

LETTERS PRO AND CON

To the Editor:

In the List of Writers accompanying my article "Polish Theories of Art between 1830 and 1850" (*JAAC*, December 1957), I found some printer's errors which I would like to correct: (1) Czernyszewski published his dissertation "On the Aesthetic Relationship of Art and Reality" in the year 1855 (not 1854). I mentioned the correct date in the text of my article. (2) Dembowski died in the year 1846. The dates of his life, therefore, are 1822-1846. (3) Wit Stwoszcz died in the year 1533 (not 1833). (4) The first name of Klaczko was Julian, not Juliusz.

STEFAN MORAWSKI

To the Editor:

The "List of Writers" accompanying the article of Stefan Morawski on "Polish Theories of Art between 1830 and 1850" contains a number of inaccuracies:

The author lists: Czernyszewski, Mikolaj (1828-1894). He has in mind the famous Russian founder of materialistic aesthetics and critic of Hegel and F. Th. Vischer: *Nikolai Gavrilovitch Chernyshevsky*. The latter never had any connection with Polish aestheticians or Polish aesthetic thought before 1945. Here he is said to be "the author of aesthetic reviews, the largest of which 'On the Aesthetic Relationship of Art and Reality' appeared in 1854." It appeared in 1855. It was not a review but Chernyshevsky's doctoral dissertation. Mr. Morawski is aware of that because he mentions the dissertation in the text of his article without naming its title. Why the title is listed here in the Polish language is unknown to me. It was written in Russian.

The author lists: Dembowski, Edward (1822-1848). But later on he is said to have been killed while fighting "as leader of peasants" in 1846. I do not know of any revolt of Polish peasants in 1846 or 1848 except for the "jacquerie" in Austrian Galicia where a peasant mob massacred Polish landowners. Polish historians state that this revolt was instigated and abetted by the government of Vienna which wanted to crush the spirit of independence of the Polish gentry. So when and where did Dembowski die?

The author lists: Klaczko, Juliusz. His name is Julian Klaczko. It is said that "his best works are on Krasiński and Sienkiewicz." Klaczko was best known for his writings on art and most influential because of his political writings. He had very little to do with the epoch 1830-1850. In 1830 he was 5 years old.

The author lists: Norwid, Cyprian Kamil as "one of the most outstanding Romantic poets." He was a post-Romantic poet or an epigone of Romantic poetry. Unknown and living in obscurity, he was discovered or rediscovered after his death.

The author lists: "Stwoszcz, Wit (indefinite-1833).¹ An outstanding sculptor, for many years he *studied* [my emphasis] in Nuremberg. His best work is the Mariacki Altar in Cracow." The author fails to mention that this man is identical with the famous wood carver and sculptor known as *Veit Stoss* who sometimes wrote his name as *Stuoss* or *Stwoss* and his first name as *Fyt* or *Feyt*. He was *born* (according to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*) in 1438 or 1440 in *Nuremberg* and died also in *Nuremberg* in 1533. Out of 93 or 95 years of his life he spent 18 years in Poland and the rest of his life in his native *Nuremberg*. He returned there from Cracow in 1496. His most important works, *Der englische Gruss* and *Lindenholzmadonna* are in *Nuremberg*. The altar in the *Marienkirche* in Cracow is an object of special sentimental attachment and reverence in Poland but not his most important work.

MAX RIESER

¹ A correction of the reference to Wit Stwoszcz was also sent to the *Journal* from Seoul from Richard Hertz, German Minister to Korea.

To the Editor:

I would like to thank Dr. Rieser for the attentive reading of my article and for the pains which he took to verify my list of writers. Let me first state the issues on which we are in agreement. Czernyszewski's work which I quote was really a dissertation, and not a review. ("Review" was used as a synonym for the word "paper"—of course, badly.) I gave Czernyszewski's name and the title of his work in the Polish transcription, as it is a custom in my country to do so. I did mention however that he was a *Russian* revolutionist. Wit Stwosz is identical with Veit Stoss.

However, I cannot agree with the other objections which Dr. Rieser makes. And by the way, I must correct two of his errors. Czernyszewski died in 1889 and not in 1894. The dissertation was not his doctoral one, but was written for his M.A. degree.

I shall answer Dr. Rieser's objections in the order in which he brought them forward:

(1) Czernyszewskij (if you like it better)—in spite of Dr. Rieser's categorical statement—had some connections with Polish aesthetic thought before 1945. It is enough to mention Bronisław Białobłocki, who in the years 1883-85 wrote many literary essays under Czernyszewski's influence. (Białobłocki's essays were edited in 1932 as *Szkice literackie*.)

(2) Klaczko was best known for his writings on art and on political questions in Western Europe. For Polish readers (and not only for them) he was also known as an outstanding literary critic. In 1853 he wrote on Bürger and Mickiewicz (*Lenora i Ucieczka*, Leszno, *Pokłosie*). In 1855 he published a study on Pushkin and Mickiewicz (*Revue contemporaine*, April and May issues). In the same year he wrote on Heine (*Revue de Paris*, January issue). In 1862 his excellent study of Krasiński, entitled "La poésie polonaise au XIX siècle. Le poète anonyme de la Pologne" (*Revue des deux mondes*, January issue), appeared. In 1888 he published in *Przegląd Polski* an analysis of Sienkiewicz's then recent books (*Ogniem i mieczem*, *Potop*). I wonder how Dr. Rieser can state so authoritatively that Klaczko had very little to do with the epoch 1830-50. The facts show quite the opposite. The argument that Klaczko was only five years old in 1830 seems naïve. The ideas born in the period 1830-50 lived on in the next decades; moreover, Klaczko's education was highly influenced by them.

(3) Norwid was not a post-Romantic poet. It is evident that his position, for many complicated reasons, was separate, but not one of the Polish historians of literature states that Norwid was not connected with the Romantic trend. I tried to argue that his aesthetics and theory of art touched the most symptomatic problems of Polish Romanticism. The same can be said of his poetry, his dramas, and his artistic creation.

(4) Wit Stwosz (Veit Stoss) is the man about whom Polish and German art historians have quarrelled for years. The difficulty is that not all the facts of his life are known, and sometimes it is impossible to make precise statements. I am not a specialist in the field of Polish or German medieval art. It seems however that Dr. Rieser has trusted too much to the information in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Recent researches on the life of Wit Stwosz permit one to state that:

(a) He was probably born in Horb, and not in Nuremberg (according to Ks. Bolesław Przybyszewski, "Nieznane archiwalia dotyczące Wita Stwosza," B.H.S.K. [Warszawa, 1952]). The date of his birth is indefinite. The information of Neudörfer does not seem valid. Thieme-Becker gives both 1438 and 1447 as possible dates.

(b) He lived not only in Nuremberg and Kraków, but spent some years in Schwaz (1500-1503) and in Münnernstadt (1504-1505). He also worked for a period of time in Passau with Nicholas of Leyden.

(c) His "first period" (until the time at which he went to Kraków) is treated by all historians as that of his journeyman's training. That is why I spoke of his "studies" in Nuremberg. This does not imply that he was the disciple of any "Nuremberg School." Polish specialists maintain that he was influenced by both the Burgundian and the Netherlandish traditions in art.

(d) Last but not least, not only Polish but also German art historians treat the altar in the Marienkirche in Kraków as his most important work. (See Max Lossnitzer, *Veit Stoss, die Herkunft seiner Kunst, seine Werke und sein Leben* [Leipzig, 1912], s. 130-1 and 165-72; Berthold Daun, *Veit Stoss und seine Schule in Deutschland, Ungarn und Sieben-*

burgen [Leipzig, 1916], s. 145/6 [the critique of Neudörfer, Sandrart, Doppelmayr, and Murr who praised his work *Der englische Gruss*].) Further, if I may quote Polish specialists, I would mention first of all S. Dettloff ("Die Quellen der Kunst des Veit Stoss," *Actes du XII congrès international d'histoire de l'art* [Bruxelles, 1930], Communications, t. 1, s. 158) who is preparing a large monograph on Wit Stwosz and Tadeusz Szydłowski ("Ze studiów nad Stwoszem i sztuką jego czasów," *Rocznik Krakowski*, 1935, t. xxvi).

I think that my explanations are sufficient. Had I given them in my list of writers, I could have avoided Dr. Rieser's charges, but I wanted to write as succinctly as possible, according to my agreement with the Editor.

STEFAN MORAWSKI

REVIEWS

MORLEY, SYLVANUS. *The Ancient Maya*. Revised by George W. Brainerd. Stanford U. P., 1956, 3rd ed., pp. 494, bibliography, maps, photographs, diagrams, \$10.00.

FERNÁNDEZ, JUSTINO. *Coatlícue: Estética del Arte Indígena Antiguo*. Preface by Samuel Ramos. Mexico City, 1954, Centro de Estudios Filosóficos, pp. 285, photographs and diagrams, \$2.00.

COVARRUBIAS, MIGUEL. *Mezcala*. Preface by André Emmerich. Notes by William Spratling. New York, 1956, André Emmerich Gallery, pp. 36, photographs and a map, \$1.50.

ASHTON, DORE. *Abstract Art Before Columbus*. Preface by André Emmerich. Photographs by Lee Boltin. New York, 1957, André Emmerich Gallery, pp. 40, \$2.50.

These four publications represent various approaches to pre-Conquest American art. It would be invidious to compare them, as their purposes are widely divergent; some discussion of their content and intent is more revealing.

The late Professor Morley's work on the Maya, long a classic in its field, has been brought up to date archaeologically by the inclusion of significant discoveries since the 2nd edition of 1947. (These include the particularly important artistic finds in the pyramid-tomb beneath the Temple of the Inscriptions at Palenque—a site where excavations are in progress, which have brought other tombs of lesser importance to light. In terms of the very highest quality in Maya art, it is relevant to note the 1957 work on the Island of Jaina, conducted by two groups from Mexico City; this will certainly require inclusion in the next edition of Morley.)

Professor Brainerd's work, completed after his death by Mrs. Bell (who wrote the last chapter of the present book), is necessarily incidental to the monumental research of Morley. The life-time of devoted attention to detail which Morley gave to the Maya makes the book indispensable for the student; it is equally impressive as a field guide for the scholarly traveler. For the general reader, however, the present edition presents certain problems. By its very nature as a revision by one distinguished expert of another's work, it lacks the unified point of view of J. Eric Thompson's related work on the Maya. All three of the people concerned with this book, initiated by Morley, have the most scrupulous regard for fact; since, unfortunately, the facts are somewhat spotty about many basic aspects of Maya culture, the sequential editorial character of the book adds to the general confusion of intellectual perspective. Current American archaeology perhaps errs on the side of nicety of evidence; one looks in vain for those bold, if incomplete speculative developments of the evidence which reveal the author's powers of historical insight and ultimate identification with his sources. (It might be noted that Europeans like Thomas Barthel and others, are conducting linguistic studies which may clarify some of the historical problems.)

Although of minor importance, in comparison with the generally comprehensive nature of this book, it would be advisable for the next edition to include a large fold-out map

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