

Maria Dernałowicz

"Obraz literatury polskiej XIX i XX wieku. Vol. 1-4", red. Kazimierz Wyka, Henryk Markiewicz, Irena Wyczańska, Kraków 1975 : [recenzja]

Literary Studies in Poland 5, 189-191

1980

Artykuł został zdigitalizowany i opracowany do udostępnienia w internecie przez Muzeum Historii Polski w ramach prac podejmowanych na rzecz zapewnienia otwartego, powszechnego i trwałego dostępu do polskiego dorobku naukowego i kulturalnego. Artykuł jest umieszczony w kolekcji cyfrowej bazhum.muzhp.pl, gromadzącej zawartość polskich czasopism humanistycznych i społecznych.

Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach dozwolonego użytku.

The Informations

Les Informations

Obraz Literatury Polskiej XIX i XX wieku (The Picture of Polish Literature of the 19th and 20th Century), Series III: *Literatura krajowa w okresie romantyzmu 1831–1863 (Literature in Poland in the Romantic Period 1831–1863)*, vol. 1: Kraków 1975, vol. 2—in print, vol. 3 and 4—in preparation.

The development of Polish Romanticism, the trend which had become victorious in Poland before 1830 with such outstanding works as Antoni Malczewski's *Maria*, Seweryn Goszczyński's *Zamek kaniowski (The Castle of Kaniów)* and, above all, with Adam Mickiewicz's poetry, from *Ballads and Romances* to *Konrad Wallenrod*, after 1831, after the collapse of the November uprising, took two different courses: in emigration, where the greatest poets of the epoch, like Mickiewicz and Słowacki, lived, and in the partitioned Poland. Series III of *The Picture of Polish Literature* is devoted to that Romanticism which developed in Poland and which, though presently less known than the literature written in the Great Emigration, exerted considerable influence on the spiritual formation of Poles. Included in the Series are both syntheses and portraits of particular writers (analysis of their works, bibliography, anthology of texts), prepared by the best scholars in the field of history of Romanticism.

In the main, writers presented in this Series are, with such rare exceptions as Aleksander Fredro, minor artists, to a great extent influenced by the conventions of the pre-November Romanticism. They wrote under extremely unfavourable conditions: political oppression, especially under the Russian rule, and severe censorship, wary of any political allusion, any patriotic and revolutionary thought,

compelled the writers to create an Aesopic language, intelligible for the Polish reading public. This literature to a much greater extent than the literature written in emigration drew on folk culture.

The social thought in the first two decades after the collapse of the November uprising stemmed from the belief that the defeat was due to the absence in the uprising of great peasant masses, still not emancipated from their serfdom and thus not interested in regaining national independence which would not change their lot. Hence in both political programmes of numerous conspiratorial groups and literary programmes the question of the people comes to the fore. Drawing on folk songs and tales, making the people conscious of their rights and their importance in the life of the nation, and all kinds of patriotic agitation become primary duties of literature.

Characteristically, in those first two decades this literature was resistant to the Messianic ideas formulated in emigration, which were to become the distinctive feature of Polish "High Romanticism." It does not mean, however, that writers in Poland were out of touch with the great works published in emigration; on the contrary, it was the great poetry of emigration, secretly reaching Poland and distributed under severe penalty, which—together with *Konrad Wallenrod*, published before 1830—helped this generation of conspirators and desperados to strengthen their belief in identity of poetry and struggle, of poetry and morality, the highest value of the latter being love of one's country.

The opposition: the gentry—the people, characteristic of this poetry of agitation, weakened after 1846, when the uprising prepared by gentry revolutionists changed, in great part owing to instigation of Austrian authorities, into the terrible Galician slaughter of the gentry by vindictive peasants, distrustful towards Polish conspirators. Different accents become predominant in literature: those of social solidarity for the sake of national values. There is a marked departure from the heroic concept of the desperado, ready for anything. Romantic revolt and revolutionary agitation are replaced by the conviction that the ideal is unattainable in the earthly reality, by the cult of tradition and idealization of the gentry past. Hence the interest in history, especially predominant in the novel, hence the vision of patriarchal relationships between the manor and the village, fixed in the social consciousness: the modest, industrious and reli-

gious manor becomes in literature an oasis of all that is Polish and patriotic.

Thus the poetry of the period preceding the uprising of 1863 is marked by the solidaristic accents; programmes of the fight for national independence are combined with programmes of social reforms, but the opposition: the gentry—the people, so distinct in the years 1831—1846, is now less exposed, and often simply blurred.

Obviously, this very schematic picture of Romantic literature in Poland does not render all extremely complicated circumstances in which it was written or all its internal contradictions. These depended on the situation in particular districts of the partitioned Poland, as well as on political events, and therefore the first three volumes of Series III, presenting writers whose main activity fell on the first two decades after the November uprising, are geographically arranged. Volume 1 is devoted to literature of that part of Poland which was annexed by Austria, Volume 2—to that of the Russian section of the country, and Volume 3—to literature written in the part under the Prussian rule. Volume 4 deals with the second generation of the “post-November” Romantics, whose careers began about 1846.

Series III of *The Picture of Polish Literature*, with its detailed analyses and presentations of literary biographies (often tragic ones), does not only enable the reader to gain better knowledge of the often neglected literature in Poland in the years 1831—1863, but also answers the question which is fundamental for understanding Polish history: to what extent was this history affected by literature?

Maria Dernalowicz

Transl. by *Maria-Bożenna Fedewicz*

Complete Works of Adam Mickiewicz

For several years the Institute of Literary Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences, together with the publishing house “Ossolineum,” has been preparing an edition of Adam Mickiewicz’s *Complete Works*. The editor-in-chief of the publication is Konrad Górski, the members of the Editorial Board are: Władysław Floryan, Jerzy Zbigniew Nowak, Zofia Stefanowska, Kazimierz Wyka (till 1975) and Czesław Zgorzelski, the Secretary—Janusz Odrowąż Pieniążek.

“The present edition,” we read in Professor Zgorzelski’s introduction to Volume I. “is intended by its editors as a critical edi-