

Photography's Narrative Spaces – Stories About Man-Altered Landscape

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In the seminal text from 1982, Rosalind Krauss wrote about the discursive spaces of photography. She stated that varied interpretations of landscape photography depend on the image circulation. The "new topography" in photography provides in artistic language data on the situation of the natural environment. Therefore, it is not just a matter of changing fields of discourses but narratives through which discourses are created. In the paper I discuss the narrative contexts of photography, in regard to Krauss's concept of discourse and narratology by Mieke Bal. Examples are modern landscape photography in the new topography style. The goal of this artistic movement, which can be dated to the mid-1970s is to document and reflect on changes that occur in the environment through human activities (mainly related to industry). Today, however, artists' voices are increasingly commenting on climate change and environmental disaster. Therefore, these are activities that can be included in the field of environmental art (in regard to T. J. Demos concept) or, more broadly, criticisms directed towards capitalocene and anthropocene consequences. I will focus on three photographic projects presenting peripheral areas in Poland: documentation of the course of the Warta entitled 808.2 km by Waldemar Śliwczyński, Jedyńka (No. 1) by Maciej Rawluk and Urodzaj (The Harvest) by Michał Woroniak.

Introduction

In 1982, an article by Rosalind Krauss entitled *Discursive Spaces of Photography* was published. The author analyzed examples of landscape photography, paying attention to the discourses in which the images were created and function. The starting point for the analysis was copies of photographs by Timothy O'Sullivan from 1867 showing landscape of Nevada.¹ Krauss argued that the same picture in the discourse of topography and geography under which they were taken, functioned differently from the discourse of art under which we watch them in a museum.

In the author's opinion, the analysis of discourses belonging to image production methods allows us to see displacements not only in the area of

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1. R. Krauss, "Photography's Discursive Spaces: Landscape/View," *Art Journal* 42, no. 4 (1982): 311-319.

photography, but above all the cultural location of photography and its wandering between the scientific and artistic circulation.

This assumption about the distinctiveness of aesthetic and scientific discourses should be reviewed in the context of the contemporary “new topography” trend. In the area of art, they perform a dual function – they show the real states of geographical space, and also comment on human influence into natural environment.

In the paper I argue that Krauss's reflection on topographic and aesthetic discourse in contemporary photography is blurred, because in galleries today narratives characteristic for scientific discourse are displayed. This is a consequence of the fact that photography functions not only in different discursive spaces, but is considered as a narrative medium. Photography belongs to the group of narratives that Mieke Bal describes as “cultural artifacts that tell a story.”² As a part of aesthetic discourse the scientific narrative of natural changes is gaining in importance. Therefore, a relation between a discourse of science and the arts is altered. Topography is not only the subject of the photo, but primarily works as a text, allowing the creators to comment visually the changes taking place because of the anthropocene.³ For the artistic trend of new topography, a narrative, which legitimize the scientific sense of the image, is important.

In the text I will analyze three photographic projects by Polish artists: *808.2 km* by Waldemar Śliwczyński, *Motorway No. 1* (Jedynka) Maciej Rawluk and *Harvest* (Urodzaj) Michał Woroniak. Each of the chosen case studies interprets differently the assumptions of “new topography” in photography – a trend interested in showing a man-altered landscape. Photographers' works relate to landscape studies, dispute over new theoretical proposals such as anthropocene and capitalocene, as well as regard to issue of periphery. In the first two examples, forgotten peripheries in the geography of Poland are both Warta River and former motorway No. 91, dominated by the A1 motorway become a symbol of the depleted, abandoned memory. In turn, *Urodzaj* presents the circumstances of the creation of an open-cast mine in the agricultural region and refers to both possible damage to the area and its social benefit for residents.

The narrative nature of these works is an essential artistic mean that allows us to understand the relationship between natural and social changes taking place in the photographed spaces to which the story relates. It also adds to two

2. M. Bal, *Narratology. Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*. Second Edition (Toronto – Buffalo – London: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 3.

3. A good example here can be the work by Edward Burzynski. His works provides an argument in favor of indicating the real effects of anthropocene. The artist writes in the description of the project: “We feel that by describing the problem vividly, by being revelatory and not accusatory, we can help spur a broader conversation about viable solutions.” <https://www.edwardburzynsky.com/projects/photographs/anthropocene>.

discourses mentioned by Krauss the third one – the ethical discourse on political consequences of the Earth transformation.⁴

Literature Review

I analyze photographs taking into account three research frameworks: 1) research into the photographic nature of the image; 2) the discursive belonging of landscape photography and 3) the trend of new topography in art.

1) Various forms of phototextualities have been the point of interest to researchers since at least the 1980s, when seminal concepts of “thinking photography” were presented (the most influential books were *Thinking Photography* edited by Victor Burgin and *Another Way of Telling* by John Berger and Jean Mohr. Both books were published in 1982). The idea that photography is not only an image but a field of intersecting cultural meanings was inspired by both linguistic turn and semiotic theories in cultural theory (texts by early Roland Barthes, Umberto Eco) as well as studies of Michel Foucault's discourses. In parallel, photography becomes the subject of research from the perspective of narratology (Mieke Bal) and visual studies (W. J. T. Mitchell). All these approaches emphasize the specific nature of photography, which is based on iconic-index duality. The first feature allows us to recognize the reference object, the second one points directly to it.⁵ I assume that the tension between what is visible (according to Barthes' concept – what is denoted) and what is based on cultural associations allows to build a visual narrative in photography. Studies on the narrative nature of photographic images have led to in-depth researches on either the archival dimension of photography, photography as an object or the role of photography in the deconstruction of historical and ideological discourses.⁶

Michael Fried points out that from the 1970s and 1980s photography began to be produced “for the walls”, so the exhibition target began to dominate over

4. The ethical discourse proposed here is a consequence of rethinking nature changes on a global scale. Initiated in proposals for new geological dating, it soon resulted in concepts that take into account economic and political changes. So while Paul Crutzen, an atmospheric chemist, and Eugene Stoermer, a biologist, should be considered contemporary promoters of the Anthropocene, it is worth remembering about other related terms such as Capitalocene or Urbanocene.

5. Peirce, Barthes, Derrida.

6. This type of reflection can be found, among others in the volume edited by Alex Hughes and Andrea Noble. See A. Hughes and A. Noble (Eds.), *Phototextualities: Intersections of Photography and Narrative* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003).

others – journalistic or informational. At the same time, their ability to construct stories has become more and more important in photographic images.⁷

William J.T. Mitchell in *Picture Theory* defines photography as an image-text based on opposing processes: one occurs within a language that constructs a message according to the structural levels on which the exchange of meanings takes place, the other – in a picture that “resists.”⁸ Reading such an image-text emphasizes the cultural nature of the structure and brings the perspective of image research closer to the cultural analysis approach proposed by Bal, understood as firstly an interdisciplinary practice, appropriating knowledge derived from historical, psychological or natural research, and secondly interdisciplinary: aesthetic, political and social.⁹

2) The analysis of cultures as discursive formations arising from Michel Foucault's poststructuralist philosophy indicates the relationship between statements and non-linguistic determinants.¹⁰ The research on the discursive nature of photography therefore refer to both the ways of producing the image (R. Krauss) and its functioning within the social institutions (J. Tagg, A. Sekula). Fundamental to this type of analysis is both the reconstruction of the forms of representation characteristic of specific discursive formations, as well as their reference to contemporary knowledge about the image. In this sense, the question asked by Krauss about the intention of creating landscape photography is crucial. The author of *Discursive Spaces of Photography* asks: „But did O'Sullivan in his own day, the 1860 and 1970s, construct his work for the aesthetic discourse and the space of exhibition? Or did he create it for the scientific/topographical discourse which it more or less efficiently serves?”¹¹

The consequence of recognizing that the aesthetic discourse is dominant would be to include photography into the group of landscapes, and if the decisive nature of the scientific/topographical discourse were recognized, photography would belong to views. In the first case, formal and artistic evaluation would be important for the recipient, in the second – the information content of the image. As I will show, the new topography changes the question about the intention laying behind the act of taking pictures. The question asked by Krauss about the

7. M. Fried, *Why Photography Matters as Art as Never Before* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008).

8. W. J. T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 285.

9. Bal, “Introduction,” in *The Practice of Cultural Analysis. Exposing Interdisciplinary Interpretation* (ed.), M. Bal, 5-7 (Stanford California: Stanford University Press).

10. M. Foucault (1981), “The Order of Discourse,” in *Untying the Text: A Poststructuralist Reader*, (ed.), R. Young (trans.), Ian McLeod, 51-78 (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981).

11. Krauss, “Photography's Discursive Spaces: Landscape / View,” 1982, 313.

discursive belonging of images to a particular discursive space determines the position of the narrator and determines the intention of the artist producing the image.

Not only the production of photographs depends on the discourse that dominates in a given place and time, but also its presentation. The act of presenting photography is discursive because, as Bal writes, "implies a set of semiotic and epistemological habits that enables and prescribes ways of communicating and thinking that others who participate in the discourse can also use."¹² In analyzing the context of the presentation, however, it should be remembered that the exhibition is also a kind of a narrative.

3) The third of the research framework used in the article focuses on the question of the importance and evolution of the new topography trend. The name was first used in 1975 by curator William Jenkins as the title of the exhibition in New York. *New Topographics: Photographs of a Man-Altered Landscape* presented a collection of photographs, among others Robert Adams, Stephen Shore, Lewis Baltz (but also European artists Hilla and Bernd Becher) whose theme was to depict the transformed environment of everyday life.¹³ Jenkins undoubtedly benefited from the experience of previous shows, the subject of which was the relationship between nature space and human life (shown at two exhibitions from 1966 and 1967: *Toward a Social Landscape* and *New Documents*). In the opinion of Michael Truscello, the joint work for works exhibited under *New Topographics* was to be "intensive landscaping", commenting on changes occurring in the human life environment, including the expansive interference of industry in the landscape, as a result of which eagerly photographed earlier (e.g., by Ansel Adams or Edward Weston) spaces "untouched" by human presence disappear. Also Gisela Parak in the article *From 'Topographic' to 'Environmental' – A Look into the Past and the Presence of the New Topographics Movement* notes that photography has allowed in the last forty years to extract and visualize the most important changes in space.¹⁴

Photographs taken within the new topography movement combine stylistic similarities. Charlotte Cotton calls this style "deadpan", recognizable due to such features as 1) the specific emotional chill of the performance, often accented by the flatness of perspective, resulting from shooting in diffused light; 2) clarity

12. Bal, *Narratology. Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, 1997, 7.

13. M. Truscello, "The New Topographics," *Imaginations: Journal of Cross-Cultural Image Studies*, 3, no. 2 (2012): 189.

14. G. Parak, "From 'Topographic' to 'Environmental' – A Look into the Past and the Presence of the New Topographics Movement," *Depth of Field* 7, no. 1 (2015).

resulting from the use of sharp imaging cameras; 3) a carefully planned, static frame, enclosing the composition in a frame.¹⁵

The use of these three research frameworks allows to extract from the analyzed examples the dual narrative-discursive nature of photography. On the one hand, photography meets the conditions of a narrative text, because also with its help “agent relates (“tells”) a story in a particular medium.”¹⁶ On the other hand, the stories told function in a set of specific cultural meanings. This last understanding of discourse is particularly important for the examples of topographic photography analyzed in the text, because in their case the narrative analysis becomes a cultural analysis, leading to the recognition of the current way of thinking about geography and social changes.

Three Case Studies

808.2 Kilometers

The project titled *808.2 kilometers* by Waldemar Śliwczyński operate in two spaces of art: as an exhibition and a photobook. Photographs are dedicated to life along the Warta River from its sources in Kromolów to the estuary near Kostrzyn. The album consists of two volumes. In the first one, in the black and white photographs taken with a large-format camera, we see the buildings of cities and villages and the infrastructure of the river. The second part is a collection of colorful pictures taken with a modern digital camera showing the photographer at work.

In the first volume panoramic shots of the banks of the Warta River are intertwined with images of human activity that are associated with the river. We watch cyclists traveling by ferry, canoeists going ashore, people bathing in the river. However, this idyllic image of everyday life along the Warta is lined with anxiety. The river infrastructures are neglected, the buildings are melancholically abandoned and the water level is falling. Life is still going on, but for how long?

Nevertheless, it is the way of constructing panoramas that one should pay attention to the context of the question about the narrative of photography. Organizing the photo album as a series of panoramas following the river current encourages readers to linear reading of the volume. The narrative continuity is emphasized by panoramic frames (Figure 1). It is worth emphasizing that Śliwczyński does not stick them together in the way of digital photo processing

15. C. Cotton, *The Photograph as Contemporary Art* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2004), 82-83.

16. Bal, *Narratology. Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, 1997, 5.

programs, but he leaves a thin white frame around every photo. This break in the consistency of the frames printed on the following pages of the album makes the recipient aware of the need to mentally supplement the missing parts. The story in the frame meets the requirements of the visual narrative described in *Another Way of Telling* by John Berger, according to which “appearances both distinguish and joins events.”¹⁷ The creation of visual narrative here is subject to the principle of perception of the whole and mentally supplementing the missing fragments. Paradoxically therefore, separating the panorama with a white border draws attention to the panoramic view of the frame.

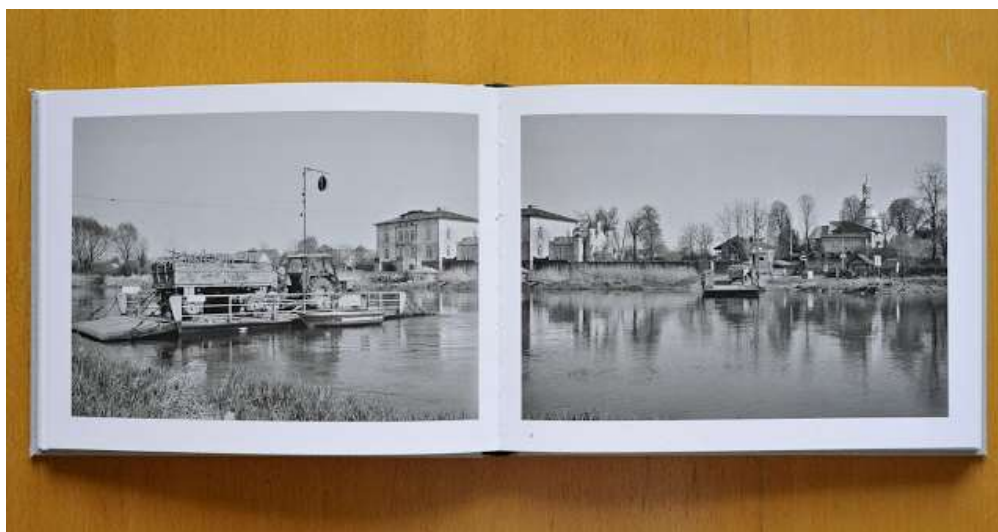


Figure 1. Waldemar Śliwczyński, *808.2 Kilometers*, 2015

Source: Courtesy of the Artist.

Also the way of presentation of photographs at the exhibition suggests a chronological and geographical continuity of the story.¹⁸ Śliwczyński suggested a kind of narrow corridor on which both sides pictures were placed. Works from the first volume were enlarged to the same scale and hung on the wall in the one line. Opposite, in a fairly short distance, photos hung documenting the implementation of the project (Figure 2).

17. J. Berger and J. Mohr, *Another Way of Telling* (New York: Vintage International, 1995), 133.

18. I refer to the exhibition *Eksploracje. Między naukowością a topografią* (*Explorations. Between science and topography*), curated by Sławomir Tobis, Municipal Gallery “Arsenal” in Poznań 2015.



Figure 2. Waldemar Śliwczyński, *808.2 Kilometers*, 2015

Source: Courtesy of the Artist.

Motorway No. 1

Also the series of photographs by Maciej Rawluk entitled *Motorway No. 1* (in Polish *Jedynka*) was published in the form of a photobook, a form that imposes a linear order of reading. This narrative is present both at the level of presentation of the content and in the artistic means of expression used by the photographer. The leitmotif of the series of photos is a journey along the former main road leading from North to South of Poland. Rawluk begins its cycle at the port of Gdańsk and ends 600 kilometers away, at the border crossing in Cieszyn. The story is devoted to the lives of people that changed when a new A1 highway was built next to the former road. The former *Jedynka* lost its significance, and the local residents who earned the benefits of transit traffic lost their jobs. Rawluk photographs subsequent fragments of the landscape along the motorway (Figure 3), and interlaces them with portrait photographs of people living along the road and living on it (Figure 4).



Figure 3. Maciej Rawluk, *Motorway No. 1*, 2014

Source: Courtesy of the Artist.



Figure 4. Maciej Rawluk, *Motorway No. 1*, 2014

Source: Courtesy of the Artist.

In the portraits one can recognize the inspiration of the “social” style developed since the times of Lewis Hine and August Sander. The main characters, shown against the background of objects that define their profession and social position, look straight into the lens. As John Tagg writes, this kind of frontal positioning of the model towards the photographer became a code denoting the specific ontological status of photography as evidence confirming the reality of

the photographed object.¹⁹ Looking at photographed gas station employees, truck drivers or roadside bar customers, we are to believe that they are not actors, but real people. The purpose of the narrative is to record everyday life along the peripheral road, monotonous, almost boring.

Harvest

The third example that I want to present in the paper is the project titled *Harvest* by Michał Woroniak. The photographer chooses a different narrative strategy from the other, described above, two authors. The presentation of works chosen by Woroniak is intended for the exhibition in the gallery. Colorful frames, enlarged in various scales, are hung at various heights. The visitor's view wanders between frames in a non-linear way, focusing on the characteristic elements of the images, as well as in accordance with the “walking” route chosen by the recipient. Photographs were taken in three small towns of southern Wielkopolska (Krobia, Poniec and Miejska Górka). That area in the Polish geographical imagination represented fertile lands. However, the discovery of lignite deposits encourages investors to transform this area into mining areas (Figure 5).



Figure 5. Michał Woroniak, *Harvest*, 2017

Source: Courtesy of the Artist.

19. J. Tagg, *The Burden of Representation. Essays on Photographies and Histories* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998), 195.

Woroniak chooses the form characteristic of the visual language of the new topography. The scenes were photographed in diffused light, the compositions clearly distinguished those objects that indicate human interference in the environment. The realism of the performance is also important here. Careful composition of the frame organizes reality. The booms of drilling equipment photographed by Woroniak, the tires with which the composters are covered, are supposed to resemble almost a catalog inventory of equipment. The photographer talks about the changes taking place in space, but he cannot recreate the state of nature from before human interference.

Discussion

The new topography approach encourages photographers to explore the scale of human interference in the natural environment, and at the same time breaks the traditional division into aesthetic landscape and scientific views. This is clearly seen when we look at multidisciplinary activities such as *Anthropocene* project by Edward Burtynsky. It is a series multimedia works that use both traditional publication forms, films and photographs, as well as VR tools.²⁰ Each fragment of the series is based on the latest scientific research on environmental changes. Burtynsky's photographs and films show a shift in landscape photography towards criticism of anthropocene. The same happens (on a not so spectacular scale) in the works of three Polish photographers. Their photographs are carefully framed and adapted to contemporary exhibition conventions (especially Woroniak's works). There are *landscapes*, but also *views* (in the sense given to these terms by Krauss) because they encourage an audience to look at the world itself, shown in the frames. Landscape imaging is to invite recipients to think about the dependence of the inhabitants' life on the river (in Śliwczyński's works), the role of infrastructure in shaping living conditions (by Rawluk) or the social dimension of environmental transformations (in Woroniak's photographs). This effect is achieved by narrative means. Each of visual narratives presented in the paper takes place in time – two of them have their spatial beginning and end, the third leaves an open ending.

In regard to Mieke Bal statement that the fabula is “a series of logically and chronologically related events that are caused or experienced by actors,”²¹ then the fabula of Śliwczyński's photos is marked by his journey from the sources of the Warta from its estuary, and Rawluk's – by the journey from the Baltic to the

20. <https://www.edwardburtynsky.com/projects/the-anthropocene-project>. [Accessed 6 May 2020.]

21. Bal, *Narratology. Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, 1997, 5.

Carpathian. Both of these wanderings also have their clearly defined narrators. In Śliwczyński's project, the narrator is first-person, revealed by volume two, when he simultaneously becomes the main character of phototext (Figure 2), in Rawluk's project the narrator is initially invisible in the frame, a third-person, and yet his gaze is also recognizable by the point of view and composition of the frame (Figure 3). However, the narrators/photographers are also actors who experience the story in these series of photographs.

The visual plot in Woroniak's project develops through the collision of a textual commentary regarding the fate of specific localities with their images. The omniscient narrator looks from a distance, invisible in the frame. This narrative character of the photographs is to direct our attention towards the environment transformed by human action. This targeting further deepens the interdiscursiveness of images. I wrote earlier that each of the three examples discussed earlier functions as both landscape and view. It is therefore both a "for the wall" image (to re-use the term Michael Fried) intended for museum discourse, as well as a source of information intended for reception on the terms of research data.

Rosalind Krauss draws attention to the role of the institution (e.g., museum) in qualifying the image's belonging to a particular discourse. Also today, over thirty years after Krauss published her article, recognition of the photographer's work as an "artistic," "scientific" or "popularizing" project affects its reception by viewers. The strategy of new topographers to talk about natural and social problems in the gallery is therefore purposeful. The information content on knowledge about natural changes may thus go beyond the scope of specialist scientific discourse towards popularization. In the case of contemporary works of photography as art – they are immediately part of aesthetic discourse, but specific – exploring and referring to the need to explore, study reality. This interpretation mode is suggested to the recipients by means of visual means – a documentary focus on the representation of details and resignation from chiaroscuro and colorful effects typical of the discourse of the picturesque landscape. Photographers' works are topographic in the sense of mapping the geography of the world transformed by human activity. In this way, aesthetic discourse becomes a tool with which scientific narrative is conducted.

In fact, however, both lead to a third – to ethical discourse focused on a critical look at the effects of anthropocene. Dipesh Chakrabarty writes about this dimension of reflection on the anthropocene as follows: "From the very beginning of its career, then, the Anthropocene has had two lives, sometimes in the same texts: a scientific life involving measurements and debates among qualified scientists, and a more popular life as a moral-political issue."²²

22. D. Chakrabarty, "Anthropocene Time," *History and Theory*, no. 1 (2018) 5-32.

This is not about anthropocene as a human time or capitalocene²³ as an era that subordinate the Earth to economic capitalist exploration. The dispute is not only about theoretical concepts, but about political choices and its impact on the ways of human life. Looking at the topics chosen by new topographers, it is easy to notice that the images of abandoned factories, ecological disasters caused by industry, or – as in the case of the works discussed in the paper, the effects of particular investments – dominate in the perspective of global criticism of economic systems abandoning the human scale, and which leads to the omission of an individual human figure. Maybe photographers don't choose Naomi Klein's radically political perspective, but her spirit seems to sound in the background. Introducing a critical look at anthropocene to the field of art gives artistic activities an engaged character. As a result, in the interpretation of images of the man-altered environment presented by photographers, their content – the story of the world, comes to the fore. Thus, topographic photography becomes a way of exceeding the frames of specialist discourses: scientific or artistic and the opportunity to present the consequences of the industrial age to a wide audience.

Conclusions

From one hand, T.J. Demos notes that contemporary visual culture plays an important role in making recipients aware of the costs of industrial expansion.²⁴ On the other, Nicolas Mirzeoff presents the mission of the pictures even more strongly. In his book titled *How to See the World*, he emphasizes the role of imagination in recognizing global natural processes (or, to be more specific, “naturecultural”²⁵ processes). Mirzeoff states that we cannot imagine the scale of changes because – first of all, the concept of climate is abstract for us, and secondly, the data on the scale of climate change provided by scientists are too theoretical. “We have to make climate change less abstract”²⁶ Mirzeoff calls and convinces the readers that images are the best rhetorical tools to show it. Therefore, one can say, following the scholar’s steps, that photography

23. N. Klein, *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs the Climate* (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2014).

24. T. J. Demos, *Against the Anthropocene. Visual Culture and Environment Today* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2016), 56.

25. The term “natureculture” was introduced by Donna Haraway to emphasize the impossibility of distinguishing the scale of cultural expansion into nature. See D. J. Haraway, *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness*, volume 1 (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2003).

26. N. Mirzeoff, *How to See the World: An Introduction to Images, from Self-Portraits to Selfies, Maps to Movies, and More* (New York: Basic Books, 2016).

simultaneously shows and gives us a substitute for experience. Paradoxically – the more documentary, scientific and restrained the image is, the more we believe it. So, although the artistic means used in the new topography do not use picturesqueness, they not only do not distance us from the views, but on the contrary – they move us emotionally. Topographic photography has another advantage: because, as Hans Belting states, “instead of visiting pictures, we prefer now to visit places in pictures,”²⁷ we mentally visit the places of destruction – we are “there” and thus we can understand the scale of the transformation.

The photographers whose works are discussed in the text, however, do not show us a global change, they focus on the minor effects of the disaster for individual residents of the transformed areas. Therefore, perhaps their visual storytellings are also convincing – being “there”, in the place shown in the picture, we begin to identify with the subjects of their stories. Problems cease to be abstract and we begin to perceive them on a human scale. None of the photographers – neither Woroniak, Śliwczyński nor Rawluk give the answer what to do – they only tell a story whose purpose is to make the viewers think. This is how photography of new topography works. The photographer's role is to tell stories, to viewers – to act.

To summarize, let's ask what is therefore the role of new topography in art?

Firstly, it fulfills the task set by Krauss – analyzing photography discourses “dismantle the photographic archive – the set of practices, institutions, and relationships to which [...] photography belonged”²⁸ and puts landscape photography in a new light. In photography as art, dominant narratives change. At the end of the 20th century, the problem of memory representation was the focus – now environmental narrative becomes the dominant one. It is worth being aware of how the discourse of art is entangled in the social and political context. Secondly, the dominant role of the new topography is also to make people aware of the many contexts of understanding the effects of anthropocene. This term in culture is freed from its scientific roots and begins to work as a metaphor appealing to recipients.

And finally, we do not need narrative only to fantasize, but mainly to understand better the reality. The story is a tool of recognizing our own identity²⁹. First of all, we tell the stories to comprehend the world around us and see our place in it. If we admit that photography has the ability to narrate, we'll also

27. H. Belting, *An Anthropology of Images. Picture, Medium, Body* (trans.), Thomas Dunlap (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011), 41.

28. Krauss, “Photography's Discursive Spaces: Landscape/View,” 1982, 317.

29. This is how Paul Ricoeur presents the concept of narrative identity. See e.g., P. Ricoeur, *The Course of Recognition* (trans.), David Pellauer (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005).

admit that it can be one of the tools that will help to recognize the importance of the environmental change.

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