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“Turn back the course of a river / the course of life / that is my mission” On the poems by Wincenty Róžański

For Mateusz, on his twentieth birthday

Separate poet. *Ante scriptum*

Wincenty Róžański was attached to two places in Greater Poland: Mosina, where he was born in 1938, and Poznań, where he spent most of his life. It was in the latter that he died in 2009, and it was there, in the Miłostowocemetery, that he was buried. He fit the local art community well, which was visible in the number of works, not only literary, dedicated to him.

Witek's legend was created by Edward Stachura when he made Róžański the protagonist of his song *Piosenka do Potęgowej*, his novel *Cała jaskrawość* and his most famous (celebrated with the Stanisław Piętań Award) 1968 narrative poem entitled *Po ogrodzie niech hula szarańcza*. Furthermore, it was Stachura who introduced Róžański into the world of poetry as an independent and, if you will, genuine artist. The exceptional original works of the Poznań-based poet were highly regarded by other poets and literary critics, yet he never managed to become a household name, like his famous colleagues managed to do, even though he had published over twenty widely-discussed collections, and received a dozen or so awards, the most valuable of which must have been Pierścień Mędrców Betlejemskich (the Wise Men's Ring) he received together with Stefan Stuligrosz in 2005 from Archbishop Stanisław Gądecki, Poznań metropolitan.

His surviving manuscripts of poems, letters, and other documents currently constitute part of the collection of the Biblioteka Raczyńskich in Poznań. He

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even received a meticulous entry in the *Katalog rękopisów Ośrodka Dokumentacji Wielkopolskiego Środowiska Literackiego*¹ (Catalogue of manuscripts of the Greater Poland Literary Community Documentation Centre), which was promoted during the exhibition entitled “*Dam wam więcej, dam czego – niewypowiedzianego*”. *Wokół archiwaliów Wincentego Różańskiego*. As was advertised in a folder issued for that occasion:

The exhibition is an invitation for a journey through the world of poetry rough drafts, which recorded the texts as they were taking shape, usually unfinished, though, thus promising an unlimited number of possible readings. The polyphony of the texts preserved in the original comes into dialogue with the multi-layer story on the poet’s existence in the world, captured in the sheets of the extensive correspondence presented at the exhibition².

Data on the contents of Różański’s works were catalogued by Regina Kurewicz and Alicja Przybyszewska, recorded under ref. nos. DL/482 to DL/509. They consist of hundreds of documents given to library collections by Małgorzata Kasztelan-Różańska, the poet’s wife, and his friends. Poetic works (over 1,500 items) occupy the main place in the multitude of the surviving documents, which were preserved in manuscript or typescript form, or which were printed in poetry collections or literary journals, and also works which had never seen the light of day.

The material from Wincenty Różański, his poems in particular, that were collected, carefully organised and prepared for display in Biblioteka Raczyńskich, offer a valuable resource for research in editing, manuscript writing, textual studies, or even philological studies, in particular in post-modern times, when the technique of digital recording has eliminated the ability to trace consecutive stages in the creation of a work of literature. All variants, palimpsests, outlines, extracts, sketches, and rough drafts vanish with a single stroke of *delete*, and what is preserved is usually a single creation – the final one (as the author intended it). The rest is purged from the memory banks. This removes any traces of the journey of a text that ends in the final form. The story of the “act of human creation” is wiped clean. Just think about cases when a long-lost rough draft version of a work proves much more interesting than the text that had been printed. That was the case with

1 *Katalog rękopisów Ośrodka Dokumentacji Wielkopolskiego Środowiska Literackiego*, vol. 4, R. Kurewicz and A. Przybyszewska (eds.), Biblioteka Raczyńskich, Poznań 2016, ref. DL/408 – DL/511.

2 „*Dam wam więcej, dam czego – niewypowiedzianego*”. *Wokół archiwaliów Wincentego Różańskiego* [exhibition folder], design, production and layout Z. Cyplik-Olejniczak, technical supervision R. Kurewicz and A. Przybyszewska, photographs Z. Cyplik-Olejniczak et al., Dom Literatury Raczyńskich, 23 November 2016 – 15 February 2017. [Unless specified otherwise, English version translated from Polish]

Ziemiaństwo polskie, which Kajetan Koźmian had been developing for nearly thirty years until he finally decided to publish it in 1839³. Having read the published fragments of the narrative poem, Mickiewicz concluded in *Forefathers' Eve Part III* that it was "a thousand lines on planting peas."⁴ But the original version released in 2000 by Piotr Żbikowski and myself⁵, which Mickiewicz could not have known, which, against the recommendations of classicists, was not polished or refined, was lively and energetic, the qualities which the narrative poem lacked once subjected to an extensive and excessive processing.

The essence of textual studies is to reconstruct the sequence of a creative process on the basis of appropriate documents: from the formation of the most primary idea to the final strokes of the pen or the final character struck on the typewriter. Wincenty Róžański proved an exceptionally generous writer in that respect, leaving behind various versions of his works: plans, sketches, partial editions, variant editions, intermediate editions, primary rough draft forms, mutations, manuscript rough drafts, typescript rough drafts, and final versions (though rarely final, i.e. canonical). The extent of textual forms of a single work surviving in his collections is truly astounding. It enables one not only to trace the transformation of an idea into a work of literature, but also to view Róžański's output, which had previously been treated selectively, in its entirety, while interpretative remarks related to it had been usually formulated in reference to published works. Such a research inclination, considering genetic criticism, has recently been undertaken by Alicja Przybyszewska⁶.

It is worth remembering that the Biblioteka Raczyńskich mainly holds Róžański's works from the final twenty years of his life, and still not all from that period as Róžański used to gift various persons with his poems. Additionally, he sent collections of poems he had prepared to publishers, some of which have never been published. Two years ago, I received from Zbigniew Rutkowski one such collection, a 45-page copy with three letters (August and September 2002) addressed to the Wers publishing house in Koziegłowy near Poznań with 42 poems, which

3 K. Koźmian, *Ziemiaństwo polskie. Poema w czterech pieśniach*, published by Zygmunt Schletter, Wrocław 1839.

4 A. Mickiewicz, *Dziady część III*, in: *Poezje Adama Mickiewicza*, vol. 4, Paryż 1832, p. 126, sc. 7: *A Warsaw salon*. [General to Literatus]. Vide A. Witkowska, "Tysiąc wierszy o sadzeniu grochu"..., in: *Studia z teorii i historii poezji*, M. Głowiński (ed.), 2nd edition, Wrocław-Warsaw-Krakow 1970, IBL PAN; *Z Dziejów Form Artystycznych w Literaturze Polskiej*, vol. 20, pp. 51-70.

5 K. Koźmian, *Ziemiaństwo polskie. Rękopiśmienna wersja poematu w pięciu pieśniach*, edited and with a history of literature commentary by P. Żbikowski, text collation, factual, philological and historical clarifications by M. Nalepa, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Collegium Columbinum, Krakow 2000.

6 A. Przybyszewska, "Archiwum literackie Wincentego Róžańskiego w świetle założeń krytyki genetycznej" *Biblioteka* 2017, issue 21 (30), pp. 101-122.

were supposed to be included in the intended publication. Just as a reminder, Wers published a collection of poems and drawings by Róžański in 1998 entitled *Ratujcie serca nasze* (vol. 5 of the poetic collection of Wojciech Bąk, edited by Jerzy Szatkowski, introduction Dariusz Tomasz Lebioda) and a collection prepared personally by the poet entitled *Została pusta karta dań tego świata* (Poznań 1998, vol. 3 of the collection of Okolica Poetów). The title of the first project most probably referred to the well-known ballad *Spasitie naszi duszi* by Vladimir Semyonovich Vysotsky.

The typescript, which is currently in my possession, is untidy, and it includes numerous hand-written, sometimes illegible corrections. Almost every poem includes the poet's name and surname and his address of residence (60–122 Poznań, Ostrobramska 25 B). The majority also include the date when it was recorded, usually the day, month and year. Some, but not all, are listed in the *Katalog rękopisów Ośrodka Dokumentacji Wielkopolskiego Środowiska Literackiego*. A few have never been printed. Love is the key motif in the poems, both *Amor sacer* and *Amor profanum*. Then, there are poems with a surrealist and existential inclination. The latter assumed a Franciscan and “Stachura” style. Furthermore, the issue of internal experiences plays a significant role in the unpublished collection. A mark of Róžański's existential inspirations was mainly the metaphor of the moment, with its best known use in “Bądź pozdrowiona chwilo...” (Praise, thee, moment...), which clearly was a polemic for both Faust's “Beautiful moment, do not pass away!”, and the message of the song *Naiwne pytania* by Ryszard Riedl “W życiu piękne są tylko chwile” (Only moments are beautiful in life), though that is a topic for a separate discussion.

Two mothers. The Mickiewicz paradigm

In the Invocation to *Sir Thaddeusz* Adam Mickiewicz referred to two mothers: The Holy Virgin Mary, as depicted in the miraculous versions of the painting from the Gate of Dawn, Jasna Góra and Nowogród, and his mother Barbara of the Majewskis. To the latter her son “offered under the care” of the Mother of God after he fell out of the window, and supposedly only prayers in a side chapel of the parish church in Nowogród restored his consciousness and health. Mickiewicz's childhood memories of motherhood mainly centred around caring for a person. Wincenty Róžański adopted the paradigm, dividing it into many voices in his poems, which together could form a poetic collection.

For many years he lived in a street whose patron was the Virgin Mary of the Gate of Dawn (Ostrobramska St., from Ostra Brama, the Gate of Dawn in English), which he stressed many times, e.g. when inscribing his address underneath his poems. Due to his illness, he required particular care, especially during relapses. Edward Stachura in his narrative poem from the late-1970s indicated that he sometimes witnessed *Witek's* behaviour, with which he did not seem to cope well.

In a fragment devoted to their asceticism, which manifested in giving everything away, which strengthened the poets' mutual bond resulting in their friendship, he directed the following apostrophe to his colleague:

ty nawet rozum swój rozdałeś
rozzuciłeś bujnie
jak ostatni grosz

i teraz opiekować mi się tobą
w przenajświętszej chorobie⁷

you even gave away your mind
threw it lavishly
like the last penny

and now I need to care for you
in your holly sickness

It is possible that by giving the poem the title of *Po ogrodzie niech hula szarańcza* (May locust rage around the garden), Stachura referred to Różański's schizophrenia. Can the beautiful garden of a human mind be saved from a locust invasion?

In the most difficult of times, the poet was cared after by his closest relatives, his sisters and brothers, but most of all by his mother Józefa, and after her death his wife Małgorzata, to whom Różański devoted most of his poems in the final decade of his life. He mentioned his family relations in many poems ("Przyszpiliłem na grobie mych rodziców...", "Rodzina jak stos...", "Tyle już cierpień tyle trosk/ że Bogu chyba źle... *Rodzicom*", "Miałem tyle lat przed sobą... *Rodzicom*", "Jak ty teraz wyglądasz ojczyste...", "Niedaleko twego grobu ojczyste...", "Ojciec leży jego order...", "Ty ojczyste jednoręki coś kłął jak szewc...", *Pożegnanie ojca powstańca*, "A ona zziębła sina... *Babci Konstancji Frąckowiak*", "Gdzie jesteś Hieronimie? Bracie?... ", "Gdzie jesteś wujku Władziu...", "Nie zna mnie nikt ni bracia ni żona...")⁸.

Różański also expected help when he was relapsing. He was not a self-reliant person. Even mundane everyday tasks, e.g. brewing a cup of tea, posed a problem for him. And he did receive help.

His gratitude resonated in many poems, particularly in those devoted to his mother Józefa, the Virgin Mary, and the notion of maternity in general. The

7 E. Stachura, *Poezja i proza*, vol. 1: *Wiersze, poematy, piosenki, przekłady*, Z. Feddecki (ed.), Czytelnik, Warsaw 1984, p. 146.

8 Throughout the article I quote titles after: *Katalog rękopisów Ośrodka Dokumentacji Wielkopolskiego Środowiska Literackiego*, vol. 4.

portfolio of Różański's output prepared by Biblioteka Raczyńskich enables one to easily find those poems dedicated to his biological mother ("Ja Ciebie Matko szukam w chmurze...", "Matka daje życie/ powinna je odbierać...", "Matka moja mówi... *Nikosowi Chadzinikolau*", "Matka mówi/ wróciłeś z urlopu żywy...", "Matka wyrosła jak kalina...", "Matki zawsze dają coś na drogę...", "Matka polska moja mamó", "Jakże dziś ładnie matko opowiadasz", *Matka*: "Naprzeciw sztyld i góra śmieci...", "Straciłem Cię z oczu matko oniemiała...", "Tęsknię za Tobą matko kochana..."). All those poems resonated with Mickiewicz's primary trust, which transcended the limits of biological bounds, and elevated maternity, thus the surprising and somewhat blasphemous prayer to Józefa who died in 1994: "Matko nieżyjąca wysłuchaj mnie w niebie..." (My dead mother hear me in heavens). Often in difficult moments Józefa, much like Barbara Mickiewiczowa, used the rosary, litany, and matins to ask for her son's health, which translated into his poetic prayer to the Mother of all mothers elevated in Jasna Góra and the Gate of Dawn ("Chroń mnie Matko Boża/ od szpitalnych i więziennych bram...", "Chroń mnie Matko Boża...", "Matko Boska Bolesciwa/ topazie cenny...", "Chwała Pani Święta...", "Chwała Tobie Pani zaklęta...", "Gwiazdo Święta Wspaniała...", "Jasno Góro! Niebieska Matko!...", "Matko Boska Częstochowska...", "Matko Boża z Synowca...", "Módl się za nami Czarna Pani...", "Święta Mario módl się za nami...", "Ty co na Jasnej stoisz Górze...", "Zdrowaś Mario łaskiś pełna...", "O łaskawa Pani/ co trwasz w twierdzy/ na Jasnej Górze...", "O Pani łaskawa/ co w Ostrej świecisz Bramie...", "Zdrowaś Mario, kwitnie las...").

Significantly enough, it was in the Virgin Mary that Różański sought poetic inspiration, turning away from Euterpe and other classical muses, from their patron Apollo, and even depriving Christ of the privilege. He used to call her Literary Virgin Mary, adding that he owed her his prime naivety, which was why "Kiedy się modli to modli się jak dziecko..." (When he prayed, he prayed like a child...), and he directed the confession to Władysław Broniewski, an atheist.

He merged the two patrons of his frailty in the beautiful poem entitled *Dwie matki*, offering different portraits of maternity (just like *Bogurodzica* and *Lament świętokrzyski* in the Middle Ages) – of the "lady beautiful and strong" and the mother with varicose veins for whom "he picked coltsfeet to alleviate her pain."

In an interview of 15 August 1998 by Andrzej Sikorski, published in the *Okołica Poetów* quarterly,⁹ Różański claimed that he owed his poetic initiation to his mother, just like her spiritual support and physical aid. "Stachura prepared me professionally. My mother spiritually. Now, years later, I can see that her care for me, her respect, goodness, and beauty defined my poetic backbone."

The need for care had in Różański's case various names, applying not only to everyday matters, but also, or maybe mainly, to his spiritual condition: rescue, salvation,

9 Issue 1 [43], Wydawnictwo Wers. Różański was one of the journal's editors.

mercy, compassion, pity, redemption ("Coraz częściej zwracam się do Boga o łaskę i wyrozumiałość, bo nagrzeszyłem w życiu" (More and more often I ask God for grace and forbearance, because I have sinned much in my life)). He directed such prayers to Christ and his Father (e.g. "Pomóż mi Chrystusie...", "Boże wielki miłosierny? Ratuj mnie od miłości śmiertelnej...", "Ty mnie ocal Boże na tej równinie...", "Boże, otul mnie płaszczem ciepłym...", "Dziś błagam Cię Boże/ nie dodawaj ognia...", "Gromowładny Stwórco okaż mi swą litość...", "Jaką mi raczysz łaskę dać Panie...", "Ty mi daj Panie/ łaskę i ocalenie...", "Ocal mnie Boże, kiedy budzę się o świcie...", "Zgaś moje pożądanie Panie/ ku rzeczom ziemskim i doczesnym...", "błagam Ciebie Boże, chroń mnie...", "Błagam Cię Ojczy chroń mnie...", "Daj mi Panie łaskę na skonanie w Tobie...", "Modlę się do Boga by mnie usynowił...", "Miłosierdzie Boże/ czekam na Twoją opiekę...", "Miłosierdzie Boże/ świec z góry w tej norze...", "Pokaż mi palcem Boże..."), and a whole host of saints: St. *Vincent de Paul*, St. *Giles*, St. *Joseph*, St. *Faustyna Kowalska*, St. *John of Nepomuk*, St. *Anthony of Padua* – patrons of children, the poor, travellers, lost items, and lost persons, St. *Camillus de Lellis* – patron of the ill, the hurting and the dying, St. *Jude the Apostle* – patron of lost causes, St. *Rita of Cascia* and St. *Expeditus* – patrons of the same frailties. He prayed to angels ("Szybuj nad nami Aniele ze skrzydłami...", "Przybył do mnie Anioł Rafał ze steranymi skrzydłami...", "Daleko za mną stada aniołów...", *Słów kilka o Aniołach*, "W labiryncie szukam od lat twego przyjscia Aniele...") and to sisters of mercy ("Przystępuję do ciebie siostrzo miłosierna...", "Otul mi twarz siostrzo miłosierdzia...", "Na wysokościach siostry miłosierne..."). He directed separate poems to Popes John XXIII and John Paul II, sometimes adding a tint of his peculiar humour, e.g.

Chciałem napisać coś o papieżu
z pochyloną głową
ale Gosia zmoczyła mi łeb nad sobą
popłynęła do przodu
robiąc znak krzyża na wodzie¹⁰

I wanted to write something about the pope
with my head bent down
but Gosia watered my head above
flowing forwards
making the sign of the cross on the water

In a poem with the incipit "Nienawidzę kobiet...", so surprising when considering a poet who constantly sent out signals about his need for love, he put

¹⁰ Typescript (unnumbered) of a collection prepared by Róžański and sent to Wydawnictwo Wers in 2002; property of Z. Rutkowski. I quote other fragments of his poems from the same source.

a washwoman from Mosina he remembered since his childhood in the same line as St. Faustyna and St. Catherine of Genoa, and implicitly also as his mother Józefa. The sanctity of both women remained unnoticed in their earthly lives, only a few saw it. She was not loud nor demanding, she was not brought to the altars. Little can be said about her, as there were no biographical or hagiographical gimmicks. The poet summarised her in one sentence, a few lines.

In particular, the tone of the prayer for metaphysical care, spiritual support, protection from the dangers of *psychomachia*, and the dark recesses of life resonates in a poem entitled “O Aniołowie! O Trony!..” The “unsightly” poet offered love in exchange for protection. That guarantees his personal security. The same love can change an anonymous being (a woman just like many others) into a light expressive figure, the refuge for a poet’s identity. But love is also a requirement for poetic creation (Renaissance Neoplatonists had already indicated that). The prayer apostrophe thus transforms into a self-referential reflection:

O Aniołowie! O Trony!
 stojący najbliżej Boga,
 chronście mnie i nie dawajcie
 dla łotra i Stawroga.
 Bądźcie mi bliżej Trony,
 na ucho mówcie tajemnice,
 czy ja jestem skończony,
 gdy szpetne me oblicze
 z miłości chce stworzyć postać
 wybranki, co pławi się w słońcu.
 Z miłości do Boga w końcu
 piszę poemat i kończę.

Oh, Angels! Oh, Thrones!
 standing closest to God,
 protect me and do not give
 for the rogue and Stavrog.
 Be closer to me, oh Thrones,
 whisper secrets to me,
 whether I am finished,
 when my unsightly face
 from love desires to create the figure
 of my beloved, bathing in sunlight.
 For the love of God eventually
 I am writing the poem and I’m done.

In this context, the thesis on the anxiety-related conditions of Różański's output seems absolutely justified in relation to the poet's religiousness and his personal life¹¹. What is also visible is the desire for care and rescue present in the paraphrases of church prayers and religious songs. Różański sealed them with his metaphysical experiences, his personality and spirituality, similar to what Orcio did in *Nieboska komedia* emulating the Lord's Prayer. That device enabled him to personalise the content and the form of generally known collective acts of speech. He confessed before God: "I pray in my own words to You..."

The extent of various prayer-based references in the poet's works is considerable and diverse, while multiple amplifications often apply to the same text. Considering the intertextuality markers proposed by Henryk Markiewicz¹², one could posit they were realised fully in Różański's religious output. Those relations were signalled by: indications of the prototype already in the incipit, the inclusion of quotations, and references to their sources within works. Let me quote several such instances: "Wierzę w Ciebie Boże żywy/ ja już prawie jestem nieżywy..." (>*Act of faith*), "Wierzę w Ciebie Boże żywy/ jedyny prawdziwy..." (>*Act of faith*), "Święty Boże święty a nieśmiertelny/ pozapiątkowy Boże niedzielny..." (>*Supplications*), "Święty Boże Święty a Nieśmiertelny/ w zaułkach kościoła śmiertelny..." (>*Supplications*), "Zlituj się zlituj Panie..." (>*Kyrie eleison* liturgical acclamation), „Baranku Boży przy mnie stój..." (> *Agnus Dei* liturgical acclamation and *Prayer to the Guardian Angel*), "Aniele Stróżu mój..." (>*Prayer to the Guardian Angel*), "Bądź pochwalony Jezu Chryste..." (> *Laudetur Jesus Christus* greeting), "Niech będzie pochwalony..." (>*Laudetur Jesus Christus* greeting), "Boże, ach Boże cóżem Ci uczynił/ czymże Cię zasmucił, czymże Ci zawinił..." (>*Ludu, mój ludu* – an improperium sung in the Catholic Church during the Good Friday liturgy), "Boże mój Boże cóżem Ci uczynił/ krzyż niosę i torbę tułacza..." (>*Ludu, mój ludu* – an improperium sung in the Catholic Church during the Good Friday liturgy), "Wielbi dusza moja Pana..." (>*Magnificat*), "Święta Maryjo, módl się za nami..." (>the "Hail Mary" prayer), "Zdrowaś Maryjo łaskiś pełna..." (>the "Hail Mary" prayer), "Gorzkie żale przybywajcie..." (>*Call – for Lenten Lamentations*), "Gorzkie żale pomykajcie/ na mej duszy łez otarcie..." (>*Call – for Lenten Lamentations*), "Boże odpuść im bo nie wiedzą co czynią..." (>Christ's final words: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do", Łuke 23: 33–34), "Czego chcesz od nas Panie..." (>Jan Kochanowski, *Pieśń XXV z Ksiąg wtórych*, also referred to as the *Hymn "Czego chcesz od nas, Panie..."*), "Jeszcze do Ciebie kiedyś powrócę/ jeszcze Cię kiedyś zasmucę/ jeszcze do Ciebie wrócę Chrystusie..." (>Julian Tuwim, *Chrystusie*, also a song), "Jeszcze do Ciebie kiedyś powrócę/ jeszcze Cię kiedyś zasmucę/ pod pióra

11 Vide, e.g. W Setlak, "Łęk oswojony", in: M. Nalepa, W. Setlak, „Syn bogini”. Wincenty „Witek” Różański, Wydawnictwo Edytorial, Poznań 2015, pp. 26–35.

12 H. Markiewicz, "Odmiany intertekstualności", *Ruch Literacki* 1988, issue 4/5, pp. 245–263.

Twoje bezpieczne...”(Julian Tuwim, *Chrystusie*, also a song), “Jeszcze do Ciebie kiedyś powrócę/ jeszcze Cię kiedyś zasmucę/ zostawię swój ślad na obrusie...” (Julian Tuwim, *Chrystusie*, also a song), „Oto zbliżam się do Ciebie Panie...” (song “Zbliżam się w pokorze i niskości swej...”), “Przyjdź Duchu Święty/ miłością napełnij mnie...” (>*Hymn do Ducha Świętego* and song “Przyjdź, Duchu Święty, ja pragnę...”), “Przyjdź Duchu Święty/ i dalej nie pamiętam...” (>*Hymn do Ducha Świętego*), “Gwiazdo Święta Wspaniała...” (>song *Gwiazdo śliczna, wspaniała*), “Z tej biednej ziemi...” (>song *Z tej biednej ziemi*), “Ojczy z niebios/ Boże Panie/ co mi dasz na pożegnanie...” (>song *Ojczy z niebios*), “Ojczy z niebios/ Boże Panie/ daj mi łaskę...” (>song *Ojczy z niebios*).

He stressed that he owed his passion for religious songs to his mother Józefa, who when she was young was a member of the parish recitation group and the Young Polish Female choir, and to Konstancja Frąckowiak, his grandmother, who would sing church songs for hours, especially when performing house chores.

“And only death knows what we are”. Proof of presence

The proofs of presence explicated in Wincenty Różański’s poems are very symptomatic. The “jeszcze” (still) particle is intended to prove an entity, though it is uncertain, though it may surprise and astonish. “Jeszcze jestem” (I am still) is as if it has existence against habits or determining facts. It implies the thought: “he should be no more.” Here are a few such incipits: “jeszcze żyję jeszcze/ powiekę/ podnoszę powoli...”, “Jeszcze żyję, jeszcze mi szumi rzeka moja...”, “jeszcze nie padłem, jeszcze żyję...” Sometimes Różański connected that presence confirmed by words with the process of creating poetry, indicating the role literature played in his life (“jeszcze nie upadłem/ jeszcze pióro me nie wypadło z rąk...”, “jeszcze mi mało/ jeszcze piszę wiersze...”)

“Jeszcze żyję”, “jeszcze piszę” – “I am still alive” and “I am still writing” are synonymous in Różański’s works (“Będę pisał, aż ręka uschnie...”) just like in Stachura’s works. In fact, he might have adopted the stylistics of presence and writing on one’s life after his literary patron. Consider Stachura’s story entitled “Czysty opis” from the *Falując na wietrze* collection, in which the narrator makes a summary of his life only to conclude it is a proof of persistence against all odds:

Now I am tired. Very tired. As much as one can be. Sometimes I feel like I’m already going to die, as if I’m already in the garden and looking for my catch. But apparently still not. – Present – like you would respond to your teacher doing the roster. Present. Still I am present. Still I am alive. Just as I know how to live. Just as I love living. From the bottom of my heart, with all my will. Hard. Completely, without any illusions, tricks or masks [...] So I am alive still. I trying to make ends meet.

I will not let myself be brought down. I was already chewing the rosin, I gobbled grass, I bit the earth, when later it will already be too late¹³. [emphasis by MN]

In the quoted fragment, apart from the *still* (jeszcze) particle, the particle and the preposition *already* (już), echoed like a mantra, is also particularly preferred by Wincenty Różański, though with more variation than in the case of Stachura. "Już" (already) is sometimes an isolation mark – separating that which was from that which is; also, a mark of ending – introduced or announced, of lostness, exhaustion ("Już minęły lata gniewu..."; "Stało się już cicho trzeba plewić ogród..."; "Już ogród zarósł/ już liście spadły..."; "Już ogród zarósł ninie..."; "Nie cierpię już bo znam ścieżkę..."; "Miłości moja już skończona..."), loss of poetic impetus ("Coraz mniej już mogę pisać..."; "Już nic nie napiszę prócz paru podań..."; "Nie mówię już więcej o Twej boskości Chryste..."; "już się zginam ledwo trzymam kroku/ może już po mnie w tym nowym roku..."), loss of vitality ("Już mnie nie cieszą kobiece ciała..."; "Już sprzykrzyło mi się życie..."; "już mi niepotrzebna/ żadna encyklopedia...")

In a "poetic crumb" Różański wrote about his own "post-existence". The motif of the intimate *post mortem* belongs to the array of catastrophic poetry, particularly resonating among poets with schizophrenic tendencies (take Książnin or Hölderlin for example, the latter of whom Różański mentioned in his poems). However, that was a catastrophism of transition, not of the end, or, in other words, a "catastrophism of salvation" (rescuing). Specialists in the matter emphasise his obsessive set of themes, where some of the more significant were the motifs of the night, heaviness, negation of the "I" and existence, *etc.* (in Różański's case: "Już nic niemoje..."; "Już niedaleko do nocy..."; "Już noc bardzo długa noc..."; "Już noc, już długa noc..."; "Już po mnie już nic mnie..."; "Już się zmierzcha..."; "Już późno/ nic nie wystoję..."; "Już się kończy co się kończyć miało...")

I once posited that Różański avoided the topic of dying¹⁴, and that he was writing a funeral elegy for after he passed, though he also stated quite clearly that "it is the worst to write about your own death." To prove that significant tendency, let me quote several incipits of his poems listed in the catalogue of Biblioteka Raczyńskich ("Już się potoczyło co potoczyć się miało", "Wierzę w Ciebie Boże żywy/ ja już prawie jestem nieżywy..."; "Już czas odejść w mary złe..."; "Było tak, że mnie nie było..."; "Na ostatnie pożegnanie..."; "Na me ostatnie pożegnanie..."; "Na stos idę z wielkim poruszeniem..."; "Nie kopcie dla mnie dołu ludzie cmentarni..."; "Dogasają resztki życia..."; "Kto zapłacze nad moim grobem?..."; "Otul ma ziemio martwego syna..."; "Poznałem nieco tajemnicę śmierci..."; "Żegnaj się z tobą świecie jedyny..."; "nad wczesnym grobem ja..."; "Żyłem Pani tak jak mi

¹³ E. Stachura, *Poezja i proza*, vol. 2: *Opowiadania*, H. Bereza (ed.), Czytelnik, Warsaw 1984 [short story "Czysty opis"], p. 246.

¹⁴ Vide M. Nalepa, W. Setlak, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

było sądzone...”, “Gdy już mnie nic nie będzie...”) Furthermore, Różański’s output includes intentional poems, poems with a request or a prayer for the end of earthly matters (“Spróbuj mi umrzeć serce...”, “Sprowadź Boże śmierć...”, “Ty mi daj Panie koniec bez znaczenia...”, “Ty co trwasz nieskończenie ja się z Tobą zamienię na mieszkanie...”, “Ty mi racz dać Panie/ wieczne spoczywanie...”)

The poem “Nie rozpaczaj Małgosiu...” carries a particular strength of poetic reflection on one’s own death, combining a funeral *comploratio* with a confession of love. The coming dusk constitutes the end grasped no longer as something from beyond the edge of “earthliness”:

ja wkrótce umrę
zanim listowie
zaszumi dumnie
już po mnie już po mnie
wspomnij te wieczory szalone
nasze rozmowy dumne
już po mnie już po mnie

I will die soon
before leaves
rustle proudly
I’m done I’m done
remember those wild nights
our proud talks
I’m done I’m done

Many incipits of Różański’s works include the verb form of “jestem” (I am), expressed directly or implicitly in a sentence ellipsis. Of course, it has a questioning supposition: *Kim jestem? (Who am I?)*. Answers to it include a clear tendency to belittle, marginalise, or even despise oneself, but also to disperse the own *I*. All those reflections resonate in the epistemic lostness, unawareness, never-ending search for meaning (“Bóg jest we mnie, choć jestem pyłkiem...”, “Jestem pyłkiem więc czy Bóg może mnie zmieścić w sobie/ jestem pyłkiem czy Bóg może mieścić się we mnie...”, “Jestem skromnym czyścibutem na rogu pamięci wielu...”, “Jestem przechodniem na tym ciemnym świecie...”, “Pokraka jestem i monster zasnuty, torbiel, poeta...”, “Ja Hiobem Panie/ odebrałeś mi wiarę w przyszłość...”, “Ja podwórkowy papież...”, “Jestem poetą ulicznikiem...”, “Jestem raczej taki poeta z przedmieścia...”, “Ja przeniewierca u schyłku”, “mój talent/ hardy mieści się na krześle.”)

Różański’s considerations of “himself” had to include the topic of illness. He referred to it directly as madness (and using related words) or implied it through the stylistics of natural phenomena and the laws of nature (“Jestem pacjentem tego świa-

ta...”, “Obłąd mnie dotyka...”, “Przebyłem noc właśnie...”, “Pomotało się wszystko...”, “Wszystko jest snem wariata śnionym...”, “Pomyliłem noc właśnie...”, “Poplątały się śniegi deszcze...”, “Dość cierpienia, już chciałbym pisać dalej...”, “Kiedy ja się uspokoję/ niespokojne serce moje/ ginę, wyję, konam skrycie...”, “Noc zamyka mnie do Aresztu...”, “Lekcja ciemności skończona...”, “Przebyłem noc właśnie...”, “W rozpaczę jestem na dnie...”, “Wszystko zamotane nicią czarną...”)

The previously unpublished *Mój wiersz*, written in the Poznań city square in midday, includes this self-referential remark, a confession, if you will:

W fiole pisałem te wiersze cierpliwie i długo
na ławce, trzy tygodnie – czterowiersz.

In craze I wrote these poems patiently and long
on a bench, three weeks – a quatrain.

The question included after it: “Can you depart further from yourself?” clearly refers to Stachura’s remarks on the narrative poem *Po ogrodzie niech hula szarańcza* and the *Pogodzić się ze światem* journal.

The world reconstructed through sickness, and the related solitude were thoughts which accompanied the poet in the poems: “koczownicy koczują w blasku...” and “patrzę na swoją twarz...”:

Let me quote two fragments:

Głowa rozpadnie się na kawałki jak dzban.

na krześle siedzę sam ze sobą
ze zdrowiem głupią chorobą

Head will break into pieces like a jar.

I am sitting on a chair with myself
in good health stupid sickness

Finally, in a poem beginning with: “Ty jesteś mój los i tęsknota...”, there appear motifs of saint madmen: God’s and man’s *Fool for God*.

“I am a passer-by in this dark world.” Poznań’s strider and Mosina’s vagrant

A ramble is a type of journey without a destination. Yet it is difficult to apply this version of *homo viator* either to Stachura or Róžański. Even if the former never had a predetermined goal, his motions through space were justified by the need

to “breath poetry in” and stimulate his thoughts. To draw poetry into his lungs Różański did something simpler: he opened the window in his flat in Górczyn (with a “view from the window where time billowed unknown.”) In fact, he himself admitted: “I cannot write from nothing...” However, he tried to avoid pointless and senseless strolling, explaining, for example, in a poem entitled *Wędrowanie* that he left home to find THAT THING. Only having found THAT THING, did he make it concrete. In the discussed work, that thing was a double kiss: by an older actress and an unnamed lover.

Różański had never written so often about Poznań as in the unpublished collection sent in 2002 to the Wers publishing house, though, of course, he had devoted to the city individual poems scattered through journals, collections and manuscripts kept in the collections of Biblioteka Raczyńskich (“Brudna noc za miastem...”, “Do-branoc ulico poznańska...”, “Pod krzyżem na os. Lecha w Poznaniu...”, “W przemykach miasta cień...”, “Spotkałem jadąc w autobusie pielęgniarza...”, “Na Noskowskiego 24 jest siedziba ZLP...”, “Na rynku szynkwas...”, *Życie ponad stan*: “Dziś, tj. 25 kwietnia 2002 r., poszedłem do kościoła...”, “Leciwa pani opowiada w tramwaju...”, “Leżą kości powstańców w ziemi...”, “Nad ranem karmię gołębie...”, “Lustra, poznańskie lustra/ jak Zaratustra, tu się wtulić na zawsze...”, „Lustra, poznańskie lustra/ nic po was w tej norze...”, “Lustra poznańskie lustra/ stojące na mrozie/ wskażcie mi drogę przed siebie...”, “O czym tu dumać na górczyńskim bruku...”, “O dziesiątej byłem w kościele...”, “Byłem po południu w poznańskiej Farze...”, “Odprowadziłem Gosię do tramwaju...”, “Po licznych wędrownkach po ulicach...”, “W Poznaniu na ul. św. Wincentego...”, “Uczyłem się nad Wartą...”, “Rozchylone wieże katedry...”, “Siedzę na tym samym miejscu, które zająłem...”, “Siedzę w bistro w tym samym miejscu...”, *Widziane z przystanku*: “Przed księgarnią nr 1, na ul. Marcinkowskiego...”, “Zgrzytają tramwaje...”, “Na Górczynie/ w tej pijackiej melinie...”, *Stary Rynek, godz. 12:05*: “Księgarnia Arsenał...”, “Godz. 4:28. Siedzę na ławce przed kościołem. Jest pięknie...”, “Idę przez plac i widzę...”, “Jakieś szare podwórko...”, “Kaplica w mroku świeci w śródmieściu...”, “Karuzela za miastem...”).

In Różański’s works, the experience of urban space was mainly focused on people. One time he met a woman with whom he had a late lunch (he gave flowers to the barmaid that served them). Then, he kissed her at a tram stop, and they took trams in different directions, returning to their homes (*W mrocznym Poznaniu*). He shared those love/wandering street experiences with the frame of mind of Nikolai Stavrogin, a character of Dostoyevski’s *Demons*, bored, “powerless against the demons which he released himself from within.” In another poem Różański asked people in Poznań (the barmaid, two pensioners, a street vendor, an older artist) about THAT THING he was looking for (*Wędrowanie*). Another time, on a sunny evening, he was relaxing by a church drinking buttermilk and watching the characters of everyday life moving through the frame: two men consuming beer, and a cyclist spitting into every trash can he passed (*Z życia wzięte*).

Usually, the poetic *I* in Rożański's poems remains in the square, where he observes many such images. In the morning, he feeds pigeons there, at the end of the day in the crowd of passers-by he sees an old lady who "with a cart after dark pushes the spectre of bad omens..."

Różański's wanderings through the city could be considered as a kind of cleansing from all demands and aspirations. They help "Give away the pride of life in humility..." The lit up noisy city is overwhelming, compressing the subjectivity of a passer-by to a shadow:

idę jak cień przez metropolię
wsiadam wysiadam
czasem do baru zajrzę tam i tu
zjadam i piję
za grzechy moje niczyje

I walk like a shadow through the metropolis
I get on and off
sometimes I visit a bar here and there
I eat and I drink
for the sins of mine and no one

Thus, *Witek* felt best in his own flat ("spokój w naszym domu...") The poem entitled *Mój pokój* most probably applied to a flat in the Lech apartment complex. The lyrical monologue is filled with a tone of being settled, being accustomed to, and a sense of security, yet explicated not quite unequivocally:

na moim stole sarta gazet pigułki
papierosy zapałki klej znaczki i listy
i kurz oraz Fikcje Borgesa jedyny przyjaciel
jedyny świadek cierpienia
nim zetrze go ręka żony i moja ręka
która schnie od pisania
w gwiazdziste noce stół czuwa
jedyny żołnierz na warcie mego bezpieczeństwa
jak mówił poeta
tyle lat pisałem
by znaleźć miejsce przy stole
Ostatniej Wieczery

on my table there is a pile of newspapers and pills
cigarettes matches glue stamps and letters

and dust and Borges' Fictions the only friend
 the only witness to pain
 before he is wiped away by my wife's hand and mine
 becoming dry of writing
 on starry nights the table is vigilant
 the only soldier guarding my safety
 as the poet once said
 I have been writing for so many years
 to find a place at the table
 of the Last Supper

He also felt such security in the flat in Górczyn, where he always returned, just like Stachura to the flat on Rębkowska St. in Warsaw. Różański's wandering was, however, much smaller. In the final two decades of his life, those covered mainly Poznań and his family town of Mosina which, as he himself emphasised, made him during his childhood impervious to the hustle and bustle of the metropolis, and later "kept him living" ("Mało mi trzeba, Mosino. Miasto dzieciństwa...", "Nad Mosiną chmury i klęski...", *Mosina matka moja*, "Mosino tyś dzieckiem świata...", "Mosino, Mosino nie wiem co zrobić...", "Mosińskie matki...", "Na mosińskim rynku...", *Obrazek mosiński*: "Mosińskie noce na rynku...", "Przybyłem do ciebie, Miasteczko, po wielu latach...", "Zapach mleka na rynku...", "W onej Mosinie...", "W tej Mosinie/ płakałem w trzcinie...", "Czasem myślę o Tobie Mosino...", "Letnie wakacje/ w miasteczku M. ...") Due to the sheer number of poems devoted to those places, one could consider Różański a regional poet. He never made the trip to Venice (*Marzenie o podróży do Wenecji, Marzenie o Wenecji, Splendor Wenecji i chwala*, "Nie byłem we Włoszech..."), for which he was invited by Grzegorz Ratajczyk, an artist of many trades: painter, graphic artist, professor of University of the Arts Poznań, author of several portraits of *Witek*. Różański preferred to say goodbye every day to his beloved Poznań street rather than meet a new city for the first time and wander its picturesque nooks and crannies:

pożegnałem się z tobą ulico
 za niebieską przecznicą
 zmęczony niedokończony bożek

I said goodbye to you, my street
 past the blue street
 tired unfinished idol

Just as Harasymowicz made himself into the poet of Krakow's city limits and suburbs, or Józef Kurylak into the eulogist of Przemysł's cemeteries and streets,

Róžański linked his internal experiences with Poznań. He also emphasised that the city was the place of important events in his biography: studies, friendships, affairs, but, at the same time, he added that he was particularly drawn to the peripheries of Poznań, obviously: the peripheries of the places not visited by tourists, of people no one cares about, and of long-forgotten events.

"Praise, thee, the painter's workshop." Grzegorz Ratajczyk

Ratajczyk and Róžański maintained a special artistic relationship, which was why they used each other as the protagonists of their works. Portraits of both were similar in terms of their widely discussed spiritualities. In Ratajczyk's paintings, realism was accompanied by the "lightly" seized ethereal aura surrounding the figure of Róžański, or the notion of care and guard over the poet inscribed in the background in the form of an angel or personified poetry. In Róžański's works, Ratajczyk's spirituality was revealed in the descriptions of real space, from which the poet selected that which was vital for the Poznań professor's mode of experiencing the world, diffusing around him an aura of fascination, intellectual "fanaticism", faith, and love. The method of "automatic recording" in the poem entitled *Pracownia Grzegorza Ratajczyka*, referring to surrealist techniques (*écriture automatique*), and reflecting the train of subconscious thought, was the perfect example of the way in which Róžański perceived the Poznań master painter. It was a portrait seized with admiration, respect, trust, and camaraderie/friendship. The space of the workshop was basically analogous to the artist's spiritual space. Its main elements included: "Sonia, Franciszek i Józia", paints, library, old wardrobe, graphic designs, drawings and sketches, images of Venice, Gubbio, Assisi, "my poems", Bellini, Tintoretto, de La Tour, Mother Theresa, Wyspiański, article on Sted, Carpaccio – *Annunciation*, Tytian's – *Annunciation*.

Róžański used the themes of modesty to emphasise that he was not able to describe the workshop/soul of his colleague/friend, but still his portrayal was convincing, and was made with extensive consideration. The poet listed points in space which outlined the artist's core thinking and inspirations. That portrait of Ratajczyk (the poem was entitled *Przeznaczenie* (Destiny), which clearly suggested the intention behind the implied image of the painter's workshop) utilizing works, items, and pieces of furniture of the artist's studio, where Róžański sometimes entered, resonated well with Grzegorz Ratajczyk's *credo* expressed in an album entitled *Malować. Monografia subiektywna*¹⁵. Considerable gravity was carried by reflections on "unfulfilment", "lack of satisfaction", creative failures, and moments of doubt of this well-known and recognised artist, experienced in

¹⁵ G. Ratajczyk, *Malować. Monografia subiektywna*, Faculty of Painting and Drawing, University of the Arts Poznań, Poznań 2015.

terms of methodology and skills, who achieved successes in various areas of academic, teaching, and painting activities.

The struggle with matter is in my work necessary, and the stigma of my painting. Oftentimes the struggle uncovers my helplessness, and inability to recreate my vision. Then I face the question: what's the point of it? Does a failed work with a painting carry any value? I do not destroy the proof of my failures. I keep mutilated canvas with a thick and tired layer of paint so that they remind me about my experiences that solidified in them. [...] Paradoxically, matter brings me closer to the immaterial experience of art. How should I name the experience? Metaphysical, mystical, religious? Truly, art is, for me, a religious experience¹⁶.

Róžański's poem *Pracownia...* is an outline of the soul of the artist/painter, reflecting his creative consciousness well. Ratajczyk somewhat confirmed that poetic analysis. Which was why *Monografia subiektywna* could be treated as an interpretative key for the discussed text. The author wrote the following:

My focus centred around the basin of the Mediterranean. I have drawn the most inspiration from that area. First, that was the trip to Italy. The architecture fascinated me, first in Gubbio, then in Assisi. On canvas, the architecture changed into the shining forms of metaphysical towns and landscapes. Italy, with its history, colour and flickering lights, has a special place in my memories. The lands of Umbria, Tuscany, and Venice. [...] It was in Venice that I was captivated by the context between the metaphysical and sensuous worlds, between matter and light. Certain images keep popping back to my head: Titian's *Pietà*, which I saw right there in Venice and which captivated me with her sensuous materiality, Bellini's *Annunciation*, the grand painted with a panoramic verve *Crucifixion* by Tintoretto¹⁷.

He continued:

Painting enables me to reach fulfilment, experience spirituality, peer deeper into the world, seek durable and positive qualities in it. Painting means touching the infinite. And only that kind of art carries any meaning for me. Beauty is the element I never underestimate in thinking about painting. Sometimes it proves a complete mystery. Something that is difficult to define, which is revealed only through intimate experiences. Beauty is the element of those grand painting projects which constitute art history. The strive for beauty is also what drives me. For me, the

¹⁶ Ibidem, pp. 5–6.

¹⁷ Ibidem, p. 6.

painting work is beautiful in itself. It is not a matter of aesthetics, but a special approach to reality through painting¹⁸.

With this poem Róžański perfectly matched the world of thoughts and imagination of the artist from Krotoszyn. In fact, one could identify various intersections of the painter's and the poet's artistic awareness and creative references:

- light flooding "landscapes, portraits, objects", and light implied by words,
- Ratajczyk's mutilated canvas, and Róžański's mutilated poems,
- Ratajczyk's ideological simplicity, (though that could not be traced back to his paintings), and the simplicity applied by Róžański the poet,
- touching upon the mystery of the being and existence, without exploring, i.e. violating, this mystery,
- participation in art as a religious experience, which was ostentatiously demonstrated already in the 16th c. by Jan Kochanowski, the Master of Blackwood,
- treating one's own artistic activities as "experiencing difficulty, but mainly [as] seeking."

The professor/artist thus concluded his textual part of the *Malować...* album:

Sometimes I think about old Titian, who painted *Pietà* in a frenzy and edging on insanity. An old painter all covered in paint standing in front of his final masterpiece. That is beautiful. I would like to paint in the simplest possible manner. Yet the simplest things prove the most difficult¹⁹.

Based on a special scale of references, the statement could be translated onto the artistic life of Wincenty Róžański, who achieved supreme "literary simplicity", intentionally, calling his poems "the poetry of daily bread", which immediately makes one think about the "holy simplicity", the basic postulate of St. Albert Chmielowski, who required those he was responsible for to be "good as bread." Poetry is natural, like bread, health, and air; it was thus perceived by the poet from Mosina, i.e. necessary as bread, daily as bread, noble as bread.

Róžański (just like Ratajczyk) was fascinated by artists, whether of major or minor status, with various biographical defects, bad fates, and stigmas. Maybe the "son of the goddess" knew that world well from his own experience – a world which is complicated, chaotic, emotional, which bears with difficulty the fruit of a work of literature. Possibly he found himself in such biographies. He also emphasised that biographies of artists (in particular their ends, either tragic or natural) ennobled him ("po stracie przyjaciół/ sierota bardzo uświęcony...").

¹⁸ Ibidem, pp. 7–8.

¹⁹ Ibidem, p. 7.

Różański called Bogdan Wojdowski, a Jew extracted from the Warsaw Ghetto, the author of *Chleb rzucony umarłym*, a Polish teacher, a writer studying the limits of human emotional and intellectual resistance, a reporter of suburban fortunes, who eventually committed suicide, a martyr who hid a television in the wardrobe:

już masz święty spokój.
 Na najgłębsze krzyki, na pytania
 jedyną odpowiedź znam: milczenie.
 Niebo przed moim jękiem-piekłem się odsłania,
 a ziemia ruinami.
 Nie wystarczy w nas to milczenie.
 I płacz za małym czasem i zamyślenie jest,
 tylko łez nie ma, nie będzie nim się nie odrodzi
 w ruinach kwiat, a w ciele człowiek.

I co powie człowiek człowiekowi,
 choć pod stopami chrzest śniegu podpowiada,
 co powie?

now you have eternal peace.
 To the deepest screams, to questions
 I know but one answer: silence.
 The heaven from my wail uncovers with hell,
 and earth in ruins.
 The silence in us is not enough.
 And cry for small time and pondering there is,
 yet there are no tears, and there will be none until
 in ruins the flower is reborn, and man in the body.

And what will man say to man,
 though the crunch of snow under the feet suggests,
 what will he say?

In trying to define major notions and their descriptions in his artistic work, modelling his artistic sensitivity and how he experienced the world, Grzegorz Ratajczyk listed: BAGGAGE, TIME, SPACE, MATTER, LIGHT, MEMORY, IMAGE (one could also add KNOT²⁰). Różański's poems implicate somewhat different "milestones" of his poetic "subjective monograph". Those consisted of a se-

²⁰ In 2015 at Dom Muz in Toruń, Ratajczyk opened an exhibition entitled *Węzeł malarstwa. Obszar Morza Śródziemnego*.

ries of key words: MOTHER, STED, GOSIA, POETRY, HOME, STREET, GOD, LOVE, DEATH.

"I have learnt long from poets..." Intertextual stylisation strategies

Despite any customary and stereotypical thinking about the originality and individuality of Stachura and Różański, one must stress that they were strongly rooted in domestic and international literary traditions. One cannot interpret their works without attempting to analyse the stylistic games played with authors they read passionately, including dialogues, polemics, actual or ostensible, either agreeing with their perceptions of literature or opposing them blatantly. The great numbers of the books they read came from their university studies (Romance and Polish studies, respectively), where they surely had to face Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of metalinguistics, which perceived literature as a monumental polyphonic book which is continually being expanded, in which each work refers to previous works, and each page to previous pages.

Intertextuality, understood in line with Ryszard Nycz's claim that "the aspect of the whole of a text's properties and relations, which indicates the relationship between its creation and reception and the knowledge of other texts"²¹, was in Różański's case signalled using various markers. Those included:

- **dedications marked in titles or included as autonomous parts of poems (quasi-texts)** ("Już ogród zarósł Ninie... Pamięci Hölderlina", "Matka moja mówi... *Nikosowi Chadzinikolau*", "Poezja srebnousty pył... *Pamięci A. Ogrodowczyka*", "Przeczucie – *Franzowi Kafce ku pamięci*", "Robert Frost poeta amerykański... *Pamięci R. Frosta*", "Sen o świętym Idzim... *ks. Markowi Wittbrotowi*", "Siejemy orzemy kopiemy... *Andrzejowi Sikorskiemu*", "Wkrótce znajdziemy się... *A. Sikorskiemu*", "Zawitam do Ciebie w lipcu... *Pamięci Jana Czopika Leżachowskiego*", "Zgaś moje oczy ja Cię widzieć mogę... *z Rilkego*", *W mrocznym Poznaniu. Pamięci Fiodora Michajłowicza Dostojewskiego*, "Kiedy się modłę to modłę się jak dziecko... *Pamięci Wł. Broniewskiego*", *Piknik u Tomsiów*,
- **various meta-textual remarks** (*Różański Wincenty, po lekturze J.L. Borgesa „Dalsze dociekania” note: evening of 14 August 2002*),
- **inclusion of protagonists from other works in lyrical monologues** ("Ja nie Józef K. ...", "Jesteś moja Tirsza/ z Pieśni nad Pieśniami...", "Ja Hiobem Panie/ odebrałeś mi wiarę w przyszłość...", "ja nie Hiob/ tylko poeta...", "Jesteśmy Ostatnimi Mohikanami w puszczy na...", "Meduzy, z którymi Perseusz walczył...", "Nastazja Filipowna na łożu śmierci...", "W Odonie nie wierzę, w Swantewicie trochę, w Marsa...", "...drzesz mi skórę/ jak potomek/ z za rogatek Terezaszowy...")

²¹ R. Nycz, "Intertekstualność i jej zakresy: teksty, gatunki, światy", *Pamiętnik Literacki* 1990, col. 2, p. 97.

“...z ziemi wstaję jak Golem z wysoka...”, “w mrocznym Poznaniu, wieczorem ja Stawrogin...”, “...Romeo i Julia skamienieli jak pijani anieli...”, “...drapię po szyi Afrodytę...”, “Zaśnij człowiecze/ niech cię Eos różanopalcą otuli...”, “Apollo niebieskooki...”, “gdybym się znał z Syzyfem...”),

- **inclusion of names and/or surnames of authors in lyrical monologues** (“Andrzej Babiński...”, “Bogdan Wojdowski pisarz...”, “Borges nawiedził mnie w nocy...”, “...tu trzeba poety Gałczyńskiego...” “Jasiu Himilbach napisał powieść...”, “Jest jakieś wyjście z kuli Pascala...”, “...ja proszę pana Pascala chcę odmalować/ niezmierność w obrębie cząstek...”, “Jurek Grupiński poeta...”, *Franz Fiszer z Kościana*, “Daleko niedopałek i cukierek Fiodora...”, “Matka Nikosa w chuście greckiej...”, “Maxie Jacobie...”, “Noc majowa Gogola – to jest coś...”, “Piszesz że lubisz gogola i czechowa...”, “Otrzymałem, Bogiem a prawdą/ list od prezydenta Havla...”, “Sto dni umierał Niekrasow...”, “Strofy wzięte ze spisu treści poematu Aragona *Elza*...”, “Kiedy umierał Rimbaud...”, “Norwidzie Stedzie...”, “Patrz Norwid który umierał w zapomnieniu...”, “...a krysia krahelska zawsze z nami...”, “...opalają się w słońcu/ Chlebniow Dickinson Apollinaire/ Jesienin Sted i ty Gosiu/ (zapomniałem o Rillem)...”, “...przez park pies umyka/ z kością po Sokratesie...”, “...Staff umarł na dobre w Warszawie...”, “na wszystkie smutki najlepszy Czechow...”, “Tu Chryzostom Pasek został na popasie...”),
- **inclusion of titles of works in lyrical monologues** (“Przeczytałem około 14 stron Biblii...”, “Przeczytałem *Życie erotyczne mężczyzn*...”, “W alei różnie... Z myśli Rimbauda”, “W święta czytałem *Chłopów* Reymonta...”, “...na moim stole sterta gazet pigułki/ papierosy zapałki klej znaczki i listy/ i kurz oraz *Fikcje* Borgesa jedyny przyjaciel...”, “wigilia poległych i rozstrzelanych/ na stole pan tadeusz...”, “Skończyła się *Historia nocy* Borgesa/ w upalny dzień...”),
- **quotations** (“Wszystko jest snem wariata śnionym...”, “Jeszcze Polska nie zginęła...”, “Marność nad marnościami, wszystko marność”),
- **mottoes in the form of quotations** (“Doskonałość istnieje w niebiosach i w marmurze”. Wasilij Rozanów – motto wiersza „W łonie matki byłem doskonały...”, “Człowiek hołduje więcej dobru niż złu...”. Bertholt Brecht – motto wiersza “Jest bezgraniczna noc, jest ciemny park...”),
- **paraphrases, transformations, travesties** (“Jeszcze do Ciebie wrócę Chrystusie...”, “Panie Boże mój/ Ty zawsze przy mnie stój...”, “Kwitnij namże polska mowo...”, “O czym tu dumać na górczyńskim bruku...”, “Samotność, czym po ludziach?... Norwidowi poświęcam”, “Jest dużo w ojczyźnie krzywd...”, “Kiedy byłem mały...”[T. Nalepa?]),
- **paraphrased titles** (“Sen nocy letniej czyli co w pejzażu wielkiego brata...”, “Ukochany kraj ukochany kraj...”, “Święta miłości ojczyzno...”, “Nad tą wielką wodą/ nad tą wielką rzeką...”, “Ojcze Boże Matko Polsko...”),
- **use of other titles by other authors** (“Czego chcesz od nas Panie..”, “Smutno mi Boże...”, “Znaszli ten kraj...”, *Cmentarze*).

Wincenty Róžański overlaid those and other intertextual tendencies onto other areas of art, painting in particular, most probably under the influence of his brother Hieronim, his sister Joanna, but mainly his friend Grzegorz Ratajczyk, and his own attempts in portrait graphics (references to Titian, Bellini, Goya, Tintoretto, Manet, Toulouse Lautrec), as well as classical music, for which his personal patron was his wife Małgorzata Kasztelan, a professional multi-instrumentalist (references to Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin, Debussy, and stage artists: Amala Rodrigez, Zofia Korybalska, he devoted a few poems to his wife's concerts).

When it came to painting-based intersemiotic translation, one could identify in some of Róžański's poems the use of the pointilistic technique. Pointing (dotting) took in those poems the form of multiple uses of paremic and parenthetic phrases. They took the form of universal guidelines or strictly private statements. There are usually several in a single poem. They emphatically stress the frame of a poem, i.e. its beginning and ending. The following is an example of mind *points* extracted from the lyrical composition of one of his poems:

Kobieta ma coś ze śmierci, a śmierci trzeba się bać.

A woman has something of death in her, and death is something to be afraid of.

W miłości można znaleźć odpowiedzi na wiele pytań.

In love you can find answers to many questions.

Cała moja twórczość jest zmaganiem się z nieśmiałością.

My whole output is a struggle with shyness.

Kiedy ojciec umierał, załatwiałem sprawy wydania książki.

When father was dying, I was dealing with the publication of my book.

Na ulicy powstaje wiele pytań./ Jestem poetą ulicznikiem.

Many questions arise in the street./ I am a street poet.

Jestem zwierzęciem stadnym. Kto się wychyli, ten umiera.

I am a herd animal. Whoever stands out dies.

Some intertextual relations, and there are quite a few in the poems, are only hypothetical. Let us consider the metaphor of a feast (life) and leaving a table full of food (death). It was used to excellent effect by Stanisław Trembecki, the king's chamberlain, in his archpoem *Sofiówka*. He inserted the metaphor into the libertine argument on the impudence of fear of the end of one's life, which should be a peaceful gesture of a full and satisfied person leaving the dinner table:

A gdy dobrze strawionym obciążony wiekiem,
 Pozna, że już przychodzi przestać być człowiekiem,
 Tak się spokojnie złoży z przodkami po społu,
 Jak gdy po walnej uczcie wstawałby od stołu²²

And when weighed down with well-digested age,
 Learns that it is time to cease being man,
 Will lie down peacefully with his forefathers,
 As if after a grand feast he would be leaving the table

In Róžański's works, the same metaphor took the form of a visit to a Poznań bar, where international dishes were served:

Karta dań tego świata spełniona...
 The menu of this world is complete...

Dania tego świata skonsumowane...
 The dishes of this world consumed...

Została pusta karta dań tego świata...
 The menu of this world is left empty...

Róžański's epigram entitled *Niestalość* is filled with the attributes of metaphysical poetry from the Baroque period. The short poem includes the motifs of vanity and eschatology, and oneiric motifs. All are associated and saturated with Pascal's cosmology and anthropology. The argument on the limits of human freedom, and an attempt to answer the question of who man is ("trash love smoke/ existence God's toy...") in a poem entitled *Kopiec poezji*, also resembled the lists of existential problems of Baroque poetry, all the way to Mikołaj Sęp-Szarzyński's sonnets. In the poem, a remark on one's responsibility for their words, and the consequences of not speaking them ("you will be judged on all your words/ which you fail to utter...") clearly refers to *Pan Cogito* or the famous monologue from Wiesław Myśliwski's novel *Stone Upon Stone* where Szymon Pietruszka lectures his silent brother that people will be judged on all the words they failed to utter at the right time and in the right place:

When it comes down to it, what are you given other than words? Either way there's a great silence waiting for us in the end, and we'll have our fill of silence. Maybe we'll

²² *Dzieła poetyczne Stanisława Trembeckiego*, vol. 1, published by Wilhelm Bogumił Korn, Wrocław 1828, p. 20.

find ourselves scratching at the walls for the sake of the least little word. And every word we didn't say to each other in this world we'll regret like a sin. Except it'll be too late. And how many of those unsaid words stay in each person and die with him, and rot with him, and they aren't any use to him either in his suffering, or in his memory? So why do we make each other be silent, on top of everything else?²³

The following listings exclude Edward Stachura and his works, as they exist in Różański's poems on special terms. He himself reminisced that he met Stachura in 1961 during the Festival of Contemporary Poetry (actually the Festival of Young Poetry) in Poznań. At that moment, so he claimed, their friendship "through thick and thin" began. However, based on a study of archives, Jakub Beczek concluded that they had already met in 1959 during the third Poznań Poetic November, during which Edward Stachura won second prize (Marian Grzeńczak won first prize) in the single poem competition (*Twórczość* 2017, issue 1).

Różański always stressed without any hesitation that his friendship with Stachura was the most important in his life. It was Stachura, not his Polish studies or piles of books he had read, who showed Różański how to appreciate beauty, form, and poetry. That is clear if one considers Różański's wedding gift to Małgorzata Kasztelan: not rings but a belt, his most treasured keepsake from Edward Stachura.

Różański addressed the largest number of poems to the author of *Fabula rasa*, and subjected Stachura's poetry, prose, and song to various intertextual procedures. They were mainly the objects of intentional or subconscious stylisation in the meaning assigned to the term by Stanisław Balbus. What is significant is that it was only Stachura's works that were subjected to those processes in Różański's poems.

Balbus referred the notion of "stylisation" to a literary expression "in which the structural principle is to imitate some else's style, i.e. the style existing in social consciousness as 'someone's property', the rules of which can, therefore, be identified as 'belonging to someone', derivative, partly and always on a one time basis, *ad hoc* of a specific work – translated onto an area where the artistic communication developed by the work and its historical/literary situation occurs; a precise identification of said affinity (its 'specific address') is not necessary, all that is required is the stylistic 'address to the outside', an indication of the 'this is some else's' or 'this has been taken from somewhere' kind"²⁴.

Różański's relationship with Stachura, as well as Stachura's with Różański, though on a much smaller scale, require careful stylometric analyses conducted directly on manuscript and printed sources. Let me only list the titles and the incipits of the poems listed in the catalogue of Biblioteka Raczyńskich and in the

²³ W. Myśliwski, *Stone Upon Stone*, trans. Bill Johnston, New York 2010, pp. 118–119.

²⁴ S. Balbus, *Między stylami*, Universitas, Krakow 2006, p. 20.

unpublished 2002 collection which suggest such relations: “Dokąd w jakim celu – Stachura to zna...”, *Dziś godz. 15:00*: “Nic się nie stało nic nie było...” [dedicated to E. Stachura], “Edwardzie Stachuro/ tyś z matką w niebie...”, “Jedno jest miejsce Boga... Stedowi”, “Koniec ogonem wywija... *Pamięci Steda*”, *Kuplety żałobne na śmierć Steda*: 1) “Nim się rozjaśni na niebie jutrzeńka...”, 2) “Zacznijmy wreszcie żyć od nowa...”, *Tren dla Steda*: “Jak Ci się wiedzie Stedzie...”, “Jak Ci się wiedzie Stedzie w niebie/ o anielskim chlebie...”, “Jak Ci się wiedzie Stedzie w niebie/ wśród tysiąca słońc...”, “Jak Ci się wiedzie Stedzie/ w tym siódmym niebie...”, “My to nie wiemy co chcemy/ mówił Sted...”, “Na polanie miłość stała... *Stedowi*”, “Nade mną widnieje ten Sted...”, “O słowa silne, słowa nagminne... E. Stachurze”, “Pamiętasz Stedzie kiedy byliśmy na...”, “Stachura nie żyje/ odwróciłem twarz w kierunku południa...”, “Przystępuję do Ciebie i znów odstepuję... *Pamięci Steda*”, “Rymy skończone... *Pamięci Steda*”, “Sted kocham Cię po śmierć...”, “Sted nie żyje/ ale czy my żyjemy...”, “Stedzie, minęło ćwierćwiecze...”, “Drogi Stedzie/ Już mija ćwierć wieku jak...”, “Stedzie teraz jesteś w niebie...”, *Wiersz pisany na kolanie. Pamięci E. Stachury*: “O Awangardo o Stedzie...”, “Z autoportretu z Aniołem/ wynurza się drzewo Steda – Stachury...”, “Zeszły się moje słowa... *Edwardowi Stachurze*”, “Byli tacy co się rodzili...”, “Dla Ciebie Stedzie/ myślę o niebie...”, “myślami z Tobą jestem Stedzie...”, “Norwidzie Stedzie...”, “Och Stedzie Stedzie/ jesień się przędzie...”, “Przegrałem w ruletkę/ Steda przy szafie...”, “Przybądź do mnie Stedzie jedyny...”, “Przystępuję do Ciebie Stedzie.../ bo chciałbym jeszcze jedną rzecz napisać...”, “Przystępuję do Ciebie Stedzie/ bo [...] sen przy stole...”, “Przystępuję do Ciebie Stedzie jedyny/ św. Wincenty à Paulo św. gwałtownik...”, “Stedzie jedyny/ do jakiej poszedłeś krainy...”, “Zmiłuj się Stedzie jedyny...”, “umarł Sted...”, “Sted mawiał jak nie chcesz...”, “Idzie noc... *Stedowi poświęcam*”.

“The old poetry whore deceived me”. Between the sacred and the profane – writer’s dilemmas

Różański often stressed his biological, even organic focus on poetry. For him, poems were like breaths, the need to sleep, drink, and eat. He treated the art of the word as a type of internal communication, a dialogue with oneself, but also as a strategy for defining his own path in life, finding his way in the complicated world, or accumulating ever so complicated relations with it. What he meant then were functions more existential than self-therapeutic.

Różański’s approach to his own poems was, however, ambivalent to say the least. He wavered between the sacred and the profane, between Platonic obsession, Homeric inspiration, and a simple craft and a way to occupy himself. He used to refer to poetry as the daughter, “silver-mouthed dust”, “a bridge through life” (though “wooden and weak” which “keeps swaying and breaking”), and to poems as children; he expressed the will to be poetry’s “inseparable brother”, he declared

fidelity to it ("Always on your side, dear poetry..."); he adored the "Literary Virgin Mary", he prayed for a "good day-poem", humorously or seriously claimed the divine origin of his works ("I stole the comparison from God...", "thank you, Lord, for my talent how will I repay Thee..."), he paraphrased Słowacki's "Smutno mi, Boże" to "I am sad, Poetry Mother..."

Then again, Różański displayed a kind of carelessness and airiness when it came to poems after he wrote them. He sent them to publishers without making copies first, despite the fact that it was not uncommon for his poems to be rejected or not accepted for printing. As most of us know, publishers do not tend to send back texts they do not order. Różański was not vexed by that and explained to his wife that he could write a new poem whenever he pleased. Mind you, the multitude of editions of a single poem, written at various times, might prove something completely different, or maybe something about remembering them. He recorded many of the works collected in Biblioteka Raczyńskich on napkins, a particularly fragile material. Włodzimierz Majakowski did that before him. Additionally, Różański used to give away his poems as gifts, proofs of friendship, gratitude or as a gratuitous act. In the flat in the Lech apartment complex, he stuck text-filled snippets of paper into every possible nook, even behind cupboards or his wife's piano. Those examples of Różański's airiness were proven in some remarks included in his poems. Here are but a few: "Zdarza mi się, że potrafię napisać trzydzieści wierszy każdego dnia" (Sometimes, I write thirty poems a day), "Przestań mi mówić o wierszach..." (Stop talking poems to me), "Piszę bzdury i brednie..." (I write nonsense and gibberish), "Tylko same dedykacje pisuję ostatnio..." (Recently, I've been writing only dedications), "Robi mi się niedobrze, kiedy piszę te słowa..." (I feel sick writing these words), *Nieciekawe zdarzenie*: "Postanowiłem pisać po 11 wierszy/ na co dzień..." (I decided to write 11 poems/daily), "O Muzy dajcie mi trochę luzu..." (Oh, Muses, cut me some slack).

Also bear in mind the Romantic paradigm of poetry, to which the Poznań-based poet referred. On its basis, poetry and being a poet is mainly a special experience of reality, only later is it the writing of the poem. Stachura even claimed that "the least of a poet is that who writes poems..." Those views resonated in Różański's reflections: "Kiedy nie jestem poetą zaczynam pisać wiersze" (When I stop being a poet, I start writing poems), "Było tak, że długo pisałem w myśli..." (Sometimes I wrote in my mind for long...) One could assume that he disliked flaunting the mask of a poet, something which Andrzej Bursa blatantly mocked:

Poeta cierpi za miliony
od 10 do 13.20
o 11.10 uwiera go pęcherz
wychodzi
rozpina rozporek

zapina rozporek
 Wraca chrząka
 i apiat'
 cierpi za miliony [...] ²⁵

The poet suffers for millions
 from 10 to 1:20
 at 11:10 his bladder calls
 he leaves
 opens his fly
 closes his fly
 Returns clears his throat
 and again, from the top
 suffers for millions [...]

The multitude of editions and various versions of the same poem by Różański could indicate he could not reach creative satisfaction and was discontent. The same applied to religious and patriotic odes of 1792–1796 by Franciszek Dionizy Kniaźnin (who was soon to face the onset of the sickness that afflicted the poet from Mosina), which were corrected and perfected many times over. In the case of Różański, the changes could not always be considered as perfecting the form or style, and even if so, the results of such efforts were sometimes contrary to what he intended. In fact, he might have been aware of those various creative deficiencies and imperfections as in a prayer poem where he mentioned the “rough words.”

One should also use that context for discussing Różański's tendency to rarely if ever give titles to his poems. A title constitutes a representation of a specific artistic event. A presumed condition of that is that the process of creating poetry is finished, the last sentence is dotted, so that the representation could be considered as a whole and release into the world. The multitude of versions of works, and the lack of titles could indicate the poet's intention to extend his relationship with them. Even once they were published, Różański used to introduce corrections, as if indicating that his story with his poems/children was not complete, that he would return to them sooner or later. As a result of such an approach, something that editors could confirm, there was no final version, a canonical text, and in terms of the textual-formal outcome, it results in a **diffusion of a poem**. It is difficult to indicate the reason for that. A publication in a collection or a journal is not conclusive. Most probably it was caused by Różański's conviction that the creative act is imperfect: it always constitutes some lack and deficiency, which cannot achieve

²⁵ A. Bursa, “Poeta”, in: J. Marx, *Legendarni i tragiczni. Eseje o polskih poetach przeklętych*, Wydawnictwo Alfa-Wero, Warsaw 2000, p. 85.

fullness. A poem lives in several parallel worlds without the option to differentiate them. It is a structure falling apart due to mutating copies. Work on dispersed material in the case of Różański's poetry (even if a poem is successful) must remain at the rough draft stage.

Wystan Hugh Auden was the master of extracting artistic perfection from such carelessness; despite being considered a classic, he did not care much for Horace's recommendation for a work to mature for at least 9 years. If he did not like a poem, he destroyed the sheet on which it was recorded. If, however, a sentence drew his attention, but the rest did not, he transferred it to another poem thus creating a kind of an anthology of self-quotations.

Różański, independently of Auden, developed a similar habit of creating poetry.

Rzeszów, December 2017–October 2018

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Marek Nalepa

„Cofnąć bieg rzeki / bieg życia / oto moje postanie” O wierszach Wincentego Różańskiego

Streszczenie

Artykuł jest próbą omówienia najważniejszych cech poezji Wincentego Różańskiego z ostatnich lat jego aktywności twórczej. Jest to literatura silnie zsubiektywizowana, manifestująca katolicyzm poety, zawierzenie Najświętszej Marii Pannie, z drugiej strony podejmująca tematykę życia codziennego, rutynowych zachowań i czynności. Dokonano ponadto charakterystyki wierszy poety poznańskiego pod względem ich relacji dialogowych i stylizacyjnych w stosunku do innych tekstów kultury, szczególnie malarstwa Grzegorza Ratajczyka oraz prozy i poematów Edwarda Stachury.

Słowa kluczowe: Wincenty Różański, poezja, Edward Stachura, Grzegorz Ratajczyk, matka, religia, *flâneur*, Mosina, Poznań

“Turn back the course of a river / the course of life / that is my mission.” On the poems by Wincenty Różański

Summary

The article is an attempt at discussing the most important features of Wincenty Różański's poetry written in the final years of his creative period. This poetry is strongly subjective, manifesting the poet's Catholicism, and entrusting himself to the Blessed Virgin Mary, but it also tackled the subject of everyday life, routine behaviors and activities. In addition, the poet's poems are characteristic in terms of their dialogical and stylistic relations compared to other cultural contexts, especially in the case of Grzegorz Ratajczyk's paintings, as well as the prose and poems by Edward Stachura.

Keywords: Wincenty Różański, poetry, Edward Stachura, Grzegorz Ratajczyk, mother, religion, *flâneur*, Mosina, Poznań

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