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Articles

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The Dialectic of Polish Positivism

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The initial stages of Positivism's reception in Poland are well-known.¹ If one omits the early, but forgotten publications of Adrian Krzyżanowski (1842) and Dominik Szulc (1851), the most significant contribution to the area was Father Franciszek Krupiński's paper *Szkola pozytywna* (*The Positive School*), published in "Biblioteka Warszawska" of 1868. The general level of knowledge of the sources of Positivism was low, and in 1873 Piotr Chmielowski wrote of the Warsaw environment as follows:

A few were found (let us say: about a score) who, motivated by conscientiousness, looked into the sources and read for themselves, if not Comte himself, then Littré, and acquired a more or less exact notion of the methods and overall nature of positive science.²

It has not yet been determined precisely at what moment Polish progressive formations accepted "Positivism" as a name to denote their aims. As early as 1866 a footnote by the editors of "Dziennik Literacki" describes Kazimierz Chłędowski's paper *Sila w historii* (*Force in History*) as an expression of "the positive philosophical school that continues to spread throughout the West."³ Three years later, Leopold Mikulski, when publishing in Lvov his translation of Büchner's *Kraft und Stoff*, confessed that his aims would be fulfilled "if this work succeeds in raising even a small number of the

¹ See B. Skarga, *Narodziny pozytywizmu polskiego (1831–1864)* (*The Birth of Polish Positivism, 1831–1864*), Warszawa 1964.

² [P. Chmielowski], *Pozytywizm i pozytywiści (Positivism and the Positivists)*, "Niwa", 1873, nr 29.

³ "Dziennik Literacki", 1866, nr 2.

members of Polish society from the domains of dream and delusion, and in summoning them to the banner of an authentic, positive philosophy.”⁴

Meanwhile in Warsaw, “Przegląd Tygodniowy” had protested against Kazimierz Kaszewski’s statement that since the appearance of Krupiński’s paper an unbroken silence had prevailed upon the subject of Positivism:

one can see that Mr. Kaszewski does not take into account the entire movement of writings in the spirit of this school that have been appearing over the last four years.⁵

Only in 1871, however, is there a build-up of Positivist declarations. At the close of this year in an introductory article entitled *At the Breaking-Point*, Aleksander Świętochowski wrote:

We do not ascribe to ourselves any exceptional or, as some would have it, Mickiewiczian mission, though we do not deny that our present struggle has a certain affinity to the renowned wars of the Romantics. One may lack genius and nevertheless feel the existence of backwardness and prejudice. We repeat yet again that we do not compare ourselves to the holy falange led by the great Adam, but we share its progressiveness. The difference lies in the scenery of epochs and their conditions. Mickiewicz was a poet and he breathed his large poetic spirit into the progress of form and imagination, and he revitalized literature, whose fields soon teemed with fruit. In place of death there was a ferment of *life*. We too, in the teeth of our motionless torpor, wish for life, but the positive spirit of the times dictates that we demand activity: not so much in the way of poetic creativity as to direct the development of the social imagination, whose leadership ought to come from the periodicals.⁶

A few weeks later, the editors of “Przegląd Tygodniowy” added, in the course of referring to the unpaid participation by young authors (“pupils of the Main High School, the forefront of the progressive intelligentsia”):

Perhaps this debut will help you to decide more easily whether we kowtow to anyone, whether our positivism is long in the tooth—or a real force for life.⁷

⁴ L. Mułski [L. Mikulski], *Kilka słów od tłumacza i wydawcy* (*A Few Words from the Translator and Publisher*), [in:] L. Büchner, *Sila i materia*, Lvov 1869, p. VII.

⁵ [Anonymous], *Przegląd prasy periodycznej* (*A Review of the Periodical Press*), “Przegląd Tygodniowy”, 1869, nr 28.

⁶ [A. Świętochowski], *Na wylomie*, *ibidem*, 1871, nr 50.

⁷ [Anonymous], *Zakończenie* (*Conclusion*), *ibidem*, nr 53.

During the next two years, 1872 and 1873, "Positivism" and its derivatives appear with growing frequency in the columns of the young press; such opponents of novel ideas as Józef Narzowski (*Pozytywni – The Positive Ones*, 1872) and Tadeusz Żuliński (*Nasi pozytywiści – Our Positivists*, 1872) suddenly begin to employ them too. From the very outset the equivocality of the term, of which the proponents of the new trends were themselves fully aware, was a source of much controversy:

Some – wrote Świętochowski – understand a Positivist to be a faithful adherent of the school of Comte, others add his independent pupils, and still others apply this term to any and every philosopher whose method of research is founded on the natural sciences. With such a triple standard, misunderstandings emerge by the minute.⁸

Polish publicists consented to support the broad interpretation previously elaborated by Świętochowski himself:

Since Positivism is far from being the invention or conception of a single man [Comte], since his fundamental ideas are the common property of several centuries and entire series of learned men; and, finally, since the most recent Positivist thinkers, so-called, contradict all the original proclamations of Comte, the founder of Positivism – it thus follows that Positivism, correctly understood, is not a school with an inflexible codex, with changeless articles of faith or with an infallible earnestness, but a scientific *method* founded upon experiment and the natural sciences, which has been applied and developed over several centuries and yields *increasingly new* results.⁹

Readers were presented with explanations along the line of this attitude – for instance, in a polemic with Narzowski's comedy *Pozytywni*:

Amongst our literati this movement is represented in part by young people who situate themselves in scientific matters on the side of Comte, Littré, Taine, Mill, Spencer and other such standard-bearers of science; they popularize their principles, translate their works and strive, come what may, to serve the victory of the party they uphold.¹⁰

⁸ A. Świętochowski, *Przegląd piśmiennictwa polskiego*. "Pozytywizm i jego wyznawcy w dzisiejszej Francji". Napisał dr Ziemia (*A Review of Polish Writing. "Positivism and Its Adherents in Contemporary France."* Written by Dr. Ziemia), *ibidem*, 1873, nr 23.

⁹ A. Świętochowski, *Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer*, *ibidem*, 1872, nr 21.

¹⁰ [Anonymous], *Teatr. "Pozytywni"*. *Komedia w IV aktach Narzowskiego (Theatre. "The Positive Ones."* Narzowski's *Four-Act Comedy*), "Niwa", 1874, nr 58.

In the earliest statements issued by its Polish adherents, Positivism appeared above all as a certain methodological tendency, in the widest sense.

To state nothing without evidential support – to refrain from categorical judgement in dubious matters – and to observe complete silence on utterly unattainable ones: that is the entire basis of Positivism –

declared Julian Ochorowicz in 1872. But a few pages later he added: we designate as *positive philosophy* the system of the *phenomenal* laws that govern the world, and of the *fundamental* laws that ought to direct actions. The first section constitutes the theory, the second, the practice, of positive philosophy.¹¹

Indeed, among the remarks uttered about Positivism by the young press there began to appear groups of statements of an ontological nature, opinions in the realm of psychology and sociology, as well as socio-political and ethical injunctions.

It seems – reports Sienkiewicz – as if the Positivists, just like idealists, deliberately selected their name as the least divisive so as to conceal fundamental differences in religious and social outlooks, in views concerning the road one ought to take in order to achieve the greatest welfare of the public – and, finally, in opinions regarding the means whereby this public could avoid, remove or crush the difficulties encompassing it.¹²

It was then – recalls Chmielowski – that Darwin's theories, social economies, practical campaigns to raise the level of the country's prosperity, and the cultivation of the natural and technical sciences became the fundamental axioms of Positivism and constituted the objects of youth's most vital concern, as it sought by means of light to draw a part of the public to itself.¹³

It is another matter that when practical side of the problem alone came under consideration other definitions were usually employed: "organic work" or "work at the foundations." And the Positivists themselves more often referred to their own groups of supporters by such names as "youth," "the young press," "the progressives," "the party of progress" etc. All this time an ongoing polemic was being waged in the young press against the misunderstandings, reproaches

¹¹ J. Ochorowicz, *Wstęp i pogląd ogólny na filozofię pozytywną* (*An Introduction to and General View of Positive Philosophy*), Warszawa 1872, p. 91, 94.

¹² H. Sienkiewicz, *Bez tytułu* (*Untitled*), [in:] *Dziela* (*Works*), vol. 47, Warszawa 1950, p. 53.

¹³ P. Chmielowski, *Zarys literatury polskiej z ostatnich lat szesnastu* (*An Outline of the Polish Literature of the Last Sixteen Years*), Vilna 1881, p. 63.

and insinuations laid at the door of Positivism by the conservatives (vulgar materialism, moral nihilism, cosmopolitanism¹⁴), together with an internal discussion between the movement's radical and its conciliatory wing over the issue of the content a "correct" and "healthy" Positivism would have to have. Detaching himself from "the negativists" who discard "tradition, peace, faith and devotion," Julian Ochorowicz formulated as early as 1875 his positivist credo, couching it in terms such as could not arouse the reservations of the moderate conservatives:

Our Positivism—to which the present writer also adheres—is primarily the rational aspect of all the laws and facts that science has confirmed or will confirm in the future, it is a theory that attacks no one and violates no one's conscience but slowly and gradually develops itself, grows and remains humble, being merely the first fruit of the results that will emerge in the future from the immense workshop of intellects inquiring into all the various domains of knowledge. It does not flit about the heavens after the will-o'-the-wisps of cosmic mysteries, nor does it crawl along earth-bound, except in its maxim of practicality. It recognizes historical continuity and gives the ideal motives of tradition a free hand to act with discretion. It adores all the lofty and noble things that the human heart has brought forth and issues the safest directives, for in basing the directives for growth upon observation and experiment and in excluding daydreams and prejudices from the realm of knowledge, it seeks to become the watchman by the highway of research, shielding from error and lighting up the chosen road.¹⁵

¹⁴ See for instance E. Lubowski, *Do redakcji czasopisma "Kłosy"* (To the Editors of...), "Kłosy", 1872, nr 343; [anonymous], *Przegląd prasy periodycznej* (A Review of the Periodical Press), *ibidem*, 1872, nos. 344 and 347. In connection with these attacks the feuilletonist of "Przegląd Tygodniowy" wrote as follows (1873, nr 15, *Echa warszawskie*—*Warsaw Echoes*): "For quite a time now Positivism has been playing the rôle of the cock in Krasicki's fable. [Translator's note. In the fable concerned a servant commanded by her mistress to rise at cock-crow kills the cock, hoping that this will end her early rising. In fact, her mistress rose before cock-crow, and since there was no longer any cock, woke her servant still earlier.] It has even become rather fashionable to discern in Positivism the root of all evil. Last Thursday, for instance, it stood before the bar of the present criminal court accused of contributing to... the crime of murdering the married couple, Mr. and Mrs. Gąsowski! Mr. Wrotnowski, the chief counsel for the defence of one of the accused, maintained that the defendant had committed the crime swayed by the theories of Darwin, Comte, Mill and other such *materialists*! His ardour in defence even drove Mr. Wrotnowski to thunder at our translators and publishers for providing our public with such positive and natural scientific works."

¹⁵ J. Ochorowicz, *Pozytywizm i negatywizm* (Positivism and Negativism), "Niwa", 1875, vol. VII, p. 85.

The controversies outlined above and the will to reach an understanding with one's opponents on matters of practice caused the leaders of the young themselves rapidly to remove the watchword "Positivism" from their banners. As early as 1876 a publicist wrote in "Przegląd Tygodniowy":

Equally strange was the look of the emblems of *Positivism* and *Idealism* which were increasingly used to designate the groups or camps of writers that were coming into being. Despite the difficulty of severing science from life, despite the actual fact that in the practices of certain Western societies tendencies of a scientific or dogmatic persuasion are linked to trends in factional politics [...] nevertheless, philosophical movements or schools, since they are expressions of certain *theoretical trends*, can nowhere become the palpable emblems of those factions that constitute the visible form of particular *aspirations to action* [...] These pseudo-philosophical signs, deriving from an overhasty urge to classification, have now forfeited their importance even in the eyes of those whose good faith took them for the emblems of literary factions.¹⁶

At the beginning of the following decade Świętochowski will enigmatically term "ill-starred" Positivism "a purely legendary banner,"¹⁷ and Chmielowski will justify himself in the name of the young:

One ought to realize that, just as the spokesmen of our Romanticism, in the early years of its development, held the name itself to be a complete misnomer for their poetry, so the spokesmen for Positivism have repeatedly reiterated that this expression does not reveal the actual features of the line of thought along which they have been advancing. Why then did they accept the term all the same? Simply because they could find no superior or more fitting one; and since in France and England a new interest in Positivism was awakening, they adjudged that they ought to assume the name of Positivists as their *nom de guerre*.¹⁸

For the other co-founders of the break (Orzeszkowa, Sienkiewicz) "Positivism," in the long run, most often represented a more philosophical standpoint rapidly abandoned as "a youthful error brought on by the general error of the times."¹⁹ Thus it is hardly surprising

¹⁶ [Anonymous], *Stronniczka i koterie (Factions and Coteries)*, "Przegląd Tygodniowy", 1876, nr 9. During the same year the term "Warsaw positivism" appeared in a paper by K. Kaszewski, *W kwestii pozytywizmu (The Positivist Question)*, "Biblioteka Warszawska", 1876, vol. I, p. 204.

¹⁷ [A. Świętochowski], *Zamknięcie roku (Closing down for the Year)*, "Prawda", 1882, nr 52.

¹⁸ Chmielowski, *Zarys literatury polskiej...*, p. 65.

¹⁹ E. Orzeszkowa, *Listy zebrane (Collected Letters)*, vol. 5, Wrocław 1961, p. 179 (to T. Bochwic dated 9 (22) IV 1909).

that Chmielowski, the first historian of the period, applied the term far more sparingly to literary works than to intellectual trends in general. In his history of literature he subsumed the period after 1864 under the heading: "The Era of Philosophical Positivism and Aesthetic Realism," repeating yet again that by "Positivism" he does not mean at all

a given, rigorously defined philosophical theory (that of Auguste Comte) but rather the aspiration to erect an edifice of thought and a plan of life on the certainties attained through experiment and subject to demonstration at any and every time.²⁰

Thus, rather than Chmielowski, it was Teodor Jeske-Choiński, the opponent of "the progressives," who permanently linked the term "Positivism" with literary works in his books *Pozytywizm warszawski i jego główni przedstawiciele* (*Varsovian Positivism and Its Chief Exponents*, 1885) and *Typy i ideały pozytywnej beletrystyki polskiej* (*The Types and Ideals of Positive Polish Belles-lettres*, 1888). Compendia and school textbooks were later to retain this nomenclature (among others – A. Brückner, G. Korbut, K. Wojciechowski, M. Szykowski, M. Kridl). Aureli Drogoszewski (1932)²¹ considered Polish Positivism to be "an intellectual movement embracing a period of about a quarter of a century after 1864;" hence he also ascribed to it various Stańczykites* as the conservative off shoots of Positivism. Zygmunt Szwejkowski (1929)²² placed heavy stress on the philosophical sub-structure of Positivism (subsequently recollected by Karol Lilienfeld-Krzewski,²³ and usually made light of—witness the deft hard of

* [Translator's note] Stańczyk is the despondent jester in a painting by Matejko sitting next to an open piece of paper recording the loss of Smoleńsk in 1514. "Tekka Stańczyka" (Stańczyk's Portfolio) took its name from this figure and was the main organ of the Galician conservatives; it began publishing in 1869 and was highly critical of past and present conspiracies.

²⁰ P. Chmielowski, *Historia literatury polskiej* (*A History of Polish Literature*), Warszawa 1900, vol. 6, p. 195.

²¹ A. Drogoszewski, *Pozytywizm polski* (*Polish Positivism*), Lvov 1943, p. 3.

²² Z. Szwejkowski, *Pozytywizm polski* (*Polish Positivism*), "Przegląd Współczesny", 1929, nr 83.

²³ K. Lilienfeld-Krzewski, "Zarys literatury" *P. Chmielowskiego o walce młodych ze starymi* (*P. Chmielowski's "Outline of Literature" and the Struggle of Youth with Age*), [in:] *Prace historycznoliterackie. Księga zbiorowa ku czci Ignacego Chrzanowskiego* (*Essays in Literary History. A Festschrift for Ignacy Chrzanowski*), Kraków 1936.

Chmielowski), as well as tracing its evolution from materialist tendencies towards spiritualism.

At the same time, however, during the twenty inter-war years, "Positivism" began to be eliminated from the history of literature as the period's name and was replaced by the term "realism" (T. Grabowski, J. Kleiner, S. Cywiński), a term referring to features peculiar to literature, which can be correlated with the then current tendency to treat the history of literature as the history of changing artistic trends or styles.²⁴

The attitude of Marxist literary history to this problem has been, as is known, a variable one. The initial broad notion of Positivism as an entire literary epoch, plus the acceptance of its secularizing, democratic and realistic traditions evinced by the journalists of "Kuznica" and by the undertaking of research into this area by teams, soon underwent fundamental revision. Its traces can be seen in the uncompleted anthology *Kultura epoki pozytywizmu* (*The Culture of the Positivist Epoch*, 1949–50) and in the collection of studies by The Institute of Literary Studies *Pozytywizm* (*Positivism*, 1950–51) under the editorship of Jan Kott. During the years that immediately followed, and as a result of the application of rigorous criteria for the measurement of progressiveness (materialism, revolutionism, national liberation movements), the ideological system referred to as Positivism was not only valued less, but also minimized in extent: it was interpreted primarily as the anti-revolutionary ideology of the pact between bourgeois and landowner, and as conciliatory towards the partitioners. In discussions of literary history there was an increasingly frequent tendency to ascribe to Positivist ideology only such slogans as served the exclusive interests of the bourgeois class, namely, for instance, the adoption of the "Prussian" road to capitalism or the principle of social solidarity. Humanitarian ideas, however, together with any exaltation of democratic forms of life or of elements of the scientific world-view, were declared to be foreign matter within Positivism, and even incompatible with it, and were treated as a specific "bourgeois democratic tradition" or as a side-effect of the radiations of revolutionary-democratic ideology.

²⁴ See S. Cywiński, *Sprawa podziału dziejów literatury polskiej na okresy* (*The Matter of the Division of Polish Literary History into Periods*), *ibidem*.

These methodological strategies and ruses were subjected to polemic in the paper *Positivism and Critical Realism* (1955), but this merely led to the carefully-framed conclusion that “within the literature of critical realism the essential features of Positivist ideology were fundamentally transformed, although no overt break with them took place. Its programmatic demands and apologies for capitalist activity (expressed through positive heroes) disappeared, whilst the progressive components of Positivism and the social criticism that resulted from them remained. [...] magnified many times over in comparison with the forms they took in Positivist journalism, even in that of the closing phase.”²⁵

It is to recent research, carried out above all by historians of social thought, that we owe the deserved rehabilitation of many of the intellectual values of Positivism.²⁶ Nevertheless, the theoretical construction has been preserved that attributes narrow temporal boundaries and a large degree of ideological unanimity to Positivism (the organicist programme; the struggle with outdated feudal habits; scientism; a programme for the secularization of culture).

2

Every researcher in the humanities is obviously fully entitled to expand or contract traditional concepts, assuming, that is, that the new proposal is sufficiently precise (i.e., that the concept’s scope is clearly delimited), does not diverge too widely from the accepted meaning (i.e., encompasses the majority of the phenomena to which people had previously agreed to apply the term concerned) and, above all, assuming that it legitimates itself as purposeful – that is, as promoting

²⁵ H. Markiewicz, *Pozytywizm a realizm krytyczny*, [in:] *Tradycje i rewizje (Traditions and Revisions)*, Kraków 1957, p. 189.

²⁶ See for instance J. Rudzki: *Z laickich tradycji warszawskiego pozytywizmu (Within the Secular Tradition of Warsaw Positivism)*, “Myśl Filozoficzna”, 1957, nr 2; *Z zagadnień pozytywistycznej teorii postępu (Issues in the Positivist Theory of Progress)*, “Studia Socjologiczno-Polityczne”, 1959, nr 2; J. Krajewski, *Julian Ochorowicz jako autor filozoficznego programu pozytywizmu warszawskiego (Julian Ochorowicz as the Author of the Philosophical Programme of Warsaw Positivism)*, [in:] *Charisteria. Rozprawy filozoficzne złożone w darze Władysławowi Tatarkiewiczowi (Charisteria. Philosophical Papers Presented to W. Tatarkiewicz)*, Warszawa 1960; J. Holzer, “*My i wy*” *po stuleciu (“You and Us” a Century Later)*, “Kultura”, 1963, nr 20.

a clearer and more adequate structuring of the strip of reality under examination. The “narrow” conception of Positivism undoubtedly satisfies all these criteria: in particular, it permits one to demonstrate the diverse, internally antagonistic and class-determined character of Polish culture during the second half of the 19th century. This has been the main trend in Marxist research up to this time—a tendency that is surely accurate and, moreover, indispensable as a revision of traditional notions. A revision that nevertheless slipped down to the level of a one-sidedness whose consequence was the disappearance from view of that culture’s unifying features, as well as of the bases for its further transformation during the imperialist era. The present paper is an attempt to outline the mode of perceiving reality and the style of thought that shaped Polish culture during the period of pre-monopolistic capitalism: an attempt undertaken from a viewpoint that sees literature as expressive of this world-view and observes the world-view’s intraliterary consequences.

One adopts the term “world-view” not without hesitation, for as a compound word it enjoys scant favour among some of the specialists in linguistic correctness. Nevertheless, it is indispensable, for “a view of the world” is both cumbersome in use and narrower in meaning, whilst “ideology” is used above all to designate a complex of ideas peculiar to a well-defined class or social group, whose interests they further.

The world-view that is here termed “Positivism” (strictly speaking, one would have to say: Positivism in the broad sense) has a scope roughly corresponding to what W. Tatarkiewicz calls scientism and D. G. Charlton, the Positivist *état d’esprit*.²⁷ Among its constitutive elements one should distinguish scientism above all—in the narrow sense of the word, that is, as a faith in science based on experiment and ratiocination as the sole source of reliable knowledge and efficacious directives to correct action.

Science—writes Orzeszkowa in her youth—grants humanity the means to conquer the forces of external nature; science, in illuminating concepts, guides nations towards peace, concord, wealth and virtue. Science kills daydreams and idle, superstitious

²⁷ W. Tatarkiewicz, *Historia filozofii (The History of Philosophy)*, vol. 3, Warszawa 1950, p. 101; D. G. Charlton, *Positivist Thought During the Second Empire*, Oxford 1959.

hopes, and directs man to delve into his earthly existence and perfect it for himself and others; finally, in conducting man to self-knowledge, it bestows upon him a sense of his own power and probity, on the basis of which he desires to be himself, to think, live and act by his own lights.²⁸

Socialism is accompanied by a more or less consistent natural monism, which conceives of history as a specific variety of the processes of nature, as part of them, and accordingly holds historical changeability to be a law-governed phenomenon, subject to determinism:

One is concerned here [...] not with an unrelenting fate or a blind necessity, but with historical development, which, in our opinion, depends upon strictly defined causes; for we must recognize as a fact that cause and effect prevail within the spiritual life also, and that every subsequent intellectual and moral state is a necessary outcome of its predecessor.²⁹

In particular, Positivism endows material agencies with a considerable, and at times decisive, significance in the totality of social life.

No one has ever seen – cried the Positivists – a nation that was poor, ill-equipped with material resources, and deprived of the benefits of highly-developed trade, that at the same time attained a high standard of education or brought forth first-rate scholars, artists or poets.³⁰

Work generates wealth; wealth, learning; and learning, virtue – is Orzeszkowa's lapidary declaration.³¹

We consider the signs of Positivism in the ethic-social system to be eudaimonistic utilitarianism (i.e. the approbation of useful behaviour with an eye to the satisfaction of needs and human welfare); the evaluation of individuals and social groups according to their productivity (broadly understood i.e. as the creation of new material and spiritual values); the postulate of individual liberty and equality of rights, opportunities and duties within society; and, finally, "practicism" (i.e. the setting of attainable ends and a careful selection of the

²⁸ Li...ka [E. Orzeszkowa], *O "Historii cywilizacji angielskiej" przez Henryka Tomazsa Buckle'a (On H. Th. Buckle's "History of Civilization in England")*, "Gazeta Polska", 1866, nr 158.

²⁹ P. Chmielowski, *Statystyka i moralność (Statistics and Morality)*, "Przegląd Tygodniowy", 1871, nr 50.

³⁰ Chmielowski, *Pozytywizm i pozytywiści*, p. 101.

³¹ E. Orzeszkowa, *O jednej z najpilniejszych potrzeb społeczeństwa naszego (On One of Our Society's Most Urgent Needs)*, "Niwa", 1873, nr 25.

means of their realization). In the language of the journalism of the time:

The main contemporary trend in our societies is utilitarianism. We cast aside all that does not positively influence the development of humanity, that adds no bricks to the great edifice whose completion is the end of our existence. This edifice is the growth and happiness of societies.

[Can therefore] man's personal interest remain in strong and lasting agreement with the interests of society without exposing him to sacrifices and costly effort? There can be no doubt about the answer to this question. Firstly, education provides every means and opportunity of transforming a narrow and shallow egotism into a deep and expansive love of the general good, and, secondly, life is gradually fashioning the conviction within every thoughtful mind that no honest activity ever loses through benefitting others and that private interest can yield its highest profits only when in harmony with the social law.

The notion of equality between men and before the law is the noblest acquisition, and chief characteristic, of our recent times. Notions of caste and noble blood no longer even provoke indignation, only hearty laughter. Humanity has realized, late in the day perhaps, but clearly: that the only nobility of earth is labour, and those who demand observance in the name of other laws meet with fitting mockery.

The tendency to independence and self-sufficiency [...] liberated labour from subservience to the guilds, lifted the yoke of slavery and serfdom, created autonomy of the community, limited and defined parental power and overthrew all authorities in science.³²

This is the Positivist world-view in outline, including all its basic components, which can easily be deduced from the situation of the Polish "third estate" at the time—that is, of the classes and social formations variously interested in their own emancipation and in the growth of an industrial civilization.

The aspirations of the contemporary working class—writes "Walka Klas"—in consistent agreement with the economic upheaval they must bring about, [...] rest on the basis of philosophical monism, and hence of atheism, determinism and utilitarianism with respect to views of morality and in ethical practice; on the basis of the evolution of all institutions, arrangements and relationships (and thus of marital, parental and educational relationships etc.): on the basis of democratic republicanism in the domain

³² A. Pilecki, *Stanowisko poezji wobec pozytywnego kierunku naszej umysłowości* (*The Standpoint of Poetry with Regard to Our Intellectuals' Positivist Tendency*), "Przegląd Tygodniowy", 1873, nr 34; [anonymous], *Interes osobisty a społeczny* (*Interests, Private Versus Social*), "Niwa", 1873, nr 48; A. Świętochowski, *Zabawnie i smutno* (*Laughable and Sad*), "Przegląd Tygodniowy", 1871, nr 48; [anonymous], *Ze stołu redakcyjnego* (*From the Editorial Chair*), "Niwa", 1873, nr 29.

of politics and the State etc.—in short, on a *realistic* basis, and here, now and everywhere, on the basis of the principle of solidarity.³³

This phenomenon is all the easier to comprehend, since in the course of the historical development between 1870 and 1890 almost every single one of the components of the Positivist world-view disclosed its internal bipolarity, its “antithetical quality” and, as it were, split into two independent and opposed elements.³⁴ Thus, Positivist scientism uncovered its Janus aspect — its “shamefaced materialism” and its “shamefaced idealism:” it had already reached materialist conclusions in ontology, whilst its agnosticism had persuaded it to tolerate, and even emotionally to accept, non-scientific idealist metaphysics. Here are three statements by Eliza Orzeszkowa.

[1867] So I am reading Schödler’s *Book of Nature* on chemistry and, what is more — I understand everything I read, and am augmenting this task with the reading of Moleschoot’s *De la circulation de la vie*; under the influence of this German sage I feel myself more and more a materialist.

[1884] Can this perennial question [“Is there anyone beyond the stars?”] possibly be justly answered by: there is nobody!? Spencer and all the Positivists have hesitated to give the answer. “We do not know,” they say. And if there *is* someone? [...] and we are trying to convince others that there’s nobody! Some day, one day, will not millions upon millions of despairing voices cry out to the graves of the sons of our age: “Give us back our God!”? etc. etc.

[1896] Where our earth is concerned we are not yet wise enough, and where things beyond it are concerned, we are blind. Even during the most refulgent earthly brightness we are benighted; the greatest of us is minute. But our darkness and our littleness — the fleetingness and relativity of all that is ours — do not prove the non-existence of an absolute brightness and perfection somewhere beyond us. Quite the reverse, the earnest

³³ [Anonymous], *Chybiony zamach (A Failed Coup)*, “Walka Klas”, 1885, nr 10–12. A. Molska, *Nauka a socjalizm w ujęciu pierwszych marksistów polskich (Science or Socialism as Understood by the First Polish Marxists)*, “Studia Filozoficzne”, 1964, nr 4, notes with remarkable insight: “If one had to point to a philosophical tendency which — *mutatis mutandis* — fulfilled a similar historical ‘mission’ in the development of Marxist thought in Poland to the rôle Hegelianism played for Marx, then one would point without hesitation to philosophical Positivism in the broad sense. Though with this difference, that in the Polish case one should speak of an *adaptation* rather than an overcoming of Positivism: and one that took place, one adds, without complicated strategies to ‘stand it on its feet’.”

³⁴ M. Żmigrodzka developed a similar conception of Positivism in her works: *Orzeszkowa*, vol. 1: *Młodość pozytywizmu (Positivism in Its Youth)*, Warszawa 1965; *Orzeszkowa a pozytywizm (Orzeszkowa and Positivism)*, a lecture given at the Institute of Literary Research in 1964).

of them—the concept of them, the longing for them—which we possess within ourselves seem to give proof of their primal source. They well up within us too, appear as tiny sparks of a great conflagration: there is a reason why they exist within us and a reason why we exist.³⁵

Natural monism, although wearing the protective coloration of deism, liberated man from a terror of supernatural powers and was the source of the young Positivists' humanist pride. In Konopnicka's *Fragmenty dramatyczne* (*Dramatic Fragments*, 1891), the scholar Vesalius prophesies:

Nie! Przyjdą wieki nowe, wyzwolone
 Z niewolniczego dla Bóstwa postrachu
 I prawd najwyższych słoneczną zasłonę
 Śmiało podniosą w tajemnym tym gmachu,
 Gdzie Bóg przyrodzie przepisuje prawa,
 A pod jej berło byt wszelki poddawa,
 Stłumione dzisiaj rozbudzą się głosy
 I nowe prądy w pierś ludzką uderzą...
 Nowy widnokrąg rozszerzą niebiosy...
 Duchy walczące potęgę swą zmierzą
 Z zagadką życia zwiłkaną, prastarą
 I wiedzą uczczą to, co dziś czczą wiarą.³⁶

[No! There will dawn new ages, freed / From slavish cowering at the Deity – / Bravely within this sunny edifice / Where God prescribes the laws that nature rule / And subjugates existence to her orb / They will lift solar veils from highest truths – / Voices now stifled will awaken, / New currents will beat against the human breast... / The heavens will open new horizons up... / And fighting spirits will test their power against / The complex, age-old riddle of this life / And consecrate with knowledge what today faith consecrates.]

But in rendering man dependent upon the action of natural laws, in depriving him of the hope of immortality, and in attributing an important rôle in the structuring of character to biological factors that dominated intellect and will, natural monism made of man the slave of nature, degraded him, and so gave impetus to pessimism:

³⁵ Orzeszkowa, *Listy zebrane*, vol. 1, p. 11 (to Jan Sikorski, dated 27 VIII 1867); vol. 3, p. 67 (to J. Karłowicz, dated 18 (30) VIII 1884); Panu Janowi Karłowiczowi (For Mr. Jan Karłowicz), [in:] *Melancholicy* (*Melancholics*), vol. 1, Warszawa 1949, p. 13.

³⁶ M. Konopnicka, *Z przeszłości. Fragmenty dramatyczne* (*Out of the Past. Dramatic Fragments*), [in:] *Pisma wybrane* (*Selected Works*), vol. 6, Warszawa 1951, p. 234–235.

[...] the longer I live and look upon this poor world, struggling, suffering so terribly and so variously—writes Orzeszkowa—the more frequently it occurs to me to ask whether the loss of the illusions and consolations with which religious belief supplied it hitherto may not prove to be one misfortune more for it.³⁷

Natural monism permitted of the examination of human relations in categories derived from biology—and here organicism, which assigned an important position to the solidaristic “laws of exchange of services,” met with opposition from the concept of the struggle for existence, which later led to Social Darwinism or theories of national egoism. The early socialist approach to class antagonisms—despite all the clearly accentuated internal differences—took shape within this concept’s sphere of influence, at least in Poland; it was written at that time that sociological science was indebted to Marx for “the formulation in the *class struggle* of the most important social form of the ideological fight for existence;”³⁸ and whilst polemicizing with Prus, Ludwik Krzywicki demanded:

Where do we discern this absence of a fight for existence such as occurs between the cells of an animal organism? Quite the contrary, we see the contours of this struggle becoming ever clearer throughout the societies of Europe; we see the existing European societies disintegrating into social atoms all scrabbling among themselves over every crust of bread; the richer capitalist gobbles up the weaker: together they crush the independent hired man; and the hired men battle among themselves in competition. Can one take as proof of the unity that is supposed to exist between individuals and forge the social organism the unrelenting struggle that is currently being waged by the bourgeoisie and the proletariat of the Western countries?³⁹

Depending on whether society is envisioned as organic or in conflict, its ceaseless change is interpreted either by stressing its gradual, evolutionary character, within which revolution would be simply a harmful anomaly, or by declaring revolution itself to be the lever of

³⁷ Orzeszkowa, *Listy zebrane*, vol. 3, p. 66 (to Jan Karłowicz dated 18 (30) VIII 1886).

³⁸ *Chybiony zamach*.

³⁹ L. Krzywicki, *Jeszcze o programie (More about the Programme)*, “Przegląd Tygodniowy”, 1883, nr 15. See H. Dominas, *Stosunek publicystów czasopism socjalistycznych (“Równość”, “Przedświtu”, “Walki klas”, “Światła”) do socjaldarwinizmu i darwinizmu (The Standpoint of the Publicists of the Socialist Periodicals [...] towards Darwinism and Social Darwinism)*, [in:] *Materiały do dziejów myśli ewolucyjnej w Polsce (Materials for a History of Evolutionary Thought in Poland)*, fasc. 1, Warszawa 1963.

historical progress. “Nature does not leap like a hare but crawls like a tortoise” – urges Prus.⁴⁰ “If history is to progress as it has done hitherto, then revolution, i.e. violent upheaval, will be the necessary supplement to evolution” – states a socialist journalist.⁴¹

The vision of human relations as conflictual became in its turn an object of both optimistic and pessimistic interpretation. The struggle for existence – writes Orzeszkowa in 1873 –

understood as the rivalry between rational beings for the most perfect self-realization, for the broadest expansion of the circles of correct action and beneficent influence, and for the largest possible share of that power, happiness and security that spring from the light of knowledge, the efforts of reason, the industry of the hands and the unbendingness of the will. – the struggle for existence is a phenomenon both necessary and just, a noble duel that yields positive and even supreme results for humanity.⁴²

But in 1884 Adolf Dygasiński heads his short story *Niezdara* (*The Awkward One*) with the epigraph: “the noble perish,” and the story *Glód i miłość* (*Love and Hunger*, 1885) closes with the sarcastic reflection:

Thus the degree to which human love is turned into happiness often remains directly proportionate to the exchange of virtuous life for a humiliating trade. Yet those who possess great treasures in their souls do not exchange them for money. They and their like perish. God is good and bears with this, and for this reason is praised by all.⁴³

Applied to the human individual, determinism tied his character and fate to environment and heredity. The first element, environment, appeared in conjunction with intellectualizing conceptions of the personality and in optimistic reflections, either as the Positivist conviction of the rôle of education, or as the socialist belief in the transforming power of a new order. Heredity, however, coupled with a recognition of the prevailing force of biological factors, was usually the basis for pessimistic conclusions. Here is Chmielowski’s optimistic argument from the year 1871:

If we consider human actions to be the necessary products of external impulses as well as internal ones, then we can rest assured that in giving a man a moral

⁴⁰ B. Prus, *Postępowcy i zachowawcy* (*Progressives and Conservatives*), “Kurier Warszawski”, 1878, nr 285.

⁴¹ Iks Bogomnos [A. Sądziński], *Sprawy żywotne* (*Living Issues*), [in:] *Pierwsze pokolenie marksistów polskich* (*The First Generation of Polish Marxists*), vol. 1, Warszawa 1962, p. 468.

⁴² Orzeszkowa, *O jednej z najpilniejszych potrzeb*, p. 4.

⁴³ A. Dygasiński, *Glód i miłość*, [in:] *Pisma wybrane* (*Selected Works*), vol. 9, Warszawa 1950, p. 152.

education, in directing his thoughts towards truth and in fashioning his feelings according to the patterns of nobility and goodness, we will be instilling into him a definite character of one type or another, depending on his natural tendencies—one which will be capable of counteracting many of the instincts, of resisting vicious thoughts and of stamping his entire behaviour with the particular seal that differentiates him from others.⁴⁴

And here is Dygasiński's pessimistic argument:

Let us recollect that a man bears within himself foreign demons as well as his own self. The heritage of virtues or sins often sleeps peacefully within the depths of the organism—whenever there are conditions favourable to its development. No one governs matters of this kind by will-power, just as no man frames the laws of life and death.⁴⁵

The thesis that social reality was determinist in nature presented a similar alternative. One could either view it as offering choices of freedom, of humanity's domination of nature and its own fate—in accord with the Comtean principle *savoir pour pouvoir*—or discern in it the Engelsian definition of freedom as the recognition of necessity.

The discovery that the laws active among us—writes Feliks Bogacki—are nothing but the necessary, general and unvarying accompaniments of certain effects by certain causes does much to increase the morality of those who know this; it grants them a feeling of their own powers: for if these laws are nothing but the accompaniment of cause by effect, then man himself can modify the effects, more or less, altering and adapting to his needs and ends the circumstances that represent the causes of the effects.⁴⁶

We do not stand outside history but submit to its laws—stated Ludwik Waryński during the trial of some proletarians in 1885.—We see the upheaval at which we are aiming as the result of historical development and social conditions. We look forward to it and strive not to be caught unaware by it.⁴⁷

Meanwhile, however, Adam Asnyk is timidly and laboriously adding the final touches of optimism to his philosophico-historical vision:

Giną w męce rody i plemiona,
Choć walczyły z męstwem bohatera...

⁴⁴ Chmielowski, *Statystyka i moralność*.

⁴⁵ Dygasiński, *op. cit.*, p. 95–96.

⁴⁶ F. Bogacki, *Tło powieści wobec tła życia (The Background of the Novel Next to the Background of Life)*, "Przegląd Tygodniowy", 1891, nr 53.

⁴⁷ Przemówienie Waryńskiego na sądzie warszawskim (Waryński's Speech before a Warsaw Court), [in:] *Pierwsze pokolenie marksistów polskich*, vol. 2, p. 611.

Mnóstwo pragnień nieziszczonych kona,
Mnóstwo uczuć bezpłodnie umiera.

Wszędzie ciężka na byt dalszy praca,
Wszędzie walki groza i męczarnia,
Która wniwecz zwycięstwo obraca
I ofiary w ciemną przepaść zgarnia.

I odwieczne nie troszczą się moce,
Co przez chwilę na fali wypłynię?
Co zatonie w zagłady pomroce?
I co zejdzie na świeżej ruinie?⁴⁸

[Tribes and lines will die in torment / Although they fought like heroes stout... / Many wishes unfulfilled will die, / Many feelings perish fruitlessly. / Everywhere labour just to carry on, / Everywhere struggle's threat and anguishes, / Which turns all conquests round about, / Gathering the fallen in abyss. / And are the powers ever untroubled / At what any moment may rise on the wave? / At what may drown in annihilation's murk / And what descend on the recent wreck?]

Finally, we encounter a similar polarization in the area of social and ethical slogans and propositions. The criterion of social productivity, which originally sanctioned the activity of the organizers of capitalist manufacture, later turned against them and became an argument for the ideology of the Socialists and Populists. At first utilitarianism was understood as the principle of “rational egoism,” which by serving the public interest indirectly, but ultimately most effectively, served the interests of the individual. Over the course of the years it was replaced by the demand for the unrelenting subordination of the individual to the primacy of the collective (national or class) good, which had as its educational slogans such words as “service,” “sacrifice,” “devotion” – and thus required an imposed or self-imposed restriction of freedom. At the same time a decidedly egocentric attitude comes into being. To illustrate this with literary examples: Orzeszkowa’s heroes anticipate those of Żeromski, and among Świętochowski’s declarations we meet with a foreboding of modernist individualism:

To die just so as to bequeath a few useful works to the public, to be a mere oyster the public swallows and forgets, to be devoid of all egoism, something for another

⁴⁸ A. Asnyk, *W walce o byt (In the Struggle for Being)*, [in:] *Pisma (Writings)*, vol. 2. Warszawa 1939, p. 200.

person's palate—that kind of theory can be proclaimed to bulls in a slaughterhouse but not to a man possessed of the right to personal happiness.⁴⁹

Of all the things people owe me—says Regina, the heroine of the drama *Ojciec Makary* (*Father Makary*)—I insist above all on my human rights. For myself I am the hub of creation. I will not be forced to sacrifice for anyone, I do not wish to learn virtue through anguish, I know no duty of self-forgetfulness [...] There are as many private worlds as there are people—I am one of them, and I know it. I do not wish to stir only when the herd moves but to live privately for myself and through myself. I am permitted to extend my human rights everywhere so long as they do not infringe upon the rights of others.⁵⁰

It is obvious that the “practicism” mentioned in the introduction justifies “organic work” and legalism to the same degree as it does the later submissive “realistic policy:” this is borne out by numerous well-known documents of the political thought of the time. It is however worth remembering that the first Polish Socialists attached an especial importance to the name “scientific socialism,” which they saw as scientific in its being more than a “noble impulse” or an “exercise in feeling humanitarian,” in its “discovering in the surrounding world a sufficient number of *facts* to support its aims and observing *positive* data so as to draw out positive conclusions,” and thus, in its directing itself “according to that which is: *reality*.”⁵¹

3

In the area of literary production social utilitarianism was the dominant line. But it could take on two concrete forms—and either posit the tendentiousness of literature, i.e. as a didactic and even agitatory illustration of a specific programme, or posit realism, on account of its epistemological values.

The main line of development however leads—still under the banner

⁴⁹ A. Świętochowski, *Wywóz naszej inteligencji* (*The Deportation of Our Intelligentsia*), “Przegląd Tygodniowy”, 1874, nr 32.

⁵⁰ A. Świętochowski, *Ojciec Makary*, [in:] *Dusze nieśmiertelne* (*Immortal Souls*), Wrocław 1957, p. 97.

⁵¹ [Sz. Diksztajn], *Dążenia socjalistyczne na emigracji polskiej 1831* (*Socialist Trends in the Polish Emigration of 1831*), “Równość”, 1880, nr 8–9; [anonymous], *Z powodu odezwy Stowarzyszenia Socjalistycznego “Lud Polski”* (*In Reply to the Appeal of the Socialist Organization of “The People of Poland”*), “Świt”, 1881, nr 6–7; [anonymous], *Dlaczego nie jesteśmy anarchistami* (*Why We Are not Anarchists*), *ibidem*, 1886, nr 6–8 (quoted in Mołska, *op. cit.*, p. 54 and elsewhere).

of utilitarianism—from the treatment of literature as a means of popularization to the recognition of its intrinsic possibilities and exigencies; from tendentiousness to “objectivity”; and from the primacy of postulatory functions to the primacy of epistemological functions of a particular kind. These functions have been described as “realism,” within which one can in turn perceive an internal opposition between the conception of literature as a peculiar variety of general knowledge (and thus as a consequence, the demand that the represented world be the most representative), and the conception of literature as a variety of concrete knowledge (and thus the demand that there be a maximum of individualization). As we know, an attempt was made to overcome this opposition by means of realistic typicality, which was understood to be the incarnation of the general within the particular.

At the same time, literature’s aspirations to realism began to devise an alternative: a scientific orientation over and against a fidelity to the experience of everyday life. On the level of novelistic technique this corresponds to the alternative of: an omniscient narrator situated outside the represented reality, or a subjective narrator immersed in it. Between these polar extremes—between narration by an omniscient author and impressionist narration in the first person—lies the practice of the great realists, who took up the position of an omnipresent and hyper-acute (but not all-knowing) narrator, or else, by applying an apparently oblique discourse, assumed by turns the observational perspectives of various figures.⁵²

A bifurcation can also be observed in the stylistic tendencies in prose, ranging from the pole of poetry to that of colloquial speech: the unobtrusive, “transparent” style, maintaining the rigours of correctness and striving for the precision and clarity of denotation; and the style soaked in the individualizing features of a historical environment, a style aiming above all at the expression of the speaking subject. They commonly co-exist within the bounds of a single literary work—the former has authorial narration as its domain, the latter dominates the dialogues. Nevertheless, the controversy between Konopnicka and Dygasiński over the affair of “popular language in

⁵² My sketch *Antynomie powieści realistycznej dziewiętnastego wieku* (*The Antinomies of the 19-Cent. Realistic Novel*), [in:] *Przekroje i zbliżenia* (*Cross-Sections and Approaches*), Warszawa 1967, treats these problems in more detail.

works of belles lettres” witnesses to a certain incompatibility between these two stylistic tendencies.

It is easy to see that in the dynamic model of the Positivist world-view and literary style sketched above, the series of phenomena given first mention (a materialist trend; an optimistic interpretation of determinism; harmony between the individual’s interest and the community’s; tendentiousness) are characteristic of the period’s initial phase; whilst the second series (an idealist trend; a pessimistic interpretation of determinism; the vision of society as conflictual; objective or impressionist realism) came into ascendancy during the period’s decline—a relative equilibrium between these two series is characteristic of the intervening phase. One can also see that a further intensification of the second series yields the poetics and world-view of Young Poland, in their dual modernist-naturalist form:

Wielbić naturę?... Za co?... Prawda, nie pობłodzi,
Bo nią mus praw tajemnych dla człowieka rządzi,
Bo jest maszyną martwą, a jej ruchy wieczne
Są bezcelowe całkiem, są, bo są konieczne.

Kochać naturę?... Za co?... Za to, że mię gwałtem
Bezwzględny utworzyła i odziała kształtem
Ludzki, może nieszczęściu najbardziej przystępnym?
Że mi wciąż grozi skonu widziadłem posepnym?

Że mi dała poczucie i świadomość woli,
A w najsroźszej tyrańskiej trzyma mię niewoli?
Że mi w mózg upragnienie wszczepiła poznania,
Ale poznać mi ślepe jej prawo zabrania?...⁵³

[Bow down to nature?... Why?... Too true, it does not err / For through it rules the force of laws withheld from man / Because it is a dead machine, whose moving through eternity / Is utterly pointless, is, because necessary. / Love nature?... Why?... Because with ruthless force / It brought me forth and clothed me with the shape / Of man, perhaps the saddest shape of all? / Because it continually threatens with spectres of death? / Because it gave me feeling, consciousness of will / And holds me in the harshest slavish tyranny? / Because it injected in my brain desire to know / Whilst forbidding me knowledge of its blind laws?...]

We are here no longer dealing with a Positivist work: we have quoted a verse by Kazimierz Tetmajer from the first cycle of his *Poezje* (*Poems*, 1891). But how much of this typical *fin de siècle*

⁵³ K. Przerwa-Tetmajer, *Wielbić naturę?* (*Bow Down to Nature?*), [in:] *Poezje* (*Poems*), vol. 1, Warszawa 1924, p. 76.

mood is already present in Świętochowski's *Dumania pesymisty* (*A Pessimist's Wonderings*), so atypical of 1876:

To be continually devoured by a fever for knowledge and continually doubtful of its truths, to meditate incessantly upon existence yet never penetrate it, never delve into its real nature, simply to inflame desires with science whilst satisfying none of them—this is a torment that has stolen more of man's happiness and suggested more anguish to him than many a cross upon which he has been stretched out. [...] It may be, and galling it is to think so, that the universe is a boundless ocean whose waves occasionally break into bubbles leaping upon the surface—people. How then can one take pride in one's power and greatness? [...] Since all that is must be the effect of a cause that preceded it and itself must become the cause of an effect that succeeds to it, nature, even if it changed all its current forms completely, would have no end, just as it had no beginning. Our eternity is equally certain. Death—I stated—is only a change in the form of one's existence. It may yet again compound the dust of a sage with a cretin's dust to make a paving stone across which smirking criminals stride.⁵⁴

To sum up one should dot the i's and cross the t's: despite the author's empirical distrust of schemas, the historical and literary material has arranged itself according to the classical schema of dialectic, which is doubtless not a universal one but proves itself here with paradigmatic clarity: the literary history of this period sees the transformation of a certain structure into its opposite by way of the crystallization of internal oppositions and the shifting of the dominants during successive phases of the overall process.⁵⁵ Obviously, the present construction is dependent upon the point of view adopted: the group of tendencies which "destructure" an original Positivism "structure" the next cultural phase, one that from the outset is far less homogeneous, a feature indubitably linked with the resurgent growth of social antagonisms. This dual historical rôle can be seen especially clearly in the case of naturalism: the fatalistic version of determinism, the biological conception of man, the dismissal of tendentiousness, the impressionism, the concern with the artistic shape of prose—all can be read as the closing phase of Positivist realism and as the inaugural phase of modernist literature.

Transl. by Paul Coates

⁵⁴ A. Świętochowski, *Dumania pesymisty*, "Przegląd Tygodniowy", 1876, nr 24, 27.

⁵⁵ See V. I. Lenin, *W sprawie dialektyki* (*In the Matter of Dialectics*), [in:] *Zeszyty filozoficzne* (*Philosophical Notebooks*), Warszawa 1956, p. 335–336.