Topographical Turn in Contemporary Polish Literature in the Works by Erwin Kruk, Andrzej Stasiuk and Jerzy Limon

Elżbieta Konończuk
Faculty of Philology, University of Białystok
Plac Uniwersytecki 1, 15-420 Białystok, Poland
Email: e.kononczuk@gazeta.pl

Abstract The analysis concerns the experience of geographical space as a text which allows a reading of the time and experience of a particular place, and in which traces of the past initiate the work of memory. Interpreting works on space and place demands we bring in the interdisciplinary contexts of humanistic geography and geo-history and employ the tools of geo-poetics. I present the oeuvre of three writers. Erwin Kruk narrates the post-war identity drama in the Masuria and the traces of its belonging to Germany. Kruk contemplates individual memory confronted with geographical space seen as historical text. Andrzej Stasiuk's descriptions of traveling in Eastern Europe as newly divided by borders belong to the poetics of post-colonialism. Jerzy Limon presents the space of the city of Sopot as a palimpsest, read by the narrator as a historian-archeologist.
Key words geopoetics; geographic space; post-colonialism; memory; topographical turn

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Erwin Kruk (born in 1942) is an author who makes a subject of his poetic and prosaic reflection Mazury, a region situated in north-eastern Poland. The writer was born during World War II on the territory of present day Mazury, which, since the 13th century, when as a result of Teutonic Knights' wars, the Baltic people of Prussians was annihilated, has been a disputed territory. For four centuries masters of this land were either Germans or Poles, and from the beginning of the 18th century to World War II this territory, called East Prussia, belonged to the German Reich. After the war it returned into the borders of Poland. Thus, the Masurian land is to Kruk, who calls himself "the last of the tribe of Old Prussians," a space of searching and confirming identity, both that individual and that collective. Although the writer remained on the land of ancestors, he lives with a feeling of being on exile from the world of their culture, where signs of both the Old Prussian and German past have been erased. In his writing he takes a task of deciphering the past in the Masurian space, the past erased from the landscape as a result of the post-war Polish policy of integration and unification.

Kruk's writings, for instance collections of poetry: *Rysowane z pamięci* (*Drawn out of memory* 1963), *Zapisy powrotu* (*Records of a return* 1969), *Moja Północ* (*My North* 1977) as well as novels: *Drogami o świcie* (*Ways at dawn* 1967), *Kronika z Mazur* (*A chronicle from Masuria* 1989) make up a literary interpretation of the ideas that underlie the theoretical considerations of Karl Schlögel, presented in his book *Im Raume lesen wir die Zeit. Über Zivilisationsgeschichte und Geopolitik* (2003). Schlögel is interested in reflection on history in its spatial aspect, since history happens not only in time but also in space, which is the scenery of events. He understands the human history as inscribed in space and this approach is a basis of the discipline proposed by him, which is topocentric historiography.

Masuria is to Kruk a space in which subsequent generations of his ancestors have left their trace but the war and post-war policy erased the traces of the Masurian autochthons' presence there. Thus, in the Masurian landscape he looks for traces of his ancestors' presence, and his writing becomes a chronicle of this search. In search of traces left by the ancestors, Kruk's characters wander into the past, both their own and that collective. Seeking for a Masurian identity requires then, as we could say after Schlögel, the skill of "reading time in space." They read the past of the Masurian land from the landscape, especially from cemeteries.

First poetic volumes of Kruk, *Rysowane z pamięci* and *Zapisy powrotu*, reflect the experience of a man who returns after the war to his family landscape and despite the sense of alienation, searches for the places marked with the presence of his close ones. In his poems an image of a pensive newcomer sitting among the Masurian grasses and sands. This desert landscape, perceived as a dead space, intensifies

the sense of loneliness, makes him recollect the past, which the poet "draws out of memory." He finds in the Masurian space a place for rooting his memory, the place where memories revive.

Incredible places in the Masurian landscape are cemeteries, and in the poetic world of Kruk they play a special role. Cemetery crosses often turn out the only testimony of the presence of its former inhabitants on this land. The poet-wanderer listens intently to the silence of the cemeteries and reads the history of his family from the vanishing German grave inscriptions. In this poetry returns an image of the Masurian land as an enormous grave hiding not only remains of ancestors but also their secrets, old books, hymn-books, which, according to a Masurian custom, were buried with them. The cemetery has become a space of oblivion, since German tombs were demolished in post-war Poland. The poet treats the landscape as a palimpsest, i.e. a multilayer text, in which earlier messages shine through from under the last layer. Uncovering subsequent layers of meanings is a job of the poet-landscape interpreter, but is also a condition of lasting and continuity of collective memory. The persona of Kruk's poems desires, like a mole, to reach the depth of earth to discover mysteries of history.

The poet searches the landscape for places strongly semanticised, which convey the essence of being Masurian. He listens closely to their speech and to what they say about the past of the land. Thus, the landscape is perceived as a symbolic text, demanding being read and interpreted, and the symbols it uses are sand, a tomb, a tree. It is the elements of the landscape, frequently evoked by the poet, which, beside universal symbolic meanings, have meanings given them by the Masurian tradition.

The motif of tomb symbolising vanishing and memory of the past time, becomes a symbol of hope in Kruk's poetry. A tomb opens the way to the land of dead ancestors, and thereby becomes a promise of return to the tribe. The motif of calling by the dead appears several times in his poems, for example in the poem *Ich głos* (*Their voice*) in the volume *Powrót na wygnanie* (*Return to exile*):

> Someone calls me
> With a juniper which grew slender among the ruins,
> With a blow of the wind on the water,
> Clean as an abandoned weeping.
> Someone calls me
> With a hill
> Where young pines have trampled cemeteries
> And the expectance of the dead rustles in the leaves. (*Powrót na wygnanie* 12)

In this poem, a man, orphaned and deserted in the familiar landscape, feels the presence of his dead ancestors. He reads the elements of the landscape, a juniper among the ruins, cemetery hills, trees rustling with their leaves, as signs of understanding with those who have passed away. In the sounds of the nature he recognises voices of his dead family members, due to which the landscape ceases to be alien and becomes refamiliarised and saturated with values. Therein one feels again at home. The symbolism of tomb as well as the motif of the expecting and inviting dead brings to mind Old Prussian beliefs, which the poet includes in the circle of his tradition. The cult of Mother-Earth was particularly important to Prussians. They believed that inside the earth there is a land of eternal happiness, where people weary of their lives find rest, where they sit on benches waiting for their relatives and come to meet them. In Old Prussian beliefs also a tree was represented as a seat of an ancestor looking after his family. Perhaps out of this inspiration in Kruk's writings appear pictures of those calling the man of trees. They, growing in cemeteries among the graves collapsing into the ground, seem to be arms of the dead who call to them the wanderer lost in the familiar landscape. The poet ascribes this meaning particularly to junipers, so characteristic of the Masurian landscape. As "the guards of the tribe" among the cemetery sands, it is just junipers, like cypresses, that express sorrow yet also memory of the past.

The symbolism of tree in Kruk's poetry is also connected with the symbolism of the Tree of the Cross. Decaying cemetery crosses deepen the poet's solitude in the Masurian landscape and deepen his experience of alienation on his family land. Crosses, decaying and collapsing into sand, mark the Masurian land with a stigma of suffering. Symbolic images of sand, a tomb or a tree are connected with the archetypical image of Mother-Earth. It is the earth that rescues from oblivion the past, preserving its relics. She also returns a human unity with the world, including him after death into her bloodstream.

"Reading time in space," reading the landscape, serves Kruk's characters not only to join the social frames of the Masurian memory, but also allows them recognise their past selves. In the poem *Dziecko i przechodzień* (*A child and a passer-by*, 2005) the poet presents an unusual image of meeting with himself as a child.

> We are still standing opposite each other,
> As if at the threshold of eternity:
> A mute child and I,
> A tired passer-by.
> I know it is little.

But the boy is stubborn.
He is standing in the dust of the road.
I do not know how to make him wander.
Will he believe me if I say
That all the bad has gone?
Or that now, since we still
Do not have a permanent place,
We'll go ahead
And look for it together. (*Znikanie* 8-9)

Kruk's writings repeatedly appears a moving image of a four-year-old boy, trusting, silent, left alone on a sandy road. In this picture returns the writer's autobiographical experience, who was orphaned by the war. His father never came back from war, mother died of typhoid, as many Masurian women, forced to carry corpses of soldiers from the fields. In the novel *Rondo* the narrator says:

> Still between the present me and the past me stands a four-year-old boy looking trustily ahead; loiters around the house, goes out onto flowered hills where weary women carry soldiers in blankets and spill the dead to the dug craters. (149)

Kruk's characters traverse the Masurian space in search of not only familiar places but also memories. They traverse both the real landscape and the landscape of memory. Frequent evoking images from childhood proves their importance for the recalling. Being the beginning of a human's way, they affect his whole further life. Evoking them, and this is the function that Kruk gives to his whole autobiographical writing, fulfils a function of putting in order and integrating his own biography and thereby understanding himself and confirming his own identity.

The war destroyed the writers house, disintegrated the space around it, the space in its topographical and axiological sense. Thus, the poet builds an image of the house and the landscape surrounding it of the memorised events, usually saturated with the drama of war. From his memories emerge mainly images of his family's deaths and their funerals. Such visions complement the drama of loneliness. In the poem *Znak* (*A Sign*) in the viluem *Zapisy powrotu* (*Records of return*), he describes a situation where only accidental objects remind him the atmosphere of his family home. His mother's mended tablecloth, kept by a strange woman, was the only thing, beside her grave, that was her heirloom.

Kruk's writing is a literary interpretation of the ideas of Karl Schlögel, who within the framework of anthropogeography understands reading and deciphering

landscapes as a key to the history of peoples and humankind, for every landscape is simultaneously a cultural and historical text.

An interesting phenomenon in Polish topographical turn literature is the output of Andrzej Stasiuk (born in 1960), who expresses his fascination with the geopolitical space of Central and Eastern Europe, the space which has been dynamically transformed over the last quarter of the century. The decomposition of "grand narratives," as we can call, after Jean- Francis Lyotard, the disintegration of totalitarian orders, resulted in the emergence of "small narratives," conducted by those who came from under the broadly understood domination and try to tell their story anew; they try to describe the space in its new shape. Political divisions in the Central and Easter Europe have changed its map, moved the borders, opening some of them and closing some of them. Changed in the 1990s, the form of the European geopolitical space — covered with a new borderline network as a result of political changes — has become a frequent topic of literary pieces. It is just Andrzej Stasiuk who in his reportages describing trips in Central and Eastern Europe makes these new European spaces, in a geographical, historical and anthropological aspects, a subject of literary reflection.

An interesting record of the experience of the Central Europe space is his book *Moja Europa. Dwa eseje o Europie zwanej Środkową* (*My Europe. Two essays on the Europe called Central*, 2007), the co-author of which, beside Stasiuk, is the Ukrainian writer, Yuri Andrukhovych. Both great authors describe in their reportages an experience of crossing real state borders, simultaneously giving their experiences a metaphorical meaning of crossing intercultural and inter-human borders. Stasiuk travels over Slovakia, Romania, Slovenia, Albania, Moldavia, or the countries he calls "auxiliary/reserve countries" and in order to show even stronger the chasm between the East and the West, he calls them recycling lands, where used-up objects (and ideas), which are not needed anymore where they came from, are dumped. The writer manifests his interest in peripheral places situated in the outskirts of Europe, remaining off big tourist tracks. Poor Central European countries are presented by him as a labyrinthine space in which, among similar landscapes of poverty and languages which sound alike, a Western European wanders about as in a dream.

In his accounts of the trip, in the collection *Jadąc do Babadag* (*Going to Babadag*, 2004), Stasiuk mentions various situations of crossing borders in Central and Eastern Europe, the borders between "worse and lesser nations." The ritual of border crossing, which refers to a situation of before 2004, resembles a spectacle prepared by customs officers. He mentions Romanian customs officers, whose face, seeing about twenty stamps in his passport, shows suspicion and hope to arrest a smuggler or a spy. He remembers a Slovenian customs officer inquiring about dinars,

who had forgotten that his country had not been Yugoslavia any more for ten years. Stasiuk gathers anecdotes connected with crossing borders, describes the forms of the stamps in the passport, some of which represent old vehicles, others a plane and yet other are amateurish and frivolous, as if made from a potato. All this gives the ritual of border crossing the nature of a childish game of tag or blind man's bluff. The spectacle of crossing the border fulfils, thus, the function of a ritual of passing to the area of a mystery protected from strangers.

Stasiuk, making his subject the space of Central and Eastern Europe, the space covered with a thick network of borderlines, inspires to consider the divisions into western and eastern countries, rich and poor countries, those dominating and those dominated. The author of *Jadąc do Babadag* is undoubtedly a co-creator of the spatial turn in Polish literature. On the one hand he offers the reader a reflection over the space in a geopolitical aspect, shaped as a result of liberating movements in Europe, thus the post-dependent space. On the other hand, he perceives the geographic space as if in a geo-poetic perspective, i.e. he treats it as a conveyor of poetic meanings. An interesting motif recurring in his writing is a map understood as both a tool of geographical representation and also a text supporting the memory of the trip and forming geographical imagination.

In Stasiuk's *Dziennik okrętowy* (*Logbook*) often recur cartographic metaphors based on the imagery of a map as a text combining biographic experience with spatial experience. This imaging may be recognised as playing a key role in his writing and resulting from the conviction that geography and imagination are, as he writes, "connected with each other with a bond stronger than madness and reason altogether," since "daydreaming always takes space as its object" (*Moja Europa* 85-86).

Stasiuk in his reportages themes the situation of contemplating or reading a map and confronts it with the image of the space experienced, i.e. perceived or remembered. In the scenes with a map, often occurring in Stasiuk's writing, the writer, like a Vermeer's geographer, raises his eyes to delve into the recollections of the places experienced during his journeys or let him get carried away by dreams of the places which he has not discovered yet. The map, thus, fulfils a function of not only a guide of unknown areas but is also a mnemonic tool invoking memories, and thus helpful in telling about journeys.

The writer conveys the experience of geographic space through two narrative situations. One is a contemplation of a map resembling looking at vast tracks of land from above; the other is a physical experience of space through the effort of wandering from place to place, often off the beaten track, in the heat or in the cold. The former satisfies the dreams of the human on coming to know the world from the divine perspective, the dream of knowledge and power over the world. The latter, on

the other hand, represents a perspective of a human overwhelmed with the vastness of the space surrounding him. Stasiuk introduces a Lilliputian perspective through his allusion to Jonathan Swift, evoking the scene of Gulliver's visit at the queen of Brobdingnag. In this scene a Lilliput pays homage to the monarch embracing her little finger with his both arms and kissing its tip. She, on the other hand, provides him with security giving him shelter in her palm. The image of the character moving on the queen's body constitutes a suggestive interpretative context for Stasiuk's allegoric images of Europe.

> Yes, Europe, your heart beats somewhere between Dijon and Paris, and your head is Iberia in the blue bedding of waters. Your insatiable belly is Germany. An me? I mean us? Were we your loins? Over twenty years ago I did not even know this word and I felt like a fish in water, like Gulliver visiting the queen of Brobdingnag, when I pored over your image for hours, as if over a forbidden photograph. The right thigh of Ukraine and the left thigh of Scandinavia. Long autumn afternoons over a school atlas and searching your arteries: the Danube, the Seine, the Rhine and the Dnieper. I felt their pulse under the green-yellow skin of plains and uplands. (*Moja Europa* 124-125)

The allegoric representation of Europe as a woman is a form of eroticization of space experienced in a rapture close to ecstasy. Such visualisation expresses a need for a direct, sensual contact with European spaces.

> Ah, Europe […] Twenty-five years ago I looked at your portraits in the school atlas. […] I looked into your images and imagined that I was wandering somewhere, small and invisible, over your enormous body. It was a very erotic vision. […] Someone conceived it well that continents are feminine; if you were a man, I wouldn't be able to think about you with such tenderness. […] You are lying on your back between the blues of waters, your left arm is Great Britain and the palm of Ireland, and the right arm is Italy; your beautiful head is Iberia and your heart beats somewhere between Dijon and Paris…(*Moja Europa* 118-119)

The image of Europe as a woman resting in blue beddings not only refers to the image of Gulliver wandering over the queen's body but also brings to mind the painting of Max Ernst *Le Jardin de la France* representing a woman's body in sensitive aesthetics, which, shrouded in the landscape, is surrounded by the rivers Loire and Indre. The eroticized representation of the geographic space renders the

intimacy of its experience, the sense of security and bliss which it conveys. The dramatised visualisation of the geographic space also refers to the tradition of ancient cartographic discourse, when maps were not only a graphic representation of the world but constituted a colourful metaphoric story of the world.[1]

The writer's spatial imagination, which could be called a cartographic imagination, was undoubtedly formed due to his fascination with maps. "A man reading maps," as Stasiuk refers to himself, perceives the surrounding world from the perspective of a cartographer, whose job is to represent the geographic space graphically. Europe contemplated by the writer stooping over an atlas is a topic of colourful descriptions which compose Stasiuk's metaphoric cartography. Bent over a Czech atlas of the world, he analyses the shapes of state borderlines.

> Well, among all European countries my Homeland has the most beautiful outline. It approximates the ideal, which is a circle. […]. I'd better not mention England. The cradle of the modern European civilisation, France, looks like a spread and shabby shirt. Italy, with its highly unserious shape falls into contradiction with herself as the foundation of Europe as such. The Austrian pie can be omitted. […] For the same reason let's omit also Hungary. In this way, actually only Romania stays at the battlefield. Only she can compete with us in this duel of beauty and harmony. (*Moja Europa* 92)

The space presented in the geographical atlas is interpreted as a graphic record of relations between countries out of the shape of which he reads their nature as well as connecting them relations of co-existence or dependence. Thus, reading the map becomes an emotional analysis of geographical, historical, economic and demographic conditions of forming the state borders. It is also a pretext for reflection over such divisions between the East and the West, between the centre and peripheries.

The map is themed by Stasiuk also as a metaphor of travel. "Is there any better metaphor of travel as a damaged map?", writes he in *Fado*. In his stories the map is understood as a thing which bears on it marks of its being used (thus, travelling), thereby becoming a text telling about a trip. A trip, as well as a story about it are always inseparable, and both those experiences are accompanied by a map.

Brian Harley, a historian and theoretician of cartography, map interpreter and collector, practising humanistic geography, compares maps with a home book or a family photo album, for those maps which accompany man in his struggles with the space and which bear marks of these struggles become, according to him, a source of memories and, as if mnemonic systems, support the memory in evoking landscapes, events and travel companions. Harley treats the map as a unique document of life.

He calls it a "graphic autobiography," the contemplation of which, enlivening the past, becomes a form of a sentimental journey. Like in the case of Stasiuk, for whom travel is a form of being in the world, the map becomes an important autobiographical document, which helps to spin a story about roams: those completed and those intended.

A trip and the space experienced during this trip are presented by Stasiuk in the narrative-compositional scheme which I call cartographic narration.

> Writing is listing names. Like with a journey, when the beads of geography slip on the thread of life. […] Borderlines like chapters, countries like literary genres, the epics of routes, the lyrics of stopovers, the blackness of asphalt at night in the light of the car bring to mind a monotonous and hypnotic line of print. (*Moja Europa* 111)

An example of cartographic narration is the description of the Danube, beginning with evoking its subsequent names: Donau, Dunaj, Duna, Dunav, Dunarea, with which it is called from the source to the mouth, often changing, as Stasiuk writes, its nationality. The writer constructs a narrative situation from the perspective of a map-reader and, in a fit of fascination with its picturesque tributaries, tries to present the meandrousness of the Danube in the description. Developing the metaphor adduced, it can be said that Stasiuk slips on the thread of the Danube tens of its names like "beads of geography," thereby including his narration into the cartographic discourse.

> […] because literature imitates history as well as geography, and in this case it must consist of fragments, of crumbs, of looks through the car glass, for here, at ours, it is impossible to knock together a long reasonable narrative which would not be more boring and less believable than life and the world. […] Yes, Europe, […] Your body consists of names and love lies in the fact that words mean more than they really mean. (*Moja Europa* 125)

Geography, according to Stasiuk's reasoning, constitutes a model of telling about the world, competitive towards history. Whereas historical stories put the course of events in chronological order, geographical stories put the space in order, naming and describing places. Stasiuk not only presents a geographical space but also makes a subject of his reportages the process of its perception. Perception of the space during a journey has a nature of catching impressions out of the corner of your eye and gathering quickly passing pictures. Central and Eastern Europe traversed by the writer is thus perceived as a mosaic of events and landscapes. The world perceived during

a journey always appears as fragmentary and so is it stored in memory and, like a jigsaw puzzle, reconstructed in recollections and imagination. Therefore Stasiuk needs a map as a model of putting the space in order and merging its image, dispersed in the process of perception.

Stasiuk's trips in Central and Eastern Europe are actually stories whose theme is geography, and their plots develop according to the rhythm of the writers moving from one place to another. Here is an example of the writer's reflection identifying wandering with storytelling:

> I always leave and return through Konieczna and this is a real *nomen omen*. I circle, snake and wander like Schweik on the way to České Budějovice and, like him, I can't keep a straight line, I can't follow the linear path of simply told stories**.** (*Moja Europa* 157)

The map used in a journey helps to establish its direction and course, while used during telling about the journey it constitutes a basis of the narrative order. Stasiuk's trips can be thus called map practising.

In the story *Mapa* of the volume *Fado*, Stasiuk tells a unique journey, which he makes in his imagination, studying a one-hundred-year-old transportation map of Austro-Hungary. Deciphering with a magnifying glass faded names of places, it becomes a journey into the past. Thus the century-old map lets the writer experience the past, since he reads from it an out-of-date image of the space rescued by the cartographer. In the event of sudden geopolitical turns, a map may fulfil the function of a historical source, for it preserves an old image of reality, and, as Stasiuk says, "the map is anyway the ultimate word and the mortal shroud of events."

> My map, on the other hand, as any old map anyway, rescues the world and, simultaneously, shows its decomposition, its passing. Looking at it, I look into nothingness, which my imagination wants to fulfil at all costs. This fragile, smouldered out, crumbling between the fingers paper resembles human memory, weak, imperfect, threatened by sclerosis and senile dementia. (*Fado* 38)

In *Słowacka dwusetka* (*Slovakian Two Hundred*) in the volume *Jadąc do Babadag*, Stasiuk describes a crumbling map, frayed at the edges, cracked at the lines of folding. The image of a crumbling map is a metaphor of the world falling apart, which is best rendered by the author's words: "Towns and villages gradually cease to exist, are used up along with folding and unfolding" (*Jadąc do Babadag* 14). Such an impression accompanies Stasiuk during his tour of the Balkans perceived as a space which loses

its clearness, fades, is subject to destruction, falls apart.

The century-old map, which makes no help in the journey, serves a reflection on the past. The author stoops over it as if over a text which conveys information on a historical picture of the space, and thus gives a pleasure of association with the past, reads with reverence the names of now-defunct places, which the map rescues. Reading the map with a magnifying glass becomes a full of reverence act of "reading the past." When the political image of the world is subject to transformation, borderlines are moved and the names of places are changed, it is the map that adopts the function of historical story.

Stasiuk's cartographical narration enters the dialogue with the post-colonial discourse, humanistic geography, topocentric history and topocentric history of literature, so with all the new tendencies in humanities which emerged as a result of the topographic turn.

Another example of the literature of the topographical turn is the novel of Jerzy Limon (born in 1950) *Koncert Wielkiej Niedźwiedzicy. Kantata na jedną ulicę, siedem gwiazd i dwa głosy* (A *Concert of the Great Bear. A Cantata for one street, seven stars and two voices*, 1999), which tells stories of one street in Sopot, ulica Haffnera (Haffner street), where the author-narrator lives. This novel implements not only the assumptions of geo-poetics but may also be called geo-historiographic, since the author presents a geographic concrete, the space of a city as a conveyor of historic knowledge, for the geographic space is for Limon the text in which one may read the past. The subject matter of the novel is a street fulfilling just the function of a text, or actually text-palimpsest, which is composed with layers of meanings recorded by particular historic eras. The narrator, in order to reach these multi-layer senses, assumes the role of an archeologist and descends into the depth of the history of his street.

> Arrival of Ests, or (Old) Prussians from behind the Vistula is ten centimeters on the level of three meters. The rule of the medieval duke of Pomerania, Świętopełk, is fifteen centimeters at the depth of two meters, and the period of the rule of the Teutonic Knights is as many as ninety-two centimeters. Jerusalem of Herodotus' time is twenty meters into the earth. A few, more than ten, sometimes some tens of years fit in one centimeter. A human life, a few generations are preserved as a couple of millimeter dashes. Time, like canvas or other cloth, is measured in meters. But it is good that at least this has remained. A thousand years of history of a town in five but sometimes only in two […] Time accumulates as growth rings in a tree trunk. (50)

I define the narration in Jerzy Limon's novel *Koncert Wielkiej Niedźwiedzicy* as archeological narration, for the author reveals subsequent layers in the history of the street. In this process he uses various testimonies and remnants. Thus, beside historical documents, he uses such sources as legends, literary pieces, biographies and memories of the people living in the street described. The author, as he writes, practices archeology of space, raking from the depth of the earth remnants telling the story of his street. He also practices archeology of memory, digging through his own memories and those of the others, who created the history of the Sopot street. The sources of knowledge about the past are of diverse nature then, and thereby they render a non-chronological and fragmentary image of the past. A narrative collage that emerged in this way combines in one text legendary origins of the town, wartime events, Siberian vicissitudes of the deportees who settled in Sopot after the war. Thus, the novel is of multi-vocal and multi-textual nature, which on the level of poetics makes it a multilayer subject of archeological interpretation.

An example of employing the archeological methodology is the fact, described by the author, of discovering human remains from the 10th century. The artifacts found with them: an iron awl, a needle with a thread wound around it, pieces of multicoloured twine, a boot upper and heel tip, allowed for identifying the excavation as a cobbler's grave. These establishments are, as the author remarks, the end of the role of an archaeologist. Here begins the role of a writer who poses questions and his imagination answers them, creating, unconfirmed by any documents, events and images of everyday life. He asks then, if a master shoemaker could participate in the meeting with the bishop of Prague, Wojciech (Adalbert)? Could he be baptised by him? Did he have a family? Did he wear fashionable clothes? Did he like dancing? Such questions refer to fiction-narrative schemes, which allow for constructing a hypothetic history of a medieval cobbler's life. Thereby the narrator draws attention to the nature of the knowledge of the past, the knowledge moulded simultaneously by a historian establishing facts on the basis of source examination and a writer putting these facts in an attractive story.

Another example of a find "unburied from the earth's memory" is a skeleton grave, where remains of a man, probably a warrior, and his horse were found. On the basis of the parts of bones, a spearhead, a ritual knife, remains of horse harness, a stone circle with an obliterated relief, a history of the death of a warrior, killed by many spear hits and buried with his horse is reconstructed (or rather constructed). This story coincides with Herodotus' account presenting a ritual worshipping a Thracian deity Salmoxis, to whom, seeking eternal life, they sent a warrior flinging him in the air in such a way that he falls on the spears. The history of the first resident of the Sopot street becomes a subject of literary fantasy of the author of the novel, who tells

it behind a fictitious novel, stylised as a eye-witness account of the events described.

Beside the excavations conducted by professional archaeologists, also amateur treasure seeking during children's open-air games reveal material remains of previous inhabitants of the street. The archaeology done by the children involves burrowing courtyards of surrounding houses damaged during the warfare. The playground in the ruins of a bombed house becomes an excavation site, where young treasure seekers acquire knowledge of the past of the house and its residents. The testimony of the past is crippled dolls, charred blocks, contorted cutlery, remnants of clothes and vessels. Beside the toys, what enjoys a special popularity is stamps, which, closely looked at, gain in value as historical micro-documents providing evidence of the history of the town. The items excavated: a little clown in checked clothes, a clock pendulum, a broken ashtray or a china teapot, move and open imagination. The made up stories provide these subjects with a status of valuable exhibits and the "children's archaeology of ruins" becomes a particular history lesson.

The subject of Limon's authothematic and meta-novel considerations is mutual inspirations of historical writing and fiction. The novel, as the author signalizes in the title, is written "for two voices." These "two voices" are the voices of the author and the narrator co-creating the narration, of which the author's voice corresponds with the historical narration whereas the narrator's voice is responsible for the fictitious order of the novel. The theme of Limon's novel is actually learning the past and its registering in both historiographic as well as literary narration. The archaeological research, on the other hand, is shrouded in an aura of mystery, since based on the reconstruction of knowledge on the basis of remains excavated from the earth, they approximate history to literature. The writer underscores then that "archaeologists are real poets among historians."

In order to reconstruct the past of the street the author employs not only the tools of a literary historian (who may be interested in the fact that Rilke once stayed there, that Herbert used to visit his mother there), historian, archaeologist, geographer, yet also an architect and astronomer. The titles of the chapters bear names of the seven stars of the Great Bear (Ursa Major) constellation and bring a metaphoric dimension into the narration. The author presents the street as a string taut at the neck of the instrument, the instrument of the town, on which the Great Bear gives a nightly inaudible concerto of celestial spheres. Limon, like Kenneth White, the originator of geopoetics, calling himself a poet-cosmographer, discovers "the poetics of space," in this case the poetics of urban space in the context of the astronomical space. A poetic dimension is attributed to the cosmic space perceived through the window of a child's room, where, as a result of Grandfather's stories, the constellation of Great Bear and Auriga become heroes of the child's imagination. Close listening to the symphony of

the world (the cantata in the title) is just, to adduce White's term, "lyrical inhabiting the world." Limon employs the novel form as a forum where various humanistic disciplines enter a dialogue on space. Thus, thee poetics of space is uncovered by an archaeologist, a poet among historians, reading the past from sand and an astronomer reading the past from the light of stars, so often already extinct.

In order to reconstruct the history of his street, Limon employs the archaeology of space or reads the past from the earth as if from an open book, which he leafs through uncovering subsequent layers of history. Here is the way the author uses the metaphor of book, so as to express through it the work of an archaeologist, who, as a poet among historians, reads the poetry of the earth:

> Like wise shamans, archaeologists perform a section of time, read from the bowels of the earth, finding in them mysterious sings, a buried language of the past, reading the caked human fate, divining from a needle or a comb found, from feathers and swamps of time […] For them a document is needle-cover and ashes, bones and fish scales, vessel shells grow to the significance of pages torn off a big book of the past; a bead found becomes a stamp, a ball of thread a papyrus scroll. (48-49)

The history of a place is always connected with the history of a man who inhabits this place and who tells about it. Thus, studying local history, understood as a metaphoric uncovering subsequent layers of earth is connected with studying one's own past.

Interest in the place of residence often leads, as Ian Hodder observes, to interest in archaeology, and a fruit of such interests is local history, which is the history of a place written from the perspective of individual experiences of those who live in this place. Limon's novel, created from fascination with a geographic concrete, and thus also locality, is just an example of exploring and interpreting local history. Limon's novel, telling a story of the author's street and house, makes up a typical example of local narration. This allows for proposing a thesis that exploring the knowledge on locality or one's closest place, is of a nature of archaeological excavations in their both literal and metaphoric sense. Thus, the local narration may be called archaeological, whose goal is to understand the place where a human is and to present a harmony between the human and his closest environment. Creating a local narrative is, thus, a form of inhabiting a place through building a spiritual connection therewith. The local narrative, thus, constitutes a confirmation of the idea of geopoetics, according to which the connection of the place and literature involves mutual shaping, for the place with its history and landscape is perceived as literary inspiration, while literature has a power of creating a cultural image of the place which consolidates in a collective

consciousness. The street presented in Limon's novel gains just a literary being due to including its history into the narrative, both historical and geographic.

Limon makes the subject of his novel not only the place but also the tools used for constructing the narrative about it, the tools of a writer, historian and geographer. The conceptualisation of the reflection on tools in a literary plot provides the novel with characteristics of a poetic and philosophical treatise on history writing.

This paper presented three different literary testimonies of geographical space experience demonstrating the development on the Polish ground the literary and theoretical tendencies whose source was the topographic turn.

Erwin Kruk in his writing "draws out of memory" the space of Masuria, the space from which after the war the Prussian and German past was erased and the signs of the past cultures only rarely shine through in the landscape-palimpsest. His writings, thus, serve to create a Masurian cultural space, and thereby to save the memory of the presence of old inhabitants of the Masurian land. In his literature Kruk reconstructs the space in which one will be able to read time.

Andrzej Stasiuk, on the other hand, fits the post-colonial discourse, presenting in his reportages a new European reality after the political divisions in the Central and Eastern Europe. The writer makes a map, changing and becoming outdated, an instrument of examining space and thereby makes a method of its description, called here a cartographic narration.

Jerzy Limon, however, in the novel analysed here, which I define as geohistoriographic, presents a geographic and historical space of his home town. In his local narration he uncovers, with the tools of archaeology and humanistic geography, a palimpsest history of his street in Sopot. Thus, Limon's novel, reflecting the poetry of his close space, becomes a form of a "lyrical inhabiting the world."

Note

1. Karl Schlögel talks about old maps: "Indeed maps and atlases are pompous inscenisations. Abraham Ortelius and Jan Blaeu call them *Theatrum mundi et orbis terrarium*. Curtains hang on the title pages; podiums and stages are erected on them, where geographical history of the world, continents, oceans, climatic zones, the wind rose have their show. Many maps are of impressive dimensions; they are not small pictures but real panoramas […] Some maps can be framed with picture stories, history in moving pictures, an early form of cartoons and comics." See Karl Schlögel, *W przestrzeni czas czytamy. O historii cywilizacji i geopolityce*. Trans. Izabela Drozdowska, and Łukasz Musiał (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 2009) 218, 220. Michel de Certeau writes about 15-18th-century maps as stories using narrative representations of ships, animals, figures, visualising various spatial actions such as voyages, wars, trade etc. See Michel de Certeau.

Wynaleźć codzienność: sztuki działania. Trans. Katarzyna Thiel-Jańczuk (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2008) 120.

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