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„*Summa summarum*: C plus, slightly above average”:

Tadeusz Sinko and the literary life of modernist Kraków

In the opening decades of the 20th century Kraków's intellectual climate was dominated by academic figures (J. Szujski, M. Bobrzyński, S. Tarnowski). Even more importantly, it was dominated by conservative circles, a fact of immense importance in the development of Polish literary canon. The eminent Classicist Tadeusz Sinko (1877-1966) emerges as the chosen exponent of 'traditional' literary and artistic critique, the widely read *Czas* (most important daily of the region) providing the primary vehicle for his opinions. Much like his scholarly output, his reviews cover a wide span of subjects, ranking from translation criticism, through reports on recent theatrical or operatic events, to the discussion of contemporary poetry. All of them are defined by similar, highly patriotic, even Romantic (in the sense of Polish Romanticism) tone, combined with certain predilection for what the reviewer sees as 'Classical' form. Given the character of contemporary poetry, such a stand generates massive tension, as Sinko appears largely unaware of the chief priorities of his contemporaries (among whom one may mention K. Wierzyński, J. Tuwim, J. Przyboś or T. Peiper). The case of Gombrowicz and his *Ferdydurke* stands out as the most illustrative example of Sinkoesque application of literary norm. As a result, a wide gap appears to separate modernist poetry and its mainstream image: yet, the often derogatory remarks of Sinko can be taken as a testimony of the fundamental change in the understanding of poetry and literature in general. After all, outside of mainstream papers (*Czas* or *Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny*) a fierce debate raged among poets themselves, with occasional interference of revered Tadeusz Boy-Żeleński. The debate touches upon many theoretical aspects of poetry, questions of its political involvement, priorities, but also on the actual poetics. Thus, poetic (often ephemeral) journals such as *Linia* or *Zwrotnica*, devote considerable effort to discussions of language, form, metaphor, etc. Our purpose is to discuss what constitutes the birth of modern literary critique in Poland as illustrated by the cultural life of a provincial yet – for the Poles – central town of the Habsburg empire.

Biographical info:

Joanna Komorowska is currently the Chair of Greek and Latin Literature at the Institute of Literary Studies on Stefan Wyszyński University. Her research interest center on the literary and intellectual output of the imperial era, with occasional forays into the Classical tragedy. She has produced several studies focusing on ancient astrological thought and a number of translations into Polish (Alexander's *On Fate*, *On the soul*, Plutarch's *On the generation of soul*). Aside from this, she has worked on some subjects in history of Polish classics, contributing to the monographic studies of the legacy of Kazimierz Morawski and Tadeusz Sinko.

Aneta Kliszc is an associated profesor at the Institute of Cultural Studies at the Jesuit University Ignatianum in Kraków. Her primary research field is modern popular culture with particular emphasis on reception and reworking of 'high' literary canon. She is also a regular contributor to the *Polish Biographical Dictionary*, focusing on the late XIXth century and modernist era.