

ABSTRACT

Doctoral dissertation titled *Palingenesis Of Myths in Polish Women's Prose After 2000* is devoted to an analysis of contemporary forms of the return and transformation of myth in literature written by women, with particular emphasis on two dominant manifestations of this phenomenon: retelling and cultural branding. The point of departure for the study is the assumption that, in the twenty-first century, myth no longer functions as a stable and normative structure of meaning, but instead operates as a dynamic narrative mechanism, subject to constant transformations resulting from aesthetic, ideological, and media-market changes.

The theoretical part of the dissertation (Chapter I) reconstructs and systematises the most important concepts of myth and its literary transformations (including those proposed by Northrop Frye, Mircea Eliade, Claude Lévi-Strauss, and Roland Barthes), situating them within the context of recent literary scholarship on palingenesis, intertextuality, and narrative transformation. The theoretical framework is further complemented by a feminist perspective, with particular attention paid to postfeminism and fourth-wave feminism. Of key importance is the observation that these two currents – despite the tensions and controversies surrounding them in contemporary academic discourse – function simultaneously in Polish women's prose of the first two decades of the twenty-first century, leading not only to their articulation but also to the banalisation and erosion of their emancipatory potential. This perspective makes it possible to analyse myth as a tool for negotiating subjectivity, gender identity, and power relations in the postmodern world.

The analytical part of the dissertation examines the phenomenon of the "return" of mythic narratives and components in selected examples of Polish women's prose after 2000. Chapter II is devoted to the first identified form of palingenesis – retelling – understood as a critical and reinterpreted practice aimed primarily at restoring a voice to figures marginalised within traditional mythological narratives. On the basis of an analysis of the selected corpus (including short stories from the anthology *Ziarno granatu. Mitologia według kobiet* and novels by, among others, Olga Tokarczuk and Monika Magoska-Suchar), three dominant retelling strategies are identified: katabasis, monstification, and escapism.

Chapter III is structured analogously and focuses on the phenomenon referred to as cultural branding. Originating in studies of mass culture and media studies, this concept constitutes an original attempt to adapt these analytical tools to the field of literary studies. In the analysed texts, mythological components no longer function – as they do in retellings – as narrative structures, but instead become cultural brands, assuming the role of carriers of ideologies present in contemporary media and political discourse (including eco-critical, identity-based, and national narratives). On this basis, three key ideas structuring the exploitation of mythic content are distinguished: masquerade (in the novels of Olga Tokarczuk and Izabela Filipiak), gaiism (in the works of Agnieszka Szpila and Barbara Piórkowska), and the notion of indigenization (in the works of Katarzyna Berenika Miszczuk and Aleksandra Seligia). The analysis demonstrates that although both retelling and cultural branding draw upon the same mythological repertoire, these two forms of palingenesis differ fundamentally in terms of their cultural function and critical potential.

Consequently, the dissertation proposes a nuanced account of contemporary myth palingenesis, revealing the tension between the literary transformation of myth and its instrumentalisation within the circulation of popular culture.

Keywords: myth, palingenesis, Polish women's prose after 2000, retelling, cultural branding