

neutics. The personalities of Jean Valjean, Andrzej Kmicic, Count of Monte-Christo, and Stanisław Wokulski are, in fact, embodiments of the Good Father, the Brave Knight and the Faithful Lover, the Superman, and the Emperor who, having known the truth cannot, like Oedipus, look at the world any more" (p. 178). According to the final interpretation (echoing B. Bettelheim's theories), "an adult reading a popular novel with a mythico-realistic protagonist in it experiences (like a child presented with a fable) a catharsis: "he overcomes his latent fears, nourishes his hopes and satisfies his need for intense sensations [...]" (p. 190). This therapeutic quality, characteristic of certain literary works ("Sienkiewicz was an excellent psychotherapist in his times"), is, in Krzemińska's view (as in Jung's) a basis for their revaluation. Krzemińska ascribes the highest value to the works that materialize the collective "I", which confirms their "psychological truth". As opposed to a stereotype (which is a dead language incapable of meeting the needs of the collective subconsciousness) an archetype determines literature's actual, social *raison d'être*, and constitutes the source of "the novel's appeal emanating toward an adequately disposed reader—the appeal whose nature cannot be specified, as it is just this appeal that gives meaning to the words out of which the whole work evolves" (p. 178).

Krzemińska's presentation of the selected characters of the 19th century novel is not, however, reduced to the symbolic aspect: they are also viewed from traditional branches of psychology i.e. physiognomics and characterology. Apart from the language of psychoanalysis ("within the hold of libido") the author makes use of the notions of psychopathology ("Wokulski's neurotic personality") as well as of a strictly scientific typology of characters (endostatics and exostatics) derived from M. Mazur's *Cybernetics and Character*. Such measures—when applied to the novel's protagonist—may appear debatable, as their

naturalism collides with the protagonist's literary (i.e. figurative) status. Another target of criticism may lie in the author's occasional and specific psychogenetism, an example of which may be the dependence of the manner of space presentation (narrowing) on the writer's (Prus') agoraphobia. Drawbacks like these do not diminish the work's cognitive value to any considerable degree nor do they question its contribution to the methodologies of literary studies. And as far as literary history is concerned, Krzemińska's book throws new light on the novel's realism whose "ambiguity" was rendered perfectly by L. A. Fiedler (a representative of the western "mythopoic" school) who said that the main value of the theory of realism resides in the fact that with more refined writers it produces a beneficial naivety toward their own creative processes, owing to which the abundance of archetypes can easily saturate their works making them acceptable for readers who credit themselves with "scientific disposition" and are hostile toward anything that is inspired and mythical.

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Halina Kosętko, Z DZIEJÓW RECEPCJI „TRYLOGII” HENRYKA SIENKIEWICZA W DWUDZIESTOLECIU MIĘDZYWOJENNYM. Wokół polemik z Olgierdem Górka. (From the records of the reception of Henryk Sienkiewicz's "The Trilogy" during the interwar decades. On the polemics with Olgierd Górka). Kraków 1985. Wydawnictwo Naukowe WSP. Prace Monograficzne Wyższej Szkoły Pedagogicznej w Krakowie. t. LXXI, ss. 260.

Henryk Sienkiewicz (1846—1916), an outstanding Polish novelist, 1905 Nobel Prize winner for *Quo Vadis?* (a novel of the days of the Emperor Nero), author of many historical novels which have been translated into numerous languages, is perhaps the best-known Polish writer abroad.

The historical novel has for years

been disputed among literary critics and historians as to the degree of its faithfulness to historical truth. The reviewed thesis discusses controversies which took place in Poland; nevertheless, because of its subject matter it may also be of interest to scholars from other countries.

Sienkiewicz's popularity in this country, apparent not only in the success of his works but also in criticism, is a phenomenon as universal in the public response as it is underestimated in literary research. The above-mentioned work, then, is the first attempt at documenting a variety of critical views expressed during the given period. It throws light on the national reception of *The Trilogy* (a series of historical novels of 17th century Poland).

Although the thesis is mainly concerned with the reception of *The Trilogy* during the two decades between 1918 and 1939, in the introduction the author traces the roots of the controversy surrounding this work, through the positivist and the modernist periods. Of the leading voices of the time, the author discusses works of such scholars, critics and writers as S. Brzozowski, W. Feldman, A. Brückner, A. Potocki, B. Chlebowski, J. Kasprowicz, S. Żeromski. Critical elements of the articles by Brzozowski and Nałkowski during the early stage of *The Trilogy's* social evaluation failed (in the author's view) to undermine the firmly established position of the writer of *The Teutonic Knights*, whose works (historical novels in particular) had already become a common property of the entire nation, and were part of world literature." (p. 27).

Further evaluations are recorded in the following chapter entitled "Interest in *The Trilogy* during the interwar period." Of the flood of critical voices, those worth mentioning are the views of Z. Brochocka expressed in *Ideal rycerza chrześcijańskiego w "Trylogii"*. *Tasso i Sienkiewicz* (*The Christian Knight Ideal in the Trilogy: Tasso and*

*Sienkiewicz*); T. Zieliński's *Idea Polski w dziełach Sienkiewicza* (*Vision of Poland in the works of Sienkiewicz*); and K. Wojciechowski's *Henryk Sienkiewicz*, a monograph. Among other articles, those mentioned are methodical papers which discuss the works of Sienkiewicz with reference to educational requirements. In addition, the author singles out those editions of Sienkiewicz's works which have had an indirect influence on public response to the novelist's creativity. On the basis of the quoted review one may conclude that works by Sienkiewicz sold fast and were being constantly read, not by Polish readers alone.

The fundamental set of problems, centered around the discussion of *The Trilogy* during the two decades between the wars, is presented in Chapters III and IV. Referring to the opinions quoted, the author maintains that if *The Trilogy* as a whole raised any doubts as to whether the author was faithful to historical facts, then it was to a limited extent only that such comments would concern *Potop* (*The Deluge*) and *Pan Wołodyjowski* (*Sir Wołodyjowski*). With respect to these two works, certain aspects were questioned, yet stress was laid on the writer's licence to create his personal vision of literary fiction. However, the first part of *The Trilogy*, *Ogniem i mieczem* (*With Fire and Sword*), became the true seeds of war among critics. And yet, the dispute had little to do with details of minor, or even of greater importance; it involved the very historiosophic content of the work, its political and ideological aspects.

Objections to *With Fire and Sword* concerned such features of the work as cruel realism, a negative and biased portrayal of the Cossacks, a false approach to the Russian question and aggravation of nationalist feelings of the Ukrainians. Adversaries of the first volume of *The Trilogy* stated their approval for the introduction of other works by Sienkiewicz, *The Deluge* in



particular, into the school curriculum. According to the author, both the critics and the defence (T. Parnicki, J. Kaden-Bandrowski, S. Tarnowski) unanimously acknowledged the high artistic standard achieved in *With Fire and Sword*.

As H. Kosętko reports, *With Fire and Sword* was accused of being anti-state in character and of exerting a negative influence over young people; these views resulted in the removal of this work from the school reading list. Nevertheless, due to the pressure of public opinion *With Fire and Sword* was restored to the school curriculum, although its selection was left open to the teacher—which in effect lowered the book's status as set reading. Under these circumstances the character of the didactic commentary was altered too, to emphasize the ethical and the aesthetic aspects of the novel rather than historical issues.

The questions raised in Chapter IV are centered around the documentation of a dispute initiated by O. Górka. It began with two studies: *Historical truth vs. the Reason of State in the South-East* (1934) and "*With Fire and Sword*" in the light of historical truth (1934). The studies gave rise to a controversy over the validity of the historical layer in *With Fire and Sword* (the account of historical events historicity of characters and events, and of Polish-Ukrainian relations). According to H. Kosętko, the following historians polemicized with Górka: A. Człowski, W. Tomkiewicz, M. Kukiel, W. Konopczyński, K. Krzewski, S. Szpotkański, J. Konopacki. The weight of the argumentation presented by these authors significantly blunted the edge of Górka's attack: the critic's negative opinions failed to diminish public admiration for the author of *The Trilogy*. The causes of Górka's public defeat in the debates and individual polemics are presented in the thesis: "The basic weakness of Górka's revisionism was the absolute negation of the historical

truth in the novel, his provocative and frequently personal manner of arguing with opponents, an insufficient familiarity with the studies of Sienkiewicz, and above all, the disregard of the source materials, all of which weakened the effect of the arguments presented by the Lwów scholar." (p. 225).

Defending Sienkiewicz from the perspective of modern research, in Chapter V the author justifies the writer by showing excerpts and literary structures which give an unbiased view of the Cossaks and of Chmielniczki's Uprising, and which (contrary to Górka's standpoint) form up a complex portrayal of those social movements. Moreover, the author demonstrates that the vision of the epoch in *With Fire and Sword* was conditioned by statements of historians contemporary to Sienkiewicz. H. Kosętko also puts stress on the development of a personal pertention of events, characteristic of every historical novelist, which is not determined by factual criteria alone, but also by the requirements of art. Although Sienkiewicz relied on the contemporary historical records by J. Szulski, K. Szajnoch and L. Kubala, the author maintains that he did not adopt their ideas uncritically, and it is on these grounds that one may speak about the individuality of historical perception in *With Fire and Sword*. Thus, H. Kosętko's book is not merely the product of a close-analysis of the recorded controversy surrounding Sienkiewicz. It documents the conscious methodological optimism of a literary scholar who is confident of the artistic and cognitive values of Sienkiewicz's literary output.

From the perspective of literary studies, the merit of the said thesis is not limited to its conscientious delineating of the polemics on the novel by Sienkiewicz. It is noteworthy that Kosętko focused on the poetics of historical fiction as a literary genre. Henryk Sienkiewicz, a disciple of Sir W. Scott and of A. Dumas possessed the

skill to fuse the motif of romantic adventure and the sequence of historical events into one artistic whole. It is a view held by certain critics that in more ways than one Sienkiewicz has managed to surpass his masters.

Halina Kosętko's book, as the first

of its kind, determines the coordinates of the historical reception of *The Trilogy*, and specifically of *With Fire and Sword*, guiding future scholars over the trails of Sienkiewicz's themes.

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