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# 'And to be malicious and belligerent / And not to lose feminine features'<sup>1</sup>: Zuzanna Ginczanka's Satirical World

"Zuzanna Ginczanka belongs to a large group of authors of the interwar period who were underrated both during their life and after death"<sup>2</sup>. These words of Maria Janion from 1999 make it possible to realise how, luckily for us, the thinking of the "beautiful Jewess"<sup>3</sup> is changing. In recent years, there have been more and more texts and monographs concerning Ginczanka's literary output, and beside the fundamental works by Izolda Kiec and research conducted by Agata Araszkiwicz one may find a freshly published post-conference volume edited by Katarzyna Kuczyńska-Koschany and Katarzyna Szymańska, titled *Ginczanka. Na stulecie Poetki*<sup>4</sup> (*A Ginczanka Centennial*).

In my paper, I would like to focus on how Ginczanka (dubbed 'Tuwim in a dress' by Adam Ważyk) felt in the Warsaw world of the 'Skamander Group', in the circle of 'Pikador' - in the world full of men, male dominance,

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<sup>1</sup> Z. Ginczanka, *Damskie kłopoty*, [in:] id., *Wiersze zebrane*, ed. I. Kiec, Sejny 2014, p. 291 [Unless indicated otherwise, quotations and titles in English were translated from Polish].

<sup>2</sup> M. Janion, 'Przepisać' los Ginczanki, [in:] A. Araszkiwicz, *Wypowiadam wam moje życie. Melancholia Zuzanny Ginczanki*, Warszawa 2001, p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. I. Kiec, *Zuzanna Ginczanka. Życie i twórczość*, Poznań 1994; A. Araszkiwicz, "Wypowiadam wam moje życie". *Melancholia Zuzanny Ginczanki*, Warszawa 2001; *Ginczanka. Na stulecie Poetki*, eds. K. Kuczyńska-Koschany, K. Szymańska, Kraków 2018.

and masculine creative power. As a woman-poet, was she finding her way in the literary, cabaret garden of Tuwim, Lechoń or Słonimski?

Trying to answer the above questions, I will take a closer look at two poems, namely *Pochwała snobów* (*In Praise of Snobs*) and *Damskie kłopoty* (*Feminine Trouble*), trying to depict the satirical nature as a specific feature of their poetics, and reconstruct the picture of the woman and poet present in Ginczanka's works. Satirical works seem to be particularly important among the numerous poems of the poet. As Izolda Kiec writes, "Satirical works are an area which allows to manifest participation in the events of the contemporary world. And this is precisely the field that Zuzanna Ginczanka is trying her hand at"<sup>5</sup>. Agata Araszkiwicz notices, in turn, particular otherness, separateness of the poet, stressing that "[in] *Szpilki* Ginczanka is the only woman in the company of many men"<sup>6</sup>. Does Ginczanka construct a female perspective that is different to male perspectives in the satirical world of *Szpilki*? Does she try to develop her own way of writing, and new satirical forms?

As it is known, Ginczanka was born in a Jewish family in Kiev in 1917. Her Semitic origins and extraordinary beauty will contribute to her death twenty seven years later, and the charismatic appearance will make a lasting impact on the life of the poet, who will continue to live in constant fear during the war years, the years of her adult life.

Ginczanka's poetic debut opened her door to the grand Warsaw world of literary men. "Her poem *Grammars* distinguished in the Young Poets' Tournament was published in *Wiadomości Literackie* in 1934 [...]. From that time the poet began to publish in the monthly magazine *Skamander*, in *Szpilki* and precisely and in *Wiadomości Literackie*"<sup>7</sup>. Back then, Ginczanka already knew Julian Tuwim, her future mentor, her Master, so to speak, who she sent her poems to and who personally encouraged her to take part in the competition of *Wiadomości Literackie*.

The poem titled *Pochwała snobów* was published in the 50th issue of *Szpilki* in 1936. This is a very perverse, ironic work mocking certain behaviours and realities of the 1930s. But is that all? Does not the poem also show how Ginczanka was finding her way in a new, still unexplored yet very enticing world? Perhaps she observes the newly explored reality from the distance and looks with reservation at what is happening in this hermetic world? This reservation provoked criticism and allowed her to adopt a satirical attitude to the reality being described.

It is worth recognising the circumstances in which the poem was written and which also shed some light to its interpretation. *Pochwała snobów* is a reaction to anti-Semitic works by Józef Gałuszka, a poet from Kraków, columnist, participant of World War One and the Polish-Soviet War. The Writers' Association Award, which was presented to Gałuszka, aroused lot of controversy in literary circles. Araszkiwicz comments this in the following way:

<sup>5</sup> I. Kiec, *Zuzanna Ginczanka...*, p. 107.

<sup>6</sup> A. Araszkiwicz, *Wypowiadam...*, p. 135.

<sup>7</sup> A. Koterska, *Wybrane problemy recepcji poezji Zuzanny Ginczanki*, [in:] *Dwudziestolecie mniej znane. O kobietach piszących w latach 1918-1939*, eds. E. Graczyk, M. Graban-Pomirska, K. Cierzan, P. Biczowska, Kraków 2011, p. 71.

In 1932 Gałuszka, an anti-Semitic poet, who earlier became infamous for his attack on Tuwim, received an award of the jury of the Writers' Association in Kraków. [...] *Myśl Narodowa* [...] decided to defend the "poet-soldier", seeing in the dispute "many people dependent on jews" [original spelling – K.O.] from *Wiadomości Literackie*. [...] the [aforementioned] poem may be considered to be a commentary by Ginczanka who belonged to these circles and dealt with with the literary life of the 1930s when anti-Semitic attacks were commonplace<sup>8</sup>.

Indeed, the name of the poet appeared in Ginczanka's work on a number of occasions:

(..)	(..)
grafomięta i tłuste snobiatka, robią brzydkie rzeczy w pieluszki i słuchają wierszyków <b>Gałuszki</b>	scribblers and fat snobs do ugly things in their nappy and listen to poems by <b>Gałuszka</b>
(..)	(..)
Im po nocach nie śni się wróżka, lecz sam znany powszechnie <b>Gałuszka</b> ,	They don't dream of fairies at night but of the well-known <b>Gałuszka</b>
lub, że wróżki przynoszą pieluszki od samego wielkiego <b>Gałuszki</b> –	or that fairies bring them nappies from the grand <b>Gałuszka</b>
(..)	(..)

Earlier Gałuszka included Tuwim in his article titled "O sparszywieniu obyczajów" (*On Manginess of Manners*), which may have been an additional incentive for Ginczanka to make an attempt at mocking the anti-Semitic poet. Her mentor was publicly derided. She could not leave this without a comment. At the same time she protested against bullying the eminent poet, her friend and master, but also against wicked anti-Semitic attitude with the consciousness that what is personal is, in fact, political. At the same time it is worth mentioning that the poet herself became an object of press attacks because of her origins. Anti-Semitic moods led to the publication of a text titled "Koleżanko Gincburzanko! Nie bądźcie Ginczanką" ("Colleague Gincburzanka! Do Not Be Ginczanka") in the Warsaw tabloid titled *Wiem wszystko* (*I Know Everything*). This is a lampoon full of cynicism which offends the poet, undermining her also as a woman and reducing her to the role of an uneducated "chick": "The young Sarmatian chick undertook a risky function of pulling ... chestnuts from the fire with her little hands".

Michał Głowiński drew attention to the fact that in Ginczanka's work "one may observe a split [...] into personal poetry and **militant anti-fascist satire** [emphasis mine – K. O.]"<sup>9</sup>. *Pochwała snobów* is not the only example pointing to the poet's criticism of anti-Semitic attitudes. In 1937, the work titled "Bez komentarzy. (O zwyczajach panów dziennikarzy)" ["No Comments.

<sup>8</sup> A. Araszkiwicz, *Wypowiadam...*, p. 149.

<sup>9</sup> M. Głowiński, *O liryce i satyrze Zuzanny Ginczanki*, "Twórczość" 1955, no. 8, p. 118.

(On Male Journalists' Manners") is published in *Szpilki*. The poet hides people of Jewish origin under the guise of dogs. This comparison of people to animals – their behaviours to non-conforming social norms – depicts how unwanted Jews were in Warsaw circles:

(..)	(..)
że „Pies rasy nieznaney bliżej honorowi miasta ubliża, załatwiając psie swoje „sprawy” na terenie miasta Warszawy.	that a dog of breed unknown insults the city's honour doing the dog's 'things' on the area of the city of Warsaw.
(..)	(..)

Ginczanka refuses to accept this. The attack is directed at journalists who, instead of digging deep into stories and realities and trying to change something, only give incomplete information full of “muck” in order to leave it “without commentary” later, but at the same time they lead very inappropriate life themselves:

w międzyczasie (wiemy niezbiecie) ma prywatne <b>pokałtne</b> życie.	in the meantime (we know it for sure) he has his private <b>shady</b> life.
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In her satires, the poet looks very soberly at social life and the policy of Warsaw, as well as the whole country, in the 1930s. This distance and objectivity allows her to notice things which others are unable to see. Is it the fear of what is happening and what may happen in the world that makes it possible for her to observe certain situations so thoroughly and draw conclusions from them? Ginczanka's vitality is no longer, after all, simple Skamadrite joy, a reaction to regaining independence, but, rather, a conscious choice of a heroic stance, an attitude to live at the time of dominant catastrophism and apocalypse in view. This is a conscious decision resulting from mature observation of the reality and existential as well as ideological reflections.

Here, a question arises about who in reality is mocked by the lyrical subject in *Pochwała snobów*. Is it the critics who often approach certain things thoughtlessly and when they vent their spleen, they “buy the *Skamander* magazine” to cheer themselves up, and later show off with their (pseudo)-erudition and intelligence in front of their acquaintances or the society reading their scribble willingly? Or does the text present the miserable world “which in the interwar period swarmed not only with a gut of words, but also an incredible number of poets [...] and poetesses”<sup>10</sup>? Ginczanka speaks directly about female scribblers who are “nice in touch”<sup>11</sup> and male scribblers who “sell poetry like any good yard goods”<sup>12</sup>. It seems to me that it is

<sup>10</sup> A. Fac-Biedziuk, ‘Rozgryźć słowo – jak migdał – w cięrpki smak’. *O poznaniu w poezji Zuzanny Ginczanki*, [in:] *Dwudziestolecie mniej znane...*, p. 84.

<sup>11</sup> Z. Ginczanka, *Pochwała snobów*, p. 299.

<sup>12</sup> As cited in: A. Fac-Biedziuk, ‘Rozgryźć słowo...’, p. 84.

difficult to find an unambiguous answer to this question. The poem touches both critics and mediocre artists. The lyrical subject remains in opposition to the attitudes presented in the poem, being tired of hypocrisy, mendacity, hierarchy in the world of literary men which must sanction the position of the writer. The status of the author remains unstable and changeable, it does not always depend on the quality of artistic work. Ginczanka depicts this with regard to Tadeusz Wittlin's situation:

Popychają Wittlina w kawiarni,  
przepraszają zbyt unizeni,  
do najbliższej biegną księgarni  
i kupują sobie *Sól ziemi* –  
pokazują znajomym *Sól ziemi*  
od rozkoszy głusi i niemi,  
ochłonawszy zaś cedzą ze spleenem:  
“Rozmawiałem właśnie z Wittlinem”.

They push Wittlin in the café,  
say sorry being all too humble,  
they run to the nearest bookshop  
and buy a copy of *Sól ziemi* –  
they show their friends *Sól ziemi*  
deaf and mute from delight,  
more composed they drawl with  
spleen

“I have just talked to Wittlin”

This stanza excellently shows the aforementioned hypocrisy. The readers are presented here in a caricatural way: the characters of the poem neither notice the poet nor read his works, they just buy what is fashionable, they show off with the book they bought, confabulate in order to gain approval and admiration of others. Ginczanka hates situations in which everything is done for effect, snooty and artificial. Those pseudo-connoisseurs, posturing to be seen as specialists in a given field, torment poets and they also torment the lyrical hero of the poem. Ginczanka wants to separate herself from that world, she understands the rules which govern it all too well. At the same time, she is aware that even good poets are dependent on both literary critics and snobbish pseudo-readers as they in a way decide about their position, shape good or bad opinion about their works, ensure them fame and social acclaim. This is why the final lines of this piece are as follows:

przeto właśnie dlatego oby  
nie wymarły na świecie snoby!

hence this is why therefore  
may snobs never die in this world!

Another work which I would like to acknowledge is a satire from 1936 titled *Damskie kłopoty*. In this poem, the lyrical subject makes it very clear that certain social conventions, norms, and roles are very up-to-date, and an attempt to go beyond them might result in pleasant consequences:

bezkarnie sypniesz rym sobie  
sprośny,  
– a niech ja powiem rzecz  
nieprzystojną,  
każdy wypomni ustęp odnośny.

you trot out lewd rhyme with  
impunity,  
– and if I say an indecorous thing,  
I'll be rebuked for the words I said.

The existence of double standards, different for authors and different for authoresses, is beyond any doubt. As a woman, Ginczanka must be careful what she is writing about. She cannot afford to do what men do. «The lewd rhyme», as Agata Araszkiewicz notices, probably refers to mocking female sexuality. Its comicality is achieved at the cost of the object that it concerns. [...] The woman, presented as a «drawback» embodied in the sex, disturbs the woman-writer in writing satires<sup>13</sup>. In this world, her gender is an obstacle for a woman. The female poet struggles with stereotypes and social roles. Simply with the oppressiveness of culture. She is constantly being adored because of her outstanding beauty both in the society of the Skamander Group and outside it. This beauty is a burden for her. Same as her sex, which culturally forbids her to behave and write in a way different from the one that is socially accepted and sanctioned. The poet is aware of the difficulty resulting from both attempts to preserve these frames and go beyond them:

Niełatwo pisać rzecz satyryczną  
z ostrym posmakiem aktualności  
i być złośliwą i napastliwą  
i nie zatracić cech kobiecości.

It is not easy to write a satire  
with a sharp flavour of current affairs  
and to be malicious and belligerent  
and not to lose feminine features.

In addition, the lyrical 'I' points to what she cannot write about as she has neither experience nor knowledge which she could refer to. This is as if the woman-poet, woman-satirist could not fully take advantage of the world, the current history, since, euphemistically speaking, she is not as refined and enlightened as a man is: "Writing satires in a magazine whose tone was set by men alone [...] is therefore, a very risky job for a «lady». Current affairs of political life seem alien to her, the woman is allowed to use different strategies of joking than «gentlemen»"<sup>14</sup>. Yet the whole ironicalness of the lyrical subject is depicted in the witty point:

a pisać trzeba, a pisać warto,  
wielka i szczytna rzecz honorarium.

and you have to write, it is good to  
write  
it is grand and noble to earn a fee.

The lyrical subject departs from lofty expressions and grand things, showing that (s)he also has to earn a living. To live. Like every other poet(ess). This auto-irony liberates, it is a tool which makes gender differences disappear, they are meaningless as money does not distinguish between women and non-women.

Ginczanka excellently fits into a certain pattern of satire set forth by members of the Skamander Group. One of very visible features in her satirical works is the affirmation of activism. She wants to act socially and economically. This activity is visible in her works. There is no stagnation, she keeps moving forward, ahead, although she is not free of fear and anxiety of what

<sup>13</sup> A. Araszkiewicz, *Wypowiadam...*, p. 136.

<sup>14</sup> A. Araszkiewicz, *Wypowiadam...*, p. 135.

may come. Other features of this type of writing include participation in the life of the state, and Ginczanka's works are also characterised by liberation from stereotypes and old patterns of thinking. Nonetheless: "the closer the war, the less liberating her irony was and the more apprehensive it grew"<sup>15</sup>.

This is not the only feature that brings the poet closer to the Skamander group. If one compares, for example, *Pochwała snobów* with *The Ball at the Opera* by Tuwim, one will notice many similar ways of constructing the world. Both works have a lot in common as they grew out of the same climate, but also they were written within a short space of time<sup>16</sup>. Tuwim presented the political elite of the world of his time: generals, chamberlains, well-to-do people who should (due to their functions and manners) represent certain typical features of behaviour. Unfortunately, the reality turns out to be completely different and these figures are ironically mocked as they are incapable of behaving at the table, they are ruthless: they kill animals only to satisfy their hunger. They have no inhibitions, they are profligate:

At the sideboard stands a toper,  
Nipper, tipper, gourmand, guzzler,  
Youthful Bourbon, Rastakowski,  
Slices up the snakelike tripe;  
On the plate of Donna Diana  
Lies a howling murdered steer,  
Prince of Georgia Dzhavachadzut,  
Sinks his teeth into a pork butt<sup>17</sup>  
(...)

Commonplace double-dealing and hypocrisy of socially respected people is beyond comprehension. Journalists who manipulate their audiences, who lie and whitewash the reality, are a standard here:

One can see a scrap of newsprint:  
With the letters IDEOLO..  
(...)  
Journalists hastily scribble:  
- ideolo - ideolo - ideolo<sup>18</sup>  
(...)

<sup>15</sup> A. Araszkievicz, *Wypowiadam...*, p. 136.

<sup>16</sup> *Pochwała snobów* was written in 1936. It was published in the 50th issue of *Szpilki*. However, as A. Polonsky writes: "The controversy around the narrative poem [*The Ball at the Opera*] is also confirmed by its editorial history. Written in the summer of 1936 it could not be published in the full version due to its heavily anti-government and probably blasphemous overtone". Before the war, several less provocative fragments were published (most of Part I and the whole Part III in the Christmas issue of *Robotnik* and *Naprzód*, the whole Part VI in *Skamander* from 1937, no. 87-89, and the first half of Part VIII in the *Dziennik Ludowy* yearly from 1938). Cf. A. Polonsky, *Bal w operze. Żydowska apokalipsa według Juliana Tuwima*, "Roczniki Humanistyczne" 2016, vol. LXIV, no. 1, p. 11.

<sup>17</sup> J. Tuwim, *The Ball at the Opera*, Warszawa 1982, pp. 18-20. In translation by Madeline G. Levine and Steven I. Levine.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 29, 32.

All around, normal life continues in accordance with the rhythms of ordinary people. The poem shows what is happening in the country and what is so far away from the events at the ball as well as after it:

Working people have arisen  
 They load guns with ammunition,  
 Deal in cattle demolition,  
 Run their business with precision  
 Drive their rivals into prison  
 Smash their skulls, destroy their vision  
 Crucify them as their mission  
 And impale them with derision  
 Make of profits their religion  
 And print banknotes on commission<sup>19</sup>  
 (...)

Tuwim excellently portrays the lies of the world. He sees attitudes which are in contrast with the responsibilities and postulates that are presented and publicly announced. He is very inquisitive and observant. "A satire on gumshoes"<sup>20</sup> – this is how Izolda Kiec wrote about the work of the poet.

The same features may be found in Ginczanka's poetry. She also does not understand hypocrisy, falseness, appearances. "She presents cultural and social stereotypes using irony as an obstacle in building an honest relation with another person"<sup>21</sup>. This is clearly manifested in *Pochwała snobów*. It seems that this openness – observability – in depicting hypocrisy is another feature which connects the poet not only with Tuwim, but also with the whole Skamander group, members of which insist that the poet should be also an active participant in the life of the country. Yet the poet does not focus on another thing that the Skamander Group demands: the ordinary, average normal man who also lives in this world and who is often underrated and ignored.

It is possible that Ginczanka's works were also influenced by Witold Gombrowicz. The author of *Ferdydurke* never joined any group, nevertheless Ginczanka had good relations with him and "usually [...] sat [...] in the group of people surrounding [...] Gombrowicz"<sup>22</sup>. *Ferdydurke* was published shortly after *Pochwała snobów* and *The Ball at the Opera*<sup>23</sup> had been written. This is another work, albeit written in prose, which uncovers myths and stereotypes. Gombrowicz, like Ginczanka and Tuwim, is an excellent observer of the reality. Unmasking the Młodziaks or the manor of the Hurleckis is only one of his numerous attempts at showing the hypocritical reality and the clash of life with the form. *Trans-Atlantyk*, which is

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>20</sup> I. Kiec, *Zuzanna Ginczanka...*, p. 113.

<sup>21</sup> A. Kwiatkowska, *Między tradycją a nowoczesnością. O polskiej liryce kobiet w XX wieku*, [in:] *Polskie piarstwo kobiet w wieku XX: procesy i gatunki, sytuacje i tematy*, eds. E. Kraskowska, B. Kaniewska, Poznań 2015, p. 143.

<sup>22</sup> I. Kiec, *Zuzanna Ginczanka...*, p. 94.

<sup>23</sup> The complete book was not published until 1982.



a continuation of the satirical ironic way, was published fifteen years later. Regrettably, Ginczanka never managed to get to know this work.

Is it possible, therefore, to venture a thesis that Ginczanka is a flesh and blood Skamandrite? Is her satirical world typical of this poetic group? Not exactly. As Izolda Kiec wrote, "Ginczanka was more connected with the Skamander Group through the table in the coffeehouse than the poetic attitude"<sup>24</sup>. Even though it is possible to find features connecting her poetics with that of Skamander, Ginczanka is much more rooted in the language, she is afraid to depart from it. "Her words are compact and focused, loaded; as if she literally «clung» to the language in order not to «fall out» of it"<sup>25</sup>. The language is for her a language of senses and "lyric poetry of the poet expresses the crisis of confidence to words with simultaneous fascination with them"<sup>26</sup>. This is not to be found in Tuwim. His words are light, they flow, they are not afraid to come to the world. Ginczanka selects words carefully, she is cautious, heedful:

<p>Tobie to dobrze, satyrotwórco, łatwe masz życie, satyry klejąc, przyprawiasz mówkę nieskromnym słówkiem i już dowcipne i już się śmieją.</p>	<p>You are lucky, you satire-maker You have easy life, sticking satires, You spice your speech with indecent words, And it's funny, and everyone's laughing.</p>
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The poet "shows the personal 'I', breaking the order with irony in such a way that the parodic vision of the world is mixed with the grotesque of her private nightmare"<sup>27</sup>. Ginczanka is soaked with fear, which is visible in her works. Intimacy emanating from her poems and satires is very interesting. It is precisely in *Damskie kłopoty* that the political and social character of certain principles which govern the rights of authors – male writers – mixes with her privacy, separateness, femininity. This is not to be found in the Skamander group: the satire "craves publicity as it propagates certain ideas to which it wishes to convince as many people as possible"<sup>28</sup>.

Therefore did Ginczanka find her way in the Skamander group? Was she not different, strange? How did she feel in this men's world as a woman, a woman-poet? Was she capable of freeing herself from the curse of her beauty and being just a writing woman (which was already a huge challenge), and not only the beautiful "star of Zion"?<sup>29</sup> Maria Stauber wrote that:

Zuza has now an air of anger. She has to constantly reject the advances of her colleagues – penmen. Susanna and the Elders – this is how it is summed up on the mezzanine by Tuwim, twenty years her elder, who

<sup>24</sup> A. Fac-Biedziuk, 'Rozgryźć słowo...', p. 81.

<sup>25</sup> A. Araszkiewicz, *Wypowiadam...*, p. 140.

<sup>26</sup> A. Fac-Biedziuk, 'Rozgryźć słowo...', p. 79.

<sup>27</sup> A. Araszkiewicz, *Wypowiadam...*, p. 140.

<sup>28</sup> *Satyra prawdę mówi 1918-1939*, eds. Z. Mitzner, L. Pasternak, Warszawa 1963, p. 10.

<sup>29</sup> As cited in: I. Kiec, *Zuzanna Ginczanka...*, p. 94.

always takes her into his solely fatherly care, albeit he is also suspected of flirting with her. [...] In reality, Ginczanka had enough of this constant adoration of men of different ages in the grip of some sexual obsession. She was afraid of stupid questions, such as: "Are you still a virgin?", those vulgar jokes, like putting a match to her lips and checking if it burns<sup>30</sup>.

This and many other indecent behaviours towards the poet were described in the book titled *Musisz tam wrócić. Historia przyjaźni Lusi Gelmont i Zuzanny Ginczanki (You Must Come Back There: A History of Friendship of Lusja Gelmont and Zuzanna Ginczanka)*<sup>31</sup>. It shows a picture of Ginczanka, who was notoriously assaulted with words (but not only) by fellow poets and writers. Men surrounding her were incapable of containing their lust. Indeed, they could appreciate her literary artistry, but did they treat her seriously? The poet was aware of her qualities and her immaculate beauty. Yet, dealing with constant and not always pleasant comments must have had an impact on her self-esteem and certainly affected her work, not only in the *Szpilki* satirical magazine:

For some time she was courted by Leon Pasternak. It looked quite funny. Short, stocky, a foot shorter than her [...] he had no chance whatsoever. Besides that Sana did not like his poems. He took a revenge in a very nasty manner, namely he published a lampoon in *Szpilki* [...]. Pasternak will be Pasternak – that is clear, but why did the editorial board of *Szpilki* publish this poem? I had only one logical answer: they all, one after another, were turned down by the beautiful lady. Hence the collective revenge<sup>32</sup>.

Ginczanka, as the only woman in that environment (here I am not mentioning Lola Szereszewska<sup>33</sup>), did not have an easy life. Assessed through the prism of her beauty and origins, she could have had some problems with finding herself, her identity and affiliation; with discovering what really was important to her.

Ginczanka had to become a woman who constantly kept proving that she has something more than just her beauty; that she can write equally well, if not better, than a man. In a different way but equally valuable, equally interesting and equally important. That as a woman she presents some new perspective, perhaps hitherto unseen and unnoticed. That it is possible to write in a sensual way at the same time, because the world may be experienced through senses and the world itself demands so. Her reality is extremely tumid, ready to explode, and the world has pulsating blood and a warm body within itself. It is very vitalistic. Partly Skamander. Partly heroic. And it belongs only to her.

<sup>30</sup> M. Stauber, *Musisz tam wrócić. Historia przyjaźni Lusi Gelmont i Zuzanny Ginczanki*, Warszawa 2018, p. 88.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 89-92.

<sup>32</sup> J. Łobodowski, *Pamięci Sulamity*, Toronto 1987, pp. 10-11.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. I. Kiec, *Oskarżona. Zuzanna Ginczanka o poetach i poetkach*, [in:] *Ginczanka. Na stulecie Poetki...*, pp. 14-15.

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## SUMMARY

The paper reflects on how Zuzanna Ginczanka, dubbed 'Tuwim in a dress' by Adam Ważyk, was finding her way – both as a woman and, above, as a poet – in the literary, cabaret world of Julian Tuwim, Jan Lechoń, or Antoni Słonimski. The paper focuses on the satirical output of the poet, which is why the author chose two works – namely *Pochwała snobów* (*In Praise of Snobs*) and *Damskie kłopoty* (*Feminine Trouble*) – as the basis for the analysis.

## Keywords

Zuzanna Ginczanka, Polish poetry, Polish poetry written by women, 20<sup>th</sup> century, Skamander

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