

## Maciej Gaździcki **The Medievalism in the Historical Novels of Józef Ignacy Kraszewski**

The main goal of the Ph.D. thesis is to analyze the image of the Polish and European Middle Ages as presented in the selected novels of Józef Ignacy Kraszewski, one of the most prolific and renowned writers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and a brilliant amateur historian. For the analysis author chose twenty two novels (most of them belongs to the epic cycle *The History of Poland*). He studies them, as well as some other Kraszewski's works, like the monography of the ancient Lithuania or the lectures on history of Polish civilization till 14<sup>th</sup> century, to find answers for several questions: what were Kraszewski's thoughts and conceptions of the medieval times? What were his sources? What kind of past he presented – the "golden" one or the "gothic"? What interested him the most? Was his depiction of the Middle Ages constant or varied depending on the novel? Did it somehow influence later representations of the medieval epoch in literature and culture? Has it any role in shaping Polish national identity during the times of the partitions?

The introduction explains the reasons for choosing the topic and gives information about medievalism (constant (re)creation of the Middle Ages in the postmedieval culture) and the terms connected with it (stereotype, myth and intertextuality). The first chapter presents two possible medievalisms: the dark one, of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, and the romantic one. Chapter two is dedicated to the medium which popularized such medievalisms, namely historical novel, especially that "founded" by Sir Walter Scott whose medievalist titles have influenced general perception of medieval England. Last part of the chapter introduces Kraszewski's view on the form of the historical novel, different from Scott's, relying mostly on being extremely faithful to the sources and established facts, subduing fictional plot to them. Third chapter presents Kraszewski's vast knowledge on the subject of the Middle Ages and their place in his historiosophy – reconstructed by his readings and the other works. Chapter fourth shows the intertextual situations like genre stylization or quotations, explaining the nature and the meaning of presented references. It also discusses the problems of narration in the selected novels – who is the narrator and is it only one. In the fifth chapter author describes medieval atmosphere created by Kraszewski, carefully analyzing such aspects as mentality, beliefs, customs or language. Chapter six presents gallery of Kraszewski's heroes, grouped in several categories – rulers, knights, members of clergy, women and other people (fools, merchants, peasants...). Seventh chapter explores the use of category of strangeness and familiarity – most notable in division between Poles and Slavs on the one side and Germans on the opposite – as well as the evaluation of "the past" and "the present" in depiction of the Middle Ages. Eighth chapter shows the examples of the reception of Kraszewski's literary construct – both in the literary criticism of his time and in the later media (novels and movies). In the conclusion author sums up his research and tries to answer the questions mentioned above.