

## Summary

Marta Wolańczyk, *The myth of Lviv in Polish literature of the twentieth century*.

The fascination with Lviv, a city that belonged to Poland for over six hundred years, has a long tradition. The Polish kings admired it and bestowed privileges on the city, which charmed also its visitors. The inhabitants lived in a melting pot, where nations, languages, cultures and religions melted. Out of this rich and diverse environment a community was born in which Polish spirit prevailed. The city distinguished itself with its specific atmosphere and unique features.

After Lviv was separated from Poland by the decision of the Yalta Conference, the process of idealising it grew among the expelled citizens. An extensive fiction about the city ensued, including hundreds of poems, songs, memoirs and short stories. The literary works created various images of the city, whilst the city itself evolved into a myth or a legend of a perfect place, full of beauty and homeliness, broadly defined culture, a centre of Polish spirit and a place of harmonic coexistence of nations at the same time. The literary image of Lviv appeared to be so rich, that it came into the scope of scholarly research. *The myth of Lviv in Polish literature of the twentieth century* has been written to organize it and investigate the mechanisms of city myth development. It has been focused on the phenomenon of mythologizing the city by Polish poets and writers. Special attention was given to two landmarks in the city's history: its 1918-1920 defence and its loss by Poland after the Second World War. The impact of these events on the perception of the city and its literary image has been thoroughly scrutinised.

The first chapter, *The theories of the myth*, was devoted to the etymology of the notion, definition, classification and interpretation in different epochs, as well as the analysis of the myth in different schools of thought: psychological, sociological, phenomenological and structural. The perception of the myth in psychology, political science, sociology and history has also been analysed. Attention was given to national myths and the relation of the myth to literature. A similar notion, the legend, was also analysed with its definition and similarity to other literary genres.

The second chapter, titled *The space, place and city* was devoted to the analysis of these three ambiguous and complicated categories. Attention was paid to their definitions and ways of interpreting them in different sciences, especially their relationship with human and humanistic geography. Also discussed were their relations with other notions, such as memory, identity, inveteracy, nomadism, migration, borderland, homeland, postmodernism, and 'Kresy'. The city phenomenon and the subjective perception of space in the observer's mind (mental map) were of importance here. The history of creating cities was dealt with together with their presence in Polish literature and the evolution of their perception.

Theoretical deliberations upon the myth, legend, space, place and city led to the interpretation of the complex problem which is the myth of Lviv in Polish literature of the twentieth century.

The third chapter, titled *The legend of the defence of Lviv in the interwar literature*, is above all a picture and analysis of the fight for the city in 1918-1920. Discussed was a broad literary material from that period: poems, songs, prose and memoirs of authors who are largely forgotten today. Investigated were the reasons for formation of the legend of the defence of Lviv, its literary image and changes in perception. Also discussed were applied literary genres, topics, poetics and references. The authoress also conducted a classification of the vast amount of poems into distinct strands according to thematic and stylistic dominant features.

The fourth chapter, titled *The myth of Lviv in post-Yalta literature*, is above all an analysis of post-war literary works of the leading writers who were either raised in the city or were descendants of the inhabitants of Lviv. This part was devoted to the works of Marian Hemar, Józef Wittlin, Zbigniew Herbert and Adam Zagajewski.

The analysed literary works allowed making a thesis that it is mainly Polish literature of the twentieth century that created the myths and legends about Lviv. It was noticed long ago that the myth gives a feeling of sense of existence, order of the world, community, spans people who think in a similar manner, gives answers to human desires and expresses their fears. It is one of the elements that form a nation. The historical and political situation forced the creation of the myth of Lviv in a way. The city, which was threatened by a Ukrainian coup, and the reviving Poland needed in 1918 an exemplar of unity, patriotism and devotion, and the defence of Lviv and its literary image responded to that demand. The legend of that defence spoke about the continuation of the historic fight for the homeland, about bravery,

persistence in suffering, and even about life sacrifice. Those were the values that newly reborn Poland needed.

The loss of Lviv after the Yalta Conference was a tragedy for its inhabitants, a feeling of historic and personal injustice, undeserved loss of homes, familiar surroundings and the city. A universal myth of lost Arcadia and expulsion from Paradise was revived accompanied by the eternal human longing for the perfect, happy place and the need for settlement.

It must be noted that the phenomenon of the city is still being unravelled. I think that the following thesis contributes at least to a degree to the process of its identification.