

## Streszczenie rozprawy doktorskiej w języku angielskim

The subject of this dissertation is the semantization of Warmia and Masuria in Polish and German literature after 1945. The research is based on literary texts in which the authors confront Warmia and Masuria as their place of birth or homeland of their ancestors. A comparative literary analysis was conducted among different literary works: the collection of stories *Aus dem Nest gefallen. Geschichten aus Kalischken* by the German writer born in the former East Prussia Arno Surminski, the autobiographical novel *Kronika z Mazur* by the Polish Mazurian Erwin Kruk, the prose and poetry works by Kazimierz Brakoniecki, Alicja Bykowska-Salczyńska, Wojciech Marek Darski and Zbigniew Chojnowski from the Cultural Community of Borussia, the novel *Ein Land so weit* by the German writer Petra Reski, whose ancestors came from East Prussia and the novel *Wodka und Messer. Lied vom Ertrinken* by Artur Becker, the writer of Polish origin living in Germany. The considerations of the selected literary works aim to define the role of Warmia and Masuria in the consciousness of Polish and German writers and the way in which Warmia and Masuria were constructed. I seek an answer to the question, how Warmia and Masuria are described in the analysed literary works and what aspects play an important role in the process of semantization.

In the theoretical chapter I focus on the notion of space in literary and cultural studies, presenting concepts that have influenced spatial discourse and portray the specificity of space. The chapter introduces the basic assumptions of the 'spatial turn' and explains the relationship between the concepts of place, memory, and space in the light of the theories of Maurice Halbwachs, Pierre Nora, Jan and Aleida Assmann, in order to determine the role played by the places and symbolic content in the constitution and semantization of space. The concepts of Michail Bachtin's chronotope and Michel Foucault's heterotopia, in which time and space categories are considered as complementary units, are also fundamental in this field. In addition, the chapter briefly discusses the selected theoretical assumptions of Hartmut Böhme and Joseph Hillis Miller pertaining to the concept of topography, mental maps, literary geography, and studies by Yuri Lotman, Henri Lefebvre, and Michel de Certeau. In the collected theoretical reflections, space is understood as a carrier of symbolic meanings and the result of cultural and social practices. The considerations of space are complemented with the explanations of the concepts of homeland, region, province and landscape as they are often used in primary and secondary literature in the context of Warmia and Masuria. They can be of importance for the process of semantization, when Warmia and Masuria are defined as a (lost) homeland, cultural landscape or a remote idyllic province.

In the following chapters, I analyse the selected literary works from the point of view of how Warmia and Masuria are presented on a geographical, landscape, cultural-historical and social level. The categories indicated in the interpretation allow to put forward the thesis that in the collected texts Warmia and Masuria are also constituted as space. A crucial role in the process of semantization is played by the perspectives and memories of the characters, the relationship between time and space, the emotional attitude to the landscape, place of origin or homeland of the ancestors. The writers construct spaces that represent different types of semantization. In Arno Surminski's stories, East Prussia signifies a lost and idyllic homeland that exists only in memories. Erwin Kruk has created an image of Masuria as a lost space of identity and a synonym of eradication in his own homeland. The writers from the Borussia Cultural Community perceive Warmia and Masuria as the basis for their regional identity and identify themselves with its cultural heritage and history. In their works, Warmia and Masuria become the embodiment of the landscape's beauty or a projection of metaphysical experiences in which historical places and nature come alive and interfere with the fate of people. The former East Prussia is depicted by Petra Reski through the space of memories of ancestors, which allows to reach the identity sources. Warmia in Arthur Becker's novel is a magical space dominated by the demonic forces of nature and represented by taboo and displaced contents. The collected observations show that Warmia and Masuria are constituted not only on a geographical, landscape, cultural-historical and social level, but also in a general sense as a space combining all the aforementioned aspects with a symbolic dimension. The point of reference in all works is indeed constituted by the same region, in a topographical sense, which takes the form of different spaces and is subject to different semantizations.

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