Ćwiek-Rogalska, Karolina: Zapamiętane w krajobrazie. Krajobraz kulturowy czesko-niemieckiego pogranicza w czasach przemian [Remembered within the Landscape. Cultural Landscape of the Czech-German Borderland in the Time of Transformation].

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In present-day academia, where time efficiency exerts ever more imperious pressure on researchers, deep, long-term and recurring anthropological field research is a rare bird indeed. The book by Polish academic Karolina Ćwiek-Rogalska, based on field work carried out in the town of Žandov in western Bohemia, is the product of just such a conscientious effort. The end result is a micro study of the attitudes of local Czechs towards the past and to the material traces that past has left behind, uncovering those attitudes in all their dynamic complexity as if in a laboratory, and exposing the ups and downs of this approach in the process.

Karolina Ćwiek-Rogalska is employed at the Institute of Slavic Studies of the Polish Academy of Science in Warsaw. While her university studies were in Czech language and ethnology, her current area of research centers on the field of cultural studies. In 2016 she defended her doctoral dissertation, which was published a year

later in book form under the title: "Remembered within the Landscape. Cultural Landscape of the Czech-German Borderland in the Time of Transformation."

It is no easy task to classify the book as belonging to any single specialist discipline. In her work, Ćwiek-Rogalska combines the methods of classic anthropology (using interviews, observation and photography) with the extensive archival research. She interprets the data gathered by both approaches using the vocabulary both of memory and of heritage studies. Her book's conclusions are of value not just to readers interested in exploring the past of those spaces often referred to as the *pohraničí* – the Czech borderland – but may also be useful in arriving at a diagnosis of current situation of that region. One can also interpret the book taking a certain separation from its specific geographical context and treat it as a case study of the bilateral process of accommodation between a place's past and the present as experienced by the people living in it.

Divided into three sections, the structure of *Zapamiętane w krajobrazie* is clear and coherent. Section one deals with matters of methodology and terminology. The author reveals herself here – as indeed she does throughout the rest of the book – as a sensitive and self-reflective anthropologist. She also pays careful attention to linguistic issues in her work, emphasizing the small, but significant differences between Polish, Czech and German vocabulary as used to refer to the world she is exploring. To take a few examples, the Czech term *pohraničí* does not have the same meaning as the Polish *pogranicze* (though they sound identical), and words like: *odsun, hrázděnka, Sudetenland* etc. all possess their own individual emotional register, making translation hardly possible.

Section two consists of three chapters, devoted respectively to the periods 1918-1938, 1938-1948 and 1948-2014. In the first two of the three chapters the author draws on and quotes from a wide range of archival data. Thereafter, in the book's third and final section ("Layers of the Cultural Landscape"), Ćwiek-Rogalska describes the meanings attached to ruins, sacral places (churches, chapels, cemeteries) and locations connected with the profoundly forgotten past of Žandov as a health resort. Despite its modest size, (about 200 pages, including bibliography) the book is richly embellished with topical detail and storylines. Each sub-chapter relates a separate story in which the past often meets with the present: as in the tale, for example, of a stone lion originally taken from a German *Kriegerdenkmal* interpreted today (in an entirely different place and context) as the national Czech symbol, or in the anecdote about the *Kneipelbach* chapel whose sacral context is defined exclusively through the national background (in this case a German one) with which it is associated.

So what main conclusions does Ćwiek-Rogalska arrive at? Well, the book comes to several conclusions, each in relation to a different issue. The first of these involves the chronology of local memory of Žandov's 20th-century past. She argues that 1918, 1938, 1948 (even more than 1945) and finally 1989 constitute the decisive *caesuras* in the memory of the local community. The period between the Munich Agreement and the communist coup d'état is clearly seen as the transitional liminal time between the town's existence as the German Sandau and its creation as the Czech Žandov. The time before 1938 is absent in the communicative and autobi-

ographical memory of citizens. It may be that the period is seen as a mythological past: almost all material elements in the city landscape date from the time, and yet no one can remember how those elements looked and functioned back then – it is as if that past has become Žandov in Past Perfect tense. The following decade, and especially the three years between 1945 and 1948 is seen as a foundational period for the community: it is the period of the settlement of Czechs, of the deportation of Germans and of the jumbled coexistence of both groups for some time. As for the post-1948 period, the chronological line becomes substantially flattened out: there is a strong presence in the memory of the experiences from late 1940s and 1950s (the time of agricultural collectivization, of the *demolice* and of internal population transfers after 1945 – of what were locally referred to as the *vnitřní odsun* – as well as the negative memories people had of their experiences with Slovak settlers, etc.) fades gradually into the relatively eventless period of the 1970s and 1980s.

Although pre-1938 history is definitively absent from personal memories, that does not mean that there is a complete absence in such memories of "bridging elements" between the pre- and post-war worlds. Several people, including two local doctors, lived in the town before, during and after WWII, and the Pokorný family, for example, also has a similar history. However, the presence of such people has taken on a magical and slightly mysterious character in the local memory. For the newcomers such people were strangers, even if they were fully accepted or tolerated. Their conduct, as in the case of Doctor Hackenberg, is remembered as being extraordinary, magical even. Add to that the fact that the house in which the Czech-Jewish-German Pokorný family once lived is today marked out as an uncanny, haunted structure. However, according to Ćwiek-Rogalska, the town's German past is commemorated mostly in the form – as she puts it – of "unintended monuments" ("niezamierzone pomniki"). Restored half-timber-framed houses (*hrazděnky*) or the Kneipelbach chapel constitute clear markers of a German past, not simply for the Germans themselves, but for the locals as well.

But the book also allows one to draw broader conclusions. Reading to some extent between the lines, one may interpret the author as accepting that her interviewees tend not to value their local landscape very highly. When she asks them about important local historical monuments, only the church merits a mention as such. Locals often point to ruins (whether still existing or already destroyed) as characteristic landmarks of the town and its surroundings, and often emphasize the deterioration in the quality of the space they are living in. Generally speaking, local landscape takes the form of a palimpsest in the memory of the local people, in which some material traces indicate (at least for some people) the presence of previous strata of historical reality.

When it comes to the critical side of my review, it is paradoxical that I should start by praising: underlining the friendliness and respect that Ćwiek-Rogalska shows to her interviewees in a great many indirect ways: none of her interviewees are openly criticized or even portrayed in a negative light. In fact, in some cases (like that of the couple who takes care of the chapel) we see them portrayed very positively. While it is obviously gracious of the author to do so, such positive treatment might raise a

question mark as to whether the picture of the people of Žandov that the book offers is not perhaps a little too sweet.

Another issue that needs mentioning is the depth of some of her more detailed interpretations. Her work is erudite and full of context throughout, but it sometimes shows an excessive concentration on theory (going a little too far into it, as it were). In one quote from an interview on collectivization in the area (revealing a personal perspective on the chronology of the process, p. 102) Ćwiek-Rogalska finds proof in the story that the landscape became "a landscape of violence" during the period. That conclusion, though it probably holds true for some victims of the collectivization process, does not necessarily follow from the interview she quotes. In passing, and keeping our focus on the same quote for a moment, one can observe a small, but significant temporal mismatch: the interviewee mentions that the JZD (*Jednotné zemědělské družstvo,* the Czechoslovak socialist agricultural cooperative) in Horní Žandov was disbanded in 1953 when "Novotný became president, so he freed us from the measure: anyone who didn't want to go with it didn't have to, with the result that the [JZD] broke up and everyone took his own [land back]". Yet in fact, it was not Antonín Novotný but Antonín Zápotocký who, as president of Czechoslovakia, said in 1953 that "no one who wants to leave the JZD will be prevented from doing so." Indeed, it was Novotný himself, as president from 1957 on, who was to return to the policy of forced collectivization of agriculture. Such a mistake in the story as told by a contemporary peasant from Žandov, while it tells us nothing about her attitude towards the landscape, does reveal quite a lot about her way of thinking about the political history of Czechoslovakia: not Zápotocký (an old hardline communist) but Novotný (also a hardline communist, but one with a more liberal attitude) is the one remembered as the "good guy". And, as a good guy, he could not be blamed for an unpopular measure (forced collectivization) that would not fit comfortably in the received picture.

There is one more very small, but nevertheless interesting chronological mismatch present, yet not explained, in the book. The author mentions that on the occasion of the erection of the monument to the "Věrní zůstaneme" movement on 28 October 1948, the local community sent an ("undated") letter to "the president of Czechoslovakia Edvard Beneš" (p. 59). Since we know that by 28 October 1948 president Beneš had been dead for almost two months (he died on 3 September 1948) and that he hadn't held the post of president since June of that year, this report must either be a mistake on the part of some author or a conscious and pointed decision by the local elites not to address the letter to Klement Gottwald as president.

However, these critical remarks do not alter my generally positive attitude towards Ćwiek-Rogalska's book. Her innovative methodological approach, combining the use of archival materials, interviews and data from field observation has produced a multilayered description of the cultural landscape of the *pohraničí* regions. Her contribution to the subject corresponds very well with other relevant studies, especially with those published by the *Anticomplex* association, which has been publishing research and memoirs on the topic over many years and has been encouraging people to take an interest in the heritage and landscape of this formerly mixed Czech-German region. Her theoretical proposition that it makes sense to

link the disciplines of memory studies and landscape studies closely together in similar work is quite likely to be taken up outside that region. I warmly recommend her book and hope that it is soon translated into Czech, German or English.

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