

Editorial Note on the Translation of Prof. Tadeusz Żabski's 'The Mode of Being of Popular Literature in the 20th Century'

Prof. dr hab. Tadeusz Żabski (1936–2017) pursued his career at the University of Wrocław. He was one of the pioneers of research into popular literature and culture. The professor's systematic, consistent work, his ability to gather around him scholars sharing his interests, gradually turned them from 'outlawed' literature and culture — primarily with regard to academic study — into 'legitimate' and attractive research subjects. However, the path to the current state of affairs — in which studies devoted to this literature and culture are the basis for academic promotion — has been long and difficult. Among its milestones was *Słownik literatury popularnej* (1997, revised edition 2006) edited by Tadeusz Żabski (who was also the author of many of the entries) and the journal *Literatura i Kultura Popularna* (founded in 1991 as a series) — the first and only such scholarly journal in Poland, devoted exclusively to said literature and culture. Particularly worthy of note are Professor Żabski's original works, including the book *Proza jarmarczna XIX wieku. Próba systematyki gatunkowej* (1993), and numerous articles, like 'Dzieje literatury popularnej. Krótki kurs' (1994), 'Literatura popularna jako zjawisko naturalne i wiecznotrwałe' (1995), 'Przemiany powieści przygodowej XIX i XX wieku' (1996), 'Miejsce literatury popularnej z punktu widzenia literaturoznawstwa' (2005) or 'Twórczość Sienkiewicza a literatura popularna i kultura masowa' (2007). We can very clearly see in them Tadeusz Żabski's way of thinking about popular literature and culture; his great understanding of what role it plays — and will continue to play — in a world with ever newer media, with more and more possibilities, including technical possibilities, on the part of authors, broadcasters and audiences (participants).

Presented in the Archive section, the article 'Sposób bycia literatury popularnej w XX wieku' [The Mode of Being of Popular Literature in the 20th Century] originally appeared in the collective monograph *Wiedza o literaturze i edukacja. Księga referatów Zjazdu Polonistów, Warszawa 1995*, edited by Teresa Michałow-

ska, Zbigniew Goliński and Zbigniew Jarosiński (published by Instytut Badań Literackich, Warszawa 1996, pp. 489–502). Polish readers are invited to read the original version; the English-language version is intended to disseminate information about research into popular literature and culture once conducted in Poland.

Only minor changes have been made to the article: the spelling has been modernised and necessary data have been added, such as bibliography, dates of birth and deaths, key words, foreign-language titles, dates of Polish and original editions, abstract, basic data relating to the authors mentioned in the article. Editorial footnotes have been marked accordingly; additions in the reference list have been provided in square brackets. The information provided by Professor Żabski has been preserved: although some of it may seem a bit outdated today, it is an excellent testimony to the state of knowledge at the time — not so distant, but so different from today. It should be noted that there is not a lot of such information. The mechanisms of popular literature and culture described in Tadeusz Żabski's article turn out to be very universal indeed. Thus, the sketch, like the professor's other works, is clear evidence of the Wrocław scholar's great insight into the situation and prospects for the development of the works of popular literature and culture mentioned by the author.

All interventions by the editors (Anna Gemra and Adam Mazurkiewicz) have been marked accordingly. We would like to thank Agnieszka Nieracka and Zbigniew Wałaszewski for information about the monsters in Japanese films, and Jolanta Ługowska for notes on the tales about Griselda.

Anna Gemra, Adam Mazurkiewicz

Translated by Anna Kijak