The bardic culture and the legend of life of Edward Stachura and Marcin Świetlicki

The dissertation discusses the artistic activity of two Polish contemporary poets, Edward Stachura ("Sted") and Marcin Świetlicki. They are considered to be prominent creators of their epoch: the first is bard of times of the PRL, the second - times after 1989. The definition of bard requires clarification. The first chapter of this dissertation devoted to the semantics of this term today and throughout the centuries.

Bard is a man who writes lyrics and music, and then he performs his song. However, contemporary definitions of bard do not explicitly explain this concept. Similarly, the work of bards can be determined differently: sung poetry, author's song, poetic song, literary song or song with lyrics. Etymologically, the meaning of the term bard is associated with the word *bardon*, which means a lute or lyre, whereas singers who play the instrument are called bards. Almost all this definition may refer to ancient Greece and its singers of *Iliad* and *Odyssey* or to many wandering singers of medieval Europe.

Today, the definition of bard has a broader meaning. The contemporary bard is still a poet and singer. In the most general sense, a bard is simply a singing poet. But in his case the personality category is very important, because the creator here takes responsibility for the whole of his speech, that is for the text, music and performance. The verbal communication is of the leading importance, not the musical layer. The bardic music is often only modest accompaniment and unsophisticated arrangements. Bard is also defined against the sphere of officiality, against the institution, is a supporter of the alternative (political, artistic or moral), which becomes the basis for agreement with the listener. The form of direct contact is fundamental. Bard is a spokesman for freedom, in particular the freedom of his nation and creative freedom. He is a financial outsider. The development of technology largely contributed to the popularity of modern bards. Bard treats his work as a way of life. The final version of the bardic song usually stays open for a long time. An important element in the definition of a bard is a legend - white or black - created around a bard, whose life is actually legendary and provoking a rumor. Besides, in all bard’s songs, the elemental joy is often the value.
These individual points of the definition of bard in reference to Edward Stachura, and then Marcin Świetlicki present the subsequent chapters of the dissertation, trying to answer how and to what extent they are bards: original and charismatic, wrapped in a legend of creators and performers of their poetic works, people in along the way, outsiders fighting to defend freedom and other values important to human life, treating their singing as a way of life and an important form of personal contact with people.

None of the bard definitions assumes that it works together with other musicians, as is the case, for example, in the case of Marcin Świetlicki and his group "Świetlik". Świetlicki never performs as a soloist and never accompanies himself with any instrument. Not only that, he is not a strictly a singer, but a melorecitatior of his poetry: the most important musical instrument of a bard is not a guitar (or other instrument), but his voice. One of the most important features of the definition of being a bard is writing your own texts (and this is a living poetic language) and making them independent in a private conversation between the poet and the recipient. Despite the fact that Stachura and Świetlicki sometimes escape the definition of a bard, one can, however, see their life and work in the perspective of the tradition of bards. In the dissertation, biographies of both artists were briefly summarized to show the background of the era of each of them and the key points of their biographies. Next, the work of these poet-singers (issues, the semantic layer of song lyrics, their language) was discussed, followed by the way of performing and recording songs.

An important part of the dissertation is a discussion of the charismatic lifestyle of these two artists and the legend that has grown around them. A personal image of both artists was presented, including the world of objects surrounding them, wardrobe, peculiarities, their characteristic attributes, to capture their charisma not only through song lyrics, but through a personal contact between the human-bard and the human-listener. In the last chapter, both authors were compared and conclusions were collected, also from the questionnaire survey.

Bards were and are an important voice in societies, a voice personally involved in the transmission of the most important values for humanity. This is also evidenced by the life and work of Edward Stachura and Marcin Świetlicki.