

Summary

Dissertation entitled *From center to peripheries. Lesbian literature and various faces of Polish non-heteronormative literature and literary criticism after 1989 – a polyphony* is a panorama of transformations and phenomena which are taking place in Polish culture of the last thirty years (in literature, literary criticism, literary studies, media discourses, social initiatives), for which the most significant context is the appearance of reflections on non(hetero)normativity. The author's intention is not to reproduce arguments already contained in dominant discourses, on the contrary, it is to take a move from center to peripheries to see the potential other than seizure of discursive power in a struggle for social recognition (undertaken by e.g. Louis Althusser, Michel Foucault or Judith Butler). One of alternative possibilities is, explored by the author, socio-cultural (re)contextualization of the readings, creating original webs of tangles, circulations and relations.

The author is especially interested in 'lesbian' literature which she distinguishes and defines in two ways: postmodern and modern. In addition to the literary texts' reading, she examines media and academic 'centralizing area' (a discourse of major impact, focusing on the chosen issues) of the turn of the XXth and XXIst centuries, which makes lesbians 'invisible', methodically elusive, 'inconvenient'. The author proves that Polish lesbian literature is rich and it co-creates a continuum (according to Adrienne Rich's concept) with various attempts and ways of its reading in particular eras.

An inspiration for constructing the expanded polyphony is the phenomenon described by Joanna Mizielińska and Robert Kulpa in *De-Centering Western Sexualities: queer (non-linear, non-chronological) 'time binding' in Central-Eastern Europe*. According to the author, impossibility of finding 'analogies' referring to categories developed in western academia or particular events of gay and lesbian liberation movement is not limiting, but exposing potential for complex, beneficial reflection on tensions between globality and locality, center and peripheries.

First part of the thesis: 'Queer, identity, late-modernity: Polish *time knotting* and latest *lesbian* literature's reading' is dedicated to aforementioned 'time knotting' – the author guides the readers through perspectives, from which non-heteronormativity is subjected to reflection: homosexual identity, lesbian / gay identity, late-modern identity, identity of resistance (which is intensively coming to the fore in contemporary Poland) as well as queer understood in various ways. What is more, the author conducts analysis on the variety of the (mostly American) sources: some of theories are associated with opening up new possibilities of non-heteronormativity expression, the others become subversive against the norms constituted by contemporary civilization and capitalism: efficiency, pursuit of success, appreciation of some particular ways of organizing one's time or family life.

Besides taking into consideration the relations and tensions between theories themselves (by Judith Butler, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Teresa de Lauretis, Elizabeth Freeman, Herbert Marcuse, Jose Estaban Muñoz, Judith 'Jack' Halberstam, Sara Ahmed, Meggie Nelson, Penny

Arcade, Michel Foucault, Anthony Giddens, Zygmunt Bauman and Manuel Castells) the author sketches a schema of flows between aforementioned perspectives, taking examples of Polish publications (literary, essayistic and problematizing occurrence of particular phenomena in Polish context (e.g. by Dariusz K. Balejko, Tomasz Basiuk, Jacek Kochanowski, Joanna Krakowska, Rafał Majka, Joanna Mizielińska, Samuel Nowak, Renata Lis, Piotr Sobolczyk, Grzegorz Stępnik, Magdalena Szcześniak, Wojciech Śmieja, Katarzyna Trzeciak and Błażej Warkocki).

Then, the author reads the latest literary 'lesbian' works: *Instrukcja dla ludzi nie stąd* by Patrycja Sikora, *Cukry* by Dorota Kotas, *Całkowity koszt wszystkiego* by Agnieszka Kłos. She refers to fragments of theories by Rosi Braidotti, Donna Haraway, Mark Fisher, Roland Barthes and Ryszard Nycz. The prose and poetry here is perceived both as queer and late-modern experimental, performative speeches, which don't essentialize lesbian identity, but individually manifest independence from oppressive systems and normativity (the subjects are elusive, embodied in feminist meaning, their occurrence works at the level of text – they transform the represented world in the direction of casually created utopias).

The second part of dissertation: 'In cogs of centralization. Dominant tendencies in culture and literary criticism at the turn of the XXth and XXIst centuries versus *lesbian literature* and non-heteronormativity' consists of five chapters. First of them, 'Conscious of uncertainty's generation, archive, fandom and queer teenagers. Turning points in literary criticism and latest texts of culture taking on the LGBTQ issues' is about decentralization, breaking the trends which have been set by academy and mainstream media, contemporary variety of grass-roots initiatives and professionalization of the humanities, including more and more self-conscious (in socio-economic context) literary criticism and capitalization of queer as a term.

The author examines phenomena of focusing literary (and other) contemporary queer projects around archive and fandom as sources of inspiration. Archives, explored in Karol Radziszewski's works, connect nowadays interests in queer practices with finding 'connectivity' with 'forefathers' (after Jacques Derrida, Heather Love, Magdalena Szcześniak). Fandom becomes crucial for youth literature – novels by Natalia Osińska and Weronika Łodyga, who both give up the rhetoric of compassion for affirmative projections of teenagers' reality, where queering history inspired by fan fiction is an impulse towards analogical changes conducted by young Poles in adult's mentality and politics.

The second chapter is titled 'In power of the Center. Media-academic discourse and literary criticism at the turn of the XXth and XXIst century and attempts to raising the subject of (especially female) non-heteronormativity'. The author conveys chosen concepts, which formed the imaginary of Polish literature after 1989 as a whole: 'politics of literature' by Przemysław Czapliński, Polish adaptation of Pierre Bourdieu's 'literary field' or project of culture's critique by Kinga Dunin. The author of dissertation critically analyses former statements on 'lesbian literature' and lesbians' activity in media.

In the third chapter, 'The (dis)covered land. Fragments of lesbian continuum in Poland until the half of 90s' the author examines intertextually related works, in which lesbian motives occur

directly or seem encrypted (the analysis contains texts of culture written by women and man, as well as chosen foreign works published in Poland in translation). A base for the story are interpreters' views, who contributed to lesbians' appearance on the pages of literature. The author includes ideas for characteristics of 'lesbian' literary text (her own as well as American and British lesbian literary critics, whose voices gathers after Krystyna Kłosińska).

According to the Polish academic and critic, Inga Iwasiów's recognition (2010) that critics' asking for Polish 'great lesbian novel' was connected with great success of *Lubiewo (Lovetown)* by Michał Witkowski, the author refers to the famous *faggots'* queer novel to outline differences between gay and lesbian text, then to present latest works by Michał Paweł Urbaniak, who departs from popular gay prose schemes, as well as *Nie rdzewieje* – a novel by Gocha Pawlak, who, after twelve years (in 2022) subversively fulfilled the reader's dreams of 'lesbian *Lubiewo*'.

In the fourth chapter 'We no longer want a man, but still need some norms. *Backlash* and postfeminism versus chosen examples of Polish prose with lesbian motives' the author carries out analysis of the phenomenon, which at the turn of the centuries was 'imported' from the United States to Poland. After making an outline of American context, e.g. after Susan Faludi and Angela McRobbie, the author does the assessment of postfeminism's occurrence in Poland (referring to Agnieszka Graff, Samuel Nowak) as well as lesbians' (im)possibility to become a 'devoted' postfeminist by reading novels: *List otwarty do królowej Wiktorii* by Anna Bojarska and *Mój świat jest kobietą. Dziennik lesbijki* by Magdalena Okoniewska. Both works incline to inquiry for lesbian's role in this movement. The author refers to Peter Sloterdijk's considerations on mass culture. The chapter closes with reading of Monika Mostowik's *Wyrzuty* in the light of Judith Butler's concept of melancholy.

In the chapter '*It's me, the Real!* Lesbian figures in Izabela Morska's works' the author focuses attention on the occurrence of lesbian figures in her prose and poetry: 'negative woman', puella docta, fatal woman and Lacanian Real referring to *Obszary odmienności* – Morska's monograph dedicated to the life and work of Maria Komornicka / Piotr Włast as well as theories by Julia Kristeva, Lynda Hart and Valerie Rohy.

The third part of work, '*Bloody, extremely intimate, existence leads to illusion.* A contribution to Ewa Schilling's works' monograph' is the aim of the journey from center to peripheries. The writer's current reception has been limited to comments on her books – the research conducted by the author on her other texts, especially juvenile, signed Ewa Kronhaus, is pioneering in Polish literary studies. In Kronhaus/Schilling's prose the author notices potential of the 'politics of location' (Bell Hooks, Adrienne Rich), nonconformity against mainstream and consequently performed literary program, as well as significant research material for *lesbian studies* (defined after Marta Olasik and Olga Stefaniuk). The author presents the characteristic features of Schilling's works: Platonic model of relationship with elements of *butch-femme* model (Wittig), combining herstory with alternative story, sketching of female characters' habitus (Bourdieu), reversing retrotopia (Bauman), neo-sentimental manner and language which encourages to possibility of 'femine' lecture.

The author identifies chosen 'locations' of the writer born in Olsztyn, Warmia: lesbian and gay magazines 'Filo' and 'Inaczej' and 'Borussia' Cultural Community, which become contexts for reading short stories and undiscussed till today columns, philippics, reviews and drafts of the literary program. In the end, the author accompanies Schilling in 'reaching the finish line' – setting up her own publishing house where she brings out her latest novel, *Nadfiolet* (interpretative context is here Mary Daly's feminist theology). She compares the novel with Ignacy Karpowicz's short story, *Prawda*. In the conclusion of the major, interpretive part of her work, the author asks the question of the future of lesbian and gay's prose. The last, fourth part, consists of commented records of authorized interviews with the writers: Natalia Osińska, Mikołaj Milcke, Michał Paweł Urbaniak and Ewa Schilling.