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Abstract of the doctoral dissertation, entitled: **The Cycle: *Jak bajeczne żurawie (Like fabulous crane birds)* by Jarosław Marek Rymkiewicz in the context of modern interpretative concepts.**

The subject of this dissertation is Jarosław Marek Rymkiewicz's cycle of novels, *Jak bajeczne żurawie*, which includes the following items: *Żmut*, *Bakiet*, *Kilka szczegółów*, *Do Snowia i dalej*, *Głowa owinięta koszulką*, *Adam Mickiewicz odjeżdża na żółtym rowerze*.

Although on many occasions Rymkiewicz in his writing refers to the legend of the life and works of Adam Mickiewicz, the series under analysis is particularly devoted to a dialogue with the Bard. The contemporary poet's intention is to create a total biography of his predecessor. Contrary thereto, Rymkiewicz's cycle has not yet been fully elaborated. This dissertation is aimed at filling this research gap. By focusing on the modifications undergone by a contemporary writer's conversation with a Romantic poet over time in the course of creating a total biography, it was possible to formulate some conclusions concerning the evolution of Rymkiewicz's essay writing and his confrontation with the Romantic tradition.

The introductory notes are devoted to: general reflections on the vitality of the Romantic tradition in literature and criticism in the years when the respective parts of the cycle *Jak bajeczne żurawie (Like fabulous crane birds)* were published; Rymkiewicz's dialogues with traditionally understood Mickiewiczology and the presentation of a selection of writers whose way of reading out the Mickiewiczian legacy is close to that of the poet from Milanówek; deliberations on the genre status of the novels included in the total biography (from the concept of metaliterary essays, through the *silva rerum* to *żmut-rootstock* [**żmut* means *a chaotic swirl of hair, strips or cords*]); analysis and interpretation of the books that constitute introductions to the Mickiewicz cycle - *Aleksander Fredro is in a bad mood*, *Juliusz Słowacki asks about the time*). The biographical interpretation of Rymkiewicz's relationship with the Bard makes use of Harold Bloom's theory of poetic agon. The reading of the series is also situated in the areas of history of literature, cultural anthropology (the turn towards things, the memory turn, the topographical turn) and literary theory (psychoanalysis, hermeneutics, deconstruction, cultural studies, historicism).

The dissertation contains numerous references to other Rymkiewicz's writings — his poetry, novels, plays, critical texts, interviews and speeches. Successive volumes of the cycle

are read in chronological order, according to the dates of publication, but also in the convention of sifting out the various threads of narration from the *żmut- rootstock*.

The main segment of the dissertation consists of five parts. The first chapter of the core text is devoted to the first part of the series *Like Fabulous Crane Birds* - under the title *Żmut*. In it, the analysis of the tangled threads of the narrative is directed towards the characterisation of a non-anthropocentric history that autonomises the concretum. A separate part of the interpretations is devoted to the forgotten stories of Karolina Kowalska, extracted by Rymkiewicz from a footnote, or to the birth of Ewelinka in the life of the Bard. This concept helps to reveal a historical lie that undermines the romantic legend of the Virgin and Gustav, established in the fourth part of *Dziady*. Rymkiewicz completes the image of Maryla by arguing against the Form of romantic love.

The second part of the dissertation is devoted to *Baket* which constitutes a continuation of the themes dissected in the first part. In a mediumistic séance - the Baket of history - Rymkiewicz arranges people, things and places directly or indirectly connected with the Archpoet. Interested in anomalies, he presents a gallery of characters marked by madness. The theme of death - already well established in poetry - appears in the novel. The biography of the Bard, crucial for the whole cycle, in this part (as in the others) is created from additions, and on its margins Rymkiewicz writes an antibiography of Xawera Deybel.

Chapter three is devoted to *Kilka szczegółów (A few details)*. The matter of existence - from which Rymkiewicz cobbles together a narrative - was subjected to interpretation from the angle of the turn towards things, the topographical turn, the turn of memory - present in cultural anthropology. Crucial for this part of the dissertation were the observations concerning the image of the figure of the poviats-based Mickiewicz, fixed in prose and poetry, and the analysis of Rymkiewicz's autothematic decalogue, which is the sum of his methodological writing programme, formulated with Mickiewicz on the basis of the project of agon.

Chapter four of the dissertation concerns *Do Snowia i dalej - To Snowie and Beyond*. In this part of the series, a story of Michał Wereszczak and Ludwik Spitznagel - as two opposing models of Romantic existence - is presented in a contrasting way. An attempt to capture the Heideggerian clearances in the narrative is intertwined with a reinterpretation of Mickiewicz's ballads. The chapter concludes with observations on the forms of correspondence between literature, painting and music in essayistic arguments.

The last chapter of the main part of the dissertation is devoted to the volumes *Głowa owinięta koszulką (A head wrapped in a shirt)* and *Adam Mickiewicz odjeżdża na żółtym rowerze (Adam Mickiewicz rides off on a yellow bike)*. In this chapter, the prologue to reflections is an

analysis and interpretation of one of Rymkiewicz's key political poems, in which an intertextual reference to the works of the Archpoet has not been deciphered correctly. Rymkiewicz clearly organizes his reflections. Although he multiplies appendixes and additions, he seeks synthesizing thematic fields in this stirred *źmut*; he clearly articulates the philosophical patronage of Nietzsche and Heidegger and makes an effort to tame the death of the Archpoet. The father-precursor returns in a dream to his son-ephebe in the last of Bloom's revisionary efforts - *apophrades*.

The concluding remarks present in a nutshell the importance of Rymkiewicz's cycle *Jak bajeczne żurawie* (*Like fabulous crane birds*) for later generations of writers. The key dialogue between the contemporary poet and the Mickiewiczian tradition, presented in the course of the dissertation, has been shown by taking into account its evolutionary character, resonating into other areas of Rymkiewicz's writing. The poet from Milanówek wrestles with the Bard until the end of his life, creating his personal autobiography on the basis of his total biography. The agon of father and son is a prerequisite for establishing the identity of the contemporary writer.

Keywords: essay, biography, poetic agon, Romanticism, Archpoet