

## POLISH THEORIES OF ART BETWEEN 1830 AND 1850<sup>1</sup>

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Polish theories of art between 1830–1850 developed simultaneously with contemporary criticism of art and philosophy. Their fundamental source was the political life in the country and that of the emigrants. This period was rightly called the political period. It was impossible at that time to avoid being drawn into the controversy on the subject of independence or the liberation of the peasants and of taking sides either for or against. Criticism of art as well as its theory touched the same questions indirectly. In the artistic field the same fight between different viewpoints was carried out: whether to be for the people or against. Dembowski in his *Piśmiennictwo polskie w zarysie* (*The Outline of Polish Literature*) underlined the situation: “Before 1838 the younger generation had been influenced chiefly by Lamennais, St.-Simonians, and Mickiewicz. And though before 1830 young people lived on “Oda do młodości” (“Ode to Youth”) and “Wallenrod” as though they were their catechism, after 1830 “Dziady”<sup>2</sup> became the focal center of everybody’s thought and feeling.”<sup>3</sup>

Artistic criticism was involved more deeply in the fight between the political parties because it directly concerned art itself, and it was in art that the chief problems of Polish national life were being discussed. Artistic criticism discussed then three fundamental questions: folk sources of art, the social protection of artists, and making beauty universally popular. The current theory of art, more closely related to philosophy than to artistic life, took up the same questions.

The characteristic feature of Polish philosophic thought between 1830 and 1850 was the search for a national philosophy. Herder’s, Schelling’s, and chiefly Hegel’s systems were the starting points. However, they were modified in order to stress the peculiar character of Polish philosophy. Hegel’s dialectical triads were applied to “soteriological” statements which tried to realize the belief in the salvation of mankind by the Polish nation. The character of Polish philosophy was irrationalistic and messianistic. It defended a personal God against Hegelian “pantheism.” Trentowski’s “Mysł” (“Thinking”), Libelt’s “Um” (“the Knowing”) and Cieszkowski’s “philosophy of action” are evidence of a search for an epistemological power higher than reason; the search for a power which would discover the way to salvation. Messianists loved people theoretically and their sympathy for the oppressed only seemed to be radical. However, the progressive character of philosophic considerations was yet not connected with rationalism. The whole of Polish culture at that time—except the mature period of Dembowski’s creative work—was saturated with religious beliefs.

<sup>1</sup> This article is a fragment of a dissertation entitled “Program sztuki narodowej w polskiej krytyce i teorii artystycznej z okresu 1830–1850” (“Program of National Art in Polish Criticism and Theory of Art between 1830–1850”) delivered at the Mickiewicz Session held by the Section of the History of Art PAN (Polish Academy of Science) on November 7, 1955.

<sup>2</sup> “Ode to Youth,” “Wallenrod,” and “Dziady”—the works of Mickiewicz.

<sup>3</sup> E. Dembowski, *Pisma* (*Works*), Vol. IV (Warsaw, 1955), p. 322.

Against the orthodox ecclesiastical conceptions arose "heretical" ideas searching for a new and purer Christianity. Dembowski, comparing Mickiewicz's and Krasiński's views in *The Outline of Polish Literature* placed them both at the forefront of Polish philosophic thought, because both of them fought for religious reform, both proclaimed the priority of a personal God and wanted the democratic organization of society.

Dembowski was wrong in his opinion that Mickiewicz's social and political views were the same as Krasiński's. He was wrong, because he took as a basic point Mickiewicz's statements in his Parisian lectures (1843-1844) when Mickiewicz was under Towiański's influence. However, the very defense of the irrationalistic attitude behind which the progressive political and social tendencies were hidden was very significant.

The theory of art became as irrationalistic as contemporary Polish philosophy. It professed a personal God as the source of beauty and of all spiritual values. It represented a specific form of messianism, arguing that it was the birth of a new art directed to all society, and not social revolution, that would realize the great metamorphosis in Polish national life. It discussed national aspects in art, but was impressed only by the folklore "form" (this was Dembowski's objection against the aestheticians of Cracow); it did not discover the folk heart in the matter. Within these irrationalistic tendencies, or at least among some of them, new aesthetic thoughts were growing and undoubtedly the majority of the problems discussed were pulsating explicitly or implicitly with the main questions in Poland: political slavery and social injustice.

In the third and fourth lectures of *Literatura słowiańska (Slav Literature)* Mickiewicz blamed Hegel's philosophy and aesthetics, saying that Hegel's God was "the sun that does not see itself." On the other hand, he was delighted with young Cieszkowski's cult of personality and his apotheosis of action, and with Królikowski's desire for a new "communistic," Messianic Poland. Mickiewicz condemned the aestheticians for their interpretation of art because it was too abstract and had nothing to do with social life, while he himself wrote about "sacerdotal" literature, whose aim was to guide people to moral truths and to the salvation of the nation as well as of mankind. His declarations at that time bear marked traces of Towiański's influence (mysticism, "miraculousness" of poetry, and heroistic conception of history). This period in his intellectual development was definitely a regressive one. It is worth while remembering, however, that even at that period Mickiewicz spoke with bitter irony of the philanthropists who wanted to relieve the misery of the poor by throwing them crumbs from the rich man's table, and at the same time he paid homage to the soldier who had refrained from shooting the worker during the insurrection in Lyon in 1834 (Course 4, chapter VIII). His sympathies were even then with the St.-Simonians against the economists who were upholding the old system. At the end of his lectures Mickiewicz wrote that the main aim of art is not to play with beautiful forms, but to stimulate people to sacrifice themselves to great national and social aims. When we compare Mickiewicz's aesthetic opinions with Dembowski's, it might seem that the former was against the idea of progress. Our interpretation, however, would be quite different if we were to take the contem-

porary fight between the Petersburg party and the revolutionary party as their background. In fact, Mickiewicz, in spite of his mistakes, was in step with the latter party. And if we assume this interpretation, it will throw a light on the ideas of messianists and will help us to grasp the very "dialectic core" of them.

1. The most essential point characteristic of the aesthetic approach of the period is the attempt to revise Hegel's system, so that art would take the first place in the course of the development of the Absolute Spirit. The characteristic feature of German culture of the same period (as Marx wrote in his *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law*) was the rapid development of philosophy. Philosophy, and indirectly aesthetics, was "a theoretical conscience." The problems which could not be solved by the then immature social and political situation were discussed and decided within it. Under Polish conditions, literature and art as well as artistic criticism were such a "theoretical conscience." Within this sphere the chief political controversies were carried on and the questions of national and social liberation were discussed. Literature, art, and artistic criticism became a platform from which men spoke in the name of the nation and to the nation. The aestheticians searched for a justification of this phenomenon in suggesting new philosophic ideas different from Hegel's. This revolutionary interpretation of the trends of art and criticism was associated with the radical negation of some of Hegel's statements. A moderate interpretation only modified Hegel's aesthetics while the retrogressive one rejected Hegel's philosophy altogether, accepting at the same time explicitly fideistic conceptions suggested by de Maistre and Bonald. The Petersburg coterie did not acknowledge the superiority of philosophy over religion but, on the contrary, they subordinated all cultural phenomena (aesthetic solutions among others) to religion. The modification made in Hegel's system drew Polish aesthetic thought nearer to Fichte's and Schelling's conceptions. Schelling was supported in Poland with great enthusiasm by Mochnacki. The recognition of Schelling's system proclaiming art as the highest form of knowledge was in fact due to non-aesthetic reasons, i.e., to the leading role of art and criticism in Polish intellectual life. And here also is the source of the assimilation of Fichte's conception of "action," linked up with the practical ideas of the Slav philosophy of action, proclaimed by messianists.

In his seventh *List z Krakowa (Letter from Cracow)* Kremer, following Schelling, writes about the connection of finite and infinite elements in art: i.e., about its revealing the infinite truth in concrete form. Further in his eighth letter in agreement with Hegel's conception he deduces conclusions as to the place of art in the development of the absolute spirit. Art expressing infinity in concrete form would be on the lowest level. Stress is laid on the national character of art, because the spiritual and material elements contained in it are peculiar to a given country and a given people. Libelt solves the same question in a different way. He gives special significance to imagination as being the psychological element specific to art. The source of the imagination is, as Kremer puts it, the inspiration, i.e., "the incarnation of the spirit of the creator in the spirit of a work of art." Art, however, is acknowledged by him to be higher than religion. Further-

more, Libelt even questions the superiority of philosophy over art. He is not consistent, because, on the one hand, he wants to keep to Hegel's schematic ideas and, on the other, produces the apology for "Um" ("the Knowing"), a psychological, Slavonic power leading from contemplation to action. Hence we read: "Fine arts, I admit, are the primary, everlasting signs of a creative spirit, that is the songs of the spirit in its full perfection, while religion and philosophy lack this creative ability. In this matter fine arts surpass religion and, moreover, philosophy, although they are equal in their significance and subject."<sup>4</sup>

If art—Libelt continues his argument—has not yet fulfilled these tasks for which it was ordained and has not influenced the people to the degree it should, it is because it has become intimately united with religion. Now, at last, it is going to be "united" with knowledge, and only in the future, realizing in itself the unity of philosophy and religion, i.e., feelings and thoughts in "Um" ("the Knowing"), will it fulfil its mission in the development of the spirit.

In his review of *Letters from Cracow*<sup>5</sup> Dembowski attacks Libelt above all for not developing this philosophic point of view into "social life," i.e., that his general considerations are not followed by the definition of the active role of art in social life. He writes: "It is really pitiful to see a man who has won his position in the philosophical world and was expected to herald in the dawn of progress, retire into his shell and shut himself up like a snail. . . . He will never carry philosophic thought into life and he will die robed in the toga of philistine pedantry."

It is of no avail, says Dembowski, that Kremer's style is vigorous and his starting-point the same as Hegel's, if "he is not only non-progressive but even sins against progress." The chief cause of this attack was Kremer's belief in the superiority of religion over art and the subordination of the latter to the former. Libelt received a more positive review because he put art "on a higher plane" than Hegel, but still Dembowski was not satisfied with his solution. Dembowski did not want the philosophy of "Um" ("the Knowing"), i.e., of art, to be treated as a servant of general philosophy but to be the actual aim in itself. He underlined the importance of the position of aesthetics.<sup>6</sup> Referring to Libelt's opinion on the priority of creative imagination, Dembowski nevertheless suggests some corrections of his own.

Both these critiques had been written before Dembowski had formed his own aesthetic ideas, and that is why he appreciated Kremer and Libelt from the point of view of the immanent coherence of their systems. From Dembowski's review we can see that already social progress was becoming the focal point of his discussion, although the terminology was still Hegel's. If we follow the development of Dembowski's aesthetic thought during 1843–1844 we shall be struck by his endeavor to free himself from Hegelianism by forming a different interpretation of art as being one of the vehicles for the development of the Absolute Spirit.

By 1842 in his article published in *Scientific Review*, he had contradicted Hegel,

<sup>4</sup> K. Libelt, *Estetyka, czyli umnictwo piękne (Aesthetics or the Knowing of Beauty)*, I (Pozen, 1875), 75.

<sup>5</sup> *Przegląd naukowy (Scientific Review)*, II, 17 (1843).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, 31 (1842).

although he called him "the most ingenious of giant spirits." But having not yet formulated his own point of view, he based his ideas on Schelling and acknowledged art as the highest subject of philosophy, accepting as its chief category "the unity of thought and feeling," i.e., "Um" ("the Knowing"). The notion of "Um" was already connected at that time with the idea of creativeness, that is, with the transference from emotion and contemplation to social action. An important revision in Hegel's system was the introduction of history in place of religion. History was to contain the element of feeling, philosophy the element of thought; but art, synthesizing in itself both these elements, was to comprise the highest and the fullest element, namely creativeness. This solution, however, was still metaphysical and based on Schelling's suggestion. Social reality (history) was here the lowest degree in the development of the spirit. Art was defined as great, not for the reason that it would transform this reality, but because of its ability to unify objectiveness with subjectiveness. A new conception appeared in "Pomysły do wiedzy umnictwa" ("Suggestions for the Knowledge of 'Um' ") and in "Twórczość w zywocie społeczności" ("Creativeness in the Life of Society").<sup>7</sup> "Um" ("the Knowing"), i.e., creativeness was understood as "the unity of thought and action." This theory led to the knowledge of social conditions, its object was not only beauty but also justice ("acknowledgment of the self-dependence of individuals, families, and peoples") and its aim was to awaken love for people and mankind. In "Suggestions for the Knowledge of 'Um' " traces of the old conception were still to be found as Dembowski referred to the schemes of the development of the spirit in Cieszlowski's *Prolegomena*. However, the ideological meaning of his own thoughts was clear. "Social Life" was treated as one of the main aesthetic problems. "Historical creativeness" was the fundamental element for the philosophy of "Um." "The importance of any branch of knowledge is measured by its influence on social life."<sup>8</sup> Social progress, on the other hand, was the measure of the effect of this influence. The aim of art was to move man "to action itself," i.e., make him realize the necessity of fighting for social justice. Then man would not agree to be "the slave of others and he would glow with self-dependent action." This would make the power of "creating out of oneself." Dembowski's terminology is difficult to understand but his thoughts are clear. The evident existence of art is to give aesthetic pleasure (beauty), but its main aim is to educate people to battle for social and political progress (creativeness). The author himself says: "The science of 'Um' ['the Knowing'] is an aim in itself and at the same time it is the means of developing new social intercourse and progressive philosophy in the structure of life."<sup>9</sup>

In the article, "Creativeness in the Life of Society," the idea of the indissoluble fusion of art and social development is expressed even more strongly. Dembowski puts forward "social improvement" as the main criterion of value, and he gives art the highest significance because it fulfils this task to the utmost. His dispute with Schiller's theses on the aesthetic education of man moves in the same direction. He accepts Schiller's aim, but sees a different way to achieve it.

<sup>7</sup> *Tygodnik Literacki (Literary Weekly)*, Nos. 7-9 and 22-25 (1843).

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 7 (1843).

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 8 (1843).



According to Schiller's view "the Knowing life" takes precedence over "social life." Dembowski's system is the other way round. Creativeness, for him, is freedom.<sup>10</sup> This sentence explains why art had priority in our aesthetic conceptions of the Romantic period. It was not merely academic controversy; the theory ratified in this indirect way the enormous influence of literature and art on the life of the nation.

2. The second characteristic problem of the theory of art was historical orientation. Historicism was characteristic of the intellectual attitude toward life between 1830 and 1850. People tried to appreciate the past in a scientific way in order to show progressive and retrogressive traditions, to point out those guilty for the decay of Poland, and to help solve actual, political problems. Dembowski says: ". . . But still the present is the fruit of the past and it is for the present and the future that we investigate the past."<sup>11</sup>

History and politics sought to fathom the following questions: what are Polish national traditions; how can the characteristics of the Polish nation be defined; and what knowledge can be gained from the past for the present. These questions were also reflected in the problems put forward by criticism and the theory of art. In art criticism the historical orientation was coupled with the search for national and folklore elements in art and with the review and appreciation of the history of Polish painting. This tendency was expressed also by archeological investigations. In Kremer's and Libelt's works this historical interest was seen in the attempt to study the development of art. In the interpretation of the two aestheticians this attempt, having its origin in Hegelianism mixed with a fideistic conception of the world, is idealistic. Nevertheless, it was from Hegel that both of them took over the historical orientation; assuming that changes take place in art, they sought for rules directing these changes and suggested their connection with social reality. In Libelt's work we read: "Fine arts primarily are the expression of the century, the expression of the ideas and learning of the time. No 'master' of art goes beyond his time, for he is the son of his time; he is the apostle of its spirit, having been its pupil. Let us put the Madonna beside the Venus de Medici and the Egyptian Isis and we should have three different characteristics of different centuries: the ideal, perfection of form, and symbolism."<sup>12</sup>

The dependence of art on our national character, underlined in Libelt's and Kremer's works, opened up a discussion of the influence of social intercourse on artistic creativeness. Kremer's remarks on Stachowicz or Wit Stwosz, or the outline of German literature written by Libelt, may serve as evidence of this. A good example of historical orientation is the history of artistic imagination in Libelt's *General Aesthetics* and in Kremer's *Letters from Cracow* and his *Podróż do Włoch (Journey to Italy)*. But the periodical division of history into different epochs is false (in spite of Kremer's underlining the decisive significance of the Renaissance according to Ruhmor and Burckhardt). The analyses of the psychological powers directing the creative process are naïve and pompous, for they lack the perception to apprehend the ideologic and artistic meaning of a work

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 22 (1843).

<sup>11</sup> Dembowski, *Works*, III, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

<sup>12</sup> *Aesthetics or the Knowing of Beauty, op. cit.*, I, 82.

and they look for the correctness of the development of art in the domain of spirit.

In Libelt's work, however, we find interesting remarks on mosaics, the art of Eastern peoples, on the Escorial, and Leonardo. In Kremer's books, besides many pertinent remarks on ancient and mediaeval art and on Shakespeare, copied from Hegel, we find also interesting ones on the common sources of Polish literature and art and on the Polish native origin of the triptych exhibited at the Cracow archeological exhibition in 1859.

Grabowski's historicism on one side, and Dembowski's on the other, will complete the picture of the tendencies under discussion. It is striking that Michał Grabowski's historicism<sup>13</sup> is the apology for the past of Polish nobility and the social status quo. His enthusiasm for Ukrainian themes, for the history of the Cossack people, is the homage paid to the inviolable "tabu" of customs and religion. In spite of the conservative character of these opinions, Grabowski has the ability to see the connection between art and social life as well as historical changes in art and literature. Dembowski's interpretation in *The Outline of Polish Literature* (1843) is the most revolutionary, the most mature, and from the scientific point of view the most advanced manifestation of historicism. Here the interpretation of historical changes in Polish literature is nearest to the truth in spite of the false "Slav-agrarian" conceptions inherited from Lelevel. Dembowski discusses the antagonism of two cultural currents: folklore and anti-folklore, as well as the changes in Polish literature caused by the tendency "to realize liberty" most fully.

In the preface to the above-mentioned work we read: "The main factor of Polish literature is an underlying love for the whole nation. . . . And that is why by the word nation we have now come to understand the entire Polish nation and not merely the nobility as it was considered before, when the whole nation was not actually formed."<sup>14</sup>

He divides the history of literature (differing from Hegel's conception of the development of art) into three epochs: before the introduction of Christianity (until 1000 A.D.), from the advent of Christianity until the decline of Poland as ruled by the gentry (until 1820), and lastly, a "typically Polish epoch in which the national spirit is genuinely developing."<sup>15</sup> These divisions and his attack on the Latin rite, on Jesuit culture, and on the gentry "caste" factor—one of the leitmotifs of the book—show his political intentions clearly. In the first Slav-Polish people's epoch Dembowski notices the living traditions. According to him the native character of this epoch was the source of inspiration for the third one. Contrariwise, the second epoch is treated very coldly.

It is interesting that Mickiewicz, in *Slav Literature* (lectures I and II), interprets the historical development of Polish culture in a similar way. In spite of his sympathies for Christianity, Mickiewicz looked for the sources of the national culture in the pagan past and took them also as an example of the idea of progress and democracy.

Historicism in aesthetics was not an academic problem. Borrowed from Ger-

<sup>13</sup> M. Grabowski, *Literatura i Krytyka (Literature and Criticism)* (1840).

<sup>14</sup> E. Dembowski, *Works*, IV, *op. cit.*, 105.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, 107.

man aesthetics mainly, that is from Hegel, it corresponded to the need of the Polish nation in the process of acquainting itself with its own past and present as well as defining its prospects of future existence. Hence the cult of antiquity (contrary to the theory of art in Germany) is very weak in Poland, and the return to the Middle Ages is only apparent. In fact, the historical orientation makes Polish theoreticians look for the native sources of their culture in Slav antiquity. The result of such an attitude is the fight against Latin culture, identified with the despotic culture forced upon the Polish people (this polemic was carried on from Mochancki to Dembowski). The defense of the Middle Ages and at the same time of Latin culture, is undertaken by the representatives of the conservative camp: Grabowski, Rzewuski, and Krasiński. Grabowski and Rzewuski defended Christian traditions against the "pagan" tendencies of the lovers of antiquity, Krasiński defended Latin culture.<sup>16</sup>

3. The third problem which should be dealt with is the attack on the "Enlightenment" theory of "imitation of reality," and the conception of an "ideal" as a fundamental element of the artistic process. The starting point in this problem, too, is Hegelian thought. Kremer in his *Letters from Cracow* writes that if art were to imitate nature, the beauty of nature would always be greater than artistic beauty, and consequently art would be superfluous. Art is "the daughter of spirit," but it does not imply, he adds, that "it might disregard nature and the whole beautiful world of God which surrounds us."<sup>17</sup> Plastic arts, sculpture as well as painting, should contain, according to Kremer, a thorough knowledge of nature and understand "its movements, life, and vibration." In the ninth letter the relation of art to reality is most fully expounded. Reality is to be merely the material for the artist. He must not reflect it, because then the spirit would not be able "to see its infinite essence mirrored in the work of art." It is true that each work of art has its "sensible" aspect; i.e., it affects our senses also. But this aspect should be "exempted from any mark of temporality and from the dust of earthly corruption; it should be transparent with the spirit glowing through."<sup>18</sup>

The real object is entangled in the surrounding world by numerous bonds, and there are accidental elements in it. The object of art, on the other hand, serves only to reveal the artist's inspirations and should be devoid of "slight and unimportant" characteristics. And here is the conclusion: "The object so transformed, the aspect so sanctified, is an ideal."<sup>19</sup> Admitting that reality is the material of art, Kremer's conception nevertheless postulates its complete disregard. He expressed it in his condemnation of showing the "filth" and "misery" of life in art.

Libelt's premises are exactly those of Kremer. He underlines the important function of imagination as being the power which brings art into existence and he writes: ". . . imagination is therefore like the two-headed Janus or a moon with two faces, with one side turned to the earth and the other turned heavenwards. It reflects the impressions of the world with one side and the impressions

<sup>16</sup> He wrote in a very acute way on The Polish Renaissance in his article published in *Bibliothèque Universelle* (1830).

<sup>17</sup> J. Kremer, *Letters from Cracow*, 2nd ed., (Wilno, 1855), letter 4, p. 71.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 197.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 199.



of the spirit with the other; and it is the third channel, through which the revelation descends upon man."<sup>20</sup>

In Libelt, however, the significance of reality as the material of art is distinctly stressed, without mere verbal pretention. The aesthetician undoubtedly sees in the spiritual element a special and dominating feature of the work of art; nevertheless, he does not deny the great importance of "material," i.e., of sensible aspects, without which inspiration would remain a mere vision. We read: "Therefore beauty, as a complete harmony of form and meaning, is the incarnation of the ideal in reality, it is the perfection embodied in real phenomenon, and hence the delight of the spirit."

The instance quoted by Libelt, of Vernet who swung from the masts during storms shows how well he understood the study of reality. The artist transforms this material in his imagination, he permeates it with his own "spirit" and thus he never merely reflects nature, although he makes use of it. Besides this, Libelt stressed much more than Kremer the technical side of artistic work. The work of the artist who is to imitate God in his creative act was for Libelt one more proof of the pre-eminence of the spirit over matter, and of inspiration over merely reflecting nature in the work of art. He says: "The master of art lives in a separate world, in a world of ideals. . . ." In this spiritual independence, in this separation of the spirit from reality lie, the great nobility of art and its superiority over the work of the craftsman and the industrial workers, and, on the other hand, its great impracticability in the real world. . . ."<sup>21</sup>

Beauty in art, when compared with that of nature, is perfect and permanent. It is even greater than nature, because in the work of art it is the Creator, too, who acts through the human spirit, the highest spirit in nature. Defending the "truth" of art against objections that it communicates only illusions, Libelt argues that art is not, and never was, an imitation of nature. Thus he comprehends truth in a particular way. It is a "bringing forth of the spirit" in matter, liberating it from incidentals and transmitting an artistic ideal into it. For art does not ape what nature creates—because then the artist would only have awkwardly imitated what God had already done perfectly. A contempt for Chinese art which imitates nature, and scorn of the ancient painter Zeuxis, close Libelt's debate on this problem. His judgments were inconsistent. But the dominating motive of his considerations is the apology for an ideal and opposition against the copyists of nature.

The attitude of Kremer and Libelt was prepared by the argumentations of Mochnecki and Żukowski. It is they who in the second decade of the nineteenth century were the first to fight for the introduction of German metaphysics into Polish thought. Żukowski's article "O sztuce" ("On Art"), published in the *Polish Gazette* in 1828, popularized statements of Kantian aesthetics. He defines the aims of art as follows: ". . . to form out of the phenomena of the sensible world—in more or less similar shapes—images of thought and inward acts of mind."<sup>22</sup>

Żukowski sees the essence of artistic perfection in the harmony between

<sup>20</sup> *Aesthetics or the Knowing of Beauty*, I, *op. cit.*, 73, 79.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 85.

<sup>22</sup> *Gazeta Polska (Polish Gazette)*, No. 98 (1828), p. 392.

earthly and heavenly elements. The article met with vehement objections that confusion would be caused in people's ideas. Zukowski was defended by Mochnacki in the *Polish Gazette* (Nos. 114–117). He attacked the fashionable drawing-room "buffoons" who were too lazy to think, and in controversy with Jan Snia-decki he put forward the argument of the necessity of undertaking interest in metaphysics for the development of Polish theoretical thinking. The defense undertaken by Mochnacki is easily understood in the light of his sympathies for Schelling's aesthetics, which he expounded in all his prominent works. In his article "Myśli o literaturze polskiej" ("Thoughts on Polish Literature") (1828) he wrote against the theory of the imitation of nature: ". . . the absolute postulate of art is the embodiment of abstract ideas and the means for realizing this postulate . . . is inspiration."<sup>23</sup>

In *Literatura Polska XIX w. (19th-Century Polish Literature)* the starting point of Mochnacki's considerations is the idea of "recognizing oneself in one's self" (*Selbstbewusstsein*) and of the primacy of fantasy over reflective thought. Zukowski's and Mochnacki's statements were taken over in the fourth decade of the 19th century and carried on not only by Kremer and Libelt, but by almost all who wrote about art and literature. W. P.'s (Wincenty Pol's) review of vol. I of *Letters from Cracow*<sup>24</sup> approves of the book because we have at last got "our phenomenology." Kraszewski's review of the book, published in the same magazine two years later, is not so enthusiastic about it. Nevertheless, he admits that Kremer as well as Libelt are "the most gifted in our literature." Having exposed the main faults (obscurity, unmethodical ways of thinking), Kraszewski enumerates others, for instance, that the author of the book "needlessly dwells upon the statement that art is not the imitation of nature. It is sheer verbosity, for who dares to think or say or write otherwise today?"<sup>25</sup>

The truth in a work of art—writes the critic—must not be understood as the truth copied from nature, but as continual negation of thought and form. We shall refer to this review once more, because it indicates not only that the dominating theory at that time was that of an aesthetic ideal superior to reality, but also the illusory controversies between the right wing of Hegel's school and the coterie of Petersburg.

Dembowski, too, fought against the theory of imitating nature in literature and in art. We find also the formulae which stress the prevailing significance of spirit and of creative imagination in the artistic process. In the article "Kilka słów o pojęciu poezji" ("A Few Words on the Idea of Poetry"), poetry is defined as "the power of intensifying beauty to an ideal."<sup>26</sup> It should be underlined, however, that Dembowski did not interpret "ideal" in the same way as the Hegelian right wing did. Art is to give "an ideal," i.e., to evaluate reality, to bring up men morally, to influence their political attitude. Dembowski's "ideal" was therefore a stimulation of progressive ideas in Polish society. There were two causes that made Dembowski use this idea. Firstly, his philosophical outlook, confined to idealism, did not allow him to discover the sound grain contained in the theory

<sup>23</sup> M. Mochnacki, *Pisma (Works)*, ed. A. Sliwiński (Lwów, 1910), p. 149.

<sup>24</sup> *Biblioteka Warszawska (Warsaw Library)*, III (1843).

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, III (1845), 191.

<sup>26</sup> *Rok (The Year)*, 29. XII, Vol. VI (1843).

of imitating nature. In "Myśli o przeszłości filozofii" ("Thoughts on the Past of Philosophy") written in 1845, Dembowski approached the materialistic conception, but he was no longer concerned with aesthetic problems at that time. Secondly, the controversy carried on with M. Grabowski made it difficult for him to admit, even partly, that the theory professed by an adversary might be right.

Grabowski in fact represented the theory of the imitation of nature. The reactionary party did not share his views. Neither did Rzewuski, Ziemięcka, nor Krasiński follow his argumentation. They wrote about the "Spirit of God," which determines the artistic line and the type of work of art. Krasiński's letters to Ary Scheffer are proof of this attitude. How did Grabowski arrive at such a conclusion? Did he in fact defend realism? Grabowski defined his position in the debates on the modern novel. He was one of the very few critics at that time who had discovered in the novel a triumphant new literary form.<sup>27</sup> Anticipating the significance of the new form, he battled to make it conform to contemporary social conditions. He looked forward to the novels about his own times of the type of Rzewuski's stories about the past of Polish nobility—the novels declaring: *Polonais, point de rêveries*. What he understood by faithfulness to reality was shown in his two books *O literaturze francuskiej zwanej szaloną* (*On the So-Called Mad French Literature*) (1839), and *Literatura romansu w Polsce* (*Literature of the Romance in Poland*) (1840), in which he argues passionately against making use of romance as a means of furthering social reform, criticizing the rich, and stimulating the poor and hungry. "The truth of life" was, in Grabowski's interpretation, simply an apology for conservatism. Grabowski was attacked by Libelt in his "Aesthetics." Kremer contradicted Grabowski only apparently. In his sixth *Letter From Cracow* he appreciated "mad" French literature, in the same way as Grabowski. He was disgusted with G. Sand, E. Sue, and A. Dumas; he found Balzac repulsive too. Kraszewski, on being attacked by Kremer in the review of *Letters from Cracow* answered in his own and Grabowski's name: ". . . but, by God, I should like to know from where Mr. Kremer has drawn his conclusions that we approve so highly of French writers, and how he can condemn us, as we have written but little on aesthetics so far, have never expressed all our ideas, and have never proclaimed that art has the truth as its aim. Even if we had, then this truth would have never been a trivial, spiritless truth of details but the universal truth, the truth of the whole, and the organic life of the work of art, and never just Flemish aping of detestable trifles."<sup>28</sup>

The above clearly indicates that the controversy was really not between the right wing of Hegelians and Grabowski, but between all of them and Dembowski. On the side of Dembowski we should mention here Kamieński also. His critical

<sup>27</sup> Dembowski ascribed to drama the highest position in Polish literature. It was drama that could communicate the main social conflicts and carry the burden of contemporary antagonism (The *Non-Divine Comedy* of Krasiński was an instance). The novel gave only a false, superficial picture of life (as examples, Rzewuski's gossip-tales and Grabowski's books were mentioned). Hence Dembowski wrote in *The Outline of Polish Literature* that fiction "done by numerous writers but futile in itself has no significance whatever for the development of the nation's spirit" (*Works*, IV, 338).

<sup>28</sup> *Warsaw Library*, III (1845), 192.

dissertations written in the 1843 *Scientific Review* popularized modern romance and spoke of a faithful image of reality as a principle of good literature. That this conception was, however, different from that of Grabowski is evident in Kamieński's preface to the novel, *Pan Józef Bojalski* (1854), and in the novel itself. The author demands "that images of living people should be portrayed as they appear in nature and against the real background." He himself wrote a book of that kind about the recruitment of peasants into the czar's army, a measure heartily approved by the local landlord. So there was a realistic trend in Kamieński's declarations. It seems, however, that this trend was characteristic only of the year 1854. In the remarks contained in *Scientific Review* (1843), one can hardly discern the theory of "imitation of nature." If Kamieński considers a work of art to be not quite artistic it is because there is the lack of "an ideal"—the absence of that superior truth, for which Dembowski fought. The theory of an "aesthetic ideal" isolated from reality was harmful from the point of view of the contemporary needs of Polish literature and art. However, we must not lose sight of its relative values in the development of aesthetic ideas in Poland. It introduced the recognition of a subjective factor, especially of feelings and imagination in the artistic process, and it completely upset the question of the typical ("the individual" and "the general" in an inseparable bond). It stressed—although in an abstract way—the priority of matter over form and the organic interdependence of both of these elements in a work of art. The same problems we find in Kremer and Libelt's papers as well as in Dembowski's.

This stress upon the significance of a subjective factor in a creative process, particularly of fantasy, led to the specific theory that a genius is a man above society. Libelt's and Kremer's enthusiasm about an artist-seer who reveals God's truths to the world is romantic throughout. At the same time, they underlined the connection of a genius with his nation and period of history. Neither of them was aware of their inconsistencies. Their conception of a genius was that he is not a solitary seer or a dreamer; he embodies the ideas and feelings of a nation and of historical period, but he is immeasurably above the rest of the people and of distinctly different quality. Dembowski's conception of genius is different.<sup>29</sup> He speaks vehemently against the solitary seer and in doing so he polemizes with his one time Bohemian friends in Warsaw. Furthermore he does not think that a genius is a person of a special quality, one who possesses a different spirit from that of other people. According to him, a genius embodies more deeply and more wisely what is inherent in all people.

The source of all these conceptions was Hegel's philosophy, which considerably pushed forward Polish aesthetic thought. But it was Dembowski alone who managed to deduce from Hegel revolutionary postulates, to define an "ideal," not in terms of "heavenly inspiration," but of the revolutionary function of the work of art.

So the third problem of 19th-century aesthetics was not merely an academic speculation. Discussions concerning the significance of a subjective factor, in

<sup>29</sup> Articles: "A Few Words on the Idea of Poetry," *The Year*, from 29. XII, Vol. VI (1843), and "Rzuty w wychowaniu osób pojedynczych i ludów" ("Conceptions on the Education of Individuals and Peoples"), *Scientific Review*, I, 6 (1843).

particular the theory of genius were in accord with the artistic practice of the romantic writers. On the other hand, the fight for an "ideal" or "the imitation of nature" was at the same time a political controversy, concerned either with the glorification in art of the contemporary social organization or with fighting for present and future justice.

There are still two problems of minor importance left: the autonomy of aesthetic experience and the extension of the field of aesthetic investigations.

4. Libelt writes in his *Aesthetics* about the beauty of art as being an aim in itself: "Besides, art comes from inspiration and does not take into account anything utilitarian, nor does it anticipate any outside influence."<sup>30</sup> His polemics with Lamennais, who connected beauty with truth and utility, and, on the other hand, the statement that even architecture is not an applied art seems to show that Libelt defended the theory of "art for art's sake." He considered other points of view as evident nonsense.

Kremer's position is similar. He writes: "In fact, the fine arts do not serve any foreign aim, because their aim is beauty itself. It is not to stimulate religious or ethical feelings or to teach or convey knowledge; fine arts are free daughters of a heavenly power, which is inherent in the heart of man."<sup>31</sup>

Both Kremer and Libelt started from Hegelian assumptions. Hegel drew a line between artistic knowledge and scientific knowledge and he emphasized the relative independence of aesthetic experience. Hegel defended the point of view that art is made for the sake of beauty and not for any other secondary purpose. Hegel's conception was therefore considered as a kind of aestheticism. A similar objection, too, was raised against Libelt and Kremer by Dembowski, who fought for revolutionary art, as well as by people from the Petersburg coterie, who were backward and non-progressive.

It seems that in the judgments quoted above a certain problem was left out. Hegel did not hold the view that art is devoid of any faculty of affecting and educating those who experience it. Undoubtedly, Hegel consciously writes about the moral influence of art, which can be either good or bad.<sup>32</sup> When speaking of affecting the feelings and thoughts of a recipient, Hegel refers to the famous line by Horace "Et prodesse volunt et delectare poetae." Kremer and Libelt solve the problem in the same way. They set the aim apart from its function. Kremer says clearly that art, as an influence on morals and knowledge, is one thing, and as a means of moral preaching and scientific exposition, another thing. This then is not aestheticism in our meaning of the word. Kremer underlines that: ". . . fine arts are the truth and they come out of man's goodness in the same way as morality, virtue and faith; so they cannot be in opposition to them nor can there be discord among them. They are all like the facets of the same diamond, which flashes with the various hues of its inward fire."<sup>33</sup>

<sup>30</sup> *Aesthetics or the Knowing of Beauty*, I, *op. cit.*, 81.

<sup>31</sup> *Letters from Cracow*, I, *op. cit.*, letter 6, 146.

<sup>32</sup> Introduction to "Vorlesungen über die Aesthetik," *Werke*, X (Berlin, 1835), 61-66. Among others Hegel writes: "Die Reinigung nämlich der Leidenschaft die Belehrung und die moralische Vervollkommnung."

<sup>33</sup> *Letters from Cracow*, I, *op. cit.*, letter 6, p. 146.



Libelt says the same thing when he expounds the statement about the connection of goodness, truth, and beauty; when he analyzes the aesthetic ideal as influencing the recipient, and when he writes about "fiery souls" (Michelangelo Ribera, J. L. David) who impress spectators morally and communicate to them a deep knowledge of the world.

The charge of aestheticism, justified to some extent in relation to the Kantian theory, is out of the question in relation to the Hegelian concept, which is directed against Kantian formalism. Hegel, and afterwards Libelt and Kremer, fought against didacticism, not against the moral, pedagogical function of the work of art. They showed its specific characteristic (beauty), but they did not question the fundamental significance of the subject. In this sense we should mention the progressive character of their declarations on the autonomy of aesthetic experience. This position was invaluable for the development of aesthetic thought, overcoming, on the one hand, the Kantian formalistic ideas and, on the other, the limitations of the theory of the Enlightenment period, which automatically subordinated beauty to truth and utility.

That, however, Dembowski's objections were in fact accurate is another thing. Libelt and Kremer, formulating their declarations of "art being an aim in itself" did not connect the work of art with the social-political fight then going on. In their particular judgments, they were little different from the members of the Petersburg party. Dembowski attacked the eclecticism of their philosophy and political attitude, but he did not question those points in the declarations of Kremer and Libelt which rightly defended the specific qualities of art, though they were expressed in idealistic terms. Dembowski himself was not an advocate of simplified didacticism. It is evident in his remarks in the then Polish drama. In his article "Kilka słów o poemacie dramatycznym samorodnym" ("A Few Words on Genuine Dramatic Poetry"),<sup>34</sup> he writes that a poet ought to avoid a boring peroration which would restrain the course of the plot: ". . . our drama cannot make other determinations than active ones."<sup>35</sup>

Especially characteristic is the declaration in the article "O dramacie dzisiejszym w ośmiennictwie polskim" ("Drama in Contemporary Polish Literature").<sup>36</sup> Dembowski maintains here the connection with the idea of progress: "Poetry is to be knowledge of the future and the deepest love of the future, and as such, it is to augur the future."<sup>37</sup> He postulates that it should reflect the conflict between different views and political parties. Starting from such a premise he criticizes Mickiewicz's "Dziady" and approves of Dominik Magnuszewski's works. Nevertheless, the analysis of his *Non-Divine Comedy* indicates that Dembowski by no means reduced the value of the work of art to didactic values. He considers *Non-Divine Comedy* to be a better work than *Irydion* because truths contained there are shown in action, the ideas are rooted in living persons, and the author, though not a revolutionary, presents "the falling of the old society into pieces."

<sup>34</sup> *Jaskółka (A Swallow)* (1843).

<sup>35</sup> E. Dembowski, *Works*, III, *op. cit.*, 323.

<sup>36</sup> *The Year*, 29. XII, Vol. VI (1843).

<sup>37</sup> E. Dembowski, *Works*, III, 415.

5. It is Libelt above others who is concerned with the problem of extending the range of aesthetic analyses. His aesthetics of nature (though based actually on F. T. Vischer's work) transcends the Hegelian conception and contemporary considerations dealing exclusively with literature, art, and music. Libelt's interpretation of beauty is fideistic.<sup>38</sup> Nevertheless, it was an attempt at justifying the objectivity of beauty and at proving that "there was no idea before nature, and . . . no beauty before being." Libelt's book *Piękno natury* (*Beauty of Nature*) was published in 1854; a year before Czernyszewski's highly interesting dissertation. Of course, there is no comparison between Libelt and Czernyszewski, although both of them are against Hegel and both argue for the beauty of nature, Libelt remains an idealist. He holds that beauty of art is a spiritual, higher quality. But he tries to get through Hegelian constructions and have a broader and deeper outlook on beauty from the point of view of its simple, material forms. This tendency in Libelt, which in fact leads to materialistic aesthetics, came to nothing, because philosophical and indirectly political limitations did not allow the consequences to be drawn from the separate treatment of the aesthetics of nature.

The aestheticians were not interested in the problem of the beauty of things used in everyday life. The separation of beauty from utility automatically excluded these analyses, which were supported by Norwid and Kraszewski. Kremer, however, was aware of this problem of art, but philosophic speculation had blunted his sensitiveness. In the second *Letter from Cracow* we read: "An artisan, a handicraftsman, a manufacturer, when he looks at the results of his occupation, sees them as works of art, and so the feeling of the beauty of form, even unconsciously on his part, penetrates into his soul and begins its magic workings there."<sup>39</sup>

Although Norwid and Kraszewski were not professional aestheticians, we cannot omit them. According to them, art is the progeny of work. This was one of the main questions of 19th century aesthetics, and not just an outcome of the aesthetic speculation of these two men. The question is connected with the reversion to the native, folk sources of artistic work, with the still greater disharmony between the artist and society, and with attempts at discovering a solution to the problem. Kraszewski and Norwid put forward their conception of making beauty universally popular as their answer to social and cultural conditions—to the lack of artistic culture in Polish society, to the first signs of the commercialization of art, and to the common demand for a national art, approved by all.

Kraszewski, even before Norwid, suggests the idea of artistic folk-craft as the basis of a national art. In *Wspomnienia z Odessy, Jedyssanu i Budżaku* (*Some Reminiscences from Odessa, Judyssa and Budjak*) (1845), Kraszewski looks forward to a time when genuinely Polish fine arts will be produced in the wooden buildings and the country cottages of the people. However, it was Norwid, not Kraszewski, who clarified the idea that art is the progeny of work, and who

<sup>38</sup> S. Morawski, "Poglądy estetyczne Libelta" ("Libelt's Aesthetic Views"), *Material for Studies and Discussions*, Nos. 7-8 (1951).

<sup>39</sup> *Letters from Cracow*, I, *op. cit.*, 9.

developed it into a rich conception of national art. They were both innovators. Probably Norwid took advantage of Kraszewski's interesting inventory and learned about relics of the past from him; but it was Kraszewski who took over Norwid's statements and embodied them in his *Sztuka u Słowian* (*Slav Art*). They both sought for the art in folk-craft as the source of native, Slavonic traditions. This was a common opinion at that time, but Norwid added some new ideas to it. Kraszewski before him, describing folk relics—rural architecture among others—was impressed by the instinctive aesthetic sense of the carpenters. Norwid finds a theoretical explanation for this fact. Beauty, according to him, is born in the process of work. Work, when treated aesthetically, ennobles man, and, moreover, it places each work on the level of an "ideality." That is why beauty is connected in his theory with utility. In his article "Z pamiętnika" ("From a Diary") we read the following: "The reverence for human work is the immortal element in art, as in the tasks which art has to perform in society."<sup>40</sup> In *Promethidion* (1847) Norwid writes that beauty, which is a form of love, is to lead us to an enthusiasm for work:

"Song and practice are one, as in fraternity  
Of marriage two people are one for eternity."

The tenth passage in *Promethidion* closes this apotheosis of beauty with a characteristic credo:

"And so I see in Poland future art  
As at the peak of towering human work  
The banner—neither a plaything nor a science,  
But as of the apostle's crafts most high,  
And as of the angel's prayer lowest sigh.

In the pamphlet *O sztuce dla Polaków* (*On Art for the Poles*) (1858) Norwid explains the opinions which he had presented at an earlier date. He is faithful of course to this idealistic conception, according to which art has a religious function. However, he adds some revolutionary suggestions. What were the other consequences which followed the statements about art being the progeny of work and about their intimate relation? It followed that, although the common man is only a spontaneous artist, he is also an extremely able one. Thus Klaczko's opinion that a national art in Poland is impossible is proved to be absurd. A feeling for plastic art must be stimulated among country people through proper forms and subjects. In this way the loneliness of the artist will vanish because he will find sensitive recipients everywhere. Secondly, the loneliness of the artist will disappear if he makes his work of art accessible to everyone and the artistic elements in them permeated with the national strain (as Chopin did). So the motto of applying the folk elements in professional art appears here in a concrete form: to analyze the creative work of country folk in their daily practice, in their furniture, dishes, clothes, buildings, etc. In *Promethidion* Norwid says without false humility, "we are all folk people. . . ." Thirdly, plastic culture is not for holidays but for everyday life. You may get accustomed to beauty not only from taking it in, but from producing it, as it is in the case of common people. On the other hand, if you must remain a recipient only, you

<sup>40</sup> Norwid, "From a Diary."

ought to spread beauty over all the things of your daily life. In the applied folk art the primitive beginnings of a national art appear. Fourthly, the problem of the common patronage of the artist is thus solved, and art achieves its full moral influence upon society.

Norwid's ideas, which he expounded in *Les Lois de l'exposition universelle* (1852) to awaken European interest, did not take root. Kraszewski followed the vicissitudes of Norwid's life with great interest. His *Slav Art* was the fruit of his own investigations in archeology and as a collector. He was stimulated in this work by the numerous investigations in the history of Polish art.<sup>41</sup> But it was to Norwid's inspiration that he owed such thoughts: "Is all art limited to architecture, painting, sculpture, and drawing? May not the sense of beauty be revealed unexpectedly in almost every moment of life in the smallest piece of furniture, in every trifle that the human hand has shaped?"<sup>42</sup>

The defense of aesthetic values in the glaze of an ordinary pot, in the carved handle of a knife, in a sword, in the drawing on a tombstone, a handmade multi-colored tapestry, and a shepherd's hut, that was Norwid's program for a folk and national art, based on applied art.

At the same time it was an apology for Polish art against Klaczko, who in his article "Sztuka polska" ("Polish Art")<sup>43</sup> held that Polish artists, deprived of the sun and light, are unable to create original plastic art. Kraszewski, taking into account that in the history of art "there must be sufficient room for the workers as well as for the masters, and the low voice of the human heart as well as powerful thought must be regarded,"<sup>44</sup> underlined at the same time the value of Polish native traditions. In this he was one with Norwid against their common antagonist. The controversy showed clearly that the problem of art as the progeny of work (i.e., the problem of making things of everyday life beautiful) is closely related to that of national art, to its traditional folk elements, and to the social patronage of the artist.

This selection of the aesthetic problems of the Romantic period does not even pretend to have threshed out the main questions. However, it indicates that theoretical analyses, although they reflected indirectly the contemporary fight of progressive ideas against retrogression, took no leading part in it. The guiding factor was the criticism of art. It put the problem of national and democratic elements of culture before the theory of art and before Polish philosophy. Philosophical works dealing with these questions appeared after 1840. Only then were they discussed by Trentowski, Cieszkowski, Kremer, Libelt, Gołuchowski, and two members of the Petersburg party, Ziemięcka and Hołowiński. In the years 1830-40 the most urgent problems of national life were raised in Poland by philosophical criticism. It assimilated new statements of German philosophy and aesthetics, enriched and modified them, and then passed them

<sup>41</sup> The abundant literature is given by M. Walicki in *Sprawa inwentaryzacji zabytków w dobie królestwa polskiego* (*The Question of Inventory of Relics at the Time of the Polish Kingdom, 1827-1862*) (Warszawa, 1931).

<sup>42</sup> Kraszewski, *Slav Art, Particularly in Pagan Poland and Lithuania* (Wilno, 1860), p. 8.

<sup>43</sup> *Wiadomości Polskie* (*Polish News*) (1857).

<sup>44</sup> Kraszewski, *Slav Art . . .*, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

on to native philosophy and aesthetics. The activities of Mochnacki were a typical and classic example.

Polish aesthetic thought, yielding to the influences of German philosophy, tried to free itself from them and find its own approach to the current problems of Polish art and criticism. In spite of the idealistic conceptions underlying it, it developed certain particular questions, such as the historical approach to art, the role of the subjective factor, the specific character of aesthetic experience, and the typical elements in a work of art. The two first problems—historicism and subjectivism to which belongs also the theory of genius as being above common society—seem to be characteristic of the contemporary attitude, since they occur in art and in criticism as well.

The particular role of art in the development of Polish spiritual life, and consequently the role of aesthetics in philosophical disciplines, must be ascribed to the contemporary conditions in Poland in which literature and art were the main platform for the fight for independence, both national and social.

#### LIST OF WRITERS

- CIESZKOWSKI, AUGUST (1814–1894). A philosopher and a Hegelian, he created a different conception of triadic development. His most important works are: *Prolegomena zur Historiosophie* (1838) and *Ojciec nasz (Our Father)* (1848). Interested in social and political questions, he took an active part in political life. He was the deputy for the Poznań district in the Prussian Parliament.
- CZERNYSZEWSKI, MIKOŁAJ (1828–1889). A Russian revolutionist, literary critic, and publicist, he was inclined to socialism in his attitude. He also was the author of numerous aesthetic reviews, the largest of which, “O estetycznym stosunku sztuki do rzeczywistości” (“On the Aesthetic Relationship of Art and Reality”) appeared in 1854.
- DEMBOWSKI, EDWARD (1822–1848). A philosopher, an aesthetic and literary critic, publicist, and Hegelian, he edited *Przegląd Naukowy (Scientific Review)* in Warsaw. A revolutionist, he was killed during the revolution of 1846 while fighting as a leader of the peasants. His outstanding work on aesthetics is *Piśmiennictwo polskie w zarysie (The Outline of Polish Literature)* (1845). He has left a great number of articles and dissertations on aesthetics.
- GRABOWSKI, MICHAŁ (1804–1863). A novelist, literary and artistic critic, his main works on aesthetics are: *Literature i krytyka (Literature and Criticism)* (1837–1840), and *Artykuły literackie, krytyczne i artystyczne (Literary, Critical, and Artistic Articles)* (1849). A conservative in his political opinion, he was also a member of the loyalists who edited *Tygodnik Petersburski (Petersburg Weekly)*.
- GOŁUCHOWSKI, JÓZEF (1797–1858). A philosopher, he was under the influence of Schelling. In the years 1823–24 he was a professor in Wilno. His most important works are: *Die Philosophie im Leben ganzer Völker und einzelner* (1822) and edited posthumously *Dumanie nad najważniejszymi zagadnieniami człowieka (Considerations on the Most Important Human Problems)* (1861). In these works he explained the existence of the Slav messianic philosophy according to which the nation was to save the world from spiritual degradation.
- HOŁOWIŃSKI, INGACY (1807–1855). Archbishop and publicist, in 1842 he was appointed president of the Roman-Catholic Ecclesiastical Academy in Petersburg and in 1851 became a metropolitan of Mohylów. He published some articles on art and aesthetics. He was conservative in his opinion and was for loyalty to czarist Russia.
- KŁACZKO, JULIUSZ (1825–1906). A publicist and an artistic and literary critic, he was the editor of *Wiadomości Polskie (Polish News)* in Paris in 1857–61. His best works are on Krasieński and Sienkiewicz. In 1880 he published “Causeries florentines”—reflections on art. In 1904 the collected edition of his *Szkice i rozprawy literackie (Literary Sketches)*



and Discussions) appeared. While an emigrant he was connected with the conservative camp.

- KRASIŃSKI, ZYGMUNT (1812-1859). One of the most outstanding of Polish Romantic poets, his best works are the two poetic dramas: *Nieboska Komedia (Non-Divine Comedy)* (1833), the subject of which is the fight of the aristocracy against democracy, and *Iridion*, the background of which is the fight of the Christians against Ancient Rome. He wrote some art and literary criticisms. His political ideas were conservative.
- KRASZEWSKI, JÓZEF IGNACY (1812-1887). The most productive Polish novelist of the 19th century, he was creator of the modern Polish novel (chiefly historical). He edited *Atheneum* in Wilno in 1841-51 and from 1859 *Gazeta Codzienna (Daily Gazette)* in Warsaw. He was also a critic and an ardent compiler. His best work of history and the theory of art is *Sztuka Słowian szczególnie w Polsce i Litwie przedchrześcijańskiej (Slav Art, Particularly in Pagan Poland and Lithuania)* (1860). His aesthetic ideas we find in his numerous critiques on current literature and art. A conservative at the beginning, he became a liberal later on.
- KREMER, JÓZEF (1806-1875). A philosopher and aesthetician, a Hegelian, and a professor at Jagielloński University and the School of Fine Arts in Cracow, he was also interested in the history of art. He dealt with aesthetic problems in *Listy z Krakowa (Letters from Cracow)* (1843-1856) and in *Podróż do Włoch (Journey to Italy)* (1859-1864). He was not interested in politics, but his sympathies were rather conservative.
- LELEWEL, JOACHIM (1786-1861). The most outstanding Polish historian of the first half of the 19th century, he was the adherent of analytic as well as synthetic investigations. According to his theory, a very important role in history is played by the masses. He considered a democratic municipal community as the base of our social traditions. He proved himself to be a democrat.
- LIBELT, KAROL (1807-1885). A philosopher as well as an aesthetician, he was educated on Hegel, but was in opposition to his master because he wanted to create a Slav philosophy. He edited *Dziennik Polski (Polish Journal)* and a magazine *Rok (The Year)* in Poznań. His main work on aesthetics is *Estetyka czyli umniactwo piękne (Aesthetics, or the Knowing of Beauty)* (1854). He took an active part in political life; a radical at first, he went over to the moderate camp.
- MOCHNACKI, MAURYCY (1804-1834). A literary critic, a historian, and publicist, he collaborated with the following Warsaw papers: *Dziennik Warszawski (Warsaw Journal)*, *Gazeta Polska (Polish Gazette)*, *Kurier Polski (Polish Express)*, *Nowa Polska (New Poland)*. He gave a theoretical basis to Polish Romanticism. His best dissertation is *O literaturze polskiej w w. XIX-ym (19th-Century Polish Literature)* (1830). He was a radical.
- NORWID, CYPRIAN KAMIL (1821-1883). One of the most outstanding Romantic poets, he expressed his opinions on aesthetics in his poems and numerous critical dissertations. In *Promethidion* (1851) he put forward (before Ruskin) the conception of the close connection of beauty with productive work. He fought for the improvement of the social conditions and material welfare of Polish artists. He was an ardent Catholic and his political sympathies were conservative. He possessed his own messianic political conception, according to which it was the moral revival of the Poles that was to bring them independence and social equality, as well as spiritual regeneration for the whole world.
- POL, WINCENTY (1807-1872). Romantic poet and the author of *Pieśń o ziemi naszej (Song of our Land)* (1843), he was interested in geography (he lectured on it at the University of Cracow between 1850-1853) and artistic criticism. He wrote articles on these subjects. He wanted the independence of Poland but he did not understand the necessity of social reform.
- ŚNIADECKI, JAN (1756-1830). An outstanding mathematician, a philosopher and publicist, he was the representative of the Enlightenment and was in definite opposition to Kantian philosophy. In his literary polemics he defended neo-classicism.
- STACHOWICZ, MICHAŁ (1768-1835). A painter, he chiefly painted scenes from the Cracovian peasants' life; the insurrection against the Russians in 1794 among others.

- STWOSZ, WIT (indefinite-1833). An outstanding sculptor, for many years he studied in Nuremberg. His best work is the Mariacki Altar in Cracow.
- TOWIAŃSKI, ANDRZEJ (1795-1878). A mystic, he was a founder of the sect of which Mickiewicz was also a member for some time. According to Towiański, a new Christianity was to be created by Slav people and the Napoleonic dynasty, as the result of their spiritual activity.
- TRENTOWSKI, BRONISŁAW (1808-1869). A philosopher and a pedagogue, he was educated in Hegelian philosophy. He was the creator of a national philosophy which ascribed to Slav peoples (chiefly the Poles) the ability to synthesize realism and idealism. His main works are *Grundlagen der universellen Philosophie* (1837) and *Chowanna* (1837). He was oscillating in his political opinions. He wanted the independence of Poland and social reforms but at the end he accepted the contemporary *status quo ante*.
- ZIEMIĘCKA, ELEONORA (1819-1869). A publicist and a writer, at first a Hegelian, she later edited *Pielgrzym (The Pilgrim)* (1842-1846), in which she propagated Catholic philosophy. She wrote on literature (Schiller, Byron) and aesthetics. In her political opinions she was thoroughly conservative.
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Polish Theories of Art between 1830 and 1850

Author(s): Stefan Morawski

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