

MAŁGORZATA BURTA

### EXALTATION, OR ABOUT LIFTING BORDERS

– *Ach, ta egzaltacja... ta egzaltacja...*  
(– *Ah, this exaltation... this exaltation...*)<sup>1</sup>

Exaltation is marked both by a haughty and not so haughty plurality of meanings, some troublesome excess, unsteady distinction and ambivalent evaluation, even when judged by historians of literature,<sup>2</sup> who usually disregard psychological and some physiological factors. Intuitively we understand it and most willingly assign it to sentimental and Romantic literature. Romanticism and existence, Romanticism and exaltation—it sounds encouraging!<sup>3</sup> It is easy to add: patriotic exaltation, national exaltation, religious exaltation, mystic exaltation, love and erotic exaltation. With no hesitation we can enumerate the exalted families of Werthers, Gustaws and Konrads, their exaggerated, disproportionate (too strong) emotions, not adequate, hyperbolised, affected, bombastic elations, all careless ‘overgrowth’ in expressing emotions. Romanticism in some way

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<sup>1</sup> *Pisma Bolesława Prusa*, ed. by Ignacy Chrzanowski, Zygmunt Szwejkowski, v. 15: *Emancypantki*, Kraków 1956, v.2, 185.

<sup>2</sup> This text grew out of the work on the entry “egzaltacja” (exaltation) to the dictionary of Polish literary criticism in the years 1764-1918. See also Małgorzata Burtta, “Przepolszczyć, przewartościować... *Nad rozprawą Kazimierza Brodzińskiego «O egzaltacji i entuzjazmie»*”, in *Verba docent. Księga jubileuszowa dedykowana Profesor Janinie Gardzińskiej*, ed. by Elena Koriakowcewa, Violetta Machnicka, Roman Mnich, Krystyna Wojtczuk, Siedlce 2013, v.2, 25-39.

<sup>3</sup> See Maria Janion, *Maria Żmigrodzka, Romantyzm i egzystencja. Fragmenty niedokończonego dzieła*, Gdańsk 2004.

depends on moody exaltation, and when we remember Hermann Broch's opinion that false exaltation is the primary convention of *kitsch*, or poetics of the heart,<sup>4</sup> we move into the upper regions of mawkish sentimentality, strengthened affectation and maudlin overflow of emotions.

An impromptu list of common reminiscences, associations, old and new synonyms and metaphors of exaltation shows a lot, but it probably hides even more. How can we move a fuzzy notion of exaltation from the area of timeless, fossilizing, disposed of banalities and elusive metaphors into the genetic and terminological clarifications of the period at the turn of the nineteenth century, the period of so called 'aesthetic duality'.

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Late Enlightenment and early Romantic assessments of exaltation—cold on the one hand and enthusiastic on the other—were marked by the attitude to the new German *Sturm und Drang* literature, with the notorious epistolary novel *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* (1774) by Johann Wolfgang Goethe, and Friedrich Schiller's idealism. It is worth remembering that the exaltation and enthusiasm of this "truly remarkable" book by Goethe was discussed by Madame de Staël in her widely read text *De la littérature...* (1800), part 1, chapter 18, entitled *De la littérature allemande*, initiating, often repeated later—also by Polish scholars, the identification of exaltations and "Wertherism":

Goethe wanted to show a person hurt in all aspect of her tender and proud soul, he wanted to show this complex of misery, which could lead a man to final despair [...]. Enthusiasm which Werther caused particularly in Germany comes from the fact that this text was in total concord with the national character. [...] As I said, all minds in Germany are prone to exaltation, and Werther acts in a wonderful way on such characters. [...] Reading Werther teaches how even good

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<sup>4</sup> Hermann Broch, *Kilka uwag o kiczu*, in Idem, *Kilka uwag o kiczu i inne eseje*, trans. by Danuta Borkowska, Jan Garewicz, Ryszard Turczyn, Warszawa 1998, 116.

exaltation could lead to madness, it shows when emotions become too strong, to cope even with the most ordinary of experiences.<sup>5</sup>

The way exaltation started to be perceived was also shaped by a play *Die Räuber* (1781) and Schiller's reflection embedded in *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung*.<sup>6</sup> A detailed analysis of both longer fragments and aphoristic statements about exaltation require a separate and thorough study. Let us just mention in passing that Schiller, using the example of the reception of the works of Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock, writes about the mood of exaltation of a German youth, who is led astray from life and directed into the kingdom of ideas and 'high spirituality; by the author of *Der Messias*. Klopstock's exaltation is needed only by the young. It is based on the fallacy of spontaneous 'sentimental genius' on the sin of dreamers' dreaming about the void. It is a move both beyond and above idealization, abandonment of human nature and all possible experience. In the part entitled "*Die Idylle*" Schiller writes that exaggeration (exaltation) consists of "the subject [...] deprives the imagination of its limits or suspends it."<sup>7</sup> And further he states that exaltation/exaggeration is the result of the "falsely understood concept of ennoblement".<sup>8</sup> Schiller concluded that "neither the naive nor the sentimental character, regarded alone, can quite exhaust

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<sup>5</sup> Anne Louise Germaine de Staël-Holstein, *Wybór pism krytycznych*, przeł. i oprac. Anna Jakubiszyn-Tatarkiewiczowa, Wrocław 1954, 51-52, 53, 54. Fragments from Works Madame de Staël were known at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and were published among others in „Pamiętnik Warszawski” and „Astrea”. See. Zofia Sinko, *Polska recepcja twórczości pani de Staël w pierwszych dekadach XIX wieku*, „Pamiętnik Literacki” 1984(2), 45-92. Herman Broch confirmed the claim of the genetic connection of exaltation and Goethe's novel. "Exaltation was used for the first time in *Werthers*, because genius is the one through which *Zeitgeist* speaks first." Broch, op. cit., 110.

<sup>6</sup> The final version of the treatise was published in 1800. Frederick von Schiller, *On the Naïve and Sentimental in Literature*, translated by Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly Carcanet, Manchester, 1981.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 73-74.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 79.

the ideal of noble humanity which can only emerge from the close combination of both.”<sup>9</sup>

The group of writers who have exceeded the norms of showing emotions has been enlarged by William Shakespeare (Hamlet) and—even more often—by George Gordon Byron. “Wertherism” has given a lot to “Reneism”<sup>10</sup> and to the other varieties of the illness of this age.

Werther’s fire did not light Polish literature straight away<sup>11</sup>. According to Stefan Kawyn, “an interlude [...] to the later discussion of exaltation in literature and its negative effects” was the answer (probably written by Stanisław Kostka Potocki<sup>12</sup>) to the text by Jan Samuel Kaulfuss published in 1816 in Poznań under the aggressive title *Warum ist die deutsche Sprache und Literatur als Hilfsmittel zur Fortbildung der französischen Sprache vorzuziehen?* (*Why German language and literature are better for the formation of the mind and heart than French language and literature*) Kaulfuss was teaching in Latin, German and Polish at the secondary school in Poznań, and he used this topic with his students for many years for essay competitions he organized.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>10</sup> René, an eponymous hero of François René by de Chateaubriand, is called “the French Werther”. See e.g. Olga Dobijanka-Witczakowa, Introduction to: Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *Cierpienia młodego Wertera*, trans. by Leopold Staff, Wrocław 2000, LXV-LXVI.

<sup>11</sup> Olga Dobijanka-Witczakowa, op. cit., LXXXVII. See Konstanty Wojciechowski, *Werter w Polsce*, ed. by Zygmunt Szwejkowski, Lwów 1925.

<sup>12</sup> Such authorship was suggested by Aniela Kowalska, *Warszawa literacka w okresie przełomu kulturalnego 1815-1822*, Warszawa 1961, 104.

<sup>13</sup> In the biographical information about Jan Samuel Kaulfuss (Kaulfus) made by Apolonia Głowacka we read: “Every year he himself wrote and published treatises with the syllabuses for the High School in Polish, German and Latin, which contained pedagogic and methodological remarks. *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, v. 12, Wrocław 1966-1967, 234-235. See also: *Dawni pisarze polscy. Od początków piśmiennictwa do Młodej Polski*, ed. By Roman Loth, v. 2, Warszawa 2001, 106-107; *Walka romantyków z klasykami*, op. cit.); Piotr Żbikowski, *Klasycyzm postanistawowski. Zarys problematyki*, Warszawa 1999, 84-85.

A Warsaw reviewer condemned the intoxicating influence of the *Romantische Schule*, so highly praised by Kaulfuss. He warned about the "raging fire" which Goethe's influential book might start in Poland:

[...] Of German writers, some give their audiences humbug, others intoxicate with their talents, lead their readers astray, make them incapable of any social life, and sometimes end in a very sad way (as was the case with *Werther*) [...]. The works of German literature, which have pushed German readers to speculation only rather than to practical action, could start a real fire in Poland if they were popularized among the populace in "the vernacular". [...]<sup>14</sup>

The review, which is deemed to have been written by Potocki, was referred to by Franciszek Wężyk in a polemic article entitled "*Uwagi nad Jana Śniadeckiego rozprawą 'O pismach klasycznych i romantycznych'*" ("*Some Remarks on the Treatise 'On Classical and Romantic Writings' by Jan Śniadecki*") published in *Pamiętnik Warszawski*<sup>15</sup> (1819, v.14, 458-477). Wężyk argued that Śniadecki's idea of German Romanticism, and particularly of *Faust*, was based not so much on his reading of these texts themselves, but "following the prejudiced opinion presented in the treatise of Mr. Kaulfuss".<sup>16</sup>

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There is no doubt that the notion of 'exaltation' became important in the debates of literary critics before the November uprising of 1830, and that thanks to Kazimierz Brodziński these debates became very heated. It worth recalling that the first full translation of *Die Leiden*

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<sup>14</sup> The review was published in 1818 in „Pamiętnik Warszawski”, v. 9, 517-537.

<sup>15</sup> The article was published anonymously but it is agreed that it was written by Franciszek Wężyk.

<sup>16</sup> Quoted in: *Oświeceni o literaturze*, part. 2: *Wypowiedzi pisarzy polskich 1801-1830*, ed. by Teresa Kostkiewiczowa, Zbigniew Goliński, Warszawa 1995, 44. Let us add parenthetically that the authors of the anthology do not confirm that the review was written by Stanisław Kostka Potocki, they write about "an unmarked author".

*des jungen Werthers* into ‘the vernacular’ was the work of Brodziński.<sup>17</sup> In 1830 a treatise by Brodziński was published under the significant title “O egzaltacji i entuzjazmie” (“On Exaltation and Enthusiasm”).<sup>18</sup> It was placed at the end of the first volume of his *Pisma rozmaite* (*Miscellaneous Works*), which included the first edition of the essay “O krytyce” (“On Criticism”) and re-editions of the following texts: “O życiu i pismach Franciszka Karpińskiego” (“On the Life and Works of Franciszek Karpiński”), “O satyrze” (“On Satire”), “O Fabianie Birkowskim” (“On Fabian Birkowski”) and “O elegii” (“On Elegy”). The second and third volumes, although announced in the first volume, were never to be published.

Zbigniew Jerzy Nowak insists that Brodziński’s treatise “On Exaltation and Enthusiasm” was probably a delayed answer of Brodziński to an anonymous article “Czy obudzanie uczuć spokojnych i łagodnych ma być jedynym poezji dążeniem?” (“Is the Re-awakening of Calm and Mild Emotions the Only Goal of Poetry?”), which was published in June 1827 in *Gazeta Polska*.<sup>19</sup> Nowak is right in stressing that traces of polemic discourse are more distinct in two preserved fragments of the first edition of the treatise. In the unpublished variant held in the Jagiellonian Library (rkps 4610—a collection of works by Brodziński gathered for Franciszek Salezy Dmochowski) Brodziński was “fighting with a concrete opponent”, while in the final version from *Miscellaneous Works* the expressions directed to a concrete author were replaced by generalized allusions directed at, widely conceived, aspiring Romantic writers. In the treatise we can recognize the fervour of early Romantic

<sup>17</sup> Brodziński worked on this translation in 1821 and published it anonymously in 1822. See, e.g., Zofia Ciechanowska, *Kazimierz Brodziński jako pierwszy tłumacz Goethego w Polsce*, Lwów 1928.

<sup>18</sup> Kazimierz Brodziński, *O egzaltacji i entuzjazmie*, in Idem *Pisma rozmaite*, Warszawa 1830, t. 1 (published by the author), 257-318.

<sup>19</sup> The review was published in *Gazeta Polska* 160 (12 June) and 161 (13 June). See introduction *Objaśnienia do artykułu O egzaltacji i entuzjazmie w: Kazimierz Brodziński, Dzieła*, red. Stanisław Pigoń, *Pisma estetyczno-krytyczne*, t. 1, oprac. i wstęp Zbigniew Jerzy Nowak, Wrocław 1964, 383.

debates; the themes of aesthetic crisis and culmination reappear regularly, but also the ideological tensions of that period lurk—the patriotic tide of the period just before the November uprising.

It is worth noting that the tension between these two articles is embedded in their titles, paradoxically and provocatively proclaiming "calm and mild emotions" (in the text about exaltation and enthusiasm) as well as exaltation and enthusiasm (in the treatise asking—albeit rhetorically—for calm and mild emotions). The confrontation of "inappropriate" titles stressed the opposition: calm and mild versus exaltation and enthusiasm. The author, hiding behind an asterisk<sup>20</sup> was, in turn, polemic with the recently published text by Brodziński "On the Life and Works of Franciszek Karpiński",<sup>21</sup> so, at some level at least, also with the earlier ideas expressed in 1818 in the memorable "O klasycyzmie i romantyzmie tudzież o duchu poezji polskiej" ("On Classicism and Romanticism as well as on the Spirit of Polish Poetry"), that is with the vision of a non-tragic idyll and moderation. In the text about Karpiński, whose works represent our national character, which in other words means "an inborn taste for simplicity and sound emotions",<sup>22</sup> while exaltation is synonymous with things new, foreign, not proper for a mild climate, a non-volcanic terrain and the quiet, pastoral character of Poles which results from them:

The emotions of Poles seem to be appropriate to their land. Their land has no volcanoes, in the same way as their hearts have no great

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<sup>20</sup> Nowak supposes that the text might have been written either by Maurycy Mochnacki himself, or by some "supporter of Romanticism remaining under the great influence of Mochnacki's individuality." Another possible author is Ksawery Bronikowski, an editor of *Gazeta Polska*. See *Objaśnienia*, 384. Stefan Kawyn saw Mochnacki himself as the most likely author of *Walka romantyków z klasykami*, op. cit., 373.

<sup>21</sup> The review was read for the first time on 29 July 1827 at a meeting of Towarzystwo Królewskiego Warszawskiego Przyjaciół Nauk, the full version was published as "Roczniki" ("Annals") Towarzystwa Królewskiego Warszawskiego Przyjaciół Nauk (1828).

<sup>22</sup> Kazimierz Brodziński, *O życiu i pismach Franciszka Karpińskiego*, in Idem, *Pisma estetyczno-krytyczne*, ed. by Aleksander Łucki, Warszawa 1934, v. 2, 57.

passions and morose thoughts. Their land is poor in gold, rich in iron, which stands for valour and farmer's toil. It is not too abundant, which prevents Eastern mellowness, and the graceful work of farmers keeps them away from merchants' egoism. Therefore, a new school of poetry, in love with foreign richness and offering temporary advantages, will not bear fruit with Poles, and will not make them exaggerated or full of *exaltations* ( italics M.B.) or strongly moved by emotions. This school of poetry would want these ridiculous Gothic castles to be built on Polish plains, monuments of weird taste and the rotten state of the society.<sup>23</sup>

The later part of this text contains pejorative expressions summing up the definition of anti-pastoral, anti-Slavic exaltation, for example "anarchy of imagination, exaggerated emotions, drive towards things weird and bizarre".

The opponent from the pro-Romantic *Gazeta Polska* answers "no" to the question from the title of his text. S/he argues that "awakening of emotions calm and mild" is not "the only goal of poetry", and definitely it is not its ultimate goal. The author rejects Brodziński's conviction that the new poetry forces exaltation and creates a fashion for turbulent emotions, that the people who follow exaltation are false deep in their hearts. Such people are justly met with indignation, for "the exaltations and yearnings are lies and so lie the emotions which in impetuous and higher souls are lit by religious love of nature, fed by loneliness and deep thoughts".<sup>24</sup> The author of this paper believes in authentic exaltation. S/he argues for a fundamental law for emotions and poetry to be very varied: "nature and the state of the human heart have many different ways, and true poetry has as many different ways".<sup>25</sup> Therefore, one should not favour pastoral mildness, because there exist "inflamed and extraordinary souls, for them each impression becomes passion, each emotion becomes ecstasy. Fiery imagination puts everything in front of them in a convulsive way,

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 71-72.

<sup>24</sup> *Walka romantyków z klasykami*, op. cit, 366.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 367.



it lights their thoughts and unbridled tenderness.<sup>26</sup> New poets "in the flames of their passion break, so to say, all the mortal borders".<sup>27</sup> Therefore, the lack of volcanoes is not enough to argue for the lack of passion of Poles. The author multiplies the expressions connected with 'volcanic' metaphors of fire and the dynamism of turbulent rivers, and through epithets of transgression s/he changes the meanings of fixed phrases: imagination is here fiery, tenderness is unbridled, thought is inflamed, emotion is exalted, the soul is turbulent. This text ends with words of prophetic praise of "holy ecstasies":

So when in the hot spirit exaltation boils, let the inspired bard, not disregarding holy ecstasies, boldly strike his lute, and despite of all praise for emotions mild and pastoral, his song will be enthusiastically repeated by posterity.<sup>28</sup>

The final version of "On Exaltation and Enthusiasm" published in 1830 clearly exceeds the mode of a casual answer/polemic. The expressions directed at a concrete opponent are more difficult to spot. It starts in a conciliatory fashion with well balanced opinions, from an obvious and unquestioned praise "of advantages of the mind elevated above the common" and "beneficial effects of enthusiasm for everything which is good and beautiful":

These features are the best, if they are true and clean; they mark something divine in man, something which reason itself cannot learn or explain.<sup>29</sup>

True exaltation, motivated by an authentic admiration for something, is contrasted with simulated, false exaltation, which is abuse and exaggeration. The author repeats his doubts presented earlier in "Artykuł nadesłany z powodu pism o poezji w «Gazecie

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 368.

<sup>27</sup> Ibidem,.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 367.

<sup>29</sup> Kazimierz Brodziński, *Dzieła*, ed. by Stanisław Pigoń, v.1, op. cit., 162. All quotations are from this edition, followed by page numbers in parentheses.

Polskiej» umieszczonych” (“An Article Sent Because of Texts About Poetry published in «Gazeta Polska»”). Brodziński wrote there about the “untimely exaltation of youth with generous emotions”. The note of anxiety was clear, particularly in this fragment:

[...] we wish that false impressions about poetry and metaphysical exaltations were not put in the place of imaginings which are in concord with human nature, with taste and experience. It is true that when it comes to emotions, ecstasies are preferred to cold indifference, so that a reasonable observer should forgive many of these ecstasies, but it is difficult not to wish that they will not be directed astray.<sup>30</sup>

The argument in “On Exaltation and Enthusiasm” begins with detailed linguistic analysis. The first paragraphs, filled with balance and calm, direct the reader into etymological and terminological clarifications. Brodziński is interested in etymological nuances, and predominantly in the “analysis of foreign words” used in the title of the treatise. He is sensitive to its foreign taste in language, literature, mentality, and he openly stresses it. It is worth mentioning that the monumental *Słownik języka polskiego* (*Dictionary of the Polish Language*) by Samuel B. Linde in praise of which Brodziński in 1815 wrote an ode entitled “Oda z okoliczności ukończenia «Słownika» Lindego” (“Ode on the Completion of Linde’s Dictionary”) has no entry for ‘egzaltacja’. At that time it sounded very French (*exaltation*),

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<sup>30</sup> The article was published in *Gazeta Korespondenta Warszawskiego i Zagranicznego* in 1827: 71 (27 March) and 72 (29 March). Quoted in Kazimierz Brodziński, *Pisma estetyczno-krytyczne*, ed. by Aleksander Łucki, op.cit., v. 2, 79, 81. It was the response to Maurycy Mochnacki’s review entitled “O «Sonetach» Adama Mickiewicza” (“Of the Sonnets of Adam Mickiewicz”) published in *Gazeta Polska* 1827, no. 80 (21 March) and no. 81 (23 March). In Mochnacki’s review we encounter on several occasions praise of “spark of enthusiasm”, passion (“Passion, which is the same thing in man’s life as thunderstorms are in nature [...]”) “phenomenon of religious and sentimental enthusiasm” (Mochnacki located its birth in the Middle Ages), “overflow of emotions”, etc. See the reprint of the review in Maurycy Mochnacki, *Pisma krytyczne i polityczne*, ed. by Jacek Kubiak, Elżbieta Nowicka, Zbigniew Przychodniak, Kraków 1996, v. 1, 120-127.

which brought associations with sentimentality out of cheap romances. The French equivalent comes from Latin, *exalto*, *exaltare*—to raise, to put up, from the root *altus*—high, hence: *exaltatio*, *exaltationis*—‘elevation’, ‘aggrandizement’. Linde’s dictionary has a related entry: „exageracyja” (exaggeration).<sup>31</sup>

Brodziński was on the side of linguistic ‘purists’ in the debate that was going on in that period.<sup>32</sup> As Jerzy Brzeziński explains:

So, Brodziński supported the idea of creating new words based on the vernacular roots, he encouraged the creation of structures based on the existing elements and within the context of the traditional tendencies in word creation, taken mostly from vernacular sources [...].<sup>33</sup>

That is the reason why “On Exaltation and Enthusiasm” is so focused on the problems of word creation. Brodziński explains expressions, and analyses in great detail “shades and degrees” of Polish equivalents of the word “egzaltacja”. He is concerned about turning “egzaltacja”<sup>34</sup> into a Polish word, and he connects it with the vernacular “gorzeć” (to blaze). On the other hand, “entuzjizm” is connected by him with

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<sup>31</sup> “Exaggeratio—rhetorical figure, of hyperbole for creating passion” M. Samuel Bogusław Linde, *Słownik języka polskiego*, Zakład Narodowy imienia Ossolińskich, Lwów 1854, v. 1, 633.

<sup>32</sup> Brodziński in his text “Wyrazy cudzoziemskie” (“Foreign Words”) wrote: “The Polish language, particularly in its elevated form, cannot stand foreign words, particularly those taken from modern languages. Everything that is foreign looks very ugly in Polish, when it is used without necessity.” *Dzieła Kazimierza Brodzińskiego. Wydanie zupełne i pomnożone pismami dotąd drukiem nieogłoszonych*, v. 8, Wilno 1844. 133.

<sup>33</sup> Jerzy Brzeziński, *Zjawiska leksykalne i stylistyczne w teorii i praktyce pisarskiej Kazimierza Brodzińskiego*, „Poradnik Językowy” 1995, i. 4, 34. See also Zbigniew Kloch, *Spory o język*, Warszawa 1995, chapter 7: „Język według Brodzińskiego”, 125-151.

<sup>34</sup> Ursula Phillips wrote perceptively of the multiple meanings of “entuzjizm”. See Ursula Phillips, *Narcyza Żmichowska. Feminizm i religia*, transl. by Katarzyna Bojarska, Warszawa 2008, 226-265. She did not, however, take into consideration Brodziński’s musings about the “shades and degrees” of this word in Polish.

the word “palić” (to burn), and he uses derivatives of these two words to prove his point.

Brodziński uses the original Greek meaning of “entuzjizm” éntheos—inspired by God.<sup>35</sup>

However, his is not pedantic, ‘dry’ lexical analysis. Brodziński claims that “analysis of words, although it is very meticulous work, often reveals national emotions and the ways nations think about them”. A very conscious handling of words leads to definitions and judgements of characters, to “constructions of psycho-intellectual human types”. An enthusiast, or “zapaleniec” (one who is burning) is thus portrayed: “[e]ach novelty rapidly overcomes him, it operates straight on his imagination and does not allow his common sense to learn about it”. (166) “The spirit, which inspires him, can be compared to strong alcohol, ‘the spirit’ [...]” (166).<sup>36</sup> The man who is “gorliwy” (ablaze), or “egzaltant” (the word derived from “egzaltacja” (exaltation), according to Brodziński tries to “persuade others to do and follow what he himself has named as true, good and beautiful”:

Feeling a heavenly spark in himself [...] he ignites with it both himself and others; for people he becomes a burning torch, the light of which is only strengthened by adversities. He is an active person in mind, heart and will. He will be happy if he keeps them in concord; not because of egoistical calculations, but because of ability and utility; if he deems himself called to enlighten, not to blind, to encourage, not to burn, to be a servant, not a master, a part not a head of the social body he lives in. (164)

A man “zarliwy” (eager) “is more directed by his imagination than his reason”:

<sup>35</sup> See editor’s note in Kazimierz Brodziński, *Wybór pism*, ed. by Alina Witkowska, Wrocław 1966, 409.

<sup>36</sup> Grażyna Tomaszewska comments on this fragment of the treatise in this way “Spiritual alcoholics, argues [Brodziński] are like real madmen. They can be saved only by cold common sense.” *Jak widzi dusza? Estetyka i metafizyka światła w «Panu Tadeuszu»*, Gdańsk 2007, 265.

He is similar to a small fire, which when allowed to be exposed to winds, changes into a big fire, and destroys everything he reaches with these winds. (164)

"Zagorzalec" (fiery) is even more imprudent:

To be extremely fiery in the mind is similar to the physical aspect of this concept. This is not a pure fire, but a smoke without a fire, which creates dizziness. Such a person is usually driven by a dark feeling of truth and goodness, and eager to surrender to his own vision of them [...], blinded and deafened by his own force, he is at the same time on the outside susceptible both to ice and fire. (164)

It is worth remembering here that the reviewer of Kaulfuss's treatise was writing about "ludzie zagorzali" (fiery people). Brodziński sees at the extreme of his spectrum "obląkaniec" (looney) and "szaleniec"—madman (for him poetic fervour is madness). He ascribes inspiration and enthusiasm to a serious style, and the linguistic equivalents of an "egzaltant" to a non-serious style. A reader may well get lost in these nuanced meanings translated into old Polish words. For Brodziński exaltation is an illness, an addiction, an exaggeration, and the cure for these is "cold common sense", applied with moderation, without eagerness. Moderation is the key criterion of evaluation: "All progress of true civilization is the mitigation of turbulent passions [...]". (175) Exaltation, not only towards imagination, but also towards reason, is a sin against moderation. In the laconic formula: "A thing burns within, it catches fire without". (162) He contrasts exaltation with enthusiasm, only to reject both of these states eventually. Drawing a fuzzy boundary between "commendable" and "deplorable" in enthusiasm and exaltation, showing the dangerous lack of stability in understanding and evaluation of these terms was the main goal of Brodziński.

Danuta Zawadzka was right when she noted that the etymological arguments of Brodziński were in fact a debate with the patriotic metaphors of fire.<sup>37</sup> To the title of Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz's text

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<sup>37</sup> Danuta Zawadzka, *Pokolenie kłęski 1812 roku. O Antonim Malczewskim i odludkach*, Warszawa 2000, 220-222.

*Iskra* (*Spark*) let us add the “igniting” lines of “Pieśń wajdeloty” (“Song of a Bard”) („Lecz dotąd iskry młodego zapału/ Tlą w głębi piersi, nieraz ogień wznieca,/ Duszę ożywią i pamięć oświecą”).<sup>38</sup> The lasting power of such metaphors is supported by a fragment from the poem “Dworzec mojego dziadka” (“A Manor House of My Grandfather”), written in 1851:

Ach! Bo jest we krwi polskiej jakaś iskra dzielna,  
Iskra święta – wszechmocna – iskra nieśmiertelna,  
Co ciągle z tajemniczym jej nurtuje warem,  
A na słowo „ojczyzna” groźnym pała żarem [...].<sup>39</sup>

Was Brodziński referring to a portrayal of an exalted youth who commits suicide in *Edmund* by Stefan Witwicki, which was published in Warsaw in 1829? Werther’s tropes may lead to such assumptions (which are not directly supported by the text itself). In the preface to his poem Witwicki gives a detached study of the reasons and symptoms of the poem’s eponymous character:

Because during the age in which poetry, having abandoned forms and rules, moved too far in the direction of the land of fantasy yearnings and melancholy, the age in which philosophy, defending itself from the lack of sensitivity and blindness of materialists, moved into the other extreme: of mysticism and idealism; in the present age we see more and more victims of this strong illness of heart and head, which we call “exaltations”, and which is even more unfortunate, because it is only the more beautiful, the deeper and nobler minds who are afflicted by it.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>38</sup> The sparks of enthusiasm/will burn inside till they start a fire/They will enliven the soul and enlighten memory.

<sup>39</sup> Ah! For there is in Polish blood some brave spark/Divine spark – omnipotent – perennial/Which is embedded in the mystery/And treats the word “fatherland” with fiery zeal.

<sup>40</sup> Stefan Witwicki, *Przedmowa do Edmunda*, Warszawa 1829, I-II; Małgorzata Burzka-Janik, Białystok 2015, 57-58. Quoted in *Idee programowe romantyków polskich. Antologia*, ed. by Alina Kowalczykowa, Wrocław 2000, 188.

Exaltation is the illness of the age, the result of the anti-Enlightenment extremity, at the same time accused and defended by Witwicki<sup>41</sup>. It is located in the centre of the debate about the concept of the literary hero, which started after the publication of *Edmund*<sup>42</sup>.

Brodziński's *Pisma rozmaite*, and particularly two texts previously unpublished and highlighted in the selection — the opening text *O krytyce* and the closing one *O egzaltacji i enuzjazmie*—were, in the spring and summer of 1830 at the centre of an aesthetic and ideological debate. The first to enter the debate (or rather to return to it) was Maurycy Mochnecki in the review of Brodziński's book published on 1 May in *Kurier Polski*, but primarily in the text *O krytyce i sielstwie* (*On Criticism and Pastoralism*) from 16 May 1830. In the unsigned article "*Pisma rozmaite*" Kazimierza Brodzińskiego (*Kazimierz Brodziński's "Miscellaneous Works"*)<sup>43</sup> reviewing only the first and last texts of the volume, the author appreciates the "awareness of national problems" of a critic, well respected in Poland, "loved by the nation", but he is critical of the pastoral model of man and literature presented there<sup>44</sup>. He writes about thunderstorms, battles of elements, which rage in human minds and in the history of the nation. Therefore, they must also enter the arts. They do not fit in the corset imposed by force. The "Police on the Parnassus" will not silence them:

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<sup>41</sup> Marek Stanisław commented: "Edmund's spiritual turbulences, his existential rebellion and rejection of the reality around are the dramatic results of the ideological conflicts of this age. See the detailed analysis of Witwicki's preface in Marek Stanisław, *Przedmowy romantyków. Kreacje autorskie, idee programowe, gry z czytelnikiem*, Kraków 2007, chapter 3, „W poszukiwaniu własnej tożsamości. Przedmowy Stefana Witwickiego”, 158-166.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 164-165, particularly the footnotes.

<sup>43</sup> Mochnecki's authorship was first confirmed by Stanisław Dobrzycki, *Spis artykułów i rozpraw Maurycego Mochneckiego w czasopiśmie warszawskich (1825-1830)*, „Pamiętnik Literacki” 1904, i. 3, 456-468.

<sup>44</sup> See Mirosław Strzyżewski, *Działalność krytyczna Maurycego Mochneckiego*, Toruń 1994, chapter 5: „Koncepcja krytyki Maurycego Mochneckiego na tle krytycznoliterackich teorii w okresie przełomu romantycznego w Polsce”, particularly 135-138.

There is, forsooth, a contradiction in our minds, in our own hearts there is a thunderstorm, our spirits are filled with confusion. But this will not be helped by any text on exaltation and enthusiasm<sup>45</sup>.

After reading of *O duchu i źródłach poezji w Polsce* (*On the Spirit and Sources of Poetry in Poland*) (1825) Mochnacki's words do not sound too revolutionary. We read there about the "state of turbulence, which we normally call enthusiasm"<sup>46</sup>, about the "triumph of enthusiasm" in the Middle Ages (33), about "rules of good taste and decency [...] invented to quench the flames of genius, (41) about the "huge space separating the inspiration of enthusiasm from the horizontal prose of life" (52) that is about the "perennial split in man's heart between calculation and inspiration". (53) In this text Mochnacki avoided the term "exaltation", and he used "enthusiasm" many times, always connecting it with Romanticism. Similarly, in the paper "Niektóre uwagi nad poezją romantyczną z powodu rozprawy Jana Śniadeckiego «O pismach klasycznych i romantycznych»" ("Some Remarks on Romantic Poetry on the Occasion of Jan Śniadecki's Treatise 'On Classical and Romantic Writings'") the term "exaltation" is yet not present. "Enthusiasm", on the other hand, is the basis of the fundamental differentiation, a deep foundation of the battle with the Classical, appearing unobtrusively in one fragment:

Common sense, limiting itself to what is common, light and easy to deal with, tends to see exaggeration and terminal illness of the mind in everything which does not conform to the limited experience, which is filled with enthusiasm, which is extraordinary and unheard of.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Maurycy Mochnacki, «Pisma rozmaite» Kazimierza Brodzińskiego, „Kurier Polski”, 1 V 1830, no. 145. Quoted in Maurycy Mochnacki, *Pisma krytyczne i polityczne*, op. cit., 237.

<sup>46</sup> Maurycy Mochnacki, "O duchu i źródłach poezji w Polsce", in *Rozprawy literackie*, ed. by Mirosław Strzyżewski, Wrocław 2000, 9.

<sup>47</sup> Maurycy Mochnacki, *Niektóre uwagi nad poezją romantyczną z powodu rozprawy Jana Śniadeckiego «O pismach klasycznych i romantycznych»*, w: *tenże, Rozprawy literackie*, op. cit., 59.



In treatises directly commenting on ideas of the "eloquent preacher of moderation", and particularly in the review, mentioned above, of *Miscellaneous Works*, Mochnacki, with growing indignation (growing since the debate about Mickiewicz's sonnets) attacks the notion of moderation, of the endeavour towards the "central point", or equilibrium, which in fact means stagnation:

Brodziński defines a central position between ecstasy and the instinct of imitation. He does not advise us to rely on ingenious ecstasy alone. He also does not advise us to imitate others. But he orders us to follow the middle road between these two extremes, following the rules taken from experience.<sup>48</sup>

Mochnacki calls "On Exaltation and Enthusiasm" a "poetics of feelings and ecstasies", a manual of good taste, which prevents "the possibility of overuse" and limits and stops an excess of ecstasies:

[...] in the treatise on exaltation he constructs the difference between elevation and soaring, enlightening and blinding, encouraging and inflaming, between sound and sick emotions. It is apparently better and far more comfortable to sit in a cage protected inside with thorns than to think and feel according to this theory [...]. In the way in which eagerness turns into fervour, zeal into fanaticism, how thinking may turn into abstraction, common sense may turn into calculations of egoism. Each power here, each emotion has its set of rules.<sup>49</sup>

In the next publication, which appeared a few days later, fuelled by the polemical voice of Józefat Bolesław Ostrowski voiced in *Dziennik Powszechny*, Mochnacki continues his open war with the "aesthetic empiricism" of Brodziński, with the power of rules "drawn from the critical dissection of creations of the dead or dying civilization", with the repetition of other people's tastes, with forcing taste for "pastoral effeminacy", he confronts "the echo of shepherds'

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<sup>48</sup> [Maurycy Mochnacki, «Pisma rozmaite» Kazimierza Brodzińskiego..., in Idem, *Pisma krytyczne i polityczne*, op. cit., 236-237.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 44.

flutes and the sweet sound of pastoral pipes” with the memorable “screaming of owls in the old, half ruined castle”, the “rustling of bats” and the “howling of wind”.<sup>50</sup> This choir of voices will soon be accompanied by the voices from the battlefields of the November Uprising. In the texts of Mochnecki from 1830 the word “exaltation” hides the turgid rebellion.

The triumphal ending of this debate between the two most prominent men of letters from Warsaw of the period before the November Uprising can be found in *O literaturze polskiej w wieku dziewiętnastym* (*On Polish Literature in the Nineteenth Century*). However, we will not find there a clearly stated solution to the question of exaltation. In his review of *Dziady, część IV* (*Forefathers' Eve, Part IV*), which is the second part of the sequel to Goethe's *Werther*, Mochnecki writes about “the sufferings of the inflamed one”,<sup>51</sup> using the Polish terms made popular by Brodziński. This does mean however, that he agrees with Brodziński.

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A strong protest against the main arguments in “On Exaltation and Enthusiasm” was presented by Józefat Bolesław Ostrowski (later known for his left-wing views, as well as his fiery and biting way of writing) in his most important text “Co są prawidła?” (“What Are Rules?”)<sup>52</sup> mentioned by Mochnecki in the subtitle to “On Criticism and Pastoralty”. This treatise is dominated by arguments presented by Brodziński in “On Criticism”. It is equally surprising that Ostrowski, while defending exaltation, did not use this word at all. He mentioned an “egzaltant” (exaltant) in his ironic reconstruction

<sup>50</sup> Maurycy Mochnecki, *O krytyce i sielstwie*, in idem, *Pisma krytyczne i polityczne*, op. cit., v. 1, 244-245.

<sup>51</sup> Maurycy Mochnecki, *O literaturze polskiej w wieku dziewiętnastym*, op. cit. 304, 309.

<sup>52</sup> “Dziennik Powszechny Krajowy”, 12 V 1830, no. 130. See the reprint Kazimierz Brodziński, *Pisma estetyczno-krytyczne*, ed. by Aleksander Łucki, op. cit., 314-325 (in Stefan Kawyn's anthology these fragments are entitled “Co to są prawidła?”. See *Walka romantyków z klasykami*, op. cit., 251-257).

of Brodziński's opinions about Mickiewicz as a crazy young man, a "supposed fashionable genius", someone who is overcome by exaltation. Refraining from the use of this term was to erase the negative effects of Brodziński's treatise, and also an attempt to detach himself from its language. Ostrowski speaks in the name of the "new school of literature", which does not want to impose its rules on art. He also shares with this new school a reluctance towards those who want to codify taste, and their consistent putting of poetry into a frame in the name of blindly following the old rules and commonsensical calls for moderation. He chooses the "internal spiritual freedom of thoughts", an original moving off the beaten track, inspiration, "endless improvement" and also the "ecstasy and enthusiasm" of a genius. The elements which Brodziński calls exaggeration, misuse and abuse, for Ostrowski are merely necessary conditions of progress and self-improvement. Moderation means stagnation. It is against the rules of the historical process:

The ideas keep moving forward all the time, all the time they develop out of themselves, reveal new phenomena. And this is their power, that they break, reject rules, that they have in themselves unlimited energy of life, that they are the beginning and the end. If someone believes that humanity builds its strength on experience, that it gets better because of experience and repetition, he wants to make us turn back to the past, to the condition of yesteryear that humanity must break in order to be able to move a step above.<sup>53</sup>

Two short replies of Brodziński to Ostrowski's review are preserved, which shows how important and topical these issues were. The most famous, stubborn and aggressive reply, which explained the adulterations of Ostrowski, was published by *Dziennik Powszechny Krajowy*<sup>54</sup>. The second reply "Odpowiedź P. J. B. Ostrowskiemu"

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 319-320

<sup>54</sup> The reply was published on 16 May 1830, just four days later in number 134. Deeply moved, Brodziński not only explains his position, but shows the abuse and

(“A Reply to P. J. B. Ostrowski”)<sup>55</sup> was more to the point and more balanced, although it should be made clear that it is sometimes treated as an inauthentic text, a compilation of quotes selected most probably by the editor from Brodziński’s texts.<sup>56</sup> On the other hand, it might be expected that this is one of the earlier variants of “On Exaltation and Enthusiasm”, as these two texts share many striking similarities. “A Reply...” is much shorter, dense, and intellectually compact. Brodziński clarifies the terms, and contrasts high emotions with exalted emotions, ascribing to the former nobility and greatness, and to the latter exaggeration, delusion, madness, and weirdness. He gives yet another definition: “[...] noble, great, wonderful emotions are not called exaltation, but we call an exalted person he who exaggerates in them, who in their name commits weird deeds [...]”.<sup>57</sup> The differences between exaltation and ecstasy are clearer here. In this context the problem of the exaltation of the poet and the exaltation of his poetry becomes a crucial one: “If he presents an exalted character, he should himself stick to high emotions during this presentation”.<sup>58</sup> At the crossroads of these realities are issues connected with the answers to the following questions: is it so that only an exalted poet creates exalted poems in which he imagines himself? Is exaltation characteristic only of the young poet? In other words, is it just a natural phase of the development of an artist, you (not) always grow out of? Is it a creative stigma of youth? What about geriatric exaltation? Is exaltation an inborn feature of sensitivity? Both in his treatise and in his reply to the attack Brodziński claims that exaltation devours the works of young artists, but that it is only a phase that passes, something you grow out of the passionate and silly poetry of youth to the moderate and ageless poetry of middle age:

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misuse of “Mr. J.B.O”. Kazimierz Brodziński, *Pisma estetyczno-krytyczne*, ed. by Aleksander Łucki, op.cit., 210-213

<sup>55</sup> Kazimierz Brodziński, *Pisma estetyczno-krytyczne*, op. cit., 313-314.

<sup>56</sup> See the editor’s remarks, Kazimierz Brodziński, *Pisma estetyczno-krytyczne*, op. cit., 312.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 313.

<sup>58</sup> Ibidem.

Both Goethe and Schiller later created works of art in which they showed that they had grown out of their youthful exaltation, and it was these works that posterity chooses to read. This was a great move forward from *Werther*, the move started by *Wilhelm Meister's Lehrjahre*, with which the poet wanted to quench exaltations which had been raised by the first book.<sup>59</sup>

The debate which was the result of the publication of Brodziński's *Miscellaneous Works* was revived in two July numbers of *Kurier Polski*. Jan Ludwik Żukowski<sup>60</sup> and Michał Grabowski<sup>61</sup> participated in it. Grabowski also referred to "On Exaltation and Enthusiasm" in another text written in the same year "O poezji XIX wieku" ("On Poetry in the Nineteenth Century"): "In Poland one key writer, who is also a poet, is against exalted poetry (Byronic)".<sup>62</sup> He coined this quasi-generic epithet, foregrounding Byron's importance and patronage, which had been spotted by Brodziński.<sup>63</sup>

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Why were the second and third volumes of *Miscellaneous Works*, never published? Alina Witkowska stresses that Brodziński was influenced by the critique of young critics and that he destroyed copies

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 314.

<sup>60</sup> Jan Ludwik Żukowski, „Jeszcze słów kilka z powodu rozpraw Kazimierza Brodzińskiego”, „*Kurier Polski*”, 13 VII 1830, 213.

<sup>61</sup> „*Kurier Polski*”, 23 VII 1830, np. 233.

<sup>62</sup> Michał Grabowski, *O poezji XIX wieku*, in *Polska krytyka literacka (1800-1918). Materiały*, ed. by Zofia Szmydtowa, v. 2, Warszawa 1959, 52-53.

<sup>63</sup> Brodziński mentioned Byron in the first draft of his text (he defended the exalted emotions), and wrote about him extensively in the published version. Byron is mentioned as a patron of emotional impulsiveness ("Byron originated and spread the conviction – most fatal for moral and poetic ideas – that a man of strong emotions can find his destiny in violent emotions"), lyrical life writing ("Byron puts his own passions and himself into other characters", "he painted everything with his own colours, and through showing suffering he wanted to show the suffering of his own heart"), "remarkable genius", whose uniqueness cannot be imitated.

of the second volume when they were being printed.<sup>64</sup> Definitely, as other participants of these literary debates, he was influenced by exaltations caused by the November Uprising. Adam Mickiewicz depicted Brodziński's transformations in the aura of myth-making:

Kazimierz Brodziński, once a soldier, started with the kind of poetry which his fellow soldiers wrote. After the fall of Napoleon he withdrew from public life, as if discouraged. He has no faith in enthusiasm, in the exaltation of the nation, he tries to lock himself in the purely artistic area, to become a national poet, Slavonic, he begins the movement down towards the Slavonic past [...]. He takes pleasure in pastoral descriptions, quiet life, Slavonic landscapes, he imitates Slavonic songs. He is somehow afraid of what was going on in poetry at that time, he does not dare to speak about Byron, terror overcomes him when he thinks about the influence of this mighty artist on the fiery spirit of Poles, he wants Poland to be quiet, calm, devoted to agriculture. He saw the fall of Napoleon, he is discouraged, terrified, full of anxieties, he is not aware that when he writes against exaltation and enthusiasm this is detrimental to the national cause [...]. Later he saw himself abandoned by his readers, he became an object of attacks by the young, who pestered him, sometimes unjustly, but knowing about the dangerous potential in his writings [...]. But the uprising of 1830 enlightened him, he showed humility and admitted his faults. In his soul and his conscience he paid homage to the genius of the nation [...]. Surprised by this crazy uprising, so full of enthusiasm, he thus spoke to his readers who had so often heard him speaking against the exaltation and enthusiasm of the young: "You, the nation (before which I bow with reverence), have decided to fulfil this idea and this destiny [...]. You are inspired, you feel your divinity".<sup>65</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Alina Witkowska, *Ofensywa przeciw egzaltantom i jej mistyczny finał*, Introduction: Kazimierz Brodziński, *Wybór*, op. cit., CIX.

<sup>65</sup> Adam Mickiewicz, *Dzieła*, ed. by Zbigniew J. Nowak et al., 9: *Literatura słowiańska. Kurs drugi*, transl. by Leon Płoszewski, ed. by Julian Maślanka, Warszawa 1997, 372-373. Zofia Stefanowska in an essay "Geniusz poety, geniusz narodu. Mickiewicz wobec powstania listopadowego" wrote: "At the bottom of this radical change of mind about the uprising there is something which brings

In prophetic lectures about the Slavonic mission Mickiewicz removed in time and space from the exultation of the early Romantic debates and, more and more overcome by the messianic ideas, argued that exaltation was a divine feature of the Polish nation, the spiritual background of its mission "the only spring in the history of the Polish nation, [the conviction] that all Poles in their great deeds were always full of exaltation".<sup>66</sup> That is the reason for the fierce attack on "On Exaltation and Enthusiasm" on the one hand, and on the other - praise of the messianic vision of history in the speech of Brodziński given on 3 May 1831 entitled "O narodowości Polaków" ("On the Nationality of Poles").

In his lecture from 17 May 1842 Mickiewicz, with details, explained "what should be meant by political exaltation", which is the stigma of Polish fate, "national enthusiasm".<sup>67</sup> Mickiewicz on several occasions referred to the definition of Pierre Leroux,<sup>68</sup> in the lecture

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to mind the words of Mickiewicz himself, spoken about another poet who had been sceptical about the revolution, about Kazimierz Brodziński. The famous sentence from the second course of *Literatur słowiańska*: "He showed haughty humility, admitted his faults and paid homage to the spirit of the nation" is quoted after the translation of Feliksa Wrotnowski (Adam Mickiewicz, *Literatura słowiańska*, Poznań 1865, v. 2, 322), which Stefanowska regards as approved by tradition, although the version of Leona Płoszewski is true to the original. I quote this fragment from Zofia Stefanowska, *Mapa romantyzmu polskiego. Pisma z lat 1964-2007*, ed. by Maria Prussak *et al.*, Warszawa 2014, 190. Let us parenthetically add here that Bohdan Zaleski, probably not accidentally, treated Brodziński's famous change of mind in a similar way: "The beginning of the November Uprising showed to Brodziński the depth of the enthusiasm of the youth at that time—the zeal in which he had only seen "mad Byronism and the false, anti-Slavonic exaltation;" See Kazimierz Brodziński, *Posłanie do braci wygnańców*, Paryż 1850, IV. Quoted in Alina Witkowska, *op. cit.*, CX.

<sup>66</sup> Adam Mickiewicz, *Dzieła*, *op. cit.*, v. 9, 418.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 318-321. It is characteristic that Mickiewicz traces the origins of "the spirit of exaltation" in Christianity, (320).

<sup>68</sup> Leroux wrote about "divine exaltation", among others, in the article *Du Christianisme et de son origine démocratique*, 1842. It should be added here that Leroux, a journalist and sociologist, is also the translator of the French version of *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, which was published in Paris in 1829 and

from 28 June 1842, when he stressed that “Leroux admits a divine mark in what he calls exaltation”.<sup>69</sup> In another lecture on 27 February 1844 he quoted Leroux and said that exaltation is the state “in which the spirit reaches for higher truths”.<sup>70</sup> Mickiewicz placed “exaltation” among the “key words of the age”: progress, brotherhood of nations, intuition. Following Schelling, he claimed that exaltation is characteristic for the age of St. John, the apostle whom Joachim Fiore “ascribed” to the Holy Spirit. The Age of the Spirit is the age of contemplation, mysticism, prophecies. Mickiewicz considers exaltation in the context of mysticism, politics, history and philosophy.<sup>71</sup>

Jarosław Płuciennik presents the debate about exaltation as a debate about the sublime. It should be stated straight away that Brodziński was an author of a text entitled “Wyrazy cudzoziemskie” (“Foreign Words”), and that in 1825 he translated a text by Kant which he entitled “O uczuciu piękności i wzniosłości” (“On the Emotions of Beauty and the Sublime”)<sup>72</sup> and that he wrote an essay “Piękność i wzniosłość” (“Beauty and the Sublime”).<sup>73</sup> The title of his text was

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republished many times. For Mickiewicz, who was then an academic and a lecturer at the Collège de France, Werther’s exaltations were already not so important.

<sup>69</sup> Adam Mickiewicz, *Dzieła*, op. cit., v. 9, 418.

<sup>70</sup> Adam Mickiewicz, *Dzieła*, op. cit., v. 11: *Literatura słowiańska. Kurs czwarty*, przeł. Leon Płoszewski, oprac. Julian Maślanka, Warszawa 1998, 76.

<sup>71</sup> See Ireneusz Opacki’s remarks «*Ewangelija*» i «*nieszczęście*», in Idem, «*W środku niebokręga*». *Poezja romantycznych przełomów*, Katowice 1995, 244-245.

<sup>72</sup> Because of our focus on exaltation, it is worth quoting a fragment from Brodziński’s translation: “Exaltations themselves, as we have seen above, have features of national characters; fanaticism, at least in the old days, reigned in England and Germany. This is a natural exaggeration of the noble character of these people. Exaltation as a feature of a national character is ascribed here to the nations of the north. Kazimierz Brodziński, *O uczuciu piękności wzniosłości*. Przekład z Kanta, in Idem, *Pisma estetyczno-krytyczne*, op. cit., 41. Danuta Zawadzka points out that Brodziński, in a way, follows this lead in the end of his “Of Exaltation and Enthusiasm” he traces the sources of Polish “zagorzałstwo” (fanaticism) in the seventeenth century. See *Pokolenie klęski 1812 roku*, op. cit., the chapter “Wiek siedemnasty”, 220-222.

<sup>73</sup> It was in this very text, which was the result of a course of aesthetics Brodziński was teaching at Warsaw University in 1822-23, that he changed “górnosc” (high



after all "On Exaltation and Enthusiasm", and Płuciennik names emotional qualities connected with the high style: following Pseudo-Longinus he writes about the intensity of affects, ecstasy, enthusiasm, admiration, shock, fear; following Burke he writes about awe, fear, surprise, and gradations: respect-admiration-reverence-esteem-surprise; following Kant he writes about negative joy, bewilderment, embarrassment, and finally, following Schiller - a mix of distress (fear) with contentment (delight).<sup>74</sup>

We are moving on the verges of the sublime, the debate about volcanoes resembles, after all, a crater in the active Etna in Pseudo-Longinus, and Kant's dynamic sublime, which is the fearful power, terrible in itself. We are also moving on the verges of pathos, exaggeration, tenderness, fury, genius, creative euphoria, improvisation, prophetism, ecstasy, convulsions ... These are possible synonyms of exaltation; not only of the nineteenth century variant. The relationships of exaltation and boredom, as well as of exaltation and melancholy seem equally interesting and surprisingly post-modernist.

The introduction of exaltation into the Polish language happened through Brodziński, and, at the same time, against him. It meant not only the translation of a foreign term, but showing the "national" motifs of our exaltation, the shift of accents, the change of motifs—from the individualistic motifs of Werther to the social, national motifs of Konrad Wallenrod and the members of the Polish 1830 insurrection. The words of Zbigniew Przychodniak which he wrote about Mochnacki can serve as a brief commentary: "[...] he converts a literary revolution in the preface of a political revolution. The strategy of an aesthetic breakthrough is replaced by a strategy of political action".<sup>75</sup> According to Brodziński, both exalted aesthetics and exalted

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style) into the new term "wzniosłość" ("sublimity"). Jarosław Płuciennik, *Retoryka wzniosłości w dziele literackim*, Kraków 2000, part. 3, chapter: "Elementy doświadczenia wzniosłości II: emocje", 162-164.

<sup>74</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>75</sup> Zbigniew Przychodniak, Wstęp do: Maurycy Mochnacki, *Pisma krytyczne i polityczne*, op. cit., 24.

politics are guilty of exaggeration, of a wild lack of moderation. However, the volcanic eruption and the spread of the “internal fire” of the Romantics were not to be avoided<sup>76</sup>. Brodziński had to succumb to them. Because it is difficult to agree wholeheartedly with the opinion that “only the cry of anguish can bring us to life, exaltation takes the place of truth”...<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> See Maria Janion, *Kuźnia natury*, in Idem, *Gorączka romantyczna*, Gdańsk 2007, particularly the part: „Ziarno i wulkan”.

<sup>77</sup> Albert Camus, *The Rebel: An Essay on Man in Revolt*, translated by Anthony Bower, Vintage International, New York, 1991, 49.