

Summary

The aim of this dissertation is to answer the question of whether, and on what conditions, Upper Silesia could be referred to as a *locus theologicus*. To achieve this goal, the task of theological interpretation of Gleiwitz tetralogy by Horst Bienek is undertaken. Thus it is easy to see that the dissertation has three starting points, each of which is reflected in its title.

The first one is theology. At first glance, Upper Silesia and Gleiwitz tetralogy state an unobvious, or even peculiar subject of theological research. However, since the Second Vatican Council turning theology towards the world and culture has been appropriate and expected. Closely related to this is the process of broadening the spectrum of theological topics, which means: topics that theology can explore and draw upon. This is precisely where this work is set as a fundamental theological approach: turning its interests towards the world and narrative, it seeks to explore yet another *locus theologicus*.

The second starting point is the multifaceted phenomenon of Upper Silesia, one of the Central European borderlands, tragically experienced by the historical catastrophe of the twentieth century, nowadays still remaining on the path to find its identity. Therefore it is constantly in the process of becoming itself, which is reflected in the Upper Silesian literature. On the other hand, Upper Silesia, despite its ambiguity and inner diversity, is very often subject to predictable and schematic interpretations.

Finally, the third starting point is the narrative. Gleiwitz tetralogy, a series of novels by Horst Bienek (1930-1990), is considered the most important literary work of Upper Silesia, best reflecting the specificity of this region. Its events take place in a crucial moment for whole Upper Silesian history – not only for the twentieth century. It begins on the night of the outbreak of World War II, and finds its epilogue in the winter of 1945, at the time of the end of Silesia – *finis Silesiae Superioris*.

The first chapter is dedicated to the above issues. Hence it deals with the so-called ‘opening of theology’ by Vatican II, further it clarifies the often carelessly used term ‘Upper Silesia’, eventually, it reviews Upper Silesian literature, which is constantly struggling with stereotypes

and searching for new and 'different' interpretations for the region, often in the context of postmodern and post-secular thought.

In the second chapter, the wide theological horizon for the interpretation is outlined, and this horizon is the *Postmodern Theology*. It is closely related to three issues. The first of them is the unusual task of this work, which implies transgressing boundaries between theology, literature and the region. The second one is the global postmodern condition, which reflects in the self-reflection of Upper Silesia. The third is the surprising 'theological call' from the inside of Gleiwitz tetralogy itself. *Postmodern Theology* is presented against the background of the most important issues of postmodern thought: the rejection of metanarratives, the critique of metaphysics, reaction to secularism and the disenchantment of the world.

In the third chapter, there is a transition from a general horizon to a specific paradigm. It is the hermeneutical *Postmodern Theology*, closely related to the thought of Paul Ricœur. First, the thought of the French philosopher is outlined, especially in the field of textual theory and interpretation as well as symbol and myth. Next, a paradigm for theological interpretation is framed, and within it: the hermeneutic and linguistic turn, the relationship between theology and literature, the theological significance of figurative language: metaphor, symbol and narrative.

The fourth chapter is also a transition: from the theory of the paradigm to the praxis of using the tools provided by it in the course of interpretation. It is merely a description of methods 'in action'. Thus it is a "map" of interpretation, the path of which is marked by Ricœur's concept of triple *mimesis*. Based on this concept, an extended metaphor of the history of salvation is identified in the narrative configuration of Gleiwitz tetralogy.

The fifth chapter is dedicated to discuss it in detail. In three stages, concerning the themes of Paradise, Good Friday and Apocalypse, it is shown how the narrative configuration of Horst Bienek's Gleiwitz tetralogy can be a 'metaphorical lens' (as Ricœur puts it) for looking at the history of salvation and how the history of salvation, functioning as an 'invisible mythos' in the Gleiwitz tetralogy, can allow this narrative to be read in unexpected ways.

The sixth chapter begins with the identification of the 'broken ending' of the interpreted narrative, which, as it turns out, negates the meaning of the entire metaphor. In three stages, further symptoms of this self-destruction of the meaning of the text are discussed: first, the

phenomenon that is defined as the 'Black Passover'; then, the disruption of the linearity of the time of narrative and the appearance of the wheel of cyclic time, which assumes an eternal suffering; and finally, the signs of the narrative moving towards nothingness, which is radically opposite to Christian salvation. The struggle of oppositions, in which one meaning overthrows the opposite, brings interpretation to a point of aporia where it would be impossible to draw theological conclusions from the text. This point, defined as a desert, becomes the starting point of the last chapter.

In the seventh chapter, the dialectic of mutually exclusive readings is undermined and the 'living metaphoricality' of the narrative, functioning despite the discovered symptoms of death and nothingness, is discovered. For this purpose, a certain transgression is made, which consists in going beyond the traditional linearity of reading. According to the strategies of deconstruction, the interpretation focuses on the marginal, peripheral parts of the narrative, isolated from the whole, which start to frame a new, different linearity determined by the symbolism discovered in them. From these latter discoveries made in the text, the most important theological conclusions are drawn.

The answer to the question about Upper Silesia as a *locus theologicus*, which is to be given on the basis of the interpretation of Gleiwitz tetralogy, is presented in the form of three questions. The first of them concerns the relationship between the narrative and the world, i.e. the relationship between Gleiwitz tetralogy and the phenomenon of Upper Silesia, the second and third concern the occurrence of such qualities in this phenomenon that could allow it to be referred to as a *locus theologicus*. The solution of all three issues, according to the hermeneutical paradigm adopted in this work, lies at the heart of Paul Ricoeur's concept of triple *mimesis*. The process of reconfiguration (*mimesis* III), which is the ultimate goal of each reading, allows to answer this question in the affirmative.