

The aim of this thesis is to present the literature of Polish Romanticism as a part of a wider phenomenon that I call "lame" modernity. I use this phrase to describe a certain form of modernity, tied to a specific model of modernization typical for semi-peripheries, and thus developing in a different way than the paradigmatic Western European modernity. I believe that in the Polish culture in the first half of the 19th century we are dealing with an interesting situation: on the one hand, we find many notions and intuitions that can be understood as clearly modern, and on the other hand, those notions and intuitions are inextricably linked with forms of thinking that appear to be anachronistic. This oscillation produces a strange and hybrid cultural paradigm that transcends the simple opposition of the modern and the premodern. Romanticism provides material for the analysis of various kinds of "literary conjectures" related to the situation of „lame” modernity. I am interested in analysing various literary traces of Polish struggles with modernity, happening at the dawn of modernity in Poland. Most of the studies on Polish modernity focus on the literature of the first half of the twentieth century, and thus analyze the literary representation of "mature" modernity, understood to be emerging in Poland with a certain delay in relation to the paradigmatic case of Western Europe. Of course, the delay in economic and social processes, which can be called modernization, is one of the most important ailments of Polish culture and society. However, this delay does not manifest itself as a simple slow-down or merely as a longer road to reach the same goal.

It can be said – paraphrasing Marx – that the history of development repeats itself twice: once as a tragedy, the other time as a farce. The peripheral position in the global economic division of labor and profits – that is, in Immanuel Wallerstein's terminology, the world-system – permanently changes the trajectory of peripheral country's development. This highlights the main paradox of modernization. Economic modernization in the core countries fosters social change, such as a departure from feudalism, urbanization, and the rise of the bourgeoisie, but also forces the peripheral countries to enter the world-system under completely different conditions. Peripheral countries can only become suppliers of cheap raw materials, which causes an increase in slave labor and prolongs domination of feudal elites controlling that labor. A good example of this situation is the case of serfdom in Poland and Russia: along with the economic development of core countries of Western Europe (and its free-labour capitalist economy) the serfdom was getting increasingly harsher. For Poland and Russia, the only possible entry into global economic exchange was as a supplier of cheap grain, and this resulted in the strengthening of feudal relations at the country level; slave labor is the cheapest labor. Serfdom was therefore not a relic of the past, strangely persisting in the semi-peripheries after

it's well-deserved end in Western Europe, but it was something that was somewhat reinvented as a mean to have any participation in the world-system economy. Analogically, slavery in Brazil and in southern states of USA was not the same slavery as premodern slavery. For peripheries entering the modern world-system and global economic exchange meant having to adopt a farsical model of modernization based on coexistence of feudal structures and modern global trade relations.

This socio-economic situation is reflected in the cultural discourses of „lame” modernity typical for peripheral countries. Those countries are not exempted from modernization for a period of time because of their belatedness, but they rather have to suffer a crippled form of modernization from the beginning. This creates cultural discourses that paradoxically combine modern impulses - resulting from participation in the global historical process - with forms of thinking more typical for the feudal times. This situation is not a simple delay of coming of modernity, but a reason for specific and hybridic form of modernity in the peripheral countries.

The crippled or „lame” nature of this modernity does not mean it surrenders and accepts it's inferior status in comparison to it's paradigmatic point of reference. Quite the contrary: "hybrid" and "hubris" have a common, though complex, etymological origin associated with scandal, pride, confusion and abomination that is contrary to the standard order of things. One could say that paradoxically those brazen struggles of historical mongrels and hybrids are the best realizations of the idea of modernity. The idea of modernity implies an active and transformative attitude toward one's present conditions and modernity cannot be understood as something enjoyed without one's effort to actively engage one's conditions. Modernity is not a sinecure or inheritance bestowed by the glorious ancestors, but a constant struggle. The countries of the periphery and the semi-periphery, including Poland, did not remain passive to the prospects of modernity. On the other hand, this crippled model of modernization leaves long-lasting traces that can be briefly called "the tragedy of reason on the periphery". The first half of the nineteenth century is only one of the stages of the long-term tendency of Polish culture and its material base to enter into difficult relations with modernity and modernization, more often than less marked by the problems of delay, a crippled model of development, resentment or a sense of inferiority and the anti-modern reaction resulting from it.

My fundamental research questions are:

how does Romanticism show the particular character of hybridic modernity in Poland?  
How it represents institutions, practices, ideologies and material conditions linked to this

situation? How does the materialistic analysis of Polish hybridic and peripheral modernization shed new light on the ideology and worldview of Polish romantics? How has this situation influenced the emergence or persistence of certain ways of thinking? What phantasms and what discourses present in Polish culture can be explained by this situation? How can we approach this phenomena from the perspective of theory of modernity, even if at first sight we are dealing with non-modern forms of thinking? At the same time, it is a question of how the paradigmatic notions of modern thought were developing in Polish culture sometimes in a paradoxically non-modern way. My research problem is the dialectics of modern and non-modern forms of ideology visible in the literature of Romanticism, analyzed as a result of Polish struggles with modernization processes. It is a question of – to quote Jacques Luc-Nancy and Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe – of history in romanticism, rather than history of romanticism.

The methodology of investigating the problems above must be transdisciplinary. I try to present modernity in relation to what Louis Althusser called *problematique*, i.e. the theoretical-ideological context that is the historical conceptual framework for discussions, texts and discourses. This approach is a way of analyzing certain key problems and concepts that does not focus on constructing a stable and homogeneous definition of the worldview of the epoch, but tries to explain the dialectics of the presence and absence of certain problems and concepts in a specific epoch. „Lame” modernity in literaturę is a complex issue that must be explored through the analysis of the various discourses present in this literature. Those discourses, however, do not have a completely coherent character, and its discontinuities, internal conflicts, cracks and deficiencies reveal their hybridic nature. The study of "literary conjectures" concerning Polish struggles with the modern form is therefore both a critique of ideology, analyzing the discursive attitude of romantic texts to modernization processes, and an attempt to offer an insight into the genealogy of aporias characteristic of Romanticism.

In the first part of the thesis, I try to outline the philosophical context for the concept of modernity. In the second part, I supplement this with a perspective oriented towards the analysis of various modernization models and it's social consequences. In the third part, I present my interpretations of the works of the most important Polish romantics: Mickiewicz, Słowacki and Krasiński.