

Kashubian Dramaturgy for Young Audiences. Review of Authors and Conventions

Daniel Kalinowski
Pomeranian University
Slupsk (Poland)
daniel.kalinowski@upsl.edu.pl

ABSTRACT: The article concerns the development of Kashubian-language drama aimed at children and youth audiences. The considerations discuss several playwrights who have written plays from the 1980s to the present. The article focuses on works written in the last twenty years of the 21st century (S. Fikus, A. Pepliński, E. Pryczkowska, T. Wejer, D. Formela, F. Baska-Borzyszkowska). Their common feature is strong didacticism and a constant moralizing, which makes them works of average, not outstanding, artistic value. The reason for this situation is that the Kashubian language has only had the status of an ethnic minority language since 2005 and has only since then been able to develop freely in the public space.

EET/TEE KEYWORDS: Kashubian drama for children and youth; Cultural identity; Images of folk culture; Native culture in drama; XXI Century.

Introduction

Research into Kashubian culture lacks major academic analyses of drama and theatre for young audiences. Although there are a handful of studies, which I will refer to in the following sections, they do not form a systematic description or result from consistent research but are rather reviews of anthologies of stage play texts or reactions to selected acts of Kashubian theatre life. Most information on Kashubian-language drama for young audiences is contained in a monograph by the writer of these words entitled *Kashubian Theatre. Phenomenon, Forms, Environment* from 2021¹. As this work is a

¹ D. Kalinowski, *Teatr kaszubski. Fenomen. Formy. Środowisko*, Gdańsk, Instytut Kaszubski, Zrzeszenie Kaszubsko-Pomorskie, 2021.

comprehensive and synthetic account of the issue, it does not contain a separate chapter reviewing the authors, stylistics or subject matter of published Kashubian dramas aimed at children and youth audiences. All the more reason, therefore, to fulfil such a task in the overview and problematisation article presented today.

From the point of view of cultural anthropology, we can say that Kashubian theatre originates from four sources². The first source is ancient rites and rituals, some of which have survived to the present day and have been reflected in performances, stagings, and theatricalisations connected with the rituals of St. John's Day, harvest festivals, or potato picking. Relics of pre-Christian beliefs connected with the cycles of nature can be found in theatrical activities of this type. Performances originating from the first source of Kashubian theatre include gestures, songs, dances, and dramatizations, which are associated with primitive and magical culture.

The second source of Kashubian theatre is the Christmas, New Year, and Easter rituals, in which the religious content of Christianity is combined with a folk perception of reality. These include activities with theatricalised fancy dress parades (with biblical and symbolic figures and animal figures), which were and still are popular in rural communities³. The element of celebrating important moments of the liturgical year while appreciating the agrarian year is included in performances of this type. The theatrical practice of the performance on stage or outdoors includes musical elements, such as noisy instruments like bells or knockers, which 'chase away' the old year, and magical-ritual forms of conjuring the new year to bring all the good things of nature to the house in question.

The third source of Kashubian theatrical activities is the tradition of amateur-folk theatre, which developed in intellectual circles of small Kashubian towns and among animators of village cultural life. This theatre trend has been popular since the first half of the 20th century and continues in Kashubia to this day⁴. This phenomenon led to the creation of ludic, educational, and patriotic plays. They showed the social and moral realities of Kashubia and the model of private and community life. Presentations of this trend were created in the aesthetics of realism, sometimes having factors of naturalism or satire.

The fourth source of Kashubian theatre is the tradition of ethnic theatre, i.e., theatre that stems from the desire to speak about Kashubian identity not through ritual or custom but through ideological discussion, setting identity

² K. Derc, *Teatry ludowe na Kaszubach*, «Teatr Ludowy», n. 6, 1929, pp. 109-111; K. Orska, *Ludowy teatr kaszubski – geneza i droga rozwoju*, «Pomerania», n. 5-6, 1970, pp. 9-26.

³ I.H. Świętosławska, *Chceta wa lëdzë gwiondzkã widzec? Opowieść o kaszubskich kołędnicach godowych*, Gdańsk, Zrzeszenie Kaszubsko-Pomorskie, 2016.

⁴ Z. Raszewski, *Z tradycji teatralnych Pomorza, Wielkopolski i Śląska*, Wrocław, Zakład im. Ossolińskich, 1955, pp. 65-104; R. Górski, *Dramat ludowy XIX wieku*, Warszawa, Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1969.

goals, and becoming aware of one's own ethnic distinctiveness⁵. Theatre of this kind develops the imagination and the sphere of Kashubian communal values. The plays then depict historical events or refer to mythical people and, at the same time, express the playwrights' attitude towards the socio-political or identification issues that are current to them.

1. *Attempts to reach young audiences*

In Kashubian drama, the first signs of authors' attention to a young audience can be seen only in the times of the Young Kashubians, i.e., the third generation of Kashubian writers (active from the 1890s to the 1930s). Aleksander Majkowski, Jan Karnowski, and Leon Heyke, generally writing for adults, created a child literary hero in their works and noticed the fact that a story for an adult audience can also have a strong identity effect on very young people. This is the origin of the child protagonist of the drama *Òtrók Swãtewida*⁶ [Grandson of Świętowit] by Jan Karnowski (1886-1939), who in the initial scenes of the play appears to be a teenage, emotionally and intellectually unstructured village boy. The development of the drama's intrigue shows him in ever-changing acts of cognition, through which he transforms from an ordinary shepherd into a socially responsible young man⁷. Karnowski has constructed a stage fairy tale in which one can see a simplified reality with the figures of a beautiful girl, a worker revolution, and a fantastic griffin – the protector of Pomerania. All this was done to emphasise the character's personality development all the more clearly. Formally speaking, the Kashubian playwright created a composition consisting of short scenes with dialogues and sequences of vivid images, which facilitated the perception of the ideological issues of the piece. His play, although it corresponds to the nineteenth-century understanding of art for a young audience, does not have an explicit address to children reading in Kashubian.

This type of situation did not change for several decades until the first Kashubian authors who consciously began to create plays for children and young people. These were Stefan Fikus (1920-2010) and Aleksy Pepliński (1921-2012), who wrote their works in this style from the late 1970s onwards.

Stefan Fikus was the author of 20 plays on a variety of subjects, aimed

⁵ D. Kalinowski, *Dramaturgia Jana Romskiego. Tematy, idee, techniki*, in J. Rompski, *Dramaty kaszubskie*, ed. by J. Treder, Wejherowo, Gdańsk, MPiMK-P, Instytut Kaszubski, 2009, pp. 5-44.

⁶ J. Karnowski, *Òtrók Swãtewida*, in J. Karnowski, *Dramaty*, ed. by M. Cybulski, Gdańsk, Instytut Kaszubski, 2011, pp. 371-394.

⁷ D. Kalinowski, *Obraz – idea – tożsamość. O dramaturgii Jana Karnowskiego*, in Karnowski, *Dramaty*, cit., pp. 71-139.

mainly at an adult audience⁸. However, among them, one can find several forms intended to reach an audience of teenagers with ideas of social, moral, and religious life. The author of the plays believed that artistic creation serves a didactic purpose and conveys positively evaluated images of past times, which should be a point of reference for the present. Fikus opted for short dramatic forms and outlined a simple stage intrigue, bringing about a swift conclusion and resolution of the conflict. This practice of the creator did not allow him to create psychologically rich characters. Moreover, the characters in the plays appeared schematic, expressing in themselves the values that the playwright propagated or, conversely, the vices that he condemned. Fikus' stage proposals were thus marked not only by didacticism but also by moralism, which was intended to serve an ordinary, at only a basic level educated audience. His plays, such as *A śmierć nie przęchôdô* [Death Does Not Come]⁹, *Strach* [Fear]¹⁰ and *Gwiôzdzka z Lęžëna* [Christmas Greetings from Luzino]¹¹ may be mentioned here.

For the context of plays for young audiences, other stage proposals by Fikus that are only available in typescript form are also important. So far they have not been published in print, although they have been performed in fragments on the amateur school and parish stage. Firstly, I have in mind the play entitled *Rojeniô dzôtków na IV Pielgrzimkę Ojca sw. do Polsczi w 1991 r.* [Children's dreams for the IV pilgrimage of the Holy Father to Poland in 1991]¹². The events of this one-act play take place among young people on a school tourist trip. The characters in the piece complain about the disappearance of authentic family life. In their view, contemporary culture is driving people away from each other and making them strangers. The teacher listens to their complaints and, in her reaction, presents the young people with even greater problems in the world: wars, poverty, or the ecological situation. The embittered young people, however, do not accept consolation from the teacher and dream of a situation in which they could tell all their worries to the Pope, who is just arriving in Poland, and receive life advice. In the following scenes of the play, the young people's dreams come true, and Pope John Paul II and Polish President Lech Wałęsa listen to the young people's comments. As a result of the meeting, the Pope and the President give advice on how the young generation of Poles

⁸ D. Kalinowski, *Moralistyka w przeróżnych odcieniach. Dramaturgia Stefana Fikusa*, «Nasze Pomorze», n. 16, 2014, pp. 169-196.

⁹ S. Fikus, *A śmierć nie przęchôdô*, in J. Lipuski, B. Pisarek (edd.), *Domôcô bina. Dziewiãc dramów do jigrë. Wëbiór z nônowszy kaszëbsczi lëteraturë*, Wejrowò, Gduńsk, MPiMK-P, Zrzeszenie Kaszubsko-Pomorskie, 2006, pp. 88-138.

¹⁰ Id., *Strach. Teatralnô sztëka w dwóch aktach*, in B. Ugowska (ed.), *Antologiô kaszëbsczi dramë. Spòd strzechë na binã*, Gdańsk, Zrzeszenie Kaszubsko-Pomorskie, 2011, pp. 357-485.

¹¹ Id., *Gwiôzdzka z Lęžëna. Sztëka teatralnô w krótczim wëkònanim*, in Ugowska (ed.), *Antologiô kaszëbsczi dramë*, cit., pp. 488-518.

¹² Id., *Rojeniô dzôtków na IV Pielgrzimkę Ojca sw. do Polsczi w 1991 r.*, unpublished.

should act and what values should guide their existential choices. Fikus' play leaves no doubt that Christian virtues and civic responsibility are inalienable elements of contemporary Kashubian life.

Another of Stefan Fikus' plays is a proposal that is a combination of ritual and religious theatre. It is *Gwiôzdka Pokoju ji Nôdzëji* [Christmas Greetings of Peace and Hope]¹³, a stage form using the genre of the nativity play, i.e., an artistic representation of the birth of Jesus Christ, the visit of the Three Wise Men, and the shepherds' bow to the Child. To such a set of characters, Fikus includes numerous scenes with representatives of Kashubian folk culture, which brings the play out of its sacred meanings and shifts it towards moral and patriotic contexts. In addition, Fikus adds the figure of Pope John Paul II to the set of characters against the background of children from all parts of the world. Here, the Pope becomes the most important figure in the play, and it is from his lips that praise is heaped on people preserving Christian tradition and advice on a pious life on earth¹⁴.

In the above-mentioned plays by the Kashubian author, it is clear that the artistic factor has been dominated by the poetics of folk and didactic theatre, in which the most important elements are instructive and addressed to the adolescent audience¹⁵. Fikus assumed that the world of theatre should comment on the social and moral reality existing next door and give young audiences a prescription for a decent life. Hence the strong persuasive factor in his plays.

The second author who consciously began writing for children's theatre was Aleksy Peplinski, author of more than 20 plays. These works were written from the 1970s onwards but were not published until decades later in separate editions: *Bëtowsczé strôszczy* (2006)¹⁶ and *Antologió lëteracczych dokôzów* (2009)¹⁷. These are short theatrical forms that present Kashubian rituals in a schematic and didactic way while bringing with them the most important components of ethnic identification¹⁸. They show the present as a space to be consciously shaped, constantly referring to the past and its former pattern of social order and security. This ideological premise of the plays makes them subordinate to a moralistic function. Peplinski's dramas prepare the young viewer to recognise the basic signs of Kashubian folk culture.

¹³ Id., *Gwiôzdka Pokoju ji Nôdzëji*, unpublished.

¹⁴ R. Wierzbowski, *Z zagadnień polskiej szopki kolędowej i satyrycznej*, «Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego», S. I, vol. 41, 1965, pp. 47-65; Id., *O szopce. Studia i szkice*, ed. by M. Waszkiel, Łódź, Polski Ośrodek Lalkarski POLUNIMA, 1990.

¹⁵ Such were the values that folk and non-professional theatre also served in other parts of Europe, see: R. Rolland, *Teatr ludowy*, P. Olkusz (transl. and ed.), Gdańsk, Słowo/Obraz Terytoria, 2008 [first publishing: 1903].

¹⁶ A. Pepliński, *Bëtowsczé strôszczy. Òbraszë na binã*, Gdynia, Region, 2006.

¹⁷ *Antologió lëteracczych dokôzów*. Antón i Aleks Peplińsce, ed. by J. Tréder, Sierakowice, Urząd Gminy, 2009.

¹⁸ D. Kalinowski, *W u(ś)cisku teatru obrzędowego i okolicznościowego. O dramaturgii Aleksego Peplińskiego*, «Acta Cassubiana», vol. XIV, 2012, pp. 66-83.

The most interesting and, at the same time, the earliest of Pepliński's ritual plays is *Kaszëbsczié jaselka* [Kashubian Christmas Plays], which can be seen as a prelude to his later dramas¹⁹. In the first act, we can see a scene in a Kashubian forest, where messengers of hell conspire to trick people who are travelling to Bytów – the Kashubian Bethlehem – towards the coming Jesus. Purtk, Smętek and Bies devise the best ways to deceive the approaching shepherds and prepare for their foul tricks. The second act features the stable of Bethlehem, where Saint Mary, along with Saint Joseph and the Child, is visited by archangels and hosts of angels. Later, they receive tributes from Kashubian shepherds. In the third act, the action of the drama takes place in the palace of Herod, who, although he is a Jewish king, is visited by three Kashubian princes travelling to Bethlehem/Bytown. The fourth act is written in an exalted style and shows the Kashubian princes making gifts to the Child. Later, three classical Kashubian writers appear and offer their artistic works. Then come three Kashubian knights-at-arms, giving the Holy Family the most precious objects they have. At the end of this gallery of characters in the drama are Stolem, Borowa Ciotka, and Królewianka, symbolic figures from Kashubian legends and tales.

The drama recalled here is highly imbued with Kashubian patriotism. It mythicises the geographical space of Kashubia and portrays it as the Holy Land. By saturating the space of the drama with Kashubian realities, the viewer sees not so much ancient Palestine as contemporary Kashubia. *Kaszëbsczi Jaselka* thus becomes a religious and ritual play, with many characters, songs, and folk behaviour, which by its spectacularity is meant to encourage young viewers to practice Kashubian culture.

Aleksy Pepliński's later dramas are either extended versions of the parts signalled in *Kaszëbsczi Jaselka* [Kashubian Christmas Plays], or more folkloristic depictions of Kashubian ritual culture. In the drama *Wilijô* [Christmas Eve], the author shows the evening before Christmas, during which old customs are played out²⁰. Thus, we have here the preparation of Christmas Eve supper, decorating the Christmas tree, feeding animals with special wafers, singing carols, the appearance of the Father Christmas with presents and the entry of a group of carol singers with a Gendarme, a Gwiżdż [the character that leads the procession], Goat, Horse, Dubelt Peasant, Stork and Chimney Sweep. Another stage picture entitled *Gwiôzdczé* depicts the time of the Kashubian ritual calendar stretching between Christmas and New Year²¹. This time, however, at

¹⁹ A. Pepliński, *Kaszëbsczié jaselka. Widowisko gwiozdkowé w sztyrech aktach*, Gdańsk, Zrzeszenie Kaszubsko-Pomorskie, 1986.

²⁰ A. Pepliński, *Wilijô. Gwiôzdkowé widzawiszczé w jednym akce*, in Id., *Bëtowsczé strôszczy: ôbrazë na binã*, Gdynia, Region, 2006, pp. 6-32.

²¹ A. Pepliński, *Gwiôzdczé. Gwiôzdkowé widowiskò w sztyrech aktach*, in Id., *Bëtowsczé strôszczy*, cit., pp. 34-46.

the centre of the drama is the very moment of the appearance of the figures of the Christmas procession, additionally with the Three Wise Men and the Star. Another aspect of the rituals we deal with is in the stage picture *Sylwestrowi wieczór* [New Year's Eve], set in a typical rural Kashubian house²². As in each of Peplinski's ritualistic plays, here too there is a juxtaposition of the old and the new. Stark, Tatka, and Mëmka tell the children what events once accompanied the arrival of the new year. They illustrate their memories with scenes of customary fortune-telling (throwing clogs, setting fire to skeins of wool, a trial with a gander). The fortune-telling is not taken completely seriously by the household but is rather a source of merriment and jokes, although it is not rejected. In another stage miniature entitled *Kòlāda* [Christmas Call], Aleksy Peplinski depicts the family's preparations for the annual visit of the priest²³. He appears in the play to consecrate the house and its residents. After the prayers typical in such circumstances, one of the host's daughters – Zosza – recites an occasional poem. After the priest's visit, the inhabitants of the cottage try to take the place where the clergyman was sitting, believing that this will bring them luck. The mother settles the dispute by putting one of her sons in the chair. Neighbours also turn up at the house, wishing them good luck. The song mentioned here is a vivid example of a work of mediocre artistic merit, serving mainly the function of depicting details of Kashubian ritual life.

All of the characterised stage paintings by Aleksy Peplinski clearly confirm the advantages and disadvantages of Kashubian ritual and school theatre created in the socio-political situation after 1945, when Kashubians did not have full rights to manifest their subjectivity²⁴. On the one hand, the telling of stories about the native customs and the shaping of patriotism is valuable here. On the other hand, however, many of the dialogues of Peplinski's plays were provided with rather inept ethnographic content.

2. The eruption of drama for children

A change in the approach to Kashubian-language theatre for children can be identified at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries. There are various reasons for this. The *firstô* is the change of legal relations in Poland and the possi-

²² A. Pepliński, *Sylwestrowi wieczór. Widzawiszczé w jednym akce*, in Id., *Bëtowiszczé strôszczé*, cit., pp. 76-95.

²³ A. Pepliński, *Kòlāda*, in *Antologîô lëteracczich dokôzów*, cit., pp. 315-335.

²⁴ K. Maksymowicz, *Kaszubska twórczość sceniczna po roku 1945*, in A. Bukowski (ed.), *Literatura gdańska i ziemi gdańskiej w latach 1945-1975*, Gdańsk, Wydawnictwo Morskie, 1979, pp. 310-323; J. Samp, *Nurt regionalny w literaturze dla młodego odbiorcy*, in A. Bukowski (ed.), *Literatura gdańska i ziemi gdańskiej po roku 1945*, Gdańsk, Wydawnictwo Morskie, 1986, pp. 191-207.

bility of teaching Kashubian at school, as well as the processes of ennoblement of Kashubian culture in many spheres of public life (liturgy in the Catholic Church, Kashubian as an auxiliary language in state administration, the emergence of Kashubian as an academic language). The second, the great popularity of theatre competitions and reviews for children, which were organised in various places in Kashubia. The competitions gathered several groups presenting themselves during one edition of the event and were prepared by a large number of teachers and instructors who promoted Kashubian culture. The third is lack of up-to-date repertoire for children's theatre groups performing in the Kashubian language. This factor was felt quite strongly, as in the situation of the 21st century, it was difficult to confidently present on stage plays that were adaptations of literature written several decades earlier²⁵.

The editors of Kashubia's most important periodical, «Pomerania» decided to remedy the shortage of plays and in 1997 launched a competition for Kashubian-language theatre works aimed at young audiences. In response, theatrical scripts of short stage forms written by teachers and writers appeared. «Pomerania»'s organisers decided to publish the best pieces, and thus the magazine published plays by Sabina Drywa *Kaszëbskô Wilëjô*²⁶ [*Kashubian Christmas Eve*], Eugeniusz Gołąbek *Nawrócenie Króla Tirana*²⁷ [*The Conversion of King Tiran*], Brygida Bulczak *Wigilijné Ôpòwiôstczi*²⁸ [*Christmas Eve stories*], and Maria Mach *Gwiôzdkka Dlô Dzôtków*²⁹ [*Christmas Eve for Children*]. All of the above-mentioned works enriched the repertoire of school theatre groups. What they had in common was a similar religious and ritual sphere of Christmas and New Year. What was lacking here, however, were other pieces that were associated with everyday life, school life or customs.

The plays published at the end of the 20th century were supported by the work of Ida Czaja (born 1968), a poet, translator, teacher, and amateur actress who wrote short plays for children's theatre groups. In 2005, she published a collection of miniatures entitled *Obrôzczi na Binã* [*Pictures for the stage*], in which one can find more thematically diverse works³⁰. On the one hand, there are still religious and ritual plays such as *Drama ô Bòzim Narodzenim* [*The Christmas Play*] or *Gwiôdz. Szpetôczél z óflama* [*Gwiôdz. A Play with Jokes*], which touch upon folk customs taking place around Christian holidays. On the other hand, however, there are miniatures showing different contexts, e.g., ludic forms praising the values of goodness and diligence and criticising the

²⁵ Description of ideological and artistic transformations in Kashubian literature of the early 21st century: D. Kalinowski, A. Kuik-Kalinowska, *Literatura kaszubska. Rekonesans / Kaszëbskô lëteratura. Wëzdrzënë*, Gdańsk, Zrzeszenie Kaszubsko-Pomorskie, 2017.

²⁶ S. Drywa, *Kaszëbskô Wilëjô*, «Pomerania», n. 2, 1997, pp. 24-30.

²⁷ E. Gołąbek, *Nawrócenie króla tirana*, «Pomerania», n. 1, 1998, pp. 28-33.

²⁸ B. Bulczak, *Wigilijné ôpòwiôstczi*, «Pomerania», n. 11-12, 1998, pp. 45-48.

²⁹ M. Mach, *Gwiôzdkka dlô dzôtków*, «Pomerania», n. 12, 2000, pp. 40-41.

³⁰ I. Czajinô, *Obrôzczi na binã*, Gdańsk, Czec, 2005.

vices of stupidity and laziness, e.g., *Za co Bòcòn bét ùkòróny* [What the stork was punished for]. The most interesting are stage images related to Kashubian legends and tales, e.g., *Jak môlinczi spiéwôk kaszëbsczi do nieba sã dostôł* [How a Tiny Kashubian Singer Got to Heaven], in which one can find elements of regional and ethnic identification. For a child audience, the opportunity to see on stage elements of the Kashubian landscape and characters known not from world or Polish literature, but from the stories of parents or grandparents, is a significant act of ennoblement of native tradition. Czaja, as an author, was also open to non-Kashubian literature, which is why she also adapted classic fairy tales by Christian Andersen, such as *Dzëwczã ze sztrëcholzama* [The Little Girl with Matches] and *Brzëdcki kaczelc* [The Ugly Duckling], into a theatrical form expressed in Kashubian. In doing so, she showed that the Kashubian language is a medium that can take on emotions and thoughts formulated in other languages.

Ida Czaja's theatrical proposals were followed by new stage works for young audiences already in print in the 21st century. This phenomenon is documented in the Kashubian-language publication supplement to «Pomerania» – «Stegna». It is in this quarterly that stage miniatures were published, e.g., by Teresa Wejer³¹, Sabina Drywa, Joanna Chaber³² and the youngest of the authors – Natalia Kuczkowska and Kornelia Wica³³. Scripts for children's plays also appeared in the Kashubian-language literary anthology *Zymk*, in which Kashubian language teacher and poet Anna Bartkowska-Rózek printed several stage miniatures³⁴.

The publication of plays in magazines or anthologies gave Kashubians the feeling that the situation with drama aimed at a children's audience was improving. However, there was still a lack of a major publication that included more scripts. Such a move had already been made in terms of dramas for an adult audience – a collection entitled *Domôcô bina*³⁵ was published in 2006, and another compilation entitled *Spòd strzechë na binã*³⁶, in 2011. However, there was no comprehensive publication with works for children and young people.

The situation changed in 2012, when a collection of nearly 30 scripts by

³¹ E.g.: T. Wejer, *Diòbelszczé zelëskò. Widzawiszczé òpiarté na bójce pòdlug Jerzégò Sampa*, «Stegna», n. 2, 2007, pp. 22-27; Ead., *Historiô ò Bòżim Narodzenim*, «Stegna», n. 4, 2008, pp. 16-19; Ead., *Pieczelnô narada*, «Stegna», n. 4, 2009, pp. 21-23; Ead., *Ô trzech bracytach*, «Stegna», n. 2, 2011, pp. 17-19; Ead., *Krësztofówé rozegracje*, «Stegna», n. 2, 2013, pp. 10-11.

³² S. Drëwa, J. Chaber, *Wëbróné scenë z żëcò Floriana Cenówé (òpòwiedzóné ze szpòrtã)*, «Stegna», n. 4, 2011, pp. 18-23.

³³ N. Kùczkòwskò, K. Wica, *Dze Bóg ni mòże, tam Òn... – to je jaselka jinaczi*, «Stegna», n. 4, 2012, pp. 2-9.

³⁴ A. Bartkòwskò, *Kaszëbszczé jaselka*, «Zymk», vol. 6, 2007, pp. 8-12; Ead., *Jaselka*, «Zymk», vol. 8, 2009, pp. 52-59.

³⁵ Lipuski, Pisarek (edd.), *Domôcô bina. Dziewiãc dramów do jigrë*, cit.

³⁶ Ugowska (ed.), *Spòd strzechë na binã. Antologiô kaszëbsczi dramë*, cit.

Elżbieta Pryczkowska, Teresa Wejer, and Dorota Formela was published under a common title, *W Krójnje Grifa* [*In the Land of the Gryphon*]³⁷. The published material was not so much artistic as didactic in purpose; it was to be used not so much by directors or theatre managers as by language teachers and animators of Kashubian culture. In this way, the playwrights envisaged their proposals to be primarily vehicles for Kashubian language, history, and ethnography, assuming that the performers of the text were able to recite, knew basic acting techniques, sang and danced. This type of theatre has become very helpful in school lessons or during artistic special events (e.g., Mother's Day or Kashubian Unity Day)³⁸.

A puzzling issue in the case of the collection of scripts mentioned here is the fact that the authors of the texts are female teachers. From a sociological point of view, this indicates a feminisation of the Kashubian school environment. Assessing this in educational terms, one can see in the activity of female teachers a specific model of education, in which they maintain the inherited tradition, diversify it, and promote it through theatre. Among the stage works of the collection in question, one senses particularly strongly the concern to bring out in the child and adolescent spectator-actor an emotional charge that supports the student on the further path of identity development. Emphasis on the young person's sensitivity means designing the work in such a way that the most important thing is to show scenes that appeal to the emotions and less to the intellect³⁹.

In the collection of scripts under discussion, the stage works can be divided into several thematic and stylistic groups. The first set includes works based on Kashubian folk tradition (Kashubian identity myths, characters from folk imagination). The second group consists of forms related to church holidays associated with Kashubian rituals (Christmas, Easter). The third group is made up of scenarios related to traditional and universalistic fairy tales and fables, which contain images of good or evil, wisdom or stupidity. The fourth set of works are stagings of occasional celebrations (Mother's and Father's Day, Teacher's Day, Day of Kashubian Unity). Finally, the last of the thematic and stylistic circles of this collection brings together cabaret and satirical texts.

³⁷ E. Pryczkowska, T. Wejer, D. Formela, *W krójnje Grifa. Têatrowé scenarniczzi*, Gdańsk, Zrzeszenie Kaszubsko-Pomorskie, 2012.

³⁸ J. Treder, *O pięknie kaszubszczyzny*, in *Jak recytować po kaszubsku. Materiały metodyczne*, Chmielno, Zrzeszenie Kaszubsko-Pomorskie, 1979; B. Cirocki, *Konkursy recytatorskie w Chmielnie*, in J. and J. Treder (edd.), *Domôcé słowo zwęczné. Antologia tekstów kaszubskich dla recytatorów*, Chmielno, Zrzeszenie Kaszubsko-Pomorskie, 1994, pp. 129-143.

³⁹ At this point, it is important to refer to separate studies showing the relationship between education and theatre in the Polish cultural situation of the 1990s, when the Kashubian theatre movement was revived: M. Gliniecki, L. Maksymowicz (edd.), *Teatr a dziecko specjalnej troski*, Słupsk, Wydawnictwo Akademii Pomorskiej, 1999; M. Gliniecki, L. Maksymowicz (edd.), *Teatr edukacyjny – komunikacja bez granic*, Słupsk, Wydawnictwo Akademii Pomorskiej, 2001.

Let us take examples from the first group of scripts, in which there are references to Kashubian legends, tales, and myths. Particularly interesting here is Dorota Formela's play *Dôwno témù na Kaszëbach* [*Long Ago in Kashubia*], in which we encounter the convention of theatre within theatre and shadow theatre. Characters from Kashubian folk texts appear here in just a few scenes: Stolems, the krośnięta [miniature fantasy beings acting as guardian spirits of the household], the princess, the farmhand, and the devil. The second author of the script, Teresa Wejer, published a more extensive script, drawing on the classics of Kashubian literature and adapting the texts contained in Bernard Sychta's academic *Dictionary of Kashubian Dialects*⁴⁰, specifically on the fantastic character of Borowa Ciotka [Kashubian benevolent spirit of the forests and protector of forest animals]. Thanks to this, Wejer's stage miniature points to both the advantages of an ecological approach to nature and evokes elements of Kashubian identity myths (the figure of the Kashubian wanderer – Remus, three demons making it impossible to achieve existential happiness).

Among the examples of the second group of scripts thematically linked to Kashubian rituals and Christian holidays, one can name the proposal by Elżbieta Pryczkowska, whose work entitled *Gwiôzdzka z Nieba* [*Christmas from Heaven*] is an apt reference to regional tradition, with the recognisable characters of Gwiazdzka [as Christmas Greetings], Dziad i Baba [*a Strawman and a Hag*], Chimney Sweep, a Bear and a Goat, who speak both about the moral sides of life and joke about everyday life events. Another author, Teresa Wejer, presented a script entitled *Dëgùsë* [*The Lashing*] based on Easter customs. The scenes show the ritual behaviour of girls and boys during the second day of the holiday, when in Kashubia young people smack each other with conifer bush twigs, which is supposed to bring health, good luck with the opposite sex, and material wealth.

The third circle of scripts, containing typical didactic and moralistic fairy tales and fables, is marked by the works of Dorota Formela, out of which stands out a miniature entitled *Pamiãtôj ò spikù* [*Remember the Dream*]. This is an instructive and, at the same time, formally well-composed stage story about a father who treats other people in a selfish manner and a mother who constantly gossips. It is only the son of this marriage, disgusted by his parents' behaviour, who breaks with his negative behaviour and decides to live a noble life. Unusual for the content of traditional Kashubian fairy tales, the author of the work criticises the adult generation, assigning qualities to young people. A formally different solution is proposed by Elżbieta Pryczkowska in her script entitled *Farwë żëcégò* [*Colours of Life*], in which she depicts the fate of fishermen, the dangers of work at sea, and love in the family circle. Songs, skilfully woven into the sequence of stage events and dividing the play into successive

⁴⁰ B. Sychta, *Słownik gwar kaszubskich na tle kultury ludowej*, 7 vols., Wrocław, Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1968.

scenes, are a great asset to this play. This creates a theatrical and musical spectacle, which has a suggestive effect on young audiences.

The fourth group of stage works written for non-artistic reasons is filled with scripts by Elżbieta Pryczkowska in the collection under discussion here. Some of them are scenic elaborations of dialogues that could occur during school celebrations of Mother's Day and Father's Day (*Dlô Mëmë i Tatka* [For Mother and Father]) or Grandmother's Day and Grandfather's Day (*Starków rada. Dżén Starczy i Starka* [Grandparents' Council. Grandmother and Grandfather's Day]). The author also conceived a script entitled *Dżén Jednotë Kaszëbów* [Day of Kashubian Unity], which is a stage picture aimed at showing children's characters explaining to each other where their cultural identity comes from and what is the significance of the festival of communal living. Pryczkowska's scripts *Kaszëbsczy Biskùp Swiāti* [Holy Kashubian Bishop] and *Brzód żécégò Jana Trepczika* [The Fruit of Jan Trepczyk's Life] are also ideologically important for the specificity of the Kashubian school. Both drama sketches acknowledge outstanding Kashubian personalities important for the formation of regional consciousness. The first one takes on a hagiographic dimension, portraying the sainthood of Bishop Konstantin Dominik (1870-1942). The second is heroic in profile, depicting the patriotic activities of Jan Trepczyk (1907-1989).

The last group of topics in this collection is made up of scenarios that could become the framework for school cabaret or satirical programmes. Teresa Wejer is very good here with her scenes entitled *Kabarët: Przezérk módë* [Cabaret: Fashion Show], thanks to which we can watch a funny clash between the mentality of people from the Kashubian countryside and the reality of a fashion show at a seaside resort. Satirical forms are also practiced by Elżbieta Pryczkowska, who in her humoresque *Wëbòrë miss* [Miss Election] parodies the environment of people organising female beauty pageants, satirising all participants in the events: both the candidates and the jurors.

The collection of theatrical scripts discussed here, *W krôjnie Grifa*, is not the only example of the revival of creators that has emerged in the 21st century. In the recent decades of the development of Kashubian drama in terms of works for young audiences, the strongest position has been built up by Felicja Baska-Borzyszkowska (born 1942). She is a teacher of Kashubian and Polish language, a writer and a publicist. In 2013, she published a set of texts of plays and theatre pictures entitled *Ŭsôdzczy na wdôr* [Works to Remember]⁴¹. In this collection, the content emphasis was placed on the didactic and moral dimension of the plays, which affects the lack of imaginative formal and artistic treatments in them. This was because the author, as a theatre person, gave up

⁴¹ F. Baska-Borzyszkowska, *Ŭsôdzczy na wdôr*, Gdańsk, Zrzeszenie Kaszubsko-Pomorskie, 2013.

her ambitions as a dramatist to become a teacher of Kashubian culture and a pedagogue.

Baska-Borzyszkowska divided her works into several thematic groups, giving them specific functions and meanings. There are forms that were created for the following purposes: appreciation of classic works of Kashubian literature, adaptation of literary works, enrichment of ethnographic exhibitions, presentation of folk customs and rituals, presentation of the beauty of the Kashubian land, commemoration of Kashubian authors and activists, enrichment of school celebrations, and theatrical presentations for state, church, or regional occasions. One or several small dramatic forms appear in the collection within the framework of the above-mentioned compositional particles. Sometimes they look like miniatures and are a few or several pages in length, with a small number of performers and abbreviated didascalia. Sometimes, however, they are theatrical adaptations of a literary text or can be regarded as stage montages of several different works or fragments thereof.

Let us take a closer look at just a few of Baska-Borzeszkowska's plays. Here is a piece entitled *Słowa malowóné akwarelami* [*Words Painted with Watercolours*], which the author intended for presentation to secondary school students. It is a spoken-word montage based on the essays of Stanisław Pestka (1929-2015). It features four reciters who speak texts from a selection of Pestka's reflections on New York, a city that is admittedly great, but at the same time alien to agrarian Kashubian culture. Alongside the recitations, illustrations from the book edition of the essays are projected onto a projector as a kind of commentary to the spoken words. What the author of the montage gains in the end is that young people hear ambitious Kashubian prose and poetry, and furthermore young people see that Kashubian is used not only to express thoughts and feelings about the immediate native landscape, but also to respond to the challenges of the modern world.

Another example of a script from Baska-Borzyszkowska's collection was dedicated to the First and Second World Wars. The work *Dzejowi spiéw* [*The Song of History*] features the lyrics of several Kashubian poets: among others, Józef Ceynowa (1905-1991), Stefan Fikus, Alojzy Nagel (1930-1998), as well as fragments of journalistic works. The Reciters and the Guide who appear on stage recall the works of the aforementioned poets and give chronological order to the play. The historical events are given in abbreviated form with single images. At the end of the stage montage, the songs appear as acts of hope and faith in a better future. Here, the author of the script touches on the complex subject of war, making the young audience of the play aware of the Kashubian road to freedom.

Such a clearly didactic approach to Kashubian theatre for young audiences does not always produce positive results, as can be seen in the play *Sobòtka w Krëbanowie* [*Sobótka in Krebane*]. On the one hand, an interesting cognitive effect is achieved here, as it is shown how the school community has the

opportunity to get to know each other better and integrate thanks to a group march on a sightseeing trip. Young people do this as well by learning about the texts of a classic of Kashubian literature by Jan Karnowski. On the other hand, however, the author's idea of having a literary figure, i.e., Karnowski himself, explain the meaning of the recited works to the audience in the language of a school discussion is not convincing. Also unsuccessful is Baska-Borzyszkowska's scenario *Ųtwórcë – jich sparlăczenié z mola* [*Artists – their Relationship with the Place*], which was intended by the author to arouse a sense of ethnic pride in the audience. On the one hand, the author used her knowledge of the geography of the birth of Kashubian writers very well and made the audience aware of the fact that Kashubian literature was created not in some distant place but sometimes in the immediate vicinity. On the other hand, however, giving a lot of biographical information from the stage overwhelms and discourages people from learning about the writers' work.

The collection of plays by Felicja Baska-Borzeszkowska vividly demonstrates the specificity of Kashubian-language plays for young audiences. Above all, they are didactic and moralistic and have therefore been subordinated by the playwrights to perform a role that is not always linked to the artistic dimension⁴². Metaphor and understatement seldom appear here, and most often there is an unambiguous moral teaching. Another feature of Kashubian theatrical proposals for children is the small form, usually one act consisting of short stage images. Rarely do playwrights decide to build larger compositions, as if they assume that the young audience will not be able to hold their attention. Still another issue is the pictoriality of the plays referred to, which is clearly not a sign of weakness in the content or composition of the plays. However, the overuse of this artistic device makes the Kashubian viewer almost unacquainted with other theatrical techniques that could add variety to the intellectual layer of the play.

Conclusions

The authors of the collections of scripts discussed here believe that theatre is an outstanding way of shaping young people's sensitivity, developing their ability to work in a group and, finally, gaining a deeper knowledge of reality. The world of theatre, through its ability to evoke a mood of joy, sympathy, and respect, as well as an atmosphere of sadness, dislike, or disapproval, supports the formation of a personal attitude towards the outside world. Dramaturgical

⁴² This feature of scripts can be considered as a result of their use in schoolwork. This type of situation is discussed in relation to other languages: P. Howell, B.S. Heap, *Planning Process Drama. Enriching teaching and learning*, London-New York, Routledge, 2013.

techniques can also show awareness and ethnographic evidence of the spiritual culture of Kashubia in a way that is attractive to a school audience. Pryczkowska, Wejer and Formela want to develop habits of perception of stage art and hope that this will result in participation in theatre life when the audience-children become adults. These authors – which is worth emphasising – derive this style of thinking from the fact that they are also teachers of the Polish language, and so they refer to scenarios present in the Polish cultural circle⁴³. Baska-Borzyszkowska is of a similar opinion, but her proposals for children are schematic in the textual layer and cautious in their references to theatrical symbols and metaphors. The author rarely allows young viewers to go beyond the position of passive spectator of a series of images. The occasional situation arises when she addresses the sensitivity of a young person and allows them to empathise with the character. Teresa Wejer is the most consistent of the contemporary authors of plays for children with this type of approach. She takes a creative approach to what has hitherto been handed down from oral or literary Kashubian tradition and leads stage events not only towards linguistic or cultural education, but also towards the qualities of play and such theatrical means as scenography and dance.

When, in 1919, a group performed patriotic and satirical repertoire for adults in Kashubian for the first time, no one in the audience expected that there would ever be a need to present plays for children or young people. After World War II, there were some plays aimed at this type of audience, but they were written in Polish (Lech Bądkowski⁴⁴, Franciszek Fenikowski⁴⁵, Natalia Gołębska⁴⁶) by Polish authors fascinated by Kashubia. Although Kashubian-language plays were being written at the same time (and earlier), none of the Kashubian-language playwrights of the time thought of a juvenile audience. It was not until the 1980s that the above-discussed Stefan Fikus and Aleksy Pepliński began to sense this, and their scripts partly fulfilled the cultural ambitions of the Kashubian community. However, it was only in the 21st cen-

⁴³ Polish-language theatre scripts useful for schoolwork can be mentioned at this point; e.g. M. Nawrocka, *24 odsłony szkolnego teatru. Scenariusze przedstawień okolicznościowych*, Warszawa, Wydawnictwo Adam, 2004; A. Miś, *Korale czyli Przygoda Jasia. Scenariusz przedstawienia dla dzieci przedszkolnych na Dzień Matki*, Kraków, Wydawnictwo WAM, 2011; J. Wróblewski, J. Szczerba, *Leśne tajemnice. Scenariusz widowiska o tematyce ekologicznej (monologi, piosenki, dialogi), przeznaczonego dla młodych widzów-dzieci i młodzieży...*, Kielce, Ośrodek Pomocy Dzikim Zwierzętom, 2011.

⁴⁴ D. Kalinowski, *Między moralitetem a baśnią. Dramaty Lecha Bądkowskiego*, in D. Kalinowski (ed.), *Lech Bądkowski. Literatura i wartości*, Bytów-Słupsk-Gdańsk, Instytut Kaszubski, Zrzeszenie Kaszubsko-Pomorskie, 2009, pp. 129-141.

⁴⁵ Id., *Historia i zabawa na pomorskim brzegu. O dramaturgii Franciszka Fenikowskiego*, in D. Kalinowski (ed.), *Franciszek Fenikowski. Kaszuby na nowo opisane*, Słupsk-Gdańsk, Akademia Pomorska, Instytut Kaszubski, 2012, pp. 121-170.

⁴⁶ Id., *Tematy, techniki i konteksty dramaturgii Natalii Gołębskiej*, «Nasze Pomorze. Rocznik Muzeum Zachodniokaszubskiego w Bytowie», n. 17, 2015, pp. 115-126.

tury, barely 20 years ago, that the Kashubian tradition gained a new quality through drama aimed at young audiences. This type of work is in the process of development, strongly influenced by the external social situation and the desire to support itself with plays in the primary or secondary school teaching process. What is missing, however, is plays that present young audiences with a different type of problem, less related to the school sphere and more to everyday life, family relationships and peers. While Kashubian authors of prose or lyric works for young readers now write in similar techniques and touch upon similar themes, as is the case in other national literatures of Europe⁴⁷, playwrights still refer to the old, pre-war understanding of art⁴⁸. At present, therefore, it can be seen that Kashubian dramaturgy still faces thematic and artistic limitations. However, the phenomena of the development of Kashubian playwriting for adults leads us to believe that positive changes will soon take place in the circle of authors of plays for children and young audiences⁴⁹.

⁴⁷ Id., *Kashubian literature for children. Historical and literary notes*, «History of Education & Childrens Literature», vol. XVIII, n. 2, 2023, pp. 165-178.

⁴⁸ Z. Mrozek, *Kaszubsko-pomorska dramaturgia w dwudziestoleciu międzywojennym*, in J. Konieczny (ed.), *W kręgu Adama Grzymały-Siedleckiego i dramaturgii polskiej*, Bydgoszcz, PWN, 1970, pp. 125-144; D. Żebrowska, *Realia obyczajowe i historyczne w dramaturgii kaszubskiej w latach 1920-1939*, «Rocznik Gdański», n. 2, 1986, pp. 295-309.

⁴⁹ D. Kalinowski, *Dramaturgia kaszubskojęzyczna. Od pierwocin do dziś*, in M.J. Olszewska, K. Samsel, A. Skórzewska-Skowron (edd.), *Dramat słowiański. Próba zbliżenia, przekroje, (re)konstrukcje i (re)lektury*, Warszawa, Wydział Polonistyki UW, 2021, pp. 131-146.