

Summary

“Prose of Piotr Guzy”

Construction of the world presented in the prose of Piotr Guzy is based on autobiographic pillars and is a mirror, which reflects the writer's image, leaving pieces of his thoughts, memories and experiences in the literary world. All the tracks left by the author allow us to recreate the biographical map of places connected with the homeland and emigration. Life has become the best material, around which novels are created and which helps present both the historical phenomena and the fate of an individual.

Piotr Guzy, born on 1922 in Zawadzkie, a town currently situated in the region of Upper Silesia, is a Polish emigrant writer, whose literary works have not yet been thoroughly evaluated. Moving to Tarnowskie Góry situated in Poland, travelling across the world during war times, joining the 1st Polish Armoured Division under gen. Stanisław Maczek, emigration and return to the country, active participation in the Poznań “Tygodnik Zachodni”, first writing attempts, second emigration, work in BBC and the Polish Radio Free Europe constitute an interesting, yet a rather common biography (Florian Śmieja, Wojciech Gniatczyński or Jan Darowski all shared a similar fate). What distinguishes the author of *Stan wyjątkowy* is his experience as a soldier, double emigrant, a writer and radio reporter. Due to his close connection with Silesia and post-war Poznań, Piotr Guzy tried to settle down in the Western Europe. He chose Daimuz, a small Spanish town near Valencia, for his second home.

The second emigration allowed Piotr Guzy to evolve as a writer. His first attempts in writing in Poland were somewhere between a production and a sensation novel, whereas later he turned to psychological and moral fiction. There are clear signs of inspiration with Joseph Conrad. The realities of war and later Polish People's Republic turned out to be a perfect background for his musings about moral and ethical boundaries, making necessary choices in extreme situations, reasons of the fall of mankind and his loss between the true and false. Such background gave the novels a more universal appeal. While the works of Piotr Guzy were appreciated by the literary environment abroad with numerous awards, in the country his novels were forgotten due to the passage of time and the author's absence in the literary life of Poland.

The main objective of my dissertation is to present all the works of Piotr Guzy. As one of the most interesting modern prose writers, an author of eight novels and one collection of short stories, Piotr Guzy has not yet been subjected to the literary criticism. It seemed reasonable that such evaluation should be made. This paper also reflects the desire to learn more about his unique works. I am mainly interested in the spacetime, axiological and psychological aspects of the novels, thus also his evolution as a writer. The object of my literary analysis are the following works published in the country – the first collection of short stories *Jędraszkowice* and *Nocna zmiana*, crime novels: *Ostatni odchodzi 22.25* (1955); *Nocny zrzut* (1955); *Cienie na gwiazdach* (1956); *Wenus z brązu* (1956) as well as novels published on emigration, such as *Krótki żywot bohatera pozytywnego* (1966); *Stan wyjątkowy* (1968); *Requiem dla pani Tosi* (1990). Furthermore, I am analysing his last works published in Poland after political changes taking place, i.e. *Zwidy na wysokościach* (1994) as well as a collection of short stories entitled *Odwiedziny u duchów i inne opowiadania* (2015). The foregoing works are diverse in themes and genres, thus they require different approaches. Therefore, in my dissertation there are references to biographies and autobiographies, geopoetics (space, place-city), psychology (memory and post-memory), cultural anthropology, as well as genology (production, police, crime, psychological and political novels). My paper is centered around the foregoing: consecutive stages of the works of Guzy, including the characteristic features of every stage, methods of introducing autobiographical elements, drawing from the literary tradition, presence of symbols and their role in the text, and finally the creation of characters. Focusing on the foregoing points should familiarize the readers with all the themes of Guzy's works.

My dissertation consists of five basic chapters, an introduction, summary, source literature and an annex. In the opening chapter entitled: *Żołnierz, pisarz - emigrant, dziennikarz radiowy. Rys biograficzny*, I attempt to recreate the biography of Piotr Guzy. Presenting the author's biography is essential to determine the number and function of autobiographical plots in all his novels. Thus, I will concentrate on such terms as literary biography and autobiography, memory and "re-creation", autobiographical elements and the concept of language as a medium for illustrating the spiritual dilemmas of a man in a world full of evil. This part of my paper focuses on analyzing the matter of identity and assimilation.

Chapter two, *Obrysowane w pamięci – autobiograficzne przestrzenie*, concentrates on the issue of space. There are three major areas present in the works of Piotr Guzy – Tarnowskie Góry (and Silesia in general), where he grew up, emigration and war hell. Guzy's

areas are occupied with characters, who feel lost, who are in the turning point, unattached to a place, like they were deprived of their identity. First of all, their memory evokes the areas from their childhood and adolescence, and then “skips” to the time of emigration, leaving the war trauma unattended. Thus, the prose of Piotr Guzy closes with war recollections, which are most visible in the writer’s last novels. When interpreting the works of Piotr Guzy I refer to space in the light of geopoetics and I focus on such issues as memory, autobiographical places and “non-places”. In contrast to other emigrant writers, the author of *Stan wyjątkowy* did not compare and contrast the emigrant spaces with the Polish ones (ugly – foreign, beautiful – home). Guzy emphasizes the volatile (changeable) character of places and their displacement, which corresponds to the emigrant’s fate.

Chapter three entitled *Od prozy produkcyjnej do powieści kryminalnej* I “follow” the first prose works of Piotr Guzy, which closely resemble the production prose. The next sensation and criminal novels written in the country could be classified as police novels. Analysis of the foregoing works focuses on their schematism, recurrence of the same popular prose models. This allows to discover any deviations from the effective model. Thus, in this part of my dissertation I pose the following questions: could the criminal novels of Guzy be interpreted in different ways? Does the author, just like Stefan Kisielewski, use the complex Aesopian language to hide an important message addressed to his readers?

In my studies I mainly focus on the evolution of the prose of Piotr Guzy, which was brought about by his second emigration. The chapter called „*Krótki żywot bohatera pozytywnego*” *drogą do twórczej wolności* describes the author’s first work written on emigration, which is classified as a political “settlement” novel. It is here that Guzy analyses the mechanisms of power but the reader can also notice the author’s interest in the psychological aspect as well. With time the second element starts to dominate in the works of Piotr Guzy. This is an important novel (the most important according to some critics) in the author’s literary output. It is this novel, in which the author of *Krótki żywot bohatera pozytywnego* shows true signs of mature writing, which in different forms may be also found in his later works.

In the fifth chapter entitled *Problematyka psychologizmu w prozie Piotra Guzega* I discuss the themes of the author’s works written on emigration. The writer is not interested in the totalitarian system itself but in the evil present in the life of an individual. The works raise the question of evil, the role of an executioner and the victim, human relations in extreme situations. The totalitarian system, war, exile are all background to human behaviour and

reveal the darkest side of the human psyche. Psychologism is present both in the themes, as well as in the extended internal monologues, often in the form of the stream of consciousness, and in the characters themselves. The novels' characteristic themes are built around their main characters, i.e. UB officer, enslaved man of letters, incapacitated women. Piotr Guzy creates psychological characters and looks for the sources of evil inside of them. He is interested in examining the causes of spiritual and moral fall of mankind.

To my mind, the author's works written on emigration are much more interesting in terms of their literary, technical, cognitive and problematic value than the works published in the country in the 1950s, although they also have a slight tendency towards schematizing. An interesting biography of a "double emigrant" reveals an esteemed, awarded writer (awards granted by "Kultura" and "Wiadomości" magazines), who was still outshone by the most important emigrant writers. All his life, Piotr Guzy was determined to write about a man, his psyche, complicated spiritual life, his ups and downs, feeling lost in the everyday life and in the shadows of the past.

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