

„The settlement literature of Lubusz area as the founding narration of the region” project proposes achievement of aims within three fields: theory of literature, analysis and interpretation of a literary text, and comparative research..

Theory of literature aim is to define genealogical distinctive features of Polish post-war settlement literature, meaning the body of prose literary texts from the years 1945-89 regarding the topic of settlement of the so called Recovered Territories as the result of voluntary and enforced migrations – the aftermath of the shift of territorial borders of Poland. That aim intends to verify the hypothesis assuming that settlement literature can be regarded as variety of the genre of Polish post-war tendentious novel characterized by invariant plot patterns and definite construction of narrative setting. Such approach stems from the assumption that settlement literature is a genealogical project – an attempt at creation of a post-war resettlement epic.

Analytical-interpretative aim is about elucidation of functionalization of literary tradition elements used in the settlement literature of the years 1945-1989 for the benefit of post-war politics of the place. This is accompanied by the assumption that references to literary tradition were to help construct a founding narrative of the society that is only just emerging, forced to exist under the new territorial, social and cultural conditions. The recurrence of themes such as Arcadia, The Promised Land or Ithaca, was to support the formation of the ideological construct of the so-called Recovered Territories as the mythical land of happiness. The project assumes that inter-textuality in the settlement literature is a manifestation of efforts to consolidate and popularize the founding myths of the so-called Recovered Territories by equipping these patterns with recognizable patterns of narrative description of reality. On the other hand, the use of the topos of the locus horridus (motifs of the Tower of Babel, the land of Nod and the Wild West) was a way to build the seeds of counter-myth, denying the official propaganda of Polish Peoples Republic.

The rendition of the project also contributes the achievement of a comparative aim that is oriented in two directions. The first research task in this field is the comparison between settlement literature of Lubusz Land and the literatures on migration to other territories of the so-called Recovered Territories. The accomplishment of this task aims to verify the hypothesis that the Lubusz Land is a region that required special legitimization measures, which resulted from the fact that after Second World War it was not restored within its medieval boundaries, but constructed anew out of fragments of other historical regions.

The second endeavour in the area of comparative literature consists of the juxtaposition of the settlement literature of the years 1945-1989 and post-transformation fiction concerning post-war displacement: with the small homelands current, and a neo-post-settlement novel (Inga Iwasiów’s proposal) / post-settlement novel (Margaret Mikołajczak’s proposal). Censorship restrictions and propagandist nature of literature from the years 1945-1989 meant that the traumatic nature of migration could not be fully articulated. Modern literature returning to the topic of migration is an expression of the need rework the trauma of resettlement, which it strives to achieve through the activation of post-memory mechanisms of the re-conceptualization of the migration experience as not so much a spatial but rather cultural dislocation.

Research interpretive and analytical procedures relate primarily to source material, which is the settlement literature of the Lubusz Land. Source research will be carried out on material consisting of texts of works about Lubusz area : Natalia Bukowiecka-Kruszona, Irena Dowgielewiczowa, Zdzislaw Morawski, Janusz Olczak, Alfred Siatecki and Zygmunt Trziszki. They are not commonly recognizable names. Although the literature of the so-called Recovered Territories is of interest to contemporary literary studies, but the part of it that concerns the Lubusz Land, has not been examined sufficiently.

The theoretical and comparative aims require juxtaposition of Lubusz texts with the literatures of other regions of the so-called Recovered Territories - Lower and Upper Silesia, Pomerania, Warmia and Mazury - therefore basic research will also include analysis of works of such authors as, among others, Halina Auderska, Jan Brzoza, Jozef Hen, Eugeniusz Paukszta, Stanislaw Srokowski, Henryk Worcell and Wojciech Zukrowski, whereas the study of post-transformation literature will be based on contemporary Lubusz works returning to the experience of migration - texts of Edward Derylak, Krzysztof Fedorowicz and Maria Sidorska-Ryczkowska - and the literature of other border regions - e.g. the novels by Joanna Bator, Stefan Chwin, Pawel Huelle, Inga Iwasiów or Olga Tokarczuk.

Recent literature returns to the experience of dislocation, while moving away both from mythologized pre-transformation literature, as well as nostalgic current of roots prose. The increased interest in the subject of migration among contemporary writers and literary scholars, proves that the post-war resettlements are not a closed subject. It should, however, be borne in mind that contemporary narratives of migration are, after all take a position in regard to the literature of the years 1945-1989. So far, however, there is no monograph, which would systematize and characterize settlement prose created before 1989, taking into account the hypothesis assuming that it is a variety of the post-war tendentious novel genre. The project will complement the state of research on literature of Lubusz Land, which on one hand is oriented locally, because it highlights the specific characteristics of Lubusz discourse, while on the other refers to the general experience – post-war dislocations, which involved 2/3 of the Polish population.

The lack of interest in settlement literature of Lubusz Land could have been contributed on the one hand by a view on prose dominated by censorship restrictions as lacking aesthetic value, and on the other pejorative treatment of regional literature as defective, inferior to the national literature. The project involves a departure from an aesthetic and evaluative interpretation, and considering Lubusz settlement literature not as an aesthetic, but genealogical and identity project.

Historical Lubusz Land comprised of only a small piece of land on today's Polish-German border, and its headquarters was Lebus. Post-war reconstruction of the region has little in common with its historical shape. The capital city of medieval Lubusz Land after 1945 remained within the borders of Germany. Lubusz Land created after the war included only a small portion of the medieval bishopric. Moreover, it was assembled from fragments of Brandenburg, Western Pomerania, Greater Poland, Upper Lusatia and Lower Silesia. This area was thus a conglomeration of various geographical, historical and cultural spaces. Its heterogeneity was strengthened by colonization by diverse groups of Polish and non-Polish population. The result is a melting pot of cultures, which was difficult to fit into the cultural policy of homogeneity of Polish society promoted by the Polish People’s Republic. In contrast to other regions of the so-called Recovered Territories, that difficulty was a result of not only the nature of the deportation action itself, but also from inconsistencies between the historical and post-war shape of the region and the absence of a clear spatial signature of the area.

Preliminary reconnaissance and research hypotheses will be verified in the course of a two-year research project, and the final results will be presented in the form of a monograph.