

Summary

Expressions of rebellion. On the confessions of female poets

Expressions of rebellion. On the confessions of female poets analyses significant aspects of the work of three contemporary Polish women poets: Anna Świrszczyńska, Halina Poświatowska and Justyna Bargielska. The focal point of the interpretative considerations is the vision of female rebellion emerging from lyrical confessions. Each of the writers can be described as a ‘rebellious woman’, which manifests itself not through journalistic manifestos but through a strongly experienced need to reveal individual opposition to social and moral rules. The original and creatively treated poetic language proves to be an effective medium for expressing “rebellious” personal content, often of the most intimate nature. The use of ambiguous metaphors and symbols proves effective in the consistent and courageous search for ways to express what is most personal, unique and, at the same time, non-negotiable.

The writers’ works are examples of how the female experience is articulated within a philosophically conceived existence and independence in a feminine variant. In this poetry, the language of the senses is also rehabilitated as a fully-fledged means of expressing subjective presence in the world. Despite the generational differences separating the authors, the texts by Świrszczyńska, Poświatowska and Bargielska share a notable similarity – their works, while remaining lyrical confessions, also become a testimony to

individual and collective experiences and constitute an uncompromising challenge to themselves, their audiences and the whole world. In their search for ways to express intimate experiences, the poets aim to leave a distinctly personal mark of their subjective bond with reality and the creative power of words.

The phenomenon of Anna Świrszczyńska – analysed by Beata Przymuszała – consisted primarily in the fact that, while invariably remaining a rebellious and in various ways rebellious ‘woman’, she sought and succeeded in finding harmony with the world. However, when speaking of harmony, it is necessary to invoke the notion of accepting what is, agreeing with what exists, because this is the only way to come to terms with oneself, to agree accept oneself, and to bring into existence a world that previously could not be articulated. With her poetry, Świrszczyńska broadened the framework for perceiving and feeling our reality, and her variety of rebellion is one that opens up the world. The texts are often an attempt to preserve previously unheard, overlooked voices and to present the existential experience of love, which is not a mere poetic subject but a form of our existence in reality shaped through relationships.

In Halina Poświatowska’s poetry, as presented by Agnieszka Rydz, love proved to be both a privileged “space-time” of existence, an essential sphere of being, and a force that determined everything. The experience of the ‘royal’ affect transformed her completely, shaking her entire being to find an ideal representation of this thorough transformation in her sensual poetry. Above all, it unleashed a new female voice: Julia’s scream. From the beginning, her powerful voice was developed and consciously constructed in such a way that this scream, protest, and rebellion would exist in the social space and that it would not be ignored or forgotten. In her variant of corpus writing, Poświatowska was radical and pushed several boundaries at the same time: the boundary of what was epistemological, of what

was expressible in words, and ultimately, of what was morally acceptable in print at the time. Without the subjectivity gained through the experience of love, rebellion would lack the powerful force and expressiveness reflected in the poems of Poświatowska on the one hand, and the mature femininity of Świrszczyńska manifested in her poetry on the other.

Justyna Bargielska's work, as presented by Agnieszka Czyżak, is a story of 'permanent rebellion' played out in the space of everyday life, whose images are marked by the omnipresent experience of individual death (of love forever lost), and later also by a premonition of the impending doom of humanity. And although today the certainty of impending catastrophes does not provoke violent protests, and it is increasingly difficult to believe that the singular voice of refusal still matters, Bargielska argues that one must not give up the right to it. The poet's existence – as can be read in her works – must therefore entail expressing opposition to the frailty of human existence, revealing internalised discord with 'fate' or 'destiny', and also articulating the anxiety caused by the deepening experience of the instability, or even fragility, of the external world. At the same time, struggling with her own serious illness led to an intensification of her rebellious attitude and alternating appearance of gestures of resignation and the desire to escape from life – yet these are still translated into the language of poetry and intimate confessions.

Female rebellion has many varieties. The youngest of the writers presented in the volume, Bargielska, is aware that she belongs to a generation of rebels whose path (also in artistic terms) was paved by her predecessors. What she has in common with the other two is primarily the conviction that subversive actions must take place within the system of customs and worldviews, thus attempting to break down their oppressive boundaries and breach the foundations of social orders. Therefore, one does not choose

an external position, which admittedly, might facilitate achieving distance, but also excludes one from the network of interpersonal connections. On the one hand, such an attitude makes it possible to broaden the audience, but on the other hand, it makes it difficult for critics to assign an unambiguous ideological label of the authors' entire oeuvre, which would ultimately lead to its inevitable marginalisation. The insights contained in this volume prove that poetic disclosure of disagreement with the rules governing the life of the collective serves primarily to protect the individual's right to choose their own path – both in the existential and artistic spheres.