

Research objective and the scope of project

The project *Literary tourist guide — new reading topographies* aims to determine the place and role of literary tourist publications in the cultural landscape of present-day Poland. I will characterize the literature of this domain and develop a typology of literary tourist guide, which is a form gaining more and more popularity. Necessarily, my research is based on the European-wide trends observed for the phenomena and publications in the field of *literary tourism*, *travel writing*. I will compare Polish works with German and English publication.

Literary tourism, which is akin to literary guidebook, is one of the constantly evolving ways of travelling. Literary tourism is an activity motivated or inspired by works and biographies of writers or by places which are identified as *literary*. Therefore, it is also crucial that the project determines the relation between literary guide and activities performed by its readers, such as literary strolls, walks along described paths, etc. Furthermore, the publications under research need to be considered in the context of related phenomena, such as literary walks, routes and maps, literary journeys, visits to literary sites, etc.

In my research, I will reinterpret and develop the concepts related to literary tourism and literary guidebooks — I will determine the current changes to literary tourism and its related literature. I will indicate the nature of the changes to these phenomena (from the perspective of their Polish, German and Anglo-Saxon traditions); I will also explain why they are socially important actions in the context of cultural and literary practices. I will look at the transformations of different forms of a literary guidebook, their formal and ideological implications in the face of social relationships and those enabling to represent and construct certain concepts and ideas.

Reasons for choosing the research topic

Literary tourist guide and literary tourism appear to be popular research topics, however, these are not popular enough among literary researchers. From literary studies and cultural studies perspectives, it is necessary to analyse the textual and performative phenomena related to literary tourism — all the more so because of the growing number of publications which are economy- or geography-oriented, emphasise the business and commercial advantages of selected projects, outline the issues of cultural management or focus on literary tourism as a form of industrial and commercial services. However, commercialism represents only one selected aspect of the phenomena to be addressed.

Following “literary traces” — i.e. places where writers lived and worked or real places mentioned in literary works — is no novelty to tourists and literary researchers. Literature has long inspired travellers; at least since the 18th century individuals have walked with a book in their hands in quest for literary places, spots, trails. However, literary tourism is now undergoing critical changes. On the one hand, this means a change in the scale, with mass tourism and literature giving rise to thematic tourism, i.e. literary tourism; on the other hand, this results in a new reading practice, with the reader performing new activities. These follow from social transformations, new travel modalities as well as changes to literature and literary studies. These also arise from a new literary mimesis — not restricted to (auto)biographism in its different constellations — and from a spatial turn. Modern literary guidebook is a socially important phenomenon, embedded in new cultural and social practices, and should be discussed in further detail.