

## **Abstract**

The object of this dissertation is post-Yaltan migratory narrative, i.e. cultural texts concerning the changed borders of the Polish state after 1945 based on the agreements made during the Yalta and Potsdam Conferences. I will focus on writings related to the mass relocations of the population to the west (the “Recovered Territories”), which, beyond any doubt, are to be listed among the greatest collective experiences of the Polish people after World War II. In this dissertation, I will make an attempt to verify whether it is also the most significant of all post-war experiences of the Poles and whether it was/is/could be perceived as founding narrative. Therefore, I will concentrate on how the post-war westwards migrations have been presented within the last several dozen years and how they are shown today, as well as on the place and role in the shaping of the Polish collective identity that used to be and are assigned thereto. In other words, in the dissertation I ask whether the Polish people can be called a (post)migration population.

When searching for the answer, I analyse different literary and visual presentations which more or less obviously touch upon the issue of post-Yaltan relocations. The analyses are proceed along two lines. I focus on the articulation of the migration experience on the one hand and on the strategies of symbolic development of the space “moved” after the Yalta Conference on the other. I consider these two notions mutually complementary, as migration is mainly a spatial experience. In the case in question, the space is developed by a very specific type of creationism, which had a major influence on its reception for long years. For this reason, I devote a lot of space to deliberations on the mechanisms of ideologisation that the records of this experience have been subjected to. The conditions, possibilities and range of the subject of post-war migrations were all determined by censorship in the Polish People’s Republic, and its return and transformations after 1989 were only possible owing to the collapse of the communist system. However, the release of the subject of migrations from the politically glaring instrumentalism coincides with its entanglement in other significant identity-related policies of the period of transformations which I also look closer at.

At the point of departure I assume that whether relocated under compulsion or voluntarily, to improve their economic situation or find a more stable shelter in a country destroyed by war, the post-Yaltan settlers had one thing in common, at least at the beginning, i.e. the feeling of not being at home and immersing in the aura of temporariness and uncertainly, which oftentimes translated into overwhelming fear. The people felt like guests in a foreign country, in which they should become hosts, experiencing a specific oscillation between the

discomfort of eradication and the equally strong enthusiastic need to develop roots again. Such feelings are rather typical, if not universal, elements of the definition of migration.

What distinguishes the situation of my interest is the series of historical and political incidents, which presented the newcomers with a twice as difficult task. Next to the need to accustom themselves to a strange cultural landscape, marked with centuries-old presence of German impacts, they also had to stand up to the challenges set by the new political order (when compared to the pre-war one), in which their travel (usually) into the unknown was called a “return” to homeland and any doubts related to this thesis were suppressed by the omnipresent censorship, as the annexed lands had for years served as areas of the exchange of people and symbolic universes. The withdrawing German culture was gradually replaced with the Polish one, in its communist, homogeneous form. In short, the substitution mechanism would look as follows: any traces of presence of the former residents of the lands were blotted out and the areas were converted into something like empty containers that were subsequently hastily filled with contents needed by the new authority. To legitimise the boundary shift and create the illusion of continuity, the term “Recovered Territories” was abruptly coined, to straightforwardly imply their Piastian genealogy. Additionally, as such “recovered”, deserted and systemically populated lands increased the chances to build a new, “ideal” socialist society, the historicising rhetoric of the “return to matrix” was accompanied by revisory rhetoric of the communist pioneers.

Therefore, it can generally be stated that the combination of shifts in the geographical space with movements in the geopolitical space brought about a compulsion to dissociate from pasts other than connected with these two subjects, i.e. both from the German one, encountered in the place of destination and inscribed into the landscape, and the one which the settlers took with them, related to the Eastern Borderlands, which turned out to be troublesome in light of the Polish-Soviet friendship declared at the time by the authorities. Furthermore, there was an implied imperative to cut off from certain ideologically inconvenient contents such as war experiences (the Home Army) or the pre-war class, religious and cultural affiliations (membership in non-communist formations). The new system wanted to bury the old one deep down, in the sphere of family stories, or even deeper, in the expressionless sphere of passion (pain, longing, frustration or bitterness), while the surface of the official discourse devoted to post-Yalta relocations was covered with a thick layer of clichés, simplifications, distortions and misrepresentations.

In still other words, the aim of this dissertation is, first, to follow the traces of post-Yalta relocations, understood in two ways, as records of experiences and as rhetoric structures,

through which they are articulated in the strongly censored or politicised narration of the Polish People's Republic, and, second, to analyse the "corrected" versions of such presentations, which appeared after 1989, i.e. at the time when the censorship principles ceased to apply.

The majority of this dissertation consists of analytical and interpretative sketches. Nevertheless, part one represents a more sectional perspective. In chapter 1 I analyse in detail the notion of migration and its relationships with literature. Chapter 2 is devoted to the analysis of ideological circumstances in which the Polish migration tale develops. Finally, in chapter 3 I describe the perspective from which I will look at the examples selected for further analysis.

Part two contains sketches about the prose on post-Yalta relocations at the time of the Polish People's Republic. Firstly, I examine the "post-Yalta genealogy", which I understand as a critical and (geo)poetologic project dedicated to the "great epic novels" devoted to relocations. Since such novels virtually did not exist back then, by analysing the ideas for writing them I try to look closer at the reasons why they were not written. Thus, chapter 4 serves as a systematisation and an overview. Then, I focus on the trilogy by Anna Kowalska, *Opowieści wrocławskie* [*The Wrocław Tales*] of 1948-1955 (chapter 5), the collection of tales entitled *Najtrudniejszy język świata* [*The Most Difficult Language of the World*] published in 1965 by Henryk Worcell (chapter 6) and the diology *Ptasi gościniec/Babie lato* [*Birds' Highroad/Indian Summer*] by Halina Auderska of 1973-1974 (chapter 7). I find these works to be the most interesting and ambivalent (as for the then designed monophony of the discourse) attempts to present the subject of migration within the three decades when the Recovered Territories were an urgent subject, vividly discussed in certain circles. Additionally, I see these texts as representative for the discourse in general, i.e. as ones based on which several important problem groups can be identified and the internal dynamics of changes in the period can be signalled.

Part three concerns the same period and serves as an addendum to previously described issues. I decided to separate it from other parts because it is devoted to visual presentations, i.e. photographic projects by Jan Bułhak conducted within territories annexed as part of the *Fotografia Ojczysta* [*Polish National Photography*] programme (chapter 8) and the movie entitled *Nikt nie woła* [*Nobody's Calling*] by Jerzy Hen and Kazimierz Kutz (chapter 9). The analysis of these images provides spatial expansion of the view on the issues of my interest. Examination of Bułhak's images provides an assumption for taking up a previously unexposed, yet crucial issue, i.e. the loss of the Eastern Borderlands, as well as the place and

role of the experience (and, more generally, of the Eastern Borderlands as the central space in the national imaginarium) in post-Yaltan discourse. The film by Hen/Kutz, in turn, implies the question about the localisation of the memory of relocations in a plan broader than the above-mentioned discourse. To conclude my deliberations on the times of the Polish People's Republic, I would like to have a closer look at the place of the post-Yaltan relocations in the then national symbolic universe.

Part four of the dissertation is devoted to transformations, meaning corrections and reinterpretations of the subject of post-Yaltan migrations after 1989. In this section, I will focus on literary returns to the experience of relocations in the second generation of migrants, created without censorship. In chapter 10 I make an attempt to define the significance of post-Yaltan relocation in literature commonly referred to as "literature of small homelands", by looking at it through the prism of the provocative notion of "Western Borderlandness". In chapter 11, in turn, I read *Bambino*, a novel by Inga Iwasiów and *Piaskowa Góra [Sandy Hill]* by Joanna Bator, to prove them to be the most comprehensive (post)migration texts so far. To conclude this part, I return to the film medium (12). When analysing *Róża [The Rose]* by Wojtek Smarzowski I repeat the question asked in relation to the work by Hen and Kutz. In this particular case, the description of the grid of cultural coordinates entwined around the post-Yaltan shifts serves as a summary of my considerations, in which I attempt to analyse the most up-to-date reasons for the previously signalled non-obviousness of descriptions of Polish people as a (post)migration population.

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