

AGATA SEWERYN

NORWID'S TEARS. ON LYRICISM AND RHETORIC*

Kto więc myślą pisarza chce się uradować,
Ten niechaj ją przytuli do łona swej duszy,
I niechaj ją obejmie uczuciem – a wzruszy
Martwe znaki – że wreszcie nie zechcą tamować
Głosu swego, i będą kwilić jako stada
Na wespół zbudzonych ptaków promieniem jutrzenki,
A poznamy dopiero, jak to myśl upada
Na siłach, jak to płacze, kiedy ją w sukienki
Czarnych głosek obleką...
(*Do piszących*, l. 14-21)¹

1. Sobbing Saints, Crying Melancholy and a Lady, Who Would Not Listen “What a Tear Means”.

Norwid wrote in a letter to Konstancja Górską: “Because no one has never seen him [that is Norwid] with anything similar to a tear, yes, he smiles almost always. Has anyone seen him in a different way?—If

* This text is a part of a larger project on Baroque tradition in Norwid’s writings.

¹ Quotations from Norwid’s texts according to: Cyprian Norwid, *Pisma wszystkie*, ed. by J. W. Gomulicki, vol. I-XI, Warszawa 1971-1976 (in the case of poems, numbers of lines are given; in the case of prose – a Roman one is for the number of the volume, an Arabic one for the number of the page). “Who, then, wants to have joy, with thoughts of a writer/S/he must hug it to her heart/And let her put feeling into it/Dead signs, should no longer stop/Their voice and will tweet like troops/Of birds half woken with the ray of dawn/And only then we will see/How this thought falls/In force, how it cries/When it is dressed in/Clothes of black sounds.” (“To the Writing Ones”).

so, let him or her say it!” (IX, 177). How many Norwid scholars have answered—if only indirectly—this question: “I have seen!” Norwid appears to be a sad, melancholic poet,² almost old on the day he was born,³ concerned mostly with negative or difficult human experiences.⁴ Maria Cieśla-Korytkowska could not even imagine him dancing a Cracovian.⁵ Such a perspective of Norwid’s perception started as early as his glorious Warsaw début. For example, in Wojciech Potocki’s letter to Andrzej Edward Koźmian dated 25 March 1841, Norwid was not only called “a child of sadness and sorrow” and his poetry “broody”, but he was also compared with Chojecki. Both are depicted as “two clear, unblemished crystals in the world of Warsaw”, “nice and lovable”, loving each other “as twins”, but, as Potocki wrote, “Chojecki—beautiful, grand, enchanting, adorable, while Norwid is quiet, morose, taciturn [...]”⁶

Indeed, if we accept an iconographic perspective, drawn, for example, in the famous Alciatus’s emblem “In Vitam Humanam”:

² See, for example, Renata Gadamska-Serafin, *Oblicza smutku w młodzieńczych lirykach Norwida*, „Ruch Literacki” 1998, (5); Sławomir Rzepczyński, *Melancholijny liryzm Norwida. Między „czarną suitą” a litografią „Solo”*, „Studia Norwidiana” 2002-2003 (2004), vol. 20-21.

³ Krzysztof Trybuś, *Stary poeta. Studia o Norwidzie*, Poznań 2000.

⁴ Which was movingly described by Danuta Zamańska (*Poznawanie poezji Norwida*, in Eadem, *Słynne – nieznanne. Wiersze późne Mickiewicza, Słowackiego, Norwida*, Lublin 1985). See also Piotr Sobotka, *Negatywne uczucia w „Vade-mecum” a Norwidowski horyzont aksjologiczny*, in *Norwid a chrześcijaństwo*, ed. by J. Fert, P. Chlebowski, Lublin 2002; Włodzimierz Toruń, *Homo patiens w liryce Norwida*, w: *Liryka romantyczna i inne szkice*, ed. by B. Kuczera-Chachulska, Warszawa 2010; Józef Fert, *Norwidowskie oblicza cierpienia*, in *Idem, Poezja i publicystyka*, Lublin 2010.

⁵ Maria Cieśla-Korytkowska, *Czy Norwid tańczył krakowiaka?*, in Eadem, *Romantyczne przechadzki pograniczem*, Kraków 2004.

⁶ Juliusz W. Gomulicki, *O nieznanym dramacie Norwida*, „Pamiętnik Teatralny” 1961, (2), 202-203. Quoted in: Zofia Trojanowiczowa, Zofia Dambek, Jolanta Czarnomorska, *Kalendarz życia i twórczości Cypriana Norwida*, vol. I: 1821-1860, Poznań 2007, 70.

Plus solito humane nunc defle incommoda vitae,
 Heraclite, scatet pluribus illa malis!
 Tu rusus, si quando alias, extolle cachinnum,
 Democrite, illa magis ludicra facta fuit!
 Interea haec cernens meditor, qua denique tecum
 Fine fleam, aut tecum quomodo splene iocer.⁷

we would definitely place Norwid on the side of Heraclitus, "weeping for the troubles of human life". It is much more difficult to imagine him laughing like Democritus. After all, he was so sensitive to the tiniest "of human sorrows" (*Aktor*, [*An Actor*]), and saw as a shadow of each joy "a counter-joy—a tear" ("Aerumnarum plenus"). Norwid not only wrote "Bad, Bad, everywhere, always" ("My Song (I)"), but he also argued that "true humour must have a tear at the bottom" (a letter to Artur Bartels, 1 September 1875; X 50), so he created "serious caricatures" and "joyful comedies". Norwid, while recollecting Italy missed not joyful moments but tears: In *Italiam! Italiam!*⁸, and in "Odpowiedzi do Włoch" ("An Answer to Italy") he addressed a "tearful, dark thing". It was not only in Norwid's early texts, but also in later works that when "joy enters", it is "as an unwanted guest" ("Sieroty", ["Orphans"])—this type of writing can be paraphrased by the following fragment from a poem by Hieronim Morsztyn *Non licet plus effere quam intuleris* "I was crying when

⁷ "Weep for the troubles of human life now more than usual, Heraclitus: it overflows with many calamities. You, on the other hand, Democritus, laugh even more, if ever you laughed: life has become more ridiculous. Meanwhile, seeing these things, I wonder: how far in the end, Heraclitus, I may weep with you, or how, Democritus, I may joke merrily with you. <https://www.mun.ca/alciato/f152.html>. Andreas Alciatus, *Emblema XCVI: In vitam humanam! Na ludzki żywot*, in Idem, *Emblematum libellus/ Księżeczka emblematów*, translation and commentaries by M. Mejora A. Dawidziuk, B. Dziadkiewicz, E. Kustroń-Zaniewska, ed. by and introduction R. Krzywy, Warszawa 2002, 198-199.

⁸ Norwid's wish to cry in the poem "Italiam! Italiam!" was pointed to by Julian Przyboś: *Próba Norwida*, in: *Nowe studia o Norwidzie*, ed. by J.W. Gomulicki, J. Z. Jakubowski, Warszawa 1961, 71.

I was born, I am crying when I die”.⁹ It is easy to list off-the-cuff at least a few of Norwid’s texts in which the motif of tears appears. At the beginning of this list we have the tear which “will fall and seep into graves”, from the poem “W Weronie” (“In Verona”), which is sometimes referred to as ‘Norwid’s-crying-poem’.¹⁰

I am not, therefore, going to prove the obvious: that in Norwid’s writings we often come across the motif of tears. It has been known at least since the publication of a trial edition of *Słownik języka Cypriana Norwida* (*The Dictionary of Cyprian Norwid’s Language*), which contains the entry ‘tear’, and it has been shown that this word often appears in Norwid’s writings.¹¹ Frequency tests made on nouns also clearly showed the privileged position of this word in these texts. For, example Teresa Skubalanka’s research showed that the most frequent noun in *Vade-mecum* is “man” (43 times) with “tear” coming second (24 times). “The low position of typically lyrical somatic expressions is striking, first of all of ‘heart’, as opposed to the highly ‘ranked tea’, Skubalanka summed up.¹² Let us notice here that she did not regard tears as a “typically lyrical” phenomenon, which is surprising because in Romantic poetry tears— “czyste rzesiste” (“I shed pure tears, countless tears”), “burza we łzy roztopiona”, (“a storm solved in tears”), “wielki płacz na pustym błoniu” (“great cry over an empty

⁹ Quoted in *Wysoki umysł w dolnych rzeczach zawikłany. Antologia polskiej poezji metafizycznej epoki baroku od Mikołaja Sępa-Szarzyńskiego do Stanisława Herakliusza Lubomirskiego*, ed. by and intro. K. Mrowcewicz, Warszawa 1993, s. 119. Józef Fert wrote about Norwid’s writings: “This is literature—and art—so serious and august that even jest is turned into didactic irony”. *Wstęp*, in *Cyprian Norwid, Vade-mecum*, ed. by J. Fert, Wrocław 1990, LXXI.

¹⁰ Małgorzata Filek, “Motyw łez w „Vade-mecum” Norwida”, in *Literackie wizje i re-wizje*, ed. by M. Stępień, W. Walecki, Warszawa 1980, 103-111.

¹¹ Jacek Leociak, Łza, in *Słownik języka Cypriana Norwida. Zeszyt próbny*, ed. by J. Chojak,

J. Puzynina, E. Teleżyńska, E. Wiśniewska, Warszawa 1988, 95-116.

¹² Teresa Skubalanka, *Z problematyki stylistycznej wierszy Norwida. Język religii – język poezji*, in *Norwid a chrześcijaństwo*, ed. by J. Fert, P. Chlebowski, Lublin 2002, 338-339.

field”), “gorąca łez rzeka” (“hot river of tears”), carry lyrical values: personal, emotional, elegiac.¹³ I will return to this theme later.

For all that, the very statement that in Norwid’s writings the word “tear” appears often would not have much weight—the trap which frequency counts can create was shown, for example, by research carried out some time ago which listed how many times words like ‘red’ or ‘blue’ appeared in the poetry of particular poets, which argued on this basis that a certain poet was a so called, ‘colourist’ or not. The very frequency of tears in Norwid’s writings may suggest that he was a leading nineteenth-century sentimentalist (which is not true), because for sentimentalists tears, apart from a tender heart, were one of the key words.¹⁴ So, it is not the quality, but quantity and meaning which count.

The importance of tears in Norwid’s writings has already been, of course, dealt with by Norwid scholars—particularly in the context of formal issues. It is known that the motif of a tear is recalled in meta-statements of Norwid in “Białe kwiaty” (“White Flowers”), but also in the poem “Finis”, where *Vade-mecum* was defined as “a hundred pearls logically strung near/To one another, as tear flows into tear,” which in a way connects Norwid’s late with his early writings, and more specifically with “Sierotki (“Orphans”), when a “tearful rosary” appears. It has been proven that declarations in “Finis” are not apparent; they are not only ornaments—in *Vade-mecum* a tear also has a compositional meaning.¹⁵ This motif is also a ‘lyrical frame’

¹³ According to Bernadetta Kuczera-Chachulska, tears often have a “religious stigma”, while an elegiac situation “as a situation of personal experience of the past by a lyric ‘I’ – has lyric features.” (*Przemiany form i postaw elegijnych w liryce polskiej XIX wieku*, Warszawa 2002, 188).

¹⁴ Teresa Kostkiewiczowa, *W kręgu serca i czucia*, in Eadem, *Horyzonty wyobraźni. O języku poezji czasów Oświecenia*, Warszawa 1984.

¹⁵ Fert claimed that what connects elements is “the logic of tears” (See *Wstęp*, in C. Norwid, *Vade-mecum*, ed. by J. Fert, Wrocław 1990, XCII). Kuczera-Chachulska reached a similar conclusion: “each new poem in *Vade-mecum* is a tear”, “while a tear from above the planet” infiltrates the whole collection (*Przemiany form i postaw elegijnych...*, op. cit., 179). According to Kuczera-Chachulska, the motifs of flowers

connecting two parts of the diptych “Tyrtej—Za kulisami” (“Tyrtej—Behind the Scenes”).¹⁶ While the fact that Norwid often connected the motif of tears with that of blood allows researchers to claim that Norwid’s tears are most often symbols of martyrdom and suffering, but also of sadness and sometimes simply “the expression of sympathy for the world which cannot understand anything—not even tears.”¹⁷

Everything seems obvious. So why should the theme of tears in Norwid’s writings be approached once more? One of the reasons is that—in a diachronic perspective, particularly in the context of lyrical, Romantic tears—Norwid’s tears often seem to be very problematic; they appear in surprising contexts. At times they provide an example of what Janusz Sławiński called a negative recall of a norm,¹⁸ while at times they become—as I will try to prove— something akin to the poet’s artistic signature, allowing us also to find connections of his lyric ‘I’ with the old literature, particularly of the Baroque period.

and tears in Norwid’s poetry “apart from the idea of collection also stress and accept certain aesthetic and symbolic values: beauty of what has been salvaged from the flow of time, the gesture of giving and a motif of water with firm connotation in culture.” (Ibid. 199).

¹⁶ Grażyna Halkiewicz-Sojak, *Liryczne ramy dramatycznego dyptyku Norwida*, in *Liryka Cypriana Norwida*, ed. by P. Chlebowski, W. Toruń, Lublin 2003, 273.

¹⁷ As far as *Vade-mecum* is concerned, the symbolic meaning of tears (martyrdom, suffering) was discussed by Ewa Teleżyńska (*Z badań nad strukturą ilościową słownictwa „Vade-mecum” Cypriana Norwida*, in *Język osobniczy jako przedmiot badań lingwistycznych*, ed by J. Brzeziński, Zielona Góra 1988) and Skubalanka (op. cit., 329). The meaning of the motif of tears was focused on in the final paragraphs of the introduction of Józef Fert (the statement I quoted in the main text comes from there). Fert added: “Then it would be crying over the irretrievably lost Arcadia of art. Crying resembling Jesus crying over a dead friend [...] or over the City. The logic of events which is forced on us here, which joins a hundred rhapsodies with a delicate thread, is the logic of tears – a symbol of compassion for oneself and others and the sign of [...]” (Ibid., XCI-XCII).

¹⁸ Janusz Sławiński, *Synchronia i diachronia w procesie historycznoliterackim*, in Idem, *Prace wybrane*, ed. by W. Bolecki, vol. 2: *Dzieło – język – tradycja*, Kraków 1998.

The first example I would like to turn my attention to is connected with the 'lyrical iconography' of Norwid; that is, either with allusions to existing works of art, or with graphic images constructed by Norwid which, as it seems, are not ekphrastic. Here we have "Mój psalm" ("My Psalm"). This poem is usually placed in the context of Norwid's interests in the emancipation of women (at the same time he also wrote a sketch entitled "Emancypacja kobiet" ("Emancipation of Women"). It is treated as an "echo of a conversation with Duchńska on feminine issues" (this text was a gift to Seweryna Duchńska),¹⁹ and it is supposed to express "glorification of womanhood".²⁰ This poem opens in the following fashion:

By day, by night, and ceaselessly I call
On many a Mary (and of these there are never
Too many), on Magdalens with rich full hair,
Sensible Sophias, Therasas who are all
Geniuses that they abolish *business* for ever.

(l. 1-5)

It ends with the following vision:

I beg this from the women saints who wear
A comb of rays, and with the practical
Veronica weep and wipe each
On a cloud of purple.

(l. 11-14)²¹

It should be admitted that such a vision of heavenly bliss has not been created by any iconography. Instead of angelic choirs and sounds of an angelic orchestra we have crying saints taken from Norwid's pantheon. This vision is disheartening, particularly if we

¹⁹ See Zofia Trojanowiczowa, Elżbieta Lijewska. Małgorzata Pluta, *Kalendarz życia i twórczości Cypriana Norwida*, v. II: 1861-1883, Poznań 2007, 770.

²⁰ Zbigniew Sudolski, *Norwid. Opowieść biograficzna*, Warszawa 2003, 593.

²¹ Cyprian Norwid, *Poems – Letters – Drawings*, ed. by and transl. by Jerzy Peterkiewicz, Carcanet, Manchester, 2000, 90.

take into consideration Norwid's challenging (which is typical of him) of the excessive expression of crying, deploring any redundancies of sentimental tears.²² To recall the emotional cry from the poem "Jesień" ("Autumn") "O – rather tread thorns and on fangs of spears/ Walk without cries,/ Than to tread mud – *mud is of how much tears,*/ Mists are sighs [...]"²³ While in "My Psalm" the saintly women sob emotionally and very intensively. Norwid makes even saint Veronica sob, and she, after all, according to apocryphal tales, did not join the crying women, but—filled with understanding sympathy—hurried to wipe the face of the suffering Man. What is more, these profusely crying saints are decorated with golden plumes of rays and placed on a purple cloud. It looks like a picture sold at village fairs. Was it Norwid's joke? Romantic irony directed at the infantile society Norwid lived in?²⁴ Or maybe a sentiment towards such somewhat kitschy iconographic representations of folk devotion?

Anyway, detecting in Norwid's poetry a positive attitude to folk devotion with its—often almost childish and not necessarily theologically orthodox—concept of God and saints, is not a great revelation. After all "naivety is innocence" ("An Actor"). This attitude is manifested in various ways. Sometimes it reveals itself in what Zamącińska would call "stylistics of Konopnicka"²⁵—for example

²² After all, he was not like Krasiński, who wrote: "Christ cried on this sad earth-/ And resurrected a corpse -with tears of tenderness". ([*Daj jej, o Panie...*], ["Give her, O Lord"]) in *Pisma Zygmunta Krasińskiego. Wydanie jubileuszowe*, ed. by J. Czubek, v. VI: *Utwory liryczne (1833-1858)*, Kraków 1912, 208). The negative meaning of sobbing in Norwid was pointed to by Zdzisław Jastrzębski, *Pamiętnik artysty. (O „Vade-mecum” Cypriana Kamila Norwida)*, „Roczniki Humanistyczne” 1956-67, vol. 6, (1) 56.

²³ Cyprian Norwid, *Poems – Letters – Drawings*, op. cit., 6.

²⁴ The second stanza, which I left out, could support such an interpretation.

²⁵ Zamącińska approached in such manner, for example, the poem "Ruszaj z Bogiem" ("Go and May God Bless You": "Why do I think that this text is false? Why the obsessive compositional bindings, ostentatious use of the phrase "Go and May God Bless You", stylistics ...from Konopnicka, sentimentality instead of toughness of the New Testament, educational angle?" Danuta Zamącińska, *Poznanie poezji Norwida*, in Eadem, *Słynne – nieznanne. Wiersze późne Mickiewicza, Słowackiego*,

in "Chwila myśli" ("A Moment for Thoughts") the main protagonist (a Youth), when he cannot bear the sobs of children crying: "Mummy, mummy, give us bread!" he, trying not to cry himself, wants to console them and explains "one shouldn't cry/Because Jesus would be angry for this". "And a Child utters a sentence, repeated later thoughtfully and commented on by a Youth: "Sir, mummy told us/That Jesus also wept a lot" (IV, 14). This sentiment for folk convictions about how God, saints and angels show that they care is also shown in a fairy-tale story "Legenda: Ostatnia z bajek ("A Legend: The Last of Fairy-Tales"), where an angel weeps because of suffering people, but this time without the hysteria of the saints from "My Psalm". He discreetly sheds a tear. While Norwid stated that maybe this is not a tear, but an optical illusion, "tiny brightness akin to a pearl" shining through a cloud.²⁶ Sobbing saints together with Jesus who "wept a lot" and an angel shedding a tear form agreeable company. Seen from this perspective "My Psalm" does not look so perplexing.

However, no matter how we are going to answer the question about the sense evoked by the closing images of "My Psalm", it is true that this 'giving of extra tears' by Norwid happened not only with saint Veronica *et consortes*—but also with the allegorical Melancholy from Dürer's engraving. Here we have *Il pensieroso*, an epigram considered to be Norwid's ekphrasis:

Norwida, Lublin 1985, 79). While Zaś Zofia Stefanowska reviewing Zamaćnińska's book wrote: "A biting remark about 'stylistics from Konopnicka' reminds me of another 'long winded' poem by Norwid, 'Bezimienni' ("Nameless") [...]. (Zofia Stefanowska, *O wierszach romantycznych*, in „Poznawać (więc kochać!)”. *O Danucie Paluchowskiej*, ed. by A. Seweryn, D. Seweryn, Lublin 2010, 195).

²⁶ "Wtedy Anioł w niebiosach wionął pióry około oczu swoich i myślałbym, że lżę uronił bo, jako przez szyby przezrocze bieży nierówno kropla rzucona rosą na okno i tęczyje się, tak, przez obłok przewiewała błędnie drobna jasność do perełki podobna..." (VI, 97). "Then an Angel in heaven wafted feathers around his eyes and methought that he shed a tear, because in the manner in which through transparent glass runs a drop of dew thrown at a window, through a cloud there wafted erringly a tiny light akin to a small pearl..."

Brodę na dłoni oparłszy kielichu,
 By oko suche błyszczało spod wianka,
 A łzy ukradkiem spływały po cichu:
 Dürera myśl to... stokroć, nad mogiłą!...
 Ale to jeszcze germańska kochanka,
 Jeszcze nie smutek ów, co gada z siłą,
 Sam na sam, rymem gardzący i prozą,
 Marmurem wyższy od nich: *Pensieroso!*

(II, 197)²⁷

This epigram is constructed upon the comparison of Dürer's engraving with Michelangelo's sculpture, depicting Lorenzo de Medici, known as "Il Penseroso" ("The Serious Man"). It is used as a testimony that Norwid preferred sculpture to painting and Italian art to Germanic art.²⁸ That was really the case, but the arguments for the superiority of Michelangelo over Dürer are somewhat devious. Where can we find "tears [which] went down quietly" in Dürer's engraving? What we have is the strength of the look typical in iconography, as art historians tell us, of intellectual composure: Dürer achieved it, among other things, thanks to turning up pupils of Melancholy, with a different axis of the look for each eye.²⁹ We have "eyes of Melancholy looking into the Invisible as intensively as the hand grips the Untouchable".³⁰ Let us add parenthetically that a fist from the copperplate engraving is also not similar to Norwid's "palm's vessel", to which the invented tears would most probably flow.

²⁷ "Rested a chin upon the palm's vessel/So that an empty eye glitters from under a wreath/And tears went down quietly:/ Dürer's thought, ... a hundred times over the grave!.../But this was still a Germanic lover,/Still not this sadness, which speaks with force,/Face to face, despising rhyme and prose./Higher from them in marble, *Pensieroso!*"

²⁸ Aneta Grodecka, *Ekfrazy Norwida*, in *Norwid – artysta. W 125. rocznicę śmierci poety*, ed. by K. Trybuś, W. Ratajczak, Z. Dambek, Poznań 2008, 139-140.

²⁹ See Raymond Klibansky, Erwin Panofsky, Fritz Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy: Studies in the History of Natural Philosophy, Religion, and Art*, Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1964, 319-320.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 319.

Therefore, in this ekphratic poem "palm's vessel" would be a specific *lacrimatorium* "a glass vessel for tears found in tombs" as Norwid explained in the footnote to *Quidam* (III, 154).

It is not my intention to show Norwid's misuse of the original engraving. After all, the poet may not have remembered all its details, or maybe he treated the engraving just as an impulse to create his individual poetic vision. Norwid did it quite often—for example in the ekphrasis *Mater Admirabilis* from *Legend* he 'added' Martha and Mary.³¹ He was also capable of manipulating artists' lives, as was the case, for example, with Raphael from "Rozmowa umarłych Byron, Rafael-Sanzio" ("A Conversation of the Dead: Byron, Raphael Sanzio").³² After all, he would also return to Dürer's "Melancholy", transforming his inspirations in a very different way than in "Il Penseroso"—I have in mind the oil painting "Saturn z cyrklem nad globem ziemskim (Melancholia)" ("Saturn with a Compass above the Globe" (Melancholy).") The point is to draw attention to—at times a bit compulsively—Norwid's returns to the motif of tears in unexpected situations. In the fifth of his lectures on Juliusz Słowacki, Norwid compared the lack of vowels in "all Semitic hieroglyphs"

³¹ See Rev. Antoni Dunajski, *Ikonografia religijna w literackich aluzjach Norwida, w: Poeta i sztukmistrz. O twórczości poetyckiej i artystycznej Norwida*, ed. by P. Chlebowski, Lublin 2007, 61-66.

³² Alina Kowalczykova, deeply moved, summed up: "All stories I know show Raphael as wonderfully composed in the social life; an artist to whom common acceptance of his life and person became a source of strength and joy of life. It is therefore surprising that in *Rozmowa umarłych* (*A Conversation of the Dead*) he appeared as a figure of a very different psyche and an attitude towards the world, full of contempt for people and sour. A different Raphael". (*Rafaël, czyli o stylu romantycznym*, „Pamiętnik Literacki” 1982, 2, 219). Grażyna Halkiewicz-Sojak connected it with Norwid's tendency "to construct himself into the characters he created." (*Byron w twórczości Norwida*, Toruń 1994, 91), Anna Kadyjewska remarked that autobiographical influences were also searched for in an etching, *Dialogue des morts*; Norwid's acquaintance found his features in the drawing of Rembrandt, while many years later J. W. Gomulicki found Norwid's features in the face of Fidiias (Anna Kadyjewska, *Norwidowskie rozmowy umarłych – dialog postaci i epok*, in *Liryka Cypriana Norwida*, op. cit., 285).

to the lack, in historical reports, of “tears, sobbing, tearing apart, tortures”, and concluded: “[s]o Queen Jadwiga, when she was told about the repaid wrongs, would ask: “[a]nd who repaid tears?—That is a question a Christian’s soul asks when confronted with triumphant history” (VI, 447). We might get an impression that the poet decided to eliminate this hole in “triumphant history” and decided to add vowels, where he thought they were missing, because he himself would rarely miss an opportunity to introduce the motif of tears. In Norwid’s poetry, even “the gentle azure eye”—that is the Eye of Providence known from Christian iconography—sheds a tear over the misfortune of Shakespeare’s lovers.

These returns to tears appear, of course, not only in the case of, as I referred to earlier, ‘Norwid’s iconography’, but also—in an obsessive manner—in conversations constructed by Norwid. This is the second case showing problems with the motif of tears in Norwid’s writings, particularly when they are read in the context of masterpieces of Polish Romanticism.

This situation is best seen in the poem “Malarz z konieczności” (“A Painter Out of Necessity”). Most often this poem is recalled as an exemplification of “the tragedy of human conflicts”,³³ and as a critique of the so called ‘parlour culture’. The protagonist of the poem, an artist, gracefully addresses a lady, proposing several topics for conversation which turn out to be unattractive to her:

Pani – mam mówić z nią o rytmie sił,
[...]
Pani – mam mówić z nią o głosce A,
Ile przyniosła ludzkości?! –

³³ This is Maria Kalinowska’s formula; she concluded: “a tragedy of words spoken and waiting for an answer, while facing silence, not filled by another man and returning to a speaking subject in such a devastating way.” (*Mowa i milczenie. Romantyczne antynomie samotności*, Warszawa 1989, 240)

Wspomnę, co mądrość? a co znaczy łza?
Nadmienię też o miłości.

(w. 1-2; 17-20)³⁴

The evening, as is often the case in Norwid's poems, ends with disappointment. The resigned protagonist, dejected by the lack of response or at least some interest on the part of the lady, who is contemplating a hairdresser, dresses and trimmings, decides to keep silence and to make a sketch in the "handy album" becoming "a painter out of necessity".

However it is not one more Norwid caricature of male-female relations that I am interested in here.³⁵ It is the subjects of the conversation which has never been which are interesting. All these subjects are known. For Norwid's readers they sound like some *basso continuo* in Baroque music. Let us take, for example, fragments from "Co? Jej powiedzieć.." ("Tell her—What?"), which fulfil the theme abandoned here about the "rhythm of forces/which are governed by planets' processions". One can attempt to grasp the meaning of the vowel 'a' for humanity, according to Norwid, for example, from his text devoted to arts' synthesis.³⁶ What draws

³⁴ "Madam – I am to talk with her about the rhythm of powers,/Madam – I am to talk with her about the sound A,/How much it has brought to humanity?!/I will recollect what is wisdom? And what is a tear?!/I will also mention love."

³⁵ Dariusz Seweryn saw in this poem a "sharply satirical representation of a woman – constructed in the manner of the 'fashionable wives' of the Enlightenment, but he also perceptively observed that "an image of the unfortunate adorer is not devoid of criticism." („Śpiąc z Epopeją”. *O możliwościach badania wyobraźni erotycznej Norwida*, w: *Jak czytać Norwida? Postawy badawcze, metody, weryfikacje*, ed. by B. Kuczera-Chachulska, J. Trzcionka, Warszawa 2008, 149-150).

³⁶ Similarly to other vowels, 'a' according to Norwid had an important role which testified to the interconnection of arts, which the poet saw in the categories of synthesis—not, as was often the case with Romantics—of correspondence. "First we have symbolic primordial shapes: *perpendicular, triangle, circle, square, oval* – that is I, which even has a dot because it is the *circle's radius* which started from the centre—A, which is a *triangle*, O, a circle; U, a square; E, two squares one on another, that is an *oval* or an ellipse: such primordial shapes are simultaneously primordial sounds, or vowels: a, e, i, o, u. And primordial numbers, that is: I means

our attention here, however, are themes placed in a triad: wisdom-tear-love. At first sight they seem to be both very general and conventional. Because, after all, from times immemorial people have been pondering on wisdom and love, while tears were so common in the old Polish literature, in the texts which documented courtly *ars amandis*, that Stanisław Morsztyn in the poem “Odkryta szczerść kawalerska” (“Bachelor’s Honesty Revealed”) decided to unravel the shallowness of complements from witty parlour games:³⁷ Here we have a fragment:

Damy, powiemli wam kiedy życzliwie:
 „Źródła łez z oczu moich wypadają,
 Oczy me z płaczu rzekami się stają
 I że mizernie żyję i płaczliwie,
 Że potop w sercu i morze łez noszę” –
 Nie wierzcie damy, nie wierzcie mi, proszę.

Rzeki nie są łzy, ani łzy rzekami;
 Nie z oczu rzeki, ale z morza płyną,
 Łzy też nie w morzu, ale w chustce giną
 I ryb nie łowią w oczach niewodami.

1, A means a triangle that is 3; E—two squares, one on another (that is an ellipse, that is 2; U means a square, that is 4, O, that is a circle, means 5, as encircling, as expression 5, for which reason the Roman five is like a compass closed at a centre of a circle (V), while the Indian talisman built out of nine squares (and covering the symbolic wisdom on numbers) has 5 in the middle, which is considered the number of the circle. In a similar manner there are five main colours: *white, black, blue, yellow and red*.” On this issue see Ilona Woronow, *Synteza sztuk w pismach Norwida*, in Eadem, *Romantyczna idea korespondencji sztuk. Stendhal, Hoffmann, Baudelaire, Norwid*, Kraków 2007.

³⁷ On this text and on the response to Morsztyn’s poem see Mirosław Hanusiewicz, *Szczerść barokowego poety. Uwagi na marginesie wiersza Stanisława Morsztyna*, in *Literatura. Historia. Dziedzictwo*. Festschrift for professor Teresa Kostkiewiczowa, ed. by T. Chachulski, A. Grześkowiak-Krwawicz, Warszawa 2006, 97-105

Żart to jest mówić: „Łez strumienie leję”,
A oko suche nic nie czerwienieje.

(l. 37-48)³⁸

I think that Norwid would have liked this poem, which so strongly shows the sham of parlour cant. Not only as a critic of ‘parlour culture’. After all, it was still in the Warsaw period that he tried to convince a lark that “a small tear [...] is not rain, is not dew”, and he returned to these issues later, for example in “Królestwo” (“A Kingdom”) “Tears? – are not like rain, although they wet like rain”.

The association of the attempt to talk about what “love means” and what “a tear means” from “A Painter Out of Necessity” with the situation of courtly flirting ornamented with tearful stylistics is—of course—very remote. Having read Norwid, one could rather suspect that if this dialogue were to develop, it would move in the direction of ‘the truth about a tear’, for example following the motif popular in religious writings of ‘a vale of tears’ revealed while the convention of a ‘complaint on contemporary times’ is launched. And it was the convention, as well as the topos of the ‘world à rebours’ (used also in sermons, for example, by Piotr Skarga), which Norwid was keen to use.³⁹ In “A Painter Out of Necessity” we have a style which is reminiscent of a sermon addressed to a lady, who should, first of all, listen.

Mieczysław Korolko referred to sermons as to ‘an advisory genre’ (*genus deliberativum*), that is concerned with “‘advising’ (*suasio*)” or

³⁸ Stanisław Morsztyn, *Odkryta szczerłość kawalerska*, in *Helikon sarmacki. Wątki i tematy polskiej poezji barokowej*, ed. by A. Vincenz and M. Malicki, Wrocław 1989, 182. “Ladies, I will tell you one day affably:/Sources of tears flow from my eyes,/My eyes from crying become rivers,/And that I live meagrely and tearfully,/That I carry in my heart deluge and the sea of tears,/Please, do not believe me./Tears are not rivers, nor rivers are tears,/Tears do not flow from eyes but from the sea,/Tears do not disappear in the sea but in a handkerchief,/And do not fish in eyes with fishing nets./It is a jest to say:/”I flow streams of tears”/And a dry eye does not get redder.”

³⁹ See Marek Adamiec, *Cypriana Norwida „świat na opak”*, in *Cyprian Norwid w setną rocznicę śmierci poety*, ed. by S. Burkot, Kraków 1991.

“dissuading’ (*dissuasio*)” of some topic, an issue, or a problem.”⁴⁰ And the dubious attempt to entertain a lady in “A Painter Out of Necessity” could be perceived as such. The lady is perceived by the orator as a disobedient, spoilt marionette refusing to co-operate with the creator of this *theatrum*, in which the scenography has been already planned. („Firankę – sługa niech odrzuci z szyb,/ Księżyc potrzebny jest k’temu,/ Naczynie pełne złotych ryb/ Podamy jemu”),⁴¹ („I siądz – na ramię zarzuciwszy szal,/ Nieumiejętnie, jak nimfy szal kładą: Błękitną niechaj on harmonią fal/ Jak z skały spada kaskadą!”; „Siądzże – i włosy swe grzebieniem zbierz,”).⁴² All this work, as Norwid’s poem proves, has been in vain, because the female protagonist, in the manner of an audience falsely recognized, made it impossible for the orator to conduct his *actio* according to the plan.

The whole, therefore, appears to be like a ‘stage version of a conversation’—a kind of apparent dialogue which Adam Karpiński, while classifying dialogue in old Polish literature, calls ‘a culture of spectacle’, and opposes to ‘a culture of conversation’.⁴³ Norwid was close here to the rhetorical tradition of the Baroque, which was thus described by Aleksander Wilkoń:

The Baroque [...] loved orating, and it almost did not matter which type of utterance a speaking ‘I’ was using [...] this way of speaking was far removed from genres like confession, recollections, personal request—that is to personal discourse, while it was close to public

⁴⁰ Mirosław Korolko, *Słownik pojęć i terminów retorycznych*, in Idem *Andrzej Frycz-Modrzewski*, Warszawa 1978, 217.

⁴¹ “Let a servant draw a curtain away from windows,/You need a moon for this,/A vessel full of golden fish,/We will give to it.”

⁴² “Despotic tendencies of a director and a scenographer” of the lyric protagonist giving a staged monologue to a woman “who had been given the role of a dummy” were described by Dariusz Seweryn, *op. cit.*, 149. “And sit down, with a shawl drawn on your shoulder,/Not skilfully, as nymphs do,/Let it with a blue harmony of waves,/ Cascades from rocks!/Sit down, and gather your hair with a comb.”

⁴³ Adam Karpiński, *Mowy i rozmowy Stanisława Herakliusza Lubomirskiego*, in *Kultura żywego słowa w dawnej Polsce*, ed. by H. Dziechcińska, Warszawa 1989, 173.

discourse. As a result we have a quasi-lyric text, not natural and pseudo-dialogic.⁴⁴

The short scene from Norwid's poem seems artificial not only because of the pompous histrionic aspect. Also because of a small "tear» squeezed between "wisdom" and "love". But, is it really a *small, personal* tear?

"A word in the context of civilization is more dramatic than personal," wrote Norwid in a letter to Władysław Czartoryski (IX, 227). And that is how—more dramatically (or maybe even histrionically) than intimately, personally, lyrically—this short scene appears to be in the poem analysed here. This dramatization of lyric poetry, at places strongly rhetorical, leads to other consequences as far as this tear of ours is concerned. The use of synecdoche results in a situation where the question "what does a tear mean?" may appear as encouragement to the explanation of the meaning of a 'tear', in the way an allegory or a symbol are explained. While the fact that apart from a 'tear' we have 'love' and 'wisdom'; a 'tear' becomes a universal notion, one of those Norwid's 'grand words' or "public words" in the sense revealed in his lectures about Juliusz Słowacki, (VI, 407). This meant moving beyond the Romantic convention of lyricism.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Aleksander Wilkoń, *Styl retoryczny w literaturze XVII w.*, in Idem, *Dzieje języka artystycznego w Polsce. Język i style literatury barokowej*, Kraków 2002, 53.

⁴⁵ I refer here to the classical way of understanding the notion of Romantic lyricism as proposed by Czesław Zgorzelski: "In Romantics' understanding it [the notion of 'lyricism'] became not so much the notion of belonging to one of the literary genres, but more of marking of an aesthetic category connected with the subjectivity of utterances and embedded in it to a larger or smaller extent independently from the genre of a text. The aspect of perceiving works of literature changed. It was not only the fulfilment of rules of epic, lyric and drama that was expected, but the creation as a spontaneous expression of man on themes of one's own internal reality of individual personality and on the truth of the world, which surrounds this individual. Poetry started to be conceived of as a result of reflections on the existence of the world and people." (*Liryczność poezji romantycznej*, in Idem, *Obserwacje*, Warszawa 1993, 181). Bernadetta Kuczera-Chachulska, developing, in a way, Zgorzelski's ideas, tried to interpret lyricism from the perspective a "meeting with a person" embedded in lyric texts. (See, for example, *Kategoria liryczności a problemy*

The fact that Norwid even in private contexts (conversations, letters) often used ‘public words’ and not ‘private words’ is sometimes explained by the process of his self-creation.⁴⁶ It can also be argued that Norwid used ‘public words’ for rhetorical purposes. His predilection was for oration, preaching—as readers of his writings know very well—was the dominant voice of his *oeuvre*. Walter Benjamin wrote about Baroque allegory that “whatever it picks up, its Midas-touch turns it into something endowed with significance”.⁴⁷ Norwid often worked in the manner of such ‘Baroque allegory’: he turned into ‘meaningful things’ everything which was within the reach of his reflection. It should be stated—in the manner of Norwid himself—that he made public what was private.

2. Between Lyricism and Cant. From Conversations about Tears to the Look of Weeping

Crying is associated in Romantic literature with lyrical confessions, and usually it is contrasted with the elevated style as something personal and emotional. The wish to discourse about “what does it mean?” in the situation marked with parlour conventions, depriving tears of intimacy connected with lyricism and inserting them within a discourse, might seem to be, in the context of Romantic tears surrounded by silence, a bit embarrassing: “Ale samotny – ale łzami płynę” – wrote Słowacki.⁴⁸ Mickiewicz, in a Rome-Dresden lyric poem, constructing a situation of an intimate prayer, was addressing God: “I tylko w nocy – cicho – na Twe łono/ Wylewam burzę, we łzy

wartościowania, in *Wartość i sens. Aksjologiczne aspekty teorii interpretacji*, ed. by A. Tyszczyk, E. Fiała, R. Zajączkowski, Lublin 2003).

⁴⁶ See Jacek Trznadel, *Człowiek i persona*, in Idem, *Czytanie Norwida*, Warszawa 1978. Marek Adamiec, *Cypriana Norwida „świat na opak”*, op. cit., 85.

⁴⁷ Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, transl. by John Osborne, Verso, London, 1990, 229.

⁴⁸ Juliusz Słowacki, [*Bo to jest wieszczca najjaśniejsza chwala...*], in Idem, *Dzieła wszystkie*, v. XII, part. 1, ed. by J. Kleiner and W. Floryan, Wrocław 1960. “How lonely I am, how I flow with tears.”

roztopioną”,⁴⁹ while Norwid’s lyric ‘T’ would like to force a woman, met in a parlour, who is at that moment focused on her dress, to listen to explanations of the semantics of crying. Maybe, however, Norwid used a different convention here— that is the convention of Romantic irony. While writing about *Beniowski* and its “form so ironic that parentheses are goals” he added:

This is, in a way, a conversation with hollow, formal and external people, to whom, after small talk about the weather and many other things we say parenthetically: “Would not we, now, talk about truth or about tears, which are forced by the birth of truth?.. (VI, 449)

The protagonist of “A Painter Out of Necessity” does exactly this, when he wants to discuss wisdom and tears with a “hollow, formal and external” parlour lady. So is it not lyricism but irony? Maybe, but what remains certain is that Norwid’s asking “what does it mean?” appears as a caricature of other Romantic ‘dialogues about tears’—particularly those of Mickiewicz. The one between Aldona and Konrad, crying over lost happiness, the one enclosed in lyrical confession of Gustaw who is comforted by the Priest; Gustaw, who in an elegiac monologue, was remembering “these lands of memory,/Where each square cell a tearful tribute exacts.”⁵⁰ When I recollect different, private and very personal tears from Romantic texts (also tears which, for some reason, would not flow anymore. “A żona twoja mu nie zostawiła/ Oczu, by płakał nad swoją niedolą” thus speaks Lilla Weneda to Lech begging for mercy for the brutally blinded Derwid).⁵¹ I must admit that I am very glad that the lady from “A Painter Out of Necessity” did not want

⁴⁹ Adam Mickiewicz, *Rozmowa wieczorna*, in Idem, *Dzieła wszystkie*, ed. by K. Górski, *Wiersze*, ed. by Cz. Zgorzelski, vol. I, part . III: 1829-1855, Wrocław 1981. “And only at night—quietly—into your bosom/I pour the tempest, melted into tears”/

⁵⁰ Adam Mickiewicz, *Forefathers’ Eve*, transl. by Charles S. Kraszowski, Glagoslav Publications, London, 2016, 380.

⁵¹ Juliusz Słowacki, *Lilla Weneda*, in Idem, *Dzieła wszystkie*, ed. by J. Kleiner, t. IV, Wrocław 1953, act II, scene II, l. 122-123. “And Your Wife Did Not Leave Him/Eyes, So That He Could Weep Over His Misery.”

to discuss the meaning of tears. While, when I recollect the scene from this poem, I usually justify ladies from Norwid's texts, ladies who are usually busy with fripperies and other vanities, who answer questions about the semantics of tears unwisely and impatiently. The one from the poem "Sieroctwo" ("Orphanhood") answered, for example, in this way:

„Nie trzeba zważać na to... co? to znaczy!...
Może – deszcz pada”.

(w. 15-16)⁵²

The tendency to create variations on the theme presented in "A Painter Out of Necessity" was characteristic for Norwid: a male protagonist keeps asking a woman about the meaning of tears, who is unable to answer this question. This is what happens in *Pierścień wielkiej damy*. Szeliga wanted to talk about tears, about "a rosary made of a man of tears, extremely expensive" which was dropped in the Dead Sea and "was all transformed/Into opal grains...crystalline.../Very hard.../light!...Like ice". He was met with a discrediting lack of understanding from the Duchess and Magdalena, who were more interested in the «little evening meeting» to which "lovely and good young ladies from a school for girls would come for a dance". As could be easily guessed, Szeliga was not content with it, and he, embittered, concluded:

Świat – jest zaprawdę trucizną ludziom,
Bo on kształci ich ...
– a nie – – rozwija!⁵³

A similar situation appears in *An Actor*. A café in a theatre is being cleaned, when suddenly a problem arises: " [...] On table four— there is a drop—truly/the Drop! [...]" (IV, act I, 173-174). It seems to be a kind of situation which is normal in a café. But not for the Older

⁵² "One does not have to be concerned with what it means,/Maybe it rains."

⁵³ The dialogue about tears summarized here is included in act II, lines 388-436. "The world—is, truly, a poison to people. As it educates them and does not develop."

Boy, who does the cleaning, who is unwilling to wipe it. After all, it might be a dew drop? These doubts are dealt with by Felcia, a daughter of the café's owner, with a rhetorical question, "Even if it had fallen from heaven, would it be cleaner?" The Older Boy is not satisfied with the commonsensical attitude; he cannot wipe the table for ulterior reasons. It is not so much the dew that matters: "And what if one of the guests wiped his forehead/Or cried?" he explains his inhibitions. Felcia, unfeeling and down to earth, answers: Wipe the table and put out a spittoon

To trzeba obetrzeć ze stoła
I kraszwarękę podsunąć...
Patetycznie
Ja kropli nie znoszę –
Baczną zalecam czystość i o czystość proszę!⁵⁴
(IV, act I, 1.181-184)

If a reader had some doubts as to how Felcia's attitude in the matter of the drop (which might be a tear, after all), should be considered, the reaction of baron Erazm Potomski: "This woman!!! Here we are! I would give her/A model dairy farm!! [...] Really!! A model dairy farm!" And Felcia adds from a distance: "I advise not to have drops on tables" (IV, act I, 189). If a reader still was not convinced who is right (Erazm is, after all, a limited simpleton), s/he would be helped by Gotard Pszonkin. This is a clearly positive, exceptional character. Not only a "great-actor" but also a "kindly man" (IV, act II, 234-235), admired, very respected, but at the same time modest, emphatic to people's suffering, helping them. There are no flaws in him.⁵⁵ In a conversation with Werner he states that the times when

⁵⁴ This has to be cleaned from the table and a spittoon given. *In a tone full of pathos*/I hate drops—/ I am all for cleanliness and I ask for it!

⁵⁵ On the construction of the character of Gotard see Bernadetta Kuczera-Chachulska, *Między estetyką a etyką. Jeszcze o „Aktorze” Norwida*, in Eadem, *Norwida „przypowieść o pięknie” i inne szkice z pogranicza genologii i estetyki*, Warszawa 2008, 59-73.

true greatness will be understood will come: “When we understand a little drop of dew/Or a tear before it flows down a nose and the front of a vest.” (Act I, l. 266-267).

We find in Norwid’s writings a situation in which a lyric ‘I’ is not asking a lady (or ladies) questions, does not check them with a test of tears, but includes a tear in a whole torrent of accusations directed at a woman. Such is the case of “Beatrix”. “[...] I have not stained your ribbons/ and satins with my tears!” But let us add straight away, not all female characters of Norwid are so light hearted in this respect; some of them pass the test of tears. I have in mind mostly Assunta, who, as a mute person, will not converse on tears, but who herself has a tear in her eye. However, Assunta is not so much a woman, as an allegory of the Look (as the title of this long poem reveals: *Assunta czyli Spojrzenie (Assunta or the Look)*). That is why her eyes are so focused upon the most important element of this allegory. We know how important the look was in the programme headwords of Polish Romanticism (one example would be Karusia shouting “I see, they cannot see!”). It is also characteristic that Norwid’s attribute of the Look is also a tear.⁵⁶

What, then, does this tear of Norwid’s meta-protagonist mean, as he wants to speak so urgently about it? What could it have meant for Norwid, as he programmed the imitated structures of dialogues around this issue,⁵⁷ as he was so eager to use tears in his literary iconography, and even his allegories looked with tears in their eyes?⁵⁸ And how did it relate to the issues of lyricism and rhetoric?

⁵⁶ In the traditional understanding of emblems, crying eyes were a symbol of saint Magdalene—such was, for example, the case in Tomasza Treter’s *Symbolica vitae Christi meditatio*, where *Magdalenae poenitentia*, a weeping figure of a converted harlot, was shown not as a full female figure, but as weeping eyes and hair covering Christ’s feet. (See Janusz Pelc, *Barok epoka przeciwieństw*, Kraków 2004, 186).

⁵⁷ Zofia Mitosek pointed to Norwid’s imitation of the whole structures of utterances (political pamphlets, letters, conversation) connecting this phenomenon with formal mimesis. (*Mimesis. Zjawisko i problem*, Warszawa 1997, 241).

⁵⁸ It is not only Melancholy and Look who shed tears in Norwid’s writings. This happens also to—for example—personifications of Poland and Greece. “I have had

3. Norwid's Hieroglyphic

Recalling a tear in "A Painter Out of Necessity", Norwid appealed not so much to readers' emotions as to their reason. It seems that the situation is similar in the case of tears in Norwid's other poems: tears are here most often not lyrical, but rhetorical. The fragments, like the one from "White Flowers", are rare; we have there a description of weeping over "great silence" experienced on a winter night during a journey across the Atlantic.⁵⁹ Usually—as is the case with *Assunta*, tears are made allegorical⁶⁰, which is also enhanced by Norwid's predilection for synecdoche: it is more often that we can encounter an individual 'tear' full of pathos than 'tears' which would be more natural in the context of individual experience. Or, tears are included in constructs which have the character of conceits.⁶¹

no illusion about Her [Poland] and I know that She is like a grown up baby with eyes filled with tears, and therefore seeing only through the perspective of tears of her saints and damned, seeing rainbows in threefold and sevenfold ways—never the truth". (IX, 166). "After Byron's death Greece, which he had eulogized, put on thick mourning clothes and wept; after the death of Juliusz, would you find even one tear?" (XI, 437).

⁵⁹ "I have never experienced higher *silence* than the *silence* of one winter night in the Ocean...so that there are no words to express it, despite the fact that it was a tough and almost hungry journey, which lasted for more than two months and made me so prosaic... I remember that I looked around and could not even find words to pray—and I only wept...that *silence could be so huge...* and after all, I had known so many seas earlier." (VI, 198).

⁶⁰ Michał Głowiński wrote on the problem of Norwid's allegories in "Ciemne alegorie Norwida", in *Cyprian Norwid w setną rocznicę śmierci poety*, Kraków 1991. This issue is connected with the issues of parables (See, for example, Michał Głowiński, *Norwida wiersze-przypowieści*, in *Cyprian Norwid. W 150-lecie urodzin*, ed. by M. Żmigrodzka, Warszawa 1973). Recently these issues, in the context of *Black Flowers*, were raised by Sławomir Rzepczyński (*Plastyczna figuratywność przedstawiania postaci w „Czarnych kwiatach”. O myśleniu alegorycznym i symbolicznym*, in *Poeta i sztukmistrz. O twórczości poetyckiej i artystycznej Norwida*, ed. by P. Chlebowski, Lublin 2007).

⁶¹ Arent van Nieukerken presented many interesting remarks on conceits in Norwid: *Na czym polega specyfika Norwidowskiego konceptyzmu*, in *Idem, Ironiczny konceptyzm. Nowoczesna polska poezja metafizyczna w kontekście anglosaskiego*

Here, Norwid applied a motif, used often in literary tradition, of tears-pearls: «dewy pearls» of weeping violets (“Marmur-biały”, [“White Marble”]), tears “hidden in the Ocean to create more pearls (“Trzy strofki”, [“Three Little Stanzas”]), and tears-pearls weeping with hail (“Puritanizm”, [“Purytanizm”]), and he also used less conventional, but still often used conceptualizations known from previous periods.

So, for example, we find tears in which the moon “a gilded spider” bathes its “ray threads” (“Noc” [“Night”]), tears—seeds of “a weak, sterile plant of longing” (“Marzenie” [Fantazja], {“Dream” (Fantasy)}), “a diamond tear” which is dangerous because it can “lock eyelids and throw into night’s abyss (“Pożegnanie”, [“Farawell”]), tears—wine grapes (“Pieśń od ziemi naszej”, [“A Song from Our Earth”]), a tear made of wax (“Po balu”, [“After the Ball”]), weeping candles and a tear breaking away from the face collected in a conch (“Bema pamięci żałobny rapsod” [“A Funeral Rhapsody in Memory of General Bem”]), a tear—star-stone, (“An Answer”) (“In Verona”), tears “resins’ amber” (“Deotymie. Odpowiedź”, [“Deotymie. An Answer”]), “windows of tears”, “tears out of dew’s lace/Glassy in three colours” (“Do panny Józefy z Korczewa”, [“To Miss Józefa from Korczew”]), “a pale silver tear” serving as a candle holder (“Post scriptum [I]”), and finally the rosary of tears I mentioned earlier, which has been transformed into a rosary of opals (*The Ring of the Grand Lady*). Norwid frequently associated tears and blood, which is considered stereotypical, (in “Zagadka” [“A Puzzle”]), for example, we have “manacles soaked in blood and tears”; they are also known from Norwid’s favourite reading—*Jerusalem Delivered* . In “Tajemnica Lorda Singleworth” (“A Mystery of Lord Singleworth”) we come across the following utterance of Toni di Bona Grazio, included in an improvisation on architecture and Gothic towers, out of which often, apparently “threw themselves the miserable mortals moved by despair”.

modernizmu, Kraków 1998. See also, Idem, *Epigramatyczność i konceptyzm w dyskursie Norwida (na przykładzie fraszek)*, in *Norwidowskie fraszki* (?), ed. by J. Leociak, Warszawa 1996.

However, even because of such rain of blood and tears, when you look at the beauty of architecture you may not be aesthetically not sensitive! (VI, 150)⁶²

If this "rain of blood and tears" recalled in the context of the description of aesthetic emotions sounds a bit shocking, this effect will be neutralized in the context of Baroque texts of the Passion type. For example, in *Pobożne życzenia* (*Devout Wishes*) by Aleksander Teodor Lacki ("a text which is a real mine of symbols and motifs characteristic for the art and poetry in the seventeenth century"⁶³), the wood of the cross becomes an apple tree in the shade of which a Spirit is longing for a Bridegroom, while "scarlet fruit" of this tree quenches her thirst.⁶⁴ This type of metaphor was extremely popular in Baroque meditational literature—in Lorenzo Scupoli's *Spiritual War*, for example, we find an example of a simile of falling rain to the blood spilled by Jesus,⁶⁵ while in "Pot krwawy" ("Bloody Sweat"), which is a translation of *Il sudore del sangue* by Giambattista Marino included by Krzysztof Mrowcewicz in an anthology of metaphysical poetry of Polish Baroque, we come across such *concetto*: "Our Lord sweats bloodily:/gracious cloud, which parched soiled/our hearts

⁶² Norwid provided a detailed footnote to this fragment of his short story with: "In some towns of Europe one could show with statistical realism how many, per year, suicides are committed by throwing oneself from the top of some monument to have one's skull shattered – so that a conscious visitor may not have from the beginning a right impression as to how to sightsee and admire these elevations."(VI, 160).

⁶³ Krzysztof Mrowcewicz, *Wprowadzenie do lektury*, in Aleksander Teodor Lacki, *Pobożne pragnienia*, ed. by K. Mrowcewicz, Warszawa 1997, 12.

⁶⁴ Aleksander Teodor Lacki, *Pobożne pragnienia*, op. cit., 120.

⁶⁵ Laurentius Skupola, *Wojna duchowna*, trans. by Rev. D. Nersesowicz, Jarosław 1683. This theme was discussed in detail in Krzysztof Mrowcewicz, *Wstęp*, in *Wysoki umysł w dolnych rzeczach zawikłany....*, op. cit. Anyway, it is not only falling rain which could remind one about blood spilled during the Passion "Drunk wine should remind one about vinegar, given to the Saviour, in all smells one has to look for the stench of bodies on Calvary, sunbeams have to be associated with the darkness which came after the death of God-man, while the voices of other people should bring to a repenting person the shouts of Jews: "Crucify him! Crucify him!" (Mrowcewicz, op. cit., 23).

gracefully wets with fertile dew/and brings fertility and does not drown”, l. 21-24).⁶⁶

It is worth remembering that the association of tears with blood, suffering—common in Christian culture thanks to penitential services—was also typical for homiletic writings of the seventeenth century, in which the idea of saint John Chrysostom was recalled: that tears can be compared to the blood of martyrs (*Martyres sanguinem fundunt, peccatores lacrymas fundunt*).⁶⁷

Norwid’s tears-conceits are often associated with metamorphoses; for example a tear becomes a little seed, out of which a plant of longing may grow, unknown in nature and allegorical as a blue flower of Novalis, or a tear is a candlestick lighting darkness. It could also serve as a varnish used to conserve “honourable boots” (“[Do J. I. Kraszewskiego po jego jubileuszu]. [“To J.I. Kraszewski After His Jubilee”]). At the same time a Norwidian tear is predominantly artificial; it often changes its state of matter. For example, it can be placed in an envelope:

[...] napiszę jej o tem –
 Nieba jej poszlę szmatkę, [...]
 Albo jej gwiazdę poszlę, [...]
 lub łzę jej włożę w list – a ona
 Odbierze łzę, gdy będzie bardzo roztargniona –
 (*Epimenides*, III, 64)⁶⁸

The change of the state of matter from liquid to solid happens regularly, and not only in *Epimenides*. Elsewhere, a tear becomes a stone-meteorite, or more conventionally, according to Baroque

⁶⁶ Quoted in Mrowcewicz, op. cit., 150.

⁶⁷ See Wiesław Pawlak, *Papierowe łzy barokowego homilety*, in *Śmiech i łzy w kulturze staropolskiej*, op. cit., 178.

⁶⁸ “[...] I will write to her about it/I will send her heaven’s little cloth,[...]/Or, I will send her a little star,[...]/Or I will put a tear in this letter – and she/Will receive it, when she is going to be very absent minded”.

tradition, a gem; particularly a banal pearl,⁶⁹ a diamond or an opal. A tear gains "weight of things". It is very typical of a poet so bent on making events monumental and showing them hyperbolically. "Reflection of Sculpture", manifesting itself in this way both in Norwid's paintings and in his writings, was spotted a long time ago by Kazimierz Wyka, who also discretely noticed that this monumental tendency at times led to a discrepancy between Norwid's intentions and the final result. "And so, for example in a 1853 drawing, which is supposed to present the resurrection of bodies—wrote Wyka—these resurrected bodies fly away over the cemetery to heaven as if they were heavy tomb sculptures, and a spectator looks, somewhat scared, so that they do not crash in such a flight."⁷⁰ It could be stated analogically that when Norwid decided to 'add' a tear to the Eye of Providence, he did not present it in the 'traditional' aquatic shape ("In Verona"). It is not a tear which might be associated with rain or dew; as we have seen Norwid has avoided such similes both in his early and in his late texts. This is a meteorite with proper weight and strength. If an Angel weeps in Norwid's text, then his tear will not have anything in common with "liquid tears"; it will be a "little pearl" shining through a cloud. ("Ostatnia z bajek" ["The Last of the Fairy Tales"]). Here, tears become specimens co-creating a poetic collection of minerals and gems, unique phenomena as the one which fascinate cosmo-mineralogists.

In the context of these heavy, rock-solid Norwid's tears a statement spoken by Goplana in Słowacki's *Balladyna* gets persistently recalled. At one moment Goplana says: "[...] I will be diluted in mist and will fall down in tears/Onto some flower on a meadow and will wither

⁶⁹ The tears-pearls in "Trzy strofki" ("Three Little Stanzas") have been fiercely debated: Mieczysław Jastrun regarded them as stereotypical (*Norwid i perły*, „Poezja” 1966, no. 8, 16-23), while Julian Przyboś as original („*Słowem każdym jak perłą*”, „Poezja” 1966, no. 8, s. 23-25). Pearls, as is known, are also often carriers of vanitative values. (See Jan Białostocki, *Vanitas: z dziejów obrazowania idei „marności” i „przemijania” w poezji i sztuce*, in Idem, *Teoria i twórczość. O tradycji i inwencji w teorii sztuki i ikonografii*, Poznań 1961).

⁷⁰ Kazimierz Wyka, *Cyprian Norwid. Poeta i sztukmistrz*, in Idem, *Cyprian Norwid. Studia, artykuły, recenzje*, Kraków 1989, 61.

with it.” (act I, scene II, l. 571-573⁷¹). We have here a situation in a way reverse to the one in Norwid’s texts: a solid matter would become ‘fluid’, will fall down as rain (dew?) on a flower and together with it, will ‘wither’, pass away. And although such a selection of Słowacki’s quotations might be considered one-sided (it is well known how often he also used ornaments of tears-pearls), it seems that—despite everything—it points to more persistent tendencies of these two poets. After all, in the context of Norwid’s imagery nobody would be inclined to retort to “the snapshot quality and lack of tangible, ductile features of an object” as Julian Przyboś did (as well as many researchers in his wake, in the context of Słowacki’s way of construction of literary reality).⁷² With Norwid we have a reverse situation: static and figurative elements dominate, combined with the “sculptural” aspect which Wyka pointed out. In the case of a tear—also of an attempt to “immortalize it in stone”—this aspect makes it less vulnerable to Heraclitan ‘panta rhei’.

The case with Norwid is that not only human tears acquire weight and become stones. Tears of nature are also transformed from liquid to solid matter—while tears of a pine tree become amber resin (“Deotymie. An Answer.”), tears of the sea become pearls (*Cleopatra*, V, 50). Drops of wax congeal—they are untrue tears of things, *lacrimae rerum* (“After the Ball”, “A Funeral Rhapsody in Memory of General Bem”).

Norwid’s tear is transformed into a stone and undergoes the process of becoming aesthetic. It glitters like something extremely valuable:

— — — — — Tło było, jako oko Marty
Siostry Łazarza: modre, łzą po-osrebrzane,
Łzą morza. [...]

(*Epimenides*, III, 63)⁷³

⁷¹ Quoted after Juliusz Słowacki, *Dzieła wszystkie*, ed. by J. Kleiner, vol. IV, Wrocław 1953.

⁷² Julian Przyboś, *W błękitu krainie*, in Idem, *Linia i gwar*, vol. I, Kraków 1959, 281.

⁷³ “The background was like the eye of Martha, /Lazarus’s sister: deep blue, silvered with a tear, /The tear of the sea.”

How often this "poet of light"⁷⁴ focused on the lucidity of tears which—similarly to making weeping an aesthetic category—may again refer to the old literary tradition. We may use as an example here: "płacz zmyślony prawdziwe wywodzące łzy" of Armida from *Jerusalem Delivered* of Tasso-Kochanowski.⁷⁵ Her tears not only glisten in the sun like (obviously) pearls and crystal. They also strike sparks. According to Platonian tradition, "eyes are fire"; so it is not surprising that they might strike sparks as well.⁷⁶ However, Norwid's sparking tears glisten with subdued, subtle light and get rent into a rainbow. ("Tęcza" ["A Rainbow"]). "And a tear a sunny beam in my eyelid/Magnified by seven colours—and it seemed to me/That I am flying into a rainbow..."), they shine usually not in gold but in silver

⁷⁴ He was also "a poet of *chiaroscuro*". The role of light in Norwid's writing was discussed in a classic book by Kazimierz Wyka (op. cit.) and many scholars followed suit. See, for example, Aleksandra Melbechowska-Luty, *Sztukmistrz. Twórczość artystyczna i myśl o sztuce Cypriana Norwida*, op. cit.. Adela Kuik-Kalinowska, *Norwid – artysta światła*, in *Poeta i sztukmistrz. O twórczości poetyckiej i artystycznej Norwida*, op. cit.. Dariusz Pniewski, *Między obrazem i słowem. Studia o poglądach estetycznych i twórczości literackiej Norwida*, Lublin 2005. Sławomir Rzepczyński, *Elementy wyobraźni plastycznej w liryce Norwida*, in: *Norwid – artysta. W 125 rocznicę śmierci poety*, op. cit.. Rzepczyński concluded: "Therefore light was the most important component of his [Norwid's] visual imagination (and more widely of his imagination in general), organizing his artistic activities and forcing perception in categories of *chiaroscuro*, light, darkness, visible and invisible". (Ibid., 146)

⁷⁵ Torquato Tasso, *Gofred albo Jeruzalem wyzwolona*, transl. by P. Kochanowski, ed. by R. Pollak, Wrocław 1951, [Canto IV, 127-128]. "invented crying, which induces real tears". Translator's note: Agata Seweryn quotes here the Polish translation of Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered* by Piotr Kochanowski (1618). This is a 'free', 'artistic' translation (Seweryn herself stresses this point implicitly when she writes about "*Jerusalem Delivered* by Tasso-Kochanowski") and the fragments about tears from it quoted here (and also later in this paper) are either not to be found in any of the English translations of *Jerusalem Delivered*, or they are so changed, that they do not present the points made by Agata Seweryn while quoting them. Therefore 'philological' translation of these fragments is given in the footnotes.

⁷⁶ Mirosława Hanusiewicz wrote about Plato's origins of such metaphors in *Oczy są ognień*, in Eadem, *Pięć stopni miłości. O wyobraźni erotycznej w polskiej poezji barokowej*, Warszawa 2004.

(“Post scriptum [I]”), one would like to say that they are more lunar than solar and appear more often in nocturnal contexts. They reflect the light of the moon, which bathes its rays in them (“The Moon”). Or—if they do not become stars—they shine like stars:

I saw her pale as this paper—wrote Norwid to an acquaintance of his,
Joanna Kuczyńska—and two streams of tears near evening lampposts
shone like two comet beams. (IX, 16)

Baroque poets also connected tears with luminous phenomena, associating them not only with glistening gems but also with cosmic phenomena (Mikołaj Grodziński was in the forefront in this category).⁷⁷

The tradition of conceits became a factor conducive to the figurative, imaginative language of Norwid, and also to the ornaments used. As is known, Norwid in his theoretical statements was critical of excessive ornaments in poetic language, fashioning himself more as a supporter of the Attic style. However, in the case of the motif of tears he was often closer to the Asiatic style of rhetoric. Yet, it was not just ornaments used for ornaments' sake—it would be wrong to associate glittering tears-pearls, diamonds and opals with parlour gadgets. They became like treasure—a precious gift offered by “an enchanted princess” to a brilliant violinist (“Do Nikodema Biernackiego” [“To Nikodem Biernacki”]), or a gift from “a son of Poland” to a lovely ballet dancer (“Do słynnej tancerki rosyjskiej-nieznanej zakonnicy” [“To a Famous Russian Ballet Dancer—an Unknown Nun”]). We should not be put off by the conventional aspect of these phrases. They may be read according to meanings which were assigned to them in old literature.

Precious stones and jewels—stated Jadwiga Kotarska—as *obiecta inventionis* were part of poetics and aesthetics of mystifying, stunning wonder. They opened up possibilities of showing erudition, the skill

⁷⁷ Mirosława Hanusiewicz, *Oczy są ogień*, op. cit., 62.

of unique play of oxymoronic *contamination of what is sacred, spiritual with what is material, tangible.* (emphasis—A.S.)⁷⁸

Maybe it is in these areas of literary tradition that we can find the answer to Norwid's question about the meaning of a tear. It seems that in Norwid's poetry—particularly Norwid's late poetry—this "tear which truly shined" ("To a Famous Russian Ballet Dancer—an Unknown Nun) often functioned exactly as contamination of what is sacred and spiritual by what is material and tangible, thus bringing associations—also thanks to its imagery—of a hieroglyphic, an element of Norwid's own symbolic code. After all, the fascination of Neoplatonists with the almost legendary Horrapolo's *Hieroglyphica* is explained first of all as the "mixing of divine and human elements in visible, but not fully comprehensible symbols".⁷⁹ Plotinus, in the fifth fragment of *Enneads*, ascribed to hieroglyphs the importance of signs communicating hidden truths in a perfect and full manner. "Later, for some of his Renaissance followers—commented Jacek

⁷⁸ Jadwiga Kotarska, „*Nad blask brylantów, pereł miganie*”. *Wśród symboli szlacheckich kamieni i klejnotów*, in Eadem, *Theatrum mundi. Ze studiów nad poezją staropolską*, Gdańsk 1998, 154.

⁷⁹ Jacek Sokolski wrote that in the period of the Renaissance the authorship of this text was ascribed to some mythical, divine figure, maybe even to Horus, the son of Osiris himself, who was associated by the Greeks with Apollo—and the name Horapollon was supposed to have been derived from it. However, he was human, not divine. Like his father, Asklepiades, before him, he taught literature and philosophy in Alexandria. Horapollan', Heraiskos, was more mysterious; he was thus introduced by Damascius (Sokolski found malicious intentions here): "His early life was spent in a mood of sainthood and mysticism. When he left his mother's womb, he kept his fingers on his mouth, thus ordering silence. The same legend is told by Egyptians about the birth of Horus – and even before the legend of Horus – about Helios coming to the world in this manner. But as, with time, the finger coalesced with his mouth, it had to be cut off, and that is why his lip was cut for ever and testified to a mysterious sign accompanying his birth." (Focjusz, *Biblioteka*, vol. 4 „*Kodeksy*” 238-248, transl. by O. Jurewicz, Warszawa 1996, 84; Quoted in: Jacek Sokolski, *Wstęp*, in Horapollon, *Hieroglify*, transl. and intro. J. Krocak, Wrocław 2003, s. 13). On Neoplatonists' understanding of hieroglyphs see Sokolski, op. cit., 14-15.

Sokolski—hieroglyphs would become model representations of Platonic ideas,” showing these ideas in a direct manner.⁸⁰

Barbara Otwinowska wrote about Baroque rhetoric:

It did not know the notion of ‘originality’ (in today’s sense). Its ideal was more like ‘novelty’, a result of the eclectic ingenuity (*ingeniosité*) of a humanist, who still consumes and transforms the rich heritage of tradition, and creates new combinations out of known and partly stale elements. Its main role and attribute is “choice”, at times identified with accurate taste.⁸¹

While Jadwiga Kotarska, in the context of variational poems, added:

Baroque authors, while undertaking a motif of thematic variations, developed a game using stale conventions and [...] readers’ literary habit. [...] An invariant skeleton is used to accommodate elements which make versions of a text both similar and different. The latter were the result of ingenuity, artistic delicacy; they show the mastery of craft.⁸²

Kotarska’s remarks were made in reference to a ‘variational poem’, that is an individual poem or a whole cycle in which a freely selected motif is, more or less artfully, transformed.⁸³ Norwid never wrote a cycle (or even an individual poem) devoted to tears as a central motif. But it seems convincing that while undertaking the theme of tears he “created new combinations” out of known elements and attempted

⁸⁰ Quoted in *Ibid.*, 150.

⁸¹ Barbara Otwinowska, „Wciąż nowa Minerwa”. *Próba kwalifikacji retoryki barokowej*, in *Retoryka a literatura*, ed. by B. Otwinowska, Wrocław 1984, 54.

⁸² Jadwiga Kotarska, *Wiersze wariacyjne – autorska propozycja krytycznej lektury*, in *Publiczność literacka i teatralna w dawnej Polsce*, ed. by H. Dziechcińska, Wrocław 1988, 78.

⁸³ *Somni descriptio*, variations on dreams, ascribed to Stanisław Herkaliusz Lubomirski, (this authorship was questioned by Adam Karpiński) is such a fascinating, Baroque cycle. See an interesting analysis of it by Janusz K. Goliński (*Barokowe igraszki z Hypnosem*. („*Somni descriptio*” – tajemnice snów, ogrodów, gabinetów...), „Ogród” 1994, no. 1).

to don on a stale skeleton a body of his own creation. He selected props from older period which were known, maybe somewhat "stale"—but thanks to their re-contextualisation over the centuries and use by various artists writing within different styles and traditions—perfectly identifiable. Even an ear of an average kind of training will catch it. Yet, it is only a connoisseur who will appreciate the virtuoso character of this particular variation, its individual beauty and the manner of interpretation of the main theme. Bernadetta Kuczera-Chachulska noted: "Both 'a tear'—present in the poet's meta-statements—and 'a flower' belong to a repertoire of means and motives made banal, and it is a bit surprising that Norwid, who over many decades of reception 'worked towards' the status of artist-intellectual, used them quite seriously [...]"⁸⁴ Yes, it may be surprising in the context of Romantic ideology, but this surprise disappears when we look at him as an heir of the Old Polish tradition. It seems that it was exactly *because* he self-fashioned himself as an artist-intellectual that Norwid could seriously gather pearl tears and pick flowers from the fields of literary tradition. However, this was a type of intellectualism rooted in the seventeenth century; less sensitive than Romanticism to individualism, the period in which the notion of the originality of a work of art was understood differently. This was intellectualism which was connected with the Baroque notion of a real *poeta doctus*.

4. A Lesson of Tears, or a Lesson of Humanity

I have claimed that the allegories and conceits with which Norwid described tears and weeping opened layers of rhetorical tradition in his poetry. But the rhetorical aspect in these poems was also the result of their didactic character. Norwid created a specific pedagogy of tears (which I have already signalled while writing on "A Painter Out of Necessity"). Norwid not only made his protagonists speak about them (or at least made them listen to them in an intelligent fashion), he also appreciated weeping, which was used by him to characterize

⁸⁴ Bernadetta Kuczera-Chachulska, *Przemiany form i postaw elegijnych...*, op. cit., 199.

people and as a test of their nature. Speaking in the simplest terms, we might claim that for Norwid the fullness of humanity was revealed, among other things, in the capability of shedding a tear—a sensual, tangible thing externalizing thoughts and the human condition, at times a reaction to what cannot be spoken in words (like in the poem: “Na zgon Poezji” [“On the Death of Poetry”]).

“A dry eye” is, after all, an attribute of the allegory of a Trifle in “To rzecz ludzka!..” (“This is a human thing!..”)

Czcza Znikomość z Arcydzieły
 Wraz, by siostry dwie, stanęły:
 Jedna – pustą ma łzawicę
 I wzrok pusty, jak Nijobe;
 Tylko czasem błyskawice
 Zaczerwienią tę osobę,
 A deszcz łzami skąpie lice.

(w. 52-58)⁸⁵

Such a “dry eye” may also be a sign of an excessive dominance of reason over the heart. “Reason brings me too cold a consolation,/ When I silence my heart, I have a dry eye [...]” says Werner in *An Actor* (act II, 500-501). And when—in the same play—the Countess, trying to cope with the misery of going bankrupt, orders the Bible to be read to her and recalls the story of Job; she compares the Bible to Homer in this way:

– Homer przy rzeczy takiej wygląda jak biały
 Marmur arcydzieł, które się za wzór przyjęło:
 Cudnych! – lecz bez źrenicy: a choćby tę miały,
 Nie byłoby łez na niej...
 (act III, 399-402)⁸⁶

⁸⁵ “Empty nothingness of Masterpieces/Together two sisters may stand/One – has empty eyes/And empty look as Niobe,/Only sometimes lightning/Will redden this person/And the rain will cover her face.”

⁸⁶ “Homer next to such a thing looks like white/Marble of masterpieces taken for a model,/Beautiful, but without a pupil: yet, even if they had it,/They would not be covered in tears.”

Werner answers: "Parnassus is made of rock", and the Countess adds to this "The Bible is all from life" (act III, 403-404).

Yet not all weeping is positive. Ardent weeping—as I have already mentioned—was, for example, perceived negatively, as a sign of fallacy, excessive sentimentalism: "This is a *tender man*—that is it is easy to offend him—you will here from him words filled with tears. ("Cywilizacja", ["Civilization"] VI, 51). While "a tender eye with a tear in it" is "the sweetest of gifts" through which God speaks ("Modlitwa" ["A Prayer"]). Not serious treatment of tears by parlour ladies disqualifies them, while an ideal woman should look through a tear in her eye. And it was not so much about Assunta as about real women.

Since my return from America I have been sincerely in love with every woman, who externally or internally has something wholly beautiful about her, an eye, a look, a hand, a turn of a neck, voice, grace of movement, or heart's loveliness or *a tear* (emphasis A.S.), an Arabian line of feet arch, or silky hair?

Norwid confessed this in one of his letters (VIII, 357). And he addressed a personified France in this way: "Give me at least a tear for so much heart" ("Pożegnanie; Ostatni rapsod Bérangera" ["Farawell: Béranger's Last Rhapsody"]).

Here, Norwid animated and re-contextualised phrases known from literature—in which poets expected tears in women's eyes. After all, Gustaw, in the fourth part of *Forefathers' Eve*, demanded from his beloved "a little tear of pain", "a little honest tear". This is again, obviously, a relic of old erotic literature in which weeping was one of the symptoms of *aegritudo amoris*—sickness of love, while tears in lovers' eyes—so much desired as a proof of love that among sixteenth-century *les blasons* we can find praise of tears (as in Maurice Scève's *La larme*).⁸⁷ One of the most famous examples, and by no means one that Norwid knew well, comes from *Jerusalem Delivered*,

⁸⁷ Mirosława Hanusiewicz wrote about *aegritudo amoris* and its symptoem (*Miłość jest chorobą*, in Eadem, *Pięć stopni miłości...*, op. cit., 12-32). I rely for the information

where the enamoured Armida enslaves Rinaldo also through “kropla słodkich łez”.⁸⁸ While Rinaldo, after he was delivered from the power of reprehensible love “uparł się zgoła, łzy z siebie nie puści”, which resulted in the vicious commentary of the rejected enchantress: “Łzy nie upuścił – podobny żelazu! / Więc przypatrzcie się złemu człowiekowi!”⁸⁹ At times Norwid wrote in a similar vein: a “bad man” will not shed an honest tear, a precious gift which at times has reviving powers, as the tears of Erminia shed over the severely wounded Tancred and also—eventually—the tears of Rinaldo, who on seeing Armida attempting to commit suicide: “[...] żalem zdjęty, twarz jej pochyloną / I piersi skropił mokremi perłami”, ożywiając ją jak poranny deszcz “rożą srebrnemi kroplami”.⁹⁰ Not a single one of Norwid’s protagonists demanded—as Armida had done—the head of a bad man who would not shed a tear, but doubtlessly such a man created negative emotions. A tear functions here not only as proof of love, but first of all as an argument allowing the construction of a moral judgement of a man, testifying to his intentions. As Tasso-Kochanowski put it: „Jeśli dać wiary nie chcesz mojej mowie, / Patrz na moje łzy, wierz, że cię nie zdradzę”.⁹¹

Lack of tears in eyes means a world of illusions and proprieties, as in the poem “After the Ball”: “Then from the candelabra at last there fell/A single tear—and that too, was of wax”.⁹² At the same time Norwid created a kind of taxonomy of tears, which put people shedding tears

on *les blasons*; also on the book by Hanusiewicz (*Ibid.*, „*Jedwabne słowa*” *kochanków*, particularly 71-76).

⁸⁸ T. Tasso, *Jerozolima wyzwolona*, op. cit., “a drop of sweet tears”, canto XVI, l. 3-4.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, “he made a resolution not to drop off any tears”, canto XVI, 50, l. 7; “He did not drop off any tear/like an iron!/so look at the bad man” canto XVI, 56, l. 8; canto XVI, 57.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, “[...]filled with remorse, her face leaning/and breast he sprinkled with wet pearls”, enlivening her like a morning rain [does]”to a rose with silver drops” Canto XX, 129, l. 1-4.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, “If you do not trust in what I say/Look at my tears and trust that I will not betray you.” Canto XX, 135, l. 1-2.

⁹² Cyprian Norwid, *Poems – Letters – Drawings*, op. cit., 36.

in different categories. This taxonomy was already present in "What Have You Done to Athens, Socrates": [...] Ashamed today of tears shed yesterday;/Those not seeing the human in you/ Will now shed tears *to the power of two* [...]”⁹³ Most succinctly the dichotomy with which Norwid treated tears is seen in the phrase: “those who do not weep in *tears*, in tears suffer a kind of convulsion” (VIII, 382). There are, therefore, different kinds of tears and different kinds of people. In some way we see here the Norvidian dichotomy, the duality of his reflections on the path to “wholeness”, which was observed by Grażyna Halkiewicz-Sojak.⁹⁴ But, what mattered for Norwid was not only the ability to shed a tear, but also the ability to understand *a tear* of others. I have already stated that according to the protagonist of *An Actor* true greatness is revealed “when we fathom a tiny drop of dew”. But, after all, this Norvidian test of a tear is offered to each reader of *Vade-mecum*, those “hundred pearls threaded/logically shed tear into tear”.⁹⁵ (*Finis*). Would Norwid think that a contemporary reader of his work passed this test? Or, maybe he would state that “a late grandson”, that is an ideal reader,⁹⁶ has not been born yet and these poems-tears-pearls are still cast before swine?

This moralizing of Norwid, shifting into a tone of digressions and oratory, a didactic mood using tears as arguments again, bring to mind Baroque sermons and preaching. The importance of tears in these sermons is supported by the fact that a whole chapter of one of the most important books in this sphere, written by an Austrian Jesuit, Tobias Lohner, *Bibliotheca Manualis Concionatoria* had a whole chapter (XXIII entitled “Lachrymae”) devoted to tears. The learned

⁹³ Cyprian Norwid, *Poems*, trans. Danuta Borchardt, Archipelago Books, New York, 2011, 107.

⁹⁴ Grażyna Halkiewicz-Sojak, *Wobec tajemnicy i prawdy. O Norwidowskich obrazach „całości”*, Toruń 1998.

⁹⁵ C.K. Norwid, *Selected Poems*, transl. by Adam Czerniawski, Anvil Press, London, 2004, 80.

⁹⁶ As Józef Fert showed, this formula should be thus understood (*Norwid. Poeta dialogu*, Wrocław 1982; in Idem, *Późny wnuk – nieporozumienie?*, „Pamiętnik Literacki” 1983, (4)).

author created a definition of tears and a taxonomy of them based on the writings of Christian thinkers, and he finally gave numerous “quotations with tears” from the Bible and the Fathers of the Church and added numerous examples.⁹⁷ What is interesting is that, in sub-chapter VIII (“Ascetica”) Lohner stated that sensual tears (being the result of human weaknesses) should be differentiated from internal, spiritual tears. As Wiesław Pawlak wrote:

The latter could be shed without limits, and what is more “each man bent on salvation will need them very much and one needs to care for them ceaselessly”, in contrast to the former one which should be avoided, or at least limited.⁹⁸

Perhaps, therefore, Norwid’s tears should be considered in the context of the “internal weeping” characteristic of a good Christian, particularly such fragments as the one from *Black Flowers* devoted to Stefan Witwicki:

He lay, dressed, on a couch, speaking made him tired, he was looking with a glance containing exceptional lightness and a drop of tears [...] (VI, 176)⁹⁹

Perhaps Norwid’s reluctance to ostentatious weeping should be considered in the contexts of such tradition and at the same time his focusing on a tear which is invisible, individual, documenting the internal condition of a man should be stressed. We can detect in Norwid a concept of spiritual senses developed by mystical theology and Baroque meditational literature. According to saint Ignatius

⁹⁷ See Wiesław Pawlak, *Papierowe łązy barokowego homilety*, op. cit., 176-185.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 180.

⁹⁹ Bernadetta Kuczera-Chachulska wrote about this fragment: “A tear’ is located inside, within the radiating lightness – whiteness; it overcomes the traditional model of mourning, which becomes a place of the opening of existence, not being limited by death. It corresponds very well with the meanings of such poems as “Do zeszłej” (“To the Deceased One”) or “Śmierć” (“Death”). (*Przemiany form i postaw elegijnych w liryce polskiej XIX wieku*, op. cit., 182).

Loyola, the adaptation of the senses to meditation is based on *applicatio sensum*: neutralization of external senses by internal ones.¹⁰⁰

And what about lyricism and rhetoric? The elements I have pointed towards: allegories, conceits, didactic tone, factors activating rhetorical tradition, in a sense rationalizing a tear, depriving it of its emotional aspect, making it not lyrical, could lead to a statement—simplifying and repeated much too often—about Norwid, a poet of an intellect.¹⁰¹ I think that here, paradoxically, the rhetorical aspects reveal in a moving way layers of lyricism understood as the “expression of an internal world of an individual”,¹⁰² an expression not always conscious, at times manifesting itself against the intention of the author. Because these constant recurrence of the theme of tears, discussing tears on so many pages, turns out to be one more manifestation of loneliness, the sense of alienation of the mega-protagonist of these texts (an allegorical figure of Norwid himself?¹⁰³). One may be tempted to offer a cautious—because it avoids dangers lurking in excessive generalizations—statement that the motif of a tear, which functions as one of the most important figures of Norwid’s imagination, not only unifies cycles (*Vade-mecum*, *Tyrtyej-Behind the Scene*) but also becomes one of the dominant attributes of a meta-protagonist, integrating the speaking voice and pointing to its coherence, “wholeness”.

Janusz Drob wrote about old Polish conventions regulating the “expression of weeping”

¹⁰⁰ For more on this see Kazimierz Mrowcewicz, *Wstęp*, in *Wysoki umysł w dolnych rzeczach zawikłany...*, op. cit., 22-24.

¹⁰¹ This formula was challenged by Danuta Zamącińska a long time ago (op. cit.).

¹⁰² Czesław Zgorzelski, op. cit., 193.

¹⁰³ I am referring here to Paul de Man, who in a similar way (as an allegory of the author) interpreted the figure of the narrator in Proust (*Czytanie (Proust)*, in Idem, *Alegorie czytania. Język figuralny u Rousseau, Nietzschego, Rilkego i Prousta*, transl. by A. Przybysławski, Kraków 2004). Danuta Zamącińska wrote: “And Norwid – not a single intellectual barrier exists here for a reader. The barrier is our reluctance to be with the suffering. The personality of the suffering person. ‘Everything runs away from suffering’ (op. cit., 97).”

Tears not contained, regrets and excessive despair, going beyond the received convention, seem to lose the sense of a communicate, stop being understood socially, become at best signs of affective sickness; and thus they stop convey the meaning which a weeping person intended. At times they stop creating co-empathy, co-weeping and create its reverse—mockery and derision.¹⁰⁴

The convention in Romanticism was different: here often appeared “not contained tears” (Kraśiński’s lyric ‘I’ confessed disarmingly: “I will suffocate with my tears!”¹⁰⁵ While Norwid in his works ordered to control one’s tears.¹⁰⁶ He approved not of physical weeping, but of “internal weeping”, of a discreet, individual tear. This tear was made slightly unreal—especially in his late works—reminiscent of a hieroglyphic meant to understand the human condition in a better way. Norwid activated mostly conventions of old literature, and therefore in the contexts of Mickiewicz’s and Słowacki’s tears they may appear to be of a paper nature. It is difficult to expect empathy, co-regret and co-weeping. Was Norwid aware of this when he wrote in a poem with a Baroque title (“Do Walentego Pomiana Z., zwierzając mu rękopisma następnie wyszłe w XXI tomie Biblioteki P[isarzy]

¹⁰⁴ Janusz Drob, *Granice rozpaczy i łez w kulturze staropolskiej*, in *Śmiech i łzy w kulturze staropolskiej*, op. cit., 137.

¹⁰⁵ Zygmunt Kraśiński, *Dwie piosnki I*, op. cit., s. 91. But it should be added that Kraśiński, for example, did not give to Maryna Mniszchówna, who had experienced various disasters and was close to death, the comfort of “a pupil misted with tears”. He argued that “Tears are children of provisional sadness, they fall on the face like from a spring cloud and are auguries of good weather, but when they are caught by frost of pain, then do not ask for the sun, for it may never come back (*Agaj-Han*, in *Pisma Zygmunta Kraśińskiego*, op. cit., vol. 2, 541).

¹⁰⁶ In the context of *Vade-mecum* Fert concluded : “But at the same time *Vade-mecum* tells us, over and over again, about the worth (and art!) of controlling unhappiness, tears,...oneself. Ideals of this art force us to be happy even when the ideal will reach the cobblestones.” (*Wstęp*, op.cit., XCII). I repeat, once again, the passage I quoted at the beginning of this paper: “Because no one has ever seen him [that is Norwid] with anything similar to a tear, yes, he smiles almost always. Has anyone seen him in a different way?—If so, let him or her say it!”.

P[olskich]" {"To Walenty Pomian Z., Offering Him Manuscripts published in Volume XXI of the Library of Polish Writers"}; he wrote:

O! tak, o! tak, mój drogi... czas idzie... śmierć goni,
A któż zapłacze po nas – kto? – oprócz I r o n i i ?

(w. 180-181)¹⁰⁷

The first stanza brings associations with “a hero of Romantic backroads and “a Romantic of Truth” Rev. Baka¹⁰⁸ (whose *Uwagi śmierci niechybnej* [*Remarks on Inevitable Death*]) Norwid knew, although, as it seems, he did not have a high opinion about it, anyway not as high as he had about his own works.¹⁰⁹ In the second stanza it is a slightly mock allegory of Irony who is weeping (“O great lady, always dressed a bit askew—/Moving with her feet quiet ashes,/With ginger tail and the red face of the moon.” l. 183-185), Yet, this short fragment—in the context of Norwid’s meta-arguments about tears—seems to be very lyrical.

For Czesław Zgorzelski rhetoric was a pejorative notion which he understood as a “contradiction of lyricism, personal, emotional speech”.¹¹⁰ However, lyricism—this “expression of the internal world of an individual”—is not always located on the antipodes of rhetoric. Sometimes rhetoric, which particularly in ‘old literature’ was used

¹⁰⁷ “O yes, O yes, time flies...death chases.../And who will cry after us? Who? Except for Irony.”

¹⁰⁸ The first term comes from Alexander Nawarecki (*Czarny karnawał. „Uwagi śmierci niechybnej księdza Baki” – poetyka tekstu i paradoksy recepcji*, Wrocław 1991), the other from a peculiar poem by Placyd Jankowski entitled “Wiersz do Baki i czytelnika” (“A Poem to Baka and a Reader”). (Quoted in Nawarecki, op. cit., 207).

¹⁰⁹ This is suggested in a letter in Maria Trębicka’s remark from June 1858: “Publishers, and then my friends have conceived of, after almost twenty years of dispersion of my texts in all Polish journals, to collect and gather them [...] Even more so that writings of Rev. Baka have been re-published.”(VIII, 338).

¹¹⁰ Michał Głowiński, *Czesław Zgorzelski: Między formalizmem a tradycją romantyczną*, in *Czytanie liryki po Zgorzelskim*, ed. by B. Kuczera-Chachulska, T. Chachulski, Warszawa 2010, 18.

to “de-personalize artistic speech”,¹¹¹ can be conducive to unravelling lyricism—can express the intimate world of a poet, in the same way as conceits are means of reaching truth (“eternal truth of lightning”—in the words of a lyric ‘I’ in the poem “Koncept a Ewangelia” [“Conceit and the Gospel”]), which cannot be reached in a different way than through unravelling paralogism, as the topos *theatrum mundi vitae* is used to express the sense of human existence. But it was not only conceits but also treating life in the categories of “being an actor”, “being in a theatre” which Norwid applied in his poetry (“Rzeczo wolności słowa” [“On Freedom of Speech”], *An Actor, Tyrtej-Beyond the Scenes*).¹¹² By the way, let us notice how much attention tears get in *An Actor*. In this play it is Gotard who is “an expert of tears.” Norwid explained brilliantly—using Gotard—why it is an actor who is particularly well predisposed to truly understand a tear: “You have to appreciate tears when you draw tears” (act II, l. 203). When Jerzy, an actor in the theatre of life and an actor who will play Hamlet, says: “And particularly—swallowed tears) (act II, l. 204), Gotard answers according to Norwid’s taxonomy of tears:

Łzy połknione
Są nad sztuką – w najszczęśliwym misterstwie – są one
Politowaniem wielkim dla niziny świata:
Tam się już nie d o c h o d z i , lecz tam się d o l a t a !
(akt II, w. 206-209)¹¹³

Why do I recall these words of Norwid’s actor at the end of my study on words? Because the conviction that it is mostly a great actor who can best see and understand the depth of human experiences and reveal their sense in front of ‘spectators’ brings to mind one of the Spanish masterpieces of the period between the Renaissance

¹¹¹ Aleksander Wilkoń, op. cit., 55

¹¹² These issues were raised by Stanisław Świontek in *Norwidowski teatr świata* (Łódź 1983).

¹¹³ Swallowed tears/Are over art—most perfect—they are/Great pity over the lowlands of the earth: You don’t go there, you fly there!

and the Baroque. *El caballero de la Triste Figura*, or Don Quixote from Mancha, as the nobleman Quijada vel Quesada asked to be called, the protagonist of the first book supposedly read by the ten-year-old Cyprian Norwid, who used to say: "[n]ot a single simile presents better the way we are and should be as comedy and actors".¹¹⁴

¹¹⁴ Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, *Przemysłny szlachcic Don Kichot z Manczy*, trans. A. L. Czerny, Warszawa 1955, v. II, 90. Information about Norwid's early readings *Kalendarz życia i twórczości...*, op. cit. Tomasz Korpysz recently wrote about Don Quixote *Nie tylko „Epos-nasza”*. *O obrazie Don Kichota w pismach Norwida*, in: *Norwid. Z warsztatów norwidologów bielańskich*, ed. by T. Korpysz, B. Kuczera-Chachulska, Warszawa 2011.