

Crossing borders in post-1989 Central Europe

Analysis of Andrzej Stasiuk's travelogue
"Jadąc do Babadag"

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Master's thesis
Polish language
Programme in Languages
University of Helsinki
November 2020

Tiedekunta/Osasto – Fakultet/Sektion – Faculty Humanistinen tiedekunta		
Tekijä – Författare – Author Borkowski, Paula Maria		
Työn nimi – Arbetets titel – Title Rajojen ylittäminen vuoden 1989 jälkeisessä Keski-Euroopassa: analyysi Andrzej Stasiukin matkakertomuksesta Matkalla Babadagiin		
Oppiaine – Läroämne – Subject Länsi- ja eteläslaavilaiset kielet ja kulttuurit, puolan kieli		
Työn laji – Arbetets art – Level Pro gradu	Aika – Datum – Month and year Marraskuu 2020	Sivumäärä– Sidoantal – Number of pages 90
Tiivistelmä – Referat – Abstract		
<p>Tämän tutkimuksen tavoitteena on löytää relevantteja konteksteja puolalaisen kirjailijan Andrzej Stasiukin (1960–) kirjoittaman matkakirjan <i>Matkalla Babadagiin</i> (2006; alkuteos <i>Jadąc do Babadag</i> 2004) tulkintaan sekä esittää tulkinta teoksesta näiden kontekstien valossa. Tutkimuksen ensisijainen tutkimusmateriaali koostuu Matkalla Babadagiin –teoksen puolankielisestä alkuteoksesta sekä siinä olevista rajoja ja rajanylityksiä kuvaavista episodeista. Toissijaisena tutkimusmateriaalina on käytetty konteksteja kuvaavia kirjallisia lähteitä kirjallisuuden- ja kulttuuritutkimuksen alalta sekä poliittisen ja kulttuurisen maantieteen parissa tehdyn rajatutkimuksen alalta.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen teoreettisena ja metodologisena viitekehyksenä on hermeneuttinen lähestymistapa. Tarkemmin teoksen tulkinnassa on käytetty kirjallisuuden- ja kulttuuritutkija Mikko Lehtosen kehittämää kontekstien hermeneutiikkaa, jossa tekstile annettujen merkitysten ja tulkintojen nähdään olevan sidoksissa moninaisiin konteksteihin. Tutkijan tehtävänä on identifioida ja kuvata tulkinnan kannalta relevantit kontekstit. Kontekstien hermeneutiikalla tavoitellaan siten paitsi tekstin myös sen tulkinnassa keskeisten kontekstien ymmärtämistä.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen tulokset jakautuvat kahteen kategoriaan. Ensimmäisen kategorian tulokset ovat Matkalla Babadagiin –teoksen luennassa esille nousseet kontekstit. Näitä ovat raja (geo)poliittisena käsitteenä, 1980-luvulla syntynyt Keski-Euroopan idea ja Andrzej Stasiukin kirjallisessa tuotannossa hahmottuva keskieuropakuva sekä vuoden 1989 jälkeinen transformaation aikakausi yhteiskunnallisena ja kulttuurisena kontekstina. Ensimmäisen kategorian tuloksina voidaan pitää myös tarkennettuja tutkimuskysymyksiä: <i>mikä on rajojen merkitys Andrzej Stasiukin keskieuropakuvan muodostumisessa ja miten transformaation aikakausi selittää keskieuropakuvan muodostumista ja kertojan kokemuksia rajojen ylittämisestä</i>. Toisen kategorian tulokset ovat tutkimuksen päätulokset. Tärkeimpänä tuloksena voidaan pitää ymmärrystä siitä, että rajojen ylittämällä eli matkustamisella on keskeinen merkitys Andrzej Stasiukin keskieuropakuvan rakentumisessa. Rajojen avautuminen vuoden 1989 jälkeen toi vapauden matkustaa ja mahdollisuuden alkaa luoda subjektiivista omaa Eurooppaa (puol. <i>moja Europa</i>), mutta samalla se aloitti vääjäämättömän kehityksen kohti rajojen ja niiden tuoman matkustamisen konkretian vähittäistä katoamista. Vaikka Stasiukin omassa Euroopassa on kyse subjektiivisesta keskieuropakuvasta, jää hän Matkalla Babadagiin –teoksen kertojan kautta tulkittuna ulkopuoliseksi tässä itse rakentamassaan Euroopassa. Rajoihin liittyy myös kokemus niiden absurdiudesta. Kertojan kokemus rajoista ei muodosta yhtenäistä kertomusta, joka auttaisi jäsentämään sitä tilaa, jossa hän matkustaa. Jokainen raja on erilainen ja kokemus rajan kohtaamisesta on subjektiivinen.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen keskeinen johtopäätös on, että kertojan kohtaamista rajoista muodostuu verkko, jolla on ajallinen ja tilallinen ulottuvuus. Matkustaessaan kertoja ylittää nykyisiä valtionrajoja, mutta hän kohtaa myös maisemaan ja kulttuuriseen muistiin tallentuneita reliikkirajoja. Reliikkirajojen kohtaaminen havainnollistaa sitä, miten muistaminen ja mielikuvitus ovat Stasiukin keskieuropakuvan rakentamisen strategioita konkreettisen matkustamisen ohella. Tutkimuksen toinen oleellinen johtopäätös on, että ilman matkustamisen ja rajojen ylittämisen konkretiaa Stasiukin luoma keskieuropakuva pohjautuisi pelkästään alati neuvoteltavissa olevaan muistamiseen ja diskursiiviseen tulkintaan. Matkustamisen konkretian tarve selittää myös vuoden 1989 ja transformaation ajan merkitystä Stasiukin keskieuropakuvan muodostumisessa. Rajojen avautuminen loi konkreettisen mahdollisuuden ylittää rajoja, kerätä passiin leimoja ja vierailta paikoissa, jotka lähitulevaisuudessa saattaisivat muuttua tunnistamattomiksi. Rajojen avautuminen mahdollisti myös vaihtoehtoisen tilan tulkinnan ja "Eurooppaan paluun" –reitin esittämisen, jollaiseksi Stasiukin keskieuropakuva voidaan myös tulkita kuten tämän tutkimuksen johtopäätöksissä esitetään.</p>		
Avainsanat – Nyckelord – Keywords Andrzej Stasiuk, matkakirjallisuus, matkustaminen, hermeneutiikka, Puola, Keski-Eurooppa, rajat, transformaatio, konteksti		
Säilytyspaikka – Förvaringställe – Where deposited Keskustakampuksen kirjasto		
Muita tietoja – Övriga uppgifter – Additional information		

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1. Introduction

“To wszystko trzyma się w kupie tylko dzięki granicom.”¹

Jadąc do Babadag (Stasiuk 2004: 218)

In 1989, the Central and East European countries started a process of profound changes as the socialist regimes collapsed. The borders of the societies formerly closed behind the Iron Curtain were opened and the era of transformation began. The topic of this study is to explore the experience of the changing era from the cultural perspectives. The study presents an analysis of the travelogue *Jadąc do Babadag* (2004)², written by Andrzej Stasiuk (1960–) who is one of Poland’s leading contemporary writers.

The aim of this study is to find relevant contexts for reading Stasiuk’s travel narrative and to interpret it in the frames they provide. The theoretical and methodological framework used in the reading is based on hermeneutics, particularly the hermeneutics of contexts presented by Mikko Lehtonen (2004). Lehtonen’s approach is a method to analyse interpretations of cultural texts from literature to films, popular music, and even advertising. In the core of the method is the question of contexts which frame the interpretations of texts. An essential element in the method is the identification and description of contexts. Thus, context becomes not only a tool to produce interpretation but a topic of study in itself.

The initial result of reading is the proposal of three contexts: border, space, and the era of transformation. Border may seem obvious context of reading, as travelling, i.e. crossing borders, is a fundamental element in *Jadąc do Babadag*. Yet, the narrative represents borders as confusing and absurd experience. The context of space is identified more precisely as Stasiuk’s vision of the Central and Eastern Europe (called *moja Europa*, my Europe). This is also compared to the idea of the Central Europe in the 1980s. The era of transformation gives temporal focus for reading. Although the identification of the contexts resulted from reading the book, their description is largely based on references from other areas than literary studies, especially the field of border studies. This method gives the work an interdisciplinary character and allows to broaden the interpretation from the text to experiencing the world.

¹ “Sometimes it seems to me that things hold together only thanks to the borders” (Stasiuk [Kandel] 2012: 173.)

² Translation in English by Michael Kandel titled *On the Road to Babadag: Travels in the Other Europe* was published in 2011.

The primary research question intertwines the contexts of border and space. It is formulated as what is the meaning of borders in the construction of *moja Europa*. The characteristics of *moja Europa* have been addressed in several earlier analyses on Stasiuk's works. Therefore, the focus of this study is not in the definition of *moja Europa* but in the role of travelling and borders in the strategies of its construction. Secondly, this study asks in which way the post-1989 time and the era of transformation can explain the narrator's experiences of crossing borders and the construction of *moja Europa*.

The analysis results in the understanding that *moja Europa* is constructed in the interplay of two strategies of travelling: crossing concrete contemporary borders and encountering relic borders by the means of memory and imagination. Crossing contemporary borders makes *moja Europa* a concrete space. Relic borders reveal the layers of history and people in the traveller's space. The narrator's experience of borders is characterised by ambiguity and absurd bias. The experience of borders do not provide basis for social or cultural unity which would bind the fragmented space together, but rather further emphasises the fragmentation caused by the multiplicity of subjective interpretations. The opening of borders after 1989 enabled travelling and opened a space for negotiation, but it also started a process which aims at the removal of borders. After all, the narrator is an outsider in the space of which he constructs his Europe.

Andrzej Stasiuk started his career as a prose writer in the early 90s. His writing evoked interest both among readers and scholars (Różycka 2002: 295). Characteristic to many of his works is travelling and the exploration of little-known places. These thematics has been also analysed by many scholars, for example, Justyna Czechowska 2008, Alexander Fiut 2008, Christina Godun 2010, Stanisław Kusiak 2010, Piotr Millati 2008, and Claudia Snochowska-Gonzalez 2008.

An introduction to Andrzej Stasiuk's writing and the genre of travel writing in general is provided in chapter 2 (Andrzej Stasiuk and travel writing). *Jadąc do Babadag* is introduced in greater detail in chapter 3. Theoretical and methodological approach used in this study is described in chapter 4. It is followed by the description of three contexts which were identified in the course of the reading (chapter 5). These contexts constitute the first results of the study. The analysis of *Jadąc do Babadag* is presented in chapter 6. Chapter 7 summarises the results which are discussed further in chapter 8 (Conclusions). Proposals for further research are presented in the last chapter.

2. Andrzej Stasiuk and travel writing

Andrzej Stasiuk is one of Poland's leading contemporary writers. His production comprises 27 books by 2020, many of which have been translated into several languages.³ He has won several literary prizes. Among them is the Nike award, one of the most esteemed literary prizes in Poland, which Stasiuk received for *Jadąc do Babadag* in 2005. Stasiuk's works have also initiated wide interest among literary scholars, and there are several studies and essays analysing his prose. The introduction to the biographical information and Stasiuk's production which is provided in this chapter is intended to contextualise his career and writing. The next chapter introduces the travelogue *Jadąc do Babadag* in greater detail.

Andrzej Stasiuk was born in Warsaw in 1960. His youth and early years of adulthood were somewhat troublesome, since he was expelled from schools and ended in prison for deserting the army in the beginning of the 1980s. He took part in a pacifist resistance movement, *Wolność i Pokój*⁴ (Ruch WiP, 23.10.2013). Stasiuk's role and activities in the movement remain largely unknown, since there is very little documentation and information available on the topic. At the end of the 1980s Stasiuk moved to Beskid Niski in the Polish mountain region, close to the borders of Poland, Ukraine and Slovakia, a place where he continues to live today with his family (Wydawnictwo Czarne 21.10.2013).

The beginning of his career as a writer coincides with the transitional moment when a new generation of writers entered the literary scene in Poland in the turn of the 1990s. This generation of writers lived their youth and early adulthood in the socialist Poland but started their literary careers mainly after 1989. Stasiuk debuted as a literary writer in 1992 with a story collection *Mury Hebronu* (The Walls of Hebron), which is based on his experiences in the prison. After publishing a collection of poems titled *Wiersze miłosne i nie* (Love Poems and Not) in 1994 and a novel *Biały kruk* (White Raven) in 1995, his writing started to take the path of thematising peripheries and mythologisation of space in *Opowieści galicyjskie* (1995, Tales of Galicia) and *Dukla* (1997, Dukla) (ibid).

Travel writing is one of the contexts this study connects to. Andrzej Stasiuk has published several travelogues since 2000. In addition to *Jadąc do Babadag*, his travel writing

³ Andrzej Stasiuk's works are among the most widely translated of contemporary Polish literature. See the report on the Polish market of books in 2013 (Instytut Książki 2013.) Despite the popularity and interest both in Poland and internationally, Andrzej Stasiuk and his works are little known to general audience in Finland. Only two of his books have been translated into Finnish. The Finnish translation of Stasiuk's second novel *Biały kruk* (1995) was published in 1998. The Finnish translation of *Jadąc do Babadag* titled *Matkalla Babadagiin* was published in 2006. Both books were translated by Päivi Paloposki.

⁴ Freedom and Peace.

includes titles such as *Fado* (2006, Fado), *Dziennik pisany później* (2010, Diary Kept Afterwards), and *Wschód* (2014, The East). Christina Godun (2010: 215) refers to Stasiuk's travelogues as travel series. She includes in it also Stasiuk's essay *Dziennik okrętowy* (2000, The Logbook), which was published in a joined volume of two essays with a Ukrainian writer Jurij Andruchowych titled *Moja Europa – Dwa eseje o Europie zwanej Środkową* (2000, My Europe – Two Essays on the Place Called Central Europe).

Characteristic to Andrzej Stasiuk's travel writing is continuous movement. This applies both to his travelling and his style of writing which is a continuous flow of impressions, anecdotes, and memories. Stasiuk himself writes in *Jadąc do Babadag*: "It's a kind of illusion of immortality when the red-and-white crossing gate is raised, a cunning version of tai chi, meditation in motion, and ultimately – let's be honest – a most ordinary escape" (Stasiuk [Kandel] 2012: 188).

Justyna Czechowska (2008: 60–61) describes Stasiuk's travel writing as postmodern writing on the road which builds on the idea of being on the move rather than travelling to unexplored destinations. She argues that such moving without a defined destination in mind and without limitations of time becomes a manifestation of freedom (ibid). Stanisław Kusiak (2010: 337–338), on the other hand, suggests that Stasiuk's travelling is metaphysical and existential. What he means is that the travelling is focused on moving rather than arriving (ibid). This is clearly explained in Polish verb form *jadąc* (present active participle from the verb *jechać*, 'to go') which translates as 'going' or, as in the English translation of the title of *Jadąc do Babadag*, 'on the road'.

Travelling is an interesting phenomenon in Polish culture, and travel writing has its traditions in Polish literature. Travelling of writers has often been forced travelling, emigration and exile, which has left its traces in the history of Polish literature. Many canonical writers lived and wrote abroad, for example Adam Mickiewicz (1798–1855) who wrote and published his romantic work *Pan Tadeusz* (1834) in emigration in France, Czesław Miłosz (1911–2004), and Witold Gombrowicz (1904–1969). In the 19th century the emigration was initiated by the political upheavals and uprising in Poland. Later in the 20th century, the Second World War and the oppression from the communistic regime drove many writers to exile and emigration. Émigré writers often kept in close contact with the cultural life of their native country and provided significant inputs to develop it.⁵

⁵ Such initiative was for example the activities of the publishing house called *Instytut Literacki* and the quarterly magazine *Kultura* founded by Jerzy Giedroyc in Rome in 1946 but later moved to Paris.

Kate Wilson and Karin Friedrich (2008: 297) note that 19th century writers, such as Adam Mickiewicz, Juliusz Słowacki (1809–1849), and Henryk Sienkiewicz (1846–1916), have received much attention among scholars studying Polish travel writing. The 19th century writers travelled in Europe and overseas, but the political situation of the times guided the writers' interests closer to Poland. As Wilson and Friedrich (2008: 296) note, Polish interest in their home territory and immediate neighbours, such as Silesia, Galicia, and the Tatra mountains, increased with their loss of statehood in the Romantic era in the 19th century. Later in the 20th century, Polish travel writing, and particularly reportage and literary journalism, has gained also international attention. Ryszard Kapuściński's (1932–2007) accounts from his travels in Africa and in the Soviet Union in 1950s–1970s are widely read and translated also outside of Poland.

Travel writing has a strong position also in the contemporary literary scene in Poland. Wilson and Friedrich (2008: 297) write that there is an increased interest in travel as a motif at the turn of the second millennium, as the changes taking place in Poland after 1989 have provided new needs and opportunities for travel. The boom of travel writing is also a wider global phenomenon, as Holland and Huggan (1998: 2) note. It is affected by a greater movement of ideas, goods, and peoples as well as an increasing accessibility to previously remote parts of the world (ibid).

Despite the fact that the world is nowadays more open for travelling and movement, it is interesting to notice that the notion of emigration is still a valid concept in Polish literature. An intriguing connection between emigration and travelling is presented by Urszula Chowaniec (2011: 133–135). She suggests that travellers and travelling writers have become the new *émigré* in contemporary Polish culture. The narratives of displacement and the experience of painful dislocation of post-1989 generation of writers also continues a longer tradition in Polish literature, particularly those of Romanticism in the beginning of the 19th century and *émigré* literature after World War II (op.cit.)

3. “Jadąc do Babadag”

Jadąc do Babadag was published as Stasiuk's 14th literary work in 2004. It consists of 14 chapters which depict the author's travels in the former socialist countries in Central, Eastern, and Southern Europe. The year of the publication of the book coincides with the entry of Poland into the European Union, thus making it an interesting insight into the era of transformation preceding the EU membership.

The storyline is not about one grand tour but of many journeys the narrator has made. This is indicated in the text as the amount of stamps the narrator counts in his passport (Stasiuk 2004: 211). The chronological or temporal record is not provided explicitly in the text which is why the journeys cannot be exactly dated. The reader is left with vague clues. For example, when the narrator says that it was only “a couple of years ago” at the time when the war in the Balkans started that he began to be curious about maps (Stasiuk 2004: 15), the reader cannot know how long time that “couple of years” was.

The central figure in the book is the traveller-narrator who is Polish and lives near the Polish-Slovakian border. The narrative is based on the narrator’s internal point of view. The traveller is the only character and voice which goes throughout the book. Other characters, whether they are travel companions of the narrator or people he meets, appear only occasionally. They remain anonymous and distant.

The narrative does not follow a distinctive plot, but the structure of the book reveals two storylines. The first of them is between the first and the last chapter showing a change in the narrator’s travelling. In the first chapter, titled *Ten lęk* (That Fear)⁶, the narrator recalls his travels in the 1980s. The space in which he travelled was a clearly demarcated territory of communist Poland bordered by the German Democratic Republic in the west and the sea in the north. He travelled aimlessly and without plans the country back and forth. Travelling was a way of passing the time in everyday greyness. Crossing of borders was not important and it actually evoked denial and fear in the narrator (Stasiuk 2004: 7–8). The last chapter, *Jadąc do Babadag* (On the Road to Babadag)⁷, has given the title to the entire book. It begins with the narrator counting stamps in his passport and recalling the numerous crossings of borders he has made. The chapter, and together with it the book, closes with a scene when the narrator returns home to Poland by crossing the Polish-Slovakian border.

The second storylines emerges in the remaining 12 chapters inbetween the first and the last chapter. They describe the narrator’s travels outside his native country of Poland. These travels create a stark contrast to the atmosphere in the opening chapter. The narration makes a clear shift to travelling in another era and through another territories and landscapes. The chapters from the 2nd to the 13th are titled as follows: *Słowacka dwusetka* (The Slovak Two Hundred)⁸, *Rășinari*⁹; *Nasz Bat’ko*; *Opis podróży przez wschodnie Węgry na Ukrainę*

⁶ All translations of the titles are from the English translation of the book published in 2012. See Stasiuk [Kandel] 2012.

⁷ Babadag is a town near the Black Sea coast in Romania.

⁸ The title refers to a map in 1:200 000 scale.

⁹ A town close to Sibiu in Central Romania.

(Description of a Journey through East Hungary to Ukraine); Baia Mare¹⁰; Țara secuilor, Székelyföld, Szeklerland (The Székely Land)¹¹; Kraj, w którym zaczęła się wojna (The Country in Which the War Began)¹²; Shqipëria¹³ (sic); Moldova; Prom do Galați (The Ferry to Galați)¹⁴; Namiot rozbity w nowym miejscu (Pitching One's Tent in a New Place)¹⁵; Delta¹⁶.

Characteristics to the style in *Jadąc do Babadag* is the use of many elements which create a mosaic-like fragmented narration. Kusiak (2010: 338) has noted that *Jadąc do Babadag* is non-fictional prose writing mixing elements of reportage, diary and memoirs from journeys. Among travel stories there are references to history as well as works and lives of Central and East European writers and thinkers, for example Ádám Bodor (1936–) and Danilo Kiš (1935–1989). Important elements are also the narrator's imagination and memory he puts in use to construct images and visions. The narrator often reflects on texts he has read and lets his imagination to play a part in creating the image pictured to the reader as stories from his travels. This can hardly be considered unique only to Stasiuk's writing as travel writing in general is a hybrid genre mixing fact and fable, anecdote and analysis, as Holland and Huggan (1998: 8–9) note.

If the reader is left with very implicit temporal clues in the stories, the references to places, on the other hand, are explicit. The vague temporal clues but detailed record of the places and their names build disproportion between time and place in the narration. The numerous places the narrator visits are typically small (occasionally even difficult to find on maps) and peripheral. Big metropolises and capital cities he rather avoids. Names of places are mentioned frequently and sometimes they are also given in different languages. Also the titles of chapters in the book often refer to places (see chapter titles listed above). Names and details activate the history of the places and add layers of meanings in the narration. In this way, there evolves a mosaic-like space which Alexander Fiut (2008: 155–156) describes as fragmented and broken from within.

¹⁰ Baia Mare is the regional capital of Maramureș County in North-Western Romania.

¹¹ The Székely Land (in Romanian: *Țara secuilor*, in Hungarian: *Székelyföld*, in German: *Szeklerland*) is a region in Eastern Transylvania in Romania. The region is partially inhabited by a Hungarian-speaking ethnic group, the Székelys.

¹² The narrator's journeys in Slovenia.

¹³ *Shqipëria* means the name of the country of Albania in Albanian.

¹⁴ Galați is a port town in Eastern Romania on the Danube river close to the Romanian-Moldovian border.

¹⁵ The central place in the story is Sátoraljaújhely, a border town on the Hungarian-Slovakian border.

¹⁶ The Danube Delta on the Black Sea coast in Romania.

4. Theoretical and methodological framework

The theoretical and methodological framework of this study is based on hermeneutics and the idea of contexts. Context is understood as a concept which evolves in the process of reading. Thus, chosen contexts partially constitute the results of the study, but they are also a theoretical element as they further frame the interpretation.

The methodological framework is based on the hermeneutics of contexts which has been presented by Mikko Lehtonen in his book *The Cultural Analysis of Texts*¹⁷ (2000). The hermeneutics of contexts is one element in a broader model of cultural analysis of texts which offers a method to reach beyond the horizon of mere text and also take into account the contextual and reader-related matters in the formation of meanings (Lehtonen 2004: 213–214). The choice of the framework is motivated by the need to find ways to cross the boundaries of a literary text into the experiences of the traveller and the historical events and phenomena. The influence of the world outside the text is evident in Andrzej Stasiuk's writing as his travels are motivated by the changes in Central and Eastern Europe in recent decades. The hermeneutics of contexts provides an approach for building the interpretation in the dialogue between the text and the world, but it also allows to bring into the reading perspectives which are not explicitly present in the text itself.

The theoretical and methodological choices of this study represent a cultural approach on reading and interpretation. Burzyńska et al. (2006: 26, 32–35, 343) write that literary theories started to shift away from the understanding of literature and literary texts as systemic, universal, and objective entities providing questions and answers from within the text in the course of the 1960s and 1970s. The new poststructuralist theories of the time, as well as the postmodern thinking in the 1980s, emphasised the interpretation produced in interaction with historical, social, and cultural contexts. This meant that analysing a text became a practice which broadens the scope of interpretation from the text itself to contexts by asking questions which necessarily are not explicit or even present in the text alone (ibid).

The following subchapters describe the elements which constitute the theoretical and methodological framework. Lehtonen's method, the hermeneutics of contexts, is introduced in subchapter 2.1. The subchapter 2.2 describes the material which is used in the reading process. The method of reading which is described in the last subchapter, explains how the hermeneutics of contexts and the reading of the material has been applied in practice.

¹⁷ From here onwards, I use the 5th Finnish edition (Lehtonen 2004) as reference. The book was first published in Finnish in 1996.

4.1 Hermeneutics of contexts

The hermeneutics of contexts connects to the long tradition of hermeneutics. Originally, hermeneutics referred to the practice of explaining the Bible, but since the nineteenth century it has been understood in more general meaning as a theory for a study of texts (Lehtonen 2004: 177).¹⁸ In modern hermeneutics, interpretation is seen as an act of looking for an understanding of the text rather than explaining it. Kai Mikkonen (2003: 64) writes that an essential principle in the interpretation is to accept that it is impossible to reach a comprehensive understanding. Texts are open to various readings, and previous interpretations guide the further ones (op.cit. 64–66). In the end, hermeneutical interpretation is achieved in a dialogue which happens when readers, texts and contexts intersect (Lehtonen 2004: 152; Viljanen 2010: 128).

In the tradition of hermeneutics, interpretation is thought to take place in the hermeneutical circle. It means that attempts are made to understand a text by proportioning its parts to the entirety and the entirety to parts. (Lehtonen 2004: 177). Mikkonen (2003: 72–73) describes this as a process in which smaller parts of the text such as sentences, paragraphs, and episodes are connected into larger structures of causality, themes, and portraits of characters. When the reading proceeds, these larger structures are again connected to smaller fragments of the text. In this spiralling circle, the reader gradually elaborates the understanding of the text (op.cit. 66).

The presupposition of hermeneutics which suggests that texts can have not only one but many different interpretations, is also in the core of the hermeneutics of contexts. According to Lehtonen (2004: 178), texts are open fields the meaning of which are determined by how they are interpreted and positioned in contexts, i.e. in a larger textual, cultural and practical field. He also argues that texts do not have meanings as such, but they get them in the interaction in which the meaning potentials contained by texts meet the cultural resources of readers. Readers exploit their contextual knowledge in their attempts to interpret and understand the texts. (Op.cit. 166–169).

The hermeneutics of contexts challenges the traditional understanding of a context as stable backgrounds of texts, often historical and societal ones, which aid in understanding the texts by providing additional information for reading. In this traditional view, context is seen

¹⁸ Hermeneutics is connected with the German philosophical tradition initiated by Friedrich Schleiermacher and Wilhelm Dilthey in the 19th century. In the 20th century, the influential representatives of hermeneutics have been Martin Heidegger (1898–1976) and Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900–2002) (Lehtonen 2004:177.)

as an element situating outside the text, but affecting the production of it, whereas in the hermeneutics of contexts the notion of context is seen as factors which both writers and readers actively bring into the process of interpretation. (Lehtonen 2004: 164, 166–167). Lehtonen suggests that contexts are best understood as variable cultural resources which are utilised to produce meanings in texts. Important cultural resources are both readers' and writers' discursive competence and frameworks of value judgement. They set limits to what can be said and how the said can be understood. (Ibid). Examples of possible contexts are also intertextual links to other texts, genre, public or private secondary texts (such as reviews, interviews, and the readings of texts by people close to us), the available language and the discursive limitations it contains, commitments of the writer (for example commitments related to certain genre, nationality, social class, etc.), as well as pressures created by cultural and publishing institutions (Lehtonen 2004: 175–180).

Lehtonen (2004: 176–177) writes that the essential question which the hermeneutics of contexts attempts to answer is which of many potential readings are actualised in different contextually constructed reading situations. In other words, the primary research interest is focused on understanding the relation between the contexts and the interpretation rather than the contexts and the text. The method to achieve this is the exploitation of contextual knowledge to initiate shuttling between micro and macro levels which resembles hermeneutical understanding (Lehtonen 2004: 166). The way how this is realised in this work is discussed further in chapter 4.3, which introduces the process of reading.

The notion that contexts do not exist ready-made but take shape in reading gives an important guideline for a researcher. Referring to Lawrence Grossberg¹⁹, Lehtonen (2004: 179) remarks that a researcher's task as an interpreter is the construction of valid contexts. The understanding, however, is not reached only by objective observation of the contexts, but the researcher participates in constructing them. Lehtonen (ibid. 219) mentions that researchers are positioned in the field of their research, hence, the claims they make are influenced by this position, for instance their own interests of knowledge.

Päivikki Hyytinen (2002: 16–17) has commented on Lehtonen's notion of a valid context saying that the cultural analysis of texts allows not only one but several contexts, yet, some of them seem to be more valid in a certain moment and among certain readers than others. Readers coming from the same cultural background most likely read similar (but not

¹⁹ Lawrence Grossberg (1947–) is an American scholar in the field cultural and communication studies. His works are a significant reference in Lehtonen's methodology for the cultural analysis of texts, especially for the part that focuses on the aspects of readers.

necessarily exactly same) contexts and meanings into the text. (ibid). Hyytinen reaches here to one of the underlying principles of hermeneutics, namely the idea of the hermeneutic circle which does not apply only to a particular interpretation but also to a wider universum of interpretations. As Mikkonen (2003: 67) notes, the chain of readers and researchers constantly recreate and broaden the texts. Hence, the previous interpretations and the discussions on them become contextual information and a cultural resource.

4.2 The collection and organisation of the research material

The material which is used to produce the interpretation presented in this work is of two kind. The primary material is the original edition of *Jadąc do Babadag* in Polish language and the narrative of borders it contains. The English edition *On the Road to Babadag* translated by Michael Kandel (Stasiuk 2012) and the Finnish edition *Matkalla Babadagiin* translated by Päivi Paloposki (Stasiuk 2006) are used to support the reading. The secondary material consists of texts which provide broader understanding of the contexts. They are mainly scientific publications on the topics.

The primary research material has two layers. The first layer is the travelogue *Jadąc do Babadag*. This means that the reading covers the entire book. The second layer is the border stories which were extracted from the narrative. As it became apparent in the course of the reading, borders are a motif which goes through the entire book. A choice was made to make borders a key concept, and give it a significant role in the interpretation (see chapter 2.3 Method of reading). The way how this is reflected in the research material is that the stories on borders were extracted from the rest of the text and collected into a separate document. This methodological act makes the border stories the actual text studied in this work and the notion of border an essential conceptual framework.

The emphasis in the identification of border stories is put on the notion of territorial borders (the concept of a territorial border is discussed in chapter 3.2). Less emphasis is put on mental and cultural borders, however, utilising these perspectives would give interesting insights into *Jadąc do Babadag* as well. Border stories, as understood in this work, are scenes in which the narrator describes the situations when he sees, experiences, recalls, and crosses borders. Separating the border stories from the rest of the book helps to recognise patters and structures in the stories, but on the other hand, it also highlights the subjective nature of the experiences at borders. The extraction of border stories makes the researcher's active role as a reader and, in fact, a producer of a text visible. Border stories constitute a text and a narrative

of its own fabricated through the reader's interpretations and choices. A prerequisite for this act is knowledge and cultural resources which enable reading certain signs as borders.

A large share of the secondary material originates from the fields other than literary studies. Especially sources in the fields of border studies, cultural and political geography, and geopolitical thinking constitute a large share of the knowledge in the secondary material. Sources from the field of literary studies and cultural studies have been used especially when mapping the discussions on Andrzej Stasiuk's works and the perspectives on travel writing.

Both the primary and secondary material constitute of texts, yet, the notion of text is not as unambiguous as it might seem at first. A question concerning especially the primary material is what actually is the text that is analysed in this study. Texts, according to Lehtonen (2004: 106–107), have both physical and semiotic qualities. Physical text is a communicative artefact, a human-produced instrument of communication created through the assistance of various technologies of production. In the case of this study, text as an artefact refers to the non-fictional stories from the author's travels printed in the form of a book. It also refers to books and articles which are used as secondary material.

As Lehtonen (ibid). mentions, the production sets certain historical and material preconditions for texts. One of the preconditions concerning especially the secondary material is the limitations of the availability of the material. In general, there is rather excessive amount of material available. The limitation it sets is the necessity to choose. Because much of the interesting and even relevant material is forced to leave out in order to stay in the scope of this work, the reader's choices become actually a contextual factor which frames the interpretation.

Although the material qualities of the text affect the interpretation, as was explained above, the more important aspect is the idea of texts as semiotic beings. Texts consist of signs and their semantic meanings which refer to something external to themselves (Lehtonen 2004: 108). An example of a sign in *Jadąc do Babadag* is a crossing gate painted in white and red. Based on the contextual knowledge the reader knows that such sign signifies a border. Also the narrator reads these signs but not in a written text but in the landscape. The sign makes him to expect control procedures, waiting, and questions to be answered. These expectations are the connotations of the sign which Lehtonen (2004: 109), referring to Roland Barthes²⁰,

²⁰ Roland Barthes (1915–1980) was a French literary theorist, linguist, and philosopher. Barthes influenced the development of structuralist and post-structuralist theories of literature and culture in the 1960s and 1970s. One of the concepts he developed was the idea of denotation and connotation as two aspects of a sign and its meanings.

describes as the interaction between the sign and the experiences and cultural resources of the users of the connotations.

4.3 The process of reading

The process of reading which is introduced in this subchapter describes how the interpretation evolved. Important steps in this process were the formulation of research question, the identification of the contexts, and the construction of interpretation on the topic within these frames. Reading, as understood in the hermeneutics of contexts, is active production of the text and its meanings by the reader rather than just passive reception or consumption of them (Lehtonen 2004: 166–167). Contexts of reading give essential frames within which the reader produces an interpretation of the text and gives it various meanings. Characteristic to the reading was that it did not take a linear path from the hypothesis and research question to the analysis, results, and conclusions, but it evolved as a cyclical process in a manner of hermeneutic circle. The process of reading was continuous movement between the text and various contexts. Some of the contexts were reader-related, e.g. the dialogue with the academic community when searching perspectives for reading. The final identification of contexts, however, was strongly motivated by the text as is explained in this subchapter.

The beginning of the reading process was initiated by the researcher's interest of knowledge to study the phenomenon of borders and their representations in Polish and Central European contexts. Some of the scenes of crossing borders in Andrzej Stasiuk's writing were known to the researcher which was an initial motivation to take Stasiuk's travel writing under study. The reading began with the preliminary assumption that borders have a role in the narrative, but the text was not set any expectations after that. Further choices in reading were motivated by the dialogue between the text, the contexts, and the reader.

The large amount of scenes referring to borders confirmed the preliminary assumption of the role of borders in the narrative. Borders constitute a motif throughout the book, yet, the question of their meaning remained open. At this stage, the initial research question was set as what kind of possibilities for interpretation the motif of borders opens. Before the focus was set to territorial borders, also many other ways of defining a border were considered. *Jadąc do Babadag* has various motifs which could be considered as borders. They are both concrete and imagined lines which crisscross in the space in which the narrator travels, for example rivers, roads, mountain ranges, cracks on the earth's surface, fences, boundaries between metropolises and peripheries, or boundaries of availability of certain cigarette and alcohol brands.

With the initial research question in mind the reading was taken further in the manner of hermeneutical interpretation. In addition to Lehtonen's method of the hermeneutics of contexts, also the methodological considerations by Elina Viljanen (2010) were followed. According to Viljanen (op.cit. 128), the reading starts from expanding the text through various point of views which open alternatives for interpretation. After that, the point of view for the analysis is set and the text is analysed. These steps help to sharpen the research question. Finally, the text is summarised within the boundaries of the research question. Lehtonen (2004: 114–115), for his part, suggests that the analysis of texts should not be a question of asking after only one meaning but rather what opportunities of meaning a text opens up.

The identification of the opportunities of meanings and Viljanen's act of expansion of the text can actually be considered as means to reach the same goal, namely finding possible paths for the analysis. The initial research question was approached by expanding the text and looking for the opportunities of meaning. This started the shuttling between the micro and macro levels. The micro level in this case is *Jadq̇ do Babadag* and the border stories collected from it, whereas the macro level is the collection and reading of the secondary research material which further developed into the contextual framework. As the reading proceeded, this shuttling evolved into a hermeneutical circle the result of which was first the recognition and definition of contexts and then the interpretation of border stories within the frames of these contexts.

Reading as movement in the hermeneutical circle can be also described as several stages of reading. Each of them took the reading further by expanding or narrowing down the text. The expansion of the text led into the recognition of the opportunities of meaning. Concretely, these opportunities were various themes and motifs recognised in the text as well as the array of points of views to anchor the definition of contexts. Narrowing down the text meant making choices which gave further focus in reading. Although the argumentation for the choices which narrowed down the text was made to be motivated by the text as much as possible, also the reader-related factors undeniably affected the choices.

The process of reading is described as three stages below. The description of the stages starts from the text and proceed towards contexts, but all of the stages included shuttling between the micro and macro levels. The first stage focused on looking for a point of view to borders in the text. It confirmed the initial assumption that borders are a frequent element in *Jadq̇ do Babadag* but their meaning is not explicitly explained. Borders and crossing of them seemed to have an element of ambiguity and confusion. Also various motifs

were identified in the texts, such as movement in space, freedom, interaction, map, geography, history and landscape. These motifs expanded the text but they did not explain the ambiguity and complexity the encounters with borders seemed to have.

The first stage also resulted in the understanding that the interpretation would benefit from accompanying the analysis with the concept of space which is one of the major themes in the book. The focus in the second stage of reading was to find a point of view to connect borders and space. Getting acquainted with other studies on Andrzej Stasiuk's writing indicated that other studies focus on discussing the characteristics and boundaries of *moja Europa*, which is a concept of space Stasiuk develops in his writing, while the question of travelling and crossing borders has got less attention. This motivated the choice to focus on borders within the space in which the narrator travels and search for understanding of borders in the context of *moja Europa*. Also the focus of borders was put on territorial borders. This was motivated by the fact that the narrator's encounters with borders are a result of travelling. Borders as such are not his primary interest, yet crossing borders cannot be avoided if one wants to travel.

Viljanen (2010: 129) suggests that one of the preconditions that guide hermeneutical interpretation is how the relation between the text and context is understood. Lehtonen, for his part, uses the notion of a valid context, which has been commented earlier in the chapter on the hermeneutics of contexts (see page 13). The notion of *motivated by the text*, which is one of the basis for a valid context in this work, bridges the text and the contexts. An important element bridging the text and contexts is the year 1989. The most important clue the text provides for this context is in the structure of the book when the narration shifts from the first story to the rest of the stories. The year 1989, or more broadly the dismantle of the Iron Curtain and the era of transition which followed, is a link that connects the text to broader discourses in various ways. It enabled linking *moja Europa* with the discussion on Central Europe in the 1980s. It also actualised the perspective of open borders.

The third stage of reading resulted in constructing the interpretation towards contextual interpretation. The identification of the contexts originates from *Jadąc do Babadag*, but their description is a result of the study of secondary research material. The construction of contexts involved asking questions for which answers could not be found in the text itself. These questions focused for example on what borders are and how they affect people, what is the relation between borders and space, and how a specific historical moment affect thinking on borders and space. When the knowledge gained from contexts was brought back into the reading of border stories, the final interpretation started to open.

In this study, the validity of contexts is constructed by factors which could be called *motivated by the text* and *openness of choices*. The impetus for certain contexts comes from the text. It is the opportunity of meaning the text offers, yet, the construction of the context is defined by choices made by the reader. These choices limit the knowledge that are at disposal in reading.

5. The contexts

The contexts, which have been identified in the reading are introduced in this chapter. At this point, they are presented as conceptual frameworks without referencing to the primary research material. The key context is border. The other two contexts are the ideas of Central Europe and the era of transformation. Borders are already inherently present in *Jadąc do Babadag* through the genre of travel writing. *Jadąc do Babadag* is a travel narrative, and travelling necessitates the crossing of borders. Travellers encounter for example the borders of national spaces, the spheres of home and foreign, and familiar and unknown. Encountering borders is also a recurring motif in the book. The construction of space, on the other hand, is one of the major themes in Andrzej Stasiuk's writing. The thematics of space in Stasiuk's works have been analysed in many articles (see, e.g. Czechowska 2008, Fiut 2008, Godun 2010, Kusiak 2010, Millati 2008, Snochowska-Gonzalez 2008), but, to my knowledge, there are no studies which focus extensively on borders crisscrossing within the space in which the narrator travels. The third context, the era of transformation, provides the temporal frames in the reading.

5.1 The transformation after the fall of the Iron Curtain

The Iron Curtain, which had divided Europe into the Western and Eastern spheres since the end of World War II, began to crumble in the end of the 1980s. Revolutionary changes took place in the socialist countries especially in 1989²¹ which has become a symbol of freedom and change. It started the transition process of formerly socialist Central and Eastern European countries towards democratic civil societies and capitalist economies with free

²¹ The beginning of the political changes varies from country to country. Hungary had implemented the multi-party system already in 1988, however, the communist party was closed down in October 1989. Poland organised free elections in June 1989 and got a non-communist government led by the Solidarity movement a few months later. Other socialist satellite states of the Soviet Union followed the revolutionary changes in 1989 and 1990. The Soviet Union ceased to exist in December 1991. Yugoslavia, which had not been part of the Soviet bloc and the mutual defence treaty of Warsaw Pact, started to disintegrate in 1991 after Slovenia and Croatia proclaimed independence.

market. As Hagen (2003: 490) has noted, cartographic changes initiated by the events of 1989 suggest a deep cultural and political transition. This transition expressed through the naming and use of language manifests shifting perceptions of East, West and Centre in Europe (ibid). Redefining the East and the West meant that peoples in the formerly socialist countries had to relocate themselves and their identity in the changed political and everyday realm.

Although the Iron Curtain was an ideological boundary in the first place, it ran along strictly controlled state borders. Thus, it can be said that the fall of the Iron Curtain was partially accomplished by opening the state borders for people and goods to cross. Opening the borders has become a powerful icon for the transition, as dismantling barriers (both physical, like the Berlin Wall in November 1989, or immaterial, such travel restrictions) has come to symbolise liberty from the rule of post-war totalitarian regimes in the history of Central and Eastern Europe. Often this freedom translated to (re)gaining national sovereignty and political independence after an era of Soviet Union's influence. Freedom also meant increased freedom to travel and cross borders.

The dismantling of the Iron Curtain and the transition that followed is commonly described with expressions such as redrawing the geopolitical map, redefining the East and the West, opening borders, and returning formerly socialist countries to Europe (see e.g. Dingsdale 1999; Green 2013; Hagen 2003). The fall of the Iron Curtain initiated discussions on the geopolitical and cultural relocation of Central and Eastern European countries (op.cit.) Paasi (1995: 4) even argues that it raised again the question of the boundaries of Europe. These expressions can be considered elements of speech which reveal a discourse. According to the definition of Sari Pietikäinen and Anne Mäntynen (2009: 27) a discourse is an identifiable pattern of representing events and phenomena from a certain point of view which the members of the community can recognise. For example, the opening of borders does not only mean practical actions but has also the symbolical meaning of gaining freedom.

Also naming can be considered an element revealing a discourse. The question of naming the new geopolitical order and areas has not been easy to answer. Whether the formerly socialist part of Europe should be called post-socialist, post-Soviet, Eastern, East Central or New Europe became an obvious dilemma (Dingsdale 1999: 145–146). As Jouni Järvinen and Jouko Lindstedt (2011: 7–8) note, naming conventions are not unambiguous and purely geographical but are affected by political intentions and cultural and social ties. Erasing the Iron Curtain from the geopolitical map of Europe brought on the challenge of how one should approach or refer to the countries, cultures and societies emerging from under the socialist era (Dingsdale 1999: 145–146).

The year 1989 marks not only political and economical changes but also shifts in almost all aspects of life, including the production of literature. The new situation changed the cultural life and literary scene in profound ways. Teresa Kostyrko (1999: 55–57) has listed some of the changes in her article. She writes that the earlier division of the literary scene to official (public institutions, official publishing houses, libraries, literature approved by censorship) and unofficial (literature published outside official forums and censorship in Poland and the émigré literature published abroad) was replaced by the diversity of literary ideas. There appeared also many new writers by the side of older writer generations. The supply of popular culture products also increased, and there a boom of newly emerged publishing houses.

The year 1989 is considered also a turning point in the periodization of Polish literature which, as Smulski (2002: 8) notes, has often followed political events such as those of 1918²², 1968, and lastly 1989. Hanna Gosk (2010: 7–11), among others, argues that the end of the socialist era began so-called *Nowe Dwudziestolecie* ('New Bidecennial', an era of two decades) in Polish literature. This periodization suggests an analogy to the literary scene of the interwar period from the regaining of independence in 1918 to the Second World War and occupations Poland experienced during the war. The two decades from 1989 to the present, however, are not fully comparable to the interwar period. Anna Kiermut (University of Helsinki: 49) notes that during the interwar period, young writers felt that literature should reflect the joy and optimism of a new era and regained political freedom. The reaction to the fall of the Iron Curtain and the transition after 1989, on the other hand, got rather painful than joyous tone (Chowaniec 2011: 134–135). Possible reasons for this can be searched in the complex situation the Central and East European countries found themselves in. There appeared a myriad of choices without evident political and societal reference points, the position of a writer as a moral authority was abandoned, and the society faced the influx of global trends such as technological changes and postmodernist approaches in addition to a situation in which the societies had just started to unravel their socialist legacies (Fiut 1999: 305–307; Kostyrko 1999: 56; Pięta 2010: 89–91).

In the 1990s, literature lost its political and social role it had had in earlier decades in Poland. Both critical literature in the country and Polish literature abroad (emigration writers) had earlier been predominantly concerned with the question of the nation (Kostyrko 1999:

²² The Polish Republic came into being in November 1918 (Davies 2005: 291) after nearly 150 years of Polish lands being partitioned between Russia, Prussia, and Austria.

55–56). Still in the 1980s, literature was politically engaged as it was one of the fields where the regime and opposing forces met, but it lost its engaging societal and contra-ideological nature after 1989 and turned instead towards the private and imaginary spheres. (Kopczyk: 90–100; Kostyrko 1999: 56). The turn towards the private spheres meant for example constructing spaces not in connection to the nation, but to local and private surroundings. Especially the younger generations of writers who were born after the Second World War and beginning their literary careers close to the 1989 or after shifted the focus from the nation to the local and private, yet they utilised strategies of constructing a space typical to earlier tradition such as the memory of the past, reconciliation of human with history and locating an identity in a place. (Czapliński and Śliwiński 1999: 259).

Interestingly, the post-1989 realm has influenced also the definitions of émigré writing in Polish literature. One could hastily assume that the fall of the totalitarian regimes and the opening of borders made emigration and émigré writing vanish, but Urszula Chowaniec (2011) suggests that the experience of émigré continues and constitutes a part of Polish literature also after 1989. In her view, travelling has become the new émigré in contemporary Polish culture. She argues that post-1989 Poland has provided a fertile ground for narratives of voluntary and economic dislocation²³, however, these are not ‘happy tales of border-crossing marked by the optimistic vision of the freedom to travel - - [but] leaving and returning stands for a common experience of suffering’ (op.cit. 134–135). Chowaniec (2011: 135–136) also suggests that the way how the new émigré writing deviates from the older generations of emigration literature is that it seeks to construct the identity by juxtaposing the experience of living at home (which often requires respecting certain national, social, and gender roles, myths, and taboos) and the experience of being a foreigner.

5.2 Borders

The journeys the narrator makes take him to many countries. Crossing borders is inevitable, but the frequency of describing the experiences and encounters at borders in *Jadąc do Babadag* suggests that there is more to borders than just the necessity of crossing them. Understanding the narrator’s experience of travelling requires understanding borders as phenomenon and concept of human activity. A base for this understanding is achieved here from the perspectives developed in the field of border studies which is a multidisciplinary

²³ Dislocation in the meaning of being dislocated from ones home, native country, native language, and even national identity.

field of research focusing on borders, their production, functions, roles, and meanings in the world. The first part of this subchapter focuses on outlining what the border is in general. The second part looks at borders in the Central and East European context.

As will be shown in this subchapter, the border is currently understood as a multidimensional concept. It is explained here largely through the development of border studies and thinking on borders, although, mapping this development is not a trivial task. As James D. Sidaway (2015: 216) notes, acquiring understanding on border studies (and the concept of border) requires exploring voluminous and fast-growing literatures across various disciplines. The benefit of the chosen approach is that it enables us to see how the understanding of the border has shifted from a fixed line to a constantly negotiated political, social and cultural phenomenon. Due to the vast amount of literature on the topic, the reference material is largely limited to political geography and geopolitics which have solid tradition in studying borders.

As is often seen in contemporary border studies, the answer to the question of what the border is increasingly depends on the situation, social relations, subjective experiences, and the ways borders are narrated. As Sidaway (2015: 214) says, borders look different depending on where you view them from. Tassilo Herrschel (2011: 30), for his part, notes that borders are always man-made and bound to local historical and cultural contexts. Borders also mean different things for different people. Their meanings might be different to international capitalist, military leaders, ordinary people, or scientists coming from different states (Paasi 1999b: 22). Assuming such case uniqueness, however, leads to the difficulty of finding out what the border theoretically and conceptually is, as Berg and van Houtum (2003: 2) note. Border scholars have increasingly attempted to address this problem by developing theoretical conceptualizations of the border by the side of empirical case studies in recent years. This has been needed especially to make the multi-dimensional character of territory and boundary-building visible (Paasi 1999b: 22).

Before we continue tracking the evolution of border thinking, short remarks on the terminology are needed. Typically it is the words *border*, *boundary*, and *frontier* that are used when referring to the edges and ends, but also points of interaction, flows and transits between territories. Tassilo Herrschel (2011: 15) and Pirjo Jukarainen (2001: 20–23) write that border typically refers to a line, often statutory such as a state border, whereas boundary is a broader physical or mental border area with social and cultural dimensions. J.R.V. Prescott (1987: 1, 12), on the other hand, defines border and boundary conversely. He writes that boundaries are lines, whereas border is the adjacent area which fringe the boundary.

Frontier, as Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson (2013: 16) write, refers to an open and expansive borderland space. Prescott (1987: 36) is of the same opinion writing that frontier is a zone.

A relatively new term which is increasingly gaining popularity among border scholars is *borderscape*. Elena dell’Agnese and Anne-Laure Amilhat Szary (2015: 4–5) note that the concept of the borderscape has not yet achieved a standard definition, but it can be understood at least in three different ways. As they write, it was first used in the meaning of an area shaped and reshaped by transnational flows. In this way, the borderscape goes beyond the modernist idea of clear-cut national territories (ibid). Such meaning of the borderscape is used for example by Mezzadra and Neilson (2013) who studied borders in the contexts of globalization and migration. The second definition of the term refers to the borderscape as a physical landscape marked by the presence of a boundary, which makes it predominantly a synonym to border landscape (dell’Agnese and Amilhat Szary 2015: 6). In the third definition, the borderscape is seen as a mental landscape. Its meanings are made and represented by the perceiver-observer in various signifying practices such as narratives, images, and imaginations (op.cit. 7–8). Thus, borders are shaped “not on the ground, but in people’s minds”, as dell’Agnese and Amilhat Szary (2015: 8) note referencing Anke Strüver (2005).

Vladimir Kolossov (2005: 607) writes that geography was perhaps the earliest discipline to study borders, and it has left a rich theoretical heritage in the field of border studies. He notes that geographers have also played a remarkable role in carrying out the task of drawing boundaries and demarcating territories. Border thinking developed especially along with the emergence of political geography and modern cartography, so that borders had become a major topic in the field by the end of the 19th century (see for example Mezzadra and Neilson 2013: 30–32; Paasi 1999b: 12). In the course of the first half of the 20th century, especially between the World Wars which was the golden era of geopolitics, borders became increasingly a central topic in political geography (Paasi 1999b: 13).

Before the institutionalization of (political) geography by the end of the 19th century, the thinking on borders had largely relied on the idea of ‘natural boundaries’ drawn in nature versus boundaries drawn by people (Paasi 1999b: 12). In this thinking, which had emerged as early as in the Middle Ages and was influential in the 18th and 19th centuries, ‘natural boundaries’ were considered real borders, whereas boundaries drawn by people were seen as arbitrary and temporary (ibid). Nowadays the division to ‘natural’ and man-made boundaries is considered obsolete. Pirjo Jukarainen (2001: 22) notes that natural boundaries, such as

ecological and physical barriers hindering interaction, should not be considered as a separate type of border, but as one of the possible dimensions affecting the construction of borders by people.

Another concept that prevailed in border thinking prior to the development of modern borders marking sovereign national territory seems to be the concept of frontier. For example Prescott (1987: 1) has noted that most remaining frontiers had disappeared and had been replaced by boundaries by the beginning of the 20th century. He recognizes two kinds of frontiers (op.cit. 36–47). *Settlement frontiers*, which emerged when settlers inhabited formerly uninhabited lands, represented the zonal limits of political authority of a country. *Political frontiers* were zones which separated neighbouring countries. Sometimes they were frontiers of contact which typically took the form of trade, migration, or conflict. In some case they were frontiers of separation. This was the case if the physical qualities of the frontier, for example the lack of natural resources or difficult terrain, inhibited cultural and trade contacts, or the exploitation of the land.

The shift in border thinking from border as outward-oriented zone of contact to border as clear-cut line of inclusion and exclusion evolved along with the emergence of modern nation states and deepening territorial thinking (see for example Jouni Häkli 1997: 9–10, 12–13; Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson 2013: 3, 30–39; and Anssi Paasi 1999b: 12–13). Mezzadra and Neilson (2013: 38) write that the mostly European scheme of dividing the world into different macroregions and areas was formalized and naturalized in the course of the nineteenth century. This development transformed the world of permeable frontiers and traditional zones of contact into a system of nation states with fixed boundaries (Paasi 1999b: 12–13). Borders became what John Agnew (2008: 176) describes as artefacts of processes that have led to the fencing off of chunks of territory and people from one another. Borders also became increasingly linked to the power and sovereignty of the state. Paasi (1999b: 12) notes that one of the early scholars in political geography, Friedrich Ratzel (1844–1904), suggested that borders are an expression and measure of state power, which is why they should be regarded as elements just as significant as the central regions.

Paradoxically, an example of the allegedly European concept of clear-cut borders demarcating the territories of states (see for example Agnew 2008: 180–181) can be seen in the history of many African and Asian borders which were drawn by European colonial powers in the 19th and 20th centuries. Two of the leading colonial powers alone, Great Britain and France, imposed nearly 40 percent of land boundaries on African countries which had not previously known the idea of the boundary as a strictly defined line (Kolossoff 2005: 611,

629). If one looks at a map, these borders are still strikingly straight and geometric in many places. Unfortunately, the local geographical, ethno-demographical, social, and cultural factors remained mostly unrecognised when the borders were drawn, which emphasises the arbitrary and artificial nature of these borders, as Wolfgang Zeller (2015: 24–27) notes.

Mezzadra and Neilson (2013: 32) suggest that the practise of drawing borders and mapping the colonial territories was reflected also in Europe as an establishment of linear borders. The European concept of the border as a strictly fixed line, as Kolossov (2005: 608) mentions, was reflected in border studies as focusing on various classifications of state borders and the study of relations between the barrier and the contact function of a border. These traditional approaches considered a state as ‘natural’ region and entity for the study of borders, but they failed to answer the questions related to borders and the society, for example the question of why the border changes sometimes evoke emotional reactions in the society when some other times they do not (op.cit. 612).

The ideas of geopolitics and the boundary terminology was heavily exploited for the purposes of expansionist politics before and during World War II. This led to the situation of both geopolitics and borders to become less appealing topics in the field of political geography, as Paasi (1999b: 13–14) notes. Despite the much used division between ‘natural’ and ‘artificial’ boundaries was replaced with the idea that all political boundaries and frontiers require some selection and, therefore, are arbitrary and artificial solutions, border studies focused mostly on empirical and descriptive investigations of specific cases while theoretization on borders was neglected (ibid).

Thinking in terms of the state territory and its borders is deeply entrenched in societies. This can be seen for example in the conclusions of the study Pirjo Jukarainen (2001) conducted on the influence of spacial consciousness in the construction of identities of youth at Finnish-Swedish and Finnish-Russian border areas. Her research showed that the increased permeability of borders did not led to the emergence of a shared borderland identity across borders. Instead, the national centres remain the cultural reference point of identity. Also the term border has long been claimed by state-centric debates which focus on the issues of security and sovereignty, as Eiki Berg and Henk van Houtum (2003: 2) also note. The long prevailed thinking, which relied on the division of the domestic from the foreign and seeing states as fixed units of sovereign space and ‘containers’ of societies, has been criticized by John Agnew (1994: 53). He argues that such thinking led into the territorial trap in which contours of society and national identities are seen as coincident with the borders of the state (op.cit. 60, 75).

New paradigms, such as postmodern, critical and postcolonial thinking which emerged in border studies in the 1980s and 1990s, made scholars increasingly question the state-centric thinking on borders and territories. Also the interest in border studies started to revive, and many global-scale phenomena have set new challenges for border thinking during the last three decades. Many scholars attribute the increasing interest in borders to the events and trends with global scale effects, such as the fall of the Soviet Union, the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks since 2001, intensified globalization, and increased migration movements (see for example Agnew 2008: 175; Berg and van Houtum 2003: 1; Paasi 2013: 223). David Newman and Anssi Paasi (1998: 186–187) mention also the rise of nationalism, the revival of ethno-regional movements, as well as forced movement and dislocation of people. Partially perhaps the increasing amount of borders in the world has also led to the revival of border studies and the interest in finding new perspectives to interpret them. Paasi (1999b: 14) mentions that the amount of states increased from about 70 to more than 190 in the second half of the 20th century, and the amount of land boundaries between states reached almost 310 by the end of the second millennium.

As a result of widening the theoretical and methodological approaches, the field of border studies has been re-routed from the state-centric debates on security and sovereignty to the path of interpreting borders as discursive, narrative practices in social relations, as Berg and van Houtum (2003: 2–3) suggest. Contributions from various fields (such as political science, sociology, anthropology, semiotics, migration studies, economy, environmental sciences, among others) have transformed border studies into a multidisciplinary field, in which borders are not anymore seen as produced and negotiated solely in the sphere of geopolitics and international relations, but also in culture, art, media, education, language use, and everyday practices of people. (Berg and van Houtum 2003: 3; Green 2013: 348; Kolossov 2005: 606–607; Paasi 1999b: 20–21). David Newman and Anssi Paasi (1998: 187) note that borders are not just static naturalized categories located between states, but equally social, political and discursive constructs. Paasi (1999b: 20–21) writes also that the meanings of boundaries should be 'read' in various discourses, for example in the field of culture among others, to find out how boundaries and their representations are produced and reproduced in various areas of life. Newman and Paasi (1998: 196–197) write that the boundary does not limit itself only to the border area, border landscape or the empirical contexts of border lines, but manifests itself also in social and cultural practices, as well as in films, novels, newspapers, and school textbooks, among others. These are boundary-related narratives which are located in 'literary landscapes'.

Considering boundaries as being produced in various spheres of life has helped to understand the metaphoric and social aspects of borders and boundary-making. Kolossov (2005: 624–625) notes that the roles of boundaries are differently interpreted by various social groups. According to him, the use of geopolitical concepts, images and symbols for example in culture helps to understand the representations of various borders, such as the limits between the West and the East as much as the geopolitical discourse by politicians do. It can also help to identify informal regions, such as ‘Central Europe’ that exist in representations both by political leaders and public opinion. Paasi (2013: 225), for his part, argues that the ideas of fixed, linear borders have been increasingly replaced with the ideas of borders, borderlands and border-crossings in a metaphoric sense. He notes that studies analysing the boundary-producing practices and discourses might not even refer to the material borders of states, but to ideas which represent certain forms of ‘boundedness’ of space, such as the Cold War dividing lines between the West and the East.

The increasing amount of borders and the diversifying analyses of the meanings and the production of borders triggers questions about the manifestations of the borderless world. For example Newman and Paasi (1998: 198) have adequately asked, whether boundaries are really disappearing. The amount of borders seems to continue increasing also after the turn of the second millennium. It has been observed that borders have been rather re-erected and reinforced than dismantled particularly in the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001, as Doris Wastl-Walter (2011: 2, 4) points out in her introduction to *The Ashgate Research Companion to Border Studies*. These questions along with the widening theoretical and methodological approaches have made borders a dynamic field of study. Borders are not merely seen as geographical peripheries or territorial edges but as complex social institutions, as Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson (2013: 3, 6) note. According to them (op.cit. 9–13, 27), borders are active sites of confrontation, contact, blocking and passage marked by tensions between practices of border reinforcement and border crossing. Also Berg and van Houtum (2003: 1–2) call for the need to see borders and the processes of bordering (both de-bordering and re-bordering) not as objects which can be installed, protected, and erased, but as dynamic and ongoing practices and discourses that people produce in their everyday lives. These argumentations reinforce the understanding of borders as man-made constructions which continuously evolve in social interaction and negotiations. Thus, they should not be seen as fixed or as must-be-overcome, as John Agnew (2008: 176) notes.

All in all borders continue becoming increasingly rich field of study. Both the proliferation of actual borders and the diversification of the understanding of borders

contribute to the sprawling perspectives and insights into the topic. Instead of a fixed object they can be seen as a form of human activity and social interaction. Borders are not disappearing as long as people have a need to organize geographical, social, political, and cultural space in one way or another. The practices of organizing the space and negotiating borders in it can equally happen in the forums of political international relations, as well as in everyday life and in aesthetic and cultural products.

5.2.1 Borders in Central and Eastern Europe after 1989

Changing borders has been an intense and frequent experience in the history of Central and Eastern Europe. Changes of territorial borders have left a strong mark in the landscape and in the memory of people. Changing borders have become even a stereotypical image to describe Central and Eastern Europe which can be seen in the repeatedly told legend of an old man who has lived in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, the Soviet Union, and Ukraine, but has actually never left his home village (see for example Lodenius 2006: 9). It is just the borders which have been moved around him several times in his lifetime.

Prescott (1987: 177) writes that the national boundaries of the Central and East European countries, to a great extent, have been created during the peace conferences which followed widespread conflict. As such conferences he considers the Congress of Vienna in 1815, the Congress of Berlin in 1878, the London Conference in 1913, and the peace Paris peace conferences which ended the World Wars I and II.²⁴ The emergence, removal, and shifts of many borders of Central and East European countries have been created in these peace treaties. Interestingly, Prescott does not mention the Treaty of Westphalia which ended the Thirty Years' War in 1648 and radically rearranged the political power and territories in Europe. Medvedev (1999: 47) argues that the importance of the Westphalian order is not only in the territorial changes but in the very principle of it which made a border as the ultimate marker of national sovereignty.

The era of transition has become yet another experience of altering borders in the history of Central and Eastern Europe. Paasi (1999b: 14) writes that the collapse of the Soviet Union added some 20 new boundaries to the geopolitical map of the world. Many other political and territorial changes have further increased the amount of borders in Central and

²⁴ The wars these peace conferences and the respective peace treaties ended are: The Congress of Vienna (1815) after the Napoleonic Wars, The Congress of Berlin (1878) after the Russo-Turkish was in 1877–1878, the Treaty of London (1913) after the First Balkan War, The Treaty of Versailles (1919) after World War I, and the Treaty of Paris (1947) after the World War II.

Eastern Europe during the last 25 years. These changes include for example the integration of West and East Germany, the disintegration Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, the declarations of independence of Montenegro and Kosovo, and unsolved territory disputes such as the separation of Transnistria region from Moldova.

The collapse of the Iron Curtain got straightforward implications at borders when borders between the socialist East and the European West were opened. Once borders were open shuttle trade boomed, cooperation schemes and visa-free zones were established, and movement of people increased. Soon opening of borders was followed by actions on larger cooperation schemes with neighbouring countries and regions across borders. New forms of neighbourhood relations and cross-border cooperation developed through various policies and activities, such as visa-free entries, cooperation programmes initiated by the European Union, formal and informal trade²⁵, worker migration, and tourism (Kennard 2003: 196–205). For example the Visegrad Group, which was established by Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland in 1991, aimed at cooperation at political, economical and cultural levels (Visegrad Declaration 1991).

Tassilo Herrschel (2011: 174) notes that after 1989, borders in the Central and Eastern Europe have gone from the hermetic separation of a fortress-like Iron Curtain, to their *de facto* abolition under the Schengen agreement. A feature which makes borders in post-1989 Central and Eastern Europe interesting is the dynamics between many simultaneous tendencies. Tassilo Herrschel (2011: 6, 18) has suggested that a distinctive phenomenon regarding borders in Central and Eastern Europe is the dynamics of re-bordering (making of borders) and de-bordering (eliminating borders) in post-1989 Europe. After the disappearance of the Iron Curtain, there emerged many new borders as manifestations of regained sovereignty and self-determination of states and nationalities (resulting for example from the collapse of the Soviet Union, the disintegration of Czechoslovakia, and the breakup of Yugoslavia). The processes of re-bordering faced the opposite agenda of the Western Europe which was the tendency to lower and, ultimately, remove borders within the European Union.

Also Eiki Berg and Henk van Houtum (2003: 1) write that the opening up the former ‘East’ made many old border disputes to re-emerge and has also given rise to new territorial claims. At the same time, there has been an intense development to integrate territories and create a united space in Europe (ibid). The same has been yet noted by Ann Kennard (2003:

²⁵ Informal trade across borders is called petty trade or shuttle trade. It refers to the activity of individuals who frequently commute across the border to sell their goods (see for example Kennard 2003: 205.)

194–195). She says that both territoriality and integration play a part in the processes of redefining borders after 1989. What she means is that 1989 initiated the re-emergence of national borders and brought a sense of freedom and ownership of national territory and identity on one hand, but, on the other hand, a desire to ‘return to Europe’, i.e. to integrate into Western Europe. In Kennard’s view (op.cit. 205), the EU membership and particularly entering the Schengen regime change the nature of borders and affect some of the cross-border activities negatively at those borders which become the external edge of the EU.

A feature of the development of borders in Central and Eastern Europe after 1989, as Herrschel (2011: 11, 50) interestingly notes, is also that borders within the former Eastern Europe seem to take different directions²⁶. Some borders have changed from being part of the Iron Curtain to the internal ‘faded’ borders of the EU and the Schengen area (for example the border between Austria and Hungary), while some other have changed from being an internal administrative boundary in the Soviet Union to a reinforced international border of the EU (e.g. the borders of the Baltic states). There have also emerged divisions within countries regarding the development of their borders. The regions in the former Eastern Europe which are bordered by western (EU) countries got quicker influx of investments and saw more rapid development of cross-border trade and cooperation, whereas the regions which did not share a border with a West European areas remained more peripheral and less connected with the Western Europe. Herrschel suggest that these differences have eventually become a new dividing line within the former Eastern Europe. Borders on the eastern side of it (often neighbouring a country which formerly was a Soviet state) are less permeable and the cross-border movement and economical activities has taken more the shape of ‘smuggling the cigaretters’ than the opportunities utilised by large scale industries and employment opportunities. (Op.cit. 11–12). It has become evident that borders are not the same for everyone. For a tourist, crossing a border might be just a practice of formalities, but for a border-dweller it can open totally different possibilities or obstacles in everyday life such as new employment opportunities, or practical difficulties due to the artificial division of the town as has been the case in the village of Szelmenc (see footnote 26).

It could be assumed that the opening of borders takes border areas inevitably towards increasing contact and connectivity. While this indeed might be the case at many borders, it

²⁶ Sometimes different directions of border development can be seen even at the same border, as has happened in the village of Szelmenc at the border of Slovakia and Ukraine. The village was divided by a border set between the Soviet Union and the Czechoslovakia after the Second World War. Even though these countries do not exist anymore, the border remains. It was opened for crossing in 2005, but it has simultaneously become a strengthened outer boundary of the European Union. (Böszörményi and Salminen 2007.)

does not necessarily happen everywhere. Open borders do not automatically create interaction, as Wastl-Walter, Váradi and Veider (2002: 75–76, 92–93) argue based on their study on two neighbouring villages on both sides of the Austrian-Hungarian border. The villages belonged to the Austro-Hungarian empire until 1921. When the empire broke the villages ended on different sides of the Austro-Hungarian state borders. The cross-border interaction ceased completely after the border became part of the Iron Curtain in 1948. Despite the border was formally opened after 1989, villagers have not grasped the opportunity of getting together, but instead, the separatedness and silence is reinforced in the rhetorics of collective memory on the traumatic past and in the anxiety towards future changes on borders, namely the question of entering the European Union and establishment of the Schengen border. There is both physical silence as stillness at the border (no traffic or movement in the proximity of the border) and silence as the absence of the neighbour in the narratives of villagers. In this way, a border which is formally open is closed in practice. (Op.cit. 75–76).

As Wastl-Walter's et al. (2002) case study shows, border changes do not necessarily erase the old border completely. Removed or effaced borders can be manifested in narratives and imaginations. A border which has ceased to perform political function but is still evident in the cultural landscape and in people's consciousness, is a relic boundary, as Marek Sobczyński (2008: 66, 70) notes. The relic boundary can continue to modify the social behaviour and hamper social contact even when the actual border is gone. Sometimes relic boundaries leave also signs in the physical landscape, for example in the land use and building forms. (Op.cit. 69–70, 73).

Concluding the topic of borders in Central and Eastern Europe, I propose that the idea of *open borders* offers an interesting perspective to borders in post-1989 Central and Eastern Europe. Opening of borders has not only meant the formal opening of territorial borders for the movement of peoples, goods, and cooperation, but also opening the borders for negotiation, i.e. social and cultural processes of re-defining their meanings. In order to understand borders in the area, they need to be seen not only as territorial divisions between nation states but also as sights of negotiations over meanings. The negotiation of meanings has set many borders on the move even in places where there have not been *de facto* border changes. Thus, borders in the Central and East European area should be seen as multidimensional, constantly evolving borderscapes. In producing and experiencing these borderscapes both current local, national, and global situations, as well as the layers of history matter.

5.3 The idea of Central Europe and “moja Europa”

The theme of space identified as a main theme in *Jadąc do Babadag* is anchored to two more specific concepts of space: *moja Europa* (‘my Europe’) which evolves in Andrzej Stasiuk’s travel writing, and the discussion on the idea of Central Europe in the 1980s. These two concepts, although very different from one another, are linked by the year 1989. Piotr Millati (2008: 177), for example, has described Stasiuk’s Europe a negative of the concept from the 1980s. This year meant an end for the earlier idea of Central Europe, but for Stasiuk it marked a starting point for travelling and his construction of *moja Europa*. Stasiuk’s concept does not directly continue the idea of Central Europe of the 1980s, but it owes to it in many ways. This is why these two concepts are presented here side by side.

The discussion on Central Europe in the last decades of the 20th century has largely been about the question of its identity rather than geographical location or territorial borders.²⁷ In the course of the 1980s, the geographical position was replaced by history and cultural terms, and the Central European idea eventually became to be constructed and cultivated on paper, as Aleksander Fiut (1999: 22) writes. Assigning Central Europe unquestionable borders proved impossible, yet the notion of borders has an important role in the definition. Fiut (1999: 8) has postulated that Central Europe is actually there where the boundaries of various spheres such as ancient empires, languages, religions, fallen kingdoms, nationalities, and the influence of communism start to blur.

Miroslav Hroch (2000: 33) suggests that politically Central Europe became a mere memory after the Yalta Conference which laid the foundations for the division of Europe by the Iron Curtain after the Second World War in 1945. According to him, not even the disintegration of the Soviet bloc changed that, because the Iron Curtain was replaced by the Schengen agreements. Yet, the idea of Central Europe re-emerged in the discussions of intellectuals in the 1980s. Maria Todorova (2000: 219) sets the starting point of the discussion to the almost simultaneous publication of three writers: Czesław Miłosz from Poland (*The Witness of Poetry*), Milan Kundera from the former Czechoslovakia (*The Tragedy of Central Europe*, see Kundera 1984), and Jenő Szűcs from Hungary (*The Three Historic Regions of Europe*). Soon the discussion was joined by other writers, dissidents and emigrants, for

²⁷ The history of the imagination on Central Europe goes far beyond the 1980s. Miroslav Hroch (2000: 23–24) mentions that the term ‘Central Europe’ appears to have been first used to designate a geopolitical entity at the time of the Congress of Vienna in the 1814–1815, although, the formation of Central Europe could be traced even to the times of the Reformation, the Thirty Years War (1618–1648), and the Polish-Swedish War in the 17th century.

example, György Konrad (1933–) from Hungary, Adam Michnik (1946–) from Poland, Danilo Kiš (1935–1989) from the former Yugoslavia, and Claudio Magris (1939–) from Italy (Horel 2013: 24–27).

The discussion which typically took place at conferences or publications devoted to the topic was joined also by exile communities and historians outside of Central Europe. Frequent themes in the discussions were borders of Central Europe, its relations with Western Europe, the Balkans and the Soviet Union, as well as the problem of identity in the Central European region. (Horel 2013: 25–26, 30, 35). Historical and cultural ties were often in the core of the definitions. For Milan Kundera, Central Europe culminated in the cities of Wien, Budapest, Cracow, and Prague which once belonged to the Habsburg monarchy (Nyysönen 2003: 10).

As Fiut (1999: 8) argues, the contribution of emigrants and dissident writers gave the Central European idea a political tone. According to Catherine Horel (2013: 25–26, 30), Central Europe was contrasted to the Soviet sphere of influence and oppression and sought liberation from it by looking for cultural models and political alternatives. Todorova (2000: 219) notes the same when she writes that Russia became Central Europe's constituting other.

Two years after the texts of Miłosz, Kundera, and Szűcs, a historian, Timothy Garton Ash (1986), published an article titled *Does Central Europe Exist?* which he begins by stating that “Central Europe is back.” In the article Garton Ash suggests that it is not only the past but also the present of those time which gives shape to Central Europe. What he means by this is the experience of living under the totalitarian system and the tradition of civic commitment from the intelligentsia. Thus, Central Europe is not a region whose boundaries can be traced on the map, but it is “a kingdom of spirit” (op.cit. 47). In his articulation, Garton Ash defines Central Europe in cultural terms, as did also Miłosz and Kundera (see Todorova 2000: 219). Piotr Millati (2008: 173, 175, 189) mentions that the Central European idea was finally meant to be a shared cultural consciousness to understand the uniqueness of Central European identity.

Alexander Fiut (1999: 9) identifies three characteristics which define the Central European idea in the 1980s. First, it underlined the strong relation of Central Europe to the Western European cultural and political heritage. Second, it looked for cultural traits which could form the basis for a shared cultural consciousness among Central Europeans. By doing so, it remained silent or even dismissed features which differentiated from it. Third, it idealised the multinational and multicultural regimes that had existed in the area earlier,

particularly the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Austro-Hungarian monarchy (the Habsburg empire).

The idea of Central Europe revived the memory of ‘forgotten Europe’ (Fiut 1999: 9). Milan Kundera (1984) claimed in his article that Central Europe is culturally integrated but tragically forgotten part of Western Europe. He wrote that Central Europe which is the eastern border of the West is seen only as Eastern Europe in the West (Kundera 1984: 33, 37). Millati (2008: 174–175) notes that in Kundera’s thinking, the West did not feel the absence of its center because the unity of Europe had become defined by economical, not cultural terms.

An effect of Kundera’s text was that suffering was placed in the core of the Central European identity (Fiut 1999: 16). Tragic suffering but also the experience of being the objects of history is one of the elements which has shaped the identities of Central European countries, as Jouni Järvinen and Jouko Lindstedt (2011: 11) note. This experience, as Timothy Snyder (2008: 60–62) suggests, builds a narrative of its own. Interestingly, he adds the ‘return to Europe’ in its constituents (ibid).

Maria Todorova (2000: 222) notes that the Central European idea had the chance to actualize itself as a region-building opportunity in the post-1989 world, but, despite some actions were taken (for example the establishment of The Visegrad Group), concrete co-operation failed to materialize. The idea of Central Europe was soon overshadowed by the aims to join Western alliances such as the European Union and NATO (Horel 2013; 24, 30). Hagen (2003: 508) even claims that the idea of Central Europe was a transitional phase in the project of returning to West and Europe rather than an attempt to create a Central European cultural and political identity independent from the East-West dichotomy.

Andrzej Stasiuk’s concept of *moja Europa* offers an interesting comparison to the idea of Central Europe. *Moja Europa* is equally created on paper and in words as was the Central European idea in the 1980s, but, instead of emerging in a broad dialogue, *moja Europa* is a construction of one writer. It is ultimately private and subjective concept, as Millati (2008: 188) has noted. The name, *moja Europa*, appeared already in Stasiuk’s essay *Dziennik okrętowy* (Stasiuk 2000). The essay begins with the scene in which the narrator draws a circle on a map. The centre of the circle is at his home – in an ultimately private place – in the borderlands of Southern Poland (Stasiuk 2000: 77). That is also the place where his journeys abroad through the border crossing in Konieczna begin (op.cit. 98).

Travelling is one of the constituents of *moja Europa*, whereas in the development of the Central European idea, crossing borders was an obstacle. Garton Ash (1986: 52) writes that the real iron curtain hampering freedom of movement and cultural exchange was actually

between Poland and Czechoslovakia. The intellectuals met more often in Paris or New York than they did in Warsaw or Prague (ibid). The opening of borders after 1989 can be seen as the point of departure for *moja Europa*, however, Stasiuk does not ‘return to Europe’ in that sense how it would have been imagined earlier. As Millati (2008: 177, 183) notes, travelling to *moja Europa* is travelling to forgotten peripheries, to the Europe of people in margins and to places that travel guides do not mention. Millati (op.cit. 178–179) continues that *moja Europa* omits the ethos of Western high culture, but includes elements which were silenced in the idea of Central Europe of the 1980s, for example the inhabitants of former Galicia or the hungarian Slovakia and Romania.

Another elementary constituents of the space Stasiuk creates in his travel writing are geography and time. According to Godun (2010: 317–320), *moja Europa* is an imaginative and metaphorical space despite the fact that he travels in real geographical spaces. Geography and history give it its shape, as Agata Lewandowska (2012) suggests saying that the boundaries of *moja Europa* slither unevenly when formed by geography and are artificially simplified where they have been demarcated as a result of history. Also Snochowska-Gonzalez (2008: 99–100) has suggested that *moja Europa* is a concrete territory but its reality does not follow linear history and progress which would give it feeling of sense. The reality is always somewhere else and in other times (ibid).

History, in *moja Europa*, means unexpected turns and terror which leaves melancholic ruins behind (Lewandowska 2012; Snochowska-Gonzalez 2008: 102). Lewandowska (2012) suggests that Stasiuk’s strategy to cope with the burdening history is to escape into ahistorical geography that is free from ideological tendencies and political redistributions. The narrative Stasiuk builds tries to escape the dichotomous East-West axiom (Lewandowska 2012), which Stasiuk does by bringing his own alternative into it, as Snochowska-Gonzalez (2008: 104) suggests. Despite meeting people during his journeys and encountering their cultures and histories, *moja Europa* does not provide a ground for dialogue between cultural spheres and geopolitical views (Millati 2008: 185).

6. The analysis of “Jadąc do Babadag”

The analysis in this chapter presents observations of reading. The chapter consists of three sections. The first of them focuses on the space in which the narrator moves. The narrator’s experiences and encounters at borders are described in the second section. The third section highlights the motif of borderless space and the fear it evokes in the narrator. The quotes from

the material are given in Polish, as the original Polish edition constituted the primary material of the study. Direct quotes from *Jadąc do Babadag* (Stasiuk 2004) are indicated as separate paragraphs marked in italic. The page number to the 2004 edition is given as reference at the end of the quote. Indirect quotes are referenced the same way as elsewhere in this work, for example (Stasiuk 2004: 75).

6.1 The traveller's space

The space in which the narrator travels expands from his home outwards together with his journeys. It is demarcated by the Carpathian mountain range in the north and two seas – the Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea – in the south and south-east. The space is cleaved by various geographical and physical lines and cracks such as rivers, roads and watersheds. It is also cleaved by culturally defined borders such as the boundary between the periphery and metropole marked by the availability of the narrator's favourite cigarette label which is not available in bigger cities (Stasiuk 2004: 78).

Snochowska-Gonzalez (2008: 98, 101, 107) notes that the world Stasiuk constructs in his texts is both very real and abstract. She suggests that by marking the topographical terrain by travelling, Stasiuk primarily makes space for his imagination. By calling the space in which the traveller concretely travels the traveller's space, I emphasise that simply visiting a country or a place does not yet make it *moja Europa*. The traveller's space is just the foundation for *moja Europa*. That is also the space in which he encounters borders. The traveller's space is a concrete geographical terrain where the narrator crosses borders to different countries, visits towns, stays overnight at local places, and pops into bars and grocery stores.

The construction of the traveller's space by crossing borders creates an interesting contrast to the travels the narrator did before 1989. As described in chapter 3, the narrator describes his travels around Poland in the 1980s in the opening story which is titled *Ten lęk* (That Fear). Back then he travelled in a closed space. He was not interested in crossing borders nor did he have any expectations towards the space. His country was enough, as he says:

*Mój kraj zwyczajnie mi wystarczał, ponieważ nie interesowały mnie jego granice. - -
Nie stawiałem przestrzeni żadnych wymagań i niczego od niej nie oczekiwałem. (8)*

In fact, he imagined journeys abroad as escapes with panic and desperation (Stasiuk 2004: 7–8). He found it better not to cross borders. It seems that the narrator associated

journeys abroad with travelling which Andrzej Stanisław Kowalczyk (2001: 5–6) calls forced travelling when political emigration and deportation had made Europe full of “travellers to unknown destinations and nowhere” in the 20th century. Moreover, the concreteness of passport, which the narrator did not even have, did not comply with freedom which was too abstract idea for him.

Oczywiście, nie miałem wtedy paszportu, ale nigdy też nie przychodziło mi do głowy, żeby się o niego postarać. Połączenie dwóch słów: „wolność” i „paszport”, brzmiało dość elegancko, ale kompletnie nieprzekonywająco. Konkret „paszportu” nie pasował do „wolności”, która wydawała się zaprzeczeniem konkretności. (8)

The shift from the first story to the narrator’s later travels reveals the year 1989 as a watershed in the narration. Opened borders enabled travelling but it was finally the maps and the war in the Balkans which initiated his travels abroad. He was not satisfied with the lack of geographical detail in maps shown in newspapers reporting on the war. The stylised image presenting only the name of a place and a symbol of explosion did not provide concrete details. The narrator says he wanted to know better what the heavy weapons are targeted at, what is the terrain like and how is the topography of those places (Stasiuk 2004: 15). Looking at maps made him imagine how flames in south start eat the paper and finally reach the Carpathian mountains in the north. He imagined the space burning and metaphorically destroying the old and making space for the new:

Czerwone płomyki wzdłuż Dunaju zaczynają trawić papier, ogień wychodzi z Wojwodiny, wychodzi z Banatu i wtacza się na Nizinę Węgierską, zagarnia Siedmiogród, by w końcu przelać się przez krawędź Karpat. (15)

The Carpathian mountains form the northmost edge of the traveller’s space. That is where his home is situated near the border crossing at Konieczna. From there he crosses the mountains to south. Stasiuk has elaborated on this choice of direction saying that after the Communism was over and borders opened, it was precisely the opening of Eastern and Southern borders which was fascinating (Ervamaa 2003). This is also the direction which Stasiuk called his European trail (*europański szlak*) already in his essay *Dziennik okrętowy* (Stasiuk 2000: 87). In the essay he writes that south is the direction which awakens his imagination tired of west, east and north.

The direction of the travels does not, however, provide an easy and joyous experience. The narrator describes the atmosphere he feels as he travels through north-east

Hungary further south to Romania. He says the further he goes the more ruthless the light becomes and the clearer he senses the change in the air.

Wjeżdżaliśmy do okręgu Sinistra. (19)

Wkrótce zaczęło się Satu Mare - - czulem wyraźną zmianę, czulem w powietrzu inny zapach, a blask nieba z każdym kilometrem nabierał bezwzględności. Daleki cień Karpat na horyzoncie ograniczał tę jasność, zamykał ją, i jechaliśmy w gęstej świetlistej zawieszynie. (21)

The first quote above offers a provocative lead to discuss the positioning of the traveller's space. The narrator explicitly admits *okręg Sinistra* refers to a book with same title by Ádám Bodor (*The Sinistra Zone*), a Hungarian writer born in Transylvania in Romania in 1936, in which Bodor thematises on horror and phantasm when constructing a symbolic space (Stasiuk 2004: 24). The etymology of 'sinister' derives from Latin meaning 'left'. In contemporary languages, for example in English, it also has meanings of 'evil' and 'menacing'.

The narrator is puzzled by the inauspicious and inexplicable terror which thickens the space and makes people tired (Stasiuk 2004: 59, 118). History and geopolitical moves seem to have taken irrational measures. In here, the traveller's space adheres to the feature which is in the core of the idea of Central Europe: the experience of tragic suffering and being the forgotten objects of history, as Milan Kundera (1984) claimed in his article.

Another feature which characterises the traveller's space is the atmosphere of stillness and waiting. Women are sitting in front of their houses, men are sitting in bars and cafes, a crowd is waiting for a train at a railway station in the night, shuttle traders are waiting at borders to cross it, and the driver who has given the narrator a ride to a village he wanted to visit waits for him to drive him back. People wait that something would happen and occasionally they take a glance into space:

O wpół do szóstej rano w Korczy pod hotelem Grand stało już kilku mężczyzn. - - Po dwóch, po trzech albo pojedynczo, zajęci rozmową albo patrzeniem gdzieś w przestrzeń. Czasami robili parę kroków tam i z powrotem, ale to był ruch bez określonego celu, chwilowa przerwa w nieruchomości. - - Wyglądali tak, jakby na coś czekali, na jakąś ważną wiadomość, wezwanie albo zdarzenie, ale żadne wieści nie nadchodziły - -. (115)

The stillness creates a magnifying contrast to the narrator's movement. In fact, locals cannot understand why someone puts effort in travelling to these peripheries. Travelling without a purpose is an absurd idea. Not only that it has not usually meant anything good for people's lives but that there is no sense to stretch the dimensions and distances of this unambiguous space by travelling and drawing maps. Measuring terrain and making politics with it is absurd when there is longing for life in some other place and location:

No więc znowu ten brak, znowu niespełnienie, znowu tęsknota za życiem, które jest gdzie indziej. Wielkość nie ma tutaj nic do rzeczy. (112)

The traveller's space is the basis for *moja Europa* but, as I argue in the forthcoming sections, there is more needed to construct it. Crossing borders sketches the traveller's space but it is also the narrator's experiences of encounters and imagination which add more dimensions in it.

6.2 Traveller at borders

In this chapter I analyse situations when the narrator is at borders, crosses them, and experiences encounters at borders. I first mention some observations about borders and then focus more on the narrator's experiences of encountering and crossing borders. One of the most important observations in this section is that borders are important for the narrator but, on the other hand, they are absurd and do not provide means for uniting encounters.

Situations of encountering and crossing borders are described several times in the stories of *Jadąc do Babadag*. This indicates that they are important and meaningful, however, they interrupt and confuse the traveller at the same time. Borders, barriers, passports, geopolitical division lines and encounters stop the traveller and bring ruptures to his continuous movement. Sometimes they also break the landscape which the narrator refers to as *bezkresny* (boundless, borderless) or *czysta* (clean, clear).

The importance of borders arises from the fact that crossing them is an essential part of travelling. However, the narration does not seem to offer a clear storyline which would create a coherent story on borders, although the narrator explicitly indicates that borders do have a crucial role for the space in which he travels. He suspects that it is borders which holds the space together. He feels the borders of territories have absorbed in them more space than indicates the geography alone:

Czasami mam wrażenie, że to wszystko trzyma się w kupie tylko dzięki granicom, że prawdziwym obliczem tych ziem i ludów są kształty ich terytoriów w atlasach. - - ich granice zawierają w sobie więcej przestrzeni, niż wskazuje geografia. (218–219)

Another observation worth noting here is the special status of Konieczna border crossing point at the Polish-Slovakian border. This is the place where the narrator's travels begin and where they end. Konieczna is the point where the narrator becomes the traveller. Crossing this border initiates movement from one space to another. Maunu Häyrynen (2006: 1) has suggested that the state that prevails at borders is a 'ground zero' where those who cross the border are transcended from citizens to visitors. Such border in *Jadąc do Babadag* is Konieczna border crossing, the closest one to the narrator's home and the one that takes him out from his home country of Poland:

Pięćdziesiąt razy ruszałem tamtędy w drogę na południe z duszą na ramieniu i w słodkim lęku przed tym, co mnie spotka - -. Tam się to wszystko zaczyna - - ze słowackiej strony - - w sklepie „Na colnicy”, zaczyna się ten południk, który przepada w Morzu Jońskim - - a wzdłuż niego jak ptaki na drucie siedzą tacy sami faceci, jak ci tutaj. - - piją piwo i patrzą na południe. (216–217)

The borders the narrator crosses are state borders but they can be simultaneously borders of unions, empires, and politico-ideological divisions. State borders are marked by setting signs and barriers in the geographic space, executing control practices of different types and drawing them in maps. They demarcate edges of national and administrative territories the narrator enters and exits when travelling. Politico-ideological boundaries such as the Iron Curtain or the borders of the European Union can be also manifested at physical borders as they usually follow the demarcation of state borders. In this way, state borders get various functions of borders at different levels (national, supranational, ideological), and they are also present layers of borders the narrator encounters.

A typical milieu for the narrator to encounter a border is a border crossing point which marks a territorial borderline. They are signified by a white and red border barrier (*biało-czerwony szlaban*), the presence of border guards or stamps in the passport. Sometimes they are also marked by a specific atmosphere or activity such as shuttle trade or smuggling of alcohol and cigarettes which are typical connotations of the 'second Europe' and its peripheral borderlands. The narrator in *Jadąc do Babadag* is also faced with these connotations.

Sometimes the borders the narrator encounters are not on the outer edges of countries and territories but in the middle of them. The narrator does not necessarily physically cross

borders in these places but he encounters them in other ways, for example when observing people queueing to a consulate in the middle of a city or seeing a queue of cars waiting to cross the border on television:

Gjirokastër - - . Okna pensjonatu Hadžiego Kottoni wychodzą prosto na minaret. - - Obok meczetu jest grecki konsulat. Od rana stoi przed nim tłum. Dziesiątki kobiet i mężczyzn czekają na wizę. Telewizor pokazuje kilometrową kolejką albańskich aut na przejściu w Kakavilë. Grecy od paru dni nikogo nie wpuszczają. (123)

This fragment reveals how borders can be encountered by not being at the border. Consulates, embassies, and offices of border control authorities which are often situated in the inland areas of a country serve functions of borders without being located at border. In this way, the territorial demarcation is separated from the immediate territorial borders and border areas. The traveller who is free to cross borders does not experience this situation as an obstacle or as force of power controlling his movement but, nonetheless, it is an encounter with border without being at border or in the situation of crossing a border.

As a traveller, the narrator is often considered alien in the border environment. A typical border crosser is not a traveller. More commonly a border crosser is a petty trader, a border dweller crossing border as an everyday routine, or a smuggler. In fact, other travellers are practically nonexistent in the narration. In few occasions when other travellers are mentioned, the narrator observes the situation from aside without attempting to interact with them.

6.2.1 Traveller's experience: absurdity

The narrator's experience at borders can be summarised as the experience of the absurdity. Sometimes it is the border rituals which are absurd as when busses are kept inbetween the barriers in the middle of a night while the traveller is easily let to pass the border (Stasiuk 2004: 44). Sometimes, in turn, the location of a border is absurd, for example in the middle of an endless maize field which makes the border guards to look like scarecrows to scare away little birds:

- - ci mundurowi w kukurydzianym bezkresie przypominali strachy na wróble. Najprawdopodobniej mieli tam jakąś broń, dostali jakieś rozkazy, ale w tym agrarnym bezmiarze wyglądali całkiem niepoważnie. (161)

The border crossing points are often empty and silent. They are surreal installations in the monotonous landscape where nothing happens. These installations are supposed to protect against some barbarian enemies (*barbarzyńcy*), which there are none in the sight. Borders marking territorial power are filled with boredom and silence which is fought with meaningless activities to kill time:

Próbowałem sobie wyobrazić nudę tego posterunku, monotonię pustego nieba i zielonkawych ekranów. Karty, przemycony alkohol, rozmowy o kobietach, radiostacje, na których łapie się zagranicznego rokendrola albo ludowe kawałki, senna kawa i żadnych barbarzyńców na widnokręgu. (197)

In the emptiness of a vast space borders do not seem to have the power and seriousness they are ought to present. An example of power being executed unsuccessfully and making the experience of a border absurd happens at the border of Transnistria. Although locals seem to be free to cross the border the narrator is stopped. He and his travelling companion feel the reception they get is hostile and distant. After a while of waiting they are told to go to the top brass in another city as they will know what to do with the travellers. In the end the problem is the border guards are at a loss for response as they do not have what to stamp the traveller's passport with. Despite the border guards of the non-recognised breakaway region of Moldova cannot stamp the passports the travellers are let through after they pay for prohibited photographing at the border area. The receipt they get for the payment and the handwritten confirmation on the other side of it serves as a permit to enter the territory. (Stasiuk 2004: 156–158). It seems border procedures can be improvised *ad hoc* as the transnistrian visa.

The absurdity of borders is revealed through the irony and parody the narrator implies when he tells about his experiences. He often feels the thrill of crossing borders. It is the feeling of 'sweet anxiety' (*słodki lęk*) of not quite knowing what awates him at borders and after crossing them (Stasiuk 2004: 216–217). Anxiety often results from the fear of anticipated difficulties at borders. The narrator is caught by the image of borders as obstacles for movement but the fear turns out to be misleading as happened once at the Hungarian border when he was returning from the city of Sibiu in Transylvania:

Wracalem wtedy z Sybina i byla jakaś piąta rano. Pojawil się na końcu korytarza, a moje serce struchlało. Miał dwa i pół metra wzrostu, ogoloną na lysa głowę, połowy mundur, w którym ledwo się mieścił, i jakiegoś gigantycznego gana przy boku. Potem drzwi się otworzyły, zobaczyłem wielką, uśmiechniętą gębę i usłyszałem: "Dzień dobry,

*całuję rączki... Tak się to mówi? Narkotyki, broń, materiały, semtex? Nie? ”.
“Dziękuję”. “Do widzenia, całuję rączki... Tak się to mówi? ”. I zniknął. (212)*

Another experience with the thrill and being caught by the image of dangers happens at the Hungarian-Ukrainian border. The narrator has read from a travel guide that the route he is planning to take is known for robbery and theft. He decides to hide the valuable items such as the camera and put in his pockets banknotes in small value in different currencies in case he need to bribe border guards. He takes a shot of alcohol for courage and heads to the border. (Stasiuk 2004: 79–81). What happens at the border make all these efforts and the narrator’s fear futile. The border guard guides the travellers through the border so that they would not have to stand in the queues. He finds them a trusted money dealer to exchange dollars to local currency and still makes sure the traveller has been provided everything they need:

Minęliśmy bramkę celną, minęliśmy paszportową, przebiliśmy się przez tłum i raptem znaleźliśmy się po drugiej stronie. Wtedy nasz cicerone wręczył nam podstemplowane paszporty i powiedział: „Nie chciałem, żebyście stali w tych kolejkach. - - Strażnik spytał, czy jeszcze czegoś może trzeba, życzył nam szczęśliwej drogi i znowu zostaliśmy sami. (80–81)

This shows that occasionally borders are easy to cross. It is not hostile power the narrator encounters but he is treated with hospitality even to his own surprise. The narrator is kindly helped through the border and smooth continuation of his travelling is ensured. The narrator’s fear prior to crossing the border appears to be motivated by the stereotype of borders as threatening obstacles. The disproportion between the expectations and the experiences make borders to look absurd and arbitrary which, in fact, can be explained by the relative openness of borders. Openness appears at varying degrees to different people. Borders are open for the traveller, but on the other hand, he is also expected to move on.

What we can see here is the permeability and openness of borders. Open borders are weak, i.e. easy to cross, whereas strong borders are produced and maintained by attempts of control of movement across the border (Järvi 2014: 25–27). The problematics of openness of borders have been widely addressed in studies on movement, migration and borders (see for example Järvi 2014; Mezzadra and Neilson 2013; Rigo 2009). These studies take a critical standpoint on the openness of borders, arguing that borders and their openness is not equal to everyone. For example Järvi (2014: 25–27) mentions that such categories as nationality, ethnicity or social class can affect how open and easy to cross a border is to an individual. In

my view, this is what partially explain the experience of absurdity. The narrator anticipates the border to be less open than it actually is. To the narrator's surprise, the openness of a border seems to be a quality of a traveller more than of a border.

6.2.2 Encounters at borders: unsuccessful dialogue

Encounters at borders discussed in this subsection emphasise the narrator as a traveller and an outsider in the micro-society which seems to have evolved at the border area. There is a lack of common language which hampers sharing the experiences. Encounters with locals are friendly chats, but finding common language and shared understanding fails. The reader can quickly notice that encounters with other people are short and temporary – people come and go. After an exchange of few words or short conversation everyone goes their own ways.

Borders in general can be seen both as points of continuity and discontinuity. Territories and identities begin and end at borders. Interestingly, the moment of discontinuity can simultaneously be a moment of encounter which produces continuity and shared experience for example through dialogue and translation. Mezzadra and Neilson (2013: 289) note that translation, whether in its linguistic or broader cultural meaning, is a practice which creates continuity at the points of discontinuity. Communication is a prerequisite for sharing of experiences and building mutual understanding which, in turn, is required for production of shared spaces. Mezzadra and Neilson (op.cit. 275) call this 'the capacity of translation to create the common'. Encounters at borders do not serve as moments of translation to produce dialogue. In this sense, dialogue is unsuccessful. Borders do not function as places of continuity (other than the continuation of the traveller's journey), but practices at borders exclude the traveller from local communities.

Alexander Fiut (2008: 166–168) mentions that Stasiuk's narrator looks at space distantly from the outside. He is a traveller who searches for rarely taken paths, but his contacts with the locals remain superficial due to his limited knowledge in local languages and cultures. This can be also seen in the encounters with people in *Jadąc do Babadag*. The narrator seems to look for connection and dialogue with locals. He likes to have a chat but they often result in the realisation of the lack of mutual interpretation and understanding of experiences. One of such encounters happen in a village somewhere in Romania. The narrator chats with a local man by a fence. He hears the nostalgic story well-known to him when there was 'equality, work and order on the streets' and he feels himself an example of inequality of the current times (Stasiuk 2004: 23). The narrator, for whom travelling is vitally important,

comes and soon goes away. He and the man he talks to do not share the same experience of freedom to travel and cross borders which cuts the discussion:

- - nie mówiłem już nic, bo cóż mogłem powiedzieć, skoro zjawilem się tutaj, przy tym płocie, jako widomy znak nierówności, zjawilem się i odjadę, kiedy tylko zechcę - - Słońce wznosiło się ponad zieloną linię wzgórz, a ja czułem, że moja wolność przyjazdu i odjazdu gównu tutaj naprawdę znaczy i nic nie jest warta. (23–24)

From the narrator's perspective, borders do not fulfill their function as a contact point and a place to build shared understanding. Following the idea of translation we should conclude that borders provide a place for dialogue but what I have observed in *Jadąc do Babadag* is that the narrator remains outsider who moves on. He does not become part of the local community. He experiences kindness and the locals, including border guards, can be helpful but this does not create dialogue which would produce common experience and feeling of unity. The narrator does not belong to the community of the border areas, but he is just a bypassing traveller. The moments in which he is kindly helped through a border highlight him as traveller – a subject who moves on and does not get a chance to stay and establish a connection to the place or its peoples. An example of such situation is when the narrator is simply let through the border although others (shuttle traders, smugglers) are kept under the control of border guards:

- - rumuńscy strażnicy, którzy trzymali w szachu całe przejście i pięć autobusów z dziesięcioma tonami kontrabandy, nas po prostu puścili, śmiejąc się rubasznie i dobrodusznie. (44)

It also seems that the narrator's motifs for travelling are not understood. There does not seem to be a shared experience of travelling or mutual understanding of its motives. This leads to the situation that the expectations the narrator and other people have of travelling and crossing of borders do not match. Sometimes the narrator is prepared for threats and dangers, but the encounter turns out to be just the opposite – he is treated friendly and politely (Stasiuk 2004: 79–81, 212). Sometimes, on the other hand, the narrator is treated with suspicion at borders. Once it happens to him that the border guard wants him to admit being a spy or smuggler (Stasiuk 2004: 211–212). Border guards cannot understand why someone travels in these places and spends there two weeks just for the sake of travelling, as happened to him when he was crossing the border between Albania and Greece:

Niektórzy są - - zdziwieni jak ten grecki na Korfu, który nie mógł uwierzyć, że spędziliśmy w Albanii dwa tygodnie dla przyjemności, i oglądał pod światło nasze brudne gacie, szukając rozwiązania niepojętej tajemnicy. (213)

In the encounters echo what has happened to borders after 1989. Open borders have opened possibilities for local economical activity – legal or illegal – which works as gravitation pulling people to borders and making borders places of encounters. However, for the traveller this is not the experience he gets. For him, territorial borders are not places to gather but lines to cross in order to get stamps in his passport and to exchange local currencies which prove him he has not imagined the journeys but they have happened in real. When he sees the “venerable faces” of rules and poets printed on the banknotes, he remembers how he has crossed borders (Stasiuk 2004: 184).

6.2.3 Memory and imagination

The critique the studies on borders have received has partially been motivated by too narrow view on borders. For example, Häyrynen (2006: 1) argues that when borders are understood classically as geopolitical lines of territorial division, they deny historically formed gradations, continuities and interlaces and become immutable frontlines maintained by meticulous repetition of border control routines. Also Mezzadra and Neilson (2013: 13) who conceptualise borders as borderscapes shaped by constant struggles and tensions have called for the need to analyse borders not only in spatial, but also in temporal dimensions.

In this subsection, I present situations when the narrator encounters borders at different layers of time. I suggest that memorizing and imagination are ways of travelling and encountering borders beyond the contemporary moment. This gives the narrator a method to construct the space for *moja Europa* also in temporal dimensions – history, past, and future. Imagination and memorizing provide methods of constructing borders and spaces in social practices (see e.g. Herrschel 2011: 15–16). According to Lehti (2003: 110–112), they produce spaces which are defined by the geopolitical imagination and rhetorics more than geographical landmarks and maps.

I have identified two methods how the narrator utilises imagination and memorizing to cross boundaries of time and enter spaces in time. Firstly, he recalls his journeys after he has returned to home. Looking at the stamps in his passport or the coins and tickets he has stored from his journeys makes him recall the places he has visited. Secondly, the memorizing and imagination can be triggered by his physical presence at a place such as his visit to

Voskopojë which I analyse below. Borders have their history. Moreover, borders and their histories are sometimes carried along after the actual border has ceased to exist. Such relic borders are present also in the narration of *Jadąc do Babadag*. This highlights the arbitrariness of territorial borders. It tells that there once was a border – or maybe even still is – but it has lost its function and power.

Relic borders are present also as references to past empires: the Habsburg empire, the Soviet block, and the Ottoman empire. An example of the narrator's encounters with relic borders is his visit to Voskopojë in Albania. It also illustrates how memorizing and imagination can be used as a method to travel and encounter borders. Voskopojë, also known as Moscopole, was a commercial and cultural centre of the Aromanian culture located on European side of the Ottoman empire. Many trading routes intersected in the city, but it was also a religious and cultural centre hosting many shrines and first in the Balkans printing house. The narrator visits Voskopojë in one of his journeys:

Któregoś dnia wybraliśmy się z Korczy do Voskopojë. Chcieliśmy zobaczyć to niegdyś największe miasto w europejskiej części otomańskiego imperium z trzydziestoma tysiącami domów - - z dwudziestoma dwoma świątyniami, chcieliśmy zobaczyć miejsce, gdzie krzyżowały się szlaki karawan z Polski, Węgier, Saksoni, z Konstancy, Wenecji, Konstantynopola - - i gdzie dwieście osiemdziesiąt lat temu powstała pierwsza na Bałkanach drukarnia. (129)

The idea of Voskopojë as a border cannot be argued that much on the basis of its location at border but rather metaphorically as a point of encounters, exchange and interaction. Also its history offers a way to encounter borders there. Once part of the Ottoman empire, recently a town in isolated communist country, and now when the narrator visits it in postsocialist Albania, Voskopojë offers a lens to recognise borders of territories intersecting in the history of the city. These borders which are in different layers of time the narrator reaches by memory and imagination.

The narrator looks for a seething trading hub and an international point of contact also in Ubl'a at the border of Slovakia and Ukraine. He hopes to find proofs that opening of borders brings what it is promised to bring: the miracle of freedom and the exchange of goods which would bring revival to the city. The narrator imagines everything would again be as it sometimes was at this crossroad of three borders, but what he finds is not a lively market place but a silent border crossing which puts a sudden end to a country.

Tam więc jechałem, żeby to wszystko odnaleźć, a zwłaszcza tę total rozjebkę międzynarodowego bazaru - - Chciałem to wszystko zobaczyć i usłyszeć ten babiloński zgiełk języków - - gdzieś tam, może jeszcze trochę bardziej na południe, był ten plac, ten majdan, targowica, na którą ściągnęły wyklęte ludy ziemi zaraz potem, jak uniosły się biało-czerwone szlabany. Tak, cud wolności i swobody wymiany towarowej w kurzu - - jakby miało powstać z nicości miasto, jakiego świat nie widział. Bo przecież znów miało być tak jak kiedyś, czyli karawany, przemarsz i transport - - . (256–258)

Although memory and imagination are ways to expand the traveller's space in time the narrator has an obsession to prove the travels have happened in real as if he does not trust the memory alone. A concrete proof of crossing borders are stamps in his passport. They are signs of travels, but they also serve his memory and imagination by helping the narrator to recall the places and countries afterwards. He says that he likes travelling to little-known countries. After returning to home, he starts gathering more information of the places where he has been, but still he needs to look at his passport to verify that the countries he visited even exist. (Stasiuk 2004: 214).

Memory and imagination motivate the narrator to go to borders. They also enable him encounter borders in the past. This shows that *moja Europa* does not hold only current borders but borders of different times. Memory and imagination become means to travel to the past and future. Looking for multicultural points of encounters at borders echoes the idea of Central Europe and its identity as cosmopolitan borderlands. If this is what the narrator is after his search seems to be futile. The opening of borders after 1989 has not made this ideal reality.

6.3 The fear of borderless space

The analysis on the traveller at borders presented above portrays the complex borderscapes of the traveller's space. The borderscape is a web consisting of contemporary, past and future borders which the narrator encounters by moving from one place to another but also by memorizing and using his imagination. His experience of crossing borders is characterised by perplexity – absurdity, disappointment, inability to reach mutual understanding and being an outsider. However, the solution is not the entire removal of borders. This subchapter aims at finding an understanding why this is so.

Fear of borderless space is a recurring motif in *Jadą do Babadag* expressed often as *bezkresna przestrzeń* (borderless or boundless space) or *czysta przestrzeń* (clean or clear space). It is expressed as the fear that places are forgotten and they fade away from a map. If places ceased to exist, the map would become empty and the space would become a monumental space without history. The quotes below are examples of the narrator expressing his fears:

Wszystko więc wskazuje na to, że nic nie zostaje, że Ubl'a, Heviz, Lendava, Babadag, Leskovik i co tam jeszcze nie pozostawiają śladów - - Miasteczko zniknie z mapy i tylko ja będę wiedział, jak wyglądało - - To samo dotyczy wszystkich innych miejsc. Zużywają się od obecności. (261–262)

- - Do rumuńskiej granicy było może z piętnaście kilometrów i znów czulem, jak czas się przyczaja, zanika, zamiera i przycicha, dając szansę czystej przestrzeni – tak przecież było w Ubli, tak jest w Hidasnémeti - - i to samo w mojej Koniecznej. - - (268)

Travelling is an attempt to store the places of his travels in the memory. If there are no borders, there is no crossing of them, no journey nor writing. That explains the narrator's urge to travel and collect stamps from crossing of borders. Travelling is an attempt to keep the map filled with places and store the memories of them before the project of returning to Europe is accomplished and the border crossing are closed down. The narrator is collecting a private museum in order to have memories to recall:

Na przejściu [w Koniecznej – PB] - - też przybyła nowa budka wielkości kiosku z gazetami: sklep, bar i kantor w jednym - - Ale dzisiaj nie ma żywej duszy poza chudym porucznikiem w kominiarce - - myślę, że za rok ma tego wszystkiego nie być, że znikną biało-czerwone szlabany - - i stemple - - Tak, to wszystko kiedyś przepadnie, więc już teraz zakładam prywatne muzeum, żeby na starość mieć jakieś wspomnienia. (228, 230)

The fear of borderless space is in fact the fear of losing the concreteness the traveller's space has. Opening of borders aims at the removal of barriers and controls in the end, which means passports are not stamped anymore. After that, the space needs to be constructed in words.

- - wszystko mogłoby zniknąć w jednej chwili i przestrzeń by to zniosła, zrosła się natychmiast i wyglądała jak gdyby nigdy nic. - - Dlatego tak się spieszę z tymi jazdami,

z tą pazernością na konkret, który zaraz zmienia się w nicłość i trzeba go zrobić od nowa ze słów. (249)

The space constructed in words is *moja Europa*. It is bound to concrete places through the narrator's travels but it cannot exist without memory and imagination. Various places it holds do not have much in common. It is not based on a unifying identity or shared experience but the only thing which holds it together is the travelling and the crossing of borders which take the narrator to see places rather randomly. The narrator's thought he presents in the title story is very revealing. He says that he remembers things and events, but he does not know what separates or connects them other than his accidental presence (Stasiuk 2004: 281).

A map, which is one of the motifs in *Jadąc do Babadag*, is a way to fight the fear. A map helps to orientate and move in the space. It helps to escape the disorientation in the fragmented space, as once did his Slovakian map which is so detailed that it once helped him find his way out of the endless fields of corn (Stasiuk 2004: 14).

7. Discussion

The objective of this study was to find relevant contexts for reading Andrzej Stasiuk's travelogue *Jadąc do Babadag*, and to interpret the travel narrative in the frames of these contexts. The methodological framework in the reading was based on the hermeneutics of contexts, which provides a cultural angle for the analysis of texts. The method and the process of reading were introduced in chapter 4.

One of the underlying ideas of the hermeneutics of contexts is to find and describe valid contexts, which frame the interpretation. Following this methodological guideline, the findings of this study are structured to two categories. The first of them is the identification and the description of three contexts: borders, the era of transformation, and space (more specifically, the idea of Central Europe in the 1980s and *moja Europa* constructed by Andrzej Stasiuk in his essays and prose). The identification of the contexts was motivated by the text, which meant that they were recognized as topics or underlying themes in the travel narrative of *Jadąc do Babadag*. The description of these contexts, however, was based on secondary literature mostly from the fields of border studies, political geography, and literary studies. This allowed broadening the interpretation outside the text. The main points of the contexts are shortly summarised below in this chapter. The description of the contexts was presented in more detail in chapter 5.

The second category of findings are the observations gained from the reading of *Jadąc do Babadag*. These observations, which were presented in chapter 6, were organised in three themes: the traveller's space, the traveller at borders, and the fear of borderless space. As the organization of the observations suggests, the border and the space became central contexts in the reading. This was also reflected in the research questions, which were formulated in the process of reading. The primary research question combines the border and the space. It asks what is the meaning of borders in the construction of space called *moja Europa*. The secondary research question added the third context in the picture by asking how the era of transformation after 1989 explains the narrator's experiences of crossing borders and the construction of *moja Europa*.

7.1 Complexity of borders and negotiating space

The context of borders was first approached by outlining the evolution of a border as a concept in the organization of space and territories. It can be said that the dominant thinking of borders has focused on the idea of borders as fixed and clearly defined lines of sovereign state territories for a long time. The foundation for such thinking was laid in the 19th and early 20th centuries at the latest. It was affected by the evolution of modern state, political geography, and cartography, which made borders to be seen as artificial and man-made concept. Before this shift in border thinking, natural boundaries such as geographical formations hindering the interaction between people were considered as 'real' borders in the times. Border thinking focused on the aspects of sovereignty and security of state territories for many decades in the 20th century, but the thinking started to broaden remarkably during the 1980s and 1990s. New disciplines and approaches, such as humanities and cultural studies among others, became interested in borders and bordering as topics of research. A result of this development is that the understanding of the border has broadened into a multi-dimensional concept. Borders are nowadays seen as constantly evolving environments, which are negotiated and represented not only in political arenas but also in cultural products, language, and practices of everyday life.

Borders were also discussed in the light of Central and Eastern Europe. The discussion highlighted how border changes have been a crucial element throughout history in Central and Eastern Europe. It has been not only the question of the negotiable and blurred outer boundaries of Central Europe, but also a question of borders which crisscross within this area. Tassilo Herrschel (2011: 3, 35–36, 174–178) suggests that the dynamism caused by diverse simultaneous border developments is well seen in the post-socialist Central and

Eastern Europe. Especially those borders which have become internal borders of the European Union have been opened or even erased in practice, while the borders which have become the outer boundaries of the EU have been strengthened. The post-socialist developments weave also into the older layers of border histories. As Herrschel argues, the complex situation and histories of borders build a specific ‘borderness’ in the Central and East European space (ibid).

While Herrschel discusses border developments mostly in the light of political and geopolitical changes, border developments have also social and cultural aspects. The subchapter 5.2.1 also brought up the role of memory and everyday life in the making of borders and practices at borders. They are seen for example in relic borders which are not anymore actual political boundaries but nevertheless affect everyday life practices at borders. Relic borders can remain for example in the silence, which means that opening of borders has not initiated interaction across the border, as has been observed by Wastl-Walter et al. (2002). Borders, both actual and relic ones, can be seen also in cultural products, e.g. in representations of the Berlin Wall in films and novels. The representations of past borders in everyday practices and cultural products show that the concept of relic borders offers interesting possibilities for studying the role of memory in the bordering practices widely, not limiting to the geographical and economical contexts, which the article by Marek Sobczyński (2008) mostly discussed, but also from social and cultural perspectives.

The question of borders is always also a question of space. Borders organize space and demarcate territories. They confine something inside and leave something out. Defining space by borders is central in the third context which compares the idea of Central Europe and Andrzej Stasiuk’s idea of *moja Europa*. They are both abstract ideas of space which do not have clearly defined and fixed boundaries. Their boundaries are defined to a large extent culturally. In the core of the bordering are history, traditions, and experiences of people, and the bordering happens in the practices of discussions and writing. Thus, the process of their demarcation happens in language – texts, stories, and narratives. Especially the idea of Central Europe was under constant negotiation by writers, dissidents and intellectuals in the 1980s.

Moja Europa is not a constantly negotiated concept in the same way, as it is a creation of one writer, yet, it also evolves in writing. I suggest that the element of discussion in its construction is hidden deeper in the contextual or intertextual links *moja Europa* takes to the idea of Central Europe and other constructions of space, such as the division of Europe to the East and the West. As was shown in section 5.3, the idea of Central Europe of the

1980s and *moja Europa* differ in their attitude on this division. Central Europe as pictured in the 1980s discussions, was set in clear opposition to the socialist Eastern Europe (and positioned in the West by the same act), whereas *moja Europa* presents rather perplexed stance on both 'sides' of Europe. In this way, *moja Europa* is a continuation to the discussion on Central and Eastern Europe suggesting yet another alternative to organize and define its space.

The context presented in section 5.3 outlined aspects which the fall of the Iron Curtain at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s and the era of transformation had on the societies of Central and East European countries. Particularly three aspects were highlighted: the redefinition and relocation of Central and East European space after 1989, opening of borders, and the changes in the literary scene. As was pointed out, the fall of the Iron Curtain started not only political and economical changes but also cultural ones. One of these changes was the redefinition of the space which emerged on the lands of formerly socialist East European countries. It also needed to be relocated on the political and cultural map, which was reflected for example in the naming of this newly emerged space. This shows that the transition actualised also in the use of language.

I suggest that one of the aspects of the transition can be seen in the concept of open borders. Opening of state borders for free movement of people and goods was of course a concrete political act to dismantle the Iron Curtain, but it has also become highly symbolic. Open borders carry the connotation of freedom. In the contexts of this study, open borders translates especially to the freedom of travelling and crossing borders.

Travelling connects also to the changes in the literary scene after 1989 especially through the notion of émigré writing. As Urszula Chowaniec (2011) has suggested, the experience of emigration continues in Polish culture also after 1989. She argues that this experience can be seen in contemporary travel writing in which the identity is constructed by juxtaposing living at home with being a foreigner. Although Chowaniec's analysis is based on Polish women writing, I suggest that it offers an interesting insight into Andrzej Stasiuk's travel writing as well. Another trend in the post-1989 Polish literature which opens paths for interpreting Stasiuk's travel writing is the turn of writing from the focus of 'nation' to 'local and private'. One of the themes in Stasiuk's writing is space which evolves into *moja Europa*. As the name suggests, it is a private conception, *his* Europe.

7.2 Encountering the complexity of borders

After the contexts were identified, the reading of *Jadąc do Babadag* was taken closer to them. The observations from the reading were organised in three thematical categories. The first category outlined the space in which the narrator travels. The purpose of naming it the traveller's space was to differentiate it from *moja Europa* which is more a mental than concrete space. Traveller's space is the geographical and cultural space in which the narrator moves. His continuous movement contrasts with the atmosphere of stillness and waiting that prevails in the places he visits. His travelling without a purpose and clear destination, as it seems for the locals and the border guards, appears often meaningless to others.

I suggest that the traveller's space is not a territory because it does not have clear boundaries but it expands as the travelling proceeds. It consists of concrete landscapes and the places the narrator visits. It also consists of territories of nation states which the narrator inevitably enters on his travels, but they do not seem to be the primary organizer of space for the narrator. Encountering them is unavoidable because his travels would not be possible if he did not cross state borders, but after that, the narrator tries to avoid deliberate encounters with states for example by omiting visits to capital cities.

The narrator enters the traveller's space through Konieczna border crossing point close from his home at the Polish-Slovakian border. To borrow the description of border proposed by Maunu Häyrynen (2006) Konieczna is a social 'point zero' where a citizen becomes a visitor. There the narrator leaves his home country and becomes a traveller. The traveller's space expands from his home to South-East to the area of the 'sinister' (*okręg Sinistra*) where history and altered borderlines have left their marks in peoples' memory. This is entirely different direction than the direction which the idea of Central Europe in the 1980s adhered to. Thus, the narrator's return to Europe is not a return to familiar West but to the direction where the narrator actually is a visitor and even an outsider, as the observations presented in the second thematical category, the traveller at borders, suggests.

The second category of observations focused on the traveller's experiences at borders. Border became a key context. They are in the core of *Jadąc do Babadag*, as it is a travel narrative, but the narrator's encounters with borders were observed to be biased and somehow troubled. His experiences with and at borders were arranged in three subcategories: absurdity, unsuccessful dialogue, and the role of memory and imagination in encountering borders.

Borders are typically thought to mark territories of some kind. However, the focus of this study did not lie in the idea of borders as edges of territories, but on the idea of borders crisscrossing in the space where the narrator travels. The borders which the narrator encounters and crosses during his journeys are first of all various state boundaries. He crosses state borders at the edges of national territories when travelling from country to country, but he also encounters them in the middle of territories, for example, in cities where embassies are located or at the airport. Some of the borders he also encounters by observing (for example when watching a queue at a border screened on local television). In addition to crossing contemporary state borders, travelling means also encountering relic borders which he encounters rather in his memory and imagination (for example in Voskopojë) than in real.

The observations from reading picture the encounters with borders characterised by absurdity and unsuccessful dialogue. Borders do not seem to have clearly defined and coherent function for the the narrator other than enabling his journeys. It also seems that the narrator does not find shared experiences with people he meets to create unity between people and help share the understanding of the space. Thus, the narrator remains an outsider who passes by and stops only for a moment just to move again. It seems that borders fail to fulfill the world-configuring function, which makes, as Mezzadra and Neilson (2013: 6) note, borders vitally important. Borders should create structure by providing means to organise and categorize space, but in *Jadq̇ do Babadag*, they create an image of surreal borderscapes and absurd experiences.

There are three factors which help to explain the experience of absurdity and unsuccessful dialogue when the narrator encounters borders. Firstly, each border is always unique and has its own contexts. The narrator does not encounter only the border as an object or artefact but as a complex social and cultural environment. As the narrator is a passing traveller, this environment is not necessarily familiar to him, and he remains an outsider in it. Secondly, borders mean different things to different people and the interpretations of borders can be even very subjective. Even the same status of the person in relation to borders, for example the occupation as border guard, does not necessarily mean their actions towards the traveller are the same. In the border stories in *Jadq̇ do Babadag*, one border guard kindly helps him to cross the border conveniently, and another keeps him waiting. Thirdly, the concept of the border itself is multidimensional. Border is a fixed line on a map on one hand, but it is also a dynamic social environment. Its meanings are constantly negotiated in various ways from geopolitics to cultural products, use of language, and people's practices in everyday life. The negotiation can also be viewed as struggles and tensions (Mezzadra and

Neilson 2013). All these aspects are involved when the narrator is at borders and crosses them. As a matter of fact, the narrator does not simply cross open and permeable borders, but he encounters dynamic borderscapes.

7.3 The necessity of open and concrete borders

Despite the absurdity and failures in creating uniting dialogue, borders are vitally important for the narrator, as was presented in the third theme of the analysis (subchapter 6.3 The fear of borderless space). Open borders enable the narrator's travelling. Thus, the narrator needs open borders, but he also fears that he could lose them one day. This fear is real as one of the border developments in Central and Eastern Europe after 1989 has been the opening of borders and their further removal particularly through the Schengen programme in the European Union. Tangible objects such as banknotes and stamps in the passport which he gets as a result of crossing borders provide concreteness to the travelling and materialize the narrator's memories. They reassure him that he did not only imagine the travels and the places but that they exist in real. If borders disappeared, the narrator would need to rely only on words in the construction of his Europe, as was the case in the idea of Central Europe in the 1980s.

8. Conclusions

The objective in this chapter is to summarise answers to two questions: first, what is the meaning of borders in the construction of Andrzej Stasiuk's concept called *moja Europa*, and second, how the era of transformation after 1989 explains the narrator's experiences of crossing borders and contextualises the construction of *moja Europa*. This chapter also includes suggestions for further study on Andrzej Stasiuk's travel writing.

The initial finding in the reading of *Jadąc do Babadag* was the identification of three contexts: borders, two concepts of the Central European space (*moja Europa* and the idea of Central Europe developed in the 1980s), and the era of transformation which started in 1989. These contexts framed the further reading of Stasiuk's travel narrative and focused it to the aforementioned questions. The further reading revealed that the representation of space in which the narrator travels, as well as his experiences when encountering and crossing borders, conveys images of bias, fear, and absurd. It also disclosed memory and imagination as fundamental elements of travelling and constructing the representation of space.

The discussion presented in chapter 7 elaborated on these findings by putting them into the contexts presented in this work. The discussion highlighted several aspects which are here used to answer the questions set for this study. First, borders are complex and dynamic environments. In the context of Central and Eastern Europe, this stretches to the landscape of borders in which both historical and current border developments can be traced. The narrator travels in this myriad of current and historical borders. He does not always comprehend their functions and meaning, or the meaning of activities that happen at borders. Second, the idea of Central Europe and the concept of *moja Europa* are discursive constructions that are created in writing. *Moja Europa*, however, has its foundation also in travelling. That is why open and concrete borders are necessary. Third, the era of transition after 1989 started the process of redefining the space, borders and travelling. It offered an opportunity to cross borders and renegotiate the space, but it meant also negotiating the openness of borders towards their further effacement.

I suggest that the meaning of borders in the construction of *moja Europa* is culminated in the importance of travelling enabled by the opening of borders after 1989. The narrator sketches the contours of his space by concrete travels, yet, it does not become *moja Europa* without temporal layers which he reaches with the help of memory and imagination. Both elements, ie. crossing concrete borders in current time and entering the temporal layers of history through memory and imagination, are equally essential in the construction of *moja Europa*. Together they create a multi-dimensional web of borders, which gives an interesting angle to the narrator's statement on the crucial importance of borders: "Sometimes it seems to me that things hold together only thanks to the borders - -" (Stasiuk [Kandel] 2012, 173).

I also suggest that the concept of *moja Europa*, when seen through the context of travelling and borders, continues the discussion on the idea of Central Europe. *Moja Europa*, however, proposes an alternative way to Europe. In this way, it comments on the political and cultural project of postsocialist countries "returning to Europe" in the era of transformation. An element of this project has been the gradual effacement of the concreteness of borders. Although open borders are necessary for travelling, their effacement holds a threat for the construction of *moja Europa*. These conclusions are explicated in this chapter.

The vision of Europe Andrzej Stasiuk constructs in his texts is built on travel experiences, among them the experiences of encountering and crossing borders. Travelling sketches the space in which the narrator moves, but for this preliminary space to become *moja Europa* also memorizing and imagination are needed. The year 1989 offered a starting point for Andrzej Stasiuk's travels and creation of a vision of Europe of his own. The opening of

borders and the increased freedom to travel were crucial for the construction of *moja Europa*, however, the era of transformation alone does not explain the narrator's experience of borders.

The importance of the year 1989 is indicated by the change the narrator's travelling takes after the first story when the focus shifts from aimless wandering in a closed space to travelling abroad, i.e. crossing open borders. Opening of borders gave the narrator his passport and enabled the journeys. It opened a space which called for social, cultural and geopolitical redefinitions and relocation. The narrator's feelings towards the freedom and the 'return to Europe' are biased because he does not find the direction of the West, which the opening of borders suggest, appealing to him.

The meaning of borders is also in the concreteness they provide. The stamps the narrator gets in his passport and local banknotes he collects from journeys are markers of borders and his travels. They also help him to initiate memories of the journeys and convince him that his travels have really happened. The narrator even calls it 'an illusion of immortality when the red-and-white crossing gate is raised' (Stasiuk [Kandel] 2012: 188). This makes crossing borders (i.e. travelling) a metaphor of existence and helps to understand why he seems to be afraid of the emptiness and silence. The concreteness of borders proves that *moja Europa* is not purely an imaginary vision of the writer, but the places he visits really exist in his Europe. In this way, Andrzej Stasiuk's *moja Europa* is different from the idea of Central Europe. *Moja Europa* is not a construction of words binding the mosaic of nations and cultures together but a space of concrete travels and places.

If border crossing were shut down, among them Konieczna border crossing point, the concreteness of travelling would be lost and the traveller as subject destroyed. After that, only memory and imagination would prevail as means to construct *moja Europa*. The traveller's space and *moja Europa* would become melancholic places for nostalgia. Stasiuk actually already anticipates the melancholic nostalgia this would bring, as he writes in his later book *Nie ma ekspresów przy żółtych drogach*: "Konieczna is now almost dead. Only weak light bulbs are burning in small stores selling alcohol which nobody buys. The situation is the same at Barwinek - - That border crossing is huge which is why its abandon can cause an attack of melancholy." (Stasiuk 2013: 152, translation PB).

Perhaps Stasiuk's traveller wants to resist what Holland and Huggan (1998: postscript) call typical to writing travellers at the turn of the millennium. They suggest that the experience contemporary travellers are after is not to be the first to see but the *last* to see. Contemporary travellers seek to be the ones who turn of the light before the place is gone.

The narrator somehow seems to be afraid that he is the last to see the places as they are before they disappear from the map. He fears that his Europe loses concrete places to travel to and becomes yet another idea of space with ambiguous geographical location constructed solely in imagination and words.

The traveller's space identified in the analysis has concrete geographical dimensions but also temporal dimensions. When the narrator moves in this space he encounters borders which form a three-dimensional web of borders within the traveller's space. This web of borders is woven from contemporary state borders but also from relic borders which he encounters with the help of memorizing and imagination. They become strategies of travelling and an important means to construct *moja Europa* by the side of crossing contemporary state borders. Memorizing and imagination allows the narrator to cross borders in time and bring the element of history into the web of borders. The traveller's space gets more dimensions as the narrator is not only bound to encounters with contemporary borders.

Jadąc do Babadag documents travelling and crossing of borders in the post-1989 era of transformation. The narrator's experiences are partially defined by this era, for example by enabling his travelling and affecting some of his experiences at borders, but the experiences are shaped also by many other times in history. I suggest that the meaning of 1989 in the construction of *moja Europa* is most of all in the idea of 1989 as one of the boundaries in the web of borders. Following what Holland and Huggan (1998) have suggested, the year 1989 is a temporal demarcating line which marks the turn of the millennium in space. As the narrator crosses it, he starts exploring not only geographical space but also various layers of history and the people of these histories. In this way, 1989 demarcates a layer in the traveller's space and further in *moja Europa*. The post-1989 layer is, however, just one layer in the web of borders. There are many older layers which are seen for example in the various names of places used in the narration.

Borders seen as a multi-dimensional web of borders in space supports the notion of border as complex borderscape rather than as simple line of division. As was shown in the description of contexts and in the discussion section in this study, the field of contemporary border studies has taken the thinking on borders towards borderscapes which includes various aspects of human activity into the study of borders. The web of borders in Andrzej Stasiuk's narrative consists of concrete experiences and mental images which build a borderscape stretching from current time to history.

Transition can also be considered as experience of displacement. As suggested in the analysis, encountering borders leaves the narrator with the experience of being an outsider

and unable to build uniting dialogue during his travels. Being at borders where he meets locals and sees local life is not an experience which makes him to be part of local communities. The narrator is paradoxically a foreigner in the space of which he constructs his Europe. He also marginalises himself in the project of 'returning to Europe' by looking for his Europe in alternative directions. The narrator resists going to the West, metropolises, and centres. As going to the East is not an option either, he travels to the direction inbetween – to the South and the South-East. This shows that Stasiuk's travel writing is political, unlike Snochowska-Gonzalez (2008: 107) suggests. He makes a conscious choice when choosing the direction of his travels and the location of his Europe.

Also participating in negotiating the space shows the political aspect in Stasiuk's writing. *Jadąc do Babadag* portrays an alternative interpretation of the space which emerged after 1989. The narrator does not only explore and document this space, but he takes part in negotiating it through his practices as traveller. Although the narrator's experiences at borders are characterised by absurdity, the inability of encounters to lead to dialogue, and the feeling of being outsider, borders have a crucial role in it. When he crosses borders and pursues his identity as traveller he reveals the multidimensional web of borders, in which borders and boundaries are more than just lines to cross. They are both real and mental landscapes which initiate interaction and struggles between people. Borders also contain memories and traces of history which fill in the space. Borders become dynamic borderscapes and part of *moja Europa* when they are narrated in *Jadąc do Babadag* and other texts of Andrzej Stasiuk.

This study has shown that *moja Europa* is not based on the idea of unity. There is no shared experience of borders nor shared interpretation of their meaning. The meaning of borders is not in their function as separating edges or connecting points which would help to define the space and the social relations. As a matter of fact, the interpretations of borders are subjective because they are affected by the expectations, motifs, and stereotypes a person has. When these do not match, encounters at borders appear absurd as there is no shared experience and interpretation. If the idea of Central Europe tried to create a culturally united space despite national borders, *moja Europa* represents a space which is fragmented not only by the actual borders but also by the interpretations and experiences of them.

In the light of *moja Europa*, there is no shared Central Europe but everyone's own Europes. Himanen et al. (2009: 9), among many others, have noted that Europe is fragmented into Europe of borders which is shattered by various points, zones, and spaces. One of these fragments of Europe is *moja Europa* which is constructed of the experiences of encountering borders as well as memorizing and writing them, as this study has shown.

8.1 Suggestions for further research

The analysis on borders in *Jadąc do Babadag* opens several topics for further research. Constantly evolving political, social, and cultural environment in the Central and Eastern Europe is a dynamic context for literary analysis. Countries in the region have progressed far from where they were in 1989. They have passed the era of transformation, and many countries have been members in the European Union for more than a decade and members in the Schengen treaty for several years.

The works of Andrzej Stasiuk provides material for more comprehensive analysis of his travel writing. In the book titled *Wschód* (2014) he leaves the sphere of Central and Eastern Europe and moves further to the East as far as Russia, China, and Mongolia. Despite new destinations, the text explores themes which are typical to Stasiuk's writing: yearning, fear, and the interplay between space and memory, as the publisher introduces the book (Wydawnictwo Czarne 23.11.2014). Another interesting focus could be to approach Stasiuk's travel writing through the lens of Konieczna border crossing point. As was shown in this study, Konieczna is the point where the narrator leaves his home country and becomes a traveller. The ambivalence of open borders is encapsulated in Konieczna, as the narrator needs to be able to cross it, hence, it cannot be totally removed.

A further study could also explore Andrzej Stasiuk's texts in the broader context of Polish travel writing. Such study could focus on societal and cultural contexts of the boom of travel and reportage writing in Polish literature in the last two decades, or the experience of travelling as new form of emigration as suggested by Urszula Chowaniec (2011). An interesting cultural context could be the tradition characterised as a Polish School of reportage in which Andrzej Stasiuk is sometimes associated with (see for example Susan Greenberg 2012: 126).

A further study could also broaden the analysis of Stasiuk's travel writing by applying more reader-related methods. The reading could be extended from the hermeneutics of context to include also other elements of the cultural analysis of texts. According to Lehtonen (2004: 177), texts are sites where a struggle for producing meanings goes on. More comprehensive cultural analysis of Stasiuk's texts could help to understand how readers in different cultural and social contexts, for example in Poland or in the regions which Stasiuk's texts represent, negotiate space and borders by giving meanings to Stasiuk's travel narratives.

Streszczenie. Granice w książce podróżniczej Andrzeja Stasiuka *Jadąc do Babadag*

Wstęp

Niniejsza praca skupia się na interpretacji książki podróżniczej *Jadąc do Babadag* (2004) napisanej przez Andrzeja Stasiuka (1960–). Celem pracy jest zwrócenie szczególnej uwagi na pojęcie granicy, z uwagi na to, że opisywanie granic i sytuacji ich przekraczania jest częstym motywem w tekstach Stasiuka. Z tego względu interesującą kwestią jest rola granic, szczególnie w *Jadąc do Babadag*, ale także ogólniej mówiąc w reprezentacji Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej konstruowanej w prozie Andrzeja Stasiuka.

Teoretycznie i metodologicznie praca ta opiera się na założeniach hermeneutyki, zwłaszcza na idei interpretacji jako cyklicznego procesu konstruowania zrozumienia tekstu, i w oparciu o pojęcie hermeneutyki kontekstów²⁸ proponowane przez Mikko Lehtonen (2004.) Praca ta opiera się również na pracach naukowych z dziedziny badania granic (angl. *border studies*), oraz myśleniu o pojęciu przestrzeni Europy Środkowej w ujęciu kulturoznawstwym i literaturoznawczym.

Proces czytania składa się z dwóch etapów. Celem pierwszego etapu jest identyfikowanie kontekstów, a drugiego – stworzenie interpretacji w ramach tych kontekstów. Wyniki pracy również należą do dwóch kategorii. W pierwszej z nich są zidentyfikowane i opisane konteksty: granica, idea Europy Środkowej i era transformacji po 1989-tym roku. Zidentyfikowanie kontekstów umożliwiło sformułowanie bardziej konkretnych pytań badawcze:

1. Jakie znaczenia mają granice w konstruowaniu *mojej Europy* (idea Środkowo-Wschodniej Europy, którą Andrzej Stasiuk konstruuje w swojej prozie)?
2. Jaki wpływ ma era transformacji na przeżycie przekraczania granic?

Drugą kategorię wyników stawi interpretacja tekstu *Jadąc do Babadag* w ramach zidentyfikowanych kontekstów. Uwagi z analizy są skupione wokół trzech tematów: przestrzeń podróżnika, podróżnik na granicach oraz strach bezkresnej przestrzeni.

Najistotniejszym rezultatem pracy jest głębsze zrozumienie tego, że granice i podróżowanie jako przekraczanie ich, są niezbędnymi elementami konstruowania *mojej Europy*. Otwieranie granic po upadku reżimów socjalistycznych umożliwiło wolność

²⁸ Tłumaczenie pojęcia z wersji angielskiej (*hermeneutics of contexts*) i fińskiej (*kontekstien hermeneutiikka*) przez autorkę niniejszej pracy.

podróżowania i otwarło możliwość konstruowania subiektywnej Europy pisarza, ale jednocześnie rozpoczęło nieuchronny proces znikania granic.

Proza podróżnicza Andrzeja Stasiuka

Tworczość Andrzeja Stasiuka cieszy się dużym zainteresowaniem i w Polsce i za granicą, o czym świadczą m.in. liczne nagrody i tłumaczenia jego twórczości na wiele języków obcych. Tematy często powracające w jego prozie (m.in. przestrzeń, czas, pamięć i obrazy posocjalistycznego krajobrazu i mentalności) wzbudzają także zainteresowanie wśród literaturoznawców. Mimo zainteresowania w wielu krajach, twórczość Stasiuka jest mało znana wśród czytelników i badaczy literatury w Finlandii.

Kariera pisarska Stasiuka rozpoczęła się od książki *Mury Hebronu* (1992). Tematyka peryferii i przestrzeni są charakterystycznymi tematami twórczości Stasiuka, również w dziełach, które Christina Godun (2010: 215) nazywa serią podróżniczą Stasiuka. Należą do niej: *Dziennik okrętowy* (2000, esej opublikowany w tomie *Moja Europa – Dwa eseje o Europie zwanej Środkową*), *Jadąc do Babadag* (2004), *Fado* (2006) i *Dziennik pisany później* (2010). Typowa w tekstach podróżniczych Stasiuka jest fragmentaryczność narracji. Teksty składają się z epizodycznych wspomnień z podróży, anegdot oraz wrażeń z historycznych i literackich lektur. Charakterystycznymi elementami są też ciągły ruch i podróżowanie bez wyraźnych celów czy schematów podróży. Są one, według interpretacji Justyny Czechowskiej (2008: 60-61), manifestacją wolności.

Szersze tło dla tekstów Stasiuka stanowią współczesne tendencje literatury podróżniczej, motyw podróżowania w polskiej kulturze (szczególnie powtarzające się w historii polskiej zjawisko emigracji), oraz silny na polskiej scenie literackiej gatunek reportażu. Według badaczy literatury Patricka Hollanda i Grahama Huggana (1998: postscript) typowa dla pisarzy podróżniczych wydaje się nie tyle potrzeba bycia pierwszym odkrywającym nowe miejsce lecz ostatnim, który zobaczy je przed jego zniknięciem.

Wyraźnym motywem w tekstach Stasiuka wydaje się lęk przed zniknięciem, z którym walczy on, przechowując materialne drobiazgi z licznych podróży (pieniądze, bilety). Jak pisze Stanisław Kusiak (2010: 337-338), kluczem do zrozumienia strategii podróżowania Stasiuka jest to, że mimo niekończącej się podróży, celem podróży jest powrót do domu.

Pisarze na emigracji mieli znaczący wpływ na życie kulturalne w Polsce w różnych czasach. Niektórzy z nich, np. Adam Mickiewicz (1798-1855) i Czesław Miłosz (1911-2004), należą do kanonicznych twórców polskiej literatury. Ciekawy punkt widzenia dotyczący tematyki emigracji i podróżowania we współczesnej polskiej literaturze przedstawia Urszula

Chowaniec (2011: 133-135), sugerując, że podróżowanie w ostatnich dekadach po 1989-tym roku można traktować jako nową formą emigracji. Cechą współczesnych narracji podróżniczych ciągle jest przeżycie przemieszczenia (tamże.)

Za drugi nurt związany z podróżowaniem w polskiej kulturze można uważać tradycję literatury reportażowej. Reportaże często zawierają element podróżowania. Tak jest m.in. w słynnej twórczości Ryszarda Kapuścińskiego (1932-2007). Narracji Stasiuka nie można jednak opisać ściśle jako literatury reportażowej, chociaż ma ona charakter reportażu.

Jadąc do Babadag

Jadąc do Babadag składa się z 14 rozdziałów zawierających fragmentaryczne wspomnienia z licznych podróży narratora. W pierwszym rozdziale narrator wspomina swoje podróże w socjalistycznej Polsce w latach 80-tych, w pozostałych zaś relacjonuje podróże poza granicami Polski po 1989-tym roku. Powtarzającymi elementami narracji są także refleksje z lektur innych środkowoeuropejskich pisarzy, np. Ádáma Bodora i Danilo Kiša, oraz wspomnienia historycznych wydarzeń regionalnych.

Główną postacią jest podróżujący narrator, alter ego autora – pisarza i podróżnika mieszkującego przy słowackiej granicy. Narrator jest jedyną postacią pojawiającą się w całym utworze. Inne postaci to osoby czasami towarzyszące narratorowi i ludzie spotykani w podróży, ale pojawiają się oni tylko chwilowo.

Struktura utworu zawiera dwa wątki narracji. Pierwszy z nich pojawia się w pierwszym i ostatnim rozdziale. W pierwszym, zatytułowanym *Ten lęk*, narrator wspomina swoje wędrówki w socjalistycznej Polsce w latach 80-tych, kiedy podróżowanie za granicę wyglądała na ucieczkę (Stasiuk 2004: 8). W ostatnim rozdziale pod tytułem *Jadąc do Babadag*, narrator liczy stemple w swoim paszporcie i w końcu wraca do domu przez polsko-słowacką granicę. Drugi wątek obecny w pozostałych 12 rozdziałach, to opowieści z podróży na Słowację, na Węgry, do Rumunii, Mołdawii, Słowenii, Albanii i na południowo-zachodnią Ukrainę.

Cechą narracji jest niespójność detali dotyczących czasu i miejsca. Chronologia podróży jest niejasna, ponieważ autor nie podaje dat. W sensie czasowym, ostatecznym punktem końcowym jest jednak rok publikowania książki (2004), i zarazem moment wstąpienia Polski do Unii Europejskiej. Natomiast małe i peryferyjne miejsca zwiedzane przez narratora są starannie i wyraźnie opisane. Tytuły rozdziałów także często zawierają odniesienie do miejsc oraz ich historii i zamieszkujących je ludzi. Mozaika nazw i ich

znaczenia tworzą przestrzeń, którą Alexander Fiut (2008: 155–156) opisuje jako rozbitą na fragmenty i wewnętrznie pękniętą.

Założenia teoretyczne i metodologiczne

Teoretycznie i metodologicznie praca ta opiera się na założeniach hermeneutyki i na pojęciu hermeneutyki kontekstów oraz na pracach naukowych z dziedziny badania granic (angl. *border studies*), i myśleniu o pojęciu przestrzeni Europy Środkowej w ujęciu kulturoznawczym i literaturoznawczym. Metoda tworzenia interpretacji obejmuje materiał i proces czytania. Zasadniczym pojęciem metodologicznym jest pojęcie kontekstu. Jest on rozumiany jako konstrukcja, która raczej ukazuje się w trakcie czytania, niż jest stabilnym tłem dla tekstu istniejącym poza tekstem.

Tradycja hermeneutyki jako metody tworzenia interpretacji tekstu ma swoje korzenie w objaśnianiu tekstów biblijnych, ale otrzymała bardziej ogólne znaczenie jako teoria badania tekstów literackich w ciągu 20-tego wieku (Lehtonen 2004: 177). Hermeneutyka kontekstów związana jest z tradycją hermeneutyki. Kai Mikkonen (2003: 64-66) pisze, że niezbędną zasadą interpretacji jest akceptowanie tego, że osiągnięcie wszechstronnego rozumienia tekstu nie jest możliwe, ponieważ teksty są otwarte na różne interpretacje. Hermeneutyczne rozumienie tekstu jest ostatecznie osiąganę w dialogu między tekstem, kontekstami i czytelnikami tekstu (Lehtonen 2004: 152, Viljanen 2010: 128).

Metodologicznym narzędziem w analizie hermeneutycznej jest wykorzystywanie tzw. hermeneutycznego koła. Interpretacja powstaje w procesie cyklicznym, w którym czytelnik oscyluje na zmianę pomiędzy szczegółami i całością tekstu. W procesie czytania mniejsze fragmenty tekstu (np. zdanie, akapit, epizod) są powiązane z większymi strukturami (np. motywy, przyczynowość, portrety postaci literackich). (Lehtonen 2004: 177, Mikkonen 2003: 72-73.)

Podjęciem zastosowanym w analizie tej pracy jest tzw. hermeneutyka kontekstów²⁹, którą fiński badacz literatury i kultury Mikko Lehtonen przedstawił w swojej książce *Merkitysten maailma* (2004.) Hermeneutyka kontekstów podkreśla rolę czytelnika w konstruowaniu interpretacji. Według Lehtonen (2004: 166-169) teksty nie zawierają znaczenia same w sobie, tylko zdobywają je w interakcji między potencjalnymi znaczeniami ukrytymi w tekście i kulturalnymi zasobami czytelnika. Takim zasobem jest m.in. zdolność

²⁹ Tłumaczenie terminu na język polski P.B. Termin po fińsku, *kontekstien hermeneutiikka* (Lehtonen 2004), jest tłumaczone jako *the hermeneutics of contexts* w wydaniu anglojęzycznym pod tytułem *The Cultural Analysis of Texts* (Lehtonen 2000.)

dyskursywna, która ogranicza to co można powiedzieć i jak to można rozumieć. Kontekstami, które również oddziałują na produkcję i interpretację tekstu, są m.in. relacje intertekstualne z innymi tekstami, gatunek literacki, drugorzędne teksty (np. recenzje, wywiady i interpretacje tekstu przez znajomych i bliskich) oraz zaangażowanie autora w kwestiach gatunku literackiego, narodowości i klasy społecznej. Konteksty są czynnikami, które i pisarze i czytelnicy wnoszą do procesu interpretacyjnego. (Op.cit. 164, 175-180.)

Zainteresowaniem badacza jest rozumienie relacji między kontekstami i interpretacją tekstu. Żeby osiągnąć ten cel, badacz oscyluje między poziomami mikro i makro wykorzystując wiedzę kontekstualną. Proces ten przypomina pojmowanie sensu tekstu w sposób hermeneutyczny. Zadaniem badacza jest tworzenie kontekstów, które są oparte nie tylko na obiektywnym obserwowaniu kontekstów ale także aktywnym ich konstruowaniu. (Lehtonen 2004: 166, 179.)

Materiał tej pracy składa się z dwóch źródłowych kategorii. Głównym materiałem jest przedstawiona w poprzednim rozdziale książka *Jadąc do Babadag* napisana przez Andrzeja Stasiuka. Tekst ten był analizowany najpierw jako całość literacka. W dalszym ciągu analiza skupiała się szczególnie na epizodach, w których przedstawiane są granice i doświadczenia narratora przy granicach. Ten wyodrębniony zbiór epizodów stał się głównym materiałem wykorzystanym do dalszej analizy.

Drugorzędnymi materiałami są publikacje naukowe dotyczące wiedzy o kontekstach, zidentyfikowane w trakcie analizy. Konteksty te są przedstawione w następnym rozdziale. Liczne źródła stanowiące drugorzędny materiał pochodzą z dziedzin takich jak badanie granic i geografia polityczna, zaś wiedza kontekstualna dotyczące twórczości Andrzeja Stasiuka i prozy podróżniczej ma charakter bardziej literaturoznawczy i kulturoznawczy. Metoda czytania, która jest używana w niniejszej pracy, ma dwa fundamenty. Po pierwsze, czytanie jest oparte na idei hermeneutyki, jak zostało opisane powyżej. Po drugie, czytanie było prowadzone systematycznie w kilku etapach, rozpoczynając od szerszego punktu widzenia i postępując ku ściślejszym ramom obserwacji. Głównymi etapami procesu czytania było sformułowanie pytań badawczych, identyfikacja i definicja kontekstów oraz konstruowanie interpretacji książki *Jadąc do Babadag* w ramach zidentyfikowanych kontekstów. Konteksty pojawiły się w czasie pierwszego i drugiego etapu czytania. Chociaż granica była punktem zainteresowania już od początku pracy, szerszy punkt widzenia umożliwił zidentyfikowanie dwóch pozostałych kontekstów czyli pojęcia Europy Centralnej jako kontekstu przestrzennego i ery transformacji jako kontekstu czasowego.

Następnie konteksty te trzeba było zdefiniować, żeby było możliwe ich dalsze wykorzystanie w procesie czytania. Definicje kontekstów przedstawione w następnym rozdziale, zostały oparte na źródłach naukowych.

Konteksty

Trzy konteksty, które zostały zidentyfikowane podczas czytania *Jadąc do Babadag*, są pierwszymi wynikami pracy. Wybór kontekstów był umotywowany przez tekst *Jadąc do Babadag*, ale źródłami ich opisu są drugorzędne materiały, które pomagają poszerzać interpretację poza tekst Stasiuka.

Centralnym kontekstem jest granica. *Jadąc do Babadag* zawiera wiele opisów napotykania i przekraczania granic, ale trudno z nich stworzyć spójną reprezentację, co wzbudza pytanie o rolę i znaczenie granic w tekście Stasiuka. Drugim kontekstem jest kwestia przestrzeni. W prozie Stasiuka przestrzeń, która w sensie geograficznym dotyczy środkowo-wschodniej i południowo-wschodniej Europy, jest jednym z głównych tematów (zob. np. Fiut 1999, Fiut 2008, Godun 2010, Millati 2008). W tej pracy kontekst przestrzeni jest zbudowany na porównaniu dwu idei Europy Środkowej, w tym wizji tzw. *mojej Europy* skonstruowanej przez Andrzeja Stasiuka w swojej prozie.

Trzeci kontekst, era transformacji, podaje punkt czasowy w interpretacji. Ten okres od upadku kurtyny żelaznej w 1989-tym roku do wstąpienia 10 posocjalistycznych krajów do Unii Europejskiej w 2004-tym roku wpłynął na wiele dziedzin życia od gospodarki i stosunków społecznych do kultury i literatury. Miał on także wpływ na rozumienie i funkcjonowanie granic i przestrzeni.

Granica

Podróże opisywane w *Jadąc do Babadag* wiodą narratora do wielu krajów i ich historii. Przekracza on granice państwowe, które są nie tylko wyraźnymi liniami administracyjnymi, ale również wielowymiarowymi zjawiskami ludzkiego działania. Kontekst granicy jest opisywany za pomocą dwóch punktów widzenia: granica jako teoretyczne i ewoluujące pojęcie oraz rola granic w kontekście Środkowo-Wschodniej Europy.

Granice są tematem, który wywołuje nazrastające zainteresowanie wśród naukowców z różnych dziedzin w ostatnich latach. Naukowe zainteresowanie granicami rozwinęło się z kartografii i geopolityki ku interdyscyplinarnej dziedzinie nauki o granicach, w której wykorzystuje podejścia m.in. z politologii i geografii oraz z nauk społecznych i

humanistycznych (zob. np. Sobczyński 2008). Skutkiem rozmaitych podejść na badania granic jest coraz bardziej wielowymiarowa definicja granicy jako pojęcia teoretycznego.

Zrozumienie pojęcie granicy zależy od tego czym jest dla nas granica. Często widzimy ją jako wyraźną linię zaznaczającą i oddzielającą terytoria państwowe. Takie postrzeganie rozwinęło się jednak dopiero z pojawieniem się nowoczesnych państw narodowych i pogłębiającym się myśleniem terytorialnym w 19-tym wieku (zob. Häkli 1997: 9–13; Mezzadra i Neilson 2013: 3, 30–39; Paasi 1999b: 12–13). Znaczącą rolę w teorii i praktyce wyznaczania granic odegrał rozwój geografii politycznej, kartografii i geopolityki, dla których granice stały się jednym z głównych tematów (Kolossoff 2005: 607; Paasi 1999b: 12.) Mezzadra i Neilson (2013: 38) piszą, że w ciągu 19-tego wieku początkowo głównie europejski sposób myślenia o podziale świata na różne regiony stał się naturalną normą. Ten proces przekształcił świat w system państw narodowych z wyraźnymi i umocowanymi granicami funkcjonującymi jako znaki suwerenności i mocy państwa (Paasi 1999b: 12–13.)

Przed erą nowoczesnych państw granice były rozumiane bardziej jako szerokie i elastyczne pogranicze na periferiach (angl. *frontier*). Według Prescottta (1987: 12–13) pojawiły się one często wskutek osiedlania na nowych terenach, które oznaczały strefę politycznej władzy kraju. Pogranicza często były strefami kontaktu w formie handlu, migracji albo konfliktu. Jeśli granice pełniły funkcję oddzielającą, wynikało to z cech fizycznej geografii, np. z trudnego terenu albo braku zasobów naturalnych. (Ibid.) Od czasów średniowiecznych jedynie formacje geograficzne były uważane za prawdziwe granice, a granice wyznaczone przez ludzi były postrzegane jako arbitralne i chwilowe (Paasi 1999b: 12.)

Obecnie podział granic na stworzone naturalnie przez naturę albo sztucznie przez ludzi jest nieaktualne. Jak twierdzi Pirjo Jukarainen (2001: 22), ekologiczne i geograficzne bariery utrudniające interakcję są tylko jednym z aspektów w konstruowaniu granic przez ludzi. Wyznaczanie politycznych granic zawsze zawiera kwestie wyboru, zatem są arbitralne i sztuczne (Paasi 1999b: 13–14.)

Rozumienie granicy jako kresu społeczeństwa i tożsamości narodowej zachodzącego wzdłuż granicy państwowej spotykało się z krytyką (zob. Agnew 1994: 53–70.) Zainteresowanie granicami nie jest już wyłącznie debatą wokół suwerenności i bezpieczeństwa państw, lecz coraz bardziej za istotę granic i ich konstrukcji są uważane dyskursywne i narratywne praktyki w relacjach społecznych (Berg i van Houtum 2003: 2–3.) Takie podejście do granic można obserwować w terminie *borderscape*, gdzie granica jest widziana jako obraz mentalny, który kształtujemy pod wpływem narracji. Ten termin

szczególnie zwraca uwagę na poznawcze, kulturowe i społeczne aspekty w negocjowaniu granic i ich znaczenia (zob. dell' Agnese i Amilhat Szary 2015: 4–8.)

Granice są obecnie uznawane nie tylko za terytorialne kresy i geograficzne periferia lecz raczej za wielowymiarowe instytucje o charakterze społecznym, jak twierdzą Sandro Mezzadra i Brett Neilson (2013: 3, 6.) Takie podejście umożliwia negocjowanie granic i ich znaczenia na rozmaitych arenach: oprócz geopolityki, także w codziennych praktykach, w użyciu języka oraz w sferach kultury, sztuki, mediów i edukacji (Berg i van Houtum 2003: 3; Green 2013: 348; Kolossov 2005: 606–607; Paasi 1999b: 20–21.) Według Kolossova (2005: 624–625), używanie geopolitycznych pojęć i symboli w kulturze pomaga zrozumieć reprezentacje różnych granic, takich jak zasięg Zachodu i Wschodu, oraz identyfikować nieformalne regiony takie jak *Europa Środkowa*.

Granice w posocjalistycznej Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej

Historia Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej jest znana z licznych i często arbitralnych dla ludzi mieszkających na tych terenach zmian granic i geopolitycznych walk. Prescott (1987: 177) pisze, że granice państw w Środkowo-Wschodniej Europie są w wielu przypadkach stworzone na politycznych konferencjach po różnych wojnach w 19-tym i 20-tym wieku. Znaczącą rolę w układzie terytoriów Europy, w tym terenów środkowo-wschodnich, miała także pokój westfalski w 1648-tym roku. Według Medvedeva (1999: 47) ten traktat ustanowił granicę ostatecznym znakiem narodowej suwerenności.

Wydarzenia, które nastąpiły po upadku kurtyny żelaznej stał się kolejnym doświadczeniem zmian granicznych w historii Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej. Anssi Paasi (1999b: 14) pisze, że upadek ZSRR dodał około 20 nowych granic na geopolitycznej mapie świata. Wśród politycznych i terytorialnych zmian, które zwiększyły liczbę granic w środkowo-wschodniej Europie po 1989-tym roku, są także np. rozpad Jugosławii, podział Czechosłowacji, oraz deklaracje niepodległości Czarnogóry i Kosowa. Według Ann Kennard (2003: 196–205) upadek żelaznej kurtyny zainicjował wiele nowych akcji dotyczących granic, np. projekty kooperacyjne między sąsiadującymi krajami i regionami, akcje umożliwiające bezwizowy ruch, wzrost działalności ekonomicznej (w tym formalny i nieformalny handel przy i przez granice), migracja i turystyka.

Charakterystyczna dla granic w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej jest nie tylko zmieniająca się liczba granic, ale także zmiany w funkcji i znaczeniu granic. Tassilo Herrschel (2011: 11–12, 50) twierdzi, że tendencją granic posocjalistycznych jest ich rozwój w przeciwnych kierunkach. Niektóre granice zmieniały się od żelaznej kurtyny do

wewnętrznych i stopniowo znikających granic Unii Europejskiej i strefy Schengen, a niektóre granice odwrotnie od wewnętrznych administracyjnych granic ZSRR do wzmocnionych międzynarodowych granic Unii Europejskiej. Za drugą tendencję Herrschel uważa nierówny rozwój regionów przygranicznych. Regiony przyległe do krajów zachodnioeuropejskich doświadczyły dosyć szybkiego rozwoju transgranicznego handlu i kooperacji. Natomiast regiony, które nie miały granicznego kontaktu z krajami zachodnioeuropejskimi pozostały bardziej peryferyjne. (Ibid.)

Kennard (2003: 194–195) uważa, że rok 1989 dał poczucie posiadania narodowego terytorium i granic, ale z drugiej strony, zainicjował chęć na powrót do Europy, innymi słowy na integrację z Europą Zachodnią. Ciekawym aspektem w procesie powrotu do Europy jest rola granic, ponieważ ważnym elementem, nawet symbolem, powrotu do Europy pozostała możliwość przekraczania granic. Warto zwrócić jednak uwagę na to, że możliwość przekraczania granicy nie musi skutkować aktywnymi interakcjami transgranicznymi. W przypadku dwu sąsiadujących wiosek badacze Wastl-Walter, Váradi i Veider (2002: 75–76, 92–93) zauważyli, że pomimo długiej wspólnej historii, fakt otwarcia granicy oddzielającej te wioski po upadku żelaznej kurtyny nie doprowadził do ożywienia kontaktów między nimi. Oprócz braku ruchu na granicy, badacze zaobserwowali także nieobecność sąsiedniej wioski i ich mieszkańców w narracjach. W ten sposób oficjalnie otwarta granica właściwie pozostała zamknięta. (Ibid.)

Przykład z badania Wastl-Walter, Váradi i Veider pokazuje, że zmiany granic nie usuwają byłych granic całkowicie, lecz czasami pozostawiają granice reliktowe. Według definicji przedstawionej przez Marka Sobczyńskiego (2008: 66) granice te są pozbawione funkcji politycznej, lecz nadal istnieją w krajobrazie kulturowym. Na przykładzie Wastl-Walter, Váradi i Veider można dodać, że granice reliktowe mogą istnieć także w zbiorowej pamięci i narracjach (w tym przypadku granicą reliktową jest żelazna kurtyna).

Koncepcja otwartej granicy oferuje ciekawą perspektywę dla granic w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej po 1989-tym roku. Proces otwierania granic skutkuje nie tylko otwarciem granic dla handlu, współpracy transgranicznej, turystyki i migracji lecz również rozpoczyna proces renegocjacji ich znaczenia. Zatem granice nie są tylko terytorialnymi granicami państwa lecz także wielowymiarowym zjawiskiem na które skadają się uwarunkowania społeczne, kulturowe i historyczne.

Era transformacji po 1989 roku

Rok 1989 jest kluczowym punktem czasowym w narracji *Jadąc do Babadag*. Ten rok dzieli podróżę narratora na podróżę w swoim kraju i na podróżę poza jego granicami. Rok 1989 rozpoczął erę transformacji, która była czasem nie tylko politycznych i ekonomicznych przemian ustrojowych ku demokratycznemu społeczeństwu obywatelskiemu i gospodarce rynkowej, ale także głębokich społecznych i kulturowych zmian. W kontekście ery transformacji chodzi o znalezienie zrozumienia o tego, jak rok 1989 i następujące lata przemian wpłynęły na zrozumienie przestrzeni i podróżowania oraz na twórczość literacką.

Upadek żelaznej kurtyny dostarczał nowego punktu wyjścia do dyskusji o geopolitycznym i kulturowym położeniu krajów środkowo- i wschodnioeuropejskich. W tym kontekście często mówi się o przedefiniowaniu pojęcia Wschodu i Zachodu oraz pomyśle powrotu do Europy. (Zob. np. Dingsdale 1999; Green 2013; Hagen 2003.) Według Dingsdale (1999: 145–146), zniknięcie kurtyny żelaznej z geopolitycznej mapy Europy postawiło także pytanie o to jak nazywać kraje i społeczeństwa, które wyłoniły się po erze socjalistycznej. Pozostał dylemat, czy te kraje nazwać wschodnią, środkowo-wschodnią czy nową Europą.

Lata po 1989-tym roku spowodowały także znaczne zmiany w sferze literatury. Podzielenie rynku wydawniczego na oficjalny i drugi obieg³⁰ zostało zastąpione różnorodnością literackich idei oraz pojawieniem się nowej generacji pisarzy i wielką liczbą nowych wydawnictw na rynku (Kostyrko 1999: 55–57.) W latach socjalistycznych szczególnie literatura o krytycznym nastawieniu do reżimu i literatura emigracyjna odnosiły się do kwestii narodu (ibid.) Po 1989-tym roku literatura jednak straciła swoją politycznie i społecznie zaangażowaną rolę, i zwróciła się raczej ku sferom prywatnym i sferom wyobraźni (Kopczyk: 90–100; Kostyrko 1999: 56.)

W kontekście ery transformacji ciekawą kwestią w literaturze jest temat emigracji. Jak sugeruje Urszula Chowaniec (2011: 134–136), doświadczenia emigracyjne wciąż są elementem polskiej literatury nawet po upadku systemu totalitarnego. Według niej, można je obserwować w narracjach dotyczących tematu podróżowania. Nie są to jednak opowieści o przekraczaniu granic i wolności podróżowania pełne optymizmu, lecz przeciwnie, opisy doświadczania bolesnej obcości, barier językowych i braku dialogu.

Upadek żelaznej kurtyny po 1989-tym roku oferował nowe możliwości podróżowania, ale wywołał także potrzebę dyskusji o znaczeniu granic, a czasami nawet o

³⁰ Drugim obiegiem nazywano wydawnictwa i publikacje wydane podziemnie, poza cenzurą. Do drugiego obiegu należały często także teksty pisarzy na emigracji.

nowym ich przebiegu. Niektóre granice zmieniły funkcję na zewnętrzną granicę Unii Europejskiej. Upadek socjalistycznych reżimów i rozbiór kurtyny żelaznej był początkiem procesu otwierania granic aż do ich prawie całkowitego zniknięcia (granice są na tyle otwarte, że ich praktycznie nie można zauważyć, bo zlikwidowane zostały procesy przekraczania granic).

Przestrzeń: Europa Środkowa i moja Europa

Istotą opisywania kontekstu przestrzeni w niniejszej pracy jest porównanie dwóch idei Europy Środkowej. Są to: idea Europy Środkowej rozwijana w rozmowach i tekstach intelektualistów w latach 1980-tych oraz konstrukcja przestrzeni stworzona przez Andrzeja Stasiuka w jego prozie. Obie idee są kulturowymi konstrukcjami związanymi z problematyką zdefiniowania i położenia Europy Środkowej. Chociaż różnią się w wielu aspektach, są one jednak zasadniczo ze sobą związane.

Dyskusje o Europy Środkowej jako jednostce geograficznej, geopolitycznej i kulturowej pojawiły się wiele razy w ciągu 20-tego wieku. Stworzenie terminu *Europa Środkowa* sięga jednak dalej w historii. Według Mirosława Hrocha (2000: 23–24, 33), termin *Europa Środkowa* został po raz pierwszy wykorzystany w znaczeniu geopolitycznym na Kongresie wiedeńskim w 1814–1815, ale początki tej idei sięgają do wcześniejszych wydarzeń³¹.

Podział Europy żelazną kurtyną na część zachodnią i wschodnią po II wojny światowej utrudniał dyskusję o Europie Środkowej (Hroch 2000: 33). Jednak w latach 1980-tych publikowano artykuły, które ożywiały tę dyskusję. Maria Todorova (2000: 219) uważa, że jednym z pierwszych takich tekstów był *Zachód porwany albo tragedia Europy Środkowej* napisany przez Milana Kunderę (1984). W tym artykule Kundera postuluje, że Europa Środkowa jest kulturalnie integralną ale tragicznie zapomnianą częścią Europy Zachodniej. Wielu pisarzy, dysydentów i emigrantów z krajów środkowoeuropejskich włączyło się do dyskusji, która głównie toczyła się na konferencjach i w publikacjach (Horel 2013: 25–35). Rezultatem tej dyskusji było zdefiniowanie Europy Środkowej jako pojęcia raczej kulturowego niż geograficznego. Europa Środkowa była w dużej mierze sformuowaniem na papierze, jak trafnie zauważa Aleksander Fiut (1999: 8).

Fiut (1999: 8–9) twierdzi, że udział dysydentów i emigrantów nadał dyskusji polityczny ton. Przedstawia on trzy cechy charakteryzujące idee Europy Środkowej:

³¹ Reformacja, Wojna trzydziestoletnia w 1618–1648 (który zakończył się na pokój westfalski), oraz wojny polsko-szwedzkie w 17-tym wieku.

włączanie Europy Środkowej do kulturowego i politycznego dziedzictwa Europy Zachodniej, szukanie wspólnej świadomości kulturowej i zbiorowej, oraz idealizacja byłych wielonarodowych monarchii (Wielkie Księstwo Litewskie i Monarchia Austro-Węgierska). Idea Europy Środkowej była sposobem szukania uwolnienia od wpływów i opresji sowieckich i budowania alternatywnych modeli kulturowych i politycznych (Horel 2013: 25–35).

Końcem idei Europy Środkowej z lat 1980-tych stał się rok 1989, kiedy zaczęły upadać reżimy socjalistyczne i zaczęto rozbrajanie ideologicznego podziału Europy na Zachód i Wschód. Ten sam moment był jednak punktem początkowym dla konstrukcji tzw. mojej Europy Andrzeja Stasiuka. Moja Europa jest również konstruktem literackim, ale w przeciwieństwie do wcześniejszej zbiorowej idei Europy Środkowej, moja Europa jest konceptem jednego pisarza. Jest ona prywatną i subiektywną konstrukcją, w której nie ma prawdziwych spotkań ludzi z ludźmi i wymiany poglądów w formie dialogu (Millati 2008: 185, 188). Piotr Millati pisze, że mimo otwartych granic, przestrzeń wypełnia milczenie (tamże).

Prywatność mojej Europy jest ujawniona w opisie kręgu własnego świata, którą Stasiuk przedstawia w eseju *Dziennik okrętowy*. Centrum tego kręgu jest jego dom na pograniczu południowej Polski i przejście graniczne w Koniecznej, przez które zaczynają się jego podróże (Stasiuk 2000: 77, 98). Zamiast dialogu i spotkań elementem składowym mojej Europy jest podróżowanie. Millati (2008: 177–179, 183) pisze, że podróżowanie do mojej Europy jest podróżowaniem do zapomnianych periferii i miejsc, które nie są wspomniane w przewodnikach.

Ważnymi elementami konstruowania mojej Europy są też historia i geografia. Agata Lewandowska (2012) twierdzi, że granice mojej Europy ślizgają się nierówno tam, gdzie są one utworzone przez geografię a mają uproszczony kształt, gdy są wyznaczone przez ludzi i historię. Historia jest jakby ciężarem w mojej Europie. Lewandowska twierdzi również, że narracja Stasiuka unika ideologicznej dychotomii podzielenia przestrzeni na Zachód i Wschód. Według niej, jest to jego strategia radzenia sobie z ciężarem historii. (Ibid.)

Analiza książki *Jadąc do Babadag*

Rozdział ten zawiera obserwacje z czytania *Jadąc do Babadag*. Obserwacje te należą do trzech tematycznych kategorii, w których głównymi wskazówkami są konteksty zidentyfikowane w pierwszym etapie analizy. Przestrzeń podróżnika opisuje elementy przestrzeni, w której narrator podróżuje. Drugim tematem jest podróżnik na granicach. Istotą

tego tematu jest motyw spotkania i przekraczania granic. Trzeci temat zwraca uwagę na motyw strachu, który wydaje się ogarnąć narratora spotykając albo myśląc o bezkresnej przestrzeni bez wyraźnych granic.

Przestrzeń podróżnika

Przestrzeń podróżnika jest obszarem, w którym narrator podróżuje i przekracza różne granice. Rozpóściła się ona od domu narratora znajdującego się niedaleko południowej granicy Polski w stronę południową i południowo-wschodnią poza karpacczymi górami. Ta przestrzeń jest oznaczona różnymi kresami i granicami. Znajdują się tam geograficzne linie i pęknięcia takie jak rzeki, drogi i wododziały. Jest ona również podzielona przez subiektywnie wyznaczone kresy, takie jak granica między metropolią i periferią ustalana według marki papierosów Kossuth, które są ulubionymi papierosami narratora niedostępnymi w większych miastach (Stasiuk 2004: 78.)

Przestrzeń podróżnika daje tło na którym *moja Europa* jest następnie konstruowana za pomocą innych strategii takich jak pamięć i wyobraźnia. Strategią wyznaczania tej przestrzeni jest podróżowanie. Liczne podróże powodują, że ta przestrzeń jest dynamiczna i zmienna. Claudia Snochowska-Gonzalez (2008: 101) uważa, że podróżując narrator wyznacza topograficzny teren i robi miejsce dla swojej wyobraźni. Wypełnia on przestrzeń swoimi fantazjami i tworzy alternatywny porządek Europy (op.cit. 107.)

Kontrastując pierwszy rozdział w *Jadąc do Babadag* z resztą rozdziałów, można zauważyć wyraźną zmianę w nastawieniu narratora do podróżowania. W pierwszym rozdziale narrator podróżuje w zamkniętej przestrzeni swojego kraju przed 1989. Nie wyraża on chęci do podróży poza granicami kraju:

*Mój kraj zwyczajnie mi wystarczał, ponieważ nie interesowały mnie jego granice. - -
Nie stawiałem przestrzeni żadnych wymagań i niczego od niej nie oczekiwałem.
(Stasiuk 2004: 8)*

Reszta rozdziałów opisuje podróże narratora po 1989-tym roku. Szczególnie otwieranie połudnych i wschodnich granic po zmianie ustrojowej zaciekało wyobraźnię Stasiuka i zachęcało go do konstruowania swojego *europiejskiego szlaku* (Ervamaa 2003). Jednak to, co odczuwa narrator, nie jest lekkim i radosnym podróżowaniem w długo oczekiwaną wolność. Im bardziej na południe podróżuje, tym bardziej czuje on bezwzględność powietrza. Przypomina ona o trudnej historii i niewytłumaczalnym terrorze,

których doświadczyli ludzie na tych terenach. Autor określa przestrzeń jako *sinister*, w znaczeniu *lewa* i *złowróźbna*.

Wjeździłiśmy do okręgu Sinistra. - - Wkrótce zaczęło się Satu Mare - - czułem wyraźną zmianę, czułem w powietrzu inny zapach, a blask nieba każdym kilometrem nabierał bezwzględności - -. (Stasiuk 2004: 19, 21)

Cechą przestrzeni podróżnika jest też bezruch i czekanie. Ludzie czasem patrząc gdzieś w przestrzeń, czekają, by coś się wydarzyło:

O wpół do szóstej rano w Korczy pod hotelem Grand stało już kilku mężczyzn. - - zajęci rozmową albo patrzeniem gdzieś w przestrzeń. Czasami robili parę kroków - - ale to był ruch bez określonego celu, chwilowa przerwa w nieruchomości. - - Wyglądali tak, jakby na coś czekali - -. (Stasiuk 2004: 115)

Bezruch i czekanie dają wzmacniające tło ciągłemu podróżowaniu narratora. Podróżowanie bez wyraźnego celu także wydaje się absurdalnym pomysłem w wyobraźni miejscowych ludzi. Nie rozumieją oni sensu podróżowania do tych peryferyjnych miejsc, które są podstawą *mojej Europy* Stasiuka.

Podróżnik na granicach

Uwagi w kategorii podróżnik na granicach zawierają się w trzech tematach: doświadczenie absurdu, nieudany dialog na granicach oraz pamięć i wyobraźnia. Pierwsze dwa tematy budują reprezentację granic jako irracjonalnych i arbitralnych. Prowokują one pytanie o to, czy granice mają znaczenie i sens. Trzeci temat ujawnia sposób, w jaki granice wpływają na budowanie wielowymiarowej przestrzeni.

Przekraczanie granic jest istotnym elementem podróżowania. Maunu Häyrynen (2006: 1) nazywa granicę punktem zerowym, w którym człowiek zmienia się z obywatela w zwiedzającego. Takim punktem dla narratora jest przejście graniczne w Koniecznej na polsko-słowackiej granicy, na którym zaczyna on i skończy swoje podróże. To właśnie tam dostaje on tożsamość podróżnika. Pozostałe granice przekracza on już tylko jako zwiedzający.

Typowym znakiem granicy jest biało-czerwony szlaban. Innymi często powtarzającymi się znakami granic są strażnicy graniczni i stemple. Pewne rodzaje działalności są także często związane z granicami (np. handel, ludzie czekający na coś). Granice znajdują się głównie na pograniczach narodowych terytoriów, ale mogą one również znajdować się w głębi lądu, np. na lotnisku albo na terenie ambasady w mieście.

Doświadczenie absurdu. Jednym z kluczowych fragmentów jest wypowiedź narratora, który twierdzi, że granice trzymają to wszystko w jednej całości (Stasiuk 2004: 218). Jednak charakterystyczne w narracji o granicach są absurd i nawet surrealistyczny bezsens, które są skutkami różnych procedur granicznych, poczucia pustki i ciszy, oraz poczucia lęku. Działania i procedury na granicach często wydają się niezrozumiałe i są opisywane z ironią, jak pokazują dwa przykłady poniżej. W pierwszej z nich, straż graniczna zatrzymuje autobusy między barierami w środku nocy. W drugim zaś, narrator opisuje śmieszny procedurę otrzymywania wizy na Naddniestrze, która pozbawia granicę potęgi i władzy. Sens opisywanych działań i procedur dla narratora pozostaje niejasny.

- - rumuńscy strażnicy, którzy trzymali w szachu całe przejście i pięć autobusów z dziesięcioma tonami kontrabandy, nas po prostu puścili, śmiejąc się rubasznie i dobrodusznie. (Stasiuk 2004: 44)

W Bender w przejściu była rozpierducha. Baraki, dykta, falista blacha, pokruszony beton, prowizorka i szlaban. - - Trzymali nasze paszporty - - Nikt ich nie uznawał, więc nie mogli stemplować. - - Dostaliśmy kawałek papieru, strzęp jakiegoś kwitu. Na odwrocie napisali długopisem, że jeden samochód, cztery osoby I kamera. To była naddniestrzańska wiza. (Stasiuk 2004: 157–158)

Pomimo humorystycznego absurdu, narratora łapie czasami też strach i lęk przed granicami. Oczekuje on trudności w ich przekraczaniu i raczej niemiłych spotkań ze strażnikami. Jednak często strach okazuje się być daremny, ponieważ doświadczenia przekraczania granic są czasami przyjaźne, w przeciwieństwie do tego, co on oczekiwał. Tak się zdarzy na przykład na granicy między Węgrami i Ukrainą. Narrator spodziewa się zagrożenia na granicy, ale strażnik prowadzi go przez salę odpraw i podstempluje jego paszport, bo nie chce, żeby narrator stał w kolejce w tłumie ruchu granicznej (Stasiuk 2004: 81).

Nieudany dialog na granicach. Narrator zostaje outsiderem na granicach, gdzie podróżnik nie jest typową osobą przekraczającą granice. Granice mają dwojaką rolę jako miejsca spotkań. Są one punktami zarówno ciągłości jak i nieciągłości. Granice przerywają jego nieustanny ruch, ale zatrzymywanie się na granicy nie prowadzi do dialogu z ludźmi na pograniczu. Z jednej strony, granice umożliwiają podróże narratora, bo one wprowadzą miejsce kontynuacji drogi. Z drugiej strony, bardzo widoczny w narracji jest prawie nieisnający dialog między narratorem i innymi ludźmi bywającymi na granicy. Narrator zostaje outsiderem w społecznościach pogranicznych.

Tę izolację można zauważyć w spotkaniach, w których narrator często jest traktowany przyjaźnie. Te spotkania jednak nie prowadzą do dialogu, który spowodowałoby porozumienie i sens wspólnych doświadczeń. Narrator jest omijanym podróżnikiem, który za chwilę rusza dalej:

- - rumuńscy strażnicy, którzy trzymali w szachu całe przejście i pięć autobusów z dziesięcioma tonami kontrabandy, nas po prostu puścili, śmiejąc się rubasnie i dobrodusznie. (Stasiuk 2004: 44)

Wydaje się także, że motywy podróżowania narratora nie są rozumiane. Prowadzi to do sytuacji, w której oczekiwania narratora oraz ludzi, których spotyka –rozróżnią się. Np. strażnicy graniczni dziwią się temu, że ktoś podróżuje do tych miejsc bez wyraźnego celu:

- - zdziwieni ja ten grecki na Korfu, który nie mógł uwierzyć, że spędziliśmy w Albanii dwa tygodnie dla przyjemności, i oglądał pod światło nasze brudne gacie, szukając rozwiązań niepojętej tajemnicy. (Stasiuk 2004: 213)

W tych spotkaniach na granicy odzwierciedlają się doświadczenia Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej po 1989-tym roku. Otwieranie granicy przyczyniło się do różnych działalności, które przyciągały ludzi ku granicom (n.p. transgraniczny handel) i sprawiało, że granice stawały się miejscem spotkań. Jednak granica jako miejsce spotkań nie jest doświadczeniem narratora. Dla niego granice to bardziej linie do przekraczania, na których dostaje się stemple do paszportu, niż miejsca gromadzenia się ludzi.

Pamięć i wyobraźnia. Znaczącymi aspektami podróżowania i przekraczania granic w *Jadąc do Babadag* okazują się pamięć i wyobraźnia, które można uważać za sposoby podróżowania i przekraczania granic. Umożliwiają one podróżowanie poza teraźniejszym czasem, i wprowadzają jedną z metod konstruowania *mojej Europy*.

W analizie zostały zidentyfikowane dwa powtarzające się sposoby, które narrator wykorzystuje, żeby przekraczać granice czasu. Pierwszy polega na wspomnianiu swoich podróży po powrocie do domu. Autor ogląda stemple w paszporcie i wspomina miejsca, które odwiedził w swoich podróżach. Drugi sposób to wspomnianie historii miejsc, które odwiedził w swoich podróżach. Z pomocą pamięci przekracza on nieistniejące już granice i spotyka granice reliktowe, np. imperium Habsburgów, imperium otomańskiego, oraz bloku socjalistycznego.

Przykładem wspominania historii miejsc jest jego wizyta w Voskopojë. Jest to miasto, które kiedyś znajdowało się na terytorium imperium otomańskiego, niedawno było miastem w izolowanym komunistycznym kraju, a teraz jest w posocjalistycznej Albanii. Voskopojë pozwala poznać granice różnych terytoriów krzyżujących się w historii tego miasta.

Któregoś dnia wybraliśmy się z Korczy do Voskopojë. Chcieliśmy zobaczyć to niegdyś największe miasto w europejskiej części otomańskiego imperium - - gdzie krzyżowały się szlaki karawan z Polski, Węgier, Saksoni, z Konstancy, Wenecji, Konstantynopola - -. (Stasiuk 2004: 129)

Przykładem historii na granicy jest też Ubl'a na granicy Słowacji i Ukrainy. Tam narrator wspomina czasy, kiedy Ubl'a była na skrzyżowaniu granic i szlaków handlu. Spodziewa się znaleźć tam dowody na to, że otwarcie granicy przyniosło spełnienie obietnic: cud wolność i handel, które ożywiłyby miasto:

Tam więc jechałem, żeby to wszystko odnaleźć, a zwłaszcza tę total rozjebkę internacjonalnego bazaru - -. Tak, cud wolności i swobody wymiany towarowej w kurzu - - jakby miało powstać z nicości miasto, jakiego świat nigdy nie widział. Bo przecież znów miało być tak jak kiedyś - -. (Stasiuk 2004: 256–258)

Pamięć i wyobrażenia są sposobami rozszerzania przestrzeni narratora do warstw czasowych. Nie chce on jednak zaufać tylko do pamięci i wyobraźni. Ma on silną potrzebę potwierdzać, że jego podróże są prawdziwe a miejsca, które odwiedził, naprawdę istnieją. Służą temu stemple w paszporcie.

Strach bezkresnej przestrzeni

Jak wynika z analizy przedstawionej w poprzednich rozdziałach, granice mają dużą rolę w podróżach narratora. Przestrzeń podróżnika jest pełen granic na różnych poziomach. Tworzą one jakby wielowarstwową siatkę, w której narrator przekracza granice przez fizyczne przemieszczanie się z jednego miejsca do drugiego oraz przy pomocy wspominania i pamięci. Mimo ważności granic, przekraczanie ich powoduje problematyczne zjawiska: absurd, nieudany dialog i pozostawanie outsiderem. Jednak pomysł bezkresnej i nieskończonej przestrzeni przeraża narratora.

Świat bez granic jest niemożliwy, bo granice wprowadzają konkret, który udowadnia, że narrator naprawdę podróżował i zobaczył te miejsca, zanim one będą

zapomniane i znikną z mapy. Znakiem tego konkretności są przede wszystkim stemple w paszporcie pomagające narratorowi przechowywać miejsca w pamięci:

Na przejściu [w Koniecznej] - - myślę, że za rok ma tego wszystkiego nie być, że znikną biało-czerwone szlabany - - i stemple - - więc już teraz zakładam prywatne muzeum, żeby na starość mieć jakieś wspomnienia. (Stasiuk 2004: 228, 230)

Strach bezkresnej przestrzeni jest strachem przed utratą tej konkretności. Wraz ze znikającymi granicami znikają stemple w paszporcie, itym samym, znika także konkretność *mojej Europy*, bo *moja Europa* jest związana z konkretnymi miejscami i z konkretnym podróżowaniem. Bez tego, *moją Europę* trzeba by było stworzyć tylko ze słów:

- - wszystko mogłoby zniknąć - - Dlatego tak się spieszę z tymi jazdami, z tą pazernością na konkret, który zaraz zmienia się w nicość i trzeba go zrobić od nowa ze słów. (Stasiuk 2004: 249)

Dyskusja

Celem niniejszej pracy było znalezienie istotnych kontekstów w czytaniu tekstu podróżniczego *Jadąc do Babadag* oraz interpretacja tekstu w ramach tych kontekstów. *Jadąc do Babadag* jest książką pokazującą doświadczenia narratora podróżującego w byłych krajach socjalistycznych po przemianie ustrojowej na przełomie lat 80-tych i 90-tych.

Metodologiczne założenia mają podstawy w hermeneutyce, a szczególnie w hermeneutyce kontekstów, według której celem analizy jest nie tylko interpretacja tekstu ale także zrozumienie kontekstów, które kształtują interpretację. Metoda ta umożliwia rozszerzania analizy prozy poza granice tekstu "ku światu", jak pisze Mikko Lehtonen (2004: 108). Wtedy w centrum badania nie jest tylko tekst literacki, lecz także konteksty i dialog między tekstem a kontekstami.

Wyniki procesu czytania można zaliczyć do dwóch kategorii. Do pierwszej kategorii należą konteksty zidentyfikowane podczas czytania *Jadąc do Babadag*. Są to: granice, idea Europy Środkowej, która pojawiła się w latach 1980-tych i obraz Europy Środkowej Andrzeja Stasiuka (tzw. *moja Europa*), oraz era transformacji następująca po upadku żelaznej kurtyny na przełomie lat 80-tych i 90-tych.

Zidentyfikowanie kontekstów umożliwiało określanie pytań badawczych, z których najważniejszym jest to, jakie jest znaczenie granic w konstruowaniu *mojej Europy*. Drugim pytaniem badawczym dotyczy tego jaki wpływ na konstruowanie *mojej Europy* miały upadek

żelaznej kurtyny i era transformacji. Uwagi dotyczące *Jadąc do Babadag* przedstawione w poprzednim rozdziale, stanowiące drugą kategorią wyników, były szczególnie skupione wokół tych pytań. Odpowiedzi na nie zostaną przedyskutowane w następnym rozdziale (Wnioski).

Wyniki procesu czytania *Jadąc do Babadag* zostały zgrupowane w trzy tematy. W pierwszym temacie omówiona została geograficzna i kulturowa przestrzeń, do której narrator wkracza przez przejście graniczne w Koniecznej. Konieczna jest punktem, gdzie narrator zostaje podróżnikiem i, w pewnym sensie, obcym. Przekraczając tę granicę ku południowej i południowo-wschodniej Europie wybiera on inną drogę do Europy, niż sugerowała to idea Europy Środkowej z lat 80-tych. Ta droga nie prowadzi przez metropolie i zachodnioeuropejskie kulturowe dziedzictwo, lecz przez mało znane i peryferijne – można powiedzieć zapomniane – miejsca i ich historie.

Narrator spotykający i przekraczający granice był drugim tematem analizy. Okazało się, że przestrzeń podróżnika jest pełna różnych granic. Spotyka on granice na kresach państwowych terytoriów, ale także w głębi lądu na przykład na lotnisku, albo widząc ambasadę w mieście. Oprócz obecnych granic, w przestrzeni podróżnika obecne są też były granice oraz granice reliktowe. Spotkanie z takimi granicami realizuje się nie tylko fizycznie (przez odwiedzanie takich miejsc) ale także umysłowo przy pomocy pamięci i wyobraźni.

Intrygującymi elementami doświadczania granic są absurd i nieudany dialog. Wydaje się, że granice nie mają koherentnej funkcji. Działania na granicy są często arbitralne. Granice nie wypełniają też swojej łączącej funkcji. Spotkania z ludźmi są chwilowe i nie prowadzą do prawdziwego dialogu i poczucia wspólnych doświadczeń. Wynika z tego, że narrator zostaje outsiderem, który zatrzymuje się na granicy tylko na chwilę zanim znów ruszy dalej.

Powodów absurdu i nieudanego dialogu możemy szukać w kontekście granicy, który pozwala zrozumieć, że narrator nie napotyka na administracyjne linie ale raczej dynamiczne i wielowarstwowe konteksty granicy. Granice mają dwojaki charakter. Z jednej strony są to nieruchome linie na mapie, lecz z drugiej strony to dynamiczne środowiska z społecznymi relacjami. Znaczenia i relacje w takim środowisku są sprawą stałego negocjowania w różnych zakresach (np. geopolityki, mediów, twórczości kulturowej oraz codziennych działań ludzi). Każda granica ma swoje społeczne, kulturowe i historyczne konteksty. Narrator zatrzymujący się na granicy, nie ma być może świadomości tych kontekstów, które tłumaczyłyby mu to co się dzieje na granicy.

Pomimo absurdu i nieudanego dialogu granice mają niezbędne znaczenie dla narratora. Bez otwartych granic nie ma podróżowania, które jest potrzebne w konstruowaniu *mojej Europy*. Strachem narratora jest zniknięcia granic z przestrzeni, bo wtedy zniknęłyby stemple w paszportcie i biało-czerwone szlabany, które stanowią konkretne dowody jego podróży. Gdyby granice zniknęły, trzeba by *moją Europę* konstruować ze słów, tak jak konstruowane była idea Europy Środkowej w latach 80-tych.

Wnioski

Na podstawie analizy przedstawianej w tej pracy można stwierdzić, że kulminacyjną rolą granicy w konstruowaniu *mojej Europy* jest kwestia podróżowania. *Moja Europa* jest reprezentacją przestrzeni opierającą się na doświadczeniach z podróży podczas napotykania i przekraczania granic. Podróżowanie w geograficznej przestrzeni zarysowuje wstępny zakres *mojej Europy*. Jest ona następnie konstruowana z pomocą pamięci i wyobraźni, które są dodatkowymi sposobami spotkania i przekraczania granic.

Narrator spotykając różne granice ujawnia wielowarstwową sieć granic krzyżującą się w obszarze jego podróży. Oprócz aktualnych granic ta sieć jest ułożona z byłych granic, które narrator spotyka przy pomocy pamięci i wyobraźni. Byłe granice wnoszą do tej sieci historię, która jest ważnym elementem *mojej Europy*. W sieci granic granice to realne i mentalne środowiska, które wywołują interakcję i negocjacje między ludźmi.

Pomimo istotnej roli granic, doświadczenia narratora na granicy są mieszane. Granice i to co się na nich dzieje wydają się arbitralne i absurdalne. Chwilowe spotkania nie umożliwiają wytworzenia wspólnej przestrzeni. Narrator zostaje paradoksalnie outsiderem i obcym w swojej Europie.

Rok 1989 pozostaje punktem wyjściowym w konstruowaniu wizji Europy dla Andrzeja Stasiuka. Otwarcie granicy dało mu paszport i umożliwiło podróże. Ten rok także otworzył przestrzeń środkowo-wschodniej Europy do nowej dyskusji i zdefiniowania. Od roku 1989-ego zaczął się tak zwany powrót do Europy, któremu Andrzej Stasiuk wybrał inny kierunek niż ten sugerowany w idei Europy Środkowej w latach 1980-tych.

Proza Stasiuka i *moja Europa* są postrzegane jako apolityczne (Snochowska-Gonzalez 2008: 107). Alternatywny kierunek do Europy i wybieranie mało znanych periferyjnych miejsc do odwiedzania zamiast kulturowych i politycznych metropolii, są jednak świadomymi wyborami. Kształtują one *moją Europę* i dają jej raczej polityczny charakter. Przez swoją wizję Stasiuk też bierze udział w dyskusji i negocjowaniu na temat przestrzeni w Europie Środkowej po 1989 roku.

Moja Europa jest przykładem tego, że nie ma tylko jednej Europy Środkowej, lecz różne interpretacje i doświadczenia. W idei Europy Środkowej z lat 80-tych poszukiwana była wspólna przestrzeń poza państwowymi i terytorialnymi granicami. *Moja Europa* z kolei pokazuje subiektywną i fragmentaryczną przestrzeń, której sieć granic jednak daje sens. Jak narrator w *Jadąc do Babadag* powie: "Czasami mam wrażenie, że to wszystko trzyma się w kupie tylko dzięki granicom" (Stasiuk 2004: 218.) *Moja Europa* jest przestrzenią konkretnych podróży i miejsc. Do udowodnienia tego granice z konkretnymi ich znakami – stemplami i biało-czerwonymi szlabanami – muszą istnieć.

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