

DESCRIPTION FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC

POST-WAR POLISH LITERATURE IN THE LIGHT OF CRYPTOTEXTS (ON THE BASIS OF BULLETINS OF THE MAIN OFFICE OF CONTROL OF PRESS, PUBLICATIONS AND SHOWS 1945–1956)

During the era of the Polish People's Republic, all culture-based texts which were to be allowed into the official circulation, had to be evaluated by state-appointed functionaries – censors working for the Main Office of Control of Press, Publications and Shows (and for its local branches spread across Poland). A result of these functionaries' work were, among others, the censor reviews drawn up by them, which were confidential in nature and therefore unavailable to the public. When the contemporary scholar – after 25 years of no censorship – reaches for these documents which were generated 65 years ago by the department of the control of words, she realises on one hand the grotesque of the phenomenon, and on the other its terror. Grotesque, when the encountered reviews are often naively propagandist, revealing ignorance, malice, and sometimes the censor's fixation. Terror, when she realises the extent of the damage which censorship had done to Polish post-war literature. Its consequences are felt nearly every day, when entering a library that contains books from the years 1944–1989 on its shelves. A terror all the greater because it is hidden, for who wonders, when taking such a book into their hands, whether or not it was published in the form originally given to it by the author?

Censorship research is a relatively new field; why, up until the point of institutionalised censorship getting dismantled, one could not have studied the topic. Until today, the subject of analyses made by literary scholars who study the machinery of prevention and repression mainly circled around the censorship reviews of literary writings; bulletins appeared rarely and mostly constituted of material for context-based remarks. Already at this point in research one may say that the material contained in the censorship office's bulletins is very heterogeneous, because it encompasses not only censor reviews, but also letters written by the employees of the Office (which sometimes took on the shape of feuilleton-type statements, or a personal confession), but also cases of their own literary creativeness. Satire dominated, and some proposals were produced on the stage of the Main Office of Control of Press Publications and Shows.

A detailed analysis of all listed writings will allow for a recreation of specific censorial manipulations aimed at specific authors and writings, which will enable the making of an alternative history of post-war Polish literature – a history of the struggle of the writer's free creative intent with the oppressiveness of a totalitarian system. So far, no comprehensive description of the bulletins has appeared, essays which span a shorter timeline which would be narrowed down to a chosen period or frames which show the topic as problematic are also lacking, which is something this research project aims to "fix".

Initial analysis of the documents makes it possible to set research objectives enabled by the material collected in the archives. These are:

A. Censorial reception of Polish literature in the first post-war decade

Reading the bulletins from the years 1945–1956, by revealing the peculiarities of the late years of the Stalin reign – the tightening and loosening of ideological pressure, will show the scale of distortion that the prevention and repression apparatus caused in the first post-war decade.

B. Literary genetic basis of the censorship review and cryptotext research elaboration

One of the research goals is to develop the original concept of cryptotexts, which I proposed when analysing the phenomenon of the censorship review. I presented the terminological distinctions in the scientific papers: *Recenzja cenzorska Polski Ludowej* („Zagadnienia Rodzajów Literackich” 2016: 97–103) and *Segment streszczający recenzji cenzorskiej (na materiale GUKPPiW z roku 1950)* („Socjolingwistyka” 2016, vol. 1) as well as in the dissertation „Czytelnik” oceniany. *Literatura w paratekstach — recenzjach cenzorskich okresu stalinizmu (na materiale GUKPPiW z 1950 roku)* [the work is in print; the thesis was recognised in three competitions: it received the award from the University of Lodz Foundation for the Best Master's Thesis, the *Polityka* magazine award for the best work on the history of the Polish People's Republic and received recognition in the W. Pobóg-Malinowski competition for the Best Historical Debut of the Year]

C. The figure of an ideal censor in the view of contextual dependence of utterances

A recreation of the image of the exemplary officer from censorship office considering, among others, the concept of context dependence.

D. Censors' self-reflections – the work of the officers (belle-lettres, letters to the editors) and the issue of evaluation and the validity of an instructional periodical.

An analysis of the letters, feuilletons, article and literary works of censors.

The abovementioned research will result in a monograph and two articles.