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DESIRES OF PLACES (INITIAL HABITATS OF INNER SPACES). SHAPING SPACE AND THE CULTURAL IDENTITY OF A PLACE

Art research paper

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Abstract

The article attempts to illustrate the essence of the influence of several key factors on the identity of place through the evocation of specific spaces. The most essential components evoked are time, -place, landscape, memory, sound: their mutual coexistence creates, in our understanding, an image that, despite our fixed idea, is constantly changing *in situ*. The reflections undertaken in the content of this article refer both to the notion of identity not linked to any given place and to a few selected places in south-eastern Poland.

Keywords

identity, place, memory, space, time, coexistence

Introduction

Space is [...] an elementary component of identity. Influencing the ontological distinctiveness of the individual as well as the community occupying the given area, identity is legitimised by the space, which consists of meaningful places [...].¹

Place, space and time, identity of an individual. The interaction of these elements remains a continuous process. We live in a space. We give it specific qualities, meanings, ideas (a cultural factor). This space becomes for us a place, increasingly clear and concrete as we assign it more qualities. The construction of this bond is also influenced by time, by creating a kind of emotional charge that connects us to a given space: a place or even several 'places' within it. We form them, create them and get to know and interpret them very subconsciously, which, as a result, makes us experience their nature. By assigning the space specific features, we build the mood of the place(s), we construct its emotional and social identity. We enter into a relationship with a place that begins to respond to our presence, we become part of it, which in many cases may certainly also be called an interaction. It already has its own characteristics, value, overtones and meaning: *genius loci*. The difference between place and space can therefore be seen very clearly. We often speak of space as being 'dehumanised', having no specific qualities, free, without belonging. Place, on the other hand, can be equated with the opposite of space: something certain, known, understood, experienced. Yi-Fu Tuan, in his book *Space and place...*, defines the concept of 'place' in an interesting way: as the 'humanised space'.² It can therefore be noted that we are dealing with an element that has its own characteristics and features, created individually or often built by a community, which already at this stage proves that it has its own identity. Following the above considerations, we can ask ourselves whether and how we are able to define a given place and by means of exactly which factors.

Place and non-place

Place: "an area or point in space",³ "a space that can be occupied or filled with something", "a location, a position occupied by some object, the position of some object (area)".⁴ These are just a few definitions of a word that we understand so well; we give it so many meanings, contexts, dimensions, yet it still remains largely undiscovered.

Place is always a fragment of space singled out, based on some particular characteristic, by a perceiving subject. The distinguishing features of a place can be historical or contemporary objects, unique buildings, monuments, outdoor sculptures, as well as the qualities given to some trivial piece of space by its users following, for example,

1 T. Burdzik, "Przestrzeń jako składnik tożsamości w świecie globalizacji", *Kultura – Historia – Globalizacja*, (11) 2012, pp. 13–27.

2 Y.F. Tuan, *Przestrzeń i miejsce (Space and place: the perspective of experience)*, Warsaw 1987, p. 23.

3 <https://wikiroznica.com/lokalizacja/miejsce> [accessed: 28/03/2022].

4 <https://encyklopedia.biolog.pl/index.php?haslo=Miejsce> [accessed: 14/04/2022].

an exciting event. A place is special because a specific culture often emerges there, which in turn reinforces the uniqueness of the place.⁵

Places, these seemingly insignificant concepts, are extremely important elements of human's world, bearing their own meanings. In most cases, we do not give much thought to their existence and nature; we grasp them in a very subconscious, even instinctive manner. They are a response to people's important need to belong, to participate, which also accounts for the individual's sense of security.⁶ We might just as well invoke the term of a 'non-place', which does not belong to anyone in particular, has no deeper meaning within it, remains to some extent neutral, impersonal, anonymous and not saturated with emotions, even blurred in meaning. One may thus be tempted to make the simple statement that non-place is the opposite of place, but possibly bearing heavily physical, precise characteristics of a space. Non-places are often identified with locations with which people have no emotional connection: airports, shopping malls or large public spaces, unified, in which it is easy to be anonymous, without much potential to co-create an identity.

Nowadays, we are increasingly dealing with a kind of 'non-places'. To some extent, it could be stated that this is almost becoming popular. The term 'non-place' is clearly associated with the French cultural anthropologist and ethnologist Marc Augé, who was one of the first to conduct research into the concept of hyper-modernity, recognising the impact of globalisation on the penetration of 'non-places' into ever deeper layers of modern people's lives. The identities of non-places, and even directly of some people, can thus also be embedded in a global identity, not belonging – unlike how individual identities were once perceived – to a place where, for example, we were born or we live. Nowadays, everything is in constant motion and, as a result, we constantly redefine places in a more or less subconscious manner. Globalisation forces mobility, which shows that human identity does not have to be linked to a specific place; through the nature of one's life (frequent movement for professional or tourist reasons) one identifies with the successive points or cultures visited, often abandoning the previous ones. Our personal identity is formed throughout our lives, it is the individual identification of each one of us, our characteristics, which is made up of a myriad of factors over the course of our lives. The concept of identity refers not only to the past, but also, to a large extent, to the present and the future.

Moreover, non-places are defined also by the fact that "everything begins to resemble everything",⁷ but even then, it is possible to pick up accents that more or less indicate a belonging and unique characteristics. This can be described by a quote from Alain de Botton's book *The Art of Travel*:

[...] as soon as I landed at Amsterdam's Schipol airport, I barely took a few steps into the terminal. I was struck by an information board under the ceiling showing the way to the arrivals hall, exit and transfer desks. It is a bright

5 B. Jałowiecki, "Miejsce, przestrzeń, obszar", *Przegląd Socjologiczny*, 60 (2011), vol. 2–3, pp. 9–28.

6 Cf. D. Czaja, *Inne przestrzenie, inne miejsca. Mapy i terytoria*, Wołowiec 2013, p. 9.

7 M. Augé, *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, transl. R. Chymkowski, Warsaw 2010, p. 17.

yellow board, one metre high and two metres wide, a graphically uncomplicated sheet of plastic set in an illuminated aluminium box, suspended on steel struts from the ceiling [...] despite its simplicity, or even mundaneness, it delights me. The source of this delight is most accurately described by the word 'exotic', although using it in the given context may seem somewhat unusual. The exoticism is concentrated in specific areas: the double 'a' in Aankomst, the neighbourhood of 'u' and 'i' in Uitgang, the use of English equivalents, the word for positions, balies, and the use of the modernist fonts Frutiger and Univers. The feeling of pleasure evoked by the sight of an information board owes its strength in part to the fact that it is the first tangible evidence of being in a new place. It symbolises a foreign country. Although, at first glance, nothing in this particular form stands out, it could not exist in my country.⁸

The notion of 'place' and 'non-place' in the following article is analysed in the context of a specific landscape. We can also cite several definitions for the term 'landscape' itself, for example making a distinction between cultural, primary, ecological, natural and devastated landscapes.⁹

[...] the space of the Earth's surface as seen from a certain point; an area distinguished by its characteristic natural, topographical, etc. features; the totality of factors constituting some phenomenon; a picture representing some neighbourhood.¹⁰

When considering these values, we continue with taking up the idea of place in the landscape, but also, more broadly, the landscape of the place itself in the context of its identity. The interpenetration of the ambiguities of these elements means that the meaning of the place itself is also never profoundly fixed, it undergoes constant, greater or lesser transformations, a redefinition that takes new shape over time. Individuals can differ in their feeling of place: it can be similar (when a community is formed) or even completely different. It is also clear that, in addition to a sense of belonging more or less to collectively known locations, there is also an individual predilection for specific locations that are not significant in the context of the community.

The process of forming an identity begins in childhood and continues throughout life. We are formed, on the one hand, by the awareness that we are different from others and that we are individual, we are ourselves (personification) and, on the other hand, we are similar to others, especially some particular others (categorisation). The process of identification draws particularly from the experiences, beliefs, judgements and overarching values that define our aspirations. Identity is a psychic structure composed of features relying to both the social, external, and the internal background.¹¹

Places

The places concerned below are located in south-eastern Poland, in the area of the Low Beskids and the Bieszczady Mountains. After World War II, the area experienced a strong transformation. The population, which had always lived there, almost completely 'disappeared' in a short space of time. Residents were often leaving their houses in a hurry, taking what was most valuable from their

8 A. de Botton, *The Art of Travel*, Warsaw 2010, p. 67.

9 Cf. F. Plit, *Krajobrazy kulturowe w geografii polskiej. Szkice*, Warsaw 2016, p. 11.

10 <https://sjp.pwn.pl/slowniki/krajobraz> [accessed: 12/04/2022].

11 M. Chyła, "Miejsce jako podstawa kształtowania się tożsamości", [in:] *1050-lecie chrztu Polski a tożsamość narodowa*, H. Czakowska, M. Kuciński (eds), Bydgoszcz 2017, p. 51.

inventory, including icons with images of saints.¹² The aim of the Operation Vistula, carried out in south-eastern Poland, was to “solve the Ukrainian problem in Poland once and for all” and to displace the population that allegedly belonged to the Ukrainian nation. Families were given the choice of going to the east or to the western territories that were given to Poland after the war. Families were separated and sent to different regions, other villages, so that the social and cultural bond would not be renewed. There were a few cases of people who returned to the displaced villages, but this was very rare.¹³ A similar story was shared by many villages in the Low Beskids and Bieszczady Mountains, abandoned by their inhabitants.¹⁴ As a result, after a period of time, everything looked as if nature had shaken off the excess of ‘humanity’ once living here. This is how this primordial landscape was transformed and populated by new people over time. We can recall here a quote from Monika Sznajderman’s book *Pusty las* (Empty Forest), which strongly illustrates the situation that followed:

[...] a new world has sprung up: Polish, not Ruthenian.¹⁵

Crosses, trees and overgrown roads remain as reminders of that world. Cemeteries, no longer cultivated fruit trees, uneven ground in the place of non-existent buildings, holes in the ground – marked or not – wells, crumbling cellars, roadside crosses... These are often the only traces that remain in the landscape – obscured by time – of non-existent villages, which used to be inhabited by people up to late 1940s. It is now dominated by silence, by nature which, with the passage of time, drastically – but at the same time most beautifully – erases the traces of their presence.¹⁶ In the following subchapters, a historical outline of selected places located in the south-eastern Poland will be recalled to illustrate the question described. Please note that the history of the following localities is described for illustrative purposes. Each of these places is extremely interesting and undoubtedly deserves a more extensive study. It should also be noted that there are an extremely large number of places of this type in the area described and it would be impossible to list them all. South-eastern Poland is a region of the intermingling of many cultures, religions and traditions, which is reflected in its unique character.¹⁷

Nieznajowa

Delving into the picturesque countryside of the Low Beskids, it is impossible not to come across valleys of displaced villages... One of them is Nieznajowa. Located in the upper valley of the Wisłoka River, it is one of the better-known villages of its kind in the Low Beskids. Mentions of Nieznajowa date from as early as 1546, when Stefan Oleśko located it under the Wallachian law. The village was growing rapidly. Already in the first half of the 17th century, there was a fulling mill, a groat mortar

12 Cf. S. Kryciński, *Łemkowszczyzna po obu stronach Karpat*, Rzeszów 2016, p. 215.

13 Cf. J. Nowak, *Zaginiony świat? Nazywają ich Łemkami*, Kraków 2003, p. 83.

14 Cf. R. Bańkosz, *Cerkwie Szlaku Ikon*, Krosno 2010, p. 22.

15 M. Sznajderman, *Pusty las*, Wołowiec 2019, p. 225.

16 Cf. J. Czajkowski, *Studia nad Łemkowszczyzną*, Sanok 1999, p. 190.

17 Cf. S. Kryciński, *Łemkowszczyzna nieutracona*, Rzeszów 2018, p. 199.

and a mill here. In 1780, a carpenter from nearby Slovakia, Teodor Rusinka, erected here one of the most impressive and beautiful churches in the entire Lemko region.¹⁸

And the Pantocrator fell in the dust

Winged Michael knocked over with a horse

Overgrown with viburnum and thickets of burdocks

Great mouth of the church in Nieznajowa.

[Jerzy Harasymowicz, *Nieznajowa cerkiew przewrócona*]

From the 19th century onwards, four fairs were held annually in Nieznajowa, with traders coming from very far away. The village became a well-known trading centre. There was also an inn nearby. In 1886 Nieznajowa was inhabited by 332 Greek Catholics. At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, there were plans to establish a railway line from Jasło to Bardejov with a large station in Nieznajowa; plans for it were even already drawn up, but then World War I put an end to this idea.

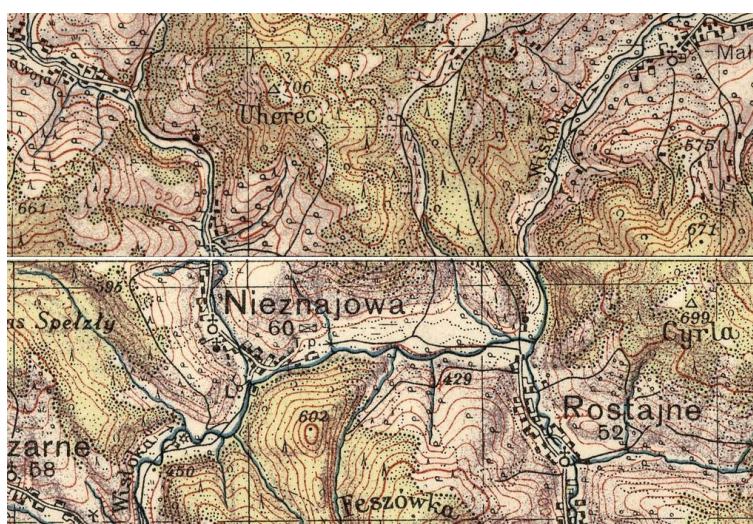


Fig. 1. Nieznajowa, 1938, https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Nieznajowa_1938_r.jpg
[accessed: 16 April 2022].

During World War I, the front passed through the village, and the wartime events were brought to an end by the Gorlice Operation of 2 May 1915. In 1927, as a result of the so-called Schism of Tylawa, the local population began to convert in large numbers to Orthodoxy. Orthodox temples built at that time were far less impressive than the Greek Catholic ones, as they were built in a hurry and often hardly even resembled temples.¹⁹ It was not uncommon for the rich furnishings of a Greek Catholic church to be transferred to an Orthodox church, which also happened in Nieznajowa. In 1936, Nieznajowa was inhabited by 220 Orthodox Christians, 6 Greek Catholics, 20 Roman Catholics and

18 Cf. W. Grzesik, T. Traczyk, *Beskid Niski. Od Komańczy do Bartnego*, Warsaw 1992, p. 186.

19 Cf. J. Nowa, *Zaginiony świat? Nazywają ich Łemkami*, pp. 151–152.

3 Jews.²⁰ In the interwar period, the village had a school and a reading room, two shops, a police station and two operating sawmills.²¹



Fig. 2. Preserved archival documentation on the church in Nieznajowa, photo: WUOZ Nowy Sącz.

World War II did not bring any major losses to the village, despite the ongoing battles in the nearby Ciecchania and Żydowsko – until the time of displacement, when the inhabitants were displaced as part of the Operation Vistula and the village was deserted. The valley began to be gradually dominated by nature, which conquered the land which had been previously taken from it. The beautiful Greek Catholic church collapsed over time. The land was adapted for sheep grazing, and in the 1970s, until the 1981 martial law, a remand centre operated here.

20 Cf. http://www.beskid-niski-pogorze.pl/galeria_regionu/nieistniejace_wsie/nieznajowa/nieznajowa.php [accessed: 14/04/2022].

21 Cf. W. Grzesik, T. Traczyk, *Beskid Niski*, p. 184.



Fig. 3-6. Archival photographs of the ruins of the Orthodox church in Nieznajowa, photos from the collection of Zagroda Maziarska, the Karwacjan and Gładysz Family Manors Museum in Gorlice. Top, on the right: entrance portal.



Fig. 7. Old fruit trees in Nieznajowa, September 2015, photo: K. Zielińska.

Today, many traces of the defunct village can still be found. The most distinctive are the stone road-side chapels. We can find the ruins of a sawmill. The church cemetery has also been preserved, where we can see fragments of the foundations of a no longer existing Greek Catholic church and several artefacts. A wooden entrance portal, a rainbow beam (currently kept in the museum in the Orthodox church in Bartne) and a *Deesis* icon (kept in the collection of the Regional Museum in Jasło) have been preserved from the church.



Fig. 8. Fragment of a rainbow beam from the Orthodox church in Nieznajowa (currently in the Museum of the Orthodox Church in Bartne), December 2015, photo: K. Zielińska.



Fig. 9. Entrance portal preserved from the Orthodox church in Nieznajowa (currently in the Museum of the Orthodox Church in Bartne), December 2015, photo: S. Zieliński.

It is not even possible to list most of these types of irretrievably destroyed objects. Fortunately, conservation efforts have saved some of them (e.g. the Orthodox church from the village of Czarne, currently available in the open-air museum in Nowy Sącz).



From left: Fig. 10. Memorial plaque of the Orthodox church in Nieznajowa, November 2015, photo: K. Zielińska. Fig. 11. Chapel in Nieznajowa, August 2014, photo: K. Zielińska.



Fig. 12. Chapels in Nieznajowa, February 2016, photo: K. Zielińska.

Krywe

Krywe is a village that no longer exists, lying between the foothills of the Otryt range and the peaks of Bukowina and Stołów. The village was first mentioned in sources in 1502. It was located under the Wallachian law before 1526. At the end of the 19th century, Krywe had 462 inhabitants, a large proportion of whom were Ruthenians.

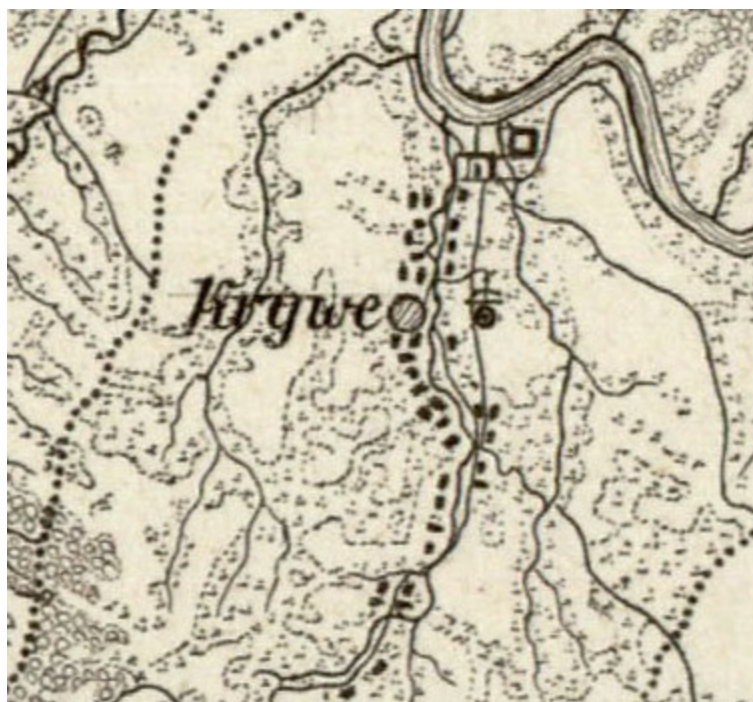


Fig. 13. Austrian map of 1855, plan of buildings in the Krywe village,
<https://naszebieszczady.com/krywe/krywe-mapa/> [accessed: 14/04/2022].

Although the village was relatively small at the time, in addition to the buildings of the inhabitants, there was a steam sawmill, a parish school, a manor house, manor buildings and a farm, a watermill and the Orthodox Church of St Paraskeva, built in 1842 (the first mention of an Orthodox church in Krywe dates back to 1589). In 1915, there was heavy fighting in the surrounding area and in Krywe itself. The village was devastated; some of the population was killed or forced to leave. Sources say that in 1921, almost 100 years ago, Krywe had 74 houses with 472 inhabitants (almost all of them, apart from a few Poles and Jews, were Ruthenians). During World War II the village was divided into two occupation zones: the Soviet and the German, who had their border on the San River. After the war, in 1945, the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) burnt down the sawmill and the manor house. In 1946, 16 families were displaced; other residents hid in the surrounding woods. A year later, Operation Vistula took place. 320 people were deported from Krywe at that time, and the remaining wooden houses and buildings were burnt down. In the 1960s, people partially returned to the area of Krywe. Summer cattle grazing took place here, prisoners used to be sent to work here, and there were two

State Agricultural Farms (PGRs) from Lutowska and Czarna. Land reclamation was carried out in the 1980s with the use of bulldozers. A bridge over the San River was then built, which lasted until 1999.²²

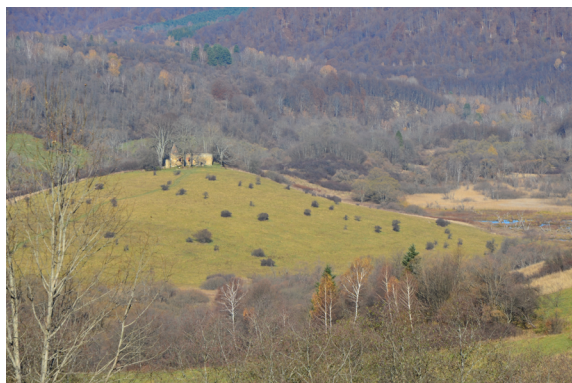


Fig. 14. Ruins of the Orthodox church of St Paraskeva in Krywe on the Dilok hill, October 2021, photo: K. Zielińska.

To this day, many traces of human presence can be found in the valley of the village, the most prominent of which are the well-preserved ruins of the bricked Orthodox church of St Paraskeva oriented on the Dilok hill, abandoned since 1947, together with the ruins of a brick bell gable and the stone gravestones preserved around them.



Fig. 15. Ruins of the Orthodox church and bell gable in Krywe, October 2021, photo: K. Zielińska.

Some of the elements of the ruins have been protected from the weather, and missing elements – such as the vaults above the windows – have been restored; inside the temple, we can still find tiles from the terracotta floor.



Fig. 16. Interior of the ruins of the church in Krywe, view towards the nave and entrance from the presbytery, October 2021, photo: K. Zielińska.

The ruins of the Orthodox church in Krywe are currently one of the best-preserved ruins of Orthodox churches in the entire Bieszczady Mountains. You can also see the ruins of a manor house (its foundation), visible unevenness of the terrain in the place of the non-existing buildings, fruit trees in blossom in spring are the remains of farmstead orchards... In 1991 the Krywe Nature Reserve was established here, partly covering the area of the non-existing village. On 8 July 2017, a ceremony took place here to dedicate a cross in memory of the villagers; it was attended by some descendants of the former villagers.²³ In the vicinity of Krywe, we can also find the remains of the villages of Hulskie and Tworylne.



Fig. 17. Elements of the Krywe Orthodox church, October 2021, photo: K. Zielińska.

Beniowa

Beniowa, a village that no longer exists, located at the very edge of the Polish part of the Bieszczady Mountains, is another example of a place understood as an object of memory recorded in the landscape. The village is first mentioned in the foundation charter of the village of Tarnawa Niżna and Wyżna from 1537, where it is referred to as the “Beniowe field”. It was the inhabitants of Tarnawa, a nearby village, who cultivated the land around it, gradually settling it over time; as a result, we can learn about the now separate village of Beniowa from sources from 1580, when the division of the lands by the heirs took place. The village was founded under Wallachian law and remained picturesque, even harmoniously, integrated into the landscape, river network and vegetation.

During the march of troops in the times of the Northern War in 1709, Beniowa was set on fire by the Swedes. At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, there were two water sawmills, a water mill, a brewery and barrel factory, a potash place, a lupine mill and even a glassworks in the village. A narrow-gauge railway was established here in the early 20th century. Beniowa also had an Orthodox church. There were several temples, but the first one was mentioned in the tax register of 1589. Another Orthodox church, the Church of St Michael the Archangel was built right by the San River in 1779. The wooden tripartite church was built in the Boyko style. However, the inhabitants of Beniowa built another, more impressive temple; this resulted in abandoning the previous one, which was demolished in 1927 (the material from this temple was used in the construction of the seat for the ‘Proswita’ Society). The new church was built in 1909 on the plan of a Greek cross in the so-called national style and it was consecrated a year later. The building was impressive, it has two vestries on the sides of the presbytery and it was vaulted by five bulbous dome forms topped by pseudo lanterns. The building was extremely interesting from the architectural point of view, as can be seen on the archive photographs.



Fig. 18. Orthodox Church of St Michael the Archangel in 1909, on a postcard from the 1930s, photo from the collection of P. Kusal (*Zapomniane cerkwie*, published by Ruthenus), photo of the church on the information board in Bukowiec, October 2021, photo: K. Zielińska.

In the 1920s, Beniowa was inhabited by 617 people of various religious denominations (almost 500 Greek Catholics, several dozen Jews and just over 20 Roman Catholics). After World War II, a national border was drawn through the village. In 1946, all the inhabitants were deported to the USSR and the village was deserted. The Orthodox church was plundered. A year later it was set on fire along with other village buildings. Nature has begun to reoccupy its original territories. In the 1980s, attempts of reclamation were made in the village with the use of explosives. Nowadays, in the seemingly primeval landscape, traces of human presence can still be found on closer inspection.



Fig. 19. Linden tree in Beniowa, October 2021, photo: K. Zielińska.

The distinctive old linden tree, now almost a symbol of Beniowa, is a silent witness to much of the village's history, and certainly the most turbulent years. The tree, visible from a large distance, is around 200 years old. In its vicinity, there is an old Orthodox churchyard with the visible foundations of a non-existent church (broken stone foundation) and preserved wrought iron crosses from the domes resting *in situ*, in place of the presbytery. It is surrounded by a fenced cemetery with several

stone tombstones made by local stonemasons (it is worth mentioning that there used to be as many as three cemeteries in Beniowa). Within the cemetery, there is also a beautiful distinctive baptismal font base with a carved fish symbol, made from a block of sandstone. Currently, a few buildings can be found only on the Ukrainian side. On the Polish side, you can see old roadside crosses, cellars and old wells. In 1991 a nature trail was marked out here, and in 1996 the area of the former village of Beniowa was included in the Bieszczady National Park.



From left: Fig. 20. Iron wrought crosses – remnants from the Orthodox church in Beniowa, October 2021, photo: K. Zielińska.

Fig. 21. Probably a baptismal font base with an engraved fish symbol, made of sandstone, October 2021, photo: K. Zielińska.

Polany Surowiczne

In the eastern part of Low Beskids, not far from Jaśliska, we can find Polany Surowiczne. It is a place that shared the fate of other displaced villages, now entirely dominated by nature. This beautiful empty valley was once a very large village. Today we can find the parish cemetery, traces of cellars, crosses, a student hostel open in summer season and a restored bell tower.

The first mentions about the village can be found in sources relating to the donation of the land to the Orthodox church in 1533. The village was founded, like others in the region, under the Wallachian law. The first tiny temple was probably built in the mid-16th century. In 1690, the village counted 665 people. In 1728, construction of a second Orthodox church began on the site of the first one; it was then gradually expanded up to the 20th century. However, the church was demolished in 1946. The brick bell tower, which still exists today, was probably built in 1730.

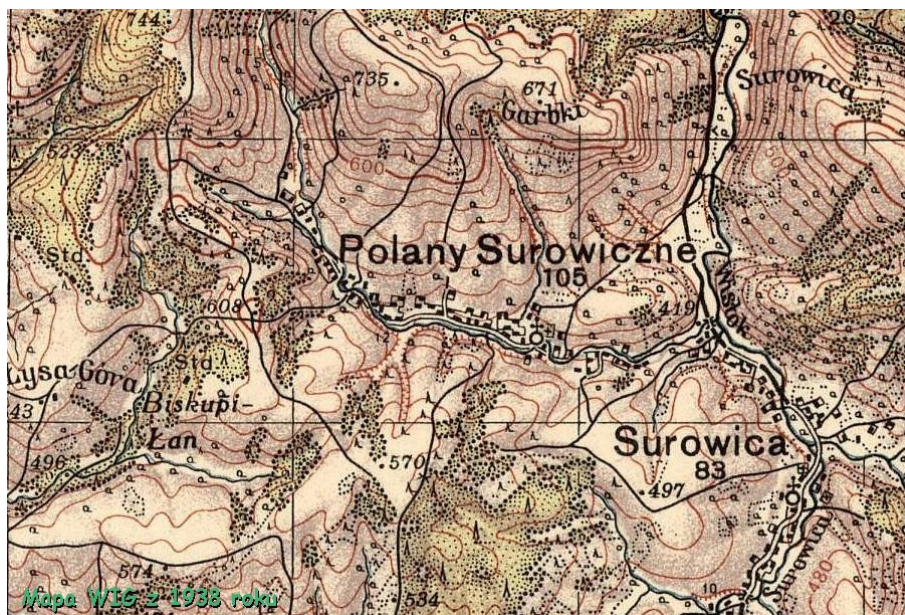


Fig. 22. Archived village map with view of buildings, http://www.beskid-niski-pogorze.pl/galeria_regionu/nieistniejace_wsie/polany.s/polany_surowiczne.php [accessed: 14/04/2022].

In 1936, more than 1,000 people lived in Polany Surowicze, almost all of whom were Greek Catholics. Therefore, less than 90 years ago, it was a very large village, which is very hard to believe when we observe the landscape today. After the end of World War II, the people living in the village left or were forced to leave it.



Fig. 23. Phases of the renovation of the bell tower in Polany Surowicze, <http://polanysurowiczne.waw.pl> [accessed: 14/04/2022].

Thanks to the social efforts of the lovers of Low Beskids, the Electrical Faculty of the Warsaw University of Technology, members of Magurycz, the 'Res Carpathica' Association and the STYKI tourist club, we can now admire the beautifully restored bell tower.

Identity of a place hidden in sound and time

The examples of selected places mentioned above form the basis for an analysis of the identity of a lost, obliterated place. The sketchy outlining of their stories is intended to give an idea of how strongly a place can be transformed, dehumanised, how its characteristics can be blurred. How the once distinctive features can almost completely disappear. At the same time, it involves an attempt to recreate the sensation of being in a particular place and a particular time by means of engaging various senses that support our imagination and comprehension in a specific way. The habits of development are contrary to what we observe in the examples above. The landscape is being destroyed. The place ceases to exist in its previous form, impoverishes, disappears. Are we somehow able to evoke and preserve its characteristic elements, even though they do not physically exist? Can smells, sounds, images, be reliably evoked to some extent? How can we transfer time without physically interfering with the current state of the place?

Places – machines, vehicles of memory. Although they are lost, it is safe to say that in their orphaned elements, which are still building the present, they are immortal. In this case, shreds of elements of the places physically survived. But what sense do they have without human presence? Seeing the landscapes of the displaced villages, we imagine their past. What do we want to see and what do we see? What do we feel? The smell of drying hay, apples ripening in the afternoon sun, the coolness and the rocky smell of the stream – associations appear almost immediately in our mind. The theme taken up is only an example based on which we can think about a way of ‘designing’ the past time. Technology offers possibilities that are not only able to recreate the desired elements of the space, but at the same time do not interfere with the landscape as such. Museums known as ‘sound banks’ have been created for a long time, which; they act like seed banks of endangered plants, preserving sound, displaced by time, technology and sometimes uselessness. How often do we hear the clatter of the typewriter that was once so popular? It is being superseded by the computer keyboard or the soundless smartphone touch screen, or even by the action of ‘writing’ a text by speaking into a voice recorder that captures words and turns them into written text. It is the scale of the action that determines the degree of interference.

Place. When returning to this now familiar, tamed point in an unfamiliar space, we imagine its sound.²⁴ Let us stay in the same place - permanently. Let us close our eyes, listen, try to interpret the sounds, as if we were participating in a sound walk. Now that we have tuned in, let us try to let that sound go backwards. Let us turn back the time. Let us keep going back. Let us listen. What do we actually hear? How far back in time have we gone? Are we already hearing our place from a week ago, maybe a year ago? How has it changed? We go back in time. A bell is ringing somewhere. Let us go further into the past. Something drives by, a clatter is heard. 30 years back? 60? Let us step back slowly,

capture, recognise, identify, let it all become familiar. After all, this is our place... What do we hear? A door slams somewhere, close by; the nearby mountain makes the sound echo, it sounds clearer, like after a rain. Far away, the bell is heard again. It is the Orthodox church, where the service is about to begin. The loud sound spread from afar across the valley. You can catch in this sound the rush of people, you can hear a call, someone singing, returning from the field. Let us locate. Let us keep listening. Somewhere in the back, the water whispers. It is a stream, but the sound is sort of unnatural, exaggerated. It is a sawmill. After all, there were three of them here, I can remember that. Let us open our eyes. Where are we?

Emptiness. Is anyone here?

The valley, the trees, the grasses, the road. Chapels remained from our journey; a cemetery is visible in the distance. In Beniowa, just over the border, a train passes in the distance. In Polany Surowiczone the wind whistles through the bell tower canopy. In the abandoned orchard in Nieznajowa, wild apples are falling, and in Krywe, old trees creak, stroking the branches of the remains of the abandoned ruins of the Orthodox church.

As far as the eye can see, the moment reigns.

One of those earthly moments

asked to last.

[W. Szymborska, *Chwila*]

Images of memory and the present

[...] matter woven from voices, images, premonitions given in visions, sensations, delusions, visions...

Images:

They appear, disappear, reappear, outside the realm of meaning, in a dialogue that cannot be translated into definable words. A procession of real and unreal characters, mythical phenomena that only expect us to acknowledge that they exist.

It is all tangled up: the real-unreal: a dream, a delusion: an abyss interspersed with voices, with lights where, it would seem, time is only just emerging to become time, somewhere between living matter and the great realm of the dead, between waking and dreaming, between reality and hallucination: in an area filled with signs that come from nowhere and ultimately do not know what they mean.

And then - long afterwards - perhaps in that mysterious space, called 'khora' by Plato, words appear. And questions asked blindly. Is this my world? Someone else's? Is it seen? Felt? Where? When? In what dream? In what memory?²⁵

It is worth referring to an example of the *Trees are clocks* project by Professor Adrian Newton (Bournemouth University), which shows, through a combination of sound art and music, how ancient trees are able to record climate change over the past centuries.

The piece uses field recordings made during one year in dying beech trees in the New Forest National Park in Great Britain. The passage of time is marked by the sound of breaking twigs and branches of trees that have recently died. These elements are combined with vocal textures derived from a set of chords with roots that move along a cycle of fifths, representing the cyclical dynamics of the forest ecosystems. Each chord is presented in a basic version and two inversions, with the different types of extended chord reflecting the contrasting moods of the different seasons. These movements are completed by an improvised cello performance, created in response to the other sound elements.²⁶

Desires of places

The undergoing project *Desires of Places* (author: K. Zielińska) aims to develop concepts, ways of defining the identity of a place using, among other things, memory as the building block. Memory is also understood here through its reference to a broadly understood identity (e.g. place, society, activities, traditions, habits).²⁷ Only a fixed image of the past provides the solidification of a stable basis through which a given identity can be constructed in the present moment, absorbing it – or not – into the present: co-participating and, at the same time, involving the future in a desirable way. Memory, which is also part of the identity of a place, lies in this case not so much in the concrete space, but also in the people's understanding of it, which equally defines its multiplicity. Identity, on the other hand, would seem to belong to a place. The continuous processes that affect memory (e.g. cognition) are able to redefine not so much the space itself but rather its image in the human understanding: the sphere in which we exist, which we have come to know and which, if necessary, can be re-created through memory.²⁸

Landscape is not static: there is time, history and place interacting in it, the identity of landscape consists of the relationship between all of them. These are the distinctive elements that the landscape contains that define the methodology for the appropriate selection and development of a method/technology for evoking memory in the creation of an image of this space, which is the consideration of the research activities in the project. It is an open relationship, constituting the identity of the place.²⁹

The memory is fixed, the landscape is changeable. So, is the identity of the place changing or not? To what extent does it remain primary? Does it depend on the nature of the space itself? Can we, through the landscape, evoke emotions, convey feelings and if yes – what kind of feeling and on what do they depend? Can we influence them: bring them out, hide them, direct them? Is this even desirable in this case?

26 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eFdXqk9k0-k> [accessed: 14/04/2022].

27 Cf. S. Macdonald, *Krainy pamięci. O dziedzictwie i tożsamości we współczesnej Europie (Memorylands: Heritage and Identity in Europe Today)*, Kraków 2021, p. 17.

28 Cf. I. Calvino, *Jeżeli t = 0*, Warszawa 2021, pp. 162–163.

29 Cf. O. Gitkiewicz, *Nie zdążę*, Warszawa 2019, pp. 107–108.

Although the spaces referred to in the article remain similar in their characteristics, the research area of the *Desires of Places* project is largely an analysis of the same problem in terms of types of space (a general idea supported by an example), e.g. EXISTING SPACE (place) / NON-EXISTING SPACE (virtual one) – RESIDENTIAL SPACE (current activity) / ABANDONED SPACE (visible cultural influence but no current activity) / NATURAL SPACE (natural, landscape) / MODIFIED SPACE (predominant human activity) / HISTORICAL SPACE (past) / MODERN SPACE (present) / FUTURE SPACE (future) / SACRAL SPACE (temple) / SECURAL SPACE (house).³⁰

The aim is to define the building element in a given space, depending on its nature and based on available source material, for example non-existing objects: analysis of available documentation³¹ – virtual development (model, VR panorama, etc.) – analysis of the place / situation of the place: e.g. approach in the context of the space around, development plans in the next few years with the result of matching the technology / mode of communication to the content communicated in relation to the space concerned.

IDENTITY = LANDSCAPE / SPHERE + CONTENT + FORM

The places referred to in the article have been transformed. It is precisely because of this, that they form the basis for considering how to describe their past through a variety of sensory experiences: both *in situ* and with the possibility of experiencing this without being physically present in the place.

Part of the project's realisation will be presented in the form of an exhibition in July 2022 at the Fashion Start-up Gallery, a gallery created as part of the project "Designing the Future. Development programme of the Jan Matejko Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków 2018–2022".

30 Cf. P. Zumthor, *Myślenie architekturą*, Kraków 2010, pp. 33–34.

31 Cf. J. Pallasmaa, *Oczy skóry. Architektura i zmysły*, Kraków 2012, pp. 16, 41–43.

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