

Summary

„Writer, painter, mountaineer”. Autobiography dispersed in Rafał Malczewski’s literary works

The main aim of the following thesis is an attempt to reconstruct Rafał Malczewski’s autobiography recorded – and dispersed – in the matter of his texts. The author aims to grasp how particular forms of the writer’s identity manifest themselves in his writings and how they interpenetrate one another. To this end, she attempts to answer the questions: how did painting, not so much as an activity but as a form of identity, a particular way of perceiving the world by the painter, influence Malczewski’s literary output and how did his mountaineering experience translate into the substance of the text? The author of *Narkotyki gór. Nowele tatrzańskie* [“Addicted to mountains. Tatra novellas”] wrote above all about what he knew and experienced, paying particular attention to spaces and places.

As an artist, Malczewski – like many others in a similar situation – had to fight for his identity, detached from the label of a famous father’s son. Therefore, one of the presented works aims to bring out the autonomous nature of his output and creative identity (without altogether abandoning references to his family roots, which, after all, played a fundamental role in shaping his character and creativity).

The dissertation consists of four chapters preceded by an introduction. The first chapter presents the chosen methodology and the motivations behind its selection. It discusses the issues related to literature study from the autobiographical perspective and explains what the author means by the dispersion of autobiography in Malczewski’s case. The relations between the autobiographical and the study of space in literature are presented, among others, by drawing on Czermińska’s category of autobiographical place. The methodological search is accompanied by an attempt to determine the research area and the field of detailed analyses of selected texts.

The second chapter attempts to reconstruct and describe Rafał Malczewski’s biography in the light of factography. For the most part, it results from work on documents scattered in Polish and foreign archives, listed in the bibliography. The author’s biography is presented in chronological order. Its subchapters are simultaneously marked by spatial shifts, which emphasises that spatiality is always characterised by self-experience and takes place across time. The last part of the chapter is devoted to the posthumous reception of Malczewski’s work.

The author interprets a selected corpus of texts in the third and fourth chapters. These are attempts to read Malczewski's writings through the process of the creative use of various factors shaping the author's identity, which is present in them. The third chapter is devoted to analysing how the painter's identity is revealed in the matter of texts and the use of painterly tools to create literary worlds in literary landscapes and portraits. The fourth chapter consists of two parts—the first concerns how Malczewski's Tatra identity functions in his writing. The second part is an attempt to reconstruct the image of Zakopane and the Tatra Mountains as an autobiographical place.

As an author, Malczewski loved to deceive his readers. Therefore, the reconstruction of his autobiography recorded in his texts took the form of identity reconstruction, worldview, and ways of experiencing reality. Malczewski was a versatile artist who did not succumb to limitations in terms of material and tools. Both in painting and writing, he experimented with form and genres. The painting and mountaineering dimensions of identity are present in his writing. His literary creations of landscapes are the equivalents of those he painted. Malczewski's mountaineering identity recorded in the text can be reduced to several roles: an expert on the Tatra Mountains, a committed sports promoter, a climber and skier, and a local social activist working for ecology. The place where all three dimensions of the artist's identity (writing, painting, mountaineering) intersect is Zakopane and the Tatra Mountains. This is the dominant place in his autobiography. Considered as an autobiographical place, it appears in the temporal model. It changes its character along with the shifts in Rafał Malczewski's biography.

Czytadla 25.04.2022

Julita Reprnka