

## Theodicy Motives in Juliusz Słowacki's Works – on the Modernity of Polish Romanticism

The project aims to prove that theodicy motives in Juliusz Słowacki's works have a modern character in the sense of Odo Marquard's approach. As Marquard points out, around 1750 new philosophical disciplines – philosophy of history, philosophical anthropology and philosophical esthetics – emerge in reaction to the sense of losing the previous framework for understanding the world with God as the absolute foundation. Along with them motives of modern theodicy – tribunalization of God, bettering of the bad and its compensation – began to develop as mechanisms helping man to reestablish his place in the reality around him. The European debate over God, evil, and history continued in nineteenth-century philosophy (to mention Schelling or Hegel), but it found unusually strong resonance in literature. In Poland, the problem of theodicy posed in this way appeared for the first time in connection with the final collapse of statehood and the Massacre of Praga, one of the districts of Warsaw, carried out by Suvorov's troops in November 1794 and was expressed not in philosophical dissertations, but precisely on the pages of literary works belonging to the so-called post-partition poetry. The next generation, already Romantic, faced the necessity of solving the growing crisis of worldview related to the erosion of the previous concept of God. The first Polish Romantics, generally departing from deistic visions and the "institutional" God offered by the Catholic clergy, constructed their own vision of the Creator as the guardian of freedom and, at the same time, the guarantor of the sense of revolutionary and national liberation efforts. A particularly noteworthy case is the oeuvre of Juliusz Słowacki, a Polish Romantic so far most strongly associated with various aspects of modernity (e. g. regarding literary practice). At the same time, he was equally expressive in his references to the Christian imaginary and struggled with evil at every stage of his writing: from the satanic traits of the protagonists in poetic novels, through references to the Bible in *Horsztyński* or *Kordian*, to the formation, from a Christological perspective, of a system known as Genesis philosophy. This project will answer questions about tribunalization of God, bettering of the bad and its compensation in Słowacki's works.

Due to the adopted research perspective fragments of selected works by Słowacki, combining the strong experience of history and the presence of evil on different levels (aesthetic, epistemological etc.), from various stages of his career will be analysed in detail, for example from *Lambro*, *Kordian*, *Anhelli* or *Król-Duch*. Among this group, dramas set in the Sarmatian universe, where the plot is connected with the experience of losing independence (as the most important factor for the Polish version of theodicy) deserve special mention: *Horsztyński*, *Książ Marek*, *Sen srebrny Salomei*, *Samuel Zborowski*. This selection will enable the most comprehensive approach to the topic, preventing any simplifications in the formulation of conclusions. Methodological tools which will be used (apart from Marquard's concept) are Maciej Parkitny's understanding modernity as a dynamic "system of tensions" between the various concepts and ideas that constitute it, Paul Ricoeur's symbolism of evil and André Lefevere's category of rewriting.

The project is intended as an innovative study filling the gaps in the state of the art and constituting an important starting point for further research on the problem of evil in the literature of Polish Romanticism. In spite of the excellent recognition of the historiosophical contexts inscribed in Polish Romanticism, as well as the links between that epoch and modernity, no attempt has been made so far to clearly pose and treat with due research attention (going beyond catechism or mystical contexts) the problem of theodicy. Considering the power of Romantic literature to influence Polish culture and its constant presence in the cultural and political discourse in the patriotic and martyrological version (which, after all, so strongly exploits the motif of blameless suffering!), the very foregrounding of the issue of theodicy, understood as one of the determinants of modernity, represents a significant re-evaluation of previous findings and opens up new interpretative horizons for Słowacki's works. Moreover, the problem of theodicy is universal and present in other Romantic literatures as well. Exploring it will allow us to place Polish Romanticism on the map of world literature in a different way than reception analyses or intertextuality studies. As a whole, the results of the project will help to develop a new model of research on Romanticism, both on a national and international scale.