

In the course of my research, I will seek to compare select works of British and Polish literary criticism of the immediate post-war period. Specifically, I'm interested in the work of socialist/socialist-leaning critics in the period of 1944-1949 (for Poland – the period *before* the introduction of the official socialist-realist doctrine) and 1945-1951 (for the UK – the period of the two Attlee ministries).

In the course of this essentially metacritical and comparative study, I would like to focus first and foremost on one specific thematic area, or one set of issues – that is, the problem of the collective subject of literary production under socialism. Who (what group of people) was the subject (or agent, or actor), actual or desired, that was considered capable (or deserving) of producing new literature? Or, in other words – under socialism – in whose interest are the works of literature written, and in whose interest *should* they be written? Whose experiences, aspirations, and world views should be primarily expressed via literary form, and who should be put in charge of setting the general goals for national literature as such? What is the model or ideal relationship between the writer and the people?

Drawing on the idea that a good metacritical study – a study in the history of literary criticism – should avoid straightforward ethical and political judgements, instead of evaluating the moral side of the actions of various Polish and British critics, I will seek to reconstruct the internal, underlying logic of their arguments and world views.

My project will have significant value to the study of literary history – and, specifically, history of literary criticism – of the post-war period. It seems safe to say that the Polish reception of modern British literary criticism in general is almost non-existent. Although traditionally Polish academics have expressed relatively large and maintained interest in British authors, this period seems to constitute a crucial white spot in our understanding of the history of British literature and culture.

Moreover, the comparison of Polish and British contexts will shed new light on the history of XX-century literary criticism in Poland.