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CONCEPT SPHERE OF ‘YOUNG POLAND’ FREE VERSE WRITING IN CRITICAL AND ARTISTIC DIMENSIONS

The article gives a synesthetical analysis of several poems taken from ‘Young Poland’ (‘Młoda Polska’) period, considering its critical interpretations during the 20th – the beginning of the 21st century. Studying Lesya’s survey of the ‘Young Poland’ poetry has conditioned the subject of this research, which is such insufficiently explored field as free verse writing. The nature of free verse would allow determining the specifications of generic and stylistic diffusion in works of a certain poet and observe formation of an individual vision of the world thereby reflected in re-interpreted initials of folklore verse. Taking impressionism, which is believed to be the common stylistic marker for ‘Young Poland’ lyrics, into consideration can evoke the researcher’s interest to vers libre as one of its characteristic phenomena.

There was shown that the conceits of ‘Young Poles’ creativity, the choice of genre and versification order first, evidence the writers’ return to initial artistic syncretism. Particularly, free verse, upon combining the prosodic systems dominant in different periods of literary process, appears to be the successor of preliminary versification traditions and, at the same time, the founder of those new. The special imagery of free verse works is defined by various lexical massifs (exotic, colloquial, or dialect words), philosophical and scientific terms. Due to ‘Young Poles’ activity, the development of free verse was actualized at the end of the 19th – the beginning of the 20th century. Stylistic diversity of free verse works by Polish Modernist poets – in particular, the symbiosis of Neoromanticism, Symbolism, Impressionism, Expressionism, and Imagism – determined the experimental characteristics of their poetics, which are word making, onomatopoeias usage, artistic synthesis, tendency to exotic stanza patterns, and re-interpretations of classical literature images.

Key words: *versification, Young Poland, free verse, artistic synthesis, image, motif, symbol, criticism.*

Problem Statement. Transition periods in literature are contradictory and multi-vector phenomena. It was at the turn of the 19th – 20th centuries when the new literary trend, famous as ‘Young Poland,’ emerged on the artistic map of the Eastern Europe. Apparently, it can properly epitomize the organic amalgamation of traditions of Polish Romanticism and French Symbolism.

Researches on the specifications of ‘Young Poland’ poetry in Ukraine were at first done by Ivan Franko and Lesja Ukrajinka. To begin with, Franko’s conversance in Polish literature was essentially large, which can be evidenced either by his early article “Pol’s’kyj seljanyn v osviltenni pol’s’koji literatury” (*A Polish Peasant as Highlighted by Polish Literature, 1887*), paying tribute to the Positivist methods of research, or the integrated scientific reflections over Polish Modernism, particularly Romanticism, in the work “Poezija Jana Kasprowicza” (*Poetry by Jan Kasprowicz, 1889*) and some other treatises.

While I. Franko was trying to embrace as long array of events as possible, Lesja Ukrajinka narrowed

her choices down to comparatively brief period – from the end of the 19th to the beginning of the 20th centuries. Her article “Zametki o nowejszej pol’skoj literatury” (*The Notes on Nowadays Polish Literature, 1901*) was intended to get the readers of that time acquainted with the peculiarities of Polish Modernist writs – firstly, the works by the representatives of ‘Young Poland’ (‘Młoda Polska’) artistic movement.

What is the most noticeable about this article is that Lesja’s critical manner tended towards the synthesis of ‘seriousness’ and ‘eulogy,’ because, as the writer herself explained, such criticism might have given an authoritative material for an insight into a nation’s intellectual life, elucidating its strengths as well as weaknesses. That was why she wrote at the end of the article:

«Польская критика вслед за беллетристами взывает: «Синтеза, синтеза, во что бы то ни стало!» Но не лучше ли было бы заменить эти слова другими: «Свободы духа, отваги, во что бы то ни стало!» – быть может, это требование даже легче выполнить. Во всяком случае, этих элементов

наиболее недостает богатой, разнообразной и крайне интересной польской литературе нашего времени, а это элементы, необходимые, между прочим, и для синтеза [5, с. 126].

The Neo-Romantic tendencies of Modernist Polish literature were what Lesja Ukrajinka particularly appreciated about it. As she thoroughly observed, Kazimierz Przerwa-Tetmajer, Zenon Przesmycki, Andrzej Nemojewski, Stefan Żeromski, Waław Sieroszewski and, what was the utmost, Stanisław Przybyszewski they had all contributed to the development of national literature due to their original manner of writing and “extremely subjective attitudes” [1, с. 252].

Analysis of Recent Researches and Publications. Unfortunately, after Lesja Ukrainka’s death, the researches of ‘Young Poland’ poetry in Ukraine are still sporadic, which may be partially explained by Soviet ideological restrictions imposed on academic philology. For instance, poetry by Leopold Staff had been profoundly analyzed in monographs by Julija Bulakhovs’ka (1970) and Ellina Cykhovs’ka (2012) who both affirmed impressionism as his stylistic dominant.

The connections of ‘Young Poland’ lyrics with Modernistic Ukrainian poetry were studied by Volodymyr Morenec’ (“Nacional’ni sljakyh poetycnoho modernizmu I polovyny XX stolittja”, 2002) and overlapped by Mykola Il’nyč’ky (“Filosofija bronzovykh mjaziv: Bohdan-Ihor Antonyč i Kazimierz Wierzynski”, 2008). What the researchers remarked about the poetry of ‘Young Poland’ was its tendency to “re-confirm the national authenticity of the Poles” [2, с. 721; 3, с. 81]. Both Morenec and Il’nyč’ky deduced that the 20th century Polish poetry was developing in unison with Ukrainian one, which thesis would become the reason to set up a paradigm for comparative studies.

Thenceforth, the brief survey of existing inquiries of Polish literature helped the author of this article outline the certain trend for the further research, which is free verse writing. The nature of free verse, also known as *vers libre*, would allow determining the specifications of generic and stylistic diffusion in works of a certain poet and observe formation of an individual vision of the world thereby reflected in re-interpreted initials of ancient verse, Biblical first of all. Taking impressionism, which is believed to be the common stylistic marker for ‘Young Poland’ lyrics, into account would lead any researcher to the conclusion about *vers libre* as one of its intrinsic stylistic constituents.

The Objectives of the Article. Therefore, the objectives of this work are to establish the formal

and substantial features of free verse writing in Polish Modernism by juxtaposition of Young Poland’s *vers libres* belonging to different authors (Waław Rolicz-Lieder, Tadeusz Miciński and Bronisława Ostrowska), regarding the critical views of Polish literature of that time and its interpretations in Ukrainian science.

Results and Discussions. According to the esthetical program of ‘Young Poland,’ a writer was proclaimed an exile from utility world and thereafter declared “a Lord of the Lords”, in other words – a herald of transcendences, unlike a mediocre ‘civilized man’ who had desperately lost one’s connections with Nature. Obviously, free verse at that time was widely lauded as a hypothetic variety of a specific ‘prophetic’ manner of speech.

Commenting upon *vers libre*, which is frequently named a ‘wiersz wolny współczesny’ (i. e. contemporary) in Polish literary dictionaries, Maria Dłuska in her monograph “Próba teorii wiersza polskiego” (*An Attempt to Theorize over the Polish Verse, 1962*) gave it a definition ‘wiersz zdaniowy’ (which can be translated as ‘the verse of sentences’), stressing its intonation-syntactic initials. As for her, “...nowoczesny nasz wiersz intonacyjno-zdaniowy <...> pojawił się pod koniec XIX w. pod wpływami zachodniego vers-libre’u <...> Nasz nowy wiersz zdaniowy ma za sobą [...] całą wysoko rozwiniętą praktykę sylabiczną naszej poezji, praktykę sylabotyzmu, a w dodatku rozwija się obok systemu tonicznego” [6, с. 245–246].

In other words, free verse as a synthesis of different versification systems to be dominant in a certain period may be considered to continue the precedent verse traditions and meantime to establish the new ones. This is why the free-verse writers willingly use the specific imagery (including various massifs of passive lexica such as exotic and borrowed words, vulgarisms and dialectal means), philosophical notions or scientific terms, thereby composing their poems as reflections over arts.

The noticed variation has been found in lyrics by Waław Rolicz-Lieder. Firstly, “Uruguay”, a lyro-epic poem with elements of *ostrannenije* (this untranslatable term was implemented by Victor Šklovskij to signify a narrator’s look at a real thing as if seen at first time), is alleged to be the pure sample of Biblical-styled or, in addition, Whitmanian free verse:

Przybywając z australskich brzegów, zwalczywszy burz kilkoro i zataczając się po drodze jak pijany wyrobnik, otarł się wreszcie śliskimi bokami o wyznaczone molo – i stanął.

*Z dwóch cylindrów kanarkowej barwy wydrgał
ostatek siwawego dymu, który okopcał gwiazdy
oceanu,
a wewnątrz nikt nie czeka gadziny przybicia,
żadna kobieta w omdleniu duszy nie wydaje [...]*
[10, c. 38]

The plot of the poem is focused on the arrival of an Australian steamboat to the South American shores, shown through the ‘viewpoint’ of a vessel itself. Thanks to the exotic words woven into practically prosaic lines, the speaker succeeded in creating the special Neo-romantic dwarfism where the smoke-stacks, euphonically named ‘the canary-yellow cylinders’ (*cylindry kanarkowej barwy*) make a contract with colorless ‘fishy eyes of the cabins’ (*oczy... są bez wyrazu, w półogłupiale, w półzmeżzone*), and the marine air is opposed to the ‘breath of ailment’ emanated by passengers.

What would force us to conclude about the priority of Rolicz-Lieder’s “Uruguay” in Polish Modernistic free-verse writing is mainly the conceit of an endless travel imminently finishing in Non-Being (in the Hell – ‘piekło portowe’ for Rolicz-Lieder). Besides, the Polish poet in his prose-oriented lines (sometimes called ‘versets’) descended to the visions of people doing their chores at the ship (seamen washing floors, a captain uttering the orders, a cook woman peeling potatoes) after a return from overseas, in which narration the romantic marine adventures should be present latently.

Thanks to alternation of motifs, specific intonation and reiterations, it is possible to determine the symbol of a steamboat created by the Polish poet as the analogue of Noah’s Ark or A. Rimbaud’s ‘Le Bateau Ivre’:

*Lampy kolorowe błysnęły na statkach; bliskim jest
czas wieczery dla szorujących kajuty: wokół gwar
przyspieszony, wokół słychać szuranie szczotek
ryżowych,
pluskanie wody zbieranej ścierkami* [10, c. 39].

In essence, W. Rolicz-Lieder’s verses, adorned with internal rhymes, alliterations and assonances, can be related to the emotional phenomena talked about in Bolesław Leśmian’s essay “Rytm jako światopogląd” (*The Rhythm as the Worldview*): “Rytm w poezji stanowi pierwiastek upojenia, oszołomienia i uczuciowych, nielogicznych nakazów (underlining is mine – NN), którym się posłuszne oddzielne słowa” [7, c. 66].

The highlighted emotional traits of free verse such as *exaltation* (upojennia), *stupefaction*

(oszołomiennia) and *sensual illogical ordinances* (uczuciowi nielogiczni nakazy), can be observed in works by another ‘Young Poland’ poet, Tadeusz Miciński, collected in the only published book in his lifetime, “W mroku gwiazd” (*In the Gloom of Stars*, 1902). Particularly, the ‘prayer’ intonation, hypothetically characteristic for free verse as a whole, determined the generic traits of the following poem, “Stygmata św. Franciszka” (*St. Francis’s Stigmas*):

*O, wzgardź mną, Panie, bom niegodny Ciebie –
lecz w piersi mojej słyszę harfy granie i ręce moje
wyciągam w zaranie – ku Tobie.*

*Uderza na mnie blask Mocy i Tronów – gwiazdy
mi grają wśród wieczornych dzwonów – na niebie
krwawe błyskają purpury – Twoich tajemnic otchłanie
i góry...* [8, c. 65].

The intricate sequences of internal rhymes (such as *Ciebie – na niebie, granie – zaranie, tronów – dzwonów, purpury – góry*), as well as the metric structure of the lyrical narration, bearing the resemblance to either a clerical chant or an epic hexameter, would allow a reader to conceive the image of St. Francis of Assisi – the legendary Roman Catholic saint who was famous of the ability to understand the language of birds and was therefore closer to merge with the initial Nature and to restore the paradisiacal harmony.

Due to the free-verse writing of Bolesław Leśmian, the ‘Young Poland’ poetry had its own version of Francis’s “The Praise to Creation”:

*Pochwalony bądź, Panie, przez brata naszego,
księżyc, i nasze siostry, gwiazdy,
Tyś ukształtował je w niebie jasne i cenne, i piękne.
Pochwalone bądź, Panie, przez brata naszego, wiatr,
I przez powietrze, i czas pochmurny, i pogodny, i
wszelki...*

[See 7, c. 422].

On top of that, the speaker turns to each object of his environment as if they are the live entities, or his brothers and sisters, in other words – treating them all as mediums on his way to God. Thanks to the specifications of poetic language that can “combine any discords, eliminate any oppositions and shift any perspectives” [9, c. 133], the reader can perceive the cosmogony act reflected in Francis’s prayer as simultaneously creation and re-creation of Nature within the human soul.

That is why Francis’s speech in Miciński’s verse is pervaded with the similes and metaphors

ornithological in style, say ‘the black-feathered depth’ (głęb czarnopióra), or ‘the birds soaring in height’ as souls of the dead asking about their fates. Overall, the extraordinarily powerful (it would be no exaggeration to say ‘cathartic’) impact of the poem is assumingly conditioned by the weird alterations of sensory motifs (smells, colors, shadows and penumbras).

Upon turning back to lyrics by Waław Rolicz-Lieder, for instance, we can see that he embodied the prayer intonations in his archetypal turning to Muse in the following verse. Taking into consideration the specifications of Polish phonetics (exclusively a penultimate syllable to be stressed), the poem, formally the sonnet, tends toward the *vers libre* due to the absence of end-rhymes and sharply syncopated intonation:

*Wiem! niewolnicą jesteś, Muzo jasna,
Żywotem miejskim i troską spętana!
A świat tak wielki i wiele na świecie
Ludzi pieszczących kaprys słodkiej woli.*

*Chciałabyś z źródeł pić piirenejskich,
Katullusowe całować jezioro
I, o kolumnę wsparta pompejańską,
Chciałabyś dmuchać w Wezuwiusza dymy.*

*Upita wonią cytryn i pomarańcz,
Chciałabyś płynąć do brzegów arabskich,
Gdzie monotonność gra gamę wieczystą.*

*I, ponad grobem Ewy zadumana,
Chciałabyś widzieć dworek modrzewiowy
Z dwójgiem wpatrzonych na gościniec topól [11].*

Here the speaker outlined the roles of both himself and the Muse – in particular, he initially called her ‘the captive’ (niewolnicą), and from thence, using the verbs in conditional mood, led her through South European landscapes up to Eden, which, according to the speaker, may be re-found only with her help. That is why the poem is whelmed with sensory images, mostly olfactory (lemons, oranges, fumes of Vesuvius), to create the sensual paradisiacal atmosphere.

The similar game of sensory conceits is especially characteristic to the lyrics by female representatives of ‘Young Poland’. This can be denoted by the works of Bronisława Ostrowska, which have acquired quite a metaphorical description in literary critical essays of the beginning of the 20th century: “Ton skrzypcowy... się panować w lirykach p. Ostrowskiej, ton rzewny i rozwiewny, zaprzepaszczający się chętnie wśród

kwiatów, gęstwy drzewnej, nad brzegami mórz, w sitowiacz rzecznych lub we mgle marzeń, słońcem ozłoconych. A ponad tym wszystkim czuwa światłość niezłomnego arcyzmu [7, c. 349].

To prove our point of view, we should exemplify it by Ostrowska’s free-verse meditative poem “Nie! ne napiszę sonetu...” (*No, I would not write a sonnet...*), in which the secrets of poetic mastery are symbolized in natural, particularly floral images:

*Nie! ne napiszę sonetu.
Ale narwę w ogrodzie astrów białych,
Promienystych, lekkich komet o złotym oku,
I gałęzi białodrzewy o białym aksamicie skóry na
smutnych liściach,
I welonów gipsówki drżących jak srebrna mgła –
I włożę to w wysoki rżnięty krystal na wnetrzu
ciemnych drzwi...*
[See 6, c. 246].

In the speaker’s imagination, the composition of bouquets has been practically identified to the verse writing, which allows us to talk about the Japanese cultural concept ‘ikebana’ creatively interpreted by Ostrowska. Poetry as an art appears to be conceived in a tuft of asters looking like the Milky Way, in sunflowers and mauves on the background of ‘laughter so loud,’ in the grapes of rowan-tree, in spikes of wheat and rye, and even, so quaintly, in cracking hazelnuts. It is expedient to append that Ostrowska herself perceived poetry as “weaving the words in the soul like on the looms”. according to B. Leśmian’s essay ‘Bronisława Ostrowska: “Aniołom dźwięku” [See 7, c. 322]; she considered it present in everything, and no specific words or, what is more, solid poetic forms (like sonnet, rondeau, triolet etc.) are needed to create it. Decidedly, the refrain “Nie! ne napiszę sonetu...” may epitomize this perception properly.

Therefore, we should confirm that Ostrowska’s “Nie! ne napiszę sonetu...”, due to its free and meantime hexametrical form, acquired not only lyrical, but also epic features, having thus become specimens of a newly invented genre – a verse novella [4, c. 78–79].

Conclusions. In general, owing to the fact that the free verse was quite sporadic in early Polish Modernism, it appears to be the most remarkable phenomenon for such studies. What was found analogous in the single free-verse works by the different in style representatives of ‘Young Poland’ such as Waław Rolicz-Lieder, Tadeusz Miciński and Bronisława Ostrowska, was, firstly, the variations of long lines, sometimes called ‘versets’.

As the free verse at the end of the 19th century was not differentiated from prose writing in terms of literary form, each of the poets analyzed preferred either to use lengthy end-stopped unrhymed lines or divide them into several verses with occasional rhymes – for instance, to create the intonation of listing (like in Miciński's "St. Francis's Stigmas"). Another factor to display the authors' aspiration to make their narrations sound epic was the three-foot meters (dactyl, amphibrach, and anapest) that imparted the Homeric resonance to the poems.

Furthermore, the formal factors discovered in the researched lyrical texts established the trend to outline their contextual similarity, which is selection of topics. Judging by the essence of plots and words to embody them, the free verses of 'Young Poland' are profoundly philosophical, religious and reflective in content, but whenever the scenes of everyday life were depicted (by W. Rolicz-Lieder, for example),

they would also become elements of contemporary archetypal picture of the world.

Finally, what conjugates the free verses of 'Young Poland' in terms of literary form and sense is the splendiferous sensory (visual, auditory, tactile, olfactory) imagery. Particularly, the binary opposition 'freedom / slavery', upon being topical for both countries in social and cultural aspects, has obtained its individual interpretations in the works by all of the poets investigated, with an archetype of Muse for the main symbol of liberated creativity.

Overall, the formal and substantial conceits ascertained in 'Young Poland' free-verse heritage would surely evidence the writers' successful attempt to synthesize various versification systems and artistic means in embodiment of philosophically complicated as well as seemingly simple everyday themes, which became intrinsic to Modernistic literature of entire Europe.

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Науменко Н. В. КОНЦЕПТОСФЕРА ВЕРЛІБРИСТИКИ «МОЛОДОЇ ПОЛЬЩІ» У КРИТИЧНОМУ ТА ХУДОЖНЬОМУ ВИМІРАХ

У статті з позиції синтезу мистецтв проаналізовано вільновіршову поезію періоду «Молодої Польщі» на тлі її критичних осмислень упродовж XX – початку XXI століть. Уважний погляд на формальні та змістові особливості молодопольської поезії зумовлює актуальність нашого дослідження – такий маловивчений аспект цього феномена, як вільне віршування. Природа верлібру дозволить визначити особливості взаємопроникнення жанрово-стильових рис у творчості певного автора і формуванні індивідуальної поетичної картини світу, заломлену крізь переосмислені фольклорні первини вільного вірша. Імпресіонізм, який, за свідченням переважної більшості науковців, є спільним стильовим знаменником лірики «Молодої Польщі», спонукає дослідника звернути увагу на верлібр як одне з його характерних явищ.

Показано, що концепти творчості «молодополяків», передусім добір жанру твору та віршового ладу, засвідчують повернення авторів до первісного синкретизму мистецтв. Зокрема, верлібр як синтез панівних у різні періоди розвитку літератури систем віршування постає продовжувачем попередніх версифікаційних традицій і водночас започатковує нові. Саме це зумовлює особливу образність

верлібрових творів, зокрема включення до їхньої мови різних лексичних масивів (екзотизмів, просторічних і діалектних слів), філософських понять, наукових термінів. Саме завдяки діяльності митців «Молодої Польщі» в поезії кінця XIX – початку XX ст. актуалізувався розвиток вільного вірша. Стильова різноманітність творчості польських поетів доби модерну (зокрема, симбіоз неоромантизму з символізмом, імпресіонізмом, експресіонізмом, імажинізмом) породила нові варіації польського верлібру, визначила експериментаторський характер його поетики: словотворчість, звуконаслідування, синтез мистецтв, уживання екзотичної строфіки, переосмислення образів класичного письменства.

Ключові слова: *віршування, «Молода Польща», верлібр, синтез мистецтв, образ, мотив, символ, критика.*