People in the City of Coal and Steel: Visual Analysis of an Exemplary Socialist Town

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Abstract

Ostrava, which used to be nicknamed the "steel heart of the republic", was an important industrial centre during and after socialism. The city's official visual presentation of itself during socialism was that of a happy life in an urban environment where it is already possible to catch glimpses of a glorious future facilitated by industrialization and its related transformations to the city's everyday life and landscape. In this paper, I present a visual analysis of the official discourse about Ostrava and everyday life there. I then confront the constituent elements of this visually produced urban landscape with distinctly more ambivalent testimonies by artistic photographers from the same period. The aim is to comprehend the basic compositional elements that furnished the multilayered image of an industrial city and people's roles there and use the two contrasting imageries of Ostrava's urban landscape to inquire into the relationship between urban landscape and visual discourse.

Key words

visual discourse analysis, anthropology of landscape, Ostrava, urban landscape, photography

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Located near the Czech Republic's north-eastern border with Poland, the metropolis of Ostrava symbolized industrialization during the 20th century. It did so not just in cultural (e.g., literary) output but also, beginning in the 1950s, the city became a crucial motif of the regime's rhetoric during socialism. It was here in the "black city", in the "city of coal and steel", that the "steel heart of the republic" was beating. In the official rhetoric of the regime, which is the focus of this paper, Ostrava became a city that was especially exemplary in industrial terms, and not just economically important, but also discursively. Ostrava was used as a city that was exemplary of industry and of socialism, one where it was already possible, in the present, to see the future, that utopian unity of the environment with the people and their work toward which Czechoslovakia, in those days, was heading ideologically under the baton of socialism.

This paper analyses some of the discourse officially produced about Ostrava during socialism. I am interested in how Ostrava is visually represented in the photographic publications about the city that were published either by its own administration or by other institutions, most of them also based in Ostrava, beginning in the 1950s. The aim of the analysis is to reveal the discursively-presented, discursively-shaped unity of this Ostrava, especially people's roles in this city idealized as one of coal, fire and steel. A canon of imagery is created through the coherency of both the representation style and the subjects of these visuals. The photographs and pictorial units can be understood as presenting the city's landscape, which is built from certain elements, and the relationships between those elements is what must be explored. In the case of these official products, they generate an ideological, political statement, the city forms a landscape that is political (see Warnke 1994). Following Seliger, it is possible to define ideology as a "sets of ideas by which men posit, explain and justify ends and means of organized social action, and specifically political action, irrespective of whether such action aims to preserve, amend, uproot or rebuilt a given social order" (Seliger 1976 cited in Eagleton 1991: 6–7). In this case, the means are of a nature that is visual (photographs and photographic publications), and the end is to create a coherent statement about Ostrava, a city landscape that is shaped visually, consisting of certain elements folded into a coherent, natural-seeming, single whole, a city that is exemplary of the ideal of socialism, that directs us toward a future utopia (a visual discourse).

This analysed landscape of Ostrava as politically shaped, visually speaking, will then be confronted with alternative photographic testimonies about the city and the life in it so as to denaturalize this developed image of the official Ostrava and its residents, thereby disrupting both the coherency and the veracity of that created image of Ostrava and its regime. The analy-

sis involves art photographers (Viktor Kolář, Květoslav Kubala, Jindřich Štreit and Miloš Polášek) who have long been dedicated to Ostrava, and their work is the material used in this second section. Although they differ in many ways when it comes to the Ostrava of their testimonies (not just stylistically, but also content-wise), they all destabilize the image of the landscape of Ostrava as it was officially produced and thereby allow us to see that product anew, as a result of which we can also think through the relationship between a discourse that is visual and the imagery produced by photographs. This can lead us to considerations that are more general about urban landscapes as created politically and as envisioned in specific ways (see Cosgrove 1984). The aim of the paper as a whole is to reveal a complicated image of Ostrava (and of people's roles there) as administered by these two sets of testimonies that are visual and, on the basis of this imagery, to inquire into the relationship between the city (the urban landscape) and these visual materials.[1] In advance of that analysis, however, it is necessary to clarify the methodological position and the theory upon which this paper is based – namely, the relationship between an (urban) landscape as a mode of seeing and the analysis of its discourse in visual terms. That will be followed by the analysis of the materials themselves – the constituent elements of the landscape of Ostrava, summarized – and then by a general discussion of the relationship between materials produced by photography, the construction of a distinct mode for their viewing, and opportunities to destabilize that gaze.

Landscape of an industrial city: The seeing, the photographing, the analysing

The term "urban landscape" could seem (in the Czech social science setting) to be somewhat strange and also not a term of art with regard to issues of photographic production and visual analysis. A landscape can be "morphologically" perceived purely as a segment of the outside world with a certain character of uniformity, where its parts relate to one another within a stabilized system (cf. e.g., Hadač 1982). The "anthropocentric" concept of landscape started to be advocated in the days of humanist geography (e.g., Tuan 1977) in the social sciences. This concept views landscape, at the most general level, as the lived world, the reality experienced and ordered by humans as embodied beings (see Tuan 1979; for the most recent work with this idea see e.g., Bender 2002b; Low 2003;

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1 This paper is one output of my long-term research into Czech industrial landscapes and their (post)socialist transformations (see also Gibas 2008; Gibas 2010; Gibas 2013).

Wylie 2009). The attempts by human beings to establish themselves in a landscape and their connections with it lead to the thematizing of their different ways of ordering and processing this geographical reality. With regard to the aims of this paper, British geographer Dennis Cosgrove's work (Cosgrove 1984; Cosgrove – Daniels 1990) sees landscape as a social construct created from the interaction between a material environment and an historically specific visuality, while anthropologists concentrate on the issue of the production of specific landscapes (Hirsch – O'Hanlon 1995) and the problem of power in the construction of landscapes, whether in the form of the material transformation of spaces for their symbolization or for their symbolic re-inscription (e.g., Duncan 1990). For Cosgrove, the ordering and processing of geographical reality is linked to the issue of emotionality and aesthetics, and landscape is understood as arising from the meeting of the material environment with a perspective that "sees" it in some way and thereby mediates the material environment as an emotional experience. For anthropologists, this ordering is related to the issue of socially-negotiated meanings, and the possible experiences of material environments and landscapes arise from the clashes between the different socially-negotiated meanings ascribed to them. In these works (which span anthropology and geography, epistemologically speaking), landscape is therefore always understood as a material space that is actively negotiated, shaped and symbolized, and then experienced and perceived in that way (see also Rodman 1992; Okely 2001).

Cosgrove comprehends landscape as "an historically specific way of experiencing the world developed by, and meaningful to, certain social groups" (Cosgrove 1984: 15). He actually describes the "grand" history of landscape as European, as a concept developed from European history, and demonstrates that landscape is quite closely connected to depictions of the outside world in visual ways and thereby also connected to the aesthetics of the visual and its development. Landscape is not just an aesthetic concept, but also an ideological one *per se*; at a certain historical moment it is imbued with the emotions and meanings associated with the aesthetics and the symbolism, in visual terms, of certain groups in society. According to Cosgrove, the landscape "is not merely the world we see, it is a construction, a composition of the world. Landscape is a way of seeing the world" (Cosgrove 1984: 13).

The anthropocentric concept of landscape is not, as it might seem, solipsistic; it does not claim that landscape exists just as a mental construct without any connection to material "reality". On the contrary, this concept emphasizes and analyses the intimate connection between human perception of the world and involvement in it at the material level, admitting the

crucial role that materiality plays in the formation of landscape, which in turn admits that the formation of the connection between our involvement in and perception of the world is also impacted in a major way by that materiality (Bender 2002a: 487). In these approaches, landscape as perceived through human subjectivities is not itself conceptualized in a subjectivist way. Landscape as perceived by people, their aesthetic conceiving and emotional experiencing of it, is always conditioned by a context that is historical and sociocultural, concretized in the experience of landscape as an entity that is culturally, historically and socially situated, unambiguously. As Barbara Bender says, on the one hand landscape exists materially, outside of human minds, but on the other hand "it is we, through our embodied understanding, … who create the categories and the interpretations. … To say that landscape and time are subjective does not require a descent into a miasma of cultural relativity. It simply means that the engagement with landscape and time is historically particular, imbricated in social relations and deeply political" (Bender 2002b: 104).

Anthropologists such as Bender, or Hirsch and O'Hanlon are, unlike Cosgrove, devoted to the "micro" histories of particular landscapes, the specific, intimate interconnections between the material and the social, demonstrating how everyday life and an existence that is ideal, imagined, "the idealized world visually represented by the image" (i.e., the mode of seeing) are reflected in landscape. Hirsch and O'Hanlon argue that landscape arises "from the relationship between the 'foreground' and the 'background' of social life" and represents the result of negotiations between socially-shaped ideas and ideals as they move forward on the level of everyday life, everyday experiences and everyday practices (Rodman 1992; Hirsch and O'Hanlon 1995: 3). In addition to visual metaphors of landscape, in anthropology these metaphors can also be textual. The aim of these metaphors is to comprehend the connections between the human organization and perception of the world, its expression in material terms, how these connections in landscapes materialize themselves, and how landscapes express these "set[s] of ideas and values, unquestioned assumptions about the way a society *is,* or should be organized … Virtually, any landscape can be analysed as a text in which social relations are inscribed." (Duncan – Duncan 1988: 123) However, a landscape is not just a single text, but rather a space where connections between different social texts transpire, where the relationships between the communicated realities of the texts and the ideas that they record are being negotiated. Landscape is again thus understood as an area blending together the background of these socially-accented texts with the foreground of the everyday life of society. Exploring landscape as intertextuality allows us to uncover the power

relationships behind its negotiation and production as a given, as a matter of course, as natural, thereby facilitating the denaturalization of landscape as the expression of an apparently natural order while facilitating inspection of its ambiguity, its many layers, its mutability and its political nature. Although landscape is perceived and represented (e.g., through paintings, photographs and the written word) as apolitical, non-ideological (because natural) and stable, it is actually a constant process (Hirsch – O'Hanlon 1995) connecting the material world around us with the meanings constantly inscribed into it via experiences and practices. Like time itself, the apparently stable landscape never stands still (Bender 2002b: 103).

It is obvious that within such concepts, it is not important whether a landscape is a non-urban or urban one. Both kinds of landscape can be viewed the same way; all that changes are the concrete sets of images and texts, the ways of seeing, and the production of the meanings applied to each kind.

To analyze landscape as intertextuality or as a way of seeing means revealing the power structures and symbolic structures inscribed into the landscape which facilitate and form the modes for experiencing and perceiving it, the emotionality evoked by the given landscape, all of which actually form a given landscape both in terms of its "exterior" and with regard to landscape as experience (see e.g., Okely 2001). This paper intends to parse such a text, one that is powerfully woven from symbols that are visual, about Ostrava and people's roles there through an analysis of this discourse that is visual, as established by Gillian Rose (2002).

Following Foucault, Rose understands discourse as "groups of statements which structure the way a thing is thought, and the way we act on the basis of that thinking. In other words, discourse is a particular knowledge about the world which shapes how the world is understood and how things are done in it" (Rose 2002: 136). This paper is based on first-order discourse analysis, an analytical method that emphasizes "discourse as articulated through various kinds of visual images and verbal texts" (ibid.: 140). It concentrates, therefore, on analysing material that is visual and that has been contextualized here and there through the writing – captions, comments, names of the photographs, etc. – about Ostrava in these photographic publications. The analysis of the background to this book production by these institutions, as well as the entire visual discourse and particular practices of each institution (i.e., in Rose's understanding, second-order discourse analysis) is therefore deliberately ignored. Rose also shows us the crucial loci (there are three) to meaning-production in material that is visual (an image or set of images): the locus of its production, the locus of its reception, and the image in and of itself, which can be focused on either

in combination with others or in isolation when studying visual material (ibid.: 32). First-order visual discourse analysis concentrates on the image in and of itself and its meanings, on how they are produced with the aid of visual media and their combinations, and on the effects of the seeming naturalness and truthfulness of the meanings shaped thereby. Such analysis assumes an interest in revealing the authoritativeness, naturalness and truthfulness of the discourse at hand. According to Duncan and Duncan, with regard to landscape, this is about revealing the symbolic system that facilitates the materialization of these meanings which subsequently become apparently natural (Duncan – Duncan 1988: 123).

The analysis of a discourse depends, obviously, "not on the quantity of the analysed material, but on its quality" (Rose 2002: 143). After an intensive search, I acquired and analysed 10 books officially[2] produced by the socialist regime (*Dějiny NHKG* 1981 [History of the The Klement Gottwald New Steelworks 1981]; *Karvinsko* 1975 [Karviná District 1975]; *Ostrava* 1975; *Ostravsko* 1975 [Ostrava District 1975]; *Ostravsko-karvinský revír* 1975 [Ostrava-Karviná district 1975]; *Ostravsko ve fotografii* 1972 [Ostrava District in photography 1972]; *Ostrava* 1978; *Ostrava* 1985; *Ostrava barevná* 1962 [Colourful Ostrava 1962]; *Uhlí a lidé* 1974 [Coal and People 1974]), of which attention was focused on the final four of this list. For this analysis, the book *Ostrava barevná* [Colourful Ostrava] turned out to be essential, as it condenses the discourse produced by all of the books used. Artistic productions (Renner and Sklář 2007) and official post-socialist productions (Sikula 2006; Ostrava 2005; Ostrava Nonstop 2010; Technické památky v Ostravě 2007 [Technical Monuments in Ostrava] 2007) served as a context that, while this paper does not explicitly go into it, does frame my grasp of the discourse produced, which is anchored in the analysis presented here. The second section of this paper analyses publications about the photographs of Viktor Kolář (2010), Jindřich Štreit (2008), Milos Polášek (2010) and Květoslav Kubala (2012) which, while they were more recently released,

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2 This division into alternative (unofficial) and official publications is largely artificial, of course. Different institutions both within Ostrava and also outside it (e.g., the Czech News Agency) issued photographic publications about Ostrava during socialism, and for post-socialist publications the situation becomes even more complex due to the number of publishing houses and distributors. I generally understand an alternative, artistic, unofficial production to be those where the artist's position as the photographer is essential, unlike official publications where the identity of the photographers is pushed into the background (especially during socialism). As for the books from the second part of this analysis, they are retrospectives of a substantial part of each photographer's life work, and their main objective is not to produce visual statements about Ostrava, but to map the artistic activity of each photographer.

do contain photographs which are either from the period of socialism or quite close to output from that time in terms of content and subject matter.[3] It appears that Kolář's and Kubala's Ostrava work is especially crucial, as it condenses their antithesis to the official productions in visual terms, but all four books contain that antithesis as well.[4]

When analysing the publications, I was interested in particular in the following, with reference to Rose: How the discourse is specifically structured and how its coherent idea and message are shaped; what meanings are produced by the photographs and by their unification into sets, specifically, and how these meanings and the photographs cluster together; how the convincingness and truthfulness of the statements is shaped; to what extent the imagery (the discourse) is coherent and where it contains internal inconsistencies, overall; and last but not least, what never appears in the imagery, what is not seen or said (Rose 2002: 150–158). The work with the material was performed by coding each image in as much detail as possible with regard to content, formal processing, and subject matter, after which I examined their relationships across the entire image set, the clusters of those relationships, and their significances. According to Rose, such analysis is not too bound by any formal requirements and must never become constricted in such a way. After all, this is a hermeneutic, interpretive process that "depends less on rigorous procedures and more on other qualities" such as craftsmanship, erudition (ibid.: 149) and thoroughness. In visual discourse analysis it is necessary to "immerse yourself in the materials with which you are dealing with. Read and re-read the texts; look and look again at the images" (ibid.: 150). The interpretations I offer are the result of just such a repeated, controlled inspection and recalculation, at the very beginning of which was my effort to free myself of any possible "predisposition" and to assume a critical gaze. The analysis gave birth to the interpretations,

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3 Štreit's Vítkovice work was photographed and released for the 180th anniversary of the Vítkovice Ironworks. I use it for its kinship in terms of content, style and subject matter because, like the work of the other three photographers, it allows us to look anew at the official productions and some of their themes.

4 Kubala's and Polášek's work is both extremely interesting and problematic, somewhat, because both contributed, to different extents, to official publications during socialisms. It is precisely for these reasons that I comprehend especially the monograph by Polášek (whose images filled official publications to a great extent) to be more auxiliary at this time. Thinking through the relationships between official and personal productions deserves much more space and more thorough interest than can be given here, and at the same time it would require focusing not just on the visual material itself, but also on its production sites, which would require a more comprehensive methodology than I apply in this paper.

not the other way around, i.e., they are ways, based on this analysis, of comprehending and interpreting these collections of photographs.

Colourful Ostrava: Labour, focus on targets, harmony

The first captivating aspect of the photographic publications produced about Ostrava during socialism is the fact that they are mainly in colour. Not all of the photos necessarily are in colour, but most are, especially the ones featured in important parts of the books' layouts (mostly on the cover and in the main photographic section in the middle of a publication), and they depict key subjects. The emphasis on the colour scheme is related to the emphasis on progress that is characteristic of these publications as a set, referring simultaneously to the objectivity of the photographs and their realism. These books pretend to portray Ostrava as it actually exists, without any embellishment or extraneous emotionality, as full of development and success, labour and life, and inhabited by people who belong there.

Through their focus on these subjects, the realistically-coloured photographs show the success of the city's construction and through that, the glorious communist future, reflections of which can already be seen in the Ostrava of the present in which the photographs were taken. It acts as a city that is exemplary, and one building block of its exemplariness is the housing estate that was erected for more than 100,000 inhabitants in the middle of a green meadow beginning in the 1950s and culminating in the 1970s, Poruba (Fig. 1).

Of course, socialism is an offshoot of modernity, and the aesthetic of modernism (or more precisely, its vestiges) forms an integral part of socialist visuality. The geometric forms of the housing estates are a frequent motif, praised both rhetorically and visually, mainly photographed either from a distance or from a height so their regularity can stand out in the terrain. They become abstract figures through a use of distance and perspective that allows them to appear self-sufficient, beyond the quotidian, devoid of people, devoid of activity, geometric shapes of a monumentality that is pure. It is black-and-white photographs that mostly serve to monumentalize these housing estates. Colour is mainly used when it is necessary to emphasize the building of a housing estate, the progress, the reaching of a target. The black-and-white monumentalization is enhanced further through colour filters (red ones), allowing a cloud-heavy, dark sky to perform its own role in the photo that results: "The harvest that has been finished in District 5-Poruba also reminds us of the construction workers' harvest – the completed construction of this residence for the factory labour of Ostrava" reads the caption for one such photograph, where a distant housing estate

of high-rise buildings and its regular rhythm, as a whole, is framed by fields
that have been harvested (Ostrava 1978: 26). In their abstraction, dictated
by the distance and the visual wherewithal used to frame them, the housing
estates of Ostrava appear to exist as independent, unique wholes.

In addition to the successful construction of monumentalized housing,
other components of the urban space, from its public transportation to its
educational, medical and recreational facilities, serve as testaments to this
advancement toward a bright future that is already underway. Although
apparently such buildings are less monumental, a clear communication
is created about the city's daily life through their portrayal – in this city
of exemplary industry, the inhabitants are provided with everything they
could possible need for their diligent labour, their everyday lives, and their
active relaxation.

This can be seen in the flawless, modern public transportation; the equip-
ment of high quality in the laboratories; the military headquarters; and
the full lecture rooms at universities attended not just by intently-listening
students from Czechoslovakia, but by people from all over the world, as
evidenced by the faces of the Africans present (e.g., Ostrava barevná 1962:
64, 72, 74–75).

Although advancement towards these glorious tomorrows is a chief
content line of colourful Ostrava, this does not mean this urban landscape
never references its own past. The publications proffer a specific vision of
the past and ways in which the past is present in Ostrava's urban landscape.
The monumentalization of the past is also produced here. Its crucial ele-
ments are the reminders of and testaments to the struggle for socialism,
especially battles during the Second World War and elements glorifying
victory. This past that was so unrestrained and wild, however, is now tamed
and only persists in building facades of old houses (such as the Municipal
Museum of Ostrava) which become the background for the happy life of
the present which, while it is based on that past, anticipates the future and
faces forward. This is ahistorical, in the sense that both the future and the
past are stripped of their own existences (and of any alternative narrative
opportunities) and are bound to the city of colourful Ostrava which, while
it is historical, transcends timeliness as it is usually understood through
its very progressiveness. Before the barrels of the guns used in the grand
struggles of the past, which have since been tamed, children, the hope for
the future, are playing (Fig. 2).

Although the main subject of these photographic publications is Ostrava,
and although city life, the fixtures and furnishings of public spaces, and
monuments to the past and present are also their themes, it is their emphasis
on industry – coal mining and the production of steel – that is particularly

primary. Coal and steel are the crucial elements of Ostrava's rise, they are the argument for and the core of its existence, they are the real reason why Ostrava exists in the form that it does and can be photographed in realistic colour.

The book *Colourful Ostrava* in particular (more than the other publications) portrays industry and those involved in it through an aesthetic that is pictorial, evoking paintings. Buildings are depicted through exterior shots, as are the effects of industrial production (particularly smoke, smog and glowing factories), all as harmonious parts of a space that is urban: "…above the city, children sit and take in the view over the roofs of the houses, where Nová huť [New Ironworks] is smoking and where a cable car conveying carts of coal over the city hovers overhead" (Ostrava barevná 1962: 31). These buildings of industry (factories, smokestacks, tanks) naturally spring forth, amplifying this atmosphere and adding another dimension, an emotional one, to the natural world (Fig. 3). Industry therefore becomes a component that is integral to both the city and to the natural world, and this harmony, as represented visually, again demonstrates how these endeavours that are so progressive are succeeding in this colourful Ostrava. The dream is being fulfilled here of industrialization, modernism and urbanization walking into the future, hand in hand, unafraid of any consequences for either the environment or society.

The interior shots also reference paintings, especially portraits in the style of socialist realism. These are either shots from the depths of the earth, where "in mineshafts that are weakly lit, the miners who are so tireless work with focus and without respite, almost merging into the coal, just their eyes glowing out of their blackened faces" (Ostrava barevná 1962: 14), or shots of factory halls full of sunlight and blistering metal, smoke and the fire that has been tamed through the art of the metallurgists to be exploited for the good of all. The fascination, bordering on fetishization, with flame-coloured light is interesting, whether that be rays from a sun that is low on the horizon or the fire of the furnaces for melting metal. Between two flames that are taller than he is stands a barely visible pitman in a white hood, captioned "Prometheus" (Ostrava barevná 1962: 35). The art of taming fire is one of the most emphasized and most stable subjects all of the official Ostrava-related productions during socialism (Fig. 4).

Nevertheless, it is possible to ask where the actual people are who reside in these housing estates that are so spectacular and who use all the conveniences Ostrava offers. In colourful Ostrava, what is interesting about the people is their coexistence with their environment in harmony, how they fit into this harmony of industry, nature and urbanity. They are almost never shown standing still, and if they are, it is always for some kind of purpose.

The everydayness of human life, as created and presented by these photographic publications, is harmonious, full of arrangement and order, awareness and aims. There is no boredom, there are no empty moments in this Ostrava, there is not an instant without a meaning and a purpose. Even relaxation is, above all, an active state – in addition to photographs paying tribute to the city's construction and functioning, or to industry, all of the books contain shots paying tribute to children and to active relaxation, athletics, physical education or attendance at a 1 May parade. It is just children with their mothers and elderly people enjoying the well-earned fruits of their labour who are able to hold still, to have a seat on a bench in a park.

The main reason why this Ostrava is occupied by people who, within the framework of the quotidian, submit to this city that is so exemplary, to its harmony and order, is the fact that this photography basically never shows them as human beings living with their own emotions, woes and worries, as hesitating and making decisions, but just shows them as crowds and as idealized types – exemplary labourers full of the enthusiasm that comes from the job, their own ability to control fire or rip coal from the earth. In fact, the colourfulness that plays this game of realism helps to hide the standardized unreality of the landscape of the Ostrava that it is producing, as well as the artificiality of its inhabitants, these characters who are themselves idealized and standardized.

Black-and-white Ostrava: Contrasts, fatigue, intimacy

It is certain that Ostrava's official publications carefully chose and laid out their photographs to express the meanings required, to evoke the appropriate emotions from viewers, and to eliminate anything that could potentially disrupt those emotions, those meanings, and their unity as a whole. Each photograph becomes a conveyor of meaning in the context of the others in any given book (and across the official publications), in addition to the contexts created by their captions and names. The arrangement in formal terms of these photographic publications (which is similar to the books with corresponding content from the era of post-socialism) informs this meaning-shaping process: Most of the photographs are in colour, and the books are similarly structured – the readers turning the pages either progress chronologically (from the past to the present, or from spring to summer), or gradually review the subjects being tendered (coal, industry, the city itself, children, leisure time).

When comparing Ostrava's official representation in visual terms with the important monographs about the art photographers, two basic differ-

ences emerge at first glance: The art photographs are black-and-white, in principle, and they mostly stand alone without textual commentary.[5] The art monographs on Ostrava are black-and-white as if their ambition is not some attempt to capture the appearances, or the realism, of their subjects, but to capture their inner workings, their life, their deeper meaning. This ontological black-and-white Ostrava seems more serious than the colourful one and paradoxically, as far as the subject matter is concerned, it also appears to be more civic and more realistic, more rooted in everyday life and its transience. This is despite the fact that content-wise, the artistic monographs and the official publications are quite close to each other. The absence of any explanatory labelling, any names or (in particular) any slogans simultaneously forces the art photographs to "speak" just through their own visuality, which ceases to illustrate ideas and is instead the main medium of the message. At the same time – or at least the works of Kolář, Kubelka and Štreit give this impression – this liberates these "Ostrava" photographs from their place and time, allowing them to attempt a more general meaning. The pictorialism of industry stops serving as a tool of harmonization and, on the contrary, creates contrasts (Fig. 5). A bus ride stops being directly related to an abstract future, or to progress in technological terms, and instead becomes an activity of an everyday nature with its own emotionality (boredom, fatigue), with which we can easily identify as viewers (see e.g., Kolar 2010: 141). Buses that are crowded are also photographed (e.g., ibid.: 101), as is the complete failure of such technology (transportation), shown even as the city's life moves on, although more slowly and tediously (ibid.: 76). The enthusiastic emotionality of progress is replaced with a civil emotionality from everyday life, colourful Ostrava's landscape – monumental, standardized – is replaced by one that appears to be (because it is black-and-white) less realistic, but that consists of much more detail related not to character types, but to living people with an emotionality of their own that is captured in these images.

Kolář and Kubala depict everyday moments: People smiling, sitting with a beer in a garden restaurant, boredom. This black-and-white Ostrava captures emotional life moments, specific ones that reveal themselves on repeated viewing. Their time is not the flow of a grand history from a bellicose past to a glorious future, nor is it filled with a meaning and a purpose that is timeless and unambiguous, but rather it is everyday time, which

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5   In the book on Kolář, the photographs are just dated; in the book on Kubala, they are accompanied by some brief information, mostly topographical, and dates (by decade), or a short title; in the book on Štreit the photographs are left absolutely alone. The exception is the book on Polášek, whose photographs bear the names he gave them, which are at times descriptive, at times ironic.

means it is uneven – here it is emotional and fast, there it is brought to a halt in those moments of anticipation, boredom and waiting that have been censored from the colourful imagery of official Ostrava. See, for example, Kolář's photograph of a bored cluster of men holding flags to wave, standing around with a tired air by a canal as they wait until the time arrives for them to join a parade (Kolář 2010: 51).

The intimacy of the locales and the times that are depicted in these art photographs and then shaped through their combination in these books is related to this difference as well. The black-and-white Ostrava is one of individual people, with private spaces of emotions and relationships, where people can relax by themselves as they wish (with a cigarette, for example), not in line with a city of exemplariness, harmony and order (Fig. 6). A number of photographs capture immediacy and instability – a bicycle rider falling (Kubala 2012: 144), somebody flying off of a sled (ibid.: 79), the blast of a demolition explosion of a mining tower (ibid.: 21) – or their consequences, such as crashed trams or the explosion of a gas line and what is left behind (ibid: 40, 41), and are all associated with this intimacy of time (and of space).

Although the black-and-white Ostrava photography follows similar subjects as the colour photographs, it affords us a different mode of seeing (sic!) such things. In black-and-white Ostrava there is also work but, as Štreit shows us, the industrial spaces are inhabited by individual people, not types, and their labour is not just charged with emotions that are positive, but is also exhausting and tedious.

In colourful Ostrava, the concept of employment as an activity that is joyful permeates the photographs, making it possible to head down the path of a progress irradiated by the blaze of the blast furnaces, but the photographs by Štreit return these jobs to the world of individual people, those who are labouring, those who are laughing, and those who are exhausted. Fatigue, at the same time, is not something that has to necessarily be abolished from the city's everyday landscape by the photographs that shape it, not something that must be downplayed and drowned out by the joy of fire-taming, as colourful Ostrava would have it. On the contrary, the components of fatigue and rest are integral to the lives of these individual people (Fig. 7). Štreit simultaneously breaks down the aestheticization of industry and industrial spaces under socialism by presenting them as places where actual individual people not only work, but also engage in action and experience their lives – like the couple kissing inside an ironworks in full operation, or the cat being fed by a man in a hall near a derrick (both photographed in Štreit 2008: unpaginated).

The black-and-white Ostrava is therefore paradoxically much more vivid, realistic and consequently more colourful than Ostrava in colour. At the

same time, it challenges the harmony between people, coal, steel and the city, and creates an idea of relationships that are far more complex, less ordered, but all the more intriguing. The black-and-white landscape of Ostrava is more layered, more complicated and less stable than the landscape of colourful Ostrava. While there, children play orderly in the park in front of the tamed cannon and are part of harmony and order, in black-and-white Ostrava they even fight sometimes (Fig. 8).

Conclusion

In anthropology and the social sciences, landscape is particularly understood as formed not just by material objects (and spaces), but also by their associated, attributed meanings, negotiated as part of the sociohistorical situation and the emotions associated with experiencing the landscape (and its aesthetics). Landscape, therefore, is not identified with a material space, but arises from the close connections of that space with these significances and their emotions (experiences), the concrete connections of which are constantly being negotiated, as a consequence of which they constantly change. Landscape, to paraphrase Bender (2002b) and Hirsch and O'Hanlon (1995), is a process that never stands still.

Of course, for establishing such ideas, for creating and disseminating the landscapes negotiated, there are many means at our disposal, but Cosgrove (1984) shows us that at the very core of the western concept of landscape lies visuality and its associated emotional experience. In a landscape's representation through visuality (which, as Cosgrove says, does not just show it, but also co-creates it), there are not just its depicted elements (i.e., what is displayed) but also their meaning, their purpose is communicated in material that is visual. This meaning is shaped in two ways: First, through aesthetics and means that are visual (composition, colour, "mood", etc.), which again are products of a certain cultural/historical situation and with which is associated a certain emotionality in the given situation (what is beautiful and what is not); and second, as Duncan (1990) demonstrates, through the relationships both within the framework of the material that is visual and the relationships that transcend it (textuality and intertextuality).

As I analysed and interpreted the Ostravas of these representations that are visual, these two aspects of landscape merged, showing how they had been created, visually, and how each landscape of Ostrava had been represented as such. It has not been the intention of this paper to follow how or if a landscape as (re)presented visually is associated with the concrete, contemporary emotionality of the lived landscape of Ostrava, but chiefly it has been to analyse the elements of which the city of coal, people and steel

consists as a landscape, and to reveal how it has been constructed through material that is visual and what role the human beings, its inhabitants, played in that construction.

From the above it is clear that landscape is multi-layered, not just as a concept, but also as a lived experience; not just as a field of research, but also as a space of the lives of people, embodied beings situated in a particular socio-historical situation. This multi-layered-ness (and to a great extent, impossibility to fully grasp) results from the fact that landscape arises on the borderlines between the "political, symbolic, material, imaginary and personal" (Gibas – Pauknerová 2009: 134). For that reason, it also does not necessarily have to be consistent, and as Rodman warns, landscape is also complicated and multi-layered because (among other reasons) it is "multilocal in the sense that it creates and expresses different meanings for its different inhabitants" (Rodman 1992: 647).

To establish what the emotional experience (see Okely 2001) of a landscape is from this multi-layered-ness, it was necessary to focus mainly on the relationship between the aesthetics (the compositions, the artistic media) and the landscapes as aesthetically-formed testimonies about Ostrava as an urban landscape. The black-and-white Ostrava and the colourful Ostrava, as described in the preceding sections, could appear to be opposites. Both represent specific ways of seeing the world, anchoring the actual Ostrava in a network of significances produced with the aid of visual materials and completing (or, conceived more radically, forming) its urban landscape. They are unable to absolutely exclude or ignore each other *per se*. Rather, these are two sets of visual texts that more or less approximate each other, sometimes intersecting, sometime existing in parallel. Each individual photograph of both of these Ostravas portrays buildings that are similar, but through the relationships within the framework of each image set, their testimonies are ascribed different, sometimes opposite, significances, and a different emotionality is associated with each. People, in this respect, are exemplary elements in both kinds of landscape as represented visually. In colourful Ostrava, people serve as idealized types inhabiting the city of labour, coal and steel in an orderly fashion bordering on enthusiasm and function as a component essential to this Ostrava that is on her way to the glorious tomorrows of the future utopia. They are people/types who joyfully labour in factories and mines and command fire for the benefit of all or who are raising the next generation of labourers/residents. It is only in the black-and-white Ostrava that these idealized types get an opportunity to become individuals who are tired, worried, or sometimes even carefree. Both Ostravas are cities of labour, but only the black-and-white Ostrava is also an Ostrava of individual human beings.

Colourful Ostrava did its best to arrange its coherent meaning through, among other things, the consistent connections between each image and the text, between the photographs and their captions or slogans. That was meant to guarantee the photographs would be correctly looked at, i.e., seen and understood. The whole then acted as a (more or less) natural perspective on Ostrava as it is, naturalizing a certain way of seeing the city, constructing, promoting and upholding a certain landscape into which Ostrava was embedded. The black-and-white Ostrava can be comprehended, in contrast, as a kind of challenge to that landscape, or as an enrichment of it that destabilizes the apparent integrity and naturalness of the colourful Ostrava, revealing its artificiality and its deficiencies. At the same time, it is possible to understand both Ostravas, with Lefebvre (1992: 33) either as two unique sets of representations of a single space (Ostrava), or as one representational space of loose associations within which these two sets encounter each other, a cross-section of the multi-layered-ness that any kind of landscape involves. Both of these wholes overlap in the contemporary landscape of Ostrava, and the visuality of both the black-and-white and the colourful Ostravas was also activated, for example, by the construction of the comprehensive image of Ostrava that was shaped by the most diverse possible sets of texts and visuals into the statement for its candidacy for European City of Culture in 2015.

The black-and-white and the colourful Ostravas, as Cosgrove would have it, can be conceived of as two specific ways (related in terms of subject matter at the very least) of seeing (Ostrava), two compositions and constructs of one and the same urban landscape that are parallels to a significant degree. With regard to the intertextual nature of landscape, as mentioned by Duncan and Duncan, and in view of its multi-layered-ness, however, it is also possible to comprehend both Ostravas as two different building blocks of Ostrava's urban landscape in which heroic labour, colourfulness and harmony overlap with the fatigue, the fragmentation, and the greyness of everyday life.

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Figure 1 "Cherries in bloom and meadows and the city. The newest blossom in Ostrava is Poruba, from the beginning of the 1950s until recently, it has been the centre of gravity of the city's construction." Ostrava 1978: 74.

Figure 2 "The domesticated gun at the memorial to the heroes in the Comenius Orchard, where 658 urns have been preserved of the Red Army soldiers who fell in the liberation of Ostrava." Ostrava barevná 1962: 70.

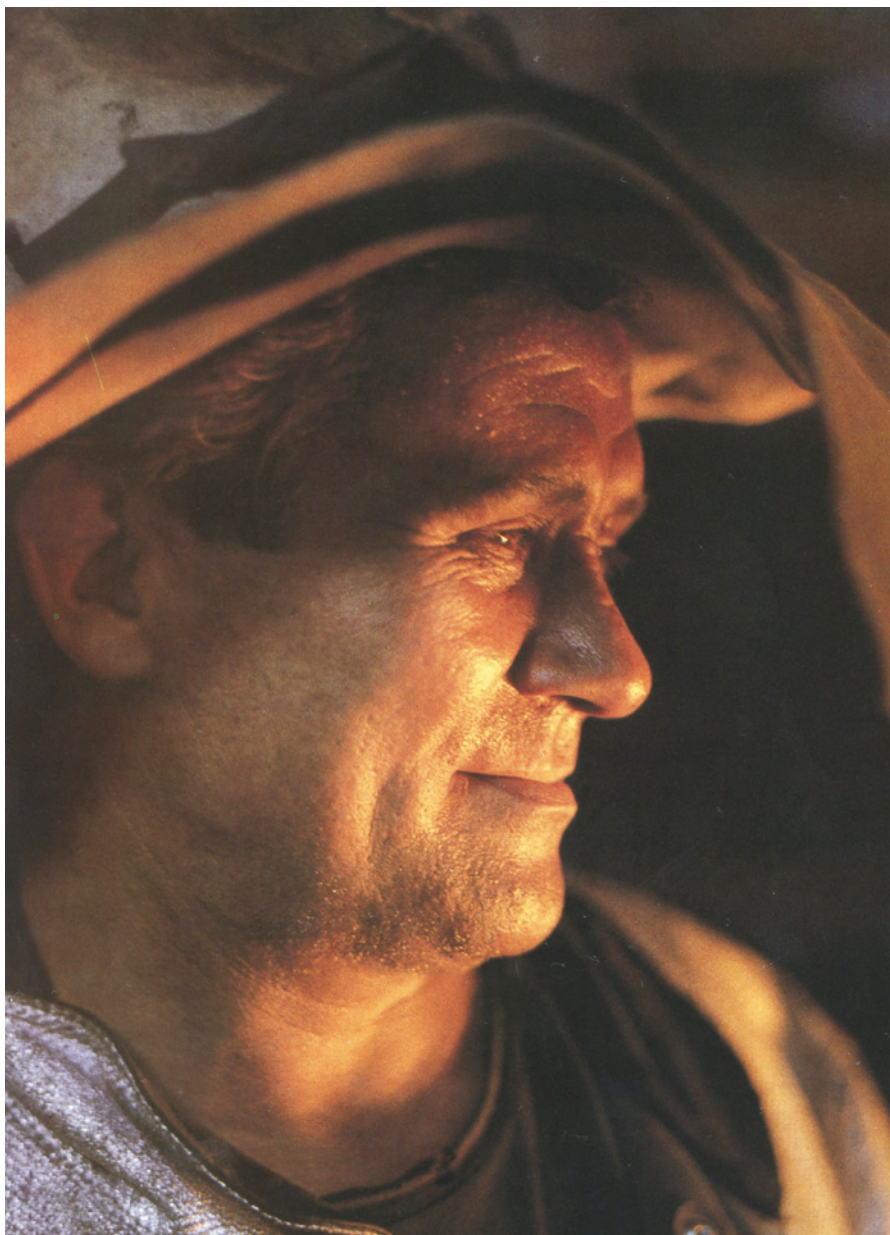**Figure 3**   uncaptioned, Uhlí a lidé 1974, unpaginated.

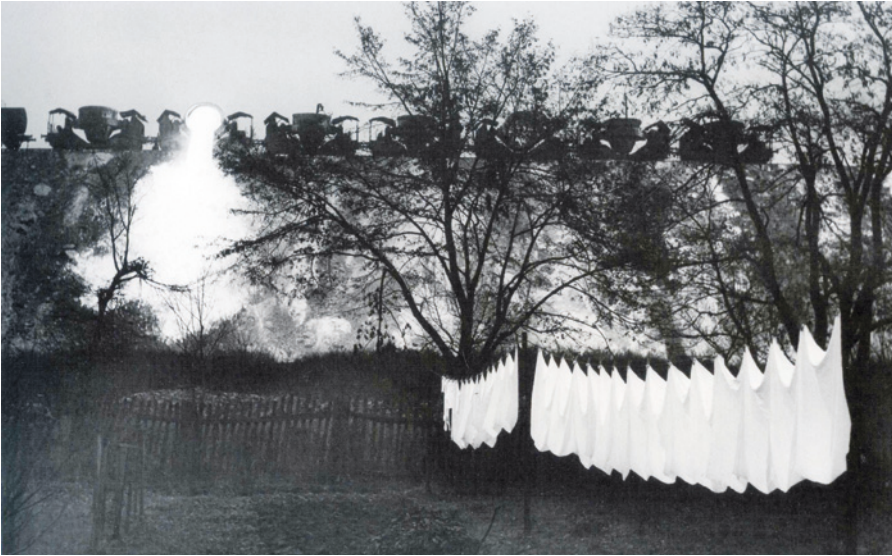**Figure 4** uncaptioned, Ostrava 1985, unpaginated.

Figure 5   Kolář 2010: 145.
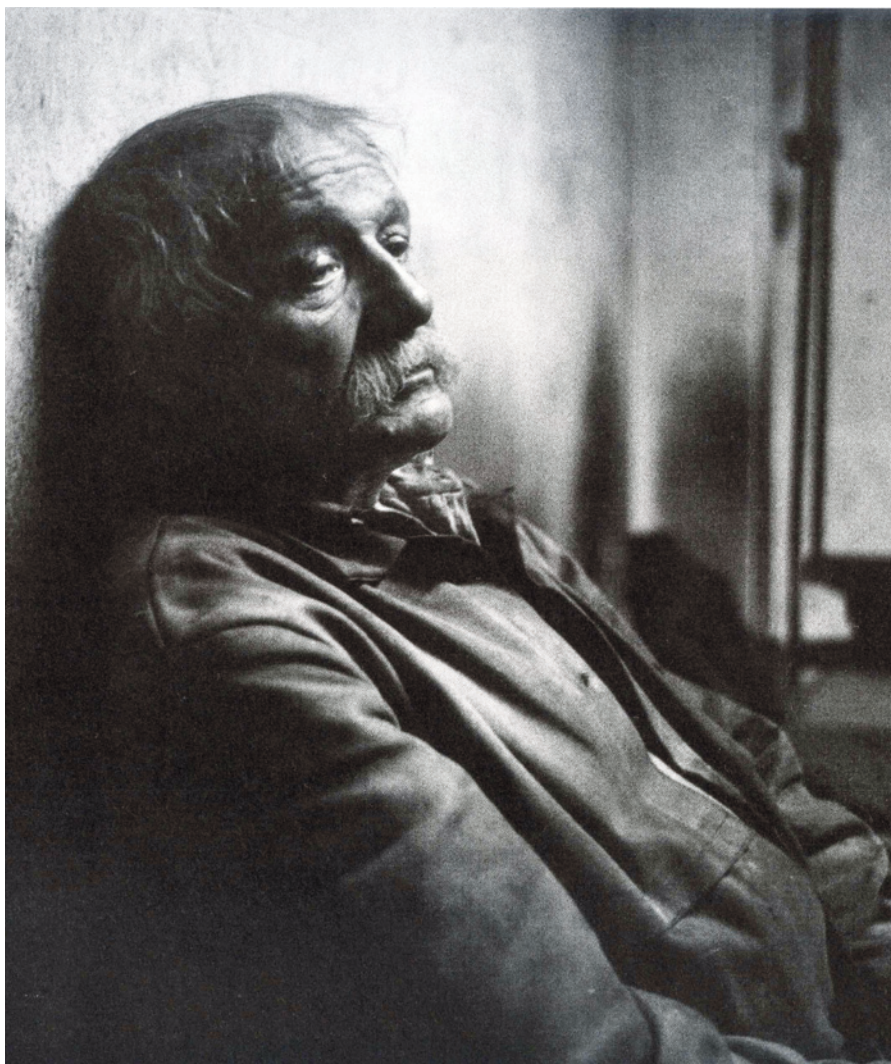

Figure 6   Kubala 2012: 101.

Figure 7 Štreit 2008, unpaginated.

Figure 8   Kubala 2012: 84.