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of texts and interpretations of conclusions arising in the course of the analysis.

The book does not offer a comprehensive treatment of the subject. The author confines herself to discussion of several motifs which, in her opinion, were better documented or seemed especially important for the thinking on language and poetry at the time. The first two studies of the volume, as dealing exclusively with the Enlightenment, will be discussed here in a more detailed way.

The first one, entitled "Język i ranga poezji wobec głównego nurtu językowej i stylistycznej myśli Oświecenia" (Language and the Status of Poetry Against the Main Trend of the Linguistic and Stylistic Thought in the Enlightenment), is devoted to Polish conceptions of language and style and their influence on poetry and its status. The question of the national language was one of the major problems of the Polish Enlightenment. The perfecting of the Polish language and universalizing it in all kinds of linguistic activities and in all circles of society became the primary motif of the programme for the national education. From its very beginnings the Enlightenment struggled for a good national language and this struggle was based on rationalistic premises: a good language is such a language which conforms to the laws of logical thinking and is an efficient tool of communication. This approach, characteristic of the European thought of the time (and represented mainly by the works of Locke, Leibniz and the French grammarians), underlies the first Polish utterances concerning the reform of the usage of language, those of Stanisław Konarski, famous educationist and writer, the author of *De emendandis eloquentiae vitiis* (1741) and *De arte bene cogitandi ad artem dicendi bene necessaria* (1767). On this approach also the grammatical codification of the Polish language was based, the major achievement in this field being *Gramatyka* (Grammar) by Onufry Kopczyński. A category of the "clarity of the language," put forward by Kopczyński, becomes the most important criterion of the language perfection and the principal postulate of the Enlightenment as regards the language. Particular importance was attached to the question of the communicational value of the word, i.e., to its comprehensibility and univocal character. (This was also characteristic of the views of Locke and his followers.) Thus, all forms which used obscure, ambiguous

or unusual words and expressions were frequently and sharply criticized; verbosity, the so-called tropes, rhetorical figures and all verbal ornamentation were reprehended, the main attack being directed against the Baroque versions of the rhetoric, still continued in the first decades of the 18th century. Comparatively seldom, however, was this censure for the deterioration of the language addressed to poetry; in this sphere a less valuable—according to the new postulates—way of using the language seemed to be tolerated. This meant separating poetry from other spheres of linguistic activity and such a situation was clearly unfavourable for the status of poetry in the contemporary consciousness. Poetry was losing its traditional position as a high form, since its features of the so-called high style were now objectionable. In all its activities concerning the language the Enlightenment endeavoured to elaborate and popularize such forms which would be close to the stylistic features of the so-called low style (in Poland consequently called the plain style), appropriate for prose. Thus poetry was threatened with degradation and with falling into the background to play only a secondary role.

To counteract this there were attempts at making the poetic utterance conform with the preferred stylistic standards, at applying the principle of the “clarity of the language” to poetry as well. Poets were warned against verbosity and told to be economical in their use of the so-called language ornaments. Generally, it was the function of *docere* which was brought into prominence.

The postulate of the “clarity of the language” remained in force—with one relevant exception—to the end of the Enlightenment. In the later part of the period there appeared, however, various attempts at diverging from this canon, which was too narrow for poetry and for the language of literature in general. Some of these attempts referred to the traditional treatment of the subject, justifying the right of poetry to a distinct language, to the ornate style. On different grounds, the significance and value of figurative elements, known from the rhetorical tradition, were reinterpreted. Metaphor, for instance, one of the especially controversial items for the contemporaries ceased then to be regarded as an ingenious, sophisticated ornament, and came to be valued as a natural linguistic phenomenon, present everywhere and used by everyone. Often

expressed was also the conviction that the language of poetry and literature in general should be characterized by simple and easy means of expression, marked, however, by directness and spontaneity, i.e., not conventionalized in their functions, and especially in those of emotional value. Interestingly enough, statements concerning the high status of poetry are to be found only in those cases in which the point of reference is the rhetorical tradition, and only at these occasions is the essential difference between the language of poetry and that of non-poetry mentioned.

Irrespective of differences, all approaches to the problem of the poetic language had one distinct common denominator: in all of them the regard for the audience was considered to be of paramount importance in both organizing and functioning of the poetic utterance. This attitude, though, of course, characteristic also of the rhetoric traditions, played an extremely important part in the rationalistically oriented conceptions of language, current at the time.

The above-discussed study is supplemented with an annex, entitled "Hasło 'poezja' w encyklopedii Krasickiego" (The Article on Poetry in Krasicki's Encyclopaedia) and devoted to the first Polish encyclopaedic treatment of the term "poetry." The Encyclopaedia, under the title *Zbiór potrzebniejszych wiadomości* (*Useful Knowledge*), prepared chiefly by Ignacy Krasicki, was published in 1781; the author of the article on poetry was Joachim Chreptowicz, a prominent figure in the Polish Enlightenment though not a very distinguished writer. Chreptowicz's article, conspicuous by its length, contains many various views and opinions on poetry, only loosely—if at all—connected. Apparently, the author did not care about the coherence of his article; after all he declares that the precise defining of what poetry is would be impossible. Neither did he try to make use of those articles on poetry which could be found in the French Encyclopaedia, already well-known at the time. In effect, his reader was presented a picture that in the main was not concurrent with the Classicist theories. Chreptowicz questioned the validity and durability of the current formula that "poetry is the art of imitating nature in verse", and found verse form an insufficient and irrelevant criterion of poeticalness. He did not mention the *docere* function and said nothing about the "clarity of the language." The chief aim of poetry he saw in

“amusing delightfully,” whereas as its highest value he regarded its capability of creating illusion through pictures painted with words.

“Malowanie słowami” (Painting with Words) is the title of the second study of the volume, dealing with the actualities of the Enlightenment. This one is devoted to the problems of the so-called “painting poetry.” In both Polish and other European poetics and utterances about poetry this motif of the pictorial capabilities of poetic works was very conspicuous. The old formula *ut pictura poesis* was frequently referred to and its realization postulated, the formula itself being incorporated into the whole context of views based on the mimetic theory of poetry. “Pictures” and “paintings” were characteristic phrases used at the time in connection with poetry. Highly appreciated were poetic descriptions, usually acknowledged as a distinct kind which, though falling within the realm of the “painting poetry,” was by no means the only kind covered by the term. Among opinions on this matter Kopczyńska discusses also those of Bodmer and Breitinger, especially representative of this trend of thinking about poetry. She draws our attention to the renewed interest of the epoch in comparisons of poetry and painting *sensu stricto* and in this context the works of Du Bos (*Reflexions critique...*) and Lessing (*Laokoon*) are mentioned.

In all contemporary texts dealing with these problems we find the belief that linguistic utterance is proficient in producing in mind a vivid picture of the object to which the utterance refers. It was maintained that objects can be seen in the same—or nearly the same—way through the medium of language as they are seen in the act of immediate sense perception. Words in the linguistic utterance were said to be shapes, colours, light and shade of the painting.

Thus, the fundamental question posed in the study is the following one: which aspects of contemporary theories of language could be the source and basis of such views? The author seeks the answer in the prevalent conception of the linguistic sign. Generally accepted at the time sign relation: word—idea (Ger. *Vorstellung*)—object afforded the function of the word to be treated as image-formative. If ideas, or mental images, were evoked by concrete words, i.e. by names of objects and of those features which can

be perceived by sense, they could have visual character, in the general sense analogical to paintings. Kopczyńska takes also into account a wider context of the discussed problems. The conception of the image-formative function of the linguistic sign, as well as the whole concept of "painting with words," must have been greatly influenced by the current sensualistic views and sensualistically oriented interest in psychology, where sense perception—and especially visual perception—were thought to be of primary importance and thus were particularly valued and stressed.

The 18th century conceived of linguistic sign as being of conventional character, and the above-presented views on the functioning of the sign were in line with this general trend; those concerned with the "painting" were explicit about the arbitrary nature of linguistic signs. Physical quality of the word was irrelevant for its performing the painting functions. To accomplish this task in the best possible manner the word should evoke the image of the thing quickly and in an unmistakable way; in other words, a well-painting word is a word whose meaning is definite and which does not absorb attention in itself. Thus, in accordance with the prevalent linguistic theory, also in the sphere of the "painting poetry" the principle of "unequivocal words" was fully respected, the denoting aspect and the referential function of the sign being considered as essential.

Poetry at the time was deemed to be particularly apt to make use of the pictorial potential of the language. Consequently, the most important problem in organizing a poetic utterance was the choice of appropriate words, with preference for concrete vocabulary. Rarely was the question of the pictorial function of metaphor mentioned in this context.

Kindred to the concept of the "painting poetry" were, in Kopczyńska's opinion, the views of Alexander Baumgarten, which can be epitomized in the definition of poetry as *oratio sensitiva perfecta*. This formula echoed in poetics of the late Enlightenment, and at the beginning of the 19th century it became the main element of the theory of poetry presented by Euzebiusz Słowacki, the author of the first Polish comprehensive handbook on poetics.

Other studies contained in the volume, in both the material they analyze and problems they discuss, pertain to pre-Romanticism

and Romanticism, and only short information on them is possible here. Generally, the author deals in those essays with the fundamental reorientation in thinking on language, as compared with the linguistic consciousness of the Enlightenment. The instrumental approach to language was abandoned for the organic conceptions and belief in the creative character of language. Connected with this orientation was the grèat interest in the characteristic features and peculiarities of national languages. Hence, in the 19th century there developed in Poland special interest in the characteristics of the Polish language, its role and significance in the life and literature of the country.

In the essay "Poezja i język w wypowiedziach Kazimierza Brodzińskiego i Leona Borowskiego"¹ (Poetry and Language in the Utterances of Kazimierz Brodziński and Leon Borowski) the author studies the problems of poetic origin of language in general and poetic language in particular, of its spontaneity and individualization, as well as the questions connected with the concept of stages in the development of the language. The reader will also find in this study a discussion of what was conceived as the character of the Polish language and of how this affected postulates concerning the line of the development of Polish poetry.

Different meanings of such contemporary phrases as "philosophical language" and "the philosophical quality of the language," the related problems of the naturalness of linguistic sign, and the question of the importance of the "philosophical language" for the theories of the romantic poetry are the subject of the study entitled "Za co Mochnacki chwalił Jana Nepomucena Kamińskiego"² (What Mochnacki Praised in Jan Nepomucen Kamiński).

In the next essay—"Koncepcja języka w paryskich prelekcjach Mickiewicza" (Conception of Language in Mickiewicz's French

¹ Brodziński was a well-known poet and translator of poetry in the 1820's and 1830's; at the same time both he and Borowski taught literature.

² Maurycy Mochnacki, a man of letters, published in 1830 his *O literaturze polskiej w wieku dziewiętnastym* (*On Polish Literature in the Nineteenth Century*), the first comprehensive manifestation of the romantic beliefs. In the same year, before Mochnacki's work, there appeared two articles by Kamiński, a writer, devoted to the question of the philosophical quality of language.

Lectures) Kopczyńska studies one of the leading motifs of Mickiewicz's lectures in the French Sorbonne, viz. the question of the character and significance of the Slavonic languages. Special attention is paid to Mickiewicz's conception of the Word (*verbum*, French *parole*), which formed the main element of his belief in the organic and creative character of language. The author stresses also the special place which the Polish language occupied in Mickiewicz's conceptions.

The last study of the volume—"Poezja jest sztuką przez język" (Poetry Is Art Through Words)—does not deal with Polish material. The subject of analysis here is Humboldt's definition of poetry, contained in his treatise *Ueber Goethes "Hermann und Dorothea,"* 1798, and the conception of two main varieties of poetry, connected with different ways of conceiving and treating the language by poets.

Sum. by the author

Transl. by *Maria-Bożenna Fedewicz*

Zofia Sinko, *Oświeceni wśród Pól Elizejskich. Rozmowy zmarłych: recepcja – twórczość oryginalna (Dialogues of the Dead in the Polish Age of Enlightenment)*, Ossolineum, Wrocław 1976.

The study deals with the Polish reception of the West-European dialogues of the dead and with works belonging to this genre written in Poland in the second half of the 18th century. The opening chapter gives an outline of the history of the genre in Europe at the end of the 17th and in the 18th century; it also discusses the basic features and formulates the poetics of the dialogue of the dead. Further chapters (II to V) contain a detailed discussion of the Polish translations of the dialogues by B. Fontenelle, F. Fénelon, Voltaire, E. Vattel, G. Lyttelton and a few other unidentified foreign authors. The translations appeared chiefly in the literary and moral periodicals: "Zbiór Różnego Rodzaju Wiadomości z Nauk Wyzwolonych" (1770), "Zabawy Przyjemne i Pożyteczne" (1770–1777), "Monitor" (1765–1785). There were also separate editions in pamphlet form, and an edition of Fénelon's dialogues