Aspazija’s play **“Goldy”** (*„Zeltīte”*) (1901)

The play was intended for the turn of the century and was written in Riga and Slobodska in the year 1900. This two-act drama finalizes the line of realistic plays (“The Lost Rights” (*„Zaudētās tiesības”*) and “An Aim Unattained” (*„Neaizsniegts mērķis”*)). After focusing on the problem of work and education in her previous works, in this psychological drama Aspazija decided to talk about marriage and moral questions. In it are depicted the emotions of a young girl, whose father forces her to marry a husband she doesn’t love. At the night of the wedding, realizing she has no right to refuse and fearing the future, she drowns herself. Aspazija sketches some autobiographical motifs within the drama. Lizete — one of the names of the poetess is encoded within the name of the heroine Zete, nicknamed Goldy (*Zeltīte*). The home with a pond draws parallels with the farmstead *Daukšas*. Although the real facts of the poetess’ own marriage are different, she portrays the feelings of a young girl who comes into contact with the cruelty of life.

Criticism sees here a protest against the fact that women have no rights. However a sharp direct criticism of the society is less present in this work, it is more of a poetic depiction, that by mingling with the reality creates tragedy. Andrejs Upīts, in his monography “The Newest History of Latvian Literature” (*„Latviešu jaunākās rakstniecības vēsture”*) of the year 1911, characterizes Goldy as one of the “most simplistic and likable woman characters in Latvian drama literature. A child, who has a soul so clean white and delicate like a freshly bloomed water lily, like just fallen white and soft snow. Happen to touch it with your foot — it will leave a permanent dirty footprint, blow a hot breath on it — it will deflate and melt.”

“Goldy” never reached the big stage, however it was successfully staged by amateur theater troupes. The drama was published in 1901 in the magazine “Mājas Viesa Mēnešraksts”. Looking from the perspective of Aspazija’s literature heritage, this psychological drama is like a short poetic episode that turns into a tragedy and reveals the author both as a poetess and a dramaturgist.