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A summary of doctoral dissertation entitled *Upper Silesia during the period of the plebiscite and Silesian Uprisings and Wojciech Korfanty in the German literature after 1919 year*.

The subject of this dissertation is the Upper Silesia during the period of the plebiscite and Silesian Uprisings and Wojciech Korfanty in the German literature after 1919 year.

The Upper Silesia, lying on the borderland, was always in the sphere of influences of German, Polish and Czech culture, which permeated each other, forming a separate culture and specific identity of the inhabitants of this land.

This sense of separateness is still alive there today, as evidenced by the activities of the Silesian Autonomy Movement in those areas. There are also Silesian TV Channels, promoting, for example, the cuisine of this region, traditions related to various holidays etc. In the Polish national census of 2011, 847 people declared their nationality as Silesian.

The impulse to address in this dissertation the issue of Upper Silesia during the plebiscite and Silesian uprisings in German literature of the first half of the twentieth century is also the myth of a multicultural Europe without borders, functioning in the general consciousness. We can also talk about Europe of homelands or about Europe of regions.

The accession of Poland to the European Union and the creation of the Schengen area enabled close cooperation of regions, especially of border regions, and at the same time gave an impulse to rediscover the local history, including its own roots, by borderland residents. The texts analysed in this work fit perfectly with this idea and they discover Upper Silesia as a common homeland of Silesian people, Germans and Poles. Especially thanks to Horst Bienek's novels, the myth of Upper Silesia functions as a land of many cultures and languages.

In Upper Silesia political forces clashed, trying to appropriate it both territorially and culturally. In the first half of the 20th century Upper Silesia was a hotspot of European politics. As a result of two world wars, a plebiscite and three Silesian uprisings, the inhabitants of this region were often forced to change their nationality without changing their place of residence.

The plebiscite as a means to resolve the dispute over the state affiliation of Upper Silesia after World War I was imposed on Poland and Germany by the Entente states at a peace conference in Paris in June 1919. It was a popular form of resolving territorial disputes, because it reflected the Wilson principle of self-determination of nations. The decision about the plebiscite was accepted by the German side, which earlier proposed such a solution to the Upper Silesian issue during a conference in Wrocław in May 1919. The Polish side initially did not accept the postulate of the plebiscite solution, because it believed that the ethnic argument, without the need for holding a plebiscite, should decide about the state affiliation of Upper Silesia. However, Poland finally decided to hold a plebiscite on the disputed area. The supervision of the plebiscite campaign was entrusted in December 1919 to Wojciech Korfanty, who was formally appointed to the post of plebiscite commissioner on 20 February 1920. At that time, the Inter-Allied Commission and the Allied troops arrived in Upper Silesia. At the same time, an official plebiscite campaign was launched, in which the German and Polish sides outdid each other in more or less real material promises to the inhabitants of Upper Silesia, which found their expression in the famous cow of Korfanty or Urbanek's goat (Kurt Urbanek was the head of the German plebiscite committee). The issue of plebiscite and Silesian uprisings was often taken up by German and Polish historiography as well as by literature.

Wojciech Korfanty (1873- 1939) was a key figure of this period. He was one of the most controversial politicians in the history of Upper Silesia, Germany and Poland. He is perceived as a politician who was responsible for the partition of Upper Silesia as a result of the plebiscite and Silesian uprisings in 1921. Echoes of these controversies are also reflected in German literature and historiography of the interwar period.

The purpose of this work is therefore:

1) Presentation of the picture of Upper Silesia on the day of the plebiscite and Silesian uprisings and reconstruction of the image of Wojciech Korfanty in German literature (after 1919) on the example of novel works: *O.S.* by Arnolt Bronnen, *Ostwind* by August Scholtis and *Pierwsza polka* by Horst Bienek,

2) An attempt to answer the question how this image functioned in the weave of various myths and stereotypes, existing in the collective consciousness of the German and Polish nations, and whether and how it changed in German literature.

Based on analysis of novels by Arnold Bronnen and August Scholtis, it can be stated that their ideas about Upper Silesia and about Wojciech Korfanty were not much different from the common stereotypes in the German discourse of the interwar period. Both writers voiced their views on the eternal belonging of this region to German culture and called the plebiscite and Silesian uprisings the Upper Silesian catastrophe. They put the blame for the loss of part of Upper Silesia to Poland on Wojciech Korfanty, the plebiscite commissar and the leader of the 3rd Silesian Uprising. He was portrayed by these writers as a bandit, imposter, liar, unscrupulous politician, offering empty promises.

A completely different picture of Upper Silesia can be found in Horst Bienek's works. Upper Silesia as a borderland is a multicultural region, a place where different languages, lifestyles and sometimes traditions meet. They were a treasury from which all the inhabitants of this region derived, creating their own specific culture. Wojciech Korfanty is an element of this landscape that has passed and as already mentioned symbolizes this multiculturalism of Upper Silesia. The author tries to look for an answer to the question of the identity of this region and its place on the cultural map of Europe.

The dissertation consists of an introduction, five chapters and final conclusions.

The second chapter of this work contains a historical outline. It discusses the political and socio-economic situation of Upper Silesia during the plebiscite and Silesian Uprisings, and introduces the figure of Wojciech Korfanty, a plebiscite commissioner from the Polish government.

The border, the borderland and the little homeland are the topics considered in the analyzed novels, which is why the third chapter is an attempt to define these concepts and indicate their symbolic meanings, as they appear in the literary texts discussed here. It discusses the concept and development of borderland literature (*Grenzlandliteratur*) and literature of little homelands (*Heimatliteratur*).

The fourth chapter is devoted to the subject of myth. Taking into account Polish and German research on the myth, it discusses its definitions, types and functions. In the German collective consciousness, circulated the myth of Upper Silesia as the lost homeland, and the image of Korfanty as a devil, a bandit responsible for the loss of this region by Germany to Poland. These myths were also reflected in the novels discussed.

The following chapters concern the analysis of the novels: *O. S.* by Arnolt Bronnen, *Ostwind* by August Scholtis (chapter five) and Horst Bienek's *Pierwsza polka* (chapter six). The first two novels were written in the interwar period, when the memory of the Silesian uprisings was still alive amongst the inhabitants of Upper Silesia, as well as in German society. Bienek's novel was created after the Second World War in the 80s of the twentieth century, as the (re) construction of the land of his youth, i.e. written *sine ira et studio*. This makes it possible to show the way and reason for changing image of Upper Silesia and shifting perceptions of Wojciech Korfanty and his activities in German literature.