

SUMMARY

Julian Przyboś, *Diffuse writings*

Julian Przyboś, the outstanding 20th-century poet, also wrote many texts as a columnist. During the interwar period, he published primarily in avantgarde magazines – in the second series of Tadeusz Peiper’s “Zwrotnica” and “Linia”, which continued the programme of the Krakow Avantgarde. The majority of the texts published were not included in book editions. After the war he placed his articles in numerous magazines, including “Twórczość”, “Współczesność”, “Odgłosy”, and “Wiatraki”. The greatest number of Przyboś’ texts appeared in “Nowa Kultura”, “Kultura”, “Życie Literackie”, “Przegląd Kulturalny” and “Życie Warszawy”. Some of his column essays were collected in: *Linia i gwar* (1959), *Sens poetycki* (1963, 2nd edition - 1967), *Czytając Mickiewicza* (1950, subsequent editions: 1956, 1965 and 1998) and in *Zapiski bez daty* (1970). It was in these volumes that Przyboś decided to include his most important texts, which remain relevant – statements concerning the theory of poetry, pertinent diagnoses and interpretations, which have stood the test of time, sketches in literary criticism devoted to writers and works prominent in literary history. Many articles remain in a dispersed state – contributions to disputes and discussions long since forgotten, comments outlining the poet’s stance on historical and social changes, reviews and discussions of what were new literary developments at the time, nowadays completely consigned to memory. Brought together in this volume, these texts are an important testimony to literary life. They give us an insight into aspects of Przyboś’ personality and creative work – the obliging reviewer of the post-war years, the attentive reader of literary history, the active participant in discussions on art and architecture. The appendix includes selected texts from Julian Przyboś’ home archive.

In his articles, Przyboś took up a variety of subjects. During the interwar period, he criticised the Young Poland movement, deliberated on the problem of folk elements and stylization, designed a socially engaged literary model, polemicized with Irzykowski and critiqued Skamander’s epigones (contrasting their repetitious poetry with avantgarde and unistic aesthetics). In the aftermath of World War II, Przyboś became involved in building cultural and literary life. However, he never lost his keen judgement in matters concerning literature and its relations with the political and historical situation. In the years of Stalinism, he contributed to discussions on Różewicz’s poetry and cut himself

off from criticism of the Warsaw Uprising, focusing rather on research into folk literature and analysing *Pan Tadeusz*. Przyboś' comments on literature and art were always sound, and his political outlook influenced his judgements to a limited extent. Making use of the relaxation in the atmosphere from 1955 onwards, Przyboś spoke on painting, the plastic arts and architecture, protested against socialist realist ethics and evaluated positively those young artists who continued the ideas of Władysław Strzemiński.

He was present in public life, took part in many discussions, took part in surveys and interviews, and spoke primarily on matters related to poetry, but also published on other subjects. He regularly contributed reviews of new publications to "Życie Warszawy" and "Przegląd Kulturalny" (mainly literature, translations and scientific and popular science monographs). Przyboś remained convinced that knowledge of literature develops through polemics, discussions and disputes, where contrasting viewpoints and opinions clash. For Przyboś initiating dialogue was a form of acknowledgment, as he believed it was worth engaging in polemics with good, interesting subjects. *Diffuse writings* shows Julian Przyboś as faithful to his views, but also interested in differences, open to discussion, and convinced that in art and literature many currents and trends must co-exist. The articles published here, along with the sketches published in *Linia i gwar*, *Sens poetycki* or *Zapiski bez daty*, serve not only as a testimony of literary life, but also as a record how the views of one of Poland's premier poets evolved.

Translated by Rob Pagett