Jens Herlth, Edward M. Świderski (eds.)

STANISŁAW BRZOZOWSKI AND THE MIGRATION OF IDEAS

Transnational Perspectives on the Intellectual Field in Twentieth-Century Poland and Beyond

[transcript] Lettre

Jens Herlth, Edward M. Świderski (eds.)
Stanisław Brzozowski and the Migration of Ideas

Lettre

Jens Herlth, Edward M. Świderski (eds.)
with assistance by Dorota Kozicka

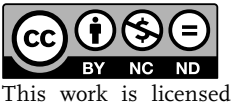
Stanisław Brzozowski and the Migration of Ideas

Transnational Perspectives on the Intellectual Field in Twentieth-Century Poland and Beyond

[transcript]

This volume is one of the outcomes of the research project »Standing in the Light of His Thought: Stanisław Brzozowski and Polish Intellectual Life in the 20th and 21st Centuries« funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (project no. 146687). The publication of this book was made possible thanks to the generous support of the »Institut Littéraire Kultura«.

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek
The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available in the Internet at http://dnb.d-nb.de



Cover layout: Maria Arndt, Bielefeld
Cover illustration: Stanisław Brzozowski, photo from the second edition of »Legenda Młodej Polski« (Lwów: Księgarnia B. Połonieckiego, 1910)
Printed by Majuskel Medienproduktion GmbH, Wetzlar
Print-ISBN 978-3-8376-4641-2
PDF-ISBN 978-3-8394-4641-6
https://doi.org/10.14361/9783839446416

Table of Contents

On Brzozowski's Presence and Absence in Poland and Beyond: Introduction
Jens Herlth | 7

TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

"Sounding out idols": Brzozowski and Strindberg as Nietzsche Readers
Jan Balbierz | 23

"Ibsen! Oh, let us not invoke this name in vain!" Brzozowski's Ibsen Not-quite-read
Ewa Partyga | 39

Stanisław Brzozowski and *Die Neue Zeit*
Gábor Gángó | 57

Les Déracinés: Brzozowski and Barrès
Maciej Urbanowski | 77

The Cult of Will and Power: Did Brzozowski Inspire Ukrainian Nationalism?
Jens Herlth | 107

Brzozowski and Cioran: *The Legend of Young Poland* and *The Transformation of Romania*
Andrzej Zawadzki | 133

Brzozowski and the Italians
Joanna Orska | 139

Brzozowski and Rorty: Coping with the Contingent Self
Edward M. Świderski | 159

BRZOZOWSKI'S PRESENCE IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY LITERARY CRITICISM AND THEORY

Stanisław Brzozowski and Romantic Revision (Meyer Howard Abrams, Northrop Frye, Harold Bloom): Prolegomena
Eliza Kącka | 187

Brzozowski as Precursor to Contemporary Studies on Cyprian Norwid's Legacy
Krzysztof Trybuś | 209

Brzozowskianism: The Trouble with the "Great" Brzozowski and His Followers
Dorota Kozicka | 237

"…actually speaking, this man converted me": Jerzy Liebert, Brzozowski, and the Question of a Modern Religous Poetry
Christian Zehnder | 249

Stanisław Brzozowski as Harbinger and Enabler of Modern Literary Theory in Poland and the West
Michał Mrugalski | 273

The Stalinist Reception of Stanisław Brzozowski's Philosophy: The Case of Paweł Hoffman
Paweł Rams | 303

Brzozowski and the Question of Engagement: On a Different Concept of the Autonomy of Art
Przemysław Czapliński | 321

Brzozowski or Plots of the Future
Marta Wyka | 339

Epilogue
Andrzej Mencwel | 351

Contributors | 359

On Brzozowski's Presence and Absence in Poland and Beyond

Introduction

Jens Herlth

In 1924, the German physician and writer Alfred Döblin undertook a journey of two months to Poland. In the account of his journey he noted, writing about the current situation in Polish literature and criticism: "The essayist and writer Brzozowski continues to have a strong impact; he, too, is a Europeanist."[1] This remark, as intriguing as it is for everyone interested in Brzozowski and his legacy, leaves us with some questions as to the actual circumstances or sources that allowed Döblin to assess this "strong impact." He was not entirely unfamiliar with Brzozowski; he had included some enthusiastic remarks on the latter's novel *Płomienie* (Flames) in a short critical piece published four years earlier.[2] But Döblin did not know Polish, therefore he is not much of an eyewitness when it comes to critical debates in contemporary Poland. In this, he entirely depended on his Polish interlocutors. Unfortunately, we cannot be sure who exactly was his informer in this specific case.[3]

1 "Der Essayist Brzozowski wirkt stark nach, auch er Europäer." Alfred Döblin, *Reise in Polen* [Journey to Poland] (München: DTV, 1987), 60.

2 Alfred Döblin (pseud. Linke Poot), "Leidenschaft und Landleben" [Passion and country life], in *Schriften zur Politik und Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2015), 180–190, 189 (first published in: *Die Neue Rundschau*, September 1920, Vol. 2, 1098–1105).

3 According to Marion Brandt's commentary to Döblin's *Reise in Polen*, this anonymous "connoisseur of Polish literature," as Döblin introduces him (*Reise in Polen*, 60), could have been Jacek Frühling, a Polish-Jewish translator and journalist. Marion

It was of course wholly justified to stress Brzozowski's presence in the intellectual debates of the new Polish republic. Some of Brzozowski's friends or supporters of the pre-war years were still alive and active; some, such as for example Zofia Nałkowska, Witold Klinger, Ostap Ortwin, or Karol Irzykowski, had made their way into the cultural establishment of the new state. Brzozowski was considered the informal "Patron" of the mainstream literary journal *Wiadomości Literackie* (Literary News), the most important literary review in Interwar Poland, founded in 1924.[4] During the 1920s and 1930s, his works were read by ardent Catholics, by supporters of Piłsudski, and even attracted radical nationalists.[5] Still, in all its generality and superficiality, Döblin's statement is somewhat typical of the destiny of Brzozowski's afterlife in Poland—and beyond: It is nothing more than a mere proposition, without any further arguments or references—and it is, of course, heavily compromised by its author's ignorance of Polish. Although, even in Poland references to Brzozowski, despite all their stereotypical emphasis, are often quite superficial in their actual treatment of his ideas.

During and beyond his lifetime the reception of Brzozowski's writings has been overshadowed by what became known as "the Brzozowski affair." In 1908, the Galician social-democratic party newspaper *Czerwony Sztandar* (The Red Banner) published a list of alleged informers of the tsarist secret police with Brzozowski's name at the top. The allegations were never fully clarified. Due to his tuberculosis Brzozowski lived mostly in Florence since 1906; he was able to attend the first part of the citizens' court trial convened by various social-democratic parties in 1909, but his poor health did not allow him to return to Cracow for a continuation of the trial. There is tragic irony in his situation: The writer who most loudly attacked Polish Romanticism and *fin de siècle* modernism for their self-complacent isolation from society found himself secluded in his Florentine sickroom, banned and despised not only by his long-term adversaries from the national-conservative camp, but also by an overwhelming part of the left-wing activists in partitioned Poland. When he died in 1911, Brzozowski was despised by some parts of the trans-imperial Polish public and nearly forgotten

Brandt, "Erläuterungen zu Alfred Döblins 'Reise in Polen'"; http://www.alfred-doeblin.de/data/erlaeuterungen-zu-doeblins-reise-in-polen.pdf

4 Małgorzata Szpakowska, *"Wiadomości Literackie" prawie dla wszystkich* ["Literary news": almost for everyone] (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo W.A.B., 2012), 373.

5 For a comprehensive study of the debates around Brzozowski and his intellectual legacy in Interwar Poland: Marian Stępień, *Spór o spuściznę po Stanisławie Brzozowskim w latach 1918–1939* [The controversy about Stanisław Brzozowski's legacy in the years 1918–1939] (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie), 1976.

by others. Thus, for instance, the *Dziennik Poznański* (Poznań Daily) wrote in a short obituary that he had "once been popular amongst circles of young radicals in Warsaw."[6]

Ever since the Interwar Years, Polish intellectuals have tried to change this; in 1928 a monument to Brzozowski was erected in the Trespiano cemetery in Florence. In the same year the young critic and painter Józef Czapski vigorously complained about the Polish intellectuals' "failure to fulfill their basic duties" towards Brzozowski's legacy and called for the creation of a "Stanisław Brzozowski Society."[7] The 1930s saw the appearance of several monographs on various aspects of Brzozowski's writings and the project of an edition of his collected works was launched.[8] In 1961, the poet Czesław Miłosz, a member of the "generation of 1911," for whom the encounter with Brzozowski's writings had been a crucial moment in his biography, wrote:

> Editors and critics always approach Brzozowski with alarm and trepidation, although the reasons for their attitude change according to fluctuations in political circumstances. This means that he is always our contemporary, and that he has not yet become a subject of literary-historical research.[9]

"Always our contemporary"—it would be difficult to come up with a higher rating of Brzozowski's continuing relevance for at least Polish cultural history. In the early 1960s, Miłosz planned not only to launch a revival in Brzozowski studies in the circles of the Polish émigrés gathered around the Paris journal

6 "[…] w swoim czasie głośny wśród młodych radykalnych sfer Warszawy." *Dziennik Poznański* 102 (04.05.1911): 3.

7 Józef Czapski, "O Towarzystwo im. Stanisława Brzozowskiego" [On the Stanisław Brzozowski Association], *Wiadomości Literackie* 28 (1928): 1.

8 Only three volumes were actually published, the project was then abandoned and renewed in the early 1970s.

9 Czesław Miłosz, "A One-Man Army: Stanisław Brzozowski," in *Emperor of the Earth. Modes of Eccentric Vision* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 188. This is a translation from his monograph on Brzozowski, originally published in 1962: *Człowiek wśród skorpionów. Studium o Stanisławie Brzozowskim* [Man among scorpions. A study on Stanisław Brzozowski] (Kraków: Znak 2000), 12 ("…jest ciągle nam współczesny…"). "Always our contemporary" was also the title of a conference held at the University of Fribourg in October 2014, where first versions of the essays collected in this volume were discussed. For more on this conference see Andrzej Mencwel's "Epilogue," 351ff.

Kultura and its editor Jerzy Giedroyc (himself a devoted 'Brzozowskian'),[10] in addition he aimed to make Brzozowski known in the West. He intended that Brzozowski's basic writings be translated and discussed by critics and philosophers in Paris and New York. Not much of this could be realized indeed. Only some chapters of Miłosz's book on Brzozowski were translated into English and published, first in a scholarly journal, then in his collection of essays *Emperor of the Earth*.[11] The overall echo was disillusioning.

Despite a recent rise in interest in Brzozowski in Poland—due to a number of contemporary critics and scholars, but also due to the activities of the "Krytyka Polityczna" publishing house with the "Stanisław Brzozowski Foundation" at its basis—publications on Brzozowski in 'Western' languages remain extremely rare and often difficult to access. A highly interesting dissertation on Brzozowski by Jan Goślicki, defended at the University of Zurich, was only partly published in 1980.[12] Rena Syska-Lamparska's book on Brzozowski and Vico gives invaluable insight into the Italian contexts of Brzozowski's thought; she deals with Vico's, but also with Labriola's, Sorel's, and Croce's influence.[13] Holger Politt's dissertation *Stanisław Brzozowski. Hoffnung wider die dunkle Zeit* (Hope against Dark Times) puts the emphasis on the political ideas of the Polish critic.[14] Lately, a special issue of *Studies in East European Thought* offers some articles on various aspects of Brzozowski's writings.[15] There exists a highly valuable entry on Brzozowski in the *Encyclopedia of the Essay,* and the *Literary Encyclopedia* published an entry on Brzozowski as well.[16] Of course, language is

10 Jerzy Giedroyc, *Autobiografia na cztery ręce* [Autobiography for four hands], ed. Krzysztof Pomian, Warszawa: Towarzystwo Opieki nad Archiwum Instytutu Literackiego w Paryżu, 2006, 185, 18.

11 Czesław Miłosz, "A One-Man Army," 186–253.

12 Jan Goślicki, *Der junge Brzozowski. Das Werk von Stanisław Brzozowski bis 1906* [The young Brzozowski: Brzozowski's works until 1906] (Zürich: Juris, 1980). This brochure has 59 pages, the original manuscript 379 (I am grateful to the author's widow, Annemarie Frascoli, who for making it accessible to me).

13 *Stanisław Brzozowski: A Polish Vichian*, preface by Wiktor Weintraub (Firenze: Le lettere, 1987).

14 Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1996.

15 Jens Herlth, Edward M. Świderski (eds.), *Stanislaw Brzozowski (1878–1911)*, special issue of *Studies in East European Thought* 63, 4 (2011).

16 Stanisław Eile, "Brzozowski, Stanisław," in *Encyclopedia of the Essay*, ed. Tracy Chevalier (London: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 1997), 120f. (unfortunately, the bibliography lists Syska-Lamparska's abovementioned book as "Stanisław Brzozowski: A Polish Vision"); Jens Herlth, "Stanisław Brzozowski," *The Literary Encyclopedia*

a crucial obstacle in the international reception of Brzozowski. Only few of his texts were translated into Western languages, with a characteristic preference for his literary works: The novel *Płomienie* (Flames) was even translated into German twice, his *Pamiętnik* (Diary) was published in French.[17] Recently, a collection of his essays was published in Italian—to my knowledge this is the only edition of a selection of Brzozowski's critical and philosophical writings in any language other than Polish.[18]

Arthur O. Lovejoy once stated that "ideas are the most migratory things in the world."[19] More than four decades earlier, the Polish sociologist Ludwik Krzywicki had developed the concept of the "migration of ideas" to explain the detachment of the superstructure from the social bases in the development of societies. The "migration of ideas," he argued, allowed societies to incorporate concepts that normally would have taken more time to develop were it not for the exchange of ideas across borders and the transmission of "foreign experience" from more to less developed countries.[20] Brzozowski's writings are a good example of this. From his early years on, he ardently followed the newest ideas in European philosophy, literature, psychology, and sociology. His activity was embedded in a broader context of so-called non-governmental, *social* endeavors of popular education; the early years of the twentieth century saw a considerable popularity of cheap brochures on science and philosophy. There was a peculiar fashion for intellectual work and a high esteem for its proponents.[21] Brzozowski not only popularized the ideas of Taine, Sorel, Nietzsche, and others, but also checked them against his own experiences and historical background. He used and reworked them according to his needs—his own and those of Polish culture as he understood it. His own highly non-systematic world-view was a peculiar

(first published 17 July 2017). http://www.litencyc.com/php/speople.php?rec=true&UID=13829

17 Stanisław Brzozowski, *Histoire d'une intelligence: journal 1910–1911*, trans. Wojciech Kolecki (Paris: le Bruit du temps, 2010).

18 Stanisław Brzozowski, *Cultura e vita* [Culture and life], ed. Anna Czajka (Milano: Mimesis, 2017).

19 Arthur O. Lovejoy, "Reflections on the History of Ideas," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 1,1 (1940): 3–23, 4.

20 Ludwik Krzywicki, "Wędrówka idei" [The migration of ideas], *Szkice socjologiczne*, cz. I (*Dzieła*, vol. 9), Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1974, 189–202, 190 (first published in 1897).

21 Bohdan Cywiński, *Rodowody niepokornych* [Genealogy of the defiant], 5th ed. (Warszawa: PWN, 2010), 72; Janina Żurawicka, *Inteligencja warszawska w końcu XIX wieku* (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1978), 222.

blend of Marxist social critique, a Vico-inspired philosophy of history and a voluntarist approach in the understanding of man and society. Although none of the single features of this world-view was entirely original, Brzozowski's energetic plea to the Polish people to adopt a position of self-conscious, creative, and heroic historical activity was in fact something new in the context of East-Central European literary criticism and the philosophy of culture of the time.

How can we explain then, that Brzozowski's ideas did not migrate to other languages and cultures, that his intellectual heritage has been practically ignored outside of Poland for more than over a century since his death in 1911? Most likely, this is because his contribution to Polish philosophy, literary theory and criticism—so esteemed by Polish experts in the field—did not so much consist of *ideas* than of something else, something that can approximately be described as a posture, a certain ethos. In an insightful statement, the literary critic Kazimierz Wyka called Brzozowski "a great creator of philosophical emotions."[22] There is reason to assume that philosophical emotions are more *emotional* than *philosophical*—and the channels for their transmission are probably others than those we typically deal with in the history of ideas. This is why it is so difficult to capture them appropriately. Andrzej Mencwel, for example, who speaks of the intense reception of Brzozowski in the circle associated with the nationalist underground journal *Sztuka i Naród* (Art and the Nation) as well as in the socialist-orientated group "Płomienie" (Flames) in Nazi-occupied Warsaw, simply argues that these young enthusiasts referred to Brzozowski "more as to an ideologist than to a philosopher."[23] Maybe it was not so much the ideological content but rather the elevated emotional temperature and the morally engaging, truly challenging nature of Brzozowski's essays that made them so popular, especially among young socially sensitive readers, throughout the first decades of the twentieth century.

Nevertheless, 'Brzozowski' as a figure, as a point of reference, has been of continuous importance in many contexts and configurations of Polish intellectual history of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. A quote from Brzozowski or the mere mention of his name or his works was perceived as endowed with symbolic capital, a capital, alas, that has practically not been convertible to non-Polish areas. Eminent scholars, such as Bronisław Baczko, Leszek Koła-

22 Kazimierz Wyka, "O ocenie myśli Brzozowskiego" [On the assessment of Brzozowski's thought], in *Stara szuflada* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1967), 57–64, 59. The original article was published in 1934 in the weekly *Pion* (Plump)

23 Andrzej Mencwel, *Stanisław Brzozowski. Postawa krytyczna. Wiek XX* [Stanisław Brzozowski. The critical attitude. The twentieth century] (Warszawa: Krytyka Polityczna, 2014), 588.

kowski, or Krzysztof Pomian, who were responsible for a revival in Brzozowski studies after the years of Stalinist prohibition and were forced to leave the PRL at the end of the 1960s or early 1970s, did not publish a single line devoted to the hero of their pre-émigré theoretical quests—the only (though important!) exception being the chapter on Brzozowski in Kołakowski's *Main Currents of Marxism*.[24] The new-comer from the outside often has a special feel for formal and informal intellectual hierarchies and how ideas and figures are rated in his or her new frame of reference.[25] Apparently, Baczko and his former colleagues understood well that, in the context of Western scholarly debates, there was nothing to gain by dealing *with* or even only referring *to* Brzozowski's writings. Back in Poland in the 1960s, 'Brzozowski' had been for them, maybe in the first place, a vehicle to explore the field of Marxist revisionism, an area they were inclined to abandon, moving forward to other fields of research and other theoretical affiliations in the 1970s.[26]

In a conversation with Bronisław Baczko in his Geneva apartment in July 2013, we asked him directly why he did not refer to Brzozowski in any of his later writings. Baczko simply stated that, when he arrived in Geneva in the early seventies, other topics were of far higher interest to him. At the time, he considered Brzozowski a closed chapter in his professional career, and there was nobody around who would have shown interest in Brzozowski. We insisted that he is considered one of the leading figures of the "Warsaw School of the history of ideas" after all and that one of the common points of reference for this school's exponents was notably Brzozowski. But Baczko retorted by pointing out that the whole construct of a "Warsaw School" seemed highly doubtful to him and that it was only Walicki who had proclaimed and continuously nourished the idea. As far as Baczko himself was concerned, there was no and had never been such thing as a "Warsaw School of the history of ideas."[27]

To study Brzozowski's presence in twentieth- and twenty-first-century Polish culture requires, among other things, confronting the problem that this presence cannot be reduced to situations of actual, textually verifiable real 'impact' or 'influence'. References to Brzozowski can often be found in personal memories, they are articulated and transmitted in the sphere of emotions, they take the form of symbolic gestures. In fact, a good part of Brzozowski criticism

24 Leszek Kołakowski, "Stanisław Brzozowski: Marxism as Historical Subjectivism," in *Main Currents of Marxism. Its Origins, Growth and Dissolution*, vol. 2, *The Golden Age*, trans. Paul S. Falla (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1981), 215–239.

25 Pascale Casanova, *La république mondiale des lettres*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Seuil, 2008), 70.

26 I am grateful to Edward Świderski for pointing this out to me.

27 The conversation was led by Edward Świderski and me on July 2, 2013.

is devoted to typological parallels and resemblances, in the realm of *the possible* rather than that of *the real*. Thus, for instance, in his *Brzozowski and the Beginnings of 'Western Marxism'*, the abovementioned Andrzej Walicki highlighted the hidden affinities between Brzozowski's thought and that of non-orthodox twentieth-century Western Marxists, above all Antonio Gramsci. Gramsci by all probability never came across any of Brzozowski's writings, neither did any other relevant representative of twentieth-century Western Marxism. Still, Walicki's discussion of the topic is highly instructive for everyone interested in the matter. One could continue in this direction: Cornelius Castoriadis's influential reflections on the social imaginary as deeply entangled in social practice, his rejection of a primordial naturality and, above all, his postulate of history as "the domain of *creation*," his emphasis on the self-creation of (a new) society,[28] strongly remind us of Brzozowski's ideas on the role of man in history. This is obviously not due to any hidden influence, but rather because of a common line of thought, a common perspective on modern societies, which Brzozowski shared with some of the most theoretically advanced minds in post- or neo-Marxist social theory of the twentieth century. Even Brzozowski's seemingly idiosyncratic recourse to the "soul" in his late essays on Polish society and on what he called "the crisis in European consciousness" seems a lot less outdated when we think of the crucial role ascribed to psychoanalytical models in critical interventions in contemporary society as practiced in the wake of Lacan's writings during the last decades. Castoriadis extensively refers to Lacan; the "psyche" is one of the central categories in his book on the social imaginary. One could also quote a recent example from Poland, namely Andrzej Leder's study of the paradoxes of consciousness in Polish society of the Post-War period.[29] Leder does not mention Brzozowski as a reference for his approach, but his heavy indebtedness to Lacanian metaphors makes him an interpreter of the cultural "soul" in the—methodologically problematic, though critically inspiring—sense that Brzozowski ascribed to this concept in the essays of *Legenda Młodej Polski* (1909, The Legend of Modern Poland) and in his posthumously published collection *Głosy wśród nocy* (1912, Voices in the Night).

The quest for parallels between Brzozowski's writings and representatives of European thought and literature dates back to the Interwar Years. Maksymilian Boruchowicz (later Michał Borwicz), in an essay published in the monthly

28 Cornelius Castoriadis, *The Imaginary Institution of Society*, trans. Kathleen Blamey (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997), 202, 45.

29 Andrzej Leder, *Prześniona rewolucja. Ćwiczenie z logiki historycznej* [The slept-through revolution: an exercice in historical logic] (Warszawa: Krytyka Polityczna, 2014).

Sygnały (Signals), analyzed "obvious parallels" between Brzozowski and the French writer Malraux.[30] The focus falls on a comparative reading of *Flames* and Malraux's *La condition humaine* (The Human Condition, 1933), but he also takes a look at the theoretical ideas of the two writers, their views on aesthetics and Marxism. The parallels, as he says, are all the more astonishing as they cannot be explained by a direct influence, since Malraux, for all we know, could not have read Brzozowski.[31]

One of the explicit goals of the present volume is to take into account this tendency in the reception of Brzozowski's work. Our special focus is not only on hitherto neglected configurations or individual readings of Brzozowski, but also on typological patterns and lines of thought, on affinities that might not have been consciously elected, but that still shed a light on what Brzozowski meant or at least *could have* meant for Polish culture in its European and global context. Indeed, this last aspect is not entirely new: One could go so far as to state that traditionally there is an important strand of "had it been the case that …" in the history of Brzozowski criticism. Tomasz Burek once suggested a prospective reading of Brzozowski's novels which meant to analyze them against the background of the works of the great writers of modernism (Thomas Mann, Robert Musil, Hermann Broch).[32] Marta Wyka drew parallels between Brzozowski and György Lukács and above all Walter Benjamin, for whom, as she says, Brzozowski was a kind of "progenitor" ("protoplasta").[33] And Czesław Miłosz's abovementioned book is a long lament about the ignorance of twentieth century philosophers and critics as far as their Polish precursor is concerned. The bottom line of all these speculations is: Brzozowski *would have* been a great, widely-read twentieth century philosopher and literary critic had he opted for a language other than Polish. Still, for honesty's sake, one should probably add some more 'would-be's' to this: had Brzozowski been born in the Austro-Hungarian (as opposed to the Russian) Empire, had his family been well-off (and not precariously impoverished), had he studied in Heidelberg or Berlin (rather than at the Russian-language Imperial University of Warsaw), had he been granted a chair at the University of Lwów…[34] It is instructive to note that the first one to

30 Maksymiljan [sic] Boruchowicz, "Brzozowski i Malraux" [Brzozowski and Malraux], *Sygnały. Miesięcznik. Sprawy społeczne, literatura, sztuka* 28 (1937): 2.

31 Ibid., 3.

32 Tomasz Burek, "Arcydzieło niedokończone" [The unfinished masterpiece], *Twórczość* 6 (1966): 73–96, 81f.

33 Marta Wyka, *Czytanie Brzozowskiego* [Reading Brzozowski] (Kraków: Universitas, 2012), 190, 337.

34 Brzozowski, *Listy*, vol. 1, 98. See also: Mencwel, *Stanisław Brzozowski*, 572.

have adopted this mode of counterfactuality in dealing with Brzozowski's legacy was actually Brzozowski himself. In the diary he wrote during the last few months of his life he stated that had he been given some more time he would certainly have been able to "change the character of Polish literature for whole generations."[35] However, as we know today, this—and far more—did *not* happen. Brzozowski did *not* overcome his illness and died only four months after he noted this conviction.

This is a book about parallels and converging vistas, it reveals hidden paths and neglected contexts. It is a book about failures, missed encounters and possible, but never pursued paths. It is also a book about cultural domination, about intellectual contagion—and immunity. We (re)construct intellectual encounters which, although not all of them actually 'happened', still might help in assessing the significance of Brzozowski's specific contribution to Polish culture. There is little probability that Emil Cioran or Richard Rorty ever heard of Brzozowski, nevertheless a comparative glance at some aspects of their thought reveals striking resemblances to Brzozowski's own peculiar version of 'Kulturphilosophie'. Particular attention is paid to the relevance of Brzozowski's legacy for recent developments in literary criticism and cultural theory. Due to their openness and a lack of systematic coherence Brzozowski's writings have turned out to be highly suggestive for later generations of cultural theorists and literary scholars.[36] His most important contributions in this regard appear to be the performativity of the reading act, the implication of the reader, and the heightened attention to the relationship between reading and the creation of communities. These are crucial issues in any substantial discussion of the role of literature and intellectual activity in contemporary societies.

In the end, it might as well turn out that Brzozowski was just a provincial intellectual, provincial in a triple sense: geographical, linguistic, and historical. *Geographical*, because he spent his formative years in the remote region of Podolia, at the outskirts of the old Polish-Lithuanian Empire. Later he came to the centers of development of modern Polish culture, the cities of Warsaw and Lwów—for many contemporaries the provinciality of these very centers was a steady issue of complaint. *Linguistic*, because he published his works in Polish—

35 Brzozowski, *Pamiętnik*, 48.

36 Two recent book projects of significant scope and insight should be mentioned here: *Stanisław Brzozowski – (ko)repetycje* [St. Brzozowski: private lessons], 2 Vols., ed. Dorota Kozicka, Joanna Orska, and Krzysztof Uniłowski (Katowice: FA-art, 2012), and *Konstelacje Stanisława Brzozowskiego* [St. Brzozowski's constellations], ed. Urszula Kowalczuk et al. (Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2012).

a language that is unfortunately traditionally marginalized and neglected in the so-called West. *Historical*, because he did not live to see the Interwar period when Poland established its own state-financed institutions. During his lifetime, Polish society was partitioned between the three *zabory* with their diverging legislation and restrictions in the field of press and public education. The socialist movement in the first decade of the twentieth century was marked by fierce internal struggles. The unfortunate affair around Brzozowski's alleged activities as an informer of the Tsarist secret police, his illness, and, not to forget, his precarious position as a freelance writer led to his isolation. György Lukács, who is so often quoted as a counterfactual role model for Brzozowski, came from a wealthy family, moved to Berlin, Heidelberg, and later to Moscow—each of these cities being an intellectual bastion in its own right. He was in touch with the Max Weber and Stefan George circles and later became the core of the so-called Lukács-Lifshits "Current," a circle around the journal *Literaturnyi kritik* (Literary Critic),[37] that is, one of the hatcheries of the theory of socialist realism in the 1930s, the literary ideology that reigned in Post-World War II Poland when publications by and on Brzozowski were prohibited for some years (this being one of the many bitter ironies, in which Brzozowski's life and afterlife abound).

However, from today's point of view, 'provinciality' does not mean irrelevance, quite to the contrary: Pre-World War I Central Europe was a cultural field of extreme variety and enormous intellectual richness. The various literary and philosophical contexts that Brzozowski absorbed and digested and the manifold intellectual processes that he triggered and inspired (up to the present) testify to this. It is worth reading Brzozowski notably for the space of possibilities that his intellectual legacy introduces to us. To think about *what could have been* proves a useful tool to understand the actual functioning of a cultural setting, a historical configuration. We acquire new perspectives and often unexpected insights in the history of philosophy and literary criticism—not only in Poland. Brzozowski's province really is the "world of human history," in the sense once proposed by Erich Auerbach:

> Whatever we are, we became in history, and only in history can we remain the way we are and develop therefrom: it is the task of philologists, whose province is the world of human history, to demonstrate this so that it penetrates our lives unforgettably.[38]

37 Natalia Poltavtseva, "Platonov i Lukach (iz istorii sovetskogo iskusstva 1930-kh godov)" [Platonov i Lukács (from the history of Soviet art of the 1930s)], *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 107 (2011): 253–270.

38 Erich Auerbach, "Philology and 'Weltliteratur'," *The Centennial Review* 13.1 (1969): 1–17, 6.

NOTE ON QUOTATIONS FROM BRZOZOWSKI'S WORKS

Quotations from Brzozowski's work are cited according to the *Dzieła* (Works) edition. The volumes of this edition are not included in the "Works Cited" sections of the single chapters. In the footnotes, they are referred to by the name of the author and a short title. The full bibliographical references of these volumes are as follows:

Listy [Letters]. 2 vols. Edited by Mieczysław Sroka. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1970.

Kultura i życie [Culture and life]. Edited by Mieczysław Sroka. Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1973.

Wczesne prace krytyczne [Early critical works]. Edited by Mieczysława Sroka (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1988.

Współczesna powieść i krytyka [The contemporary novel and contemporary criticism]. Edited by Mieczysław Sroka and Janina Bahr. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1984.

Idee [Ideas]. Edited by Mieczysław Sroka and Stefan Góra. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1990.

Legenda Młodej Polski [The legend of modern Poland]. 2 vols. Edited by Janina Bahr. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2001.[39]

Sam wśród ludzi. Książka o starej kobiecie [Alone among people. A book about an old woman]. Edited by Maciej Urbanowski. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2011.

Pod ciężarem Boga. Wiry. Płomienie [Under the weight of God. Whirlpools. Flames]. Edited by Maciej Urbanowski. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2012.

The following two works have not yet been included in the *Dzieła* edition. They too are referenced by a short title and are not listed in the "Works Cited" sections:

Głosy wśród nocy. Studia nad przesileniem romantycznym kultury europejskiej [Voices in the night. Studies on the romantic crisis in European culture]. Edited by Ostap Ortwin. Lwów: Księgarnia Polska B. Połonieckiego / Warszawa: E. Wende i Sp., 1912.

39 All references are to the first volume of this edition.

Pamiętnik [Diary]. Edited by Maciej Urbanowski. Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy imienia Ossolińskich, 2007.

NOTE ON THE TRANSLATION OF TEXTS FROM POLISH

We translate all Polish (German, Ukrainian…) quotations to English. The original Polish text is given for Brzozowski's works and in cases where it is essential for the sake of argument.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Several chapters of this book were translated from the Polish; the name of the translator is indicated at the end of the texts. Most of the translated chapters were fundamentally revised by the editors, a process in which Andrew Niemann and Florence Lanz provided invaluable assistance. We would like to express our deep gratitude for their excellent work. We would also like to thank Eliane Fitzé and Christian Zehnder who helped us in preparing the ultimate edition of this book.

TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

"Sounding out idols": Brzozowski and Strindberg as Nietzsche Readers

Jan Balbierz

> There can be no strong, canonical writing without the process of literary influence, a process vexing to undergo and difficult to understand. […] The anxiety of influence is not an anxiety about the father, real or literary, but an anxiety achieved by and in the poem, novel or play. Any strong literary work creatively misreads and therefore misinterprets a precursor text or texts. An authentic canonical writer may or may not internalize her or his work's anxiety, but that scarcely matters: the strongly achieved work *is* the anxiety.[1]

The formation of a new literary canon and the displacement of the boundaries of the classical one played a crucial role in the cultural debates around the turn of the twentieth century; this era included Nietzsche finally being received in Europe, which led to one of the most spectacular canonical shifts in European modernism. Nietzsche's dramatic rise in influence from a virtually unknown private scholar before 1890 to a cultural icon and *the* philosopher of modernity, was mostly created by three Scandinavian writers: Georg Brandes, Ola Hansson, and August Strindberg.

1 Harold Bloom, *The Western Canon. The Book and Schools of the Ages* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1994), 8.

The European Nietzsche Boom

The European Nietzsche boom began in the spring of 1888 at the University of Copenhagen, when Georg Brandes, a Danish critic and culture historian, delivered a groundbreaking series of lectures on Nietzsche; these were later published under the title "Friedrich Nietzsche. En Afhandling om aristokratisk Radikalisme" (Friedrich Nietzsche: An Essay on Aristocratic Radicalism).[2] Around the same time, the Swedish author Ola Hansson published an article on Nietzsche, which, when translated into German, played an important role in the European reception of Nietzsche at the end of the nineteenth century.[3] Brandes had probably heard of Nietzsche as far back as early 1880, and their correspondence began in 1887 when Brandes wrote:

> Aber vieles stimmt mit meinen eignen Gedanken und Sympathien überein, die Geringschätzung der asketischen Ideale und der tiefe Unwille gegen demokratische Mittelmäßigkeit, Ihr aristokratischer Radikalismus.[4]
>
> Much of it coincides with my own thoughts and sympathies, the ascetic contempt of ideals and the profound disgust with democratic mediocrity—your aristocratic radicalism.

Nietzsche answered with his famous and often quoted compliment, "ein solcher guter Europäer und Kultur-Missionär" (such a fine European and cultural missionary).[5]

Brandes's presentation of Nietzsche in *Aristokratisk Radikalisme* may seem antiquated for today, but it was groundbreaking for the time. The main focus of the text is on Nietzsche's critique of the liberal-democratic developments in Europe and his aversion to Christianity, and yet, most importantly, he did not give considerable attention to the formal developments of art and literature. Despite Brandes's fierce diatribes against romantic aesthetics in the text, he exudes the influence of the romantic "cult of genius." For him Nietzsche was one of those

2 Georg Brandes, "Friedrich Nietzsche. En Afhandling om aristokratisk Radikalisme (1889)," *Samlede Skrifter*, vol. 7 (Copenhagen: Gyldendalske Boghandels Forlag, 1901), 596–664.

3 Ola Hansson, *Friedrich Nietzsche. Seine Persönlichkeit und sein System* [Friedrich Nietzsche: his personality and his system] (Leipzig: Fritzsch, 1890).

4 Paul Krüger, *Correspondance de Georg Brandes III, L'Allemagne* (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde og Bagger, 1966), 439.

5 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Briefe 1861–1889* [Letters], ed. Karl-Maria Guth (Berlin: Contumax, 2013), 339.

great minds who shared many of the same views as the "Modern Breakthrough," a movement that contested the remnants of romanticism which emerged in the literatures of Scandinavia from the end of the 1860s onward. Brandes mainly focuses on Nietzsche's critique of the liberal-democratic developments in Europe and his aversion to Christianity.

Brandes also introduced Strindberg to Nietzsche by giving him *Der Fall Wagner*; in October 1888, Strindberg thanked him for the gift:

> Thank you for so kindly sending me Nietzsche in the midst of my desolation, an acquaintance for which I am greatly indebted to you, since I find him the most liberated, the most modern of us all (not least, of course, on the Woman Question).[6]

Then for a few weeks between 1888 and 1889, Strindberg began a correspondence with Nietzsche, but it was interrupted by Nietzsche's nervous breakdown.[7] The small but well-known cache of letters between them is mainly concerned with the possibility of translating and promoting each other's works. More interesting though are the passages on Nietzsche in numerous other letters that Strindberg mainly sent to other fellow writers. Strindberg wrote to Brandes's brother,

> I am studying a German philosopher. His ideas and mine agree so completely that I find him excellent, the only philosopher alive that I have any use for. We have been in touch with each other for a few years. His name sounds strange and he is still unknown. His name is Friedrich Nietzsche. But he is a genius.[8]

---

6 August Strindberg, *Strindberg's Letters Vol. 2, 1892–1912*, trans. Michael F. Robinson (London: The Athlone Press, 1992), 285.

7 Directly after Nietzsche's collapse Strindberg wrote to Brandes: "Dear Doctor, I know I am pestering you with letters, but I now believe our friend Nietzsche is mad, and what's worse, that he can compromise us. Unless, that is, the crafty Slav (remember Turgeniev-Daudet, bear in mind the cunning Tolstoy) isn't playing a trick on all of us! Read his letters in succession. In No. 1 he asks me to translate *Ecce Homo*—into *French*! To discourage him, I let him know what I had to pay for the translation of *Mariés* (1,000 Francs). In No. 2 he draws back—and sends me *The Genealogy of Morals*. I'm amazed to find I had already speculated about 'Remords' (Pangs of Conscience) before I ever heard of him, and send him my story. Whereupon he replies with No. 3, signed Nietzsche Caesar. *Was thun?* In haste, Yours August Strindberg." Strindberg, *Letters Vol. 2*, 299.

8 Ibid., 125.

To the writer Verner von Heidenstam he wrote, "Buy a modern German philosopher called Nietsche [sic], about whom G.B. has been lecturing. Everything is there! Don't deny yourself this pleasure! N. is a poet too."[9] Some months later he added: "Read Friedrich Nietzsche. (Jenseit von Gut und Bose [sic!])."[10] In yet another letter he wrote that Nietzsche enabled the "fermentation of my ideas" and that "the uterus of my mental world has received a tremendous ejaculation of sperm from Friedrich Nietzsche, so that I feel like a bitch with a full belly."[11] Strindberg was suffering from a strong anxiety of influence, he declared that his ideas were astonishingly similar to Nietzsche's proposals even though he claimed to have developed them independently. In a letter to Brandes, he wrote that he himself had "anticipated the man [Nietzsche] […] he entered my life immediately after I had arrived at his position, without my knowing him, his point of view coincided with mine."[12]

Karin Hoff argues that Nietzsche's correspondence with the Scandinavians in part contained debates on the canon which were always intertwined with issues of power and authority and that Strindberg's and Nietzsche's writings from this time were a kind of dialogue on the questions of social and biological hierarchy as well as symbolic capital. Along with this, Hoff claims that the *dispositifs* of power and the will to power are the "ideological nucleus"[13] of Strindberg's play *The Father*, which Nietzsche praises in one of his letters. The play presents mechanisms of violence and subjugation; it shows how attributes of power are transmitted and acquired through language games and how rhetorical devices help to maintain prestige, or on the contrary, lead to the destruction of traditional values established under the authority of the main character. A large part of the drama deals with symbolic capital and its transmission and substitution before concluding in the breakdown of social conventions.[14]

Brzozowski's Analysis of Nietzsche

Brzozowski analyzes Nietzsche in two texts, the philosophical dialogue "Fryderyk Nietzsche," which was written in 1906 and then published in 1907, and the

9 Ibid., 277.

10 Ibid., 288.

11 Ibid., 283.

12 Ibid., 328.

13 Karin Hoff, "…'Ein angenehmer Wind von Norden'. Nietzsche und Strindberg im Dialog" ["A pleasant wind from the North." Nietzsche and Strindberg in dialogue], *Arcadia—International Journal for Literary Studies* 39,1 (2004): 61.

14 Ibid., 56.

essay "Filozofia Fryderyka Nietzschego" (Friedrich Nietzsche's Philosophy) from 1907, which was published in *Przegląd Filozoficzny* (Philosophical Review) in 1912. Along with these essays, Brzozowski makes numerous references to Nietzsche that are scattered throughout his works. Brzozowski's writings can be viewed in the context of the first phase of Nietzsche's reception in Europe, like Strindberg he makes frequent references to the "superman," "will to power," and the "revaluation of all values."[15]

Strindberg and Brzozowski were both compulsive readers and had a voracious appetite for books; along with reading, the two were obsessive canon-makers. Much of their works deal with removing or adding to the canon; the body of works they drew from was huge and always in flux so that there were constant reevaluations of the same texts, making these canons impossible to define. On several pages of Brzozowski's *Pamiętnik* (Diary), for example, there are varying references to writers such as Arnold, Swinburne, Newman, Coleridge, Blake, Keats, Meredith, and Shelley.

Nietzsche occupies a central place in the personal canons of Strindberg and Brzozowski; both of them recognized the novelty and modernity of his philosophical thought and vindicated different aspects of his philosophy. In order to justify their own poetics and philosophies, both Strindberg and Brzozowski were selective in their readings of their respective canonical authors. For Strindberg, Nietzsche was a modern perspectivist (like Strindberg himself) and he was, as well, an antidemocrat, an aristocratic radical, who foresaw the downfall of European culture through its decadence.[16] In December 1888, Strindberg summarized Nietzsche's philosophy, stating:

> Nietzsche heralds the downfall of Europe and Christianity [...]. Nietzsche is the modern spirit who dares to preach the right of the strong and the wise against the stupid and small

15 The topic of Brzozowski and Nietzsche is one of the earliest in the study of the works of the Polish philosopher and critic; in the mid-1930s Kazimierz Wyka delivered a paper on the topic and he was followed by Czesław Miłosz, Paweł Pieniążek, and Andrzej Walicki.

16 *By the Open Sea* (I havsbandet, 1890) is usually interpreted as a part of the *Übermensch* debate with its main character, the fishery inspector Axel Borg, being seen as a Swedish appropriation of the concept. Tobias Dahlqvist sees it as the most "Nietzschean" of Strindberg's novels that was "clearly conceived within a decadent horizon of expectations." Tobias Dahlkvist, "By the Open Sea—A Decadent Novel? Reconsidering relationships Between Nietzsche, Strindberg and Fin-de-Siècle Culture," in *The International Strindberg. New Critical Essays*, ed. Anna Westerståhl Stenport (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2012), 201.

(the democrats), and I can imagine the suffering of this great spirit under the sway of the petty host which dominates this feminized and cretinous age. And I hail him as the liberator, ending my letters to my literary friends like his catechumen with: Read Nietzsche![17]

In the preface to the *Twilight of the Idols* (a book that Strindberg received from Nietzsche in 1888) Nietzsche coins the "phrase sounding out idols":

Another mode of convalescence […] is sounding out idols. There are more idols than realities in the world [we must] pose questions with a hammer, and sometimes to hear as a reply that famous hollow sound that can only come from bloated entrails—what a delight to one who has ears even behind his ears, for me, an old psychologist and pied piper before whom just that which would remain silent must finally speak out.[18]

In Brzozowski's texts, Nietzsche appears among a rather heterogeneous group of predecessors such as Novalis, Vico, Boehme, Kleist, and Słowacki and contemporary philosophers such as Marx, Sorel, Simmel, or Avenarius. He is one of the cultural *maiores* and becomes one of the most important figures in Brzozowski's cultural canon. Brzozowski's reading of Nietzsche focuses on his critique of contemporary culture, life-philosophy, and the reevaluation of historicism. Like Nietzsche, Strindberg, and Ibsen, Brzozowski, especially in *Legenda Młodej Polski* (The Legend of Young Poland), sounds out the idols of contemporary Polish social life and public debate, revealing the "mystified consciousness" (zmistyfikowana świadomość)[19] of the cultural Philistines; he criticized archaic rituals, conspicuous consumption of the ruling classes, and eventually the clerics' futile aspiration of living outside of history. If we employ the classifications that Nietzsche proposed in *Untimely Meditations*, the central agenda for Brzozowski is a critical approach to history that opposes its nationalist monumentalization as well as the naive positivist quest for objectivity. The introductory chapter of *Legenda*, entitled "Nasze 'ja' i historia" (Our "Self" and History), is an attack on ahistorical thinking in which he writes that the fictions produced by literary historians "are only the specific form, the specific result of more general, and more fundamental delusions that one could describe as delusions of cultural consciousness" (są tylko poszczególną postacią, poszczególnym wynikiem złudzeń bardziej ogólnych i zasadniczych, które nazwaćby można złudze-

17 Strindberg, *Letters Vol. 2*, 295.

18 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale.

19 Brzozowski, *Legenda Młodej Polski*, 16.

niami kulturalnej świadomości).[20] One cannot liberate oneself from history, one can only misapprehend it. Contrary to Nietzsche he offers a *remedium* to that grand "system of delusions and illusions" (system złudzeń i iluzji) and the "flights from history" (ucieczek przed historią)—"labor" (praca).[21]

Leszek Kołakowski's *Main Currents of Marxism* provides a chapter on Brzozowski that continues to be the main source of information on the writer for non-Polish speakers. Kołakowski notes that Brzozowski's concept of the worker goes beyond the Marxist relations of production and the distinction between the proletariat and capitalists; instead, "to him the proletariat was the instrument of a Promethean ideal derived from metaphysical reflection and not from observation of the actual tendency of the workers' movement."[22] And that "it was only from the point of view of labor that men could understand the meaning of their own efforts, it was from the class of direct producers that humanity must learn to understand itself and be imbued with the necessary hope and confidence to govern its own destiny."[23] The free, efficient worker is not subjected to any superior power; he is a messenger for a better world in which he serves as a sort of secular messiah. Brzozowski continues to use quasi-religious language to describe this ideal society when he states:

Póki społeczne życie nie stanie się współżyciem dopełniających się i potęgujących się wzajemnie, w niczym zaś nie krępujących jedne drugich – *wolnych duchów*, póty zadaniem sztuki będzie ponad społeczeństwem stwarzać dla wszystkich – *promienne państwo bezgranicznej swobody*, dziedzinę, w której każdy wreszcie będzie mógł wyżyć sam siebie całkowicie, w której nie będzie skłonności tak odrębnej, tak nowej, która by nie mogła znaleźć dla siebie całkowitego, nie pohamowanego niczym wyrazu.[24]

As long as social life does not become a community of *free spirits* that complement and strengthen each other, that do not embarrass one another, the mission of art is to create the *shining state of limitless freedom* above society for everyone, a sphere in which everybody can finally fully realize oneself, in which there would not be a penchant so special, so new that could not find for itself an expression that is not restricted by anything.

20 Ibid., 13.

21 Ibid., 26.

22 Leszek Kołakowski*, Main Currents of Marxism. Its Rise, Growth and Dissolution. Vol. II. The Golden Age,* trans. P.S. Falla (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 234.

23 Ibid., 231.

24 Stanisław Brzozowski, "Teatr współczesny i jego dążności rozwojowe" [Contemporary theater and its development] in *Wczesne prace krytyczne*, 342–343.

His prophecy of the resurrection of the working class has failed, as all historiosophical prophecies do. Despite this, the figure of the worker does not necessarily need to be understood in terms of class struggle because Brzozowski's opposition is between anyone who actively changes the course of history and the material foundations of society, i.e., the workers, and what Thorstein Veblen called "the leisure class," which Brzozowski equated with unproductive intellectuals who "consider their adventures in acquiring culture, their ideological development, their state of mind to be the core of history" (uważają swoje perypetie w nabywaniu kultury, swoje przejścia ideologiczne, stany dusz, za właściwy rdzeń dziejów).[25]

Most critics recognize Brzozowski's philosophy as being rooted in Marxism. If this is correct, his idea of the workers and the proletariat would be another variation of the phantasma of the "working class" as the driving force of history, which has been so dear to the academic upper-middle class since the nineteenth century. However, Brzozowski's affiliations to Marx and his followers, especially, were complicated. In *Legenda Młodej Polski* he writes, "historical materialism was forged […] initially as a method of research that finally turned into some sort of socialist Esperanto" (Materializm dziejowy został sfałszowany […] z metody badania, stał się tylko pewnym rodzajem socjalistycznego Esperanto)."[26] In his essay on Nietzsche, he expresses even more strongly his disgust with left-wing group-thinking, "Nothing is more infamous than the modern theories of social solidarity that throw around the notion of altruism" (Nic dla nas nie ma ohydniejszego niż szermujące terminem altruizm nowoczesne teorie solidarności społecznej).[27] The main aim of the proletariat is not class struggle but rather the creation of the new man—one of the central myths of early modernism:

> Ruch klasy robotniczej rozpatrywany z tej strony posiada całkiem inne znaczenie niż to, jakie mu się nadaje zazwyczaj, jest to tworzenie się nowej arystokracji, powstawanie nowego typu człowieka, zdolnego objąć świadomy ster dziejów. Różni się on głęboko od demokratycznych dążeń, z którymi splatają go jednodniowe interesy polityki.[28]

> From this perspective, the working-class movement has a fundamentally different significance from that which it is normally ascribed to; it entails the creation of a new aristocracy, the emergence of a new type of man who will be able to take the helm of history in

25 Brzozowski, *Legenda Młodej Polski*, 13.

26 Ibid., 231.

27 Brzozowski, "Filozofia Fryderyka Nietzschego," in *Kultura i życie*, 683.

28 Brzozowski, *Legenda Młodej Polski*, 231.

hand. It profoundly differs from the democratic aspirations with which it is merged by ephemeral interests of politics.

In his essay on Nietzsche, Brzozowski makes a lengthy argument for the role of the worker in history and how "the ideal of freedom today is the worker" (ideałem swobody ludzkiej jest dziś robotnik),[29] who is supposed to be skillful and flexible. He defines "true freedom" in relation to labor and not as something spiritual because a free man produces the basis of his life for himself. [30] This philosophy focuses on the formulation of ideas rather than on knowledge (especially with the creation of the idea of labor instead of the earlier idea of being) which results in the creation of a new type of man whose existence is based on freedom. This man, as opposed to the rest of the world, is a worker.[31]

Kołakowski notes that Brzozowski's proletariat is "a collective warrior with the traits of a Nietzschean hero";[32] indeed Brzozowski's "worker" and his "working class" share certain characteristics with Nietzsche's concepts of the artist and superman. For Nietzsche, the artist is not only someone who writes poems or stands at an easel, instead he is anyone who is capable of changing his own life by exceeding its boundaries and recreating himself. The concept of the worker for Brzozowski is emblematic of an existence that is free, creative, and open to continuous transgression. In place of being a class-related category, it becomes an existential imperative of self-mastery, and thus an important part of Brzozowski's moral philosophy. This similarity is explicitly stated in the dialogue "Fryderyk Nietzsche" in which Brzozowski refers to the superman as a "creator" (twórca) and writes that "every creation is always tantamount to this slogan: beyond the man!" (wszelka twórczość zawsze i wszędzie równoznaczną jest z tym hasłem: ponad człowieka!)[33] Nietzsche also appears in the article "Filozofia Fryderyka Nietzschego" as an example of an ideal man who is "capable of a free life"[34] (zdolny do swobodnego życia) and reliant on the chaos of history. Here the argument continues with a critique of an earlier philosophy that could only provide "mythological falsifications" (mitologiczne falsyfikacje). Brzozowski states that Nietzsche's writings are a document of the "decomposition of a certain type of consciousness" (rozkładu pewnego typu świadomości),[35] but also

29 Brzozowski, "Filozofia Fryderyka Nietzschego," 650.

30 Ibid., 679.

31 Ibid., 673.

32 Kołakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism*, 233.

33 Stanisław Brzozowski, "Fryderyk Nietzsche," in *Kultura i życie*, 643.

34 Brzozowski, "Filozofia Fryderyka Nietzschego," 648.

35 Ibid., 657.

the heralds of a new consciousness. In his interpretation of Nietzsche, Brzozowski first criticizes the idea of "being" as something that is granted to humankind and then relying on Nietzsche he proposes a philosophical project built on the idea of the individual subject actively fighting with and changing reality in its material aspects. Brzozowski states that "Nietzsche's philosophy is essentially a philosophy of courage: dare to live, dare to struggle for life" (Filozofia Nietzschego jest właściwie filozofią śmiałości: śmiej żyć, śmiej walczyć o życie)[36] and that in dealing with the forces of life, courage is more important than unchangeable moral values, laws, or ethical systems.

If we interpret Brzozowski's philosophy in this post-Nietzschean context, it radically changes from a variant of Marxism to a philosophy of existential courage. In the chapter "Odrodzenie indywidualizmu" (The Rebirth of Individualism) of his lecture "Estetyka poglądowa" (The Aesthetics of Perception), he writes that according to Nietzsche, the end of the nineteenth century is characterized by a "fear of responsibility"[37] (obawa przed odpowiedzialnością):

> Współcześni nasi boją się wprost – mówi on – być sprawcami czegokolwiek, lękają się każdego czynu, który by był prawdziwie ich czynem, nie śmią oprzeć się nigdy wyłącznie na samych sobie, szukają poza sobą lub ponad sobą czegoś, co by nimi kierowało i uświęcało ich kroki, co by działało niejako za nich.[38]

> Our contemporaries—he [Nietzsche] says—are simply afraid of being the agents of something, they are dreading every act which would really be their own, they do not dare to rely exclusively on their own selves, they are searching for something beyond or above themselves that would guide them and illuminate their path, that would somewhat act for them.

This new philosophy proclaims a sovereign life based on the concept of *labor*. Only when labor is recognized as the sole form of "life that produces effects in the world beyond man" (życia wytwarzającą pozaludzkie, bytowe skutki)[39] can human existence become sovereign: "Nie miej religii, lecz bądź religią – tak formułuje się stanowisko Nietzschego. […] Sam dla siebie musisz zostać bogiem, stworzyć swego boga"[40] (You should not have a religion but be one—that is how Nietzsche's attitude can be defined. […] You have to become a god for

36 Brzozowski, "Filozofia Fryderyka Nietzschego," 664.

37 Stanisław Brzozowski, "Estetyka poglądowa," in *Wczesne prace krytyczne*, 79.

38 Ibid., 79n.

39 Brzozowski, "Filozofia Fryderyka Nietzschego," 688.

40 Ibid., 690.

yourself, to create your own god). Or, as Brzozowski puts it elsewhere, "All of our everyday reality is our constant achievement. Nietzsche knew about this as well as all the other *deep* religious moralists" (Cała powszednia nasza rzeczywistość jest naszym nieustannym dziełem. Wiedział o tym zarówno Nietzsche, jak i każdy z *głębokich* moralistów religijnych).[41] The affirmative aspects of Brzozowski's idea of labor are also derived from Nietzsche, whose "reckless individualism" (indywidualizm bezwzględny) means to utter "the holy and creative word 'yes'" (świętego i twórczego słowa "tak").[42]

One of the most important features of the literary and philosophical discourse of the turn of the twentieth century was the instability of the narrative point of view. Nietzsche's perspectivism, for example, his reflections on the impossibility of creating neutral perspectives, the incommensurability of truth(s), and the necessity of interpretation, can be seen in the broader context of the changing narrative patterns in modernist literature.[43] Despite numerous recurring themes in Nietzsche (as well as in Brzozowski and Strindberg), the narrative points of view change synchronically and diachronically, their discourses are often incoherent, concepts are turned upside-down, and the twisting and turning of ideas never ends. Since conventional philosophical language had degenerated to clichés as a columbarium of mummified truths and "a mobile army of metaphors, metonyms and anthropomorphisms,"[44] the only way to renew philosophy was to make the language performative. "Creativity" (twórczość) then must have its own life, it must grow directly out of the "active relations of the given, living person" (czynnych stosunków danej, żywej istoty), and yet be unprecedented and radically new. A performative act of language then can transform reality:

> Twórczość – powstanie absolutne, początek bezwzględny, jest poza nawiasem tego, co jest. Można mówić o niej słowem *„będzie",* a właściwie i tak nawet nie, lecz jakimś nieokreślonym i nieustającym *„niech się stanie"*.[45]
>
> Creativity—absolute emergence, the unconditional beginning is outside the realm of what exists. One could depict it with the words "it will be," but even this is not exact, rather some indefinite and continuous "let it emerge."

41 Stanisław Brzozowski, "Prolegomena filozofii pracy," in *Idee*, 244.

42 Brzozowski, "Estetyka poglądowa," 83.

43 Cf. Michał Paweł Markowski, *Nietzsche. Filozofia interpretacji* [Nietzsche. A philosophy of interpretation] (Kraków: Universitas, 2001).

44 Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Portable Nietzsche*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Penguin, 1982), 46.

45 Brzozowski, "Fryderyk Nietzsche," 614.

The most profound consequence of the shift from representation to the performativity of language are the perpetual inconsistencies of discourse in Nietzsche, Strindberg, and Brzozowski which make it impossible to construct a coherent worldview—they were all anti-systematic thinkers. In a letter to Brandes from December 1888, Strindberg wrote: "Strange that through Nietzsche I should now find the method in my madness of 'opposing everything'. I reassess and put new values on old things!"[46] Brzozowski also commented: "Ważne jest to, co stawia opór spójności myślowej i jedności perspektywicznej, co nie daje się objąć w jednym i tym samym planie" (The important thing is to resist the coherence of thought and the unity of perspective, so that it could not be comprehended on one single level).[47]

Brzozowski's "Fryderyk Nietzsche" exemplifies the narrative inconsistencies typical for the subversive thinking of Brzozowski and Nietzsche. From the dialogue a cultural canon evolves, and Brzozowski shows how his own works are embedded in that canon. Nietzsche, following Schopenhauer, introduced overlooked philosophical problems that develop new issues associated with the concepts of life, action, and labor; Brzozowski declares himself to be among the same philosophical tradition as he strives to solve these problems through the two main pillars of his philosophy—life and labor. Nietzsche is presented as a precursor of the "philosophy of life," and Brzozowski postulates a "socio-psychological" point of view that takes into account both the individual and what is socially conditioned.

"Fryderyk Nietzsche" plays on the narrative tradition of Platonic dialogue with all the aporias and contradictions that are associated with this genre. Two key issues with the text would be whose voice does the speaking and what its significance is in relation to the overall narrative. The irony of the introduction encapsulates the text whose plot takes place during a symposium between a handicapped sculptor who can no longer use his tools, a tubercular actress, and a philosopher. The characters have all their "possibilities blocked in their development" (możliwości powstrzymane w rozwoju)"[48] and they are left discussing philosophy because "for those who do not live themselves, nothing remains except to scrutinize life" (tym bowiem, którzy sami nie żyją – nie pozostaje nic prócz zgłębiania życia).[49]

Nietzsche's fundamental place in Brzozowski's cultural canon is merited by the fact that he created a new anthropology:

46 Strindberg, *Letters Vol. 2*, 296.

47 Brzozowski, *Pamiętnik*, 39.

48 Brzozowski, "Fryderyk Nietzsche," 605.

49 Ibid., 606.

Usiłuje on [Nietzsche] wydobyć, przeżyć jak najwięcej „stanów duchowych", czy jak się to nazywa, uwolnionych spod władzy i kontroli koordynujących perspektyw. Ma się przecież wrażenie, że Nietzsche śmieje się prosto w twarz wszelkim teoriom, normom i ideałom: „tyle chcecie zostawić z człowieka, tyle znacie; a to? a to? I tych „a to?" jest bez końca. Filozofowie badają człowieka zazwyczaj z punktu widzenia przydatności jego do takich a takich celów, a tu mamy samorodność żywą, drgającą, nerwowo zmienną, chwiejną, wielokształtną. *Cel* – cel? Jam jest, który stawiam, stwarzam cele![50]

He [Nietzsche] tries to retrieve, to live through, the greatest possible number of "states of mind," or how should one call it, which are free from the power and control of perspectives. There is a saying that Nietzsche simply laughs in the face of all theories, norms, and ideals: "so this much is what you would like to leave of the man, this is what you know; and this? and this? And there is no end to these "and this?". Philosophers usually study man from the point of view of his applicability to these or other goals, but here we have a living self-creation, twitching, nervously variable, unstable, multifaceted. *A goal*—a goal? It is I who sets, who creates goals!

Nietzsche represented "the new type of philosopher" who was anticipated by Giambattista Vico. Philosophy today puts new issues on the agenda, it has to awaken to the "self-government" (samowładza) of humankind. Thus, it becomes a part of personal and social liberation. Nietzsche's radical novelty lies in the fact that he reformulated the undertaking of philosophy: "człowiek sam wyznacza sobie ten cel, dla którego ma żyć, chce żyć. […] Filozofia przestaje być poznawaniem idei – staje się ich tworzeniem" (man himself sets the goal that he wants to live for. […] Philosophy ceases to be the cognition of an idea—it becomes its creation).[51] For Brzozowski, Nietzsche's uniqueness lies in his exploration of the tragedy of existence and, as Rüdiger Safranski puts it, his struggles with the "enormity" of life.[52] The merit of Nietzsche's philosophy is that no one ever represented better the erratic, pulsating, irrational, creative "life." Moreover, Nietzsche's discourse is characterized by "breaking up with bookish 'theoreticizing'" (zerwanie z książkowym "teoretyzmem").[53] Just as the ancient metaphysicians were apologists for religious beliefs, Nietzsche writes apologias for the unrestrained life.

50 Brzozowski, "Fryderyk Nietzsche," 622.

51 Brzozowski, "Filozofia Fryderyka Nietzschego," 646.

52 The term "das Ungeheure" (the uncanny) is used in: Rüdiger Safranski, *Nietzsche. Biographie seines Denkens* [Nietzsche: a biography of his thought] (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2002), 15ff.

53 Brzozowski, "Filozofia Fryderyka Nietzschego," 645.

There is an entire body of writings, shared by early Nietzsche readers like Strindberg and Brzozowski. The most prominent authors figuring in this list were Charles Darwin and Arthur Schopenhauer—"the educator" of a whole generation. Other, more forgotten influences were Ernst Haeckel, with whom Strindberg corresponded; Henry Buckle and his *History of Civilisation in England* (he appears several times in Strindberg's autobiographical novel *The Son of the Servant*); Maurice Barrès's trilogy *Le culte du moi*;[54] and eventually, though surprisingly, Emanuel Swedenborg, a major influence on late Strindberg whom Brzozowski described as an "uncommon […] thinker […] and scholar" (niepospolity[…] myśliciel[…] i uczony) who will be fully appreciated along with "progresses in preternormal psychology" (postępy psychologii ponadnormalnej).[55]

The array of cultural topics is also easily recognizable: physiology and the politics of the body, the mythologies and rituals of the upper middle-classes, emancipation, the decay and possible healing of European culture, objectivity, and the *Was-ist-Wahrheit* question. In her book on Ibsen, Toril Moi argues that our understanding of the term modernism is a result of historical amnesia:

> Most of the numerous nineteenth-century struggles over realism had nothing to do with modernism, and everything to do with idealism. […] What we have forgotten is that idealism did not simply die with romanticism, but that it remained a powerful aesthetic norm for most of the nineteenth century, and that weak, degraded forms of idealism lasted until just about all the aesthetic conflicts that raged in Europe throughout the century, and particularly in the bitter struggles that mark the period after 1870.[56]

Most aspects of modernism in Nietzsche, Strindberg, and Brzozowski can be seen in the light of the discreditation of the idealistic assumptions of late post-romantic culture and the operative delusions of the European upper-middle classes that were usually referred to under the umbrella-term of idealism. In a European context, Brzozowski's rewriting of Nietzsche can be seen as the backdrop of a cultural movement whose main aim was the debunking of this idealism.

Translated by Zofia Ziemann

54 To his friend Leopold Littmansson, Strindberg commented on his own essay "Moi" in Summer 1894: "The only thing that exists is the self (le culte du moi), and I know nothing about the world and 'other people' except through myself." Quoted and translated by Robinson in: Strindberg, *Letters Vol. 2*, 241.

55 Brzozowski, *Pamiętnik,* 115n.

56 Toril Moi, *Henrik Ibsen and the Birth of Modernism. Art, Theatre, Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 3.

WORKS CITED

Bloom, Harold. *The Western Canon. The Book and Schools of the Ages*. New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1994.

Brandes, Georg. "Friedrich Nietzsche. En Afhandling om aristokratisk Radikalisme (1889)." *Samlede Skrifter*. Vol. 7, 596–664. Copenhagen: Gyldendalske Boghandels Forlag, 1901.

—. *Correspondance de Georg Brandes; III: L'Allemagne*, edited by Paul Krüger. Copenhagen: Rosenkilde og Bagger, 1966.

Brzozowski, Stanisław. "Estetyka pogladowa." In *Wczesne prace krytyczne*, 76–83.

—. "Teatr współczesny i jego dążności rozwojowe." In *Wczesne prace krytyczne*, 328–348.

—. "Fryderyk Nietzsche." In *Kultura i życie*, 605–643.

—. "Filozofia Fryderyka Nietzschego." In *Kultura i życie*, 644–694.

—. "Prolegomena filozofii pracy." In *Idee,* 213–251

Dahlkvist, Tobias. "By the Open Sea—A Decadent Novel? Reconsidering relationships Between Nietzsche, Strindberg and Fin-de-Siècle Culture." In *The International Strindberg. New Critical Essays*, edited by Anna Westerståhl Stenport, 195–214. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2012.

Hansson, Ola. *Friedrich Nietzsche: Seine Persönlichkeit und sein System*. Leipzig: Fritzsch, 1890.

Hoff, Karin. "…'Ein angenehmer Wind von Norden'. Nietzsche und Strindberg im Dialog." *Arcadia—International Journal for Literary Studies* 39,1 (2004): 55–69.

Kołakowski, Leszek. *Main Currents of Marxism. Its Rise, Growth and Dissolution. Vol. II. The Golden Age.* Translated by Paul S. Falla. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978.

Markowski, Michał Paweł. *Nietzsche. Filozofia interpretacji*. Kraków: Universitas, 2001.

Moi, Toril. *Henrik Ibsen and the Birth of Modernism. Art, Theatre, Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Portable Nietzsche*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Penguin, 1982.

—. *Briefe 1861–1889*. Edited by Karl-Maria Guth. Berlin: Contumax, 2013.

—. *Twilight of the Idols*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale. http://www.inp.uw.edu.pl/mdsie/Political_Thought/twilight-of-the-idols-friedrich-neitzsche.pdf

Safranski, Rüdiger. Nietzsche. Biographie seines Denkens. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2002.

Strindberg, August. *Strindberg's Letters, Vol. 2: 1892–1912*. Translated by Michael F. Robinson. London: The Athlone Press, 1992.

"Ibsen! Oh, let us not invoke this name in vain!"[1] Brzozowski's Ibsen Not-quite-read[2]

Ewa Partyga

Although Stanisław Brzozowski truly admired Henrik Ibsen in his early years, he did not publish very much on the playwright. Before 1905 he only reviewed two Ibsen productions—*Samfundets Støtter* (Pillars of Society) in February 1903 and *Gengangere* (Ghosts) in November 1904. Between late 1905 and early 1906 he wrote two works devoted to Ibsen following Wilhelm Feldman's lectures on his dramaturgy in Zakopane. Both of the latter texts were published in *Przegląd Społeczny* (Social review) soon after Ibsen's death in 1906. Brzozowski's ideas from the dialogue in verse "Nad grobem Ibsena" (Over Ibsen's Grave) were subsequently presented in a more systematic way in the important essay "Styl Ibsena" (Ibsen's Style). Finally after 1906, Ibsen became one of the negative protagonists of *Legenda Młodej Polski* (The Legend of Young Poland) where he appears in varying chapters with the unrewarding role of a consoler of his generation.[3] In *Legenda*, Brzozowski announces his intentions of discussing Ibsen in greater detail in a future work. As he writes in a letter to Ostap Ortwin, the Ibsen passages that were eventually not included in *Legenda*, figured in *Idee* (Ideas) under the title "Herezje o Ibsenie" (Heresies about Ibsen).[4] However, they did not make it into the eventual publication of the work; what is more, Ortwin could not find them in Brzozowski's papers after his death. It is possible that Brzo-

1 "Ibsen! O, nie wzywajmy imienia tego nadaremno!" Brzozowski, *Wczesne prace krytyczne*, 655.

2 The research for this article was supported by the National Science Center Grant, no. UMO-2013/11/B/HS2/02494 (Narodowe Centrum Nauki).

3 Cf. Brzozowski, *Legenda Młodej Polski*, 215.

4 Cf. Brzozowski, *Listy,* vol. 2, 175. Ortwin quotes this letter in his introduction to *Głosy wśród nocy* [Voices in the night].

zowski came to regard these considerations as backward with respect to *The Legend*. In any case, there is a lot to suggest that he deemed Ibsen's case a closed chapter by the end of 1909.

In 1906 Brzozowski wrote, "Ibsen – to jedno z najdroższych kłamstw naszych. Mówić o nim spokojnie niepodobna; i dlatego warto jeszcze mówić"[5] (Ibsen is one of our most precious lies. It is not possible to speak about him calmly; and that is why it is still worth while talking about him). Did he decide three years later that Ibsen was no longer worth talking about? Did he want to symbolically kill his Ibsen with silence? Even if this were the case, Brzozowski did not forget his love for Ibsen's plays. This is evident from a letter to Feliks Brzozowski from late December 1910:

Każdy z nas wyrobił sobie swój własny świat wewnętrzny, w który wierzy. Świat wewnętrzny każdego człowieka jest ciasny w porównaniu z wielkim, jaki istnieje, choć nie jest nigdy poznany, więc właściwie ja i Ty, i wszyscy możemy być pewni, że jesteśmy raczej błędem drukarskim historii niż czymś innym. No, ale jeżeli tak, to ponieważ i tak zecer wyjmie nas z formy i rzuci do kaszty (plagiat robię z Ibsena i jego odlewacza guzików w *Peer Gyncie*, którego, jeżeli nie znasz, przeczytaj – w jakim chcesz języku, choćby po rosyjsku, bo jest to jeden z fragmentów najszczerszej i najmędrszej, odważnej poezji, jakie zostały w tych nie bardzo mądrych i nie bardzo odważnych czasach wytworzone […]).[6]

All of us have created our own inner world that we believe in. Every man's inner world is narrow in comparison to the big world that exists, although it is never perceived, hence you and I and all the others can be sure that we are rather a misprint of history than anything else. But if this is the case, then the typist will take us out of the form and throw us to the type case anyway (I am plagiarizing Ibsen with his Button-Moulder in *Peer Gynt*, which you should read if you haven't read it yet—no matter in what language, even in Russian, since this is one of the pieces of the sincerest and wisest poetry that has ever been created in our not so wise and not so brave times […]).

In the abovementioned texts that were written between 1903 and 1909, Brzozowski constructed a picture of Ibsen by commenting on a relatively small body of the playwright's works. In the review of *Pillars of Society*, Brzozowski mentions three texts in passing: *Bygmester Solness* (The Master Builder) and *En Folkefiende* (An Enemy of the People), both are spoken of favorably, and *Fruen fra Havet* (The Lady from the Sea), which he criticized for its light-hearted ending. *Rosmersholm* appears as context for a conversation between a playwright

5 Brzozowski, *Kultura i życie*, 211.

6 Brzozowski, *Listy,* vol. 2*,* 507.

and an actress in "Nad grobem Ibsena." *Legenda* mentions the earlier plays, *Peer Gynt* and *Brand*, as well as Ibsen's last play, *Når vi døde vaagner* (When We Dead Awaken), which Brzozowski held in highest regard. In *Pamiętnik* (Diary), he lists texts that constitute a still valuable Ibsen canon: *Kongs-Emnerne* (The Pretenders), *Peer Gynt*, *Vildanden* (The Wild Duck), *The Master Builder* (or at least parts of it), and, again, *When We Dead Awaken*. Brzozowski's references to Ibsen are always cursory and the plays do not seem very closely read. Moreover, Brzozowski's reading is not as original as would be expected and one can easily identify the words of other critics.

Ibsen's reception in Poland was always somewhat superficial because reviewers discussed his plays along the lines of the current intellectual and artistic concepts rather than offering an original approach to the texts. Although Jan Michalik[7] and Michał Głowiński[8] consider Brzozowski's voice as one of the most profound in the chorus of shallow Ibsen exegetes, it should be noted that he rarely overturned established criticism on Ibsen, he merely develops and deepens others' perspectives by translating them into the terms of his own critical idiom. Moreover, there are strong indications that Brzozowski, following his deep conviction for the existential dimension of any significant text, reads Ibsen's works in the context of the playwright's biography and general worldview. In the reviews, Brzozowski seems to have specific passages from Ibsen's letters in mind as some excerpts of his letters were published and discussed in Poland in *Czas* (Time), *Prawda* (Truth), or *Biblioteka Warszawska* (Warsaw Library) in 1904 and 1905.[9] Critics, including Brzozowski, employed his epistolary utterances and polemical remarks, which were fragmented and taken out of context, as his worldview—gleaning his ideological/artistic declarations or his "theory" of literature from them.[10]

---

7 Jan Michalik, *Twórczość Ibsena w sądach krytyki polskiej 1875–1906* [Ibsen's work in Polish criticism] (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1971), 39–41.

8 Cf. Michał Głowiński, "Deux critiques littéraires sur Ibsen (Ortwin – Brzozowski)," in *Swedish-Polish Literary contacts*, ed. Nils Åke Nilsson (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1979), 61.

9 Polish translations were based on letters published in 1904 in *Die neue Rundschau.*

10 Some of the passages most popular with Ibsen commentators constitute an interesting background for observations developed by Brzozowski: "For a man of a certain spiritual development, the old notion of motherland is no longer sufficient […]. I believe that the sense of nationality is already dying out, and is going to be replaced by the sense of tribe."; "For an individual, in turn, it is by no means necessary to be a citizen." (from letters to Brandes, translated into Polish by Józef Flach, "Listy Ibsena do Brandesa" [Ibsen's letters to Brandes], *Czas* 201 [1904]): 1; "Everything that I have

Brzozowski considered Ibsen to be an important part of his own spiritual and intellectual biography and counted him among the writers and thinkers whom he cherished. Therefore, for Brzozowski, criticizing Ibsen was like criticizing himself. By undermining Ibsen's beliefs and judgments, he reevaluates and overcomes his own views. What were these judgments and beliefs? First of all, Brzozowski portrays Ibsen as a spokesman for "absolute individualism," which he also advocated for at the beginning of his writing career. Later on though, he polemicized against this stance and denounced it for its futile indulgence in contemplative attitudes—a habit Brzozowski persistently sees in Ibsen's protagonists. Secondly, Ibsen, in Brzozowski's view, advocated for the idea of society as the coexistence of free spirits; a topic that Brzozowski repeatedly revisited in order to better define the social dimension of individual existence.[11]

Brzozowski's whole dispute with Ibsen is very coherent and consistent. The texts on Ibsen can be read as a kind of three-act autobiographical drama with Ibsen as a foil. These portraits may differ in some detail, yet the principles and perspectives in them are much less unstable than those of his other critical projects. As a result, the image of Ibsen in these texts is not as polemically loaded as that of Stanisław Wyspiański, for example,[12] but it grows stable and becomes increasingly unequivocal and one-dimensional.

Act One: Ibsen in Brzozowski's Play Reviews

In his review of *Pillars of Society* from February 1903, Brzozowski clearly had his doubts about Ibsen's early play, which he regarded as outdated and immature

created remains strongly connected with what I have lived through, but have not experienced. Every new work fulfilled its aim with respect to myself, serving as a liberating and cleansing process. For man is never without his share of responsibility and blame before the society to which he belongs. This is why I wrote the following dedication in a copy of my book: To live—means to defeat in oneself / the spectre of dark nights. / To create—to pass judgement / over one's own self." (translated into Polish by Bertold Merwin, "Listy Ibsena", *Prawda* (49): 1904).

11 These explorations are discussed, e.g., by Andrzej Mencwel and Paweł Pieniążek in their books on Brzozowski.

12 The ambivalence in Brzozowski's attitude towards Wyspiański was recently discussed by Magdalena Popiel, "Brzozowski – Wyspiański. Dwie formuły 'pathosu wyjątkowości'" [Brzozowski—Wyspiański: Two formulas for the "pathos of exceptionality"], in *Konstelacje Stanisława Brzozowskiego*, ed. Urszula Kowalczuk et al. (Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2012).

in terms of its depth.[13] He ridicules the "abundance of naive excitement" (zbytek naiwnego oburzenia) and the "varnish of commonplaces" (pokost komunałów) that smother "every sincere and frank outburst" (każdy szczerszy i śmielszy wybuch).[14] Optimism was always "an ideological mask for passivity" (ideową maską bierności)[15] for Brzozowski, so he was particularly put off by the play's happy ending and bluntly describes it as a lie, "Even Ibsen, his Viking power notwithstanding, sometimes had to lie to himself in order to live" (nawet Ibsen, pomimo swej mocy Wikinga, potrzebował niekiedy kłamać przed samym sobą, by żyć).[16] However, he also highlights some points on Ibsen that invariably fascinate him; namely the expression of creative fervor, the deliberate incompleteness of some of his other plays, and his refusal to be contented with what he had already done. This appeals to Brzozowski because Ibsen—fortunately—could not be entitled a perfect artist. Thus, Brzozowski's appreciation at the time stems from the formation of his philosophical belief in the "primacy of function over product."[17] What matters above all is the deep conviction that Ibsen's writing was not art for art's sake: "Sztuka nigdy nie była u Ibsena sama przez się i sama dla siebie celem, nigdy nie była czemś ostatecznem i jedynem"[18] (For Ibsen, art never was a goal in and for itself, was never something final and unique).

This idea, which is concurrent with Brzozowski's conception of art, is based on the prevalent thoughts that had already been a critical key to Ibsen's works at the time. Since the mid-1890s, these thoughts were regarded as Ibsen's "confrontation with himself, an attempt to consider, analyze, and overcome his own illusions, mistakes, ideals."[19] Some critics like Feliks Konieczny analyzed Ibsen's writing through his biography so that in his plays his "personal problems are given a universally human dimension, and in this way become objectivized,"[20] while others treated it as his method of acquiring spiritual maturity or development. Thus, when Brzozowski writes that Ibsen's works "were always

13 Brzozowski, *Wczesne prace krytyczne,* 558.

14 Ibid., 556.

15 Brzozowski, *Legenda Młodej Polski,* 191.

16 Brzozowski, *Wczesne prace krytyczne,* 558.

17 Ryszard Nycz, "Wywoływanie świata. Zadania krytyki i sztuki w pisarstwie filozoficznym Stanisława Brzozowskiego" [Invoking the world: the tasks of criticism and art in Stanisław Brzozowski's philosophical writings], in *Język modernizmu. Prolegomena historycznoliterackie* (Wrocław: Fundacja na Rzecz Nauki Polskiej, 1997), 123.

18 Brzozowski, *Wczesne prace krytyczne*, 557.

19 Michalik, *Twórczość Ibsena*, 84.

20 Quoted from: Michalik, *Twórczość Ibsena*, 85.

for him [Ibsen] only stages: they did not exist for and through themselves, but were always just the efforts of some inner liberation" (były zawsze dla niego tylko stopniami: nie istniały one same dla siebie i przez siebie, lecz były zawsze tylko usiłowaniami jakiegoś wewnętrznego wyzwolenia),[21] he does not do anything groundbreaking in Ibsen criticism. However, he does include Ibsen in his reflections on the contradiction between artistry and creative work. The latter is characterized by incompleteness and openness on the one hand and a tight link between artistic or cultural activity and the process of self-definition on the other.

In the review of *Ghosts*, Ibsen becomes Brzozowski's accomplice in a passionate and ruthless attack against the "Lechitic idleness" (lechicka gnuśność) and the "urban self-adulation" (mieszczuchowskie samouwielbienie)[22] of the Warsaw psyche. Brzozowski portrays the blabbering Oswald who loses touch with reality as a symbol of the future of Polish audiences who watch tragedy with the indifference of condescension. In a highly affected manner, Brzozowski calls for a deeper reading of *Ghosts* that would draw back the conventional language of the moment and reveal something more. At the time, *Ghosts* was conventionally regarded as the epitome of naturalism, but Brzozowski tried to reveal a deeper meaning in the play:

> Jest tylko jeden grzech, za który nie ma przebaczenia, grzech przeciwko wiecznie twórczej, wiecznie rwącej się w świat poza siebie żądzy życia. Jest jeden tylko grzech: wyprzeć się własnych bogactw duchowych, które się ma, i tych, które się zdobyć może. Jest jeden tylko grzech: zabić tę żądzę życia, żądzę piękna, potęgi w sobie lub kim innym.[23]
>
> There is only one sin for which there is no forgiveness, the sin against the eternally creative will to life, eternally striving for the world beyond itself. There is only one sin: to renounce one's own spiritual riches, those which one already has and those which one can obtain. There is only one sin: to kill the will to life, the will to beauty, to the power in oneself or in someone else.

Brzozowski is not alone in this view of *Ghosts*. In Polish criticism after 1900, such concepts as "żądza życia" (the will to life) or "żądza mocy" (the will to power) were frequently used with reference to Ibsen's protagonists in order to

21 Brzozowski, *Wczesne prace krytyczne*, 557.

22 Ibid., 649.

23 Ibid., 651.

bring out their Nietzschean traits,[24] even though these approaches were contested as well.[25] In these reviews Brzozowski still presents Ibsen as an author who fulfills the critic's then valid postulates regarding art. However, it turns out that the Norwegian playwright no longer meets Brzozowski's demands towards creative work.

Act Two: Brzozowski's Ibsen in 1906

The first of Brzozowski's two texts on Ibsen, "Nad grobem Ibsena," was a dialogue in verse that staged a conversation between actress and playwright after a showing of *Rosmersholm*. This setup was probably inspired by Stanisław Wyspiański's "Studium o Hamlecie" [Study on Hamlet], a work that links the dramatis personae with the actors' true bodies and personalities, including Shakespeare. Brzozowski gradually blurs the boundaries between the actress playing a character, the character itself, and its maker. Wyspiański presents these relations in a constant flux while in Brzozowski they are clearly defined. The actress and playwright discuss the inevitable and permanent rupture between art and life experienced by Ibsen's protagonists, the actors struggling with playing their roles, and finally the author himself. Thus, Ibsen himself eventually becomes the protagonist of the dialogue—Ibsen made to resemble an Ibsenian character. The act of consigning the author into the fictional world of his own works emphasizes the key topic of Brzozowski's text, the problem of unembodied desires, which turns Ibsen's fight for individuality into a dead end:

Wszedł w ciszę śmierci / Człowiek, co błyskawic łaknął chrztu / […] / Lecz by zobaczyć Boga piorun jasny, / Trzeba uwierzyć / W szczyt, że jest nasz własny. / Trzeba stać na nim nie myślą – marzeniem, / Lecz ciałem – pracą. / Bezcielesnymi Bóg gardzi myślami.[26]

And the Man who yearned for the baptism by lightning entered the silence of death […]. But to see God's bright thunderbolt, you have to believe in the summit that is ours. You have to stand on him not in thoughts or in dreams, but as a body—by labor. God despises those who are bodiless.

The key concept of this stage of Brzozowski's reflection on Ibsen is the lack of corporeality within experience which he sees as being manifested in these works.

24 At that time, Brzozowski also readily associates Ibsen with Nietzsche, cf. *Wczesne prace krytyczne,* 104.

25 Cf. Michalik, *Twórczość Ibsena,* 82f.

26 Brzozowski, *Kultura i życie,* 174f.

This idea was not new in Ibsen criticism as there were frequent claims that his protagonists came from forms of self-reflection and purely intellectual explorations, a certain "algebraism of thought."[27] Their primary role in the inner development of Ibsen's individuality was noted by Ortwin,[28] while Feldman underscored that the author's late plays occur "only in the realm of the soul: all characters only signify the states of the artist's soul; […] here, the material body is only an appearance, and the symbolized experience of the soul is everything."[29] In a side remark to his discussion of *Rosmersholm*, Feldman claims that "Ibsen aimed to separate man from the directness of any life, to bridle all forces of nature, and throw them at the spirit's feet."[30] Brzozowski does not explore such critical views or set them against the concrete text; instead, he uses them as an argument in constructing his philosophy of action and labor. First of all, he places Ibsen among those whose thought and art are occupied with the mind and are thus solely contented with theatrical gestures that do not live up to action. This finally undermines Ibsen's individualism, which, as Brzozowski sees it, always remains sentimental and contemplative so that it never becomes heroic nor tragic.

Aphoristic and poetically phrased, the propositions of the dialogue were discursively expanded and specified in the essay "Styl Ibsena." Brzozowski's distinction between dream and work is reformulated as he revises and generalizes both categories under the evaluative framework of a confrontation of idealism and tragicality.[31] For the first time Brzozowski sketches a fuller portrait of Ibsen as someone representing his whole generation, a generation that realized its worldview in the playwright's style. Connecting Ibsen with his era allows Brzozowski to portray a characteristic attitude toward the world termed "Ibsen's style" that serves as an inspiration for his contemporaries. In the essay, Ibsen plays the role of "one of the—devilishly rare—arguments that allow us to believe in the spiritual dignity of modern man" (jednej z racji – diabelnie nielicznych – pozwalających wierzyć w godność duchową nowoczesnego człowieka).[32] Yet, at the same time he has already become "one of our most cherished lies"

27 Michalik, *Twórczość Ibsena,* 122.

28 Cf.: Ostap Ortwin, "Ibsen w rozwoju dramatu" [Ibsen in the development of drama], in *O Wyspiańskim i dramacie,* ed. Jadwiga Czachowska (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1969) (Ortwin's article was first published in 1900).

29 Quoted from: Michalik, *Twórczość Ibsena*, 131.

30 Ibid., 90.

31 This essay is discussed from a comparative perspective (Brzozowski–Ortwin) by Michał Głowiński, "Deux critiques littéraires sur Ibsen (Ortwin – Brzozowski)."

32 Brzozowski, *Kultura i życie*, 211.

(jednym z najdroższych kłamstw naszych). His plays have helped the whole generation to maintain certain illusions: "Ibsen – to nasza legenda o wewnętrznej wolności człowieka, to baśń o jaźni oczyszczającej się przez duchowy samosąd w filisterskim ciele"[33] (Ibsen is our legend of man's inner liberty, the fairy tale of the "I" that purges itself through a spiritual trial against oneself in a philistine body). Thus, Ibsen turns into a symbol of absolute individualism—the shielding of the self against the world in order to safeguard one's inner spiritual freedom. According to Brzozowski, his own generation always heard the same call in Ibsen's plays, namely to be, and be faithful to, oneself as well as to one's own truth. However, the fascination with this seemingly radical call turned out to be merely a substitute for life, a dangerous form of idealism. This leads to the inevitable mind-body split that goes so far as to disregard the body altogether; it also makes the structural basis for "Nad grobem Ibsena" in that "[t]he body is the organ of our relations with the universe; in thought we are only communicating with ourselves" (Ciało jest organem naszych stosunków z wszechświatem; myślą obcujemy tylko sami ze sobą).[34] Ibsen's protagonists nurture their dreams of inner freedom and are attuned to their "beautiful souls," yet they are deaf to the calls of the external world and thus doomed to "their souls becoming rotten." He concludes the essay by explaining how Ibsen's characters remain forever "sub-tragic"[35] because they are devoid of their bodies. Tragic destruction cannot result from the fulfillment of one's self in the framework of individualistic spiritualism; it can only follow from the transcendence of one's self, which Brzozowski defines as labor. After 1906, he no longer doubted that Ibsen's self did not know this kind of labor and thus could not long for it in the first place.

Act Three: Ibsen in *Legenda Młodej Polski*

As Głowiński correctly notes on the capricious, paratactic narrative of *Legenda*, Ibsen first appears at random, momentarily becomes a lead character and then

33 Ibid. This conviction echoes Stanisław Przybyszewski's view of Ibsen. Cf. Stanisław Przybyszewski, *O dramacie i scenie* [On drama and scene] (Warszawa: Księgarnia Naukowa, 1905). Perhaps indeed it was the model of Ibsen reception proposed by Przybyszewski that influenced the young Brzozowski's views, which later petrified him as he was rethinking his old beliefs.

34 Brzozowski, *Kultura i życie*, 216.

35 Ibid., 216.

slips into the background as a generic example.[36] Brzozowski seems to be much more extreme in his evaluation of Ibsen in *Legenda* through stressing the barrenness of the playwright's relations with his generation. His Ibsen counts among those who are not able to go "beyond the limits of this historical phase, which brought about, which produced our entire psyche" (poza granice tego odłamu dziejów, który wysnuł, wyprządł całą naszą psychikę).[37] Through a confinement in himself, Ibsen becomes the representative of the modern mind; one that can merely be cultured but never creative since it turns "the result of historical labor" into "an individual adventure without any way out."[38] Thus, Ibsen is the exclusive symbol of ruined romanticism in *Legenda*. Unlike Adam Mickiewicz or Andrzej Towiański, he is unable to overcome the literary movement because he considers the problem of individuality "from the point of view of an individual who lost his individuality, or never did have one." ("z punktu widzenia jednostki, która indywidualność utraciła lub nie miała jej nigdy").[39] He becomes an example of someone who intentionally separates one's self-creating effort from one's corporeal and collective life. As well, he is someone with a self-alienating tendency, a tendency described by Brzozowski as "our psyche's striving for separation" (pęd naszej psychiki ku odosobnieniu).[40] The deliberate separation of self and community inevitably leads to one's disregard for the specific cultural and historical grounds that are essential for an individual. Ibsen can leave social life indefinitely, if—as Brzozowski has it—what counts is only "the freedom in the domain of the personal self" (swoboda w obrębie własnego ja).[41] However, a self that renounces reflection and work on the conditions that shape it ceases to be an individual. Under these circumstances, Ibsen's idea of faithfulness to oneself turns out to mean faithfulness to an illusion while "limitless individualism is nothing but poeticized slavery" (bezgraniczny indywidualizm jest tu tylko upo-

36 Michał Głowiński, "Wielka parataksa. O budowie dyskursu w *Legendzie Młodej Polski* Stanisława Brzozowskiego" [The great parataxis. On the construction of discourse in *The Legend of Young Poland*] *Pamiętnik Literacki* 4 (1991): 50.

37 Brzozowski, *Legenda Młodej Polski*, 16.

38 Ibid., 10.

39 Ibid., 188.

40 Ibid., 220.

41 Paradoxically, Brzozowski restores some accusations from the "social medics," a group of critics from the 1890s who regarded Ibsen as a fanatic individualist and deaf to national and social problems. An example of this would be: Władysław Bogusławski, "Skandynawizm w literaturze. Henryk Ibsen" [Scandinavism in literature. Henrik Ibsen], *Biblioteka Warszawska* 4 (1891).

etyzowaną niewolą).[42] This line of reasoning recurs several times in *Legenda* in order to transform Ibsen into the patron of living in the fiction of one's own self.

Based in part on his interpretation of *When We Dead Awaken*, Brzozowski intermittently tones down his criticism in order to stress that "Ibsen felt his inner contradictions himself. He felt that his severe self-examination was still a compromise […], that he confronts a full life with psychological dialectics" (Ibsen sam czuł wewnętrzną sprzeczność. Czuł, że jego surowy samosąd jest jeszcze kompromisem […] że pełnemu życiu przeciwstawia dialektykę psychologiczną).[43] Yet, he is ever more resolute in denying Ibsen's modernity because he reduces experience to the feelings and dilemmas of "a lonely psyche that is hovering somewhere above life" (samotnej i unoszącej się ponad życiem psychiki)[44] Ibsen's individualism is more of a ritualized or representative category (należy do kategorii obrzędowych, reprezentatywnych).[45] As well, Brzozowski contrasts Ibsen's individualism with Knut Hamsun who has what Ibsen mostly lacks in "the extension of creativity to the whole, so to say, the zoological domain of life, to the sphere in which the psyche is liberated from the very process of organic life" (rozszerzenie twórczości na cały rzecby można zoologiczny obszar życia, na całą tę dziedzinę, w której wydobywa się psychika z samego procesu organicznego życia).[46] Thus, in Hamsun it is not the psyche, not the soul, but the body that becomes the *principium individuationis*.

The negative portrait of Ibsen concludes with the charge that his works are only serious, and contrary to this seriousness, Brzozowski states:

Humor jest postawą duchową, pozwalającą nam myśleć o samych sobie nie w kategoriach słuszności, lecz tworzącego się życia. […] Wyprowadza on nas poza szranki podmiotowości – a jednocześnie nie zamraża w żadnym gotowym, wykrystalizowanym już przedmiocie.[47]

Humor is the spiritual attitude that permits us to think about ourselves not in terms of rightness but in terms of life creating itself. […] It guides us beyond the limits of our subjectivity—and at the same time it does not freeze us in any ready-made, crystallized object.

42 Brzozowski, *Legenda Młodej Polski,* 220.

43 Ibid. 216f.

44 Ibid., 220.

45 Ibid., 243.

46 Ibid., 245.

47 Ibid., 294.

Brzozowski cannot hear Ibsen's laughter; he only sees him as a stern fanatic. Again, the sentimentally contemplative Ibsen is contrasted with another author, namely Robert Louis Stevenson. According to Brzozowski, sometimes

> […] wobec uśmiechniętej mądrości tego Szkota rozpływa się cała tragiczna mgła otaczająca postacie Ibsena, że ponad nimi wszystkimi: Rosmerem, Borkmanem, rzeźbiarzem z epilogu – dźwięczy oceaniczny śmiech tego pisarza"[48]

> […] in comparison to the humorous wisdom of the Scotsman [Stevenson], the whole tragic fog that is surrounding Ibsen's characters clears and the oceanic laughter of this writer resonates over all of them: Rosmer, Borkman, and the sculptor of the epilogue.

At the same time, Brzozowski makes it clear that Stevenson's writing does not really come from his talent but rather from the superiority of British culture.[49] The aim of this brief comparison of Ibsen and Stevenson is to confirm, yet again, Brzozowski's fundamental assertion, which recurs in *Legenda* in many varieties: "the artist's form is always a reflection of the state of values in a specific nation" (forma artysty odbija zawsze stan wartości w narodzie[50]).

Although the remarks and observations on Ibsen are scattered throughout *Legenda*, they still constitute a coherent image that becomes a gradually solidifying mask. Brzozowski wants to show that Ibsen is dangerous since he affirms the audience's impuissance and encourages each person to retreat inside him or herself. It is as though, in this case, Brzozowski forgot that it is up to the reader to determine what the text produces for the reader.

Performative Dialogue or Theatrical Monologue?

Jan Władysław Dawid's often-quoted view is relevant to Brzozowski's statements on Ibsen: "Coming into contact with a new system of thought, Brzozowski did not care to familiarize himself with it thoroughly and present it as it was; he treated it as a point of departure, as a thread on which he could weave out his own dealings."[51] These reflections on Ibsen formed a kind of autobiographical play in three acts. Ibsen is supposed to be a partner for discussion or a dialogue, yet does he appear on the stage of this "drama"? In the first act we only get his

48 Ibid., 296.

49 Ibid., 297.

50 Ibid., 373.

51 Jan Władysław Dawid, *Psychologia religii* [Psychology of religion] (Warszawa: "Nasza Księgarnia", 1933), 104.

after-image, for Brzozowski's interpretation contains few references to Ibsen's work, yet there are still pre-processed echoes of criticism in it. We cannot hear Ibsen's voice. In the second act, the after-image disappears and there is only Ibsen's corpse, stiff in his mask of the "ruins of romanticism," and, to make it worse, only playing an extra. It is impossible to recognize Ibsen behind the mask. Brzozowski stays center stage in act three to continue—without the doubts that had appeared in the previous acts—his monologue in which he sticks a final dagger in Ibsen's body to prevent him from haunting the living, from producing the feeling of powerlessness in those who take him seriously.

Ibsen cannot be present in this autobiographical play because it seems that, despite writing about him, Brzozowski does not read him and seems to only rely on his memory.[52] Ibsen's own words do not serve as a vantage point for Brzozowski. He creates his own Ibsen using labels and critical formulas taken from the existing criticism on the playwright. Out of this material he forms the portrait of an Ibsen who is characteristic of Young Poland. Indeed, when translated into Brzozowski's critical thought, much of these empty interpretative slogans are gradually filled with meaning. Moreover, this method seems quite fitting for Brzozowski's aim. After all, Brzozowski repeatedly underscores that he is interested in Ibsen as a legend for himself personally as well as for his generation. Thus, the negative portrait that was sketched in several takes in *Legenda* was on the one hand made and shaped by Scandinavian or Germanic culture, while on the other, the Ibsen as seen by Young Poland. Hence, it comes as no surprise that the contours of this image of Ibsen were largely determined by the preexisting, already-used terminology. By taking over the language that described Ibsen, Brzozowski also appropriates the public's conception of the playwright so that he can present Ibsen's impact on the culture of Young Poland by deconstructing the "Ibsenizing" tendency of the age as a form of group thinking. At the same time, however, he cements Ibsen's image in this form and thus makes it a part of his legend.

In refraining from a dialogue with Ibsen in *Legenda*, Brzozowski prevents Ibsen's texts from really coming to life. His criticism of Ibsen, read as an autobiographical drama with Ibsen as a foil, seems to be more of a spectacle than a performance. It is a spectacle that did have an effect on the reader thanks to its well paced suspense and several perfectly played out climaxes, however, there are no traces of performative reading or writing. Although Brzozowski does

52 Although perhaps he would have liked to: his letters from Nervi contain repeated pleas for a delivery of Ibsen's collected works dating back to 1906. When in late autumn 1910 he finally received several volumes, he complained about still not having the particular texts that he wanted most.

consider Ibsen's works several times at different stages of his intellectual development, they never qualified for the "reading between texts," which Andrzej Zawadzki understood as Brzozowski's hermeneutical practice.[53] Hence, coming back to Ibsen Brzozowski is not interested in the creative dispersion of discovered or constructed meanings, on the contrary, he aims at specifying or hyperbolizing the already established horizon of a legend whose substance is constituted by Ibsen's not-quite-read dramas. Writing from memory, Brzozowski does not allow these dramas to resonate within himself so that only his own preconceived thoughts about their author work. Thus, it is difficult to share Głowiński's view that Brzozowski reads Ibsen using a hermeneutic strategy.[54] In *Legenda*, he is rather a teacher-cum-pamphleteer.

In Brzozowski's critical autobiographical play, Ibsen appears as an afterimage and corpse and was thus cast in a clearly defined role. This Ibsen is a purely nineteenth-century product and Brzozowski uses him to explain how to overcome those times. To a certain extent, Brzozowski mimics the early-twentieth-century critics who make Ibsen seem antiquated in order to avoid giving his works thorough consideration. In his discussion of the allures and threats of Ibsenizing, Brzozowski is much more consistent and precise than the rest of the Young Poland Ibsen interpreters. Like the other critics of his time, Brzozowski fails to really understand Ibsen's work, but, in a way, he values the somewhat out-of-date Ibsen. Brzozowski makes the playwright a gauge to the crisis of culture, yet this aspect is limited because it exhausts itself in idealistic dreams that offer no solutions for this crisis. For this reason, Brzozowski questions the "real-life productivity" (życiowa wydajność)[55] of Ibsen's plays. Ibsen may have indeed accurately represented nineteenth-century dilemmas and anxieties, but he was incapable of transgressing them creatively and this results in him offering nothing new in a creative sense. In other words, Ibsen's plays lack the power to bring forth reality and due to the sterile nature of his diagnosis of the world as seen by Brzozowski, the features of his texts that were formerly assessed positively for their incompleteness and openness later become symptoms of powerlessness and stupor.

53 Andrzej Zawadzki, "'Między tekstem czytać'. Kilka uwag o hermeneutyce Stanisława Brzozowskiego" ["Reading in between the text." Some remarks on Stanisław Brzozowski's hermeneutics], in *Stanisław Brzozowski – (ko)repetycje*, vol. 2, ed. Tomasz Mizerkiewicz, Andrzej Skrendo, and Krzysztof Uniłowski (Katowice: FA-art. 2013), 92f.

54 Głowiński, "Wielka parataksa," 66.

55 Brzozowski, *Legenda Młodej Polski*, 23.

In order to see if Ibsen could be read as a twentieth-century author, one would have to pose new questions about his plays rather than limit oneself to the old repertoire of often-repeated questions. As a relic of romanticism, i.e., a relic of the nineteenth century, Ibsen has nothing interesting to say to Brzozowski. Thus, it is no wonder that Brzozowski's utterances on this subject are invariably monologic and increasingly unambiguous in character. Does Brzozowski lose much from not listening to Ibsen? After all, the twentieth-century Ibsen inspired the likes of Sigmund Freud, Rainer Maria Rilke, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and many others. What could Brzozowski have talked about with Ibsen if he had chosen a performative dialogue over a one-sided, domineering monologue? We should recall that Brzozowski, before his death, recommended *Peer Gynt* to his brother and also how he waited with impatience, first in Nervi and then in Florence, for the delivery of Ibsen's plays. It is as though he felt that he had not fully read Ibsen.

If this were the case, Brzozowski was right. Had he read Ibsen more carefully, he could have found a partner that would have challenged his portrayal of absolute individualism because Ibsen repeatedly questioned this concept. Brzozowski, following Przybyszewski, reduced Ibsen's ideas to "being true to oneself," which actually constituted only one stage in the development of Ibsen's thinking on the condition of modern man and the status of human subjectivity. In the majority of the plays written after *Rosmersholm* (a text that was undeservingly disregarded by Brzozowski), Ibsen's characters mostly differ in their approach to identity, which is experienced more often as decentralized, processual, or incomplete, identity understood as a self-transforming practice.

Also, Ibsen always considered the social dimension of individual existence. As early as in *Peer Gynt*, he stressed the negative effects of an absolutization of the individual's autonomy and freedom and searched for a way out of the vicious circle of individualism's isolating factors. One of the key themes of the play was the relational nature of subjectivity. It was also one of Ibsen's reasons for choosing theater as a privileged form of artistic creation that enabled him to present subjectivity as a result of interpersonal bonds, and language as an "an organ of human living-together" (organ ludzkiego współżycia)[56]—to cite an expression from *Legenda*, which is fitting for Ibsen's plays. Even when they look for a private language or try to tear away from a network of relations, Ibsen's protagonists confirm that this network is constitutive for human identity. Brzozowski and Ibsen could have also been brought together by their similar approach to the duties of art. After all, they both shared a deep conviction that art is meaningful only if it is critical and has an impact on the world; they were as

56 Ibid., 86f.

well averse to any alienating forms of artistic creation. This theme recurs in many of Ibsen's plays and it is a central subject in his later works. This is why in the second half of the twentieth century Ibsen influenced critical theatre in Germany and Asia, but in Poland the critical potential of his plays still remains unused.

Thus, it seems that at the beginning of the twentieth century, it was none other than Brzozowski who would have been in a position to undertake a significant dialogue with Ibsen by introducing the Ibsen of the twentieth century to Polish culture and it is even more a pity that Brzozowski's conversation with the playwright never took place.

Translated by Zofia Ziemann

WORKS CITED

Bogusławski, Władysław. "Skandynawizm w literaturze. Henryk Ibsen." *Biblioteka Warszawska* 4 (1891): 553–605.

Dawid, Jan Władysław. *Psychologia religii.* Warszawa: "Nasza Księgarnia", 1933.

Flach, Józef. "Listy Ibsena do Brandesa." *Czas* 201 (1904): 1–2.

Głowiński, Michał. "Deux critiques littéraires sur Ibsen (Ortwin – Brzozowski)." In *Swedish-Polish Literary Contacts*, edited by Nils Åke Nilsson, 61–72. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1979.

—. "Wielka parataksa. O budowie dyskursu w *Legendzie Młodej Polski* Stanisława Brzozowskiego." *Pamiętnik Literacki* 4 (1991): 43–70.

Mencwel, Andrzej. *Stanisław Brzozowski: postawa krytyczna: wiek XX*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Krytyki Politycznej, 2014.

Merwin, Bertold [pen name of Baruch Menkes]. "Listy Ibsena." *Prawda* 49 (1904): 585.

Michalik, Jan. *Twórczość Ibsena w sądach krytyki polskiej 1875–1906*. Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1971.

Nycz, Ryszard. "Wywoływanie świata. Zadania krytyki i sztuki w pisarstwie filozoficznym Stanisława Brzozowskiego." *Język modernizmu. Prolegomena historycznoliterackie*, 123–161. Wrocław: Fundacja na Rzecz Nauki Polskiej, 1997.

Ortwin, Ostap. "Ibsen w rozwoju dramatu." *O Wyspiańskim i dramacie*, edited by Jadwiga Czachowska, 55–74. Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1969.

Pieniążek, Paweł. *Brzozowski: wokół kultury – inspiracje nietzscheańskie.* Warszawa: Wydawnictwo IFiS PAN, 2004.

Popiel, Magdalena. "Brzozowski – Wyspiański. Dwie formuły 'pathosu wyjątkowości'." In *Konstelacje Stanisława Brzozowskiego,* edited by Urszula Kowalczuk et al., 243–253. Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2012.

Przybyszewski, Stanisław. *O dramacie i scenie.* Warszawa: Księgarnia Naukowa, 1905

Zawadzki, Andrzej. "'Między tekstem czytać'. Kilka uwag o hermeneutyce Stanisława Brzozowskiego." In *Stanisław Brzozowski – (ko)repetycje*, vol. 2, edited by Tomasz Mizerkiewicz, Andrzej Skrendo, and Krzysztof Uniłowski, 87–97. Katowice: FA-art, 2013.

Stanisław Brzozowski and *Die Neue Zeit*

Gábor Gángó

Stanisław Brzozowski's contribution to *Die Neue Zeit* (The New Times), "Der Geschichtsmaterialismus als Kulturphilosophie: Ein philosophisches Programm" (Historical Materialism as Philosophy of Culture: A Philosophical Project), has long been known to scholars.[1] The original Polish version, which was published in *Przegląd Społeczny* (Social Review) and in Brzozowski's book *Idee* (Ideas), has been subject to intensive analysis. In this paper, I will argue that although the German version of the article does not considerably enrich Brzozowski's work from a strictly thematic point of view, it cannot be dismissed as a re-issue either. The circumstances of its publication in *Die Neue Zeit*, the theoretical journal of the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD), do help us to understand Brzozowski's intellectual and political dilemmas, especially in regards to his personal relationship with German and Polish Social Democracy between the Russian Revolution of 1905 and the outbreak of the "Brzozowski affair" in early 1908, when he abruptly abandoned all efforts to gain an international reputation. Thus, this article challenges the commonly held view on the lamentable ignorance of Brzozowski outside of Polish literature through the contextual reconstruction of the story of his sole appearance in the most important forum of German Social Democracy.[2]

1 Andrzej Walicki, *Stanisław Brzozowski – drogi myśli* [Stanisław Brzozowski—paths of thought] (Kraków: Universitas, 2011), 124; 365f., 405; Holger Politt, *Stanisław Brzozowski: Hoffnung wider die dunkle Zeit* [Stanisław Brzozowski: Hope Against Dark Time] (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1996), 155.

2 Concerning Brzozowski's international reputation, it must be noted that his novel, *Płomienie* [Flames], was published posthumously by Bong Verlag in 1920 in a German translation, *Flammen*. Richard Bong (1853–1935) was a woodcut printmaker in Berlin who founded his publishing house in 1891 (Frank C. Kempe. "Galerie Saxo-

Die Neue Zeit: A Forum for Marxist Theory and Polish Social Democracy

At the time of Brzozowski's interest in the journal, *Die Neue Zeit* was the main organ for the international Social Democratic movement,[3] which remained from its very beginning under the editorial management of Karl Kautsky until 1917.[4] The profile of the journal was revamped several times with its main profile being the broadening of sociology as scientific support for the routine struggle in the

nica," http://www.saxonia.com/cgi-bin/dynfs.pl?Kuenstler_liste=/galerie/008619.htm). Besides art books, he also published books by and on Richard Wagner, William Shakespeare, and others. Leon Richter, Brzozowski's translator, also translated Władysław Stanisław Reymont's novel *Wampir* (The Vampire), which came out in 1914. Further research about the reception of *Flammen* in the interwar German and East European Zionist youth movements is still missing in Brzozowski scholarship, although significant contributions are available for scholars speaking Hebrew (cf. Ofer Nordheimer-Nur, "Die anarchistische Ästhetik der Jugendbewegung 'HaShomer HaZa'ir' in den 1920er Jahren und das Tragische in ihrer Weltanschauung," in *Deutsch-Jüdische Jugendliche im "Zeitalter der Jugend"*, ed. Yotam Hotam (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009), 67f.; concerning Matityahu Mintz's works on the history of Hashomer Hatzair in Poland, see Aharon Oppenheimer, "Matityahu Mintz at 80," in *SHVUT. Studies in Russian and East European Jewish History and Culture* No. 11 (27) 2002–2003. *Matityahu Mintz Jubilee Volume*, ed. Benjamin Pinkus (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 2004), 11. According to Yosef Gorny's summarizing account, "the Marxism of Hashomer Hatzair was diluted with the national socialist ideals of Brzozowski" (Josef Gorny, "New man's land," review of *'Ha'adam Hahadash' Shel Hamahapekha Hatzionit: Hashomer Hatzair Veshorshav Ha'eropayim* [The 'New Man' of the Zionist revolution: Hashomer Hatzair and its European roots], by Rina Peled, *Haaretz*, November 15, 2002. http://www.haaretz.com/new-man-s-land-1.28337).

3 Brigitte Emig, Max Schwarz, and Rüdiger Zimmermann, *Literatur für eine neue Wirklichkeit. Bibliographie und Geschichte des Verlags J.H.W. Dietz Nachf. 1881 bis 1981* [Literature for a new reality: bibliography and history of the publishing house J.H.W. Dietz Nachf. 1881–1981] (Berlin: Dietz, 1981), 85.

4 Angela Graf, *J.H.W. Dietz 1843–1922. Verleger der Sozialdemokratie* [J.H.W. Dietz 1843–1922: publisher of Social Democracy] (Bonn: Verlag von J.H.W. Dietz Nachfolger, 1998), 96–102; Till Schelz-Brandenburg, introduction to *Die Neue Zeit*, Online-Edition der Bibliothek der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, http://library.fes.de/nz/nz-intro.html

labor movement. It encompassed such themes as the women question, colonization, the living conditions of the working class, modernization, discoveries in natural sciences and technology, healthcare, industry and capitalism, Russia, contemporary naturalistic and socially engaged novels, the economy, alcoholism, prostitution, and periodical overviews of the workers' movement in various European countries, including the Polish movement as part of or connected to the Russian, German, and Austrian Social Democracy.

After *Die Neue Zeit* became increasingly involved in the fate of German Social Democracy, it equally grew more open to the application of theoretical issues. When Brzozowski's study was published, the journal was a general philosophical forum of the Left, so they included a number of authors who contributed but did not belong to the core group of contributors to the journal. Despite this, Brzozowski was the only one audacious enough to challenge the orthodox interpretation of historical materialism.

After 1890, *Die Neue Zeit* became an important forum for Polish Social Democracy as Polish authors and subjects concerned with it started to appear regularly; articles from the journal were translated for the Polish socialists as well.[5] These articles generally reported on the situation of socialism in Poland for the labor movements in Germany, Russia, and Austria. Such Polish authors from around the turn of the century included Kazimierz Kelles-Krauz, who discussed theoretical issues from a Polish perspective, and Salomea Perlmutter, who wrote articles for the journal and, along with this, a review of her dissertation was published as well.[6] Besides her articles, a letter she wrote to Kautsky that was sent along with her "Ein Beitrag zur Agrarfrage" (A Contribution to the Agrarian Question) also remains.[7]

Kautsky was moderately interested in Polish issues, at least as far as the problem of the Russian-Polish rivalry was concerned. He wrote two articles on Poland in his journal: "Finis Poloniae?" (The End of Poland?), which was pub-

5 For example: *Kwestja polska a ruch socjalistyczny. Zbiór artykułów o kwestji polskiej R. Luxemburg, K. Kautsky'ego, F. Mehringa, Parvusa i innych*, *z przedmową R. Luxemburg i uwagami wydawców oraz dodatkiem* [The Polish question and the socialist movement: a volume of studies on the Polish question by R. Luxemburg, K. Kautsky, F. Mehring, Parvus and others, with a foreword by R. Luxemburg, with Remarks by the publishers, and with an appendix] (Kraków: Rudolf Moszoro, 1905).

6 Dr. Salomea Perlmutter, "Tolstois Weltanschauung und ihre Entwicklung" (1902/1903 I); mzm. [M. Zetterbaum]: "Dr. Salomea Perlmutter, 'Karl Menger und die österreichische Schule der Nationalökonomie'" (1902/1903 I); Dr. Salomea Perlmutter, "Ein Beitrag zur Agrarfrage" (1904/1905 II).

7 International Institute of Social History. Karl Kautsky Papers. D XVIII 486.

lished in 1895/1896, while "Das neue Polen" (The New Poland) in 1916/1917 reflected a more optimistic stance towards the reestablishment of the Polish state. The former article argued that St. Petersburg was a more likely revolutionary center than Warsaw so that the international proletariat did not have to stand up for the restitution of Poland. The Russian Revolution of 1905 seemed to fulfill Kautsky's most sanguine hopes[8] and he encouraged the Polish to integrate with democratic Russia.[9] Kautsky occupied a definitive pro-Russian stance and he regarded the never-ending skirmish between Polish and Russian Social Democrats as a mutually detrimental and regrettable event for the international workers' movement,[10] thus he wanted to keep his journal free from these bitter polemics.[11]

Although it had some discussion of Polish issues, *Die Neue Zeit* was primarily the forum where new trends in Marxism were discussed. From the very beginning, a number of renowned Marxists—many had been long-time activists in the labor movement—contributed to *Die Neue Zeit* with studies on historical materialism, which played a part in the evolution of Marxist thought. Brzozowski's article was consequently one text among many others, and to add more to its obscurity, the author was relatively unknown in the socialist movement.

8 As he wrote in 1905 to an unknown correspondent, "Die russische Revolution macht mich zehn Jahre jünger" (BArch NY 4055/11, fol. 60). I would also like to thank Grit Ulrich (Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde) for her help during my research in German State Archives.

9 Feliks Tych, "Karl Kautsky und die polnische Frage. Aus dem Polnischen von Jürgen Hensel" [Karl Kautsky and the Polish Question. Trans. Jürgen Hensel], in *Marxismus und Demokratie. Karl Kautskys Bedeutung in der sozialistischen Arbeiterbewegung*, ed. Jürgen Rojahn et al. (Frankfurt: Campus, 1992).

10 "Im übrigen kann ich Ihnen nicht verschweigen, daß, so weit ich in Basel über die rußischen Dinge sprechen konnte, ich überall die größte Erbitterung und Mißachtung gegen die rußischen und polnischen Genoßen wegen ihres ewigen Haders gefunden habe. […] Man hat in der Internationale keinen Respekt mehr vor Euch – dieß ‚Euch' gilt allen Fraktionen" (Karl Kautsky to Julian Marchlewski, Berlin-Friedenau, 9 December, 1912, BArch NY 4055/22Ü, fol. 14).

11 "Was ich anstrebe, ist von der N. Z. jede Diskussion russischer Streitpunkte fernzuhalten. […] Von diesem Standpunkt aus lehne ich jeden polemischen Artikel über russisch-polnische Streitpunkte ab, stamme er von rechts oder links. Ich mußte auch den Ihren ablehnen" (Karl Kautsky to Julian Marchlewski, Berlin-Friedenau, 13 December, 1912, BArch NY 4055/22Ü, fol. 16).

Brzozowski's "Der Geschichtsmaterialismus als Kulturphilosophie" and Its Journey to *Die Neue Zeit*

At least from the beginning of 1906, Brzozowski wanted to make himself known to the German-speaking world, so he turned to Salomea Perlmutter who later became his translator as well as his mediator for communicating with Kautsky.[12] First, he was thinking about a text entitled "Czy wracamy do Kanta?" (Back to Kant?), although there is nothing more that is known about this project.[13] Instead, Perlmutter translated two of his other articles into German and recommended them to *Die Neue Zeit* and to the Austrian Socialist review *Der Kampf* (The Struggle) respectively.[14] *Der Kampf* published his "Polnische Literatur in der Revolution" (Polish Literature in the Revolution) in January 1908.[15]

The Polish version of "Historical Materialism as a Philosophy of Culture" was published in February 1907 in *Przegląd Społeczny* and then was translated and sent to *Die Neue Zeit* by early April. In his commentary to Perlmutter, Brzozowski downplayed the significance of his manuscript and braced himself against Kautsky's rejection. He apologetically wrote to Perlmutter telling her to expect rejection, "The article was neither well-written nor new in its content. Whatever, I do not care about Kautsky's inevitable refusal. But it's a pity for your time" (Artykuł nie był ani dobrze napisany, any nowy w treści. Mniejsza o to zresztą: nie zmartwię się nieuchronną odmową Kautskiego. Szkoda tylko mi Waszego czasu).[16] He again wrote the same sentiments to the Buber family, "Sądzę, że Kautsky nie wydrukuje artykułu, i będzie miał słuszność"[17] (I assume that Kautsky is not going to publish the article, and he will be right to do so).

Brzozowski was probably pleasantly surprised when he received the news of the May 1907 publication of his article and he began formulating projects for further contributions to *Die Neue Zeit*. He considered writing on the topics of

12 For her biography, see Brzozowski, *Listy*, vol. 1, 107n1; Angelique Leszczawski-Schwerk, *"Die umkämpften Tore zur Gleichberechtigung:" Frauenbewegung in Galizien* (Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2014).

13 Stanisław Brzozowski to Salomea Perlmutter, Nervi, 7 February, 1906. Stanisław Brzozowski, *Listy*, vol. 1, 155.

14 Ibid., 159n10, 318, 321n1, 354.

15 Ibid., 338n14.

16 Stanisław Brzozowski to Salomea Perlmutter, Nervi, 10 April, 1907. Ibid., 319.

17 Stanisław Brzozowski to Wula and Rafał Buber, Nervi, around 10 April, 1907. Ibid., 325.

Machiavelli,[18] the "social foundations of Nietzscheanism," and "contemporary art."[19] His publication was a rite of passage to the working class, which he labeled as his belonging to an "inferior class" (minderwerthiger klasy).[20] It reveals a telling analogy of how he viewed the Poles as inferior compared to the Germans, referring to them as the "minderwerthige Nation" in his letter to Wula and Rafał Buber on 4 January 1906.[21]

Brzozowski's Polemic with Karl Kautsky's *Ethik und materialistische Auffassung*

In the initial Polish version, "Historical Materialism as Philosophy of Culture" was a creative effort to reinterpret some fundamental theses of historical materialism with a fearless confidence in the intellectual strength of Polish culture vis-à-vis the German Socialist mainstream; for its contemporary readership, the German translation must have given a very different impact. The reference to the orthodox Marxist interpretation of ethical issues in the first sentence of the article suggests that Brzozowski was specifically addressing Karl Kautsky. The beginning surprises the reader with its sharply polemical tone that invokes an "unpleasant" and "thoroughly non-philosophical custom" of using the word "Marxism" as a brand that is fit for all subject matter. As well, it mentions an example for an imaginary title of a book very similar to that of Karl Kautsky's entitled, *Ethics and the Materialist Concept of History*. Brzozowski writes,

In der sozialistischen wissenschaftlichen Literatur findet sich bisweilen die unangenehme und durchaus unphilosophische Gewohnheit, an allerhand Dinge den Marxismus einem Schilde gleich anzuhängen, das sich ab- und ankleben läßt: „Die Kunst vom marxistischen Standpunkt", „Die Ethik vom Gesichtspunkt des historischen Materialismus" usw.[22]

In socialist scientific literature one encounters from time to time the unphilosophical habit of attaching all sorts of things to Marxism as if it were a signpost where one could hang

18 Stanisław Brzozowski to Salomea Perlmutter, Nervi, 2–3 June, 1907. Ibid., 346.

19 "Czy dla Neue Zeit nie byłoby dobrze napisać: społeczne podstawy nietscheanizmu [!] lub raczej 'nowej sztuki'?," Stanisław Brzozowski to Salomea Perlmutter, Nervi, 7 June, 1907. Ibid., 354.

20 Stanisław Brzozowski to Salomea Perlmutter, Nervi, 7 June, 1907. Ibid., 353.

21 Stanisław Brzozowski to Wula and Rafał Buber, 4 January, 1906. Ibid., 109.

22 Stanislaus Brzozowski, "Der Geschichtsmaterialismus als Kulturphilosophie: Ein philosophisches Programm," *Die Neue Zeit* 25 (1906/1907), vol. 2, Heft 31: 153f.

something up or take it down: "Art from a Marxist standpoint," "Ethics from a Historical Materialist Perspective," and the like.

Accordingly, the critique of the usual treatment of questions of ethics and aesthetics in Marxist literature seems to be directed at Karl Kautsky's book, which had a Polish translation.[23]

In his book, Kautsky intended to elucidate the difference between Kantian and historical materialist ethics to prove that Kant's position was very far from a Socialist one,[24] and thus, Kautsky separated ethics from historical materialism.[25] Brzozowski, in contrast to Kautsky, argues that there is an essential relation between the cultural superstructure and its economic base.[26] Although he did agree with Kautsky that the ethical ideal had always been and would always remain in the hands of the bourgeoisie,[27] he tried to formulate another solution to this problem by provocatively distinguishing the truth of political socialism with that of philosophical Marxism. While political socialism uses Marxism as its instrument in the struggle for changing society's economic basis, philosophical Marxism is concerned with the method of approaching the superstructure in a Hegelian approach:

Denn der Geschichtsmaterialismus ist nichts anderes als die Methode, alles zu erforschen, was das Werk der Menschheit ist, also auch die Moral, das Recht, die Wissenschaft und die Kunst […]. Der Geschichtsmaterialismus ist das Selbstbewußtsein der geschichtlichen Schöpfungskraft, die aus sich Kunst und Literatur, Wissenschaft, Recht, Moral, Religion

23 Karol Kautsky, *Etyka w świetle materjalistycznego pojmowania historji. Szkic* [Ethics in the light of a materialist conception of history. A sketch], trans. A. Warski (Warszawa: "Bibljoteka naukowa" – Wyd. St. Kucharskiego, 1906). Holger Politt attributes the translation to Jan Władysław Dawid. Politt, *Stanisław Brzozowski*, 47n27.

24 Karl Kautsky, *Ethik und materialistische Geschichtsauffassung* (Stuttgart: J. H. W. Dietz Nachf., 1906), vii, 34.

25 "Auch die Sozialdemokratie als Organisation des Proletariats in seinem *Klassenkampf* kann das sittliche Ideal, kann die sittliche Empörung gegen Ausbeutung und Klassenherrschaft nicht entbehren. Aber das Ideal hat nichts zu suchen im *wissenschaftlichen* Sozialismus, der wissenschaftlichen Erforschung der Entwicklungs- und Bewegungsgesetze des gesellschaftlichen Organismus zum Zwecke des Erkennens der *notwendigen* Tendenzen und Ziele des proletarischen Klassenkampfes. […] Die Wissenschaft steht über der Ethik, ihre Resultate sind ebensowenig sittlich oder unsittlich, als die Notwendigkeit sittlich oder unsittlich ist." Kautsky, *Ethik*, 141f.

26 Brzozowski, "Der Geschichtsmaterialismus als Kulturphilosophie," 154.

27 Kautsky, *Ethik*, 135f.

und Sozialwirtschaft gebärt […]. [D]er Geschichtsmaterialismus zeigt uns die Geschichte der Menschheit und deren Kultur, als ihr eigenes selbst geschaffenes Werk und ihre Verantwortlichkeit.[28]

Historical materialism is nothing else than the method to explore everything that is the work of man, that means morals, right, science, and art […]. Historical materialism is the self-consciousness of the historical creative force issued from art, literature, science, right, morals, religion, and social economy […]. Historical materialism shows us the history of mankind and its culture as a self-created work and its responsibility.

By establishing an analogy between historical materialism and cultural creation on the one hand and natural sciences and technical praxis and discoveries on the other,[29] Brzozowski modifies Kautsky's approach to the relationship between technical progress and historical materialism.[30] Brzozowski also argues with Kautsky's interpretation of moral ideals, saying that

Moral, Ästhetik, Kunst, Philosophie, Geschichtsauffassung und Kultur bleiben noch immer unter dem überwiegenden Einfluß der Autoritäten und Ideale, welche der ritterlich-priesterliche Lebens- und Denktypus ausgearbeitet hat. Dieser Typus hatte seine inneren Gegensätze und Zerrissenheiten; der Priester kämpfte hier mit dem Ritter. Und heute noch kämpfen in unseren Köpfen diese Gespenster, die Stelle moderner Kämpfe vertretend. Die Probleme treten eine lange Zeit in historischen, anachronistischen Masken auf, bevor sie in ihrer wahren, nackten Gestalt auftreten.[31]

Morality, aesthetics, art, philosophy, and concepts of history and culture still remain under the predominant influence of authorities and ideals that were produced by the chivalric and priestly way of living and thinking. It has always had its inner contradictions and disunities; the priest always struggled against the knight. Even today these specters still

28 Brzozowski, "Der Geschichtsmaterialismus als Kulturphilosophie," 154, 155.

29 "Der Geschichtsmaterialismus ist das im Verhältnis zur kulturellen und historischen Schaffungskraft, was die theoretische Wissenschaft gegenüber der technischen Praxis und der Erfindungskraft." Brzozowski, "Der Geschichtsmaterialismus als Kulturphilosophie," 155.

30 "Kein Zweifel, es besteht eine Wechselwirkung zwischen der Ökonomie und ihrem geistigen Überbau – Moral, Religion, Recht, Kunst usw. –: von dem geistigen Wirken des Erfindens reden wir hier nicht, es gehört zur Technik, in der ja der Geist auch eine Rolle spielt, neben dem Werkzeug; die Technik ist die bewußte Erfindung und Anwendung von Werkzeugen durch den denkenden Menschen" (Kautsky, *Ethik,* 128).

31 Brzozowski, "Der Geschichtsmaterialismus als Kulturphilosophie," 159.

fight in our heads, replacing modern struggles. Problems tend to appear for a long time in historical and anachronistic masks, before appearing in their real, naked shape.

A Further Effort to Strengthen Contacts: Brzozowski's Letter to Karl Kautsky

Once Brzozowski received his copy of *Die Neue Zeit*, he intended to continue his success; the very next day, on 8 June 1907, he wrote the following letter to Karl Kautsky:

Hochgeehrter Genosse!
Gestern habe ich die N. der Neuen Zeit erhalten, wo mein Artikel, den meine gute Freundin Genossin dr. Salomea Perlmutter so gütig war zu übersetzen und Ihnen übersenden. Es freut mich sehr, dass meine Arbeit so günstig von Ihnen beurtheilt war, und lasse mir hoffen dass auch andere meine Beiträge werden von Zeit zu Zeit auf Spalten Neuer Zeit Platz für sich finden[.] Wenn ich aber jetzt mir erlaube Ihnen mit meinem in schlecht deutschen geschriebenen Brief Zeit zu verderben, dann thue ich es um Ihre Aufmerksamkeit auf eine Kleinigkeit zu lenken, die vielleicht einer Besprechung und Abfertigung in Neuer Zeit nicht unwerth ist. In dem neuen Buch von Arturo Labriola uber die Pariser Komune, finde ich folgenden „geistreichen" Einfall über Karl Marx. Ich schreibe die Stelle buchstablich ab:
["]Ma il guidizio di Marx è soggetto a revisione. Marx non amò mai i suoi concorrenti socialistici, la qual cosa mentre teneva all'indiscutibile superiorità della sua mente sovrana, rivela in lui una inclinazione poco simpatico dello spirito[.] Successivamente egli si ruppe col Willich, col Weitling, col Proudhon, col Bakunine, col lo St. Mill, col Lassalle cuoi con tutto quanto d'un certo rilievo e d'una certa importanza produsse l'intelligenza socialista[.] *La sua intimità col'Engels resta certamente un enigma psicologico, messo in rilievo dalla circonstanza che i socialisti tedeschi hanno sempre evitato di pubblicare una biografia di Marx."*
1) Da notare: Marx era molto povero ed Engels molto ricco. Inoltre Engels lasciò eredi della sua fortuna proprio le figlie le di Marx. Arturo Labriola. La "commune" di Parigi. s. 71–72.
Genosse Labriola hat überhaupt sein Buch mit forcirter Originalität verdorben. Er will partout Entdeckungen machen obgleich alle allgemeinen Gesichtspunkte seines neuesten wie früheren Buches vom Georg Sorel stammen. Ich glaube aber dass hier hat seine Originalitätssucht jede Grenzen passiert[.] Wenn ich Ihnen geehrter Genosse nicht unerlaubt andringend scheinen werde, so werde ich sie noch mit einer persönlichen Bitte belastigen. Ich arbeite an einem kleinen Werk über die Philosophie von Karl Marx[.] Leider muss ich Gesundheit wegen in schlimmsten Bücherbedingungen arbeiten[.] So, habe ich bisher

keine Möglichkeit gefunden mir Aufsatz von Marx über Max Stirner zu verschaffen[.] Die Buchhandlungen antworten mir, dass es nicht kauflich ist. Da es meine Arbeit, die erste in unserer armen theoretischen Literatur dem grossen Gegenstande sein wird, so vollkommen informiert sehen möchte, als es für mich möglich ist, so macht mir der Mangel dieser Marx'schen Arbeit grosse Sorge. Wenn Sie so freundlich gegen einen Unbekannten sein wollten und mir den Aufsatz zu leihen, würde ich Ihnen sehr dankbar sein und den Aufsatz in einer Woche wiederschicken. Natürlich ist es meinerseits fast eine Frechheit Ihre kostbare Zeit so in Anspruch zu nehmen und ich bin nicht so romantisch um zu sagen Marx'ens willen thun Sie das. Vielleicht werden Sie es aber meiner polnischen Leser willen es thun und damit unendlich verpflichten Ihren Sie hoch verehrenden Genossen
Stanislaus Brzozowski
Nervi. pension Bismarck (Leider! sogar in Italien lebt man in seinem Zeichen)[32]

Highly esteemed comrade!
Yesterday I received the copy of *Die Neue Zeit* where my article is published which my good friend comrade Dr. Salomea Perlmutter had the kindness to translate and send to you. I am glad that my work was judged so benevolently by you and I hope that other of my contributions will from time to time appear in the columns of *Die Neue Zeit*. If I now permit myself to spoil your time with my letter written in bad German, then I do it in order to point your attention to a detail which maybe is not unworthy of a review and discussion in *Die Neue Zeit*. In Arturo Labriola's new book about the Paris Commune I found the following "witty" idea about Karl Marx. I copy the passage literally:
"However, Marx's judgment is put into question. Marx never loved his socialist rivals, the reason of which is the undisputed superiority of his sovereign and an unpleasant spiritual penchant. Successively he broke with Willich, with Weitling, with Proudhon, with Bakunin, with St. Mill, with Lassalle, and with everything produced by the socialist intelligentsia that was of a certain importance and certain renown. *His intimacy with Engels will surely remain a psychological mystery, still increased in importance by the fact that the German socialists have always avoided publishing a biography of Marx."*
1) Note: Marx was very poor and Engels very rich. Moreover, Engels made Marx's daughters heirs of his fortune. Arturo Labriola. The Paris "Commune". Pp. 71–72.

32 Stanisław Brzozowski to Karl Kautsky, Nervi, 8 June, 1907. International Institute of Social History. Karl Kautsky Papers. D VI 714. Downloaded from: http://hdl.handle.net/10622/ARCH00712%2ED%20VI%20714?locatt=view:pdf. I am thankful to Dr. Till Schelz-Brandenburg for his help in finding the original copy and for his critical remarks on the first draft of this paper. The transcription of this letter in the edition of Brzozowski's correspondence is riddled with incorrect readings and thus unsuitable for scholarly use (Brzozowski, *Listy*, vol. 1, 375–377).

Comrade Labriola generally spoilt his book by excessive originality. He wants to make discoveries at any cost although all general ideas of his recent and his earlier book are indebted to Georges Sorel. I believe his obsession for originality has exceeded all limits here. Hoping not to seem impermissibly intrusive, I would like to bother you with a personal demand. I am working on a small piece on Karl Marx's philosophy. For now, I have not yet found an opportunity to purchase Marx's article about Max Stirner. The bookshops have been telling me that it cannot be bought. Since I would like to have my first work, the first in our poor theoretical literature devoted to this great topic, as well informed as possible for me, the lack of this work of Marx is a cause of great concern for me. If you could be so friendly to an unknown person and lend me the article, I would be very grateful and send the article back in a week's time. Of course, it is an impertinence from my part to take up your precious time and I am not so romantic to say that you will do this for the sake of Marx. Perhaps you will do it for the sake of my Polish readers and infinitely indebt your highly admiring you comrade
Stanislaus Brzozowski
Nervi. Pension Bismarck (Unfortunately! Even in Italy one lives in his sign)[33]

The letter's poor German probably did not create a favorable impression as Brzozowski colloquially addresses Kautsky and Arturo Labriola, a renowned mastermind of socialism, as comrades despite the fact that he had never met either of them. Even Perlmutter, who was herself well-known in the movement, addressed her letters to Kautsky quite formally. It was also a failure because Brzozowski, speaking mainly about himself, used a great number of expressions of submission to Kautsky; his reverence was in odd discrepancy with the oversized intellectual ego of the ambitious Brzozowski. Apparently, Brzozowski believed that Kautsky had a high opinion of his article and he subsequently vowed to send more. He then denounces Labriola for plagiarism and finally, he shares his idea for writing a groundbreaking work on Marx that would be a first "in our poor theoretical literature." He as well assures Kautsky of many more theoretical contributions on Marx and Marxism but also tries to borrow an article by Marx from him. Kautsky left this letter unanswered.

The tone of the letter is quite contrary to his sharply critical tone when Brzozowski wrote about German Social Democracy in February and April 1907.[34] It appears that the publication of his article in Germany affected him so strongly that he had a sudden urge to endorse the theoretical side of the German Social

33 As Brzozowski says himself, the letter is written in clumsy and faulty German language. The translation tries to render this style without reproducing the errors.

34 Stanisław Brzozowski to Wula and Rafał Buber, Nervi, 18 February 1907 and Nervi, beginning of April, 1907. Brzozowski, *Listy*, vol. 1, 307f. and 312–316.

Democratic movement. This gesture, however, was most likely insincere since he had already declared himself a non-Marxist (at least from an orthodox perspective) at the beginning of April 1907. Therefore, he must have written the article in question as an outsider, not as an engaged Social Democrat: "Sooner or later what is true must come to light, although I am not a Marxist and I do not possess a redemptive belief in the providence of a silent evolution of economic factors" (Prędzej czy później to, co jest prawdziwe, wydobędzie się, chociaż nie jestem marksistą i zbawiającej wiary w opatrzność milczącej ewolucji czynników ekonomicznych nie posiadam).[35]

In any case, once the article was published, Brzozowski thought that he was welcomed by the Social Democrats, so much so that he was thinking about going to Stuttgart for the 18–23 July Congress of the Socialist International (like his friend Buber).[36] Additionally, he considered sending another article to the review *Mouvement Socialiste* (Socialist Movement).[37] His rather poor opinion of the Germans and German Social Democrats had by no means changed after the publication of his article, but it turned even more bitter when he received no answer from Karl Kautsky. Around mid-November 1907 he wrote about *bestialità tedesca* (German bestiality) and vented his ambitiously destructive plans to criticize the position of the Stuttgart Congress and to prove in general that "German Social Democracy undeservedly occupies the leading position among the socialist organizations in the world" (socjaldemokracja niemiecka niezasłużenie zajmuje przodujące miejsce pośród organizacji socjalistycznych świata).[38]

Brzozowski's German Publication in the Context of the Polish Social Democratic Movement

Brzozowski's aim for the article's publication was not only to gain German readers but he also wanted to flaunt his success to his fellow Polish Social Dem-

35 Stanisław Brzozowski to Wula and Rafał Buber, Nervi, beginning of April 1907 Brzozowski, Ibid., 314f.

36 Walentyna Najdus, *SDKPiL a SDPRR 1908–1918 (Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania and the Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party 1908–1918)* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich – Wydawnictwo Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 1980), 133.

37 Stanisław Brzozowski to Wula and Rafał Buber, Nervi, the first ten days of July 1907. Brzozowski, *Listy*, vol. 1, 372f.

38 Stanisław Brzozowski to Wula and Rafał Buber, Florence, mid-November, 1907. Ibid., 394, 398n21.

ocrats (he had a complicated relationship with many of them). Although the article had already been printed in Polish, the fact that it was translated and published in German would raise Brzozowski's standing within Polish Social Democracy. Not only were Brzozowski's relations to Polish Social Democracy complicated,[39] the labor movement itself was in a precarious situation because Poland was partially controlled by the Austro-Hungarian Empire.[40] The labor movement in the German-occupied territories in Brzozowski's time consisted of the *Polska Partia Socjalistyczna zaboru pruskiego* (PPS zp), which had seceded from the German Socialist Party (SPD) in 1901, and the *Polska Partia Socjaldemokratyczna Galicji* (PPSD), which operated in Austro-Hungarian Galicia.

39 Stanisław Brzozowski to Rafał Buber, Florence, 7 Mai, 1908. Ibid., 502f.; Aleksander Kochański, *Socjaldemokracja Królestwa polskiego i Litwy w latach 1907–1910* [Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania in the Years 1907–1910] (Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1971), 274f.; Walicki, *Brzozowski*, 187–194.

40 Robert Blobaum, *Feliks Dzierżyński and the SDKPiL: A Study of the Origins of Polish Communism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984); Franciszek Hawranek, *Polska i niemiecka socjaldemokracja na Górnym Śląsku w latach 1890–1914* [Polish and German Social Democracy in Upper Silesia in the years 1890–1914] (Opole: Instytut Śląski, 1977); Kochański, *Socjaldemokracja*; Żenna Kormanowa, *Kwestia narodowa w rewolucji 1905-1907 roku* [The national question in the 1905–1907 revolution] (Warszawa: Wiedza Powszechna, 1958); Edmund Makowski, *Od socjaldemokracji do „solidarności". Organizacje robotnicze w Wielkopolsce w XIX i XX wieku (do roku 1990)* [From Social Democracy to "Solidarity": workers' organizations in Great Poland in the nineteenth and twentieth century (to the year 1990)] (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, 1991); Najdus, *SDKPiL a SDPRR*; Walentyna Najdus, *Polska Partia Socjalno-Demokratyczna Galicji i Śląska 1890–1919* [The Polish Social Democratic Party in Galicia and Silesia, 1890–1919] (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1983); Marian Orzechowski, *Rewolucja, socjalizm, tradycje. Przeszłość narodowa i tradycje w myśli politycznej rewolucyjnego nurtu polskiego ruchu robotniczego* [Revolution, socialism, traditions: national past and traditions in the political thought of the revolutionary current of the Polish workers' movement] (Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1978); Aleksandra Tymieniecka, ed., *Manifest zjazdu zjednoczeniowego SDKPiL i PPS-Lewicy* [The manifesto of the unification meeting of SDKPiL and Left-PPS] (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Lubelskie, 1918); Anna Żarnowska, *Geneza rozłamu w Polskiej Partii Socjalistycznej 1904–1906* [The origins of the schism in the Polish Socialist Party 1904–1906] (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1965).

Brzozowski associated more with the PPSD because Perlmutter and Buber, who were working in Jewish socialist organizations that were associated with the party on varying degrees, were his contacts in the party. Eventually, Brzozowski published some of his own material in the party's journal.[41] Brzozowski did have problems though with the two parties who later formed the Polish Communist Workers' Party in 1918. *Socjaldemokracja Królestwa Polskiego i Litwy* (SDKPiL) (Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania) operated in the Russian territories and they had a more orthodox platform, which meant that they were Brzozowski's enemies. Their newspaper, *Czerwony Sztandar* (The Red Banner), reported on Brzozowski's alleged espionage scandal in early 1908 partly because of his criticism of Rosa Luxemburg,[42] who was the party's most well-known member, and because of his opinion that Polish philosophy was greater than Marxism.[43] *Polska Partia Socjalistyczna* (PPS) (Polish Socialist Party), on the other hand, valued Poland over Marxism and thus PPS's position was closer to that of Brzozowski; they regarded him more as a rival than an enemy.[44] During the Russian Revolution of 1905, Brzozowski was a sympathizer of the PPS[45] and he took the position of an official journalist and theorist for the PPS the following year.[46] In the early 1930s *Robotnik* (The Worker), the party's paper, had a more lenient perspective of the Okhrana affair.[47] In any case, the publication in Germany did not improve Brzozowski's positions among Polish Social Democrats.

An Echo of Brzozowski's Article: Max Adler's "Das Formalpsychische im historischen Materialismus"

Kautsky decided to publish Brzozowski between the renowned Marxists, Rudolf Hilferding and Franz Mehring, which may reflect Kautsky's reservations about Brzozowski as the two were perfect foils for Brzozowski's unorthodox views. Brzozowski would never be published again in *Die Neue Zeit* after his letter to

41 Najdus, *Polska Partia*, 510.

42 See Stanisław Brzozowski to Wula and Rafał Buber, Nervi, 28 January, 1906, *Listy*, vol. 1, 136.

43 Walicki, *Brzozowski*, 51–53.

44 Mieczysław Sroka, introduction to Brzozowski's *Listy*, vol. 1, xxxi.

45 Żarnowska, *Geneza*, 34.

46 Walicki, *Brzozowski*, 194f.

47 Mieczysław Niedziałkowski, "Sprawa Stanisława Brzozowskiego [The Brzozowski affair]," *Robotnik* 265 (1933): [1].

Kautsky, but they did publish an article thoroughly refuting his position without mentioning his name. Soon after Brzozowski's article was published, Max Adler issued his "Das Formalpsychische im historischen Materialismus" (The Formal Psychical in Historical Materialism), which gave an overview to the theoretical approaches that were printed in *Die Neue Zeit*.[48] Adler gives some details on the international repercussions of Brzozowski's article. Unfortunately, scholarship has taken into account nearly exclusively Anatolii Lunacharskii's reflections on Brzozowski.[49]

48 "Das Grundproblem der materialistischen Geschichtsauffassung ist die Frage nach dem Verhältnis des Materiellen zum Ideellen, nach der Art der zwischen beiden bestehenden Beziehung. Es wäre jetzt, da diese Zeitschrift auf ein Vierteljahrhundert unermüdlicher Arbeit an den theoretischen Grundanschauungen des Sozialismus zurückblickt, nicht bloß naheliegend, sondern auch sehr lohnend, der Geschichte der Weiterbildung des historischen Materialismus an den Blättern der 'Neuen Zeit' nachzugeben. Hat sie doch mit vielen bedeutungsvollen Abhandlungen in diese Weiterentwicklung eingegriffen; ich erinnere nur an die Aufsätze von F. Mehring zu diesem Thema, an die Arbeiten von H. Cunow und Sadi Gunter, vor allem aber an die Artikelserie von K. Kautsky im XV. und von Max Zetterbaum im XXI. Jahrgang dieser Zeitschrift." Max Adler, "Das Formalpsychische im historischen Materialismus," *Die Neue Zeit* 26 (1907/1908), vol. 1, Heft 2: 52. Among others, Adler must have had the following articles in mind: Franz Mehring: "Zur historisch-materialistischen Methode" (1893/1894 II); Franz Mehring: "Vom 'wahren' Marxismus" and "Ein letztes Wort über den wahren Marxismus" (1899/1900 I); Heinrich Cunow: "Ein Kritiker der materialistischen Geschichtstheorie" (1898/1899 II); Sadi Gunter, "Die materialistische Geschichtsauffassung und der praktische Idealismus" (1897/1898 II); Karl Kautsky: "Darwinismus und Marxismus" (1894/1895 I); Karl Kautsky, "Die materialistische Geschichtsauffassung und der psychologische Antrieb" (1895/1896 II); Karl Kautsky: "Bernstein und die materialistische Geschichtsauffassung" (1898/1899 II); Max Zetterbaum: "Zur materialistischen Geschichtsauffassung" (1902/1903 II).

49 Anatol Łunaczarski, "Stanisław Brzozowski a materializm dziejowy" [Stanisław Brzozowski and historical materialism], *Pisma wybrane* [Selected writings], trans. Adam Galis et al., introduction and notes Leszek Turek (Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1969), vol. III, 853–64. For the monistic theory of history, see Walicki, *Brzozowski*, 44. For Brzozowski's acquaintance with Lunacharskii, see Stanisław Brzozowski to Salomea Perlmutter, Florence, beginning of December 1907; Brzozowski, *Listy*, vol. 1, 409. For Lunacharskii's critique, see Andrzej Walicki, "Stanisław Brzozowski i rosyjscy 'neomarksiści' początku XX wieku" [Stanisław Brzozowski and the Russian "neomarxists" of the early twentieth century], in *Wokół myśli Stanisława Brzozowskiego*, ed. Andrzej Walicki and Roman Zimand (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Litera-

From Adler's retrospective account, it seems that Brzozowski's provocative study helped end the debate on historical materialism in *Die Neue Zeit* and it paradoxically contributed to the consolidation of the orthodox interpretation to Marxism. Adler considered the orthodox interpretation of the base and superstructure as a dogma that was not open to revision.[50] Criticizing this position was nothing else than a bourgeois chimaera, "Auch seither hat kaum ein Marxist von wissenschaftlicher Bedeutung eine derart skurrile Ansicht vertreten, und alle bürgerliche Polemik gegen dieses Phantom ist pures Mißverständnis"[51] (never before has any Marxist of some scientific reputation held such a bizarre view, and all the bourgeois polemics against this ghost is a pure misunderstanding). This statement, applied to Brzozowski's argument, meant that Brzozowski was "no Marxist of scientific significance" and his critique was a bourgeois polemic directed against phantoms that originated from a misunderstanding. Adler's response to Brzozowski's attack (or one much like it) was that historical materialism is essentially related to real life and it has nothing to do with materialism in natural philosophy.[52] In connection with this, Adler refuted the Hegelian readings of Marx[53] and then his summarizing statement on the nature of art and ethics seems to reject Brzozowski's viewpoint,

---

ckie, 1974), 214–219; Krisztina Mänicke-Gyöngyösi, *„Proletarische Wissenschaft" und „sozialistische Menschheitsreligion" als Modelle proletarischer Kultur* ["Proletarian science" and "socialist religion of humankind" as models of proletarian culture] (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1982), 222; Politt, *Brzozowski*, 91. In Holger Politt's interpretation, Lunacharskii's main objection was directed towards Brzozowski's all-too Hegelian stance in which the Marxist position was hardly recognizable. According to Politt, Brzozowski failed to understand Lunacharskii's response and mistook it for a sign of approval. See also: Brzozowski, *Listy*, vol. 1, 401.

50 "Die materialistische Geschichtsauffassung bestimmt das Verhältnis des Ideellen zum Materiellen in der Weise, daß sie bekanntlich das letztere zum bedingenden oder, wie der Ausdruck auch lautet, bestimmenden Element des ersteren macht." This is a thesis that both Marx and Engels held (i.e., Adler defended Engels against any revisionist attack): "Die Unterstellung, als ob die materialistische Geschichtsauffassung je behauptet hätte, das Materielle, das heißt die ökonomischen Lebensverhältnisse bewirken oder erzeugen erst die geistigen Lebensformen, so daß also diese in Idee, Sitte, Recht, Kunst usw. nur eine Art von Reflex wären, ohne jede eigene, selbständige Wesenheit – erscheint schon durch den Wortsinn der bezüglichen Stellen bei Marx und Engels widerlegt." Adler, "Das Formalpsychische," 53.

51 Ibid., 53.

52 Ibid., 54.

53 Ibid., 55.

[D]ie bewußt gewordenen Richtmaße unserer geistigen Natur, also die Ideen der Wahrheit, der Sittlichkeit, des Rechtes, der Kunst, sind somit nichts anderes als die Formen der sozial gewordenen Selbsterhaltung, als die Art, in welcher sich die soziale Beschaffenheit des menschlichen Lebens inmitten seines individuellen Entwicklungsprozesses immer wieder herstellt.[54]

The standard gauges of our spiritual nature, hence the ideas of truth, morality, rights, and art are nothing else than forms of self-preservation having become social, than the way in which the social shape of human life is constantly reproducing itself in the middle of its individual process of development.

It was in this sense that Adler rejected Prometheism as well as determinism, considering the sphere of the economy to be nothing else but the fundamental layer of the spiritual, thereby concluding that the "superstructure" could never be independent of the "base"—or even less could their relation be reversed.[55]

Conclusion

Brzozowski's efforts to make a name outside of the Polish-speaking world peaked in the first half of 1907 when his position was close enough to Marxism that he looked for contacts with the Austrian and German Social Democrats. But jealousy limited his ambition, because he wanted to stand on a more equal footing with the Polish Social Democratic leaders who had urged him to seek support and recognition in the German-speaking world. In his haste to be known, Brzozowski unwittingly (or deliberately?) reversed his priorities—being an author in *Die Neue Zeit* did not make a Social Democrat but instead it was being an engaged Social Democrat that made one an author of the journal. Brzozowski's publication in *Die Neue Zeit* was an exception and the reasons for his appearance in the journal remain a mystery.

At first it seemed that he was about to realize his dream: two of his articles were published in Perlmutter's translation, but this came to nothing and it was very much his loss. The letter he wrote to Kautsky delivered the *coup de grâce* to their possible personal, political, or professional relations. Adler's devastating rectification concerning the "correct" interpretation of historical materialism, Luxemburg's denunciation of Brzozowski at *Der Kampf*, and the accusations of his being a collaborator with the Tsarist Okhrana[56] swept all of his hopes away

54 Ibid., 58.

55 Ibid., 60.

56 Brzozowski, *Listy*, vol. 1, 487n7; Kochański, *Socjaldemokracja,* 22f.

of gaining a greater intellectual reputation in a national and international context. These accusations finally alienated Brzozowski from the Polish Social Democrats and he also maintained resentment against the German Party,[57] most likely because of the negative reception of his article and the rejections of anymore of his work.

WORKS CITED

Archival Sources

Bundesarchiv (BArch), Germany. Nachlass Karl Kautsky.

International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Karl Kautsky Papers.

Bibliography

Adler, Max. "Das Formalpsychische im historischen Materialismus." *Die Neue Zeit* 26 (1907/1908), vol. 1, Heft 2: 52–61.

Blobaum, Robert. *Feliks Dzierżyński and the SDKPiL: A Study of the Origins of Polish Communism.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1984.

Brzozowski, Stanislaus. "Der Geschichtsmaterialismus als Kulturphilosphie: Ein philosophisches Programm." *Die Neue Zeit* 25 (1906/1907), vol. 2, Heft 31: 153–160.

—. *Flammen*. 1–2 Bde. Eine berechtigte Übertragung aus dem Polnischen von Leon Richter. Berlin: Bong, 1920.

Emig, Brigitte, Max Schwarz, and Rüdiger Zimmermann. *Literatur für eine neue Wirklichkeit. Bibliographie und Geschichte des Verlags J.H.W. Dietz Nachf. 1881 bis 1981*. Berlin: Dietz, 1981.

Gorny, Josef. „New man's land." Review of *'Ha'adam Hahadash' Shel Hamahapekha Hatzionit: Hashomer Hatzair Veshorshav Ha'eropayim (The 'New Man' of the Zionist Revolution: Hashomer Hatzair and its European Roots),* by Rina Peled. *Haaretz*, November 15, 2002. http://www.haaretz.com/new-man-s-land-1.28337

Graf, Angela. *J.H.W. Dietz 1843–1922. Verleger der Sozialdemokratie*. Bonn: Verlag von J.H.W. Dietz Nachfolger, 1998.

57 Walicki, *Brzozowski*, 91–193.

Hawranek, Franciszek. *Polska i niemiecka socjaldemokracja na Górnym Śląsku w latach 1890–1914*. Opole: Instytut Śląski, 1977.

Kautsky, Karl. *Ethik und materialistische Geschichtsauffassung*. Stuttgart: J. H. W. Dietz Nachf., 1906.

— [Kautsky, Karol]. *Etyka w świetle materjalistycznego pojmowania historji. Szkic*. Z upoważnienia autora tłumaczył A. Warski: Warszawa: „Bibljoteka naukowa" – Wyd. St. Kucharskiego, 1906.

Kempe, Frank C. "Galerie Saxonica." http://www.saxonia.com/cgi-bin/dynfs.pl?Kuenstler_liste=/galerie/008619.htm

Kochański, Aleksander. *Socjaldemokracja Królestwa polskiego i Litwy w latach 1907–1910.* Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1971.

Kormanowa, Żenna. *Kwestia narodowa w rewolucji 1905–1907 roku*. Warszawa: Wiedza Powszechna, 1958.

Kwestja polska a ruch socjalistyczny. Zbiór artykułów o kwestji polskiej R. Luxemburg, K. Kautsky'ego, F. Mehringa, Parvusa i innych z przedmową R. Luxemburg i uwagami wydawców oraz dodatkiem. Kraków: Rudolf Moszoro, 1905.

Leszczawski-Schwerk, Angelique. *"Die umkämpften Tore zur Gleichberechtigung": Frauenbewegung in Galizien.* Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2014.

Łunaczarski, Anatol. "Stanisław Brzozowski a materializm dziejowy." In *Pisma wybrane.* Trans. Adam Galis et al., introduction and notes by Leszek Turek, vol. III, 853–864. Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1969.

Makowski, Edmund. *Od socjaldemokracji do "solidarności". Organizacje robotnicze w Wielkopolsce w XIX i XX wieku (do roku 1990)*. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, 1991.

Mänicke-Gyöngyösi, Krisztina. *„Proletarische Wissenschaft" und „sozialistische Menschheitsreligion" als Modelle proletarischer Kultur*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1982.

Najdus, Walentyna. *SDKPiL a SDPRR 1908–1918.* Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich – Wydawnictwo Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 1980.

—. *Polska Partia Socjalno-Demokratyczna Galicji i Śląska 1890–1919*. Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1983.

Niedziałkowski, Mieczysław. "Sprawa Stanisława Brzozowskiego." *Robotnik* 265 (1933): [1].

Nordheimer-Nur, Ofer. "Die anarchistische Ästhetik der Jugendbewegung 'HaShomer HaZa'ir' in den 1920er Jahren und das Tragische in ihrer Weltanschauung." In *Deutsch-Jüdische Jugendliche im "Zeitalter der Jugend."* Edited by Yotam Hotam, 61–74. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009.

Oppenheimer, Aharon. "Matityahu Mintz at 80." In *SHVUT. Studies in Russian and East European Jewish History and Culture* No. 11 (27) (2002–2003). *Matityahu Mintz Jubilee Volume*. Edited by Benjamin Pinkus, 9–13. Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 2004.

Orzechowski, Marian. *Rewolucja, socjalizm, tradycje. Przeszłość narodowa i tradycje w myśli politycznej rewolucyjnego nurtu polskiego ruchu robotniczego*. Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1978.

Politt, Holger. *Stanisław Brzozowski: Hoffnung wider die dunkle Zeit*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1996.

Schelz-Brandenburg, Till. Introduction to *Die Neue Zeit*. Online-Edition der Bibliothek der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. http://library.fes.de/nz/nz-intro.html

Sroka, Mieczysław. Introduction to Brzozowski. *Listy.* 2 Vols. Vol. 1, vii–lxxx. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1970.

Tych, Feliks. "Karl Kautsky und die polnische Frage. Aus dem Polnischen von Jürgen Hensel." In *Marxismus und Demokratie. Karl Kautskys Bedeutung in der sozialistischen Arbeiterbewegung*. Edited by Jürgen Rojahn, Till Schelz, and Hans-Josef Steinberg, 274–286. Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 1992.

Tymieniecka, Aleksandra, ed. *Manifest zjazdu zjednoczeniowego SDKPiL i PPS-Lewicy*. Lublin: Wydawnictwo Lubelskie, 1918.

Walicki, Andrzej. "Stanisław Brzozowski i rosyjscy 'neomarksiści' początku XX wieku." In *Wokół myśli Stanisława Brzozowskiego*, edited by Andrzej Walicki and Roman Zimand, 214–219. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1974.

—. *Stanisław Brzozowski – drogi myśli.* Kraków: Universitas, 2011.

Żarnowska, Anna. *Geneza rozłamu w Polskiej Partii Socjalistycznej 1904–1906*. Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1965.

Les Déracinés: Brzozowski and Barrès[1]

Maciej Urbanowski

Although the work of Stanisław Brzozowski has been extensively described and discussed, his sketch of Maurice Barrès, published in *Głosy wśród nocy* (Voices in the Night), has not received much scholarly attention. It was not discussed even in the recent collective volume *Stanisław Brzozowski (ko)repetycje* (Stanisław Brzozowski: Private Lessons), devoted largely to *Głosy wśród nocy*.[2] Nor has it been mentioned, as a rule, by the most prominent scholars of Brzozowski's works.

Is this as it should be? *Voices in the Night* holds an especially important place in Brzozowski's *oeuvre*. The author compiled it literally on his deathbed, repeatedly changing its composition and content, yet each time retaining the essay on Barrès, which clearly suggests that he regarded this text as significant. Was the eponymous protagonist equally important to him? Brzozowski mentioned Barrès already in his earlier articles and books, and his attitude towards the French author underwent an evolution. He read him as a spokesman of modernity, a representative of contemporary French thought, and finally—as the author of *Les Déracinés* (The Uprooted), a novel about which Brzozowski wrote with much regard towards the end of his life.

Let us admit right away that from the present-day perspective Brzozowski's interest in Barrès, and especially the appreciation suggested above, may surprise, raise doubts, or even offend. After all, today scholars consider the French author interesting as a political thinker, and specifically as the originator of modern

1 A Polish version of this article ("Les Déracinés: Stanisław Brzozowski i Maurice Barrès") was published in my book *Prawą stroną literatury polskiej* [On the right side of Polish literature] (Łomianki: Wydawnictwo LTW, 2015), 39–63 (M. U.).

2 *Stanisław Brzozowski – (ko)repetycje*, ed. Dorota Kozicka, Joanna Orska, and Krzysztof Uniłowski, vol. 1 (Katowice: FA-art, 2012).

nationalism of the conservative, integral, organic, and even fascist kind;[3] or as a representative of "anti-Enlightenment" in European thought,[4] but he is no longer held in high esteem as a literary figure. One must not forget, however, that among twentieth-century continuators of Barrès, critics and biographers list such acclaimed writers as Mauriac, Montherlant, Drieu la Rochelle, Malraux, Vercors, Aragon or Camus.[5]

Brzozowski's interest in Barrès cannot be surprising if one remembers that in the first decade of the twentieth century the French author was at the peak of his political and literary career, and his writings were widely commented on in France and abroad.[6] The same was true in Poland, although here the reception of his work was rather restricted and had a specific character. During Brzozowski's lifetime, two of Barrès's novels were published in Polish translation: *Wyrwani z gruntu ojczystego* (Ripped out of Native Ground), a 1904 rendition of *Les Dé-*

3 Cf. Robert Soucy, *Fascism in France. The Case of Maurice Barrès* (Berkeley: University of California Press); David Carroll, *French Literary Fascism. Nationalism, Anti-Semitism, and the Ideology of Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 19–41; Zeev Sternhell, *Maurice Barrès et le nationalisme français* [Maurice Barrès and French nationalism] (Paris: Fayard, 2000); Jacek Bartyzel, *"Umierać, ale powoli!" O monarchistycznej i katolickiej kontrrewolucji w krajach romańskich 1815–2000* ["To die, but slowly." Monarchist and Catholic counter-revolution in Romance countries 1815–2000] (Kraków: Arcana, 2002), 453–480; Arkadiusz Barut, *Egotyzm, etyka, polityka. Myśl konserwatywna Maurycego Barrèsa* [Egotism, ethics, politics. The conservative thought of Maurice Barrès] (Kraków: Arcana, 2009). In the most recent Polish textbook of the history of French literature, the author is discussed in the chapter entitled "Antysemityzm i nacjonalizm" [Antisemitism and nationalism] in less than a page-long section: "Maurice Barrès – nacjonalizm integralny" [Maurice Barrès: integral nationalism], Katarzyna Dybeł, Barbara Marczuk, Jan Prokop, *Historia literatury francuskiej* [The history of French literature] (Warszawa: PWN, 2005), 334f.

4 Zeev Sternhell, *Les anti-Lumières. Une tradition du XVIIIe siècle à la guerre froide* [The Anti-Enlightenment Tradition] (Paris: Fayard, 2010).

5 Pierre Boisdeffre, *Métamorphose de la littérature. De Barrès à Malraux* [Metamorphosis of literature: From Barrès to Malraux] (Paris: Editions Alstatia, 1963), 23–90; Yves Chiron, *Barrès. Le Prince de la jeunesse* [Barrès. The prince of youth] (Paris: Perrin 1986); Sarah Vajda, *Maurice Barrès* (Paris: Flammarion, 2000).

6 For a discussion of Barrès's influence on Brzozowski's French contemporaries, see: Henri Massis, *Barrès et nous. Suivi d'une correspondance inédite (1906–1923)* [Barrès and we. With unpublished correspondence (1906–1923)] (Paris: Plon, 1962).

racinés,[7] and, published soon afterwards, two (!) translations of *Au service de l'Allemagne* (In the Service of Germany).[8] For the sake of completeness, let us add that a year after Brzozowski's death, the novel *Colette Baudoche* was published, followed in 1921 by *Un Jardin sur l'Oronte* (A Garden on the Orontes).[9] Here ended the history of Polish editions of Barrès, who, as can be seen from this enumeration, did not enjoy particularly great renown among Polish publishers or readers.[10]

Although some of Barrès's novels were available in Poland, the same cannot be said about his essays or diaries; moreover, the published novels included those expressing the writer's nationalistic sympathies, but not his first, decadent works, voicing the "cult of the self," praising "proud egotism, which is to serve the deepening of inner experience and the winning of happiness."[11] This is interesting, since it is the trilogy *Le culte du moi* (The Cult of the Self, 1881–1891) that was valued more highly by the few Polish critics who wrote about Barrès before Brzozowski. For example, in his extensive study from 1903, devoted mainly to Barrès's early works, Jan Lorentowicz finds in them a "frenetic hymn to individualism," and calls their author an "enthusiastic sceptic," "ironical dandy," and "first-class master of language." This "elegant juggler of ideas" appealed to the critic more than the later Barrès "of deed with not too original a

7 Maurice Barrès, *Wyrwani z gruntu ojczystego*, vol. 1–2, trans. J. P. (Warszawa: Drukarnia A. T. Jezierskiego, 1904).

8 Maurice Barrès, *Pod pikielhaubą*, trans. Maria Rakowska (Warszawa: Drukarnia A. T. Jezierskiego, 1906); Maurice Barrès, *W usługach Niemiec*, trans. Karol Scipio (Kraków: Spółka Wydawnicza Polska, 1908).

9 Maurice Barrès, *Colette Baudoche. Historia młodej dziewczyny z Metzu* [*Colette Baudoche. A history of a young girl from Metz*], trans. Zofia Potocka (Lwów: „Słowo Polskie", 1912); Maurice Barrès, *W ogrodzie nad Orontem*, trans. Maria Ruszczyńska (Poznań: Eos, 1921).

10 In 1929, Adolf Nowaczyński complained about Tadeusz Boy-Żeleński wanting to translate Proust when "in Polish there are so few translations of, for example, a prose writer such as Barrès" whose novels are "powerful, solid, ideological, arch-Gallic, satirical-political, and for us—pedagogical" (Adolf Nowaczyński, "Do Prusa, nie do Prousta!," [To Prus, not to Proust!] *Myśl Narodowa* 6 (1929): 83.

11 Antoine Adam et al., *Literatura francuska* [French literature], ed. Antoine Adam, Georges Lerminier, Éduard Morot-Sir**,** trans. Joanna Arnold-Ejsmond et al., vol. 2. (Warszawa: PWN, 1980), 380f.

physiognomy," who "started calling to duties and shaking his fists like any passing street chauvinist."[12]

Also telling is Władysław Jabłonowski's remark in his introduction to the Polish edition of *Les Déracinés*: "In Barrès's views, there is much bias; the theses which he develops are guilty of doctrinarism, at times he overly narrows the notion of homeland to traditional virtues of a particular portion of the whole country, and to the borders of one province […]."[13]

Leaving aside for the time being Brzozowski's remarks on Barrès, let us add here that after 1918, the French author was not very widely discussed, and if such discussions did take place, it was usually among writers associated with the political right (understood in broad terms). This is exemplified by Jan Emil Skiwski's 1929 extensive study "Maurice Barrès. Próba charakterystyki twórczości" (Maurice Barrès. An attempt to characterize his works).[14] The last echo of the Polish reception of Barrès, especially interesting in the context of the present paper, was Andrzej Trzebiński's sketch "Korzenie i kwiaty myśli współczesnej" (The roots and flowers of modern thought), published in German-occupied Warsaw in 1942, in the underground journal *Sztuka i Naród* (Art and the Nation). Trzebiński's contribution contained a thesis about the wartime "disappointment with the lures of modern thought" and about the necessity, stemming from that disappointment, of returning to four thinkers who overcame the mistakes of contemporary civilisation, namely Bergson, Barrès, Brzozowski, and Heidegger.

This is a surprising constellation of names, especially in that Trzebiński saw all four figures as representatives of "the thought of nationalism."[15] As regards

12 Jan Lorentowicz, "Maurycy Barrès," in: Jan Lorentowicz, *Nowa Francya literacka. Portrety i wrażenia* [New literary France. Portraits and impressions] (Warszawa: Wł. Okręt, 1911), 216.

13 Władysław Jabłonowski, introduction to *Wyrwani z gruntu ojczystego*, by Maurice Barrès (Warszawa: Drukarnia A. T. Jezierskiego, 1904), ix.

14 Published in Skiwski's volume of essays *Poza wieszczbiarstwem i pedanterią. Żeromski – pisarz i apostoł – oraz inne szkice krytyczne* [Beyond prophecy and pedantry. Żeromski—writer and apostle—and other critical essays] (Poznań: Księgarnia Akademicka Fiszer i Majewski, 1929), 93–115.

15 Andrzej Trzebiński, "Korzenie i kwiaty myśli współczesnej" [Roots and flowers of contemporary thought], *Sztuka i Naród* 5 (1942): 1–5, in Andrzej Trzebiński, *Aby podnieść różę. Szkice literackie i dramat*, ed. Maciej Urbanowski (Warszawa: Fronda, 1999), 50f. Commenting on his remarks, Elżbieta Janicka notes that Trzebiński's essay gives a "pastoral" and "highly inconclusive" impression of Barrès; see: Elżbieta Janicka, *Sztuka czy naród? Monografia pisarska Andrzeja Trzebińskiego* [Art or na-

Barrès and Brzozowski, the critic portrayed the first as "[…] the author of the now legendary novel *Les Déracinés*, the ideologist of so-called 'regionalism'," and contrasted him with "cosmopolitan European intellect."[16] Elsewhere in his essay, he evokes *Les Déracinés* again, arguing approvingly: "The thought of Nationalism fights against the *déraciné* man, the extra-environmental man, against this whole nineteenth-century nomadism of man without a place in the world. It fights devotedly and bravely."[17] Hence the similarity of Brzozowski's thought and that of nationalism so defined. According to Trzebiński, "In Brzozowski's writings, his famous metaphorical definition of Romanticism as a revolt of the flower against its roots, is not only beautiful, but also astonishingly consistent."[18]

Barrès in Brzozowski's Texts

Yet Brzozowski himself never fully identified with Barrès. He first mentioned the French author in passing in his 1903 discussion of Karol Irzykowski's *Pałuba* (The Hag). Writing about "weak individuals" (jednostkach słabych), who "struggle to create surrogate ideals for themselves" (usiłują sobie wytworzyć surogaty ideału) and "attempt to make themselves have faith" (starają się wmówić w siebie wiarę), among other figures he mentioned Barrès and his "patriotic activity" (patriotyczną działalność).[19]

Brzozowski's reserve towards the French writer did not change over the next years. This is corroborated by passages in *Legenda Młodej Polski* (The Legend of Young Poland, 1909) devoted to the author of *Colette Baudoche*. Here, Brzozowski rejects the Barrèsian vision of relations between the individual and the society, regarding it as deterministic ("[…] society is not a sphere of human responsibility here, it is a fact that one has to accept"),[20] and deems the French author's anti-Romanticism illusive and superficial. "Did Maurice Barrès really

tion? A literary monograph on Andrzej Trzebiński] (Kraków: Universitas, 2006), 150–154.

16 Trzebiński, "Korzenie i kwiaty myśli współczesnej," 51.

17 Ibid., 52.

18 Ibid., 53.

19 Stanisław Brzozowski, "Cogitationes morosae," *Głos* 47, 48 (1903), in Brzozowski, *Wczesne prace krytyczne*, 371. See: "C'est curieux, remarquait Mme Gallant, mon père et mes frères, qui parlaient très bien le patois, n'en tiraient ni vanité ni plaisir. Toi, Henri, tu ne le sais pas, et il te rend heureux et fier!" Maurice Barrès, *Le roman de l'énergie nationale. L'appel au soldat* (Paris: Bibliothèque Charpentier, 1900), 268.

20 "[…] społeczeństwo nie jest [tu] dziedziną odpowiedzialności ludzkiej, jest faktem, który trzeba przyjąć." Brzozowski, "Cogitationes morosae," 34f.

get completely rid of romanticism, did he overcome it, was he cured from it […]" (Czy istotnie tak całkowicie wyzbył się romantyzmu, przezwyciężył go, uleczył się z niego Maurycy Barrès), Brzozowski asked rhetorically, and evoked a scene from *L'Appel au soldat* (Appeal to a Soldier, 1900), in which the grandmother of one of the protagonists says to him: "[…] it's astonishing, your ancestors lived here and did not bother too much about the dialect, but you make speaking patois a solemnity" (to dziwne, twoi przodkowie mieszkali tu i nie troszczyli się tak bardzo o dialekt, ty zaś robisz z mówienia gwarą jakąś uroczystość).[21] Brzozowski commented mockingly: "How many times a converted romantic idealized and apotheosized his abandoned home and, having thrown away the rebellious standards, found a dish towel, a napkin or an apron in the trenches of his soul!" (Ileż to już razy idealizował i apoteozował nawrócony romantyk porzucony ład domowy i porzuciwszy buntownicze sztandary, zatykał na okopach swego ducha ścierkę, serwetkę, albo fartuszek!).[22]

Even more pointed remarks can be found in the chapter "Naturalizm, dekadentyzm, symbolism" (Naturalism, Decadence, Symbolism) of *Legenda*, where Brzozowski speaks of Barrès's "outrageously brutal […] *dilettante soldierdom*" (niesłychanie brutalnym […] *dyletanckim żołdactwie*).[23] However, the core of his criticism remained the same: deep within, the Frenchman is a romantic and a determinist:

> Pierrot stał się tu pachołkiem oprawcy – konieczności. Dla Barrèsa rzeczywistość pozostaje […] procesem niezależnym od świadomości; świadomość ma zrezygnować ze swego ja, swego jałowego buntu, wsiąkać w wielki zbiorowy proces, który ją wyłonił. Nie potrzebuję mówić, jak wiele *romantyzmu* jest w tej Barrèsowskiej walce z romantyzmem. Dla Barrèsa rzeczywistościami stają się pewne przeciwstawienia świadomości romantycznej. Istnieje dla niego jako rzeczywistość pewien jednolity, zbiorowy proces, wytwarzający świadomość, wystarczy go uznać i zająć w nim miejsce.[24]

> In this case Pierrot became the lackey of the assassin—of necessity. For Barrès, reality remains […] a process independent of consciousness; consciousness is to renounce its ego, its effete revolt [and] sink into the great collective process which brought it forth. It hardly needs saying how much *Romanticism* there is in Barrès' struggle with Romanticism. For Barrès, what is real stands in opposition to romantic consciousness. Reality for him is a

21 Brzozowski, *Legenda Młodej Polski*, 31.

22 Ibid., 31.

23 Ibid., 275. Unless indicated otherwise, the emphasis is Brzozowski's.

24 Ibid., 275f.

homogeneous, collective process that creates consciousness; it suffices to recognize it and take one's place in it.

Given the radically anti-German tone of much of Barrès's writing, including the famous novel series *Les Bastions de l'Est* (Bastions of the East), Brzozowski's juxtaposition of the French author with the Prussians was especially malicious. This is true as well regarding his allusions to the Franco-Prussian war of 1870, whose damaging consequences for French mentality ("un Sedan intellectuel")[25] Barrès was trying to overcome. However, the author of *Legenda* saw this as a case of imitating what one attempted to overcome:

Pruscy oficerowie w 1870–71 roku, czytając Hartmanna i Schopenhauera, dla odpoczynku notowali swe filozoficzne aforyzmy ostrogami po zwierciadłach, mozaikach, inkrustacjach mebli: jakaś porcelanowa pasterka rozkochała się w pruskim bucie i z tego związku wbrew naturze narodził się patos Barrèsowski. Jest to marzenie rzeczy kosztownych i jedynych, zmiażdżonych przez koła wozu, o tym, jak z kolei one miażdżyć będą, nie marzenie nawet, ale jakieś stopienie się myślą, sercem z gwałcącym procesem.[26]

During 1870–71, Prussian officers, who were reading Hartmann and Schopenhauer, while resting inscribed their philosophical aphorisms with their spurs on mirrors, mosaics, the inlays of furnishings: a certain porcelain shepherdess fell in love with a Prussian boot, and out of this liaison was born, contrary to nature, Barrès's pathos. It is dreaming of costly and unique things, crushed by the wheels of a cart, of how, in turn, they will crush, in fact not really dreaming, but some kind of fusion of thought, the heart with the violent process.

Brzozowski repeated the same observation in his polemic with Wilhelm Mitarski, who compared Barrès to Wyspiański: "W stylu Barrèsa czuje się nieustannie trzask i zgrzyt, głuchy jęk deptanej subtelności"[27] (In Barrès' style one senses constantly a sundering and grating, the mute cry of downtrodden subtlety).

Summarising his outrightly critical view, exemplified above, Brzozowski concluded:

25 This is how Sturel refers to it in *Les Déracinés*: "Avec l'intégrité du territoire à reconstituer, il y a aussi l'intégrité psychologique à sauvegarder." Maurice Barrès, *Les Déracinés* (Paris: Nelson: undated), 310.

26 Brzozowski, *Legenda Młodej* Polski, 276.

27 Ibid.

Nie na zrzeczeniu się samoistności, lecz na samoistnym, świadomym tworzeniu kultury, na tworzeniu form życia, które są w stanie uczynić dziełem swobody dzisiejszy automatyczny i bezwiedny proces zbiorowego istnienia, zasadzać się może jedyne wyzwolenie.[28]

Emancipation can occur not by relinquishing self-sufficient existence, but in the course of the self-sufficient, deliberate creation of culture, in the creation of forms of life able to turn today's automatic and senseless process of collective existence into the work of freedom.

Interestingly, the Polish thinker turned out to be more amicable towards Barrès in *Idee* (1910, Ideas), including the Frenchman's works among those which exerted a "constant influence" upon him.[29] In Brzozowski's *Pamiętnik* (1913, Diary), in turn, written during the last months of his life, Barrès features alongside thinkers such as Nietzsche, Sorel, Maurras, Lafrogue, Pareto, Chesterton, Croce, Seillière, Loisy, Bergson, James, Wells, Kipling and Browning, all highly

28 Ibid., 276.

29 See: "[…] sam w sobie odnajduję wpływ nieustanny Sorela i Proudhona, ale także prac krytycznych Lasserre'a, Seillière'a, pisma Barrèsa, Maurrasa i Chestertona; a byłbym niewdzięcznym, gdybym nie wspomniał Carlyle'a, Carducciego i Sainte-Beuve'a" (I find in myself the ceaseless influence of Sorel and Proudhon, but likewise of the critical works of Lasserre, Seillière, Barrès's writings, Maurras and Chesterton; I would be ungrateful were I not to mention Carlyle, Carducci and Sainte-Beuve) (Brzozowski, *Idee,* 352). In a side-remark in his study "Anty-Engels" (Anti-Engels), Brzozowski also disagreed with Karl Lamprecht, who argued that Barrès could not be compared to Nietzsche: "Jest to więcej niż niewątpliwe, jeżeli chodzi o siłę, głębię indywidualności, talentu; jeżeli jednak rozważać to porównanie jako pewien rodzaj oceny dwóch kultur, to jest rzeczą bardzo wątpliwą, czy stanowisko Nietzschego, jego styl, jest dowodem większej dojrzałości, większego wyrobienia kulturalnego środowiska. Barrès reprezentuje punkt widzenia rozpatrywany przez nas pod literą *b*, Nietzsche jest najwybitniejszym i najtragiczniejszym przedstawicielem stanowiska i przeżyć pozostających w związku z punktem widzenia rozpatrywanym pod *a*" (It is more than doubtless in regard to his force, the depth of his individuality, his talent; if however this comparison is considered as a kind of evaluation of two cultures, then it is doubtful whether Nietzsche's standpoint, his style, is proof of greater maturity, of a greater sophistication of the cultural milieu. Barres represents the point of view we consider under the letter *b*, Nietzsche is the most distinguished and tragic representative of the standpoint and experiences related to the point of view considered under *a* (Brzozowski, *Idee*, 330).

important for the Polish philosopher.[30] Thus, Barrès, after all, turns out to count among "modern minds, minds expressing the mood and spiritual structure of our times (umysłów nowoczesnych, umysłów wyrażających nastrój i strukturę duchową naszych czasów).[31]

On the Fictional Man: Ground and Blood

It was the aforementioned sketch from the 1912 *Głosy wśród nocy*, however, that features Brzozowski's most exhaustive discussion of Barrès. "Maurycy Barrès (Ze studiów nad myślą francuską)" (Maurice Barrès: Studies on French Thought) is a difficult text, exhibiting many typical features of Brzozowski's essay-writing: it is digressive, associative, oscillating between repetition and ellipsis (to recall Michał Głowiński's formulation), lacking clear argumentative sequences on top of which the reader is often left to ponder whether in a particular passage the critic is speaking on his own behalf or reconstructing Barrès's views.[32] Brzozowski employs characteristic vocabulary, or, to put it in broader terms, imagery, which paraphrases, it seems, the Barrèsian categories of "ground" and "soil," derived from his emblematic organic and medical imagery.[33] For example, already in the second sentence of his sketch Brzozowski writes: "Dusza jest jak gleba wytwarzająca pewną właściwą sobie roślinność psychologiczną myśli, uczuć, pożądań"[34] (The soul is like soil that gives rise to the psychological plant of thinking, feeling, demanding). Further on, he claims:

> Pora już byśmy zaczęli się żywić chlebem z własnych pól, by przestała być dla nas nowoczesność czymś, co jest dostępne tylko w nastroju chwili. Jest to rzeczywistość i musimy poznać jej prawa i poznać naturę gruntu i jego uprawy.[35]

30 Brzozowski, *Pamiętnik*, 38, 89.

31 Ibid., 89.

32 See: Henryk Markiewicz, "Krytyka literacka Brzozowskiego" [Brzozowski's literary criticism], in *Od Tarnowskiego do Kotta* (Kraków: Universitas, 2010), 143–225; Michał Głowiński, "Wielka parataksa. O budowie dyskursu w *Legendzie Młodej Polski*" [The great parataxis: Discourse of *The Legend of Young Poland*], in *Ekspresja i empatia. Studia o młodopolskiej krytyce literackiej* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1997), 265–305.

33 See: Jean-Michel Wittmann, *Barrès romancier. Une nosographie de la decadence* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2000).

34 Brzozowski, "Maurycy Barrès," in *Głosy wśród nocy*, 232.

35 Ibid., 235.

It is time that we start feeding ourselves with the bread from our own fields, that modernity ceases to be for us something only accessible in the mood of the moment. It is reality and we need to come to know its laws and the nature of its ground and its cultivation.

Another key word of Brzozowski's text is "blood"—again, important in the Barrèsian lexicon, to recall the title of his famous collection of travel writings from Italy, Spain, and Grece: *Du sang, de la volupté, de la mort* (1893, Of Blood, Voluptuousness and Death), also mentioned by the Polish critic.[36] In Brzozowski's sketch we read about "the *organism of today's thinking*" (*organizmie myśli* dzisiejszej), whose "blood flows in our brains" (krew krąży przez nasze mózgi)[37], and about nostalgia "producing directly a feverish tremor in our blood" (działającej bezpośrednio w samej krwi naszej gorączkowym dreszczem).[38] Nor is it easy to define with certainty the genre of Brzozowski's text about Barrès. It oscillates between an essay, a portrait,[39] and a polemic, approaching the kind of writing which Tomasz Burek once named a critical parable.[40]

It is worth adding that in his letter to Ostap Ortwin of October 1909, Brzozowski mentioned "Maurycy Barrès"—among the pieces left out from the material for *Legenda Młodej Polski*.[41] Later he was consistent in including this text in the successive versions of his next planned volume, which was initially meant as the second part of *Legenda*, entitled *Dusze i zagadnienia* (Souls and Problems), and which eventually became *Głosy wśród nocy*. We do not know, however, to what extent the 1912 version differs from that of 1909.

Finally, also significant is the place of this text in the context of the volume *Głosy wśród nocy*. It comes *after* the essay "Kryzys w literaturze rosyjskiej" (The Crisis in Russian Literature) that ended with the warning that,

Niebezpieczeństwo Rosji nie słabnie, lecz wzmaga się i wymaga wzmożonej pracy, wymaga skupienia i podniesienia energii narodowej i tworzenia raz jeszcze nowoczesnej

36 Ibid., 247.

37 Ibid., 234.

38 Ibid., 240.

39 "[…] obchodzi mnie psychologia autora" (I am concerned with the author's psychology), the author writes towards the end. Ibid., 252.

40 Tomasz Burek, introduction to *Humor i prawo* [*Humour and Law*], by Stanisław Brzozowski (Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1988), v–xviii.

41 See: Ostap Ortwin, introduction to Brzozowski, *Głosy wśród nocy*, xii–xiii.

świadomości; wychowania młodych pokoleń polskich do zwycięskiej biologicznej i ekonomicznej walki w nowoczesnym świecie.[42]

The danger Russia poses is not weakening but growing greater, and it requires increased work, concentration, raising the nation's energy and creating once again a contemporary consciousness; the education of Poland's young generations to a victorious biological and economic struggle in the contemporary world.

And it comes *before* Brzozowski's discussion of Saint-Simon's memoirs, which in turn begins with the claim that "everything that ever was history concerns us (wszystko, co było kiedykolwiek bądź dziejami jest naszą sprawą)—a truth which "Polish minds" (polskie umysły)[43] are reluctant to admit.

Thus, clearly apparent here is the context of the "Polish question," or, to be more precise, the problem of "raising the nation's energy." The category of "national energy" recurred in *Legenda Młodej Polski*; it also constitutes a crucial term in Barrès's lexicon, who, after all, authored *Le Roman de l'énergie nationale* (The Novel of National Energy). As Robert Soucy observes, "It was one of Barrès favorite themes: reality and energy were inseperable; to know one was to fulfill the other."[44]

It is no accident that almost at the very beginning of the essay under analysis, Brzozowski warns against "lyricism" (liryzmem) as "the most insidious temptation within Polish thought" (najniebezpieczniejszą pokusą myśli polskiej).[45] "It is certain that only what speaks out against *democracy* is worth reading in France today" (To pewna, że tylko to, co występuje przeciw *demokracji*, jest dzisiaj we Francji godne czytania […]),[46] he also notes, specifying another reason for his interest in Barrès, whose criticism of democracy he seemed to embrace. Above all else, however, he saw in Barrès an author whose work reveals "the profound and tragic trait of modernity" (głęboki i tragiczny rys nowoczesności)[47] and gives insight into "the very essence of contemporary reality" (w samą istotę współczesności),[48] exposing its "most hidden temptations, the subtlest errors,

42 Stanisław Brzozowski, "Kryzys w literaturze rosyjskiej," in, *Głosy wśród nocy*, 199.

43 Stanisław Brzozowski, "Z powodu pamiętników Saint-Simona" [On account of Saint-Simon's memoirs], in *Głosy wśród nocy*, 217.

44 Soucy, *Fascism in France. The Case of Maurice Barrès*, 167.

45 Brzozowski, "Maurycy Barrès," 234.

46 Ibid., 244.

47 Ibid., 247.

48 Ibid., 234.

and its most instructive downturns" (najtajniejsze pokusy, najsubtelniejsze błędy, najbardziej pouczające upadki).[49] Brzozowski believed that Barrès's writings

> […] zapewniają mu bardzo poważne stanowisko nie tylko w literaturze francuskiej, lecz wśród umysłów europejskich naszej doby. Są to [bowiem] bardzo cenne przyczynki do świadomości kulturalnej, książki niezbędne dla każdego, kto chce zapoznać się z nowoczesnością jako stwarzaniem konkretnego życia.[50]

> [...] ensure that he will have a very important status not only in French literature, but likewise among European minds of our day. For they are very valuable contributions to the cultural consciousness, indispensable for anyone who wants to come to know modernity as the creation of concrete life.

Barrès's evolution reveals fundamental problems of the modern man who, having at first taken relish in his "self" and experienced "the sense of autonomous creativity" (poczucia samowiednego stwarzania),[51] comes to doubt the self-sufficiency of the self, and asks with uncertainty "what in my psyche truly comes forth from me, and what is the product of accidental, disoriented actions?" (co w mojej psychice wyrasta naprawdę ze mnie, a co jest dziełem przypadkowych, dezorientujących działań).[52]

In contrast to Lorentowicz or Jabłoński, both quoted above, the author of *Głosy wśród nocy* had more reservations about Barrès's "early" or "transitional" texts. Brzozowski saw in them a gesture typical of the intelligentsia, namely breaking with life in its particularity, and "a critical nostalgia for unknown forms of existence sensed across the entire span of history" (krytyczną tęsknotę dla form istnienia nieznanych, przeczuwanych na całym przestworzu dziejów).[53] In his description of such longing, Brzozowski refers to the imagery of illness,[54] as he believes that this kind of attitude is something "poisonous." It assumes an external, as if actor-like approach to reality and oneself; it means recreating the world instead of creating it. What matters for this attitude are aesthetic rather than ethical choices, namely "how will I manage to make of this life something

49 Ibid., 234f.

50 Ibid., 247.

51 Ibid., 247.

52 Ibid., 253.

53 Ibid., 238.

54 Cf. "trawiący duszę organ nostalgii" (the organ of nostalgia besetting the soul), "subtelna trucizna" (subtle poison), "tajemna gorączka" (mysterious fever). Ibid., 238, 237.

that will suit my taste" (w jaki sposób zdołam z życia uczynić coś […] co mi przypadnie do smaku).[55]

For Brzozowski, this is what the early Barrès is like; he is a man who, "when he *is something* regards it from without, as if he only seemed to be so" (gdy *jest czymś*, patrzy na to z zewnątrz, jakby wydawał się tylko),[56] and who took the recreation of somebody else's (alien) states of mind to a certain extreme. As Brzozowski sarcastically puts it,

Poszukiwał [on bowiem] ostatecznie indywidualizującego dreszczu; właśnie tak całkowitego skomplikowania, by obca dusza stała się toksyną, weszła w krew, zaraziła swą gorączką i potem, tą gorączką, tym wykrzywieniem, zwężeniem świata aż do granic czapki Hiszpana, dajmy na to, z XVI wieku: iść w nasz czas i chwytać na gorącym uczynku paradoksalne odbicie.[57]

He was searching for the ultimate individualizing shudder; complication on such a complete scale that the alien soul becomes a toxin, enters the blood, infects it with its fever and sweat, this fever, this contortion, this narrowing of the world to the outer limits of a Spaniard's hat of, say, the sixteenth century: to march in our own time and to catch the paradoxical reflection red-handed.

On the other hand, though, Brzozowski believed that the surplus of self-awareness accompanying such imitations makes Barrès's efforts incomplete, and thus feeble when compared to Bourget's or Pater's, with whom the Polish critic contrasted him. The author of *Un amateur d'âmes* (An Amateur of Souls):

[…] nieustannie pamięta, że to *chce* wywołać w sobie, wytworzyć tę lub inną psychikę i ta umyślność przesłania mu samo wywołanie; nie może poprzestać on na ziszczeniu. Być może dlatego właśnie, że nie jest, nie bywa ono nigdy zupełne, umie on wydobyć zawsze co najwyżej pewne momenty tylko jakiegoś stanu duszy, i to te, które leżą na pograniczu krwi i umysłu: sama krew działa słabo mimo toksyny, być może dzięki temu, że i nie zatruta, nie jest ona bogata.[58]

[...] he remembers constantly that he *wants* to invoke this in himself, to create this or that psyche, and this intention only conceals the very invocation; he cannot rest content with fulfillment. Perhaps because it is not, can never be complete, at most he knows how to

55 Ibid., 246f.

56 Ibid., 237.

57 Ibid., 240.

58 Ibid., 241.

extract certain moments of only some state of the soul, and only those lying at the border separating blood and the mind: despite the toxins the blood acts ineffectively, perhaps thanks to not being infected it is not rich.

Finally—but still with regard to the early Barrès—Brzozowski sees here "a historical psychic diletantism and an abstract point of view of the pure will to unconditional action" (dyletantyzm historyczno-psychiczny i abstrakcyjny punkt widzenia czystej woli bezwzględnego czynu),[59] whose patrons would be two "educators of careerists and the déclassés" (wychowawcy karierowiczów i zdeklasowanych): Ignatius of Loyola and Napoleon Bonaparte. Indeed, both were Barrès's masters: Loyola in the period of the "cult of the self," and Napoleon practically throughout his life. Especially telling here is the famous, oft-discussed chapter eight of *Les Déracinés*. The seven young protagonists of the novel, "ripped out of native ground," gather at Napoleon's grave. As the narrator remarks,

Le tombeau de l'Empereur, pour des Français de vingt ans, ce n'est point le lieu de la paix, le philosophique fossé où un pauvre corps qui s'est tant agité se défait; c'est le carrefour de toutes les énergies qu'on nomme audace, volonté, appétit. […] On n'entend pas ici le silence des morts, mais une rumeur héroïque; ce puit sous le dôme, c'est le clairon épique où tournoie le souffle dont toute la jeunesse a le poil hérissé.[60]

This is how Sturel and his Lorrainian friends feel. For them, Napoleon is "un professeur d'énergie" and "un excitateur de l'âme"; someone who has "puissance de multiplier l'énergie" and "une vertu de lui émanera encore pour dégager les individus et les peuples d'un bon sens qui parfois sent la mort et pour les élever à propos jusqu'à ne pas craindre l'absurde."[61]

Brzozowski, who does not directly refer to this scene, gives a completely different, radically critical image of Napoleon. He disagrees not only with Barrès's cult of the "master of energy," but also with the closely related "caesarism," i.e., the faith in a strong individual who is able to "self-knowingly" direct the course of history. For Brzozowski, Napoleon was a troublemaker who, "being *immanently* alien in the very society over which he had gained power" (*wewnętrznie* obcy temu społeczeństwu, którym zawładnął),[62] could "utilize France, cut into interior knots, injure its organ [...] as no one else could have done who under-

59 Ibid., 242.

60 Barrès, *Les Déracinés*, 210f.

61 Ibid., 215.

62 Brzozowski, "Maurycy Barrès," 245.

stood and loved this society" ([…] posługiwać się Francją, rozcinać jej wewnętrzne węzły, kaleczyć jej organizm […], jak nie mógłby czynić tego żaden człowiek pojmujący i kochający to społeczeństwo).[63] Consequently, Brzozowski sees Napoleon rather as a model for "attending to an easy, superficial relation to life" ([…] do pielęgnowania łatwego, powierzchownego stosunku do życia),[64] who represented the attitude of "arbitrary romantic individualism" (romantycznego indywidualizmu arbitralnego).[65]

Therefore, Brzozowski will take the most interest in the "late" Barrès, who discovers that "consciousness is born in connection with life" (świadomość rodzi się w związku z życiem) and that it is always an awareness "of just this concrete, specifically determined life" (takiego a takiego właśnie, konkretnego, ściśle określonego życia),[66] and hence—let us be clear—the national life. "Already the fact that one is French is mere chance, but that one is from the Lorraine and born in Nancy needs to be recalled without delay" (Już to, że się jest Francuzem jest przypadkiem ale o tym, że się jest Lotaryńczykiem urodzonym w Nancy, należy jak najspieszniej przypomnieć)[67]—Brzozowski recapitulates ironically the standpoint of "the professors of philosophy, scholars, intellectuals" (profesorów filozofii, uczonych, intelektualistów), thus clearly referring to Barrès's biography and to *Les Déracinés*. He also agrees with the French author that the beliefs of intellectuals are "horrible errors" (potwornymi błędami),[68] and he deems them characteristic of democracy:

Dziś to jest fikcja demokratyczna – twierdził – fikcja, opierająca się na pojęciu, że oddarty od pracy, wyrwany ze swego środowiska człowiek niezależnie od tego, jaką rolę spełnia w życiu, stwarza je wolą swą i myślą. Ten fikcyjny człowiek ma swój fikcyjny świat: świat,

63 Ibid., 246.

64 Ibid.

65 Commenting on this problem, Stefan Kołaczkowski explained: "The individual does not impose ideas which he draws from his tradition or background, nor those which arise from the essence of his personality, but rather those which he has reached from the outside, whether because they sparked his imagination, or through the despotism of his ambitions or a whim, or through the desire to stifle his inner weakness by imposing a form on himself." Stefan Kołaczkowski, "Stanisław Brzozowski," in *Pisma wybrane. Tom I. Portrety i zarysy literackie*, ed. Stanisław Pigoń (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1968), 186.

66 Brzozowski, "Maurycy Barrès," 247.

67 Ibid., 249.

68 Ibid., 249.

którego charakter polega na tym, aby mógł być zawsze całkowicie scharakteryzowany w terminach dostępnych każdemu wyborcy.[69]

Today it has become a democratic fiction, a fiction based on the idea that torn from his work, ripped out of his environement a man, regardless of his role in life, creates it with his will and thinking. This fictional man has his fictional world: a world which is such that it can at every moment be characterized in terms accessible to every voter.

Like Barrès, Brzozowski contrasted the fictional man, "ripped out of his environment," with the "localised" man, connected to his country:

Można na pewno twierdzić, że sam proces powstawania konkretnej woli tworzy zindywidualizowane, konkretnie zabarwione życie umysłowe i że myśl działa tu najsilniej, jeżeli jest zrośnięta z lokalnymi wyobrażeniami, doświadczeniami osobistymi.
Organem pracy jest życie całego kraju, zlokalizowane, związane z ziemią rodziną, z bezpośrednimi pamiątkami: konkretne, zlokalizowane życie umysłowe, przekazywane w rodzinie obyczaje, wypróbowane metody tworzenia woli.[70]

It can certainly be affirmed that the very process, in which the concrete will emerge, creates an individualized, concretely tinged life of the mind, and that thinking is most effective when it is fused with local representations and personal experiences.
The organ of labor is the life of a country as a whole, it is local, tied to the family's land, to direct heirlooms: the concrete local life of the mind, customs transmitted within the family, tried and tested methods of constituting the will.

This is why Brzozowski shared the Barrèsian critique, expressed in *Les Déracinés*, of the modern educational system which "at every level strives to treat the

69 Ibid., 251. Brzozowski probably developed a distaste for democracy, a system which he could not have known well in practice, by reading Sorel, Maurras and Barrès, see: Bronisław Baczko, "Absolut moralny i faktyczność istnienia (Brzozowski w kręgu antropologii Marksa)" [The moral absolute and factual existence (Brzozowski in the context of Marx's anthropology)], in *Wokół myśli Stanisława Brzozowskiego*, ed. Andrzej Walicki and Roman Zimand (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1974), 172. About the relations between Barrès and Maurras and their views on democracy: Michael Curtis, *Three Against the Third Republic. Sorel, Barrès, and Maurras* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959); François Huguenin, *L'Action Française. Une historie intellectuelle* [Action Française. An intellectual history] (Paris: Perrin, 2011), 63–66.

70 Brzozowski, "Maurycy Barrès," 250.

child as an abstract entity lacking a determinate past and a probable future" (na wszystkich swoich szczeblach dąży […] do tego, aby traktować dziecko jako istotę abstrakcyjną bez określonej przeszłości i prawdopodobnej przyszłości) and in this way produces people who "know nothing about their country, know nothing of its workings, its beliefs" (nie wiedzą nic o swoim kraju, nie wiedzą nic, jak on pracuje, w co wierzy).[71] He also considered "exceedingly true" (niezmiernie słuszne) the postulates of administrative decentralisation, regionalism as the basis of the life of a nation, and also the critique of "the frivolous self-deception of today's official France" (lekkomyślnej obłudy dzisiejszej Francji oficjalnej).[72]

Notwithstanding that, Brzozowski remained strongly and consistently opposed to Barrès's determinism. He rejected not so much the very claim that "our soul is created by the deceased who preceded us on our ground, our soul is created so that we can pull farther, continue their labor" (dusza nasza stworzona jest przez umarłych, którzy poprzedzili nas na naszej ziemi, dusza nasza stworzona jest do tego, byśmy snuli dalej, ciągnęli ich dzieło),[73] but rather—I believe—its conservative or even reactionary interpretation, topped with arty egotism.[74] Brzozowski underscores that

Nie znalazło się w Barrèsie siły zdolnej przezwyciężyć izolację intelektualną, zerwanie ciągłości z życiem, charakteryzujące świadomość kulturalną, zabrakło mu tej siły, która napływa do myśli strugą gorącej krwi i dlatego do swojej Francji doszedł on zewnętrznym procesem, przez wyobraźnię i zżył się nią tylko o tyle, o ile da się ona pomyśleć *en bloc*, i o ile *en bloc* współczuć z nią można. Jest to [więc] pisarz nie wzrostu życia, lecz zachowania narodowego. *Nie wie on, jak życie rośnie*: może on myśleć i mówić o życiu już gotowym.[75]

There were no forces within Barrès able to overcome [his] intellectual isolation, to break the continuity of a life characterized by a cultural consciousness, he lacked the power which flows into the mind like a warm bloodstream, which is why he attained his France by an external process, in his imagination, and he achieved vital contact with it only inso-

71 Ibid., 252.

72 Ibid., 254.

73 Ibid..

74 Concluding his sketch, Brzozowski also quotes Nero's *qualis artifex pereo*—words which Barrès planned to use as the title of what became *Le jardin de Bérénice* (The Garden of Berenice, 1891), the last part of the trilogy *Le culte du moi*—thus, I believe, pointing towards the "egotism" inscribed in the French author's work.

75 Ibid., 255.

far as it can be conceived *en bloc* and to the degree that it is possible to empathize with it *en bloc*. He is [thus] a writer not at the height of life, but restricted to a nation's behavior. *He knows not how life grows*: he can think and speak only of already determinate life.

What Brzozowski has in mind is an attitude towards life which puts emphasis not on "recovering one's own boundaries" (odnajdywanie własnych granic) of that which is national (Brzozowski believed that this was the case with Barrès), but rather on their "ceaseless widening" (nieustanne rozszerzanie), on the creation of "ever newer, ever more distant determinants, that is, ever newer contexts of nature's elements subjected to human will (tworzenie coraz nowych, coraz odleglejszych determinizmów, to jest coraz nowych zakresów żywiołu poddanych ludzkiej woli).[76] Thus, Brzozowski's answer to the Barrèsian defense of national "dignity" is the national "strength"; he claims—clearly with his own readers in mind—that "*not traditionalism but concrete creativity, creation of life across its entire stretch is the law of a nation's expansion*" (*nie tradycjonalizm, lecz konkretna twórczość, lecz tworzenie życia całą powierzchną jest prawem narodowego rozrostu*).[77]

For Brzozowski, then, his encounter with Barrès's work became an opportunity to mark points of juncture and disjuncture with the then rising modern nationalism. What is interesting, though, is that Brzozowski did not use terms such as "nationalism" or "national socialism," which were coined by Barrès. Nor did he mention at all the problems which were the focus of attention or even outrage of the French author's readers: his racism, chauvinism or anti-Semitism. Instead, Brzozowski regarded as significant and relevant the Barrèsian attempts at overcoming the intelligentsia's detachment from "life" and "nation," and especially his warnings against the "abstract" and "fictional" Cartesian subject,[78] coupled to a defence of the "concrete" subject, "rooted" as Barrès would say, or "localized" in Brzozowski's terms.[79]

This criticism was in line with Brzozowski's search for sources of national strength and energy, undertaken especially in his last works. Here, the Polish writer resembled Barrès in that he, too, diagnosed and criticized his nation's powerlessness, weakness, and decadence. What turned out to be a point of con-

76 Ibid., 256.

77 Ibid..

78 Barut, *Egotyzm,* 16.

79 See: Bohdan Cywiński, "Narodowe i ludzkie w myśli Stanisława Brzozowskiego," [The national and the human in Stanisław Brzozowski's thought] In *Wokół myśli Stanisława Brzozowskiego*, ed. Andrzej Walicki and Roman Zimand (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1974), 275.

tention, however, was their approach to tradition and work, as well as to "foreignness." Barrès's vision of the nation was far more exclusive than Brzozowski's, even though both writers had behind them the crucial experience of living in the borderlands. After all, each grew up at a crossroads of nations: the Frenchman in the French-German borderland, the Pole in the Polish-Ukrainian-Jewish-Russian melting pot. And yet the narrator of *Les Déracinés* notes:

S'il est constant qu'un esprit vigoureux, bien assuré de ses assises, peut se hausser de son étroite patrie, de son milieu et de sa race, pour atteindre à d'autres civilizations, on n'a constaté chez personne l'énergie de faire de l'unité avec des elements dissemblables.[80]

This claim is significantly illustrated by the story of François Sturel's affair with the Armenian girl Astiné, who in Barrès's novel represents "un principe qui n'était de sa nature," i.e., "un précipité de mort."[81] The "Asian" mistress tears the protagonist away from his native land, from "intérêts de la vie française."[82] Barrès gives a similar treatment to French-German relations. Suffice it to recall *Colette Baudoche*, a novel of which Brzozowski thought highly.[83] Its eponymous protagonist refuses to marry a young German professor for the sake of protecting her French soul ("ce n'est pas une question personnelle, mais une question française").[84] From this perspective, these works can be contrasted with Brzozowski's *Płomienie* (Flames, 1908) or *Dębina* (Oakwood, 1911), which tell about their protagonists' tearing free of their nation, but here, this tearing free of the native land has a much more ambivalent nature. In his commentary to *Płomienie*, Brzozowski claims:

[…] usiłowałem przedstawić, że brak twórczej świadomości narodowej prowadzi od odrywania się jednostek samoistniejszych od narodowej wspólności, do widzenia życia w abstrakcyjnych, upraszczających dogmatach, do niemożności odnalezienia związku z narodem bez zrzeczenia się własnej swobody. Przedstawiłem dzieje Kaniowskiego nie jako błąd, lecz jako cenny, dodatni w danych stosunkach proces myślowy […].[85]

80 Barrès, *Les Déracinés*, 117.

81 Ibid., 116.

82 Ibid., 115.

83 Brzozowski, "Maurycy Barrès," 255.

84 Maurice Barrès, *Colette Baudoche. Histoire d'une jeune fille de Metz* (Paris: Librairie Félix Juven, 1909), 254.

85 Brzozowski, *Legenda Młodej Polski*, 443.

[...] I struggled to show how the absence of creative consciousness leads from more self-sufficient individuals severing their ties with the nation's community to looking at life with abtract, simplistic dogmas, to the impossibility of recovering a connection with the nation without forsaking one's own freedom. I set forth Kaniowski's history not as an error, but, in the given circumstances, as a valuable, positive intellectual process.

Finally, the nation is for Barrès "la terre et les morts," and hence the special significance of the symbolic imagery of the grave, the cemetery, or the funeral in his works. This is exemplified by the famous description of Victor Hugo's funeral in *Les Déracinés*.[86] Brzozowski's vision of what a nation is was much more dynamic. In the second edition of *Legenda Młodej Polski*, he wrote about it in very vivid terms, at the same time leaving no illusions:

Barrès o całym życiu narodowym myśli w kategoriach higieny osobistej. Jego powieści rozpatrują naród raczej jako pewien gatunek automatycznie utrzymującego się zakładu hydroterapeutycznego, a nie zaś jako wielki walczący ze światem otaczającym o samoistność swą i ciągłość organizm. Dość postawić Barrèsa obok takiego nacjonalisty jak Dostojewski lub nawet takiego jak Kipling. Nacjonalizm Barrèsa to przyrząd ortopedyczny, nacjonalizm Kiplinga to natura.[87]

Barrès conceives a nation's entire life in the categories of personal hygiene. His novels look upon the nation rather as a certain kind of automatically self-regulating hydrotherapeutic plant, and not as a mighty organism waging a struggle with the surrounding world in order to achieve self-sufficiency and continuity. It suffices to juxtapose Barrès with a nationalist such as Dostoevsky or even Kipling. Barrès's nationalism is an orthopedic instrument, Kipling's nationalism is nature itself.

Thus, the *milieu* of French modern nationalism turned out too conservative, too narrow for Brzozowski, and thus too feeble to be able to enhance national en-

86 At the funeral, Hugo Sturel "a distingué la grande source dont sa vie n'est qu'un petit flot. Entraîné parmi ses ondes humaines dans le sillage du genie, il s'est aperçu que leur bon ordre et leur honneur ne lui étaient pas de choses indifférentes, extérieures, et qu'en les supprimant on eût, ce lundi 31 mai, anéanti son âme même. Une circonstance si belle et si rare, qui faisait évidente l'unité de ce pullulement de Français, lui permit encore de saisir d'autres lois: dans ce cortège, chacun maintenait une discipline, en exigeait une, parce que c'était l'intérêt de chacun." Barrès, *Les Déracinés*, 448.

87 Brzozowski, *Legenda Młodej Polski*, 350.

ergy. What he found more appealing was the imperial model of British nationalism of Kipling's variety, i.e., expansive and conquest-oriented.

The "Uprooting"

In this light, Brzozowski's opinion of *Les Déracinés*, expressed in the aforementioned essay *Kryzys w literaturze rosyjskiej*, may seem surprising or even puzzling. What he did there was to compare Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks* with Barrès's novel, deeming them both as "from the point of view of philosophy and society the most profound novel of recent times" (najgłębszą z punktu widzenia myśli filozoficznej i społecznej koncepcję powieściową ostatnich czasów).[88]

Marta Wyka argues with reference to this statement that Brzozowski saw in *Buddenbrooks* a work that "describes the crumbling foundations of nineteenth-century Europe." Tomasz Burek, in turn, points to the theme which would resonate with Poles, namely the fall of a family and "the exhaustion of practical capacities of a given [bourgeois, M. U.] kind of life."[89] But what was it in Barrès's novel that so interested Brzozowski?

Let us recall that it was published in 1897 as the first volume of the trilogy entitled *Le Roman de l'énergie nationale*, and enjoyed tremendous success, winning Barrès the status of a classic of French fiction.[90] Józef Heistein, a Polish historian of French literature, not long ago still described *Les Déracinés* as a masterpiece, and at the same time a "bible of nationalism."[91] Albert Thibaudet wrote in the 1930s about the entire trilogy that "[…] these theses put into fiction do not lack in artificiality or bad faith; nevertheless, the books which contain

88 Brzozowski, "Kryzys w literaturze rosyjskiej," 179; however, he made the proviso: "jeśli naturalnie pozostawić na stronie powieść angielską" (if of course one leaves aside the English novel). Let us add that in the first version of "Kilka uwag o stanie ogólnym literatury europejskiej i o zadaniach krytyki literackiej" (Some Remarks about the General Situation of European Literature and the Tasks of Literary Criticism), Brzozowski included *Les Déracinés* among the books "that can stimulate thought about the issues raised here" (które mogą przyczynić się do rozbudzenia umysłu dla zagadnień tu poruszanych). *Głosy wśród nocy*, 75.

89 Marta Wyka, *Czytanie Brzozowskiego* [Reading Brzozowski] (Kraków: Universitas, 2012), 346; Tomasz Burek, *Dalej aktualne* [Still relevant] (Warszawa: Czytelnik 1973), 70.

90 Chiron, *Barrès*, 161.

91 Józef Heistein, *Historia literatury francuskiej: od początków do czasów najnowszych* [The history of French literature: from the beginnings to the present times] (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1987), 503.

them are among Barrès's liveliest works, and have provided the French intelligentsia with topics for discussion for thirty years."[92] Louis Aragon saw in *Les Déracinés* the first modern political novel in France, and even the point of departure of the novelistic avant-garde.[93] Pierre Boisdeffre considered Barrès's text to be one of the greatest books of the last quarter of the nineteenth century; he wrote about its great success at the beginning of the twentieth century, and deemed it "the only real novel" of the French writer.[94]

It should be added that *Les Déracinés* was one of the most influential novels of the twentieth century. The "uprooting" (*déracinement*) present in the title, as well as the closely related "rootedness" (*enracinement*), was to play an enormous role throughout the whole century. This was pointed out by, e.g., Andrzej Mencwel in his recent book on Brzozowski. Mencwel notes, first, that this notion was popular with conservatives in the twentieth century and, second, that in order to establish what it meant back then, "one would need to write a thorough study, almost amounting to a history of mid-twentieth-century literature."[95] The theme recurred in the works of many eminent authors, from Przybyszewski and Chesterton to Márai or Tolkien. To Mencwel's long list of names we should certainly add Simone Weil and her study *L'Enracinement* (1943, The Need for Roots). What is significant is that Mencwel himself applies the notion of "uprooting" when speaking about Brzozowski's life, e.g., "His family history is a story of *uprooting*," or "The student of the Niemirów gymnasium, Leopold Brzozowski, *uprooted* from tradition, certainly was a fine-tuned instrument of progress."[96]

92 Albert Thibaudet, *Historia literatury francuskiej: od Rewolucji Francuskiej do lat trzydziestych XX wieku* [The history of French literature: from the French Revolution to the 1930s], trans. Joanna Guze (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1997), 433.

93 Louis Aragon, *La lumière de Stendhal* (Paris: Denoël, 1954), 266f. Cf.: "Et cela parce qu'il a été […] *un partisan :* parce qu'il y a fait à la politique sa place dominante dans le monde moderne, parce qu'il y a pratiquement nié et rejeté le préjugé de la 'distance romanesque', écrit en marge de l'événement, immédiatement sur l'événement avec, pour materiel, l'événement même auquel il avait été personnellement mêlé. […] Et *Le Roman de l'Energie nationale* […] constitue pour la création romanesque un élément d'avant-garde, de progrès humain."

94 Boisdeffre, *Métamorphose*, 57, 62.

95 Andrzej Mencwel, *Stanisław Brzozowski. Postawa krytyczna. Wiek XX* [Stanisław Brzozowski. The critical attitude. The twentieth century] (Warszawa: Krytyka Polityczna, 2014), 197f.

96 Ibid., 654, 658.

This explains to a certain degree why it was *Les Déracinés* and not any other of Barrès's works that Brzozowski was most keen to evoke, whether directly or indirectly. Already in the chapter *Kryzys romantyzmu* (The Crisis of Romanticism) of *Legenda Młodej Polski* he wrote the following words, as though forestalling future polemics, and especially the accusations that his critique of Young Poland is an echo of Barrès's novel:

Przede wszystkim chciałbym zaznaczyć swoje stanowisko względem pewnego zestawienia, które nasuwa się samo przez się. *Déracinés* Barrèsa są mi dobrze znani. Wiem, że niejednemu z czytelników nawinie się to przypomnienie, gdy czytać będzie o [...] samotnej jednostce. Nie będę walczył przeciwko samemu terminowi. Tak jest, ruch Młodej Polski był usiłowaniem znalezienia gruntu pod nogami, wrośnięcia w żywą sprawę, zlania się z nią, zapuszczenia korzeni w istotny czarnoziem[97].

Foremostly, I would like to state my position with regard to a comparison that comes readily to mind. Barrès's *Déracinés* are by no means unknown to me. I am aware that not a few readers will naively make this association when reading about […] the lonely individual. I won't struggle against the term itself. Yes, the movement Young Poland sought to find a basis to stand on, to meld with something vital, to sink roots into authentic black earth.

In Barrès's writing, the antinomy uprooted-rootedness had an ethical, and at the same time nationalistic character. After all, it is possible to take root only in something that is both national and local, provincial: in the "native ground" (today we would perhaps phrase it as the "mała ojczyzna"—"little homeland"). This is a desirable state, synonymous with moral health, but also—what was especially important for Barrès—enabling the development of personal individuality. Hence, the individual self has, or rather should have, its "roots" in its native land. However, the self is not "a greenhouse plant," but "a tree growing deep into native ground," that is, as Jacek Bartyzel clarifies, "into its nation and homeland."[98]

Speaking about rootedness, the French writer evokes an organic, or, to be more precise, dendrological metaphor, where the tree is a symbol of the relationship binding the invidual and the nation; it represents the perfect society. As Thibaudet noted, "In his rich and complex work, Barrès employs an image, perhaps banal, yet completely refreshed, of a growing tree, which draws everything from its native soil: reflection, patience, logic, inner relations among

97 Brzozowski, *Legenda Młodej Polski*, 30.

98 Bartyzel, *"Umierać, ale powoli!"*, 467.

seemingly contradictory and inimical forms of life."[99] In *Les Déracinés*, this is illustrated by the beautiful parable about a plane tree, told to Roemerspacher by Hippolyte Taine.[100] For him, the tree is an image, i.e., "une belle existence," "l'éternelle unité" and "l'éternelle énigme qui se manifeste dans chaque forme." He calls it "une fédération bruissante," and underscores that,

> Cette masse puissante de verdure obéit à une raison secrète, à la plus sublime philosophie, qui est l'acceptation des necessités de la vie. Sans se renier, sans s'abandonner, il a tiré des conditions fournies par la réalité le meilleur parti, le plus utile. Depuis les plus grandes branches jusqu'aux plus petites radicelles, tout entier il a opéré le même mouvement…[101]

From this perspective, the nation is a tree, and the individual a leaf, i.e., a part of a larger whole, a transient part, fed by the roots of the tree. Tearing away from these roots, or being torn away from them, individuals doom themselves to weakness, and then defeat, fall, decadence.[102] This is why, as Jean-Michel Wittman notes, Barrès associates the term "uprooted" with "decapitated" (décapité), with images of a body with a severed head, a body left to itself, disintegrated, doomed to degradation and wasting away.[103]

This is illustrated by Barrès's story of the young citizens of Lorraine "ripped out of the native ground." Their uprooting is the result of several factors, a crucial one being the educational system, as embodied by Professor Bouteiller. Bouteiller is a follower of Kant, whose philosophy was highly important for Brzozowski. In the words of the narrator of *Les Déracinés*, Bouteiller "[…] allait hausser ces enfants admiratifs au-dessus des passions de leur race, jusqu'à la raison, jusqu'à l'humanité."[104] The Professor believes that "Le monde n'est qu'une cire à laquelle notre esprit comme un cachet impose son empreinte…"[105] and he does not want to adapt his teaching system to the character and intellec-

99 Thibaudet, Historia literatury francuskiej, 432.

100 Barrès, *Les Déracinés*, 193f.

101 Ibid., 194.

102 Soucy, *Fascism in France*, 203. See also: „Je suis une des feuilles éphémères, que, par milliards, sur les Vosges, chaque automne pourrit et, dans cette brève minute, où l'arbre de vie me soutient contre l'effort de vents et des pluies, je me connais comme un effet de toutes les saisons qui moururent." Maurice Barrès, *Les Bastions de l'Est. Au service de l'Allemagne* (Paris: Félix Juven, 1906), 100f.

103 Wittman, *Barrès romancier*, 93f.

104 Barrès, *Les Déracinés*, 18.

105 Ibid., 19.

tual make-up of his students. The narrator of Barrès's novel describes this in the following way:

Déraciner ces enfants, les détacher du sol et du groupe social où tout les relie, pour les placer hors de leurs préjugés dans la raison abstraite, comment cela le gênerait-il, lui qui n'a pas de sol, ni de société, ni, pense-t-il, de prejugés? […] Ses moeurs, ses attaches, il les a discutées, préférées et decidées.[106]

As a result, an "uprooted" individual is born, compared to a colourful balloon, aimless, dependent on external forces: "Ces lycéens frémissants dans sa main, on peut les comparer à ces ballons captifs de couleurs éclatantes et variées, que le marchand par un fil léger retient, mais qui aspirent à s'envoler, à s'élever, à se disperser sans but."[107]

Commenting on Bouteiller's activity, the narrator notes:

Ses élèves […] ne comprennent guère que la race de leur pays existe, que la terre de leur pays est une réalité et que, plus existant, plus réel encore que la terre ou la race, l'esprit de chaque petite patrie est pour ses fils instrument d'éducation et de vie. […] On met le désordre dans notre pays par des importations de verités exotiques, quand il'y a pour nous de vérités utiles que tirées de notre fonds.[108]

He also adds:

Mais précisément, un bon administrateur cherche à attacher l'animal au rocher qui lui convient; il lui propose d'abord une raison suffisante de demeurer dans sa tradition et dans son milieu; il le met ensuite, s'il y a lieu, dans une telle situation qu'il ait plaisir à s'agréger dans un groupe et que par son intérêt propre se soumette à la collectivité.[109]

The question is whether this was the kind of "uprooting" that Brzozowski had in mind when in *Legenda Młodej Polski* he wrote of Romanticism as "the revolt of the flower against its roots" (buncie kwiatu przeciw swym korzeniom)?[110] Here,

106 Ibid., 24f.

107 Ibid., 38.

108 Ibid., 37.

109 Ibid., 36.

110 Brzozowski, *Legenda Młodej Polski*, 32. According to Mencwel, Brzozowki borrowed this expression from Nikolai K. Mikhailovskii. See: Mencwel, *Brzozowski*, 185.

the dendrological metaphor—Barrès would have probably spoken of a revolt of leaves against the tree/roots—is replaced by a botanical one, while pathos, it seems, evolves towards irony. The intention, however, appears to be similar: both Brzozowski and Barrès point out the social loneliness of individuals, resulting from their conscious or unconscious tearing away from their "roots" or "ground." The writers also share a very critical view of this phenomenon. The difference lies in the fact that for Brzozowski "soil" does not necessarily need to have national connotations; he speaks rather about rootedness in the "historical soil" (glebie dziejowej), and even about "labor putting down roots ever more deeply" (coraz głębiej zapuszczającej korzenie – pracy).[111]

The root metaphor returns in Brzozowski's unfinished novel *Dębina*, whose first book bears the title *Gałęzie i korzenie* (Branches and Roots). But is it possible that as he wrote it Brzozowski drew inspiration from *Les Déracinés*? This is difficult to ascertain today, although the story of the Ogieński family, as sketched in Brzozowski's novel, could be interpreted in terms of the protagonists' "déracinement," at least in the manner employed by Konstanty Troczyński with reference to Wacław Berent's *Próchno* (Rotten Wood).[112]

111 See: "Dusze jednostkowe tkwią korzeniami swej psychiki w jednej i tej samej dziejowej glebie. Glebę tę odnajdziemy we wszystkim, co jest w danej epoce głębokie, a więc silnie i samoistnie żyje"; "[…] Polak nie wie jeszcze, w swej świadomej myśli, jak twardo już umie walczyć ze światem: – pora już tylko, by to twarde, silne życiowe jądro przedarło powłokę niedojrzałości myślowej, aby świadomość zbiorowa przestała się wyrażać w formach marnotrawiących, osłabiających wyniki bezwiednego życiowego procesu, pora, by jako jedyna ukazała się samej sobie Polska zawziętej, zapamiętałej woli życia i niestrudzonej, niesłabnącej pod ciosami, przeciwnie, wciąż krzepnącej i coraz głębiej zapuszczającej korzenie – pracy" (The psyches of individual souls are rooted in one and the same historical soil. We will find this soil in everything that is profound in a given epoch, that lives forcefully and self-sufficiently; […] the Pole does not yet know, as he thinks, how tough-minded he is already in his struggle with the world—it is time, though, that this tough-minded, forceful vital core tore away the surface layer of immature thinking, in order that the collective consciousness cease to express itself in petty forms that weaken the results of the mindless vital process; it is time that Poland becomes one, shows itself as a committed, fully cognizant, wilful vitality—as labor that is tireless, undaunted by blows, that takes form and sinks roots ever more deeply). Brzozowski, *Legenda Młodej Polski*, 344, 122.

112 Konstanty Troczyński, "Artysta i dzieło. Studium o *Próchnie* Wacława Berenta" [Artist and work. A study about *Próchno* by Wacław Berent], in *Pisma wybrane.* Tom I: *Studia i szkice z nauki o* literaturze, ed. Stanisław Dąbrowski (Kraków: Wy-

A separate problem is the poetics of *Les Déracinés*, a modern political novel, as Aragon had it, but also—quite simply—a thesis novel, whose protagonists, and readers together with them, are students, constantly educating themselves and the educated.[113] As Skiwski accurately observed, "A characteristic feature of Barrès's novel is [also] a certain abstractness. The author is not trying to achieve realistic effects—he always treats external situations as opportunities to express an abstraction."[114] Such is the case with *Les Déracinés*, whose "modernity" consists in saturating the plot with "the authentic."[115] This was also noted by Jabłonowski in his introduction to the Polish edition of Barrès's book:

> History and fiction combine here; invention melts away in the didactic, journalistic element; poetry, artistry are bent to serve real aims, vital issues, which the author considers or sheds light on in long, animated discussions.[116]

Jan Lorentowicz, in turn, pointed out the characteristics of *Le roman de l'énergie nationale*: the foregrounding of the narrator, who intrudes in the protagonists' actions, "pushes them to the background," and who "himself speaks, explaining things, preaching political and social sermons, or expressing thoughts inspired by the observation of his own protagonists,"[117] so that the novel lacks compositional unity. "We have here," the critic notes, "a historical treatise, and alongside it—a course in philosophy, a study in aesthetics, and finally several moments of a Stendhalian romance," and all this put together constitutes "an attempt at applying metaphysics to social or individual life."[118]

Again, what remains open to consideration and discussion is the extent to which these aspects of the poetics of *Les Déracinés* could have not only interested Brzozowski, but also inspired his novels, in particular the works written

---

dawnictwo Literackie, 1997), 436f. Phrases such as "uprooted soul" or "people already completely ripped out 'of native soil'" were used with reference to Brzozowski's novel by Tomasz Burek in his sketch "Arcydzieło niedokończone" (An Unfinished Masterpiece). See: Burek, *Dalej aktualne*, 68f.

113 Wittmann, *Barrès romancier*, 95.

114 Skiwski, *Maurice Barrès*, 103.

115 Starting with the second volume of *Le roman de l'énergie nationale*, Barrès's novels become less and less "novelistic": fiction is abandoned for the sake of documentary, chronicle, and testimony; see: Wittman, *Barrès romancier*, 121.

116 Jabłonowski, Introduction, viii.

117 Lorentowicz, "Maurycy Barrès," 253.

118 Ibid., 257.

towards the end of his life: *Dębina* and *Książka o starej kobiecie* (A Book about an Old Woman).

Towards Catholicism

Brzozowski died in 1911 at the age of thirty-two, Barrès in 1923 at sixty-one. The author of *Głosy wśród nocy* could not read the works the Frenchman wrote in the last decade of his life. We cannot tell whether Brzozowski would have taken an interest in them or what he might have thought of them.

It is worth noting, however, that those later works of Barrès', from the novel *La colline inspirée* (1913; published in English as *The Sacred Hill* in 1929) onwards, signalled his turn towards Catholicism, personalism, and universalism, and eventually his "conversion," to a large extent conditioned by Henri Brémond and the works of Pascal and Newman.[119] I mention this because, as we know, Brzozowski's evolution took a very similar course. For both thinkers, ultimately, the *milieu* of modern nationalism, whether conservative or imperialist, proved to be too restrictive.

Translated by Zofia Ziemann

WORKS CITED

Adam, Antoine et al. *Literatura francuska*, edited by Antoine Adam, Georges Lerminier, Éduard Morot-Sir. Translated by Joanna Arnold-Ejsmond et al. Vol. 2. Warszawa: PWN, 1980.

Aragon, Louis. *La lumière de Stendhal*. Paris: Denoël, 1954.

Baczko, Bronisław, "Absolut moralny i faktyczność istnienia (Brzozowski w kręgu antropologii Marksa)." In *Wokół myśli Stanisława Brzozowskiego*, edited by Andrzej Walicki and Roman Zimand, 127–178. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1974.

Barrès, Maurice. *Le roman de l'énergie national. L'appel au soldat*. Paris: Bibliothèque Charpentier, 1900.

—. *Wyrwani gruntu ojczystego*. Translated by J. P., vol. 1–2. Warszawa: Drukarnia A. T. Jezierskiego, 1904.

119 Boisdeffre, *Métamorphose*, 75–81, Chiron, *Maurice Barrès*, 300–321; Barut, *Egotyzm*, 228–237.

—. *Pod pikielhaubą*. Translated by Maria Rakowska. Warszawa: Drukarnia A. T. Jezierskiego, 1906.
—. *W usługach Niemiec*. Translated by Karol Scipio. Kraków: Spółka Wydawnicza Polska, 1908.
—. *Colette Baudoche. Histoire d'une jeune fille de Metz.* Paris: Librairie Félix Juven, 1909.
—. *Colette Baudoche. Historia młodej dziewczyny z Metzu*. Translated by Zofia Potocka. Lwów: „Słowo Polskie", 1912.
—. *W ogrodzie nad Orontem*. Translated by Maria Ruszczyńska. Poznań-Paryż: Eos, 1923.
—. *Les Déracinés*. Paris: Nelson, s. a.
Bartyzel, Jacek. *„Umierać, ale powoli!" O monarchistycznej i katolickiej kontrrewolucji w krajach romańskich 1815–2000*. Kraków: Arcana, 2002.
Barut, Arkadiusz. *Egotyzm, etyka, polityka. Myśl konserwatywna Maurycego Barrèsa*. Kraków: Arcana, 2009.
Boisdeffre, Pierre, *Métamorphose de la littérature. De Barrès à Malraux*. Paris: Editions Alstatia, 1963.
Burek, Tomasz. *Dalej aktualne*. Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1973.
Burek, Tomasz. Introduction to *Humor i prawo* by Stanisław Brzozowski, v-xviii. Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1988.
Carroll, David. *French Literary Fascism. Nationalism, Anti-Semitism, and the Ideology of Culture*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995.
Chiron, Yves. *Barrès. Le Prince de la jeunesse*. Préface de Jacques Laurent. Paris: Perrin, 1986.
Curtis, Michael. *Three against the Third Republic. Sorel, Barrès, and Maurras*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959.
Cywiński, Bohdan. "Narodowe i ludzkie w myśli Stanisława Brzozowskiego." In *Wokół myśli Stanisława Brzozowskiego*, edited by Andrzej Walicki and Roman Zimand, 257–276. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1974.
Dybeł, Katarzyna, Barbara Marczuk, and Jan Prokop. *Historia literatury francuskiej*. Warszawa: PWN, 2005.
Głowiński, Michał. *Ekspresja i empatia. Studia o młodopolskiej krytyce literackiej*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1997.
Heistein, Józef. *Historia literatury francuskiej: od początków do czasów najnowszych*. Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1987.
Huguenin, François. *L'Action Française. Une historie intellectuelle*. Paris: Perrin, 2011.
Jabłonowski, Władysław. Introduction to *Wyrwani gruntu ojczystego*, by Maurice Barrès, v–x. Warszawa: Drukarnia A. T. Jezierskiego, 1904.

Janicka, Elżbieta. *Sztuka czy naród? Monografia pisarska Andrzeja Trzebińskiego*. Kraków: Universitas, 2006.

Kołaczkowski, Stefan. *Pisma wybrane. Tom I. Portret i zarysy literackie*. Edited by Stanisław Pigoń. Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1968.

Kozicka, Dorota, Joanna Orska, and Krzysztof Uniłowski (eds.). *Stanisław Brzozowski (ko)repetycje*. Vol. 1. Katowice: FA-art, 2012.

Lorentowicz, Jan. *Nowa Francya literacka. Portrety i wrażenia*. Warszawa: Wł. Okręt, 1911.

Markiewicz, Henryk. *Od Tarnowskiego do Kotta*. Kraków: Universitas, 2010

Massis, Henri. *Barrès et nous. Suivi d'une correspondance inédite (1906–1923)*. Paris: Plon, 1962.

Mencwel, Andrzej. *Stanisław Brzozowski. Postawa krytyczna. Wiek XX*. Warszawa: Krytyka Polityczna, 2014.

Nowaczyński, Adolf. "Do Prusa, nie do Prousta!" *Myśl Narodowa* 6 (1929): 83–85.

Ortwin, Ostap. Introduction to *Głosy wśród nocy*, v–xl.

Skiwski, Jan Emil. *Poza wieszczbiarstwem i pedanterią. Żeromski – pisarz i apostoł – oraz inne szkice krytyczne*. Poznań: Księgarnia Akademicka Fiszer i Majewski, 1929.

Soucy, Robert. *Fascism in France. The Case of Maurice Barrès*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972.

Sternhell, Zeev. *Maurice Barrès et le nationalisme français*. Nouvelle edition augmentée d'un essai inédit. Paris: Fayard, 2000.

—. *Les anti-Lumières. Une tradition du XVIIIe siècle à la guerre froide*. Edition revue et augmentée. Paris: Fayard, 2010.

Thibaudet, Albert. *Historia literatury francuskiej: od Rewolucji Francuskiej do lat trzydziestych XX wieku*. Translated by Joanna Guze. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1997.

Troczyński, Konstanty. *Pisma wybrane.* Tom I: *Studia i szkic z nauki o literaturze*, edited by Stanisław Dąbrowski. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1997.

Trzebiński, Andrzej. *Aby podnieść różę. Szkice literackie i dramat*, edited by Maciej Urbanowski. Warszawa: Fronda, 1999.

Vajda, Sarah. *Maurice Barrès*. Paris: Flammarion, 2000.

Wittmann, Jean-Michel. *Barrès romancier. Une nosographie de la décadence*. Paris: Honoré Champion, 2000.

Wyka, Marta. *Czytanie Brzozowskiego*. Kraków: Universitas, 2012.

The Cult of Will and Power: Did Brzozowski Inspire Ukrainian Nationalism?[1]

Jens Herlth

Reference to the works or the mere name of Stanisław Brzozowski can be regarded as a basso continuo in twentieth-century Polish intellectual debates. Ever since his premature death from tuberculosis in 1911, his writings as well as his critical posture have served as a vantage point, as a source of inspiration or of symbolic authority for several generations of Polish intellectuals up to recent times. Although it is not always easy to assess how precisely Brzozowski may have inspired religious thinkers of the 1920s, literary critics of the 1930s, Marxist-revisionist philosophers of the 1960s, or left-wing activists of the 2000s (to name only a few settings in which references to Brzozowski have been particularly frequent)—the sheer fact of his presence is something that can hardly be called into question. If this holds true for Poland, the opposite must be said for the rest of the world. Brzozowski's relevance as a writer and thinker somehow vanishes completely as soon as we cross the borders of Polish culture. Several attempts were made to mark at least Brzozowski's potential to exert an influence on the history of twentieth-century literature, criticism, and social philosophy. The most prominent example is Andrzej Walicki's book on *Stanisław Brzozowski and the Polish Beginnings of 'Western Marxism'*.[2] However, there is something inevitably melancholic in these endeavors. It simply has to be admitted that Brzozowski was practically ignored by intellectuals outside Poland. Exceptions were few—one could point to his encounters with Anatolii Lu-

1 I would like to express my gratitude to the colleagues and friends who helped me with finding materials or gave me their advice during the writing of this essay: Lyudmyla Berbenets, Andrej Lushnycky, Dorota Kozicka, Olesya Omelchuk, and Dariusz Pachocki.

2 Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989.

nacharskii and Maksim Gor'kii in Florence in 1907;[3] to his programmatic article on "Historical Materialism as Cultural Philosophy" in the German socialist journal *Die Neue Zeit*,[4] and maybe as well to his plan to collaborate with the Florence-based journal *La Voce*,[5] which unfortunately remained aspirational.[6] However, these few examples confirm rather than disprove the assertion that one cannot speak of any impact whatsoever exerted by Brzozowski's writings on non-Polish debates in the twentieth century.

Nevertheless, there was one exception. Brzozowski *was* in fact read and appreciated by a small number of Ukrainian intellectuals in the interwar period. There even is some (admittedly scarce) evidence that his ideas were picked up and developed in the context of Ukrainian nationalist thought in the 1920s and 1930s. The goal of the present chapter is to shed some light on this episode in the history of the reception of Brzozowski's works, to collect hints that point to a possible affiliation between the Polish philosopher and his Ukrainian readers, and to assess if we can indeed speak of an 'influence' wielded by the former's writings in this specific context.

Did it Happen? Brzozowski's Encounter with Dmytro Dontsov

In Mykhailo Sosnovs'kyi's *Dmytro Dontsov: A Political Portrait* we read that Dmytro Dontsov (1883–1973), possibly the most influential representative of Ukrainian nationalist thought during the interwar years and one of the intellectual leaders (though not a formal member) of the "Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists" (OUN),[7] had spent some months during 1908 and 1909 in Za-

3 Daniela Steila, "A philosophy of labour: comparing A. V. Lunačarskij and S. Brzozowski," *Studies in East European Thought* 63 (2011): 315–327.

4 Stanislaus Brzozowski, "Der Geschichtsmaterialismus als Kulturphilosophie: ein philosophisches Programm," *Die neue Zeit: Wochenschrift der deutschen Sozialdemokratie* 31 (1907), 153–160. http://library.fes.de/cgi-bin/neuzeit.pl?id=07.06297&dok=1906-07b&f=190607b_0153&l=190607b_0160&c=190607b_0153. The article was reviewed by M. S. H. in *American Journal of Sociology* 13, 3 (1907): 429. For more on this see Gábor Gángó's essay in this volume, 57ff.

5 As mentioned in a letter to Ostap Ortwin on May 3, 1910. Cf.: Brzozowski, *Listy*, vol. 2, 419.

6 Cf. annotation in: Brzozowski, *Listy*, vol. 2, 412, and also in: Brzozowski, *Pamiętnik*, 121. All these plans were balked by the "Brzozowski affair."

7 Cf.: Tomasz Stryjek, *Ukraińska idea narodowa okresu międzywojennego* [The Ukrainian national idea in the interwar period] (Toruń: Wyd. Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2013), 116.

kopane for treatment. Sosnovs'kyi further states that, in Zakopane, Dontsov had "made the acquaintance of the outstanding Polish philosopher and journalist of the so-called 'Young Poland' generation, whose works, as some people suppose, bore a considerable influence on Dontsov."[8] Unfortunately, this is the only occurrence of Brzozowski's name in this extensive study of Dontsov's intellectual biography.

Sosnovs'kyi's laconic remark could not fit better with a general conclusion I reached during my research on the forms and representations of Brzozowski's intellectual heritage. Many key figures in Polish twentieth-century intellectual history claim to have been influenced or inspired by Brzozowski. Nevertheless, only very rarely does one get to know more about the specific ideas, terms or concepts of the author of *The Legend of Modern Poland*, which were actually picked up by his readers. This observation raises the problem of 'intellectual influence' as such. We have no clear definition of what it means to be 'influenced' by an author—his person or his writings. Does it suffice that his name is mentioned as a source of inspiration or would we expect references to his works, direct quotations or other explicit or implicit marks of intertextuality? In Brzozowski's case, we frequently get the impression that reference to his writings—or, unfortunately more often, solely to his name—is not so much meant to call up specific ideas as to declare a personal affiliation to a certain group, camp or intellectual and generational cluster. Thus, 'Brzozowski' becomes a label, a common denominator that is employed to declare one's kinship with a group of likeminded peers. Recently, Małgorzata Szpakowska has shown that the engagement with Brzozowski's heritage in the interwar journal *Wiadomości Literackie* (Literary News) was actually rather superficial, despite the fact that Brzozowski was generally considered the journal's intellectual "patron."[9]

For a clarification of what can be understood as 'intellectual influence' we can turn directly to Brzozowski's ideas on the matter. In his *Diary,* he stated, "what is not biography does not exist at all."[10] Presumably Brzozowski's most often quoted statement, this phrase considerably disturbs scholars who are used to rely on structures and networks more than on the subject as an agent in a historical process. It certainly needs further explanation to be of use for a discus-

8 Mykhailo Sosnovs'kyi, *Dmytro Dontsov: politychnyi portret. Z istorii rozvytku ideologii ukraïns'koho natsionalizmu* [Dmytro Dontsov: a political portrait. From the history of the development of the ideology of Ukrainian nationalism] (New York – Toronto: Trident International, Inc., 1974), 76.

9 Małgorzata Szpakowska, *"Wiadomości Literackie" prawie dla wszystkich* ["Literary news": almost for everyone] (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo W.A.B., 2012), 373f.

10 Brzozowski, *Pamiętnik*, 164.

sion of Brzozowski's own sphere of influence. In an annotation to his translation of John Henry Newman's writings he developed this idea somewhat more fully: every "thing" and every "principle" or "idea" is of historical relevance only insofar as it enters the concrete life of an individual. It is this individual who introduces the idea to a greater community: "Everything must be a moment of someone's biography."[11] The concept of "entering one's biography" oscillates between the claim to historical and biographical factuality, or at least verifiability, and a rather blurred symbolic or charismatic meaning. And it is precisely thanks to this semantic ambivalence that it can be useful as a tool for intellectual historians who are interested not so much in a free flow of ideas in some sublime, depersonalized *empyrean*, but in the institutional, social and concrete historical context which produces and shapes these ideas—as well as their impact. The *person* is situated at the very intersection of these factors. Moreover, she is an acting part in the process. However, we must not forget that the mere mention of an author's name as a source of authority or symbolic capital can also be completely misleading. It is often more fruitful to ask for which specific interest or motivation does someone choose to claim 'Brzozowski' as an authoritative point of reference for her own intellectual biography or public image, rather than to try to detect traces of Brzozowski's ideas in her writings. But this assessment can only be made after a thorough examination of the philosophical or critical concepts that are at stake in the respective context.

In this regard, Dmytro Dontsov's case is exceptional. Whereas in certain contexts of Polish culture, Brzozowski's name clearly served as a source of symbolic capital, nothing similar can be stated for cultures outside Poland. Why should the Canada-based author of a 1974 biography about the mastermind of Ukrainian interwar nationalism resort to this device? One would normally not expect that a reference to Brzozowski in the context of Ukrainian émigré scholarship could produce the same charismatic effect as in the Polish context. Should we not conclude therefore that there must be more behind this reference than a simple attempt to confer significance on Dontsov's person and writings? Nevertheless, it would be risky to conclude from the pure fact of this somewhat isolated reference that Brzozowski actually *did* inspire Dontsov's political ideas or world-view. Unfortunately, Sosnovs'kyi's version of an encounter in Zakopane is at best circumstantial evidence—or rather no evidence at all. However, this did not hinder later Dontsov scholars from reiterating it: Thus, Oleh Bahan stressed the importance of Dontsov's encounter with Brzozowski in Zakopane in

11 Cf.: John Henry Newman, *Przyświadczenia wiary* [Testimonies of faith], trans. Stanisław Brzozowski (Lwów: Księgarnia Polska B. Połonieckiego / Warszawa: E. Wende i Ska., 1915), 221.

1909. He even assumed that the pen-name "Zakopanets'," adopted by Dontsov in some of his publications should be read as an acknowledgment of the pivotal role of this encounter for the development of his political thought.[12] Unfortunately, Bahan, too, spares us any references that could tell us more about the sources from which he builds his assessment. In all likelihood, he simply follows Sosnovs'kyi here. As did the Polish writer and critic Józef Łobodowski in a 1981 essay on Dmytro Dontsov; speaking of Sosnovs'kyi's account of Dontsov's meeting with Brzozowski, he asserted that "this is an interesting fact for Polish cultural history" (Tu interesujący polonik).[13]

It is hard not to agree with this assessment: Dontsov's meeting with Brzozowski would indeed be an interesting fact—if it were a fact at all. The problem is that, for all we know, Brzozowski did *not* stay in Zakopane in 1908 or 1909.[14] If Dontsov met him there, this must have been in 1905. In July and August 1905, Brzozowski held lectures at the "Holiday University" (Uniwersytet Wakacyjny) in the Tatra resort.[15] But this date seems improbable for a meeting of the two, given that we have no evidence that Dontsov could have come to Zakopane during the years of his studies at St. Petersburg University.[16] Zakopane was in the Austro-Hungarian part of Poland; reliable biographical accounts state that Dontsov left the Russian Empire for the first time (and for good) in 1908.[17]

12 He also mentions Dontsov's meetings with the leader of Ukrainian conservatism V'iacheslav Lypyns'kyi (1882–1931) in Zakopane in 1909: "Особистостями, які посприяли цьому, можна припустити, були польський критик і мислитель волюнтаристського спрямування Станіслав Бжозовський (1878–1911) і український історик та теоретик консерватизму В'ячеслав Липинський (1882–1931), з якими він познайомився у 1909 р., вже на еміграції, у польському курортному містечку Закопане. (Можливо, не випадково один час його псевдонімом був «Закопанець», що ніби вказував на значущість зустрічей у мальовничих Татрах)." Oleh Bahan, "Ideoloh natsional'noï velychi" [An ideologue of national greatness]. http://dontsov.info/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=121:oleg-bagan-qideolog-nacionalnoji-velychiq-&catid=36:poslidovniki&Itemid=41

13 Józef Łobodowski, "Dmytro Doncow: życie i działalność" [Dmytro Doncow: life and deeds], *Zeszyty Historyczne* 55 (1981): 146.

14 Cf.: Mieczysław Sroka, "Ważniejsze daty z życia i działalności Stanisława Brzozowskiego" [The most important dates in the life and the deeds of Stanisław Brzozowski], in Brzozowski, *Listy*, vol. 2, 871–876.

15 Cf.: ibid., 861.

16 Cf. Sosnovs'kyi, *Dmytro Dontsov*, 68.

17 Oleh Bahan, "Dzherela svitohliadnoho natsionalizmu Dmytra Dontsova" [The sources of Dmytro Dontsov's ideological nationalism], in Dmytro Dontsov, *Vybrani tvory u*

The references quoted above are not the only sources which claim a link between Brzozowski and Dontsov. In Mieczysław Sroka's introduction to his edition of Brzozowski's letters, we find the following sentence: "The Ukrainian nationalist Dymitr Doncow will be enthusiastic about Brzozowski."[18] This remark, too, is obviously highly intriguing, given that Sroka's thoroughly commented and annotated edition remains until this day one of the authoritative cornerstones in Brzozowski studies. But, unfortunately and quite uncharacteristically for such a scrupulous philologist, Sroka, just like Sosnovs'kyi, does not supply any reference that could document Dontsov's alleged "enthusiasm" for Brzozowski.[19]

Recently, Trevor Erlacher, in a highly interesting essay on Dontsov's intellectual development prior to World War I, took up Sosnovs'kyi's assumptions, specifying that Dontsov met Brzozowski in L'viv and in Vienna in 1908.[20] It seems that this is an unfounded conjecture, given that Brzozowski did not stay in either of these cities in 1908.[21] Moreover, it is not very likely that Dontsov who just had "escaped abroad to L'viv […] on 12 April 1908"[22] should have sought the company of a man who was suspected of being an informant of the Okhrana. The infamous list with Brzozowski's name at the top was published on April 25,

desiaty tomakh, vol. 1: *Politychna analityka (1912–1918 rr.)*, ed. Oleh Bahan (Drohobych – L'viv: Vidrodzhennia, 2011), 8.

18 "Brzozowskim entuzjazmował się będzie nacjonalista ukraiński Dymitr Doncow." Mieczysław Sroka, "Przedmowa," in Brzozowski, *Listy*, vol. 1, xxxix.

19 In contemporary Ukrainian scholarship Sosnovs'kyi's version of a personal acquaintance between Brzozowski and Dontsov continues to persist. In a recent book on Dontsov and the ideological background of his journal *Vistnyk*, Olesia Omel'chuk names Brzozowski among the thinkers who influenced Dontsov, adding that Dontsov "knew him personally." Olesia Omel'chuk, *Literaturni idealy ukraïns'koho vistnykivstva (1922–1939)* [The literary ideals of the Ukrainian "Vistnyk" circle] (Kyïv: "Smoloskyp", 2011), 20. Cf. also: Hanna V. Davlietova, "D. I. Dontsov: pochatok formuvannia svitohliadu" [D. I. Dontsov: the beginning of the forming of his world-view], *Naukovi pratsi istorychnoho fak-tu ZNU* 21 (2007): 141.

20 Trevor Erlacher, "The Birth of Ukrainian 'Active Nationalism': Dmytro Dontsov and Heterodox Marxism before World War I, 1883–1914," *Modern Intellectual History* 11, 3 (2014): 531f.

21 Sroka, "Ważniejsze daty z życia i działalności Brzozowskiego," 871–873. All of Brzozowski's 1908 letters were sent from Florence, Italy (cf.: Brzozowski, *Listy*, vol. 1, 430–767).

22 Erlacher, "The Birth of Ukrainian 'Active Nationalism'," 531.

1908.[23] This latter point is of marginal importance though, since Brzozowski simply did not leave Italy in 1908. Nonetheless, relying exclusively on Sosnovs'kyi (for Dontsov's biography) and on Walicki and Kołakowski (for references from Brzozowski's works), Erlacher cannot resist stating that "in Brzozowski we find the most immediate inspirations for Dontsov's later attitudes on ethics, nationality, and the primacy of will, ideas, and power in human history."[24] Even if based on second-hand sources (in Brzozowski's case), Erlacher's observations regarding parallels between Dontsov's ideology of "active nationalism" and Brzozowski's ideas on the modernization of Polish culture are not without valuable insight. As it turns out, a comparative analysis of Brzozowski's and Dontsov's writings is arguably the only viable way to assess, if not the 'impact' or 'influence', then at least the common ideological standpoints and approaches that link the two authors. Still we have to acknowledge that the attempt to establish a factual biographical link between them has not led to convincing results. Possibly, we are dealing with just another legend here, comparable to Wilhelm Feldman's conjecture concerning a meeting between Brzozowski and Lenin in Switzerland.[25] Maybe some day, archival research will provide us with reliable information about a meeting between Dontsov and Brzozowski. For the time being we have to note that, according to the published sources of which we dispose, such a meeting could not have taken place either in 1908/1909 in Zakopane or in 1908 in L'viv or Vienna. This means that the ground for a discussion of Brzozowski's impact on the emergence of Ukrainian nationalist thought in the first third of the twentieth century is at best very shaky.

"The cult of will and power": Did Brzozowski "give birth" to Dontsov?

As it turns out, all speculation about Brzozowski's weighty influence on Dontsov can be traced back to Michał Rudnicki, or rather Mykhailo Rudnyts'kyi (1889–1975), a former collaborator of Ostap Ortwin in the Bernard Połoniecki publishing house in Lwów. According to Mieczysław Sroka, Rudnyts'kyi, to-

23 Cf. Brzozowski, *Listy*, vol. 1, between pp. 512 and 513.

24 Erlacher, "The Birth of Ukrainian 'Active Nationalism'," 532.

25 Wilhelm Feldman, *Współczesna literatura polska, 1864–1917* [Contemporary Polish literature, 1864–1917], part III, 6th ed. (Warsaw: Towarzystwo Wydawnicze w Warszawie, 1919), 81. Cf. also: Sroka, "Przedmowa," xxxf.

gether with Ostap Ortwin, transcribed manuscripts for the editions of Brzozowski's works that were issued by "Księgarnia B. Połonieckiego."[26]

During the interwar years, Rudnyts'kyi was a well-known literary critic, writer, and literary scholar, as well as an important figure on the Ukrainian cultural scene in Galicia. He worked as a journalist and published books of prose and essays in Ukrainian. In Soviet times, he became a professor for literature at L'viv University.[27] It is essential here to take into account the status of Ukrainian culture in Poland as a 'subordinate culture' that was, moreover, divided between two hostile states—Poland and the Soviet Union. The Ukrainian intellectuals in L'viv and the region of Galicia could function perfectly well in a Polish language environment, but because Polish culture was dominant Poles did not need Ukrainian. The Ukrainians had their own public sphere with a number of newspapers and journals. But a closer look, for example at the issues of the daily newspaper *Dilo* (to which Rudnyts'kyi contributed as a literary critic from 1923 on), tells us more about the severe and sometimes hostile environment in which Ukrainian culture developed in Poland. For reasons of censorship, many pages of this newspaper were partly left blank, a fact that the German writer Alfred Döblin noted with astonishment in his account of a visit to Lwów in 1924.[28]

Talking about the status of Ukrainian literature for the contemporary Polish reader at a meeting of the "Zawodowy Związek Literatów" (Professional Writers' Union), Rudnyts'kyi stated that "Ukrainian literature is more exotic and unknown for the Polish community than for instance Spanish literature."[29] In Poland, Ukrainian culture was dominated and subordinated much like Polish culture was on the European level. In an article, published in the Warsaw-based Ukrainian language journal *My* (We), Rudnyts'kyi declared in 1934 that Brzozowski could well have been acknowledged as one of the leading European intellectuals of his time, if only he had chosen a different language for his publications—or if someone would have prepared a selection of his works translated

26 Cf. Brzozowski, *Listy*, vol. 2, 228. Cf. also: Karol Kuryluk, "Krytyk ukraiński o Stanisławie Brzozowskim" [A Ukrainian critic on St. Brzozowski], *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* 34 (1935): 676.

27 Cf.: Ivan Koshelivets, "Rudnytsky, Mykhailo." http://www.encyclopediaofukraine.com/display.asp?linkpath=pages\R\U\RudnytskyMykhailo.htm

28 Alfred Döblin, *Reise in Polen* [1925] (München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1987), 191.

29 "[…] literature ukraińska jest dla polskiego społeczeństwa czemś bardziej egzotycznym i nieznanym niż n. p. literatura hiszpańska." bwl. [=author], "Współczesna literatura ukraińska," *Słowo Polskie*, April 24, 1931, 6. http://jbc.bj.uj.edu.pl/dlibra/plain-content?id=200345

into a language more accessible than Polish.[30] It is not astonishing that Rudnyts'kyi had high esteem for Brzozowski. It was he who accomplished the translation of the missing fragments of Brzozowski's edition of articles by John Henry Newman, published as *Przyświadczenia wiary* (Testimonies of Faith) in 1915.[31] In his preface to a volume of Georges Sorel's essays Rudnyts'kyi translated for the same series,[32] he repeatedly quoted Brzozowski who, for his part, was a great admirer of Sorel.[33] For Rudnyts'kyi, Brzozowski was one of the first to discover the significance of Sorel's thought and he considered Brzozowski's essay on Sorel to be "the only fruit of real reflection about Sorel."[34] Moreover, the authors Rudnyts'kyi referred to were very much the same that Brzozowski dealt with in his late writings: Vico, Hegel, Renan, Blondel, Newman—to name only a few. Rudnyts'kyi's article in *My* testifies to a deep and sympathetic understanding of Brzozowski's ideas. It was not devoid of criticism, but generally paid tribute to Brzozowski's mission as that of an intellectual who belonged to a stateless nation and wanted to show this nation the path to Europe.

It is more the *context* than the *content* of Rudnyts'kyi's article that allows me to highlight a connection between Brzozowski and Ukrainian nationalist thought: In a commentary signed by the "editorial team"[35] of *My*,[36] Brzozowski's writings are credited with an "acute actuality." Brzozowski is seen as the progenitor of a "new epoch of nationalism" that emerged "in the coulisses" (на лаштунках) of the old and decaying prewar-world. The authors of the commentary draw a direct connection to the contemporary state of Ukrainian culture in Poland:

30 Mykhailo Rudnyts'kyi, "Muchenyk neprymyrennykh idealiv. Stanislav Bzhozovs'kyi" [A martyr of irreconcilable ideals: Stanisław Brzozowski], *My. Literaturnyi neperiodychnyi zhurnal* 3 (1934): 174.

31 According to Leopold Staff's "Editor's Remark," this was about one third of the text. Cf.: Newman, *Przyświadczenia wiary*, s.p.

32 "Symposion," ed. Leopold Staff.

33 Cf.: Michał Rudnicki, "O konkretności myśli Jerzego Sorela" [On the concreteness of Georges Sorel's thought], in Georges Sorel, *O sztuce, religii i filozofii*, trans. Michał Rudnicki (Lwów: Księgarnia Polska B. Połonieckiego / Warszawa: E. Wende i Spółka, 1913), xxvi, xxxiii, xlviif., lii.

34 Ibid., lxv. Brzozowski's essay on Sorel was published in the Kiev journal *Świt* (Dawn) in 1907 (reprinted in his *Kultura i życie*, 515–522).

35 The journal was edited (in 1934) by Ivan Dubyts'kyi and Andrei Kryzhanivs'kyi.

36 For *My* cf.: Serhii Kvit, *Dmytro Dontsov: ideolohichnyi portret*, 2nd ed. [Dmytro Dontsov: an ideological portrait] (L'viv: Galyts'ka vydavnycha spilka, 2013), 56.

Now, when Ukrainian life is undergoing a renaissance under the sign of a "cult of will and power" [культу волі та сили], when a new Ukrainian individuality is crystallizing and solidifying, the works of this famous Pole, this tragic, impulsive and romantic man, gain a new, peculiar, sharp relevance for us.[37]

In these few words, one recognizes, of course, the late Brzozowski's metaphors: In *Voices in the Night* he had dealt with the link between literature and thought on the one hand and forms of political (national) community on the other, applying the notion of "crystallization."[38] Also the word "гартуватися" is quite characteristic of Brzozowski's rhetoric. However, there is something more going on here: The authors speak of a renaissance of Ukrainian life and even quote the formula of a "cult of will and power." It is here, according to them, that the link between Brzozowski and the contemporary Ukrainian intellectual scene in Poland can be observed. The formula "культ волі та сили" had been propagated by none other than Dmytro Dontsov, the author of a book on *Nationalism*, published in 1926 by the L'viv publishing house "Nove Zhyttia" (New Life).[39] The authors of the commentary were even more specific about the connection between Dontsov's ideas and Brzozowski's writings, claiming that "in our life, Brzozowski's influence is only in one case wholly unquestionable. No one else but Brzozowski gave birth to [породив] the well-known critic and publicist Dmytro Dontsov."[40] They point to parallels between Brzozowski's and Dontsov's ideological development from "passionate Marxism" to a "no less passionate nationalism and traditionalism," and they stress the fact that Dontsov, "being trapped by the reading of Brzozowski," incessantly borrowed "names, complete quotes, metaphors, and thoughts" from the works of the Polish philosopher.[41]

37 Ivan Dubyts'kyi and Andrei Kryzhanivs'kyi, "Prim. Redaktsiï" […], *My. Literaturnyi neperiodychnyi zhurnal* 3 (1934): 174.

38 Cf.: Brzozowski, *Głosy wśród nocy*, 192.

39 Dmytro Dontsov, *Natsionalizm* (L'viv: Vydavnitstvo "Nove Zhyttia", 1926), 211. Cf. also: Myroslaw Yurkevich, "Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists," in *Internet Encyclopedia of Ukraine*. http://www.encyclopediaofukraine.com/display.asp?linkpath=pages\O\R\OrganizationofUkrainianNationalists.htm ("Their [the OUN's] outlook was influenced strongly by Dmytro Dontsov, who propounded a cult of will and power and indiscriminately praised fascist and Nazi leaders.").

40 Dubyts'kyi and Kryzhanivs'kyi, "Prim. Redaktsiï," 175.

41 Ibid. It is important to note that these passages are in fact to be found in the "Editorial Remark" and not in the actual text of Rudnyts'kyi's essay (Erlacher quotes them as Rudnyts'kyi's text; apparently, he did not have access to the issue of *My*).

Apparently, they wanted to denigrate Dontsov's rank as a thinker and literary critic by presenting him as a kind of 'second-hand-Brzozowski' who had nothing original to offer to his Ukrainian readers. Accordingly, they concluded their introductory commentary by asserting that "Brzozowski is such an independent and characteristic figure that the educated Ukrainian reader should take a direct interest in him."[42]

It is important to add that the editorial team of *My* polemicized on numerous occasions against Dontsov and his Lwów-based journal *Vistnyk* (Herald; formerly *Literaturno-naukovyi vistnyk*—Literary-Scientific Herald). Both journals propagated nationalist ideas, *My* representing a more liberal and moderate approach to questions of literature and aesthetics than the politically more radical and aesthetically more utalitarian *Vistnyk*. Oleh Bahan, in an introduction to a recently published collection of Mykhailo Rudnyts'kyi's writings, indicates that *My* was financed by "Soviet special services" and that Kryzhaniv'skyi was a hired agent of the U.S.S.R. However, he does not provide us with any evidence for these assertions.[43] It is difficult for me to assess whether Bahan is right. As a Dontsov scholar and, to judge by the ideological tendency of his articles, as an ardent follower and devotee of Dontsov's ideology, Bahan apparently has some interest in saving the honor of his hero. All we can note is that Ivan Dubyts'kyi and Andrei Kryzhanivs'kyi, the editors of *My*, did their best to defame Dontsov as a second-rate thinker, if not a plagiarist. However, it remains unclear if we are dealing with a struggle between different ideological positions or also with a struggle for the supremacy in the—extremely narrow—field of Ukrainian language press and criticism in interwar Poland[44] in this instance, or if there was

42 Ibid., 175.

43 Oleh Bahan, "Koryfei liberal'noï literaturnoï krytyky" [An eminent authority of liberal criticism], in Mykhailo Rudnyts'kyi, *Vid Myrnoho do Khvil'ovoho. Mizh ideieiu i formoiu. Shcho take "Moloda Muza"?*, ed. Oleh Bahan (Drohobych: Vidrodzhennia, 2009), 14. According to the *Internet Encyclopedia of Ukraine*, *My* had been "founded by supporters of the Government-in-exile of the Ukrainian National Republic." http://www.encyclopediaofukraine.com/display.asp?linkpath=pages\M\Y\MyIT.htm

44 The editors of *My* launched polemical attacks against Dontsov on other occasions, too. Cf.: Ivan Dubyts'kyi and Andrei Kryzhanivs'kyi, "Patetychna peredmova, napysana hlybokim znavtsem chytal'nyts'koï psykhiky na zamovlennia redaktsiï ta v ïï imeni" [An impassionate foreword, written by a deep connoisseur of the readers' psyche, ordered by the editorial team and in its name], *My* 3 (1934): 9–14. This was a reaction to a polemical review of *My* in Dontsov's *Vistnyk*. Cf. also: "Z presovoho fil'mu" [From the press] *Vistnyk* II, 3 (1934): 228–231 (no author indicated). The polemics was about ideological but also personal issues; Dubyts'kyi, Kryzhanivs'kyi as well as

some sort of political conspiracy behind it, secretly orchestrated by Soviet authorities who wanted to undermine Dontsov's authority among Ukrainian nationalists. The allegation of collaboration with Soviet secret services is of course not without irony in the context of Brzozowski studies. It should also be noted that Dontsov himself was suspected of a secret collaboration with Russian agencies at the time of his break with the Ukrainian Social Democratic Party in 1913.[45]

One point is clear, though: it is Brzozowski's name and works that serve as a central point of reference in these polemics. The question remains to what extent his writings could possibly have contributed to the renaissance of "Ukrainian life" in the 1930s.[46] Polemics and conspiracies apart, from the words of the editors of *My* we can conclude that the Ukrainian intellectual community in Poland was not yet very familiar with Brzozowski's works. Nevertheless, they postulated that his writings had an impact on the latest developments in the field of nationalist discourse ascribing the role of a mediator to Dmytro Dontsov.[47] Once more, was there any connection between Dontsov and Brzozowski? Mykhailo Sosnovs'kyi, in his *Dmytro Dontsov: A Political Portrait*, commented on the above-quoted commentary to Rudnyts'kyi's article: According to him, to state that Dontsov was "trapped by the reading of Brzozowski" would be an exaggeration. He did not fail to note that, "Rudnyts'kyi" (he does not pay attention to the fact that the commentary was signed by the "editorial team") did not give any reference for "his" hypothesis. However, as for the general assumption of Brzo-

Rudnyts'kyi were sharply criticized on both levels. Cf. also Dontsov's article "Da capo," (first published in 1929) in Dmytro Dontsov, *Literaturna eseïstyka*, ed. Oleh Bahan (Drohobych: Vidrodzhennia, 2009), 284–291, esp. 288–291 (attacks against Rudnyts'skyi).

45 Oleksandr Zaitsev, *Ukraïns'kyi integral'nyi natsionalizm (1920–1930-ti roky). Narysy intelektual'noï istoriï* [Ukrainian integral nationalism, 1920–1930. Sketches of intellectual history] (Kyiv: Krytyka, 2013), 160.

46 "[…] украïнские життя вироджується." Dubyts'kyi and Kryzhanivs'kyi, "Prim. Redaktsiï," 174.

47 Interestingly enough, we find a similar (non-)link to Brzozowski in an essay on the Ukrainian poet Mykola Ievshan, published in *Literaturno-naukovyi vistnyk* in 1929. The author puts much emphasis on the claim that the common idea of Brzozowski's influence on the works of Ievshan, widely present, as he writes, in the literary circles in Galicia of the time, was completely unfounded. Oles' Babii, "Mykola Ievshan (Fediushka)," *Literaturno-Naukovyi Vistnyk* 28,11 (1929): 976. It is however somewhat suspicious that Babii devotes two whole pages of his short piece (six pages on the whole) to the refutation of this idea.

zowski's influence on Dontsov, he agreed: "We do not call into question the influence of Brzozowski's (and other authors') writings on Dontsov."[48]

In Dontsov's publications references to Brzozowski are scarce: In an essay on the main representatives of Russian culture, dating from 1919, Dontsov approvingly quotes Brzozowski's depiction of the Russian writer Mikhail Artsybashev's works as based on a "philosophy of spermatoidism."[49] However, the remainder of the essay, even though in its polemical stance it reminds one of Brzozowski's "Kryzys w literaturze rosyjskiej" (The Crisis in Russian Literature) from his posthumously published *Głosy wśród nocy* (Voices in the Night, 1912), does not contain any further hint of Brzozowski. In a 1936 article from *Vistnyk*, Dontsov takes a quote from Brzozowski which he found "in one Polish newspaper"[50] as a point of departure, yet there is no mention of Brzozowski in the further course of the text. Both quotations are rather superficial and not quite exact. Surely, they do not allow us to conclude that Dontsov was heavily influenced by Brzozowski's writings. But they do prove that he was at least familiar with Brzozowski's name and some of his texts in a general way.

For lack of direct quotations from Brzozowski in Dontsov's writings, I suggest casting a comparative glance at both thinkers' personal background and intellectual formation. In his student years, Dontsov joined and co-founded parties and groups of a socialist orientation.[51] He remained a member of the Ukrainian Social Democratic Party which he had co-founded in 1905, at least until 1913 or, according to other sources, until the outbreak of World War I.[52] Not only does the development of Dontsov's ideological stance remind us of Brzozowski's own evolution from Marxism to nationalism.[53] When we read Dontsov's book on *Nationalism*, which upon its publication in 1926 gained him the position of a leader in the Ukrainian nationalist camp in Galicia (and beyond), we can in fact note parallels with Brzozowski's merciless analysis of the shortcomings of Polish national culture. Dontsov claimed a categorical priority

48 Sosnovs'kyi, *Dmytro Dontsov*, 77.

49 Dmytro Dontsov, "Kul'tura prymityvizmu," in *Vybrani tvory u desiaty tomakh*, vol. 2: *Kul'turolohichna ta istoriosofs'ka eseïstyka (1911–1939) rr.*, ed. Oleh Bahan (Drohobych / L'viv: "Vidrodzhennia", 2012), 96. See Brzozowski, *Głosy wśród nocy*, 194 ("panspermatoidyzm Arcybaszewa").

50 Dmytro Dontsov, "Zgoda v simeistvi," in *Vybrani tvory u desiaty tomakh,* vol. 2: *Kul'turolohichna ta istoriosofs'ka eseïstyka (1911–1939) rr.*, 311.

51 Cf. Stryjek, *Ukraińska idea narodowa okresu międzywojennego*, 118.

52 Zaitsev, *Ukraïns'kyi integral'nyi natsionalizm*, 160. Cf. Stryjek, *Ukraińska idea narodowa okresu międzywojennego*, 119.

53 Cf.: Dubyts'kyi and Kryzhanivs'kyi, "Prim. Redaktsiï," 175.

of the nation above all other political and axiological principles. For him, the nation was a self-sufficient ideal that did not need to be justified by supranational, common human values.[54] Brzozowski himself had declared that the main item on the political agenda of his time was to "create Poland as a power that will prevail in the world."[55] He had tackled Poland's "infantilism" whereas Dontsov denounced the provinciality of Ukrainian thought and society. Very much in the style of Brzozowski, Dontsov ridiculed the Ukrainian aversion towards all kinds of heroism and historical greatness:

> The construction of pyramids, medieval cathedrals, great empires, crusades—all these are products of a "barbaric" epoch, talk of which today, in this "age of reason," is ridiculous. Their ideal is to sit quietly in their rural "peaceful country," awash in milk and honey, and God forbid that Moses should come and lead them out of there.[56]

Dontsov denounced this stance as "provansal'stvo" ('provençalism'). Referring to the region in southern France, he understood "provansal'stvo" as a worldview and a way of life that was based on provincial self-sufficiency and idyllic mediocrity.[57] His own idea of the nation referred to biological and racial features. It involved a struggle for survival and even a rivalry between currently living and future members of a national community (with preference given to the latter).[58] All this reminds us of Brzozowski's understanding of the role of the nation in the modern world as presented notably in his *Legend of Modern Poland*.

As the editor-in-chief of *Literaturno-Naukovyi Vistnyk* from 1922 on,[59] Dontsov had made clear that the journal's main goal was to give shape and form to the Ukrainian "national idea."[60] His decision to pursue this aim by means of literature and literary criticism can be seen as consistent with Brzozowski's conviction that by means of literature and literary criticism a society could gain

54 Dontsov, *Natsionalizm*, 27. Cf.: Omel'chuk, *Literaturni idealy ukraïns'koho vistnykivstva (1922–1939)*, 17.

55 Brzozowski, *Legenda Młodej Polski*, 197.

56 Dontsov, *Natsionalizm*, 34. For a discussion of Dontsov's "psychological portrait" of Ukraine and "the Ukrainians" cf.: Stryjek, *Ukraińska idea narodowa okresu międzywojennego*, 164–181.

57 Dontsov, *Natsionalizm*, 6–148 (chapter: "Ukraïns'ke provansal'stvo").

58 Ibid., 37.

59 The journal existed until 1932 and was later continued by Dontsov under the title *Vistnyk* (1933–1939).

60 Cf.: Dmytro Dontsov, "Nashi tsily," *Literaturno-Naukovyi Vistnyk* 1 (May 1922): 1.

self-consciousness and develop a political platform. Dontsov's idea of the nation was based on merging features he took from contemporary 'Lebensphilosophie' (Bergson's "élan vital") and its philosophical precursors (Nietzsche's "will to power"),[61] combining them with a concrete political agenda: independent Ukrainian statehood, defense of Ukrainian national interests, and even expansion for the sake of self-preservation.[62]

Brzozowski's proximity to proto-fascist ideas and terminology was noticed as early as the 1920s. Maciej Urbanowski has given a sober and sophisticated account of these possible affinities, concluding that, for simple reasons of chronology, the question "did Brzozowski uphold fascist ideas?" is ill-posed: Brzozowski died in 1911, roughly a decade before fascism came into being as a political movement in Italy.[63] Nevertheless, Brzozowski's ideas concerning the nation, the mythical bond that forges a society, the emphasis he puts on the soldier and the worker, his fascination with "strength," "hardness," "heroism," and "energy" reveal obvious affinities with the later context of fascist and/or radical right movements in Europe.[64]

It should be noted that Dontsov did not overtly adhere to or declare himself a proponent of fascist ideology[65] even though he *did* express some sympathy for "fascism."[66] His essay *Nationalism* must of course be read against the background of the emergence of fascist movements in Europe during the 1920s.[67] His refusal of universalist categories, the accent on biological categories in his conception of the nation[68] and on the "will" (vola) as the nation's irrational "élan vital"[69] are quite near to the late Brzozowski's conceptualizations of nation and society. For both of them Georges Sorel was an important point of reference. However, Dontsov's ideal of a "peasant and petty bourgeois republic"[70] hardly

61 Dontsov, *Natsionalizm*, 159.

62 Ibid., 171.

63 Maciej Urbanowski, "Stanisław Brzozowski and Fascism," *Studies in East European Thought* 63 (2011): 306.

64 Cf.: ibid., 309–312.

65 Stryjek, *Ukraińska idea narodowa okresu międzywojennego*, 149.

66 Ibid., 149–156. Cf. also: Dontsov, *Natsionalizm*, 212.

67 For an excellent discussion of fascist elements in the ideology of Dontsov's journal Vistnyk cf.: Omel'chuk, *Literaturni idealy ukraïns'koho vistnykivstva (1922–1939)*, 219–248.

68 Cf. Stryjek, *Ukraińska idea narodowa okresu międzywojennego*, 138.

69 Ibid, 142.

70 "Отже, селянська дрібно-буржуазна республіка. Такий наш ідеал." Dmytro Dontsov, *Pidstavy nashoï polityky* (Viden': Vydavnytstvo Dontsovykh, 1921), 119.

fits with Brzozowski's enthusiastic praise for the worker. Similar to Brzozowski, yet on a certainly less sophisticated level, Dontsov referred to writers and poets in order to support his views on the essence of the Ukrainian nation. Mostly, these were Ukrainian writers, such as Lesia Ukraïnka or, of course, Taras Shevchenko, but we encounter also Jack London and his "joy to kill."[71] In his programmatic brochure *The Foundations of Our Politics*, Dontsov gave an over-all analysis of Russian culture and society, referring above all to literature as an empirical basis for his observations,[72] just as Brzozowski had done 12 years earlier in his essay on the "Crisis in Russian Literature" from *Voices in the Night*[73]—an essay Dontsov was familiar with, as we can conclude from the abovementioned quotation concerning Mikhail Artsybashev.

Alexander J. Motyl has rightly pointed out that we should not overemphasize the role of "ideas themselves as the source of his [Dontsov's] inspiration."[74] It is hardly possible to track down exactly whose books and articles Dontsov read, or whom he met and when. Even if we could approximately reconstruct his readings and encounters, this still would not allow us to assess how he rethought and evaluated these manifold inspirations, not to mention the political events of the time which also played an important part here.[75]

What we can do is point out some typological parallels between Dontsov and Brzozowski. When Dontsov declares his credo of "creative violence" and of "will and power,"[76] then this reads in fact as a somewhat simplified or radicalized version of Brzozowski's deliberations on the "search for and the creation of power"[77] from *The Legend of Modern Poland*. It reminds us also of Brzozowski's understanding of the "nation" as a "great source of creation" with the accent falling on the "family" and the "military and state organizations" from *Ideas*.[78] For the late Brzozowski, the "nation" was the unique source of self-consciousness, "since there are no non-national, international organs of spiritual life."[79] This would be a quite fitting definition of what is discussed as "integral

71 Dontsov, *Natsionalizm*, 171.

72 Dontsov, *Pidstavy nashoï polityky*.

73 Stanisław Brzozowski, "Kryzys w literaturze rosyjskiej" [1909], in *Głosy wśród nocy*, 173–199.

74 Alexander J. Motyl, *The Turn to the Right: The Ideological Origins and Development of Ukrainian Nationalism, 1919–1929* (New York: Columbia UP, 1980), 67.

75 Ibid., 67f.

76 Dontsov, *Natsionalizm*, 211.

77 Brzozowski, *Legenda Młodej Polski*, 398.

78 Brzozowski, *Idee*, 268, 264.

79 Ibid., 269.

nationalism" in research on Dontsov. In the same context, Brzozowski stressed the role of "power," a "power" that is inseparably linked to the nation and that alone allows a person to achieve real existential depth.[80] In *The Foundations of Our Politics*, Dontsov wrote that only a "clearly defined national ideal" could transform a "national idea" into the "crystalized core for individual or collective wills inside the nation"; without this core, they would find "other centers of gravity."[81] The nation is seen as the catalyst for individual and collective aspirations, it forges a community, vests it with a core and a direction. In this respect Brzozowski's and Dontsov's views coincide with only slight differences: Dontsov, who wrote his *Foundations* in the aftermath of World War I, was more concrete, more aggressive, and less philosophical than Brzozowski, since his political aims were more clearly defined.

However, all common inspirations, references, key words notwithstanding—this is hardly sufficient to speak of a "strong influence" exerted by Brzozowski's writings on Dontsov. I pointed out above that Sosnovs'kyi's story of their actual meeting is untenable. This still leaves us with the question why the editors of *My* put so much emphasis on the link between Brzozowski and Dontsov—when Brzozowski was hardly ever mentioned in the latter's writings. Stepan Lenkavs'kyi, the author of an early account of the philosophical foundations of Dontsov's concept of "nationalism," did not mention Brzozowski at all,[82] which perhaps does not mean much, since for adherents of the radically anti-Russian and anti-Polish Ukrainian nationalist movement, the intellectual affinity with a Polish thinker, whose possible collaboration with the Tsarist Okhrana was not entirely clarified, could well have been something better left unmentioned.

Brzozowski in the Polemical Context of Ukrainian (Galician) Interwar Criticism

For now, we have to assume that the story of Dontsov's "enthusiasm" for Brzozowski, as told by Sroka and Sosnovs'kyi, and, more recently, Bahan and Erlacher, had its origin exclusively in the introductory remarks to Rudnytskyi's piece on Brzozowski in *My* 1934.[83] But for what reason should Ivan Dubyts'kyi

80 Ibid., 270.

81 Dontsov, *Pidstavy nashoï polityky*, 125.

82 Stepan Lenkavs'kyi, "Fil'osofichni pidstavy 'Natsionalizmu' Dontsova," *Rozbudova natsiï* 7–8 (1928).

83 In the preface to his book Sosnovs'kyi indicates that he met Dontsov personally in 1968 and that he also had conversations with Dontsov's wife and other persons of his

and Andrei Kryzhanivs'kyi have chosen the reference to Brzozowski in order to discredit Dontsov, and why did they do so in a commentary that was meant to introduce the readers to a partly critical, but overall sympathetic, and at times even *enthusiastic* article on Brzozowski? In my view, the only explanation that makes sense (given the current state of knowledge) would be contextual: Mykhailo Rudnyts'kyi, who signed the essay but not the commentary (although we cannot know if he wrote it together with Dubyts'kyi and Kryzhanivs'kyi), was one of Dontsov's ideological adversaries within the Ukrainian intellectual community in interwar Poland—and one of the latter's principal rivals in the field of Ukrainian-language journalism and literary criticism.[84] In his articles Dontsov launched vivid attacks against proponents of nearly all ideological or political camps, most often denouncing them as "provençalist." Among others, this concerned Mykhailo Rudnyts'kyi.[85] The polemics between Dontsov and Rudnyts'kyi revolved around the role of the "worldview" for literature, Dontsov demanding of the writer a clear—if not political, at least philosophical—stance and a commitment to activity and struggle, whereas Rudnyts'kyi put the accent on aesthetic values.[86] Dontsov attacked not only the critic but also the prose-writer Rudnyts'kyi.[87] The charges directed against him and his journal *Nazustrich* (*Rendez-vous*) were: lack of principle, careerism, cynicism, decadence.[88] Rudnyts'kyi, for his part, in an interview published in the leftist Polish journal *Sygnały* (Signals), overtly labelled the contributors of Dontsov's *Vistnyk* as "nationalists of fascist orientation." He accused Dontsov of publishing works of a "certain specific tendency," regardless of their artistic value.[89] It must have been

entourage (Sosnovs'kyi, *Dmytro Dontsov*, 7f.). I assume that he relied on non-verified, most likely oral sources when he claimed that Dontsov and Brzozowski met in Zakopane in 1908/1909 (but this is of course just another conjecture).

84 Omel'chuk, *Literaturni idealy ukraïns'koho vistnykivstva (1922–1939)*, 85.

85 Stryjek, *Ukraińska idea narodowa okresu międzywojennego*, 170.

86 Cf.: Bahan, "Koryfei…," 15. Cf. also: Dmytro Dontsov, "Estetika dekadansu," [1930] in *Dvi literatury nashoï doby* (Toronto: Nakladom vydavnytstva „Homin Ukraïny", 1958), 197.

87 Dmytro Dontsov, "Nashe literaturne getto," [1932] in *Dvi literatury nashoï doby*, 219.

88 Dmytro Dontsov, "'L'Art pour l'art' chy iak stimul zhyttia?" [1935], in *Dvi literatury nashoï doby*, 225–258; 225f., 243–246.

89 "'Wistnyk' Doncowa skupił wokół siebie nacjonalistów faszystowskiego pokroju […]." "Droga na Zachód (Rozmowa z Michałem Rudnickim)" [The way to the West (a conversation with Michał Rudnicki)], *Sygnały* 4–5 (1934 = "Numer ukraiński"): 2. In 1934 *Vistnyk* published an essay by the German propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels. Omel'chuk, *Literaturni idealy ukraïns'koho vistnykivstva (1922–1939)*, 197.

especially provocative to Dontsov that this assessment was pronounced in a Polish journal and addressed to the Polish intellectual community.

Why should Ukrainian intellectuals of the interwar period have an interest in Brzozowski? Reading Brzozowski's novels *Płomienie* (Flames, 1908) or *Sam wśród ludzi* (Alone among People, 1911), and his critical essays we hardly ever encounter any Ukrainians. Although Michał Kaniowski's (from *Flames*) and Roman Ołucki's (from *Alone among People*) families live in Podolia, where the peasant population was ethnically Ukrainian, the Ukrainian element is practically absent in both novels. Andrzej Mencwel rightly noted that no works by Ukrainian authors are ever mentioned in Brzozowski's essays.[90] What then could attract Ukrainian intellectuals of the interwar period to this author? It is somewhat ironic that it is not Dontsov who can give us an answer to this question. His ideological and aesthetic adversary Rudnyts'kyi, who rejected any ideological, idea-centered approach to literature,[91] *did* formulate some thoughts on the possible relevance of Brzozowski's writings for Ukrainian readers of the 1930s. For Rudnyts'kyi, Brzozowski, in his messianic aspirations, was, above all, the "characteristic type of Slav who wants to catch up with Europe" and, attempting to achieve this goal, "opted for the most inappropriate means: prophecy" (проповідництво).[92] Brzozowski had wanted to liberate his nation "through literature," to "give her a national philosophy or religion." It was, according to Rudnyts'kyi, this romanticist idea that inspired the Polish philosopher.[93] It is quite characteristic that he concentrates notably on the late Brzozowski's ideas on identity and nationality. This allows him to draw a parallel between the fate of the Ukrainian nation in the 1930s and that of the Poles at the beginning of the century, but we also notice some reserve on his part when it comes to the applicability of Brzozowski's world-view: "As members of a stateless nation which is inspired by steely outcries about national strength we have the tendency to take the famous slogans of great demagogues for a worldview."[94] Unlike many Polish intellectuals of the interwar period, Rudnyts'kyi was clear about the lack of clarity in

90 Andrzej Mencwel, *Stanisław Brzozowski. Postawa krytyczna. Wiek XX* [Stanisław Brzozowski. The critical attitude. The twentieth century] (Warszawa: Krytyka Polityczna, 2014), 185. In a personal conversation with the author, Mencwel argued that it was Brzozowski's *szlachta* background that made him ignore this part of the social reality in nineteenth-century Podolia (August 30, 2014).

91 Mykhailo Rudnyts'kyi, "Meta i metoda," in *Vid Mirnoho do Khvyl'ovoho. Mizh ideieiu i formoiu. Shcho take "Moloda Muza"?*, 34.

92 Rudnyts'kyi, "Muchenyk neprymyrennykh idealiv," 192.

93 Ibid., 194.

94 Ibid.

Brzozowski's writings. For him, there could be no straightforward reading of Brzozowski; there was no direct link even between the last chapters of *The Legend of Modern Poland* and a concrete political platform that could lead to national liberation. Brzozowski's thoughts were too complex, too manifold, and too vague and foggy to be used for political propaganda. These statements seemed to be directed against Dmytro Dontsov, although, let us stress this once again, Brzozowski's allegedly crucial role for Dontsov was nothing but an assumption issued implicitly by Rudnyts'kyi himself and explicitly by his editors. As a matter of fact, Rudnyts'kyi was quite skeptical about a possible impact of Brzozowski's ideas and concepts on future readers. He asked, "how could one transfer the electric energy of Brzozowski's works to the accumulator of a well-constructed factory"?[95] Brzozowski's library reminded him of a chemistry laboratory with extracts and essences on every shelf. The question only was, "How to make use of this experiment?"[96] Apparently, Rudnyts'kyi did not have an answer to this question.

In all his meditations on criticism and literature, Rudnyts'kyi paid a great deal of attention to the role of minor literatures, namely Ukrainian literature, as confronted with the literature of urban elites, European, or even "Weltliteratur."[97] He was very much concerned about the theoretical level of Ukrainian literary criticism—in Polish Galicia as well as in Soviet-ruled Ukraine—and deplored the divide between European discussions and the intellectual sphere in Galicia.[98] The common thread of his 1932 book *Mizh ideieiu i formoiu* (Between Idea and Form) was the role of ideology in literature and the struggle against the attempts of the representatives of "national criticism" to claim national ideology as the superior criterion in discussions about literature.[99] Rudnyts'kyi's understanding of the critic's role was very similar to Brzozowski's. In *Between Idea and Form*, he wrote:

95 Ibid., 195.

96 Ibid., 199.

97 Cf.: Rudnyts'kyi, *Vid Mirnoho do Khvyl'ovoho*, 84.

98 Rudnyts'kyi, "Nash riven' dyskusiï" [Our standard of discussion], in *Vid Mirnoho do Khvyl'ovoho*, 343f.

99 Cf.: Rudnyts'kyi, "Rizni dukhovi potreby" [Various spiritual needs], in *Vid Mirnoho do Khvyl'ovoho*, 356–364.

[…] literature is a battlefield of different currents and ships; the role of the critic is to recognize the direction of the wind and to distinguish armored cruisers from boats, but also to discover the new shores to which these are heading, unconscious of their aim.[100]

This of course reminds us of Brzozowski's depiction of the critic as "the poet of this new *Odyssey* across the sea of the human spirit and life" and as "a cartographer of strange journeys" in his essay "Kilka uwag o stanie ogólnym literatury europejskiej i o zadaniach krytyki literackiej I" (Some Remarks on the General State of European Literature I) from *Voices in the Night*.[101]

Although Rudnyts'kyi only rarely mentioned Dontsov by name, it is nevertheless rather obvious that the views he expressed in the essays published in *Mizh ideieiu i formoiu* and *Vid Mirnoho do Khvyl'ovoho* (1936) were at least in part meant to counter Dontsov's program of a nationalist literature. Given the wide range of key works of modern European literature and criticism quoted and discussed by Rudnyts'kyi, we can in fact conclude that for him Dontsov's ideology of literature was not "provençal," but *provincial* in the plain sense of the word. For Rudnyts'kyi the way out of the ghetto of minority literature meant having to broaden perspectives, to spread European ideas and to develop an ethos of 'world literature'. Young Ukrainian writers should not be content with compliments issued by domestic (i.e., Ukrainian-language) criticism. After all, criticism that did not refer to examples from world literature was nothing but "ordinary provincial propaganda."[102] For Rudnyts'kyi and, arguably less, for Dontsov, Brzozowski served as a model here: an intellectual of European stature who did not limit himself to his own, parochial world, who included in his meditations on culture and the nation nearly every new idea or philosophical current to appear on the European stage. At the same time, Rudnyts'kyi made use of Brzozowski's name to discredit his adversary. Insinuating that Dontsov borrowed his ideas and a good deal of his bibliographical references from Brzozowski, Rudnyts'kyi tried to convince his Ukrainian readers of Dontsov's profound provinciality: There was nothing original about the ideas of the author of *Nationalism*, which would be obvious for readers once they gained access to Brzozowski's texts. On the other hand, he implicitly used references to Dontsov to distinguish Brzozowski, the sophisticated critic and connoisseur of European

100 Rudnyts'kyi, "Pragmatychnyi kryterii" [Pragmatic criteria], in *Vid Mirnoho do Khvyl'ovoho*, 413.

101 "Krytyk dziś musi być poetą tej nowej Odysei po morzach ducha i życia ludzkiego, która jest jedynym możliwym eposem naszego czasu. […] on [krytyk] jest kartografem dziwnych podróży." Brzozowski, *Głosy wśród nocy*, 97.

102 Rudnicki, "Droga na Zachód," 3.

literature, from Brzozowski, the predecessor of nationalist (and by this: simplified) cultural criticism.

Conclusion

The answer to the question I have posed in the title of this paper is negative. However, even if we have no evidence that Brzozowski inspired Ukrainian nationalist thought, we can state that at a certain moment Brzozowski served as a point of reference in a discussion about the interconnections between aesthetic and political concepts in Ukrainian criticism of the 1930s. Brzozowski *did* indeed inspire Mykhailo Rudnyts'kyi's critical writings and his aesthetics. Rudnyts'kyi overtly acknowledged this indebtedness. Curiously enough, in doing so, he (or his editors) simultaneously ascribed an indebtedness to Brzozowski to his principal ideological adversary in the field of Ukrainian (Galician) literary criticism of the time. The aim of this insinuation is clear: What can a nationalist program be worth that is entirely based on borrowings from a philosopher and critic who, in the Galician context, belongs to the hegemonic culture—the culture whose dominance a Ukrainian nationalist program has to tackle in the first place?

We were able to see that the parallels between Brzozowski and Dontsov are merely typological; shared concepts, rhetoric devices, and biographical references notwithstanding. However, the most astonishing outcome of this short overview is that the hypothesis of Brzozowski's "strong impact" on Dontsov, which we could trace back to inner-Ukrainian (Galician) critical polemics of the 1930s, has lived on and been reiterated in various sources right to the present. Furthermore, it is astonishing that those who postulated an impact of Brzozowski's writings on Dontsov also postulated a meeting between both authors—in absence of any viable historical source and as if this were a prerequisite for 'influence'. Apparently, in intellectual history there still is a strong need for real persons and their actual "accelerated pulse," as Brzozowski put it in his *Diary*.[103]

103 "[…] wszystkie kosmologie i metafizyki, to epizody biografii, to czyjś puls przyspieszony, czyjś błysk oczu – wszystko w człowieku" ("[…] all cosmologies and metaphysics are nothing else than episods of a biography, one's accelerated pulse, the shine in one's eyes—all is in the person). Brzozowski, *Pamiętnik*, 164.

WORKS CITED

Babii, Oles'. "Mykola Ievshan (Fediushka)." *Literaturno-Naukovyi Vistnyk* 28, 11 (1929): 975–981.

Bahan, Oleh. "Koryfei liberal'noï literaturnoï krytyky." In Mykhailo Rudnyts'kyi. *Vid Myrnoho do Khvil'ovoho. Mizh ideieiu i formoiu. Shcho take "Moloda Muza"?*, edited by Oleh Bahan, 3–26. Drohobych: Vidrodzhennia, 2009.

—. "Dzherela svitohliadnoho natsionalizmu Dmytra Dontsova." In Dmytro Dontsov. *Vybrani tvory u desiaty tomakh*. Vol. 1: *Politychna analityka (1912–1918 rr.)*, edited by Oleh Bahan, 5–19. Drohobych – L'viv: Vidrodzhennia, 2011.

—. "Ideoloh natsional'noï velychi." http://dontsov.info/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=121:oleg-bagan-qideolog-nacionalnoji-velychiq-&catid=36:poslidovniki&Itemid=41

Brzozowski, Stanislaus. "Der Geschichtsmaterialismus als Kulturphilosophie: ein philosophisches Programm." *Die neue Zeit: Wochenschrift der deutschen Sozialdemokratie* 31 (1907): 153–160. http://library.fes.de/cgi-bin/neuzeit.pl?id=07.06297&dok=1906-07b&f=190607b_0153&l=190607b_0160&c=190607b_0153

—. "Kilka uwag o stanie ogólnym literatury europejskiej i o zadaniach krytyki literackiej I." *Głosy wśród nocy*, 1–97.

Davlietova, Hanna V. "D. I. Dontsov: Pochatok formuvannia svitohliadu." *Naukovi pratsi istorychnoho fak-tu ZNU* 21 (2007): 138–143.

Döblin, Alfred. *Reise in Polen*. München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1987.

Dontsov, Dmytro. *Pidstavy nashoï polityky*. Viden': Vydavnytstvo Dontsovykh, 1921.

—. "Nashi tsily." *Literaturno-naukovyi vistnyk* 1 (May 1922): 1–5.

—. *Natsionalizm*. L'viv: Vydavnitstvo "Nove Zhyttia", 1926.

—. *Dvi literatury nashoï doby*. Toronto: Nakladom vydavnytstva "Homin Ukraïny", 1958.

—. *Literaturna eseïstyka*. Edited by Oleh Bahan. Drohobych: Vidrodzhennia, 2009.

—. *Vybrani tvory u desiaty tomakh*. Vol. 2: *Kul'turolohichna ta istoriosofs'ka eseïstyka (1911–1939) rr.)*, edited by Oleh Bahan. Drohobych – L'viv: "Vidrodzhennia", 2012.

Dubyts'kyi, Ivan, and Andrei Kryzhanivs'kyi. "Prim. Redaktsiï." *My. Literaturnyi neperiodychnyi zhurnal* 3 (1934): 174f.

— and Andrei Kryzhanivs'kyi. "Patetychna peredmova, napysana hlybokym znavtsem chytal'nyts'koï psykhiky na zamovlennia redaktsiï ta v ïï imeni." *My* 3 (1934): 5–14.

Erlacher, Trevor. "The Birth of Ukrainian 'Active Nationalism': Dmytro Dontsov and Heterodox Marxism before World War I, 1883–1914." *Modern Intellectual History* 11, 3 (2014): 519–548.

Feldman, Wilhelm. *Współczesna literatura polska, 1864–1917*. Part III, 6th ed. Warsaw: Towarzystwo Wydawnicze w Warszawie, 1919.

Kuryluk, Karol. "Krytyk ukraiński o Stanisławie Brzozowskim." *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* 34 (1935): 676.

Koshelivets, Ivan. "Rudnytsky, Mykhailo." *Internet Encyclopedia of Ukraine*. http://www.encyclopediaofukraine.com/display.asp?linkpath=pages\R\U\RudnytskyMykhailo.htm

Kvit, Serhii. *Dmytro Dontsov: ideolohichnyi portret*. 2nd ed. L'viv: Galyts'ka vydavnycha spilka, 2013.

Lenkavs'kyi, Stepan. "Fil'osofichni pidstavy 'Natsionalizmu' Dontsova." *Rozbudova natsiï* 7–8 (1928): 272–276.

Łobodowski, Józef. "Dmytro Doncow: życie i działalność." *Zeszyty Historyczne* 55 (1981): 144–160.

Mencwel, Andrzej. *Stanisław Brzozowski. Postawa krytyczna. Wiek XX*. Warszawa: Krytyka Polityczna, 2014.

Motyl, Alexander J. *The Turn to the Right: The Ideological Origins and Development of Ukrainian Nationalism, 1919–1929*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1980.

Newman, John Henry. *Przyświadczenia wiary*. Translated and with a foreword by Stanisław Brzozowski. Lwów: Księgarnia Polska B. Połonieckiego / Warszawa: E. Wende i Ska., 1915.

Omel'chuk, Olesia. *Literaturni idealy ukraïns'kogo vistnykivstva (1922–1939)*. Kyïv: "Smoloskyp", 2011.

Rudnicki, Michał. "O konkretności myśli Jerzego Sorela." In Georges Sorel. *O sztuce, religii i filozofii*. Translated by Michał Rudnicki, v-lvi. Lwów: Księgarnia Polska B. Połonieckiego / Warszawa: E. Wende i Spółka, 1913.

— [=bwl]. "Współczesna literatura ukraińska." *Słowo Polskie*, April 24, 1931: 6. http://jbc.bj.uj.edu.pl/dlibra/plain-content?id=200345

—. "Droga na Zachód (Rozmowa z Michałem Rudnickim)." *Sygnały* 4–5 (1934 = "Numer ukraiński"): 2f.

— [Rudnyts'kyi, Mykhailo]. "Muchenyk neprymyrennykh idealiv. Stanislav Bzhozovs'kyi." *My. Literaturnyi neperiodychnyi zhurnal* 3 (Summer 1934): 174–199.

—. *Vid Mirnoho do Khvyl'ovoho. Mizh ideieiu i formoiu. Shcho take "Moloda Muza"?*, edited by Oleh Bahan. Drohobych: Vidrozhdennia, 2009.

Sosnovs'kyi, Mykhailo. *Dmytro Dontsov: politychnyi portret. Z istoriï rozvytku ideologiï ukraïns'koho natsionalizmu*. New York: Trident International, Inc., 1974.

Sroka, Mieczysław. "Przedmowa." In Brzozowski. *Listy*, Vol. 1, vii–lxxx.

Steila, Daniela. "A philosophy of labour: comparing A. V. Lunačarskij and S. Brzozowski." *Studies in East European Thought* 63 (2011): 315–327.

Stryjek, Tomasz. *Ukraińska idea narodowa okresu międzywojennego*. Toruń: Wyd. Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2013.

Szpakowska, Małgorzata. *"Wiadomości Literackie" prawie dla wszystkich*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo W.A.B., 2012.

Urbanowski, Maciej. "Stanisław Brzozowski and Fascism." *Studies in East European Thought* 63 (2011): 303–313.

Walicki, Andrzej. *Stanisław Brzozowski and the Polish Beginnings of 'Western Marxism'*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989.

Yurkevich, Myroslaw. "Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists." *Internet Encyclopedia of Ukraine*. http://www.encyclopediaofukraine.com/display.asp?linkpath=pages\O\R\OrganizationofUkrainianNationalists.htm

Zaitsev, Oleksandr. Ukraïns'kyi integral'nyi natsionalizm (1920–1930-ti roky). Narysy intelektual'noï istoriï. Kyiv: Krytyka, 2013.

[no author indicated]. "Z presovoho fil'mu." *Vistnyk* II, 3 (1934): 228–231.

Brzozowski and Cioran: *The Legend of Young Poland* and *The Transformation of Romania*

Andrzej Zawadzki

An attempt to compare Stanisław Brzozowski's and Emil Cioran's philosophies may seem initially surprising and not very promising. They belong to different generations (Cioran was born the year of Brzozowski's death in 1911) and, what is even more important, they dealt with different philosophical problems. For Polish readers, Cioran, as the author of *Pe culmile disperării* (On the Heights of Despair), is first of all a historian of Western decadence and a perspicuous critic of the illusions inherent in the Western narrative of modernization. His works are full of extreme existential, cultural, and civilizational pessimism, atheism, and melancholy; he as well sees time and history as murky regions of decadence and corruption in which all hope is doomed to vanish. This philosophical stance seems to be in contradiction with Brzozowski's line of thinking, which, in brief, can be characterized as an expression of humanism and vitalism, the belief in the highest value of history, man, and his projects, and the possibility of progress. These are all characteristic features of the early, heroic version of modernity which is still unconscious of its own dark side.

The area in which I want to situate the comparison between Brzozowski and Cioran is the problem of modernity, or more precisely a modernity that has been deferred. The nations of East-Central Europe, which are situated spatially and temporarily on the margins of European modernity, have been experiencing this delay since the late nineteenth century and they have had to face the problems that arise from this. Cioran deals with such problems in his third book, *Schimbarea la faţă a Romaniei* (Transformation of Romania), published in 1936. I want to concentrate my attention on this book because, as far as I know, it has

not been translated into Polish or English[1] and it presents aspects of Cioran's thought that are relatively unknown. Brzozowski's ideas, which are much more popular and better known (at least in Poland), will serve here as a context. By comparing some parts of Brzozowski's and Cioran's philosophies, I also want to substantiate my thesis that the former defined a set of problems that successive Central European thinkers have had to solve or at least to deal with.

Cioran frequently made critical and ironic observations about his compatriots in a number of works, but he most fully confronts Romanian identity in *Transformation of Romania*. It should be noted that the character and ardour of this confrontation can be compared with Brzozowski's clash with Polish identity in *Legenda Młodej Polski* (The Legend of Young Poland). When writing their crucial texts, both Brzozowski and Cioran were young men at the respective ages of thirty-one and twenty-six. The historical, civilizational, and cultural contexts of these two works were set as confrontations with their respective "backward" countries during the inevitable process of modernization. However, the consequences of these clashes were the creation of modern nations and modern national cultures.

Some of the similarities between Brzozowski and Cioran can be found in their concepts of culture, their styles in critically analyzing these cultural phenomena, their visions of modernity, the way in which they treat history and the historical dimension of culture, and their rhetoric and the narrative roles that they assume as the speaking subjects of their works.

Even without getting into a detailed discussion of the authors' opinions concerning Polish and Romanian societies, it is easy to notice that both thinkers were pessimistic about the state of their societies, and they consequently deliver a thorough and total critique of the cultural forms that are created by them. Due to their backwardness and their inability to develop culture, these forms are responsible for the deep inertia in the Polish and Romanian societies. Brzozowski and Cioran seem to presume that culture is the expression of social consciousness which can either assist or hinder a society's needs and progress. They also share the conviction that Poland and Romania required a project that would be able to satisfy the needs of the modernizing societies in their times. Thus, both writers can be considered as representatives of *Kulturkritik* in a Central-European form.

The problem of history is crucial in Cioran's remarks on the Romanian condition, as having no history, or existing on its margins; it is the biggest issue for the Romanian people. Getting into history through the conscious creation of it

1 A French translation entitled *Transfiguration de la Roumanie* was published in 2008 by L'Herne publishing house.

then should be the country's greatest goal, or even an obsession. Cioran goes as far as to invent terms meant to accentuate Romania's lack of history in his use of, for example, "sub-history,"[2] "a-history" (63), "non-history" (78), and "historical dream" (63). He illustrates this lack by contrasting history to the other concepts that replace it. First, he opposes history to time and the past, stating that "the past of Romania is time without history" (49) so that time is just simple duration, change, and flux. Along with this, Cioran contrasts history with geography so that "Romania is geography, and not history" (57), which consequently places geography—the domination of a spatial dimension in its immutability, stability, and continuity being rooted in some defined place—over history. Finally, he sees the metaphysical, irrational idea of fate replacing history; he argues that "Romanians do not understand history, [instead] they substitute destiny for history" (94). Fate is opposed to history as a synonym of eternity, determinism, and a passive acceptance of destiny, which received its full expression in the famous folk ballad "Miorița." The idea of fate is also close to the "lyrical proximity of being" (74) in which it is possible to find the "*ontologism*" characteristic of the Romanian culture. This can be identified with the primacy of idle being over change and, generally, with a static concept of the world, nature, and life as stable, given, and pre-formed structures, or, as Cioran himself puts it, "the worship of created reality, which causes inertia and stagnation" (102).

There are at least four important features that are common to Cioran's and Brzozowski's philosophies of history. First, they are both convinced that history is the only realm in which the creative potential of humankind can be realized and, consequently, they claim that neither an individual nor a nation can exist outside of history. They also treat history in purely anthropological terms, and not in religious or providential ones ("Man can create only one condition that gives him a central position in history," 104). Brzozowski and Cioran additionally reject the idea of any given and pre-formed reality which they treat as an illusion and fiction, and thus they also reject the so-called "referential" concept of truth (i.e., truth seen as correspondence between cognitive structures and reality) treating it as a kind of illusion, based on the belief in the stable, unchanged essence of reality. Instead, they accept an "existential" idea of truth the essence of which lies in the creation of ever-new conditions and circumstances that serve life by stimulating progress and development. And lastly, both thinkers share the opinion that authentic history is the affirmation of coming into being and constant renewal. They also treat it as a domain of the will, an affir-

2 Emil Cioran, *Schimbarea la față a României* [Transformation of Romania] (București: Humanitas, 1993), 41, 47 (henceforth, quotes from this book will be referenced directly in the main text).

mation of a nation's existence and force, a domain in which a nation is fighting for recognition, and a process in which it gradually becomes self-conscious.

The problem of modernity is strictly connected with the problem of history. Cioran describes modernity on the two basic levels of civilization and philosophy. Both Cioran and Brzozowski use suggestive and clear contrasts in order to accentuate aspects of modernity that differentiate it from pre-modernity. Violent industrialization and urbanization are two fundamental phenomena that determine the character of modern culture. The city is a fully historical phenomenon: both knowledge and novel cultural forms are produced there, while on the other hand, the rural is the "suspension of history" because it is satisfied with spirituality and, in its simplicity and homogeneity, it can be no more than a biological reserve of the nation (118–120). Peasants have always existed at the peripheries of life; yet, the worker is situated at the very center of it—he can independently create life because he is aware of his significance and value (124). Subsequently, it is the worker who represents a new kind of humanity that determines the modern world's form, and mass culture created by the proletariat is a new kind of history (127). Peasants are reactionary, whereas the modern working masses are fighting for the self-consciousness they are deprived of. Their struggle takes form as a revolution which is then the crucial turning point of history that imposes its direction and substance on the simple and inert. According to Cioran, the evolution leading from the closed, integrated, and homogenous community to the shapeless mass that lacks any inner form and is based only on economic interest is degradation. Nevertheless, this process is historically necessary, it has an air of grandeur and fatalism which accentuates the tragic character of modernity (128).

Both Brzozowski and Cioran, as theorists of modernity, largely approve of urban civilization instead of traditional rural existence, which belongs to the past and is doomed to disappear. These traditional forms are represented by the Polish landed gentry in Brzozowski's thought and, in Cioran's opinion, their best incarnation is the Romanian peasantry. They unanimously see a new kind of humanity in the worker as creative and self-conscious (124). Modernity is, in their eyes, first of all a leap into history, life, and coming into being; it is also a creative impulse that liberates people from the passivity and inertia of the rural communities; and it is a chance to discover and develop the creative potential of humanity. But modernity is not only an opportunity, it is also a task that must be carried out by communities still deeply rooted in some form of pre-modernity. So, both thinkers seem to address their compatriots with an urgent and radical message: either we become modern or we perish.

The foregoing similarities of Brzozowski and Cioran can be explained by the influence of the philosophy of life on both writers. In Romania, the best known and most influential partisan of this philosophy was Nae Ionescu, an intellectual patron and mentor of the entire generation of the young Romanian intellectuals born at the beginning of the twentieth century. Moreover, both Polish and Romanian thinkers can be recognized as disciples of Hegel. According to Brzozowski, Hegel first of all holds that the subject, made and formed in and by history, must finally dominate and control history. Cioran understands that for Hegel history is a process in the development of self-consciousness: "Hegel taught us a truth which became a cliché, the deepest sense of historical life is the realization of *consciousness* and the development of history is the development of consciousness" (7).

Although their styles differ, Brzozowski and Cioran adopt similar narrative roles and use many similar rhetorical devices. In his seminal essay on the discourse of the *Legend of Young Poland*, Michał Głowiński discerns three basic narrative roles of teacher, pamphleteer, and interpreter played by Brzozowski.[3] Similar roles can be discerned in Cioran's *Transformation of Romania*. Both writers are sharp analysts and interpreters of contemporary culture and profound cultural critics. Moreover, they often serve as *the* educators of their societies, or even the prophets who uncover weaknesses, ruthlessly castigate vices, guide future development, and indicate the only means of salvation.

Many similarities can also be noticed in the style of both treatises. They are impetuous, accusatory and visionary, and full of passion and pathos. In the case of Cioran's book, even the title is a reference to the feast of the Transfiguration of Jesus ("Schimbarea la Faţa" in Romanian), which endows the entire discourse with a sublime and quasi-religious character. Both Brzozowski and Cioran use a very rich language, full of courageous generalities, effective formulas, and brilliant aphorisms—a mode of language which is very different from the reserved, transparent, and neutral style of a traditional philosophical paper. All of these features make these books philosophical essays, which was a very popular literary-philosophical genre at the turn of the twentieth century and during its first decades. Most important is the fact that all of these stylistic features and linguistic devices are not accidental, nor are they just an ornament of speech, but they are strictly connected with the essential features of thinking, in which description and critical assessment, analysis of the contemporary world, and projections of

3 Michał Głowiński, *Ekspresja i empatia* [Expression and empathy] (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1997), 290.

the future are tightly interconnected. The language used by Brzozowski and Cioran is then a performative language, focused on changing reality.[4]

WORKS CITED

Cioran, Emil. *Schimbarea la faţă a României*. Bucureşti: Humanitas, 1993.

—. *Transfiguration de la Roumanie.* Paris: L'Herne, 2008.

Głowiński, Michał. *Ekspresja i empatia*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1997.

Kozicka, Dorota. "'Umysł w stanie nieustannego tworzenia'. O krytyce Stanisława Brzozowskiego jako akcie performatywnym." *Teksty Drugie* 5 (2011): 265–274.

4 Dorota Kozicka was the first to describe the performative aspects of Brzozowski's language in her essay "'Umysł w stanie nieustannego tworzenia'. O krytyce Stanisława Brzozowskiego jako akcie performatywnym" ["A mind in the state of incessant creation." On Stanisław Brzozowski's criticism as a performative act], *Teksty Drugie* 5 (2011).

Brzozowski and the Italians

Joanna Orska

Brzozowski's preface to his *Idee* (Ideas) is a case unique in its kind, altogether contrary to the rationalist canon of modern science. He certainly was not the first thinker who recognized that a philosophical 'opus' is first of all a process as well as an active method of development and construction—the creation of the philosopher's own consciousness. However, it is here as well that the philosopher begins his life-long summa by way of personal confidences that take the form of an intellectual diary. Not only does Brzozowski not give an account of the chapters that make up his philosophical book, he likewise provides no alternative systematic overview of its contents. The author opens his text in a most peculiar way, compromising so to say the objectivity of his own research presented here as a journey through life: "an odyssey across the seas of the human spirit and life which in our time is the only possible epic" (odyseja po morzach ducha i życia ludzkiego, która jest jedynym możliwym eposem naszego czasu).[1] For example:

Krytyka moja była buntem nie posiadającym lub poszukującym dla siebie organów myśli, i w ich braku walczyła takimi, na których ciążyła jeszcze przynależność do bezhistorycznego, abstrakcyjnego stanowiska myślowego, tego właśnie stanowiska, z którym podjąłem walkę.[2]

My critique was a revolt neither possessing nor seeking to find organs of thinking, and in their absence it was a struggle against those afflicted by adherence to an ahistorical, abstract form of thinking, the form precisely that I set out to oppose.

1 Stanisław Brzozowski, "Kilka uwag o stanie ogólnym literatury europejskiej i o zadaniach krytyki literackiej I" (Some remarks about the overall state of literature in Europe and the tasks of literary criticism, part I), *Głosy wśród nocy*, 97.

2 Brzozowski, *Idee*, 71f.

And again:

Stanisław Przybyszewski to oswobodził mnie z tej najniebezpieczniejszej dla zmysłu prawdy i życia jednolitego niewoli: – dzięki niemu przekonałem się, że można żyć na stanowiskach duchowych nakazanych nam przez poczucie wewnętrzne prawdy nawet wtedy, gdy nie mamy w myśli naszej żadnych środków utrzymania się na nich.[3]

Stanislaw Przybyszewski freed me from that most pernicious captivity affecting the sense of truth and the integral life—thanks to him I came to the conviction that it is possible to live on a spiritual basis prescribed to us by our inner sense of truth even when in our thinking we lack any means to stand firm on it.

Passages like these give the impression that we find ourselves at the heart of a nineteenth-century *Bildungsroman* or else in the face of an ironic, self-conscious statement by a character from Witkiewicz, or perhaps as well that we are presented with a fragment from Brzozowski's novel *Płomienie* (Flames) or from his *Książka o starej kobiecie* (A Book about an Old Woman). It is not my point to suggest that *Ideas* starts out as a novel—including recourse to essayistic form, blending a variety of expressive styles, the interpenetration of literary, critical, and philosophical matter, which are rather common in texts grounded in the romantic tradition. Of greater interest would be the kind of strategy to which Brzozowski appeals: it consists in not separating the progressive construction of the creative subject—the critical subject taking shape through self-thematizing, the discovery of fundamental premises for philosophizing within biography—from the philosophical matter itself.

Brzozowski himself, taking account of his own experience of reading Sorel, and by the same token instructing his reader as to possible ways of reading, incites us to change our understanding of the tasks a philosophical text has to fulfill. He puts the accent not so much on the actual meaning contained in the text but on the cognitive activity it triggers. This is not about what the text means but how it acts.

Narzędzie działa i żyje tylko w samym procesie; dlatego tak trudno jest czytać Sorela. Dojrzały czytelnik tych pism [...] przekona się, że pozornie są one tylko tak chaotyczne, że nie są to niespójne nagromadzenia uwag, *ale nowo narodzone, nieznające jeszcze swej własnej natury organizmy myślowe*.[4]

3 Ibid., 72.

4 Ibid., 257.

A tool acts and lives only in the process itself; that is why it is so difficult to read Sorel. A mature reader of his writings [...] will come to see that only superficially are they chaotic, *that they are not formless collections of remarks, but newly born thought organisms still ignorant of their own nature*.

According to Brzozowski, Sorel does not construct a philosophical conclusion on the basis of his considerations: he does not explicate ready-made meanings, rather he 'creates meaning in us': "Pisze on ściśle tylko tyle, ile tworzy; daje nam sam proces życiowy myśli" (He writes precisely only as much as he creates; he offers us the very course of life within thought).[5] Brzozowski offers a similar reading of Bergson. What remains important for Brzozowski is the specific 'activism' of philosophical thinking that shapes its meanings in a way resembling the manner in which literature does by exploiting the metaphorical might of fiction, viz., performatively, in a progressive manner, often dramatizing the text by means of what only seem to be fragmentary statements colliding against one another and obliging the reader to second the struggle of ideas and apply himself to the intellectual outcome of their friction.[6]

In the important chapter in *Ideas* devoted to Sorel and Bergson, the author writes of the "unsystematic" character of the former's works. They do not permit of "abstract treatment" but constitute "multilateral and vital tools"—"this strange something, that needs to be created by one's own effort in the soul, as an organ of thought, apt to think about life without injuring it [the organ]" (to dziwne coś, co zrodzić trzeba własnym wysiłkiem w duszy, jako organ myśli, zdolny myśleć o życiu, nie krzywdząc jego).[7] The fluidity of meanings, extracting them in the course of the subject's intellectual labor, *in statu nascendi*, is connected evidently with, besides Bergson's ideally realized perspective, an element previously referred to in the book and tied directly to Marxist philosophy. The reference is to Antonio Labriola's philosophy of practice (*filosofia della praxis*) understood as the codependence of philosophy and practice, as "the emancipation of life from the dominance of the concepts through which we conceive of it" (emancypacj[a] życia spod władzy form pojęciowych, za pomocą których je

5 Ibid., 258.

6 See also: Joanna Orska, "Stanisław Brzozowski – poeta i filozof. Krytyka jako poezja progresywna w *Głosach wśród nocy*" (Stanislaw Brzozowski—poet and philosopher. Criticism as progressive poetry in *Voices in the Night*), *Teksty drugie* 5 (2011); eadem, "Ja – 'arabeska'" [The self is an arabesque], in *Stanisław Brzozowski (ko)repetycje*, vol. 1, ed. Dorota Kozicka, Joanna Orska, and Krzysztof Uniłowski (Katowice: FA-art, 2012).

7 Brzozowski, *Idee*, 257.

ujmujemy).[8] The Hegelian-Marxist conviction that humanity is its own more or less conscious product explains Brzozowski's insistent and apodictic tone when, writing about Sorel's philosophy, he insisted that agreement and intellectual concordance do not constitute the basis for truth:

[...] prawda musi polegać *na tym, że się nią jest, a nie zaś, że się ją poznaje*. I że cały wielokształtny świat ludzki może pozostawać *w głębokiej zgodzie z samym sobą*, różniąc się umysłowo i duchowo nieskończenie i wiedząc, że ta *różnica* jest organem tej zgody.[9]

[...] *one is in the truth, one does not come to know it*. And that the entire multifaceted human world can remain *in profound agreement with itself* while manifesting endless intellectual and spiritual diversity, aware at the same time that this diversity is the organ of agreement.

In the present study, what interests me is the 'poetic', that is, literary aspect that a philosophical work acquires as it establishes the creation of an 'interactive', 'living' text-work. Its task would be to represent, or rather to constitute in the reader, the sort of formula for 'truth' that one is to be in the course of action, through the 'progressive autonomization' of philosophical thought. Such 'poetic' experimentation in the context of a philosophical exposition is typical of Brzozowski and can rarely be found elsewhere. The more typical nineteenth century post-romantic thinking, rife in the energy of Marxist or Nietzschean discourse, remains the straightforward discursive declaration of the inseparability of philosophy and philology as tools of 'autonomization'. From an 'external' perspective, this is accompanied by the conviction that they cannot be separated from biology, physics, history, economics, politics—every kind of science and art. This kind of tradition is equally important for German idealist philosophy as well as for the specific renaissance-like humanism of the Italian interpreters of Marxism at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These two tendencies constituted the core of Brzozowski's most essential and critical thinking.

8 Brzozowski, *Idee*, 82. Brzozowski first mentions Labriola when discussing the notion of historical materialism in the presently discussed chapter and in another entitled "Epigenetyczna teoria historii" (Epigenetic theory of history) in which Labriola is evoked in the context of a critique of orthodox "post-Engels" Marxism. Brzozowski refers to him as a writer important for both Bergson and Sorel as well as for the Italian thinkers Croce and Gentile, reference to whose writings recurs in *Idee* on several occasions. Brzozowski also wrote a separate essay devoted to Labriola, which was first published in the collection *Kultura i życie* (1907).

9 Brzozowski, *Idee*, 255.

In his introduction to *Ideas*, Andrzej Walicki underscores the specific alternative that thinkers—who stood apart from the politicized and evolutionistic readings of Marxism by the legislators of the II International (Plekhanov, Kautsky), based mostly on *Capital* and Engels's version of Marxism—created to operate with Marxist categories (the world understood as the correlate of activity). Walicki also draws attention to the resemblance of Brzozowski's views to those of the somewhat younger theoretician and critic of Marxism, Antonio Gramsci.[10] Brzozowski and Gramsci both read Labriola, Croce, and Italian critics and aestheticians drawing similar interpretations from their works. The immanentist conception of reality as reduced to the activity of history, or as Gramsci put it, "pure humanism," explains Kant's subjective conception of reality as the "historical subjectivity of a social group."[11] Freed from all manner of transcendental excesses, radical historicism, by renouncing an essentialist conception of human nature and asserting that all human knowledge is the product of human history, shows that—as Walicki demonstrates—Gramsci is closer to Brzozowski than to Lukács.[12] The simplest way of putting the point is to say that this specific understanding of Marxism (in contradiction to the II International) makes Brzozowski's and Gramsci's thinking kindred. However, Brzozowski, while citing Labriola as an unorthodox and independent Marx interpreter, turned as well on several occasions to yet another Italian source that was for him quite essential, providing a common thread of meaning for the pursuits of the positive heroes of his *Idee*, viz. Giambattisto Vico's *Scienzia Nuova*.[13]

In a recently published book devoted to contemporary Italian Marxist thought, Roberto Esposito assesses its history in relation to the category of phi-

10 See also Walicki's *Stanisław Brzozowski and the Beginnings of 'Western Marxism'* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989).

11 Andrzej Walicki, "Filozofia dojrzałości dziejowej," (The philosophy of historical maturity), introduction to: Brzozowski, *Idee*, 23.

12 Walicki, *Stanisław Brzozowski and the Polish Beginnings of 'Western Marxism',* 26. There are still other similarities between Brzozowski and Gramsci. Walicki supports his thesis by calling on Bronisław Baczko and Ewa Sowa (ibid., 2, 318) who contributed to the collection *Wokół myśli Stanisława Brzozowskiego*, edited by Walicki and Roman Zimand in 1974 .

13 See Eliza Kącka, "'Nieobciążony wpływem żadnej sekty…' Giambattista Vico w myśleniu Stanisława Brzozowskiego." In *Brzozowski (ko)repetycje*, ed. by Dorota Kozicka, Joanna Orska, and Krzysztof Uniłowski (Katowice: FA-art, 2012). The first to write about the ties of Brzozowski's philosophy to Vico was Rena A. Syska-Lamparska, *Stanisław Brzozowski: a Polish Vichian*, preface by Wiktor Weintraub (Firenze: Le Lettere, 1987).

losophy connected to the *operaismo* movement. Characterizing what he seeks to present as "the Italian difference," he refers to categories that on his assumption proceed from the original and distinctive conception of Italian culture, the beginnings of which would be associated with the Renaissance. The philosophical orientation that interests Esposito and that is supposed to constitute the specificity of contemporary Italian Marxism, is most often simply equated with 'Italian humanism'.[14] At the beginning of his book Esposito cites Pico della Mirandola's famous oration *On the Dignity of Man* as perhaps being the earliest European philosophical and political manifesto declaring a non-essentialist conception of man. According to Mirandola, man is a "work of indeterminate form" to whom God ascribed "no fixed seat, no form of thy own, no gift peculiarly thine."[15] It is this indeterminacy that constitutes the basis of human freedom and gives to the Christian doctrine of free will its real meaning. Man is a being who knows how to create himself and not a subject with predetermined conditions of existence. Esposito indicates not only that speculative categories are inseparable from practical and aesthetic categories (much as in early German romanticism), but also that profound philosophical thinking cannot be disconnected from local history, politics and everyday life. He is very much concerned to divorce 'living Italian thinking' from any connotations of both nationalism and Italian fascism.[16]

Describing the "Italian difference" on more than one occasion in the categories of a philosophy of man as a social being, constantly going beyond himself, tied both to social life and to biology that submits to no norm, Esposito questions the primacy of language (presupposed by hermeneutics and analytic philosophy)

14 Roberto Esposito, *Pensiero vivente. Origini e attualità della filosofia italiana* (Torino: Einaudi, 2010). All references here are to the translation, *Living Thought. The Origins and Actuality of Italian Philosophy*, transl. by Zakiya Hanafi (California: Stanford University Press, 2012).

15 As cited in Esposito, *Living Thought*, 41.

16 Esposito treats "Italianateness" virtually as a philosophical a category seeing its sources in the Italian Renaissance. Given the originality together with the anachronistic character of this concept that is central to his work, Esposito keeps clear of any romantic nationalist connotations. The philosophies of Machiavelli, Bruno, Campanella, Galileo or Vico do not provide, according to Esposito, elements of a typically idealist historiography insofar as they emerged under conditions of political decentralisation, in a fragmented world, in a world of clashing interests. For these reasons "Italianateness" has its beginnings in literature. Although this thesis is to some extent a historical simplification related to the wishful character of the ideological manifesto that *Il pensiero vivente* in fact is, it is hard to resist the attractiveness of "Italianateness" so understood.

that became the basis of the anti-metaphysical turn in European philosophy. From the Italian perspective, the linguistic turn that considers language as a determinate philosophical value, analyzed in its own matter, creates overly abstract speculations and cannot for that reason bring remedies to the ethical or social problems generated by modernism. "The Italian difference" upholds the romantic conviction in the importance as much of language as of literature in order to actualize their conflictual relation to life. It enables us to discern the difference between the intellectual conceptualization of the world from human life as such, and it conceives of this difference as the basic factor in the conflict between the present and tradition, and hence of the dynamics of history. Esposito follows Leopardi's *Zibaldone* in affirming that the Enlightenment, in its feverish pursuit of truth, deprived humans of their material roots, thus leading Platonism and Christianity, for which the spirit is superior to matter, to extreme consequences, including abstracting entirely from language.

The attempt to reconstruct the meaning of literature with recourse to Vico's historical myth, comprising the metaphorically written, historical heritage of man's past efforts, penetrating the present down to its core, is the reason why Esposito's text is not a scholarly work. The author of *Living Thought* creates his own history of the "Italian difference," referring in equal measure to its cultural and philosophical origins (in the writings of Machiavelli, Bruno, and Vico), as well as to paintings by Leonardo da Vinci, Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Cuoca's historical writings, de Sanctis's literary critique, and especially Leopardi's poetry that he so admires. Attempting to reactivate the meaning of philosophy as inseparable from life, Esposito does not turn literature into an instrument for the proof of antecedently admitted philosophical theses, as is so often the case in contemporary German and French thought. Instead, he tries to glean, within diverse means of expression, 'nuggets' of thought that actively produce philosophical meanings while excluding nothing from their historical nature or literary specificity. The inseparability, the historical immanence, and progressivism of the many individuals' spiritual and intellectual lives for whom the most important complex that renders self-consciousness (autonomy) possible, remains the necessity of creating community—this is the ideological conglomerate that, according to Esposito, characterizes the "Italian difference": It is a specific multi-linear, dynamic, restless, internally contradictory, and constantly changing 'whole' of a pre-modernist bent that nevertheless does not prevent it from anchoring itself, polemically, within modernity. What is decisive in this regard is the inclination of Italian thought toward what is not philosophical: to depart from philosophy in the direction of a broadly conceived externality out of which arises

its "civil commitment and its contamination from other styles of expression."[17] It is this inclination that is the cause of its separation from the specialized, self-reflexive lexicon of philosophical concepts characteristic of modern philosophy.

In the chapter of *Ideas* entitled "Pragmatism and historical materialism"—that together with "The epigenetic theory of history," "Nature and knowledge," and the "Prolegomena to the philosophy of 'labor'" constitutes the philosophical core of the volume—Vico is called on as a witness only sporadically but on each occasion his appearance is spectacular. One instance is the discussion of the empiriocriticist and pragmatist views of Richard Avenarius and Ernst Mach. In *Ideas*, Brzozowski undertook a 'personal' struggle with

[…] *niemożność osiągnięcia* jedną i głęboką, współczującą myślą wszystkiego, co było twórczym, pracowitym, pełnym dobrej wiary w ubiegłym stuleciu. Początkiem jakiegoś nowego barbarzyństwa jest stan, w którym pewne dziedziny duszy własnej są głucho-nieme wobec siebie.[18]

[…] *the impossibility of grasping* in a single profound and empathetic thought all that has been creative, painstaking, and full of good faith in the course of the last century. The beginning of a new barbarism is the state within which certain areas of the soul are deaf and dumb to themselves.

In the "Pragmatism" chapter Brzozowski confronts philosophies that "still continue today to defend the specter of being, of a ready world" (dziś jeszcze usiłują bronić widma bytu, gotowego świata)[19] and that he considers entirely anachronistic. Criticizing Mach's mechanist view of life, he cites *The New Science*, so resonant with his own style:

W tej gęstej nocy, która zalega myśl od najdalszej, najpierwotniejszej starożytności, ukazuje się to nieprzemijające wieczne światło tej prawdy, która nigdy nie podlega zaciemnieniu i nie może być podana w wątpliwość, że ten świat społeczny został stworzony przez ludzi.[20]

17 Esposito, *Living Thought*, 11.

18 Brzozowski, *Idee*, 253.

19 Ibid., 209.

20 Ibid., 208.

But in the thick night of darkness enveloping the earliest antiquity, so remote from us, there shines the eternal and never-failing light of a truth beyond all question: that the world of civil society has certainly been made by men.[21]

In his *New Science* Vico traces the entirety of knowledge, understood here as the social world (with its logic, morality, economy, politics, physics, astronomy, chronology in the sense of history and geography), back to poetic wisdom that he considers to be the wisdom of the ancients, the origins of which he attempts to winnow out of commonly known myths, as traces of a no longer decipherable past consciousness. For Vico, the social world is a world that we once succeeded in imagining and narrating; the poetic creation of the community precedes intellectual conceptualization and makes possible the later functioning of social institutions. The idea of the collective construction of history, conceived as the effort of imagination, though without the possibility of attaining any kind of an enduring, however finite form, seems to pervade Brzozowski's philosophy of labor in a most evident manner. In order to systematize the concepts Brzozowski brings to his account, we need to get clear about how he understands the category of 'creation' that seems to be connected to a considerable degree with Vico's 'poetic wisdom'.

Giorgio Agamben, one of the heroes of the last chapter of Esposito's book, in a work entitled *L'uomo senza contenuto* (1970, The Man without Content), tries to recover the issues related to the ancients' concepts of poiesis and praxis, the separation of which was decisive for the Cartesian model of epistemology in the European Enlightenment.[22] Its direct consequence appears to have been the separation of mind and body, subject and object. Following Aristotle, Agamben restores the Greek meaning of poiesis as inventing rather than acting or 'making' something, as widely understood today, and identifies it with the creative process as such. For Aristotle, poiesis connotes pro-duction (bringing something into the world out of nothing) of new objects, material objects above all, a meaning ascribed in antiquity to every kind of technical creativity.[23] Agamben critically presents the nineteenth century history of the identification of this concept with the practice that was supposed to have led to the nihilist interpretation of art as

21 Giambattista Vico, *The New Science of Giambattista Vico*, trans. Thomas Goddard Bergin and Max Harold Fisch (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1948), 85.

22 Giorgio Agamben, *L'uomo senza contenuto* (Milano: Rizzoli, 1970); here and below I reference the translation: *The Man without Content*, trans. G. Albert (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999).

23 Agamben refers of course to Aristotle's distinction between poesis and praxis in the Nicomachean Ethics. Agamben, *The Man without Content*, 68f.

an essentially self-sufficient, critically self-aware practice based on, as with Aristotle's praxis, desire and the will. The history of this equation is tied to Novalis who, following Leibniz, Fichte, and Schelling, inherited the conviction in the correlation of the concepts of practice and activity in the 'poetic' sense, as the outcomes of perception (that is, the cognition of the world) and the will (its creation). As is well known, in its culmination the will was absolutized as the originary principle of all things. As a spiritual-biological hybrid, man's task would consist in transcending limitations carried by the intellectual, conceptual dichotomy inscribed in his activity:

> This idea of man as the redeemer and messiah of nature is developed by Novalis in the form of an interpretation of science, art, and in general all human activity as the "formation" or "education" (*Bildung*) of nature, in a sense that appears to anticipate Marx's thought and in some ways Nietzsche's as well.[24]

The creative potential of the thinking spirit, flowing the self-reflection, was to go beyond Fichtean idealism, since: "As Marx would fifty years later [...], Novalis located this going beyond in praxis, understood as the higher unity of thought and action."[25] Agamben points to the ensuing consequence of the philosophical equation of poiesis and praxis in the form of alienated activity reduced in modernity to the melancholy artistic act directed to the past conceived as a whole and deprived of any tangible social effects. The division of the world, of experience and language, is Agamben's main philosophical thesis.[26] In order for language to be able once again to name, create the real world as well as to determine the community, Agamben conceives of the 'voice' as a paradoxical phenomenon, one in which the corporeal and the lingual in man cross. The energy flowing from the division of language and the world, the creative potential of alienated, non-signifying language renders possible the replacement of devalued traditions by a community whose identity must remain a pure, constantly recreated possibility.

In his criticism of romantic ideas of art as the sole possible, uniquely true realization of life, Agamben is reminiscent of Brzozowski with his negative, but fascinated orientation to the speculative worlds of the romantics, wholly lacking in real effects for the life of the collectivity and indeed rather standing in for its life. In *The Man without Content* Agamben rejects Novalis' concept of 'Poetry'

24 Ibid., 46f.

25 Ibid., 47.

26 Giorgio Agamben, *Language and Death: The Place of Negativity*, trans. K. E. Pinkus, M. Hardt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006).

as the fundamentally creative but autotelic will. On the other hand, however, he reserves for poiesis—within art and literature—in the Italianate manner, the important task of mediating the conflict between the old and the new, between the past and the present, and what in the future is to be consigned to the flames.[27] The 'circular' activity of the human mind, coming to know itself in the act of continuous self-development, turns out to be abstract rationality mired in philosophico-aesthetic speculations. The result is that, from the Italian perspective, it comes to lack the fundamental component of experience, biological corporeality, the matter of life and its conditions, dictated by history and relations of domination rendered conflictual by the individual constantly struggling for his freedom. Doubtless, for Brzozowski as well, biology and the reality of social change constitute the fundamental limits to philosophical speculation, for which reason perhaps he praises Vico.

Vico's concept of "poetic wisdom" appears to presage the nineteenth-century concept of poiesis as the "creative will." Esposito's Italian "living thought" is therefore dependent on not only the Renaissance but also the early romantic intellectual heritage. As Agamben shows, Marx's thought, too, is marked by this characteristic. "Poetic wisdom" is characterized as social experience extracted creatively from the past as it was remembered or inscribed in the collective myth that requires actualization. On the one hand, given the premises pertaining to 'poeticalness' understood as creating a new world, there follows, on the part of "Italian thought," a characteristic relation to history, likewise in the manner of a 'fable'. On the other, an equally specific place is accorded to what is creative in literature. Brzozowski's chapter on the "Epigenetic theory of history" corresponds precisely to Vico's categories of circularity. Vico's tradition is visible as well in later chapters of *Ideas*, characterizing the concepts of historical materialism and the philosophy of labor, the discussion of which necessarily presupposed the theory of history. What is especially interesting, however, is the way in which Brzozowski draws the reader into the flow of his account, requiring of him a certain creative effort and obliging him to adopt a critical stance. We can see this in what is the most important chapter in *Ideas*, "The Prolegomena to the Philosophy of Labor." Initially, Brzozowski attempts to provide a more precise account of labor as creativity that has a determinate aim and calls forth determinate 'creative gestures'. Resistance to labor that is to bring about real, fundamental change, in a social sense, comes on the one hand from nature and human biology and, on the other, from the entirety of encountered gestures and objects, the outcomes of earlier labor. As such, there is no matter which would condition the creation of a common world in a way not connected to human activity. In

27 Agamben, *The Man without Content*, 68f.

this way, all concepts are rendered present and intelligible only insofar as they are commensurate with labor. Brzozowski offers the following, only seemingly puzzling, definition of labor: "Jako gest wewnętrzny jest praca określonym przez nas przemijaniem życia"[28] (In being an internal gesture labor is the passage of life as determined by us). According to "Prolegomena" it is difficult to speak of a reality as long as it is not created or of a subject that is not constructed in unending confrontation with the limitations of our biology and common history. For Brzozowski, the truth about creativity as the sole truth renders the concept of truth as predetermined essence impossible. That is why he, in treating creation in the philosophy of labor precisely as "creation," at once real and "poetic," promulgates a "new knowledge" attempting to "activate" his own text by means of a play of statements put forth as well as by the continual reconstruction of his subjectivity. He is indefatigable in exercising or rather 'training' the reality created by the intellect, believing that when he writes he creates facts belonging to a common intellectual world and in this way reinforces the collective self-consciousness.

Where the arguments are concerned, the five parts of "Prolegomena" do not differ fundamentally from one another; the narrative is not sequential, from part to part, but rather involves a specific superposition of ever more developed contents at ever higher and more complicated levels of understanding. As soon as we have the sense that we understand Brzozowski, the impression arises that he keeps saying the same thing round and round—an effect encountered as well while reading *Scienza Nuova*. He attempts to cope with recourse to means he particularly disliked, the pragmatist perspective, in that he submits to a test the different world views that interest him. In the fifth, summarizing subchapter of "Prolegomena," Brzozowski begins with a characterization of the concept of 'life' in order to throw down, in the last sentences, the project of freedom worked in accordance with local principles and traditions specific to the Polish nation. He then proceeds to a polemic against the objectivized, sociological languages of Simmel and Poincaré describing 'life' as a phenomenon "just as incomprehensible and external as a sunset, a mountain cascade" (równie niezrozumiałego i zewnętrznego jak zachód słońca, kaskada górska).[29]

However, Brzozowski simply does not clarify the failings of what interests him, viz., the scientific view of the world. Instead, he mitigates by raising a simple question, "What is life?," and then he gives himself an answer in a manner that imitates the positive theses he put forward in the preceding chapters: "Wszystko jest dziełem życia, a samo życie nie może być przez nas myślane

28 Brzozowski, *Idee*, 223.

29 Ibid., 241.

jako rzeczywistość, możemy myśleć o nim jedynie w kategoriach zacieśniających tę rzeczywistość"[30] (Everything is the product of life, and life itself cannot be conceived by us as reality, we are able to think about it only in categories that restrict this reality). He seeks first of all deceptive similarities of contemporaneous thoughts—the Marxist prerogative of a reality that is entirely in flux and dynamic as well as post-Cartesian scientific projects that, in keeping with the Enlightenment, exclude metaphysics from the sphere of description of shared reality that after all is a social fact here as well. The definition of 'life' to which the latter style of thinking leads us is compromised in an exceedingly subtle way by the subject of the critical text who as it were 'identifies' himself with a position that is contrary to his own. By subjecting the myth of the worldview to hyperbole, in order to acquire a dramatic dimension with its accompanying deep irony, this subject tries to present to his readers the terrifying absurdity of Poincaré's 'non-human' world:

Są te zjawy i to jest wszystko; umysłowe życie człowieka i sam człowiek jako jeden z przedmiotów, jedna z jego zawartości, jest w gruncie rzeczy przygodą, wydarzającą się nie wiadomo komu – w głuchoniemej próżni. […] Pozornie tylko mówimy, wewnętrznie i zewnętrznie, właściwy świat jest niemy.[31]

There are just these phenomena and that is all; man's thinking life and man himself as one object among many, one of its contents, is at base pure chance happening to one knows not who—in a deaf and dumb void. […] Speech is an illusion, internally and externally, the world as such is dumb.

At this point of the argument a rebound occurs—in the words of Paul de Man one would like to say, a parabasis of the allegory of tropes:

Mnie, który jestem hipotezą, powiodła się inna hipoteza. Pozornie jest to stanowisko *niezmiernie* uwypuklające czynny, spontaniczny charakter życia, ale jest to pozór tylko. Tłem zasadniczym jest zawsze to: coś się tworzy, coś się myśli i w pewnej mierze trwa; nie wiemy, czym jest to coś, myśl nasza, ale trwałość jest oznaką skuteczności, szukajmy tego trwania.[32]

I who am a hypothesis ceded successfully to another hypothesis. On the surface it is a perspective that puts *great emphasis* on the active, spontaneous character of life, but this is

30 Ibid., 240f.

31 Ibid., 241.

32 Ibid., 242.

only an illusion. The basic background is always the following: something is created, something is thought and to a certain degree persists; we know not what this something is, our thinking, but persistence is the sign of effectiveness, let us seek out this persistence.

Brzozowski not only well understood the meaning of Marxian alienation of labor and commodity fetishism in opposition to the representatives of the determinist and scientific conception of the historical development of classes in their struggle for emancipated existence. By means of a variety of devices of a 'poetic' character, sudden shifts of discourse, the construction of a kind of represented world of the critical text, Brzozowski tried hard to avoid an 'objectifying' definition of phenomena he considered to be dynamic, in flux and vital. As the creative subject who sets the scene, he neither presented nor systematized his worldview. Instead, he gave free reign to the dynamic clash of his own convictions, their change, creating in the face of what is other, strange, absurd, even unreadable.

Brzozowski describes the relations that tie labor and life—his fundamental concepts—in a way that could be characterized as autotelic story-telling, presenting—or rather constantly working out—the autonomous creative process. According to Brzozowski, the only basis of our psyche's authority over us is the entirety of human life, such as it is:

Poza nim, poza tym życiem jest coś, o czym to tylko możemy powiedzieć, że jest współmierne z naszą pracą; to jest że pomiędzy czasem w nas a czasem poza nami jest taka styczność, że możemy przez pewne zużycie naszego życia zapewnić pewne właściwości psychiczne nastąpić mającym przebiegom czasu.[33]

Beyond it, beyond this life there is something about which we can only say that it is coeval with our labor; that is, between the time within us and the time outside us there is a contiguity of a sort that, by using up some degree of our life, we can ensure certain properties of the psyche supervening on the flow of time.

In keeping with his auto-thematic style Brzozowski relates to the philosophical meaning of the foregoing thesis about life, developing not the sphere of examples and proofs, but instead directing the reader to its variable and ineffable nature that is meant to find its reflection in the author's vital style:

Jest rzeczą do najwyższego stopnia trudną dokonać całkowicie tego przetworzenia myśli, jakiego wymaga ujęcie tego stanowiska. Rozkłada ono wszystko, co wydaje nam się

33 Ibid., 243.

stałym, cały świat fizyczny […] i roztapia we wrzącej i chropawej, zasadniczo niezupełnej, spontanicznej nieprzewidzianości, irracjonalności życia.[34]

It is exceedingly difficult to transform thinking in the way that this standpoint demands. It breaks up everything that seems to us constant, the entire physical world [...] and melts [it] in the roiling, coarse, fundamentally incomplete, spontaneously unpredictable irrationality of life.

Brzozowski, without defining, systematizing, introducing any speculative characteristic of phenomena in the course of a philosophical deduction, creates social concepts such as history in a way distant from the modern, post-Enlightenment project of ordering knowledge as truth. Proceeding philosophically beyond philosophy he interprets history in the manner of Vico:

Harmonia sfer trzyma się na krwawym słupie ludzkiego wysiłku, jest jedną z cech zbudowanego przez nas ludzkiego życia, jedną z cech potoku życiowego, który przez wnętrze nasze przecieka; jest nami w momencie bierności, sam siebie pogłębia i dźwiga; tworzy swe wzniesienie, by utworzyć swój spadek i pięknem własnego przepływania utrzymuje się w wysiłku dźwigania. Żaden obraz nie wyczerpie tu wszystkich stron rzeczywistości, jaką jest ona.[35]

The harmony of the spheres hangs on the bloody mast of human effort, is one of the traits of human life we have constructed, a property of the flow of life coursing through our innermost being; it is what we are in the instant of passivity, it deepens and bears itself; it raises itself in order to create its downfall and in the beauty of its own flowing it maintains the effort of bearing. Here no picture can exhaust all the aspects of the reality that it is.

Thus, creative autonomy is worked out, the autonomy of the subject understood as the voice of the individual struggling to acquire the right to the creative differentiation of jointly constructed social life—an individual whose essence is activity, development, change, labor, the transformation of what is encountered in order to attain the impossible perdurance of one's achievements. This is not a process that remains a mere gesture and that can be associated with the modernist concept of intellectual autonomy as the purely subjective autarchy of art. It is an 'autonomy' that carries above all the meaning associated with Mirandola's Renaissance humanism. At the same time it proceeds from the absolute freedom and indeterminacy of man ceaselessly creating his forms out of matter on the

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid., 245.

basis of his own decisions that give form to 'humanity'. Autonomy thus conceived, autonomy signifying the self-consciousness of society, remains as well the history of the collective. It should be understood not only 'poetically', but also in the Italian manner.

As Esposito argues, Italian thought sets itself up in parallel to European modernism; when modernist processes occur in Europe it is in a sense 'non-actual', though it stands ready, with its reserves of meaning, to run with the baton in case modernism does not manage with the issues it has brought to the table. Rather than cutting itself off from its sources, modernist and European, Italian thought always turns to its sources and seeks there the meaning of its actuality. The "Italian difference," instead of creating its specific modernity starting from zero, by instituting a robust frontier between the rational and the feral, creates itself rather by returning to the sources prescribed in Machiavelli's writings or understood as Vico's *ricorso*. This is the return of a dark, unfathomable past recovered within the very heart of creation today, so necessary for new historical openness. Here the past is the source of energy, its reproduction does not consist in 'reaction', a real return to or restoration of the past, but rather in its evident 'contiguity' with the actuality of changing history which is immolated in what draws near. The necessary co-functioning of the contradiction constitutes in this way the present order of history, having nothing in common with the philosophical systems of the Enlightenment. The history that comes to expression in the formula of the present clash of diverse perspectives cannot discard its source, for the shaky order of the collective is derived from and reproduces it. "Attualità" is thus shot through with incommensurable alternatives that demand decisions. Life, which acquires its expressive formula, especially when it becomes a stake in political conflicts, is understood as "[…] a set of impulses, desires, and needs that run through the body of individuals and populations in a form that is irreducible to the distinction between *res cogitans* and *res extensa*, reason and force, or proper and common."[36]

Creating life and the world in the historical process, which in Vico's case takes place poetically, is connected frequently in Brzozowski's case directly with literature or literary criticism. Literature turns out to be an important polygon, a coefficient in the 'creation' of social reality, though not in the categories of the modernist meaning of art's autonomy—thrown back exclusively on itself. Nor does it relegate to the conviction belonging to philosophical speculation grounding the concept of autonomy: the profound individualization, irreplaceability, as well as the reflexivity of the tools of creation. Life is creative, it works out an autonomy that is broad and socially significant, carrying in itself the possibil-

36 Esposito, *Living Thought*, 25.

ity—as Brzozowski would say—of the proletariat's consciousness of self that is also a kind of utopia of Italian operatic thinking. The "Italian difference" not only does not eliminate the linguistic-literary aspect of philosophical reflection but in fact connects its own inception with Dante's and Vico's poetic humanism as well as with contemporary literature. As Esposito puts it: "[…] the most recent Italian thought takes language as a given that is so constitutive of the human being that it can be identified as the point of suture between nature and mutation, invariance and difference, biology and history."[37]

It is natural that Esposito calls on Dante or Leopardi. Leopardi himself described great poets such as Horace, Dante, and Shakespeare as thinkers, and in turn philosophers such as Plato as poets. The poetic imagination remained for him "an indispensable, internal structure of reason."[38] For Agamben, too, literature is a very important aspect of philosophizing. In *Language and Death*, the voice is the point of suture between the body and language to whose system the voice ascribes a bodily singularity. In his *Categorie italiane. Studi di poetica* (The End of the Poem: Studies in Poetics), he deals with the source of what it means to be 'Italian': *The Divine Comedy* and the life of language.[39]

From Bruno to Gentile Italian philosophy has gone down the path along which the individual subject is the constitutive locus of the community, never ultimately determined by the constitutive force of his innermost identity. On the other hand, it is deeply rooted in the productive rhythm of unending life. At the heart of Italian philosophy we find not individuality but a common world with its inexhaustible potential. Literature has not been the main focus of Italian Marxist thinkers. The chief theoreticians of *operaismo*, known also as Italian autonomians, such as Massimo Cacciari or Antonio Negri—much like Brzozowski earlier—do not leave behind the subject consciously creating its own world and at the same time fulfilling a certain 'communitarian' mission. They do, however, reject the generalizing character of the purely philosophical concept of the dehumanized authority producing its own essence, the individual nature of which consists in isolating itself from social phenomena. They attempt as well to reconstruct the concept of autonomy by conjoining the singular and the universal.

The similarities between Brzozowski's poetic, activist "Epigenetic Theory of History" and Italian philosophy rooted in Marxism derive no doubt from their common literary sources of inspiration in the nineteenth century—Marx, Nietzsche, Bergson, and Sorel, but also still earlier thinkers. Vico, read by Nietzsche, is the intellectual core, as Esposito puts it, not only of Italian philosophy. On the

37 Ibid., 8.

38 Ibid., 126.

39 Giorgio Agamben, *Categorie italiane: studi di poetica* (Venezia: Marsilio, 1996).

other hand, Agamben finds currents common to Marxism and early romanticism in the writings of German precursors of modernity, such as Schelling, Novalis, and Hölderlin—important equally for Brzozowski—that lead in Nietzsche's direction. Examining anew the *operaismo* philosophers, observing the course of their thinking in relation to new readings, new historical events, we can shed new light on Brzozowski's thought by asking in what the current development of Italian humanism consists as well as by considering its closest ideological and intellectual affinities. Doubtless, the emancipatory conceptions of philosophy and art, directed against the Enlightenment project, will reveal a family resemblance. In this way, on the one hand, the joyful Kantian and Spinozist knowledge of the early romantics creating their pan-poetic philosophy at the margins of German classicism; on the other hand, Italian renaissance humanism in the biological and mythical interpretation drawing on Vico, laid the basis for many twentieth-century expressions of revolt against institutions of social knowledge and power, among which Brzozowski's *The Legend of Young Poland* certainly figures. Speech and myth, voice and language or finally art, 'poeticity', constitute from this perspective a creative factor invoked in philosophical as well as philological categories. It may well be that this is the most important remainder of the pre-modernist understanding of the place and function of poesis: to creatively imagine man's life in the dynamic paradoxical formula of poetic practice.

Translated by Edward M. Świderski

WORKS CITED

Agamben, Giorgio. *L'uomo senza contenuto*. Milano: Rizzoli, 1970.

—. *Categorie italiane: studi di poetica*. Venezia: Marsilio, 1996.

—. *The Man without Content*. Translated by Georgia Albert. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999.

—. *Language and Death: The Place of Negativity*. Translated by Karen E. Pinkus with Michael Hardt. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006.

Baczko, Bronisław. "Absolut moralny i faktyczność istnienia (Brzozowski w kręgu antropologii Marksa)." In *Wokół myśli Stanisława Brzozowskiego*. Edited by Andrzej Walicki and Roman Zimand, 127–178. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1974.

Brzozowski, Stanisław. "Kilka uwag o stanie ogólnym literatury europejskiej i o zadaniach krytyki literackiej I." In *Głosy wśród nocy*, 47–107.

Esposito, Roberto. *Pensiero vivente. Origini e attualità della filosofia italiana*. Torino: Einaudi, 2010.

—. *Living Thought. The Origins and Actuality of Italian Philosophy*. Translated by Zakiya Hanafi. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012.

Kącka, Eliza. "'Nieobciążony wpływem żadnej sekty…' Giambattista Vico w myśleniu Stanisława Brzozowskiego." In *Stanisław Brzozowski – (ko)repetycje*, vol. 1, edited by Dorota Kozicka, Joanna Orska, and Krzysztof Uniłowski, 171–201. Katowice: FA-art, 2012.

Mirandola, Pico della. *Oration on the Dignity of Man. A New translation and Commentary*, edited by Francesco Borghesi et al. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Orska, Joanna. "Stanisław Brzozowski – poeta i filozof. Krytyka jako poezja progresywna w 'Głosach wśród nocy'." *Teksty drugie* 5 (2011): 284–294.

—. "Ja – 'arabeska'." In *Stanisław Brzozowski – (ko)repetycje,* vol. 1, edited by Dorota Kozicka, Joanna Orska, and Krzysztof Uniłowski, 141–167. Katowice: FA-art, 2012.

Sowa, Ewa. "Stanisław Brzozowski a myśl filozoficzna marksizmu." In *Wokół myśli Stanisława Brzozowskiego*, edited by Andrzej Walicki and Roman Zimand, 179–219. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1974.

Syska-Lamparska, Rena A. *Stanisław Brzozowski: A Polish Vichian*. Preface by Wiktor Weintraub. Firenze: Le Lettere, 1987.

Vico, Giambattista. *The New Science of Giambattista Vico*. Translated by Thomas Goddard Bergin and Max Harold Fisch. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1948.

Walicki, Andrzej. *Stanisław Brzozowski – drogi myśli.* Warszawa: PWN, 1977.

—. "Filozofia dojrzałości dziejowej." In Brzozowski, *Idee*, 5–66.

—. *Stanisław Brzozowski and the Polish Beginnings of 'Western Marxism'*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989.

Brzozowski and Rorty: Coping with the Contingent Self

Edward M. Świderski

Brzozowski, always our contemporary, in the light of whose thought we stand—an assertion that inspired a research project within the scope of which the following remarks are couched. The assertion invites confirmation; it bids us to seek partners in dialogue with Brzozowski today. In the present instance, my interest focuses on Brzozowski the philosopher and I ask, does Brzozowski speak to the concerns of philosophers today, and if so, how?

It is not immediately clear that this is the case, starting with the state of the dialogue in Brzozowski's native Poland. His standing as a major representative figure of Polish modernism came in for renewed attention in the aftermath of the collapse of Polish communism that generated soul-searching by the Polish intelligentsia. To the degree that his specifically philosophical views can be prised from his worldview as a whole and addressed on their own footing, they have drawn the attention of those who have been intent on reviewing the status of the so-called "Warsaw School of the History of Ideas," in particular, the stand the members of the school adopted in regard to 'orthodox Marxism'.[1] At a critical

1 The locus classicus is the following book: Andrzej Walicki, *Stanisław Brzozowski and the Polish Beginnings of 'Western Marxism'* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989). The most up-to-date treatments of the Warsaw School of the History of Ideas are two collections: A. Kołakowski, ed., *Wokół dorobku Warszawskiej Szkoły Historii Idei* [Around the works of the Warsaw School of the history of ideas] (Warszawa: IFiS PAN, 2013), and Pawel Grad, ed., *Warszawska Szkoła Historii Idei: tożsamość, tradycja, obecność* [The Warsaw School of the History of Ideas: identity, tradition, presence] (Warszawa: IFiS PAN, 2014). A background question throughout many of the essays gathered in these volumes is whether the scholars most often cited in connection with the 'School' shared a common identity.

juncture Brzozowski came to enjoy celebrity among the scholars with whom the school is identified as a forerunner of 'Western Marxism'. Brzozowski's 'recovery', unbeknownst to him, in the initial decade of the twentieth century, of the spirit, and to a considerable degree the letter, of Marx's early praxis philosophy appeared to augur well for his (potential) influence among those in Poland for whom a socialist worldview remained a viable option. However, when the political authorities cracked down on, among others, the scholars associated with the Warsaw school following the events of March 1968, Brzozowski's potential influence waned. In any case, it is doubtful that Brzozowski had anything to 'say' to analytic philosophers, phenomenologists, and Catholic philosophers, the three salient non-Marxist currents in Polish philosophical life throughout the communist period. In addition, in the course of the two decades prior to the collapse of communism Marxist philosophers in Poland turned increasingly eclectic in their theoretical ambitions in order to preserve the little that remained of their relevance.[2] The direction that eclecticism took was not fuelled by attachment to Brzozowski's philosophy.[3]

Nor did the situation change in the aftermath of the transition to a democratic Poland. For example, in the mid-nineties, the Polish Academy of Sciences invited Jürgen Habermas, Richard Rorty, Leszek Kołakowski, and Ernst Gellner to discuss the state of philosophy in the company of the associates of the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology in Warsaw.[4] Brzozowski was nowhere 'visible' in this debate, his name appears nowhere on the roster of references to whom the

2 No better example of this eclecticism can be cited than the case of the 'Poznan School' whose chief architects, Leszek Nowak and Jerzy Kmita, construed an 'antipositivist naturalist' account of scientific method eschewing a distinction between natural and human science by bringing central tenets of Marxian historical materialism in line with Popper's philosophy of science, elements of Ajdukiewicz's logical semantics, Znaniecki's conception of the cultural sciences, and in due course a historical epistemology drawing on the Quine-Duhem thesis. As regards the question of whether and how 'orthodox' Marxists in Poland dialogued with their opposite numbers, cf. Józef Tischner, *Polski ksztalt dialogu* [The Polish form of dialogue] (Kraków: *Znak*, 2002).

3 Kołakowski's role, both in a positive and negative sense, as regards Brzozowski's 'Marxism' was crucial. In 1977, when he published his three-volume *Główne nurty marksizmu* [Main currents of Marxism], Kołakowski put paid to his earlier belief that Brzozowski's Marx-inspired 'social subjectivism' provided a sure footing for a philosophical anthropology.

4 Jozef Niżnik and John T. Sanders, eds., *Debating the State of Philosophy. Habermas, Rorty, and Kołakowski* (Westport: Praeger, 1996).

associates of the Institute appealed in the course of their discussions with the invited luminaries. This is significant given that it was surely no coincidence that a debate of this kind about the prospects for philosophy should have been organized at that time in Poland, still in the throes of the 'transition'. Apparently, Brzozowski's 'absence' signified that few if any believed that his philosophizing held out any prospects for the life of philosophy in Poland.

It may be an irony, however, that there are voices outside Poland that do match the tone and style of Brzozowski's reflections. One such voice, in my opinion, is that of Richard Rorty. I want to suggest below that the basis for a dialogue between Brzozowski and Rorty does exist and I shall try to bring Brzozowski 'up to date', so to speak, in order to determine if and how he measures up as a 'contemporary', taking Rorty as a pertinent foil. Readers familiar with the writings of both thinkers will surely acknowledge that there are parallels: both display an iconoclastic spirit with regard to age-old philosophical stereotypes; both mix discourses freely—philosophy, literary criticism, cultural commentary—with only passing concern for established academic boundaries; each is alive to the potential of metaphor to invigorate thinking; both are committed to a social ideal ('achieving our country' in Rorty's phrase; reshaping the Polish national consciousness as Brzozowski hoped to do). To be sure, the differences of context cannot be overlooked—Brzozowski's as a (renegade) intellectual in the culture of Young Poland steeped in nineteenth-century philosophy; Rorty the 'American' pragmatist who took distance from philosophy because he understood that 'liberalism' enjoins the search not for 'objective truth' but for 'communal solidarity'.

How then do we reconcile the parallels with the differences in context? The first step is to show that Brzozowski and Rorty raised closely similar questions, differences of context notwithstanding. The second is to note commonalities—and differences—in their ways of handling these questions. And the third is to hypothesize that, with respect to the differences, had Brzozowski at his disposal the kinds of 'tools' to which Rorty could appeal to construct his arguments, he might have come to conclusions very much like those Rorty defended. The 'tools' I have in mind have to do with the ways and means of philosophizing, including philosophizing in a 'deconstructive' vein, something that was common to both. Because we want to test whether Brzozowski is our philosophical 'contemporary' we want to imagine him speaking the 'language' Rorty could assume on the part of his audience, a language honed from the dialectic of philosophical controversy throughout the twentieth century. Needless to say, Brzozowski knew nothing of that dialectic; nevertheless, the aim of my attempt to put words into Brzozowski's mouth is to show that, in the course of thinking about the ques-

tions he held dear, he stumbled over the lack of an adequate 'vocabulary' to express what I believe he was groping toward. I contend that the 'vocabulary' that might have kept him from stumbling over his words could well have been Rorty's. The 'might have been' needs emphasizing: I will not contend that there is anything like a one-to-one correspondence between the two thinkers.

Despite—or rather because of—Brzozowski's critical reception of so many philosophies of his day, they conditioned the style of his own questioning. My idea is that, within a given discursive context, disagreement is dialectically proportional to what can count as an intelligible alternative within that context. The philosophical context of Brzozowski's questioning was such that, despite his critical stance in regard to many of the philosophies he examined, he remained committed to their tenor and purpose, viz., to seek true responses to substantive philosophical questions. In Rorty's case, by contrast, his critique and ultimately abandonment of time-honoured philosophical assumptions rested on his version of the so-called 'linguistic turn' abetted by his pragmatist convictions. The upshot was that, in his view, substantive philosophical arguments should be recast as ways of speaking, first of all metaphorically, in order in this way to expose the myth that philosophers have something to discover about the way things really and truly are. I want to say that although Brzozowski remained stuck in the mould of substantive philosophizing his persistent questioning pointed beyond that mould and is consistent with the 'vocabulary' Rorty preferred.

The 'Truth within' rather than the 'Truth without'? First Glimmers

What are the questions that Brzozowski and Rorty share? Each wants to become clear about the relation of the self to the world and in particular about the nature of the relation. Each believes that the relation is not discovered, it is made; and each seeks clarity about the nature of the making. For his part, Rorty came to the view that there is no centred self who would do the making by exercising powers grounded in some underlying human essence. One way in which he came to this conclusion concerns the idea that language is the medium through which the subject reaches the world. Rorty sought to undermine this idea and in so doing jettisoned two issues closely connected with it: representation and truth, including truthful representation of the self. Freed from the onus of truth-telling, lan-

guage reappears as a 'poetic' tool serving diverse needs and interests within the community.[5]

By contrast, Brzozowski, I will say, struggled to reconcile nostalgia for a centred subject, on the one hand, and a socio-cultural historicism with regard to the 'content' of the subject, on the other. From stage to stage in his thinking the tension between these poles is palpable: who or what is the subject who makes the history that is all the content that the subject is (or has)?[6] In this regard, how he sees language remains somewhat ambiguous, an ambiguity which is, I contend, a symptom of the tension in his thinking. Whereas he would appear to agree with Rorty that as far as the 'world' is concerned language is not a transparent medium of worldly representation, he remains in thrall to the truth of *self*-representation, to the 'truth within'. Despite insisting that we are only what we have made ourselves to be, Brzozowski, I will argue, never relinquished the conviction—the hope—that there is a fundamental truth about the 'subject', the 'truth', namely, that the self is *essentially* self-constituting, that it belongs to its nature to be so. And here is where he 'stumbles over his words', as I put it above: how to pair the demand for truthful self-representation about what we are, essentially, on the one hand, with, on the other, the claim that we are but the products of our contingent, forever impermanent industry? [7]

Let me now go over this ground again, this time with an eye to detail.

Consider the following sentence from Rorty. "At the heart of pragmatism is the refusal to accept the correspondence theory of truth and the idea that true beliefs are accurate representations of reality."[8] Brzozowski never tired of stating similar-sounding claims, initially in his Fichtean activist philosophy, subse-

5 These are the master themes of Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), in particular the first part, "Contingency."

6 Throughout, my reading of Brzozowski is directed to "Nasze 'ja' i historia" [Our "self" and history] (1909), the first chapter of *Legenda Młodej Polski*, 9–27.

7 I leave out of account here the dialectic of the individual and the collective which played a key role in Brzozowski's speculations, but which took more than one form. Initially, he placed the accent on the autonomous individual; then in the Marxist phase of the philosophy of labor attention to the individual receded in favour of collective, 'social subjective', labor history; in his last period, Brzozowski returns to the individual self. More on this below in the section devoted to Brzozowski's evolution.

8 Richard Rorty, "Pragmatism and Romanticism," in *Philosophy as Cultural Politics. Philosophical Papers*, vol. 4 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 105.

quently in his Marxian praxist phase, and right through to the end of his life.[9] There is the eventual complication that Brzozowski had qualms about the pragmatism with which he was familiar, charging its proponents with not having sufficiently explained the concept of activity,[10] the concept that provides the reference frame of the sentence I just quoted from Rorty. At the same time, however, a pragmatist strain in his thinking is rather evident, though of course Rorty's pragmatism had come a long way from that of William James, with whom Brzozowski appeared to be familiar.[11]

---

9 One example: "In cognition, we come to know forms of goal-directed action and the creation of ever newer such forms. [...] Man does not come to know some ready encountered world, but rather, at first unawares, but at present consciously, he creates and grows aware of his different forms of activity. If cognition can still be explained as coming to know something given as ready, then this is possible only in the following way: it turns out that what lies outside of us is such that now these, now those actions can be undertaken that lead to determinate results." "Przyroda i poznanie" [Nature and cognition], in *Idee*, 195.

10 "What is an action?—I ask the pragmatists. And here we have the weakest point of their philosophy. Here they break down. They are incapable of distinguishing action from the feeling [poczucie] of action." "Pragmatyzm i materializm dziejowy" [Pragmatism and historical materialism], ibid., 211. I am not clear, however, about what Brzozowski means by „the feeling of action."

11 A Polish commentator selects the following passages from Brzozowski and argues that they show Brzozowski's affinities with pragmatism (my translations): "The basis of the theoretical truth of some point of view is its practical value (in the widest sense of the expression)." "The soul of a world view, its veritable princeps movens is always the need to assume a certain active position in relation to life and the world. It is not so much our theoretical thinking that requires unification as our actions." He asserts that "these theses are very similar to the pragmatist claims that resolving metaphysical controversies may require '[…] to turn […] away from abstraction and insufficiency, from verbal solutions, from bad *a priori* reasons, from fixed principles, closed systems, and pretended absolutes and origins' and to turn instead 'towards concreteness and adequacy, towards facts, towards action and towards power.' It would seem that Brzozowski tended toward this kind of approach." Pawel Bieławski, "Stanisława Brzozowskiego 'Wstęp do filozofii – próba analizy'" [Stanisław Brzozowski's "Introduction to philosophy"—an attempt of an analysis], http://www.racjonalista.pl/kk.php/s,500/k,3. The first two quotations are from "Monistyczne pojmowanie dziejów i filozofia krytyczna" [The monistic conception of history and critical philosophy] in Stanisław Brzozowski, *Kultura i życie.* 313, 279 respectively. The remaining is

Brzozowski's reservations with regard to pragmatism have much to do with the influence his selected philosophical brethren exercised. These included Vico, German idealist philosophers from Kant onwards, but also their critics (Marx, Nietzsche, and Kierkegaard), bits of Bergson, Sorel, and Labriola, as well as the empiriocriticists Avenarius and Mach, for good measure. With this heady potion to stimulate him, Brzozowski required 'activity' to be something more than activity as James liked to think about it, as that to which we defer when we wish to know what it is useful to believe.

Rorty shares some of these affinities—Hegel, Nietzsche, for instance—but blows the trumpet especially for philosophers and writers in the New World: Emerson, Peirce, James, Dewey in particular, as well as for those of his contemporaries in whose work he perceived pragmatist affinities—Davidson, Quine, Sellars, Putnam, and Brandom. While all the figures in Brzozowski's and Rorty's pantheons question representationalist epistemology, arguing the case instead for the constructive character of human cognition, the second group, unlike the first, does not ascribe a privileged ontic status to the agent or subject. Those in the first group vacillate with regard to whether the subject (agent) is centred or not, whereas those in the latter on the whole think that is not the case (a point to which I will return presently).

To grasp the import of the difference, consider in addition the following passage from Rorty.

> […] what we call "increased knowledge" should not be thought of as increased access to the Real, but as increased ability to do things—to take part in social practices that make possible richer and fuller human lives. This increased richness is not the effect of a magnetic attraction exerted on the human mind by the really real, nor by reason's ability to penetrate the veil of appearance. It is a relation between the human present and the human past, not a relation between the human and the non-human.[12]

On the one hand, Brzozowski would surely have warmed to Rorty's practical interpretation of 'knowledge', his appeal to the primacy of human flourishing, as

from William James, *Pragmatism*, in *Writings, 1902–1910*, ed. Bruce Kuklick (New York: Literary Classics of the United States, 1987), 508f.

12 Richard Rorty, *Philosophy as Cultural Politics*, 108. Compare this with Brzozowski: "Thinking is a part of life, its forms, tools, and perspective: it can affirm its effective reach only through life. The significance of thinking consists in the effects it exerts on the creation of victorious forms of life. We don't ask, what are you thinking?, but what are you doing—as the pragmatists say." Brzozowski, "Pragmatyzm i materjalyzm dziejowy," 209.

well as his recommendation to us to acknowledge the self-sufficiency of the human condition within the socio-cultural matrix that makes up the substance of history.[13] Rorty's remark about the relation between the human past and present sits well with Brzozowski's contention that all that we are is our own history.

On the other hand, however, when Brzozowski waxed lyrical about activity he had in view first of all the transformative power of labor, which extends so far as to underwrite the categories of cognition. For Rorty, our "increased ability to do things" is not a matter of 'transformative powers' mediating the self's cognitive relation to the world, but of the imagination. 'Imagination' is not the name of a cognitive faculty, as in Kant, for instance, who allies the imagination with the understanding in order to account for representation. Rorty's imagination stimulates new ways of speaking, new descriptions that come with time to animate cultural practices. He fixes this imaginative capacity by the term 'Romanticism'. "At the heart of romanticism is the thesis of the priority of imagination over reason—the claim that reason can only follow paths that the imagination has broken."[14]

We know that the 'mature' Brzozowski didn't hold much truck with Romanticism, a major target of his criticisms being the neo-romanticism of Young Poland. Nevertheless, he appeared to have believed that romanticism did convey an urgent sense of the creative powers of the ego, however unfinished the creative potential of the ego—the individual ego—finally is.[15] Allowing for Rorty's slant on Romanticism, Brzozowski could well have penned the following Rorty-like sentence: "I hold that "activity"—be it the deed [*Tat / czyn*], labor [*praca*], struggle, creation, terms omnipresent throughout his writings—is prior to reason; I claim that reason can only follow paths that 'activity' has broken."

13 Something very much like this sentiment is expressed by Brzozowski as follows: "When we evaluate the cultural value of a given thought, a given current, we examine not its intellectual logical character, but its vital productivity [wydajność]: we ask not whether this current answers to our preferences, habits, presuppositions, but whether it will manage to maintain and develop itself in relation to the world, whether it will manage to survive in the face of life." Brzozowski, "Nasze 'ja' i historia," 25. The idea expressed can be parsed in pragmatist terms: the cultural value of a given thought is tantamount to the way in which it helps us with some task.

14 Rorty, "Pragmatism and romanticism," 105.

15 Agata Bielik-Robson, "Syndrom romantyczny. Stanisław Brzozowski i rewizja romantyzmu" [The romantic syndrome. Stanisław Brzozowski and the revision of romanticism], *Słupskie Prace Filologiczne. Seria Filologia Polska* 5 (2007). See as well Eliza Kącka's article in this volume, 187ff.

Still, the difference between 'labor' and imagination, in the 'activist' setting Brzozowski and Rorty otherwise share, is significant. My claim is that the difference hinges on vestiges of a foundationalism in Brzozowski that Rorty explicitly disavows, vestiges due in large measure to the philosophical lineage with which Brzozowski associated. Citing Rorty again, for him pragmatism and romanticism—a union tantamount to the utter rejection of the correspondence theory of truth and representational epistemologies—"are reactions against the idea that there is something non-human out there with which human beings need to get in touch."[16] Brzozowski, I would say, has not altogether given up the idea that there is something "with which humans need to get in touch."[17] However, in his case, the 'out there' is transposed to 'in here'; he wants us 'to get in touch with' something fundamental about our human condition. He raises high the banner of human self-realization, understanding it as the affirmation of the human potential to create a world—a culture—in tune with something fundamental about human nature. Or at least this is how I read his paean to freedom, to take control of our destiny, in the essay "Our 'Self' and History." There, in ringing tones, Brzozowski proclaims:

Rysem znamiennym nowoczesnej europejskiej kultury jest to, że opiera się ona na tak pojętej indywidualności, że przyjmuje ona cały bezmiar tkwiący w samym pojęciu *ja*, że usiłuje to ja zrealizować. To wyznacza zasadniczy, podstawowy kierunek europejskiej historii. Ja tu jest nie złudzeniem, lecz czymś istotnym. Kultura europejska – to usiłowanie zmierzające ku utożsamieniu pojęcia *jaźni i człowieka*, to podniesienie człowieka do godności swobodnego, rzeczywistego sprawcy swoich losów.[18]

The significant feature of modern European culture is that it is based on a conception of individuality, that it accepts the immeasurable proportions of that concept, and *strives to*

16 Rorty, "Pragmatism and romanticism," 108.

17 Of course, activity qua labor is 'in touch with' something 'out there', viz., the stuff—nature, matter, that undergoes transformation in human hands for human purposes. But it is not a stuff that, on Brzozowski's view, has to be adequately represented in order to ensure the success of 'transformation', an idea that attracted Brzozowski's scorn. In this respect there is no disagreement between Brzozowski and Rorty: nothing 'out there' is a ground of our 'activity'. For example, "By his will, thinking, and labor man must reinforce himself in the face of nature; our enemy is all that is uncontrolled, that which in us or beyond us is left to itself; our enemy is any and every state of nature: raw matter and the naked soul." Brzozowski, "Polska zdziecinniała" [Poland gone puerile], in *Legenda Młodej Polski*, 68.

18 Brzozowski, "Nasze 'ja' i historia," 19.

realize it. This is what determines the fundamental, basic orientation of European history. Here the Self is no illusion, but something *essential*. European culture strives to bring together, to unite the concept of the self and man, to raise man to the dignity of *the free and really effective agent* of his destiny.[19]

Brzozowski deploys terms that evoke historical purpose, an inherent aim of cultural history: "striving to realize […], to unite under one concept […]." Nor does he shun the term 'essential' with reference to a Self to whom it belongs to be free and effective. Can this way of talking be understood in any other way than to say that, however much it may be that all we are is what we have made ourselves to be, the making, the power or capacity itself, is essential to the nature of the Self, the ground of the Self's freedom?

Rorty would desist; he would consider this kind of language, the language of truthful self-representation, as rooted in a 'poetic' tradition that has known a variety of forms. In his view, talk about self-realization is just that—it is talk that conveyed a culturally significant narrative rather than a report about something that had been waiting to be discovered. Self-talk is a language game among others, some of which are consistent with it, some not, that we owe to a succession of genial speakers ("strong poets") who managed to get across the idea—'romantic imagination'—that self-talk is a better tool than other forms of talk humans have invented to decide what is good to believe.

Brzozowski (under the spell in part of Kant[20]—the world conforms to concepts, it is the world for the subject—but also of Avenarius and Mach—the raw material of psychic elements awaiting organization) makes much of the teeming vital energy of the psyche that in the course of labor rises to the status of a 'solid' Self able to withstand nature's destructive forces. On the strength of the passage from Brzozowski cited above, self-constitution is inscribed within the European cultural idea as its essential end—the realization of man as the autonomous Self. In my estimation, this is the way to understand the following passage by Brzozowski: "[…] we have to struggle to render permanent what we value in ourselves, which means that we need to work on how to ensure the duration of that which appears to us to be what is most valuable in us."[21] The idea seems to be that by our inherent resources, which belong to us essentially, we fix on that within the self which we discover to be the self's fundamental value (or truth). Brzozowski concludes the essay in question with the sentence:

19 Italics mine (E. M. Ś.).

20 For instance, the essay Brzozowski, "Kant w stulecie smierci" [Kant. On the centenary of his death], in *Kultura i życie*, 249–258.

21 Brzozowski, "Nasze 'ja' i historia," 26.

"Our foundation and our construction take place only within us; they are not outside of us," which I understand to be his call to "get in touch with something in here."[22]

Rorty could perhaps go along with that part of this evocation of the Self that is the expression of the 'romantic ideal', with the proviso, however, that we relinquish the myth of a Self that *has* powers of self-constitution.[23] To be clear: by denying that there is a 'substantial' self which has such capacities Rorty does not mean this to be a point about ontology, that is, about "reducing" the subject to something of an entirely different nature. Quite to the contrary, the meaning of self-talk, i.e., its uses in our socio-cultural context, is not endangered by physicalist talk about the way things really are supposed to be 'in here' (no more or less than they would be by the way things are supposed to be 'out there').[24] Dropping futile worries about the status of self-talk in relation to some other supposedly privileged form of talk in no way abets or diminishes the role it has played in our culture; rather it testifies to the powers of the "imagination."[25]

22 Ibid., 27

23 Richard Rorty, "Non-reductive physicalism," in *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth. Philosophical papers*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

24 The reason this is so has to do with semantics, with synonymy. Reduction of self-talk would need to proceed by way of a 'translation', one-to-one, without remainder, to the preferred physicalist idiom—a translation which Rorty claimed was neither possible nor intelligible, i.e., useful.

25 It may be that what kept Brzozowski from getting clear about the vestiges of the modern subject in his thinking was his abhorrence of 'naturalism', both in its evolutionist form and in that of 'scientific Marxism', both of which struck him as 'reductionist'. He quoted approvingly Marx's first "Thesis on Feuerbach" in which Marx dismisses the naturalist ('materialist') project (as well as its 'idealist' counterpart). However, he offers the following gloss on Marx's meaning: "Given that our fundamental reality is life, given that man is the giant ceaselessly struggling with nature [żywiolami], he has to become his own law-giver" (Brzozowksi, "Pragmatyzm i materializm dziejowy," 210). Would Marx have subscribed to what appears to be a Kantian reading of his passage: as if in invoking the Kantian "autonomous" subject Brzozowski sought to infuse Marxian Praxis with an inner purpose? Indeed, this impression can easily be reinforced by the lines that follow the passage just quoted: echoing his conviction about the creation of the self as the aim of history, Brzozowski writes about man's "victory over the unknown" (ibid., 211), a victory consisting in appropriating and maintaining his autonomy. The underlying question here seems to be whether 'self-creation' is 'self-determination' in the Kantian sense, as submission to the moral law?

So it appears that for Brzozowski the human condition is, on the one hand, *sui generis* and in process, and, on the other hand, it appears that self-constitution proceeds from a centre, a foundation within man's activity that, in the end, is the whole point of activity—to assert and maintain its autonomy.

Excursus: Brzozowski's "Evolution"

My sense of the tension in Brzozowski's thinking is confirmed to a degree by discussions among scholars in Poland about the evolution of Brzozowski's thinking. And part of that discussion has to do with the changes in Brzozowski's approach to the Self. A brief pause to consider this discussion will provide additional stimulus for the Brzozowski-Rorty juxtaposition. Andrzej Walicki has looked carefully at stages of Brzozowski's development both in his book-length study[26] and in an article entitled "Leszek Kołakowski a Stanisław Brzozowski" (Leszek Kołakowski and Stanisław Brzozowski).[27] Walicki's references to his colleague include an article the latter wrote entitled "Miejsce filozofowania Stanisława Brzozowskiego" (The Place of Stanisław Brzozowski's Philosophizing),[28] which will figure in the background of my remarks.[29]

Walicki contends that Brzozowski's thinking is "remarkably organic" and "the general problematic of his thought remained basically unchanged."[30] Notwithstanding the claim, Walicki's own presentation could well produce the opposite impression—that Brzozowski was less than entirely clear as to what it

26 Walicki, *Stanisław Brzozowski and the Polish Beginnings of 'Western Marxism'*.

27 Andrzej Walicki, "Leszek Kołakowski a Stanisław Brzozowski," in *Kołakowski i inni*, ed. Jan Skoczyński (Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka, 1995).

28 Leszek Kołakowski, "Miejsce filozofowania Stanisława Brzozowskiego," in *Pochwała niekonsekwencji. Pisma rozproszone z lat 1955–1968*, vol. 1 (Londyn: Puls, 1989); originally published in *Twórczość* 6 (1966): 39–54.

29 There are writers who question whether there is anything resembling an evolution in Brzozowski's philosophical writings. With reference to the research on Brzozowski that began appearing in Poland as of the 1970s one writer is baffled by the seeming consensus that "we can discern something like an evolution in his thinking." Try as he might, this author finds none, remarking only that "what we have here is an evolution devoid of anything that might be called its teleology […]; just a pure and abstract process of evolving for its own sake." He continues: "Each time I read Brzozowski and try to grasp the gist of his philosophy, it all bursts and implodes, as if there was no gist to it at all." Jacek Gutorow, "Stanisław Brzozowski and the Ends of Thought," *Studia Culturae* 16 (2013): 39f. http://iculture.spb.ru/index.php/stucult/article/view/469

30 Walicki, *Stanisław Brzozowski and the Polish Beginnings of 'Western Marxism'*, 169.

was that he was searching for. On the one hand, Walicki identifies the philosophy of labor as the linchpin joining the phases of Brzozowski's thinking. On the other hand, there is reason to ask what the core of this idea is that remained intact from stage to stage. As Walicki characterizes these stages, we have, first, emphasis on labor in a narrow sense, that is, material production; second, 'labor' characterized by Walicki as 'social praxis', which he understands as the construction of humanly meaningful reality; and finally 'labor' understood as the will to discipline the irrational, chaotic forces within both man and nature.[31] What do these several meanings have in common? Walicki offers no answer.

More to the point, Walicki is entirely candid about the significance of Brzozowski's last phase, the "movement from radical humanism to an attempt to ground human existence in the Absolute Being."[32] He writes in this regard of Brzozowski's "radical reorientation" consisting in his giving up Promethean anthropocentrism in order instead to ground human existence in the divine being. If so, then talk of a radical reorientation hardly sits comfortably with affirmations about the organic continuity of Brzozowski's philosophy. Between radical anthropocentrism, that is, an immanent historicist perspective advancing the cause of the *Gattungswesen*, and the search (or longing) for a transcendent ground of personal existence there is more like an abyss than a continuous line. Perhaps a solution to this quandary might be to suggest a core in Brzozowski's thinking other than the 'philosophy of labor'. Walicki, so far as I can tell, does not propose any alternative. My sense in this regard is that the alternative might be Brzozowski's search for the centred subject, be it the individual, the toiling collective, the working class, the nation—all of which Brzozowski at various times assigned the epithet 'Man' (człowiek).

Interestingly, the issue I have been driving so far, the tension inherent in Brzozowski's thinking, comes out explicitly in Walicki's reading of what he sees as the virtual congruence of Brzozowski's and Kołakowski's "evolutions." Following their closely similar anthropocentric phases, in large measure derived from—in Brzozowski's case surmised from—the same source (the early Marx), each arrives at a critical 'reorientation', viz., each turns to transcendence and the search for certitude. Walicki pays attention to the difficulties of this quest given both thinkers suspicions of 'representationalist' epistemologies. Each denies that human knowledge can avail itself of standards by which to measure truth value that are independent of any and all circumstances in which the knowing subject finds herself and within which it constructs tools for survival. For Brzozowski-Kołakowski, "no truth can be free of history, that is, of the situation in which it

31 Ibid., 174.

32 Ibid.

was acquired. No human knowledge can pretend to be free of the inevitable relativity attached to the human species."[33] But then, how to recognize transcendence, how to aspire to what is not contingent?

Each came to doubt, according to Walicki, the cogency of this relativist vision; each began to see that its consequences could become culturally fatal… the danger of universal relativism, creeping skepticism, and finally outright nihilism. Nevertheless, as Walicki recreates the logic of their respective situations, neither Brzozowski nor Kołakowski wished simply to give up the idea of the creative potential of the human deed and the tools it creates to satisfy its needs, but they came to understand that attempts to stave off the ravages of relativism by shifting to a generic or social subjectivism are illusory. Brzozowski recognized, as Walicki puts it paraphrasing Kołakowski's own account, that a radical anthropocentrism was at base "contradictory."[34] How could a radically contingent being, whether the individual or the species as a whole, hold itself up, over the course of its biological and cultural history, as a self-sufficient absolute? The upshot is to recognize that the search for unconditional truth assumes contact with "something" other than that to which labor or social praxis provide access—neither of which can surpass what is contingent and relative to changing needs. Hence, either a leap of faith and personal commitment to transcendent values—by Walicki's lights the solution Brzozowski favoured—or the recognition that the search for certitude is the symptom of mythopoeic consciousness—the solution favoured by Kołakowski.

As Walicki presents these parallels they take on the air of paradox. He writes, "For both Brzozowski and Kołakowski philosophy is first of all the search for meaning, not the meaning of words, but the meaning of life, the meaning of the world."[35] Walicki sees Kołakowski's embrace of the 'mythical option' as a clue to what might have been Brzozowski's own path had he had the time to probe to his nascent religious inclinations. Now, for Kolakowski, to recognize the presence of myth[36] is to recognize that cultural forms are inherently projective, that they supersede anything our experience in the world can possibly vouchsafe. Terms such as value (e.g., truth), abiding permanence, wholeness, contrast with our concrete experience of finitude, contingency, and fragmentation. Concerning the latter, there is all too much evidence; as to the former, it is as if the wish could make it so.

33 Walicki, "Leszek Kołakowski a Stanisław Brzozowski," 19.

34 Ibid., 20.

35 Ibid., 21.

36 Leszek Kolakowski, *The Presence of Myth*, trans. Adam Czerniawski (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1989).

It seems to me, then, that with regard to the question of the "meaning of life," as Walicki puts it, the position Kołakowski adopts, on the basis of his suspicion that myth permeates every cultural form, is akin to Anselm's '*credo quia absurdum*'. We seem not to be able to get along without values which we 'create' to assure ourselves of meaning; but despite this we want to believe (an excusable form of bad faith) that some values are not contingent and historically relative, that they abide somewhere outside our ordinary experience. *Pace* Walicki, this does seem to be about the meaning we ascribe to words, empty signifiers, however much we may wish to believe the contrary.

In the end, therefore, once they gave up their 'neo-Marxist' convictions, Brzozowski and Kołakowski struggled with something redolent of the Hegelian 'unhappy consciousness'—the search to reconcile the temporal and the eternal, the inner world of the spirit and worldly finitude. I can summarize this part of my discussion by the following pairs of contrasting characteristics—unresolved *aporias*—which, on the basis of Walicki's reflections—apply equally to Brzozowski and Kołakowski in the last stages of their thinking:

Immanence	⇔	Transcendence
Making truth	⇔	Discovering truth
Relativity/contingency/finitude	⇔	Permanence/structure/foundation
Historied[37] culture	⇔	Reality (Truth)

where the characteristics in the right column are—certainly for Kołakowski and, I assume, for Brzozowski as well—projections (myths) by which we to seek to assure ourselves that we are bound to something beyond the pale of finitude—represented by the characteristics in the left column.

Brzozowski's "Incomplete" Paradigm Shift?

I have proposed that Brzozowski remained captive to the 'modern philosophy of the subject', though he sought a way to historicize, relativize the centred subject, believing that the autonomy of the self-creating subject would be preserved. That he remained captive is to say that he found it difficult to relinquish the idea that there is something essential, something substantive at the basis of self-creation.

37 The term 'historied' is taken from Joseph Margolis: "The grand theme that thought is historied, incapable of fixing the norms of reason beyond the horizon of its own contingent vision." Cf. Joseph Margolis, *Historied Thought, Constructed World: A Conceptual Primer for the Turn of the Millennium* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 7.

I speculated at the outset of the paper that, given his questions, had Brzozowski at his disposal the discursive, philosophical means that Rorty deployed to considerable effect, he might have managed to relinquish the idea and take a path similar to Rorty's. While I can't hope in the present paper to sufficiently justify this hypothesis, I want to illustrate what I mean by 'had Brzozowski at his disposal the discursive, philosophical means'. It is a hypothesis about the dialectic of philosophy, about paradigm changes in philosophy, about new ways of thinking, something to which Brzozowski was attuned.

I will present two views of the history of (European) philosophy in terms of paradigm shifts, one by Habermas,[38] the other by Rorty,[39] and propose on that basis an interpretation of Brzozowski's truncated shift.

Habermas outlined the major shifts in the European philosophical consciousness since the Ancients as successive passages from being to consciousness to language. These can be described, very roughly, as, first, fascination with essence, whereby knowledge, itself an essential component of being, pays witness to essence in the form of Logos. The anomalies that came to afflict this paradigm prompted the questioning that culminated in the Kantian Copernican Revolution (things conform to concepts, not concepts to things), the shift to *Bewusstseinsphilosophie*, the 'philosophy of the subject'. In its turn, this move brought in its train the vexed question of the relation of mind to world, that is, the issue of 'epistemology', viz. does consciousness / mind reach beyond itself to the world in a way adequate to the world? This paradigm began losing its grip throughout the nineteenth century (perhaps with Nietzsche in one direction, with Frege in another, and with Peirce in yet another). Signs increased that *Bewusstseinsphilosophie* was ceding ground to symbolic practices—language—that not only carry meaning but are at the source of meaning.

Habermas does not hold, however, that the succession from being to consciousness to language involves radical discontinuity, such that it would be difficult to speak of the "history" of philosophy. We are, it is true, he holds, in a post-metaphysical era of philosophizing (that is, beyond being and the recovery of being in the subject), but that is not because we deserve to be sceptical about the pertinence of the old questions. Instead, new ways of thinking are better adapted to integrating the many and increasingly diverse discursive formations that Modernity has introduced into the public sphere. 'Paradigm changes' in philosophy

38 Jürgen Habermas, "Metaphysik nach Kant," in *Theorie der Subjektivität*, ed. H. F. Fulda, R-P. Horstmann and U. Pothast (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp 1990).

39 Rorty, "Non-reductive physicalism." Habermas and Rorty confronted their respective visions of the history of philosophy during the debate about the state of philosophy in Warsaw in 1995. See the reference in note 4 above.

are therefore better understood as increased awareness of philosophy's reconstructive efforts, within its discursive sphere, in view of needs for renewed meaning elsewhere in the broader socio-cultural context in which it is practiced and is acknowledged as relevant (or irrelevant). Habermas offers as an example of philosophy's reconstructive task the ways in which doubts about the discourse of mind and body in its Cartesian or transcendental formats were increasingly handled as the nineteenth century wore on. There are, Habermas believes,

> […] good grounds to ascribe philosophical status […] to 'tertiary' [dritte] categories such as 'language', 'action', or 'body'. These attempts to rethink transcendental consciousness by 'incorporating it in language, action, and the body, and to 'situate' reason in society and history, have a not inconsiderable argumentative potential [Argumentationspotential] behind them. Starting with Humboldt, such arguments ran from Frege to Wittgenstein or from Dilthey to Gadamer, as well from Peirce to Mead, and from Feuerbach to Merleau-Ponty via Plessner.[40]

The issue I have raised about Brzozowski, in regard to the discursive means which he brought to the resolution of his questions about the relation of Self and world concerns precisely the 'tertiary' to which Habermas alludes. It is indisputable that Brzozowski was very much alive to the possibility that the Subject should be recast in terms of *action* as well as *reason in society and history*.[41] He was of course far less alive to the possibility of recasting the subject through the prism of *language*, in part because the 'linguistic turn' had not yet crystalized in the first decade of the new century. To see how the effects of this 'ignorance' can plausibly be measured in his philosophy I turn to Rorty's take on the paradigm shifts within European philosophy.

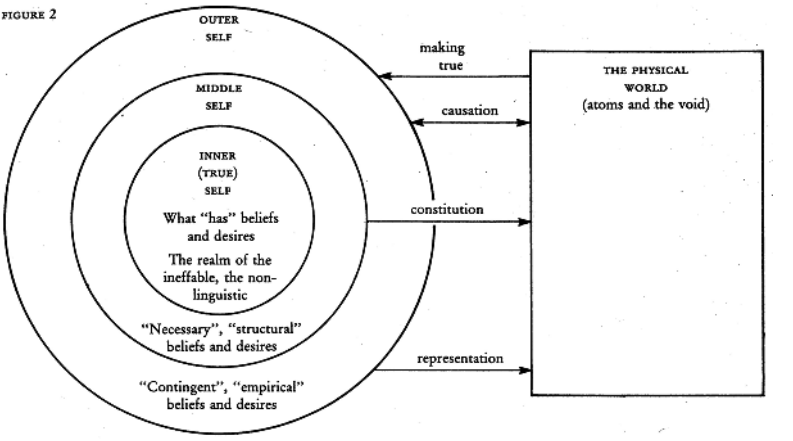
Rorty agrees broadly speaking with the 'three stage' view advanced by Habermas, but in his picture the succession *does* proceed in the form of radical breaks. Rorty thinks of the breaks as liberations from outmoded ways of talking, that is, from dead metaphors. He sides with Habermas as regards philosophy's reconstructive task, though in his case the shift to new ground involves not recasting the old questions but inventing new ways of talking, even at the cost of philosophy.

Although philosophers' fascination with 'Being' came to be displaced by discovery of the Subject, modern philosophy bogged down in what Rorty de-

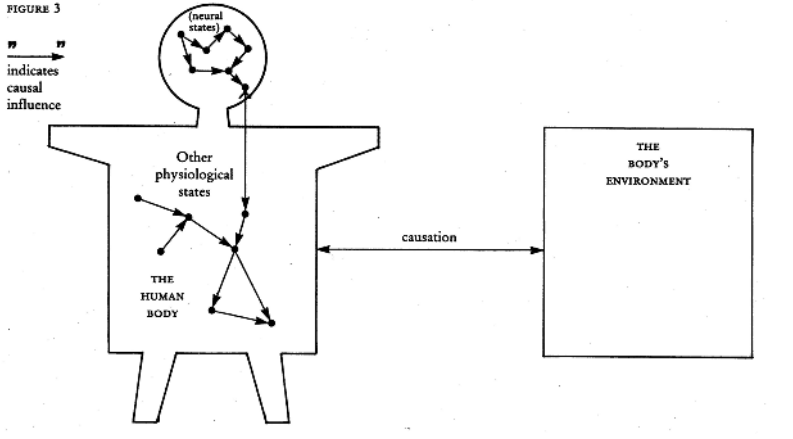
40 Habermas, "Metaphysik nach Kant," 435f.

41 Recourse to italics, here and below, is meant to indicate that the reference of the expressions is to categories.

scribes as the "post-Kantian" model of the Subject (or Self) that had been paradigmatic for some two centuries. He diagrams the model in this way:



The second model, the one that Rorty bids us to recognize (on the basis of his favoured 'pragmatist lineage'), is strikingly different.[42]



The differences between the two models are all too evident, not least of all visually. The second diagram has but one arrow symbolizing the relation—that of causation—between the human self (the organism) and the world. The first, by contrast, sets up four relations and, in addition, presents a 'picture' of the inner make-up of the self that is incomparably more complex than that of the second.

42 Both diagrams are from Rorty, "Non-reductive physicalism," 119, 122.

Suffice it to say, and indeed Rorty wants to say, that in the former the self is characterized as a (transcendental or noumenal) centre to which various 'functions' and resources accrue over which this centre exerts control. The latter model is devoid of any such centre: it represents a major philosophical shift away from the philosophy of the subject. The make-up of the 'self' in the second model consists of the same stuff that its environment consists of, that is, the perspective is naturalist all the way down, nothing remains left over which something else—the kind of self pictured in the first diagram—could claim as its specific mode of being. The two models do, however, share a vision of 'external reality'—one which takes its cues from physical science. God, final causes, unseen spirits are absent in the physics of the post-Kantian model, all the more so in the physics of fields of energized particles.[43]

Now, in light of these models as well as Habermas' paradigm shifts, how far did Brzozowski come in deconstructing the post-Kantian Subject? He would boil down the post-Kantian self in a way that stands mid-way between Rorty's two models. With Rorty, Brzozowski would strip away the relations of 'making true' and 'representation'—the mainstays of the correspondence theory of truth. Again like Rorty he would retain the double arrow of causation, the relation of the organism and the environment. However, in contrast to Rorty, he would leave in place the arrow of constitution running from the human being to the world, though in his case post-Kantian constitution becomes (Marxian) 'labor'. Rorty would see this as a vestige of the post-Kantian *Bewusstseinsphilosophie*. The question immediately arises whether or not Brzozowski believed that behind 'constitution' *qua* 'labor' there stands some deeper Self, and the further question is whether his 'model' of the Self in relation to the world is finally coherent.

Notice first, however, that Rorty believes that he can eat his cake and have it, too. He insists that his second, minimalist model is not to be interpreted as banishing *talk* of the subject (the self). This follows as soon as we acknowledge the futility of the epistemological enterprise—the obsession with objective representation—and drop the idea that language is the medium of cognitive representation: the problem with the reference of self-talk vanishes accordingly. Self-talk does not hinge on objective representations of the way things really are 'in here'.

43 Rorty buttresses his argument in favour of the second model by three theses (mostly taken over from Donald Davidson): (1) reasons for our actions must be their causes; (2) sentences are not made true by the world, and (3) the meanings we think inhabit our sentences are metaphors gone dead. The upshot is that there is no 'space', no centre from within which the Subject establishes a relation to the world. The difference that subject-talk makes in our lives does not require an epistemic warrant underwritten by ontological realism (or idealism for that matter).

In Rorty's nominalist model, language games do not pick out bits in the world, nor bits within the subject; they have no place, therefore, within the single relation his minimalist model depicts. Within the scope of the causal nexus joining the organism and the environment all that there can be of language is acoustic blasts and physical marks, the rest being a matter of some of these blasts and physical marks becoming familiar to their users in accord with their needs.[44]

Rorty would not know what to make of Brzozowski's 'labor', all the more so as there is an open question as to how Brzozowski understood labor.[45] Did he think that human labor manages to do more than rearrange pre-existing materials and brings into existence entities of a new 'human' kind, or did he hold instead that our artefacts remain relative to, and therefore dependent on, the way in which we 'perceive' arrangements of pre-existing materials as meaningful to—and for—us? But Rorty, we saw, removes the sting from the issue by dint of his pragmatist 'linguistic turn': once you rid yourself of the idea that language is a medium in which to convey representations of the way things are, including the way 'new things' created by human ingenuity are, then nothing hangs on deciding the issue one way or another. 'Talk' of a new human world that is significant to its users is a feather in the cap of the creative imagination in our culture, not a report about the state of a world 'out there'.

Now given Brzozowski's appeal to the Self to be rid of the historical world it has created, it would appear that he does ascribe ontological weight to labor, for how else could the world compromise the autonomy of the Self? If so, then he is blocked from turning Rorty's neat trick of neutralizing the issue. For if the historical world is 'real', then ipso facto what we say about the things we bring into existence has to be constrained by what they are, objectively, in particular if we are to acquire the means to be better able to realize our intentions. But then,

44 Rorty's 'linguistic turn' is that of a radical nominalist, not in an ontological sense since that would run counter to his anti-representationalism, but in a linguistic sense alone. For him, words, sentences, narratives, etc. are just so many tools serving whatever purposes appear important to us within our public spheres. In addition, he subscribes to a Darwinian evolutionary account of the needs for which language is a tool.

45 I took on this question in an earlier publication believing that Brzozowski could be characterized as a constructionalist nominalist in the manner of Nelson Goodman; Brzozowski's labor might be likened to Goodman's 'ways of world making'. However, there are passages in Brzozowski in which he puts forward by far more realist-sounding claims—'labor brings out about' substantial change, creates entities that are properly qualified as human. Cf. Edward M. Świderski, "Was Brzozowski a 'constructionist'? A contemporary reading of Brzozowski's 'philosophy of labour'," *Studies in East European Thought* 63 (2011).

however much Brzozowski would have liked to rid philosophy of the worry about how things really are out there, by clinging to a strong concept of labor can he consistently give up objective representation?

Of course, Brzozowski would be struck dumb by the question "are there really tables?" As would Rorty, who explains, however: "[…] the best way to predict the behaviour of tables will probably remain to talk about them *qua* tables rather than as collections of particles or as fuzzy replicas of the Platonic archetypal Table. That is all one could possibly mean by saying 'There really are tables.'"[46] To 'predict the behaviour of something' is to make sense of it relative to our needs; we won't advance the meaning of table-talk amongst ourselves, in our life-world, if we switch to talking about tables in terms of particles or archetypes. We don't need independent confirmation of the existence of tables *qua* tables to fix the *use* of table talk.

Brzozowski, on the contrary, both does and doesn't need independent confirmation. He doesn't insofar as it belongs to a strong ontological concept of labor that, when successful, labor runs its course to the finished product, with the laborer monitoring the process to the end. 'I made the table, I can show you how—so of course it exists'. He does need independent confirmation, however, in the sense that the strong concept can stand its ground only in case there is an intentional subject of labor suitably equipped and able to set in train the process in the course of which the finished product comes into being.[47]

In this last regard, we arrive once again at the tension at the heart of Brzozowski's philosophy. Though the history of her industry is all that the Self is, nevertheless, in order to preserve its autonomy and creative potential the Self has to free itself of that content. Stating the same thing in terms of Rorty's post-Kantian model as modified by Brzozowski—there is a centred Self underlying the constitution of the meaningful experience of the world and intentional action.

I have argued all along that this is what Brzozowski believed, but that at the same time he struggled to reconcile this belief in the autonomous Self with his equally persistent belief in the 'human world' created by the Self. On the one hand, he would have agreed with Habermas that relative to the human world it makes, the Self could well be recast in terms of the categories of *action* and *historical reason*. On the other hand, because he thought that it belongs *essentially*

46 Rorty, "Non-reductive physicalism," 115f.

47 A transcendental argument could be imagined which concludes to the existence of such a subject from the undeniable fact that tables do exist and therefore had to be constructed by a subject. But this is a dubious strategy given that the intentional properties of tables obviously require reference to intentional subjects, without this alone entailing that the subjects produce real tables.

to the Self to make the human world, he shied away from relativizing that essential characteristic in terms of *historical reason*, since in that case the Self would be on a par with its products, as relative as they in relation to changing needs and new ways of categorizing.

Habermas and Rorty, though in different ways, see that the dialectic of philosophical argument moved past a perhaps still substantive notion of the human world as when *language* began taking over the reins of *action* and *historical reason* from whatever vestiges of *consciousness* that still remained. *Language*—in the several connotations Habermas marks out in the passage quoted above—displaces 'consciousness' and 'experience' as both the source and carrier of meaning, becoming thereby the primary locus of *action* and *historical reason*. The latter became coeval with *language*; they cannot be more meaningful than the meaning that *language* articulates. For the Self, the subject, the upshot seems to be unmistakable. Self-understanding is not independent of, it is constituted by, *language* as the articulate bearer, the 'site' of historical understandings. Rorty, however, takes the argument to the limit by dint of his nominalism: self-understanding is not to be glossed as discovering some fact of the matter about the nature of the self across the history of *language*, for instance, some fact about the essentially creative potential of the self.

Seen in this light, Brzozowski's hope to retrieve the Self from the historical world the Self creates, even as he concedes that the historical world is all the content that the Self has, is rife with paradox: by stepping back from the world the Self has created does it not relinquish the means it has put in place to give expression to its activity in that world? That is, does it not deprive itself of articulate self-representation? Brzozowski's 'argument' is that the Self is forever more than it has in fact created, is never identical with its actual project, and therefore in principle is ahead of itself. The downside for him is that the historical world that the Self has created can compromise its autonomy to the extent that the Self deceives itself about the source and 'substance' of that world—as being the outcome of forces beyond the reach of labor—and succumbs as a result to the illusions of fetish. In response to this danger Brzozowski insists all the more on the urgent need for the Self to appropriate its autonomy over and against the world it has created. The questions that remain are: what is the nature of the autonomy that the Self is asked to recover in pure form, so to speak, and how, if at all, does the Self represent that autonomy to itself over and beyond its means of self-expression within the historical world it has left behind?[48]

48 In "Nasze 'ja' i historia" Brzozowski cites with approval Hegel's *Phenomenology*: it is an example of how to overcome fetishized consciousness. It seems, however, that Brzozowski either misunderstands or overlooks Hegel's *Geist* that comes to self-con-

We can avail ourselves at this stage of Walicki's account of Brzozowski's 'evolution'. Recall that for Walicki, not only did Brzozowski grow wary of the historical world, a realm of contingency and relativity threatening the constancy of the Self, he came in time to the conclusion that the Self is not self-sufficient, it cannot pretend to the status of an/the Absolute. In other words, the 'remaining questions' above can have no answer so long as they assume the Self's self-sufficiency. Brzozowski could not go down the road to *Language* in the sense of Habermas and Rorty; the philosophical dialectic at the time had not come far enough to allow Brzozowski to envision such a possibility. Where Habermas and Rorty, each in their own way, relativize the ontology of the historical world to the manner in which way it is displayed in language, Brzozowski, despite his doubts about the self-sufficiency of the Self, needs the 'strong' concept of labor to reinforce the urgent need to recover the 'truth' about the Self—her autonomy over and against this historically created world. But as soon as autonomy as self-sufficiency is perceived to be groundless, empty, where is refuge for the Self, a sense of foundation, to be sought?

Walicki assures us that at this stage Brzozowski grasped at the straws of transcendence, he reached out to an/the 'Absolute'. It is more to the point to observe, however, that if Walicki's word is to be taken regarding Kołakowski's and Brzozowski's spiritual kinship, then Brzozowski's turn to the Absolute was tantamount to coming to terms with myth in Kołakowski's meaning. Semantically, myths are empty signifiers as far as ordinary experience is concerned, nothing corresponds to them, but they are infused with a meaning that comes from the need, the hope that there is something beyond experience to which these signifiers correspond. If we give up this hope, suppress the need, the nothingness that ensues would be tantamount to the death of the Self (and for Kołakowski at least undermine the creative forces within culture).

I wrote above that Rorty would have been nonplussed by Brzozowski's strong concept of labor. He would doubtless have been impressed by the 'romantic imagination' to which Brzozowski gave expression in his passionate quest for some deeper meaning of the creative, autonomous Self. Still, he would have seen behind Brzozowski's efforts the ever persistent influence of the philosophy of the subject throughout the forms it acquired following Kant's 'Copernican Revolution'. He wrote in this regard:

Kant and Hegel went only halfway in their repudiation of the idea that truth is "out there." They were willing to view the world of empirical science as a made world—to see matter

sciousness by reflexively appropriating and identifying with the totality of its historical objectivations.

as constructed by mind, or as consisting in mind insufficiently conscious of its own mental character. But they persisted in seeing mind, spirit, the depths of the human self, as having an intrinsic nature—one which could be known by a kind of non-empirical super science called philosophy. This meant that only half of truth—the bottom, scientific half—was made. Higher truth, the truth about mind, the province of philosophy, was still a matter of discovery rather than creation.[49]

Indeed, the spirit, if not every detail, of this passage corresponds to Brzozowski's predicament: that mind—or labor—'makes' the world, a making expressive of its nature, the self-representation—the discovery of which requires a form of representation that transcends experience, whether or not this form goes under the name 'philosophy' (perhaps 'religion'). Rorty would be happy, I am sure, to label this higher form of self-representation 'myth', though not in Kołakowski's meaning, the point of which is to preserve the semblance of representation despite the empty signifiers. For Rorty, it is myth because it is an idea that has outlived its time; if it was once culturally significant, an overstated invitation to think beyond reified ways of describing human relations, today we understand this need to seek new ways of being without claiming that successive ways are closer approximations to 'truth', Kołakowski/Brzozowski affirm that we can't have one without the other, the new forms of being require a concomitant sense of continuity, certainty, historical wholeness, for as Brzozowski puts it, the entire point of European history is to show that "the Self is no illusion, but something *essential*."[50]

Taken to this stage, to the point where the Truth of the Self, over and beyond its created human world, is 'myth', there is no possibility of a rational solution to the question. Curiously, Rorty would certainly agree with the conclusion, though he would arrive at it from a diametrically opposed perspective. Language is the heart of the matter: Brzozowski's move into Myth requires him to forsake language for the sake of 'what cannot be said'; Rorty detaches language from the obligation to say how anything is. Regarding the Self and its 'truth' the two positions come to the same: words in the absence of representations.

49 Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, 4.

50 "[…] the fundamental and basic direction of European history. The self is no illusion, but something essential. European culture has been the struggle to identify the concepts of consciousness and man, to elevate man to the dignity of a free and real agent of his fate. Brzozowski, "Nasze 'ja' i historia," 19.

WORKS CITED

Bieławski, Pawel. "Stanisława Brzozowskiego Wstęp do filozofii – próba analizy." http://www.racjonalista.pl/kk.php/s,500/k,3

Bielik-Robson, Agata, "Syndrom romantyczny. Stanisław Brzozowski i rewizja romantyzmu." *Słupskie Prace Filologiczne. Seria Filologia Polska*, 5 (2007): 53–63.

Brzozowski, Stanisław. "Kant w stulecie smierci." In *Kultura i życie*, 249–257.

—. "Przyroda i poznanie." In *Idee*, 184–203.

—. "Pragmatyzm i materializm dziejowy." In *Idee*, 204–212.

—. "Nasze 'ja' i historia." In *Legenda Młodej Polski*, 9–27.

—. "Polska zdziecinniała." In *Legenda Młodej Polski*, 49–84.

Grad, Paweł, ed. *Warszawska Szkoła Historii Idei: tożsamość, tradycja, obecność*. Warszawa: IFiS PAN, 2014.

Gutorow, Jacek. "Stanisław Brzozowski and the ends of thought," *Studia Culturae* 16 (2013). http://iculture.spb.ru/index.php/stucult/article/view/469

Habermas, Jürgen. "Metaphysik nach Kant." In *Theorie der Subjektivität*, edited by Hans Friedrich Fulda, Rolf-Peter Horstmann, and Ulrich Pothast, 425–443. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp 1990.

James, William. *Pragmatism. A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking*. In: *Writings, 1902–1910*, edited by Bruce Kuklick, 479–624. New York: Literary Classics of the United States, 1987.

Kołakowski, Andrzej, ed. *Wokół dorobku Warszawskiej Szkoły Historii Idei*. Warszawa: IFiS PAN, 2013.

Kołakowski, Leszek. *Główne nurty marksizmu. Powstanie, rozwój, rozkład*. 3 vols. Paris: Instytut literacki, 1977.

—. "Miejsce filozofowania Stanisława Brzozowskiego." In *Pochwała niekonsekwencji. Pisma rozproszone z lat 1955–1968,* vol. I, 160–176. London: Puls, 1989.

—. *The Presence of Myth*. Translated by Adam Czerniawski. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1989

Margolis, Joseph. *Historied Thought, Constructed World: A Conceptual Primer for the Turn of the Millennium*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.

Niżnik, Jozef, and John T. Sanders, eds. *Debating the State of Philosophy. Habermas, Rorty, and Kołakowski*. Westport: Praeger, 1996.

Rorty, Richard. *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

—. "Non-reductive physicalism." In *Objectivity, relativism, and truth. Philosophical papers*, vol. 1, 113–125. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

—. "Pragmatism and romanticism." In *Philosophy as cultural politics. Philosophical papers*, vol. 4, 105–119. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Świderski, Edward M. "Was Brzozowski a 'constructionist'? A contemporary reading of Brzozowski's 'philosophy of labour'." *Studies in East European Thought* 63 (2011): 329–343.

Tischner, Józef. *Polski ksztalt dialogu*. Kraków: Znak, 2002.

Walicki, Andrzej. *Stanisław Brzozowski and the Polish Beginnings of 'Western Marxism'*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989.

—. "Leszek Kołakowski a Stanisław Brzozowski." In *Kołakowski i inni*, edited by Jan Skoczyński, 15–23. Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka, 1995.

BRZOZOWSKI'S PRESENCE IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY LITERARY CRITICISM AND THEORY

Stanisław Brzozowski and Romantic Revision (Meyer Howard Abrams, Northrop Frye, Harold Bloom): Prolegomena

Eliza Kącka

The development of Stanisław Brzozowski's writing owed much to his profound and complex relationship with Romanticism, not only in its Polish manifestations. This historical-literary assertion should be noted from the outset, since its potential for the study of Brzozowski's oeuvre has not been fully realized.[1] As a result, first, there are only few studies that take into account his output as a whole (from *The Philosophy of Polish Romanticism* to *Voices in the Night*), and second, the multiple aspects of the presence of Romanticism in Brzozowski's work are underrated. It is not by coincidence that I refer to these two books: they are entirely different on account of their language and style and the difference is due to their subject matter and the purpose for which they were written. The sympathisers of English topics and the essayistic character of *Voices in the Night* will at times find it hard to stomach the prophetic and confessional tone of *The Philosophy of Polish Romanticism*. Nevertheless, it is only by studying both these texts (together with *The Legend of Young Poland*, *The Diary*, his correspondence and, finally, *Ideas*) that we can appreciate not only the span of Brzozowski's diction and interests, but also the close relationship between his philosophical-critical project and Romanticism. It is on account of the relationship between reading the Romantic writers and the shape of their own philosophy and

1 In fact, it has been clear since the late 1920s that Romanticism was one of the most important points of reference for Brzozowski, as was illustrated in Zdziechowska's study: Stefania Zdziechowska, *Stanisław Brzozowski jako krytyk literatury polskiej* [Stanisław Brzozowski as a critic of Polish literature] (Kraków: Kasa im. Mianowskiego, 1927), 47–67.

critical work that Brzozowski can be studied on a par with such authors[2] as Meyer Howard Abrams, Harold Bloom, Northrop Frye, Geoffrey Hartman. Even though their views were different, they all held Romanticism, which they thought through in a profound, multi-faceted, and intensive manner, as the foundation of their criticism. All of them also enlarged the possibilities of literary criticism—as in this passage (about Lionel Trilling):

> Trilling was more than a critic […] though it is difficult to say what term better describes him. No doubt his work bears intermittent witness to the kind of concern we associate with intellectual history, or with literary journalism, or with sheer speculative commemoration; but it is perhaps more appropriate to think of Trilling as having enlarged the possibilities of literary criticism to accommodate almost any subject—provided only that it be framed to meet the terms of a focused and largely thematic enquiry.[3]

Brzozowski's connection with Polish and English Romanticism makes him intimately linked to the Anglo-Saxon critics not only on account of the importance of Romantic texts in his work (they all referred to a shared set of authors).[4] The similarities are of far greater weight and more specific. Despite the differing time frames and cultural contexts (Brzozowski died in 1911, while Abrams started publishing in 1934),[5] all these authors regarded Romanticism as

2 I shall be using the words 'author' and 'critic' interchangeably to refer to Brzozowski, Abrams, Bloom and Frye, despite the fact that I am aware of how problematic this can be. It is due to the nature of their critical work, which only rarely can be taken strictly as literary criticism, for even in the texts in which they reacted to contemporary literary events they seamlessly discussed philosophical or theoretical issues or engaged in essayistic or philological interpretation. Nevertheless 'criticism' in its broad understanding, as I will discuss below, can serve here as the common denominator—even though it is not entirely suitable, it is useful for a number of reasons.

3 Robert Boyers, *Lionel Trilling: Negative Capability and Wisdom of Avoidance* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1977), 2.

4 Stanisław Brzozowski was familiar with the works of such authors as, among others, William Blake, William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Ralph Waldo Emerson, John Keats, Percy Bysshe Shelley and George Byron. Cf. Wanda Krajewska, "Związki twórczości Stanisława Brzozowskiego z literaturą angielską" [Stanisław Brzozowski's contacts with English literature], in *Wokół myśli Stanisława Brzozowskiego,* ed. Andrzej Walicki et al. (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1974), 331.

5 This is the date of publication of his first book (he was only twenty-two at that time) entitled *The Milk of Paradise: The Effects of Opium Visions on the Works of De Quin-*

much more than an inspiring epoch in the history of literature and culture. For Brzozowski, as well as for Abrams and his disciples, Romanticism provided a frame of reference of reflection and a particular philosophy of the subject which was far from anachronistic. None of them aimed to reconstruct this philosophy in a systematic fashion; instead, they all constructed it in their own ways to suit their own research, philosophy of life, and vision of creative work. I use the word 'construct' on purpose, for it illustrates the specific nature of their interaction with Romanticism, which they viewed as a formation that implicitly advocated the need for creativity. It is just this specific view of Romanticism as a timeless and provoking challenge that allows drawing parallels between Brzozowski and the English critics.

Against Abstraction

The article "The Survival Eros of Poetry," included in the volume *Romanticism and Contemporary Criticism*, ends with a questionnaire in which the following declaration is to be found:

> Question: Would it make sense to describe your critical theory as Romantic?
> Answer: Oh, it's entirely Romantic, yes. I see the Romantic movement as the first great step in clarifying the role of criticism and bringing in a conception of creativity that could unify the mental elements in creative process.[6]

The respondent (and the author of the article) was Northrop Frye, who wrote a pre-eminent study on William Blake (*Fearful Symmetry*)[7] and an equally acclaimed work on "the scope, theory, principles, and techniques of literary criticism."[8] Frye emphasised the role of Romanticism as the foundation of the modern critical paradigm and of the tendency to activate the full potential of an artist,

---

cey, Crabbe, Francis Thompson, and Coleridge. His most significant study, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition*, appeared in 1953.

6 Northrop Frye, "The Survival Eros in Poetry," in *Romanticism and Contemporary Criticism,* ed. Eaves Morris and Michael Fischer (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 15–45.

7 Northrop Frye, *Fearful Symmetry: A Study of William Blake* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970).

8 Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), 8.

not only in its intellectual sense. The fine scholar of Blake[9] must have shared Stanisław Brzozowski's view, namely that the passion of a Romantic writer was focused not on the abstract, but on the concrete, be it historical, anthropological, or human. In other words, one that does not gloss over the full scope of humanity in all its historical manifestations. As Brzozowski wrote in his *Diary*, "Only Blake with his [words]: 'abstract thoughts belong to scoundrels!'" (Jedyny Blake ze swoim: "abstrakcyjne myśli należą do oszustów!").[10]

He advocated taking a firm stand rooted in reality, both in thoughts as well as in practice. A similar tendency was found in Harold Bloom's thought (with reference to his fascination with Blake—"mental Traveller in the open world of poetry")[11] by Agata Bielik-Robson:

> If there is a slogan, which captures the force of Bloom's theoretical efforts, from his earliest works on romanticism, through his engagement with deconstruction, to his latest inquiries into the aesthetics of genius, it ought to be drawn from the marginal notes of Blake: "To Generalize is to be an Idiot. To Particularize is the Alone Distinction of Merit. General Knowledges are those Knowledges that Idiots possess."[12]

This aphorism by Blake, so meaningful to Brzozowski[13] and Bloom, could serve as an epigraph for an essay on the relations between Brzozowski's philosophy of the subject and that of the other 'Romantic critics'.[14] They did not treat this philosophy autonomously nor did they give any systematic lectures on the subject. As a result, it can be only deduced from their most important works.[15] It

9 Cf. Murray Krieger, "Northrop Frye and Contemporary Criticism: Ariel and the Spirit of Gravity," in *Northrop Frye in Modern Criticism. Selected Papers from the English Institute*, ed. M. Krieger (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966).

10 Brzozowski, *Pamiętnik*, 37.

11 Harold Bloom, *Blake's Apocalypse: A Study in Poetic Argument* (New York: Doubleday, 1963), 436.

12 Agata Bielik-Robson, *The Saving Lie: Harold Bloom and Deconstruction* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2011), 3.

13 Maciej Urbanowski, who provided the footnotes to *The Diary*, pointed to this quote from Blake as the most probable source for the paraphrase by Brzozowski. Cf. William Blake, *The Complete Prose and Poetry*, ed. G. Keynes (London: Nonesuch Press, 1989), 777.

14 For the purposes of this article, I use this particular expression drawing on the term "Romantic critical theory" used by Frye, "The Survival Eros in Poetry," 38.

15 Among others, Adam Lipszyc undertook this task in his book on Bloom. Cf. Adam Lipszyc, *Międzyludzie. Koncepcja podmiotowości w pismach Harolda Blooma z nieu-*

remains clear that Abrams (in *The Mirror and the Lamp* or in *Natural Supernaturalism*), Bloom (in *Agon* or *Poetry and Repression*), Frye (in *Fearful Symmetry*) and Brzozowski were loath to see philosophy separated from poetry,[16] literature, and the experience of life. They advocated an all-encompassing view of the human being, a 'living singularity', as Bloom would have it, which radically changes the perspective of studying philosophy, history of literature, and theory. It entails rejection of the sort of knowledge of humanity which tends to generalize by disregarding the multitude of historical and social factors. In their interpretation, Romantics cultivated historical awareness sensitive to subtleties and were reluctant to admit abstraction, desiccated theories, and impersonal approaches. Bloom wrote in his *The Breaking of the Vessels*:

> Any mode of criticism, be it domestic or imported, that would defraud us of this true context of suffering must at last be dismissed with a kind of genial contempt. Perhaps there are texts without authors, articulated by blanks upon blanks, but the strong poet has the radical originality that restores our perspective to the *agonistic image of the human which suffers*, the human which thinks, the human which writes, the human which means, albeit all too humanly, in that agon the strong poet must wage, against otherness, against the self, against the presentness of the present, against anteriority, in some sense against the future.[17]

In this passage, Bloom described, yet again, the figure of the powerful poet, which was so central to his critical conception. It is not for this reason that I use this quote, but rather on account of the emphasis it places on human potential and the character of creative activity, or any activity for that matter. Bloom's remark is not a platitude, but a sort of a credo, especially if we see it against the background of other critical schools (e.g., the Yale deconstructionists) rather than the general knowledge. The weight of Bloom's 'human' is similar to Brzozowski's remarks concerning 'the living thought' as the only subject of interest for a thinker of such stature. Their remarks are equally general and expressed with similar power, but it is not only the rhetorical intensity that makes these two declarations so close. What they also have in common is the attempt to

---

stającym odniesieniem do podmiotoburstwa [Inter-human. The concept of subjectivity in the writings of Harold Bloom with constant reference to the deconstruction of the subject] (Kraków: Universitas, 2004), 7ff.

16 I refer to poetry as independent of literature on account of its particular understanding in the nineteenth century and its privileged position in nineteenth-century literature.

17 Harold Bloom, *The Breaking of the Vessels* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 82.

pursue the critical work that by means of its propositions would make an impact on the reader. Another common feature is the need to find a psychological and spiritual struggle in literature—the need that binds the critical project very closely to Romanticism in the existential, philosophical, and historical-literary sense. Brzozowski wrote in his *Voices in the Night*:

W ogóle chciałbym by czytelnik zrozumiał, że moje książki są zawsze systematem wyznań i podniet intelektualnych: że nie mają gotowej treści i na próżno by jej w nich szukał. Moją rzeczą jest czytelnika tak zaskoczyć, usytuować, by, jeżeli chce on zgody z sobą i życiem, musiał myśleć i znaleźć mniej więcej te myśli, o które mi chodzi. Jeżeli czytelnik z góry już nie chce dać nie książce, ale samemu sobie z jej powodu ani okrucha żywej i własnej energii, niech lepiej nie czyta tych rzeczy […].[18]

In general, I would like the reader to understand that my books are always a system of confessions and intellectual stimuli: that they do not have a ready-made content and that it would be futile to search for it. It is my concern to surprise the reader so that if he wants to be in accord with himself and with life, he must think and find more or less the thoughts that I am concerned about. If the reader does not want to give, not to the book, but to himself on its occasion, a crumb of his own living energy, then he should rather not read these things [...].

This caveat to the reader reveals an important premise underlying their reasoning: Brzozowski, in a way similar to Abrams, talks about a sort of writing that applies an interpretative intuition (on the part of both the writer and the reader) rather than an easily identifiable method. They both emphasized (and it may well be that Bloom would subscribe to this narrative) the impression of truthfulness, the very power and energy of the text, and the importance of interaction with the reader. Abrams remarked:

[Wayne C. Booth, in his critique of Abrams's book *Natural Supernaturalism*] involves, explicitly or implicitly, a wide range of propositional truth-claims, of which only a fraction assert literal causation. […] The basic mode of "proof" employed for this mixed bag of assertions is their incorporation into a story—more specifically, into a story made up of many stories, in which we can distinguish, within the overarching narrative, a number of middle-sized "novellas" and a great many "short stories"; and a book as a whole requires that the reader enter into its "narrative world" and be convinced that "*all of this hap-*

18 Brzozowski, *Głosy wśród nocy*, 8.

pened—this story is *true*," as a necessary condition for being persuaded of the soundness of the truth-claims and value-claims that the narrative implicates.[19]

In the text quoted above ("Some remarks on the general status of European literature," from in *Voices in the Night*) Brzozowski proposed to treat the critic as a "profound artist."[20] He wrote that "the critic can be recognized by the fact that he is never content with impressions, he immediately, at the slightest twitch of his sensitivity, searches for life […], recognizes it and strives to preserve it. He stands continuously as a watchful guard" (Krytyka poznaje się po tym, że nie poprzestaje on nigdy na wrażeniu, lecz natychmiast poza najlżejszym drgnieniem swej wrażliwości szuka życia […], rozpoznaje je, usiłuje zabezpieczyć. Jest on nieustannie czujną strażą).[21] The figure of the "watchful guard" refers to the particular and the individual, which are in fact the most real. This is a recurrent motif in Brzozowski's writing: he underlines the need to remain open to life and the concomitant readiness to individualize one's approach each time. The basis for such individualization is the awareness of human involvement in history, an antidote to all abstractions. Certainly, this perspective is not a great accomplishment of speculative thought, but it has to be said that Brzozowski (following Vico, Newman, and Norwid) did not aspire to reach the heights of idle and lifeless speculation. He encouraged reflection that would restore the human being to the historical world and empower the concrete 'I'. Regardless of the attitude adopted to this perspective, be it the Hegelian "feeling soul" (*die fühlende Seele*),[22] as Agata Bielik-Robson would have it,[23] or Vico's vision of the historical man,[24] there remains the common conviction that participation in

19 Meyer Howard Abrams, *Doing Things with Texts: Essays in Criticism and Critical Theory*, ed. Michael Fischer (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1989), 115f.

20 Brzozowski, *Głosy wśród nocy*, 5.

21 Ibidem.

22 Cf. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Hegel's Philosophy of Subjective Spirit / Hegels Philosophie des Subjektiven Geistes*, ed. and trans. Michael John Petry (Dordrecht: Springer, 1978), §403.

23 Agata Bielik-Robson, "Syndrom romantyczny. Stanisław Brzozowski i rewizja romantyzmu" [The romantic syndrom. Stanisław Brzozowski's revision of romanticism], in *Romantyzm, niedokończony projekt. Eseje* (Kraków: Universitas, 2008), 76f.

24 For the importance of Vico in Brzozowski's thought, cf: Rena A. Syska-Lamparska, *Stanisław Brzozowski: A Polish Vichian*. Pref. Wiktor Weintraub (Firenze: Le Lettere, 1987); Andrzej Walicki, *Stanisław Brzozowski – drogi myśli* [Stanisław Brzozowski—paths of thought], ed. Andrzej Mencwel (Kraków: Universitas, 2011), 83f.; Andrzej Mencwel, *Stanisław Brzozowski. Postawa krytyczna. Wiek XX* [Stanisław Brzo-

the world is necessary for being a powerful and complete subject. Both Polish and British Romantic writers (from Mickiewicz to Norwid and, for the British, at least from the late eighteenth century up to the 1830s) were interested in the human being that, as Dilthey wrote, "wills, feels, and thinks" and cannot be reduced to "the mere contents of perception, representation, and thought."[25] Abrams and Frye, as well as Brzozowski, applied the consequences that arose from the Romantic sense of the whole to their own critical practice. The readiness of Abrams to place literature and criticism in larger cultural contexts (note the text by Michael Fischer devoted to his work)[26] did not result from observation of the contemporary circles of criticism and methodology, but rather from his reading of the Romantic authors. Being rooted in culture and history not only helps to understand the complexity of a given phenomenon, but it also promises—which is of particular importance in this study—to bring concrete reality seen as a unique outcome of a number of simultaneous phenomena into a closer perspective. Such is the background for the following remark by Fischer: "While appreciating the formal complexity of literary works, Abrams emphasizes that they are by, for, and about human beings."[27] While addressed to Abrams, the remark could well be referred, in its core message, to any of the critics under consideration. Despite appearances, Bloom's intricate theory of agon, reinforced and renewed a number of times, in the last analysis takes into consideration 'human beings', the concrete subjects:

> What concerns me in a strong poem is neither self nor language but the utterance, within the tradition of uttering, of the image or lie of voice, where voice is neither self nor language, but rather spark or *pneuma* as opposed to self, and act made one with word (*davhar*) rather than word referring only to another word (*logos*). A poem is spark and act, or else we need not read it a second time. Criticism is spark and act, or else we need not read it at all.[28]

---

zowski. The critical attitude. The twentieth century] (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Krytyki Politycznej, 2014), 25f.; Eliza Kącka, "'Nie obciążony wpływem żadnej sekty...' Giambattista Vico w myśleniu Stanisława Brzozowskiego" [Vico in Stanisław Brzozowski's thought], *Przegląd Filozoficzno-Literacki* 33 (2012).

25 Wilhelm Dilthey, *Introduction to the Human Sciences*, ed. Rudolf A. Makkreel and Frithjof Rodi (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 50.

26 Michael Fischer, "Foreword," in Abrams, *Doing Things with Texts*, ix ("A readiness to place both literature and criticism in their larger cultural context.").

27 Ibidem, x (emphasis mine, E. K.).

28 Bloom, *The Breaking of the Vessels*, 4.

In this passage Bloom testifies to the focus on 'voice' instead of 'language', which in this case underlines the subjective, volitional character of writing (it is perhaps useful to disregard this gnostic vocabulary, which has been commented on also in Poland).[29] Writers are, according to Bloom, entangled in tradition, in the textual agon, which does not mean that they are anonymous, extra-historical links in this agon. On the contrary: the 'human being' formula guarantees the historicity and the subjective character of an utterance. Geoffrey Hartman in his important work *The Unmediated Vision* expressed a view that might serve as a condensed characteristics of the approach taken by the 'Romantic critics', in the sense that I wish to emphasize in this article:

> Abstraction is never less than total. Great poetry, however, is written by men who have chosen to stay bound by experience, who would not—or could not—free themselves by an act of knowledge from the immediacy of good and evil.[30]

To sum up: adopting an all-encompassing perspective which does not disregard reality is a fundamentally Romantic approach. Certainly, the readers of Bloom, Brzozowski, Abrams, and Frye are well aware of the fact that, while holding fast to the Romantic tradition, they dispelled several of its most ingrained illusions: the illusion of the full autonomy of poetic imagination and of the subjective self. This dispelling does not break their community with Romanticism. Quite the reverse: Romanticism itself, as they all perfectly knew, had a great potential for self-revision. It is no coincidence that Bloom, a reader of Shelley and the twen-

29 In particular one should refer here to Agata Bielik-Robson and Adam Lipszyc, as well as Jan Potkański, who used Bloom's theories for his own theoretical undertakings. Another author who referred to Bloom with respect to literary criticism was Kacper Bartczak. In Polish interpretations of Bloom's gnostic vocabulary, Bielik-Robson and Lipszyc are particularly important, not unlike, on the European scale, Richard Rorty. Cf., e. g.: Bielik-Robson, *Inna nowoczesność. Pytania o współczesną formułę duchowości* [*A different modernity. Questions about the contemporary form of spirituality*] (Krakow: Universitas, 2000), 87–122; Agata Bielik-Robson, "Sześć dni stworzenia. Harolda Blooma mitologia twórczości" [The six days of creation. Harold Bloom's mythology of creativity], in Harold Bloom, *Lęk przed wpływem: teoria poezji*, trans. Agata Bielik-Robson et al. (Kraków: Universitas, 2002); Lipszyc, *Międzyludzie*, 47–59; Kacper Bartczak, *Świat nie scalony* [The unassembled world] (Wrocław: Biuro Literackie, 2009), 12–30; Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 28–30.

30 Geoffrey H. Hartman, *The Unmediated Vision. An Interpretation of Wordsworth, Hopkins, Rilke, and Valéry* (New Heaven: Yale University Press, 1954), xi.

tieth-century canon, indicated that complete mastery of language is impossible and that we are indebted to tradition to a much greater extent than we believe, even though we cherish the originality of thought and independence.[31] In a sense, Bloom's protest against the naive claim of absolute originality as well as the assertion of breaking the continuity between us and history or tradition is analogous to the protest of the author of *The Legend of Young Poland* against thinking that disregards its historical roots.[32]

Romanticism(s) and History

Brzozowski and the other authors use different metaphors and different sets of ideas, but they share, as I have argued already, the intention to question the model of subjectivity that 'levitates' somewhere above tradition and history, free of everything that preceded it in the course of events or utterances. So distinct is this intention that it becomes possible to draw parallels rooted in the creative and critical reading of Romanticism. This reading in its turn draws attention to the volatile nature of the historical context of creative work, not only in the strictly artistic sense, but more broadly in action, in human activities. In his text "Humour and law" included in *The Legend of Young Poland*, Brzozowski wrote:

W Anglii świadomość kształtowała się pod wpływem nieustannego poczucia potężnej, zbiorowej mocy, która zdoła każdy indywidualny wysiłek wyzyskać, zużyć: rozstrzygało tu to zaufanie ku potężnej jak żywioł angielskiej ojczyźnie. Włoska świadomość ukształtowała się w ponadżyciowym zawieszeniu, kształtował ją opór stawiany przez kulturalną tradycję zniszczeniu; to tłumaczy nam najdobitniejsze różnice w tych dwóch stanowiskach. Ale ważnym dla nas jest ich rys wspólny: jedno i to samo poczucie, jeden i ten sam materialny fakt istnienia i jego najwyższe umysłowe szczyty. Jednostka może tu czuć i myśleć w rytmie wielkiej całości; myśl nie tworzy bolesnych przerw, niebezpiecznych osamotnień. […] Myśl nowoczesna, jaką ją znamy przeważnie u nas, powstała pod wpływem izolujących lub zrywających naturalne łączności stanów dusz lub interesów.[33]

In England, consciousness evolved under the influence of the constant feeling of a powerful collective force that is prone to exploit and to use every individual effort: this is a result of the trust in the English fatherland that is as powerful as a natural force. Italian

31 The role of the guardian of the canon results from this sort of awareness. Cf. Harold Bloom, *The Western Canon: The Books and School of the Ages* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1994).

32 Cf. Brzozowski, *Legenda Młodej Polski*, 15ff.

33 Ibid., 313.

consciousness evolved in a supra-existential suspension, it was formed by the resistance put up by the cultural tradition against destruction; this explains to us the most striking differences between these two positions. But what is important for us is their common feature: one and the same feeling, one and the same material fact of existence and its highest mental peaks. The individual must feel and think in the rhythm of a great whole; the mind does not create painful breaks, dangerous solitudes. […] Modern thought as we predominantly know it in our country emerged under the influence of states of mind or interests that isolate or break up the natural bonds.

This passage, so important for descriptions of Brzozowski's views of England and Italy (together with his diagnosis of Poland's historical discontinuity), perfectly illustrates the awareness of different rhythms of historical development. He realized that different national Romanticisms should not be mixed together, warning:

Romantyzm polski nie jest odbiciem, czy echem jakiegoś zachodnio-europejskiego prądu kulturalno-literackiego. [...] Romantyzm polski był wypływem zmiany, ruchu, przeistoczenia, jakie zaszły w duszy polskiego społeczeństwa na początku ubiegłego stulecia. Zrozumieć romantyzm, to znaczy, zrozumieć tę zmianę, ten ruch, to przeistoczenie.[34]

Polish Romanticism is not a reflection or echo of any Western European cultural-literary current. [...] Polish Romanticism was the outflow of change, of movement, and transformation that took place in the soul of Polish society at the beginning of the last century. To understand romanticism means to understand this change, this movement, this transformation.

Brzozowski demonstrated the separate nature of the phenomenon that gave rise to his present, and I am thinking here not only of the modern formation, but also of modernity in its broader sense (and at the particular stage that he was able to observe it). In a sense, Brzozowski repeats, albeit with necessary corrections, the gesture of Mickiewicz's *Paris Lectures*, which he knew well, for he read them passionately while working on his own lectures,[35] later collected in that peculiar pamphlet entitled *Filozofia romantyzmu polskiego* (The Philosophy of Polish Romanticism). It is worth noting at this particular instance that, when situating Brzozowski on the map of European thought and philosophy, one should not disregard the focus on Polish Romanticism. This remark is meant to be directed

34 Brzozowski, *Kultura i życie*, 376f.

35 In 1905 Brzozowski held his lectures on Romanticism in Kraków and at the Lwów Polytechnical School.

polemically against an approach that, in this context, favours *Voices in the Night* and marginalizes *The Philosophy of Polish Romanticism*. Agata Bielik-Robson, in her penetrating view of Brzozowski as a forerunner of the Romantic revision,[36] asserts her claims on the basis of her reading of the 'European' or 'English' Brzozowski while altogether disregarding the Polish context. This context, however, should be brought into consideration; paradoxically, it can only corroborate her diagnosis. Brzozowski's discussion of Romanticism evinces the same awareness with which Abrams declared the following in his response to the reviews of *Natural Supernaturalism*:

> I didn't intend, however, to posit eternal ideas or universal traits of human nature to explain the relations between the various themes and structures that I identify and trace trough time. I took care, in fact, to assert early on that the history I undertook to tell is strictly culture-bound.[37]

Brzozowski, Abrams, Bloom, and Frye appreciated the perspicacity of the Romantics in diagnosing man's involvement in the world and history. However, they also noticed the excessive passivity and perplexity with which many Romantics treated the very fact of this entanglement, their inability to use it in a positive way. Certainly, both Brzozowski and Bloom had a powerful will of emancipation from the burdensome elements of tradition. They advocated, as Bloom would have it, the 'strong self',[38] but they did not think of this self outside the historical context, which is a context of dependence. Brzozowski strove to dispel the illusory view of language according to which its origins lie outside the contexts of life and society. His conviction in this regard is similar to that of Charles Taylor expressed in *A Secular Age* (even though the wording of the latter is markedly different):

> Even great innovative religious founders have to draw on a pre-existing vocabulary available in their society. This in the end shades into the obvious point about human language in general, that we all acquire it from the language-groups we grow up in, and can only transcend what we are given by leaning on it.[39]

One of the important indicators of 'Romantic' critical practice is the suggestive tone of the argument, which despite being erudite remains non-scientistic. The

36 Bielik-Robson, "Syndrom romantyczny," 75.

37 Abrams, *Doing Things with Texts*, 120.

38 Bloom, *The Western Canon*, 55.

39 Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 148.

best known work by Meyer Howard Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp*, is not an anthropological manifesto, but rather a historical reconstruction as well as a paradigmatic construction. His proposition to view the conceptions of art, poetry, and criticism from the perspective of metaphorical transformations engages the reader's erudition and imagination in a way that is markedly different from that of academic 'non-situational' treatises (in Brzozowski's terms). It was to these 'non-situational' thoughts, disregarding reality and intentionally disengaged, that Brzozowski referred to in his *Diary*, most notably in those parts devoted to his critical attitude to the philosophy of Kazimierz Twardowski and his circle. Certainly, he intended to criticize philosophizing understood as a prerequisite for 'being skilled in writing lectures',[40] for such an understanding of philosophizing takes no real responsibility for anything. In a broader sense, however, he referred the term 'situationality' to the focus on an external (social or existential) check concerning literature or theoretical constructions.

A note of caution: in his *Anatomy of Criticism* Frye attempted to present a model of objectivist criticism in relation to 'an impersonal corpus of received knowledge'.[41] Brzozowski will have none of its impersonal tone and the declaration of having a method. Following Vico[42] (and not only him, even though the following passage refers to his polemic against Descartes), he perceived the violent character of method directed against life: "Już Vico prowadził nieustanną polemikę przeciwko wszelkim racjonalistycznym próbom zamknięcia treści tego życia w granicach jakiegoś pojęcia, wyrozumowanej i logicznej teorii" (Already Vico carried on a protracted polemic against rationalist attempts to enclose the content of life within a given concept, a ratiocinated and logical theory).[43]

40 Brzozowski, *Pamiętnik*, 29.

41 Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, 15. He would have termed Brzozowski's criticism as 'journalistic'. Brzozowski's mode of work is closer to that of Abrams, even though Frye can also be included in the context of the study of Brzozowski's criticism (in fact, on many accounts: take for example his reading of Blake in *Fearful Symmetry*).

42 The role of Vico in the writings of Abrams and his students merits a separate study. It is not only with reference to the figure or metaphor of the spiral form (applied to the broad understanding of Romanticism) that Vico appears in Abrams's writing: "The book as a whole has a structure that is deliberately iconic of the spiral form which many Romantic thinkers considered the necessary shape of an intellection, and in which many Romantic writers ordered their philosophies, their histories, and their fictional writings." Abrams, *Doing Things with Texts*, 116.

43 Brzozowski, *Współczesna powieść i krytyka*, 170.

Poetry

Philosophy, criticism, and readings interlaced in Brzozowski's mind to form a particular auto-paideia and autopoiesis in the effort to raise, form, and create oneself. This effort was to be connected to the proposition of activity (the Greek poiēsis) in a broader sense. Frederick C. Beiser in his book *The Romantic Imperative* wrote:

The primacy of the ethical and political in *Frühromantik* means that the romantics subordinated the aesthetic and religious to ethical and political ends. They defined the highest good not as aesthetic contemplation but as human self-realization, the development of humanity. No less than Plato and Aristotle, they insisted that this ideal is realizable only within society and state. Thus ethical and poetical values played a decisive role in the romantic agenda: they are the ultimate purpose behind its aesthetics, its philosophy of history, and *Naturphilosophie*.[44]

Brzozowski, for his part, wrote in his text entitled "Titania's Spouse" published in July 1905 (against Józef Tretiak and his reading of Słowacki):

Krytyk, który byłby tylko krytykiem, byłby bezwzględnym zaprzeczeniem twórczości. Człowiek jest to czynność nieustająca. Istnieje dla niego naprawdę to tylko, co przez jego czyn ogarnięte zostaje. […] Aby zrozumieć czyjeś ja, trzeba je odczuć, czyli właściwie stworzyć. Stworzyć je możemy zaś tylko z własnej naszej duszy, z własnej jaźni.[45]

A critic who is solely a critic would be an absolute denial of creativity. Man is constant activity. Only that really exists for him, which is embraced by his action. [...] To understand someone's self, one must feel it, or actually create it. However, we can only create it from our own soul, from our own self.

Certainly, one could deduce from this passage a sentence much like Schleiermacher's hermeneutic formula on understanding authors better than they understood themselves.[46] The passage as a whole, however, has a different purport and

44 Frederick C. Beiser, *The Romantic Imperative. The Concept of Early German Romanticism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), xi.

45 Brzozowski, *Wczesne prace krytyczne*, 509.

46 "It was Schleiermacher's prime objective 'to understand an author better than he understood himself.' […] Privileging the author, however, does not mean foregrounding a personality but rather focusing on the author as the originator of the individual and hence not immediately graspable meaning of a foreign strange speech."

the affinity with Schleiermacher is not fundamental. What is placed in the foreground is the motif of creativity, action and, consequently, the change in perceiving the role of literary criticism. Even though it sounds somewhat general and esoteric, criticism in this view is seen as an activity that engages the human being as a whole and not just a particular intellectual disposition. Vico's call to create truth, so dear to Brzozowski, led—when applied to criticism—to the praise of invention and responsibility for one's creations. The indication that "we should not seek the truth, but create it,"[47] which Brzozowski inferred from Vico's polemic against Descartes, was an important impulse that led him to re-evaluate the role of the critic. In "Titania's Spouse," Brzozowski wrote things that indicate his standing as a continuator of nineteenth-century thought on poetry, in its existential sense rather than the sense of poetic creativity. He can thus be seen as an author who conceives of poetry as another mode of reflection, different from systemic philosophy: For "how many critics withered because they lacked the poetry that would complement them!" ([…] ilu krytyków zmarniało przez brak uzupełniającej ich poezji!).[48] On account of this, he can be seen as a representative of the same tradition which, on the one hand, is founded on the canonical texts of German Romanticism or, in Polish Romanticism, on Norwid's writings on Słowacki or on Mochnacki. On the other hand, this tradition is founded on such texts as *On Heroes* by Thomas Carlyle and the writings of Ralph W. Emerson and John Henry Newman. These authors studied the relations between poets and verse-writers (or: poetry as a means of participation and engagement in the world and poetry as poetic creativity).[49] It is no coincidence that Harold Bloom, a passionate reader of Emerson, wrote in his *Poetry and Repres-*

Wolfgang Iser, *The Range of Interpretation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 46.

47 The translation of *Verum esse ipsum factum* is "The true is the thing made [or done] itself." Or "The true is precisely what is made." Cf. Giambattista Vico, *On the Most Ancient Wisdom of the Italians: Unearthed from the Origins of the Latin Language*, trans. L. M. Palmer (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), 46.

48 Brzozowski, *Wczesne prace krytyczne*, 511.

49 Cf.: "There is an ambiguity in the word 'poetry', which is taken to signify both the gift itself, and the written composition which is the result of it. Thus, there is an apparent, but no real contradiction, in saying a poem may be but partially poetical; in some passages more so than in others; and sometimes not poetical at all." John Henry Newman, *Essays Critical and Historical*, vol. 1 (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1907), 11.

sion that the poet is not a mere "verse-writer"[50] and that the most powerful poets of the twentieth century were Freud and Nietzsche:[51]

A poetic "text," as I interpret it, is not a gathering of signs on a page, but is a psychic battlefield upon which authentic forces struggle for the only victory worth winning, the divinating triumph over oblivion […].[52]

Metaphorical language is a key feature of poetical thinking. In his *The Mirror and the Lamp* and in *Natural Supernaturalism* Abrams wrote about metaphors, used metaphors in his critical discourse, and classified theories on the basis of their prominent metaphors. In the foreword to the former of those two books, he explained:

I have attempted the experiment of taking these and various other metaphors no less seriously when they occur in criticism than when they occur in poetry; for in both provinces the recourse to metaphor, although directed to different ends, is perhaps equally functional. Critical thinking, like that in all areas of human interest, has been in considerable part thinking in parallels, and critical argument has to that extent been an argument from analogy.[53]

Harold Bloom wrote in his *Kabbalah and Criticism*:

I knowingly urge critical theory to stop treating itself as a branch of philosophical discourse, and to adopt instead the pragmatic dualism of the poets themselves, as I can see not the least relationship of what we have called poetics to the actual problematics of reading poetry. A theory *of* poetry must belong *to* poetry, must be poetry, before it can be of any use in interpreting poems.[54]

50 Harold Bloom, *Poetry and Repression: Revisionism from Blake to Stevens* (New Heaven: Yale University Press: 1976), 2.

51 Cf. Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, 28.

52 Bloom, *Poetry and Repression*, 2.

53 Meyer Howard Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp: romantic theory and critical tradition* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), iv.

54 Harold Bloom, *Kabbalah and Criticism* (New York: Seabury Press, 1975), 109. Peter de Bolla wrote: "For him [Bloom] a theory that is critical, and which deals with poetic texts, must be grounded within those texts: his argument is tied to extremely traditional accounts of the practice of reading literary texts in this respect." Peter de Bolla, *Harold Bloom: Towards Historical Rhetorics* (London: Routledge, 1988), 18f.

This reluctance to include criticism in philosophy seems to collide with Brzozowski's intention, for he was quite clear that his own theoretical undertakings form part of a particular project of philosophizing. However, as soon as we counterbalance this assertion with a passage from *The Diary*:

Każdy element obojętności istniejący w nas, mogący istnieć w chwili poetyckiego ujęcia, uszczupla głębokość poezji, jest połączony z jej uszczerbkiem. *Poezja musi być pojmowana jako twórcza autodefinicja człowieka*.[55]

Every element of indifference that exists in us, which can exist in the moment of poetic treatment, depletes the depth of poetry, is damaging it. *Poetry must be understood as the creative self-definition of man*.

…then the perspective will change radically, for understanding poetry as a 'creative self-definition of a human being' overrides Bloom's warning that one might engage in theoretical reflections that would disregard poetry and lead criticism into a scientific cul-de-sac.[56] In the light of this chapter Brzozowski truly appears as a precursor of Romantic revision, which continually faced the challenge of reflecting on *ratio* in its specific Romantic understanding:

Blake calls the sum of experiences common to normal minds the "ratio," and whenever the word "reason" appears in an unfavorable context in Blake, it always means "ratiocination," or reflection on the "ratio."[57]

Conclusion: Towards a New Shape of Criticism

The term "Romantic critical theory" used by Frye[58] leads me to acknowledge, despite all differences, the common foundation that unites the practices of Stanisław Brzozowski, Meyer Howard Abrams, Northrop Frye, and Harold Bloom (to this group one might add, with many qualifications, several other scholars).[59] The common foundation and the mode of reflection is their reading of Romantic texts which transcends the boundaries of critical appraisal, scholarly

55 Brzozowski, *Pamiętnik*, 13 (emphasis mine, E. K.). Cf. Mencwel, *Stanisław Brzozowski. Postawa krytyczna*, 648.

56 Cf. David Fite, *Harold Bloom: The Rhetoric of Romantic Vision* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1985), xii.

57 Frye, *Fearful Symmetry*, 22.

58 Cf. footnote 14.

59 E.g. Wayne C. Booth, Jonathan Culler, Geoffrey Hartman, Lionel Trilling.

description or essayistic commentary. It is a practice which brings about a particular community to which the critics themselves subscribe as well. This community does not do away with scholarly, critical or philosophical standards. However, it would not come into being had it not been for the important component inscribed in the text of *Voices in the Night*:

> Punktem wyjściowym romantyzmu jest założenie, że świat, w którym nie ma miejsca dla danej indywidualnej treści, nie jest światem skończonym i zamkniętym […] że ostatnie słowo należy zawsze do twórczej psychiki ludzkiej. […] sądzę, że jest to […] rys raczej bezwzględnie wartościowy w romantyzmie […].[60]

> The starting point of romanticism is the assumption that a world in which there is no room for a given piece of individual content is not a finite and closed world […] that the last word is always up to the creative human psyche. […] I think that this is […] a rather unconditionally valuable feature of Romanticism.

In *Voices in the Night* affirmation blends with critical distance, a revisionist approach is paired with codification of the accomplishments of Romanticism, and this blend is not contradictory. Moreover, such an interrelation of approaches is inevitable in the case of the critics for whom Romanticism was a vibrant problem and a challenge. Dealing with Romanticism led to a sense of community, even though a degree of ambivalence remained. In a letter of September 1909, Brzozowski wrote: "I exchange secret greetings with Newman, Hegel, and Norwid" (wymieniam tajne pozdrowienia z Newmanem, Heglem, Norwidem).[61] He referred in a similar way to William Blake, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and John Keats, who were so important for Bloom, Abrams, Frye, and Hartman.

None of the critics under consideration, nor Brzozowski himself, advocated a simple return to Romanticism. It is not by coincidence that I decided to use the term "Romantic revision" in the title. It entails not only a critical reading, but also an actualisation of meanings: their re-contextualization and creative renewal. Brzozowski, as well as Abrams, Frye and Bloom, did not advocate a return to a Romantic paradise lost, but attempted to establish criticism on the basis of reading Romantic authors and rethinking Romanticism as a productive and modern proposition. That they subscribed to the Romantic circles, which I have discussed here, is not to be understood too simple-mindedly. At any rate, it would be difficult to understand it in this way, given that these scholars were

60 Brzozowski, *Głosy wśród nocy*, 55.

61 Brzozowski, *Listy*, vol. 2, 234.

fully aware of the complexity of Romantic texts, which they explored and publicized so keenly.

WORKS CITED

Abrams, Meyer Howard. *Doing Things with Texts: Essays in Criticism and Critical Theory*, edited by Michael Fischer. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1989.

—. *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and Critical Tradition*. London: Oxford University Press, 1976.

Bartczak, Kacper. *Świat nie scalony*. Wrocław: Biuro Literackie, 2009.

Beiser, Frederick C. *The Romantic Imperative: The Concept of Early German Romanticism*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003.

Bielik-Robson, Agata. *Inna nowoczesność*: *Pytania o współczesną formułę duchowości.* Krakow: Universitas, 2000.

—. *The Saving Lie: Harold Bloom and Deconstruction*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2011.

—. "Sześć dni stworzenia. Harolda Blooma mitologia twórczości." In Harold Bloom, *Lęk przed wpływem: teoria poezji*. Translated by Agata Bielik-Robson and Marcin Szuster, 201–239. Kraków: Universitas, 2002.

—. "Syndrom romantyczny. Stanisław Brzozowski i rewizja romantyzmu." In *Romantyzm, niedokończony projekt. Eseje*, 75–88. Kraków: Universitas, 2008.

Blake, William. *The Complete Prose and Poetry*, edited by G. Keynes. London: Nonesuch Press, 1989.

Bloom, Harold. *Blake's Apocalypse: A Study in Poetic Argument*. New York: Doubleday, 1963.

—. *Kabbalah and Criticism*. New York: Seabury Press, 1975.

—. *Poetry and Repression: Revisionism from Blake to Stevens*. New Heaven: Yale University Press: 1976.

—. *The Breaking of the Vessels*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982.

—. *The Western Canon: The Books and School of the Ages*. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1994.

de Bolla, Peter. *Harold Bloom: Towards Historical Rhetorics*. London: Routledge, 1988.

Boyers, Robert. *Lionel Trilling: Negative Capability and Wisdom of Avoidance*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1977.

Dilthey, Wilhelm. *Introduction to the Human Sciences*, edited by Rudolf A. Makkreel and Frithjof Rodi. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989.

Fischer, Michael. "Foreword." In Meyer Howard Abrams. *Doing Things with Texts: Essays in Criticism and Critical Theory*, edited by Michael Fischer. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1989, vii–xiii.

Fite, David. *Harold Bloom: The Rhetoric of Romantic Vision*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1985.

Frye, Northrop. *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957.

—. *Fearful Symmetry: A Study of William Blake*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970.

—. "The Survival Eros in Poetry." In *Romanticism and Contemporary Criticism*, edited by Morris Eaves and Michael Fischer, 15–45. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986.

Hartman, Geoffrey H. *The Unmediated Vision. An Interpretation of Wordsworth, Hopkins, Rilke, and Valéry*. New Heaven: Yale University Press, 1954.

Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. *Hegel's Philosophy of Subjective Spirit / Hegels Philosophie des subjektiven Geistes*, edited and translated by Michael John Petry. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 1978.

Iser, Wolfgang. *The Range of Interpretation*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2000.

Kącka, Eliza. "'Nie obciążony wpływem żadnej sekty...' Giambattista Vico w myśleniu Stanisława Brzozowskiego." *Przegląd Filozoficzno-Literacki* 33 (2012): 303–324.

Krajewska, Wanda. "Związki twórczości Stanisława Brzozowskiego z literaturą angielską." In *Wokół myśli Stanisława Brzozowskiego*, edited by Andrzej Walicki and Roman Zimand, 331–358. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1974.

Krieger, Murray. "Northrop Frye and Contemporary Criticism: Ariel and the Spirit of Gravity." In *Northrop Frye in Modern Criticism. Selected Papers from the English Institute*, edited by M. Krieger, 1–26. New York: Columbia University Press, 1966.

Lipszyc, Adam. *Międzyludzie. Koncepcja podmiotowości w pismach Harolda Blooma z nieustającym odniesieniem do podmiotoburstwa*. Kraków: Universitas, 2004.

Mencwel, Andrzej. *Stanisław Brzozowski. Postawa krytyczna. Wiek XX*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Krytyki Politycznej, 2014.

Newman, John Henry. *Essays Critical & Historical*, vol. 1. London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1907.

Syska-Lamparska, Rena A. *Stanisław Brzozowski: A Polish Vichian*. Firenze: Le Lettere, 1987.

Rorty, Richard. *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Taylor, Charles. *A Secular Age*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007.

Vico, Giambattista. *On the Most Ancient Wisdom of the Italians: Unearthed from the Origins of the Latin Language.* Translated by L. M. Palmer. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988.

Walicki, Andrzej. *Stanisław Brzozowski – drogi myśli*, edited by Andrzej Mencwel. Kraków: Universitas, 2011.

Zdziechowska, Stefania. *Stanisław Brzozowski jako krytyk literatury polskiej*. Kraków: Kasa im. Mianowskiego, 1927.

Brzozowski as Precursor to Contemporary Studies on Cyprian Norwid's Legacy

Krzysztof Trybuś

Norwid as a Commentator on Brzozowski

Cyprian Norwid died when Brzozowski was five years old. I do not intend to compare them, as the scopes of their influence vary. Norwid's poetic achievements determine, or will determine, the direction of modern Polish poetry. However, both of them have been perceived as "opaque," some hold them up as saintly while others deem them monsters. And neither has received a full edition of their works in Poland.[1]

The foregoing quotation is from Czesław Miłosz's 1962 book *Człowiek wśród skorpionów* (Man among Scorpions). In addition to the lack of recognition that both writers experienced, Miłosz compares the histories of Brzozowski and Norwid and he recognizes that Brzozowski follows a parallel "line of fate"[2] as the earlier Norwid in both his life and legacy. The two are not only similar insofar as they experienced rejection and faced near oblivion in the history of literature and Polish culture; Norwid, whose name appears eleven times in Miłosz's reflections, is in fact ubiquitous to Miłosz's reading of Brzozowski's thought and intellectual development. He is also silently present in Miłosz's poetry and it was

1 Czesław Miłosz, *Człowiek wśród skorpionów. Studium o Stanisławie Brzozowskim* [Man among scorpions: A study on Stanisław Brzozowski] (Kraków: Znak, 2000), 72.

2 Czesław Miłosz, "A Controversial Polish Writer: Stanisław Brzozowski," *California Slavic Studies* II (1963): 55.

him who prompted the relevant poetic tropes that allowed the three writers—Norwid, Brzozowski, and Miłosz—to transcend the "damned formulas."[3]

Both Brzozowski and Norwid are mainly concerned with the role and meaning of history in molding humanity, or in the shaping of "historical maturity"[4]—this is why Norwid is constantly present in Brzozowski's discussion of Giambattista Vico and John Henry Newman. This parallel is important in the lives and legacies of both writers as they both represent the vast stratum of destitute Polish nobility and by this the emergence of the post-noble intelligentsia. Earlier, such a sociological explanation of affiliation, or non-affiliation, would have seemed somewhat suspicious to me as it encourages us to find a cause and describe the unexplainable or illogical; the emergence of such genius does not need to be explained. To recall the category once described by Leszek Kołakowski, a great poet just like a "great philosopher"[5] creates a new epoch or falls outside of it at the same time—they transcend their own epoch. Though both came from nobility, Norwid and Brzozowski contested the customs of their class for its excessive glorification of ritual over reason. Nevertheless, the source that allowed them to constantly confront their contemporaries and developments in contemporary Polish culture can be seen in their sense of mission, which can only be explained by their noble ethos. A comparable sublimation of the chivalrous sense of honor and duty occurs in the works of Joseph Conrad because the behavior of his characters retains a shade of heroism and preserves a memory of obsolete customs.[6]

3 Cyprian Norwid, "Klaskaniem mając obrzękłe prawice…" [Their hands swollen with applause], in *Pisma wszystkie*, ed. Juliusz W. Gomulicki, vol. 2 (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1971), 16.

4 See Eliza Kącka, "'Ten, co od sumienia historii się oderwał, dziczeje na wyspie oddalonej'. Dojrzałość dziejowa w myśli Stanisława Brzozowskiego i Cypriana Kamila Norwida" ["He who distracts himself from history is decivilized on a faraway island": historical maturity in Stanisław Brzozowski's and Cyprian Kamil Norwid's thought], in *Konstelacje Stanisława Brzozowskiego*, ed. Urszula Kowalczuk et al. (Warszawa: Narodowe Centrum Kultury, 2012); for the Brzozowski and Norwid parallel in a wider perspective, see, Eliza Kącka, *Stanisław Brzozowski wobec Cypriana Norwida* [Stanisław Brzozowski and Cyprian Norwid], (Warszawa: Nakł. Wydziału Polonistyki Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2012).

5 Leszek Kołakowski, "*Wielki filozof* jako kategoria historyczna" [*The great philosopher* as a historical category], in *Pochwała niekonsekwencji* [In praise of inconsequence] ed. Zbigniew Mentzel, vol. 1 (Warszawa: Niezależna Oficyna Wydawnicza, 1989).

6 For Brzozowski's remark on *Lord Jim,* see *Pamiętnik* [Diary], 179: "Znaczenie *Lorda Jima*. Zabija go utrata własnego szacunku, poczucia własnej godności. Od tej chwili

In the case of Norwid and Brzozowski, the old values of the knightly ethos reflect a model of personal endeavor and the productive effort of an individual striving to attain a sense of authentic humanity.[7]

The chivalric ethos in this manner does not refer so much to the values that are beyond the individual, but to those that are continuously being created by a person so that it is a process that enables one's continuous growth. In Norwid and Brzozowski, this leads to an engagement with history and the world as a whole, which, as related to the chivalric ethos, remains a crucial source of the sublime for both authors.[8] Additionally, this legacy simultaneously reveals an

ginie dla niego cały olbrzymi świat, który materialnie go otacza, w którym bierze on udział. Problem przybiera tu postać bardziej skomplikowaną, nowoczesną, wskutek tego, że ten świat materialny azjatycko-tropikalny jest niewspółmierny z naszą etyką i wobec tego nasza etyka, nasze sumienie, bezwzględne nakazy stanowiące samą istotę naszej osobowości są tylko postulatem, czymś względnym, przypadkiem, który walczy dopiero o swoje istnienie" (The importance of *Lord Jim*. He is oppressed by the loss of self-esteem and of the feeling of his own dignity. From this moment on, the whole world that physically surrounds him, in which he participates, is vanishing for him. Here the problem acquires a more complicated, a more modern character, since this physical, tropical, Asian world is incommensurable with our ethics, and therefore our ethics, our conscience, the reckless commands of which the core of our personality consists are only a postulate, something relative, accidental, only just fighting for its existence).

7 See the comments on the role and meaning of Norwid's chivalric ethos in reference to the observations of Maria Ossowska on knightly ethos in Zofia Dambek, *Cyprian Norwid a tradycje szlacheckie* [Cyprian Norwid and the traditions of the nobility] (Poznań: Wydawn. Naukowe im. Adama Mickiewicza, 2012), 152.

8 See the reflections on "catastrophist discourse" in: Jens Herlth, "Epickość życia nowoczesnego. Obrazowość estetyczna i wzorce postępowania katastrofizmu polskiego" [The epic strain in modern life: on the historical imaginary and models of conduct in Polish catastrophism], in *Katastrofizm polski w XIX i XX wieku: idee, obrazy, konsekwencje*, ed. Jerzy Fiećko, Jens Herlth, and Krzysztof Trybuś (Poznań: Wydawnictwo "Poznańskie Studia Polonistyczne", 2014), 267: "In Brzozowski's heroic conception of history, idyllic silence is contrasted with the 'epic' character of modern life, where the constant threat of catastrophe may ensure the existence of values. Catastrophism is an answer to the comprehension of modernity as the grand epic of a lone man being put to the test. Facial contours in conditions of modernity are recognizable and recordable only through struggle—this is the fundamental axiom of catastrophism. Therefore, its tendency to decisionism and the exacerbation of conflict, […] its regular allusions to the world of chivalric romance, and consequently its 'swashbuckler' spirit."

emerging doubt in Romanticism concerning the possibility of continuing an old way of thinking, writing, and living. Hence, the continuous presence of this possibility is expressed in the contrast of the principles of chivalry and those of the landholding class as well as in the rejection of the ahistorical mentality of a rural idyll. The preference, then, for choosing such compositional forms enables an ongoing polemic that favors a foregrounded discourse associated with the expression of a subject, which then ensures the uncomplicated transition between different themes and how they are expressed. It can be assumed that Norwid's "fragmentary means of expression"[9] and the similar method of building a discourse of literary criticism in Brzozowski's works, as characterized by Michał Głowiński as a "great parataxis,"[10] leads to analogous results:

1. the characteristic pansemiotism—the searching for meaning that covers everything being said and everything has a meaning;
2. the person who is speaking is an interpreter of his own thoughts, life, and fate—he is commenting on the world that he is in order to fulfill his own ethos, which mainly leads to understanding and recognizing one's own self in humanity;
3. the work of a hermeneut is always unfinished and unready—thought, word, and pen are in constant flux.

Brzozowski and Norwid share a common heritage in identifying with the chivalric spirit, which demonstrates how Brzozowski is profoundly indebted to Norwid beyond mere literary criticism. Brzozowski identifies with Norwid through his own reflections concerning the writer's as well as literature's role in society and one's own personal life. Therefore, Brzozowski could recognize himself and his own line of fate through Norwid's works.

Zenon Przesmycki worked on Norwid's forgotten poems in the reading room of a Viennese library in 1897 and also brought Polish readers' attention to Norwid's volume *Poezje* (Poems) from 1862. Apart from "Garstka piasku" (A Handful of Sand), which is the source of the motto for Brzozowski's *Idee* (Ideas), the volume also includes "Malarz z konieczności" (A Painter by Necessity), "John Brown," "Do Emira Abdel-Kadera w Damaszku" (To Emir Abdel-

9 Cyprian Norwid, "Letter to Maria Trębicka (January 2–3, 1846)," in *Pisma wszystkie*, ed. Juliusz W. Gomulicki, vol. 8 (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1971), 26.

10 Michał Głowiński, "Wielka parataksa. O budowie dyskursu w *Legendzie Młodej Polski* Stanisława Brzozowskiego" [The great parataxis: on the construction of discourse in *The Legend of Modern Poland*], *Pamiętnik Literacki* 4 (1991).

Kader in Damascus), "Człowiek" (Man); the longer pieces *Pięć zarysów* (Five Drafts) and *Rozmowa umarłych* (Conversation of the Dead); the novellas "Bransoletka" (Bracelet) and "Cywilizacja" (Civilization); the tragedy *Krakus*; the poem *Epimenides*; and Norwid's most extensive epic work, *Quidam*. Przesmycki recognized that *Quidam* was crucial for Norwid's growth as it summarized his poetic works linked to the Romantic era and initiated the period when he wrote *Vade mecum*. Considered as a deconstruction of the romantic epic, *Quidam* recognizes an opportunity for the creation of post-chivalric heroism in literature.

Quidam is the main character of the poem while he also serves as Norwid's literary double. He is a philosopher of pre-Slavic origins who tries to prove that European civilization is rooted in "Israeli, Greek, and Roman knowledge."[11] Quidam's death at the age of thirty-three presents a martyrological dimension of heroism at the dawn of a new era to which his death is the most important testimony. Simultaneously, Quidam's death is like a theatrical curtain that unveils a blank space in Rome's historical memory. His death does not save the memory of the hero who came from far away to the capital of European civilization. Quidam's broken line of fate reads almost as if Brzozowski's philosophical and critical works had been transformed into a poem and Brzozowski's method of commenting on the works of other writers were used—with the language of the poem being a part of the language of the commentary.

Quidam then discusses the possibility of bringing Christianity back into history, or of rediscovering it in "the middle of time," while also conceiving history through Vico's idea of its path as a spiral:

> Pomiędzy świtem a nocy zniknięciem
> Płomienne blaski różowe z mrokami
> Walczą, jak Cnota z *świata – tego Księciem* –
> Mgławе, lecz ufne, choć wciąż je coś mami.
> Pomiędzy świtem a nocą jest chwila,
> Gdy hoże łuny z czarnymi krepami
> Błądzą, aż bystry promień je przesila.
> Ostatnia gwiazda wtedy w niebo tonie,
> A słońce rude swe wynosi skronie –
> I periodyczna pamiątka *stworzenia*
> Wciąż o *Pańskiego* kreśli się skinienia.[12]

11 Cyprian Norwid, *Quidam*, in *Pisma wszystkie*, ed. Juliusz W. Gomulicki, vol. 3 (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1971), 80.

12 Ibid., 89.

Between dawn and night's disappearance
Pink flames gleam in the dark
fighting like Virtue with the Prince of this world—
Misty, but hopeful, yet constantly deluded.
Between the light and the night there is a moment,
When comely glows along with black crape,
roving until a bright ray causes its climax.
Then, the last star into the sky will sink,
and the red sun will lift its brow—
And this repeating memento of creation
Is still being drawn by a nod of God's head.

The symbolism in *Quidam* refers to the creation myth in Genesis and foreshadows the eternal conflict between good and evil and the world's spiritual transformation—one that is experienced individually through acts of spiritual labor. Conceived as a Christian epic that alludes to the Parable of the Mustard Seed, the poem is a discourse with Adam Mickiewicz's messianic projects of rebuilding the world and Juliusz Słowacki's revolutionary theory of progress.[13] Quidam's death takes place in an atmosphere of chaos, which recalls Kierkegaard's split between the eternal and temporal.[14] The irony of his death shows the fragments of a dispersed being belonging to an existing whole; and, conditioning the perception of the status quo, it also gives the reader the point of view of a hermeneut. Such a solution remains in accordance with the traditional allegorical exegesis of the Bible in which irony is derived from allegory; it allows us to translate the meaning of the words of Revelation, but unlike an allegory, it operates so that the truth "is exposed through the negation of the written word."[15] In

13 For a broader perspective see: Krzysztof Trybuś, *Epopeja w twórczości Norwida* [The epic in Norwid's works] (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1993).

14 Stefan Kołaczkowski writes about Kierkegaard's thoughts on irony which were closer to Norwid than Schlegel (the dominating view in Romanticism) in the classic study "Ironia Norwida" [Norwid's irony], *Droga* 11 (1933). He highlights the role of prophetic characters—such as Sokrates in Kierkegaard's *On the Concept of Irony with Continual Reference to Socrates* (1841)—who, on the threshold of a new era, refer to irony in their statements by denying the ideas of the old world.

15 Włodzimierz Szturc, *Ironia romantyczna: pojęcie, granice i poetyka* [Romantic irony: concept, limits, and poetics] (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1992), 58. By describing the role of allegory and irony in an allegorical reading of the Bible, Szturc pays attention to the rhetorical tradition of Quintilian, which for Isidore of Seville, Julian of Toledo, and Saint Bede was the object of reference.

his poetry, Norwid demonstrates the limitations of being through irony, which constructs the world and shapes his characters; and, consequently, it explores the chivalric tradition of heroism through the concept of Christ the Logos.

To read *Quidam* as a translation of Brzozowski's worldview into poetic language is obviously a stretch, however, the fact that we find the structures and contents of Brzozowski's critical thoughts in Norwid does not conflict with a strict chronological view on literary history. This can be seen in Brzozowski's study *Filozofia romantyzmu polskiego* (The Philosophy of Polish Romanticism). The view of history during the moment of the encounter between classical antiquity and Christianity would seem familiar to anyone reading *Quidam*. This entire somewhat archaeological fragment of Brzozowski's reflections on the theme concerning the formation of early Christianity could provide philosophical insight into Norwid's poem and the exegesis of the "Parable of the Mustard Seed":

> Kościół jest niewzruszony, bo jest oparty na Słowie, ale dla człowieka Kościół ma się rozrastać, bo rozrastać się ma w człowieku samo Słowo, bo to jest żywot owego ziarna gorczycznego, które cieniem swym ma okryć ziemię.[16]
>
> The Church is imperturbable since it is based on the Word, and for man the Church has to grow since the Word itself has to grow in man, since it is the life of this mustard seed that has to cover the earth with its shadow.

Brzozowski, just like Norwid, brings his own reflections on Christianity back to the origins of the Church's community, to the time of its birth, and he rebuilds its foundations anew.

Brzozowski as a Commentator on Norwid

There has been little criticism linking Norwid and Brzozowski, Norwid is rarely mentioned in the reception of Brzozowski's works, and he is not often cited as a source of inspiration for Brzozowski. What is more, Brzozowski's observations concerning Norwid's thoughts and style have not been recognized as a crucial reference for studies on Norwid. The comparative analysis of Norwid's and Brzozowski's works, initiated by Rafał Marceli Blüth, was later continued by Miłosz. That work has not been continued in more recent research, although an interpretation of Norwid through Brzozowski would be a significant contribution

16 Stanisław Brzozowski, "Filozofia romantyzmu polskiego" [The philosophy of Polish Romanticism], in *Kultura i życie*, 382. Traces of the reading of *Quidam* in the period of Young Poland may be found in the works of Cezary Jellenta and Tomasz Miciński.

to Norwid studies. One of the reasons for Brzozowski's critical exclusion remains his characteristic style of reading Norwid as being subordinate to Brzozowski's own philosophical thought—Maria Janion describes this as the "holy book of Romanticism's style of exegesis."[17]

On the other hand, Norwid is regularly cited and usually appears in the philosophical and cultural research frame of reference in studies on Brzozowski. Norwid has been used to clarify or more frequently illustrate the meaning of Brzozowski's poetry, which is an advantage for our knowledge of Brzozowski, though it is less useful for understanding Norwid as a poet. In this context, it is worth mentioning Wiesław Rzońca's important book *Norwid a romantyzm polski* (Norwid and Polish Romanticism) precisely because he does *not* mention Brzozowski,[18] even though he undoubtedly deserves credit for returning Norwid to Romanticism—the main outline of Brzozowski's dispute with Przesmycki touched on this particular issue. Brzozowski saw Norwid both as a rejuvenator of Romanticism and as its critic and successor. Long before the more recent debates over the poet's placement in the history of literature, Brzozowski not only opposed himself to Young Poland's usurpation of Norwid, but also pointed to the constant relevance and future significance of the latter's poetry.

What is astonishing even today is the completeness in Brzozowski's recognition of the ideological dimensions of Norwid's works. He acknowledges the pivotal role of history and religion as he surveys Norwid's poetry by going far beyond the discussion of poetic language. His hermeneutic approach to Norwid has its complement in a processual evaluation of Norwid's epoch in *Filozofia romantyzmu polskiego*. Its importance is apparent in the following quote because of the order in which the poets are mentioned—Słowacki after Mickiewicz and, instead of Krasiński who is usually present in the history revealing the formation of the myth of the Three Bards of Polish Romanticism,[19] Norwid:

17 Maria Janion, "Badania nad romantyzmem polskim" [Studies on Polish Romanticism] in *Rozwój wiedzy o literaturze po 1918 roku*, ed., introduction Janusz Maciejewski (Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1986), 119.

18 Wiesław Rzońca, *Norwid a romantyzm polski* (Warszawa: Wydział Polonistyki Uniw. Warszawskiego, 2005). Rzońca seems to prefer Cezary Jellenta over Brzozowski, as far as the reception of Norwid in the period of Young Poland is concerned. Ibid., 203.

19 See Henryk Markiewicz, "Rodowód i losy mitu trzech wieszczów" [On the genesis and the fate of the myth of the three bards], in *Świadomość literatury. Rozprawy i szkice* (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1985), 217f. The author notices that Brzozowski's criticism of Krasiński is enhanced in *Legenda Młodej Polski.*

W Mickiewiczu, Słowackim, Norwidzie odsłania się właśnie treść romantyzmu polskiego i żyje ona bezpośrednio w duszy ich, i oni sami życiem swoim, całą nieprzymuszonością swego tworzenia dają świadectwo. W Cieszkowskim i Krasińskim znajdujemy bardziej zewnętrzną świadomość romantyzmu naszego i jego zdobyczy.[20]

Through Mickiewicz, Słowacki, and Norwid, the essence of Polish Romanticism is revealed and it unequivocally lives in their souls; they themselves testify through the story of their lives, through the unconstrainedness of their creation. In Cieszkowski and Krasiński we find a more external consciousness of our Romanticism and its achievements.

Perceiving the period of Romanticism mainly as the domain of Mickiewicz, Słowacki, and Norwid, Brzozowski indicates that they create its substance, formed through time and crowned and enclosed in the works of Norwid:

Norwid to otchłań światła, zbyt niezmącona, by już nawet wybuchem radości być miała; jest to jakieś zatopienie się światłości w sobie: niewzruszoność i cisza.
I znowu Norwid jest wielką rękojmią. Bo romantyzm polski byłby czymś nieskończonym, jak gdyby nie zamkniętym i niedojrzałym, gdyby nie było w nim tej ciszy i tego spokoju.[21]

Norwid contains an abundance of light, too undiluted as to be even an outbreak of joy; this is an immersion of lightness in and by itself: imperturbability and quietness.
And then again Norwid is a great guarantee because Polish Romanticism would be incomplete, as if it were not concluded and not mature, were it not for his quietness and this tranquility.

The dispute over Norwid's status in the history of Polish literature seems to be never-ending. As in Brzozowski's time, there are constant reevaluations of Norwid's poetry that not only stem from his ingenuity but also from the progression of literature generally, because, to aptly describe it, every age desires its own Norwid. Obviously, the ever-evolving status of Norwid in contemporary research is also determined by literary history itself. Brzozowski's interpretation of Norwid as a part of Romanticism is not the result of an excessively strict categorization of the period, as making it so would ultimately cut off Norwid's influence from Brzozowski and his contemporaries as well as later literature, thus changing the history of Polish poetry. Unquestionably, Brzozowski considers Norwid's works a result of the buildup of contradictions and internal tensions in

20 Brzozowski, "Filozofia romantyzmu polskiego," 397f.

21 Ibid., 397.

nineteenth-century literature, although he also secures a special place for those works which cannot be described using traditional notions of literary history, just as Polish Romanticism cannot be described with them. Brzozowski states,

Bo romantyzm nasz to nie szkoła literacka, nie kierunek artystyczny, nie coś przypadkowo powstałego i powierzchownego, lecz objawienie prawdy. Nie jest to konstrukcja umysłowa ani wizja poetycka – lecz prawda życia przez Słowo prześwietlonego.[22]

Our Romanticism is not a literary school or an artistic direction and it has nothing superficial that occurs accidentally, but it is a revelation of truth. It is not a rational construction or a poetic vision, but the truth of a life that was illuminated by the Word.

Regardless of the fact that Brzozowski's opinions on literary history are explainable in the context of his ideological assumptions of an aesthetic utopia,[23] they are also a result of treating literature and culture as a kind of totality beyond temporal considerations. From this perspective, the current examples that subordinate Norwid to rigidly defined fields of literature may get muddled, yet the obligatory academic discourse has made us accustomed to finding commentary on Norwid in studies concerning either Romanticism or the literature of the second half of the nineteenth century. The need to organize aspects of Norwid's poetry around the logic of an academic argument negates the inspiration emerging from Brzozowski's thought. Yet, what if we attempt to move beyond the pattern of unequivocal assertions while staying within the realm of hypotheses that negotiate the status of the poet? I would like to make a reference to such an attempt by Janusz Maciejewski who shares Brzozowski's point of view. Maciejewski claims that a crucial role in the formation of Norwid's poetry is played by Romanticism and that which exceeds the boundaries of this period:

Miejsce jego [Norwida] nie jest przed, ale obok pozytywizmu, między romantyzmem a modernizmem. Stanowił wariant literatury polskiej tej doby, nie boczny, ale centralny, bardziej może centralny niż sam pozytywizm, szybciej bowiem i dokładniej zbliżający się

22 Ibid., 401.

23 See an elucidation of "idyllic topics" from Brzozowski's considerations, accompanied by a summary of the studies on this subject, in an article by Maciej Gogler, "O myśleniu utopijnym Stanisława Brzozowskiego" [On Stanisław Brzozowski's utopian thought], in *Ostać się wobec chaosu. Prace ofiarowane Profesorowi Tomaszowi Lewandowskiemu,* ed. Radosław Okulicz-Kozaryn and Mateusz Bourkane (Poznań: Wydawn. Naukowe Uniw. im. Adama Mickiewicza, 2013), 135–151.

do możliwości XX wieku: do symbolizmu, eksperymentów awangardowych, nowego klasycyzmu.[24]

[Norwid's] place is not prior to Positivism, but alongside it, between Romanticism and Modernism. He was a variant of the Polish literature of the times, though not in a secondary position, but a central one, maybe even more essential than Positivism itself since he approached the possibilities of the twentieth century more quickly and more neatly in regards to symbolism, avant-garde experiments, and new classicism.

Therefore, the significance of Norwid appears here in the context of the important role of his poetry in the history of literature. Paradoxically, this is Przesmycki's point of view, but in this particular case, the twentieth-century successors are the explorers of Norwid's poetic originality.

The importance of the studies on the relationship between Norwid and Romanticism may be most fully illustrated through the influence of Zofia Stefanowska's seminal research. Her classic contributions "Norwid – pisarz wieku kupieckiego i przemysłowego" (Norwid: The Writer of a Mercantile and Industrial Century) and "Norwidowski romantyzm" (Norwid's Romanticism) are a general frame of reference for recent Norwid scholarship. They undoubtedly contributed to the broadening of our understanding of the period,[25] but does the characteristic of Norwid's poetical individuality as a nineteenth-century writer allow us to understand the universal meaning of his works?

Certainly, these revisionary attempts remain a great opportunity for analyzing Norwid based on Brzozowski's interpretation; additionally, revisionists strive against periodization using Fernand Braudel's concept of *longue durée*. Romanticism as a pivotal tradition of Polish literature, included in it as a component of its contemporaneity, could participate in the co-creation of what modern

24 Janusz Maciejewski, *Cyprian Norwid* (Warszawa: PEN, 1992), 137. For more on this subject, see my article: Krzysztof Trybuś, "Jaki Norwid? (Między diagnozą a postulatem)" [Which Norwid? Between diagnostics and postulation], *Poznańskie Studia Polonistyczne* 4 (1997).

25 Stefanowska's essays remain in line with the tendency of Polish Romantic studies, emphasizing the significance of the great creative individual's dialogue and the role of internal antinomies. See more on this issue in: Janion, "Badania nad romantyzmem polskim," 133: "Polish Romanticism, which seemed to be speaking with a single voice, is returning today in shape of a polyphonic universe of the Great Dialogue. The restoration of the natural and internal dialogic character of Romanticism that reveals conversation as its fundamental structure became the highest ambition of Polish research in this tendency."

readings of Norwid as a poet of our times bring in accordance to Brzozowski's claims.

The Presence of the Absent

Recalling Brzozowski's absence in contemporary interpretations of Norwid, it is worth looking at "Testament Cypriana Norwida" (Cyprian Norwid's Testament). Giving his own statement in the form of a "Testament," Brzozowski centers Norwid's message in his works on three principal topics: (1) the notion of labor and its equivalence to creation, (2) attitudes towards Poland and (3) religiousness in Norwid's poetry. As a consequence, most of the critical disputes over Norwid's legacy were later concerned with how to interpret these three topics. They also constitute the common perspective that link the two poets and highlight the affiliation between their works. As Brzozowski states,

> Kulturą byłoby dla Norwida tylko to, co byłoby wynikiem własnej i swobodnej twórczości narodów. On, który pojmował jako krzywdę wyrządzoną polskiej sztuce krzywiznę i koszlawość każdej polskiej stodoły, patrzył na tę kwestię bardzo głęboko.
> Zresztą w *Promethidionie* wypowiada się on najzupełniej wyraźnie. Mówi on o tym, że jedną z największych klęsk życia kulturalnego jest całkowite odarcie pracy od twórczości […]. Twórczość jest w stosunku do pracy momentem zwycięstwa, momentem narodzin godności osobistej.[26]

> Culture for Norwid would be only the result of the independent and free creativity of nations. He understood the crookedness and lopsidedness of every Polish barn as a harm done to Polish culture and looked at this issue very deeply.
> Besides, it is in *Promethidion* that he expresses himself most clearly. He says that one of the greatest disasters of cultural life is the complete separation of labor from creativity […]. Relative to labor, creativity is a moment of victory, a moment of the birth of personal dignity.

This comment reflects Brzozowski's own opinions on the topic of labor—a key concept of his philosophy—and the organizing principle in his polemic against contemporary thought: "Niezrozumienie *istoty pracy jest najbardziej chorym punktem myśli nowoczesnej*"[27] (The lack of understanding *of the essence of labor is the most defective point in modern thought*).

26 Stanisław Brzozowski, "Testament Cypriana Norwida," in *Kultura i życie*, 220f.

27 Brzozowski, *Idee*, 332.

The context of Norwid in consideration of Brzozowski's philosophy of labor became an important area of study in the history of ideas, as it situates Norwid's thought within the context of the philosophy of Cieszkowski, Trentowski, and Libelt. This then undoubtedly connects Norwid with his own period and solidifies the status of his works in history—maybe more in the history of philosophy and aesthetics than in that of literature. What is more, Norwid's notion of labor became the cause of ideological simplification and even propagandic manipulation. As a result, passages of *Promethidion*, which were intended to encourage labor, were stripped of their references to biblical tradition and ultimately ended up sounding like newspaper slogans.

The strongest ideologization in the Norwid reception of the interwar and post-war periods covered such notions as the nation, the fatherland (*ojczyzna*), the relationship between Polish emigration and the homeland (*kraj*), and by extension the relationship between Europe and Poland. Brzozowski perceived all these accumulating layers of political influences by mentioning in "Testament Cypriana Norwida" the patriotism of the "all Poles":

Ale patriotyzm wszechpolaków nie ma nic wspólnego z patriotyzmem romantyków i emigrantów naszych – dla nich Polska była ideą, a więc krajem i narodem, który miał się stać wyrazem tego wszystkiego, co człowiek zdoła stworzyć, wydobyć z siebie pięknego i wzniosłego.[28]

But the all Poles' patriotism has nothing in common with the patriotism of our Romantics and emigrants, for them Poland was an idea, and, hence, a country and a nation that was supposed to become the expression of everything that a man could create and of everything beautiful and sublime he could draw out of himself.

This passage sounds relevant even today; in relation to the reflections on Norwid's works, it indicates the inevitability of the collision between its message and Polish nationalist thought.

The most spectacular testimony to this collision could be Zygmunt Wasilewski's book on Norwid from 1935 in which he compiled his articles on the poet published over several years in the journal *Myśl Narodowa* (National Thought). One influential essay focuses on Norwid's Masurian origin and how it determines the spiritual aspects of his poetry. Wasilewski states that, "the primitiveness of the Masurian spirit was a definite asset of Norwid's poetry."[29] Kazimierz

28 Brzozowski, "Testament Cypriana Norwida," 222.

29 Zygmunt Wasilewski, *Norwid* (Warszawa: Skład Główny w Administracji Myśli Narodowej, 1935), 35.

Wyka, disputing Wasilewski's theses in the magazine *Droga* (Path), points to the conceptual consequences of such assumptions by linking the poet's works—favorably characterized in an axiological manner—with national indigenousness.[30] According to Wasilewski, Norwid's more than thirty-year Parisian period represents a time of the poet's decline even though such works as *Quidam, Vade-mecum, Aktor* (Actor)*, Tyrtej* (Tyrtaeus)*, Kleopatra i Cezar* (Cleopatra and Caesar), and *Pierścień Wielkiej Damy* (The Ring of a Grand Lady) were written during this period. This was thus a time when Norwid became the Norwid who would turn out to be the precursor of contemporary European poetry. However, a reduction of Norwid's universal significance solely to the Polish backwoods is not consistent with Norwid's writings. In the poem "Moja ojczyzna" (My Fatherland), he wrote for instance:

> Naród mię żaden nie zbawił, nie stworzył;
> Wieczność pamiętam przed wiekiem,
> Klucz Dawidowy usta mi otworzył,
> Rzym nazwał człekiem.[31]
>
> No nation fashioned or saved me;
> I recall eternity's span;
> David's key unlocked my lips,
> Rome called me a man.

The most revealing aspect of "Testament Cypriana Norwida" is the issue of religiousness:

> Ideał swobody, ideał czysto ludzkiej, swobodnej kultury opierał się u Norwida na całym systemacie teologicznym.
> Był on jednym z ostatnich chyba ojców kościoła.
> Teologia Norwidowska jest ciekawa i godna uwagi w nie mniejszym stopniu niż filozofia Platona np. albo Boehmego […]
> Osamotnienie dziejowe wytworzyło w Norwidzie, i nie tylko w Norwidzie, stan duszy, w którym ideał tak głęboko ludzki, jak powstanie kultury, będącej wyrazem swobody pracy, stwarzającej własne idee i podstawy, przerastającej w twórczość, ukazywał mu się jako

30 Kazimierz Wyka, *Cyprian Norwid. Studia, artykuły, recenzje* [Cyprian Norwid. Studies, articles, reviews] (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1989), 217–223; idem, "Zygmunt Wasilewski: *Norwid*," *Droga* 2 (1935): 185f.

31 Norwid, *Pisma wszystkie* [Complete works]*,* vol. 1, 336. See translation by Adam Czerniawski in: Cyprian K. Norwid, *Selected Poems* (London: Anvil Press, 2004), 41.

wynik woli pozaludzkiej, w każdym razie ponadludzkiej mocy. Dla Norwida była wiara w tę nową, na swobodzie pracy opartą Polskę – cząstką wiary religijnej.[32]

Norwid's ideal of freedom, of a purely human and free culture, was based on a whole theological system.
He was one of the last Church Fathers.
Norwid's theology is worth attention and it is no less interesting than the philosophy of Plato or let's say Boehme […]
The historical isolation created in Norwid—although not only in Norwid—a state of mind, in which an ideal so profoundly human, like the emergence of a culture, the expression of the freedom of labor, that would create its own ideas and foundation and that would evolve into creativity, seemed to him to be the result of a transhuman, or at least superhuman, force. For Norwid faith in this new Poland through labor was a part of his religious faith.

Both writers have similar ideas when rooting the notion of labor in Christian tradition. Brzozowski perfectly recognizes this integral part of Norwid's legacy in its religious foundations. Calling the poet "one of the last Church Fathers" entails a symbolic meaning, which is not necessarily clear and it does not match the doctrine of contemporary patristics. Unquestionably, just as in present times, the emphasis in such a metaphore is placed on the righteousness of the religious doctrine (*doctrina orthodoxa*), the common acknowledgement of its adherents (*approbatio ecclesiae*) grounded in the sanctity of their lives (*sanctitas vitae*), as well as on recollections of the authority of ancient times, which remains important in this case (*antiquitas*). From early Christianity just after the Apostolic Age up to the beginning of the Middle Ages, but before the schisms of Christianity, the Church Fathers proclaimed that the sources of their faith were rooted in tradition as the central pillar of religious doctrine.

Norwid's religious righteousness is emphasized by Brzozowski in his earlier *Filozofia romantyzmu polskiego* where he distinguishes religious ideas in Norwid from the messianic reflections of other Romantics. Perhaps even today, this hypothesis remains crucial for the significance of Norwid's teaching, as discussed by Stefanowska,

[…] because the Norwid dilemma cannot be limited to the fact that the poet was religious, as some could claim, and thus, keen on reading the world and history in terms of a set of signs created by God. Many Polish Positivists were "privately" religious writers. Norwid is religious in a different way, because it is through Romanticism that he is so. Since

32 Brzozowski, "Testament Cypriana Norwida," 224.

Romantic devoutness is expansive and possessive, it cannot be confined to the private sphere; it conquers every domain of reflection in the world—from politics to the railways, and from the arts to the *faits divers* column. The religiousness that is oriented towards a totally deified vision of the world probably represents the most characteristic feature of Norwid, but we should also add that the poet remains within the boundaries of orthodoxy, his religiousness is not subjected (or it is rarely subjected) to individual transformations. It is more static than the religiousness of the Romantics from the previous generation, which gravitated toward heterodoxy.[33]

In many studies, the limits of Norwid's orthodoxy were disputed since his religiousness, just like his works, was always in flux—a fact that is not discussed in Stefanowska. Dealing with the evolution of Norwid's faith, Zofia Trojanowiczowa emphasizes the evident presence of utopian and messianic topics in his works during the revolutionary period of 1848. She claims "such a statement may provoke objections, since the messianic perspective is often called into question by scholars of Norwid's works who are keen on finding fragments that are critical of messianism in his writings."[34]

These arguments concerning Norwid's faith, which were formulated many years ago without the slightest mention of Brzozowski (although they are often surprisingly consistent with his discoveries), are returning today in crucial publications on Norwid's works. An example would be *Perspektywiczność sacrum. Studia o Norwidowskim romantyzmie*[35] (The Sacred in Perspective: Studies on Norwid's Romanticism) by Arent van Nieukerken, in which Brzozowski is not mentioned neither. Nevertheless, a reader of certain Norwid poems may make use of Brzozowski's remarks on the poet's religiousness, which often give a

33 Zofia Stefanowska, "Norwidowski romantyzm" [Norwid's romanticism], in *Strona romantyków. Studia o Norwidzie* (Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniw. Lubelskiego, 1993), 70.

34 See Zofia Trojanowiczowa, "Cypriana Norwida mesjanizm sztuki, czyli o poszukiwaniu *wszechdoskonałości*" [Cyprian Norwid's messianism of art, or On the quest for *perfection*], in *Studia Polonistyczne* 14/15 (1986). Broader documentation of this approach may be found in Zofia Trojanowiczowa, *Ostatni spór romantyczny. Cyprian Norwid – Julian Klaczko* [The last romantic controversy. Cyprian Norwid—Julian Klaczko] (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1981). See a polemical review of this book in: Grażyna Halkiewicz-Sojak, "Spór o mesjanizm Norwida" [The dispute on Norwid's messianism], in *Studia Norwidiana* 2 (1984).

35 Arent van Nieukerken, *Perspektywiczność sacrum. Studia o Norwidowskim romantyzmie* (Warszawa: Instytut Badań Literackich PAN, 2007).

more accurate interpretation.[36] Stanisław Barańczak once argued that Norwid was like an unseen presence for later Polish poetry—the less the patron's presence is visible, the more it is determinative of his successors.[37] Could it then be that the same goes for Brzozowski being a patron of later Norwid scholarship?

Norwid's religiousness in his poetry determined how he was received by Polish audiences. It is worth recalling some instances of this, such as the PRL's use of Norwid in its propaganda, which proclaimed through academic banners that the Polish nation exists as our common obligation, as well as the emphatic reading of Norwid by Karol Wojtyła—the priest and the poet. The Institute for the Study of Cyprian Norwid's Works at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin has constantly and patiently contributed to the recognition of Norwid's poetry; and along with this, the *Colloquia Norwidiana,* a series of conferences organized by Professor Stefan Sawicki and his students, has been a framework for interdisciplinary research among literary scholars, linguists, art historians, philosophers, and religious studies scholars.

The problem of Norwid's religiousness, as described by Stefanowska, often appears in the form of two diametrically differing tendencies. In one, religious meaning is simply eliminated, which seems especially drastic regarding studies concerned with Norwid's values.[38] The other tendency is on the contrary a scientific approach that confines Norwid to the illustrator of obvious truths in faith. A large number of articles on Norwid's religiousness do not explain in what it

36 See an example of such a situation in an interesting fragment of parson Antoni Dunajski's reflections, which are somewhat an exception to the rule. They include Brzozowski's classifications of the status of tragedy in the work of Norwid. Antoni Dunajski, *Chrześcijańska interpretacja dziejów w pismach Cypriana Norwida* [A Christian interpretation of history in Cyprian Norwid's works] (Lublin: Redakcja Wydawnictw Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, 1985), 114.

37 Stanisław Barańczak, "Norwid: obecność nieobecnego" [Norwid: the presence of the absent], in *Tablica z Macondo. Osiemnaście prób wytłumaczenia, po co i dlaczego się pisze* (London: Aneks, 1990), 89–105. Cf. also id., "Norwid nie chce podpisać volkslisty" [Norwid does not want to sign the volksliste], in *Przed i po. Szkice o poezji krajowej przełomu lat siedemdziesiątych i osiemdziesiątych* (London: Aneks, 1988).

38 See the critical outline of Edward Kasperski's book, *Świat wartości Norwida* [Norwid's world of values] (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1981), in Andrzej Tyszczyk, *Studia Norwidiana* 4 (1984): 98–104 (he states that, "in a work containing over 350 pages that are fully dedicated to the subject of the poet's axiology, there is almost nothing about the concept of the arts or the human being fundamental for that axiology, and nothing about the original idea of Christianity, which is elementary for the poet's world view.").

differs from the treatment of religion, e.g., in the writings of Henryk Sienkiewicz.

More attention needs to be paid to the context of Catholic modernism, so present in Brzozowski's reading of Norwid. Could there be someone with the courage to ask about such issues as faith and a Catholic worldview in order to return Norwidian literary criticism into the religious sphere of the poet's values? Such audacity is characteristic of Brzozowski, though not for merely stating that religion is "a factor of cultural, historical, and social isolation,"[39] but for being a religious thinker and author of the foreword to the works of Cardinal Newman. Have we already exhausted the topic of Norwid's romantic religiousness as described by Stefanowska as his "totally deified vision of the world"?

In fact, Norwid was not the only nineteenth-century writer whom Brzozowski called "Church Father":

Taki np. Lamennais lub nawet Renan, w pierwszych wiekach chrześcijaństwa mogliby być obrońcami i ojcami kościoła. Dogmaty i legendy religijne mogą iść w zapomnienie, lecz dopóki pozostanie szczere i gorące uczucie religijne, dopóty i sama istota religii pozostanie nietknięta, gdyż religia jest "Bogiem odczutym przez serce" – jak mówi Pascal, a Bóg ten odczuwany jest głęboko przez serca tęskniące za Nim w krwawej męce, jaką sprawia im pustka, szerzona naokół przez umysł badawczy i chłodny.[40]

Thus, someone like Lamennais or even Renan could have been defenders and Church Fathers in the first few centuries in the history of Christianity. Religious dogmas and legends can fall into oblivion, but as long as an honest and ardent religious feeling remains, the very essence of religion will remain unaffected because religion is "God felt by the heart," as Pascal states, and this God is felt deeply by the hearts that long for Him in the bloody ordeal that was brought to them by the emptiness which the inquiring and cold mind sows.

Along with Amiel, Towiański, Newman, as well as Blondel and Loisy, there is no doubt that Norwid, too, is an important guide for Brzozowski on his path to the discovery that "every man finds God within his own fate, and not in an abstract, transcendent space in a vertical dimension."[41] Is there any chance in the

39 "[…] czynnikiem izolacji kulturalnej, dziejowej, społecznej […]." *Legenda Młodej Polski*, 90f.

40 Brzozowski, *Głosy wśród nocy*, 149.

41 Tomasz Lewandowski, "Młodopolski modernizm katolicki" [Young Poland's Catholic modernism], in *Spotkania młodopolskie* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo "Poznańskie Studia Polonistyczne", 2005), 43.

studies on Brzozowski's religiousness of a symbolic return to Café Greco—the one from the novel *Ad leones!,* and from Miłosz's poem "Caffé Greco," where Miłosz talks to Jerzy Turowicz about his juvenile reading of Maritain? Will we encounter there the "others," the "[n]oble minded," the "great[s]," "[t]hose who gave testimony to their faith,"[42] and among many of them Brzozowski and Norwid?

The phenomenon of the presence of the absent described here appears especially in the studies of Norwid's poetic language. Brzozowski, remarking on the poet's style in the famous text "Cyprian Norwid. Próba" (Cyprian Norwid: An Essay), outlines the most significant areas of reflection on Norwid's aesthetics—an aesthetics of silence and the sublime, of fragments and the whole, of memory and oblivion. Initiating his reflection with the statement, "utwory Norwida są jak mowa ruin"[43] (Norwid's works are like ruins talking)—he not only indicates the most crucial image and topic of Norwid as a romantic poet, but also discovers the mystery of the Word in the poet:

> Thanks to the author of "Próba" and "Testament," two highly important currents of reading Norwid's works in the period of Young Poland may be taken into account. One of them is founded on worship, the other on comprehension. […] The better understanding of Norwid's works was to serve his own expressive style of understanding, popularizing the mythic style. In both of Brzozowski's critical texts on Norwid, the highest regard and admiration for the forgotten author is plainly noticeable. It may be observed both on the surface of the works, directly explained, and in many parts of *Testament* or in the voice of a critic, expressing himself indirectly, when he talks about his intertextual attitude towards Norwid's language—as in the critical poems from the fourth and the seventh chapter of "Próba."[44]

42 Czesław Miłosz, *New and Collected Poems, 1931–2001* (New York: Harper Collins, 2003), 466.

43 Stanisław Brzozowski, "Cyprian Norwid. Próba," [Cyprian Norwid. An Essay], in *Kultura i życie*, 149.

44 Piotr Wierzchosławski, "Norwid odczytywany przez Brzozowskiego: *Cyprian Norwid. Próba* oraz *Testament Cypriana Norwida*" [Norwid read by Brzozowski], in *Dwór mający w sobie osoby i mózgi rozmaite. Studia z dziejów literatury i kultury*, ed. Barbara Sienkiewicz and Barbara Judkowiak (Poznań: Nakom, 1991), 190f. Wierzchosławski is referring to the critical opinion of Kazimierz Wyka who focuses on the classification of Norwid as a "poet of ruins" in Brzozowski's "Próba." In a contemporary perspective it is obvious that the author of *Quidam* did not follow the style that was initiated in *Les Ruines, ou méditations sur les révolutions des empires* by Volney (Wyka accurately indicates the fallacy of this poetic clue), the topic and motif of ruins

It is necessary to add to Wierzchosławski's accurate remarks that Brzozowski makes use of intertextuality in his discourse, and he then demonstrates it also as a fundamental feature of Norwid's style as shown by later research.[45] The specific phenomenology of ruins in "Próba" allows Wierzchosławski not only to address Norwid's historicism—"the essence of the ruins is the presence of the ages. Who wakes the ruins, wakes the ages" (ruin istotą jest obecność wieków. Kto ruiny budzi, wieki budzi)[46]—but also to take into consideration the recollections of old words, and hence a special style that places words into a historical setting. Brzozowski argues this when stating, "Słowo Norwida jest jak odpowiedź wieków na pytanie trafunku. Jest jak wieki omszone, poważne i nieprzewidziane"[47] (Norwid's word is like the ages' answer to the question of coincidence. Just like the ages, it is moss-covered, serious, and unforeseen.) More recent research has classified Norwid's archaic poetics in three ways: (1) as a tool to render the most precise description of his poetic diction; (2) the omnipresent recognition of the theme of old age; (3) the special status of allegory. Each of these points may then be considered as a continuation of the hermeneutic insights of "Próba" which still need to be further discussed in the criticism on Norwid.

In a way, Brzozowski's interpretation of Norwid is similar to Walter Benjamin's use of the ruin allegory in which he discusses the birth of modernity and the subsequent disintegration of cultural discourse. As with Benjamin, Norwid uses allegory as a means of referencing old quotes, creating something from the remains of a vanished culture, and recalling the past as boundless. Brzozowski was one of the first of Norwid's readers to note what would later be termed by

in the works of Norwid are transformed originally and compose his own aesthetics of ruins (also appearing in art works by the poet); see more on that issue, among others, in a survey by Grażyna Królikiewicz, *Terytorium ruin. Ruina jako obraz i temat romantyczny* [The territory of ruins. The ruin as romantic image and topic] (Kraków: Universitas, 1993), 123–133. See also Michał Głowiński, "Intertekstualność w młodopolskiej krytyce literackiej" [Intertextuality in the literary criticism of Young Poland], *Pamiętnik Literacki* 4 (1989).

45 See references to the works of Norwid in the classic essay by Michał Głowiński, "O intertekstualności" [On intertextuality], *Pamiętnik Literacki* 4 (1980). See also, from more recent studies: Krzysztof Trybuś, "Po co Homer. O poematach dygresyjnych Cypriana Norwida" [Why Homer? On Norwid's digressive poems], in *Między tekstami. Intertekstualność jako problem poetyki historycznej*, ed. Jerzy Ziomek, Janusz Sławiński, Michał Głowiński (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1992).

46 Brzozowski, "Cyprian Norwid. Próba," 149

47 Ibid.

Hans-Georg Gadamer the "rehabilitation of allegory."[48] Norwid was aiming at a rehabilitation of existence in its ephemeral dimension. In his continuous transcription of reality he evokes old images that acquire the status of cultural archetypes. By emphasizing the extent of antiquity, Brzozowski argues against Young Poland's interpretation of Norwid; he emphasizes the distance between the writer and French symbolism as it contrasts with Norwid's use of archaic modes of discourse, the primacy of the theme, and the idea of the historical nature of human existence.[49]

At least two more of Brzozowski's hermeneutic insights could contribute to finding new ground in Norwid studies, this goes especially for the interpretations concerned with the poet himself and his essence: "[…] zbyt lekkim określeniem jest powiedzieć, że był poetą albo myślicielem ruin, był on duszą ruin. Ruiną był sam we wnętrzu swoim" (It is a bit simplistic to say that he was a poet or thinker of ruins, he was the soul of ruins. He himself was a ruin within).[50]

The other topic that still remains insufficiently developed in Norwid studies is the role and meaning of memory, which is often indicated in "Próba":

Bo ruiny porasta pleśń: niepamięć o samym sobie. Bo bierze je w posiadanie cisza, co nazbyt ciszą jest, by siebie znała. I by siebie sobie przypomnieć, trzeba coś zwalić; i to się tylko pozna, co się skruszy.
Mową ruin jest tylko zniszczenie. Idąc w perzynę, dochodzą do głosu. I gdy się w nich ozwać coś chce, mówi: „byłem".[51]

Because mold grows on the ruins: an oblivion to itself. Because silence will take possession of it, a silence that is too silent to know itself. And to remember something, one must knock over something; and only that can be recognized that collapses.
Ruins' talk is only destruction. Crumbling to ashes, they obtain a voice. And when something wants to talk in them, it says: "I was."

And one more fragment:

48 Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*. 2nd edition (London, New York: Continuum, 2006), 69.

49 Cf.: Arent van Nieukerken, "O *niewczesności* Norwida, dwóch modernizmach i Miłoszu" [On Norwid's *timelessness*, two modernisms, and Miłosz], *Teksty Drugie* 6 (1995).

50 Brzozowski, "Cyprian Norwid. Próba," 151.

51 Ibid., 150.

Ruiny wspominają:
Zniszczenie ożywia w nich pamięć.
Każde słowo, każde stąpnięcie budzi echo
Krok głupca odbija się w mądrości wieków. Czy nie jest to styl opowiadań czy nowel Norwida?
Ruiny są ironiczne.
Wszystko, co nie dla wieków jest ośmiesza się, kiedy w wieki wchodzi.
Lecz jest ironia dziwna: szydzi spokojem. Jest zbyt mądra, by gniew miała w sobie.
Można rzec, że jest w niej wyrzut: dlaczego przechodniem być chcesz tylko, dlaczego przechodniem? Gościnę mamy dla wieków, budowały ją wieki: dziecię wieków, czemu chcesz być tułaczem jednej godziny?
Ironii Norwida połysk jest jakby mimowolny: tak szydzić musi zwierciadło, co bohaterów widziało, gdy się odbija w nim błazen.[52]

Ruins remember:
Destruction revives their memory.
Every word, every step wakes an echo.
The fool's step resounds in the wisdom of the ages. Are they not the style of Norwid's stories or novels?
Ruins are ironic.
Everything that is not predestined for the ages is laughed at when it enters the ages.
But this is a strange irony—it mocks through silence. It is too wise to cherish anger.
One can say that there is a blame in it: why do you only want to be a passerby, why a passerby? We have hospitality for ages, we prepared it for ages: child of the ages, why do you want to be one hour's wanderer?
The shine of Norwid's irony is seemingly involuntary: thus a mirror is mocking when it is reflecting a jester although it saw heroes.

Unlike the issue of Norwidian irony that has been extensively explored in current research, the problem of memory described by Brzozowski as the most crucial feature of the poet's style still awaits a monograph. The role of memory in Norwid's works had been emphasized in Brzozowski's time by Cezary Jellenta who wrote, "The mind of Norwid is like an acquisitive museum, aiming to own all the treasures of ruins and excavations."[53]

Referring to a distinction established Jan Assmann, we can state that Norwid's poetic imagination constantly moves between biographical memory, which

52 Ibid., 155.

53 Cezary Jellenta, *Cyprian Norwid. Szkic syntezy* [Cyprian Norwid. A synthetic sketch] (Warszawa: E. Wende i Sp., 1909), 98.

records the experiences of its own fate, and collective memory[54] as the basis of the Polish emigrant community. Figures of memory form this imagination and incorporate images of the past in the poet's presence, which leads to a continuous reconstruction of these images. Reading Norwid may become a reconstruction of different kinds of memory—one of creation referring to the very beginnings of history, another of Rome as a particular memory of place, a memory of allegory that implies the existence of a common range of meanings established in the past, and then a memory of death bringing up images of cessation and commemoration encouraging the self-examination of a waning life.

Can Brzozowski's *Pamiętnik* (Diary) be regarded as an attempt at self-examination in its retention and commemoration of fading thought? Writing about the light discovered by Newman underneath a layer of darkness (and his phrase "*I know, I know*"), did he remember the motto from *Promethidion* memorializing through the promise of a future encounter "on the route of white suns"[55] the death of the poet's friend? Brzozowski noticed that the light coming out of the bottom of our soul "pozostaje w łączności ze słońcem niegasnącym" (remains in communion with the undying sun). And the last words, linked with this fragment in *Pamiętnik,* refer to memory, "nie zapomnieć, nie utracać z oczu tego *I know, I know*"[56] (One must not forget, not lose from sight this *I know, I know*).

54 On the distinction of biographical and foundational memory, see: Jan Assmann, *Pamięć kulturowa. Pismo, zapamiętywanie i polityczna tożsamość w cywilizacjach starożytnych* [Cultural memory: scripture, commemoration, and political identity in early high cultures], trans. Anna Kryczyńska-Pham, ed. Robert Traba (Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2008), 67. Assmann's reflections on the "culture of memory" (Erinnerungskultur), have inspired my reading of Norwid, in: Krzysztof Trybuś, *Pamięć romantyzmu. Studia nie tylko z przeszłości* [Romantic memory. Studies not only on the past] (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, 2011), 178–221.

55 Cyprian Norwid, *Promethidion,* in *Pisma wszystkie,* ed. Juliusz W. Gomulicki, vol. 3, 425.

56 Brzozowski, *Pamiętnik,* 190.

WORKS CITED

Assmann, Jan. *Pamięć kulturowa. Pismo, zapamiętywanie i polityczna tożsamość w cywilizacjach starożytnych.* Translated by Anna Kryczyńska-Pham, edited by Robert Traba. Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2008.

Barańczak, Stanisław. "Norwid nie chce podpisać volkslisty." In *Przed i po. Szkice o poezji krajowej przełomu lat siedemdziesiątych i osiemdziesiątych*, 91–98. London: Aneks, 1988.

—. "Norwid: obecność nieobecnego." In *Tablica z Macondo. Osiemnaście prób wytłumaczenia, po co i dlaczego się pisze,* 89–105. London: Aneks, 1990.

Brzozowski, Stanisław. "Cyprian Norwid. Próba." In *Kultura i życie*, 149–165.

—. "Testament Cypriana Norwida." In *Kultura i życie*, 217–224.

—. "Filozofia romantyzmu polskiego." In *Kultura i życie*, 375–414.

Dambek, Zofia. *Cyprian Norwid a tradycje szlacheckie*. Poznań: Wydawn. Naukowe im. Adama Mickiewicza, 2012.

Pbr. Dunajski, Antoni. *Chrześcijańska interpretacja dziejów w pismach Cypriana Norwida*. Lublin: Redakcja Wydawnictw Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, 1985.

Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Truth and Method*, 2nd, revised edition, translation revised by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall. London, New York: Continuum, 2006.

Głowiński, Michał. "O intertekstualności." *Pamiętnik Literacki* 4 (1986): 75–100.

—. "Intertekstualność w młodopolskiej krytyce literackiej." *Pamiętnik Literacki* 4 (1989): 47–76.

—. "Wielka parataksa. O budowie dyskursu w *Legendzie Młodej Polski Stanisława Brzozowskiego*." *Pamiętnik Literacki* 4 (1991): 43–70.

Gogler, Maciej. "O myśleniu utopijnym Stanisława Brzozowskiego." In *Ostać się wobec chaosu. Prace ofiarowane Profesorowi Tomaszowi Lewandowskiemu,* edited by Radosław Okulicz-Kozaryn and Mateusz Bourkane, 135–151. Poznań: Wydawn. Naukowe Uniw. im. Adama Mickiewicza , 2013.

Halkiewicz-Sojak, Grażyna. "Spór o mesjanizm Norwida." *Studia Norwidiana* 2 (Lublin, 1984): 90–98.

Herlth, Jens. "Epickość życia nowoczesnego. Obrazowość estetyczna i wzorce postępowania katastrofizmu polskiego." In *Katastrofizm polski w XIX i XX wieku: idee, obrazy, konsekwencje*, edided by Jerzy Fiećko, Jens Herlth, and Krzysztof Trybuś, 255–268. Poznań: Wydawnictwo "Poznańskie Studia Polonistyczne", 2014.

Janion, Maria. "Badania nad romantyzmem polskim." In *Rozwój wiedzy o literaturze po 1918 roku*, edited by Janusz Maciejewski, 116–147. Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1986.

Jellenta, Cezary. *Cyprian Norwid. Szkic syntezy*. Warszawa: E. Wende i Sp., 1909.

Kasperski, Edward. *Świat wartości Norwida.* Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1981.

Kącka, Eliza. *Stanisław Brzozowski wobec Cypriana Norwida*. Warszawa: Nakł. Wydziału Polonistyki Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2012.

—. "*Ten, co od sumienia historii się oderwał, dziczeje na wyspie oddalonej*. Dojrzałość dziejowa w myśli Stanisława Brzozowskiego i Cypriana Kamila Norwida." In *Konstelacje Stanisława Brzozowskiego*, edited by Urszula Kowalczuk, et al., 71–84. Warszawa: Narodowe Centrum Kultury, 2012.

Kołaczkowski, Stefan. "Ironia Norwida." *Droga* (1933): 1135–1137.

Kołakowski, Leszek. "*Wielki filozof* jako kategoria historyczna." In *Pochwała niekonsekwencji*, edited by Zbigniew Mentzel, vol. 1, 199–206. Warszawa: Niezależna Oficyna Wydawnicza, 1989.

Królikiewicz, Grażyna. *Terytorium ruin. Ruina jako obraz i temat romantyczny*. Kraków: Universitas, 1993.

Lewandowski, Tomasz. "Młodopolski modernizm katolicki." In *Spotkania młodopolskie*, 9–62. Poznań: Wydawnictwo "Poznańskie Studia Polonistyczne", 2005.

Maciejewski, Janusz. *Cyprian Norwid*. Warszawa: PEN, 1992.

Markiewicz, Henryk. "Rodowód i losy mitu trzech wieszczów." In *Świadomość literatury. Rozprawy i szkice*, 180–224. Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1985.

Miłosz, Czesław. "A Controversial Polish Writer: Stanisław Brzozowski." *California Slavic Studies* II (1963): 53–95.

—. *Człowiek wśród skorpionów. Studium o Stanisławie Brzozowskim*. Kraków: Znak, 2000.

—. *New and Collected Poems, 1931–2001*. New York: Harper Collins, 2003

Norwid, Cyprian. "Moja ojczyzna." In *Pisma wszystkie*, edited by Juliusz W. Gomulicki, vol. 1, 336f. Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1971.

—. "Klaskaniem mając obrzękłe prawice…." In *Pisma wszystkie*, edited by Juliusz W. Gomulicki, vol. 2, 15–17. Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1971.

—. *Quidam*. In *Pisma wszystkie*, edited by Juliusz W. Gomulicki, vol. 3, 77–240. Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1971.

—. *Promethidion. Rzecz w dwóch dialogach z epilogiem*. In *Pisma wszystkie*, edited by Juliusz W. Gomulicki, vol. 3, 423–471. Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1971.

—. *Selected Poems*. Translated by Adam Czerniawski. London: Anvil Press, 2004.

Rzońca, Wiesław. *Norwid a romantyzm polski*. Warszawa: Wydział Polonistyki Uniw. Warszawskiego, 2005.

Szturc, Włodzimierz. *Ironia romantyczna: pojęcie, granice i poetyka*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1992.

Stefanowska, Zofia. "Norwid – pisarz wieku kupieckiego i przemysłowego." In *Strona romantyków. Studia o Norwidzie*, 5–54. Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniw. Lubelskiego, 1993.

—. "Norwidowski romantyzm." In *Strona romantyków. Studia o Norwidzie*, 55–82. Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniw. Lubelskiego, 1993.

Trojanowiczowa, Zofia. *Ostatni spór romantyczny. Cyprian Norwid – Julian Klaczko*. Warszawa: PIW, 1981.

—. "Cypriana Norwida mesjanizm sztuki, czyli o poszukiwaniu *wszechdoskonałości*." *Studia Polonistyczne* 14/15 (1986): 303–311.

Trybuś, Krzysztof. *Epopeja w twórczości Norwida*. Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1993.

—. "Jaki Norwid? (Między diagnozą a postulatem)." *Poznańskie Studia Polonistyczne* 4 (1997): 11–31.

—. *Pamięć romantyzmu. Studia nie tylko z przeszłości*. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, 2011.

—. "Po co Homer. O poematach dygresyjnych Cypriana Norwida." In *Między tekstami. Intertekstualność jako problem poetyki historycznej*, edited by Jerzy Ziomek, Janusz Sławiński, and Michał Głowiński, 215–228. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1992.

Tyszczyk, Andrzej. "Świat wartości Norwida?" *Studia Norwidiana* 4 (1984): 98–104.

van Nieukerken, Arent. "O *niewczesności* Norwida, dwóch modernizmach i Miłoszu." *Teksty Drugie* 6 (1995): 53–68.

—. *Perspektywiczność sacrum. Studia o Norwidowskim romantyzmie*. Warszawa: Instytut Badań Literackich PAN, 2007.

Wasilewski, Zygmunt. *Norwid*. Warszawa: Skład Główny w Administracji Myśli Narodowej, 1935.

Wierzchosławski, Piotr. "Norwid odczytywany przez Brzozowskiego: *Cyprian Norwid. Próba* oraz *Testament Cypriana Norwida*." In *Dwór mający w sobie*

osoby i mózgi rozmaite. Studia z dziejów literatury i kultury, edited by Barbara Sienkiewicz and Barbara Judkowiak, 175–192. Poznań: Nakom, 1991.

Wyka, Kazimierz. "Zygmunt Wasilewski: *Norwid*." *Droga* 2 (1935): 183–186.

—. *Cyprian Norwid. Studia, artykuły, recenzje*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1989.

Brzozowskianism: The Trouble with the "Great" Brzozowski and His Followers

Dorota Kozicka

References to Brzozowski as an author who had enough courage and critical power to tackle the reality of his times and rework dominant worldviews have appeared almost continually for more than a century, which has invariably triggered heated debates on his actual ideological stances. This problem has been repeatedly debated, including in one of my own earlier texts which argues for the special place of Brzozowski within the landscape of Polish literary criticism.[1] The critics and intellectuals who have taken up Brzozowski's thought and have treated his texts as a benchmark for their own intellectual work are usually referred to as *brzozowczycy*—"Brzozowskists"—and although today the term has a slightly outdated ring, it has preserved its positive meaning. A very different case is *brzozowszczyzna*, "Brzozowskianism," a notion that I would like to analyze here more closely by looking at the elements of Brzozowski's life and work

1 A bibliography of texts which analyse Brzozowski's influence on Polish intelligentsia can be found in Krzysztof Fiołek's article "Kłopotliwa obecność Stanisława Brzozowskiego w kilku przygodach ideologicznych inteligencji polskiej" [Stanisław Brzozowski's troublesome presence in several ideological adventures of the Polish intelligentsia], *Ruch Literacki* 4/5 (2005): 383–392. Cf. also Marian Stępień, "Spór o spuściznę po Stanisławie Brzozowskim w latach 1918–1939" [The controversy about Stanisław Brzozowski's legacy in 1918–1939] (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1976); Maciej Urbanowski, "Brzozowski i powojenna krytyka literacka. Uwagi wstępne" [Brzozowski and post-war literary criticism: preliminary remarks], *Dekada Literacka* 4 (2008); Dorota Kozicka, "Brzozowski – pobożne życzenie krytyki" [Brzozowski: criticisms' wishful thinking], in Dorota Kozicka, *Krytyczne (nie)porządki. Studia o współczesnej krytyce literackiej w Polsce* [Critical (dis)ordering: Studies on contemporary literary criticism in Poland] (Kraków: Universitas, 2012).

which gave the term its connotations, and, above all, at its actual meaning. Has it changed throughout history, or does it rather, like *żeromszczyzna* (Żeromskianism), contain a fixed set of characteristics understood relatively unambiguously by all? Seemingly obvious as it is (after all, we do feel intuitively what could be meant by this notion), the matter becomes more complicated once we take a closer look at the specific context in which the term of *brzozowszczyzna* is used. A literary critic testifies to its vague, nondescript character stating that when "[l]ooking for the acolytes of *brzozowszczyzna*, however understood, it is worthwhile to ask about critics from outside this circle, i.e., those not reading, not susceptible to, not in dialogue with, not fascinated by the heritage of the author of *Legenda Młodej Polski*."[2]

On the other hand, this notion can also be found in unambiguous contexts such as when used with a particular meaning in mind as argued by Maciej Urbanowski who states that "there was Brzozowski, and there was *brzozowszczyzna*," which thus distinguishes the work of Brzozowski from its imitations, them being either inept or cynical.[3] When later asked in an interview for *Fronda* (Fronde) "What would *brzozowszczyzna* look like today?", Urbanowski replied as follows:

Of course, it is hard to speak here of any normative formula. Of a correctly or incorrectly understood *brzozowszczyzna*. In any case, the very word *brzozowszczyzna* sounds pejorative and condescending. Certainly, there will not be a new Brzozowski, a second or third

2 Anna Legeżyńska, "Fantazja lekturowa o nie-czytelniku Brzozowskiego" [A reader's fantasy about a non-reader of Brzozowski], in *"Ostać się wobec chaosu". Prace ofiarowane Profesorowi Tomaszowi Lewandowskiemu* ["To survive in the face of chaos": Studies to honor professor Tomasz Lewandowski] (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, 2013), 288.

3 "Czy jest koniunktura na Brzozowskiego? Ze Sławomirem Sierakowskim i Maciejem Urbanowskim rozmawia Cezary Michalski" [Is Brzozowski fashionable? Sławomir Sierakowski and Maciej Urbanowski in conversation with Cezary Michalski], in: *Brzozowski. Przewodnik krytyki politycznej* (Warszawa: Krytyka Polityczna, 2011), 61. The full context of this sentence is as follows: "The last such attempt of using him was, I think, Kornhauser's and Zagajewski's *Świat nieprzedstawiony* [The unrepresented world], and then Andrzej Pawluczuk's *Rozbiory* [Construals]. The latter was sharply criticised by Tomasz Burek, who called it a caricature of Brzozowski's method. I do not know whether this critique was deserved, but certainly in our literature there were many rentiers who cashed up, conveniently and usually with impunity, on the thought of the author of *Płomienie* [Flames]. There was Brzozowski, and there was *brzozowszczyzna* […]."

Brzozowski. Surely, Czapliński to some extent refers to Brzozowski, but he puts his emphasis on the progressive, Promethean Brzozowski, the one who "exchanges" Poland for a different Poland, "liberated" from the burden of tradition, religion. What shall remain for us of this exchange? Not much, I am afraid. But there is also for example the already-mentioned Tomasz Burek, who refers to the late Brzozowski, already clearly detached from that Polish progressivism, those sorry Youngbloods[4] reading at breakfast American feminists and French philosophers. Thus, Burek is trying to find a trend in the Polish tradition, which, starting from 1905, has combined revolutionary and national, political and metaphysical tendencies. Perhaps this is our alternative to leftist *brzozowszczyzna*, this shows us how to read literature today and what kind of Polishness to think about.[5]

In Urbanowski's statements, the meaning of the term in question is clearly limited to such reading as the imitation of or fascination with Brzozowski's works (to briefly recall Legeżyńska's enumeration), which, according to the Kraków-based scholar, is not in line with the thoughts or intentions of Brzozowski himself. Although it certainly seems open to question how this very "unorthodoxy" can be identified (a problem I will return to later in this essay), here it is worth noticing that Urbanowski's emphasis on the pejorative meaning of *brzozowszczyzna* corresponds to the common understanding of such name derivatives in Polish. The dictionary *Słownik poprawnej polszczyzny* (Dictionary of Correct Polish) defines the meaning of the *-izna* and *-yzna* suffixes, which feature nouns derived from adjectives and nouns, with reference to three semantic categories. The first of these is in combination with the names of countries,

> […] a language, or a set of features of a given country (i.e., fashion, mentality, manner of being), as in *polszczyzna, francuszczyzna, niemczyzna* [derivatives from the Polish names for Poland, France, and Germany respectively]. In the case of nouns derived from qualitative adjectives, they [these suffixes] add to the lexical base a sense of gluttony or excess, i.e., *jaskrawizna* [from *jaskrawy*, gaudy (of a colour)], *szarzyzna* [from *szary*, grey (dull)], *dłużyzna* [from *długi*, long (in a temporal sense)]. In the case of derivatives from personal proper names, they create names of intellectual, artistic, or political formations repre-

4 The Youngbloods (Polish "Młodziakowie") were a fictional progressive Polish family of the interwar period, portrayed by Witold Gombrowicz in his novel *Ferdydurke*. Their name has since been used by critics to refer to the thoughtless following of new trends.

5 "Religijny i metafizyczny socjalista. Tomasz Rowiński rozmawia z Maciejem Urbanowskim" [A religious and metaphysical socialist. Maciej Urbanowski in conversation with Tomasz Rowiński], *Fronda* 65/4 (2012). http://www.pismofronda.pl/religijny-i-metafizyczny-socjalista

sented by their authors, e.g., *towiańszczyzna*, *wyspiańszczyzna*, *żeromszczyzna* [from Towiański, Wyspiański, and Żeromski respectively], and they are often marked negatively.[6]

What is worth considering in reference to this dictionary definition is whether the third category does not also contain the connotations of the previous two. It is in this sense that I would like to discuss *brzozowszczyzna* in this paper.

Brzozowskianism vs. Brzozowski

As soon as it was coined, the label *brzozowszczyzna* was used to refer to Brzozowski's works and/or his imitators and followers. In the case of Brzozowski's supporters, these two usages are disjunctive, while for his adversaries, his influence on readers becomes an important argument for opposing him. In his famous text "Brzozowski jako wychowawca" (Brzozowski as an Educator), Ludwik Fryde concludes his analysis of the educational consequences of *Legenda Młodej Polski* and other writings by Brzozowski as follows:

> *Brzozowszczyzna* is a cultural ailment no less dangerous than *żeromszczyzna*. This ideology does not lack consistency or even historical intuition—it is partial truth, yet based on a fundamental lie. For it is unwittingly assumed that one has the unquestionable right of leadership of the people. The intelligentsia believes that its irresponsible protests in the name of humanitarianism are permissible, and when it abandons all scruples, it thinks that it is allowed to seek power by all means, and retain it at any cost. And hence, *brzozowszczyzna* is a reflection of *żeromszczyzna*. It creates, despite the apparent power and consistency of its ideological program, a school of political hysteria, a school of social mercenarism.[7]

Writing in *Nowe Drogi* (New Ways), an ideological organ of the Polish Workers' Party and the Polish United Workers' Party, Paweł Hofman takes a different position than Fryde, stating,

6 Andrzej Markowski, ed., *Słownik poprawnej polszczyzny PWN* (Warszawa: PWN, 2010), 153.

7 Ludwik Fryde, "Brzozowski jako wychowawca (Z powodu wydania *Legendy Młodej Polski*)" [Brzozowski as an educator (Upon the occasion of the publication of *Legenda Młodej Polski*)], *Ateneum* 1 (1938). Quoted after the reprint in: *Jest Bóg, żyje prawda. Inna twarz Stanisława Brzozowskiego,* ed. Maciej Urbanowski (Kraków: Fronda, 2012), 205.

In many circles of the Polish intelligentsia, even in socialist circles, there still hangs the stench of Brzozowski's views or ideology. There exists the legend created by Brzozowski and the legend created about Brzozowski. The dissipation of both of these legends, the liberation of Polish intellect from the taint of *brzozowszczyzna*, will facilitate a proper outlook on the last half-century of our history.[8]

Brzozowski's broadly-understood ideology is fundamental for both critics and no matter how they define it, it becomes the object of their criticism. As demonstrated by Fryde, Brzozowski's attitude can be considered even more dangerous as it is expressed in a manner that is appealing to the reader, producing a particular mode of reading and thinking. Pointing out Brzozowski's style, the type of reader who would reach for *Legenda Młodej Polski*, and the way the book is received, Ludwik Fryde touches on issues that seem no less important for our reflections on *brzozowszczyzna* than on Brzozowski's particular ideas and opinions. It is therefore impossible to separate Brzozowski's ideas from the manner he conveyed them and also from their reception, which includes the imitations that usually bring the features of the orginal into its sharpest relief.

A different view on the influence of Brzozowski's writings comes from Eustachy Czekalski—the first person to use the word *brzozowszczyzna*, as far as I know. He mentions "the senile radicalism of the literary-critical *Brzozowszczyzna* persisting in a couple of already bald and grey skulls." Using Suchodolski's book on Brzozowski as his point of departure, the author tries to contrast the "true" value of Brzozowski with those of his imitators who maintained left-wing views. He claims that "it behooves and it is worthwhile" to read Brzozowski, "yet one should not take from him his positive assertions, but rather his melodies and tone, the intensity of his spirit."[9] Jan Emil Skiwski also refers to Brzozowski's followers and imitators in his 1928 essay on scientific and prophetic criticism. Deprecating the latter, Skiwski distinguishes between "the invariably deep, costly, and even painfully intense engorgement of contemporary philosophy," characteristic of Brzozowski himself, and the "improvisations *à la* Brzozowski." He forgives Brzozowski for his "immensely demoralizing" mannerisms ("artificial dramatization of language," "jargon of philosophical emotions" instead of direct statements, and suggestions instead of arguments) for the sake of "his talent" and originality. It was in this essay that Skiwski claimed that the unquestionable originality of Brzozowski's thought was taken by his contempo-

8 Paweł Hoffman, "Legenda Stanisława Brzozowskiego" [The legend of Stanisław Brzozowski], *Nowe Drogi* 2 (1947): 103.

9 Eustachy Czekalski, "*Brzozowszczyzna*" [Brzozowskianism], *Antena. Zjawisk życia-sztuki-literatury* 8 (1933): 2.

raries and "transformed into a little pocketsize codex" from which they drew ready-made formulas for depth, "vitality," and "singularity."[10] Several decades later, Marek A. Cichocki repeated Skiwski's argument, directing this description of *brzozowszczyzna* against his ideological opponents:

> When one follows the Polish dispute today, one can get the impression that *brzozowszczyzna* has entered into the circulation of public debate for good, giving it sometimes a downright, unbearable, self-accusatory tone. By *brzozowszczyzna*, I mean here a certain attitude characteristic of the Polish intelligentsia, and the whole ensuing set of arguments critical of Polishness (their congenial examples can be found in "Polska zdziecinniała" [Poland Gone Puerile]). It is a form of moral blackmail, readily employed by representatives of our intelligentsia in regard to their less-enlightened fellow citizens who are shamed by their alleged non-modernity and lack of understanding of the modern world. This attitude involves many hidden, never-overcome complexes, and many unjustified simplifications. Describing the phenomenon of *brzozowszczyzna* in the interwar period, Jan Emil Skiwski noticed that the unquestionable originality of Brzozowski's thought was taken by his contemporaries and "transformed into a little pocketsize codex," from which they could draw ready-made formulas. Also today for example, the compound "Polish-Catholic," borrowed mainly from Brzozowski, is repeated like a Hindu mantra by all critics of traditional Polishness and defenders of a particularly understood modernity. It is not always, however, that *brzozowszczyzna* manifested in this way has anything to do with Brzozowski's thought. Hence, sometimes it is worth distinguishing it from Brzozowski's work, which is anything but a handy pocket-size codex.[11]

In this sense—as imitation reducing the original model; as settling for a stereotypical, superficial repetition of somebody else's views or ways of acting; as imitating a particular intellectual pose, yet understood as significantly distinct from Brzozowski's actual writings—*brzozowszczyzna* acquires a character that is predominantly used by right-wing authors to refer to leftist-oriented intellectuals who evoke Brzozowski's patronage (or in whose works any "common places" can be found, as is the case with Czapliński, as mentioned by Urbanowski). Thus, the main function of the term *brzozowszczyzna* is to discredit ideological

10 Jan E. Skiwski, "O krytyce naukowej i profetycznej" [On scientific and prophetic criticism], *Myśl Narodowa* 15 (1928); reprinted in: idem, *Na przełaj oraz inne szkice o literaturze i kulturze*, ed. Maciej Urbanowski (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1999), 36.

11 Marek A. Cichocki, "Brzozowski – suwerenność w kulturze" [Brzozowski: sovereignty in culture], *Znak* 2 (2001); reprinted in: *„Jest Bóg żyje prawda". Inna twarz Stanisława Brzozowskiego*, 361f.

opponents, which makes it all the more interesting that most authors who use this term do seem to appreciate the diversity of Brzozowski's views and to understand his influence on various attitudes and ways of thinking. Urbanowski himself, who has used *brzozowszczyna* most often, argues on many occasions that Brzozowski's undeniable greatness is manifested in the fact that his writings have allowed many generations of Polish intelligentsia from multiple ideological "options" to define themselves, and that in this way the critic has become a crucial role-model for different intellectual milieus and thinkers. In this case, however, the belief in the "eternal sources of creative capacities" contained in Brzozowski's works is combined with a firm idea of what can and what cannot be considered a proper use of these sources and it is motivated by the desire to defend Brzozowski against mediocre followers who simplify his thought. Used in this sense, the term *brzozowszczyzna* can be used above all in ideological disputes, but it also serves as a term in the struggle over Brzozowski's true critical legacy.[12]

12 This way of thinking has been aptly demonstrated by Cichocki who writes that "one should combat *brzozowszczyzna* as an intellectual pose, but the thought of Brzozowski himself is worth being continuously engaged with." He then goes on to explain that "on the other hand, it is difficult to pretend not to see that Brzozowski's concept of modernity was always combined with an attitude of radical criticism—without it, it loses its actual meaning. This is not very distant from the conviction that a spiritual transformation of the Polish people can only take place if the old world is reduced completely to rubble. This argument was already used by many Polish intellectuals as an explanation of their enchantment with Stalinism in the early 1950s. The same lack of consideration with respect to tradition and intemperate criticism of one's own national community that would lead to its destruction later became the main feature of *brzozowszczyzna* as a critical approach popular after 1989. However, this attitude assumes a significant reduction of the themes of Brzozowski's work, focusing as it does almost exclusively on his critique of Polish traditionalism in the form of nobility culture and Catholicism. What disappears when such a perspective is adopted are all the motifs of Brzozowski's critique of bourgeois liberalism and its derivative forms of culture that could contribute to an unfavorable description of the Polish parvenu middle-class today. [...] One may get the impression that Brzozowski's critical grandiosity often sets the same trap for Poles, namely the trap of Polish intellectual parochialism. So suggestive is Brzozowski's critique of Polishness that anyone who dislikes something about the Poles can identify with it. His work is so rich that it can inspire both wise and stupid criticism of Polishness." (Cichocki, "Brzozowski – suwerenność," 374f.).

The Power of Immaturity

The two uses of *brzozowszczyzna* present somewhat different perspectives with the first referring to Brzozowski himself, centered not so much on his ideas as on his critical approach and his way of performing intellectual work. The second is used to assail Brzozowski's imitators who do focus on Brzozowski's views overall, although they concentrate somewhat on condemning his emotions and rhetoric.

I would like to clarify this negative perspective by defining the notion of *brzozwszczyzna* following the example of *żeromszczyzna*[13] by moving from a strictly evaluative formula to a more descriptive one, which would nevertheless take into account the pejorative character of this term. Without ignoring the obvious accusations put forth by different ideological camps against Brzozowski's particular views, I want to find in critical and polemical statements the caracteristics that are commonly ascribed to Brzozowski's work. These can refer to his ideological stance, critical temperament, way of reading, and style of writing. After all, today it would be difficult to think of *brzozowszczyzna* without taking into account Brzozowski's readers, critics, and followers; yet it would be equally difficult to forget that it was the characteristic performativity of his influential texts.

The most salient element defining *brzozowszczyzna* is undoubtedly Brzozowski's changing views and beliefs and his temperament as a driven planner and mender of the world. Brzozowski's style is unique because of the vividness and sharpness of his claims, his characteristic manner of arriving at particular views, and the changeability of his opinions and thought. From analyzing various texts, one can distinguish some vivid descriptions of these negatively perceived features. An example of this is the "'critical' St. Vitus dance,"[14] which is

13 Cf. the entry "Żeromszczyzna," in *Słownik terminów literackich* [Dictionary of literary terms], 3rd ed., ed. Janusz Sławiński (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1998), 640, and Stanisław Sierotwiński's *Słownik terminów literackich*, 4th ed. (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1986), 306.

14 Stefan Żeromski wrote in 1918, "Fierce, phenomenally hasty, fitful reading, often not out of internal need but out of snobbism, which he himself admits, to impress the literary mob by the unheard of multi-directionality of reading, moved his mania of adorations from Sorel as far as to the writings of Cardinal Newman. Every book he read smote him to such a degree that he cut veritable capers among multifarious authors. […] This 'critical' St. Vitus dance practiced by Stanisław Brzozowski made a great impression and even still impresses certain writing spheres in Poland." Stefan Żeromski, *Dzieła. Pisma różne* [*Works. Various writings*], vol. 2: *Pisma literackie i krytycz-*

a pejorative rendering of one of the most often underscored characteristics of Brzozowski's critical work, i.e., the eclecticism, changeability, and superficiality of his reading; his unhealthy ambition to keep *au courant* with Western novelties. Another feature of Brzozowski that is strongly connected with his reading is the "harvesting of thoughts from books." Zygmunt Wasilewski referred to his reading as "literary emptiness"[15] and accused Brzozowski of cherishing the beauty of ideas rather than truth. Fryde adopts a similar tone by describing *Legenda Młodej Polski* as "sick and contagious intellectual hedonism" and accused Brzozowski of relishing in infinite intellectual associations.[16] Similar views are expressed today in the indictments by the communist left against the over-intellectualized elitism of the members of the *Krytyka Polityczna* circle who have been influenced by Brzozowski's thought. Another such feature referring somewhat to the literary roots of Brzozowski's thought and above all to the style of his texts is the phenomenon metaphorically described by Fryde as "the rushing of grand words and grand problems."[17] This phrase touches on Brzozowski's bombastic style, the settling of intellectual problems at the level of existential resolutions, and his emotional tone.

It seems that it is in Brzozowski's way of shaping his critical discourse that we will find significant markers of the incriminated *brzozowszczyzna*; a style of writing capable of inspiring radical solutions. These texts are to some "a volcano of thoughts, feelings, and pursuits"[18] while others describe it as "a raw,

---

ne [Literary and critical writings] (Warszawa 1963), 73. The accusations of literary snobbism and eclecticism already appeared during Brzozowski's lifetime, for example in Jan Lemański's rhymed pamphlet entitled *Erudyta* [The erudite] *Widnokręgi* 10,2 (1910): 340f., reprinted in: *"Chamuły", "gnidy", "przemilczacze"... Antologia dwudziestowiecznego pamfletu polskiego* ["Boors," "lice," "dissemblers"… An anthology of the twentieth-century Polish pamphlet], ed. Dorota Kozicka (Kraków: Universitas, 2010).

15 Zygmunt Wasilewski, "Idea pracy" [The idea of labor], in *Dyskusje* (Poznań: Księgarnia Św. Wojciecha, 1926); reprinted in: *Jest Bóg, żyje prawda…*, 113f.

16 Fryde, "Brzozowski jako wychowawca," 188.

17 "The direct current of high emotional voltage, the rushing of grand words and grand problems, and the unclear yet very suggestive calls to action made us passionately delve into *Legenda*, with flushed cheeks even before we grasped its meaning." Ibid., 187.

18 Silvester [s. Teresa Landy], "Stanisława Brzozowskiego drogi do Rzymu" [Stanisław Brzozowski's Roads to Rome], *Verbum* III (1935), reprinted in: *Jest Bóg, żyje prawda…*, 145.

revolutionary element."[19] Still others stress the performative power of Brzozowski's extremely passionate way of dealing with literature and criticism. Such features are evidently connected with the characteristics of Brzozowski's thought which he best described when he wrote that he was always unready and immature.[20] This description is very fitting in that it encompasses both Brzozowski's tendency to record all of his thoughts, even while reading. He transcribes the thinking process rather than complete thoughts and to write in a youthful state of emotions by treating literature and philosophy as a "territory of quasi-life expansion."[21] As a consequence, the most "zealous inheritors"[22] of the critic were young intellectuals. Characteristic among the numerous texts referencing the youthful character of both Brzozowski's writings and their reception is a review of Tomasz Burek's second book of literary criticism in which the reviewer expresses his concern that unlike other critics who went through a Brzozowski phase, Burek never grew out of his.[23] Another example would be Adam Zagajewski, who during the period of programmatic articles of the Polish New Wave, wrote pamphlet-like texts evoking Brzozowski, whereas a dozen or so years later in 1985, one of his means of grounding the radical change of his attitude was a wholesale deprecation of Brzozowski and his imitators:

> Those who put on the mask of Stanisław Brzozowski, whether for a moment or forever, […] bring to life a phantom of literature, a poltergeist of art (it is easy to tell an artist from an educator—the former always speaks on his own behalf, the latter feels a generation, a nation, a social class, humanity, or a poetic group standing behind him). I can imagine where the charm of Brzozowski's heritage stems from; it seems to promise a strict, conceptual power over literature, a government of souls, and more—of chosen souls, those which govern other souls. Conceptual shortcuts, reductions, and postulates crisscross here like orders, like signals of a hunting horn.[24]

It is the feverish emotionality—a combination of thoughts awakened and led on in multiple directions, of intellectual upsurges rather than finished, precisely-

19 Krzysztof Fiołek, "Kłopotliwa obecność," 387.

20 Brzozowski, *Legenda Młodej Polski*, 289.

21 Fryde, *Brzozowski jako wychowawca*, 192.

22 For Marta Wyka's phrasing, cf.: "Głos Brzozowskiego. Rozmowa redakcyjna" [Brzozowski's Voice. Editors' discussion panel], *Dekada Literacka* 230 (2008). http://www.dekadaliteracka.pl/?id=4660

23 Cf. Zbigniew Bieńkowski, "Klucze" [Keys], *Twórczość* 2 (1974): 95.

24 Adam Zagajewski: *Solidarność i samotność* [Solidarity and solitude] (Warszawa: Fundacja Zeszytów Literackich, 2002), 76.

formulated mental constructions, a combination juxtaposed with the presence, constantly manifested in the texts, of Brzozowski fighting for his views and for a better reality that seems to constitute the special mixture comprising *brzozowszczyzna*. These features arguably prevented posterity from seeing an unquestionable greatness in Brzozowski and it contributed to the fact that he left a mark on Polish contemporary culture and broadly understood criticism not as an unchallenged authority but rather as a catalyst for radically different views and ideological stances. Yet it is thanks to these same features, I believe, that Stanisław Brzozowski still remains inspiring, intriguing, not quite read to the full…

Translated by Zofia Ziemann

WORKS CITED

Bieńkowski, Zbigniew. "Klucze." *Twórczość* 2 (1974): 93–96.

Cichocki, Marek A. "Brzozowski – suwerenność w kulturze." In *"Jest Bóg żyje prawda." Inna twarz Stanisława Brzozowskiego*, edited by Maciej Urbanowski, 361–377. Kraków: Fronda, 2012.

Czekalski, Eustachy. "*Brzozowszczyzna*." *Antena. Zjawisk życia-sztuki-literatury* 8 (1933): 2.

Fiołek, Krzysztof. "Kłopotliwa obecność Stanisława Brzozowskiego w kilku przygodach ideologicznych inteligencji polskiej." *Ruch Literacki* 4/5 (2005): 383–392 .

Fryde, Ludwik. "Brzozowski jako wychowawca (Z powodu wydania *Legendy Młodej Polski*)." In *"Jest Bóg żyje prawda." Inna twarz Stanisława Brzozowskiego*, edited by Maciej Urbanowski, 181–214. Kraków: Fronda, 2012.

"'Głos Brzozowskiego.' Rozmowa redakcyjna." *Dekada Literacka* (2008). http://www.dekadaliteracka.pl/?id=4660

Hoffman, Paweł. "Legenda Stanisława Brzozowskiego." *Nowe Drogi* 2 (1947): 104–136.

Kozicka, Dorota. "Brzozowski – pobożne życzenie krytyki." In *Krytyczne (nie)porządki. Studia o współczesnej krytyce literackiej w Polsce,* edited by Dorota Kozicka, 82–122. Kraków: Universitas, 2012.

Legeżyńska, Anna. "Fantazja lekturowa o nie-czytelniku Brzozowskiego." In *"Ostać się wobec chaosu". Prace ofiarowane Profesorowi Tomaszowi Lewandowskiemu,* edited by Radosław Okulicz-Kozaryn, and Mateusz Bourkane, 285–302. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, 2013.

Lemański, Jan. "Erudyta." In *"Chamuły", "gnidy", "przemilczacze"... Antologia dwudziestowiecznego pamfletu polskiego*, edited by Dorota Kozicka, 209–212. Kraków: Universitas, 2010.

Markowski, Andrzej, ed. *Słownik poprawnej polszczyzny PWN*. Warszawa: PWN, 2010.

Silvester [s. Teresa Landy], "Stanisława Brzozowskiego drogi do Rzymu." In "*Jest Bóg, żyje prawda." Inna twarz Stanisława Brzozowskiego*, edited by Maciej Urbanowski, 145–164. Kraków: Fronda, 2012.

Sierotwiński, Stanisław, ed. *Słownik terminów literackich*. 4th ed. Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1986.

Skiwski, Jan Emil. "O krytyce naukowej i profetycznej." In idem, *Na przełaj oraz inne szkice o literaturze i kulturze,* edited by Maciej Urbanowski, 31–38. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1999.

Sławiński, Janusz (ed.). *Słownik terminów literackich*. 3rd ed. Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1998.

Stępień, Marian. *Spór o spuściznę po Stanisławie Brzozowskim w latach 1918–1939*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1976.

Urbanowski, Maciej. "Brzozowski i powojenna krytyka literacka. Uwagi wstępne." *Dekada Literacka* 4 (2000): 24–37.

—. "Czy jest koniunktura na Brzozowskiego? Ze Sławomirem Sierakowskim i Maciejem Urbanowskim—rozmawia Cezary Michalski." In *Brzozowski. Przewodnik krytyki politycznej*, 56–71. Warszawa: Krytyka Polityczna, 2011.

— (ed.). *"Jest Bóg żyje prawda." Inna twarz Stanisława Brzozowskiego*. Kraków: Fronda, 2012.

—. "Religijny i metafizyczny socjalista. Tomasz Rowiński rozmawia z Maciejem Urbanowskim." *Fronda* 65, 4 (2012): 255–272. http://www.pismofronda.pl/religijny-i-metafizyczny-socjalista

Wasilewski, Zygmunt. "Idea pracy." In *"Jest Bóg, żyje prawda." Inna twarz Stanisława Brzozowskiego*, edited by Maciej Urbanowski, 105–115. Kraków: Fronda, 2012.

Zagajewski, Adam. *Solidarność i samotność*. Warszawa: Fundacja Zeszytów Literackich, 2002.

Żeromski, Stefan. *Dzieła. Pisma różne*, vol. 2: *Pisma literackie i krytyczne.* Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1963.

"…actually speaking, this man converted me": Jerzy Liebert, Brzozowski, and the Question of a Modern Religous Poetry

Christian Zehnder

Whatever one thinks of the last years and months of the life and work of Stanisław Brzozowski, one facet is perfectly clear: he did not consider his growing proximity to Catholicism a 'conversion'. In a letter from 1909 he wrote, "Nie jest to żadne nawrócenie: sądzę, że nigdy nie zrywałem związku z Kościołem jako żywym zrzeszeniem duchów."[1] (This is not at all a conversion: I think that I never broke with the Church as a living association of spirits.)

As Andrzej Walicki points out, Brzozowski had indeed used the term *kościół* as early as 1903, though denoting not so much the Catholic Church, but a kind of organic community to be built by mankind.[2] It can be said without exaggeration that there had always been an "ecclesiastical" dimension in Brzozowski's thought, even in his Marxist period (1904–1908). However, the argument against the idea of undergoing a conversion, the anxiety of becoming a genuine "convert" takes another course in the *Pamiętnik* (Diary), the diary Brzozowski wrote from the end of 1910 until his death in April 1911. On December 10, he noted, "Staraj się żyć modlitwą, a nie polemiką i przeciwstawieniem. Siła ginie w tym tarciu i nie rodzi się pewne światło" (Try to live by prayer and not by polemics and opposition. The force dies in that struggle and light will not be born).[3] And a few pages later: "Religia twoja nie powinna być nawróceniem. Strzeż się, strzeż się tego […] błędu" (Your religion must not be a conversion. Beware, beware of

1 Letter to Witold Klinger from April 27, 1909. Brzozowski, *Listy*, vol. 2, 134.

2 Andrzej Walicki, *Stanisław Brzozowski – drogi myśli* [Stanisław Brzozowski—paths of thought] (Kraków: Universitas, 2011), 281.

3 Brzozowski, *Pamiętnik*, 9.

this […] fault).[4] That is to say, that to "live by polemics and opposition" would be as mistaken as to be religious in a *converted* way. Agata Bielik-Robson understands this careful avoiding of a rupture as "another conversion," as an all-integrating conversion without loss[5] (of one's own intellectual biography), which she calls a "highly creative and almost heretical misreading" of the Church's teaching.[6]

The arguments against conversion mentioned by Walicki and Bielik-Robson also imply a third one: Brzozowski cannot but have fundamental troubles with the transcendence or supernatural character of the Christian truth, because truth, according to Brzozowski, is always actually *made* by mankind, and never already given (revealed) and "known."[7] So, even if Brzozowski came to the conclusion that man needs transcendence, it remained for him, in Walicki's words, a "postulate" in the Kantian sense of the word, and Catholicism as a whole a "possibility."[8] Interestingly, Walicki's and Bielik-Robson's arguments had been anticipated by Leszek Kołakowski, when he called Brzozowski's Catholicism a "receptive container for cultural continuity"[9] and when he concluded that the philosopher's "longing for a non-historical absolute" stands "on the threshold of hesitation not fully overcome."[10]

4 Ibid., 12.

5 Agata Bielik-Robson, "Another conversion. Stanisław Brzozowski's 'diary' as an early instance of the post-secular turn to religion," *Studies in East European Thought* 63 (2011): 280 and passim.

6 Ibid., 291.

7 Walicki speaks of a "primacy of acting over knowledge" in Brzozowski. Walicki, *Stanisław Brzozowski – drogi myśli*, 317. On late Brzozowski's critical remarks on Saint Thomas Aquinas's intellectualism under the auspices of (Catholic) modernism (Maurice Blondel, Alfred Loisy, George Tyrrell as well as—in Brzozowski's reading—Cardinal Newman) see Tomasz Lewandowski, "Młodopolskie spotkania z modernizmem katolickim" [Young Polish encounters with catholic modernism], in *Spotkania młodopolskie* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo "Poznańskie Studia Polonistyczne", 2005), 38f., 44.

8 Walicki, *Stanisław Brzozowski – drogi myśli*, 308, 317.

9 Leszek Kołakowski, "Miejsce filozofowania Stanisława Brzozowskiego" [The place of Stanisław Brzozowski's philosophizing], in *Pochwala niekonsekwencji. Pisma rozproszone z lat 1955–1968* (London: Puls, 1989), 173.

10 Ibid.

Brzozowski's Conversional Energy According to Blüth, Liebert, and Wajngold/Gołębiowska

Despite all these ambiguities and explicit reservations Brzozowski became a model of conversion to *other* intellectuals. The literary scholar Rafał Blüth (1891–1939), himself a convert from Judaism to Christianity, a co-founder of the Catholic journal *Verbum* (1934–1939), described the paradox of Brzozowski as a convert *malgré lui* in his article "Stanisław Brzozowski jako wychowawca" ("Stanisław Brzozowski as Educator," 1938) as follows:

> What we, the readers of his [Brzozowski's] writing and confessions, know can be summarized by the affirmation that Brzozowski was fully aware of the path toward conversion that he had taken. However, intellectual sincerity does not allow us to consider Brzozowski as a Catholic writer with a completely formed worldview… A Catholic must be shocked to the very end by Brzozowski's conception of truth by which he, as an extreme anti-rationalist, excluded elements of intellect and knowledge. Hence Catholic intellectuals, those who had always confessed this worldview as well as those who had come to the Truth of Catholicism by different ways, and even those who were awakened and compelled to it by Brzozowski, are *attached to him most deeply by the last moment of his life—and maybe by his death*.[11]

For Blüth, as later for Walicki, the criterion to measure Brzozowski's (unrealized) conversion is his "anti-intellectual" notion of truth. Yet Blüth introduces another criterion, which is a plausible explanation of the philosopher's attractiveness to young intellectuals: his suffering arising from social isolation and illness in his last years, the "full awareness" of his turn to religion during this phase, and, most importantly, the receipt of the last rites in the hour of his death.[12] That is to say that, regardless of the ambiguity of his own conversion,

11 Rafał M. Blüth, "Stanisław Brzozowski jako wychowawca" [Stanisław Brzozowski as educator] in *Pisma literackie*, ed. Piotr Nowaczyński (Kraków: Znak, 1984), 322 (emphasis in the orig.).

12 Cf. Anna Brzozowska, "Wspomnienie o Stanisławie Brzozowskim" [Remembering Stanisław Brzozowski], *Twórczość* 216 (1963): 51, and recently Maciej Urbanowski, "Droga do Rzymu: Newman Stanisława Brzozowskiego" [The way to Rome: Stanisław Brzozowski's Newman], in *Konstelacje Stanisława Brzozowskiego*, ed. Urszula Kowalczuk et al. (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2012), 367. For an account of Catholic—and particularly Rafał Blüth's—views on Brzozowski in the 1930s cf. Marian Stępień, *Spór o spuściznę po Stanisławie Brzozowskim w*

Brzozowski—"by the last moment of his life"—bears witness to the longing for salvation. Thereby he releases, as I would put it, an "energy" that galvanizes the conversion of others.

Now when it comes to the case of the poet Jerzy Liebert (1904–1931), can we say, using Blüth's words, that reading Brzozowski "awakened and compelled" him to Catholicism? Liebert's own answer to this question is an unambiguous yes. He expressed it in 1927 in a letter to Maria Leszczyńska, a married woman with whom he had a relationship following the decision of his friend Bronisława/Agnieszka/Miriam Wajngold, later known as Sister Maria Gołębiowska, to enter the convent.[13] The letter to Leszczyńska has been quoted again and again and has become inevitably a commonplace of Liebert scholarship. Nevertheless, I will quote it here at length, given that it is the poet's most detailed account of his view of Brzozowski. Liebert starts by explaining his early fascination with Nietzsche, and then goes on:

> After Nietzsche at some point I took up Brzozowski. And actually speaking, this man converted me. Thanks to him I for the first time became attentive to the essential importance of Catholicism, to its eternal, universal meaning. I was reading Brzozowski's books from the period when he was still fighting with the Church. He did not lead me himself but drew my attention to Cardinal Newman, to the latter's *A Grammar of Assent*. I read this book, there was a lot I did not understand, but I also understood a lot. Brzozowski had written an introduction to it, and thus Newman actually gave him a new birth.
> Later, after my conversion, I returned sometimes to Brzozowski, up to the present day he remains for me the most compelling read. How often I was driven up the wall when reading his understanding of Catholicism. Only now, recently, his *Diaries* fell into my hands. I knew before that Brzozowski had expressly come closer to the Church, he already believed though without yet acknowledging it, but the *Diaries*, written in the most difficult period of his life, really showed me the great spirit of Brzozowski. I do not know whether anyone else could be found in Poland who has come to Catholicism in such a sincere and at the same time critical way.[14]

---

latach 1918–1939 [The controversy about Stanisław Brzozowski's legacy in the years 1918–1939] (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1976), 82–86.

13 On Sister Maria cf. Stefan Frankiewicz, *Nie stracić wiary w Watykanie. Ze Stefanem Frankiewiczem rozmawia Cezary Gawrys* [Not to lose faith in the Vatican: Stefan Frankiewicz in conversation with Cesarzy Gawrys] (Warszawa: Biblioteka "Więzi", 2014), 39f.

14 Letter from September 4, 1927, in: Jerzy Liebert, *Pisma zebrane* [Collected works], ed. Stefan Frankiewicz, vol. 2 of *Listy* (Warszawa: Biblioteka "Więzi", 1976), 425. Brzozowski's Newman edition is an anthology of different writings of the English

Let me take a closer look at this statement. Brzozowski, Liebert writes, "converted" him by drawing his attention to the universality of the Church, even through his early writings (here, Liebert may have in mind the contradictory statements on Catholicism in *Legenda Młodej Polski—The Legend of Modern Poland*).[15] As a reason for conversion, this seems to be a surprisingly superficial point. But the abundant use of expressions in the root of *wróc-* (turn) as "nawrócił," "nawrócenie" as well as "po raz pierwszy *zwróciłem* uwagę" (I for the first time became attentive) and "[n]ie doprowadził mnie sam, ale *zwrócił* uwagę" (he has not lead me himself but drew my attention) show that the conversional "energy" of Brzozowski, for Liebert, is actually linked with the emphasis on the notion of Church. As a matter of fact, such emphasis also lies at the center of Brzozowski's introduction to John Henry Newman. The *Pamiętnik*, this highly intimate document, was only belatedly to confirm the authenticity and rightness—if we take his letter as a factual account at all—of Brzozowski's "awakening" him to the Church.

Newman is mentioned numerous times in Liebert's letters to Agnieszka Wajngold,[16] but we know almost nothing about his Brzozowski readings and the existential role they played, according to the abovementioned letter to Maria Leszczyńska. And this uncertainty is all the more problematic since in his correspondence Liebert is admittedly trying to convert Leszczyńska, a fairly decadent, disillusioned agnostic. Thus the way he speaks of Brzozowski might be at least partly an attempt to offer her an intellectually attractive model for *her* conversion. Yet there is another account of the same event left by Sister Maria (the former Agnieszka Wajngold). In a text from 1976 addressed to her fellow sisters

---

Convert (see note 29). What attracted Brzozowski most in Newman was, as Walicki puts it, the "particular connection of a skeptical anti-intellectualism and historism with a personalist and anti-relativist tendency, which finds the source of certainty in the most individual depths of the personality." Walicki, *Stanisław Brzozowski – drogi myśli*, 309f. Crucial in this regard is Newman's notion of the "illative sense," developed in *A Grammar of Assent* (1870) to characterize the individual's access to universal truth, whereas Brzozowski would see first of all the anti-intellectual potential of this "illative sense." Ibid., 310.

15 See Walicki, *Stanisław Brzozowski – drogi myśli*, 290.

16 Examples include: "Lately I haven't read anything besides Newman, but I do read him in the evening and there is a growing closeness between us" (October 13, 1925). And: "I read little, but systematically. […] I'm starting to get Newman better and better." (February 3, 1926) Jerzy Liebert, *Listy do Agnieszki* [Letters to Agnieszka], ed. Stefan Frankiewicz (Warszawa: Biblioteka "Więzi", 2002), 185, 339.

she describes her reading of Brzozowski's Newman essay with Jerzy Liebert in 1924.[17] She writes:

> […] this was a book with the title *A Grammar of Assent*—a collection of writings of Cardinal Newman who converted from Protestantism to Catholicism and later became a cardinal of the Catholic Church. There was a foreword by Stanisław Brzozowski in which he is searching: searching for God, searching for Catholicism. We read that foreword and began to read the book. For me, this was probably the most important moment of my life. I suddenly understood that there is a supernatural world, that besides this world we see there is an invisible, inconceivable but living world, and that in this world there is Christ. And that Christ is something more than a man. Although I could not yet say that he was God, but [realized for myself] that He is someone more than a man. I remember this feeling, for me this was as if a curtain had been pulled back, as if before me there opened a completely other, new world.
>
> And besides that I came to know that there is the Church. I ask you, Sisters, to think about this: I had read so many books, the life of the Lord Jesus and several legends on Christ, but never could I put it all together for myself. I think this was a great grace the hugeness of which I could not embrace afterwards. When it comes to Jerzy Liebert he descended from a Catholic family, but Catholic in a superficial, traditional way; he was baptized, had had the First Holy Communion, went to confession from time to time at school—but all this was not vital at all. […] And suddenly all this awakened in him. Completely, as if it had been asleep…
>
> Thus we simultaneously found ourselves in another world.[18]

Unfortunately, the problem of the singularity—and marginality—of Liebert's letter to Leszczyńska is not solved by Sister Miriam's account; on the contrary. What if it had been written only after she had read the 1927 letter (accessible to her through the editor of Liebert's *Collected Works,* Stefan Frankiewicz, and published in the same year, 1976), and under its "influence"?[19] Regardless of this uncertainty it is useful to compare the two statements. As we see, Sister Miriam chooses even stronger words when describing the Brzozowski experience: "For me, this was probably the most important moment of my life." Thus the factor of

17 For details of their friendship and impossible love see Frankiewicz, *Nie stracić wiary w Watykanie*, 29f.

18 Maria Gołębiowska, "Tak się zaczęło…" [This i show it started] in *Ludzie Lasek*, ed. Tadeusz Mazowiecki (Warszawa: Biblioteka "Więzi", 1987), 499.

19 In a personal letter (November 13, 2014) Stefan Frankiewicz confirmed to me that Sister Maria knew Liebert's letters to Leszczyńska before Frankiewicz published the *Collected Works* in 1976.

being "awakened and compelled" (Blüth) is present here, too. The major difference in contrast to Liebert's letter concerns the supernatural, and particularly the divine nature of Christ. Since we know that the supernatural is what Brzozowski develops the least in his Newman introduction, and that Christ is virtually absent in his *Pamiętnik*, Sister Maria's emphasis on Brzozowski rather than on the former Anglican "Protestant" Newman may be surprising. And even more so if we take into consideration that a "confirming" encounter with the *Pamiętnik* seems to be lacking in *her* experience. However, what unifies the two texts is the central place in them accorded to the Church. Even the awakening of Liebert's conventional Polish Catholicism, according to Sister Maria, is an effect of Brzozowski's insistence on the necessity of a universal Church—very much as in Liebert's own letter.

Liebert's "Christianity by decision" in View of Brzozowski's Hesitation

Thus, one can say that Brzozowski, a thinker who, as Bielik-Robson puts it, carefully avoided Pauline metanoia,[20] became a model for the conversion of those two young intellectuals. One could denote Liebert's and Wajngold's religion with the German term *Entscheidungschristentum*, i.e., a stance of faith no longer rooted in traditions, but in the personal experience of and *decision* for grace. If we call such an emphasis on experience "mystical," one could even apply Karl Rahner's famous dictum to the case of Liebert and Wajngold, "the Christian of the future will be a mystic or he will not be [a Christian] at all."[21] About this Christianity of experience, Liebert wrote to his—religiously less fervent—friend Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, "if one knows what Divine grace in life is, if one receives it daily [i.e., the Eucharist], one starts believing in wonders. Intellect, will, the heart are powerless as long as God does not illuminate them. Believe me, my dear, I experienced this for myself. Things most painful, heavy and horrible begin to settle down."[22] However, *the* paradigmatic text in this matter is Liebert's best known poem, "Jeździec" (The Rider, 1926). It is a confession of an earthly "soldier" who tried to escape from his "heavenly Rider," but then was captured by him irreversibly. I quote the poem in its entirety:

20 Bielik-Robson, "Another conversion," 291.

21 For different references of the sentence in Rahner's works cf. Albert Raffelt and Hansjürgen Verweyen, *Karl Rahner* (München: C. H. Beck, 1997), 124.

22 Letter from March 27, 1926. Liebert, *Pisma zebrane*, vol. 2, 398.

Uciekałem przed Tobą w popłochu,
Chciałem zmylić, oszukać Ciebie –
Lecz co dnia kolana uparte
Zostawiały ślady na niebie.

Dogoniłeś mnie, Jeźdźcze niebieski,
Stratowałeś, stanąłeś na mnie.
Ległem zbity, łaską podcięty,
Jak dym, gdy wicher go nagnie.

Nie mam słów, by spod Ciebie się podnieść,
Coraz cięższa staje się mowa.
Czyżby słowa utracić trzeba,
By jak duszę odzyskać słowa?

Czyli trzeba aż przejść przez siebie,
Twoim słowom siebie zawierzyć –
Jeśli trzeba, to tratuj do dna,
Jestem tylko twoim żołnierzem.

Jedno wiem, i innych objawień
Nie potrzeba oczom i uszom –
Uczyniwszy na wieki wybór,
W każdej chwili wybierać muszę.[23]

I ran away from You, panic-stricken,
I wanted to mislead, to cheat You—
But stubbornly my knees, day after day,
Left traces on the sky.

You caught me, heavenly Rider,
You knocked me down, you trampled on me.
I lay beaten, drunken from grace,
Like smoke, scattered by a tempest.

I have no words to rise from under your feet,
Speaking becomes all the harder.
Does one need to lose one's words,
In order to find them like a soul?

23 Liebert, *Pisma zebrane*, vol. 1, 157.

Or must one first go through oneself,
Entrust oneself to Your words—
If necessary, trample me to the ground,
I am merely your soldier.

One thing I know, and other revelations
My eyes and ears do not need—
Having made forever a choice,
In each moment I must choose.

"Jeździec" connects the all but gentle capture by the "Rider's" grace with the soldier's voluntary *assent* to it—a "choice" (wybór), which turns out to be a commitment to be constantly renewed, in each moment. Thus, on the one hand, grace is frightening and even violent in this allegorical poem; on the other hand, the soldier confesses that besides his *choice* (for grace) he needs no other "revelations" (objawień). A conscious, personal choice as revelation—such a daring connection of a strong devotion and self-confidence is highly typical of John Henry Newman, especially in his *Apologia pro vita sua* (1864).[24] However, it does not seem to have anything in common with Brzozowski's hesitating religiosity. The association by the young critic Jan Kott of Liebert's "Jeździec" with Saint Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus[25] is certainly justified and underlines a clear distance from the author of the *Pamiętnik*. For Brzozowski a Paulinian mortification of the past, as we have seen, would have been a "mistake" to be assiduously avoided. In this sense, Liebert's (and Wajngold's) conversion is anything but an imitation of Brzozowski's; rather one could call it a

24 Cf. for instance the following passage from a letter (1844), which Newman quotes in his *Apologia*: "Certainly, I have always contended that obedience even to an erring conscience was the way to gain light, and that it mattered not where a man began, so that he began on what came to hand, and in faith; and that anything might become a divine method of Truth; that to the pure all things are pure, and have a self-correcting virtue and a power of germinating. And though I have no right at all to assume that this mercy is granted to me, yet the fact that a person in my situation may have it granted to him, seems to me to remove the perplexity which my change of opinion may occasion." John Henry Newman, *Apologia pro vita sua, being a reply to a pamphlet entitled "What, then, does Dr. Newman mean?"* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, and Green, 1864), 333.

25 Jan Kott, "Katolicyzm liryki Lieberta" [Catholicism in Liebert's poetry], *Przegląd Współczesny* 155 (1935): 433.

completion of the philosopher's "possible" Catholicism (Walicki) or "other conversion" to it (Bielik-Robson).[26]

The attractiveness to Liebert of Brzozowski's religious quest, then, would be precisely its obvious incompleteness which leaves space for his *own* decision. This outlook would be in perfect accordance with what Józef Czapski wrote in 1928 about Brzozowski's significance—not only in religious matters—for young intellectuals: "Each of his [Brzozowski's] pages contains precious seeds. Our generation's task is to bring these grains to fruit. We must continue the construction undertaken by Brzozowski."[27] To carry Brzozowski's conversion "to an end" is one way of fulfilling the task Czapski formulates here.

The Word and the Church: Brzozowski's Mediality and Liebert's "Fulfillment"

But is it all as clear as that? Is it not possible that Liebert is, at least partly, closer to Brzozowski than it would seem? In order to answer this question I propose to take a look at some aspects of Liebert's writings through the prism of Brzozowski's introduction to Newman as well as the *Pamiętnik* and, finally, via the Russian religious philosopher Nikolai Berdiaev (for whom Liebert had a remarkable predilection). Let me first return to the very notion of the Church. In a letter to Wajngold from 1925 Liebert points out, "that Catholicism is not just another tiny idea, […] but the idea that *this is life, our most simple life*."[28] The view that the Church is not something abstract but "life itself" is one of the central concerns of Brzozowski's Newman essay. There the philosopher writes: "nie jest on [Kościół] dziełem myśli, rozumu, dogodności: to wszystko – *dzieła życia, a Kościół jest samym życiem, jako tworzeniem wiecznej prawdy i realności*" (the Church is not a matter of thought, reason, convenience: all that is a matter of life and the Church is life in itself, as the creation of eternal truth and reality).[29] Similarly, in *Pamiętnik* he notes: "Newman uważał *Kościół* za *sumę* życia ludzkości, z niego brało źródło wszystko, co jest życiem, wszystko co jest człowiekiem" (Newman considered the *Church* to be the *sum* of the life of humanity,

26 Bielik-Robson, "Another conversion," 291.

27 Józef Czapski, "O towarzystwo im. Stanisława Brzozowskiego" [On the Stanisław Brzozowski Association], *Wiadomości Literackie* 28 (1928): 1.

28 Letter from July 26, 1925. Liebert, *Listy do Agnieszki*, 287 (emphasis mine, Ch. Z.).

29 Stanisław Brzozowski, "John Henry Newman," in John H. Newman, *Przyświadczenia wiary*, ed. Stanisław Brzozowski (Lwów: Księgarnia Polska B. Połonieckiego / Warszawa: E. Wende i Ska, 1915), 23 (emphasis in the orig.).

it is the source of everything that is life, everything that is human).[30] And a few months later, shortly before his death, Brzozowski wrote his famous words: "Katolicyzm jest nieuchronny. Nieuchronnym, w samej idei człowieka zakorzenionym faktem jest kościół. Człowiek jest niezrozumiałą zagadką bez kościoła. Życie ludzkie jest szyderstwem i igraszką, jeżeli kościoła nie ma" (Catholicism is inevitable. The Church is an inevitable fact that is rooted in the very idea of man. Without the Church, man is an unresolvable riddle. Human life is a scoff and a plaything if the Church does not exist).[31] Besides the idea that the Church is the only real key to human life,[32] obviously shared by Liebert, the young poet follows the philosopher in extending this very idea to language and particularly to literature. Brzozowski, lamenting the superficial approach to religion in Polish culture, intends to transform Catholicism, as he puts it, into a "medyum ekspresyi i wypowiedzenia" (medium of expression and utterance).[33] I will come back to this aspect below. Let me first note that, implicitly, a similar concept underlies another famous poem by Liebert, "Kościół wojujący" (The Church Militant, 1925). Here (in stanzas 3 and 4), the Church is addressed as a form-giving power to anything human. Before the interference of the Church not only is the sky "empty" ("puste," second stanza), but also words are unable to clearly distinguish between different realities, and the human heart is distracted:

> Jeszcze słowa niespokojne
> Dzielą ziemi brud od piękna,
> Nam jak miecze się nie skruszą
> I w pacierzu nie uklękną.
>
> Jeszcze serce wykąpane
> W dreszczach słodkich firmamentu,
> Jest jak miasto pod gwiazdami
> Pełne gwaru i zamętu.[34]
>
> Still unquiet words
> Separate the earth's dirt from beauty,

30 Entry of December 31, 1910. Brzozowski, *Pamiętnik*, 71 (emphasis in the orig.).

31 Entry of April 5, 1911, ibid., 190.

32 Brzozowski also writes that outside the Church there are only "facts of description," whereas within it they become "facts of experience." Brzozowski, "John Henry Newman," 20.

33 Ibid., 26.

34 Liebert, *Pisma zebrane*, vol. 2, 212.

Like swords we can't crush them
And in prayer they don't kneel.

Still our heart is immersed
In shivers of the sweet firmament,
It is like a town under starlight
Full of chattering and chaos.

But then the restless chattering falls silent and the heart is transformed. It becomes somehow "ecclesiastical" or at least a kind of image of the Church (in its earthly state as "Ecclesia Militans"):

Lecz już wznosi się wyniosłe
Obnażone i milczące,
I pokorne i żarliwe
Niby kościół wojujący.[35]

But then it rises up sublime
Naked and silent,
And humble and ardent
As if [it were] the Church militant.

Although Liebert implies in his letter to Maria Leszczyńska quoted above that he became acquainted with the *Pamiętnik* only in 1927 (two years after "Kościół wojujący"), one cannot fail to recall here Brzozowski's remark about Newman's writings as a hermeneutical key to poetry: "nie sądzę, aby dostępne dla mnie były ciche, głębokie, oceaniczne i międzygwiezdne regiony poezji. Wszystko to zawdzięczam Newmanowi" (I do not think that the calm, deep, oceanic and interstellar regions of poetry are accessible to me. I owe all this to Newman).[36] Brzozowski speaks also of a "pewne powinowactwo ze spokojem, tak całkowicie jej [duszy] dotąd obce"[37] (a certain kinship with calm hitherto so alien to her [his soul]), that he owes to Newman. In the same entry Brzozowski confesses he believes "in a calm transformation at the bottom of the soul" (w cichą przemianę na dnie duszy).[38] And the entry ends with the words: "Nic nie mogę napisać więcej – już przemaga znużenie i przesłania jasność. Teraz mogłyby już

35 Ibid.

36 Entry of February 12, 1911. Brzozowski, *Pamiętik*, 167.

37 Ibid., 166.

38 Ibid., 169.

tu być *tylko słowa*" (I cannot write more—fatigue is overcoming me and obscured the clarity. Now there could be *only words* here).[39] Is this anxiety about the superficiality of "mere words" not the same as Liebert's anxiety in the face of language reduced to its sound, language *emptied*?

Brzozowski, as we see, hopes to attain a certain "kinship with calm" thanks to Newman—this modern ecclesiastical voice—as a literary/cultural "medium," or "preparing."[40] That is why he presents Newman's thought to the Polish public "jako wytwór jego organizacyi, indywidualności, nie troszcząc się o zasadność lub bezzasadność tych lub innych jego sposobów widzenia, *traktując myśl i duszę jako kwestię stylu*" (as the result of his organization, of his individuality, not caring about the foundation or the groundlessness of his specific ways of seeing things, *treating his thoughts and his soul as matters of style*).[41] Liebert's search for an ecclesiastical grounding of language seems to be quite different from Brzozowski's project of a Newmanian "mediality" and "stylistics." Liebert seeks less a medium for the (poetic) word than its *fulfillment*, and even salvation, by the Spirit. While Brzozowski constantly emphasizes the need for "creating" and "building" (*wytwarzać* and *zbudować*) the truth, which would *be* the Church,[42] Liebert appeals to the Spirit to *bless* his poetic gift by grace. This is the theme of the poem "Veni Sancte Spiritus" (1930). In a letter to his friend Rafał Blüth, Liebert justifies his modern version of the hymn *Veni Creator Spiritus* to some critics (including Blüth himself, who had suspected Liebert of a poetic "heresy"):

> Not in the feeling of his own power, as some *critics* put it mistakenly, but in the feeling of complete lack the poet asks the Holy Spirit to send him a sign and grace, because without those the poet's poetry and he himself will be like an empty cross on which Christ is absent, so that, transferred to the sphere of poetry, it will be sound, form—devoid of life,

39 Ibid. (emphasis mine, Ch. Z.).

40 Cf. Brzozowski, "John Henry Newman," 44: "Newman może stać się przygotowaniem do rozumienia bardzo bliskich nam i tak nadużywanych przez nas dzieł własnej naszej twórczości" (Newman can become a preparation for us to understand the works of our own creation).

41 Ibid., 74 (emphasis mine, Ch. Z.).

42 On the strong link between Brzozowski's "philosophy of labor" and the notion of truth and action in Catholic modernism (Blondel, Loisy) cf. Lewandowski, "Młodopolskie spotkania z modernizmem katolickim," 42–45; and Walicki, *Stanisław Brzozowski – drogi myśli*, 291.

content, a mere conventional symbol, behind which could hide quietism, spiritual consumerism, a mystical, so to say, ruse.[43]

Liebert's self-commentary is actually but a translation of the poem into prose. Here is the first stanza of Liebert's "Veni Sancte Spiritus":

> Nie – iżbym niemoc krył, czuł w sercu lęk,
> Gdy chcę, byś na mnie, gołąb – spadł.
> Lecz byś wypełnił sobą kształt,
> Gdy tu udziałem moim dźwięk.[44]

> It is not to hide weakness, what my heart was anxious about,
> When I ask, dove, that—you descend on me.
> But that you yourself fill shape,
> My part being only sound.

In a very general way, the philosopher Charles Taylor has described the longing for *fullness*—and therefore the overcoming of a feeling of emptiness—as a central concern of religiosity in the "secular age."[45] And I would say that such a longing, in this general way, is shared by Brzozowski and Liebert. However, Liebert's concept of *fulfilling* (wypełnienie)[46] is more specific. It is about breathing life into *religious poetry* within modernity, a task seemingly unrealistic.[47] I

43 Letter of July 20, 1930. Liebert, *Pisma zebrane*, vol. 2, 432f. (emphasis in the orig.).

44 Liebert, *Pisma zebrane*, vol. 1, 213.

45 Cf. Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, Mass./London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 5: "We all see our lives, and/or the space wherein we live our lives, as having a certain moral/spiritual shape. Somewhere, in some activity, or condition, lies a fullness, a richness; that is, in that place (activity or condition), life is fuller, richer, deeper, more worthwhile, more admirable, more what it should be. This is perhaps a place of power: we often experience this as deeply moving, as inspiring. Perhaps this sense of fullness is something we just catch glimpses of from afar off; we have the powerful intuition of what fullness would be, were we to be in that condition, e.g., of peace or wholeness; or able to act on that level, of integrity or generosity or abandonment of self-forgetfulness. But sometimes there will be moments of experienced fullness, of joy and fulfillment, where we feel ourselves there."

46 Liebert, *Pisma zebrane*, vol. 2, 432.

47 For a detailed account of Liebert's place within the tradition of Polish religious poetry and his high ambitions of renewing it see Piotr Nowaczyński, "O miejscu Lieberta w

think that Jan Kott makes an essential point when writing about the "catholicity" of Liebert's poetry, comparing it with religious features in the poems of the members of *Skamander* Julian Tuwim, Kazimierz Wierzyński, and Jan Lechoń (whose inspirations are easily recognizable in Liebert's early poems). Kott writes,

> God [in Tuwim, Wierzyński, Lechoń] is just a symbol, a metaphor not defined by all-embracing love or a metaphysical fear of life.
> Liebert is extraordinary by virtue of his Catholicism, in the sense of a theological accordance with dogmatics and even with Catholic mysticism, by his poetical experience of the inner struggle for the Kingdom of this and not of this world.[48]

In a way, Kott gets Liebert better than the "tracker of subtle heresies"[49] Blüth. The danger of Liebert's poetry, as he himself understands it, is not that it runs the risk of not conforming to the Church's teaching, but that it would remain a conditional symbol and the cross empty, i.e., a poetic religiosity of *clichés*. Whether Liebert had in mind the "metaphorical" God of the *Skamander* poets or his own—quite numerous—religious verses *before* the moment of his conversion is perhaps not so important. What is crucial is the basic model: that already as a high school student he found a poetic *form* and would now, following his conversion, let it be "fulfilled." Hence the poet's prayer to the Holy Spirit to "send him a sign and grace."[50] A similar reconstruction of Liebert's path seems to inform the *Skamandrist* Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz's obituary notice for Liebert in 1931:

> Liebert's version of Christian faith is first of all Catholicism and as such it represents an absolutely particular stance within our highly uncatholic poetry. But this is not the most important point. What is striking is above all the atmosphere of this religiosity, which is

polskiej liryce religijnej" [On Liebert's place in Polish religious poetry], *Znak* 208 (1971).

48 Kott, "Katolicyzm liryki Lieberta," 430.

49 From the above-quoted letter to Blüth: Liebert, *Pisma zebrane*, vol. 2, 432.

50 In his short foreword to Liebert's third collection of poems, *Kołysanka jodłowa* (Pine Forest Lullaby, 1932*)*, Kazimierz Wierzyński writes: "He was *filled* by religiosity like a saint." Liebert, *Pisma zebrane*, vol. 1, 183 (emphasis mine, Ch. Z.). This may be just a conventional formula, however, it goes well with Liebert's fulfillment model of the poem "Veni Sancte Spiritus."

highly individual, but at the same time it reflects currents and aspirations of a specific era and a specific group.[51]

While Brzozowski wanted to turn (Newmanian) Catholicism into a universal cultural "medium," Liebert seeks to transform *himself*, the poet and his poetic mastery, into a living, not "conventional" medium of Catholic content.[52]

But a conversion also involves serious problems. Curiously, it intensifies the awareness of a potential multiplicity of persons within the convert. In a letter to Wajngold from 1925, shortly after both converted, Liebert writes how the "man" in him threatens the "poet": "my heart is longing for universal (i.e., Catholic) poetry as if it were for bread. Lately, I have changed quite a lot, especially in regards to poetry: *the man has overtaken the poet*, and now, when I simply want to write, he is lacking the means. The poet, as it turned out, walked more freely."[53] The attempt to harmonize the different paces of the "man" and the "poet" becomes a salient motive in Liebert's letters. In 1926 he describes how the poet prevents him from drawing near to Christ, "though, I am a poet and I have no intention to deny him. But today I grasp within me that I could not see the Lord Jesus a day earlier, that I am *merely turning around Him, not getting closer even for one step*."[54] Then, a little later, Liebert seems to overcome the

51 Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, "O postawie duchowej Jerzego Lieberta" [On Jerzy Liebert's spiritual stance], *Wiadomości Literackie* 40 (1931): 3. However, by "tendencies of his time and aspirations of a certain group" Iwaszkiewicz may connote less the *Skamandrist*'s poetics than Fr. Władysław Korniłowicz's religious circle "Kółko" (Circle) and the Laski milieu. Iwaszkiewicz is not unambiguous here.

52 Interestingly, Liebert could use here French Cardinal Henri Bremond's (whose writings had also been a connecting item between Newman and Brzozowski) specific, mystically transformed notion of "pure poetry" as described in his *La poésie pure* (1926). See Stefan Frankiewicz, Introduction to *Pisma zebrane*, by Jerzy Liebert, vol. 1, 45, and *Nie stracić wiary w Watykanie*, 27f. It is again Jan Kott who has well seen the possible impact of Bremond's notion—be it on Liebert's poetry itself or its reception: "His [Liebert's] work could be one of the not numerous proofs of Fr. Bremond's beautiful yet hardly verifiable thesis of the unity of the poetic and the mystical experience, of poetry-as-prayer and [the thesis] that 'tout poème doit son caractère proprement poétique à la présence, au rayonnement, à l'action transformante et unifiante d'une réalité mystérieuse que nous appelons: poésie pure'." Kott, "Katolicyzm liryki Lieberta," 435.

53 Letter from July 22, 1925. Liebert, *Listy do Agnieszki*, 282 (emphasis mine, Ch. Z.).

54 Letter from March 12, 1926. Ibid., 374 (emphasis mine, Ch. Z.).

problem of multiplication within the self. He proposes to re-center and unify the human person by an act of will. In a letter to Iwaszkiewicz he writes,

> […] my dear friend, today we are all suffering from the, let's say, "multitude" of selves. From behind every act, from behind every thought there are many Jarosławs or Jureks crawling out, but don't tell me, for I wouldn't believe that anymore, that it is impossible to get a man out of this game of hide and seek. And it is that man whom we have to put in the center.[55]

But once man is "put" back into the center, what happens to the poet and his "steps"? Liebert does not speak about that. But one can assume that once the conversion of the poet has succeeded, the poet is now a part of the man. A month later Liebert specifies this solution in a letter to Wajngold, with recourse to the "step" imagery: "Now I know one thing—the Lord Jesus is going with me. And nobody, no force can change the rhythm of the pace I'm moving to."[56] The extension of the simple metaphor of "walking" to *rhythm*, I would argue, can be read here as an allusion to the rhythm of poetry. If this is so, it shows once again that, for Liebert, unlike for Brzozowski, Catholicism is not the "medium" of poetry. On the contrary, poetry, its rhythm, is to become a proper medium of *Catholicism* within a modernist context.

So far, I have not discussed Liebert's possible indebtedness, as a literary critic, to Brzozowski. However, Liebert's activity as a critic in the second half of the 1920s, mainly for the journal *Wiadomości Literackie* (Literary News), is anything but marginal and should not be underestimated.[57] For the topic of the "converted artist" it is all the more relevant that Liebert often integrates into his reviews reflections that concern himself as a poet. Thus he developed his concept of the *habitus poetycki*, i.e., of the poet's "strict responsibility […] for each written word," in a review of a collection of poems.[58] He probably owes the term

55 Letter from March 27, 1926. Liebert. *Pisma zebrane*, vol. 2, 398.

56 Letter from April 23, 1926. Liebert, *Listy do Agnieszki*, 396.

57 For an overview see Anna M. Szczepan-Wojnarska, *"Z ogniem będziesz się żenił". Doświadczenie transcendencji w życiu i twórczości Jerzego Lieberta* ["You will marry fire." The experience of transcendence in Jerzy Liebert's life and works] (Kraków: Universitas, 2003), 83–93.

58 Liebert, "Zakonspirowany romantyk [Stefan Napierski: *Ziemia wolna*, 1930]" [A conspirative romantic. Stefan Napierski: *Free Land*, 1930]. *Pisma zebrane*, vol. 1, 593. Interestingly, "fullness" (pełnia) is a part of the concept, too: "The poetical *habitus*! It decides if poetry will be a mere reflection of the lightly sketched contours of the idea or the thing; it decides of the acuteness and the *fullness* of visions which, re-

"habitus" to Jacques Maritain's *Art et scolastique* (1920).[59] Moreover, responsibility, in connection with consciousness, had been an essential category of Brzozowski's essay on Newman. It is not surprising, then, that Frankiewicz refers to Brzozowski in order to characterize Liebert's approach to literary criticism.[60] Whether Liebert ever attained the degree of radicality of the great critic of the 1900s could be, of course, questioned. What is clear is that Liebert's proximity to Brzozowski is certainly not typical in a *Skamandrit* context. Jan Lechoń's devastating statement with regard to Brzozowski is well known: "He [Brzozowski] was fantastically blind to what in literature is art, he was to it [literature] a Savonarola and Torquemada; he did not explain it to people, he did not teach it, but converted [nawracał] it to his permanently changing beliefs and heresies."[61] Interestingly enough, Lechoń accuses Brzozowski—who avoided his own conversion—of having *converted* literary texts according to his own needs instead of making them accessible to readers. Regardless of the polemical tone of Lechoń's remark, it reflects very precisely Brzozowski's idea of "medializing" Newman. On the other hand, in quite the opposite way, Liebert, in his criticism (consisting mainly of poetry reviews), tries less to "convert" the volumes he discusses than to *measure* them according to the conversion he has already undergone. As much as faith can only increase "through a certain inner and spir-

gardless of the time and tendencies witness most clearly the poet's force." Ibid. (the first emphasis in the orig., the second is mine—Ch. Z.).

59 Jacques Maritain, *Art et scolastique* (Paris: Desclée De Brouwer, 1965), 66–70, the section "Règles et *habitus*." Cf. Frankiewicz, Introduction, 47f.

60 Citing the following paradigmatic sentence from *Współczesna krytyka literacka w Polsce* [Contemporary literary criticism in Poland]: "Rozumie się i ocenia tylko to, co było etapem naszej własnej pracy" (One understands and appreciates only what has been a stage of one's own work). Frankiewicz, Introduction, 52.

61 Jan Lechoń, "Prawda poety a prawda krytyka" [The truth of the poet and the truth of the critic], *Wiadomości Literackie* 6 (1924): 1. For a quite different view, cf. Anna Iwaszkiewiczowa, Iwaszkiewicz's wife, who joined the Laski milieu together with Jerzy Liebert. When reading Brzozowski's *Legenda Młodej Polski*, she writes in her Notebook on September 1st, 1923: "Reading this pages, full of an almost phantastic enthusiasm, involuntarily I am comparing that all the time with our present psychology and the idea that there are few, very few amidst us, the present Young Poland, people that could fall in Love with something, believe in something, hate something so passionately and despise something in such a way." Anna Iwaszkiewiczowa, *Dzienniki i wspomnienia* [Diaries and memories], ed. Paweł Kądziela (Warszawa: Czytelnik, 2000), 55.

itual power of grace" (Liebert citing Newman in a letter to Wajngold),[62] the poetic word has to be first of all an "external act"[63] (Liebert's expression in a review of Anatol Stern) susceptible of becoming an "inner" one—of being fulfilled. For this reason Michał Sprusiński could speak of an "apostolic approach to art" in Liebert's literary criticism,[64] which he could not have done in the case of Brzozowski, simply because for Brzozowski the potential "conversions" of literature have no fixed end. They do not recognize a unique conversion as a point of reference.

A New "Style" of Christianity? From Brzozowski to Berdiaev and back to Liebert

If Liebert and Brzozowski, in their very closeness, remain always somehow opposed to each other, they seem to share, however, a crucial (anti-)modern topos: the topos of "another" light, an anti-rationalist enlightenment *after* the Enlightenment. Instead of a conclusion, I would like to sketch this ideological/rhetorical aspect and then come back once again to the notion of the Church. The source I would like to use here is the small book *The New Middle Ages* by the Russian émigré religious philosopher Nikolai Berdiaev (1874–1948), containing three essays: "The New Middle Ages," "Thoughts on the Russian Revolution," and "Democracy, Socialism, and Theocracy," published in 1924 in Berlin.[65] Liebert had lived and attended school in Moscow from 1915 to 1918[66] and knew Russian quite well. In 1926 he mentions in several letters to Wajngold that he has undertaken a translation of Berdiaev's "very good book."[67] Although the translation went well, he would never finish it. When referring to the first of Berdiaev's three essays and comparing some passages from it with Brzozowski's

62 Letter of September 16, 1925. Liebert, *Listy do Agnieszki*, 152.

63 Liebert, "Bieg do bieguna [Anatol Stern: *Poezje*, 1927]" [The run to the runner. Anatol Stern: *Poems,* 1927], *Pisma zebrane*, vol. 1, 557.

64 "Asking a lot from himself, he demanded maximalism also from others, a serious, nay, even apostolic attitude towars art." Michał Sprusiński, "Jerzego Lieberta 'siła fatalna'" [Jerzy Liebert's 'fatal force'], *Twórczość* 6 (1977): 109.

65 Nikolai Berdiaev, *Novoe srednevekov'e: Razmyshlenie o sud'be Rossii i Evropy* (Berlin: Obelisk, 1924). An English translation was published nine years later under a different title: Nicholas Berdyaev, *The End of Our Time*, trans. Donald Atwater (London: Sheed & Ward, 1933).

66 Frankiewicz, Introduction, 9f.

67 Cf. the letter from March 15, 1926. Liebert, Listy do Agnieszki, 376.

essay on Newman, my argument remains to a certain extent hypothetical (in assuming Liebert's basic conformity with Berdyaev's thought). However, regarding Berdiaev and Brzozowski it may be recalled that the Russian thinker had been a Marxist in his early years.[68] This fact is relevant when it comes to comparing their respective ideas on labor and their new notions of the Church.

Newman's life and work, according to Brzozowski, gives off a specific "light." A light that not only enlightens but also brings an almost corporeal *warmth*.[69] Berdiaev's imagined upcoming era of a cosmic "dawn"—the "new middle age"—closing the era of "bright" individualism, though it has a completely different face, includes a specific atmospheric "warming" as well. Berdiaev writes:

> All these forms lose the sharpness of their outlines in the twilight of modern history: man's atmosphere is now universal and cosmic, he meets the mystery of life and finds himself facing God. He was chained to individualism by forms which cut him off from other men and from the world at large. Now he moves towards generality, an epoch of universality and collectivity. He no longer believes that he was self-sufficient and could look after himself from the moment that he had rationalist thought, secular morality, Law, Liberalism, Democracy and Parliaments.[70]

The strong aspect of "collectivism" in Berdiaev's rather predictable cultural criticism is very clearly incommensurable with Newman's individualistic approach to universality—and to his self-conscious "brightness."[71] However, as

68 Cf. Frederick C. Copleston, *Philosophy in Russia: From Herzen to Lenin and Berdyaev* (Tunbridge Wells, Kent: Search Press Ltd/University of Notre Dame Press, 1986), 372, 374. One should also mention that Brzozowski was familiar with the volume *Problemy idealizma* (Problems of Idealism, 1902*)*, containing seminal Russian philosophers' critical answers to (their own former) Marxism. Among the essays there was Berdiaev's contribution: "Ėticheskaia problema v svete filosofskogo realizma," in *Problemy idealizma. Sbornik statei*, ed. P. I. Novgorodtsev (Moskva: Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo psikhologicheskogo obshchestva, 1902) (Trans.: "The Ethical Problem in the Light of Philosophical Idealism," in *Problems of Idealism. Essays in Russian Social Philosophy*, trans., ed. and intr. R. A. Poole (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2003). Cf. Walicki, *Stanisław Brzozowski – drogi myśli*, 39.

69 Brzozowski, "John Henry Newman," 39.

70 Nicholas Berdyaev, "The New Middle Ages," in: Nicholas Berdyaev, *The End of Our Time*, 86f.

71 See Newman's famous words he said to his servant when, during a journey in Italy in 1833, he got ill and supposedly was to die soon: "I shall not die, for I have not sinned

Brzozowski writes in *Pamiętnik*, "Newman jest egotystą, ale *nie* jest nigdy sam, nie chce być sam, każde jego zdanie ma korzenie, sięgające głęboko w myśl poprzedzającą go"[72] (Newman is an egotist, but he is never alone, he does not want to be alone, every phrase he writes has its roots that go deep into the thoughts which preceded it). Brzozowski is very careful about pointing out how Newman manages to establish an "organic" contact between his "loneliness" and universalism (i.e., Catholicism). In his introduction Brzozowski writes:

> […] wie on [Newman], jak ustala się związek z powszechnością poprzez samotność indywidualnej duszy, był on po *tamtej* stronie logiki i wyrażającego się w mowie rozumu, wie on, co dzieje się, gdy gaśnie to światło i wie, jak się je roznieca. Zna głębsze źródła światła i nie podaje nam nigdzie samej teoryi, lecz wyłącznie i jedynie wspomnienia i przykład własnej praktyki – daje nam on we wszystkiem, co mówi, pełną i konkretną prawdę rzeczy przeżytych, doskonale i spokojnie poznanych.[73]

> [Newman] knows how to establish a link with commonality through the loneliness of the individual soul; he was beyond the logic that is expressed in the language of reason; he knows what happens when the light goes out and how it is stirred up. He knows the deeper sources of light and never gives us any theory, but rather and exclusively memories and the example of his own practice—in everything that he says he gives us the full and definite truth of lived experience, a truth that was perfectly and calmly perceived.

The "light" of Newman's Christian knowledge, according to Brzozowski, is immune to rationalism inasmuch as he had already experienced its irrational, hidden side and its "deeper roots." In this mixture of a bright and a peculiarly darkened light Brzozowski's Newman is not that far removed from Berdiaev's idea of a new ecclesiastical universality. In Brzozowski's words, "Kościół nie jest instytucyą ludzką, '*establishment*'" ("The Church is not a human institution, not an '*establishment*'."),[74] but a force that would penetrate everything and render culture "cosmic." It is exactly at this point that in Berdiaev's dark neo-medieval vision (not free of sympathies for Italian fascism[75]) a "transforming" light starts to shine. What makes such an unexpected "other" enlightenment possible

against light, I have not sinned against light." Newman, *Apologia pro vita sua*, 99. Brzozowski refers to this passage in his essay (Brzozowski, "John Henry Newman," 52).

72 Entry of January 15, 1911. Brzozowski, *Pamiętnik*, 125 (emphasis in the orig.).

73 Brzozowski, "John Henry Newman," 53 (emphasis in the orig.).

74 Ibid., 22 (emphasis and English in the orig.).

75 Cf. Berdyaev, "The New Middle Ages," 89f.

is the new role of the "religious intelligentsia," as the Russian philosopher puts it. He writes:

> The Church is cosmic by her nature and contains within herself the fullness of Being; she is the universe baptized. This ought to be a living and practical truth instead of just a theoretical and abstract doctrine; and the *Church must pass from the period in which the sanctuary has predominated to a period of transfiguration of the cosmic fullness of life*. Modern religion has become merely a department of culture, with a special place reserved for it—a very small one. It must again become *all*, the force which transfigures and irradiates the whole of life from within; its spiritual energy must be set free to renew the face of the earth.
>
> Christianity has reached a stage in which the intelligentsia will play an increasingly important part […]. The "people" are being led away from faith by atheistic propaganda and by Socialism; but the "intellectuals" are coming back to it. And that is changing the style of Christianity.[76]

Berdiaev doesn't specify this new, elitist, not (yet) popular "style" of Christianity. If it is, quite evidently, not the individual universalism of Newman, is it, then, something like the late Brzozowski's all-integrating concept of Catholicism? Or is it akin to what I have called Jerzy Liebert's "Christianity by decision"? I am not able to answer this question here. But what is surely interesting is that Berdiaev links the new cosmic universality with "labor" and "creativity" (*trud* and *tvorchestvo*)[77] just as Brzozowski does with regard to Catholicism and the cultural activity of *zbudować* and *wytwarzać* ("to build" and "to create").

Berdiaev imagines even a "particular sort of monastic life in the world."[78] Such a secular monastic life is to a certain extent common to Newman, Brzozowski,[79] Berdiaev—and Liebert. The question is whether Liebert's condition following his conversion ("drunken from grace") has much to do with Brzozowski's "to build" and "to create" or Berdiaev's "labor" and "creativity." As I have tried to show in this chapter, his Catholicism is clearly of another kind. I would phrase it as follows: Brzozowski (and possibly Berdiaev) showed Liebert an "energetic" form of the Church. But as a converted poet he would himself *fill* this form.

---

76 Berdyaev, "The New Middle Ages," 108f. (changed; emphasis mine, Ch. Z.).

77 "The principle of work, spiritual and material, will be found at the root of future societies: not, as in Socialism, of work of which the goodness or badness does not matter, but of work considered qualitatively." Berdyaev, "New Middle Ages," 115.

78 Berdyaev, "The New Middle Ages," 116.

79 See Brzozowski, *Legenda Młodej Polski,* 446f.

WORKS CITED

Berdiaev, Nikolai. "Ėticheskaia problema v svete filosofskogo realizma." In *Problemy idealizma. Sbornik statei*, edited by P. I. Novgorodtsev, 91–136. Moskva: Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo psikhologicheskogo obshchestva, 1902.

—. *Novoe srednevekov'e: Razmyshlenie o sud'be Rossii i Evropy*. Berlin: Obelisk, 1924.

— [Berdyaev, Nicholas]. "The New Middle Ages." In *The End of our Time*, translated by Donald Atwater, 69–120. London: Sheed & Ward, 1933.

— [Berdyaev, Nikolai]. "The Ethical Problem in the Light of Philosophical Idealism." In *Problems of Idealism. Essays in Russian Social Philosophy*. Translated, edited and with an introduction by R. A. Poole, 161–197. New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2003.

Bielik-Robson, Agata. "Another conversion. Stanisław Brzozowski's 'diary' as an early instance of the post-secular turn to religion." *Studies in East European Thought* 63 (2011): 279–291.

Blüth, Rafał M. "Stanisław Brzozowski jako wychowawca." In *Pisma literackie*, edited by Piotr Nowaczyński, 317–330. Kraków: Znak, 1984.

Brzozowska, Anna. "Wspomnienie o Stanisławie Brzozowskim." *Twórczość* 216 (1963): 42–51.

Brzozowski, Stanisław. "John Henry Newman." In Newman, John H. *Przyświadczenia wiary*, edited by Stanisław Brzozowski, 1–89. Lwów: Księgarnia Polska B. Połonieckiego/Warszawa: E. Wende i Ska, 1915.

Copleston, Frederick C. *Philosophy in Russia: From Herzen to Lenin and Berdyaev*. Tunbridge Wells, Kent/Notre Dame, Indiana: Search Press Ltd/University of Notre Dame Press, 1986.

Czapski, Józef. "O towarzystwo im. Stanisława Brzozowskiego." *Wiadomości Literackie* 28 (1928): 1.

Frankiewicz, Stefan. Introduction to *Pisma zebrane*, by Jerzy Liebert. Vol. 1, 5–91. Warszawa: Biblioteka "Więzi," 1976.

—. *Nie stracić wiary w Watykanie. Ze Stefanem Frankiewiczem rozmawia Cezary Gawrys*. Warszawa: Biblioteka "Więzi," 2014.

Gołębiowska, Maria. "Tak się zaczęło…" In *Ludzie Lasek*, edited by Tadeusz Mazowiecki, 497–506. Warszawa: Biblioteka "Więzi," 1987.

Iwaszkiewicz, Jarosław. "O postawie duchowej Jerzego Lieberta." *Wiadomości Literackie* 40 (1931): 3.

Iwaszkiewiczowa, Anna. *Dzienniki i wspomnienia*, edited by Paweł Kądziela. Warszawa: Czytelnik, 2000.

Kołakowski, Leszek. "Miejsce filozofowania Stanisława Brzozowskiego." In *Pochwala niekonsekwencji. Pisma rozproszone z lat 1955–1968*, 160–175. London: Puls Publications, 1989.

Kott, Jan. "Katolicyzm liryki Lieberta." *Przegląd Współczesny* 155 (1935): 429–435.

Lechoń, Jan. "Prawda poety a prawda krytyka." *Wiadomości Literackie* 6 (1924): 1.

Lewandowski, Tomasz. "Młodopolskie spotkania z modernizmem katolickim." In *Spotkania młodopolskie*, 9–62. Poznań: Wydawnictwo "Poznańskie Studia Polonistyczne", 2005.

Liebert, Jerzy. *Pisma zebrane*, edited by Stefan Frankiewicz. 2 volumes. Warszawa: Biblioteka "Więzi", 1976.

—. *Listy do Agnieszki*, edited by Stefan Frankiewicz. Warszawa: Biblioteka "Więzi", 2002.

Maritain, Jacques. *Art et scholastique*. Paris: Desclée De Brouwer, 1965.

Newman, John H. *Apologia pro vita sua, being a reply to a pamphlet entitled "What, then, does Dr. Newman mean?"*. London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, and Green, 1864.

Nowaczyński, Piotr. "O miejscu Lieberta w polskiej liryce religijnej." *Znak* 208 (1971): 1298–1330.

Raffelt, Albert, and Hansjürgen Verweyen. *Karl Rahner*. München: C. H. Beck, 1997.

Sprusiński, Michał. "Jerzego Lieberta 'siła fatalna'." *Twórczość* 6 (1977): 106–111.

Stępień, Marian. *Spór o spuściznę po Stanisławie Brzozowskim w latach 1918–1939*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1976.

Szczepan-Wojnarska, Anna M. *"Z ogniem będziesz się żenił". Doświadczenie transcendencji w życiu i twórczości Jerzego Lieberta*. Kraków: Universitas, 2003.

Taylor, Charles. *A Secular Age*. Cambridge, Mass./London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007.

Urbanowski, Maciej. "Droga do Rzymu: Newman Stanisława Brzozowskiego." In *Konstelacje Stanisława Brzozowskiego*, edited by Urszula Kowalczuk et al., 364–376. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2012.

Walicki, Andrzej. *Stanisław Brzozowski – drogi myśli*. Kraków: Universitas, 2011.

Wierzyński, Kazimierz. Introduction to *Kołysanka jodłowa*, by Jerzy Liebert, 183–184. In Vol. 1 of *Pisma zebrane*, edited by Stefan Frankiewicz. Warszawa: Biblioteka "Więzi", 1976.

Stanisław Brzozowski as Harbinger and Enabler of Modern Literary Theory in Poland and the West

Michał Mrugalski

Since the 1970s, a great deal of effort has been invested into making Stanisław Brzozowski a key figure in Polish "continental" philosophy, on a par with his analytical contemporaries from the Lvov-Warsaw School.[1] This reassessment of the philosopher's output entailed that Brzozowski, having ceased to be merely a speculative literary critic, gifted public speaker, and ideologist without a party, became a thinker in his own right and a patron saint[2] of contemporary Polish left-wing intellectuals. After the rise and fall of the Soviet Union—which, though not directly Karl Marx's fault, did, nevertheless, shake faith in his infallibility—Brzozowski's unfaithfulness to Marx, whom he abandoned after a four to

1 Andrzej Walicki, *Stanisław Brzozowski and the Polish Beginnings of 'Western Marxism'* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989); Andrzej Mencwel, *Stanisław Brzozowski. Kształtowanie myśli krytycznej* [Stanisław Brzozowski. The formation of critical thought] (Warszawa: Czytelnik 1976); Andrzej Mencwel, *Stanisław Brzozowski. Postawa krytyczna. Wiek XX* [Stanisław Brzozowski. The critical attitude. The twentieth century] (Warszawa: Krytyka Polityczna, 2014).

2 Czesław Miłosz, *Człowiek wśród skorpionów. Studium o Stanisławie Brzozowskim* [A man among scorpions: A study on Stanislaw Brzozowski] (Warszawa: Krytyka Polityczna, 2011), 212: "[…] prosty księżyna, wychodząc z pokoju, gdzie odbywała się spowiedź, był czemuś wzruszony, miał łzy w oczach i podobno powiedział do obecnych: Módlcie się, tu umiera święty" (the simple priest, when leaving the room where the confession took place, was somehow touched, had tears in his eyes and allegedly said to those present: "Pray, there is a saint dying here").

five year period of fascination,[3] stopped hindering the acknowledgement of his social and literary theory. His stylistic mannerisms also have become so alien to us that we no longer feel embarrassed for the author. Brzozowski's dissidence and, alas!, susceptibility to ridicule have made it difficult to assess his impact on the Polish humanities.

The measure of a philosopher in the eyes of the leftist intelligentsia ceased to be how far she goes along with the current interpretation of Marx. In pre-war Poland the Left either rejected Brzozowski altogether (Andrzej Stawar, Jerzy Borejsza, Ignacy Fik),[4] or, as in the case of young Wiktor Erlich, redeemed veneration for Brzozowski's literary criticism with condemnation of his unorthodox philosophy of culture.[5] While the liberal weekly magazine *Wiadomości Literackie* (Literary News) paid lip service to Brzozowski as a stand-in for democratic and modern Poland,[6] without embracing his or any other specific critical program, Brzozowski became the main source of inspiration for personalist-oriented critics such as Stanisław Adamczewski, Stefan Kołaczkowski, Kazimierz Wyka, Ludwik Fryde, and Józef Spytkowski.[7] With time, the personalist kind of literary criticism wore out, giving way to a less existentially engaged critical discourse shaped to a decisive degree by modern, text-and-structure-oriented professional literary theory. But this does not in the slightest mean that Brzozowski's legacy disappeared from literary criticism in the broad sense of the word, including also university-based literary studies, leaving him as the object of study exclusively by philosophers who came eventually to appreciate his intellectual self-government or, if you like, inconsequence. Brzozowski was and is still present in literary criticism, albeit mostly anonymously for reasons of a chiefly political nature (as well as those having to do with fashion and style).

---

3 Andrzej Walicki, *Stanisław Brzozowski – drogi myśli* [Stanisław Brzozowski—paths of thought] (Kraków: Universitas, 2011), 142–151.

4 Ignacy Fik, *Rodowód społeczny literatury polskiej I* [The social genesis of Polish literature I] (Kraków: Czytelnik, 1938), 133–135; Marian Stępień, *Spór o spuściznę po Stanisławie Brzozowskim w latach 1918–1939* [The controversy about St. Brzozowski's legacy in the years 1918–1939] (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie 1979), 17–36.

5 Wiktor Erlich, "Stanisław Brzozowski," *Myśl Socjalistyczna* 11 (1937): quoted after http://lewicowo.pl/stanislaw-brzozowski/; Wiktor Erlich, "Brzozowski a socjalizm" [Brzozowski and socialism], *Sygnały* 65 (1939).

6 Małgorzata Szpakowska, *"Wiadomości Literackie" prawie dla wszystkich* ["Literary news": almost for everyone] (Warszawa: WAB, 2012), 262–265.

7 Stępień, *Spór o spuściznę po Stanisławie Brzozowskim*, 110–172.

The thesis, which I propose to discuss below, is that Brzozowski had prepared the ground for Polish literary studies in such a way that students of literature in the interwar period were able to adapt Russian Formalism and Czechoslovak Structuralism with less effort and more resourcefully. Moreover, owing to the ease and ingenuity of the reception, due in large measure to their knowledge of Brzozowski's output, the Polish Formalist-Structural School contributed importantly to modern literary theory, first and foremost by becoming a vital part of so-called Slavic Formalism which emerged in the 1930s. Thanks to Slavic Formalism vital elements of Brzozowski's literary criticism and philosophy entered into the global discourse of the postwar Humanities of which the center was the literary theoretical discourse (such that that the Humanities then and now are often called just "theory").

Brzozowski and Formalism: Marx *avec* Avenarius

The extent to which Brzozowski enabled the new discourse demands careful reconstruction as his influence was systematically downplayed. He was regarded neither as a reliable Marxist, nor as someone who could be confined to the 'prison-house of language' (as Formalism is still regarded by those who have little idea of its historical nature). This is why it is hard to believe that he could have exerted any influence whatsoever on the works of the Polish representatives of the formal movement in 1930s who were mostly Communists (Dawid Hopensztand was a member of the Polish Communist Party as of 1933, Stefan Żółkiewski joined the party during the war; Wiktor Weintraub relates how Franciszek Siedlecki defended the Moscow show trials while on a scholarship in Paris).[8] Stanisław Brzozowski, a "Nationalist" and "Catholic," was no hero during the time of the impending clash of totalitarian regimes. And yet, I argue that Brzozowski played a prominent role not only in the emergence of modern literary theory in Poland in the 1930s, but also, due to the significance of Polish scholars (notably Manfred Kridl and, to a much greater degree, Wiktor/Victor Erlich) in the transfer of Eastern and Central European theory to the West.

That the importance of Brzozowski for the evolution of modern literary theory remains largely unknown by contemporary students of intellectual history is a circumstance explained by a fatal misunderstanding. An instance of that is also to be found in the first monograph of the Polish Formalist School. In Andrzej

8 Wiktor Weintraub, "A Political Gloss to the History of the Polish Formalist Movement," in *Russian Formalism: A Retrospective Glance. A Festschrift in Honor of Victor Erlich*, ed. by Robert Louis Jackson, Stephen Rudy (New Haven: Yale Center for International and Area Studies, 1985), 7.

Karcz's otherwise seminal work, Brzozowski is depicted not even as a literary critic, but as a "social thinker" focused on "the issues of ethics, patriotism, rebuilding the nation and various other social problems." His postulates "often, if not always, recalled the methods of positivist literary criticism."[9] Contrast this with Kazimierz Wyka's crackdown, as early as 1933,[10] on the persistent legend according to which Brzozowski was indifferent to aesthetic qualities of the literary work! Victor Erlich felt obliged, by the way, to dismiss a corresponding rumor on the part of Russian critics.[11]

Even if one disregards this legend, the question remains: How can Brzozowski, the 'social thinker', be regarded as an enabler of the Formalist-Structural approach, even if its champions stood up for social justice? The solution of the riddle lies perhaps in Wacław Borowy's claim from the late 1930s, which at first seems to speak against my thesis.[12] Borowy spoke for a considerable number of students of literature of his time when he claimed that the Russian Formalists had invented hardly any new tools or methods of literary studies; the elements of theory had been worked out earlier, mostly in German-speaking academia (Russian contemporaries of Borowy, Viktor Zhirmunskii, or Rozaliia Shor were equally decisive in declaring the dependence of Russian Formalism on German invention as was Manfred Kridl).[13] What the Russians did invent, Borowy

9 Andrzej Karcz, *The Polish Formalist School and Russian Formalism* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2002), 37.

10 Kazimierz Wyka, "Brzozowskiego krytyka krytyki" [Brzozowski's critique of criticism], in "*Kartografowie dziwnych podróży": wypisy z polskiej krytyki literackiej XX wieku*, ed. Marta Wyka (Kraków: Universitas 2004), 47: "Nie spodziewał się, że sam stanie się materiałem legend jeszcze liczniejszych niż Młoda Polska. Jedną z nich, najdokuczliwszą, jest legenda o niewrażliwości estetycznej Brzozowskiego jako krytyka. Legenda, że nie miał on zupełnie zrozumienia dla sztuki samej w sobie, że istniała ona dlań tylko jako materiał do naświetleń społecznych bądź filozoficznych" (He did not expect to become the object of yet even more legends than "Young Poland." One of these legends, the most annoying one, is about Brzozowski lacking aesthetic sensitivity in his critical writings. A legend saying that he did not understand art at all, that it existed for him only as a material for social or philosophical insights).

11 Victor Erlich, *Russian Formalism: History—Doctrine* (Hague: Mouton, 1965), 19f.

12 Wacław Borowy, "Szkoła krytyków" [The school of critics], in *Studia i szkice literackie*, ed. Zofia Stefanowska and Andrzej Paluchowski (Warszawa, PIW, 1983).

13 Viktor Zhirmunskii, "Vokrug 'Poėtiki' OPOIaZa " [Around the "Poėtika" collections of OPOIaZ], *Zhizn' iskusstva* 12 (1919). http://www.opojaz.ru/zhirmunsky/vokrug.html; Viktor Zhirmunskii, "K voprosu o formal'nom metode" [On the question of the formal method], in Oskar Walzel, *Problema formy v poėzii* [The problem of form in po-

claims, was, first, a specific arrangement of those methods; second, the Formalists adopted a completely new attitude to literary studies that marked the direction and specific style of their investigations. In their works they prescind from evaluating literary phenomena according to extra-literary factors and attempt to create value-free literary studies. This was truly a revolution, especially in Slavic countries where literature had been more often than not entangled in issues of social life by virtue of being a compensation for various deficits.[14] It was also a seemingly deadly blow to a critic like the Fichtean Brzozowski who, having devoured the Russian *raznochintsy* and *narodniki*, made "morals" or "morality" the pillar and club of literary criticism. Nevertheless, in his writings there were a great number of elements of importance for modern scholars less openly but perhaps equally engaged in answering the social questions.

Brzozowski was in no way the one who could instill such a value-free attitude into the Polish Formalists. Yet his role in the emergence of modern Polish literary theory cannot be reduced to that of a purveyor of tools as in the case of the international (mostly German and Polish) forerunners of Russian Formalism. Not only are there intersections between the sets of properties associated with Brzozowski's and Formalist-Structuralism's poetics, but equally Brzozowski's aesthetics, first and foremost his attempt to constitute a theory of the novel, promises a solution to the pivotal problem of the Polish Formalist movement, which was both politically engaged and focused on detecting the literariness of literary works. The Polish formalists adopted namely Brzozowski's ideal of welding social interest and *aesthesis* as well as his program for carrying out the task by merging "Marx's theory of the development of humanity" with Richard Avenarius's "descriptive and formal" method of Empirio-criticism "that was

---

etry] (Leningrad: Academia, 1923), http://www.opojaz.ru/walzel/preface.html; Rozaliia Shor, "'Formal'nyi metod' na zapade. Shkola Zeiferta i 'ritoricheskoe' napravlenie" [The formal method in the West], *Ars Poetica* 1 (1927), 127–143, http://www.sdvigpress.org/pub-100150; Manfred Kridl, "Poetyka Żirmunskiego" [Zhirmunskii's Poetics], *Wiadomości Literackie* 19 (546) 1934: 4.

14 Chernyshevskii relates the all-encompassing character of literature in Russia (of which the Kingdom of Poland was a part) to the backwardness of the Russian economy and the ensuing lack of the division of labor: Whereas a British writer can write fiction and only fiction, leaving politics and, say, sport to specialists in their respective fields, a Slavic novelist has to be a philosopher, an activist, etc. See Nikolai Chernyshevskii, "Ocherki gogolevskogo perioda russkoi literatury" [Sketches on the Gogolian period in Russian literature], in vol. 3 of *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (Moskva: Goslitizdat, 1947), 303–306.

developed in such a monumental way with regard to forms of cognition."[15] I will argue that Brzozowski's "regulative idea" (regulatyw)[16] of fusing Avenarius and Marx was in harmony with the assumed goal of interwar Formalist-Structuralist research. It is one of many paradoxes involving Brzozowski: the same features of Brzozowski's philosophy that caused the Polish Formalists to leave unsaid the impulses they shared with or had obtained from him, made him indispensable to fulfill their ambitions to combine Marxism with an advanced aesthetic analysis. It is as if Brzozowski, by exceeding both Marxism and Formalism, had been all too successful in specifying the task for modern literary critics for which reason he had to be officially ignored by the Marxists and Formalists alike.

The Morality of the Estrangement Device

Brzozowski formulated the concepts that are most akin to Formalist premises in his 1905 study on Żeromski,[17] who was committed, remarkably, to questions of morality and mores. Even had they been suppressed, with such forerunners as Brzozowski and Żeromski, value-free Formalism could not be *that* cynical, and seemed bound to look for ways of combining aesthetics with critical social philosophy. The preoccupation with moral and social issues was passed on by Polish intermediaries to the West as an intrinsic quality of the Formalist-Structural school or at least as a signpost pointing in the direction in which post-Formalist literary theory should develop. But the signpost pointed as well to the past. The Brzozowski-Żeromski complex of Slavic Formalism brings to light certain moral qualities characteristic of Russian Formalism—even in its earliest, militant and nihilist, phase. When Shklovskii introduced his famous technique of "estrangement" (defamiliarization), he used as an example Lev Tolstoy's description of whipping as corporal punishment. Shklovskii comments on his own example: "Please excuse my somewhat ponderous example, but it is typical of how Tolstoy appeals to conscience. A plain whipping was estranged both by description and a proposal to change its form without changing its substance."[18] The point of resorting to the device of estrangement is, then, to appeal to conscience in a way analogous to Żeromski's recourse to all possible poetical devices in order to tear open the Polish wound so that it would not be scarred by a

15 Brzozowski, *Współczesna powieść i krytyka*, 64.

16 Ibid.

17 Stanisław Brzozowski, *O Stefanie Żeromskim. Studyum* [On Stefan Żeromski: a study] (Warszawa: Centnerszwer i Ska, 1905).

18 Viktor Shklovskii, "Iskusstvo kak priem" [Art as device], in *O teorii prozy* (Moscow: Federatsiia, 1929), 14.

layer of baseness.[19] Consent to evil stems from becoming accustomed to evil, which therefore has to be estranged. Equating evil and routine found expression already in the most influential work in Polish literary history—Adam Mickiewicz's *Dziady III* (Forefathers' Eve III)—which begins with the hero's gnostic[20] grieving over the slumber of indifference veiling humanity—"nie dziwi słońca dziwna, lecz codzienna głowa"[21]—and ends with a comparison: those among my Russian friends who object to my message of freedom resemble a dog so used to his collar that he bites the hand trying to set it free.[22] Brzozowski's fascination with Polish romanticism[23] must have made him very sensitive to the sinister power of habit. Pitting poetry against habit, which overpowers the liveliness of life, was of course also a legacy of German and British romanticism. This romantic tradition—claim Omry Ronen and Ilona Svetlikova in unison—had a direct impact on Russian formalism in general and the concept of estrangement in particular. For example, in some of his formulations Shklovskii repeated entire phrases from Shelley's "A Defence of Poetry," which had been translated by Konstantin Bal'mont in 1911.[24]

In his 1905 booklet *O Stefanie Żeromskim. Studyum* (*On Stefan Żeromski: A Study*) Brzozowski eloquently defended the principle of estrangement or defamiliarisation as central to moral and aesthetic experience(s): "His mystery is

19 Stefan Żeromski, *Sułkowski. Tragedia* [Sułkowski: a tragedy] (Kraków: Książka), 145.

20 Stanisław Pieróg, "Mistyka i gnoza w myśli filozoficznej polskiego romantyzmu (Mickiewicz, Trentowski i Libelt)" [Mysticism and gnosticism in the philosophy of Polish romanticism (Mickiewicz, Trentowski, and Libelt)]. https://www.filozofiapolska.pl/spory/files/mistyka-i-gnoza.pdf

21 Adam Mickiewicz, vol. 3 of *Dzieła* [Works], ed. Julian Krzyżanowski et al. (Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1955), 129: "No one is struck by the sun's strange, and yet daily head."

22 Mickiewicz, *Dzieła*, 308. Maria Janion claims that the recurring Polish uprisings (1830 and 1863 against Russia, 1846/48 against Prussia and Austria) aimed principally to wake the nation from its habituation to bondage. This aim was more important than victory, in which the leaders nevertheless believed. Maria Janion, "Vorwort" [Foreword], in *Polnische Romantik – Ein literarisches Lesebuch*, ed. Hans Peter Hoelscher-Obermaier (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2000), 10.

23 Stanisław Brzozowski, "Filozofia romantyzmu polskiego" [The philosophy of Polish romanticism], *Kultura i życie*; Brzozowski, *Głosy wśród nocy*.

24 Omri Ronen, *Serebrianyi vek kak umysel i vymysel* [The fallacy of the Silver Age] (Moskva: OGI, 2000), 127f. Ilona Svetlikova, *Istoki russkogo formalizma. Traditsii psikhologizma i formal'naia shkola* [The origins of Russian formalism: the traditions of psychologism and the formal school] (Moskva: NLO, 2005), 75–77, 81f.

mysteriousness itself"—Brzozowski writes of Żeromski.[25] This mysteriousness of Żeromski's person and world is a function of form, because form means—according to the study on the contemporary Polish novel published a year later—finding a right perspective on the experience of the world:

Świat ten [świat Zeromskiego] wydaje się nam głęboko znany, ale jakąś dziwną, niedostępną świadomości i odmienną od niej wiedzą [...] gdy dostrzegamy jakąś dobrze nam znaną rzecz, drzewo, krajobraz ze strony całkowicie nam obcej, i gdy nagle zdajemy sobie sprawę, żeśmy rzeczy tej nigdy nie widzieli, że oto teraz dopiero ujawniła się nam jej treść istotna, którą pełni nienasytnego zdumienia chłoniemy jak gdyby innym, niecodziennym, głębszym, przenikliwszym wzrokiem.[26]

This world [i.e., Żeromski's] seems to us to be profoundly familiar, but familiar to some strange, inaccessible consciousness and to a knowledge distinct from this consciousness […]. It is as if we notice a thing familiar to us—a tree, a landscape—from a perspective completely alien to us and realize that we have never seen the thing before, that only just now its essential content has been revealed to us, a content which we, full of insatiable amazement, absorb with a somewhat different, out of ordinary, keen sight.

Much like Shklovskii quoting Tolstoy, who could not remember whether or not he had mindlessly dusted a sofa and in whose morality Shklovskii was more interested than the history of ideas has been willing to admit, Brzozowski claims eleven years earlier than Shklovskii that defamiliarization is the only adequate moral and artistic reaction to the life we live in forgetfulness and mechanically.

Brzozowski's description of estrangement may be perceived as an attempt to fuse the social dimension, so dear to him and his hero Żeromski, with Avenarius's philosophy of experience. Shklovskii's principle of estrangement is apparently dependent on Avenarius's philosophy in that it simply inverts the Empiriocriticist or, more generally, post-Kantian,[27] basic principle of austere economy in

25 Brzozowski, *O Stefanie Żeromskim*, 8: "… zagadką jego jest właśnie zagadkowość sama." Cf. 29.

26 Brzozowski, *O Stefanie Żeromskim*, 9.

27 This was at least the way in which the Kantian aesthetical legacy was perceived at the time when Brzozowski's ideas emerged: Cf. Witold Barewicz, "[Recenzja:] Les Problemes de l'Esthétique Contemporaine par M. Guyau. – Paris: F. Alcan, 1904" *Pamiętnik Literacki* 4 (1905): 110: "Dlatego zapatrywania ewolucjonistów, jak H. Spencera, Grant Allena i Groosa, którzy wznowili teoryę Kanta i Schillera, że sztuka niczym innym jest jak igraszką niezajętej energii wyższych władz umysłowych człowieka, musiały w nim [Guyau] wywołać pewnego rodzaju oburzenie" (This is why

aesthetics. Whereas in Avenarius's theory of apperception pleasure stems from economizing energy and displeasure from an experience of something new, strange, unusual,[28] which forces the apparatus to exceptional activity, Shklovskii makes aesthetic appreciation proportional to the time needed to acquaint oneself with the estranged object, so that the quality of being new acquires the value of pleasure-giving. Whereas in Avenarius's habit, *Gewohnheit*, steers everything—the choice of the object, the construction of its 'idea', acts of will, movements[29]—Shklovskii, following the Romantics, sets art against its worst enemy, habit. In retrospect, the passages from Avenarius's *Philosophie als Denken der Welt gemäss dem Princip des kleinsten Kraftmasses. Prolegomena zu einer Kritik der reinen Erfahrung* (1876, Philosophy as Thinking of the World According to the Principle of the Smallest Expenditure of Effort: Prolegomena to a Critique of Pure Experience) appear to defy the Formalist-Futurist theory of art based on the principle of estrangement:

Ich glaube kaum, dass Jemand die Vorstellung "Ungewohntes" denkt, ohne einen wenn auch noch so leisen Anklang von Unlust in sich zu fühlen; jedenfalls fühlte er diese Unlust, wenn er Ungewohntes wirklich denken soll. Einfach, weil Ungewohntes denken ein ungewohntes Denken, d. h. ein das Gewohnheitsmass überschreitendes Denken ist. Eine jede Vorstellung, welche nicht in dem System unserer bereits erworbenen, unter sich fest verbundenen Vorstellungen enthalten ist […] lässt uns deutlich die Scheu oder Abneigung der Seele vor dem Ungewohnten empfinden, vor dem Zwang, neben dem Alten ein Neues zu denken. Ein solches Denken, eine solche Vorstellung ist uns "unbequem" und wir reagieren darauf mit Unlust.[30]

I do not believe that anyone is capable of thinking of the idea of "unusual" without feeling the slightest touch of reluctance; as a matter of fact, he would feel this reluctance if he would actually think the uncommon. This is simply because thinking the uncommon is uncommon thinking, i.e., thinking that exceeds the limits of the usual. Every representation, which is not yet a part of our already acquired representations […] lets us clearly feel our soul's awe or dislike with reference to the uncommon, with reference to the constraint

the approach of the evolutionists—like H. Spencer, Grant Allen, and Groos, who revived Kant's and Schiller's theory that art is but a play of free energy pertaining to the higher mental faculties of man—must have incensed Guyau to a degree).

28 Richard Avenarius, *Philosophie als Denken der Welt gemäss dem Princip des kleinsten Kraftmasses. Prolegomena zu einer Kritik der reinen Erfahrung* (Leipzig: Fues, 1876), § 7.

29 Avenarius, *Philosophie als Denken*, § 714.

30 Ibid., § 18, 8f.

to think something new apart from the old. This kind of thinking, this kind of representation, is disagreeable to us and we react to it with reluctance.

Empirio-criticism, as the latest vogue of Positivism that presented itself as an heir to Kantianism ("Kritik der reinen Erfahrung..."), was the proper other (one of the most proper others, taking into consideration the complexity of the intellectual field at the time), against which Formalism could define its stance—not only with regard to defamiliarization but also literary history. By literary history I mean both the autonomous development of literary devices as well as its interplay with the institutional framework. On the basis of Aleksandr Bogdanov's philosophy of "living experience" (живой опыт), which combined Avenarius's pure experience with an anti-determinist understanding of Marxism,[31] a version of literary history could have been developed that would have been strikingly similar to the concept of literary criticism Brzozowski upheld at the time he was a Marxian philosopher of life and experience and wrote his books on Żeromski, the Polish novel, and literary criticism in Poland.

Brzozowski's Ideas between East and West

It is an already established opinion that the social and in particular historical approach to literature was at the center of Russian Formalism, which, even before Shklovskii undertook what Jakobson called "defeatist attempts at a compromise with vulgar sociologism,"[32] produced such classical studies as Tynianov's "Literary Fact," "Literary Evolution," "Archaists and Innovators," Tynianov's and Jakobson's "Problems of the Study of Literature and Language," Ėikhenbaum's "Literature and Literary Environment," "My Diary," and Shklovskii's

31 Aleksandr Bogdanov, *Filosofiia zhivogo opyta. Populiarnye ocherki. Materializm, ėmpiriokrititsizm, dialekticheskii materializm, ėmpiriomonizm, nauka budushchego* [The Philosophy of living experience. Popular sketches. Materialism, empirio-criticism, the science of future] (Sankt-Peterburg: Pechatnyi trud, 1912).

32 Quoted in: Aleksandr Galushkin, "I tak, stavshi na kostiakh, budem trubit' sbor… K istorii nesostoiavshegosia vozrozhdeniia Opoiaza v 1928–1930 gg." [Stepping on bones, we will call the roll… On the history of the failed revival of Opoiaz in 1928–1930], *NLO* 44 (2000), http://magazines.russ.ru/nlo/2000/44/galush.html; Jakobson refers to Shkovskii's works *Material i stil' v romane L'va Tolstogo "Voina i mir"* [Material and style in Lev Tolstoy's novel "War and Peace"], *Matvei Komarov, zhitel' goroda Moskvy* [Matvei Komarov, inhabitant of Moscow].

"In Defense of the Sociological Method."[33] Many Formalists got involved politically, Shklovskii and Brik being central figures of "Levyi Front Iskusstv" (Left Front of the Arts) where they met the leading critics who adhered to Aleksandr Bogdanov's "Proletkul't" that was rooted in the idea of fusing Marxism with Empiro-criticism. On the other hand, Jakobson and Nikolai Trubetzkoy enthused over the Eurasian Ideology, which was also a kind of political commitment.[34]

In Russia, the founder of "Proletkul't," Aleksandr Bogdanov and his fellow traveler Anatolii Lunacharskii, the first Soviet People's Commissar of Education, campaigned for combining Marxism with Empirio-criticism. (While reading Lunacharskii's 1924 pamphlet on Formalism in which he criticized Formalism's sterile analyses in the name of emotional intensity charging them with the bourgeois mentality of a spectator,[35] one can imagine how Brzozowski's protest against the one-sidedness of early Formalism would have looked, had he been alive at the time of the Formalist surge. It was usual for Brzozowski to lay the charge of the spectator mentality.)[36] Andrzej Walicki has described in detail Bogdanov's and Lunacharskii's personal acquaintance and intellectual ex-

33 English titles after William Mills Todd, III, "Literature as an Institution. Fragments of a Formalist Theory," in *Russian Formalism: A Retrospective Glance*, 16. Cf. also Liah Greenfeld, "Russian Formalist Sociology of Literature: A Sociologist's Perspective," *Slavic Review* 46 (1987).

34 Nikolaj Trubetzkoy, *Russland, Europa, Eurasien. Ausgewählte Schriften zur Kulturwissenschaft* [Russia, Europe, Eurasia: selected writings on cultural studies], ed. Heinz Miklas (Wien: ÖAW, 2005), Roman Jakobson, *Formalistická škola a dnešní literární věda ruská* [The Formal School and contemporary Russian literary criticism], ed. Tomáš Glanc (Brno: Academia, 2005), 122f. and passim; Tomáš Glanc, "Structuralism Forever / Jakobson 1935," in *Prague Structuralism. Methodological Fundaments*, ed. Marek Nekula (Heidelberg: Winter, 2003). Roman Jakobson and Petr Savitskii, *Evraziia v svete iazykoznaniia* [Eurasia in the light of linguistics] (Praha: Izdanie Evraziitsev, 1931).

35 I am using a German translation of "Formalizm v nauke o iskusstve" (Formalism in art criticism): Anatolii Lunačarskij, "Der Formalismus in der Kunstwissenschaft" [Formalism in art history], in *Marxismus und Formalismus*. *Dokumente einer literaturtheoretischen Kontroverse*, ed. Hans Günther and Karla Hielscher (München: Hanser, 1973).

36 Cf. Michał Mrugalski, "Vers une stylistique de l'acte. La querelle de Karol Irzykowski et Stanisław Brzozowski à propos du *Trésor* de Leopold Staff dans le contexte des philosophies polonaise et allemande," trans. Katia Vandenborre, *Slavistica Bruxellensia* 11 (2015). http://slavica.revues.org/1715

changes with Stanisław Brzozowski, whom they met in Florence.[37] Contrary to Lenin, who argued in his famous book that materialism and Empirio-criticism are incompatible, a consideration of the role of Empirio-criticism for the Formalist aesthesis demonstrates not the incompatibility of Marxism and Empirio-criticism, but of Formalism and Phenomenology. Roman Jakobson hoped to merge the two mismatched traditions in what was later called "phenomenological Structuralism."[38] In his last letter to Jakobson, written in 1941, the Polish Formalist-Structuralist Franciszek Siedlecki, terminally ill and stranded in occupied Warsaw, warns Jakobson against Phenomenology and envisions a salvation of the OPOIAZ legacy by means of establishing a new union of "materialism" and "Empirio-criticism."[39] Uniting Marxism and Empirio-criticism, i.e., Materialism with a positivist, anti-metaphysical philosophy of experience, was exactly the program Brzozowski laid down in 1906 to study the succession of artistic forms without falling into the soulless "mechanicism" characteristic of Ferdinand Brunetière's notion of literary evolution.

Siedlecki's message did not reach Western academia, as his letter was published only in Polish in 1966. But two Polish literary critics managed to escape Poland and settle in the USA, Manfred Kridl and Victor Erlich. Although the age difference between them was thirty-two years, they were both under the compar-

37 Andrzej Walicki, "Stanisław Brzozowski i rosyjscy 'neomarkiści' początku XX wieku" [Stanisław Brzozowski and the Russian "neo-Marxists" at the beginning of the twentieth century], *Wokół myśli Stanisława Brzozowskiego*, ed. Andrzej Walicki, Roman Zimand (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie 1974), Walicki, *Stanisław Brzozowski. Drogi myśli*, 101–108.

38 Cf. Elmar Holenstein, *Roman Jakobsons phänomenologischer Strukturalismus* [Roman Jakobson's phenomenological structuralism] (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1975); the most important contribution to the topic, in my opinion, is Dieter Münch, "Roman Jakobson und die Tradition der neuaristotelischen Phänomenologie" [Roman Jakobson and the tradition of neo-aristotelian phenomenology], *Prague Structuralism. Methodological Fundaments*, ed. Marek Nekula (Heidelberg: Winter, 2003).

39 Roman Jakobson, "List badacza polskiego" [A letter from a Polish researcher], in *Literatura, komparatystyka, folklor. Księga poświęcona Julianowi Krzyżanowskiemu*, ed. Maria Bokszczanin, Stanisław Frybes, Edmund Jankowski (Warszawa: PIW, 1968), 664–674 (first publication in *Kultura i społeczeństwo*, 9, 1, 1965, 13–21). The passage from the letter is so intricate that it may mean the opposite of what I said. Siedlecki may have meant that Phenomenology was in his day what Empiro-criticism had been in Lenin's day: an unacceptable idealistic stance. Either way, the relationship between Marxism and Empirio-criticsm was still an urgent problem for the Polish scholar in the 1940s.

atively strong influence of Brzozowski's philosophy of culture and literary criticism. Their reception of Slavic Formalism, in its Russian and Czech varieties, had been preceded and most likely prepared by their intensive preoccupation with Brzozowski, in advance of becoming propagators of modern Eastern and Central European literary theory in the USA and Western Europe.

The position and age of Manfred Kridl, professor of Polish Literature in Vilnius,[40] predestined him to become a central figure of the Polish Formalist movement, in that he gathered a group of gifted youths from Vilnius, Warsaw (the aforementioned Siedlecki, Hopensztand, Żółkiewski, Budzyk), and Poznań around him. Kridl assimilated a large part of Russian Formalism's output into his "integral method" that consisted in combining, *in nuce*, a phenomenological theory of fictionality as a hallmark of literariness with the Formalist dynamic approach to aesthesis.[41] The "integral" method also took into consideration the social aspects of literature, although these were to be dealt with from a specifically literary perspective. As far as I know, Kridl was the first writer to inform American audiences in 1944 of the main features of Russian Formalism.[42] Nevertheless, Kridl's interest in the Russian formalist approach dates back no earlier than the mid-1930s, whereas, already a decade and a half earlier, he had written about Brzozowski in a spirit presaging the theses of his "integral method." First of all, he did not fall prey to the "legend" of Brzozowski's hostility toward aesthetic values. No *horror litterarum* in the author of *Współczesna powieść w Polsce*. On the contrary, Brzozowski strived, driven by "the love of art," to "substantiate art's value, to interlock art with the totality of life, to make it a self-

40 Teresa Dalecka, *Dzieje polonistyki wileńskiej 1919–1939* [The history of Polish studies in Vilnius] (Kraków: Societas Vistulana, 2003), 75–101; *Tradycje polskiej nauki o literaturze: Warszawskie Koło Polonistów po 70 latach* [The traditions of Polish literary studies: The Warsaw circle of Polonists 70 years later], ed. Marcin Adamiak and Danuta Ulicka (Warszawa: Wydział Polonistyki UW, 2008); Adam Kola, "Zwrot dokonany niedopełniony. Z dziejów nowoczesnego literaturoznawstwa polskiego okresu międzywojennego" [The turn accomplished not-fullfilled: The history of modern Polish literary studies in the interwar Period], in *"Zwroty" badawcze w humanistyce. Konteksty poznawcze, kulturowe i społeczno-instytucjonalne,* ed. Jacek Kowalewski, Wojciech Piasek (Olsztyn: Colloquia Humaniorum, 2010).

41 Manfred Kridl, *Wstęp do badań nad dziełem literackim* [Introduction to the study of the literary work] (Wilno: Dom Książki Polskiej, 1936), 44–46, 57–63, 151–152, 181–186.

42 Manfred Kridl, "Russian Formalism," *The American Bookman. A Quarterly of Criticism and Theory of the Public Arts* 1 (1944).

aware organ of life."[43] These words may be read as a lofty pre-formulation of the "integral method": To avoid the restrictions the early Russian Formalists imposed on themselves to concentrate solely on the relationships between forms and devices, on the one hand, and the aesthesis, on the other. The scope of literary studies needs to be expanded without forgetting, however, that the aesthetic lies at the core of the discipline. Kridl therefore adhered to the program Brzozowski set down in his book on the Polish novel and in return became something of a Brzozowski expert in the eyes of the liberal intelligentsia. I have already mentioned that the weekly *Wiadomości Literackie*—a liberal magazine attracting the attention of the younger generation of literary scholars equally drawn to Kridl[44]—often referred to Brzozowski's legacy in order to legitimize its progressive stance. When Bogdan Suchodolski's[45] seminal work, *Stanisław Brzozowski. Rozwój ideologii* (Stanisław Brzozowski: The development of an ideology), appeared in 1933, *Wiadomości Literackie* asked none other than Manfred Kridl to write a review.[46]

By enlarging Formalism so that it became (a crucial part of) the integral method, Kridl followed the example of the critic who, according to Stanisław

43 Manfred Kridl, *Krytyka i krytycy* [Criticism and critics] (Warszawa: Gebethner i Wolff, 1923), 81: "Z tego ukochania [sztuki, M. M.] właśnie płynęła [Brzozowskiego, M. M.] dążność do uzasadnienia jej wartości, do związania jej z całokształtem życia, uczynienia świadomym siebie organem życia."

44 Only 5 out of altogether 27 works that the leading figure of Polish Structuralism Franciszek Siedlecki published during his lifetime and that were eventually republished in *Pisma zebrane* (Warszawa: PIW, 1989) were not published in *Wiadomości Literackie* or *Skamander*, two press organs of the Skamander Group.

45 Another platform where the young Warsaw literary scholars could immerse themselves in Stanisław Brzozowski's methodological thought was the interdisciplinary Circle of Science Studies (Koło Naukoznawcze), which met in Warsaw as of 1928. Although the leading thinkers of the Circle of Science Studies were connected to the so-called Lvov-Warsaw School (Jan Łukasiewicz, Stanisław Ossowski, Maria Ossowska, marginally Tadeusz Kotarbiński), Suchodolski held a lecture on the role of the notion of science in Stanisław Brzozowski's development as a thinker; a summary of the lecture and the subsequent discussions were published in a magazine closely connected to the Circle, cf. Bogdan Suchodolski, "Rola pojęcia nauki w rozwoju myśli Stanisława Brzozowskiego (streszczenie referatu)" [The role of the notion of science in the development of Stanisław Brzozowski's thought (abstract of a paper)], *Nauka Polska. Jej Potrzeby, Organizacja i Rozwój* 19 (1934).

46 Manfred Kridl, "Książka o Brzozowskim" [A book on Brzozowski], *Wiadomości Literackie* 8 (1934).

Baczyński, "attacked the narrow-mindedness that ensued from the art for the art's sake ideology, because he saw in it a separation from the most important issues of the time and the artist's most exciting experiences."[47] In this spirit Kridl worked on a model in which art acquired the substantiality of the social, while, as fictional, the autonomous area of *Dichtung* conversely became a laboratory where social forms were only scrutinized and modeled as forms. The art for art's sake ideology, at least in its Polish variety, did not strive for the autonomy of art, but for its subjugation to a vague Platonism; Brzozowski waged his anti-Miriam campaign against subsuming art under something as unchangeable as the Platonic Idea. Instead, art has to have a substantive basis in the dynamic realm of social activity.[48]

In contrast to the somewhat obscure Manfred Kridl, who, although named to a professorship at Columbia University, never achieved the standing that he had enjoyed in pre-war Poland, Victor Erlich is, next to Roman Jakobson and René Wellek, the most important figure in the transition of Slavic Formalism for the West. Erlich's biography is contained in his memoirs.[49] He was born in 1914 in Petrograd to a Jewish family with strong intellectual traditions: his grandfather was the legendary Jewish historian Simon Dubnov; his mother wrote Russian poetry which was praised, among others, by the Russian poet Kornei Chukovskii; and his father was a leader of the Jewish "Bund," first in Russia and then in Poland where the family moved to soon after the outbreak of the October Revolution. At the start of World War Two, Victor escaped the Germans through Lithuania, Russia, Japan, and Canada, and landed in the U.S. Army fighting in Germany. After the war, he wrote a dissertation at Columbia on Russian Formalism which was inspired by, and mostly devoted to Roman Jakobson. It be-

47 I quote after Stępień, *Spór o spuściznę po Stanisławie Brzozowskim*, 51: "Brzozowski atakował ciasność horyzontów, wynikającą z hasła 'sztuki czystej,' widząc w niej odseparowanie się od najważniejszych zagadnień czasu i najbardziej emocjonujących artystę przeżyć." The narrow-mindedness of the art for art's sake approach will be further criticized by Jakobson.

48 Czepiel [Stanisław Brzozowski], "Scherz, Ironie und tiefere Bedeutung [fragmenty]" [Comedy, irony, and deeper meaning (fragments)], "W odpowiedzi na protest" [Responding to a protest], "Miriam – zagadnienie kultury [fragmenty]" [Miriam—the problem of culture (fragments)], in *Programy i dyskusje literackie okresu Młodej Polski*, 3rd ed., ed. Maria Podraza-Kwiatkowska (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 2000). This is supposed to be a more brutal version of the press campaign in comparison to the one republished later with alterations in Brzozowski's *Kultura i życie*.

49 Victor Erlich, *Child of a Turbulent Century* (Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 2006).

came the first and probably the most influential monograph of the movement. All subsequent major contributions had to take into account Erlich's work: Peter Steiner, who wrote his *Russian Formalism: A Metapoetics* in Yale where Erlich taught, Krystyna Pomorska, and Aage A. Hansen-Löve, all had to take a stance on Erlich's *Russian Formalism: History—Doctrine*.[50]

Despite the fact that Erlich did not hold Kridl in high esteem as a person (he once recounted how, during the defense of his dissertation on Formalism, Lionel Trilling "took a brief nap while Manfred Kridl, professor of Polish literature, spoke at inordinate length"),[51] he made Kridl's "integral method" pivotal for the acceptance of Russian Formalism in the West. Not only did Kridl become the main hero of the chapter of *Russian Formalism* devoted to the redefinition of Formalism in Poland, Erlich also included his ideas (along with those of other members of the Vilnius-Warsaw School) in his systematic reconstruction of the Formalist output. Needless to say, Erlich described the reformulations of Russian Formalism in Czechoslovakia and Poland as having transformed the initial Russian impulse into the most mature approach to the literary to date.

Erlich follows Kridl when he speaks about the inadequacy of the Formalist's initial premises and expresses dissatisfaction with their "last-minute attempt to combine rigorous formal analysis with some hasty sociologizing."[52] The Warsaw Formalists, it will be remembered, promised that they would find a blueprint for a more rigorous and revealing combination of aesthetic analysis with sociology in accordance with Brzozowski's idea of uniting Marxism, as a theory of collective creativity, with Empirio-criticism's theory of experience. In numerous passages of his *Russian Formalism* Erlich shows his aversion to Viktor Shklovskii's extravagances. Thus he does not accept Shklovskii's claim that a new form appears not in order to express a new content, but in order to replace an earlier, worn-out form. This aversion was instilled into Erlich not exclusively by Roman Jakobson,[53] but also by his own early preoccupation with Brzozowski's attempt at substantiating the value of artistic forms. Granting that Erlich, the author of *Russian Formalism* was under the nearly hypnotic influence of Jakobson and

50 Krystyna Pomorska, *Russian Formalist Theory and Its Poetic Ambience* (The Hague: Mouton, 1968), 39. Aage A. Hansen-Löve, *Der russische Formalismus. Methodologische Rekonstruktion seiner Entwicklung aus dem Prinzip der Verfremdung* [Russian Formalism: A methodological reconstruction of its development out of the principle of estrangement] (Wien, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1978); Peter Steiner, *Russian Formalism: A Metapoetics* (Lausanne: sdvig, 2014), 25–29.

51 Erlich, *Child of a Turbulent Century*, 135.

52 Erlich, *Russian Formalism*, 130.

53 Erlich, *Child of a Turbulent Century*, 133

took for granted some of Jakobson's most controversial appraisals (above all regarding the indigenous character of Russian Formalism and the formative role of Husserl's Phenomenology on structural linguistics),[54] one gets the impression that Brzozowski's aesthetic philosophy of collective and creative work, about which Erlich enthused in his Polish years, found its prolongation not only in Erlich's sympathy toward the integrity of Western Slavic Formalism, but also in his later development. In the years after *Russian Formalism,* he began to shift or expand[55] his interests in the direction which he himself described with Stanisław Barańczak's phrase "Poetics and Ethics."[56] Barańczak, for his part, was a brilliant representative of Polish Structuralism, before he moved to Harvard. It had been Brzozowski's program for literary criticism to make morality and form two focal points of the great ellipse. Thanks to Erlich's early preoccupation with Brzozowski, he was susceptible to Jakobson's notion of Slavic Structuralism and he came to treat structures ever more in ethical and sociological terms.

Brzozowski's Social Kantianism and Slavic Structuralism

Victor Erlich left Poland as an ardent follower of Brzozowski's literary criticism—as ardent as his Marxist creed allowed him to be. He devoted his Master's thesis defended in 1937 at the Wolna Wszechnica Polska in Warsaw to Brzozowski, the more liberal of the two universities in Warsaw at the time. In two magazine articles concerned with Brzozowski, the second of which marked symbolically the end of an era as it appeared in Spring 1939 in the Lvov based *Sygnały* (Signals) magazine,[57] Erlich struggled to defend the substance of Brzozowski's literary criticism while at the same time condemning his 'nationalist' political positions and mysticism that obscured his general philosophy of culture. (In *Russian Formalism* Erlich mentions neither Brzozowski nor his own Polish publications.) One may say that he had the same problem with Brzozowski as the Warsaw Formalists who could not simply set aside Brzozowski's program for literary criticism, but were not willing to follow him in his unorthodox Marxism and his later turn to Catholicism. This struggle was formative for Erlich, impacting his vision of Formalism, because while he was still in Warsaw,

54 Erlich, *Russian Formalism*, 58, 62.

55 Which is discernable already in the "Foreword to the Second Edition," in Erlich, *Russian Formalism*, 7: "still more critical than I was a decade ago of the excesses of 'pure' Formalism."

56 Erlich, *Child of a Turbulent Century,* 161.

57 Wiktor Erlich, "Stanisław Brzozowski," *Myśl Socjalistyczna* 11 (1937); Erlich, "Brzozowski a socjalizm."

he made contact with Russian Formalism. The pages in *Russian Formalism* devoted to the Polish Formal School that consisted of Manfred Kridl's Vilnius Group and the Warsaw Circle are concise and scholarly. At the beginning of the monograph, Erlich mentions *en passant* his original idea for a book describing the entire spectrum of Slavic Formalism (Structuralism) and subsequently the need to narrow the scope of the material so that only those aspects of Prague and Polish Structuralism are covered which had a direct correspondence with the Russian School.[58] Erlich's memoirs give, alternatively, a livelier picture of the Warsaw group:

> Already back in Warsaw I began to move away from the Marxian approach to literature in search of what a New Critic would call a more "intrinsic" perspective on imaginative literature.

Note that it was a period when he dealt predominantly with Brzozowski:

> […] sometime in 1937 I attended a couple of meetings of the vital Polish Literary Club at the University of Warsaw, which was demonstratively drawn to structural analysis of verse and of artistic prose. I was especially impressed by the brilliant young scholar of versification Franciszek Siedlecki, author of the innovative *Studies in Polish Metrics*, as well as the sophisticated if somewhat Talmudic David [sic!] Hopensztand and his discussion of point of view in the prose of an influential contemporary Polish writer [Juliusz Kaden-Bandrowski, M. M.[59]]. Siedlecki and Hopensztand were to perish during the war. The only surviving key member of the circle whom I met again in Warsaw in 1960 was the articulate Stefan Zólkiewski [sic!], who was to play a visible role in postwar Poland's cultural life as a cross between an influential—and relatively open-minded—"official" literary critic and an establishment bon vivant.
>
> The political ambience in the circle was decidedly leftist. Yet its dominant methodology was not Marxist. Both Siedlecki and Hopensztand were taking their cues from a remarkable school of Russian literary scholarship which originated in the second decade of the twentieth century, a school of which Roman Jakobson was one of the architects and which became the subject of my dissertation and my first book, so-called Russian Formalism.[60]

58 Erlich, *Russian Formalism*, 12.

59 Dawid Hopensztand, "Mowa pozornie zależna w kontekście *Czarnych skrzydeł*" [Free indirect speech in the context of *Black Wings*], in *Prace ofiarowane Kazimierzowi Wóycickiemu* (Wilno: Dom Książki Polskiej, 1937).

60 Erlich, *Child of a Turbulent Century*, 127f.

Before becoming a spokesman for Roman Jakobson, whose version of the Formalists' history he tried to recount, Wiktor Erlich received his cues from the Warsaw Circle and Manfred Kridl, a group whose members were prepared, to various degrees by Brzozowski, for their reaction to Russian Formalism. They undoubtedly influenced the reception of what Erlich had learned from Jakobson and from written sources in New York libraries after the war. Here is how they did it: According to Erlich's *Russian Formalism*, in order to remain prolific, Formalism had to cease to be just Formalism and become instead an integral method. The Polish scholars agreed with Jakobson and his colleagues from Czechoslovakia as to the integrity and the scope of the method, but whereas Jakobson looked rather to Phenomenology as the vehicle of expansion, Polish Structuralists, although not totally deaf to the siren song of Phenomenology, held rather to Empirism and Positivism which they wanted to marry with Marxism. (In Brzozowski's time Emprio-ciriticism was the most advanced Empiricist stance, whereas in the 1930s the position was occupied by the Vienna Circle, whose output Żółkiewski tried to implement in literary studies). In this respect, the Warsaw group seems to have been more decided then Kridl's Vilnius circle.

Prague Structuralism and the Polish Integral Method, Erlich claimed, managed to "reopen the problem of 'literariness' and place it in a proper perspective."[61] This is the perspective of aesthesis involved in life, 'mores', or 'environment', as the Russian Formalist notion '*byt*' is translated. It may serve as an indication of the influence of Brzozowski's moralist world-view on Erlich that he chose the ethically loaded notion of 'mores' to render '*byt'*, which is probably a pendant to Hegel's *Sittlichkeit,* and not, say, 'environment'. Once the one-sidedness of Russian Formalism has been corrected in the Western Slavic country's world-views and morality, even if entangled in multidimensional mores, are seen as a part of art. Ethos is no longer "a camouflage element of the esthetic structure,"[62] its presence in the work is not an effect of a projection on the part of the critic.[63] Erlich, in the chapter devoted to the relationships of literature and life, sounds almost like Brzozowski. And it is not only the presence of sublated elements of social life in the artwork or that the literary partakes in social experience which exhaust the presence of life in literature and its theory. Theory, just as Brzozowski postulated, has to resemble life, it needs to be organic in its structure; this crucial principle guides endeavors to weld the social and the aesthetic. This is why the trickster of Russian Formalism Viktor Shklovskii failed in his attempt to combine the social and the formal analyses of Tolstoy's *War and*

61 Erlich, *Russian Formalism*, 198.

62 Ibid., 199.

63 Ibid., 197f.

Peace. Shklovskii's "categories [were] mechanically superimposed on each other rather than integrated,"[64] Erlich writes, thus amplifying the *topos* referred to even by present-day Russian critics: "The enclosure of the Prague theses and 'formal-sociological' premises in the Marxist framework (even if Marxism were purely ornamental here) was made too superficially, and even in a *mechanical* fashion."[65] It was a strange accusation, by the way, directed at the critic who was a professional driver and borrowed his metaphors from the mechanical rather than the organic.[66]

Erlich's critique of the mechanical character of Shklovskii's version of Russian Formalism is isomorphic with Brzozowski's put-down of Brunetière's literary evolution, which he described in his work on the contemporary Polish novel as a mechanical succession of abstract forms paralleling a soulless, because deterministic, development of societies.[67] Already at the stage marked by *Kultura i życie* (Culture and Life, 1907), a book which testifies to his initially hesitant turn to Marxism, Brzozowski tried to combine art criticism with a radical anti-determinism resembling the Kantian teleology of art. The social and the aesthetic were to meet in teleological anti-determinism so that the sphere of art appeared as a Kantian utopia of disinterestedness freed from economic needs.[68] Brzozowski, it seems, pleaded during the later stages of his career for the liberation of, rather than the liberation from, labor so that labor, like creation and aesthetic play, could be unconditionally free. Brzozowski's pathos kindled Erlich's double-edged attack on both the anti-social attitude of early Formalism and "vulgar sociologism," to which Shklovskii turned in his later Formalist works. But what repelled Erlich in Shklovskii's book on *War and Peace* was also the determinism of form, exactly like that severely criticized by Brzozowski in his rejection of Brunetière's literary evolution. The history, recounted by Shklovskii in his book on Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, is a model treatise in the style of the Marxist 'despitists' (*voprekisty*), as opposed to the camp of "thankists" (*blagodaristy*).[69] This was an allegedly more dialectical stance than the

64 Ibid., 124

65 Galushkin, "I tak, stavshi na kostiakh, budem trubit' sbor…" (emphasis mine, M. M.).

66 An example: Shklovskii writes in an open letter to Jakobson "You and I were like two pistons in the same cylinder. That's a fact in the life of steamships. You have been unscrewed and kept in Prague as an implement." Viktor Shklovskii, *Third Factory*, trans. Richard Sheldon (Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1977), 39.

67 Brzozowski, *Współczesna powieść i krytyka*, 62–64.

68 Brzozowski, *Kultura i życie*.

69 Cf. Katerina Clark and Galin Tihanov "Soviet Literary Theory in the 1930s: Battles over Genre and the Boundaries of Modernity," in *A History of Russian Russian Liter-*

vulgar determinism of the 'thankists' who reduced the message of a work to its author's class origin that prompted her to write in a way corresponding to her class origin. The supporters of 'despitism' invoked Engels's opinion on Balzac, who, in accordance with his social origin and world-view, wanted to write reactionary novels, but his qualities as a writer made him do otherwise.[70] Literary form as such is progressive and changes itself because it cannot stay the same. The history of Balzac repeated itself in the case of Shklovskii's Tolstoy who had planned to write an apologia of the nobility, but the form he chose carried him into modern polyphony. The determinism of Tolstoy's class world-view was derailed by the history of literature, i.e., the history of literary forms working of its own accord. Shklovskii's approach seems to be dialectical and modern, and yet Erlich deems this procedure mechanical. This assessment can be understood in the light of Brzozowski's radically anti-determinist theory: the formal causality postulated by Shklovskii is still a causality which cannot be brought in correspondence with the freedom of creation. Brzozowski was probably the most resolute anti-determinist philosopher of his time. According to his ardent reader, Erlich, not until Western Slavic Structuralism adopted teleology in lieu of determinism was it able to rid itself of the obsolete and extravagant elements in Russian Formalism. As every other reader of Brzozowski may easily foresee, the new anti-determinist and multidimensional stance on literariness boiled down to (social) Kantianism.

> Just because art is not primarily a call for action or a source of information, but a disinterested contemplation of the medium, "purposiveness without purpose" (Kant), can it bring within its orbit so many, often discordant, elements and become involved with so many interests and endeavors.[71]

Brzozowski along with Kazimierz Kelles-Krauz and Edward Abramowski worked on an anti-metaphysical "social Kantianism," based in part on an anti-determinist reading of Marx's doctrine of embodied praxis.[72] The social Kantians of the beginning of the twentieth century perceived social reality as the domain of free creation; even determinist processes both in the base and super-

ary Theory and Criticism. The Soviet Age and Beyond, ed. Evgeny Dobrenko and Galin Tihanov (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011), 117.

70 This opinion was expressed in a letter to Margaret Harkness in early April 1888. Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, *Werke* [Works] (Berlin: Dietz, 1967), vol. 37, 42–44.

71 Erlich, *Russian Formalism*, 210.

72 Andrzej Walicki, *Polska, Rosja, Marksizm* [Poland, Russia, Marxism] (Kraków: Universitas, 2011), 286–292.

structure were rooted in the spontaneity of the subject.[73] Kantianism adopted in West Slavic Structuralism and Integral Method—its main aspects were the theological approach to human reality and bracketing purpose in the teleology of the aesthetic function—salvaged "the healthy core" of Russian Formalism. It literally brought Formalism to life without having it renounce the aesthetic core: "Structuralism, the final result of Formalist theorizing, points the way toward a conception of literature that would do full justice to both the uniqueness and the relevance of literary art."[74]

The social Kantianism professed by the Polish Marxists (Brzozowski, Kelles-Krauz, Abramowski) that, according to Jakobson and Erlich, became the mature form of the Formalist project, which started in Russia and came to realization in West Slavic cultures, is quite conspicuous, for example, in the notion of the dominant. I would like to close this paper with a short analysis of the notion. It aims to demonstrate that Brzozowski's program of introducing Avenarius's description of aesthesis to literary criticism, which would be integral and social and pay justice to both uniqueness and the relevance of literary art, was perfectly in accord with the later developments of structuralism.

The Case of Dominant

Dominante was a term that Richard Avenarius used in his *Kritik der reinen Erfahrung* to designate that among many the "*Vitalreihen*" (life series) competing with one another in the framework of the central nerve system (the system C) which subsumes other series and thus determines the general direction of an individual's behaviour. Excitations that do not fall in the scope of dominant are repressed, their energy absorbed and transferred to the dominant series.[75] The functioning of the "dominant" described by Avenarius tallies with Broder Christiansen and Aleksei Ukhtomskii's[76] usages of exactly the same term, which

73 Edward Abramowski, "Zagadnienia socjalizmu" [Questions of socialism], in *Zagadnienia socjalizmu. Wybór pism*, ed. Krzysztof Mazur (Kraków: Ośrodek Myśli Politycznej, 2012). Abramowski was a personal friend and mentor of Żeromski.

74 Erlich, *Russian Formalism*, 211.

75 Richard Avenarius, vol. 2 of *Kritik der reinen Erfahrung* [Critique of pure Experience] (Leipzig: Fues, 1890), 275–277.

76 Broder Christiansen, *Philosophie der Kunst* [Philosophy of Art] (Hanau: Clauss & Fedderssen, 1909); Alexej Uchtomskij, "Die Dominante als Arbeitsprinzip der Nervenzentren," *Mitteilungen der Luria-Gesellschaft* 11, (2004): 25–38; Aleksei Ukhtomskii, Dominanta. *Stat'i raznykh let. 1887–1939* [The Dominant: Collected Articles, 1887–1939] (Sankt-Peterburg: Piter, 2002), 126. See Igal Halfin, *Terror in My Soul:*

exerted a direct influence on Formalisms in Eastern and Central Europe (beginning with Eikhenbaum and Shklovskii[77]). The transfer of energy between the dominant and the subjugated elements of the system foreshadows the functionalistic structuralism of the mature Roman Jakobson.[78]

The role of the dominant consists namely in securing the dynamic character of an achieved balance amounting to the system's ability to develop.[79] The system must remain in the state of a dynamic equilibrium of contradicting forces in order to be able to adapt to the ever-changing environment, but, at the same time a hierarchy of elements has to be assured for the system to remain organised. According to Mukařovsky, the inner contradiction sets structure apart from a mere aggregate of elements.[80] In order for inner tension to dynamize but not blow up the whole, one of the system's aspects has to come to the fore and become its dominant. In Averarius, the dominant subsumes other series, absorbs their energies and gives a general direction to the system. The system may thus become dynamic and historical, as already Roman Jakobson stressed in his 1935 Czech essay on the dominant (in which he does not mention Avenarius nor refer to Christiansen or any other champion of the term). The dominant is for Jakobson not only historically changeable (his definition of the dominant is ostensive as it consists in an enumeration of different dominants of Czech poetry).[81] The

Communist Autobiographies on Trial (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 2003), 155. Special thanks to Erik Martin who pointed out to me that the notion of the dominant was initially used by Avenarius.

77 Boris Eikhenbaum, *Melodika russkogo liricheskogo stikha* [Melodics of Russian lyrical verse] (Peterburg: OPOIAZ, 1922), 9; Viktor Shklovskii, "Sviaz' priemov siuzhetoslozheniia s obshchimi priemami stilia / Der Zusammenhang zwischen dem Verfahren der Sujetfügung und den allgemeinen Stilverfahren" [The relation between the technique of the subject addition and the general techniques of style] in *Texte der Russischen Formalisten.* Band I: *Texte zur allgemeinen Literaturtheorie und zur Theorie der Prosa,* ed. Jurij Striedter (München: Wilhelm Fink, 1969)*,* 50–53, 118f., 120f.; Jurij Tynjanov, "O literaturnoi ėvoliutsii / Über literarische Evolution" [On literary evolution], ibid., 440f., 450f.

78 Roman Jakobson, "Dominant," in *Poetry of Grammar and Grammar of Poetry,* vol. 3 of *Selected Writings*, ed. Stephen Rudy (The Hague: Mouton, 1981).

79 Balance is truly very important also for Jakobson's mature structuralism. See: Holenstein, *Roman Jakobsons phänomenologischer Strukturalismus,* 42.

80 Jan Mukařovský, "Über Strukturalismus" [On structuralism], in *Formalismus, Strukturalismus und Geschichte*, ed. Aleksandar Flaker and Viktor Žmegač (Kronberg/Taunus: Scriptor, 1974), 86f.

81 Jakobson, "Dominant," 751f.

dominant is the notion through which—according to Jakobson who was already exchanging with his Polish colleagues in 1935—the aesthetic may and should be connected to the social:

> […] the definition of an artistic work as compared to other sets of cultural values substantially changes, as soon as the concept of the dominant becomes our point of departure. For example, the relationship between a poetic work and other verbal messages acquires a more exact determination. Equating a poetic work with an aesthetic, or more precisely with a poetic, function, as far as we deal with verbal material, is characteristic of those epochs which proclaim self-sufficient, pure art, *l'art pour l'art*. In the early steps of the Formalist school, it was still possible to observe distinct traces of such an equation. However, this equation is unquestionably erroneous: a poetic work is not confined to aesthetic function alone, but has in addition many other functions. Actually, the intentions of a poetic work are often closely related to philosophy, social didactics, etc.[82]

In a manner which does not surprise at this stage of the present exposition, Jakobson's positing of the dominant harmonizes with Brzozowski's aversion to mechanicism as well to the narrow-minded ideology *l'art pour l'art*, in opposition to which he proposed the program of welding Marxism together with Empirio-criticism, from where the notion of the dominant began its expansion in sciences and the humanities. Needless to say, Erlich expressed the same aversion, given his adherence to Brzozowski and Jakobson at different stages of his life. Jakobson pointed out that the dominant connects the aesthetic to the social and stands in opposition to the mechanical character of pure sociologism as well the monistic stance of aestheticism:

> In direct opposition to the straight monistic point of view is the mechanistic standpoint, which recognizes the multiplicity of functions of a poetic work and judges that work, either knowingly or unintentionally, as a mechanical agglomeration of functions. Because a poetic work also has a referential function, it is sometimes considered by adherents of the latter point of view as a straightforward document of cultural history, social relations or biography. In contrast to one-sided monism and one-sided pluralism, there exists a point of view which combines an awareness of the multiple functions of a poetic work with a comprehension of its integrity, that is to say, that function which unites and determines the poetic work. […] a poetic work is defined as a verbal message whose aesthetic function is its dominant.[83]

82 Ibid., 752.

83 Ibid., 753.

The echo of Jakobson's "integral method"—reinforced by Brzozowski's fervent anti-determinism—was clearly discernable in Erlich's condemnation of Shklovskii's "vulgar sociologism" and his praise of the social Kantianism of West Slavic structuralisms.

WORKS CITED

Abramowski, Edward. "Zagadnienia socjalizmu." *Zagadnienia socjalizmu. Wybór pism*, edited by Krzysztof Mazur, 45–123. Kraków: Ośrodek Myśli Politycznej, 2012.

Avenarius, Richard. *Philosophie als Denken der Welt gemäss dem Princip des kleinsten Kraftmasses. Prolegomena zu einer Kritik der reinen Erfahrung*. Leipzig: Fues's Verlag 1876.

—. *Kritik der reinen Erfahrung*, vol. 2. Leipzig: Fues's Verlag, 1890.

Bogdanov, Aleksandr. *Filosofiia zhivogo opyta. Populiarnye ocherki. Materializm, ėmpiriokrititsizm, dialekticheskij materializm, ėmpiriomonizm, nauka budushchego*. Sankt-Peterburg: Pechatnyi trud, 1912.

Borowy, Wacław. "Szkoła krytykow." In *Studia i szkice literackie*, edited by Zofia Stefanowska and Andrzej Paluchowski, 125–130. Warszawa: PIW, 1983.

Brzozowski, Stanisław. *O Stefanie Żeromskim*. *Studyum*. Warszawa: Centnerszwer i Ska, 1905.

—. "Filozofia romantyzmu polskiego." *Kultura i życie*, 375–414.

—. "Scherz, Ironie und tiefere Bedeutung [fragmenty]," "W odpowiedzi na protest," "Miriam – zagadnienie kultury [fragmenty]." *Programy i dyskusje literackie okresu Młodej Polski*, 3rd ed., edited by Maria Podraza-Kwiatkowska, 528–563. Wrocław: Ossolineum, 2000.

Chernyshevskii, Nikolai G. "Ocherki gogolevskogo perioda russkoi literatury." In *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 3, 303–306. Moskva: Goslitizdat, 1947.

Christiansen, Broder. *Philosophie der Kunst*. Hanau: Clauss & Feddersen, 1909.

Clark, Katerina and Galin Tihanov. "Soviet Literary Theory in the 1930s: Battles over Genre and the Boundaries of Modernity." *A History of Russian Literary Theory and Criticism. The Soviet Age and Beyond*, edited by Evgeny Dobrenko and Galin Tihanov, 109–143. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011.

Dalecka, Teresa. *Dzieje polonistyki wileńskiej 1919–1939*. Kraków: Societas Vistulana, 2003.

Ėichenbaum, Boris. *Melodika russkogo liricheskogo stikha*. *Peterburg*: OPOIAZ, 1922.

Erlich, Wiktor. "Stanisław Brzozowski." *Myśl Socjalistyczna* 11 (1937). http://lewicowo.pl/stanislaw-brzozowski/

—. "Brzozowski a socjalizm." *Sygnały* 65 (1939): 1–2.

— (Victor Erlich). *Russian Formalism: History—Doctrine*. Hague: Mouton, 1965.

—. *Child of a Turbulent Century*. Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 2006.

Fik, Ignacy. *Rodowód społeczny literatury polskiej I*. Kraków: Czytelnik, 1938.

Galushkin, Aleksander. "I tak, stavshi na kostiakh, budem trubit' sbor… K istorii nesostoiavshegosia vozrozhdeniia Opoiaza v 1928–1930 gg." *NLO* 44 (2000). http://magazines.russ.ru/nlo/2000/44/galush.html

Glanc, Tomáš. "Structuralism Forever. Roman Jakobson 1935." In *Prague Structuralism. Methodological Fundamentals*, edited by Marek Nekula, 105–120. Heidelberg: Winter, 2003.

Greenfeld, Liah. "Russian Formalist Sociology of Literature: A Sociologist's Perspective." *Slavic Review* 46 (1987): 38–54.

Halfin, Igal. *Terror in My Soul: Communist Autobiographies on Trial*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press 2003.

Hansen-Löve, Aage A. *Der russische Formalismus. Methodologische Rekonstruktion seiner Entwicklung aus dem Prinzip der Verfremdung*. Wien, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1978.

Holenstein, Elmar. *Roman Jakobsons phänomenologischer Strukturalismus*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1975.

Hopensztand, Dawid. "Mowa pozornie zależna w kontekście 'Czarnych skrzydeł'." In *Prace ofiarowane Kazimierzowi Wóycickiemu*, 371–406. Wilno: Dom Książki Polskiej, 1937.

Jakobson, Roman, and Petr Savitskii. *Evraziia v svetle iazykoznaniia*. Praha: Izdanie evraziitsev, 1931.

Jakobson, Roman. "List badacza polskiego." *Kultura i Społeczeństwo* 9,1 (1965): 13–21.

—. "List badacza polskiego." In *Literatura, komparatystyka, folklor. Księga poświęcona Julianowi Krzyżanowskiemu*, edited by Maria Bokszczanin, Stanisław Frybes, and Edmund Jankowski, 664–674. Warszawa: PIW, 1968.

—. "Dominant." In *Poetry of Grammar and Grammar of Poetry,* edited by Stephen Rudy. Vol 3 of *Roman Jakobson: Selected Writings*, edited by Stephen Rudy, 751–756. The Hague: Mouton Publisher, 1981.

—. Formalistická škola a dnešní literární věda ruská. Brno 1935, edited by Tomáš Glanc. Praha: Academia, 2005.

Karcz, Andrzej. *The Polish Formalist School and Russian Formalism*. Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2002.

Kridl, Manfred. *Krytyka i krytycy*. Warszawa: Gebethner i Wolff, 1923.

—. "Książka o Brzozowskim." *Wiadomości Literackie* 8 (1934): 4.

—. "Poetyka Żirmunskiego." *Wiadomości Literackie* 19 (1934): 4.

—. *Wstęp do badań nad dziełem literackim*. Wilno: Dom Książki Polskiej, 1936.

—. "Russian Formalism." *The American Bookman. A Quarterly of Criticism and Theory of the Public Arts* 1 (1944): 19–30.

Lunačarskij, Anatolij. "Der Formalismus in der Kunstwissenschaft." In *Marxismus und Formalismus*. *Dokumente einer literaturtheoretischen Kontroverse*, edited and translated by Hans Günther and Karla Hielscher, 83–95. München: Hanser, 1973.

Marx, Karl, and Friedrich Engels. *Werke*, vol. 37, 42–44. Berlin: Dietz, 1967.

Mencwel, Andrzej. *Stanisław Brzozowski. Kształtowanie myśli krytycznej*. Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1976.

—. *Stanisław Brzozowski. Postawa krytyczna. Wiek XX*. Warszawa: Krytyka Polityczna, 2014.

Mickiewicz, Adam. *Dzieła*, vol. 3, edited by Julian Krzyżanowski et al. (Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1955).

Miłosz, Czesław. *Człowiek wśród skorpionów. Studium o Stanisławie Brzozowskim*. Warszawa: Krytyka Polityczna, 2011.

Mrugalski, Michał. "Vers une stylistique de l'acte. La querelle de Karol Irzykowski et Stanisław Brzozowski à propos du *Trésor* de Leopold Staff dans le contexte des philosophies polonaise et allemande." *Slavica Bruxellensia* 11 (2015): 1–27. http://slavica.revues.org/1715

Mukařovský, Jan. "Über Strukturalismus." In *Formalismus, Strukturalismus und Geschichte*, edited by Aleksandar Flaker and Viktor Žmegač, 92–105. Kronberg/Taunus: Scriptor, 1974.

Münch, Dieter. "Roman Jakobson und die Tradition der neuaristotelischen Phänomenologie." In *Prague Structuralism Methodological Fundamentals*, edited by Marek Nekula, 135–167. Heidelberg: Winter, 2003.

Pieróg, Stanisław. *Mistyka i gnoza w myśli filozoficznej polskiego romantyzmu. (Mickiewicz, Trentowski i Libelt)*. https://www.filozofiapolska.pl/spory/files/mistyka-i-gnoza.pdf

Pomorska, Krystyna. *Russian Formalist Theory and Its Poetic Ambience*. The Hague: Mouton, 1968.

Ronen, Omry. *Serebrianyi vek kak umysel i vymysel*. Moskva: OGI, 2000.

Shklovskii, Viktor. "Iskusstvo kak priem." In *O teorii prozy*, edited by Viktor Shklovskii, 9–25. Moscow: Federatsiia, 1929.

—. "Sviaz' priemov siuzhetoslozheniia s obshchimi priemami stilia / Der Zusammenhang zwischen dem Verfahren der Sujetfügung und den allgemeinen Stilverfahren." In *Texte der russischen Formalisten Band 1: Texte zur allgemeinen Literaturtheorie und zur Theorie der Prosa*, edited by Jurij Striedter and Wolf-Dieter Stempel, 36–121. München: Wilhelm Fink, 1969.

—. *Third Factory*. Translated by Richard Sheldon. Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1977.

Šor, Rozaliia. "'Formal'nyi metod' na zapade. Shkola Zeiferta i 'ritoricheskoe' napravlenie." *Ars Poetica* 1 (1927): 127–143. http://www.sdvigpress.org/pub-100150.

Steiner, Peter. *Russian Formalism: A Metapoetics*. Genève: sdvig press, 2014.

Stępień, Marian. *Spor o spuściznę po Stanisławie Brzozowskim w latach 1918–1939*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1979.

Suchodolski, Bogdan. "Rola pojęcia nauki w rozwoju myśli Stanisława Brzozowskiego (streszczenie referatu)." *Nauka Polska. Jej Potrzeby, Organizacja i Rozwój* 19 (1934): 407–410.

Svetlikova, Ilona. *Istoki russkogo formalizma. Traditsiia psikhologizma i formal'naia shkola*. Moskva: NLO, 2005.

Szpakowska, Małgorzata. "*Wiadomości Literackie" prawie dla wszystkich*. Warszawa: WAB, 2012.

Todd, William Mills. "Literature as an Institution. Fragments of a Formalist Theory." In *Russian Formalism: A Retrospective Glance. A Festschrift in Honor of Victor Erlich*, edited by Robert Louis Jackson and Stephen Rudy, 15–26. New Haven: Yale Center for International and Area Studies, 1985.

Trubetzkoy, Nikolaj. *Russland, Europa, Eurasien. Ausgewählte Schriften zur Kulturwissenschaft*, edited by Fedor B. Poljakov. Wien: OAW, 2005.

Tynjanov, Jurij. "O literaturnoi ėvoliutsii / Über literarische Evolution." In *Texte der Russischen Formalisten Band I: Texte zur allgemeinen Literaturtheorie und zur Theorie der Prosa*, edited by Jurij Striedter, 432–461. München: Wilhelm Fink, 1969.

Uchtomskij, A. A. "Die Dominante als Arbeitsprinzip der Nervenzentren." *Mitteilungen der Luria-Gesellschaft* 11 (2004): 25–38.

— [Ukhtomskii, Aleksei]. *Dominanta. Stat'i raznakh let. 1887–1939*. Sankt-Peterburg: Piter, 2002.

Walicki, Andrzej."Stanisław Brzozowski i rosyjscy 'neomarksiści' początku XX wieku." *Wokół myśli Stanisława Brzozowskiego*, edited by Andrzej Walicki and Roman Zimand, 195–220. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie 1974.

—. *Stanisław Brzozowski and the Polish Beginnings of 'Western Marxism'*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989.

—. *Polska, Rosja, Marksizm*. Krakow: Universitas, 2011.

—. *Stanisław Brzozowski – drogi myśli*. Kraków: Universitas, 2011.

Weintraub, Wiktor. "A Political Gloss to the History of the Polish Formalist Movement." In *Russian Formalism: A Retrospective Glance*. *A Festschrift in Honor of Victor Erlich*, edited by Robert Louis Jackson and Stephen Rudy, 6–14. New Haven: Yale Center for International and Area Studies, 1985.

Wyka, Kazimierz. "Brzozowskiego krytyka krytyki." In *„Kartografowie dziwnych podroży": wypisy z polskiej krytyki literackiej XX wieku*, edited by Marta Wyka, 47–53. Kraków: Universitas, 2004.

Żeromski, Stefan. *Sułkowski. Tragedia.* Kraków: Księgarnia S.A. Krzyżanowskiego, 1914.

Zhirmunskii, Viktor. "Vokrug 'Poėtiki' OPOIAZa [Poėtika. Sborniki po teorii poėticheskogo iazyka. Pgrd. 1919.]." *Zhizn' iskusstva* 12 (1919). http://www.opojaz.ru/zhirmunsky/vokrug.html

—. "K voprosu o formal'nom metode." In Oskar Val'tsel'. *Problema formy v poėzii*, 5–3. Petrograd: Academia, 1923. http://www.opojaz.ru/walzel/preface.html

The Stalinist Reception of Stanisław Brzozowski's Philosophy: The Case of Paweł Hoffman

Paweł Rams

The Stalinization of Polish artistic, cultural, and academic life began around 1947, even though the breaking point for Polish literature was the Writers' Congress held in Szczecin in January 1949. As Zbigniew Jarosiński, the author of a book on Polish Socialist Realism notes, "at the very beginning, socialist realism was manifested in a few vague slogans based on the solid conviction that Polish art should be socialist, which meant both realist and faithful to the Party."[1] These initially vague visions grew into a firm doctrine that restricted all kinds of artists.[2] Polish cultural history ran its course, as did the cultural history of the Soviet Union, which moved towards socialist realism over a decade earlier by Maxim Gorky and his follower, Andrei Zhdanov.

The organized destruction of intellectual life in Poland[3] was preceded by philosophical debates grounded in Lenin's thesis that "philosophical theories are not neutral in the class struggle but are instruments of it. Every philosophy is in

1 Zbigniew Jarosiński, *Nadwiślański socrealizm* [Socialist realism along the Vistula] (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo IBL PAN, 1999), 15.

2 Ibid.

3 In this regard, as Michał Głowiński demonstrates, Stalinism was inconsistent: "On the one hand, it ruined Polish culture and tradition, but, on the other, it was in favor of ideas that lead to the growth of science and culture, especially those in which Communists could serve the function of patrons, protectors, or founders." Cf.: Michał Głowiński, "Pani Mayenowa – próba portretu" [Mrs. Mayenowa: a portrayal], in *Rozmaitości interpretacyjne. Trzydzieści szkiców* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo IBL PAN, 2014), 229.

the service of some class-interest, and in a society torn by the class struggle this cannot be otherwise."[4] The proliferation of philosophical views on class struggle can be shown as the manifestation of a prior conflict at the level of production and ownership. However, it cannot be so in a classless society, which requires a unified philosophical approach that signifies working-class self-awareness. This approach came into being through the Soviet Union's implementation of Marxist materialism as interpreted by Lenin and systemized by Stalin.

After the Bolshevik Revolution, social and political life in the Soviet Union was controlled by *Vserossiiskaia chrezvychainaia komissiia* (The All-Russian Extraordinary Commission) who had the responsibility to suppress political opposition. In intellectual life, such roles were assigned to institutions such as the People's Commissariat of Education, the Red Professors' Institute, and the Communist Academy in Moscow,[5] which were formed by Lenin to replace university philosophy departments. The latter two functioned under the patronage of Nikolai Bukharin who considered Marxism as a scientific approach to both social and natural phenomena of life.

How does the debate within such a defined Marxist framework of Lenin's era differ from those of Stalin's? In short, if it was at least somewhat possible under Lenin,[6] the word "debate" practically disappeared from the register under Stalin. A late example of a debate would be between the "mechanists" and "dialecticians." The mechanists perceived Marxism as a theory explaining the facts of social life but not as a philosophy, and hence, they disregarded the Marxist thinkers of their times as well as philosophers in general because they were products of bourgeois culture. The dialecticians, on the other hand, claimed that philosophy was necessary for the elaboration of exact science and its results in the spirit of dialectical materialism. In doing so, they wanted to explain the shift from quantitative to qualitative phenomena—the idea rejected by mechanists.[7] Followers of dialectical materialism led by Abram Deborin were also interested

4 Leszek Kołakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism*, trans. Paul S. Falla (New York: Norton and Company, 2008), 717.

5 Ibid., 827.

6 "Until the mid-1920s philosophical debates went on rather undisturbed. Undisturbed in this sense that the opponents were at least allowed to respond to each other." Leonid Stołowicz, *Historia filozofii rosyjskiej. Podręcznik* [The history of Russian philosophy: a textbook.], trans. and afterword by Bogusław Żyłko (Gdańsk: słowo/obraz terytoria, 2008), 589.

7 Further analysis of the dispute between the "dialecticians" and "mechanists," and its philosophical ground can be found in Nikolay Lossky, *History of Russian Philosophy* (New York: International Universities Press, 1951), 347–356.

in the history of philosophy, however, they used it mostly to consolidate their stance. Owing to the influence of academic publishers and references to Engels and Lenin in their writings,[8] dialecticians led the official criticism of ideological opposition in April 1929; it was not a long-lasting victory. At the beginning of 1931, an act condemning Deborin's followers was decreed which led to the editors of the journal *Pod znamenem marksizma* (Under the Banner of Marxism) to be forced to self-criticism. According to Leszek Kołakowski, since that moment in time, "the history of Soviet philosophy under Stalin [was] largely a history of Party ukases."[9] This and the fourth chapter of Stalin's *History of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks): Short Course* significantly changed the way that students wrote philosophy because they were obliged to paraphrase the text with the proper application of the four elements of the Marxist dialectical method and three features of philosophical materialism in their research. No changes to the original were allowed until 1953.[10]

Stalinization in Poland was based on an already existing model that had been developed in the Soviet countries during the 1920s and 1930s; the process affected all spheres of life including politics, administration, culture, and the arts. Polish journals and magazines published after the war until 1948 show the changes in public debate especially on history, culture, and politics during which there was a more open discourse,[11] but after 1948 Stalinism became the domi-

8 Ibid.

9 Kołakowski, *Main Currents*, 847. Cf. Stołowicz, *Historia filozofii rosyjskiej*, 589–591.

10 *Historia Wszechzwiązkowej Komunistycznej Partii (bolszewików): krótki kurs, pod red. Komisji KC WKP(b) zaaprobowany przez KC WKPB(b) 1938* (Warszawa: Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza "Książka," 1948), 120–134.

11 In March 1945 "Tygodnik Powszechny" (Universal Weekly), an independent (from both the state and the Church) Catholic newspaper was established. From May 20–25, 1945, a plenary session of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party took place, during which Władysław Gomułka criticized the fragmenting of the Party, excessive activity of security forces including the activity of the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKWD) on Polish territories. He also cautioned against identifying the Polish Workers' Party with the Soviet forces in Poland. In such journals as *Kuźnica* (The Forge)*, Odrodzenie* (Revival), and in *Tygodnik Powszechny*, the debate over the shape of Polish culture after the war was still ongoing. Among the people involved in it were Zofia Nałkowska, Stefan Kisielewski, Jan Parandowski, and Juliusz Kleiner. In July 1945, the Polish People's Party was formed, with Stefan Mikołajczyk as its first head (the party kept its autonomy until 1947) and another journal, *Tygodnik Warszawski* (The Warsaw Weekly), was established. A managerial

nant approach in literature in both style and content marking the beginning of cultural dependence in Poland.

Stalinization affected philosophy even more than literature because of the fact that there were so many responses to Marxism in Poland before 1945 and they differed so significantly from Stalin's *Historia WKP(b)*. Such distinguished thinkers as Ludwik Krzywicki, Kazimierz Kelles-Krauz, or Edward Abramowski were controversial and could have led to revisionism. In order to hamper these free interpretations of the Marxist doctrine, it was necessary to combat the reactionaries on the Polish Left in order to control academic discussions on Marxism. This peculiar act of deciding what was true or not preoccupied the minds of philosophers affiliated with the Polish Worker's Party until the mid-1950s.

"Legenda Stanisława Brzozowskiego" (The Legend of Stanisław Brzozowski) by Paweł Hoffman and published in *Nowe Drogi* (New Ways) in 1947 was the first paradigmatic text for the philosophy of the era. Hoffman's life was no different from many other members of the Polish Worker's Party; he was born in Lviv in 1903 and began his activity in socialist movements when he was eighteen. He studied at the Department of Law and Philosophy at the University of Lviv and then moved to Krakow. In 1927 he became a member of the Communist Party of Poland and he started working for such socialist journals as *Czerwony Sztandar* (The Red Banner) and *Lewar* (Jack) before the war. In 1937

congress of the Union of Independent Socialist Youth took place in 1946 during which Jan Strzelecki's speech titled "Humanizm socjalistyczny" (Socialist Humanism) prompted a vivid discussion joined by Józef Chałasiński, Maria and Stanisław Ossowski, and Adam Schaff, among others; the first issue of a Catholic periodical *Znak* (Sign) was released in Krakow the same year. Based on Marta Fik, *Kultura polska po Jałcie. Kronika lat 1944–1989* [Polish culture after Yalta: the chronicle of the years 1944–1989] (London: Polonia, 1989). Here, I refer to the following issues: 1945 (36, 71, 94, 111, 170); 1946 (43, 61). These are only a few selected events that show the heterogeneity of the official discourse in Poland after the war. It seems important to mention that Stanisław Brzozowki's *Płomienie* (Flames) was also reissued in 1946. Joanna Kulczyk-Saloni ("O *Płomieniach* St. Brzozowskiego. Nowa recenzja bardzo starej powieści" [On *Flames* by Stanisław Brzozowski: a new review of a very old novel], *Kuźnica* 32 [1948]) and Kazimierz Koźniewski ("*Płomienie* Brzozowskiego" [Stanisław Brzozowski's *Flames*], *Twórczość* 4 [1948]) were skeptical in their reviews of the work. However, they acknowledged the value of the novel and Brzozowski's impact on the leftist intelligentsia before the war. Numerous references to Brzozowski can be found in other writers' texts. There were some positive references as well (e.g., Józef Chałasiński, "Inteligencja polska w świetle swojej genealogii społecznej" [The Polish intelligentsia and its social genealogy], *Kuźnica* 4 [1946]).

Hoffman was arrested for his political activity and spent two months in prison, and then after the outbreak of the War, he worked as a teacher in Soviet-occupied territories until he joined the Red Army in 1941. In May 1943 he was assigned the position of Officer in Education and Welfare in the Polish First Tadeusz Kościuszko Infantry Division. In June 1944 Hoffman had become a member of the Polish Worker's Party and after 1945 he worked as an editor of numerous periodicals, such as *Rzeczpospolita* (The Republic), *Kuźnica*, and *Nowa Kultura* (The New Culture). For a short period Hoffman worked also as the head of the cultural department of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party. It also seems important to mention that Hoffman got Adam Ważyk's "Poemat dla dorosłych" (Poem for Adults), which symbolically marks the beginning of the Polish October in 1956, published in *Nowa Kultura*. After that, Hoffman worked as a translator, editor, and the deputy chief editor of *Polskie Wydawnictwo Naukowe* (Polish Scientific Publishers). In 1975 he decided to maintain his formal membership while keeping his distance from the party until he died in 1978.[12]

"Legenda Stanisława Brzozowskiego" is significant for a number of reasons; first and foremost because Hoffman choses one of the most interesting yet most controversial philosophers of the twentieth century for the text's (anti-)hero. He subjects Stanisław Brzozowski to a critical analysis that was considered an act directed at the Polish non-Stalinist Left. Although initially considered a socialist authority, Brzozowski is depicted as a bourgeois reactionary in order to portray Marxism-Leninism as the only true way of thinking in accordance with Stalinism. Secondly, "Legenda Stanisława Brzozowskiego" also exemplifies the way in which Soviet philosophical discourse was transplanted onto Polish soil.

I will first provide a summary of Hoffman's three key arguments which are archetypal for a Stalin-era text that confronts bourgeois thought. The first part of the overview highlights the philosophical tradition that Hoffman uses, discusses the undertones implicated in his text, and analyzes the way in which empirical categories are used and transformed into shallow, vulgar, and ideologized concepts. Next, I will explore Brzozowski's life and work within the context of Polish history and more specifically in the political, artistic, and intellectual movements in Poland at the turn of the twentieth century. Finally, I will address the language and structure of the article because these two elements are inseparable.

12 *Słownik biograficzny działaczy polskiego ruchu robotniczego* [Biographical dictionary of the activists of the Polish Workers' Movement], vol. 2, ed. Feliks Tych (Warszawa: "Książka i Wiedza", 1987), 535f.

At this point, some additional information regarding methodology needs to be provided. Hoffman does not enter into a discussion of Brzozowski's thought, nor does he encourage anyone to do so, therefore, the following analysis does not intend to show which interpretations of Brzozowski's writings are inaccurate or simply false because all of the arguments presented by Hoffman are self-evident and questioning them seems pointless and irrational. The only way to pinpoint the ideological discourse of the text is to deconstruct and discuss the structure of its dogmas through an exploration of the text's foundation.

The most characteristic feature of texts like "Legenda Stanisława Brzozowskiego" is its schematic blueprint that functions as a template in which themes can be changed or added. However, this formula has a major flaw in that it prevents the author from writing more complicated narrative structures for ideas and rhetoric. In the case of "Legenda Stanisława Brzozowskiego" whose targeted readers were neither experts in philosophy, nor connoisseurs of Brzozowski's writings, this flaw appears to be the text's greatest advantage in that it provides arguments that are difficult to falsify but not difficult to believe.

In "Legenda Stanisława Brzozowskiego," an ideological opponent becomes a coherent and rational subject with a clear set of ideas while the reader is assigned the role of both the observer and witness who sees the judgment for the crimes of the accused. Hoffman uses virtual or reverse induction which consists of two major elements: an extra-narrative knowledge of the author and the reader's unawareness. Although the author's position is fixed from the very beginning, he does not reveal all of his knowledge at once; instead, he gradually reveals it through various literary techniques. As a result, the text is not only a discovery for the reader but it is also an account of the author's rising awareness. In this configuration the reader serves as a passive textual subject with limited knowledge, but he or she knows enough to follow the argumentation. This textual structure though can be easily unmasked because the reader must be completely under the control of the author, or otherwise he ruins the author's meaning. Therefore, the text does not allow room for argument because it is assumed that the targeted reader of an ideological text must not be distrustful. The reader is then forced into an arrangement with the author—either he or she will accept the text, or become the author's antagonist. What merely appears to be a rejection of an ideological position had significant intellectual, psychological, and physical consequences in reality.[13]

13 Andrzej Walicki discusses this problem when analyzing "Zniewolony umysł" (The Captive Mind) by Czesław Miłosz. Andrzej Walicki, *"Zniewolony umysł" po latach* ["The Captive Mind" revisited], in *Prace wybrane*, vol. 4: *Polska, Rosja, marksizm* (Kraków: Universitas, 2011).

Brzozowski and the Theory of Marxism

Marxism is a guideline to act. In a capitalist state, it is a guideline for the working class struggling for power. In a people's state, it is a guideline for the working class which leads to the creation of a new material and cultural reality. The Marxist philosophy of life—the recognition of reality in the process of transformation in order to transform it again—is a theoretical tool that any conscious creator of a new society—a socialist—cannot do without if he truly wants to become a conscious creator, i.e., one consciously and effectively using his sociological knowledge in social practice. Hence the demand to address issues transgressing the frames of strict practicality; hence, for instance, the necessity to analyze our cultural past; the necessity motivated by certain reactionary, radically anti-democratic, ideological attitudes seem to have a progressive form or even, as some may believe, a socialist one.[14]

This fragment from "Legenda Stanisława Brzozowskiego" conveys important lessons as a Communist primer, a credo of Marxist-Leninist belief. These lines present the author's, and the Party's position that became the foundation of the criticism of Polish leftist thought, and, most specifically the faction represented by Brzozowski.

The opening sentence had to set a basis that resonates throughout the text so that Hoffman's voice is infallible and draws a line in the sand for the reader. Although the Second World War had ended two years earlier, the war over the direction of humanity had just begun. The Stalinist text thus needed to evoke fear so that an individual would be willing to go into life-threatening situations and fight for Stalinism. In the case of "Legenda Stanisława Brzozowskiego," Hoffman's short, succinct, and most of all, logical phrasing of communist arguments displays the values of the Polish People's Party[15] to the reader in their conventional interpretation. Therefore, the text argues that Hoffman's standpoint is the only legitimate and possible one that can serve as a point of departure for future philosophical debate.

The first sentence of the article is a reference to a political message of communism. And for the readers of the time, it was clear that the main idea behind Marxism, as advocated by Lenin and Stalin, was to fight in order to give power

14 Paweł Hoffman, "Legenda Stanisława Brzozowskiego" [The legend of Stanisław Brzozowski], *Nowe Drogi* 2 (1947): 103. From this point on I will refer to the text using the abbreviated title "LSB" and the number of the page.

15 The "Polish United People's Party" after 1948.

to the parties representing the working class.[16] Thus, to create a political agenda out of working-class struggle was not only an expression of Lenin's genius, but it was also the decisive factor behind the Russian Revolution. Owing to Lenin's constant efforts, Marxism developed from a philosophical and economic theory to a political doctrine with clearly defined and practical guidelines explaining how to create a communist state.[17] Therefore, to use the formula of a classical definition (A means B) in the opening line is meant not only to legitimize his rationale but also to prove that Marxism-Leninism is superior to Brzozowski's Marxist philosophy whose line of reasoning is by far illogical and unclear.[18]

The following two lines add historical elements and constitute an elaboration on the initial definition of Marxism. Interpretations of the political message written into the original statement vary and depend on circumstances, as for example, in a capitalist state, the message becomes a fight for power given to the working class; while in a people's state, it is imperative to act for the creation of a new material and cultural reality. At this point, the reference to the history of the Soviet Union is quite clear. Marxism enables the working class to reclaim power from capitalists; however, that does not mean that the war was over, because the second sentence reveals Hoffman's doctrinal orthodoxy. Like Lenin, Hoffman claims that the state should not be understood as an autonomous entity but rather as a stage in the process of creating a model community, which then justified violence and brutal imposition of the new order. Even Marx wrote about the need to get past that stage[19] because he viewed it as temporal and certainly

16 A similar argument is presented in *What Is to Be Done?* (1902) by Lenin, in which he criticizes the parties who opposed a Social-Democratic revolution. Hence, Hoffman had an excellent model to follow in confrontations with other ideologies.

17 Setting goals and pursuing them, but also the necessity to act on both political and theoretical grounds are emphasized by Lenin in his reference to Engels's *The Peasant War in Germany*. In this way, he opposes certain social-democratic ideas, seeking possibilities for a change in immediate action and the worker's union. Vladimir I. Lenin, *What Is to Be Done? Burning Questions of Our Movement* (New York: International Publishers, 1969), 27.

18 On the one hand, Marxists referred to commonsensical formal logic. However, in their references to dialectical materialism, they also made use of the dialectical logic of Hegel that was adopted by Marx and Engels, and in consequence, also by Lenin. To refer to the rules of formal logic and use them as an argument against ideological enemies could have been seen as a double-edged sword. Cf.: Lossky, *History of Russian Philosophy,* 345–347.

19 Cf. Kołakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism*, 296. This interpretation of Marx, especially in his early works, was criticized by Andrzej Walicki, who writes: "Marx was

less destructive. Followers of Soviet policy could have argued that the state, despite its oppressiveness, was indispensable in the fight against reactionaries because, owing to its structure, it was possible to eliminate a counter-revolutionary element. To make such a statement in Poland in 1947 equates the necessity to fight for the state against those who do not want to give power to the people. This struggle takes place not only in the realm of politics, but also—as Hoffman's text illustrates—in the realm of ideas, and the author explains which attitudes are acceptable and which are not.

The fourth sentence then sets a more philosophical and sociological context by clarifying Marxist philosophy. First of all, Hoffman argues that it should be treated as a philosophy of life that provides specific instructions regarding everyday life. Secondly, as a method of philosophical analysis whose nature is rather peculiar, it refers to reality in the process of transformation.[20] According to

well aware that the consequence of people's liberation from materialized objective relations must be a substantial increase of personal dependency; that elimination of the market's 'invisible hand' would lead to consolidation of the power of an organized collective over individuals. Contrary to liberal axiology, Marx viewed this as a positive change. As he claimed, 'true liberty relies on the degree of subordination to the authority'." (Andrzej Walicki. *Marksizm i nieudany „skok do królestwa wolności"* [Marxism and the unsuccessful "leap into the Kingdom of freedom"], in *Prace wybrane*, vol. 4: *Polska, Rosja, marksizm* [Kraków: Universitas, 2011], 407). According to Marx, the structure of a model community should resemble that of a factory. He also wrote about the ambiguous role of the state, which only proves Walicki's point. Karl Marx, "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right," in Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 3 (London: Lawrence & Wishart: 1975), 3–129.

20 This idea is derived from dialectical materialism. According to Lenin, it is "a development that repeats, as it were, stages that have already been passed, but repeats them in a different way, on a higher basis ('the negation of the negation'), a development, so to speak, that proceeds in spirals, not in a straight line; a development by leaps, catastrophes, and revolutions; 'breaks in continuity'; the transformation of quantity into quality; inner impulses towards development, imparted by the contradiction and conflict of the various forces and tendencies acting on a given body, or within a given phenomenon, or within a given society; the interdependence and the closest and indissoluble connection between all aspects of any phenomenon (history constantly revealing ever new aspects), a connection that provides a uniform, and universal process of motion, one that follows definite laws—these are some of the features of dialectics as a doctrine of development that is richer than the conventional one." Vladimir I. Lenin, *Lenin's Collected Works,* vol. 21 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964), 454f.

Lenin, philosophy cannot exist by itself; it is a consequence of various productive forces, therefore, a philosophical method should not be treated as an academic tool but as social practice. The next line carries another dogma of Marxism-Leninism, viz., that the communist movement is a union of theory and practice separated from capitalism. Hence, the author argues that two academic disciplines—philosophy and sociology—merge in the working class movement, ultimately resulting in social engineering. This Marxist concept is important because it constitutes the foundation of Brzozowski's literary and philosophical work. In effect, Hoffman explains the dogma of communism and prepares the grounds for the criticism of Brzozowski.

According to Hoffman, the problem of reactionary tendencies is of high importance—to deal with it is not an act of escapism, but of utmost concern. Hoffman's article was crucial at the time because of the fight for political leadership in the newly-established Polish People's Republic, even though it was not intended to deal with the irrelevant texts produced by the working class's enemies. It was rather a defensive action to protect the proletariat from the anti-democratic slogans of the old capitalist era; slogans which also found followers in the new people's reality.

Hoffman's demonization of opponents was not only based on revealing Brzozowski's "deceitful" modes of thought; Brzozowski was also accused of trying to destroy the commonsensical laws governing history. Reactionaries contradicted rational cognition of reality and nullified its objective nature by claiming that the world depends on individuals. This ideal vision highlights fideism and the belief in an intuitive power of cognition while disregarding the legacy of empirio-criticism and the philosophy of Henri Bergson, which are the themes that Hoffman focuses on the most in his criticism of Brzozowski. Revealing inaccuracies within Machism was equivalent to questioning the work of the Polish philosopher in general, the philosopher who openly displayed his fascination with both of these tendencies in modern philosophy. When analyzed from a Marxist-Leninist perspective, both make the same mistake—they describe themselves as anti-metaphysical but, on the other hand, resort to anti-materialist argumentation. Anti-metaphysical currents are materialist and anti-materialists are idealists. Therefore, Brzozowski's choice was unacceptable for Hoffman because of its attempt to join together mutually exclusive currents.

Hoffman is well aware that entering into an argument with an ideological opponent may easily go off on the wrong track, hence, he constructs a conceptual pattern of interpretation in his article. First of all, he picks out concepts from the Marxist-Leninist register that are already legitimized in communist discourse. Next, he shows how these concepts function as reactionary weapons

against the proletariat, and then he "uncovers" the presence of these concepts in Brzozowski's writings, to arrive finally at the conclusion that Brzozowski was an advocate for bourgeois philosophy and had to be removed from the collective memory of the leftist movement. This argument is slightly invalid, though. Brzozowski indeed refers to the same legacy as the Communist movement and his interpretation of this legacy differs from that of Lenin and Stalin; but it would still have to be shown that he was an ally of imperialism. In this sense, Hoffman's polemics are only quasi-argumentative and intended to depreciate his opponent's standing. In this way, the author only proves that his perspective is relative.

One of Brzozowski's crimes was, as Hoffman writes, "a shift from empirio-criticism (which he initially believed in) and pragmatism to Bergsonism. It is an evolution from an already reactionary philosophy to an even more reactionary one."[21] Hoffman also notes, "Bergson says nothing about reality or about cognition in general. Epistemological matters essential for empirio-criticism were solved in an overly simplified way—ontological and epistemological matters do not exist; everything is metaphysical and the only concreteness lies inside of us."[22] The most fundamental theoretical abuse is to assume that intuitionism is an anti-epistemological current if interpreted as "a stance exposing the role of intuition (moral, intellectual, metaphysical) within cognition."[23] In that case, why does Hoffman contradict the most fundamental Bergsonian thesis? There are two possible answers, one being that Hoffman refers to Lenin's *Materialism and Empirio-criticism: Critical Comments on a Reactionary Philosophy* in which the latter introduces the theory of reflection, as summed up by Leszek Kołakowski: "Sensations, abstract ideas, and all other aspects of human cognition are the reflection in our minds of actual qualities of the material world, which exists whether or not it is perceived by anyone."[24]

The way that Hoffman presents his opponent's philosophy is not meant to prove Brzozowski wrong but rather to ridicule his work as reactionary philosophy. Bearing in mind the premises of Marxism-Leninism, any worker or member of the intelligentsia with no education (there were such in the Polish United Workers' Party) would find Hoffman's choice of Brzozowski's arguments ridiculous, which was precisely the result that Hoffman wanted. The devaluation of Brzozowski's work is achieved through textual manipulation, terminological

21 Hoffman, "LSB," 106

22 Ibid., 105

23 Jan Hartmann, "Intuicjonizm" [Intuitionism], in *Słownik filozofii* (Kraków: Krakowskie Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 2009), 108.

24 Kołakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism*, 719.

ambiguity and finally, through ridicule and the devaluation of the philosopher's work. As Hoffman claims, "there are no original thoughts" in Brzozowski's writings; "everything is borrowed from the most reactionary Western-European thinkers."[25] Hence, Brzozowski not only follows the most outrageous epistemological theories, he also does not build upon them with any original thought of his own.

Brzozowski and Polish History from a Marxist Point of View

In the section "Klasowość jako podstawa antydemokratycznego solidaryzmu" (Social Class as the Foundation of Anti-Democratic Solidarity), the focus changes from philosophical matters to more social and political issues, which, according to Hoffman, are inseparable from Brzozowski's writings and the author himself. The tone changes as Brzozowski is presented not only as an authoritative Polish intellectual at the turn of the twentieth century but also as a political proponent. This way of writing about him diverges from the initial style, although this shift is unclear and can easily be challenged. If Hoffman considered Brzozowski as an advocate of a certain philosophical theory, then, in the context of social and political analysis, he becomes a conscious and active subject who affects the flow of events through his publications instead of direct action. This hypothesis is justified in the philosopher's attempt to reconcile two of the most important political currents that shaped prewar Poland society as emblematized by Roman Dmowski and Józef Piłsudski.

The second section of the text seems to be of more importance for Hoffman. He devotes more space to socio-political discussion and there is also a difference in his reasoning. As in the first section, Hoffman resorts to terminological density, numerous shortcuts, and arguments based on association; but then the second section is also characterized by a slower pace in order to analyze Brzozowski's philosophy more closely and systematically. These different sections are connected by one central thesis which claims that Brzozowski was not actually a socialist, but rather a proto-fascist. In doing so, Hoffman argues from what he conceives as a set of governing laws that make of communism the pinnacle of human development.

In the chapter on syndicalism, which is devoted to its advocate, Georges Sorel, Hoffman states that "[Sorel] proclaimed the Bergsonian mystique the successor to dialectical materialism [and] the most adequate philosophy for the working-class movement. He contested the value and aim of political struggle, and

25 Hoffman, "LSB," 108.

the idea of the proletariat coming to power."[26] Hoffman argues that the relation between Bergson and Sorel was based on mutual inspiration, and thus, the former as an intuitionist was considered a syndicalist while the latter was influenced by Bergsonian intuitionism as an advocate of syndicalism. There is one more reason why Sorel can be qualified as an enemy of communism: He challenged the idea of a workers' utopia with the "myth" of workers' syndicates. In his letter to Daniel Halévy, Sorel wrote:

> The revolutionary myths that exist at the present time are almost free from any such mixture; by means of them it is possible to understand the activity, the feelings and the ideas of the masses preparing themselves to enter on a decisive struggle; the myths are not descriptions of things, but expressions of a determination to act. A utopia is, on the contrary, an intellectual product; it is the work of theorists who, after observing and discussing the known facts, seek to establish a model to which they can compare existing society in order to estimate the amount of good and evil it contains. […] Whilst contemporary myths lead men to prepare themselves for combat which will destroy the existing state of things, the effect of utopia has always been to direct men's minds towards reforms which can be brought about by patching up the existing system.[27]

Associating Brzozowski's ideas with Sorel's critique of the workers' movement and replacing utopia with myth allows Hoffman to deny his opponent's individuality and originality. For him Brzozowski is just another reactionary since he does not offer anything new. Using Sorel's myth in a simplified way, Hoffman demonstrates how familiar slogans work as a cover for dangerous ideologies as he disqualifies what most people would consider the greatest intellectual achievement of Brzozowski—his philosophy of work—and presents it as an attempt to hide the truth about capitalist exploitation. Furthermore, it is presented as highly mystical and thus inaccessible to analysis with materialist or Marxist categories. What Hoffman wants to prove is that Brzozowski's language is only superficially socialist, because his use of Marxist vocabulary only refers to reactionary concepts. By supporting the bourgeoisie, the greatest Polish author and philosopher becomes the 'greatest fraud'.

The major goal of the article was to prove Brzozowski's connection to Polish nationalism, although this could not be done directly. In his own writings,

26 Ibid., 115

27 Georges Sorel, "Introduction: Letter to Daniel Halevy," in *Reflections on Violence*, (New York: Dover Publications, 2004), 28f. The quote shows the exactly opposite understanding of utopia and the role of the workers' movement than presented by Lenin in *What Is To Be Done?*.

Brzozowski openly criticized the nationalist tendencies of the National-Democratic Party, and it is possible that many readers of *Nowe Drogi* were still familiar with these texts.[28] Hoffman argues that although there was no apparent connection to nationalism on the surface, a closer analysis would reveal Brzozowski's kinship with Dmowski's movement. At this point, his adaption of content to form is obvious, and he emphasizes Brzozowski's anti-revolutionary and anti-romantic attitudes. Hoffman presents himself as a defender of the national tradition, as a rightful heir of revolt, and most of all, as the only heir of romantic moral values,[29] while Brzozowski as well as the National-Democratic Party are portrayed as the nation's true enemies. He then argues that the only rightful heirs of Polish imponderabilia were the Polish United Workers' Party, and that "Brzozowski warns against any grassroots revolutionary action, against the people's mass movement, against any attempt of going to war with the invaders' governance."[30] He describes both the November Uprising and the January Uprising as anti-capitalist and connects them to the Bolshevik Revolution by presenting them as a fight for people's rights and the end to oppression. With these rhetorical tricks Hoffman deems Brzozowski as anti-Polish.

The final section of the text, entitled "Longing for Imperialism," is a major accusation against Brzozowski. Hoffman's aim was to discredit indisputably Brzozowski's tradition, especially since imperialism was a substantial topic for Marxism-Leninism. Supposedly, Brzozowski's most important project was to combine two conflicting ideological currents which apparently had a common feature in that they were both epiphenomena of a Polish capitalism rife with deeply rooted tensions and inconsistent ambitions. On the one hand, there was a desire for independence from foreign powers, while on the other, a need for a pragmatic agreement. Trying to solve this problem, Hoffman claims that Brzozowski had to act on behalf of the invaders, which is proven by his friendly

28 Cf.: S. Brzozowski, "Trąd wszechpolski" [The all-Polish leprosy]; "Oto wszechpolskie są junaki!" [Here are the all-Polish braves!]; "W przededniu [o taktyce narodowej demokracji]" [The day before: on the tactics of National Democratic Party] in *Pisma polityczne. Wybór*, ed. Michał Sutowski (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Krytyki Politycznej, 2011).

29 "Shortly after the war, the authorities were mostly preoccupied with the rising social awareness of the romantic tradition to prove that it is not in contradiction with the new state." Wojciech Tomasik, *Inżynieria dusz. Literatura realizmu socjalistycznego w planie „propagandy monumentalnej"* [The engineering of souls: the literature of socialist realism in "monumental propaganda"] (Wrocław: Monografie Fundacji na Rzecz Nauki Polskiej, 1999), 74.

30 Hoffman, "LSB," 124

sentiments to both the Soviet Union and Western powers. What is crucial and unusual in this way of argumentation? First of all, Brzozowski was manipulated into a purely political game, which was close to the heart of the Polish people at the time. The problem was not only related to the near future, but also to matters of liberty and independence, because collaboration with invaders, even to be suspected of such activity, was met with condemnation. Although not mentioned in the text, the reference to the so-called "Brzozowski affair" and his apparent collaboration with the tsarist Okhrana is apparent. Secondly, the process of re-writing history relied on prevailing post-war sentiments in Poland. Hence, Piłsudski and Dmowski were drawn together, called traitors,[31] and described as politicians not able to predict the Russian Revolution of 1917.[32] To put them in the same category ended many perilous discussions and was suitable for Hoffman's dichotomous vision of the world as presented in "Legenda Stanisława Brzozowskiego." Finally, according to Hoffman's argument, the close relations between the philosopher and National Democracy as well as his actions against Poland could be proven.

In his conclusion, Hoffman states that "his ideology, the political ideas that Brzozowski was the father of in *Legenda Młodej Polski*, were put into practice only after May 1926, when the Polish bourgeoisie was ready—under favorable circumstances—to follow the imperialist bourgeoisie of other nations, as suggested, among others, by Brzozowski."[33] This quote makes Brzozowski responsible not only for future events that he could not have predicted, but also presents him as a major ideological thinker of *Sanacja*. Pretending to be a socialist, he made statements to which Piłsudski and his followers referred during the coup of May 1926. According to Hoffman, this approach not only solves the problem of Brzozowski's philosophy and its pseudo-socialist and proto-fascist origins, it is also a warning for those who would think of departing from the Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy. In this way Hoffman creates a link between history and the ongoing political, social, and cultural events.

---

31 Piłsudski's rejection of Socialism was frequently reported on in newspapers long before the beginning of the First World War. Their aim was to deconstruct the myth regarding the history of Piłsudski's leftist military activities. Cf. Władysław Bieńkowski, "Nad grobem legendy" [Above the grave of the legend], *Odrodzenie* 25 (1947); Henryk Jabłoński, "Raz jeszcze o legendzie *piłsudczyzny*" [A few more notes on Piłsudski's legend], *Odrodzenie* 29 (1947).

32 "Neither Dmowski nor Piłsudski expected this happening: that Russian Revolution will end with victory, that tsardom will be overthrown, and that Russian imperialism will collapse" ("LSB," 128).

33 Ibid., 131f.

This analysis of Hoffman's "Legenda Stanisława Brzozowskiego" is supposed to establish the structure and the purpose of the Stalinist text of reconciliation and demonstrate how important it was to eliminate any discourses that opposed Marxism. The case of Brzozowski and Hoffman is a perfect example of this since the text has been frequently referred to in, for instance, Adam Schaff's *Narodziny i rozwój filozofii marksistowskiej* (The Birth and Development of Marxist Philosophy)[34] in which are present the same figures and ideological calques. The same method was applied to other controversial Polish thinkers of the turn of the twentieth century, including Edward Abramowski and Kazimierz Kelles-Krauz. However, after 1956, the foundations of philosophical criticism in the spirit of Marxism-Leninism would be destabilized.

Translated by Karolina Mistrzak

WORKS CITED

Bieńkowski, Władysław. "Nad grobem legendy." *Odrodzenie* 25 (1947): 1f.

Brzozowski, Stanisław. "Trąd wszechpolski," "Oto wszechpolskie są junaki!," "W przededniu [o taktyce narodowej demokracji]." In *Pisma polityczne. Wybór*, edited by Michał Sutowski, 207–216; 147f.; 182–186. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Krytyki Politycznej, 2011.

Chałasiński, Józef. "Inteligencja polska w świetle swojej genealogii społecznej." *Kuźnica* 4 (1946): 1f.

Fik, Marta. *Kultura polska po Jałcie. Kronika lat 1944–1989*. London: Polonia, 1989.

Głowiński, Michał. "Pani Mayenowa – próba portretu." In *Rozmaitości interpretacyjne. Trzydzieści szkiców*, 225–239. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo IBL PAN, 2014.

Hartmann, Jan. *Intuicjonizm*. In *Słownik filozofii*, 108. Kraków: Krakowskie Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 2009.

Historia Wszechzwiązkowej Komunistycznej Partii (bolszewików): krótki kurs, pod red. Komisji KC WKP(b) zaaprobowany przez KC WKPB(b) 1938. Warszawa: Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza "Książka," 1948.

Hoffman, Paweł. "Legenda Stanisława Brzozowskiego." *Nowe Drogi* 2 (1947): 103–135.

34 Warszawa: „Książka i Wiedza", 1950.

Jabłoński, Henryk. "Raz jeszcze o legendzie *piłsudczyzny*." *Odrodzenie* 29 (1947): 5.

Jarosiński, Zbigniew. *Nadwiślański socrealizm*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo IBL PAN, 1999.

Kołakowski, Leszek. *Main Currents of Marxism*. Translated by Paul S. Falla. New York: Norton and Company, 2005.

Koźniewski, Kazimierz. "*Płomienie* Brzozowskiego." *Twórczość* 4 (1948): 109–112.

Kulczyk-Saloni, Joanna. "O *Płomieniach* St. Brzozowskiego. Nowa recenzja bardzo starej powieści." *Kuźnica* 32 (1948): 3f.

Lenin, Vladimir I. *What Is to Be Done? Burning Questions of Our Movement*. New York: International Publishers, 1969.

— [Lenin, Włodzimierz]. *Co robić? Palące zagadnienia naszego ruchu*. Warszawa: "Książka", 1948.

—. *Lenin's Collected Works,* vol. 21. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964.

Lossky, Nikolay. *History of Russian Philosophy*. New York: International Universities Press, 1951.

Marx, Karl. "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right." In Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels. *Collected Works*, vol. 3, 3–129. London: Lawrence & Wishart: 1975.

Schaff, Adam. *Narodziny i rozwój filozofii marksistowskiej*. Warszawa: "Książka i Wiedza", 1950.

Sorel, Georges. "Introduction: Letter to Daniel Halevy." In *Reflections on Violence*, 3–36. New York: Dover Publications, 2004.

Stołowicz, Leonid. *Historia filozofii rosyjskiej. Podręcznik*. Translated and afterword by Bogusław Żyłko. Gdańsk: słowo/obraz terytoria, 2008.

Tomasik, Wojciech. *Inżynieria dusz. Literatura realizmu socjalistycznego w planie "propagandy monumentalnej."* Wrocław: Monografie Fundacji na Rzecz Nauki Polskiej, 1999.

Tych, Feliks (ed.). *Słownik biograficzny działaczy polskiego ruchu robotniczego*, vol. 2. Warszawa: "Książka i Wiedza", 1987.

Walicki, Andrzej. "*Zniewolony umysł" po latach*. In *Prace wybrane*, vol. 4: *Polska, Rosja, marksizm*, 447–502. Kraków: Universitas, 2011.

Walicki, Andrzej. *Marksizm i nieudany "skok do królestwa wolności."* In *Prace wybrane*, vol. 4: *Polska, Rosja, marksizm*, 397–446. Kraków: Universitas, 2011.

Brzozowski and the Question of Engagement: On a Different Concept of the Autonomy of Art

Przemysław Czapliński

In the history of Polish literature, Brzozowski has been commonly regarded as the first critic to draw an opposition between pure and socially engaged art. In a series of polemics—against Henryk Sienkiewicz, Zenon Przesmycki "Miriam," and finally the poets of Young Poland—the author of *Legenda Młodej Polski* (The Legend of Young Poland) is said to have pointed to the consequences of aestheticism and made a case for ethical writing.

This was how Brzozowski was regarded throughout the twentieth century, especially on those occasions when due to a change in the political situation, artists felt obliged to make a clear declaration and alter their writing accordingly. The first decade of the interwar period was marked by interest in form; in the second decade, artists moved "from Formism to moralism."[1] Following the Second World War, the period of engaged art continued despite the increasing censure of Brzozowski's work, but it was interrupted in 1955, with artists once again declaring their allegiance to pure ethics. Yet this phase also soon ended: In the mid-1970s—with the increasingly severe censorship, the rise of independent channels of communication, and the first organised political opposition—a shift occurred, and, as Stanisław Barańczak put it, ethics took precedence over poetics.[2] And in the mid-1980s, when fulfilling ethical obligations yielded in litera-

1 Cf. Konstanty Troczyński, *Od formizmu do moralizmu. Szkice literackie* [From formism to moralism: literary sketches] (Poznań: Jan Jachowski Księgarnia Uniwersytecka, 1935).

2 Cf. Stanisław Barańczak, *Etyka i poetyka* [Ethics and poetics] (Paris: Instytut Literacki, 1979). The eponymous pair introduced by Barańczak immediately entered Polish literary criticism, and survived until the early 1990s. The categories of "ethics"

ture merely noble forgone conclusions, artists heard again that they should choose "solitude" over "solidarity."[3]

The foregoing summary of the history of engagement and aestheticism in twentieth-century Poland is far too schematic. Seen in these simplified terms, history is marked by an alternating radicalisation of attitudes and artists' biographies are governed by the neurotic repetitiveness of the same dilemma, which can only be addressed with a zero-one response. On the other hand, it can hardly be denied that the history of modernity bears some resemblance to compulsive neurosis, to obsessive repetition of the same predicament and the endless need to decide either to defend art as a value irreducible to economic calculation or social benefit or to subordinate artistic matters to a particular idea that constitutes the quintessence of the artwork and the social justification of art. In other words: either self-concerned art or art in the service of important goals of collective life.

Those who think that the obtrusiveness of this antinomy disappeared at the end of the twentieth century, when the lesson of deconstructionism taught us to know better than to trust in dichotomies, should take a closer look at present-day evocations of Brzozowski in disputes about art. It will turn out that today the literary-critical consciousness is still determined by the belief in the opposition between autonomy and engagement in art and the conviction that the patron saint of this distinction is none other than the author of *Idee* (Ideas). To give an example, in an interview tellingly entitled "Wróg Polski zdziecinniałej" (The Enemy of a Poland Gone Puerile), Sławomir Sierakowski claims:

> […] we embrace the idea of engaged art developed by Brzozowski in his campaign against Zenon Przesmycki (Miriam) and the 'art for art's sake' of Young Poland. We share his view that it is impossible to abstract art from social life.[4]

---

and "poetics" were used both to describe the positioning of art vis-à-vis society and to create a certain code of values, helpful in evaluating particular works.

3 I am referring here to Adam Zagajewski's much-discussed book *Solidarność i samotność* [Solidarity and solitude] (Kraków: Oficyna Wydawnicza MARGINES, 1986), in which the author writes that following the birth of the Solidarity movement, the cultural struggle against the totalitarian regime became "something childishly easy, […] rather anachronistic, almost unnecessary, even exaggerated." He expressed the hope that "thus, perhaps the more difficult works of the spirit will regain their timeless significance" (62).

4 "Wróg Polski zdziecinniałej." Interview with Sławomir Sierakowski by Tomasz Diatłowicki, *Focus Historia*, June 25, 2011. http://www.focus.pl/artykul/wrog-polski-zdziecinnialej

Igor Stokfiszewski, also from the circle of *Krytyka Polityczna* (Political Critique), wrote in his book *Zwrot polityczny* (The Political Turn):

> Stanisław Brzozowski […] believed that the category of real literature should be reserved for texts which, regardless of genre, influence society's perception of reality, change the course of our intellectual choices, readjust the world and life.[5]

Both critics—young, active, influential—refer to Brzozowski when they want to say that "real" art has an impact on social life, whereas its opposite, i.e., literature of lesser importance, is art for art's sake. With such a clear-cut division it is possible to oversee the entire realm of artistic creation, enjoying the right to select and evaluate. Thus, with recourse to articulate slogans, critics can situate, on one side, the Demirski/Strzępka team, Masłowska, the author of *Paw królowej* (The Queen's Peacock/Spew), and, on the other side, Stefan Chwin or Jacek Dehnel. However, it behoves us to ask whether it is indeed Brzozowski to whom we owe the division between pure and engaged art.

Double Negation

What the young critics did not develop was the idea that by criticising the aesthetics of the *Chimera* art magazine and Przesmycki's achievements Brzozowski took a stance against autonomous art and in behalf of engaged art. The idea was born much earlier. In *Main Currents of Marxism*, Leszek Kołakowski wrote:

> Brzozowski was, it is true, the most active exponent in Poland of modernist or 'neo-Romantic' thought, but he would have nothing to do with that aspect of it which he regarded as a continuation of the 'bad side' of Romanticism, i.e. the view that art should be completely free [from real life, P. Cz.] and unfettered by any consciousness of its social functions.[6]

---

5 Igor Stokfiszewski, *Zwrot polityczny* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Krytyki Politycznej, 2009), 156.

6 Leszek Kołakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism: Its Rise, Growth, and Dissolution.* Vol. 2: *The Golden Age*, trans. Paul S. Falla (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 217. It is to this side that Sławomir Sierakowski refers when he claims: "For Brzozowski *l'art pour l'art* will be the recognition of inactivity and the incapacity to act as the symbol and symptom of spiritual superiority / elevation." *Powrót zbawionego heretyka* [The return of a saved heretic]. In: *Brzozowski. Przewodnik Krytyki Politycznej* [Brzozowski: *Krytyka Polityczna* guidebook], ed. *Krytyka Polityczna* editorial team,

It is not difficult to find in Brzozowski's works interpretations originating in this approach or relevant firm statements, such as this oft-quoted sentence: "Sztuka i twórczość jest zjawiskiem społecznym, jest zawsze wynikiem społecznego dowartościowywania przeżywanych wzruszeń"[7] (Art and creativity are a social phenomenon, are always the result of the appreciation of deeply felt emotions). The problem, however, lies in the fact that Brzozowski's concept of art as a "social phenomenon" does not entail acceptance for social art. In other words, in negating aestheticism by no means does the author of *Idee* turn to engaged art. After all, it is noteworthy that in *Main Currents of Marxism* Kołakowski framed his interpretation of Brzozowski's attitude towards the two opposing poles of art with the following comment:

> He was equally opposed to the positivist, utilitarian approach and to the doctrine of 'art for art's sake'. He wished to preserve a place for artistic creation which was not determined by the laws of 'progress' and did not owe its significance to other than human powers, yet at the same time did not represent a breach of historical continuity or claim to be exempt from social responsibility.[8]

Kołakowski's remark is noteworthy, because it reveals a double negation. If Brzozowski questioned both modernist aestheticism and utilitarian art, he must have formulated his judgement from a different perspective—from a third space. This space did not overlap with either the pole of pure art or the pole of engaged art. It would be very convenient to make a hasty discovery and locate this space outside the dichotomy in question. Yet the problem with Brzozowski is that his concept of the relation of art to itself and to society, albeit based on the negation of both extremes, does not in fact go beyond them at all.

"There is no entitative being"

In order to shed light on this problem, we must place Brzozowski's concept of art in the framework of his philosophy.

In a nutshell, his philosophical program can be extrapolated from three pairs of assertions:

Katarzyna Szroeder-Dowjat (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Krytyki Politycznej, 2011), 16.

7 Stanisław Brzozowski, *Mitologia estetyczna – Miriam* [Aesthetic mythology: Miriam] in *Współczesna powieść i krytyka*, 262.

8 Kołakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism*, 217.

1. There is no entitative being—there is only being.
2. Being is unfinished—the essence of being is free creativity.
3. Creative freedom in is not a value in itself—its aim is mutual freedom.

The assertion that there is no entitative being means that there is no idea that determines human life. Stated in an existentialist idiom, no essence precedes human existence. In Brzozowski's understanding, entitative being—physical or metaphysical—determines the forms of human existence, leaving no space for free self-creation. If there is entitative being, the human being does not exist. This follows from classical ontology, which, according to Brzozowski, revealed the impossibility of entitative being; it defined the conditions human beings must recognize in order to understand what their life is. Thus, the anthropological task of the philosophy of entitative being is to make us aware of the conditions to which the human being is subject. The simplest of these is at the same time the strongest: we were born, so we must die; we have bodies, so we must accept the decay of matter; we partake in the exchange of goods, so we are governed by the laws of economy. In light of the philosophy of entitative being, the only thing a human being can do is to understand that there is nothing s/he can do. This is why, as Hegel put it, freedom is the recognition of necessity.

But if the human being does exist, then there is no entitative being. Human beings exist, i.e., they undergo changes throughout historical ages and introduce these changes into social reality. Since change is possible, entitative being as the broadest possible framework determining the human being does not exist. There is no entitative being, there is only being. "There is no entitative being," because "the essence of the world is free creativity. Deed and creation are not an illusion, but the highest truth."[9] If Heidegger argued that philosophy after Socrates forgot being, Brzozowski—alongside Nietzsche—would be among the first who brought being back to mind and pointed to others who did so as well.

Once being is brought back to mind—i.e., the absence of destiny, fate, and a framework of determination—the human being regains self-creating potency, yet at the same time is left lonely with respect to being. For there is no plan of creation which could be realised in existence, nor any foundation with respect to which a given stage of human activity could be evaluated: "[…] człowieczeństwo nie ma żadnego 'gruntu', na którym by stało […] jest samo dla siebie

9 Stanisław Brzozowski, "'Miriam' – zagadnienie kultury" ["Miriam": the question of culture; 1904], in *Programy i dyskusje literackie okresu Młodej Polski* [Literary programs and discussions of Young Poland], 3rd ed., ed. Maria Podraza-Kwiatkowska (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 2000), 547.

wsparciem ostatecznym"[10] (humanity has no "ground," on which to stand […] it is its own ultimate support). Brzozowski holds that the human being—even when lacking plans or aims—nevertheless preserves a value relating to every deed. This value is "freedom," i.e., the quality of being free from previous limitations and constraints. Once we regard value as something that transcends and justifies any given end, "freedom" can be understood as the gauge of human achievement.

It would seem that by negating entitative being and defining freedom as freeing oneself from constraints, Brzozowski is close to existentialism. The difference comes, however, with the following point, i.e., the problem of human self-creation. The author of *Idee* argues that being makes the human being metaphysically but not ontically lonely. This is because endowing being with value does not manifest itself in individual emancipation, in individual self-liberation from frameworks previously regarded as unchangeable. Attributing value to being is possible only by binding together that which has been freed. Brzozowski formulates this idea in an oxymoronic-sounding postulate: "Uczynić swobodnymi względem samych siebie i wzajemnie wszystkie uczucia, wzruszenia, popędy etc. istniejące – oto jest zadanie kultury"[11] (The task of culture is to render each and every sentiment, emotion, drive, etc. free in itself and in relation to all the others). I say oxymoronic, because normally one can either "render" something "free in itself" or "in relation to all the others." The former consists in loosening ties, the latter in creating them; to free things is to make them independent of one another, whereas to "free mutually" is to bind the freeing of one thing with the winning of freedom by another. In this sense, freedom can only be attained by creating ties.

The non-existence of entitative being, the indeterminacy of being, and mutual freedom—these are the three fundamental paradoxes of Brzozowski's philosophy. Could they find expression within the framework of any existing philosophical system? Brzozowski answered this question in the negative: "nowa filozofia […] nie istnieje"[12] (There is no […] new philosophy). It does not exist, because it is not a philosophy in the established sense of the word; however, it is a practice. There is no system, no ontological affirmations—but what does exist is the critical mode of investigation. Lacking foundations practice draws the justification of its groundlessness from the concept of being devoid of foundations. According to this approach, philosophy is worked out, not practiced. It is—just like any other human activity—processual, incomplete, unfinished,

10 Brzozowski, *Głosy wśród nocy*, 247.

11 Brzozowski, "Miriam," 551 (emphasis mine, P. Cz.).

12 Ibid., 545.

inconclusive. It must be continuously produced, despite the awareness that it will never be definitively created. When Brzozowski writes that "scientific 'notions' and 'methods' need to be recognized as a means of artistic expression" (trzeba uznać "pojęcia" i "metody" naukowe za jeden z środków ekspresji artystycznej),[13] he expresses the belief that scientific discourse uses language in the same way art does—for the sake of being, and not entitative being. That is: not in order to name that which is because it must be, but rather that which is coming about, because it can become.

Hence, there is no difference between philosophy and art, because both are forms rather than domains of activity. Culture is the process of producing reality, and this production does not have a ready-made program. This is the first reason why Brzozowski cannot be deemed a supporter of social art: socially engaged art would have to fulfil the postulates of some other, superordinate domain, e.g., that of the social sciences or the laws of production. Were he to acknowledge the existence of some such superior domain, the artist would have to admit that objective truth also exists. However, in that case truth of an economic or social nature would not only dictate to the artist the content of his work, but also contradict the previously stated view that truth about reality is truth produced. Acknowledging socially useful art that advocates a specific program would mean that there is entitative being; and were such to exist then there could be no human being, i.e., the being who constitutes and decides about itself. And if the abode of humans is being—not entitative being—art is situated on the same level of indeterminacy as science or production.

Second, social art is not possible due to the subjectivity Brzozowski ascribed to it. If the philosopher had come to the conclusion that art serves society, he would have situated it on a level lower than, say, practical needs. The existence of a higher level would arrest the searching movement: the human being would know that certain spheres of human activity are privileged and other subordinate. As a result, the artist would be deprived of creative freedom, i.e., the very aspect which Brzozowski regarded as the prerequisite of a creative act. Consequently, the artist would need to reconcile, in some specific way, freedom and oppression, much like a factory laborer who dances merrily alongside a machine producing hundreds of identical screws.

Thus, to sum up concisely, socially engaged art understood as the simple opposite of pure art would have been the Trojan horse of Brzozowski's conception. Adopting this idea would have meant that there exist objective truths and standards of value external to art, and that it would be necessary to subordinate the artist to these truths, making him serve the freedom of others.

13 Brzozowski, *Idee*, 391.

A Different Autonomy

In order to resolve this dilemma, we can refer to Brzozowski's polemics with Sienkiewicz and Miriam. Breaking with the prevalent critical tradition of considering the two disputes separately, Andrzej Mencwel has argued that in both cases Brzozowski resorted to pairs of the same categories, albeit in each case interpreted differently:

> The logic of two-sided polemic forced […] Brzozowski to reinterpret his understanding of the whole relation of expression and communication. With respect to Miriam, it assumed a concept of expression other than that of passive contemplation, and with respect to Sienkiewicz—a concept of communication other than one that is particularly restricted. […] expression had to be "active," and communication "universal," while both were supposed to be inseparably linked together. This way of thinking was decisive for the anti-Modernist orientation of Brzozowski's aesthetics.[14]

According to Mencwel, in the second half of the nineteenth century "expression" was synonymous with poetry, i.e., the true outpouring of an artist, who comes to expression in the work of art; "communication," in turn, was understood from the point of view of true poetry as "production of literature," i.e., writing not "from oneself," in one's own name, but for a rather nondescript collective reader. "Expression" projected a passive, contemplative attitude of the reader that Brzozowski found in the poetry of Young Poland, and with which he contrasted the necessity of inciting an active attitude. "Writing for the many," in turn, even if it was "active" and activating, remained particular as in Sienkiewicz, i.e., oriented to a selected area of culture: the family, the history of the Polish 'republic of nobility', religion. Hence, particularism should be understood as isolation of specific aspects of being; for now let us define the opposite of such an attitude as universalism. Thus, a consistent reading of Andrzej Mencwel's proposition reveals four varieties of art: passive expression (Miriam) and active expression (e.g., Leopold Staff in the period when his poetry aimed to overcome impotence), as well as communication of a particular (Sienkiewicz) and universal kind.

It is universal art activating the recipient that can be deemed the essence of Brzozowski's explorations. We will see this once we translate the categories suggested by Mencwel into notions related to engagement. Let us not forget that Brzozowski's polemic with Miriam is regarded—even in university teaching—

14 Andrzej Mencwel, *Stanisław Brzozowski – kształtowanie myśli krytycznej* [Stanisław Brzozowski: the formation of critical thought] (Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1976), 235.

as foundational for the opposition between aestheticizing and engaged art. We already know, however, that in challenging "art for art's sake" Brzozowski did not deny the autonomy of art. He was looking for such an art that would be autonomous and engaged at the same time. He resolved this contradiction by proposing a different understanding of both these features. In the already quoted text "'Miriam' – zagadnienie kultury", he wrote: "[…] dziś pracujemy dla *kultury integralnej*, dla wielkiego wyzwolenia wszechżycia. Stąd i swoboda nasza nie jest już przywilejem, lecz czymś głębszym nawet niż prawo – istotą naszą"[15] (today we are working for an integral culture, for the great liberation of the entirety of life. That is why our liberty is no longer a privilege, but something even deeper than law—it is our very essence).

Instead of contrasting autonomy with engagement, Brzozowski contrasted integration with alienation. The true aim of art is to create an integral culture. An obstacle for the development of this culture is not autonomous art, but rather art for the sake of its own or another's liberation, but never for the sake of linking its own freedom with the freedom of others. Art can be egoistically focused on its own freedom or altruistically devoted to the freedom of others—and in this sense both pure and engaged art can be threatened by alienation. Integrating art, in turn, by freeing a given aspect of human life, includes that which is freed in the entire culture.[16] Under this approach, the value of art, its aim and its form-producing power is the capacity to overcome alienation. To integrate the emancipated areas means to make their free existence mutually bound: a new word discovered by a poet, unblocked feelings and drives, the idea of a new institution, or a plot about changed social relations will acquire an integrative value only if they do not reproduce conditions of alienation. Thus, in Brzozowski's philosophy the real name of "engagement" is "art integrating being." This cannot, however, be conventional art, which neglects its own form. Socially useful conventional art is a case of voluntary self-alienation: acting for the sake of liberating others, it remains dependent in artistic terms, which, as Brzozowski has it, means that the creator of this kind of art has neither diagnosed the problem correctly nor formulated his/her own answer to it, has not run it through himself. The artist must produce form only under the influence of the problem he has noticed, only when faced with alien reality, so the more engaged he wants to be, the greater should be his defence of the autonomy of art. If the real aim of art

15 Brzozowski, "Miriam," 551 (emphasis mine, P. Cz.).

16 Brzozowski strove to achieve a state in which "personal life uses the whole of history as an instrument and creates its own organism in it" (życie osobiste posługuje się całą historią jako swoim organem i tworzy w niej swój organizm); *Pamiętnik,* 9.

is to reveal alienated aspects of being and continuously integrate culture, then the autonomy of art is a precondition of, not an obstacle to, integration.

Brzozowski criticised "art for art's sake" not for its autonomy, but for its isolation from reality. Romanticism invented the idea of art in opposition to the world, and early Modernism turned this into a programmatic tenet. The author of *Idee* did not want to deprive art of autonomy; what he did want, though, was that this autonomy be marked by solidarity. The measure of the value of a work is not the sum of freedoms gained by the author, but rather the sum of "mutual freedoms" secured for the human world. This means that the philosopher was not searching for an opposite of autonomy; he was searching rather for a different mode of its realisation. In this way, he came to the opposition between isolating and integrating autonomy.

This can be illustrated as follows:

activity…	…that is alienating	…that is integrating
autonomous art	self-oriented autonomous art, isolating itself from the rest of reality (e.g., art for art's sake)	autonomous art integrating all emancipated aspects of life
socially useful art	conventional art oriented towards the liberation of one social group: the proletariat, women, peasants, etc.	conventional art aiming to integrate all of existence (e.g., present-day variants of eco-art)

Thus, Brzozowski should not be regarded as the patron of the opposition "pure art versus engaged art." In his conception, they are not opposites, but rather two varieties of autonomous art. The difference between them lies in the scope of emancipation: the "pure" artist is interested in exploring the language of art, liberating his or her domain from entanglements in and dependencies on any other languages, whereas the "integrating" artist states his case in such a way as to include others in the emancipation and connect the emancipated parts within a new whole. Put differently, the "pure" artist, obtaining independence for his/her own domain, alienates its language from the sphere of social communication, using it as a tool for individual emancipation, whereas the integrating artist triggers the process of de-alienation, which does, admittedly, begin in the work of

art, but then expands in the form of connections ranging over the entire spectrum of social life. Thus understood, engaged art is still autonomous; in contrast to "art for art's sake," which seeks autonomy for itself, "engaged" art acts for the sake of solidary autonomy. What matters here is not the extent to which a work of art becomes autonomous with respect to social life, but rather how many freedoms revealed by this work in social being will be bound together in an integrated culture.

The Troublesome Relevance of Modernity

The reading of Brzozowski's philosophy proposed above and the ensuing necessity of reinterpreting the opposition between pure and engaged art seem to create an opportunity for a different approach to Polish art of the modern period. Throughout the twentieth century, artists faced a changing reality and an unchanging list of problems. Political events forced them to take a stance with respect to the dilemma "ethics or aesthetics"; due to the development of mass culture, every dozen or so years they had to describe themselves in terms of the "mass or elite" extremes; blurring borders among genres and the surge of nonfictional forms renewed the problem "truth or fabrication."

The basic strategy adopted by artists of the interwar period manifested itself in the logic of alternating radical choices: members of the Skamander literary group began with a demonstrative turn against engaged art, glad to be able to praise spring rather than Poland, but in the 1930s some of them, like Tuwim, abandoned the path of "non-engagement" for the sake of ethical art. Several Futurists took the opposite path: Wat, Młodożeniec, or Czyżewski entered public life by manifestly rejecting traditional versions of aestheticism and seeking out forms of social communication with a strong and immediate impact. Yet by the 1930s they stood at the opposite end of the scale, exploring folk language, searching for simple forms, creating poetry that was not translatable into ideological slogans and programs. A similar course was taken by Czesław Miłosz: from the path of engagement during his time with the journal *Żagary* (Brushwood) and his debut collection *Poemat o czasie zastygłym* (A Poem on Frozen Time) to the ethical orientation adapted following his much-publicized breakup with the left. But is the Miłosz of post-engagement phase a representative of pure art?

By posing this question, we reveal the problem of any dichotomous classification. If great artists fail to fit it, the division must be inadequate. By way of example—was Tadeusz Peiper, with his references to Brzozowski, an engaged artist? For sure. Did he pursue autonomy in art? Definitely.

The case of Peiper indicates that the division into pure and engaged art is both necessary for understanding the dilemmas of modern art and insufficient for explaining the most advanced artistic solutions. It is true that modernity was dominated by the dynamics of alternating extremisms; however, the most interesting artistic results appeared when artists followed Brzozowski's course. Here, the aim of artistic explorations was to maintain the inner tension between the pairs of opposites while at the same time preserving the key values of each. On the basis of the lesson Brzozowski taught us we know that in order to find a solution it was not a matter of choosing between autonomy and its negation, but rather between two different scopes of autonomy. But how was this really accomplished?

Tadeusz Peiper seems to have been the first to see the necessity of a different resolution of the dilemma awaiting artists in modernity. This is indicated by his double-edged polemics: he criticised engaged as well as pure art. In Peiper's well thought-out conception, correlated with the problems of modernization, the autonomy of poetry is manifested in the right to violate syntactic and phraseological linguistic rules. Destroying stock patterns of poetic creation stems from the conviction that language and the social perception of reality are linked; according to Peiper, we see the world in the way language allows, and what we see determines how we take part in reality and how we transform it. In other words, we can only change what we are able to name in a changed way. Consequently, social changes are not possible without the renewal of language. But Peiper takes his thinking even further, as it were in the footprints of Brzozowski: He argues that the rationale of poetry is to integrate the unintegrated, i.e., to bind together separate elements of the world. Poetry teaches its readers relational thinking and acting. Yet it teaches them not by means of direct instruction, as revolutionary poetry does, but by training their sense of functionality. Poems turn the mass into a society.

Following Peiper, the history of integrating autonomy was carried forward by very different representatives of Polish modernity. I would include here Miron Białoszewski, the post-war Miłosz, the poets of the late phase of the New Wave,[17] as well as Zbigniew Herbert who in his poetry prior to the mid-1970s

17 My inspiration here is Jacek Gutorow's opinion, expressed in his interpretation of the poetry of Julian Kornhauser: "The lesson of Kornhauser shows that he is not only after poetics or rhetoric in the narrow sense of the word. He is also, or perhaps above all, after a certain vision of being—being understood as remaining open to all languages, the higher and lower, those fully conscious and those outside consciousness, resulting from an impulse coming from elsewhere. Nothing is given. One has to decide, choose, get engaged—but blindly, not owning even oneself, taking everything

(i.e., before the collection *Pan Cogito* [Mr Cogito]) and his essays gradually broadens the scope of human sensitivity, and binds ethics with aesthetics, making aesthetic taste a prerequisite for the individual's moral sovereignty.

Does this idea continue to have significance? Is it justified to extend modernity beyond 1989? One could risk the following answer: modernity lasts as long as the human being produces alienation or is unable to overcome it. As long as alienation remains a result of human activity, whether its main or side effect, the idea of integrating is still relevant.

Uncertain about further names, I would mention—hesitantly—Magdalena Tulli (as the author of the novels: *Sny i kamienie* [Dreams and Stones], *W czerwieni* [In Red], *Tryby* [Moving Stones], *Skaza* [Flaw]), Zbigniew Kruszyński (*Schwedenkräuter*, *Szkice historyczne* [Historical Sketches]), Jacek Dukaj (as the author of *Czarne oceany* [Black Oceans], *Perfekcyjna niedoskonałość* [Perfect Imperfection]), and Marek Bieńczyk (as the author of *Terminal* and *Tworki*, as well as the essays *Melancholia* and *Przezroczystość* [Translucence]). Even if I am wrong in my choice of names and achievements, it is clear that I am selecting those who pursue solidary, integrating autonomy. Hence, it is not about those who point to the necessity of returning freedom to particular collective subjects: women, sexual minorities, children, Jews or animals. Artists active in the sphere of solidary autonomy look for the broadest possible basis of coexistence, finding it in communication (and not in human language itself), in improvised network connections (and not only in stable networks). Thus, their efforts are directed against the mechanics of exclusion, rather than against the exclusion of a particular social group or natural species. In their art, the represented autonomy, played out in the plot, is linked with the autonomy of the means of expression, i.e., language, of form or composition. At the same time, the emancipation awarded to particular beings is reintegrated, in hypothetical mode, with a broader sphere of reality. Here, the question is not, "How and in what name to liberate a given subject?" but rather, "How to make sure that emancipation does not lead to isolation?"

The foregoing sketch of an idea, which as yet does not even deserve the name of a précis of Polish modernist literature, seems worth considering insofar as the opposition between the autonomy and heteronomy of art persists. Gone or at least lessened are the oppositions between mass and elite culture or truth and fiction. Yet the dichotomy of autonomy and heteronomy has maintained its status, dramatic fervour, and relevance.

---

that comes our way." *Języki Kornhausera* [Kornhauser's languages] in: *Niepodległość głosu. Szkice o poezji polskiej po 1968 roku* (Kraków: Znak, 2003), 56f.

Today, even the very reflection about the shrinking autonomy of culture has itself become a non-autonomous form, contributing to a certain ritual of frustration. Revealing the subordinate character of literature serves cynical reason and leads to a bitter conclusion: Since writers cannot be independent of the market, let them live off their own dependence. On the other hand, the market, an area heteronomous to art, accepts and rewards tales about the integration of humans with nature, objects, or even machines. Ideas of a harmonious life in communion with nature, especially in a lakeside cottage, like that depicted in a popular TV series, of active concern for the climate, pro-environmental thinking, recycling—all of this is in line with the expansion of capitalism. Thus, the present changed position of Brzozowski's idea is conditioned by the fact that although modernity at the turn of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries has recourse to the ideology of integration, it thereby conceals vast areas of exclusion, both economic and ecological. This poses a double challenge for art. The first task is to reveal the dangers of coercion hidden in integration. The second, opposite task is to focus attention on everything from which people of late modernity isolate themselves with full awareness and for the sake of survival. Viruses are the literal and metaphorical example of phenomena from which people take distance, and epidemiology provides models of isolation procedures. In response to this challenge, art would have to raise the question about the limits of integration laid down by human beings in the name of self-defence. Put differently, today the greatest problem of solidary autonomy is the question whether at the end of the day it is only humans who should benefit.

With the above-stated problem, I would like to return to present-day claims to Brzozowski's legacy. Even though contemporary literary criticism practiced under the patronage of the author of *Idee* can be interesting, it does bypass the crucial challenges formulated by him. I would single out three most important issues.

First of all, the main categories of Brzozowski's philosophy—labor, culture, nation, church—are too often separated. In their interpretations, leftist critics employ the notions of "labor" and "culture," while right-wing critics reach for "nation" and "church"; the left avoids the undesirable motif of community ties rooted in tradition, the right refuses to admit that in Brzozowski's view man creates himself. Secondly, taking as its point of departure the dichotomy "pure art versus engaged art," present-day criticism reverses the necessary action, assuming that forms of engagement are given, whereas Brzozowski regarded artistic form as a result of coming to know reality and as an individual expression of solving a particular problem. He wrote:

Każda treść w dziele sztuki ujawniona jest wywalczona, zdobyta, przeżyta, zawiera więc w sobie ciężar własny i powagę własną rzeczy głęboko istniejących. […] Nie jest wytworem myśli, jest realnością kanciastą […]. Walka z nią, z jej określonością, usiłowanie oddania jej niezawisłego, indywidualnego kształtu, tworzy rdzeń wysiłków formalnych w sztuce. Ona to – ta walka z określonością własnych czynów i sił, które tym czynom się przeciwstawiają – rozsadza zawsze wszelki sztywniejący szablon w sztuce, manierę. Styl własny, forma własna – nie wynajdują się i nie wymyślają. Jedna jest tylko droga do nich prowadząca – życie własne.[18]

Each content brought forth in a work of art has involved struggle, achievement, deep experience, and hence bears its own weight and the authority of things that exist deeply. […] It is not a product of thought; it is an angular reality […]. The struggle with it, its determinate contours, the attempt to provide it with an independent, individual shape, constitutes the core of formal efforts in art. This struggle against the fixed determinacy of one's own deeds and the forces opposing them rips apart every congealed template, manner, in art. A personal style, a personal form, these are not discovered nor conjured up by thought. Only one road leads to them—one's own life.

In other words: form emerges when individual thought meets the resistance of reality; it is neither superimposed on the world by the mind nor borrowed from literary tradition. Finding a solution to an artistic problem, the artist at the same time finds the solution of a specific general and his own individual problem. The form suggested by the artist combines individual biography and shared culture. Thanks to that, Brzozowski could postulate an engagement that is inseparable from the freedom of artistic exploration.

Third, Brzozowski's conception is—exclusively and expansively—anthropocentric, and this anthropocentrism is complemented by the image of nature as a foreign continent, which must be conquered and subdued. This image is dangerously consonant with the colonising approach to nature in modernity. If in Brzozowski's philosophy only the human is to be the subject of integration of being, this means that his conception legitimates cruel forms of alienation—concerning animals, plants, bodies of water, but also human bodies. If, on the other hand, integration could encompass not only human beings, but also everything that coexists with them and often threatens them, we would need to ask where in Brzozowski's thought is the passage that would allow the transition from the human to the post-human world.

It seems that these three problems—the problem of community, artistic form, and anthropocentrism—today pose a challenge to anyone who wants to comment

18 Brzozowski, "Miriam," 556.

on the development of engaged art by referring to Brzozowski. In his view, autonomy is the precondition of engagement, while integration is the aim of autonomous actions. Thus, art of value cannot exist without community or autonomy. This seems to open up a new perspective on Polish modern culture as a whole—one aimed not at works which confirm the opposition of pure and engaged art, but rather at finding a poetics that would act for the sake of overcoming this dichotomy. Perhaps this perspective could encompass the art of late modernity of the turn of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The ideal of "mutual freedom" suggested by Brzozowski does, after all, seem to constitute a link missing from present-day social life and contemporary art. As postulated by art today, emancipation is rarely accompanied by thinking about mutuality, while mutuality more often than not appears among those who have already gained freedom. Brzozowski's idea enjoins us to remember that the freedoms which we enjoy acquire value only when they free others. This concerns also the autonomy of art.

Translated by Zofia Ziemann

WORKS CITED

Barańczak, Stanisław. *Etyka i poetyka.* Paryż: Instytut Literacki, 1979.

Brzozowski, Stanisław. "'Miriam' – zagadnienie kultury" [1904]. In: *Programy i dyskusje literackie okresu Młodej Polski*, 3rd ed., edited by Maria Podraza-Kwiatkowska, 543–563. Wrocław: Ossolineum 2000.

Gutorow, Jacek. *Niepodległość głosu. Szkice o poezji polskiej po 1968 roku.* Kraków: Znak, 2003.

Kołakowski, Leszek. *Main Currents of Marxism: Its Rise, Growth, and Dissolution*. Vol. 2: *The Golden Age*, translated by Paul S. Falla. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978.

Mencwel, Andrzej. *Stanisław Brzozowski – kształtowanie myśli krytycznej*. Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1976.

Sierakowski, Sławomir. *Powrót zbawionego heretyka*. In *Brzozowski. Przewodnik Krytyki Politycznej*. Edited by Krytyka Polityczna editorial team, Katarzyna Szroeder-Dowjat, 6–19. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Krytyki Politycznej, 2011.

—. "Wróg Polski zdziecinniałej." Interview with Sławomir Sierakowski by Tomasz Diatłowicki. *Focus Historia*, June 25, 2011. http://www.focus.pl/artykul/wrog-polski-zdziecinnialej

Stokfiszewski, Igor. *Zwrot polityczny*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Krytyki Politycznej, 2009.

Troczyński, Konstanty. *Od formizmu do moralizmu. Szkice literackie*. Poznań: Jan Jachowski Księgarnia Uniwersytecka, 1935.

Zagajewski, Adam. *Solidarność i samotność*. Kraków: Oficyna Wydawnicza MARGINES, 1986.

Brzozowski or Plots of the Future

Marta Wyka

Brzozowski was the author of five novels: among them the debut *Pod ciężarem Boga* (Under the Weight of God), and *Płomienie* (Flames), a novel written in difficult times during which he was fighting allegations of his supposed collaboration with the tsarist secret police; furthermore the project of European and world scale, as his contemporaries (but also Brzozowski himself) called it, *Dębina* (Oakwood). And yet, despite these achievements, it appears that Sienkiewicz rather than Brzozowski remains the chief diagnostician of Polishness. All of Brzozowski's novels, previously difficult to come by, were published in two volumes in 2011 and 2012 by the Cracow-based publishing house Wydawnictwo Literackie.[1] It is worth mentioning this fact, because this reedition has failed to inspire Brzozowski scholars—especially those of the younger generation—to undertake new readings of these novels. This is surprising indeed, insofar as the author attached considerable significance to his novels, regarding them as a breakthrough. Their later fate, however, did not confirm his sentiment.

For it is around Henryk Sienkiewicz that lively discussions still revolve today, even though he did not attempt to offer, in his works, prognoses for culture. Brzozowski believed that his European contemporaries should by all means get to know the works of Stefan Żeromski, because otherwise the Polish mentality will remain a puzzle. As we know, this puzzle still awaits a solution, although Europe is not even aware of its existence. Żeromski remained an unknown. Already these brief signals announce the first assumption governing my present argument: as a novelist, Brzozowski had a particular aim in mind, namely to give in his plots an account of places which had shaped him and which he considered formative for his worldview to the extent that they were translatable from indi-

1 Brzozowski, *Dębina. Część pierwsza. Sam wśród ludzi. Książka o starej kobiecie*; Brzozowski, *Pod ciężarem Boga. Wiry. Płomienie*.

vidual into collective experience. My preliminary suggestion is that Brzozowski's novels were determined by his biography, and the degree to which he deformed his biography manifests at the same time the artistic style that he wished to create, regarding these particular works (and especially *Dębina*) as a bold experiment. Are we today in keeping with the self-definition of Brzozowski the novelist? Are we willing to admit—as readers and scholars—that in writing *Dębina* he made a breakthrough, forgotten but nonetheless significant, in European and Polish fiction?

Critics deemed *Dębina* an unfinished masterpiece. Originally, the entire work was to be entitled *Mesjasz* (Messiah); in the end, only the first part of the planned trilogy was completed, namely *Sam wśród ludzi* (Alone among People). Let me recall here two lines of fascination with the novel: the authorial dimension and that of the reader. The readers always belonged to the intellectual elite; the novel never won mass popularity, which, as we know, is often the fate of works oriented towards breakthrough, change, and experiment. The passage of time did not help Brzozowski's novels, however; they remain scholarly fare, though in fact within academia they do not enjoy a privileged position.

Czesław Miłosz considered *Sam wśród ludzi* as the most important Polish novel. And yet its plot, and the narrative that carries it, turned out not to be sufficiently appealing to ensure that the novel has a place in Polish history to which readers would want to return. It was Sienkiewicz's *Trylogia* (Trilogy) that achieved this status despite the criticism directed to it. Brzozowski's fiction demanded overcoming stereotypes and penetrating the "dark current" of Polish nineteenth-century history. Sienkiewicz, going further back in time, better satisfied the expectations of those who sought a positive model in the past. Undertaking a far riskier challenge, Brzozowski nurtured the conviction that he was writing about a "historical type" his contemporaries could not fathom, a type (and thus a fictional character) placed in the borderland between fantasy and realism. Strange as this borderland is, this indeed is the space in which historiosophical and personal visions of novelistic characters can be situated.

As always with Brzozowski, the steadily expanding literary project, extensively described in his letters to friends, was not completed. Here are examples of how the author saw it:

> […] jest absolutnie pewne, że sama zasada kompozycyjna powieści zrozumiana nie będzie, ale jestem już tu tak na stronie od młodopolskich wartości i norm, że na razie jest nieporozumienie i lekceważenie mojej pracy nieuchronne […].[2]

2 Brzozowski, *Listy*, vol. 2, 554f.

[…] it is absolutely certain that the principle guiding the composition of the novel will not be understood, however, I am already so far removed from the values and norms of Young Poland that for the time being incomprehension and neglect of my work is inevitable […].

Moja nowa książka będzie dla ludzi w Galicji – dla różnych „niepospolitych" i „oryginalnych" umysłów, które, licho wie dlaczego, uważają, że mam z nimi coś wspólnego, ostatecznym kamieniem obrazy. Natomiast jestem przekonany, że robię rzecz dobrą, która jeśli nie dziś przyniesie pożytek trwały i głęboki, później będzie w każdym razie czymś spoza granic dzisiejszej polskiej umysłowości.[3]

My new book will be, for people from Galicia—for those "uncommon," "original" minds who, for some reason, believe that I share something in common with them, the ultimate stone of offense. On the other hand, I am convinced that I am doing something good that, even though it may not bring lasting and profound benefits today, will in due course be something beyond the limits of the current Polish mentality.

Księga III jest właściwie beletrystyczną krytyką polskiego romantyzmu.[4]

All things considered Book III is a belletristic critique of Polish Romanticism.

These three quotations and three points establish the function and message of Brzozowski's fiction: a new compositional style, a critical field of reference (Romanticism), and fixing the limits of Polish mentality. Brzozowski turned his back on the *status quo* in each of these domains, i.e., he pursued his project without regard for its thematic tradition. How else could he proceed, if the theme itself was considered intellectually frivolous and anachronistic ("Poland gone puerile," "Poland of pet pupils"—these and similar epithets from *Legenda Młodej Polski* (The Legend of Young Poland) characterised his critical discourse)? Brzozowski's contemporaries did not deserve an intellectual, let alone creative partnership. This is very evident in his satirical collection *Widma moich współczesnych* (The Spectres of my Contemporaries), which can be read as an announcement of his principal *belles-lettres* campaigns (I am using this expression in Brzozowski's sense, to mean novelistic writing).

The author was certainly right when, having completed the first part of *Dębina*, he wrote to Walentyna and Edmund Szalit: "[…] mam wrażenie, że w całości jest to najdziwniejsza rzecz, jaką od wielu lat, może od czasu pierwszych

3 Ibid., 546f.

4 Ibid., 377.

powieści Przybyszewskiego, – w polskiej literaturze ktokolwiek napisał."[5] (I have the impression that as a whole this is the strangest thing that has been written in Polish literature for many years, perhaps since Przybyszewski's earliest novels.) We must not forget, however, that "the whole" never saw the light of day.

Brzozowski's enemy number one was the "Galician mentality." What did he mean by this? Certainly not just the well-rooted "territorial" conflict between the Austrian- and Russian-governed parts of former Poland. Brought up in the Eastern Borderlands, educated in the Russian-controlled Kingdom of Poland, Brzozowski suffered the greatest personal defeat in Galicia: it was in Cracow that he was brought to court on a charge of espionage. On the other hand, many of his close friends as well as his wife's family lived here. In any case, Brzozowski's mental map points to Galicia as the place of oppression, one where the most respected figures of city life can be exposed as individuals unable to transcend their own limitations. No "uncommon minds" are to be found here. But then again, it was in Galicia that, at the beginning of his career, Brzozowski enjoyed spectacular success as a speaker and lecturer: in Lvov and also in Zakopane. Cracow was the home of Wilhelm Feldman, editor of the journal *Krytyka* (Critique) and Brzozowski's long-time intellectual ally, who published his texts.

The writer's conflict with "the city of funerals" (this is how he saw the Cracow of the turn of the century, as shown in his column piece "Król-Duch w Krakowie" [King-Spirit in Cracow] from *Widma moich współczesnych*) was much more complex than that: he objected to a certain type of mental constitution prevalent in Galicia. However, it was in Cracow that Stanisław Przybyszewski's artistic milieu took form, setting a model for the modern novel. Even though Brzozowski did not belong to the bohemian circle headed by the author of *Satans Kinder* (Satan's Children) nor traverse its trails in Cracow, his reception of Przybyszewski's novels was uncritical: He placed them in the leading position as far as new themes and new expression were concerned.

In present-day readings of Brzozowski's novelistic endeavour, the Galician conflict, once so sharply accentuated by the author himself, is treated as almost irrelevant or is only rarely mentioned. It is true that characters created in the first part of the novel were to develop psychologically with time, and the reader's initial contact with them was only meant to provide an introductory overview presaging further progress. Such was the principle of composition in *Dębina*, similar to that of the great European cycles which came twenty years later, although in the former the content of the "family framework" was already radically

5 Ibid., 525f.

different; we could say that, from the perspective of a European of Brzozowski's time his compositional style appeared as fantastic and exotic. Yet as regards the artistic effects of "cyclicality," so important for the fiction of high modernism (Mann, Musil, Proust), Brzozowski did anticipate them, just as he anticipated the diversity of novelistic discourses.

The "historical type" in Brzozowski's fiction is highly complex and his experience quite inaccessible, hermetic. The author was aware that this type needed "civilising," i.e., it needed to be fitted with features—related to the places he came to know—which would bring him closer to some cultural community. This seems to be why Brzozowski regretted not having managed to describe mid-nineteenth-century Paris, with all its artistic and human diversity (in this context Balzac plays a central role as a model). The culture of Florence, too distant from the nature of Polish disputes, could not inspire him the way French culture did. No matter that Georg Simmel considered the Italian city as especially conducive to culture, or, on a different level, that Brzozowski responded deeply to the story of Robert and Elisabeth Browning, who lived in Florence. Emotionally dedicated to his wife, he compared the British couple to his own marriage. We can surmise that the writer's disposition needed the kind of stimulation that moved Zola, Flaubert, or Balzac rather than the harmonious palimpsest of culture that Florence arguably was. Today, venues of writing are of particular interest to scholars of the novel, hence my reason for referring to them; writing in Italy, Brzozowski stigmatised both the city and state as a space of exile and undeserved suffering. He tried to escape to other cultures, with different degrees of artistic success.

The French inspiration of Brzozowski the novelist, superseded by the dominant influence of British authors, is underestimated. We can hardly speak of an evolution here; what happened was rather a revolution of sentiments, which changed radically over the course of several years. In Brzozowski's case, the idea of an evolution of sentiments and models generally does not seem very useful. It is better to replace it with the notion of "change" (with all its implications), or perhaps to express it in performative terms.

In the rather rarely cited Chapter Ten of *Legenda Młodej Polski* ("Naturalizm, dekadentyzm, symbolizm" / Naturalism, Decadence, Symbolism) Brzozowski points to the works of Gustave Flaubert and to the French author himself, seeing in him the progenitor of changes of the second half of the nineteenth century. There is no Zola without Flaubert, nor Anatole France or Jules Laforgue. Without getting into comparatistic detail, we can say that Flaubert's *Éducation sentimentale* (Sentimental Education) was a matrix which the modern writers could fill in accordance with their own social and historical experience, with the proviso that they always and above all follow two principles: that the

novel should be seen in its social context, and that the emotional life of the characters must be filtered through the author's own personality, i.e., his biography. Brzozowski wrote about the social background of *Dębina* as set against the European context, about the transformations of the international activist, who as a type was the psychological descendant of Polish Romanticism; he also wrote about people who for different reasons found themselves uprooted. Refuges and exiles, incomers from foreign cultures, were to determine the shape of Europe—but how? Does this special visionary quality bring Brzozowski's fiction closer to modernity?

From his high esteem for Wacław Berent's *Próchno* (Rotten Wood)—a European novel about European artists whom Europe does not want to admit to its circle (the story takes place in Munich), we can infer, among other things, that Brzozowski not only could relate to the technical fabric of Berent's experiment ("action pushed out into inter-chapters" or a certain "plotlessness"), but also sensed a deep analogy between his own uprootedness and the situation of the protagonists of *Próchno*, who in their monologues manifested alienation (which occupied Brzozowski's attention in other contexts as well) and separation from the social world. There was one difference: the son of Brzozowski's protagonist was supposed to return to this world, albeit not as an artist but as a socialist agitator. Or as the Messiah, which would be the next prophetic figure following Romanticism, and now fulfilling modern tasks.

As we know, in the end neither version was put to paper, although politics and socialist agitation appeared as a theme in *Książka o starej kobiecie* (A Book about an Old Woman), written simultaneously with *Dębina.* This barely sketched novel announces Brzozowski's novelistic potential: the narrator moves to the margin, he is "nameless," so that it is left to the reader to judge the characters. The opening scene of *Książka…* takes place in a courthouse—does this mean that Brzozowski aimed to abandon the "grand" narrative of *Dębina* for the sake of performance?

The foreground story of *Dębina* is hard to grasp for a European reader: Polish Podolia in the time of the Napoleonic Wars (and later the November Uprising of 1830–1831), complicated relations between the forebears of the Ogieński family and the Petersburg court, dark scheming and patriotic escapes (the figure of emissary Trawka)—a reader without knowledge of Polish history will untie—if at all—the whole plot tangle in a way entirely different from that of a Polish reader (if at all). The former will certainly be taken aback by the contrast between the European age of Enlightenment and its feeble Polish mutation. He or she will also be moved—I believe—by the tragic loneliness of the inhabitants of a far-off periphery of the enlightened world. Yet despite these

historiosophical merits, the nineteenth-century culture of Polish gentry and its heritage (we may also call it the Romantic heritage), unknown in this exotic dimension in Europe, did not find a place among the themes of great European literature.

Learning about Europe in Poland also meant education in the field of style, natural for the reader familiar with Goethe's rules: this style is created by travel accounts, reports on the progress of schooling received from tutors (even those ridiculed, like Truth-Hegel in Brzozowski's novel), exploring cities (Berlin, Paris), getting involved in conspiracies. But how, under what conditions could a Romanticism as versatile as Polish Romanticism be read, a Romanticism so subtly transposed by Brzozowski into family stories, conflicts in small communities, the social and individual quirks of people "thrown off the saddle," the complex character of Polish-Russian contacts (both intellectual and erotic…), revolts, escapes, the return of young men so different from their fellow Europeans?

In the Polish cultural context, the philosophy of a declining house and the dissolution of family structure was certainly a breakthrough, as Brzozowski meant it to be, but it was completely divergent from, say, the image of Lübeck as created by Thomas Mann. Although Brzozowski admired him, and sensed precisely the functions of the novelistic autobiographical style developed by the German author, it would have been very difficult for him to cross the border separating two worlds: the German bourgeoisie and Polish landowners.

Abandoning Flaubert (even though he saw in the French author the father of new fiction), Brzozowski discovered the British route. This is a rather well-researched aspect of his reading interests—from Kipling's "imperialism" through Conrad's "colonialism" to the fiction of Herbert George Wells, which attracted Brzozowski's attention.

As can be seen, the nineteenth century was the natural soil of Brzozowski's mind, and could not have been absent from his greatest novel. Its psychologism seems to owe much to the already common, widely read, predominant model.

Where then, in which spots, did Brzozowski project his "plots of the future"? Why did he regard his novel as an experiment which no other author could measure up to and no reader fully understand? An important role in the design of *Dębina* was to be played by the long timeline: the history of three generations, hence—time. At the time Proust's cycle, whose first volume will be published in 1914, was well under way. Without getting carried away by easy comparisons, let us note, however, that confrontation with time is a structural component of the text, and signals that the anticipation of fundamental changes in the modern

novel was already deeply ingrained in the awareness of prose writers who addressed the nineteenth-century stereotype.

Three factors shape Brzozowski's protagonist: the family, the distant province of Europe, the city. It was in a modern city that the author wanted to place his protagonist: the Messiah or a labor leader. Scholars of modernity like to translate this into Marshall Berman's vision of the city,[6] although in this case Brzozowski himself was probably inspired by Sorel, and not by Marx, as Berman was. This signalled messianic motif is not unique in the twentieth century: several years after Brzozowski it will fascinate Walter Benjamin, likewise a reader of Sorel. Bruno Schulz is said to have written a novel about the Messiah, and efforts to find it continue, as though its appearance could strengthen Schulz's vision of Drohobych, a town brought out from provincial darkness into the world of great fiction.

Brzozowski's last unfinished essay is the kernel of his planned larger exegesis of Conrad. Of course we will not find Conradian motifs in *Dębina*, but while writing the novel, Brzozowski was already thinking about the relationship between culture and imperialism, just as Edward Said did in his seminal work eighty years later.[7]

It seems that the family story in *Dębina* is the most personal story of the author himself. Of course it is not about faithfulness to detail, which would in any case be difficult to measure, since we know so little about his early life. That a family can descend into self-destruction was something that Brzozowski, the critical reader, also saw in Mann's *Buddenbrooks*, of which he provided an accurate description. To what extent he treated Mann's work as the context of his own fiction cannot be resolved in this brief discussion. Brzozowski provokes his interpreters to create very broad contexts for his writing—which is both rewarding as an intellectual exercise and dangerous, as it ascribes to him the creation or rather emanation of analogies which are often difficult to test.

But could the heritage of the Polish gentry, as a culture and not only as plot material, enter Europe? Because this gentry is, in the end, the protagonist of *Dębina*; not the picturesque Sienkiewicz variety, but this impoverished yet proud gentry, having faith in its visions of civilisation based on the family, even though its ties are increasingly weaker. It was the gentry that gave rise to the Polish intelligentsia, of a kind unknown in Europe. Brzozowski had first-hand experience of the heritage of being "thrown off the saddle" and tried to liberate himself from it.

6 I am referring here to Marshall Berman's book *All That Is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982).

7 Cf. Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993).

Certainly, this type of culture did stand a chance of an alliance with Europe—and yet it did not come to pass. Here, we touch on a variety of issues and problems. Writing a history of the nation—whether like that of Żeromski's *Popioły* (Ashes) or Brzozowski's *Sam wśród ludzi*—entails a fictional presentation of a particular national idea. As these novels were never translated the Polish Romantic idea remained confined within its own circle. Brzozowski went further than Żeromski; he decided that his plots will be "inlayed" with essayistic discourse, as was later the case with Musil or Hesse.

Today, unlike in the time of Brzozowski's contemporaries, incompleteness is interpreted as guaranteeing the relevance of a text. Certain thematic motifs, such as Brzozowski's interest in Judaism or Marxism, are read as clear signals of communication with modernity. And the plots? They could be used as components of the presented world on the border of fantasy and mimesis.

The fantastic aspect of *Sam wśród ludzi* has been noticed by Andrzej Mencwel in his biography of Brzozowski. Mencwel quotes a passage describing the vision of the "mad child" Oleś, a character appearing in *Dębina*. He places it in the introductory chapter, in which he discusses Mark Twain's novel *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* as an illustration of one of the fundamental conflicts of early modernity, namely that which plays out between (Romantic) nature and the emerging civilisation: between the world of feeling and technology, between the past and modernization arising from technological progress.[8]

Brzozowski's novel was supposed to be grand and modern. Of course its author could not have been aware of new tendencies in the development of fiction writing, which were already ripening, albeit as yet concealed. The suggestion of "grandness" brings to mind epic literature. The approach that Lukács presented in his essay "on the forms of great epic literature" is quite relevant for understanding Brzozowski's fiction. According to the Hungarian critic, the fundamentals of epic literature as projected by Cervantes are "melancholy" and "irony."[9]

The plot and narration of *Dębina* undoubtedly meet these criteria. Added to these are the essayistic discourse and the epistolary solution. "Essayism" offers commentary and philosophical reflection, while letters open and conclude the

8 Andrzej Mencwel, *Stanisław Brzozowski. Postawa krytyczna. Wiek XX* [Stanisław Brzozowski. The critical attitude. The twentieth century] (Warszawa: Krytyka Polityczna, 2014), 30f.

9 Georg Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel: A Historico-Philosophical Essay on the Forms of Great Epic Literature*, trans. Anna Bostock (Cambridge/Mass.: MIT Press, 1971), 104.

novel. The letter of the representative of the old world, Castellan Ogieński (of the Kopajgród castle), is a farewell to the world of Enlightenment; the letter of his grandson, in turn, creates an image of despair and melancholia shaping the Romanticism of Poland's Eastern Borderlands, abandoned and tragically unfit for life. These plots can be quite accurately illustrated with passages from *Legenda Młodej Polski*—or the other way round, *Legenda…* receives additional corroboration from the novels.

The foregoing discussion aimed to demonstrate that Brzozowski's connection with the nineteenth century is stronger than we used to think. It could also follow that the writer's every contact with Polish problems was secretly determined by his biography. To conclude: the modern surprises that Brzozowski prepares for scholars result largely from the incomplete and thus unpredictable character of his novelistic projects, as well as from the combination of writing techniques whose coexistence within one text was only admitted within late modernist fiction: the employment of essay and letter, i.e., genres belonging to different textual spaces.

Emotions controlled by irony, the melancholia and neurasthenia of the inheritors of history, which Europe should by all means get to know, the pride of the artist who confronts them—none of these dominant elements in his writing helped Brzozowski secure a place among masters. Perhaps this was meant to be the fate of those "born late." Here, i.e., in the communal experience of a generation, another possible perspective on reading Brzozowski's novelistic plots comes into view, again reaching out into the future (and not back to the past).

But there also exists another solution: I propose to call it "abandoning plots." According to this approach, the scholar of Brzozowski's fiction refrains from deciphering Brzozowski's psychological historicism or adopting it to the European norm. What he or she does instead is look into Brzozowski's essayistic reflection in order to see how it functions, cognitively and artistically, in his fiction. Adopting a research strategy of this kind, the scholar moves *beyond* the plots, thus modifying their function from narratives in the foreground to fictional additions to visions of the nineteenth-century world, governed not only by its own laws but also by the principles by which the philosophical mind learns about reality.

With this choice, Brzozowski's fiction becomes universalised, always relevant for any "world of thought." Whether this proposition can be defended I am in no position to judge. But a polyphonic "concert of ideas," whose coexistence is possible in an extra-historical universe, indeed distinguishes Brzozowski's fiction. Writing about polyphony, Bakhtin used Dostoevsky to illustrate his thesis. Brzozowski admired the author of *Crime and Punishment* as an insightful

spokesman of "the Russian soul." Again, the nineteenth century and its great prose support Brzozowski's novelistic design. "This is our beginning"[10]—these words from the first chapter of Czesław Miłosz's "Traktat poetycki" (Treatise on Poetry), referring to the role of fin-de-siècle for the emerging new era, could be shared by Brzozowski—even though he was such a harsh critic of the "Galician heritage." The heritage of the Eastern Borderlands operated according to similar principles. And the writer made both those currents accountable, believing that he alone possessed the artistic authority to pass judgment on them.

Translated by Edward M. Świderski

WORKS CITED

Berman, Marshall. *All That Is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982.

Lukács, Georg. *The Theory of the Novel: A Historico-Philosophical Essay on the Forms of Great Epic Literature*. Translated by Anna Bostock. Cambridge/Mass.: MIT Press, 1971.

Mencwel, Andrzej. *Stanisław Brzozowski. Postawa krytyczna. Wiek XX*. Warszawa: Krytyka Polityczna, 2014.

Miłosz, Czesław. *A Treatise on Poetry*. Translated by the author and Robert Hass. New York: Harper Collins, 2001.

Said, Edward. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1993.

10 Czesław Miłosz, *A Treatise on Poetry*, trans. Czesław Miłosz and Robert Hass (New York: Harper Collins, 2001), 5.

Epilogue

Andrzej Mencwel

According to dictionaries of literary terms, an epilogue to a given text is supposed to inform us of the subsequent history of the tale recounted in the completed work. But these dictionaries remain silent about when, following the completion of the work, the epilogue comes to be, for which reason I will assume that the time frame remains indeterminate: it can be written shortly after the tale has been told but also well after the event, from a more distant temporal perspective. As I write, more than a year has passed since the end of the international scholarly conference, entitled "Always Our Contemporary: Stanisław Brzozowski and the Intellectual Field in Twentieth Century Poland and Beyond," organized at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland, October 23–24, 2014. It might be thought therefore that I am making life too easy for myself by resorting to this, so to say, artistic stylization. However, the point is not merely that the conference took place under the sign of a risky designation ("always our contemporary") and gathered scholars from several countries, especially from Poland, with a program the thematic scope of which was equal to the repertoire of issues that exercised Brzozowski. The point is rather that the conference was expertly organized, the best of its kind in my decades-long experience of conferences throughout the world. To be sure, I have in mind as well the fabled Swiss penchant for exactness, esteemed everywhere, including Poland: everything took place according to plan, punctually and exactly, in a cordial and friendly setting. Even the Alps, clearly visible through the windows of the conference room, seemed to extend their greeting to us. None of this, however, exceptional though it was, would justify recourse to the artistic stylization suggested by the title of the conference were it not for the fact that the conference was pervaded by a distinctive sense of drama, a scenic character, so to speak, to which all the participants seemed alive. It is still fresh in my mind and is the reason why I am adding this epilogue.

How did this dramaturgy come about? First of all, the invited speakers were requested to submit the texts of their presentations in advance of the conference in order to prepare an online as well as a complete print version distributed to all participants at the start of the conference. Everyone knows that generally this fails to happen, and that conferences tend to consist of talks not infrequently constructed in the course of the presentations. The monotony of the ensuing monologues works to the disadvantage of, indeed it tends to stymy, free exchange and dialogue. I have been witness to sessions during which no time remained for discussion. I would have said that the farther one penetrates into Eastern Europe the more frequently do such cases occur, a regularity deriving from Soviet party conferences, were it not for the circumstance that the French, among whom rhetoric tends to supersede argument, likewise favor this style.

From the start the organizers of the conference in Fribourg enjoyed a double organizational success: not only did they distribute the texts of the presentations, they managed to convince all the speakers to restrict themselves to short summaries of the main theses of their papers. I keep racking my brain, trying to understand how the organizers managed to achieve this consensus, since I can recall countless occasions of presentations exceeding all measure—recently, I won't say where, a presentation in bad English dragged on more than an hour—with the speakers stoically ignoring reminders from the chairpersons. Worse still are the cases when speakers acknowledge the time constraints, promise to close anon, and go on incessantly. There would be little point of rehearsing these unfortunate examples were it not for the fact that, seen against this background, the Fribourg conference dedicated to Brzozowski became a model of its kind. It took on the character of a virtually ceaseless debate, a two-day dialectical symposium, with discussions running on even during the prandial interludes. It is evident that the best means alone could not by themselves achieve this level of intellectual drama without the skills and qualities of the conference organizers—Jens Herlth, Dorota Kozicka and Edward Świderski. Personally, in the company of such protagonists, on such a stage, I felt like a fish in water.

The significance of this kind of symposium does not come down to the presentations prepared in advance—though some of these were excellent—with which the reader can at present become familiar in the revised versions following the discussions during the symposium. Rather the two-day, virtually incessant debate constituted the proper sense of the conference, a sense 'superimposed', to quote the Structuralists, on the texts prepared in advance that were so many answers to the implicit question raised in the title of the conference. Does Brzozowski forever remain our contemporary, and if so, in what does his con-

temporaneousness consist? What is it that today continues to lend vitality to his thinking and creativity? In seeking to answer these questions, I should first note that at no time during the meeting was the so-called 'Brzozowski affair' even mentioned, never mind discussed. It is well-known that in 1908 Brzozowski was accused of collaboration with the tsarist political police, an accusation that doubtless shortened his life and exerted a catastrophic effect on the reception of his work over the course of the ensuing century. It became a kind of 'moralizing' ritual to offer answers to the pseudo-question, whether, namely, in case Brzozowski was a 'spy', his works retain an autonomous value and remain important or whether they are without value in this sense and should be excommunicated, together with their author? Nothing of the sort made the rounds in the course of the conference in Fribourg, which fact leads me to conclude that, for the participants, this question had been resolved: not only was Brzozowski not guilty of the collaboration for which he was accused, but the very accusation was a falsehood and thus deserves no further attention. Though this is the majority opinion today, it is not exclusive: on the occasion of another conference I attended someone opined that, had it not been for all the tumult surrounding the so-called 'affair' and the periodic revivals of the controversy, Brzozowski would have long since been forgotten. However, the organizers of the Fribourg symposium recognized in advance, so to say, that the actual significance of the author of *Idee* (Ideas) has all to do with the message he conveyed, a message so rich in content that it would more than meet the aims of the conference. Moreover, it is a message that seems to speak to a key contemporary issue, as represented by Richard Rorty, an issue that Edward Swiderski took up in his paper.

I will return to this paper, since the discussion it called forth amounted, in my opinion, to the intellectual highpoint of the conference. At present, I want to return to the 'Brzozowski affair', approaching it, however, from another angle, not as a problem, but as a symptom. That it became a problem is a matter in regard to which I took a firm stance in my first book, published in 1976, a stance I confirmed in my most recent book of 2014.[1] However, this does not alter the conviction, stated long ago already, that the so-called 'Brzozowski affair' merits a separate investigation in that it is an example of the way in which the media within our mass societies exacerbate contemporary political mechanisms. Or stated in simpler terms: instead of addressing the question become stand-

1 Cf. "Nota V. Czy istnieje sprawa Brzozowskiego" [Note V. Does the Brzozowski affair exist] in Andrzej Mencwel, *Stanisław Brzozowski. Kształtowanie myśli krytycznej* (Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1976), 362–386, as well as my *Stanisław Brzozowski. Postawa krytyczna. Wiek XX* [Stanisław Brzozowski. The critical attitude. The twentieth century] (Warszawa: Krytyka Polityczna, 2014), especially 600–612.

ard—was Brzozowski guilty? —I suggest turning to the question, how was the Brzozowski affair concocted? The wide-ranging and fruitful discussions in Fribourg rekindled this question in my mind, turning it in fact into a broader issue: Has the intellectuals' fate in Eastern and Central Europe in the first half of the twentieth century been more specific and dramatic than that of their counterparts in Europe's heartland, that is, in the West? Did the same dilemmas—for instance the conflict between the 'patriots' and the 'internationalists' (as word had it in Warsaw at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries)—which in the heart of Europe ran their course in orderly, 'normal' ways, acquire extreme, radical, and explosive forms at Europe's peripheries? And is it not the case that, at the peripheries, modernism was often qualified as a "worthless" (obezwartościowy) relativism, as Brzozowski would have put it, and that the forms of escape from this relativism have often been extreme—in the direction of anarchism, nationalism, socialism, even fascism and communism? Conversions to Christianity, on the contrary, often evince a personalist tinge.

To a question as broad and fundamental as this I have no concise, desultory answer. I do admit, however, that the presentations and discussions during the Fribourg conference stimulated my thinking about these matters, which deserve to become a theme for research. During the conference Brzozowski appeared not only in the light of the by now classical juxtaposition with Lukács, but also with Emile Cioran; as a possible source of inspiration for Ukrainian nationalism as well as the Israeli Kibbutz movements; in the context of the Italian Marxists, Labriola and Gramsci and their contemporary followers. As I listened to Jens Herlth's presentation, whose protagonist was the coryphe of Ukrainian nationalism, Dmytro Dontsov, I recalled Ivan Franko's intellectual biography that in many ways is closely analogous to Brzozowski's. To this analogy I would add the Czech, Zdeněk Nejedlý, who transformed himself from a modernist into a Stalinist, as well as the Lithuanian, Mikalojus Čiurlonis, a musician and painter rather than a theoretician, but whose fate was no less dramatic than that of Brzozowski. What do I have in mind in suggesting these analogies? Just this: writers, thinkers, and artists from the European peripheries experienced the intellectual dilemmas and conflicts of their day with particular intensity. Close attention needs to be paid to their *intellectual milieus*, as signaled in the subtitle of the conference. The clash of modernity and tradition often took an acute, dramatic form at the peripheries and came to expression as well in the cultural modes of being. Outstanding local artists and intellectuals still continue to aspire to 'govern souls' so soon as they are directed to become 'engineers of souls'; they stylize themselves as the 'conscience of the nation', although advancing nations have not a conscience but interests; they seek to be the legislators for their

societies, whereas the latter need experts. That is why anyone who fails to understand this fundamental historical transformation has somehow or other to be depraved and/or liquidated. In my opinion, the staging of the 'Brzozowski affair' is a salient example of the personal consequences of this kind of historical clash.

If, however, the claim that opened the conference—"always our contemporary"—is to stand, that is to say, to be confirmed in relation to Brzozowski, he needs to be more than a historical accident, he needs to be genuinely our contemporary. This was the issue Edward Świderski addressed in his attempt to juxtapose Brzozowski with Rorty. It was a felicitous choice, since Rorty, more than any other philosopher who has recently enjoyed international renown (among others, Habermas, Derrida, Bauman), is the iconic thinker of the *intellectual milieu* at the turn of the twenty-first century. Moreover, he enjoys considerable prestige in Poland, having several devoted commentators, and as testified by the controversial debate that took place in Warsaw in which he was the chief adversary.[2] In his presentation, Edward Świderski first emphasized the analogous roles of the two thinkers, notwithstanding the century that separates their respective activities as well as the different cultural contexts. Brzozowski and Rorty are not arm-chair philosophers but rather conscious actors on a broad cultural stage; both attacked effete idols and *dead metaphors*; each sought to carry out a fundamental reconstruction of philosophy as a whole in the name of a new vision of truth; both engaged in radical cultural criticism in order to transform the state of mind of their respective societies; and each upheld literature as the exemplary model of human creativity.

The most evident difference between them is the century-long temporal divide, visible as well in their writerly forms—Brzozowski, though attaining literally in the last months of his life a crystal clarity in his essays theretofore unknown in Polish, remains a fundamentally modernist writer, and hence somehow dated; Rorty's style sparkles with all the effects of contemporary philosophical rhetoric honed within and directed to the university seminar. Moreover, the author of *The Legend of Young Poland* could count on no more than the local Polish public, whereas the author of *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* stepped onto the broad American cultural scene that today more than ever before is synonymous with global visibility. However, this disproportion in style and exercised effect need not necessarily work to Brzozowski's disadvantage, especially if we keep in mind his pursuit of truth rather than success. In this last regard,

2 Józef Niżnik, John T. Sanders (eds.). *Debating the State of Philosophy Today: Habermas, Rorty, and Kołakowski*. Westport, CT.: Praeger, 1996.

Brzozowski does occupy one of the lowest places in world rankings, although the Fribourg symposium does doubtlessly improve his standing.

I encourage anyone interested in the parallel between Brzozowski and Rorty to attend directly to Świderski's text.[3] I want only to call attention to the way in which the discussion that ensued focused on what I consider to have been the salient point of the Fribourg conference and that is at the same time *a core component of the cultural consciousness*. To this end, let me set out briefly, and hopefully without excessive simplification, the essence of Brzozowski's thinking as manifest in key biographical nodes. The first node is the youthful 'Darwinian crisis', as it was then called, that brought on the loss of religious faith, substituting for the latter the, at the time virtually sacred, "scientific worldview." In Brzozowski's intellectual biography this was the first step to rejecting the 'Platonism' of European thought, as Richard Rorty was to dub any faith in a predetermined world of ideas a century later. But Brzozowski was soon to discover that the 'scientific worldview' depended on a different version of 'Platonism', viz., on the claim that there exists a predetermined 'readymade being' that, like a book inscribed by the hand of God, has only to be deciphered by science. Brzozowski's extensive criticisms of then contemporary versions of the scientific worldview presented in "Monistyczne pojmowanie dziejów i filozofia krytyczna" (The Monist Conception of History and Critical Philosophy, 1904)[4] retains its significance to this day. Fully aware of what he was doing, Brzozowski passed from a philosophy of cognition to a philosophy of action, claiming moreover that being is not readymade but is created, both in its essence and in all of its particular forms: nature, history, societies, cultures, personalities and persons. Here I can no more than mention the philosophical inspirations of this passage, chief of which was doubtless Marx's thought understood as a critical *historical materialism* and Nietzsche's radical critique of science and history.

In my opinion, as the critical side of the *philosophy of action*, subsequently reformulated into the *philosophy of labor*, acquired its proper guise in the *philosophy of culture*, Brzozowski confronted the key problem for the thought of his day. If it is true that all known forms of religion, science, and philosophy are hardly 'objective' revelations about some *extra-human* essence of our world but only 'subjective' claims concerning its human qualities, then on what basis can we evaluate these claims and accept them as more or less true? As he worked on the initial version of the *philosophy of action* Brzozowski grew aware of its subjectivist and voluntarist limitations (is every act of each person of equal value?) and sought to establish the conditions of its validity. He subjected modernist

3 See pp. 159–184 of the present volume.

4 Brzozowski, *Kultura i życie*, 273–347.

relativism, that he termed an *illusionism*, to a withering critique: it is not the case that every statement is equally valid since not illusions but *labor* constitutes our world. Legitimacy accrues to only those thoughts, forms of consciousness, assertions that stimulate labor so understood. Brzozowski's sometimes virtually literal style of expression imparts a somewhat anachronistic character to his thinking, but as soon as its essence is appreciated the difference that separates his thought from the dominating trait of contemporary philosophy, as represented emblematically by Rorty, becomes clear. Brzozowski's main issue was the metaphysical problem; he struggled constantly with the classical question—why is there something rather than nothing?—and sought an ultimate answer in his own language. If the world as a whole and all its concrete forms are of our own making, then what must we be like in order to be equal to this task? This doubtless creationist cosmology required a counterpart in a creationist anthropology. Ultimately, however, of utmost importance is the question of what must man be who is able responsibly to bring this creation into being. Even though, in what were virtually his last words, Brzozowski spoke of *poetry*, he described it as *man's creative self-definition*. And it is here, I claim, that Brzozowski's standpoint outstrips Rorty's philosophy. Happily, Brzozowski knew nothing about the 'linguistic turn' in philosophy. He was not concerned with the validity of philosophical claims but with the validity of man's standpoint as such. It is in this sense that he remains a thinker who is *always our contemporary*.

Translated by Edward M. Świderski

Contributors

Jan Balbierz, PhD, is associate professor at the Department of Germanic Languages of the Jagiellonian University, Cracow.

Przemysław Czapliński, PhD, is professor at the Department of Literary Anthropology at Adam-Mickiewicz-University, Poznań.

Gábor Gángó, PhD, is professor at the Institute of International Studies and Political Science of Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Budapest, and Fellow at the Max Weber Centre for Advanced Cultural and Social Studies of the University of Erfurt.

Jens Herlth, PhD, is professor of Slavic literatures at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland.

Eliza Kącka, PhD, is associate professor at the Institute of Polish Literature of Warsaw University.

Dorota Kozicka, PhD, is associate professor at the Department of Contemporary Criticism of the Jagiellonian University, Cracow.

Andrzej Mencwel, PhD, is professor emeritus at the Institute of Polish Studies of Warsaw University.

***Michał Mrugalski*,** PhD, is a guest professor at the Instiute of Slavic Studies of Humboldt University, Berlin.

Joanna Orska, PhD, is professor at the Department of Polish Literature after 1918 of the University of Wrocław.

Ewa Partyga, PhD, is professor and head of the Theatre Department at the Institute of Art History of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw.

Paweł Rams, is a doctoral student at the Institute of Literary Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

Edward M.Świderski, PhD, is professor emeritus of philosophy of culture and aesthetics at the Department of Philosophy of the University of Fribourg, Switzerland.

Krzysztof Trybuś, PhD, is professor and head of the Department of the Literature of Romanticism at Adam-Mickiewicz-University, Poznań.

Maciej Urbanowski, PhD, is professor and head of the Department of Contemporary Criticism at the Jagiellonian University, Cracow.

Marta Wyka, PhD, is professor emerita of Polish literature and contemporary criticism at the Jagiellonian University, Cracow.

Andrzej Zawadzki, PhD, is associate professor at the Department of Literary Anthropology and Cultural Studies of the Jagiellonian University, Cracow.

Christian Zehnder, PhD, is a postdoctoral researcher in Slavic Literatures at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland.