

## Summary

The dissertation deals with the reinterpretation and manifestation of the Habsburg-Galician myth in contemporary Polish literature. Its aim is to indicate that although the Galician theme has been slightly marginalized in recent years, the myth continues to function by finding new expressions in literature. The purpose of the dissertation is to examine how the myth has evolved and how it fits into the broader literary context of Central Europe. To this end, three selected works will be analyzed, taking into account their historical and cultural background. These will be three contemporary Polish novels: Pawel Huelle's *Mercedes Benz*, Radek Rak's *Baśń o Wężowym Sercu* and Krzysztof Varga's *Sonnenberg*.

The first chapter focuses on Galicia as a retrospective and frontier space. The phenomenon of the border as a key element shaping Galicia's identity is analyzed in detail. The border is understood not only geographically, but also culturally and symbolically – as a place where different peoples, languages and traditions meet. The historical conditions of Galicia's existence as a province in the Habsburg monarchy are examined, drawing attention to its heterogeneity and importance as a microcosm of Central Europe. Described as a “space of transgression”, Galicia was a place of dynamic cultural exchange in which borders simultaneously divided and united diverse communities. The chapter also presents Galicia as a myth-making space, where nostalgia and history combine to create enduring literary archetypes. It is particularly emphasized that Galicia in retrospect is not only a memory of a past reality, but also a place that is constantly reinterpreted in literature, responding to the needs of contemporary readers.

The next chapter of the dissertation is devoted to analyzing Pawel Huelle's novel as an example of literary use of the nostalgia motif. In *Mercedes Benz*, Galicia appears as a space of memory and longing and an idealized family paradise lost. The chapter examines how Huelle uses the Galician myth to construct a narrative that is both personal and universal. Galicia in his novel is depicted as a space of cultural harmony and multi-ethnic coexistence that was interrupted by the changing turns of history. The analysis also points to the contrast between the idyllic vision of the past and the present, in which Galicia is present mainly in the form of memories: permanent cultural ones, and impermanent ones related to the functioning of generational memory. Huelle's narrative shows how nostalgia can be a tool for reflecting on transience and identity, while also providing a commentary on contemporary social and

cultural issues. The chapter also demonstrates that Galicia in Huelle's novel is not so much a geographical place, but before all else also a symbolic space, pregnant with meanings and individual emotions.

The analysis of Radek Rak's novel, *Baśń o Wężowym Sercu*, conceptualizes on the author's transfigurative use of Galician myth to introduce a fantasy narrative. Although it tells the story of real events, i.e. the peasant uprising of Jakub Szela, which went down in history under the name of the Galician rabble, Galicia itself is shown in the novel as a mythical space, where reality mixes with magic and history with legend. The method by which Rak creates a world in which Galicia becomes a transcendent place that transcends the boundaries of time and space is analyzed. The chapter analyzes motifs related to folk beliefs, folklore and mythology, which give Galicia an archetypal dimension. Rak interprets Galicia as a place where different realities meet – historical, spiritual and magical realities. Attention is also given to the role of fantasy in expanding the boundaries of the literary imagination, and how Rak's narrative relates to contemporary problems through the metaphorical representation of conflicts, desires and fears. The chapter points out that fantasy Galicia is not only a literary place, but also a universal symbol of man's spiritual quest.

The last chapter is devoted to the analysis of Krzysztof Varga's novel *Sonnenberg*. It includes a presentation of the literary manifestation of the Habsburg myth. It analyzes how Varga uses the Habsburg myth to construct a narrative of decline, decadence, but also rebirth. The realization of the Habsburg myth in the novel becomes a metaphor for cultural and social decay. Attention is drawn to the dystopian nature of the narrative, which critically addresses contemporary issues such as globalization, loss of identity and the breakdown of social ties. The chapter also examines how Varga transforms the traditional tropes of the Habsburg myth, giving them new meanings and contexts.

The purpose of the dissertation is to highlight the persistence and vitality of the Habsburg-Gallic myth in contemporary Polish literature, and to show that it still plays an important function as a literary tool for exploring both the past and the present. The reinterpretations of the myth indicated in the text reflect not only changing cultural needs, but also the dynamic relationship between history, memory and literature. Particularly emphasized is the ability of the Galician myth to adapt and transform in response to new cultural and literary challenges.

The dissertation, in its premise, wishes to indicate that the Galician-Habsburg myth, an element of Central European heritage, has integrative potential, enabling dialogue between different traditions and cultures of the region. The necessity of further research on literary

tropes related to Galicia, especially in the context of contemporary social and cultural changes, is also emphasized. Above all, the work aims to show that the Galician-Habsburg myth remains not only a historical legacy, but also a dynamic element of the literary and cultural imagination.