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### A DIGRESSIVE POEM: SŁOWACKI—NORWID

Writing about the digressive poem by Juliusz Słowacki in the context of Cyprian Norwid's work is not an accidental act, dictated by some extra-substantial reasons. It is generally known that for Norwid Słowacki was the most highly appraised Polish Romantic poet. In 1849, just before Słowacki's death, Norwid visited him three times, and in the spring (April–May) 1860 he gave a series of six lectures *O dziełach i stanowisku Juliusza Słowackiego w sprawie narodowej* [*On Juliusz Słowacki's works and his attitude towards the national cause*]. Kazimierz Wyka wrote about these lectures:

This is Norwid's most extensive and exhaustive text about Słowacki and Polish Romanticism in general. Certainly "exhaustive" in the Norvidian way: it means that he passes over all dates and all information; over whole periods of Słowacki's life and whole groups of his works. Nevertheless it is the first attempt at a comprehensive presentation of the work of the author of *Król-Duch* [*The Spirit King*], earlier than Antoni Małnecki's monograph (1866). And albeit this distinguished publisher of Słowacki's posthumous works, and his first monographer complained about Norwid's fanciful ideas, it may be surely said that in these fanciful ideas there are truths the honorable Małnecki was never able to find.<sup>1</sup>

Norwid devoted the whole of Lesson V of the lectures to an analysis of two poems: *Beniowski* and *Król-Duch* [*The Spirit King*]. As he remarked, "[...] both are unfinished, however, they constitute the best moment in

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<sup>1</sup> Kazimierz Wyka, "Norwid o Słowackim [Norwid on Słowacki]," in Kazimierz Wyka, *Cyprian Norwid. Studia, artykuły, recenzje* [Cyprian Norwid. Studies, articles, reviews], ed. Henryk Markiewicz, Marta Wyka (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1989), 270.

Juliusz Słowacki's writing."<sup>2</sup> Starting from the emphasis on the need of "the memory of the heart", taking into consideration "tears, weeping, dilemmas and tortures that are left out" in the description of the civilization, Norwid went on to say: "Indeed, a lot of courage is necessary to make contemporary and popular moments known and to immortalize them. Słowacki had this great and greatest courage, and probably he was the only one who had it at his time."<sup>3</sup>

Norwid's remarks on *Beniowski* start from statements of the genetic nature. The author of *Vade-mecum* stresses Słowacki's courage, because he wanted "to make popular moments known and to immortalize them." As Norwid defines it, "this great and greatest courage" is probably Słowacki's personal courage that made him say unpopular things, bitter for others. Admittedly, "making contemporary moments known and immortal" is done as if automatically in any linguistic record, but—in Norwid's opinion—it is connected with a certain act of courage. It is worth remembering that this is stated by the author of the later treatise *Rzecz o wolności słowa* [*On Freedom of Speech*], by a poet who so many times emphasized the significance and dignity of the word, and often was misunderstood and rejected by critics.

Słowacki's courage in bringing out and recording things—in Norwid's opinion—is mainly concerned with contemporary and popular moments in life. This is probably the kind of popularity that is realized by making the history of the main protagonist of a poem prosaic, by making it usual. The hero's simplicity, lack of sophistication, or even coarseness are features that are quite easily seen.

In Lecture V *O Juliuszu Słowackim* [*On Juliusz Słowacki*] that we are interested in here Norwid continued his deliberations on *Beniowski* in the following way:

In *Beniowski* in every page one can feel some air – not of the place, but of the time – when mouth may not be opened, and it ill befits you to remain silent, and all you can do is to hiss with pain, and hence to be considered a hissing snake, although

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<sup>2</sup> Cyprian Norwid, *Pisma wszystkie. Zebrał, tekst ustalił, wstępem i uwagami krytycznymi opatrzył Juliusz W. Gomulicki* [Complete Works. Collected and provided with critical commentaries by Juliusz W. Gomulicki], vol. 6: *Proza: część pierwsza* [Prose: Part One] (Warszawa: PIW, 1971), 447. The remaining quotations from Norwid's works come from this edition. Further on the abbreviation PWsz will be used; the first Arabic numeral denotes volume, and the second one—page.

<sup>3</sup> PWsz 6, 447–448.

you are a slave hissing with pain. Under the title of this work by Juliusz its readers wrote the word “n o v e l” in their minds, just like on that wall where because of the police requirements under a sculpture of an eagle the word “peacock” was written. And so the book of rhymes about various great pains that is called *Beniowski* is regarded as an unfinished romance!<sup>4</sup>

“Some air,” according to Norwid, that may be felt in every page of *Beniowski*, and that did not allow the author to open his mouth, but just to hiss with pain, is surely the hostile attitude assumed by critics towards Słowacki’s work. After all, the host of the famous feast in honor of Adam Mickiewicz, Eustachy Januskiewicz, in a letter to Leon Niedźwiedzki of 24<sup>th</sup> June 1836 admitted: “Sorry to make you blush my Leonard, but I hate Słowacki as a poet. He knows about versification, he has what a smart poetaster should have—an aptitude for rhyming, and sometimes even beautiful images—but as to the feeling—not a bit of feeling.”<sup>5</sup>

Coming back to Norwid’s lecture, our attention is drawn to the attitude of the author of *Vade-mecum* towards the generic classification of *Beniowski* as a “novel” or a “poetical and unfinished romance.” The specific context of the comparison: “[...] its readers wrote the word «novel» in their minds, just like on that wall, where because of the police requirements, under a sculpture of an eagle the word «peacock» was written” suggests that Norwid probably distances himself from this type of opinions. For him Słowacki’s poem is first of all “a book of rhymes about various great pains, called *Beniowski*”. The significance of these pains, comprised in the rhymes “seemingly having no connection or course” is testified to by the fact that Norwid compares them to the moans of a condemned man tortured by Venetian inquisitors:

Venetian inquisitors had tables with round holes in the middle, and the holes were covered with helmets: around such a table clerks wrote down what the head looking out of the helmet said, when the body of the culprit placed in such a position was subjected to tortures under the table. Hence there was little sense in what he said, but the word and the idea that connected the torn words was violence, and the echo of the violence was the curse that responded to it from the womb of justice! I would not have anything else to compare *Beniowski*’s rhymes, apparently having no connection or course, to.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> PWSz 6, 448.

<sup>5</sup> Quoted after Stanisława Jasińska, “Słowacki w zapiskach Leonarda Niedźwiedzkiego [Słowacki in Leonard Niedźwiedzki’s notes],” *Pamiętnik Biblioteki Kórnickiej* 1947, fasc. 4: 208–209.

<sup>6</sup> PWSz 6, 448.

A curse—in Norwid’s opinion—is connected with any “violated truth,” or a truth that was not allowed to be born freely, so it was born “crookedly and ironically.” The carrier of such a truth, a word that was not allowed to ripen, is dangerous, “poisonous” for people themselves, for the society. Hence Norwid argued:

The poem *Beniowski* is so much filled with curses that its contents is just what is secondary; the form is so ironical, that the brackets are the aim. It is like a conversation with vain, formal and outwardly people, to whom, after a chat about the weather and many other things, we say incidentally: “And now couldn’t we talk a little about the truth or about the tears that are brought to one’s eyes when the truth is born?...<sup>7</sup>

In a sense Maria Konopnicka’s later reflection corresponds to Norwid’s remarks on *Beniowski*. The author of *Rota* [*The Oath*], referring to seascape metaphors, compared Słowacki’s poem to a boat sailing on rough waves:

If one was to characterize *Beniowski* in a few words he could say that the poem is like a boat sailing on a stormy sea. The sky is covered with storm clouds, the wind gets stronger and then it dies down. When it hits the sails, the boat starts rocking, heaving, everything that is in it starts moving, shaking and jumping, nothing can remain in its place, so that, holding our breath, we wait to see, full of anxiety, how this will end. [...] This impression is not something accidental and deserves closer attention, as it is a consequence of a certain psychological reality and remains in a closest connection with the poet’s state of soul, full of clouds, burdened with a storm. In this soul, out of the gathered sadness, bitterness and sorrow, just in the same way winds picked up, lightning flashed and thunders roared. And when the lightning and thunders stopped, when the storm ran out of electricity for a moment, a time of relative peace and of relatively good weather came, gilded with a thin ray of the sun that got through a crack in the disturbed soul.<sup>8</sup>

Zygmunt Krasiński’s opinions about *Beniowski* are very puzzling. The author of *Irydion*, who many times spiritually supported Słowacki, hearing the news about the poem being written, encouraging Juliusz wrote to him approvingly in his letter of 23<sup>rd</sup> 1840:

Until now I have written to you with my brains, with criticism—and not with my heart—but when there is less and less paper, I feel that my heart grows towards

<sup>7</sup> PWsz 6, 449.

<sup>8</sup> Maria Konopnicka, *O „Beniowskim”* [On “Beniowski”] (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo St. Sadowskiego, 1911), 6–7.

you and it would like to lean out of my chest in order to look your way. —Julu, I implore you—do not care about those rumors that will convert to you some time. Keep your soul like the Aeolian harp—higher than all the people’s hands, among the puffs of the sky—let God’s thoughts, rays of the stars and the wings of the flying angels, and not people’s thoughts, Parisian editors, opinions, remarks or treatises, play it. Add some bile to your laurels—you will see how this earthly chemical element will entice the earth to you—there are more livers than hearts in the world—ah! How livers will understand you then! And then, bile is this glue for a poet that joins the torn particles of his being, that turns the whole world into his person! Try—they demand it. Only then will they feel your hand, when you attack them savagely, when a heavy, bony black hand falls on their temples. Until it is raised in the air—and towards the stars, towards God’s shrines—they think it is a white lily growing innocently on the meadows of blue spaces. Grab the sword and to the council—cut and slash—and having left the dead bodies on the yard grow wings again and hang in the sky.<sup>9</sup>

However, when *Beniowski* was published, in a letter of 5<sup>th</sup> July 1841 to Delfina Potocka—referring to the typically romantic juxtaposition of the heart and the reason—with embarrassment, helplessness and earnestness he did not try to conceal, Krasiński confessed:

Yesterday evening I wanted to read *Beniowski*; it slipped out of my grasp. Only two verses agreed with me; I came across them by chance:

Enough on shattered hearts, oh, world,

Here the earthly and there the over-solar one; they are both sad!

the rest being constantly imitation of Musset. I hate such poetry that admits that it has lost heart, or that it has never had a heart. There is only one life on earth, powerful, noble, sacred—the life of the heart! All other ones are pale delusions. Where there is not enough heart, there is nothingness, and even endless reason cannot populate, fill or enliven this nothingness. Reason, when it is alone, is a skeleton, and even if this skeleton is huge—then what of it!<sup>10</sup>

Stefan Treugutt explained Krasiński’s state of troublesome embarrassment with Słowacki’s departure from the opposition of the heart and the reason, with a deviation from the Romantic ideal of poetry. In his monograph „*Beniowski*”. *Kryzys indywidualizmu romantycznego* [“*Beniowski*.” *A crisis of Romantic individualism*] he argued:

<sup>9</sup> Zygmunt Krasiński, *Listy do różnych adresatów* [Letters to various addressees], Zebrał, opracował i wstępem poprzedził Zbigniew Sudolski, vol. 1 (Warszawa: PIW, 1991), 446.

<sup>10</sup> Zygmunt Krasiński, *Listy do Delfiny Potockiej* [Letters to Delfina Potocka], Opracowanie i wstęp Zbigniew Sudolski, vol. 1 (Warszawa: PIW, 1975), 254.

The foundation that negatively integrates the *casus* of Słowacki's poem is the lack of the heart, and more precisely, the declaration of a loss of the heart. Which means: the accusation is that he departed from the artistic ideal of Romanticism, from ascribing the essential significance to the opposition of the reason and the heart. [...] The "heart" that Słowacki lost as part of his artistic program, is a departure from the ideal, sublime experience of his loneliness; it is mixing the "noble, sacred" *universum* with the world of Punchinellos and butchers. [...] This time Zygmunt Krasiński was a feeling and understanding reader again. He organized the problems included in the poem according to the main line running through the whole digressive "mosaic." He discovered—and denounced—in *Beniowski* a great deviation from the Romantic ideal of poetry and the poet.<sup>11</sup>

It is characteristic that Krasiński's charge of a lack of the heart in *Beniowski* had been earlier formulated by Józef Bohdan Zaleski, a man who was also kind to Słowacki. In a letter to Ludwik Siemiński written on 7<sup>th</sup> June 1841, appreciating the artistic values of the form, Zaleski wrote critically:

I was going to write something else. But, but—Seweryn has a copy of Słowacki's poem entitled *Beniowski* for you. You will see for yourself. The best of all that he has written so far. A lot of fantasy, but not a grain of heart. He does not believe in anything, loves no one, does not expect anything. He considers himself the *centrum* of the world, and of Poland, and of all things that exist: in one word, he thinks he is God. An unbearable braggart, quick-tempered and malicious, a hundred times more so than Byron. He lashes mercilessly with a whip anybody he comes across. He has lashed both me and Seweryn. He tyrannizes Mickiewicz to death... However, he has found the right genre and that is why he has become and outstanding author at once: I doubt if a poet? Rhyming is extraordinarily brilliant and brisk. His octaves are better than those by Ariosto himself. The language is pliant, clear, but it lacks some poetical odor that is given by the heart, the same that Ariosto lacks. Hatred—his Muse, and the ugly I—is God. The feverish state of his soul is also reflected in the pictures of national customs. And this nationality is also only apparent. He is not a patch on Sopllica! He may astonish his readers with his brilliance and naturalness, but will not captivate the hearts for a long time.<sup>12</sup>

Coming back to Krasiński's statement on *Beniowski* it is worth paying attention to one detail. Namely, "the poet of the ruins," contrary to the

<sup>11</sup> Stefan Treugutt, „*Beniowski*”. *Kryzys indywidualizmu romantycznego* [“Beniowski.” A crisis of the Romantic individualism] (Warszawa: PIW, 1964), 26–27.

<sup>12</sup> Józef Bohdan Zaleski, “List do L. Siemińskiego 7 czerwca 1841 r. [A letter to L. Siemiński of 7<sup>th</sup> June 1841],” in Józef Bohdan Zaleski, *Korespondencja* [Correspondence], ed. Dionizy Zaleski, vol. 1 (Lwów: Księgarnia H. Altenberga, 1900), 205.

popular opinion referring Słowacki's poem to the convention of Byron's *Don Juan*, points to the context of Alfred de Musset's work: "the rest being constantly imitation of Musset." As a reminder, it should be noted that Musset, as the author of colorful poetical stories *Contes d'Espagne et d'Italie* mainly under Byron's influence introduced the cult of sensual passion and subtle irony into French literature. But, perhaps in Krasieński's statement on *Beniowski* Musset is mainly the author of the poems *Un spectacle dans un fauteuil*, *Rolla*, *Les Nuits*, and first of all the author of the famous novel *Confession d'un enfant du siècle*.

The work by Norwid that appears in the context of *Beniowski* is *Assunta*. In 1908 Władysław Jankowski, reviewing the publishing of this poem by Józef Kallenbach, decidedly said:

Both as a whole and in its details of the poem the echo of *Beniowski*'s immortal model sounds—in the subtle octaves as well as in broken phrases leading the course of the action or in the capricious digressions, in which – following the example of Słowacki—the poet states his reflections and remarks. Especially at the end of Canto IV the sounds of *W Szwajcarii* [*In Switzerland*] can be heard.<sup>13</sup>

In a sense Stanisław Windakiewicz's remark of 1914 corresponds with Jankowski's thought; the former, showing the effect of Walter Scott and Lord Byron on Polish Romantic poetry, wrote:

And finally Norwid's *Assunta* (1870) should be mentioned; it is an erotic eclogue about the love of an artist and a gardener's blind granddaughter, whom the artist met when he was buying flowers. It very slightly reminds *Don Juan* with the satirical treatment of the great lady's salon conversation in Canto III, with the author's digressions about art and literature, and lastly, in some places, with an ironical or interjected sentence, whose use in the octave rather clearly points to its model. In the poem several stanzas may be mentioned that are in the style of *Don Juan*, or rather of *Beniowski* [...]<sup>14</sup>

Windakiewicz's suggestion was recently analyzed by Grażyna Halkiewicz-Sojak. Confronting his thought with the theses in Stefan Treugutt's monograph on *Beniowski* she wrote:

<sup>13</sup> Władysław Jankowski [review], *Sfinks* 2 (1908) fasc. 4: 159.

<sup>14</sup> Stanisław Windakiewicz. *Walter Scott i Lord Byron w odniesieniu do polskiej poezji romantycznej* [Walter Scott and Lord Byron's relation to Polish Romantic poetry] (Kraków: Druкарnia UJ, 1914), 241.

Analyzing *Beniowski* [S. Treugutt – W.T.] wrote about «thinking with octaves». Borrowing this expression we can say that Norwid and Byron think with octaves on the same subject, or more precisely—the author of *Assunta* takes up one of the essential subjects in *Don Juan*—the problem of love and of an ideal lover. However, he takes up the motif in such a way that Norwid's poem may be defined as anti-*Don-Juan*. Just one love motif in *Assunta* is in sharp contrast with the numerous picturesque but superficial affairs Byron's protagonist has, which are result of an accident, sophistication, an outburst of passion, the instinct of self-preservation, aspiring for achieving privileges and money. The love in *Assunta* from the very beginning has a sacred dimension<sup>15</sup>.

Windakiewicz's remark is interesting for us inasmuch as although generally the effect of *Don Juan* on *Beniowski* is accepted, we would find similarities between *Beniowski* and *Assunta* by referring them to their mutual model, that is *Don Juan*.

Władysław Arcimowicz, the author of the monograph "*Assunta*" C. Norwida. *Poemat autobiograficzno-filozoficzny* [C. Norwid's "*Assunta*." *An autobiographical-philosophical poem*] published in 1933, did not refer to *Beniowski*, but still, he drew the reader's attention to the digressive course of the poem:

Nonetheless in the scene of the conversation with "the noble lady" Norwid falls into such realism that we begin to think that it is only love that matters here, an ordinary case of love to a woman. But the poet's ironical words shake us out of this; the words that may be directed not only towards the motif of the poem, but to the reader, too. [...] Realism is indeed involuntary—the poet lost his temper because of the digression about violating the sacrament of marriage and he forgot about the main aim of the poem. And finally, seeing this he came to his senses and... before coming back to the essential things he interjected a digression «on the unsedateness of the worldly conversation». It is in accordance with the general character of Norwid's literary output. In each of his works there are a lot of digressions, frequently diverting the reader's attention from things less essential than the plot, that Norwid basically avoided, or reduced it to the minimum and to most primitive forms.<sup>16</sup>

In order to have a full view of the relations between Słowacki and Norwid it should also be reminded that as soon as at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Grażyna Halkiewicz-Sojak, *Byron w twórczości Norwida* [Byron in Norwid's work] (Toruń: TNT, 1994), 68.

<sup>16</sup> Władysław Arcimowicz, „*Assunta*” C. Norwida. *Poemat autobiograficzno-filozoficzny* [C. Norwid's "*Assunta*." *An autobiographical-philosophical poem*] (Lublin: Towarzystwo Wiedzy Chrześcijańskiej, 1933), 25–26.

century Adam Krechowiecki compared *Assunta* with Słowacki's poem *W Szwajcarii [In Switzerland]*. However, this analogy, limited mainly to comparing the degree of temperament and to the expression of erotic emotions, came out poorly for Norwid's poem:

The above comparisons show best that Norwid, writing *Assunta*, had Słowacki's unequalled poem in front of his eyes, or perhaps in his thoughts. He did not imitate it, that is for certain, as he hated all imitations; he wanted to do it in another way and, undoubtedly, to do it better [...]. Did the execution correspond to the intention? The above comparison of analogous sections of *W Szwajcarii [In Switzerland]* and *Assunta* decides this question best. *Assunta* cannot be put in the class of love poems in Polish literature even because of the form itself, which is devoid of softness and proper panache. However, it undoubtedly has beautiful sections, at which the reader's thought stops, and which stamp their contents on his memory.<sup>17</sup>

Apart from *Assunta* digressions, or a digressive course can be encountered in several other poems by Norwid. A significant number of digressions and references to the tradition of digressive poem in short narrative poems (*Wesele [The Wedding Party]*, *Szczesna*, *Epimenides*, *Emil na Gozdawiu*, *A Dorio ad Phrygium*) pointed Magdalena Woźniewska-Działał.<sup>18</sup>

Barbara Subko wrote that poems epic-digressive *Wesele [The Wedding Party]*, *Szczesna*, *A Dorio ad Phrygium* are not "pure" poems digressive on the model created by Słowacki. But by: 1. presence digressions (lyrical, metapoetic, autothematic); 2. presence theme hero's journey; 3. extraction of primary role of the narrator-creator who digressions asks the reader, you can talk about stylistic references to digressive poem.<sup>19</sup>

In his historiosophical treatise *Rzecz o wolności słowa [On Freedom of Speech]*, although it is the word that is the main "hero" of the work, we often see "deviations" from the main course of the argument. Already Piotr Chlebowski who wrote a monograph of the poem, emphasized:

<sup>17</sup> Adam Krechowiecki, *O Cyprianie Norwidzie: próba charakterystyki, przyczynki do obrazu życia i prac poety, na podstawie źródeł rękopiśmienniczych* [On Cyprian Norwid: an attempt at a characterization, contributions to the picture of the poet's life and works, on the basis of manuscript sources], vol. 2 (Warszawa: Gubrynowicz i syn, 1909), 314–315.

<sup>18</sup> See: Magdalena Woźniewska-Działał, *Poematy narracyjne Cypriana Norwida. Konteksty literacko-kulturalne, estetyka, myśl* [Cyprian Norwid's narrative poems. Literary and cultural contexts, aesthetics, thought] (Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka, 2014).

<sup>19</sup> See: Barbara Subko, "O poematach Cypriana Norwida (próba typologii gatunku) [About the poems of Cyprian Norwid (sample typology of the genre)]" *Prace Filologiczne* 43 (1998): 433–443.

The multitude and variety of subjects, lack of concentration on some chosen problem, is a structural characteristic of *Rzecz o wolności słowa* [*On Freedom of Speech*]. Over and over we encounter deviations from the basic course of the argument, questions that appear in a way that is not always justified and sufficiently well prepared, loose digressions and numerous questions and problems arising from them. There are a lot of excursions, all kinds of «additions» in *Rzecz o wolności słowa* [*On Freedom of Speech*]. [...] Besides longer digressions and various bifurcations we encounter a whole lot of smaller fragments that are often included in the fundamental thought on the basis of a poet's freedom.<sup>20</sup>

We also encounter digressiveness in the parable *Quidam*. This is connected with the specific narrative strategy of the poem, which “[...] tends to neutralize the events, to substitute descriptive categories for narrative ones.”<sup>21</sup> The description that is made static, according to the “moral-metaphysical” conception of the poem, is broadened exactly owing to the digressions:

Looking with the narrator's eyes we limit our «contemporary» (more precisely: the 19<sup>th</sup> century) knowledge, in order to enter the circle of those characters' cognitive horizon; it also happens that we have to recall this knowledge. But as a rule we are faced with a scene that is directly presented to us, and not one reported as a summary only. And our contact with the world of the poem proceeds in this way till the last verses of the poem. However, in the later parts ever more often metaphorically expressed commentary to the events can be seen; poetical philosophy finds its bifurcations in long digressions. The perspective becomes longer and openly the point occurs from which we look—a more intellectual than sensual one.<sup>22</sup>

In conclusion of these deliberations that are still introductory ones, it should be admitted that Norwid did not write a *sensu stricto* digressive poem. Following Zofia Stefanowska it should be said: “The tradition of the Romantic digressive poem did not weigh much on his own work.”<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, it may be said that digressiveness was close to Norwid's way of

<sup>20</sup> Piotr Chlebowski, *Cypriana Norwida „Rzecz o wolności słowa”. Ku epopei chrześcijańskiej* [Cyprian Norwid's “On Freedom of Speech.” Towards the Christian epos] (Lublin: TN KUL, 2000), 330, 331.

<sup>21</sup> Zdzisław Łapiński. “‘Gdy myśl łączy się z przestrzenią’. Uwagi o przypowieści ‘Quidam’ (‘When the thought is united with space.’ Remarks on the parable ‘Quidam’),” *Roczniki Humanistyczne* 24 (1976) fasc. 1: 226.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*: 225–26.

<sup>23</sup> Zofia Stefanowska, “Norwid a poemat dygresyjny [Norwid and the digressive poem],” in Zofia Stefanowska, *Strona romantyków. Studia o Norwidzie* [Romantics' site. Studies on Norwid] (Lublin: TN KUL, 1993), 151.

thinking and formulating statements. For this personality that was so colorful and unconventional departing from the main subject, presenting it from various points of view, specifying the concepts, were usual measures. And it was not so much parody, autothemacity, or even irony, but rather an attempt at finding the truth that was the patron of it.

*Translated by Tadeusz Karłowicz*

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#### POEMAT DYGRESYJNY: SŁOWACKI – NORWID

##### Streszczenie

Głównym celem niniejszego szkicu jest ukazanie stosunku tych dwóch twórców do poematu dygresyjnego. Cyprian Norwid nie napisał, co prawda, *sensu stricto* poematu dygresyjnego tego typu jak *Beniowski* Juliusza Słowackiego, ale w wykładach *O Juliuszu Słowackim* wypowiadał się na temat tego poematu i nawiązywał do poetyki tego gatunku. W takich utworach Norwida jak *Wesele*, *Szczesna*, *Epimenides*, *Quidam*, *Rzecz o wolności słowa*, *Assunta*, *Emil na Gozdawiu*, *A Dorio ad Phrygium* znajdujemy liczne dygresje, pełniące różne funkcje artystyczne. Uogólniając, można powiedzieć, że dla Norwida, osobowości tak bogatej i niestandardowej, tok dygresyjny był bardzo użyteczny. Partonowała temu nie tyle parodia, autotematyzm czy ironia, ile przyświecał główny cel twórczości artystycznej – docieranie do prawdy.

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**Słowa kluczowe:** Beniowski, konwencja literacka, krytyka literacka, Norwid, poemat dygresyjny, poezja, romantyzm, rozum, serce, Słowacki.

#### A DIGRESSIVE POEM: SŁOWACKI—NORWID

##### Summary

The main purpose of the sketch is to show the relation of these two artists to digressive poem. Cyprian Norwid although not written in the strict sense digressive poem of this type as *Beniowski* of Juliusz Słowacki, but in the lectures *O Juliuszu Słowackim* [*On Juliusz Słowacki*] spoke about this poem and referred to the poetics of the genre. In such works of Norwid as: *Wesele* [*The Wedding Party*], *Szczesna*, *Epimenides*, *Quidam*, *Rzecz o wolności słowa* [*On Freedom of Speech*], *Assunta*, *Emil na Gozdawiu* [*Emil in Gozdaw*], *A Dorio ad Phrygium* we find numerous digressions, having different functions arts. Generally it can be said that for Norwid personality so rich and nonstandard digressive course was very useful. The patron of it was not so much parody, autothematicity or irony as the main purpose prevailed artistic creativity, reaching out for the truth.

*Translated by Tadeusz Karłowicz*

**Key words:** Beniowski, digressive poem, heart, literary convention, literary criticism, Norwid, poetry, reason, romanticism, Słowacki.