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Doctoral thesis abstract:

„Above all, I would like to remain an author” Martin Pollack’s dialogue with reality,

written under the supervision of Katarzyna Nowakowska, Doctor habilitated

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The concept of the doctoral thesis is the result of careful observation of Martin Pollack’s activity, an Austrian writer, one of the major participants of the contemporary European literary movement. On account of the writer’s impressive artistic prolificacy, the material that a researcher of Pollack’s writing needs to tackle exceeds the scope of a strictly historic and literary exploration and it requires the application of additional tools for the exploration in the field of sociology, history and ethnography.

A Slavicist and a historian by education, and a socially and politically active writer and publicist, Martin Pollack earned his name as a reportage writer, a Polish literature translator, an essayist and a journalist as well as a lover and expert of central and eastern European culture. The rich and varied achievements of the Austrian author present a wide spectrum of his writing, translation and a columnist’s activity, within the scope of which he conducts a thorough analysis of historic events and current affairs, leading to a deep, and at the same time possibly an objective reckoning with his own biography and the life of his loved ones. Pollack’s work develops on all of these levels nearly simultaneously. In his works the writer is keen to focus on the history of Central and Central-Eastern Europe, concentrating on the events that determined the fate of individual nations crating the region’s historic and cultural future – including that of Austria and the Austrians. He devotes a lot of attention to his own origins and to his family, who at the time believed in the national socialist ideology, finding close links between the fate of his country and the search of his own identity, both privately and professionally. The works of Pollack, a writer presenting apart from literary aspects his own model of social involvement in his subsequent texts, feature distinct historical, sociological, ethnographical and psychological aspects, which requires that individual works be analysed with the application of the methods of cultural anthropology.

The objective of the thesis is to present Martin Pollack’s versatile activity, as a writer, a translator and an involved citizen of Europe, as a columnist, but also as a historian, a Slavicist, a scholar, a

traveller, and a lover of central and eastern European culture and literature. A critical presentation of Pollack's rich artistic creations, which this thesis provides, at the same time takes into account the artist's preferences, who – when asked about the role that was closest to him – admitted without hesitation that “above all, he would love to remain an author”¹. The presentation of the artist's prolific achievements featured in the thesis additionally reveals a dialogue with reality that the Austrian artist undertakes and constantly carries out in each of his roles: Pollack the columnist, Pollack the translator, Pollack the writer or Polack the historian, the humanist or the promoter of central European literature.

The empirical material of this doctoral dissertation is chiefly provided by Martin Pollack's books, which were published in Polish translations: *Po Galicji. O chasydach, Huculach, Polakach i Rusinach. Imaginacyjna podróż po Galicji Wschodniej i Bukowinie, czyli wyprawa w świat, którego nie ma*²; *Ojcobójca. Sprawa Filipa Halsmanna*³; *Śmierć w bunkrze. Opowieść o moim ojcu*⁴; *Dlaczego rozstrzelali Stanisławów*⁵; *Cesarz Ameryki. Wielka ucieczka z Galicji*⁶; *Pogromca Wilków. Trzy duety literackie*⁷; *Skazone krajobrazy*⁸; *Topografia pamięci*⁹ and *Kobieta bez grobu. Historia mojej ciotki*¹⁰. What is more, the thesis focuses on Pollack's shorter literary forms – his essays, columns, press articles, as well as speeches, addresses and published interviews, which constitute an integral part of his activity, complementing his writings, while at the same time providing significant information about the author himself.

The deliberations on Martin Pollack's writings included in the dissertation were conducted on the grounds of a semantic analysis of the concept of Central and Easter Europe, as well as the

¹ *Martin Pollack: twórca o wielu twarzach. Wywiad-rzeka* conducted by Monika Żukowska, [in:] Anex to this doctoral thesis.

² M. Pollack, *Po Galicji. O chasydach, Huculach, Polakach i Rusinach. Imaginacyjna podróż po Galicji Wschodniej i Bukowinie, czyli wyprawa w świat, którego nie ma*, translated by Andrzej Kopacki, Olsztyn: Borussia, 2000 (in the cycle of *Odkrywanie światów*). (2nd edition: Wołowiec: Wydawnictwo Czarne, 2007.)

³ M. Pollack, *Ojcobójca. Sprawa Filipa Halsmanna*, translated by Andrzej Kopacki, Wołowiec: Wydawnictwo Czarne, 2005.

⁴ M. Pollack, *Śmierć w bunkrze. Opowieść o moim ojcu*, translated by Andrzej Kopacki, Wołowiec: Wydawnictwo Czarne, 2006.

⁵ M. Pollack, *Dlaczego rozstrzelali Stanisławów*, translated by Andrzej Kopacki, Wołowiec: Wydawnictwo Czarne, 2009.

⁶ M. Pollack, *Cesarz Ameryki. Wielka ucieczka z Galicji*, translated by Karolina Niedenthal, Wołowiec: Wydawnictwo Czarne, 2011.

⁷ M. Pollack, *Pogromca wilków. Trzy duety literackie*, translated by Karolina Niedenthal, Wołowiec: Wydawnictwo Czarne, 2012.

⁸ M. Pollack, *Skazone krajobrazy*, translated by Karolina Niedenthal, Wołowiec: Wydawnictwo Czarne, 2014.

⁹ M. Pollack, *Topografia pamięci*, translated by Karolina Niedenthal, Wołowiec: Wydawnictwo Czarne, 2017.

¹⁰ M. Pollack, *Kobieta bez grobu. Historia mojej ciotki*, translated by Karolina Niedenthal, Wołowiec: Wydawnictwo Czarne, 2020.

development of the post-war Polish-German and Polish-Austrian relations, constituting, in a sense, the sphere of a dialogue conducted by the Austrian writer in his multi-faceted activity. Furthermore, the analysis of Martin Pollack's works presented in the thesis was carried out with reference to a wider exploration of the culture of memory, with a particular focus on its presence in literature, including, above all, in reportage genres, constituting an especially significant tool in the dialogue the writer conducts with the past and with his own as well as the reader's reality. The thesis is complemented by interviews conducted with Martin Pollack and with the Polish translators of his works: Andrzej Kopacki and Karolina Niedenthal, which are incorporated in the annex to the doctoral dissertation.

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Małgorzata Zaluska