symmetry is supported by several verses which are divided into two parts, and several which exist as undivided unities, but this is a line which lacks any rhythmic resemblance in the whole text – it can be considered a seed incomparable to anything, but at the same time as a source of everything:

Ja mistrz!
S // S
(2 syllables, 2 rhythmic groups)

The appearance of musicality also can be observed in the varying intonation, which must be omitted in this analysis because of the difficulties of presentation in a written text. What we can show more easily is the frequency of rhythmic groups and metrical feet. For instance, in the second part of the fragment above, we are dealing with two 8-syllabic lines, but the first is dominated by the rhythm of 3 amphibrachs, illustrating the slow starting of movement, then accelerating and becoming more regular in the next verse, where we can hear 4 dynamic trochees:

To nagłym, to wolnym ruchem,
sSs sSs Ss
(8 syllables, 3 rhythmic groups)
Kręcę gwiazdy moim duchem.
Ss Ss Ss Ss
(8 syllables, 4 rhythmic groups)

The Great Improvisation from *Dziady* is obviously an act of inner experience, which is accompanied by a simultaneous aspect of expression.³¹ It has its own

Kraków: Universitas, 2001. Vol. 3: *O wersyfikacji Mickiewicza (Próba syntezy)*. P. 173-294.

31 The Great Improvisation is described as a dramatic monologue (perhaps based on Mickiewicz's own nocturnal improvisation without listeners) with some features of ode, dithyramb and hymn. On the poet's creative power, see: Juliusz Kleiner. *Problematy Improwizacji Konrada*. Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe K.U.L., 1947 (analysis of the words “Ja mistrz” – p. 20). On Konrad's improvisation as the

internal *dynamis*, which can affect a certain material and transform it, and therefore it is an embryo of the form. The source of this form lies within the internal experience, which belongs to the life of the soul – Humboldt’s *Energeia* – an act of the soul which has the capacity of *Tätigkeit*: being aware of its own states and able to present its own states to itself in forms created by itself.

This state, of recognizing oneself as an entity possessing various potencies, is embedded in the image of the Cosmos. The Cosmos is felt and understood from the inside – by extending its boundaries to the whole external area, able to be embraced (perhaps only with the power of the imagination) through its spiritual affinity. Cosmos is perceived as a multitude of tones. At the same time, there is a sense of an ability to create words (meanings) – a sense of the word as transferred from within and able to live without; the sense of the word as a kind of being, which belongs to the creator as children belong to their father.

Here one can see the process of forming feelings, whose tension, expressiveness, violence, variability and inner diversity all create a sort of progress, which is most comparable to the course of music, for example, Chopin’s nocturnes or fantasies. But the thought cannot be separated from the emotional path as it develops with an inexorable consequence. If “emotion” is formative, then thought is formative too – they both agree in their choice of meanings of words, intonations, rhythms, creating a unique course that we would like to see as completely natural.

The discussion regarding the interpretation of Konrad’s speech to God has persisted in Polish culture for almost two centuries. In his journey into the supernatural world, Konrad accuses God of creating a world full of evil, suffering and death. He solemnly confronts him and desires to take away his power in order to “to sing a joyful song” [“zanucić pieśń szczęśliwą”]. In Stanisław Wyspiański’s drama *Liberation* [*Wyzwolenie*, 1902], a new Konrad appears who desires action, but is capable only of gestures. He cries out: *Poetry, you are a tyrant!*

Is Konrad mistaken, even if he is morally correct? Does Konrad confuse the power of his imagination with an authentic creative power – spiritual learning with real creation?

most brilliant manifestation of human genius and independence from God, see: Zofia Stefanowska. *Wielka – tak – ale dlaczego improwizacja?* In *Studia z teorii i historii poezji. Seria II*. Ed. Michał Głowiński. Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1970. P. 151-166. On romantic subjectivity in drama, see: Agnieszka Ziółowicz. *Dramat i romantyczne “Ja”. Studium podmiotowości w dramaturgii polskiej doby romantyzmu*. Kraków: Towarzystwo Autorów i Wydawców Prac Naukowych “Universitas”, 2002. Monographs on this part of *Dziady*: Waclaw Kubacki. *Arcydramat Mickiewicza. Studia nad III częścią “Dziadów”*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo M. Kot, 1951; Bogusław Dopart. *O “Dziadach” drezdeńskich Adama Mickiewicza*. Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka, 2002.

Within this creation, the “I” recognizes itself as Master. Let us regard this statement as an act of self-knowledge, in which the soul recognizes its limits and its cognitive powers. What does it mean when the soul feels its cognitive powers? It means that it uses them. What does it mean when it recognizes its limits? That it recognizes its ability to expand, and in doing so, sets it in motion. Cognition takes in everything that can become available to the spirit – and gives an insight into the whole, of whose sentient soul it is only a particle. What is internal is given together with what is external. In the source experience, while studying itself the soul finds itself in relation to nature, God, other people. Such a starting point must be described as hermeneutic.

This state, a recognition of itself as a self, a being with various potencies, given in the form of a sense of its own creative power and complete independence, paves the way towards the semantics, which is accompanied by visual and musical imaginings. To put it more precisely: the subject expands its boundaries, uniting with the whole of the Cosmos, which can probably be covered due to the spiritual affinity of all existence. By the power of the spirit, the Cosmos is being learnt from the inside – felt internally, it manifests itself as a multitude of tones, breezes, as the dynamics of the movements of stars and planets, as a powerful energy, but also as a phenomenon potentially marked aesthetically and ethically. We are dealing here, I suppose, with a poetic representation of speech as a transition from unconsciousness to consciousness. As we know, according to Humboldt, the model moment of transition from unconsciousness to consciousness is the act of speech, which he rightly considered as a creative act. If the consciousness is connected to a certain type of objectification, it is with the presentation of one’s own states in a way that can be excluded from the inside and made “external,” and therefore also communicated to someone else, then in the act of creation presented in *The Great Improvisation*, we are dealing with the transition from unconsciousness to music and to word as creations of available consciousnesses.