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Representations of women’s biographies through monodrama. Agnieszka Przepiórska’s Theatre¹

Monodramatyczne reprezentacje biografii kobiet. Teatr Agnieszki Przepiórskiej

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Słowa kluczowe: monodram, biografia, świadectwo, herstory

Abstract

Agnieszka Przepiórska’s monodramas are a series of performances inspired by women’s biographies. They are an example of herstory – history that reflects the specificity of women’s experiences through an affective and identity-building approach. Monologues establish a strong biographical relationship between the actress and the heroines by combining the features of testimony and confession.

Agnieszka Przepiórska’s monodramas are a symptomatic phenomenon in 21st century women’s art for at least two reasons. Firstly, the actor’s stage performances in the last two decades emphasise the emergence of herstory, a historic perspective in contemporary art that combines artistic practices with research on the work of female artists, both famous creators as well as those whose work is only beginning to gain prominence. Theatre research projects that present the feminine perspective include *Inna scena* (Another stage), which initiates theoretical

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reflection on women's role and achievements in theatrical work (*Inna scena* 2006), and *Hypatia. Kobięca Historia Teatru Polskiego* (Hypatia. Female History of the Polish Theatre) that gave rise to several book publications and a website presenting the accomplishments of female stage artists². Secondly, Przepiórska's theatre is strongly inspired by women's biographies. These types of stage practices, referred to as "biotheatre", can be incorporated into the framework of Polish biographical theatre of the 21st century (Kasprzyk 2020; Popczyk-Szczęsna 2020, 2021a). This article explores monodramas that are based on a biographical narrative, provide women with a platform for freely expressing their opinions, and constitute a theatrical strategy for representing women's stories in the context of the rising popularity of biographies in the contemporary culture. The article focuses on a single female artist, but her work reflects broader creative trends and viewer expectations.

Agnieszka Przepiórska has been staging her monodramas for more than ten years in collaboration with playwright Piotr Rowicki and director Anna Gryszkówna. They have produced a number of stage plays inspired by the biographies of Zuzanna Ginczanka (Jewish poet killed during the war), Simona Kossak (researcher and environmental activist, member of the famous Kossak family of artists), Anna Walentynowicz (labourer, social activist, member of the underground opposition in communist Poland), and Barbara Sadowska (poet connected to the anti-communist opposition movement who was persecuted by the Security Service). These productions form a highly cohesive series of biographical works which began with *Tato nie wraca* (Dad is not coming back), an autobiographical performance based on Przepiórska's experiences of growing up without a father (the play premiered on 9 September 2013 in WARSawa Theatre). This dramatic piece was not only instrumental in establishing actor's trademark style in the following years, but it also gave rise to a close emotional relationship between the performer and the portrayed heroines, as noted by Przepiórska in many interviews³. Her theatrical work deserves closer scrutiny as a method of celebrating women's life stories, but also as an example of polyphonic stage discourse, where social acts of stigmatisation affecting individuals are intertwined with the process of regaining subjectivity.

² <http://www.hypatia.pl/> [accessed: 09.12.2023].

³ Radio interview: Agnieszka Przepiórska: bioteatr nie ma nic wspólnego z ekomarchewką. *O wszystkim z kulturą*. Polish Radio II, 27 October 2023, <https://www.polskieradio.pl/8/3664/Artykul/3268576,agnieszka-przepiorska-bioteatr-nie-ma-nic-wspolnego-z-ekomarchewka> [accessed: 09.12.2023].

Agnieszka Przepiórska's monodramas are characterised by a meticulous textual layer, suggestive staging solutions, and emotionally charged acting. Her monodramas largely fall into the category of popular theatre – in a positive sense of the term – which is based on psychological dramatic techniques and minimalist stage design to convey metaphors that the audience can easily identify with. As a graduate of the St. Petersburg State University of Film and Television, Przepiórska has the necessary tools to portray her characters with great psychological depth (*Mówić własnym głosem* [To speak in your own voice], 2023). The documentary and fictional aspects of her work are derived from women's biographies, a literary genre that, by definition, is highly diverse and “jumbled”, and where fact is intertwined with fiction (Dauksza 2021). The biographies of Zuzanna Ginczanka (*Wypowiadam wam moje życie. Melancholia Zuzanny Ginczanki* [I am reciting my life. Zuzanna Ginczanka's melancholy] by Agata Araszkiewicz, 2013), Simona Kossak (*Simona. Opowieść o niezwykłym życiu Simony Kossak* [Simona. The story of Simona Kossak's uncommon life] by Anna Kamińska, 2015), and Anna Walentynowicz (*Walentynowicz. Anna szuka rajju* [Walentynowicz. Anna's search for paradise] by Dorota Karaś and Marek Sterlingow, 2020) were adapted for stage by Piotr Rowicki. His stage plays have enabled Przepiórska to paint expressive stage portraits of women during performances delivered in small theatrical venues.

Playwright Piotr Rowicki transformed women's biographies, personal diaries, archive materials, and poems (in plays dedicated to Zuzanna Ginczanka and Barbara Sadowska) into literary monologues that are highly emotionally charged, but have a limited narrative. The events in the heroines' lives are presented sparingly, often as suggestions or metaphors. The playwright focused on biographical events and situations that had played an important role in the protagonists' personal growth, but also illustrate the power of self-determination. Women's artistic and social accomplishments are presented against the backdrop of private or even intimate scenes from their daily lives to expose hidden meanings or preserve the memory of heroines who have been overlooked by history. These plays attempt to epitomize the dramatic existence of courageous, rebellious, and creative women, rather than to revise these literary resources. The fact that Rowicki relied on various sources in developing his stage plays does not undermine the specificity of monodrama as a theatrical piece which combines a syncretic approach with “dramatic, lyrical, epic, musical, and pantomime elements” with a polyphonic approach, because a “monologue enables the actor to depict various characters, individuals, and voices, while portraying his/her subjects through a highly personalised lens” (Jarząbek 2007).

Regardless of the dominant themes in Przepiórska's work or the behavioural techniques that are deployed in the process of building the portrayed characters, the poetry of Przepiórska's monodramas stems from a linear approach to life events, from early childhood experiences that have shaped the protagonists' psyche, through the first memorable moments marking the transition to adulthood, to mature adult life (not necessary old age because not all of the portrayed women had a chance to grow old). However, this linear arrangement does not imply that all theatrical narratives evolve in a chronological order, and the most important moments in different stages of the protagonists' lives are amalgamated into a holistic message (Czermińska 2015). Childhood and adolescent experiences play a particularly important role in the process of recounting women's life stories (in the context of the presented story, rather than the theatrical discourse). Even if they are not addressed in the early stages of narrative development, these events play a formative role and shape the protagonists' future attitudes and/or psychological profiles.

The protagonists in Agnieszka Przepiórska's monodramas – Zuzanna Ginczanka, Simona Kossak, Anna Walentynowicz, and Barbara Sadowska – are free-thinking women who experience a sense of “otherness” and grapple with rejection or trauma. They are also highly active professionals who move beyond gender stereotypes, are not confined to social roles, and – as a result – face ostracism. Agnieszka Przepiórska stated in an interview that all of her characters were forced to “develop a survival strategy”⁴ in their daily lives to deal with experiences of trauma or unfavourable historical circumstances, and/or because they had an uncompromising attitude to life. These women have left a visible mark in the world of culture, but many of them had to break numerous barriers and challenge stereotypes during their struggle. Therefore, Przepiórska's performances honour the memory and accomplishments of these brave women through a unique artistic perspective. The protagonists' achievements are presented in a different light that goes beyond stereotypes and cultural biases, often in the context of their painful experiences.

Przepiórska's monodramas align with the herstory genre by “giving women a voice” and strongly accentuating the specificity of female experiences through an affective approach (by envisaging the protagonists' highly individualistic emotional space) and an identity-building approach (by portraying women in the process of developing autonomy despite external pressures and limitations). These women “construct the self”, and Przepiórska focuses on the nascent and emancipatory

⁴ Ibid.

aspects of the identity-building process. Each biographical story in Przepiórska's monodrama series is a narrative identity project (Partyga 2010: 450), but the relational and dramatic elements of the original story are preserved. The presentation of women in the process of constructing their subjectivity, striving for self-determination, or overcoming trauma is an effective means of highlighting the dramatic aspect of their identity, provided that the act of pursuing a goal is liberating and can be more important than the goal itself, regardless of whether it is achieved. The staging solutions deployed by Agnieszka Przepiórska to present important moments in the protagonists' lives heighten the audience's sensitivity "to the construction or deconstruction of reality, as well as the relationship between factual truth and fictional truth" (Partyga 2014: 271).

Despite numerous similarities, Agnieszka Przepiórska's herstories differ in terms of aesthetics, meaning, and acting style. The characteristic features of several monodramas that form a diverse gallery of female portraits are discussed in subsequent parts of this article.

*Ginczanka. Recipe for a simple life*⁵

The protagonist's physical appearance is the main instrument of dramatic interpretation in the monodrama dedicated to the poet Zuzanna Ginczanka. Agnieszka Przepiórska begins her stage monologue against the backdrop of Ginczanka's famous photograph. The actor's blond hair and tennis outfit sharply contrast with the poet's dark hair, and Przepiórska's facial features do not bear any resemblance to Ginczanka's Semitic physiognomy. This visual contrast takes the audience by surprise, and it delineates the style in which Ginczanka's biography is presented. Przepiórska's blond (instead of dark) hair brings to mind photographic film, and it suggests that the process of preserving the poet's memory is akin to developing a photograph from archive materials. On the other hand, the actor does not attempt to imitate Ginczanka's physical features, thus inviting the audience to a world of fiction, where the striking realism of the portrayed experiences is deeply rooted in fact.

Agnieszka Przepiórska paints a highly expressive portrait of Zuzanna Ginczanka through a dynamic speaking style and body language that evocatively captures the young poet's vitality and thirst for life. It can be argued that bodily

⁵ P. Rowicki, *Ginczanka. Przepis na prostotę życia*, dir. A. Gryszkówna, Teatr Łąźnia Nowa, premiere: 6 March 2020.

movement – directed forward, sideways, and upward – is a psychological gesture that portrays Ginczanka’s joy and creativity. In Przepiórska’s rendition of the character, the poet emanates a powerful presence when she talks about her childhood life in Rivne under the watchful eye of her grandmother, and when she recalls her ecstatic response to a letter from Julian Tuwim expressing praise for her first attempts at poetry. The protagonist’s youthful energy and power of imagination also come to light when Ginczanka shares her childhood dreams with the audience (a meeting with the famous poet Tuwim, a trip to America, winning the Nobel Prize, hitting the headlines). The young woman’s initial enthusiasm and vigour are sharply contrasted with subsequent events in Ginczanka’s life story. The protagonist’s journey to Warsaw (portrayed with the minimal use of props – a suitcase and a coat) is fraught with difficulty and humiliation, and her dream career in the spotlight (the monologue even makes a modern reference to the poet’s Instagram activity) takes on a completely different course. The poet is confronted with chauvinistic behaviour (during an appointment with Mieczysław Grydzewski, the sleazy editor of the literary journal „Wiadomości Literackie”), and she is detained in the confined space of a prison cell, where she can only dream about bread with marmalade, an apple, a patched dress, and some shoes.

The following scenes are consistently built around the poetic juxtaposition of beauty and stigma. “My face is my stigma,” reflects Ginczanka. She recounts humiliating events (“Very pretty. It’s a shame she’s Jewish”. “Being beaten, spat on and called names is the price you pay for knowledge”) and experiences of symbolic and physical violence during the segregation of Jewish students at university, but she never loses her courage: “I am a poet, I will cope, I will find a metaphor,” she convinces herself.

References to Ginczanka’s poetry are an important staging strategy in this biographical monodrama. One of the poems, *Przepis na prostotę życia* (Recipe for a simple life), has been included in the title of the production, and it sets the tone for the entire play. Other poems recited by the actor, *Bunt 15-latki* (A rebellious 15-year-old) and *Non omnis moriar*, are equally powerful and expressive. These sequences can be described as the actor’s anthropological maximum, the pinnacle of individuation, and an expression of the protagonist’s mental state and emotions. Agnieszka Przepiórska gives meticulous attention to these scenes: “In poetry, I need to take a breath, these words have to be born inside of me”⁶. The actor adopts this approach not only “to pay heed” to female poets’ biographies, but also with a deep sense that their work carries performative force and efficacy.

⁶ Agnieszka Przepiórska: bioteatr nie ma nic wspólnego z ekomarchewką.

Zuzanna Ginczanka's biography is a story of double exclusion – both gender and cultural – and it has inspired many artistic projects. Successive attempts at interpreting the poet's life and work indicate that her biography “works”. In the context of this discussion, the monodrama strives to bridge Ginczanka's image of a “natural healer” who experiences a sensual connection with nature (in scenes depicting the poet's fascination with objects and smells during her carefree childhood in Rivne) and her portrayal as a feminist poet (Araszkiwicz, Keff 2023) and the author of emancipatory and anti-patriarchal verse. However, the young poet's vitality and drive for self-determination and inner freedom, even in a life-threatening situation, take precedence over the feminist dimension of Ginczanka's work and experiences of racial discrimination. At the beginning and end of the play, the protagonist asserts “My name is Zuzanna Ginczanka. I am 27, and I want to live so much...”. The story is wrapped around this statement to accentuate the dominant theme in Ginczanka's biography: the manifestation of the poet's voice and attempts to articulate her autonomy through gestures, words, and relations with people and the world.

*Simona K. – Crying in Wilderness*⁷

The monodrama about Simona Kossak is the most polyphonic stage piece, where Agnieszka Przepiórska portrays various characters. The protagonist, a nature activist who dedicated her life to exploring the Białowieża Primaeval Forest, was a member of the artistic Kossak family, known for her unconventional lifestyle. Kossak is portrayed through her relations with both human and non-human characters. Her relations with people are based largely on criticism, whereas her interactions with non-human entities constitute the essence and purpose of her life.

The stage representation of Simona Kossak's life story hinges on two acting tasks. Firstly, Przepiórska imitates the protagonist's dialogues with other persons (which sheds light on the actor's *vis comica* and her ability to mimic other people through facial expression, body language, and vocal delivery). Secondly, the monodrama relies on a minimal use of props (the only objects displayed on the small stage of Juliusz Słowacki Theatre are a backpack, a stick, a tree trunk, and green rain boots) which represent objects of animate and inanimate nature and depict the heroine's close relations with the Białowieża Primaeval Forest. Simona's

⁷ P. Rowicki, *Simona K. Wołająca na puszczy*, dir. A. Gryszkówna, Teatr im. J. Słowackiego w Krakowie, premiere: 4 October 2020.

family life, first school and social experiences, and conversations with family members (her father, who was disappointed with the child's gender, and her mother, a beauty with aristocratic gestures) are juxtaposed with "wilderness stories" when Simona talks about the forest and her animal companions. It is through these stories that the protagonist shines an aura of a happy and fulfilled woman. In these parts of the monologue, the heroine is portrayed as a highly sensitive person who expresses herself through soft movements and gestures. The actors' expression changes radically when the heroine is confronted with humans. She imitates others with considerable humour and sarcasm, or portrays Simona as a valiant and uncompromising eco-warrior who "fights" for the forest *avant la lettre*.

Simona had experienced ostracism in the human world, whereas the forest, birds, and animals were the essence of her existence. Agnieszka Przepiórska portrays a woman who is strongly driven by her passion, dedicated to nature conservation, and sensitive to the fate of animals. The "wayward" daughter's devotion to nature is a manifestation of female willpower and Simona's attempts to protect the natural environment, but also to find her voice in the "human environment". The beginning and end of the monodrama serve as a symbolic framework for this message. In the opening scene, the actor talks about Kruszyńka, a vixen who leads her cubs out of the den ("Animals take pride in their offspring," she notes ironically). In the closing scene, Przepiórska/Simona stands on top of the tree trunk with her arms spread wide. Illuminated by a spotlight, with her long hair loose, the protagonist dies a symbolic death in communion with nature to the sounds of Gregorio Allegri's *Miserere*. Her muscles turn to fibre, and the woman is transformed into a tree. This majestic finale epitomizes individual freedom and a woman's right to choose a lifestyle that is free from the rigour of social convention.

*My name is Anna Walentynowicz*⁸

Anna Walentynowicz, the protagonist of Agnieszka Przepiórska's subsequent monodrama, is portrayed as a character who is determined to overcome life's challenges with dogged perseverance. Walentynowicz not only struggles for dignity (and a full stomach) in her own life, but she is equally resolute in fighting for the rights of other factory workers. A stooping elderly woman wearing a woollen vest, a tattered dress, and thick-rimmed glasses appears on the stage in the

⁸ P. Rowicki, *Nazywam się Anna Walentynowicz*, dir. A. Gryszkówna, pre-premiere in the Gdańsk Shipyard: 14 August 2022. Premiere in Cracow: Teatr Łąźnia Nowa, 1 September 2023.

opening scene. In contrast to Zuzanna Ginczanka, Walentynowicz is portrayed as a huddled figure, which suggests that Przepiórska's performance will revolve around an old woman's life story ("I don't remember everything... how many days were good?") and her readiness to take action ("smothered" by a difficult childhood and poverty, the woman's life is a never-ending process of pulling herself up by her bootstraps; she manifests her will power through a stiff and tense body posture, as shown in the scenes where Walentynowicz joins the Union of Polish Youth or begins working in a shipyard).

Agnieszka Przepiórska portrays Walentynowicz by juxtaposing the protagonist's "lowly" social status (a poor and uneducated Ukrainian woman) with her unwavering resolve, determination to incite conflict in the struggle for her rights (as a woman, worker, mother, and trade unionist) and criticism of others (she writes her critiques in a notebook), and unquenchable ambition (she criticises Lech Wałęsa for devaluing her accomplishments in the opposition movement). Przepiórska's paints a multi-faceted portrait of Walentynowicz not only by diversifying the narrative and relying on a variety of archival materials, but also by incorporating contrasting elements in her performance. The above is manifested by changes in the actor's body language (from the stooping posture of an old woman to the lithe and graceful movement of a young activist) and expression in subsequent scenes (the dynamic and rhythmic movements of a welder/crane operator are contrasted with moments of inactivity when the protagonist falls sick or reflects on her life).

The constant struggle for workers' rights (including the rights of female workers in the male-dominated world of Solidarity activists) is also portrayed through visuals. The monodrama is set against the backdrop of historic photographs depicting shipyard strikers with Lech Wałęsa as the leader and Anna Walentynowicz as an "anonymous worker" (this is how the protagonist ironically describes her status in the opposition movement). The narrative takes on the form of a sine wave that oscillates between moments of personal humiliation ("bitch", "Kike", "shipyard whore") and scenes of resplendence or even glory ("Mother of God with one shoe", "our Joan of Arc", and visual metaphors, where the joyful protagonist, standing tall and statue-like on a raised platform is portrayed in slow motion on a screen).

The main message of the monodrama, depicted through contrasting elements, is neither an apotheosis or a criticism of the uncompromising protagonist. Rather, the monodrama tells the story of her difficult life and attempts to rectify the distorted image of Walentynowicz as a high-conflict personality who brought turmoil to the opposition movement. The ambiguity of the portrayed character

and her enigmatic and irrational *élan vital* are brought to light in the last scenes, when Walentynowicz steps into the role of a village witch or Nemesis, the ancient goddess of revenge, and casts a spell on her surroundings (the witnesses to her life and future generations) by throwing sand in a ritual gesture of preserving her memory. The final scene departs from the monodrama's documentary and mimetic style, and it can be interpreted as an act of transforming Anna Walentynowicz into a symbolic figure, an icon of women's struggle against discrimination and violence. However, this is not an authoritarian gesture or the main thesis of the play – in previous scenes, Walentynowicz was portrayed through the lens of her private life, maternal fulfilment, and the happy moments spent with her son.

*One does not die in May. The story of Barbara Sadowska*⁹

Whereas motherhood was only one of Anna Walentynowicz's multiple roles, Barbara Sadowska is depicted mainly as a mother who had lost a son. The dramatic portrayal of a woman traumatized by loss makes a reference to the pain and suffering of Mary, the mother of Jesus. The play begins by setting the timeline of the story – the dates marking the birth and death of Sadowska's son are displayed on a screen. The essence of the protagonist's life, including her literary work and involvement in the opposition movement, was the cause or the effect of the principal dimension of her existence – Sadowska's relationship with her son Grzegorz. The monodrama thus paints an evocative portrait of a grieving mother.

“A mother and a poet – the two do not go together,” observes Sadowska when enumerating the events and experiences of her life (the protagonist's delivers her lines through enumeration: her statements are curt, she uses nonverbal sentences, repetitions and metaphors to express her emotions and her attempts to explore the world through poetry). Excerpts from the Bible (*Way of the Cross*) and literature (Mrs. Rollison in the third part of Adam Mickiewicz's *Dziady*) are equally important means of expression that introduce an element of allegory to the portrayal of Sadowska's life experiences. In her relationship with her son, the protagonist is more of a poet, an opposition activist or a hippie than a pragmatic and caring parent (she never bothered to buy a table and she rarely cooks), but despite her reluctance to engage in stereotypical motherly behaviours, Sadowska manages to raise her son as a free-thinking and decent human being.

⁹ P. Rowicki, *W maju się nie umiera. Historia Barbary Sadowskiej*, dir. A. Gryszkówna, Dom Spotkań z Historią w Warszawie, premiere: 15 May 2023.

Agnieszka Przepiórska portrays Barbara Sadowska through expressive gestures and open body language, and the repeated motion of spreading her arms can symbolize the poet's elation and journey to personal freedom, but also the prostrate body of her tortured son and, in an allegorical dimension, the Passion of Christ (crucifixion and/or the Pietà). Despite the actor's expressive rendition of both literal and metaphorical meanings, she is able to depict Sadowska's emotional anguish with extraordinary concentration, by modulating her facial expression, acting with her eyes, and making small, but poignant gestures (such as a shaking hand contrasted with a motionless body in the scene where Sadowska learns about her son's death).

The poet is portrayed as a mother who has been traumatised by the loss of her beloved son, and the monodrama depicts all stages of grief – despair, depression, apathy, longing and anger. The last stage, acceptance, comes in the final scene which, paradoxically, combines the ethical and political dimensions of Przepiórska's performance. To represent the protagonist's physical and mental exhaustion, the actor takes off her wig and, standing on one side of the stage, delivers the indictment in a formal, rather than poetic language. In her final speech, Sadowska accepts the painful truth, but she also accuses the system and its "prosaic" officers of committing a brutal murder. In the closing scene, a personal tragedy is elevated from the status of a "local Pietà" to an act of rebellion against a criminal justice system that legitimises violence. The protagonist's opposition to any act of injustice marks the highest point in the actor's performance and her communication with the viewers.

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Agnieszka Przepiórska's monodramas are an example of artistic discourse that takes the form of a testimonial narrative¹⁰. This theatrical practice is a "conscious act of paying heed to someone" (Nycz 2012: 221) – in this case, to extraordinary women, female artists and/or activists who dedicated their lives to art or social work. However, Przepiórska's monodramas, based on selected fragments of women's biographies, are not manifestations of "the power of testimony" (Niziołek 2018), nor do they attempt to own someone's personal experience. The

¹⁰ For more information about this artistic strategy in other biographical monodramas, refer to my previous article: *Monodramy biograficzne w najnowszym teatrze polskim – świadectwa i rekonstrukcje*, *Er(r)go* 2021, 2: 154–158, <https://journals.us.edu.pl/index.php/ERRGO/article/view/10022> [accessed: 07.03.2024].

interpersonal dimension and affective potential of Przepiórska's performances play a very important role in the process of embodying her characters and creating a transformative experience for the audience. The actor openly declares a sense of emotional affiliation with her protagonists' experiences: "I have to make sure that my character is a good 'fit', that I can 'embrace' her and that she can embrace me back," Przepiórska said in an interview (*Mówić własnym głosem* 2023). This creative process requires the ability to process the "emotional pain" associated with life experiences – those of the actor and the portrayed characters. Przepiórska refers to her performances as the "protagonist's laboratory", and an analysis of the actor's means of artistic expression suggests that her biographical work combines the act of "paying heed" with "giving testimony", where the actor speaks in the voice of the heroines. This strong "biographical relationship" (Boyer-Weinmann 2005) endows Przepiórska's performances with an emotional aura, and it is a clear manifestation of a polyphonic biographical discourse. Przepiórska's monodramas are rooted in empathy and identity-building, and the actor "becomes immersed in the current of other person's lives as an alternative form of existence" (Legeżyńska 2019:18), and this act of self-expression reinforces the veracity of the recounted herstories.

Przepiórska's biographical monodramas emphasise the creative potential of women representing different generations, both leading figures and supporting characters, including the actor herself. Przepiórska's work has attracted considerable popularity and positive reviews (the artist was awarded the prestigious prize of the Aleksander Zelwerowicz National Academy of Dramatic Art for her accomplishments in the 2022/2023 season¹¹), which testifies to the "biographical fever" of 21st century culture (Dosse 2011). Monodramas inspired by women's biographies and other biographical productions satisfy the human need to observe others and peep into other people's lives (which is clear example of voyeuristic tendencies in the contemporary media culture). In these works of art, the portrait becomes fused with the background, and individual experiences (in this case – herstory) are commingled with social and historical processes.

The success of Agnieszka Przepiórska's biographical monodramas can be attributed to the actor's skilful choice of artistic strategies and her ability to elicit a strong emotional response from diverse audiences. Therefore, Przepiórska's work is instrumental in highlighting women's significant contribution to culture.

¹¹ Agnieszka Przepiórska received the Aleksander Zelewerowicz award for the Best Actor in the 2022/2023 season for her portrayal of Barbara Sadowska and her contribution to biographical monodrama; cf. <https://e-teatr.pl/przyznano-nagrody-teatru-40404> [accessed: 15.12.2023].

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