

Summary

***Homo reminiscens* – Stefan Żeromski's creations of literary characters versus the problems of modern subjectivity**

Dissertation titled „*Homo reminiscens*” – *Stefan Żeromski's creations of literary characters versus the problems of modern subjectivity* concerns the relationship between memory and subjectivity appearing in – Stefan Żeromski's literary characters. The aim of this dissertation was the recognition of how the writer – by means of the creation of *homo reminiscens*, ‘remembering man’ – diagnosed modern subjectivity as broken and his struggle with it being broken and, simultaneously, how that struggle caused subjectivity to be merged.

The basic material of interpretation consists of the most representatives works: *Homeless People* (1899), *The Wages of Sin* (1908), *The Charm of Life* (1912), *Converting Judas* (1916), *Blizzard* (1916), *Charitas* (1919), *The Coming Spring* (1924), *Mistakes* (1923), *Fir Forest* (1925), *Oriole* (1925). As a context: the novels *Radius* (1897), *Ashes* (1903), short story *Forest Echoes* (1905) and drama *The White Glove* (1921).

The dissertation is composed of an introductory chapter, three basic chapters, glossary, conclusion, and bibliography. The introductory chapter considers relations between memory and subjectivity present in literature and culture during the XIX and XX centuries. In this context, an interpretation of Żeromski's thoughts about the value of memory, memories and getting to know yourself that are in his *Journals*, follows. Then, there is a discussion of the state of research of these concepts in the bibliography of the writer's works.

These literary characters for whom memory became a yoke and the struggle with this memory became the biggest tragedy of life were analyzed and interpreted in the first chapter. Characters experiencing the oppressive role of memory – memory depriving identity and psychological coherence – were recognized: Tomasz Judym (*Homeless People*), Ewa Pobratyńska (*The Wages of Sin*), Piotr Rozłucki (*The Charm of Life*), Ryszard Nienaski (*Blizzard*), Witold Granowski (*Charitas*). The interpretation of their experiences allowed for a reconstruction of Żeromski's thoughts about the reasons for the formation “memory wounds” as well as their influence on the stability of subjectivity.

In the second chapter, the experiences of characters who oppose the oppressive role of their own memory are described. Described are the ways protagonists confront their own awareness, consisting of attempts to describe the painful past anew, in another way, and consequently attempting to create a new definition their selves. It is characteristic for Witold Granowski, Ewa Pobratyńska, and for characters in *The White Glove*, postwar drama and noted problems included in *The Coming Spring*. In the second part of this chapter, there is an analysis of the experiences of those characters, who wanted to create a new narration about their own past – a narration of falsifying ancestral and individual memory – entrusted memory Other and let them model.

In the third chapter, there follows an analysis of, as described by Żeromski, the mechanisms of strengthening subjectivity by cultural memory. In this perspective, characters meetings with monuments of the past and the process of discovery by them of historical heritage and the formation of postmemory were interpreted.

Żeromski looked at individual memory in relation to identity from different perspectives. In some measure, he checked function of memory in specific situations of the character's life. Żeromski's creativeness is not uniform; the writer took up various topics and realized them in different ways. His discourse about memory is not single-threaded, and this confirms creative reflection about the properties of memory. The problem of memory and influence – destruction and reintegration – for the formation of identity was important for Żeromski, who belonged to a generation dealing with worldview crises on individual and collective life. The writer belonged to a generation which had awareness of dependencies between individual process integration and the conditioning of a nation deprived of boundaries. Żeromski showed his literary characters in a fight with the problems of memory and self-identity – individual, ancestral and national.

In Żeromski's works, we can find prose in which memory is a subject of private reflection. This intimate voice we can find in elegical works. This is the voice of man experienced in life and looking at his own past with a maturity of being a man, whose voice we can hear when reading *Mistakes*, *Fir Forest*, *Oriole*. Interpretations of those works – described in the glossary – were referred to in Żeromski's *Journals*, to thought about memory, and finally, the deepest reflections about the condition of remembering man.

The creation of characters fighting with memory forms a discourse about the philosophical and psychological role of memory, which phenomenon was considered by the writer consciously and with the latest intellectual contexts. The dissertation compares Żeromski's literary thought with the thought of other writers: Stanisław Brzozowski, Karol

Irzykowski, Stanisław Przybyszewski, Stanisław Wyspiański. They took up the problem of memory in their works: Stanisław Brzozowski in *Flames*, Karol Irzykowski in *The Hag*, Stanisław Przybyszewski in the prose poem *Ascencion*, Stanisław Wyspiański in the tragedy *Protesilas and Laodamia*. The inclusion in this dissertation of interpretations of their works made it possible to designate common points in literary creation of remembering man in literature at the end of the XIX and early XX century.