

PREFACE

The project of the philosophy of localness and home stems from the need to develop a research path in order to radically complement and transform the existing understanding of space with a complex analysis of philosophy and anthropology of a place. A complex cultural interpretation of a place – a region, identity of a place, axiological and metaphysical foundations of a community, cultural experience – is crucial for me. Searching for a place, rootedness and home in space requires combining cultural orders of thought and experience – to create a research path which would be sensitive to time and place, cultural and historical depth. Revealing the potential of past also became a call for responsible interference in a place.

Undeniably, “old topographies” – as Dariusz Czaja indicates – have been relocated and destabilized.¹ When we look at the story which comments but also produces the world, we will notice the movement of a place shift: Marc Augé’s *non-lieux*, Pierre Nora’s *lieux de mémoire*, Stijn Reijnders’s *lieux d’imagination*, Michel Foucault’s *hétérotopie*.² It is complemented by a list of displacements: dystopia, atopia, utopia, eutopia, etc. We repose

¹ D. Czaja, ‘Nie-miejsca. Przybliżenia, rewizje,’ in: *Inne przestrzenie, inne miejsca. Mapy i terytoria*, ed. and foreword by D. Czaja, Wołowiec: Wydawnictwo Czarne, 2013, p. 8.

² See: M. Augé, *Nie-miejsca. Wprowadzenie do antropologii hipernowoczesności*, trans. R. Chymkowski, introduction by W. J. Burszta, Warszawa: PWN, 2011; M. Foucault, ‘O innych przestrzeniach. Heterotopie,’ trans. M. Żakowski, *Kultura Popularna*, no. 2, 2006; S. Reijnders, *Places of the Imagination: Media, Tourism, Culture*. Farnham–Burlington: Ashgate, 2011; *Rethinking France: Les Lieux de mémoire*, vol. 1–4, ed. P. Nora, transl. and ed. D.P. Jordan, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006–2011.

a question about components of identity, about the central and the peripheral, the established and the spontaneous, the old and the new, the present and the virtual. However, our stories about “loosening a place” are not able to cover its meanings. Yet, they can effectively cover the philosophy of locating oneself. I want to look at space in the perspective of a place in order to reintroduce the concern for the experience of a cultural place into the experimental space.

We face the challenge of building responsibility for the common good. It is very important to reverse the negative trend of perceiving the public and the common as belonging to nobody. This seems particularly needed in perceiving the phenomenon of grassroots social activity, the proverbial taking matters into one’s own hands, realising the impact on the immediate environment and, consequently, the quality of life. Development of a renewed perspective on a place also is profitable in terms of research. It leads to the study of place in terms of cultural rootedness, revealing anthropology and aesthetics of “designed places,” transformation of thinking about place or development of research path emphasising the importance of thinking about a place and the necessity to reflect upon one’s own location.

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Directing my reflection in such a way let me concentrate on revealing the experience of a place and the concept of a man, leading me to rethinking our location and being at home. The proposed inclusion of localness, stemming not only from the recognition of the power of a place but also from the affirmation of the local idea, leads to the concept of a local man, finding in it the life-giving energy “supporting” the world and co-creating a particular *ars bene vivendi*. Ennoblement of a peripheral path and a located view is performed in retreat from the global and anti-local “nowhere,” “everywhere,” “anywhere,” but also in retreat from familiarity. Dynamically understood figure of localness, extracted from stagnation or from a sealed fortress, becomes close

to the image of rough sea. Along with localness which keeps our attention on home, on the surroundings, comes the knowledge that the reason of the stubborn focusing on the local is to have strength to confront the infinite, unheard and limitless. Thus, the home thinking directs us towards the indefinite and provides us with simple knowledge that in the realm of home we deal with the infinite and indefinite. In the realm of a local man one could find the power to create a renewing bond with the world and a valid story about a place.

The home thinking leads to oikology, which is perceived as a reflection on home being the domain of both privacy (*oikos*) and a community (*polis*), and as such becoming an expression of concern. Oikology in this understanding leads not only to metaphorical recognition of the home content but also to revealing experience, and through the latter – spiritual, emotional and intellectual capacity, as well as traces of events, relations and an authentic encounter with another human being. Oikology is about making an effort to return, even with the knowledge that the ancient and distinct homesteads are gone.

Thus, located reflections were derived from the need to attentively listen to the connection between a man and a place, which can be a little bit solemnly called a good act of servitude, service (in/for) a place. A local man together with cultural experience belying the philosophy of localness and the story of a place were in the centre of my reflection. What could the idea of localness be? Is one able to travel without the idea of home? Does a local man have the power to create the world? These and other questions were developed in my further reflections on a located man and resulted from a sense of crisis of locating oneself and a lack of thorough reworking of the idea of being at home in experience. It was underlined with the hope to recognize intricate connections between a man and a place, which would let me extract the idea of localness from a simplified image of the familiar, archaic, monolithic and closed. By transforming the thinking about localness and a local man I wanted to “loosen”

the contemporary ennoblement of losing roots, mobility and a global cultural route. The affirmation, as a gesture confirming the importance of locating a man, was underlined with the hope to overcome mythicized separation between a nomad and a settler. Because a place, with its stratified density of experiences, weaves together the unrooted and the external with the bonded and the familiar.

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While working on the monograph I was constantly pondering upon revealing the connection between the ideas of place, localness and home. For this purpose I conducted research in numerous places, trying to demonstrate the effects of this work on scientific conferences or in publications which demonstrated a portion of the research. Then, already at the stage of creating the monograph, the portions were either omitted or expanded, deepened and complemented by theoretical interpretation. Some fragments have been changed, placed in new text joins and supplemented with new fragments.

The monograph contains reflections divided into seven parts. The first part *Towards the Philosophy of Localness* is a theoretical interpretation of the idea of localness being developed as a broad and affirmative concept defining the humans' way according to the teaching of a place. This part stems from the need to trace a creative power in what is only seemingly passive, stiffened, separate. A local man is demonstrated in the power to create bonds with the world and a valid story of a place. The next part *Being at Home on the Border: The Silesian History of Place and Things* introduces into the understanding of local space as world space because it is a place which is the beginning of determining oneself as an individual and as a part of a community – there is *Jedermann* in a local man. Silesian Görlitz, together with the experience of wandering and stories of those who lost home, enables reflection on localness in the proximity of home and migration. In the part *The Transgression*

of History and the Desire for Nature: The Value of a Derelict Park I focus on the experience of existence developed by a local man, which is formulated on the very margins of the world. The reflection is focused on a fallen landscape design of the former Fazaniec park in Silesia. The next part *The Narrative of the Cultural Border and the Silesian Philosophy of Home* is focused on the description of the borders and the problem of the dialectics of oppression and border protection. Where could one search for new ways of narrating the border, ones that would not only constitute a novelty but affect the realm of relations? The reflection leads to the Silesian narrative of home. The part *An Insight into a Post-Industrial Place* is focused on the post-industrial place which is more than just design. The post-factory teaches us to understand we are attached to the ground and offers us such a journey which is perhaps a passage to the heart of darkness. It also inscribes our existence in the larger event of dwelling. *The Philosophy of Localness and the Arts* combines thinking about a city with thinking about a metaphysical community, home and localness, which directs to the description of cultural practice in Barcelona, but also to the reflection upon a local metropolis. The last part *University and the Idea of Place* is an interpretation of the idea of the university at the intersection of the world and home. The main aim of this part is to describe problems of autonomy, location, and connection with regions. The explanation of the idea of wonder leads to the consideration of an important role of university as an independent and autonomous place in our common space.

The monograph is completed by photographs which do not fulfil a decorative function but constitute an integral part together with the word, thus becoming a text being analysed and interpreted. Both the word and the image are used to reveal local space which locates us in points of experience, thus making us responsible for a located gesture, embodied word and tangible movement. Reflection on a located man leads to the developed idea of localness where, like in a broad thought, we can find again the proximity of the furthest, because paradoxically the closest, things.