

RE-DISCOVERING THE SUDETENLAND IN CZECH LITERATURE AFTER 1989

The area under analysis, called in German *Sudetenland*, *Sudeten-gebiet*, and *Sudetenraum*, and in the Czech language *Sudety*, has no equivalent in Polish which would aptly reflect its unique history and culture. The term “Sudety” is strictly geographic. Semantically better, it seems (if only due to the different history of Poland and the territory of the present-day Czech Republic, with no clear connotations), is the Polish term “Kraj Sudecki”, which however should be seen as a larger region than the Czech-German and Czech-Austrian frontier. Its uniqueness originated already in the Middle Ages: since the first half of the 13th century¹ it has been inhabited, also on the Czech side of the border, in large measure by German nationals, who for centuries, up to the 20th century, upheld their language and traditions and resisted assimilation with the local Czech element. However, it was primarily the 20th century that was a time when the notions of “sudeckość” [literally: Sudetenlandness], “problem sudecki/kwestia sudecka” [Sudeten problem/issue] or “Niemcy sudeccy” [Germans of Sudetenland] acquired a new meaning.

Starting with the question of the Czech-German frontier, we must not lose sight of the fact that the entire territory of the present-day

¹ The colonisation of the frontier on the orders of King Wenceslas I of Bohemia (1230–1253) meant the settling of the territory by primarily German speakers.

Czech Republic, since at least the 10th c.² has been inhabited by Jews, partly cherishing their own traditions, partly – to a varying degree – assimilated with both the Czech and German nationals. In the wake of World War II, this area saw an extermination of the Jews and an eviction/displacement/expulsion³ of the Germans. The frontier regions lost most of their population, becoming at the same time an area of oblivion, punishment and anarchy; some villages vanished without a trace, others were forcefully settled with citizens whom the new regime found “uncomfortable”, still others were left to self-appointed councils of the locals. A lack of continuity of tradition, a lack of a natural social stratification and a deliberate lack of interest on the part of the authorities resulted in numerous acts of violence, injustice and gradual destruction. While the non-ethical conduct of the Germans was in the years 1948–1989 exploited by the propaganda of the communist regime⁴, similar behaviour on the part of the Czechs with respect to Jewish and primarily German compatriots was at that time cautiously hidden. It was only after 1989 that began – first in Czechoslovakia and then in the Czech Republic – the documentation and

2 First written records.

3 In Czech “vysídlení”/“odsun”/“vyhnání”; the choice of the term still triggers much debate, both among specialists (primarily historians as well as literary scholars and sociologists) and in the press. The topicality of the issue is confirmed e.g. by the activity of Antikomplex movement, offering a number of publications and educational projects for schools and the general public on the Sudetenland and on the German minority, e.g. *Zmizelé Sudety (Vanished Sudetenland)*, *Tragická místa paměti (Tragic places of memory)*, *Otevřená hranice – 10 let poté (Open border – 10 years after)* (more information: www.antikomplex.cz, access: 20. 02. 2015). The above debates, no doubt of great significance, resulted in the educational materials recommended for use by the Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports on eviction/displacement/expulsion, providing ample evidence for the anarchy and violence of the process (<http://dum.rvp.cz/materialy/vyhnani-a-odsun-nemcu.html>, access: 20. 02. 2015).

4 E.g. V. Řezáč, *Nástup* (1951; in Polish *Powrót*, 1953), a novel made into a movie (*Nástup*, dir. Otakar Vávra, 1952); *Bitva* (1954; in Polish *Bitwa*, 1957), a novel made into a movie, too (*Kronika žhavého léta*, dir. Jiří Sequens, 1973).

We should add that there are also non-biased artistic images, e.g. the short story by J. Durych *Boží duha* (it is critical to see the disparity between the writing of the text and its publication; the author completed the text in 1955 and it was published in 1969), as well as the series *Synové a dcery Jakuba Skláře*, based on a script by J. Dietl in 1985 (forced displacement of all citizens of German nationality to Germany was presented as unjust in a touching scene of the protagonist’s family saying goodbye to the daughter/sister, accompanying her German husband, relocated to Germany pursuant to post-war decrees).

studying of the 20th-century history and multicultural traditions of frontier regions⁵, stripped of residents of both “inappropriate” nationalities a few decades before. This situation is aptly commented upon by the Polish historian Robert Trąba; in order to open up national memory to the memory of other nations and communities, he proposes the term “polyphony of memory” (quoted after: Rybicka 349n).

Reflection on the Czech polyphony of memory has been since the 1990s reflected in literature⁶. When analysing these texts, literary criticism asked postmodern identity questions. However, the spatial turn in contemporary humanities shifts the study focus to another issue⁷; each of the authors addressing the question tried to re-connect the frontier territories to the rest of the country through their texts, making use of the role of literature for the formation and design of geographical space, (re)constructing places and territories. Attempts at discovering this area of heterotopy demonstrate differences of opinion arising from the national factor⁸ and are also artistically divergent. I have selected three dissimilar approaches.

⁵ E.g. *Transfer/Vyhnání/Odsun v kontextu české literatury – Transfer Vertreibung Aussiedlung im kontext der tschechischen literatur*. Ed. G. Zand, J. Holý. Brno 2004; *Vysídlení Němců a proměny českého pohraničí 1945–1951 (volume I–VI)*. Ed. A. von Arburg, T. Staněk. Středokluky 2010; M. Peroutková, *Vyhnání – jeho odraz v české a německé literatuře a ve vzpomínkách*. Praha 2008 (in German 2006).

⁶ E.g. K. Tučková, *Vyhnání Gerty Schnirch*. Brno 2009, 2010; J. Katalpa (actu. T. Jandová), *Němci. Geografie ztráty*. Brno 2012; D. Jařab, *Za vodou* [from a trilogy of theatre plays *Dokud nás smrt ...*] (27. 03. 2014 – premiere).

A valuable approach to similar issues is offered in a book by the British author Simon Mawer *The Glass Room* (2009; in Czech *Skleněný pokoj*, 2009, 2012, 2013), nominated in 2009 to the prestigious literary award *The Man Booker Prize*, inspired by the plight of a Brno-based Jewish Tugendhat family and their famous modernist villa, designed by the world-famous German architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, since 2001 on the UNESCO world heritage list.

⁷ “Since culture is always conditioned and dependent on situations, space [...] will become one of its major features.” E. Rybicka, “Geopoetyka (o mieście, przestrzeni i miejscu we współczesnych teoriach i praktykach kulturowych)”, in: *Kulturowa teoria literatury. Główne pojęcia i problemy*. Ed. M. P. Markowski, R. Nycz. Kraków 2006, p. 477. “Space and place are not, then, seen by geopoetics as a subject or category of text composition, an element of representation. They are rather, I wish to stress that, a frame, tool and issue”. E. Rybicka, *Geopoetyka. Przestrzeń i miejsce we współczesnych teoriach i praktykach literackich*. Kraków 2014, p. 12.

⁸ See numerous books reliant on memory, especially by pre-war citizens of Czechoslovakia of German origin, e.g. E. Althammer-Švorčíková, *Češi jsou vlastně docela milí...*

In his novel *Grandhotel*⁹ (2006, in Polish 2011), **Jaroslav Rudiš** treats one of the major towns¹⁰ of Sudetenland, Liberec in north Bohemia, as an enclosed area, we may safely say a ghetto. It is this ghetto that the protagonist unsuccessfully tries to flee a number of times, until he finally realises that the only way out is the way up, through the clouds. The town limits, for reasons unclear to the reader¹¹, are an unapproachable mental barrier. However, being enclosed within this space, or rather being doomed to it, does not scare the protagonist. He gets to know his world not so much across – in terms of territory, but primarily in-depth, in terms of time. Repeatedly, with a nearly obsessive regularity, he enumerates all the historical names of individual places, in passing reminding the readers about the multicultural traditions of the area:¹²

This is where I live and work. In Grandhotel on the Ještěd mountain. The hill used to be called Jeschken. And before then Jeschkenberg. And before then Jeschenberge. And before then Jesstied. And before then Jesstiedr. Apparently the hill's name got to do with some hedgehog or some cave. (Rudiš 19)

Similar chains of historical toponymies attract attention, especially that they are mentioned by the protagonist who looks like an autistic outsider, recognised by all around him as a weirdo, interested solely in the observation and documentation of the weather, as if trying to escape the overwhelming world of everyday reality. We learn from the protagonist, commonly regarded as a bit slow, what should be obvious for everyone: “[...] our town is a Czech-German town. Or German-Czech. You can choose. But you cannot run away from it.” (Rudiš 73).

The author evokes the German minority, indispensable for this region also through the figure of a former resident of the city who regu-

Česko-německé vzpomínky. Praha 2004. On the German side there are also literary images of post-war traumas, e.g.: H. Kennel, *Bergesdorf*. Prag 2003 (in Czech 2011), the novel which sparked tempestuous debates on the Czech side of the border.

⁹ The novel was made into a movie *Grandhotel*, dir. D. Ondříček, 2006.

¹⁰ “The city seems at present a privileged area of studies on the relation between space and memory”. E. Rybicka, *Geopoetyka. Przestrzeń i miejsce we współczesnych teoriach i praktykach literackich*. Kraków 2014, p. 309.

¹¹ Only at the end of the novel does the reader realise that the reason the protagonist was enclosed in the “ghetto” of the city was the death of his parents in a car crash.

¹² All translations from Czech originals by author.

larly comes and asks the protagonist to accompany him on his sight-seeing tour of the city of his youth:

We took the tram with Franz. [...] from one end of the town to the other [...]. We did this often. Franz liked to enjoy the view. He was looking around the town, digging for memories, talking about [...] his life that was nearing its end [...]. And out of the blue it again seemed to me that Franz is not Franz, that he is one of those people who no longer exist. [...] "So what is our motto?" Franz asked. "You must end in the same place where you were born. (Rudiš 126n)

The last words seem to explain one of the seemingly obvious reasons for elderly Germans revisiting the areas where they spent the first years of their lives.

The author familiarises the reader of his novel with the space whose history/memory was forgotten for nearly half a century, via mythologizing one of its architectural symbols, an actual television aerial linked to a hotel, with a characteristic shape of a tapered pyramid:

I work in a hotel [...] above it infinity starts, in a hotel that sometimes for weeks [...] disappears in clouds [...]. Well, this is where I live and work. Lost at the most beautiful spot on earth, where land ends and sky begins. [...] the most beautiful places on earth have such a magical power of attraction. Like the Eiffel tower. (Rudiš 19n)

Importantly, one of the effects of recurrent mythologizing is the shift of the traditional focus of the Czech cultural world, the centuries-old and multicultural Prague, towards the younger and equally multicultural Liberec: "What I know is that in the centre of the solar system is the sun. [...] The centre of the storm is the cumulonimbus cloud. [...] What I know is that the centre of my universe is not only the weather but also our town." (Rudiš 84)

When the author shows the protagonist as lost, this may be justifiably interpreted as a metaphor of the plight of the citizens of the frontier territory:

I work in a hotel that does not have corners and yet you can still crack your head and lose your mind. In a hotel where everything is round and where you can lose your way just as easily as in a fog, in a large city or inside yourself and that is something that once in a while happens not only to me but to absolutely everyone and so one should be prepared for it. That is what my doctor says. (Rudiš 19)

One more metaphor can be found in the eponymous, symbolic Grandhotel. As there are no corners or reference points in the hotel,

the frontier territory lacks former fundamental elements of spatial and historical reference – houses, farms, churches, and monuments. There are people who are lost in space and a physician who tries to help domesticate and order this space¹³. This is the author's diagnosis of the present situation of Sudetenland: it is an area of people who cannot find their bearings and those who aim to restore major reference points.

Radka Denemarková in the novel *Peníze od Hitlera*¹⁴ (2006, in Polish *Pieniądze od Hitlera*, 2008, in English *Money from Hitler*, 2009) describes successive returns of a Jewish woman of German nationality with a Czechoslovak and then Czech citizenship to her family estate in the village of Puklice¹⁵ in the frontier territory. The first time she comes back to her native village in the summer of 1945, certain that she was coming back home, to the only place that survived the war, the time which wiped out her family. The next few times she comes back half a century later, in the summer of 2005, after her family was cleared of the accusation of collaboration with the Nazis and with the sole intention to commemorate this fact by a memorial. The novel, although it describes the time after what is traditionally perceived as Shoah, comes very close to the images of Shoah itself in its crushing and nearly naturalistic accounts of injustice and violence.

The book starts in a telling way, from the image of the land, by no coincidence red in colour, and the following situation:

Denis [a young child playing in a garden – L.N.V.] holds a green, pointy shovel in his hand and sticks it into softened reddish clay. [...] When he finishes, being out-of-breath, there is a strikingly long and narrow bowl lying in front of him, a bowl with strange stumps, crinkly cracks and holes. A white bowl. He lifts it and cleans it. He peels bits of dirt off. He rinses it with a child's watering can. [...]. Surprised, he looks into two empty holes. Eye sockets. It is a skull. A human skull. (Denemarková 11n)

As early as the prologue, from which the above excerpt is chosen, the reader can learn through synecdoche and symbolism the essence

¹³ The same author in the comic strips *Bílý potok* (in Polish: *Biały Potok*, 2003) and *Zlaté Hory* (in Polish: *Złote Góry*, 2005) shows fragments of the past of residents of frontier area mountains – Czechs, Germans and Poles – as nebulous visions of the protagonist, a mental ward patient.

¹⁴ Importantly, the novel's translation into German (*Ein herrlicher Flecken Erde*, 2009, transl. E. Profousová) received two awards in Germany.

¹⁵ Users of the Czech language associate the name of the village with the verb "puknout", i.e. burst and with the plural form of the noun "puknutí", or "rupture".

of the evolving plot: this land will be a place and home as well as the denial and death of the unwanted ones.

Land, space, is shown in the novel almost always with the attendant emotions: "I'm returning home." (Denemarková 19) "Nothing will be like before. I will never touch *their* skin. [...] Our farm remained. Walls behind which I will hide and gather strength [...]" (Denemarková 20).

The inevitable death moves from the area of Shoah proper to the place which used to be native ground:

It is a trap. Such a simple trick from Puklice. Just a trick. The language that I speak will decide my fate.¹⁶ The words that come out of me will result in me facing the wall or setting the conditions. Words mixed with my saliva will send me from the railway station ramp, from the massive empty platform either to the left to a gas chamber or to the right in the direction of hope of survival. (Denemarková 58)

A representative of the new, post-war local authority explains to the protagonist after her return that no one expected a return of concentration camp prisoners to their native village, since such a comeback was considered very unlikely; her family property (estate, household, locksmith's workshop, distillery, and starching studio) had been divided and could not be regained from its new owners. The reader is not shown what the village looks like; place descriptions are vague and fragmentary. They vanish in the text like the image of the protagonist's house was to vanish in her memory under the decisions of the local authorities.

When after the social rehabilitation of her parents in 2005 the protagonist returns to her village, she encounters a small store in her former family home and decides to enter it, first without disclosing her identity:

Actually I don't know what I want to buy. I notice the rotating stand with postcards and magazines. I select a rectangular postcard. A photo of Puklice. A rigid picture of a God forgotten village divided into a few segments. The shopkeeper does not want to give me the envelope although it is included in the price. (Denemarková 82)

Space was once again characterised via impression and feeling, this time a feeling of enmity towards Strangers, or *Others*, although the salesperson might only suspect the client's "status".

¹⁶ I.e. German or Czech language, before WWII co-existing in border regions. – L.N.V.

The resistance of Puklice, of “space”, and more precisely of the people laying claim to this space, to accept a different element which used to belong to it/them, will prove, despite the shocking experience from the preceding visit, much more powerful than the protagonist had expected. Her ample experience of being expelled from any space will gain one more form: the locals will assault her, e.g. using the following (pseudo)argument: “Is it not surprising that only you of the entire family have survived the concentration camp?”. Still, the protagonist’s need to perpetuate tradition and thus to save memory – her own, others and the collective memory of a given space – grows stronger: “Every post-war visit to Puklice sucks my strength away. I return, not learning the lesson, and I constantly try to relate everything to those lost moments. Instead of living in the current ones. In my thoughts I never left Puklice. Only the body wandered the world, my soul was stuck here.” (Denemarková 209).

There will be no happy ending, though. The author consistently creates a symbolic history of Czech Jews from Sudetenland:

I am approaching the bus stop from which I can leave my nest; [...] I don’t believe my own eyes. They are saying goodbye! After all, they think of me. I look at their strange message with fascination. As if in a trance, I look at the friendly greeting. My family’s tombstone. A farewell to Gita Lauschmann. A greeting from all the good neighbours. One freshly sprayed in a warm yellow colour. On a scratched metal board with the timetable. [...] A yellow star with the label JUDE.” (Denemarková 210n)

Since the protagonist has no home, she leaves the village, symbolically and literally, via another place. Although this time it is her own decision, this space is again linked with the articulation of hate and craving for exclusion. The locals’ approach will force the protagonist to take things to court. After her death, legal action is pressed by her granddaughter, no longer intent to restore memory to the place but determined to seek compensation for the wrongdoing suffered. She repeats as a justifying argument: “If you seek justice, you have to do it till the end”. The omniscient narrator curtly comments on the granddaughter’s conduct: “[They launch – L.N.V.] a war that will not bring benefits to either side” (Denemarková 235). The words can be seen as a warning or a verdict of the text’s author: the new generation does not refer to space via the emotions of ties with the home, but through the sense of being wronged, which justifies its alleged rectification by

hook or by crook. The author creates a loop for the description of space by repeating the store scene: „Bára will cross the village green, she buys a postcard in the local shop. A photograph with the church’s erect finger, red roofs tightly huddled together and the spaghetti-like oblong palace with farm buildings.” (Denemarková 235). This time, however, the image of space, the place to which Shoah was transferred, provokes compassion rather than fear in the reader.

Josef Urban in his novel *Habermannův mlýn* (2001)¹⁷, based on true events, gives an account of the history of a German entrepreneur from the Czech-German frontier, who provided help to the Czechs, and yet was subject to anti-German hate after the war; the craving for taking over his property is an additional element.

A village in northern Moravia in the mountains Jeseníky on the Polish border, is shown as many other places – the eponymous mill, sawmill, woods, and village, a lot of detailed descriptions of interiors, pubs, nooks and corners, paths, and roads. A concrete image of space, despite the artistic author’s licence, looks very real or even verifiable, due to overt references to actual events from history. However, desolation is part of it, hidden by the author until the very last pages of the novel. Only in the postscript does the author show the current state:

I am standing in a meadow that hasn’t been mowed for a long time and I am looking around. At a short distance below there are derelict buildings. Both of us [with the father – L.N.V.] are looking in the same direction, observing the old peeling walls of a big building that looks abandoned. “What are these houses?” pointing my head in the direction of buildings covered in overgrown vegetation. [...] Father is thinking hard [...] suddenly he raps his forehead with his finger: “That is the mill where in forty-five they killed some Haberman.” [...] “And who killed him if he was not a fascist?” I ask forcefully and in all honesty I do not understand it. (Urban 184)

The superimposition of the images of space “then” and “now” shows the complete non-place. The absence of people and the houses they once lived in, the desolation and emptiness, as well as a lack of memory about the place and its inhabitants (like numerous other non-places of the post-war settling of scores with the Germans) are the suppressed and excluded part of the non-place described. As the author implies via the dramatic juxtaposition, it is high time to forget this non-place to restore its memory, if not life.

¹⁷ The novel was also the basis for the movie *Habermannův mlýn*, dir. J. Herz, 2010.

The novel, a fictionalised narrative merging the eyewitnesses' account gathered by the author, contains few features of artistic literature, however, as the other two, triggered vehement social debate on the eviction/displacement/expulsion of the Germans after World War II. The book's impact on the readers is directly due to its references to genuine events, places and people.

* * *

Sudetenland is addressed by all the three authors via the protagonists' autobiographical memory, thus tincturing the images of this area with a clearly emotional character, typical of individual memory ("Lost in the most beautiful place in the world, where the earth ends and heavens begin."). Building a narrative based on memory, writers re-merge three sections of time determined by our culture, whose coherence was disrupted in this territory – reflecting on memory is in this case the key task for the present and future ("She will start a War which will benefit no one."). The measures applied by the writers under discussion here can be linked to questions about identity. While they are indispensable in multicultural areas, after the displacement/eviction/expulsion they become (seemingly) unequivocal, nearly superfluous ("[...] our town is a Czech-German town. Or German-Czech. You can choose. But you cannot run away from it").¹⁸

The time perspective is significant. In the novels the main narrative follows the chronology of events, and at the same time it gets disrupted a few times through flashbacks and references to the future ("Surprised, he looks into two empty holes. Eye sockets. It is a skull. A human skull."). It is these glimmers, or recourses to the past and future, while they barely signal past or future tragedies, that highlight the dramatic nature of the narrative and are a kind of parallel of the memory of all of us, of collective memory. Through suppression (or deliberate omission and lies), executed by the state system after World War II, Czech collective memory today has only "glimmers" of the events which are an inglorious part of post-war history (while school education after 1989 has gradually been changed, the historical identity of older generations is still largely based on the knowledge they acquired at their school time).

¹⁸ P. Ricoeur indicates a close link between autobiographical memory and the attendant identity with narrativity. P. Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*. Chicago, 1994.

Reasons for the incompatibility of individual memory and collective memory are convincingly accounted for by Ricoeur in his *Memory, History, Forgetting*: “This tenacious adherence of the ‘who’ to the ‘what’ is what makes the transfer of memories from one consciousness to another so difficult” (Ricoeur 2006: 126). At the same time the author points to the moment of possible contact, and thus the coherence of both memory types: “In its declarative phase, memory enters into the region of language; memories spoken of, pronounced are already a kind of discourse that the subject engages in with herself” (Ricoeur 2006: 129). The entry of individual memory into the public sphere can be linked with the difficulties arising from the remembrance of the traumas suffered, observes the philosopher, and the above texts (irrespective of their place on the scale between the term “document” and “fiction”) prove it perfectly well. As to the commonly accepted opposition of individual memory and collective memory, Ricoeur puts forth a hypothesis of its triple rather than binary attribution:

Does there not exist an intermediate level of reference between the poles of individual memory and collective memory, where concrete exchanges operate between the living memory of individual persons and the public memory of the communities to which we belong? This is the level of our close relations, to whom we have a right to attribute a memory of a distinct kind. The close relations, these people who count for us and for whom we count, are situated along a range of varying distances in the relations between self and others. (Ricoeur 2006: 131)

This triadic concept of memory seems the most appropriate for the above literary texts. The protagonists’ individual memory is handed down to their close relations (level of plot), and thanks to the mimetic aspect of literature also to readers (reality level). In this way authors of novels, making use of the centuries-old role of literature, restore through plot (almost real) images of historical events to the collective memory, simulating the natural tripartite message of memory I–close ones–society. Engagement of the close ones is easy to find in the plot (“And who killed him if he was not a fascist? – I ask forcefully and in all honesty I do not understand it.”), and the interest of the “close ones” from the reality outside of the book is proved by numerous debates on the works under analysis.¹⁹ The restoration of memory, con-

¹⁹ See e.g. bibliography at the website of the Institute of Czech Literature of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic: Rudiš:<http://isis.ucl.cas.cz/websearch?form=biblio&author=&action=Vyhledat&title=grandhotel&subject=&source=&from=&to=&genre=all>

tingent according to Ricoeur on the community of time and space – “The shared experience of the world rests upon a community of time as well as space” (Ricoeur 2006: 130) – becomes thus possible thanks to the simulated proximity of protagonist–reader, creating a community of time and space.

Sudetenland, after a forced period of being subject to oblivion, comes back. In Czech literature this area becomes a significant supplement to the famous and popular place of intersection of national and supranational discourses, i.e. Prague. Due to the restoration of memory, the introduction of the term “polyphony of memory”, it is worthwhile to ask a question about WHAT the current citizens of the Czech Republic decided to remember. Through e.g. mythologization, plot and narrative inspired by real events, contemporary Czech literature tries to reflect on the suppressed and hidden historical spaces. This area returns, perhaps not in mainstream literature, but is offered enough attention and reflection. After all, Rudiš is one of the most popular young authors and his *Grandhotel* one of the most popular recent books; the movie adaptation of the novel has been recognised, too. Denemarková is one of the most appreciated women writers and literary scholars, her book *Peníze od Hitlera* being awarded with the prestigious Czech literary award Magnesia Litera (2007). The novel *Habermannův mlýn*, like the movie based upon it, provoked a lot of social debate. The pulsation of present and past, evident in all the books dedicated to the space of Sudetenland, is crucial for the sake of the future.

When Paul Ricoeur in *Oneself as Another* described the importance of the present for a person’s understanding of him- or herself, he left out space as less useful during the determination of the meaning of human existence. He moreover observed: “Nothing is lost of what has been. Minimal meaning: nothing could make it that that being had not existed” (Ricoeur 2008: 47). The literature of Sudetenland joins one with the other, making up an indivisible whole. Persistence and memory, the temporal dimension, markedly shapes this space. Since Kenneth White defines geopoetics as a “study of intellectual and sensual relations between the human being and the Earth to develop

&b70=on&b8090=on&b97=on&log=*&output=short (access: 25.02.2015), Denemarková: www.slovníkceskeliteratury.cz/showContent.jsp?docId=1376&hl=denemarkov%C3%A1 (access: 25.02.2015), Urban: <http://isis.ucl.cas.cz/detail.jsp?rowID=30790&db=B97> (access: 25.02.2015).

a harmonious cultural space [...] in order to [...] place contact and relation and to express it: the question of expression (language) is fundamental [...]” (White 21), expressing this space via language in its fullest complexity is paramount for the human predicament.

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