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The work of Kazimiera Zawistowska in the face of Young Poland's dilemmas and oppositions

Summary

The aim of the dissertation is to describe the poetic world of Kazimiera Zawistowska (1870–1902), taking into account the broader literary and cultural background of the epoch. For a very long time, the poet's texts were looked at mainly through the prism of her biography presented in the *femme fatale* pattern typical of Young Poland, or as a portrait of an accursed poet. In my dissertation, I focus on reading the works of the poet from Supranówka in the context of selected poems by other artists and against the background of socio-cultural changes at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. I analyze the ways Zawistowska uses motifs and topics characteristic of her times. I make an attempt to reconstruct the poet's cultural awareness. By referring to feminist and translation studies, I try to see in her works something more than a recording of a love drama or the duplication of fashionable topics. I have my heart set on finding a deeper meaning in her poetry. My goal is to show the specificity of her output and the autonomy of a large part of literary ideas that enter into dialogue with other achievements of that time.

The dissertation begins with an introduction in which I present the creative profile of Kazimiera Zawistowska against the background of attitudes and judgments towards women's poetry at that time. I define its place in women's literature at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. My next step is to inform the readers about the way her texts were welcomed by literary critics and present the state of research on the poet's work. Then, in the first chapter, I discuss the antinomies relevant to the literature of Young Poland, referring to three pairs of oppositions: nature – culture, femininity – masculinity and soul – body. They are important in the broader perspective of thinking about man in the last decades of the 19th century, which is also reflected in belles-lettres. In Zawistowska's texts, these categories percolate to a large extent – their clear delineation is impossible. The second chapter deals with the existential issues raised by the author of *Herodiada*. In this part of the work, I try to present her thematic choices, primarily in two areas relating to love and death. In the following chapters I discuss the religious and historical inspirations of her work. In the third chapter, I pay attention primarily to the use of stylistic (in reference mainly to *The Song of Songs*) and thematic references to the Bible. Zawistowska was mainly interested in the heroines who embody oppositional values – Ewa, Herodiada, Maria, Magdalena. The works in which the saints appear

– Teresa, Agnesa, Kinga and Johelet – resemble peculiar apocrypha. I would like to point out that the poet does not reconstruct their biographies, but gives them a voice and allows them to express the needs of the spirit and body. For this purpose, she uses the lyric of the role and the lyric of the mask. I devote the second part of this chapter to the most valuable series by Zawistowska, the title of which alludes to The Old Testament love poem. It presents the events of the liturgical year from the perspective of Maria, and is also varied in terms of style and genre. In the fourth chapter, I analyze references to ancient and medieval motifs as well as mythological and historical figures. It should be emphasized that we are not dealing here with any deeper reference to images and patterns from the past. The poet, however, efficiently uses the historical and cultural staffage related to the Winckelman tradition of Greek arcadia to evoke symbolic content and to create a specific mood. She is also interested in strong and imperious women (Kleopatra, Agrypina). On the other hand, she captures the Middle Ages through the prism of romantic perception. It is a knightly medieval period, but there is also an interest in the lives of saints or the works of great masters. Before she started her own work, Zawistowska was engaged in translation work. It is to this issue that I devote the fifth chapter. In it I present the translation reception of selected works by French poets (Baudelaire and Verlaine), indicating in her choices an affinity with the poet's own views and her aesthetic sensitivity. I also compare these translations to translations created by other poets. In the last chapter, I elaborate on Zawistowska's choices regarding literary genres. The main one she cultivates is the sonnet. I draw attention to its variability as a difficult form, forcing the thought to be closed in a rigid versification structure, and at the same time allowing this structure to be inscribed in an open cyclical system. I analyze combinations of "sister sonnets" (two or three pieces forming a whole), as well as the arrangements of poetry cycles. In addition, I pay attention to the personal communication relationships in her poems. I can see the poet's self-awareness as she creates the identity of the self that speaks in her works in the context of the game of roles and masks allowing for the gradation of subjective assertion. At the end of the attempt to describe Zawistowska's work undertaken in this dissertation, I attempt to define its place within Young Poland's literature. On the basis of the analyzes carried out, I notice that the leading "ism" in the works is the Parnassian convention understood in the "syncretic" approach, in connection to neoclassical stylizations and the symbolic and impressionistic way of building literary images. I also describe the poet from Supranówka as a representative of women's literature mainly due to clear affirmation of sensuality in her work, courage in revealing female desires and experiences, including erotic ones, empathy towards heroines perceived in patriarchal culture as defying social and moral norms of 19th and 20th centuries.

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