

MAŁGORZATA ŁUKASZUK

### MARIAN MACIEJEWSKI - THE OVERLOOKED

Marian Maciejewski, in his book about the kerygmatic interpretation of literature,<sup>1</sup> listed three main factors determining the choice of problems which he wrote about, and therefore the choice of texts dealing with these problems. They are: his own methodological interests and the ideological attitudes of his students, the changes after the Second Vatican Council and the involvement in the neo-catechumenate. My paper is an attempt to recall his “own methodological interests”, of which he spoke to us so rarely in a direct way. He did not reveal to us, his students and later young researchers in the field of Polish literary studies, or to his department colleagues, details about his way and the reasons for his choices. He was, first of all, a teacher, in the proper sense of this word; he simply showed; he made us patient with ideas and values which were not at the centre of our discourse of literature. When I ask today about his “individual interests”, perhaps I will be able to compensate for my earlier lack of attention, omissions, lack of listening and experience. I do not hope to recreate all the memories, because other people’s memories are richer and better, and I have no intention to explain to the doubting and to the haughty what his ‘lesson of literature’ was about, his ‘good lesson’ of ‘good literature’.

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<sup>1</sup> Marian Maciejewski, «ażeby ciało powróciło w słowo». *Próba kerygmatycznej interpretacji literatury*, Lublin 1991.

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It is obvious that Professor Maciejewski did not want to separate three main aspects of academic work: taste, usefulness, servitude—that is what I remember from his lectures and seminars. Methodology, for him, was not a set of abstract and handy tools; it was a real cognitive and axiological problem. He was more than sensitive to the poetic and cognitive findings of lyric poetry, to the ‘unusual beauty of visions’ and ‘enormous happiness released’ which were embedded in literature and he really showed no impatience when we tried to describe these treasures ourselves. Put briefly: he referred to the inadequacy of our interpretations as ‘intelligent polemic’ and turned towards books which we showed to him as important to us with the constant, surprising passion of a man who was eager and generous to search for more. Because, perhaps, if for Maciejewski some dubious (in terms of ethics) theory or practise of reading was an unforgivable heresy, he would still consider our methodologies as ethically authorized. It would be heresy if our own engagement with the text did not have a didactic function, if it did not lead to a real change: a look inside and a look upwards—towards truth and beauty.

He was, while an academic lecturer, a law maker, but he was also the recipient of our emotions and potential preferences, reacting with liveliness to our sometimes weak, sometimes pathetic involvement in the real artistic and academic life. Before I learned that he was both a historian and a theoretician of literature, I had known that he was an authority, though still before his Ph.D, publishing in *Pamiętnik literacki*; an author of books published in Warsaw and Wrocław, articles in the key synthetic books of the period and canonical treatises, as well as the reviewer and supervisor of the works of people who became fundamental for the Polish Humanities.

In his last text, which was again about Mickiewicz’s late lyrics,<sup>2</sup> he called for a style of interpretation which would grasp “categories of the tradition understood in the modern way”. And yet, as

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<sup>2</sup> Marian Maciejewski, «Wrzucony do bytu otchłani», in «Wrzucony do bytu otchłani». *Liryka lozańska i jej konteksty*, Lublin 2012.

I remember from his analytical classes (closest to modernity of all his classes) he was reluctant to use terminology deemed modernist (I have a similar problem today) and what is more, he labelled as “modern” even those categories which were at that time already obvious to us (‘the world of texts’). Moreover, we often heard his voice through the critique of his opponents (he was the representative of this fraction of ‘the Lublin school’, which in the research on religious literature and on Romanticism had ‘gone astray’), and this voice was additionally controlled by a friend and a very meticulous commentator of his, professor Paluchowska.

Maciejewski was very modest in revealing his individual interests before his metamorphosis. I perceived his modesty to be a result of the fundamental rule he was faithful to till the moment when I heard from him that he had written enough and was not going to write any more. Some people took this silence lightly, but we must remember the very good comparative studies-anthologies (about Słowacki’s *Krzemieniec*<sup>3</sup>), another book on Mickiewicz, and reviews of other people’s research works, for which he was often asked more than obtrusively. He took his time with them. To put it bluntly, he saw his goal as an attempt first of all to carefully help others understand the world, and only then to understand ‘the world of texts’ (he would add).

A literary text was, as he put it, “only” a very fine pretext and intermediary to “understand and go further” He had to redefine the type of classes he had with students: nominally they were classes in the history of literature, but they were turned into “academic classes of literary analysis”, which very often included works not normally referred to as religious literature. Maciejewski himself used the phrase ‘so called religious literature’, and I can see in this distance the distinction he was making from the beginning between religiosity and (no, not spirituality) Christianity. What he meant was Christianity as the “superior semantic level of the text”, which was to be revealed through ‘cleansing’ the space of discourse: methodology

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<sup>3</sup> *Gdzie po dolinach moja Ikwa płynie*, ed. by Marian Maciejewski, Lublin 1999.

of the literary text (phenomenology, structuralism, semiotics), the description of morphology, interpretation concerned with historical meaning (genology and historical poetics). These elements, united by a real curiosity about the people embedded in the text, were used to reveal the identity, not of “the essence of the spirit”, but “the essence of Christianity”.

Maciejewski’s readings of literary texts—lively, energetic, joyful—were (as I remember) the result of his decision to force us to see things we could not see, and we did not want to see. In the first paragraphs of the text about Mickiewicz’s religious lyrical poetry Maciejewski wrote about the sense of these poems as “mystery”, not only the kind of mystery which is inconvenient ideologically and axiologically for the reader, but also the mystery which is guarded by the poet’s esoteric ideology, or some details of the language and ‘internal structures’ of poems, requiring both careful and relevant description. Literature was for him a picture of man, and ways of its reading were means of building of a person. He was not interested in footnotes and very detailed questions—he asked about things fundamental, vital, central. And in these most detailed and concrete of interpretations he was concerned with the following things: they were written in words and in structures, but they reached beyond them, into the tradition, life, and even further—into God.

Literature—although not in the way it was for Ryszard Przybylski or Rudolf Otto, whom he often quoted—was for Maciejewski kerygmatic; making literature available through literary criticism (inspired by love) was a supplement and an extension of literature itself. I remember the conference in the Institute for Literary Research devoted to Białoszewski; it was after 1989, under the reign of the ‘new literary paradigm’ introduced in 1989. Maciejewski read his paper and he was really very sad. He told me “they did not understand a thing”, and as a result Maciejewski’s text was not included in the post-conference volume. They would have understood—I think—if he had spoken about overt religious images in Białoszewski’s works, or about spirituality as the contemporary rite also embedded in Białoszewski’s works, but Maciejewski, the author

of *Biblie romantyków* (*Romantics' Bibles*), did not speak, and did not want to speak, about them. Moreover, Maciejewski's goal was different from 'redefining oneself' through the text, an activity which gives a lot of self-satisfaction. Such a hermeneutic directive was doubtlessly a methodological dogma for Maciejewski, but he took more from the text than his own readiness to read it carefully; he drew more serious conclusions than the standard 'understanding of "I"' (of an author, of a reader) in the process of the understanding of the text.

Hermeneutics was, for him, the most honest of literary approaches: a particular way of understanding an interpreter, deeply immersed in tradition and existence (Kierkegaard), an approach which is in the state of consciousness and attitude an approach of a preacher (here Maciejewski often quoted Paul Ricoeur), and it is an approach free from rules, restrictions, prohibitions, guilt and the need for rebellion. The way which was to be shown by a hermeneutic researcher, led beyond 'I', in the direction of the seriousness of the world of values and the One who is their perennial guarantor. For Maciejewski the notion of 'understanding the world' was not identical with 'understanding oneself in the world' and 'understanding oneself in front of the text'. Was it not the reason why Maciejewski somehow distinguished ('separated' to use Ricoeur's term) texts with 'I' seemingly stable, strong, Promethean, while in reality detached, altered, separated?

The Lausanne lyric poems: "Maria", "Fatum" („Doom"), "Bo to jest wieszczą najjaśniejszą chwałą..." ("This is the Greatest Glory of the Bard") were all analysed by Maciejewski. For him it is the status of the existential 'I' which is the central theme in each of these texts, or group of texts. This status is multiplied, reified, phantasmagorical, false, hidden. It seems to be the problem of the 'other side' of existence. And the other side of conscience.

Therefore, it is characteristic of Maciejewski's interpretation to put aside all types of literature which are oriented towards the expansion of "I", or in other words, on man's anarchy in the sphere of dubious, denied and false kerygmatic concepts. Self-preservation (pride, courage, dreams, heroism, escapism) are for Maciejewski the false

perspectives of Romantic poets, but also of Herbert or Miłosz. All types of lay Humanism were for him an illusion, looking for self-preservation in social, psychological and philosophical idols, beyond God and his interventions. All existential heroism was false, because it was pointing to an impossible—and therefore false—road. All attempts to exorcise the past through the return to childhood, myth, Arkadia were heretical. For Maciejewski all allegories of eternity were naive.

But the texts in which these quasi kerygmatic, negative concepts appeared were not for him false, heretical or naive. They were true as expressions of man's nakedness, emptiness, shame—after the sin. Yes, he really selected texts in which the shameful side of existence is often present the infantile side, like in Białoszewski. Only further on, in the ways in which people deal with shame, Maciejewski must have seen a fault worth revealing: confronted with the lie of the “total freedom” a man (having departed from God) fulfils his independence in pathetic, bogus gestures, although we “contemporary and modern” are willing to ascribe to them axiological status. Foundation of life outside the God of history, wrote Maciejewski, is heresy (therefore heroes of Mickiewicz's religious lyrics are heretics), relying on idols: the others, spouse, children, science, art, culture, religion, are just as elusive as sex, material goods and nation.

The voice of professor Maciejewski could not have been quiet and humble. After all, it is the goal of a kerygmatic interpretation of a literary text to identify and reveal the relative value of texts, which in different forms of escapism find a prescription for happiness, or at least want to show a way of living in a satisfactory way.<sup>4</sup> Beyond the Word, Jesus Christ—and his ‘follies’—there is no salvation and there is no truth of salvation. It is not present even in the best of literature or culture. Literature or culture, writes Maciejewski, does not save, does not lead to eternal life, does not protect life from death. They will not lead to nothing but a spiritual schizophrenia,

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<sup>4</sup> See Bernadetta Kuczera-Chachulska, *Posłowie. Poezja i kontemplacja*, in Marian Maciejewski, «Wrzucony do bytu otchłani»..., op. cit. 160.

existentialist suffering, cultural trance, reductionism. What is it, then? For it must be something important for an exegete so disciplined and radical as he to write so much about it. It is a chance, a sign, a picture. This space which we are left with after our follies, as a place to live and speak. The space, the borders of which not only provide an orientation in the world, but also make it possible to go beyond them.

Blake wrote in *Marriage of Heaven and Hell* "For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things through narrow chinks of his cavern".<sup>5</sup> This statement could be completed with the ideas of Simone Weil: these "narrow chinks" are subjected to a constant pressure of imagination which works ceaselessly to "block" even the smallest of them, so that grace could not go through them.<sup>6</sup> Maciejewski, in the kerygmatic criticism which he in the nineteen seventies, in the middle of his life as a scholar, started to regard as the most honest, was investigating what happened if a man "locked himself" in the prison of his mind, what was seen through these narrow chinks and what, when the movement ceased, remained in a lifeless sphere, which the gaze did not reach. Profesor Maciejewski patiently explained why he was not interested in texts repeating Biblical schemata of events and people; they are, according to him, closed, locked, surrounded by dogmas. It is therefore not enough to state that he was interested in literature which showed the depths of human existence.<sup>7</sup> Camus, Kafka, Beckett, Sartre, Dürrenmatt. He mentioned them because they describe the curse of Man, the consequences of sin (Biblical death of Man). Maciejewski was most interested, however, in characters who are humbled by God most severely through the fact that they can act as they wish; that they are anguished by the void, the lack of "awe, pity and wrath". And while experiencing this void they commit the mistake most common

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<sup>5</sup> William Blake, *Selected Poems*, ed. by Mike Davies and Alan Pound, Heinemann, Oxford 1996, 105.

<sup>6</sup> Simone Weil, *Świadomość nadprzyrodzona. Wybór myśli*, trans. by Aleksandra Ołędzka-Frybesowa, ed. by Andrzej Wielowieyski, Warszawa 1999, 245.

<sup>7</sup> And such is the title of his last book of sketches on Lausanne lyric poems: «Wrzucony do bytu otchłani». *Liryka lozańska i jej konteksty*.

and most understandable: “they cling to even the meanest of styles”<sup>8</sup>; but also to the things and ideas seemingly valuable: other men, goods of culture or religion, as to the only reality available to them

Maciejewski picked up, very sparingly out of such texts, existentially potent and tragic, individual verses, restrained metaphors, fragments from plots and visions, in which a man reaches the zero point of the awareness of his misery and its reasons; this man is a double man—Biblical and contemporary—directed (also in the gestures of rebellion or destruction) towards the God of history, not of religion. In other words Professor Maciejewski selected not whole texts dealing with dark and painful existence, grappling with death, but their unusual, surprising bits, which portray shame and nakedness. The kerygmatic type of hermeneutic interpretation allowed Maciejewski to separate the striking simplicity of a grain of truth of ‘Jonah’s sign’ from the ‘mud; of religiosity, natural mysticism and prophetism which spread over the fashionable anthropological-mythical theories.

Maciejewski often put phenomena and people in a ‘problematic’ line; for example Malczewski, Chodźko, Rzewuski, Mochnacki, Mickiewicz, Norwid, Słowacki, Miłosz, Herbert, Białoszewski, Camus, Dürrenmatt, Malraux, Weil, Sartre, Saint-Exupéry, Grass, Gombrowicz, Baczyński, Gajcy, Szymborska. He never, however, or at least so rarely that I do not recall it, built axiological synthesis going beyond and above just one concrete text. He also never drew the line of the development of a writer or a trend without giving examples from the very early stages, and was particularly careful in revealing the senses of early words and visions. He quoted as precisely possible fragments of texts which are an ‘ontological mirror’ of a contemporary man; he showed carefully selected fields, ‘giving refuge to the tormented consciousness’, which is, as his analysis showed, not just a pretence of a refuge, but its fiasco. In Maciejewski’s sketches each quoted fragment was confronted with the next one, and

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<sup>8</sup> Simone Weil, *op .cit.*, 251.



one more, out of the same whole, out of earlier and later elements of the cycle, out of visionary or ideological pre-supposition.

Maciejewski opened his last sketch about Mickiewicz's last lyric poems with the quote from "Żeglarz" ("A Sailor"), the poem dated 17 April 1821, because "insertion into the abyss of being" and "the birth of romantic individualism, opening perspectives for eternity" started, as far as Mickiewicz is concerned, very early. It may be stated that Maciejewski "very early" understood the truth that only a quote after a quote, a discovery after a discovery, it is possible to approach the slowly growing and encrypted message which the author, often beyond the intention and alertness of the empirical writer, has written down with the "paler type of ink"; both in the structure of the text or a body of texts or on their margins. Paler ink and margins—exactly these things are discussed in the first sentence of the analysis of the poem by Słowacki ("This Is the Greatest Glory of the Bard")<sup>9</sup> written on 12 January 1842 on the copy of the letter to Krasieński—were for Maciejewski the most important elements in the discovery of the mystery of 'glory'.

As a result, in the sketches of Maciejewski it was a "worsened hero" of the text who met a reader "shamed" by his carelessness and lack of prudence. And it would turn in Maciejewski's sketches that the only mirror in which one could see one's face as it really is, not as it seems to be, was the mirror of Words. Not culture, not myths, not history, not humane values, not religion—because they are created by man. Not the other man—because he is in fact 'Me', seen from the outside. Let us state it in yet a different manner: in Maciejewski's sketches the human condition, marked by cultural, religious and dogmatic factors, turned out to be a mere mirage, to be nothing in comparison with the human condition as an analogon of the world of nature, the key features of which are best described by folk parallelism and the soteriology of the Bible. Maciejewski found a man of eternity in nature, in its central place, focused in the 'cottage

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<sup>9</sup> Marian Maciejewski, *Słowackiego «praca na wieczność»*, in «ażebym ciało powróciło w słowo»..., op. cit.

of the spirit', stopped, immobilized in a 'moment of eternity' other than human time.

Professor Maciejewski wanted to show us—his pupils and his colleagues—a lesson of poetry and art different from expected and different from obligatory, a lesson which is not the imitation of nature. It is its pictorial successor, and therefore a Cossack in *Maria*, a folk medium, can make contact with History. The early sketches of Maciejewski are seemingly old-fashioned, and even if we perceive them still as works 'only; about Romantic epistemology, they turned out to be a scholarly project of huge impact on our thinking about poetry, its language, its meaning and its goals. The phrases he used in the titles: "nature of cognition", "from erudition to cognition" are in fact phrases about crossing horizons, about the opening of new territories, more important and fundamental: of the ontological status of the consciousness in the act of cognition. The texts devoted to the religious lyrics and last poems of Mickiewicz, although at times may be perceived as 'locked' by the premises of kerygmatic interpretation, presented Romantic consciousness, and in general, artistic consciousness, in such a strong synthesis of proposals and enactments that they caused the change of the language of discourse, which we can use today not only about these phenomena, but also about poetry which came much later, that is the poetry of Czechowicz, Wat, Miłosz, Białoszewski.

I am still under the strong impression of the carefulness of analysis and the power of interpretation in these works. Maciejewski used a wealth of quotes, connecting them in clear, non-relative phrases, connected with his own words, and in the centres of semantic quotations he placed his own understanding of things which were not spoken or written about as much as it was necessary; of things that were buried under layers and layers of influences—*Wrzucony do bytu otchłani* (*Thrown into the Abyss of Being*). The God of history (but not of historicism) is beyond history, folk culture (but not folklore), is beyond culture, and in these areas—argued Maciejewski— 'follies' are embedded, follies which will be verified in the name of the quotations.

Each of Maciejewski's analytical works and each of the synthetic works—here as an example we can use the sketch about *Maria* or the last and religious lyrics of Mickiewicz, as well as the one about a 'crucified' "Doom" by Norwid or Słowacki's "This Is the Greatest Glory of the Bard"—is full of information about every layer of these poems: from their sounds and composition, graphic layout, ending of individual verses, through their imagery, aesthetic pretext of motifs, to plot sequence and the placing in landscapes, and particularly of placing in time. Each sketch is about the foundations of consciousness; central and clinching issues of philosophy. This synthetic vision—which in fact is the vision of Man!—is not diluted by remarks about concrete things: an individual word, line, phrase, verse.

The importance of Maciejewski's observations are preserved in our memories through repetitions and synthetic remarks based, often, on the musings of an authority. Sometimes, but it happened meaningfully rarely, Professor Maciejewski would select one word, which is a sign of the situation involved in the plot, but which has taken its meaning from elsewhere. This is the case in the beautiful sketch about *Maria* with "v i s i b l e" graves, which are "not silent": they tell a story which was preserved in the memory of the people and in the pragmatic space of folk consciousness. This is the case in the exquisite, canonical analytical miniature about the poem ["Gdy tu mój trup..."] ("While Here My Corpse..."), where the "road is searched for", although, as in Norwid's poetry, "it has been made long ago".

Two states of existence, of life 'inserted' into existence (but not 'imprisoned' in it), inserted into words and expressed in words of which Maciejewski wanted to speak, are the states which are symbolically embedded in the title of a part of his book *Poetyka – gatunek – obraz* (1978) (*Poetics—Genre—Vision*): look around (Malczewski) and look up (Norwid). The motif of looking and further looking beyond what has been seen clearly at first might have been in these musings more important than motifs of immersion, locking, opening, hiding, fusion. Through the semantics of 'looking without prejudice' Maciejewski was speaking about a situation of a man who, from the bottom of his existence, looks up towards the One, who created the world; like in

Mickiewicz's "Widzenie" ("Vision"): "I woke up facing heaven". For Maciejewski avoiding heresy as a literary scholar meant adopting such a 'look towards', which for him meant the 'look beyond' and 'the look above' of what is obvious and willingly observed. He accepted the kerygmatic interpretation as risky, but at that time the only one which allowed him to look into the text as fulfilment of the Christian dimension, to look into Man, who has a chance to look at himself through God. And not the other way round.

Kerygmatic criticism, which in his last sketch was pronounced to be "too preoccupied with the ideological angle", allowed him to separate what is 'religious' from what is 'Christian'; what is derived out of various types of 'man-made' religiosity (Otto), from real epiphany, which is a gift and grace.

Maciejewski, while putting together analytical sketches about the kerygmatic method (1991), did not change texts so that they would reveal kerygmatic aspects. He did diminish their world. He did not add anything. He read them truly, thoroughly, carefully, slowly and with great esteem for their native context. But he also asked about things which had not been said in them clearly enough and 'shallowly' enough, so that everybody could hear it, and particularly those for whom it is easy to judge the experiences of others/aliens.

Professor Maciejewski was not content with the simple division of motifs into classical and Romantic, although he would thoroughly present this receptive profile. He was not content with the standard description of a "masterpiece" or the adequacy of a historical analysis of literature, although he was a distinguished historian of literature. While speaking of the ever intriguing "depth of poetic semantics", he asked, at the same time, for some other dimension of imagination, other than things put together in themes, *topoi* and figures.

Maciejewski was a careful reader and a careful reviewer—and not only of the commentaries of Romantic scholars with whom he differed in absolutely basic things; as they, with false methodology falsified the truth of man and truth of literature recording experiences (not emotions). He kept his distance from those close to him—so it seemed—the most erudite of readers, the most subtle, sensitive and

open to the doomed topics and hell of existence. He was also critical towards these extremely brave texts and towards their authors. He did not change facts, he did not add new facts, he did not put facts in a different order—he was looking for facts overlooked or unrecognised, and he looked for them in the places where so many facts had already been found. Once he named them, he showed their place in time to be paltry and in time eternal, and he differentiated “deep theological explication” from “deep Christian experience”. ‘Sacralisation’ was for him ‘stiffening’, religion—which was for him the opposite of the order of the way, self-justification and self-consecration—was heresy. What is more, in the ways of articulating how to be ‘most Christian’ he saw a fault of religiosity belying the state of grace.

In his last sketch, while writing about his own trespassing against Mickiewicz’s last “lyrical masterpieces”, Maciejewski still differentiated the “high artistic and lyrical value” of this testimony from “only” human “existential truth”, which only at times and in tiny fragments approximate the truth of nature. Maciejewski could not deal with these issues on the level of an individual quotation or an individual text. He needed larger wholes, self-allusions, premonitions and sequences, reaching for fragments beyond the author’s body of work. In his study “Przesłanie z drugiego brzegu: Mickiewicza liryka lat ostatnich” (“A Message from the Other Shore: Mickiewicz’s Lyrics of His Final Years”)<sup>10</sup> Maciejewski adequately called these sequences of evidences “summed up experience”, the traces of which he tried to detect in the biography of the main protagonist, who, together with new lines and new fragments of a cycle or a poem, was turning into a plot, a story, a narrative from “beyond”, a new, permanent “incarnation of God into a concrete life”.

In effect, in his last study Maciejewski distinguished and strengthened the point which the reflection ultimately reaches: the intention of the ‘subjective’ truth of existence; in the same vein as was strengthened through the ‘anti-mystical’ understanding of Mickiewicz’s final poems presented by Janusz Sławiński. It is

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<sup>10</sup> Marian Maciejewski, «ażeby ciało powróciło w słowo»..., op. cit.

really amazing that Professor Maciejewski, who had always been so concerned with the truth of man's experience, wrote about his own "negligence of semantics of the subject, who, nevertheless, without losing its autonomy or the right to make a mistake, lived in the picture", in the landscape, in nature. Maciejewski wrote about things which made possible the connection between "contemporary Christian philosophy" and "post-Einstein quantum physics", about the world as a grand thought, about the only certainty of being, that is of "subject's thought", "the existence of our thinking and observations". And of the necessity of atonement. One more distinction, which I have so far overlooked, is necessary to understand Maciejewski's intentions: "subjectivity of cognition", usually interpreted in the Romantic way—and the "perceiver's consciousness", which is part of the perceived subject. Maciejewski wrote that because the "observer and subject observed create one unity" (Jan Guitton), Romantic poetry, as a point for interpretative reference "seems not to suffice". As God "seems to have hidden behind man", "as if silenced"—it was difficult to recognize his voice through (only) kerygmatic interpretation.

Neither Man nor God incarnated could be "re-created" in the categories of style (including the Biblical style) and myth (model act of epiphanies)—Maciejewski would keep repeating. Here lies the fundamental mistake of Konrad, which can be extended in Polish literature to cover most of the representation of things that go on between the created and their Creator. Remembering Maciejewski's criticism about the ambitions of Romantic heroes, some time ago, in my awkward sketch I wrote that God had not answered Konrad, because such a God, created by a Romantic poet, God of philosophers and moralists, is a mistake of their thinking: rhetorical language and strong emotions could not have given any answer to a man. Now I should write that it is man himself, locked by himself in his 'I', imprisoned in the 'cave' of his self, his defective self, looking through too narrow crevices at everything, will not hear an answer. He does not see a hand. He does not understand that he is not a source.

Maciejewski never approved of any stylistic modes with which man in a spectacular fashion 'grapples' with the world, with himself

and God: Ancient, Baroque, rhetorical, Romantic. Mystical, moral. All these modes for him were a 'trap', a mistake of the lack of trust in 'essence', which is framed into handy 'trinkets'. In these modes of stylization, as well as in escapes from 'I' to 'you' and 'we', or in the excess of rhetorical attacks, he saw a curtain obscuring literary and religious tradition, the reverse of existence, honesty, psychological expression and subjective truth (different from the fatal truth of 'I'), the reverse of the course of goodness and love 'from—to'.

Maciejewski's works contain the type of conversation which is not the result of anthropology, so rampant these days, but of the primordial state, the foundational act of being, which is the mystery of the Cross. This is the cause for the strong and judgemental title of his sketch about Norwid's Christian "Doom"; this is the cause for the constant depiction of religious rites and rituals through which a man saves himself without true salvation.

Self-recognition, similarly to self-salvation, is an empty game. It is attacking God, who finds no answer for man's ill-will. God finds no answer also when—as in "Zdania i uwagi" ("Sentences and Remarks") prophesying of the Word is not a "personal recognition in it", or as in "Snuć miłość..." ("Talk love...") or in "Żal rozrzutnika" ("Spendthrift's Sorrow") were giving love is seen as a form of self-fulfilment. Everything, almost everything, which has been written in literature, was for Maciejewski unreal life, an exorcising of time, caricatures of eternity. The only way out of impasse and falsity was the chance given in the narrow strip in the cave of existence: seeing beyond "I". Or, maybe it is even enough just to change "seeing" from the epistemological to the ontological?

God and science are not opponents; spirit and matter have not been "far removed". There is a chance to reconcile them without obliterating—as Ricoeur wrote—what constitutes their 'difference' and 'separation'. Maciejewski looked in literature for traces of uncertainty, gestures of hesitation, helplessness, even of deceit. He put Job, Jacob and Jonah in the place where the historians of literature saw Prometheus; he put Adam where they saw Odysseus; 'wound', 'scar' of death (in *Maria*) was for him a trace of 'childish' helplessness,

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the existential experience of fragility (in Słowacki's miniatures) was also a trace of helplessness, so were the tears, those flowing in life (in Mickiewicz's last lyric poems). And so were the entering into the whisper, the silence, also in his own silence.