

## Summary

It has been 180 years since the publishing of Mickiewicz's arch-poem. The subsequent anniversary has become a good pretext to ask so much up-to-date question about the status of in contemporary literature. Does the immortal fame of the epic poem, which has been foreseen by Stanisław Pigoń, continue up to the present? Are the words by Alina Witkowska that 'demonstrated authoritarian strength of tradition' and at the same time 'shaped it in a manner to show the origins of the future concepts of the century and make it liable to associations with progress and the spirit of transformations without which would merely be a fine tombstone laid on former Poland...' valid?

Much has been written and said about the text so turning to a piece of literary work which has been 'interpretatively worn out', as it may seem, is burdened with a considerable hazard. Ironically, however, the power of masterpieces lies in a possibility of their incessant interpretation. Widening the choice of reading matter has not only been made by means of the latest methodologies or research strategies but most of all by means of highly amazing receptiveness of the masterpiece itself, its exceptional capacity, ambiguity and multiplicity of perceptions which made some of the readers view as a poem on 'parochial life' (Słowacki) others, on the other hand, as deeply metaphysical (Miłosz).

Despite a great number of texts which has been composed so far, the scholars have been struggling with a challenging problem of literary genre of this narrative poem, (Is it an epic poem? If so, which one? What tradition did it originate?), intricate aesthetics of the work and finally, with the issue of masterpiece's main character (Jacek Soplica versus title Tadeusz). A separate trend in the masterpiece research is the question of its receptiveness – as the 19<sup>th</sup> century reading, in the interpretations of poets, writers and artists in general, in current methodology research, in present and ancient culture (various media) and finally, in a personal and individual reading.

It seems that Mickiewicz's common tale and the reality presented in it evoke interpretative insufficiency in spite of the fact that so many various interpretations have been suggested so far. Hence, we have invited a great number of researchers to discuss – people who represent different generations, academic institutions and academic disciplines and those who represent different research strategies and methodologies.

Interestingly enough, contemporary texts on the masterpiece reflect mainly on its aesthetic and philosophical aspects (see texts by Bernadetta Kuczera-Chachulska, Bogusław Dopart, Magdalena Saganiak and Michał Kuziak) as well as deliberations on the structure of the poem and its peculiar features such as humorous aspect which Agnieszka Ziółowicz refers to in her book. Grażyna Tomaszewska,

for instance, presents as a narrative poem which is concerned with the aesthetics of imperfections making the readers aware of the significance of contradictions and ambiguity that marks human existence. She also presents as a polemic poem with regard the category of 'peace and harmony' which has been generally assumed in the research on the masterpiece. The text by Tomaszewska is accompanied by a dose of anxiety which has also been revealed in other texts. They are concerned with pigeonholing Mickiewicz's masterpiece as an epic poem, humorous or realistic narrative poem or, what is more, 'the Polish language work of art' (Jarosław Ławski). The same point of view is suggested in the texts by Karol Samsel who, by means of phenomenology methods, undermines research stereotypes on read by interpreters of the poem's epiphanic dimension, Ewa Hoffmann-Piotrowska who raises again the question of anthropological (existential) models depicted in the epic poem and Andrzej Fabianowski, Jerzy Fiećko and Michał Friedrich who devote their attention to Jankiel – a character who grows to an exceptionally vital figure among Soplicowo characters of a 'demanded hero' and even, as Michał Friedrich proves, an absolute one with his enterprising spirit, intelligence and cleverness. Another significant reading method, though less frequently applied in research methods these days, is reading the text through the prism of cultural and historical references which would touch at least custom-related reality prevailing in the manor of the Polish gentry (see the text by Joanna Puchalska).

Whenever is read, the question of context, cultural influence and reception recurs. One of the thematic blocks gathers texts raising the subject of resilience and persistence of this epic poem in personal (Barbra Kryda, Marek Piechota), artistic (e.g. texts by Grażyna Halkiewicz-Sojak, Teresa Winek) as well as media (Krzysztof Kopczyński, Michał Pieńkowski) memory.

The book also includes opinions regarding the presence of Pan Tadeusz in school curricula – the matter which cannot be avoided discussing the place of the arch-poem in contemporary culture (the article by Henryk Gradkowski).

As a rule, reflecting on any text collectively, on one hand, exposes the work but on the other hand, it says a lot about the tendencies in the research methods on Romanticism. Therefore, apart from anything else, the book can account for a humble yet, let us hope, vital testimony of contemporary mickiewiczology.

The reason for writing the book, as it has already been mentioned, is the subsequent anniversary of publishing the masterpiece. However, the book appears in 2016 as the year is particularly important for the University of Warsaw whose 200th anniversary of its establishment will be celebrated in November 2016 and to commemorate the event the staff at the Department of Romanticism Institute of Polish Literature at the Faculty of Polish Studies of Warsaw University initiated the idea of this collective monograph – a book on a masterpiece which is especially important to Polish fate and culture. This is our way to mark the jubilee of the University of Warsaw and at the same time our way to pay tribute to the Alma Mater.

*Translated by Małgorzata Dąbruć*