The comparative method in Adam Mickiewicz’s etymological ideas

Abstract
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In the first half of the nineteenth century in his Paris lectures, Adam Mickiewicz defined the comparative method on three different levels: 1. cultural (the comparison of civilizations), 2. literary (the comparison of literatures) and 3. linguistic (the comparison of languages). However, it was language that became the principium comparationis, serving as the poet’s point of departure in all his major comparisons. Mickiewicz studied linguistics much more thoroughly than was necessary for the preparation of the lectures at the Collège de France. In the early 1840s, he became interested in the etymology of words. He expected this to enable him to discover the secrets of Slavic history and culture. As Mickiewicz claimed, it would be impossible to achieve on the basis of Slavic architecture and art, as they hardly existed, with the exception of oral poetry: fables, hymns, and legends. As with previous Slavic enthusiasts, Mickiewicz failed in his attempts at creating a mythos of this people’s former greatness and historic destiny based on its system of beliefs, for this very system could not be reconstructed. Accordingly, he tried to derive myth from language. Mickiewicz treated linguistics as the main means of comparing the roles that Slavs and other peoples played, or were supposed to play, in their history.

Keywords: Mickiewicz, Slavic culture, literature, language, etymology, comparison

In Samuel Fiszman’s dissertation Komparatyjstwa w prelekcjach paryskich Adama Mickiewicza (Comparative studies in Adam Mickiewicz’s Paris lectures), he rightly states that the lectures were:

the first comparative intellectual history of the Slavic and Western European worlds, an entirely significant pursuit of the comparative method in the form developed in European Romanticism programs of the first half of the nineteenth century (Fiszman 1981: 125).

One wonders how Mickiewicz developed such advanced skills in comparative thinking in the 1840s. It would be a mistake to attribute this talent to Prof. Leon Borowski, a pioneer in the comparative method from Vilnius, whose lectures on speech and poetry Mickiewicz had attended during his studies. Borowski, who wrote Uwagi nad poezją i wymową pod względem ich podobieństwa i różnicy (1820, Remarks on poetry
and speech in the aspect of their similarities and differences) and whom Mickiewicz admired as reader and critic of his Dziady, Pt. II (Forefathers’ Eve)\(^1\), was neither an outstanding educator nor a brilliant theoretician of the comparative method (cf. Beauvois 1991: 260–261). Although Borowski’s volume on poety and speech is considered by some\(^2\) to take an important position in polemics between classicists and Romanticists (cf. Buśka-Wróński 1972: 25), his output at the height of Romanticism debates of the 1820s and 1830s was rather low. Its methodological discourse was limited to the presentation of comparison as a tool in developing a theory of relations among the fine arts, and for identifying historical and regional-ethnic factors as decisive criteria for evaluating the compared works.

What proved favorable were references to comparatist methods and practices of Dubos, Lessing, Mendelssohn, Kant, and Herder\(^3\), which were then little known within Polish social sciences. Nevertheless, young Mickiewicz’s critical dissertations including “Uwagi nad ‘Jagiellonidą’ Dyzmasa Bończy Tomaszewskiego” (Remarks on Jagiellonida by Dyzmas Bońca Tomaszewski) and “O poezji romantycznej” (On Romantic poetry), focusing on relations between Polish and European literature, already point to the fact that the master could learn more from his disciple than the disciple from the master. The Paris lectures then prove that the distance had increased between the level of comparative analysis presented by Mickiewicz and Borowski.

Another precursor of the Polish comparative method during the 1820s was Ludwik Osiński. Mickiewicz came to know indirectly of Osiński’s lectures at the University of Warsaw from his friends Jan Czeczot and Franciszek Malewski. Both were rather critical about the quality of Osiński’s classes. In 1819, Malewski wrote that the lecturer intended to resign from his position due to negative student opinions regarding his lectures (cf. Skręt [accessed on: 14.07.2018]). Again, Mickiewicz’s skills in comparative studies is linked to his intellectual predispositions and writing talent rather than to his formal education.

Of particular interest is which of Mickiewicz’s interests inclined him to adopt the comparative method in the 1840s. On a general level, this would be Slavic culture as presented in his lectures. As Michał Kuziak notes, his purpose was to “constitute the universe of the clashing ideas, a place for dialogue, often a clash of cultures. Such a perspective gave the grounds for the comparative studies of the inter-Slavic lecture” (Kuziak 2007: 21). One may see while investigating “inter-Slavic” elements of the lectures that on one hand these reinforced Mickiewicz’s interest in relations between the Slavic and Western European worlds, while on the other they provided a concrete, tangible subject for comparative theory. When presenting his second lecture, Mickiewicz explained that he would analyze “relations between Slavic and Western civilizations and their mutual influences” (Mickiewicz 1997b: 24). When he attempted to define the object of his study in a more

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\(^1\) Cf. letter to Jan Czeczot of 4/16 December 1822 (Mickiewicz 1998b: 249).
\(^2\) Including Brodziński’s dissertation O klasyczności i romantyczności... and Śniadecki’s O pismach klasycznych i romantycznych.
\(^3\) More on the subject in: Krysowski 2016: 231–232.
precise way, in the second course’s twenty-eighth lecture, he stated that these lectures were “principally, to discover relations between Slavic and European literatures by tracing the fundamental thought of such literatures” (Mickiewicz 1997c: 360).

Literature was not, however, the target of Mickiewicz’s search for researchable objects for comparison. The process of culture development was more accurately reflected in the language, which sometimes constituted the only credible trace, being the tool for “conversation and literature” (Mickiewicz 1997b: 55). Such a unique “monument” was given to Slavs’ history and tradition, who had not, as Mickiewicz stated, constructed characteristic architecture, outstanding works of art, “or even medals, coins, or inscriptions. Out of all their works, only their language remained; it can be said that all their strength, all capacity was directed to shape the language” (Mickiewicz 1997b: 83).

The value of language as the source of knowledge about Slavic culture and the criteria for comparison with other nations is the greater, in Mickiewicz’s opinion, because the people had not created a particular mythology. Myths had accompanied Egyptian, Greek, Roman, German, and Scandinavian development, and that of many other cultures. These spoke of the origins of tribal culture, heroic deeds, supernatural abilities of rulers and warriors, and close relations between people and their gods. Myth allowed individuals to identify with certain communities and traditions. As Mickiewicz suggested, because the original Slavic religion relied on simple dogmas – faith in a single god, the fight between good and evil, immortality of the soul, and there was no mention of revelation, unlike other religions – the Slavic people were unable to adopt a mythology. Without mythology, there can be no linking to history or a spiritual or ideological tradition.

The situation sketched by Mickiewicz may seem peculiar from the anthropological point of view. If we follow Mircea Eliade in his view that archaic religious experience means “experiencing existence as a whole, which reveals to man his way of being in the World”, where the “being is mixed with sacrum”, and chaos is transformed into an ordered universe (Eliade 1994: 9), then one should consider the religion of Slavic peoples as presented by Mickiewicz as not performing its fundamental function. It did not develop a mythology to define relations between the people and the sacrum, to define its identity and place among the world’s communities and cultures. Mickiewicz was unclear

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4 In his first course’s sixth lecture, Mickiewicz stated that the religion: was destined to sterility because it absolutely lacked the idea of revelation, direct relation between God and man. Hence the religion could never work out a mythology which, according to, in our opinion, right conviction of many scholars, is but a contamination of the revealed religion. The existence of a mythology always imposes adopting relations between a god and people. All philosophies originated from explanation of such relations; all philosophies assume the existence of a mythology (Mickiewicz 1997a: 68).

Mickiewicz verified this opinion in the third course of his lectures, referring to the research by Czech scholar Ignác Jan Hanuš, a lecturer at Vilnius University, who in his Die Wissenschaft des Slawischen Mythus im weitesten, den altpreußisch-lithauischen Mythus mitumfassenden Sinne (1842, Science about Slavic mythology in the broadest meaning, also comprising old Prussian-Lithuanian mythology), argued for the existence of a certain system of Slavic myths. In the twelfth lecture, Mickiewicz pointed out that “a year ago, German scholar [sic] Hanusch published a work on Slavic mythology. Having analyzed all the known mythological systems, Indian, Persian, and Greek, he believes the Slavic system, or rather Lithuanian-Slavic system, as the vastest, the most thorough, and the most complete” (Mickiewicz 1998a: 144). He probably wrongly determined the scholar’s nationality since Hanus’ book, written in German, inaccurately spelled its author’s name as Hanusch (cf. Mickiewicz 1998a: 363).
as to the exact interpretation. While he stated that mythology “is but a contamination of revealed religion” (Mickiewicz 1997b: 68), he also perceived the gap created by the absence thereof in sources used for research on Slavic culture. He also pointed out that the gap was filled to some extent by the language, preserving traces of earliest times, beliefs, and values characteristic of its community. “Over thousands of years”, he explained, “their history remained in the dark; we must gather the few scattered names, and seek information about the past of this uncounted people in the memories of foreign peoples” (Mickiewicz 1997b: 75).

The comparative method was thus defined on three different levels: 1. cultural (the comparison of civilizations); 2. literary (the comparison of literatures); 3. linguistic (the comparison of languages). And it was language that became the *principium comparationis* from which Mickiewicz derived all comparisons, and investigating it went beyond the scope of preparatory work for the Collège de France lectures. In the early 1840s, he developed an interest in etymology, which he hoped would help him discover secrets of Slavic history and culture. These weren’t discoverable in works of architecture and art that, in his opinion, had left no marked impression. For Mickiewicz, only the oral traditions of fables, hymns, and legends had made any valuable contribution to Slavic culture. As Zdzisława Kopczyńska has rightly pointed out, for Mickiewicz:

> Slavic language concealed grand [...] treasures and opened research opportunities, being the only work of the entire Slavic community. From this point of view, it was exceptional, in the positive sense, of course, among other European languages (Kopczyńska 1976: 145).

Mickiewicz’s “etymological ideas” developed between 1841 and 1843, along with his lexicographic articles discussing the origin and meaning of the word *cnota* (virtue), intended for the emigrée publication *Słownik języka polskiego* (Dictionary of the Polish language)\(^5\), planned for 1844 at the initiative of Eustachy Januszkiewicz. Etymological juxtapositions formed in the search for traces of Slavic culture’s ancient nature, at least by assumption, were constituted of two root branches. The first, “Próba źródłosłowu I” (An attempt to find the root), reflects the intention to reconstruct development of Slavic words by considering various dialects and relations to Latin\(^6\); the latter, “Próba źródłosłowu II”, investigates direct relations between Latin and Polish, Russian, and Lithuanian vocabulary. The last branch seems particularly important, as it reveals mechanisms governing Mickiewicz’s comparative studies on the interlinguistic level.

Mickiewicz’s reconstruction of the history of words had rather little to do with the discipline now referred to as scientific etymology, which diligently reconstructs, step by step, all changes to words’ construction and meaning in specific time periods. His historical-linguistic attempts resemble folk etymology involving intuitive determination of the origin

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\(^5\) Mickiewicz’s linguistic interests continued in his critical review, written in 1853, of Wacław Aleksander Maciejowski’s dissertation *Piśmiennictwo polskie od czasów najdawniejszych aż do roku 1830* (Polish literature from the oldest times until 1830) (vols. 1–3, Warsaw 1851–1852).

\(^6\) I discussed this listing in more detail in “Źródłosłowy kultury. O pomysłach etymologicznych Adama Mickiewicza” (Krysowski 2012: 11–25).
of words by associating vocabulary that is not genetically related (cf. Krysowski 2012)\(^7\). A similarly nonrational etymological method was applied by Jan Nepomucen Kamiński in articles including “Czy nasz język jest filozoficzny?” (Is our language philosophical?) and “Wywód filozoficzności naszego języka” (Arguments for philosophical nature of our language), which were to explain rules for evoking a language’s national spirit (Kamiński 1830a; Kamiński 1830b). Kamiński texts were recognized by Romanticists who treated language as a tool for learning about the metaphysical world\(^8\). They were criticized by academic linguists, however, who argued that relations between words pointed out by Kamiński had no scientific basis, as with the thesis about the Polish language’s “philosophical nature”, which these assertions were intended to prove\(^9\).

Mickiewicz’s etymological discourse, as in the case of Kamiński’s works and of Kasper Ciechoniewski in Oko, hieroglifyk, twór rzeczy, źródłosłów, pierwszy wyraz słownika polskiego, z względami nad nim gramatycznymi, z postrzeżeniami, z jego sposobem mówienia czyli frazesami, i z niektórymi w ogólności uwagami, za wzór całego słownika polskiego, jaki może być zrobiony... (1804; Eye, hieroglyphic, form of things, root, the first word in the Polish dictionary with grammatical aspects, with remarks, pronunciation and phrases, and some general remarks, to model an entire Polish dictionary that can be made...), and by Feliks Jezierski in Przygotowanie do wiedzy mowy polskiej (1843; Introduction to knowledge on the Polish Language), fall within the trend of “spirited linguistics” that presented language as an “emanation of spirit” (cf. Walczak 1999: 265). This is indicated by Mickiewicz’s remarks on sound that open his deliberations about word roots in Slavic dialects:

Mark H, namely cha [pronounced [x]], is neither a vowel nor a consonant, it is the most spirited mark, meaning emanation of spirit. I – a human vowel, the voice of the human spirit. [...] B – explosion of the spirit in the visible world, W – its entry, P – its impact – these marks are similar. Ch – free spirit, K – spirit in the world referred to as organism, G – in the inorganic world. Similar marks (Mickiewicz 1997a: 199).

Language was thus not only to reflect the spirit of the community that developed it or defined its individual properties. It was also to act as an intermediary in the “emanation” of spirit in the universal meaning, that spirit permeating the “visible” world, both “organic” and “inorganic”. Analysis of the language of the people would not prove

\(^7\) Cf. ibidem, 18.
\(^8\) Mickiewicz wrote:

The Germans yielded philosophy of nature, the Slavs – philosophy of language. Slavic scholar Kamiński relied his historical and natural system on the analysis of Slavic languages. If the study of nature undoubtedly contributes to explanation of spiritual phenomena, the analysis of the word, being an intermediary between the inanimate nature and the divine nature, on its part provides fundamental data to explain the mysteries of philosophy (Mickiewicz 1997b: 85).

Works by Kamiński were also appraised by Maurycy Mochnacki in his dissertation O literaturze polskiej w wieku dziewiętnastym [On Polish literature in the nineteenth century].

\(^9\) Cf. for example an article by Józef Kazimierz Plebański, “Grammatyka i grammatycy”, in vol. 10 of the Orgelbrand Encyclopedia (Plebański 1862).
sufficient in finding properties distinguishing the spirit of old Slavic culture, however, or means by which the universal, divine spirit “revealed itself”. Mickiewicz needed a point of reference to understand old Slavic culture by analogy to other old cultures, and a language that would preserve reminiscences of observing Slavic peoples from the outside. In his etymological deliberations, he chose Latin as a point of reference. In the second listing of origins mentioned above, “Próba źródłosłowu II”, he traced relations between Latin forms and the vocabulary of Slavic tribes. For he assumed that the Slavic people originally formed an ethnic community using a single language that then developed, as a result of communities splitting into particular tribes, into separate dialects: Czech, Polish, Russian, etc. He thus linked the role of linguist with that of Romantic historiosopher and philosopher of culture.

When looking at his 142 items presenting Latin words and morphological particles and their Slavic equivalents, one realizes that Mickiewicz made notes for a nonconventional Latin-Slavic dictionary. We are provided with a description of Latin words and their Polish meanings that differs from the traditional one practiced in lexicography since the Middle Ages. For example, in Jan Mączyński’s Latin-Polish dictionary from the sixteenth century, Vir was translated as “Mąż/mężczyzna” (man) (Mączyński 1564: 499 v). The same meaning is provided in the Lexicon Latino-Polonicum. Słownik łacińsko-polski na wzór słownika Jakóba Facciolati... by Rev. Florian Bobrowski (Bobrowski 1822: 1217), and in the modern Słownik łacińsko-polski edited by Marian Plezia (Plezia 2007c: 623). In Mickiewicz’s version, however, we read: “Vir – a man of one faith, viri-vira in Ukrainian” (Mickiewicz 1997a: 204). This is thus not about the meaning of the word vir (viri) as established by translation methods. Mickiewicz seeks a deeper meaning by juxtaposing the word, principally due to sound similarities, with the Polish word wiara (faith), or the Ukrainian віра. Interestingly, he is not satisfied with the explanation of “vir – man of faith”. He also introduces extra meanings by pointing to “one” faith and, more precisely, a man who remains faithful to one specific system of values.

The brief summary Mickiewicz provides of vir provided does not match the word’s traditional explanation in bilingual lexicography. Reading it is also difficult from the perspective of standard etymological discourse. Samuel Bogumił Linde, Aleksander Brückner, and other modern etymologists have never associated the word wiara (faith) with the Latin vir. According to Linde and Brückner, vērus (true) is affiliated with wiara (cf. Linde 1814: 182; Brückner 1993: 611). Krystyna Długosz-Kurczabowa is of a similar opinion. She treats wiara as a “domestic word, of general Slavic nature, cf. Czech víra,

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10 Mickiewicz formulated this view pursuant to findings including those of Josef Dobrovský (Dobrovský 1818) and Pavol Jozef Šafárik (Šafárik 1836–1837). In first course’s thirteenth lecture, he stated: “The analysis of the Slavic language, so rich with dialects, indeed teaches us that, since ancient times, there existed a family of dialects which could neither merge or mix with one another”. While referring to contemporary times, he added: “One could say that the vast Slavic language is now divided not into dialects but into grand languages; it is even apparently the only speech that encompasses many languages within itself” (Mickiewicz 1997b: 163).

11 Zofia Stefanowska has convincingly discussed Mickiewicz’s instrumental use of Slavic literature. As she pointed out, for the poet, this “vigorously and inevitably became material for a philosophy of history” (Stefanowska 2001: 285).
Bulg. wiára, Serbo-Croatian vjera; inherited from Old Slavic věra ‘what is real’; affiliated to Latin verus ‘true’ […] German wahr ‘significant, true,’” (Długosz-Kurczabowa 2008, 699). The order of word origin, as determined by Mickiewicz, is also atypical. The theory of etymological research, already a recognized branch of social science by the nineteenth century, dictated that a word that’s origin is being sought should be listed first. In Mickiewicz’s notes, that initial position belongs to Latin words, for example:

- Uligo – Russian właga; Polish wilgoć. [humidity]
- Lupus – łupież, wilk, od wlić się, włóczyć się. [dandruff, wolf, from erring]
- Fovere – chowere, chować [to hide]
- Foemina – kumina, kuma.
- Fatum – pronounced by Romans as fato - gato, gado, god, czorny god, fate, bad adventure, to reconcile (Mickiewicz 1997a: 204)\(^\text{12}\).

Are we to assume that Mickiewicz sought the origins of Latin words in Polish, Russian, and Czech? In some cases, this is exactly what he did. He believed that rigor (hardness, roughness, stiffness) and rigidus (rigid, harsh, tough, steadfast, wild, ruthless)\(^\text{13}\) originated from róg (horn) (Mickiewicz 1997a: 206), and that “intus – was pronounced as etus or eto, wnętrze [interior, in Polish]” (Mickiewicz 1997a: 206), and that “dux and its derivatives originated from duch [spirit], who leads all” (Mickiewicz 1997a: 208). Interestingly, he was not the only one to do so. He may have been inspired by the theses of Ján Kollár, a Slovak archaeologist and poet-linguist, who used Slavic runic inscriptions on the Bamberg Cathedral’s Styrian helms and stone lions to formulate a theory on Slavic people’s original inhabitation of northern Italy, and on their relations with the Etruscans. According to Kollár’s theory, announced in his paper “Staroitalia slavjanská” (1853), Latin was one branch of the old Slavic language. In his etymological research, Kollár always placed Latin words first and sought their equivalents in Slavic languages, as Mickiewicz did. His findings were confirmed by Pavol Jozef Šafárik, his compatriot,

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\(^\text{12}\) Uligo – in Russian właga; Polish wilgoć.
- Lupus – łupież, wilk, od wlić się, włóczyć się.
- Fovere – chowere, chować.
- Foemina – kumina, kuma.
- Fatum – wymawiano u Rzymian fato – gato, gado, god, czorny god, los, zła przygoda, godzić się.

\(^\text{13}\) Meanings are from Słownik łacińsko-polski, ed. M. Plezia (Plezia 2007b: 561–562).
historian, and linguist. Mickiewicz often referred to both scholars in his Paris lectures\textsuperscript{14}. He admired Kollár’s linguistic works and his poetry.

The order of the Latin and Slavic words adopted in “Próba źródłosłowy II” may be the result of the method Mickiewicz used in recording his linguistic observations. In this instance it involved determining formal similarities between words of the dead language and that of the living one, to ascertain the link between Slavic culture and the use then of spoken Latin. For this purpose, Mickiewicz used a simple comparative method formally marked in his descriptions using the abbreviation “cf”. (Latin confere, to compare):

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{Lacrima} – cf. \textit{tkać, tkanie}. [to weep]
  \item \textit{Dentes} – cf. \textit{Dzięsła}. [gums]
  \item \textit{Guttur} – cf. \textit{ktrań}. [larynx]
  \item \textit{Pes} – noga, cf. pieszy \textit{i pies, który nie pochodzi od paść, jak myślą Czechy, ale od pieszy}. [leg, cf. pedestrian and dog, the Polish word does not derive from pasture, as the Czechs believe, but from pedestrian]
  \item \textit{Glans, glandis} – cf. \textit{gałąź}. [branch]
  \item \textit{Digitus} – cf. \textit{tykać, tyka, patyczek}. [to tick, rod, stick]
  \item \textit{Corpus, corpo} – cf. \textit{krepko} strongly – quod est concretum, durum (Mickiewicz 1997a: 205, 207)\textsuperscript{15}.
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{14} The view of Latin as a branch of old Slavic was maintained by Kollár in relation to alleged discoveries of runic writings as early as in the 1830s. This material evidence of his theory was investigated in 1852 by Wójciech Cybulski, a specialist in the history of literature and a Slavist. Cybulski stated that one must have a rich imagination to perceive runic writings in barely visible irregular cuts, cracks, and scratches on the Bamberg monuments, much less Slavic runes. Cybulski wrote: Indeed, one would need Kollár’s arch-Slavic eyes to notice anything similar to runes; furthermore, to puport Slavic monuments from the very external shape, namely, of roughly hewn shapes of lions! From monuments to several shapeless marks on the sandstone idols, from marks to runic letters, from runic letters to the entire runic inscription, we jump from one conclusion to another. While because the church servant told Kollár how the idols spoke of the evil spirit who would destroy at night what was built during the day; Kollár was aware of the history and that Saint Otto was the bishop of this church, and that this Saint Otto was also an apostle for the Pomeranian Slavs whose idols he turned down and destroyed, and even sent one to the pope to prove his apostolic zeal; the next conclusion was at hand: that the evil spirit, expressed as the idols was the Black God, and Saint Otto brought this Black God from Pomerania to Bamberg. The alleged Runes, spread unevenly on the left side of one idol, must have come close to one another and bend to yield the desired inscription, which, understandably, could only be written in the Polish-Pomeranian dialect, and sounded Czarni-bu, namely Czarny-bóg! [Black God]. In such manner, Kollár arrived at the famous discovery in Slavic archaeology, which I dare to call a fabrica
tion of his hyper-Slavic fantasy […]. (Cybulski 1860: 26–27; cf. also Boroń 2012: 88 ff.).

\textsuperscript{15} \textit{Lacrima} – cf. \textit{tkać, tkanie}.

\item \textit{Dentes} – cf. \textit{dzięsła}
\item \textit{Guttur} – cf. \textit{ktrań}
\item \textit{Pes} – noga, cf. pieszy \textit{i pies, który nie pochodzi od paść, jak myślą Czechy, ale od pieszy}
\item \textit{Glans, glandis} – cf. \textit{gałąź}
\item \textit{Digitus} – cf. \textit{tykać, tyka, patyczek}
\item \textit{Corpus, corpo} – cf. \textit{krepko - quod est concretum, durum}.
This conventional comparative formula applied in nineteenth-century lexicography, including in Słownik języka polskiego by Linde, provides important guidelines for the genesis and significance of Mickiewicz’s attempted rooting of words. We become aware that such exercises are preparations for much more complex research. At this point in his studies, Mickiewicz was focused upon simple juxtaposition of words. This was not without a purpose. The next step involved searching for rules derived from these comparisons; those, in turn, opened paths for new findings that reached beyond linguistics towards history, ethnography, and a philosophy of culture.

To reach such conclusions regarding linguistic techniques within Slavic culture, Mickiewicz needed to compare specific words to support his etymological research. It could not be done through intuition and a Romantic quest for the emanation of spirit in the language, or the idea of Slavs as the chosen nation, as he proclaimed in the Paris lectures. A sound knowledge of word formation was required, such as Linde possessed. What Mickiewicz aimed at as a lecturer¹⁶ was to investigate the testimonies of the nation’s past to find clues as to the world-historical role it was yet to play. That role was to be substantiated by the “word of the era” or the “divine word”, the understanding and fulfillment of which was the destiny of the Slavic peoples, according to him¹⁷. Attempts to reconstruct word roots resulted in separate “etymological ideas” recorded by Mickiewicz, and in the repeated analyses of word origins presented in his Paris lectures. Such analyses did not necessarily reflect standard historical-linguistic processes reliably or objectively. The lectures functioned to authenticate, the Slavic legend he created, even if by fantasy.

In this situation, it is not surprising that Mickiewicz associated the Latin vir with the general Slavic wiara (Bulg. wiára, Czech víra, Ukr. віра). In this manner, he attributed additional meaning to wiara by referring to the ancient ethos of valor, maturity, and character. He proceeded accordingly with other words. As the root of the Latin lexeme dux (guide, leader, chief, driver, inspirer), he pointed to duch (spirit), where Johann Gottfried von Herder, for example, when analyzing the construction of the oldest “eastern languages”, noticed that in them abstract concepts were concrete: “spirit was wind, breathing”, and “soul was called breath” (Herder 1987: 123–124). This direction was also taken by Linde, deriving the word duch from dech (breath) and pointing to synonymous lexemes: zapach, wiatr (smell, wind) (Linde 1807: 544); as well as Kollár, who referred to its links with the Latin tūs, tūris – kadzidlo (incense) (Kollár 1853: 122).

Brückner also contributed: “cerk. [Old Slavonic] duch [spirit], ‘dech’ [breath], du-chati, ‘wiać’ [blow], wózduch, ‘powietrze’ [air] (Rus. wozduch, wozdusznýj, ‘napowietrzný’ [airborne])” (Brückner 1993: 102). Etymologists today point to the origin of this Slavic word from pie. dhou-s-, Old Slavonic duchъ as well as thematic alterations, as in Polish: “duch-/dusz-/duch- /dycz-/dech- /dch- (tch)” (Długosz-Kurczabowa 2009: 109). The meanings of the word duch thus focus on breath, breathing, smell, nonmaterial

¹⁷ Cf. The tenth lecture in the fourth course.
substance, volatile, invisible (cf. also Boryś 2010: 131). In Latin, one can find semantic equivalents in duch (spiritus) and dusza (anima, soul). None of these words, however, has usually been associated with the lexeme dux.

The reason for Mickiewicz’s unconventional word associations may be due to the sound similarity as well as graphic similarity of the words (the poet was fluent in Russian, and the word dux written in Cyrillic resembles the Latin form dux). What most appealed to Mickiewicz in the semantics of the lexeme dux was the issue of leadership and inspiration. This is what the concept of the relation between the words relied on. Dux means “spirit who leads all” and, therefore, leader, driver, inspirer. This association is not rooted in the morphological similarity of the words (this he rightly recognized in the later presented relations between the forms docere and doctor with the word dux\textsuperscript{18}), but in the Romantic interpretation of spirit as the invisible force that rules the world and inspires action. The poet’s arguments indicate that Latin, in common with the Slavic language, is encoded with properties of leadership and spirit. This was mentioned by German precursors of Romanticism when writing about absolute spirit (macrocosmos) that shapes each individual spirit (microcosmos), leading and inspiring it. “We dream of traveling across the universe”, Novalis stated, “and isn’t there universe in ourselves? We do not know the depths of our spirit. A mysterious path leads inside” (Novalis 1984: 93). He added: “If any spirit revealed itself to us, we would immediately overwhelm our own spirit: we would be inspired by ourselves and that spirit at the same time. Without the inspiration, there would be no spirit. Inspiration is at the same time the appearance and the counter-appearance, taking and giving” (Novalis 1984: 98). The juxtaposition of the words dux and duch is one of the more interesting exemplifications of Romantic etymology in Mickiewicz’s writings. The idea orientates thinking about language, decides its method for interpretation.

More exercises in etymological research can be found in Mickiewicz’s many works. He glossed Flos as “cf. włos [hair]; ‘meadow sheds lengthy hair,’ Zimorowicz” (Mickiewicz 1997a: 207). The linguistic corpus does not record either a semantic or a morphological affinity between the two words. Linde points out that włos has a common root with the Latin vellus (fleece, wool) and villus (animal hair, fleece, feather down), which derive from velló, -ere (tear, pull, pluck, pull out) (Linde 1814: 266). Wiesław Boryś points to the old Indo-European root “ṷel(ə) - ‘włos, włókno, wełna’ [hair, fiber, wool]” (Boryś 2010: 704). How was the lexeme flos (flower) derived in Mickiewicz’s etymological workings? It may have come from “Obmowa”, an idyllic poem by Józef Bartłomiej Zimorowic: 

As a hardworking reaper, when amidst the summer
He sweeps the overgrown grass with his sharp blade
The shaven meadow sheds the blooming hair
And the steel gives a loud sound rushing further;

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\textsuperscript{18} These relations were also mentioned by Warron (Marcus Terentius Varro, 116–27 BCE), author of De lingua Latina.
If lily of the valley appears sometimes near the valley
And cannot be seen among the rudimentary
Weed, the strong reaper soon
Reaps its maiden circles with his deadly arrow,
There it faints and lets go
Abundantly pouring the dew from its insides:
And so Fillis, my dear Fillis, the love of my soul,
When we were reached by the general punishment
Of the deadly fall, almost since the morning
Weeping and mourning without a stop,
She finally gave farewell to maidens and maids,
And death took a slow look at the virgin lips
Worth of eternal years, envied her to people
So that immediately cut her thread of life
(Zimorowicz 1857: 34)19

In Zimorowicz’s poem, hair is identified with flowers metaphorically. In the passage quoted above, death takes young Fillis to the hardworking reaper who “sweeps the overgrown grass with his blade”. One of the “Mourners”, Fedora, calls this grass “blooming hair”. The baroque poet thus associates flowers with hair through the metaphor of grass. Fillis is figured as a lily of the valley among the weeds in a meadow, cut down by the “reaper”.

The only justification for Mickiewicz’s juxtaposition of the lexemes flos and włos is the imprecisely quoted fragment of Zimorowicz’s idyllic poem (“meadow sheds the lengthy hair” instead of “shaven meadow sheds the blooming hair”). The linking of the Polish (Slavic) lexeme włos with the Latin flos (flower) was adopted by Mickiewicz against the commonly received lexicographic tradition, characteristically, pursuant to a single

19 Jako robotny kosiarz, kiedy pośród lata
Ostrem żelazem trawę zaroślą umiata,
Roni rozkwitłe włosy ogolona łąka,
A stał się pomykając dalej głośno brzęk;
Jeśli tam konwalia kędy przy dolinie
Wynika, a nie znac jej w pospolitym gminie
Zielska niepoczesnego, prędko kosiarz tęgę
Przejmie śmiertelną strzałt jej panierskie kręgi,
Tam ona omdlewa patrząc na usta dziewicy,
Hojną z wtrętności lejąc wytoczoną rose:
Tak Fillis, sliczna Fillis, duszy mej kochanie,
Kiedy nas dosięgało powszechne karanie
Śmiertelnego upadku, prawie od poranku
Placząc i narzekając rzewnie bez przestanku,
Zegnała ostatecznie panny i panice,
A śmierć z nienagłą patrząc na usta dziewczyn,
Godne lat wiekuistych, ludziom jej zająźała,
Ze nici dożywotne natychmiast przerwała.
literary image, the only image of a meadow of its kind\textsuperscript{20}. As in the case of wiara and duch, Mickiewicz’s etymological thought was driven by Romantic creativity, rather than documented knowledge about the process of language formation.

Apart from such free “poetic” comparisons between Latin and Slavic words in “Próba źródłosłowu II”, one can find juxtapositions within further corresponding lexical units:

\begin{itemize}
  \item Domus – dom. \([\text{home}]\)
  \item Semen – siemie \([\text{sic}], \text{nasionie.} \) \([\text{linseed} \ [\text{sic}], \text{semen}]\)
  \item Ager – ugór. \([\text{fallow}]\)
  \item Nasus – nos. \([\text{nose}]\)
  \item Oculus – oko \([\text{eye}]\)
\end{itemize}

(Mickiewicz 1997a: 206)\textsuperscript{21}

If the sound and semantic similarity seemed obvious, Mickiewicz refrained from comments regarding their relations and origin. When the selection of the juxtaposed forms did not correspond with the lexicographical tradition, Mickiewicz referred to the \textit{confere (“compare”) formula, for example “Corpus, corpo – cf. krepko [strongly]”} (Mickiewicz 1997a: 207)\textsuperscript{22}. The comparative rule in such a cases would be a question mark placed against uncertain situations, and an alternative method utilized to rationalize the irrational. The word “compare” would thus mean confront, evaluate, and draw conclusions. It would turn the presented juxtapositions into preliminary, hypothetical pairs that await either confirmation or rebuttal.

A question arises about the cognitive value of such comparisons. When discussing the rules of comparative studies, Edward Kasperski points out:

Comparisons with cognitive objectives must, therefore, uncover properties of the juxtaposed items or phenomena, which would otherwise remain undetected and invisible. It is only this characteristic that proves decisive in determining whether comparisons are cognitively justifiable and fortunate. Secondly, they cannot be unreal, meaning invented or untrue. In turn, the detected properties may, either jointly or severally, refer to various aspects of the phenomena. They may lead

\begin{itemize}
  \item It is worth adding that Zimorowic was a bilingual poet, who wrote many texts in Latin (cf. his \textit{Pisma do dziejów Lwowa odnoszące się}, Lwów 1899). This part of his work, however, did not inspire Mickiewicz in his etymological studies.
  \item Domus – dom.
  \item Semen – siemie \([\text{sic}], \text{nasionie.} \)
  \item Ager – ugór.
  \item Nasus – nos.
  \item Oculus – oko.
  \item Corpus, \textit{oris – ciała} \([\text{body}]\) (cf. also metaphorical meanings that do not include the equivalent of \textit{krepko} quoted by Mickiewicz in: Bobrowski 1822: 287; Plezia 2007a: 773). No relations between the noun \textit{corpus} and adverb \textit{krepko} (krzepko, or strongly) or adjective \textit{krzepki} (strong) have been recorded either by Linde (Linde 1808: 1155), or by Brückner, who only analyzes the verb \textit{krzepić} (strengthen) (Brückner 1993: 275), or by Boryś (Boryś 2010: 266–267).
\end{itemize}
to the analysis and description of a structure of the phenomenon that would remain unnoticed in any other case. They further lead to determining mutual equivalence occurring in the compared phenomena, allowing to classify them to a common category, type, or group (Kasperski 2010: 24–25).

If the first of these conditions, namely uncovering properties of the juxtaposed items that would otherwise remain undetected, is met by Mickiewicz’s attempts to find the word origins, the issue of the verifiability of the comparisons raises significant doubts. This is because there are no credible or convincing arguments to allow including the words dux and duch, vir and wiara, flos and włos, or corpus and krepko (krzepko, or strongly) in common categories or families of words. Therefore, all the interpretations created around such pairs are presumptive.

Cognitive value was, however, not as important as the ideological interpretation of Mickiewicz’s etymological discourse. The comparison of Slavic “dialects”, as he referred to them, is not of great consequence, for the Slavic people borrowed many words and made it an important point of reference for lexicographical studies. Mickiewicz’s methods, however, are unique and original, containing not just linguistic significances but historical and cultural ones. The practice of deriving Latin lexemes from Slavic words corresponds with Kollár’s theory that Latin may be a branch of the old Slavic language. This, in turn, would suggest that this language is older than the one used by the ancient Romans. This would mean that Mickiewicz imagined the Slavic race as an ancient people who inhabited most of Europe, and thus an important part of history. In the first lecture of the first course of Literatura słowiańska [Slavic literature], he stated:

From the most material point of view and, according to my general opinion, the only truly material point of view, namely the point of view of the number and the area, Slavic language can be of utmost importance: dialects of the language are spoken by a people of seventy million individuals. It alone covers half of Europe, and a third of Asia. When drawing the line from the Bay of Venice to the mouth of the Elbe, outside the line and on its entire length, we shall find the remnants of this people, pushed to the north by the German and Roman tribes (Mickiewicz 1997b: 17).

Latin and Slavic comparisons in the study of word origins were exercises undertaken in the theses presented by Mickiewicz during his lectures. As such, they co-created the myth of Slavic culture, which according to him should build a future from its own noble past. As Alina Witkowska rightly points out, Romaniticism in its entirety was a period of treating myth as an “encrypted collective awareness and as a system of signs containing the memory of the past and the prophecy of the future” (Witkowska 1980: 41). This is in contrast with legends about the Polish past created pursuant to unverified hypotheses by renowned historians including Fryderyk Henryk Lewestam (Celtic-invasion theory; Lewestam 1841) and Karol Szajnocha (Norman-conquest theory; Szajnocha 1858).
Mickiewicz, in common with many linguists, ethnographers, historians, philosophers, and poets, did not fully succeed in creating a myth about the grand historical role of Slavic culture and history, for the system of beliefs he sought proved impossible to reconstruct. He thus attempted to derive that myth from language, making it the fundamental means for emphasizing the Slavic people’s role played in European history. Therefore, although his etymological ideas were confined to his students at the Collège de France (with notes first published in 1880)\textsuperscript{23} and were not widely disseminated during his lifetime, they document interactions between ideology and language. As Wojciech Cybulski would say, this is a testimony to Adam Mickiewicz’s “hyper-Slavic fantasy”, and to his original and sometimes odd ideas following the visionary Romantic trend in Slavic studies.

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\textsuperscript{23} Excerpts from Mickiewicz’s etymological ideas were first published in the Paris edition of his works (Mickiewicz 1880: 57–62).


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