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## THE FUNCTIONS OF MAGICAL PLACES IN AMERICAN AND POLISH ALTERNATE HISTORY WORKS (ORSON SCOTT CARD<sup>1</sup> AND JACEK PIEKARA<sup>2</sup>)

Magic places (lat. *locus magorum*), according to the name, are marvellous and wonderful areas, buildings or spaces. In the books of Card and Piekara these places perform a variety of functions, and recognition of them will be main subject of my article. The comparative analysis is an operation which is dependent upon the ordering of identical elements according to similarities and differences (Janaszek-Ivaničková 1989:18). The main purpose of this article will be comparing magic places which appear in the series of both authors and definition of functions performed in their works.

Novels about Alvin Maker belong to the alternate history (Bień 2008:285) genre. The main aim of this type of speculative fiction is presenting an alternative vision of human history. The most recognizable (Sapkowski 2001:42) examples of this genre are works like: *The Man in the High Castle* by Philip K. Dick, *The Sound of His Horn* by Sarban, *Worldwar: In the Balance* by Harry Turtledove, *SS-GB* by Len Deighton, trilogy *Eden* by Harry Harrison, or *Fatherland* by Robert Harris. Alternate history is also becoming more popular in Poland, a fact which can be proved by books like: *Xavras Wyzryn* and *Lód* by

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<sup>1</sup> One of the greatest and the most popular speculative fiction writers. He was born in 1951 in Richland, Washington. He became famous thanks to science fiction novel *Ender's Game* (1985). The novel won Hugo and Nebula Awards in 1986. One year later he repeated this achievement and thanks to *Ender's Game* sequel – *Speaker for the Dead* (1986) both won Hugo and Nebula Awards again. Married, father to five children, he is Mormon. His works were translated into 16 languages, including Polish.

<sup>2</sup> One of the most popular speculative fiction writers in Poland. He was born in 1965 in Kraków, Poland. His debut short story was published in 1983 and his first novel *Labirynt* 1987. In 1990 he was nominated to the Janusz A. Zajdel Award (the most precious speculative fiction award in Poland). After publishing his series about inquisitor Madderdin (five volumes so far) he become very popular in Poland. His book *Śluga Boży* was translated into Czech in 2007.

Jacek Dukaj, the cycle about inquisitor Maderdin by Jacek Piekara, or *Ragnarok 1940* by Marcin Mortka. *The Tales of Alvin Maker* in six volumes composed by Orson Scott Card – *Seventh Son* (1987), *Red Prophet* (1988), *Prentice Alvin* (1989), *Alvin Journeyman* (1995), *Heartfire* (1998), and *Crystal City* (2003) – with the seventh in the series, *Master Alvin* unpublished to date.

The first place (present in Orson Scott Card's series about Maker) which can be described as a magic place is the town called Vigor (later the name was changed into Vigor Church). This settlement took name from the Alvin's oldest brother. Vigor Miller sacrificed his life to defend his pregnant mother and unborn young brother. The town took his name to honour this hero. Vigor Church is a magic place for a few reasons. The Miller family settled down there, also Alvin jr. – the seventh son of the seventh son, the most talented child in the Miller house was brought up there. There were many cases throughout our history, when a small town became famous and important only because of the reason that a great man was born or lived there. Bethlehem or Nazareth cannot be described as big cities, but in a Christian tradition they are as important as Jerusalem or Rome. Small Polish towns – Wadowice and Wisła retain a similar status. Because of the history of pope John Paul II the small (settled next to Cracow) town is well known to almost every Polish man and thanks to deeds of a Polish ski jumper every child knows that Adam Małysz lives in Wisła. We can say that Vigor Church is similar to the examples described above, but also the presence of other citizens makes this town unusual. The Millers' remaining children are also talented. When the saga's action is developing, Alvin is training his brothers. He is trying to show them how to become a Maker. Despite the fact that Alvin's attempt was not a complete success, the town Vigor Church can be called the first Makers' settlement, embryo of future the Crystal City. By genesis and name the town is inseparably connected with the main character and with his family. It performs an important symbolic function throughout the whole series.

Hatrack River is the next settlement, which deserves to have the name of Makers' city. Young Alvin becomes a blacksmith's apprentice here, and after a hard apprenticeship he earns the title of journeyman. He thinks that knowledge of metals will help him to become the Maker. In his masters' blacksmith shop Alvin makes the first creation act: he forges a plough of living gold. The plough in the sixth part of cycle will be used to mark borders and foundations of the Crystal City. It is not only Hatrack River's blacksmith shop which is a magic place. The whole town is full of people blessed with unusual talents called knacks (Card 1995:161). Alvin likes this settlement because a lot of creative people live here. He predicts that some of them will help him to realise his life's mission (creation of the Crystal City). The town also performs an important composition function, because a lot of valid things happen there. All these events have a huge impact on the final formation of the main character's personality.

Camelot – *Charleston, South Carolina, in our world* (Collings 2001:121) – is the next unusual place presented in Card’s saga. The city is the capital city of the Crown Colonies and a base of the British King in exile – Arthur Stuart. Seemingly the city is devoid of any magical aura and it seems that only its name is unusual. However the whole case is more complicated. Black slaves are obedient to their white masters only because they give back their magical amulets (which contain the part of their souls and their names) to the mighty shaman – Gullah Joe. The shaman’s house is a secret place and only the chosen ones can see this building. The strong magic present in this house binds slaves’ souls and hides it from unexpected guests.

The appearance of the city called Camelot can be perceived either as a nostalgia for an Arthurian legend and myth or as a critique of feudal society. The city performs an important stylistic and ideological function. In Card’s vision the monarchy is deeply rooted in southern, conservative states, it supports slavery and archaic feudal structure. The character of Arthur Stuart, the ruler of the Crown Colonies clearly contrasts with the portrait of the legendary king Arthur, which is consolidated in the collective unconsciousness of readers. The author wants to show them that name, surname and our birth place don’t have crucial influence on what and who we are. Despite having the noble roots of a king, an honest man from a simple folk can act with more dignity than the ruler. The capital city of the Crown Colonies performs two stylistic functions. By referring to Arthurian myths it inserts intertext and a big divergence (between the city and the legendary Camelot) performs ironical function.

The Crystal City is the most important magic place present in the saga. At the beginning it is only an unclear vision which was seen by Alvin, when he observe a magical ritual performed by the Red Prophet, Indian chief Tenska-Tawa (Card 1988:164). The young Maker feels that Crystal City is the most valid of his projects and it becomes an important part of his future. Unfortunately the vision doesn’t provide an answer as to how to build this great city. At the beginning Alvin thinks that he has to gather a group of Makers to realise this project. That is why he organises a *school* of making in Vigor Church. Miserable effects of his efforts lead him to realise that it isn’t a proper way to implement his dream and to build the Crystal City. He leaves Vigor Church and starts his journey through America thinking that some day he will understand what exactly the city from his vision is and how it will be built. It is only in the sixth volume that the reader gains some details about this mystic place.

Acting according to advice received from Tenska-Tawa, Alvin seeks to create unusual thing using his marvellous skills, his own blood and water. The crystal ball is an object which shows one possible vision of the future. The crystal bridge helps black slaves and French refugees to escape from New Barcelona (called New Orleans before) ruled by Spanish. The young Maker and his Indian mentor create also the crystal dam (Card 2003:114). Thanks to which,

the aforementioned refugees can cross Mizzipy River and finally set free from the Spanish chase. During his journey Alvin starts to understand what the Crystal City is and how it will be created. He finally understands that not Makers but just normal people should be the builders of the city. Through this work they are becoming the co-authors of Alvin's project. The Crystal City from Card's series becomes an ideal place, real (in the alternative universe) utopia. Alvin Maker becomes the mayor of the city, but in group of leaders we can find trader Abraham Lincoln, lawyer Veril Cooper and African woman La Tiia.

The vision of the Crystal City has a large influence on the young Maker. His entire journey is subordinated to its realisation. The knowledge and experience gained by the main character have to help him in realisation of this bold task. The Crystal City as an idea appears in the second volume of saga (Card 1988:164), but the foundations of the city are made in the sixth part of the series. This expansion shows that Alvin's project is very important and the Maker has to overcome a lot of difficulties to implement it. This place is becoming an important, fundamental element of the work and performs a valid motivation function<sup>3</sup>, including constructive motivation.

Reading descriptions of the Crystal City, it has to be admitted that it is very similar to pastoral images, or even utopia. The author is presenting the city as an almost ideal place, a base for harmonic community, the settlement of Makers. The question about the genesis of this vision is legitimate. Card is a Mormon and he lives in group, which has a lot of ideal society features. It is known that they deny violence and the live in traditional communities. Constructed in a similar way the Crystal City is probably reminiscence of his own experience. This wonder place is not only simply a recreation of the Mormon community, but it is also a guide and an example for the reader. He has to believe that the Crystal City (the place where different people can co-operate and live together) is a viable project. In this case the vision of this magic place has to console those who lost all hope in human and their possibilities and it performs an important symbolic function.

Not only are towns and cities magic places in Alvin's saga. Rivers, lakes and forests are also considered to be unusual areas. Water as an element has a very complex symbolism. To desert people it has positive connotations related to life and salvation. In marine cultures like the Mediterranean Sea culture, Nordic culture or Anglo-Saxon culture this element has a lot of negative connotations. People and animals drown in water; storms destroy ships, or whole villages are doomed by floods. In these cultures water very often means death and destruction. Card, as the Anglo-Saxon, is using this symbolism. The Unmaker, the main antagonist of Alvin,

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<sup>3</sup> See *Motivation*. The psychological and moral impulses and external circumstances that cause a literary Character to act, think, or feel a certain way. Showing what motivates the actions of characters helps make the characters believable and their actions satisfying, even inevitable (Morner, Rausch 1998:140).

always tries to kill him using water. A flood has to destroy the unborn Maker and his mother, watermill-stone has to crush the very young Alvin, an alligator tries to kill our hero while he is crossing the Mizzipy river etc. In Card's series, water and objects connected with it (like watermill-stone) are lead by the Unmaker and evil. The Unmaker is the main Alvin's foe and *the enemy of everything that exist. All it wants is to break everything into pieces, and those pieces into pieces, until there's nothing left at all* (Card 1987:127). Just like nature is a source of Indian powers (and a main hero) the water is an ally of Alvin's opponent. Also rivers and lakes are part of magical places set. Mizzipy River is the border between Whites and Indians land. It was set up after the Tippy-Canoe massacre when Indians, lead by the Red Prophet and decimated by whites, crossed the river by the crystal bridge made from the blood of the murdered. Alvin performs a similar miracle: from his own blood he creates the crystal dam (Card 2003:114) for refugees from New Barcelona (New Orlean). Card's water performs a complex and symbolic function. As a substance and element it acts against the main character and is a mortal threat for him. Later it becomes a component of crystal objects. As the river is a border between natural (it means pure) Indians and not respecting laws of nature Whites.

The forest in Card's saga is unusual. It is a place where the greensong (one form of the Indian magic) can be heard. Native Americans live in harmony with nature, it (the greensong) gives them strength and it is a basis of their spells. The greensong enables them to take long distance without effort, it causes that listener's moves are smooth and nature helps the runner by removing branches and roots from his track (Card 1998:143). The forest isn't the only area when the greensong can be heard. It acts also in any place untouched by human hand (e.g. the desert).

By inserting elements of Indian beliefs Card wants to interest the potential reader with Indian mythology. Reference to greensong has to make reader sensitive towards problems of this ethnical minority. When Whites took Indians' land they broke their connections with nature. In this case these magic places perform a mythological function, subordinated to the ideological circumstance.

In the second volume of the saga we can find another magic Indian place. The first is *the eye of the land* which is the crystal tower made by Indian shaman Tensaka-Tawa, called the Red Prophet, on the middle of the Mizogan Lake (Card 1988:164). In the tower, created by the Indian magic, young Alvin receives the vision of his fate. From now on he knows that the building of the Crystal City is his destiny.

In the fourth part of the saga Margaret Larner (Alvin's future wife) visits the next wonder place which is Becca's house (Card 1988:286). It is very hard to find it because it is partially located in another dimension. To get there you have to cross the border between the magical house and the real world. Only the chosen few can do it and Alvin does it in the second volume of the series. He goes there with Indian chief Ta-Kumsaw and he knows the history of the loom and the importance of this object for the whole continent. The house can be

discovered also by shamans and Torches (gifted people who can see the all deeds and future singed in people's souls). Margaret belongs to the last category and she is able to meet inhabitants of the old house. Women from the house (the Spinners) have very responsible work, they are weaving the history of the continent on magical looms (threads are representing peoples lives). Although their main task is booking down the history of America (Card 1988:288) and recording it on the form of multicoloured fabric the Spinners have limited influence upon the destiny. They can try to drag someone's thread and join its fate with another. They also have limited knowledge about the future. One of the Spinners called Becca tells Margaret, that if Calvin's thread moves away from the destiny of his older brother (Alvin), it can bring death for the latter. During the creation of this magic place, the author probably based his ideas upon various ancient mythologies. Greek goddess of the destiny (Mojrs) and Nordic weavers of the fate (Norns) seems to be related to Card's characters. Becca's house inserts intertextual themes from European culture, so it performs stylistic function next to fundamental function for the subject and the plot of events.

Wonderful places from Card's series have an influence on the characters and the action of the novels. Mentioned above, the Spinners House is not only an unusual women's base, but it also performs a function of the oracle. Alvin's wife, Margaret, while visiting the old house learns a lot of important information for the future of the continent. She finds out that Civil War is coming; and she comes to understand the danger related to disconnection of Alvin with his younger brother Calvin. The Spinners House has a big influence on the saga's action and on the future events. It is catalyst for novels' action and performs a composition function.

Card tries to make the saga attractive and he adds fantasy elements to it. In his vision of the beginning of the American statehood a lot of people have unusual skills. Torches are seeing the past and the future of observed human, Makers know telekinesis and telepathy, Indian shamans control nature, people possessing magic talents can cast the spells and charms and almost everyone uses protective talismans. This original mixture of fiction, history, folklore and magic isn't a literature for children but a work finding acknowledgement of critics. Andrzej Sapkowski words hold out this opinion:

*Orson Scott Card – intelligence and talent, he has the rare skill to write a book, which can be read with pleasure and which is giving the reader a reason to think for a while. (Card 1993:iv)*<sup>4</sup>

The appearance of magic places in Card's saga is caused intentionally by the author, because together with unusual events and characters it determinate

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<sup>4</sup> The original text: *Orson Scott Card – inteligencja i talent; rzadka umiejętność napisania książki, która czyta się z przyjemnością, a która po przeczytaniu daje czytelnikowi powód, by przez chwilę pomyśleć.*" [Polish translation by Piotr W. Cholewa]

fantasy elements, it means that they perform a genealogical function. It is obvious that if the work has to possess a fantasy feature, that author (besides of inserting some kind of magic and persons using their wonder powers) has to also insert places which the reader can identify as unusual or magical. According to Polish literature critics, the saga about Alvin Maker is an important part of Card's literal attainment (Świdorski 2002:70–71). More than once they noticed that a lot of his works have a strong messianic theme (Orliński 2005:2–4). In one issues of the Polish magazine *Nowa Fantastyka*, Maciej Parnowski presented an interesting critique of this American writer's creation:

*Card faultlessly juggles the reader's emotions. He is keen and sentimental, his vision of societies and individual's behaviour in the time of [...] trail is more mature than [visions of other authors]. In situation of a great danger, most of the time giants are born on peripheries, giants that change the world. (Parowski 2005:71)<sup>5</sup>*

Referring these words to Alvin's deeds seems to be natural. He is the character who rises up for a giant. He is the one who will change the word that surrounds them for good.

The most important function of the magical places analysed, is creating Alvin's universe mythology. Next to unusual people and powers, wonderful places are a fundamental part of Card's mythology, where magic, history and myth are connected and made original wholeness and a new quality. Another of Card's trademarks is that *his texts employ not only the conventions of science fiction and fantasy, but also the patterns – aesthetic as well as narrative – typical of tragedy* (Machocka 2007:161). Card's prose is interesting not only for readers but also for critics like Michael R. Collins (1990) or Edith S. Tyson (2003).

Card's America is multicultural and multicoloured. Someone may say that it was also in reality, but the author of Alvin's universe is making this continent more complex. In Card's vision the State of Irrakwa and the free Cherriky, as administrated by the Indians, is a part of the United States. This idea moves the series to the alternate history genre. In Card's universe magic is very important and has many forms. We have used white magic for protection (hexes drawing by Alvin), black voodoo and Indian greensong. Besides magic, there is a lot of phenomenon that could be called paranormal by a modern observer. Alvin and Calvin have Makers' powers, Margaret sees *heartfires* and possible future, Napoleon possesses the gift of empathy and can subordinate his interlocutor's will. Paranormal creatures from tales about Alvin are also the element of Card's mythology. The Unmaker and Overseer are the personification of nonentity,

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<sup>5</sup> The original text is: *Card bezbłędnie włada emocjami czytelnika. Jest przenikliwy i sentymentalny, jego wizja zachowań społeczeństw i jednostek w chwili [...] próby wydaje się dojrzała [niż wizje innych autorów]. W sytuacji wielkich zagrożeń najczęściej na peryferiach rodzą się giganci, którzy przemienia świat.*

which is main the antagonist of Alvin Maker. We can see that Card's mythology of a 19<sup>th</sup> century America is quite complex and coherent.

Just like Tolkien's Middle Earth from some point stops to be assemblage of themes and myths and starts to be a fully independent, although created world with its own mythology, history, geography and language. The same happen with Card's vision of America. This universe also has its own, original features and starts to live its own life. It also has mythology and magical places which are important component elements.

Piekara's series about the inquisitor Madderdin compose five volumes – *Śługa boży* (2003a), *Młot na czarownice* (2003b), *Miecz Aniołów* (2004), *Łowcy dusz* (2006), *Płomień i krzyż, vol. 1* (2008). In the plots of his books, magical places are also an important element of the constructed world and surely they deserve similar analysis of functions performed in the saga about inquisitor Mordimer Madderdin.

Title short story from the first volume of the saga is very important for a number of reasons. First of all, it is an introduction to Madderdin's universe for the reader and it lets him know with our inquisitor and his three dark assistants. The author is using a theme of commission given to the main character (commission-them is a reason to start action in many short stories of the series). Madderdin convinced by a proper payment accepted an order and during the investigation discovered that dark rituals took place in the ruins of nearby Sarevaald Castle (Piekara 2003a:20). These ruins are the first unusual place appearing in tale about inquisitor Madderdin. The dungeons situated under the remains of the castle are an excellent background for the action of the story. When Piekara was creating this place he used gothic patterns and themes consolidated in a collective unconsciousness of readers as folk legends and fairy tales. In mediaeval legends the important entrance is protected by the giant and in Piekara's prose the situation is similar. The gate is occupied by a bodyguard called Giant, although in this case a huge bodyguard got the name which came from town Tirianon-nag commonly known as Tirian (26). In contrast to the legends Madderdin and his helpers defeat the guard very rapidly and, after the short investigation, the bodyguard is killed. The dungeons appear to be the settlement of dead people and cultists get gold for the celebration of dark rituals and human-sacrifice devoted to ghosts. Ruins of gloomy, gothic castle perform a dual function in the analysed story. Being the constitutional module of the story, the plot performs the composition function; meanwhile, linking to classical gothic novel it performs the stylistic function. When we compare this place to Card's series we noticed that ruins can be matched with Becca's house. Both places perform the composition function, but Card's is the catalyst of action when Piekara's ruins are the constitutional module of the story. The second stated function (stylistic) connects Sarevaald Castle ruins not only with mentioned Becca's house, but also with Camelot from Card's universe.



Stanneberg Castle (Piekara 2003b:179) is also worthy of being labelled as an unusual place. The reader meets it twice – in story *Waż i gołębica* from the second volume of Madderdin's saga and in its continuation entitled *Waż i gołębica. Powrót* from the fourth volume. After the suicidal death of Sir Stanneberg the castle was taken by the Haustoffer clan. This event took place one year before the beginning of the action of this story. From this time mysterious disappearances and deaths among the local population are assigned to the vampire activity. Peasants claim also that the Haustoffers are vampires. Although the stronghold is placed in the less populated area, its interior (especially huge worth of king main hall) causes Madderdin to be surprised (187). Although descriptions of the castle are modest the gothic character of this place is sensible. While the action is developing the reader gets to know more details about the Haustoffer family and although young master turns out to be only insane with the obsession to become a vampire, the old baron is the real representative of the dark race. The gloomy castle as the settlement of baron Haustoffer is clearly linked to the traditional gothic horror so it performs stylistic function, simultaneously the stronghold as the vampire-house performs also mythological function and is an important element of the Piekara's vision. Stanneberg Castle (just like Sarevaald Castle ruins) reminds Becca's house and Camelot from Alvin's universe. However the presented mythological function means that the vampire's fortress can be combined with Indians' magic places.

The next magic place, or rather magic area, in Madderdin's universe is the *un-world* (Piekara 2006:183). This place is situated beyond our specter. It is a parallel, astral dimension and only very few chosen people can get into it. Mordimer is one of them. The main character, to cross the border between world and un-world, has to celebrate sort of ritual, so called *prayer* (Piekara 2003a:89). During it he concentrates himself and starts to use his unusual skills. Reader meets this ritual for the first time during lecture of story entitled *Szkarlat i śnieg*. The description of the astral dimension is very superficial. We know that even if it bears a resemblance to the real world it is still a very dangerous place. Staying there is linked with enormous pain and with quick loss of vital force, so Madderdin decides to go there only if he really has to. Residing there, the inquisitor can track the trace of using magic and also to see places hidden by the illusion (90). Up to fourth volume of series reader does not even know the name of this parallel world, just in story *Piękna jest tylko prawda* Mordimer describes it as the un-world. The Arsanes's magic *enclave* (Piekara 2008:291) from story *Drugie piętro wieży* is also the part of this parallel reality. Although this area is the part of un-world then it is under total control of mighty warlock. Analyzed place performs dual function in the text: as the catalyst of the action it solves difficult cases (compositional function), it possesses also symbolic function – it proves that supernatural forces exist and it confirms the fact that Madderdin has unusual skills. Although un-world as the place from the parallel dimension has

no full equivalent in Card's prose that in case functions it seems to be similar to Vigor Church and the Crystal City (the symbolic function). As the catalyst of the action it can be combined with Hatrack River and Becca's house (the stylistic function).

Amszilas monastery is the most mysterious place in the whole series about Madderdin. Although this building is only mentioned in the first volume of the series (Piekara 2003a:223), for more information about this place the reader has to wait to the third volume of our inquisitor's adventures. In story *Głupcy idą do nieba* we can find a general description of Amszilas. The reader knows that the monastery *is built on a forested hill, situated next to a bend of the river* (Piekara 2004:119)<sup>6</sup> just like a typical fort. Monks are also members of Holly Office, but their task is not only *listening to the sins from the most obdurate sinners – inquisitors traitors, warlocks and witches* (*ibid.* 119)<sup>7</sup>, but also studying books taken from prisoners and *deepen dark knowledge in this way that their mysteries has no secrets for servants of God* (*ibid.* 119)<sup>8</sup>. It means that Amszilas is not only the great library but also some kind of research center. Thanks to conversation with the gatekeeper we know that the monastery is almost 600 years old (*ibid.* 121). The next fragment informs us about the secret hidden in the dungeons (*ibid.* 120) of Amszilas, whereas another one mentions about magic, protection aura (*ibid.* 120) surrounding this unusual place. In the story entitled *Maskarada* from the same volume another details about this unusual building were transparent. The head of Amszilas is the Monastery's Council (*ibid.* 342) and the library gathers not only books but also *amulets, sculptures and paints, that from centuries help in dark rituals* (*ibid.* 337).<sup>9</sup> The dangerous warlock imprisoned by Madderdin – Casimirus Neuschalk mentions that the greatest secret of Amszilas has been protected for hundreds of years (*ibid.* 343). This information surely increases reader's interesting and it resizes the strain connected with getting to know new facts about Madderdin's universe. The readers' curiosity is partly appeased just in the last story from the fourth volume entitled *Wodzowie ślepych*. In the one of the last scenes inquisitor is honoured by letting him know the greatest secret of the monastery. At the beginning the reader thinks that the secret is keeping the sword (Piekara 2006:401), which was used by Christ when he walked down from the cross, but the truth is more unexpected: in Amszilas's dungeon, monks are keeping the body of Jesus (*ibid.* 402). Small detail from the

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<sup>6</sup> The original text: *jest zbudowany na zalesionym wzgórzu.*

<sup>7</sup> The original text: *wysłuchiwanie grzechów najbardziej zatwardziałych i najgroźniejszych grzeszników – zabląkanych inkwizytorów, czarnoksiężników i wiedźm.*

<sup>8</sup> The original text: *zglębianie mrocznej wiedzy, tak, by jej tajniki nie stanowiły już zagadki dla sług Bożych.*

<sup>9</sup> The original text: *amulety, rzeźby, i obrazy, które od wieków służyły uprawianiu mrocznych sztuk.*

title page of the story attracts the critic attention. Author dedicates this story to his friend Karolina Wiśniewska. This decision is explained, he writes: *she made up what the greatest secret of the Amszilas monastery is (ibid. 264)*.<sup>10</sup> These words mean that at the beginning even Piekara did not know what this mystery is and the whole Madderdin's universe is dynamic, life and developing project. First volume of *Plomień i krzyż* brings more details about analyzed place. Part of title-story finally gives some information about monastery's localization. Thanks to it we know that Amszilas is placed in the valley of Laba River (Piekara 2008:184). The epilogue of the story entitled *Drugie piętro wieży* assures us that not every secret of this unusual place has been discovered (Piekara 2008:324).

Summing up, Amszilas monastery performs multiple functions in the series: as valid for the action of many stories place performs the composition function. Monastery symbolized also the base of Holly Office and from the fourth volume of saga it performs the symbolic function as the place where Christ's body is kept. Amszilas can be matched with several magic places from Card's series. The composition function allows the monastery to be connected with Hatrack River. Both places are important for the plot of their sagas. When we combine Amszilas with Becca's house we also get interesting results: both are the catalyst of the action. The symbolic function allows matching with Vigor Church and with the most important place in Card's series, it means with the Crystal City. The last comparison is very accurate. Although both places are different then with the development of the action are become the central magic places for their series.

At the end of the part devoted to the Polish writer I would like to pose a question: Why did Piekara include magical places in a universe created by himself? It seems that his motivation is similar to Card's. Also in the prose of Polish writer the most important function is creating a mythology of his own, literate world. Some differences might be found when we compare the cultural area of these two worlds. Piekara's universe is an alternate vision for 16<sup>th</sup> century Europe, while Card's vision is placed in 19<sup>th</sup> century America (except the fragment when Calvin travels to Europe). Both visions are partly inspired by dramatic events from our history (rout of Indians and Secession War in Card's prose and Protestant Reformation in Piekara's). Although both series contain some similarities, their differences mean that we can't say that one writer was based on the other. It is hard to say that Card's vision is ideal utopia but we have to admit that Piekara's universe is more *dark*. I am thinking about the main conception of the world (where Christ walks down from the cross in 33 A.D.) and about the fact that action of the series is placed in old-gothic times. Although the mythopeic function of both universes is certain, their interpretation is different: When Card creates his world he is making not only

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<sup>10</sup> The original text: *to ona wymyśliła, coś takiego jest największym sekretem klasztoru Amszilas.*

the American mythology, but also he wants to treat it as the alternative for inglorious page of American history (Oziewicz 2008:198). Piekara also creates some kind of European mythology but different to Card he does it accidentally. Furthermore his vision of the history does not try to be the alternative or some kind of the warning for real history, but rather a proof that human nature is unchangeable (people in real Europe from the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and Europeans from Piekara's universe are almost identical). The critic of literature is not surprised that the mythopeic function is strongly present in Card's series. The USA as a young and multicultural country needs the factor that connects its society. Literature is responding to this nostalgia and needs. It creates the American mythology by the synthesis of the history, the Indian mythology and the European tradition. Piekara's series is rooted in the culture of the old continent so it is focused on other case. The Polish writer does not have to create the European or Polish mythology and he can to concentrate on the other matter: it means on the Human nature.

The analysis of Card's and Piekara's works proved that the magic places present in their prose perform varied functions (symbolic, mythological, ideological, genealogical, constructive, compositional and stylistic) in his prose. It is worth adding that some places have multifunctional character what emphasize complex and originality of the universes created by them.

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