

Philology in Touch

Polish Studies, German Studies, Postcolonialism

Summary

The monograph *Filologia w kontakcie. Polonistyka, germanistyka, postkolonializm* [Philology in Touch. Polish Studies, German Studies, Postcolonialism] encompasses the comparison of postcolonial and post-dependence research carried out by Polish literary scholars with the German version of historical and literary *postcolonial studies*. The comparative perspective of the research project, involving the two neighbors, focuses widely on Polish-German contexts of history and culture of the 20th century (e.g. Nazi occupation in Poland, “expulsions” of Germans), which in both countries have so far been explored within the framework of postcolonial studies only to a limited extent. Therefore, the purpose of this book is also to analyze the causes for such a research gap and fill it by pointing to potential areas, where the two neighbors’ discourses might meet. These issues, among others, are discussed in the first theoretical-methodological part of the monograph (chapters II and III), which also includes an overview of self-referential reflection on the Polish and German Philologies, both in Poland and abroad, which are nowadays reconstructing their programs (chapter I).

According to the intercultural aim of research, the second part is devoted to analytical studies of the most recent works of German and Polish literatures, which problematize the experience of the Second World War and its impact on the present. As for this part of the book, the aim of research is to test the capacity and usefulness of categories of postcolonial discourses in Poland and Germany (such as victim/aggressor, superior/inferior, central/peripheral). This line of research makes it possible to answer a question whether there is room in both discourses for neighbors as subalterns and their memories of the 20th century.

With reference to the study of the literary postcolonial and post-dependence discourse, apart from tools specific to the study of postcoloniality and post-dependency, the following tools were used: intercultural literary studies, philology of neighborhood, comparative studies of discourse and critical discourse analysis. The second part of the research, devoted to selected literary works and their historical and cultural contexts, was carried out with the use of methods related to postcolonial studies, post-dependence studies, as well as gender

studies. These methods revealed the (im)permanence of misconceptions and prejudices that constitute one of the dominating thematic elements of the works I discussed.

A parallel study of Polish and German literary discourse is an ideal platform for critical development of the methodology of postcolonial studies in the area of international (here: bilateral) relations that are crucial to this discipline. The innovative value of the monograph consists in placing the already existing Polish post-dependence studies in the Polish-German context, and at the same time taking into account the postcolonial experience of the Germanic part of Europe, which is radically different than ours. Such research is necessary to show the complexity of civilizational consequences of history in contemporary Poland and Germany. Focusing not only on the Polish experience of the Second World War, but also on the experiences of our neighbor, can make it possible to reliably participate in the debate on memory in Europe. For philology studies (Polish and German studies in Poland and abroad, Slavic studies in Germany), the monograph may be a real common ground for the researchers from both countries who are active in the abovementioned subdisciplines.