

ADAM MICKIEWICZ'S SLAVIC THEATRE CONCEPT (SOME REFLECTIONS ON A LECTURE GIVEN BY THE POLISH ROMANTICIST AT THE COLLÈGE DE FRANCE IN APRIL 1843)

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The article attempts to introduce the concept of Slavic drama and theatre, which is interesting in the context of Slavic studies, as presented during one of the lectures that the eminent Polish poet Adam Mickiewicz gave at the Collège de France. In his lecture delivered in April 1843, the poet initiated the great tradition of spiritual, metaphysical theatre, continued until the present day in Polish dramaturgy. Slavic drama is a small yet important element in the larger concept of Slavic culture, which were Mickiewicz's lectures on Slavic literature from the years 1841–1844, in which he undertook the great effort to bring Slavic culture closer to the Western audience.

KEYWORDS: *Adam Mickiewicz, lectures on Slavic literature at the Collège de France, Slavic drama and theatre*

In October 1840, Adam Mickiewicz – the most recognisable Polish Romanticist, a particularly significant personality for Polish culture, left Switzerland with his entire family and went to Paris with a view to taking up the chair of Slavic literature at the Collège de France. He decided, not without regrets, to leave the beautiful Lausanne, where he had led a prosperous life as a professor of Latin literature, living in the beautiful villa Beau-Sejour located among the mountains with a view of Lake Geneva. The poet's daughter Maria confirms in her memoirs that it was a blissful time in the life of the family,¹ free from financial worries, full of natural joys resulting, among other things, from communion with the surrounding nature.

However, the poet suddenly decided to interrupt this idyll, aware of the enormous opportunity that was opening up for him as a Polish poet – presentation of Slavic history, culture, and literature by a Slavic intellectual to

¹ See Sudolski 1997: 464.

the Western European audience. In 1840, the French authorities (represented by the then Minister of Education Victor Cousin) decided to establish the chair of Slavic literature at the College de France. This decision was motivated by the fact that the Slavs constituted one-third of the European continent, and their history was little known in Western Europe. Mickiewicz himself saw these lectures as an opportunity to balance, or even overcome Russian dominance in the perception of Slavic culture, and by assuming the chair in Paris, he wanted to uplift other Slavic cultures, thus asserting “the existence of one Slavic literature, Slavdom as a master, ethnic-cultural category, which is only being divided into the cultures of individual nations and countries”². Between the inauguration lecture given by the poet on 22 December 1840 and the last one from 1844, in four lecture courses, Mickiewicz constructed an enormous summa of Romanticism – subjective and characterised by a personal way of understanding and interpreting Slavic cultures, including the special relations between Poland and Russia, but also the vision, role, and mission of literature. From the Paris chair, Mickiewicz spoke about everything that he considered important at that time – philosophy, history, and the mission of man and nations. He raised ethical issues, referred (in a very critical way) to the philosophy and civilisational developments of the time, and discussed the history and literature of each Slavic nation, thus projecting – and this is the issue that I will try to address in my article – the concept of Slavic drama. At that time, the poet considered drama to be the most significant realisation of literature and a place where the Slavic spirit should manifest itself in a special way. The professor presented the most complete visions of it during Lecture XVI delivered on 4 April 1843, in the third year of the lecture course. This lecture – known in Polish literary studies as the “theatre lesson” – is a special phenomenon. In fact, the entire theatre tradition of the twentieth century (and slightly earlier) – from Stanisław Wyspiański to Jerzy Grotowski – stemmed from its interpretation.

At the beginning, there was Mickiewicz... This could be the beginning of a story of the Polish “theatre tradition constituting one of the main trends and cores of Polish theatrical explorations”, to which Dariusz Kosiński refers as the “Polish transformation theatre”³. According to this scholar, the distinguishing traits of this theatre primarily are “perception of the theatre as a place where real, individually and socially important events take place”, where “the theatrical space is a place of cognition and transformation, which constitute a challenge to work on oneself and to transform the world”, as well

² Łukasiewicz 1998: 144.

³ See Kosiński, 2007.

as a specific perception of acting, which “through experience, leads to an act equivalent to epiphany”⁴. This is a concept of a theatre serving a broader development of the human being and a special type of interaction with a literary text, which becomes a musical score of a kind, a script touching deep layers of both collective and individual consciousness.

The above-mentioned Lesson XVI is considered the gospel of dramaturgical practices understood in this way. The concept of Slavic drama presented there is the culmination of a broader and longer path of the poet's thinking about future poetry. It is also the fruit of Mickiewicz's reflections on writing subsequent parts of the drama *Dziady* (*Forefathers' Eve*), which Mickiewicz considered to be his most important work, and to which he referred in his lectures – indirectly yet frequently – constantly projecting its continuation. Mickiewicz – a lecturer at the Collège de France – was also a visionary in the field of poetry and his own artistic achievements. Lesson XVI, and perhaps other parts of the lecture to an even greater extent, were also an attempt on the part of Mickiewicz to face up to the role of the Slavic poet-coryphaeus, who – as he himself said “should appear on the stage” and whose story “would have to be delivered in front of an audience by the poet”⁵. The Slavic poet-priest, who would cause the audience to experience *numinosum* and *katharsis* through his Word, was to be a new Christian *aoidos*. The poet dreamt of returning to the times when theatre served not only to entertain, but above all to provide a deep, religious reflection on man. Thus, the poet used the Paris chair as his stage, on which, through his words and gestures, he embodied the role of the Slavic bard and prophet.

The Acting Word

Slavic drama in Mickiewicz's concept is above all a drama of the Word. Its mission was to be accomplished primarily through a live, acting word, while the performance should be realised through “very simple means”, as a drama that would be rhapsodic and religious at the same time. After all, Mickiewicz derived the etymology of the Slavs from the biblical Word that did not lose its creative potential – the ability to “call saints and heroes from the grave”, the power to make miracles. According to the poet, “the Slavs are the people of the word, or rather the Word of God. These people have maintained the pure tradition of the concept of the word, which in his works contains

⁴ Kosiński, 2015: 62.

⁵ Mickiewicz 1993–2005, vol. X: 197.

the notion of holiness and creative power”⁶. These people are rooted in sacral and creative Logos. Therefore, the mission of the Slavs is to ennoble the Word of God and return it to its original, sacral function. According to the poet, modern drama – so different from contemporary scenic plays that were only “for fun”, providing unsophisticated entertainment for the audience – was to serve this purpose.

Thus, the context of the Gospel of John, the Logos Word, which is the model for the acting word, is a very important element in the poet’s reflections on the Slavs and drama. This concept seems especially important to understand Mickiewicz’s concept of Slavic drama, but it cannot be analysed separately from the poet’s views, which had been taking shape since the 1830s, on the concept of the “new poetry” prophesied by Mickiewicz in the new, upcoming historical reality. In addition, this reality was projected by a “spiritually stimulated”⁷ artist, who would reflect on the sense and shape of poetic vocation in relation to his inner, religious experiences with which he struggled intensely in the 1830s, but also in relation to the acceptance of his works among his contemporaries, which was a huge disappointment to the poet⁸. Underlying this new concept was certainly the criticism of the theatre of his times, but also of the Romantic model of literature created by Byron. It is not only about the distance from the “rogue books” propagating attitudes of rebellion, alienation from the world, nihilism or immoralism, but the anthropological pattern promoted by this poetry, which in very general and simple terms might be defined as a model of unbridled individualism, expressed, for example, in the attitude of an individual confronting the community. Mickiewicz’s opposition to the attitude of the hero who wishes to transform the world and other people, straying from the plans of the Providence, is probably most fully expressed in Part III of *Dziady* from 1832. In the broadest terms, the attitude of the protagonist of the drama – Konrad (also a personification of a Romantic poet) – is strongly negated and opposed to the attitude of his adversary – the humble Father Piotr, whose dialogue with the Creator crowned with a prophecy could even be described as a model of the new poetry. The creation of this hero could be considered the paranesis of the new poet – the follower of the prophets of the Old Testament. In the

⁶ Mickiewicz 1993–2005, vol. XI: 76.

⁷ J. Ławskiego 2011: 63.

⁸ “What has Poland gained from my poetry” – the poet would complain to Niewarowicz in 1846 – “I did not write it for the entertainment of my compatriots or to give them aesthetic satisfaction. In my inspiration, I looked for truth, and I saw in it the means to save my homeland. Have they listened to me and followed the truth expressed in my writing? (...)” (Mickiewicz 1920 vol. XVI: 260).

1830s, the inspired biblical works became the model of creation for the poet: “having fixed his eyes on the figures of the biblical prophets” – as Władysław Mickiewicz wrote about his father – “Adam considered his own works to be outdated”⁹. The concept of Slavic drama, as articulated in the Paris lectures, is therefore strongly rooted in the poet’s views – developed over many years – on the mission of the poet and literature, and on the vocation of the Slavs, perceived not only as a historical, mythical, and ethnographic reality, but also as a historiosophical concept. For when Professor Mickiewicz speaks about what the Slavs were like in ancient times, he immediately projects what they should be in the future to fulfil their vocation in history. This is, clearly, a vast issue, which goes beyond the scope of consideration of this article¹⁰. I just want to point out that, in the lectures, Slavism is a great historiosophical and anthropological concept, and the “new” Slavs revived by the “spiritually stimulated” Mickiewicz are to mould themselves internally also thanks to literature, through drama. Participation in this drama is meant to be a form of a committed involvement in the mystery, a participation in special retreats, in an experience which goes far beyond the boundaries of art. Art – and drama itself – is understood here as a tool of spiritual pedagogy, an instrument forcing Slavic “sluggish spirits” to action. The Romantic poet believed that Europe devastated after the French Revolution might be revived by the “living” Slavic people. First, however, it had to prepare itself for it spiritually. Thus, the poet primarily considered drama an instrument that explains and supports the Slavs’ mission, a medium, but also a vehicle towards the final truths. It was perfectly suited for this purpose for a number of reasons. It worked through a spoken word and had a collective character – the interaction between the actor-coryphaeus-preacher of the word and the audience, as co-participants in the drama, genuinely took place during the performance, in a specific time and place. Drama also had a spontaneous, mutual, and one-time character. However, Mickiewicz knew that such a performance needed to have a specific shape, both in terms of text and stage “setting”, although it must be admitted that he was the least concerned with technical issues relating to performance. What is more, Mickiewicz was in his own way inconsistent in discussing

⁹ Mickiewicz 1890–1895, vol. III: 146.

¹⁰ As Jarosław Ławski demonstrated brilliantly, the poet does not aspire to convey the truth to the Slavs, even from the perspective of nineteenth-century studies. The scholar writes: “The scope of this cognitive structure goes so far beyond the boundaries of nineteenth-century scientific Slavic (also Czech) studies, that it is legitimate to write about deep cultural, historical, and artistic hermeneutics related to the cognitive imperative of exploring Nature and (God’s) Eternity (...) To get to know the existence to the divine ground, to get to know everything – that is the goal” (Ławski 2011). And Slavic drama – the most complete realisation of the future epoch – is to serve this purpose.

technical issues. For example, he said that for the Slavs to see the “realisation of their drama”, first, there must be “an improvement in the auxiliary arts of drama, such as architecture, painting, play of lights, etc. (...)”. Further on, he however claimed that “Slavic poets who create dramas should completely forget about theatre and stage” and that “these features are undoubtedly necessary, yet by no means essential”¹¹. Later, in an addition, Mickiewicz cited Johann Ludwig Tieck who “showed that improvements in decorations and theatre, and in particular paying such a great attention to it, testifies to the decline of drama”¹². These two thoughts of the poet seem to be in conflict. In the course of the argument, however, the professor writes emphatically that the Word only relies on machinery, the “decorator and machine operator”, when it is not strong enough, and thus with its technical enclosure “proves either its own impotence or the ultimate dulling of the audience”¹³. Therefore, the more perfect the poet’s word, the fewer scenographic components are necessary. An example of this theatre of the word, with one spiritually engaged actor and director at the same time, were the Paris lectures – a brilliant oral performance virtually stripped of other components of theatrical setting.

Referring to technical concepts of Mickiewicz’s theatrical performance, Marek Dybizbański rightly writes (at the same time, paraphrasing the words of the inspired lecturer) that in fact the poet is not “concerned with theatrical forms, but what spirit will use them, not concerned with decorations, but what Word will resound amongst them”¹⁴. Obviously, spirit and Word become the most important elements in Mickiewicz’s entire vision of drama. We know from other statements made by the author of *Pan Tadeusz* that in order to be a poet, one has to be a saint, a man working on his interior, a chosen spirit. And perhaps the biggest problem in the realisation of Slavic drama is precisely the poet. Mickiewicz imagines him to be a spiritual giant, a great performer who is capable of influencing the internal condition of spectators (listeners) and compelling them to act effectively in real life.

According to Maria Prussak, “if we are to look for a theatre programme in this lecture given by Mickiewicz then it is a programme for a playwright, and not a director”¹⁵. And this programme was primarily an ethical one, whereas, for the poet, the most important thing was communication, dialogue through dramatic word. Thus, in the entire vision of drama, there are coherent components similar to those presented in the classic Jakobson’s communication

¹¹ Mickiewicz 1993–2005, vol. X: 197–198.

¹² Mickiewicz 1993–2005, vol. X: 198.

¹³ Mickiewicz 1993–2005, vol. X: 198.

¹⁴ Dybizbański 2011: 232.

¹⁵ Prussak 1995: 33.

model. In this special communication, Mickiewicz puts special emphasis on the sender, who, however, is not the poet, but a co-participant in the drama. In a lecture on a drama written by the eminent Romanticist Zygmunt Krasiński titled *Nie-boska komedia* (*The Undivine Comedy*), the professor spoke directly that “the poet himself should appear on the stage. The story, which constitutes a very important part of this drama, should be told in front of the audience by the poet himself”.¹⁶ This stemmed from the abovementioned concept of the inspired poet-rhapsodist, a man touched – just like one of the protagonists of *Dziady*, – Father Piotr, – by God, who, after all, cannot give his voice to others. In fact, the poet himself embodied a preacher of the word (Word) during his lecture given on 28 May 1844:

Mickiewicz said – I am a Christian, and I recalled the Gospel verse in which the one who wants to speak great truths is forbidden, I repeat, clearly forbidden, to come with already well-considered sentences. Everyone knows this spiritual and at the same time literary law. [emphasis added by the author] (...) I have made it a rule never to prepare my speeches in advance¹⁷.

The professor then continued, emphasising the role of the Providence in shaping the lecture. Such a creation of the “I” becomes understandable when we recognise that the personal experience of the author-actor is the basis for the story told from the stage: “the storyteller always introduces themselves into the story and plays some role in the plot”¹⁸. A live word must also be reliable with regard to statements made somewhere else, so that one writes as one lives¹⁹. Conformity²⁰ between the word preached (and acted out through drama) and the artist’s life is the basis of new literature, of which Slavic drama is the fullest realisation. For Mickiewicz, the ideal of the poet understood in this way is Jesus Christ, who can transform spiritual, social, and historic reality with his word.

¹⁶ Mickiewicz 1993–2005, vol. X: 197.

¹⁷ Mickiewicz 1993–2005, vol. X: 177.

¹⁸ Mickiewicz 1993–2005, vol. X: 198.

¹⁹ According to the poet, G. Byron proved “that one should live as one writes, that desire and the word are not enough” (Mickiewicz 1993–2005, vol. X: 22). The poet is believed to have expressed a similar thought to G. Sand, saying that she is a great spirit, “but she does not know how to live as she writes. (...) you should act as you write” – Mickiewicz advised the writer – “or do not write at all” (Mickiewicz 1933, XVI, s. 287).

²⁰ See Mickiewicz 1993–2005, vol. X: 96–197.

Writing vs. Staging

Let us return, however, for a moment to the score of the drama – the text. The poet-bard distinguishes in the drama “two separate layers: writing vs. staging”²¹. Realisation of drama is therefore not only an orally spontaneous activity. The poet says that the basis for the text is the personal experience of the inspired artist, and, on the other hand, formulates a thematic statement; the content of the performance must be a story, immersion in historical events. Drama arises the moment that the story reaches a solstice (“always announces the end of one epoch and the beginning of another one”). The nation must therefore first deliver heroes – “representatives in real life” so that poetry can be written to perpetuate their memory. This is why, in the lectures, Mickiewicz ennobles historical texts that are also visionary and prophetic, such as *Proroctwo (Prophecy)* by Father Marek Jandołowicz, *Nowa Gigantomachia (The New Gigantomachy)* by Father Kordecki, or *Proroctwo Wernyhory (Wernyhora’s Prophecy)*²². Relying on a visionary story is to be the subsoil for the new drama but let us add a reservation that Mickiewicz is not concerned with the presentation of historical events. “The historicity of literature does not mean only that it takes place in a specific ‘place and time’ but that it stems from historical processes,”²³ said Krzysztof Rutkowski. But this is not enough, as history cannot be comprehended without understanding the future. For the poet, the past and the future are one great reality, one concept in which the Providence manifests itself. The poet understands history as a great *gesta Dei*. God planned a specific mission in history for each nation – the role of poets is to reveal and explain this meaning through art. This is precisely what Mickiewicz does in the Collège de France “theatre”, by pointing out to the mission and significance of the Slavs. This is why historical and prophetic texts have such a big significance in the lectures.

At this point, we would have to delve into the issue of “miraculousness”, which Mickiewicz recognises as an inherent component of new drama. This miraculousness is not, however, an aesthetic category, but an element of a worldview based on the truth about the communion of saints, from which the cult of spirits among the Slavs – understood in the way presented by Mickiewicz in *Dziady*, as the interaction between past and present generations – derives. As Mickiewicz spoke from the chair about this most important holiday for the Slavs – “There is no one who would lose their faith in the real

²¹ Mickiewicz 1993–2005, vol. X: 192.

²² See Szturc 1999: 223.

²³ Rutkowski 1980: 121.

existence of spirits after death”²⁴. In this ethnological concept (participation in one world of spirits), the poet sees the specific character of the Slavs not lost until the times contemporary to the poet – unlike in Western European nations. It is a component of the specific, religious vision of the world presented by Mickiewicz. From this perspective, his *Dziady* are a proof of interaction between live spirits of both bodily and non-bodily existence. Therefore, Slavic drama is to unveil the basic truth of Christianity, where the lives of individuals and nations constitute the mystery of God’s interventions, which needs to be revealed through art thanks to the poet being the medium of God’s message. The miraculousness is a “breath from a higher realm as a vague memory or premonition of the supernatural world”, which in drama and epic “takes on a visible shape of a divine being”²⁵. It is also worth emphasising that the supernatural world as a necessary element of Slavic drama is not a fantasy – it is a reality, an actual participation of spirits, a confirmation of the communion of the saints. Thus, to create Slavic drama, one first needs to believe in this “real existence of spirits after death”²⁶.

Slavic According to Mickiewicz

Why is it precisely that the Slavs are predestined to create this new drama? Clearly, there are numerous reasons for this distinction of the Slavs – starting from the Herder’s concept of the mission of the Slavs, different ideas of the Romantic Slavophilia, to Mickiewicz’s original ethnological concepts of the Slavs being a virgin nation not tainted by Western rationalism²⁷, which in the times contemporary to the poet still preserved many relics of the past culture. At the same time, the poet very strongly emphasises that this culture benefited greatly from Christianity – the combination of elements of former customs, rituals, political and social structures with revealed religion resulted in a special cultural project, which was meant to revive the musty Europe of the nineteenth-century. “The Slavs” – as Piotr Stasiewicz, believing in the possibilities of contact with the metaphysical sphere, comments – “live therefore on a completely different level than people from the West”²⁸. Thus,

²⁴ Mickiewicz 1993–2005, vol. X: 195.

²⁵ Mickiewicz 1993–2005, vol. X: 193–194.

²⁶ In the lecture, when criticising Cooper and Scott, Mickiewicz also speaks about “the abuse in recent years of the use of miraculousness, the manner in which this world was treated, about the sacrilege with which it was intruded and about uncovering of its secrets”. Mickiewicz 1993–2005, vol. X: 201.

²⁷ Mickiewicz 1993–2005, vol. VIII: 64.

²⁸ Stasiewicz 2011: 143.

Mickiewicz, as befits a Romantic thinker, creates the grand concept of the Slavic continent – of unity and the fraternity of the Slavic peoples – shaped, by the way, to a large extent in opposition to the concept of Russian pan-Slavism. On the map of Slavdom, Russia is a huge intellectual problem for the poet, a “cursed” problem, which would certainly require a separate presentation²⁹.

In any case, Mickiewicz consistently presents the Slavs to the listeners of his lectures (mainly the French audience) as the propagators of the new revelation, interpreters of the Word, the significance and sense of which was lost by Western European nations. Even though, according to the poet, “God has not spoken to any Slav”, this does not mean that he will or has not in the poet’s contemporary times. The poet, in fact, associates the rebirth of Europe with the revival of Christianity – also changes in the Church itself. For this reason, the designed Slavic drama is to be a Christian drama based on revelation and high moral and spiritual requirements towards the author. It is worth juxtaposing the considerations of drama from Lesson XVI with the poet’s thoughts expressed in a letter to his friend Hieronim Kajsiwicz on 31 October 1834. In it, Mickiewicz wrote:

The real poetry of our age has not yet been created. Only some symptoms of its coming are visible. We have written too much just for entertainment or for too little purpose. Please recall these words of St Martin: “*On ne devrait écrire des vers qu’ après avoir fait un miracle*”.³⁰ It seems to me that the times when one had to be a saint to be a poet will return, that inspiration and information from above about things that reason cannot express will be needed, to wake in people respect for art, which has remained an actress, a harlot, or a political newspaper for too long. These thoughts often cause me grief and make me almost desperate, it often seems to me that I can see the promised land of poetry like Moses from above, but I feel that I am not worthy of reaching it (...) ³¹.

The problem of the poet and his spiritual condition seems to be the central one and remained so in the 1840s, when the poet delivers the Paris lectures. In light of the letter to Kajsiwicz, Lecture XVI constitutes a continuation of the new poetry concept outlined there. Aleksander Chodźko’s introduction to Volume VII of the poet’s *Pisma* issued in Paris in 1844, inspired by Mickiewicz, may also be seen as complementary to the considerations on

²⁹ This issue, with a vast literature on the subject, is explained for example in a book by S. Pavlenko 2018.

³⁰ “Poems should not be written without making a miracle first” – translation according to the footnote: Mickiewicz 1993–2005, vol. XV: 287.

³¹ Mickiewicz 1993–2005, vol. XV: 285.

the lecture from April 1843. The publisher's *Foreword* contains a view that "poetry as commonly understood [is] today closed", it is a relic, but "only a relic of the past". Chodźko wrote about the creative work of *Pan Tadeusz's* author as of a "fulfilled prophecy" and "whatever has come out of the poet's pen must be contemporary to him, thus, must be greater by the law of growth and the law of the spirit"³². In the second half of the 1830s, Mickiewicz became the programmer of new literature, however, feeling unworthy as its author. Perhaps the anticipation of the new drama was combined with waiting for a new poet-revealer, who meets high moral standards and the postulate of a man of great moral strength, a miracle man. A poet of such a new measure could only come out of the womb of Slavdom.

In View of History

By the law of logic of the Romantic professor, Slavic drama was to emerge at a time of the next historical solstice, for which Europe had been waiting since the French Revolution. At the time when Mickiewicz gave the theatre lesson from the Paris chair, he was very concerned about the prophet and visionary who had arrived from the poet's home country of Lithuania – Andrzej Towiański. The poet's faith in a mission of a self-proclaimed prophet is an issue that has been intriguing entire generations of scholars³³. This unique relationship would even be difficult to summarise in a few words. However, it needs to be mentioned, because Mickiewicz saw the appearance of the prophet Towiański as an announcement of an imminent transformation in Europe. From the point of view of our deliberations, this provides an important context. As an admirer of Towiański, Mickiewicz preached that, with the appearance of Towiański, one epoch would end and the next one would begin, which, incidentally, gave rise to disagreements with the French Ministry of Education and, as a consequence, resulted in taking the chair of Slavic literature away from the overly "inspired" professor. However, the poet persisted in arguing that the coming new times belonged specifically to the Slavs. It was precisely the visionary Andrzej Towiański who, through his prophecy, helped with understanding their mission. The emergence of the new poetry (new drama based on revelation) would support the preparation of Slavic nations for the fulfilment of their historic mission, about which the Lithuanian "prophet" spoke.

³² Chodźko 1844, vol. 1: I-VII.

³³ See Witkowska 1989.

The concept of the Slavic drama, embedded not only in Lesson XVI and in lectures dedicated to *The Undivine Comedy* by Zygmunt Krasiński but also in other statements made by the poet on the status of poetry in the coming era, is an idea that Mickiewicz failed to fully accomplish. *Dziady* comes closest to this concept, although the author and lecturer scarcely spoke of it from the chair at the Collège de France for various reasons. However, this concept was attractive enough to find numerous followers in the later history of Polish theatre. Dariusz Kosiński presents different ways to continue Mickiewicz's theatre tradition and creative performances based on Mickiewicz's ideas. He discusses Stanisław Wyspiański's modernist monumental theatre, the pre-war concept of Osterwa's "Reduta" Theatre, or the most worldwide known theatre of Jerzy Grotowski – Mickiewicz's twentieth-century successor at the Paris chair. In this category, I would also include Mieczysław Kotlarczyk's Rhapsodic Theatre, in which the young Karol Wojtyła acted. The programmer of this extraordinary theatre project admitted on numerous occasions that he continued Mickiewicz's concept of drama, dreaming of creating a specifically Slavic theatre. "Undoubtedly," – as Jacek Popiel writes – "Mickiewicz's views contained in *Lesson XVI* and Wyspiański's ideas (in *Studium o Hamlecie* (*A Study on Hamlet*)) had the greatest influence [on Kotlarczyk]"³⁴. Commenting on the staging of *Eugene Onegin* at the Rhapsodic Theatre, Kotlarczyk wrote that Mickiewicz's "drama programme" contained in the Paris lectures is "a kind of an announcement of the Slavic Theatre that has not been realised until now", which, by implication, the Rhapsodic Theatre was to implement. The concept of the Slavic theatre expressed in the 1840s became incredibly inspiring for much later, often avant-garde, dramaturgical practices. In fact, we cannot speak of Polish theatre omitting this lecture delivered by the inspired professor from the Paris chair.

The briefly described concept of Slavic drama, which later found many followers, creating a separate Polish theatre tradition, is – in my opinion – worth bringing closer to scholars studying Slavic culture. It is because a prominent intellectual of his times creates, in the first half of the nineteenth century, a vision of Slavic culture and searches for a key to its unity. Clearly – as Jarosław Ławski writes –

In the lectures, there are gaps in the choice of materials about the Slavs, arbitrary choices of subjects (...). There are also subjects or persons (...) deliberately and consciously not mentioned. The scope of this cognitive structure, however, goes so far beyond the boundaries of nineteenth-century scientific Slavic studies, that it is legitimate to write about deep

³⁴ Popiel 2001: XXI.

cultural, historical, and artistic hermeneutics related to the cognitive imperative of exploring Nature and (God's) Eternity.³⁵

By creating this exceptional, very subjective vision of the 'Slavic continent', Mickiewicz also notes differences between the history and tradition of each tribe, subsequently Slavic nations, yet all the time searching for the keystone of their cultures. "This continent" – the poet said about Slavdom – "encompasses a variety of religious and political forms, examples of which may be found in both ancient and modern history"³⁶. However, the ethnic differences of individual Slavic peoples are united, according to the professor's idea, by spiritual keystones rising above them. Mickiewicz sees one of these keystones in the concept of literature – and specifically drama, which is not only Polish drama but also a Slavic performance. The concept of unity through theatre and the word present in it is an extraordinary idea, which has proven to be constantly inspiring.

The way Mickiewicz – the prominent nineteenth-century intellectual, poet, and Slavophile – looked at the Slavs and their culture seemed to me worthy of presentation to the circle of Slavists. Slavic drama is, naturally, a small yet significant element of this great cognitive structure, represented by the Slavic literature lectures delivered in between 1841 and 1844. Perhaps the titanic effort to introduce Slavic culture to a Western audience, undertaken by a Polish poet, should be continued.

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³⁵ Ławski 2011: 67.

³⁶ Mickiewicz 1993–2005, vol. VIII: 17.

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KONCEPCJA SLAVENSKOGA KAZALIŠTA ADAMA MICKIEWICZA (NEKA RAZMIŠLJANJA O PREDAVANJU KOJE JE POLJSKI ROMANTIČAR ODRŽAO NA COLLÈGE DE FRANCE U TRAVNJU 1843.)

Sažetak

Članak nastoji predstaviti koncepciju slavenske drame i kazališta, zanimljivu u kontekstu slavističkih studija, kako je izložena u jednome od predavanja koje je ugledni poljski pjesnik Adam Mickiewicz održao na Collège de France. U svome predavanju održanome u travnju 1843. pjesnik je započeo veliku tradiciju duhovnoga, metafizičkoga kazališta, koja se u poljskoj dramaturgiji nastavlja sve do danas. Slavenska drama mali je, ali važan element u širemu konceptu slavenske kulture, kakav čine Mickiewiczeva predavanja o slavenskoj književnosti iz razdoblja 1841.–1844., a u kojima je uložio velik napor da slavensku kulturu približi zapadnoj publici.

KLJUČNE RIJEČI: *Adam Mickiewicz; predavanja o slavenskoj književnosti na Collège de France; slavenska drama i kazalište*