

## Summary

The anthology included texts on the diagnosis of the experience of modernity in the second half of the nineteenth century in Central and Eastern Europe. Translations of languages: Hungarian, Czech, Croatian, Lithuanian, Hebrew, Yiddish, Ukrainian, German, and little-known texts by Polish authors were placed in the volume.

The materials have been selected so as to show the different dimensions of formation of modernity in this particular region, and also pay attention to various aspects of the formation of the identity of the hero of Central Europe, both in its individual and collective variant – the entity entangled not only in the dilemmas of personality, but also absorbed by the political and historical tensions; collection creates a coherent whole.

In volume *Community of Questions* were published fragments known in Polish language only in an age in which they were created, and they are worth recalling. They include, for example, texts showing the transformation of feminine consciousness, represented among others by the works of Maria Krzymuska-Iwanowska and Konstancja Morawska.

The anthology constitutes a response to the lack of publications about Central and Eastern European variety of modernism, in which source texts created in the second half of the nineteenth century and the turn of the century play a major role.

Anthology is divided into four parts. In the first part, entitled *Diagnosis of Modernity* were published mainly theoretical and journalistic texts, designed to outline specifics of historical and social changes in Central

and Eastern Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century. All contained proposals neatly describe issues related to the modernity in Central Europe. This is facilitated by the optics of “looking from the inside” – all texts were written by people who live in this part of the continent. The modern experience of the city and history is not only connected with the space, but also – with time. This mechanism is shown in excerpts from the novel *At the Source* by Maria Iwanowska (edited by Izabela Poniatowska; the fragments published in the anthology concern the participation of the main character in the Warsaw episode of the 1905 revolution) or a fragment of a novel *Down with Weapons* by Bertha von Suttner (edited by Ewa Paczoska). The novel *Millions!* by Szolem-Alejchem (edited by Ewa Paczoska and Karolina Szymaniak), a fragment of which was published in the anthology, is the image of the life of Jewish merchants from Kiev (in the novel: Jehupiec). Text *From the Correspondence of Princess Łowicka* (edited by Urszula Kowalczyk) is a testimony of deep reflection on ways of documenting the complicated history of Poland, in which biographies of the people involved in historical events became helpful.

The second part of the anthology was dedicated to redefinitions of European consciousness. The second half of the nineteenth century was a time of political upheavals, the emergence of mass culture, both in its local and global dimension, and technology development. The Antun Gustav Matoš' essay (translated by Stanisław Rek, edited by Małgorzata Vražić) about Zagreb is worth a closer look because it perfectly illustrates the specificity of the experience of urbanity in Central Europe on the example of Zagreb, where the locality is mixed with inclusiveness, conviction of the need to defend national values – with the longing for breaking out of the “small” cities, simultaneously modern and backward, the feeling of being at home – with a poignant feeling of alienation. Modernity in Central Europe is the issue in which cannot be reconciled longing for the past and the drive towards novelty. Similarly, Central European urbanity is characterized in text by Janko Polić (Kamov; text translated by Stanisław Rek, edited by Małgorzata Vražić),

whose protagonist, Bitanga, talks about the experiences of a resident of the province who came to Zagreb. Croatian issues, so far little present in the Polish reflection on modernism Central and Eastern Europe, is dedicated to the text *Three Months in Croatia. Memories from a Trip to Austria and Hungary* (edited by Dawid Maria Osiński) whose author, the Frenchman, looks at this part of the continent from the perspective of a Westerner. From the position of a stranger looks at Poland and Russia also Dane Georg Brandes (all three texts edited by Ewa Paczoska). *Awareness of the Text* refers to changes taking place within the thinking about literature in Central and Eastern Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century, under the influence of the experience of modernity. Hugo von Hofmannstahl in the text *Gabriele D'Annunzio* (edited by Mieczysław Dąbrowski) wrote a penetrating diagnosis of the artist caught up in modernity. The validity of the category of personal experience, which, as it seems, it is particularly important to talk about the Central European variant of modernism, emphasizes, in relation to a person of an art critic, František Xaver Šalda, in the text *Criticism as Pathos and Inspiration* (translated and edited by Justyna Kijanka) appearing in the third part of the anthology. The validity of the criticism in the life of the nation emphasizes Bal Makhshoves (translated by Sara Arm, edited by Izabela Poniatowska). On the other hand Sofija Čiurlionienė-Kymantaitė took a critical look at the whole Lithuanian cultural life (text translated and edited by Joanna Tabor).

The last, fourth part of the anthology *Literary Reconnaissance*, contains translations of texts that were not previously known to the Polish audience, and fragments of prose in Polish completely forgotten. The common denominator of these works, regardless of their artistic value, is the attempt to read the experiences of individual character in the context of the tensions that are created on the line of unit–society (actually: social expectations). This part of anthology proves that modernism in Central and Eastern Europe is not merely a theoretical construct, created for the modern history of literature and culture, but actually existing formation that gave shape to today's cultural landscape of this part of the

continent. This can be seen especially in the opportunities offered by comparatistic reading contained in the volume of proposals: *The Free* by Olga Kobylańska (translated and edited by Urszula Górska) can be read in parallel with works by Gabriela Zapolska (eg. *Malaszka*), the story by Margit Kaffka (translated and edited by Maja Paczoska) combined with the growing interest in the role of women in society, including in sensual dimension, so strongly present in the early works of Zofia Nałkowska, Krúdy's writing (both texts translated and edited by Maja Paczoska) is a good context for interpretation of Leśmian's *Adventures of Sinbad the Sailor*, the texts of Zagorka (translated and edited by Małgorzata Vražić) and Belmont (edited by Izabela Poniatowska) bind together the interest mass audience complicated themes of guilt and punishment, and included the story of Ladislav Klíma (translated and edited by Mateusz Chmurski) brings to mind Stefan Grabiński's writing. *Fight* (translated and edited by Joanna Tabor) is a text characteristic to Jurgis Savickis, one of the most prominent Lithuanian modernists, who liked to use irony to tell about the condition of modern man. The fragment from *Der Rauch des Opfers* (translated by Nina Oborska, edited by Anna Dżabagina) by Eleonora Kalkowska is a description of historical change, which takes place before the eyes of the author, and one of the first pacifist manifestos in German.

The title *Community of Questions* suggests that texts collected in the anthology focus more on formulating the problems specific to the development of Central European identity than on putting risky, because easy to refute, response. And so it is indeed: "great" history in Central and Eastern Europe is told from the point of view of the hero living in a melting pot of cultures and languages, characteristic for this part of the continent – and at the same time unique in the whole of Europe.

**Keywords:** Central and Eastern Europe, modernism, modernity, topographical turn, literature, locality, translations, experience.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Europa Środkowo-Wschodnia, modernizm, nowoczesność, zwrot topograficzny, literatura, lokalność, tłumaczenia, doświadczenie.