Sensus Historiae
ISSN 2082–0860
Vol. IX (2012/4)
pp. 89-118

Sławomir Kapralski
Szkoła Wyższa Psychologii Społecznej, Warszawa

The (Non-)Presence of Jews in the Memoryscapes of South-Eastern Poland

The concept of MEMORYSCAPE refers to a real or symbolic area "in which collective memory is spatialized" (Muzaini, Yeoh 2005: 345). The suffix SCAPE suggests that in memory conventions according to A. Appaduraia (1996: 33), i.e. a certain flexibility of shape which a given "landscape" takes, its perspectivist nature as a multilevel structure of meanings, perceived differently depending on the location of specific objects, also as an imagined character: notwithstanding the fact that the memoryscape may take various material forms, it is constituted via imaginations of those who refer to it.

The area of spatializing memory is on the one hand the territory of expression and creating our identities and on the other hand, the fight for power. According to A. Gupty and J. Ferguson (2004: 269-270) these two phenomena—"hierarchical structures of authority" and „cultural constructs of community"—are responsible for the fact that some kind of abstract space being the theatre of the events becomes a place equipped with meaning. In Polish literature this issue was earlier analyzed by B. Jałowiecki (1985: 134), who dealt with transformations of space and included them it transmission of memory as the form of political fight in symbolic spheres having almost sacral character for the members of a given society, as including almost the most significant elements of their identity. This line of thinking was lately continued by L.M. Nijakowski, making use of the concept of "symbolic domain," as "the territory on which a given group rules symbolically" (Nijakowski 2007: 108). Symbolic ruling is to paraphrase it "ruling over ... goods, which are vital symbols for a given group" such as monuments, memory tables, buildings, objects of cult; they play the role of signs of controlling time and space, and thus become a material extension or the sign of group identity. (Nijakowski 2007: 111). This article deals with theoretical

problems undertaken by the quoted authors and deal with them on the grounds of analysis of the special dimension of Polish and Jewish memory.

Two geographies

Before World War II towns and villages of southern and eastern Poland were inhabited by Poles, Jews, and in the eastern parts of the region also by Ukrainians and/or Ruthenians. Jews represented generally between 20 and 60% of the urban population, although in some places, such as Włodawa, Lesko and Dukla, more than 70%. The coexistence of Poles and Jews in these not very large spaces, was characterized, on the one hand, with attempts to describe the site by the dominant community, i.e.: Polish Catholics, and on the other hand, the desire of a Jewish community to create in the existing landscape the expression of their own identity.

The result of these processes was, among others, the phenomenon of co-existence of the two completely different "symbolic geographies:" Jewish and Polish in one and the same space.

> Ask an average Pole where the city of Chełm is located—D.K. Roskies and D. Roskies (1979: 45) write—he may or may not know. Every Jew, however, even if he has never been to Poland, can tell you that Chełm has the world reputation of the city of fools. It may look strange that the two nations, living in the same land, could have a completely different attitude towards the same place, but that was the case. Jewish geography was not quite the same as the geography of Gentiles. Jewish geography would not accept geographical changes. The historical boundaries of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania have been preserved in Jewish geography as Lite, even two hundred years after it ceased to exist. Moreover, other cities and towns, apart from Chełm, which did not have any meaning for the Gentiles, were extremely vital for Jews from the cultural point of view.

So we experience the same physical space changed into two different symbolic places, determined by the constructs of both groups' identities. The „Polish" place was, however, additionally established by the existing power structures and was more "stable" than that of the Jews. From the perspective of a Jewish resident of the pre-war Rymanów the situation looked in the following way: so to say Jewish and Christian Rymanów were two different towns. The Christian one was so firmly embedded in the reality that no power in the world could bring it down.

> The Jewish Rymanów, on the other hand, drifted the world without any roots. Any gust of wind could have come and turn it upside down. Which happened in reality—it took only night for the Jewish Rymanów to cease

> to exist. It will remain only in memory of those few who have survived the Holocaust. ... May the soul of my city be inseparable linked to the lives of its sons, who will keep it in their memory forever. (Fuerer 1983: 8)

Although the memories reflect the Holocaust tragedy, one can find some conviction of lower "materiality" and thus the power of "Jewish place." The space where Jewish identity is manifested most fully and most permanently is the abstract-symbolic memory space, in which specific, physically present places are mapped onto specific memories. It could be said that if Jewish identity based on the MEMORIES OF THE PLACE, then the Polish identity, through better ability of controlling memoryspace, was expressed in the "positioning" or spatialization of memories.

In summary, when the two communities live in the same territory, they tend to create it as the memory space of their identities. This situation may often lead to conflicts about their space where both groups are trying to mark their presence physically and symbolically.

In the case of a minority group the situation is more difficult since a dominant group tries to control and monopolize their means of symbolic expression in order to strengthen its claim to the territory as its "property." In this way, the landscape becomes a battleground: a place in which a group fighting for the best representation of their identity, trying to, with available resources, shape the landscape and equip it with meaning to corresponded best with the vision of identity possessed at the time by the group.

The Holocaust wiped out the world of Polish-Jewish towns and its Jewish inhabitants. After the war, the elements of the landscape representing the presence of the Jews, which had survived, were largely destroyed, because there was no community which could make a center of their lives. Towns and villages being the scene of Polish and Jewish efforts to leave imprints of their own identity in the space became homogeneously Polish. As a result, writes J. Young (1993: 116), Poles "were left alone with their undisputed memory of events." From a political point of view, the communist authorities were also trying to give meaning to the landscape appropriate from the perspective of their historical vision. The remains of Jewish memoryscapes were placed in the confines of two controlling forces, and their further fate reveals identity encoding mechanisms in space and on the aspects of a multi-level landscape, with the memory of many groups.

Conflict on the space does not end with one of the groups leaving a battlefield. It then converts into a conflict of memories. Landscape becomes an arena of the remembering and forgetting processes, but it has merely bee formed by activities formed by a group that remains and a stubborn presence of matter containing the memories of those who have passed away. The memory of the eliminated group and its material / symbolic representations

in such a situation can be manipulated in an almost unlimited way by a group of survivors. Landscape stores what a group wants to remember, and what the group wants to forget ceases to exist, is ignored or kept in a distorted way. Sometimes it is a natural process: attempts of storing memory other than the ones of their own group end in distortion, even with the best of intentions. Most often, however, it is difficult for such intentions and the memory groups to remain if in a given place they can no longer be cared for, so it is intentionally destroyed or distorted by those who have remained.

Variations of (non)presence

To illustrate the various representations of the Jewish (non) presence in the Polish landscapes, let us use the example of a building facade at Goldhammera St. in Tarnów, undergoing various transformations over the years. The first photograph, coming from early 90s of the twentieth century, shows, on the one hand, the devastating effects of time and oblivion, on the other hand—the stubborn resistance of the materials against these processes: the Jewish inscription, along with the Polish invitation to visit this once welcoming place, is still visible, although over 50 years have passed since the building's last redecoration. (Phot. 1). The fall of communism in Poland meant, among other things, liberalization of access to public space, revision of the communist manipulations in history, and—which is equally significant in this context—the tendency to renew old facades. The latter one can be seen in a collective photography made in 2000 (Phot. 2).

Naturally, it is difficult to erase the memory completely and the old characters still show through a new coat of paint, leaving our facade with a polyphonic message from the world which does not exist. Since the stubborn resistance sometimes brings benefits, the message has recently obtained some sort of life after death, becoming a part of postmodern nostalgia, exploring the locality and „Tourism industry," yet this would not have been possible without the presence of people of good will who have decided to help the past in its unequal struggle with time (Phot. 3).

This photograph, made in 2008, shows that preserving of the Jewish past, cultivated in many various ways, may be treated as an interesting option for contemporary Polish residents (and not only them) of Goldhammer St. in Tarnów.

Oblivion, erasure and preserving memory accompanied by resistance to the destruction by the material traces of memory are the three most important variations of Jewish (non) presence in the Polish memoryspace. They do not represent a chronological sequence: they can all be found in

Photo 1 Building facade at Goldhammer St. (early 90s XXth century)

Photo 2 Second Facade of the building at ul. Goldhammer (2000)

any of the post-war periods, although the probability of their occurrence was variable and depended on the specific system of relations and vision of Polish identity which dominated in a given moment. Moreover, preserving in the Polish memory identity may take a variety of forms, ranging from the manipulation and distortion to fair representation. Let us look at some specific examples.

Łańcut: Musealisation and memory space

The spatial arrangement of Łańcut is largely representative of many cities in the region and can provide a spatial illustration of the area occupied by the Jews, both in the social structure and in the "mental map" of the Poles. If we imagine a line joining the preserved synagogue with the Roman Catholic Church located on the other side of the market, we obtain the first axis defining a special system of the city.[1]

The second axis is marked by the line connecting the palace with a market place next to the synagogue, and further, if we could imagine the continuation of this line, it goes to the village houses inhabited by the peasants, the source of income for the palace in the old times

Shown in Fig. 1 spatial system can be also seen as a code encrypting the economic position of the Jews, their religious and social structure in the former Poland (where they were treated as a separate state, next to the nobles, the clergy and peasantry), and their position on the mental map of Poles, in many cases, has been conveyed until this day.

The axis linking the church and the synagogue marks a fundamental religious opposition between Jews and Catholic Poles. The latter in fact, especially with reference to the inhabitants of small towns and villages, had (and have) a tendency to perceive Jews, primarily in religious terms—as enemies, Christianity traitors, who have rejected Christ and crucified him.

A. Cała, on the other hand, writes that the Jews were perceived in an almost ystical way, as "participants" of sacred narrative of Christianity—the story of the Passion of Christ, which—according to Cała, would provide evidence on the ambivalence of religiously conditioned Jews' perception in a Polish society. It seems, however, that instead of ambivalence we are dealing rather with the lack of indifference: the fact that the Jews were simply religiously „Significant" for Catholics that they were „on the same axis" of religion. Although being on the same axis the Jews were also enemies, they

[1] Synagogues in the southern and eastern Poland were generally built in the center of towns and separated from the local church by the market. The rule was (legally sanctioned formerly) that the synagogue should not stand out as a building.

Photo 3 The synagogue in the foreground. Church tower in the back, the first of the left. (Cała 2005).

were „on the other side," which is also encoded in the Łańcut space, in the relationship between the church and the synagogue building.

However, we can talk about ambivalence in case of the second, secular axis, representing the political dimension of economic life of the town. Here, the Jews were present "in the middle," mediating in trade exchange. Therefore, they were seen on the one hand as remaining "in the service" of the center of economic and political power, symbolized by the palace, on the other hand—as an essential component of economic life, enabling peasants to sell their goods and allowing the purchase of necessary goods.

In this sense, the secular axis of the city not only interconnected the spaces of exchange and production power, but also—as A. Markowski observed when discussing another village (2004: 344)—was the social mediation for villages and cities, allowing not only for economic contacts, but also for cultural and religious exchange between town and countryside setting contact area for Jews and Christians.

From peasants' and small-town mentality perspective, Jews thus appeared as religiously and culturally alien, belonging to "another world" together with the "palace" and its residents. On the other hand, the Jews, this time similarly to peasants, occupied subordinate position, which meant for them double subordination: economic-political and religious, often

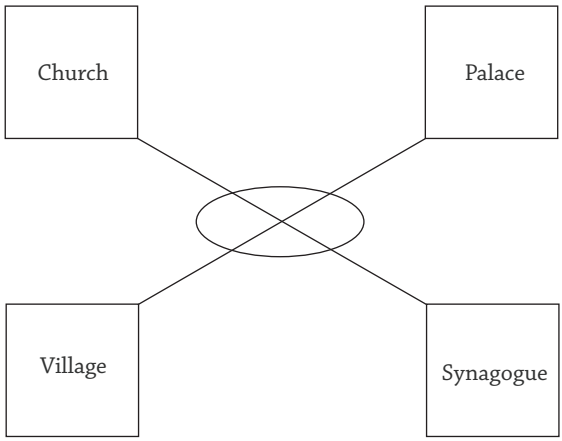

Figure 1 Schematic mental map

unnoticed by the Poles, focusing more on the relationship of the Jews with the centers of power.

In fact, the relationships between the Jewish community and the aristocracy were generally very good. The synagogue construction in 1761 was financially supported by one of the towns current owners, Prince Stanislaus Lubomirski, and in 1939, when the German army soldiers set fire on the synagogue, Alfred Potocki, the last resident of the palace, used his connections among the German aristocracy to impress the German commanding officer and make him stop the destruction of the building.

As a result of the World War II, a complex network of Polish-Jewish relations, with their internal logic, conflicts and alliances, stopped to exist. Łańcut Jews who did not manage to escape to the territories occupied by the Soviet Union, were murdered. Alfred Potocki left the country, fleeing the advancing Red Army, rightly assuming that his aristocratic connections would not impress the Red Army officers. In this sense „alien" dimension of the Polish symbolic universe ceased to exist. After some time the Palace was turned into a museum, and a synagogue, converted by the German occupiers into the warehouse, was used in the same purpose by the Poles.

Two existing in the town Jewish cemeteries were destroyed during the German occupation. Many years later, on one of them, the visiting Jews put two so-called "ohels" at the burial site of Hasidic tzaddiks. In the second one, owing to the efforts of Holocaust survivors, an unobtrusive monument commemorating those who had died was erected. They were the only objects that could more or less openly remind about the Jewish presence in the city,

i.e. the ones in which "Jewishness" was visible—as opposed to the Jewish secular and private houses, whose new residents were not particularly interested in commemorating their previous owners.

The situation began to change as late as in the late 70s of the 20th century with the wave of growing interest in Jewish history and Polish-Jewish relations, entangled in the political context of the times (Steinlauf 2001). The synagogue, for some time then not operating as a warehouse, became a part of Łańcut Castle Museum. The rooms underwent the renovation, the rooms were set up rooms to arrange a small exhibition showing the history of the Jewish town community, the guides were trained and the museum was opened to the public. Thus Jewish memory returned to Łańcut in a "musealized" form.

However, since 2008, in connection with the coming into force the Act on the municipal properties return to their Jewish owners, the synagogue in Łańcut is no longer part of the museum, but is managed by the Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish heritage. In a certain way it means replacing a "musealized" memory by a living memory, represented by a Jewish organization operating in Poland. What will be the fate of the memory? Time will show.

Żołynia: memory exclusion

For many years, on entering Żołynia, a small town between Łańcut and Leżajsk, you could see a board with the outline of the cross contour of Grunwald; you could also read the information that the medal was awarded to the community for their assistance given to the partisan movement during the war.[2] This could have indicated that the inhabitants of the town were preserving the memory of the war with pride. However, this seems to be rather a selective memory.

In the corner of the Żołyń market a small obelisk crowned with the wings stretching eagle is located. The inscription on the obelisk says: "In memory of Żołyń, people who died for their country and were murdered by the Nazis in the years 1939–1945." Below you will find 24 names of Poles executed in June 1943. It is symptomatic that exclusively Polish people sacrifice has been commemorated, even though the vast majority of „Żołyń people" murdered by the Nazis were Jewish. Their names, or even a short notice about them, are not included on this commemorative obelisk.

[2] For a while, the Cross of Grunwald has not been welcoming the entering visitors—perhaps its presence preserved the „incorrect" memory of the communist era when it was awarded to the municipality.

This should be interpreted as symbolic exclusion of Jews from the "local" community, regardless of whether this exclusion was intentional or not. It just so happens that at the very moment the concept of "Żołynia people" refers only to the Poles, since they are the only ones living in the town. Projecting this situation into the past we could say that the locals excluded Jews from their collective memory, which can be interpreted in terms of reconciliation of heterogeneous and homogeneous memoryscape of the presence by submission of the former to the latter. The obelisk in Żołynia says, in essence: "This is Poland, a country of Poles who have their own glorious and tragic, only Polish history."

Such exclusion has also a historical dimension: the structure of Polish-Jewish relations, shown as an example of Łańcut Palace spatial layout, placed the Jews in a "foreign" world, as a group, which from the Polish perspective, did not belong to a "community of fate." This explains the feelings of indifference of many Poles towards the extermination of the Jews: their death was not the death "our people," it belonged to a separate Jewish history, sometimes intersecting with the Polish history, but essentially following its own path. In the post-war process of cultural homogenization Polish history was identified with the history of the Polish and Żołynia obelisk, like many other monuments (both existing and those that have not been built); it is an expression of the process and the means of memoryscape controlled by the dominant history vision. That exclusion or erasure from the Jewish memory may not have been done consciously. The side effect of successful homogenization awareness is the way of thinking as by definition they are simply "the others." In the memoryscape controlled by the Żołynia obelisk this evidence will be hard to challenge.

Yet the Jewish memory of Żołynia has returned in a sense. Joseph Waldman, born in a family with its Jewish roots in Żołynia, fenced the area of the vandalized cemetery and left a certain amount of financial means in the Municipal Office for those who would find cemetery gravestones in the local area. The ones who have already been found were returned to the cemetery, which after years of "non-existence" has reappeared as a visible sign of the Jewish presence. Admittedly, this way of "recovery" is symptomatic: Jewish memory, in some latent manner, is still present among the inhabitants of Żołynia, although it is not subjected to reflection or should not be treated as any significant element of these memories. However, if any reason for such reflection is found, the memories come alive, just like in a piece of sandstone lying on the grass for years, which can suddenly "become" part of the Jewish tombstone, with its place in the cemetery.

Perhaps this "opening" of memory has caused the sudden recent appearance of publications on the Jews' history by the local historians; the

Jewish extermination has become an integral part of the history of the village (Kątnik-Smith 2002: 76-88, cf., also Bonusiak 1998), although the issue of the Holocaust in this work takes only a marginal part in the local history of the occupation. The Commune Cultural Centre in Żołynia employees are also aware of the existence of the website, "The Żołynia Memorial," developed by M.A. Miller (www.zolynia.org), from which one can derive a considerable amount of knowledge on the history of Jews from Żołynia.

Leżajsk: memory segregation

Leżajsk is an excellent illustration of the "double," Polish and Jewish, geography described by The Roskies and Fuerer. For the Polish it is a town with a beautiful baroque church, being a local center of Marian devotion, hosting in addition to a "miraculous image" a monumental and famous organ instrument. As such Leżajsk has become the goal of religious pilgrimages of Polish Catholics and place of visits for music lovers. For Jews, Leżajsk is a burial place for the late Rabbi Elimelech (1717–1787), one of the most important spiritual leaders and teachers of the third generation Hasidism to many later tzaddikims. Elimelech's visits to the tomb on the anniversary of his death are probably the oldest in the region case of characteristic Hasidic pilgrimages to the places where some significant people of this movement are buried.

The striking image of two religious groups going on a pilgrimage to the same town and not knowing too much about each other represents symbolic separation of Polish and Jewish memoryscapes. The central point of the Jewish landscape is the tomb of the Jewish Rebbe Elimelech, condensing the Hasidic spiritual tradition in the region and a being the symbol of richness of the Jewish religious life. Polish memory finds its spatial expression in the beautiful baroque church and miraculous image of Our Lady, symbolizing the spirituality of the Catholic Church, the power, and to a large extent—Polish identity. Polish memory, however, is the memory of living men, constantly present in the contemporary Leżajsk, while Jewish memory exists outside of this place and it is "brought" here regularly by Hasidic pilgrims, yet in every day it is represented by the grave of Tzadik located on the remains of the Jewish cemetery.

In recent memory, segregation in Leżajsk is slowly replaced by the growing interest by the Polish tourists with the tomb of Elimelech. This is a part of integrative process involving tourist guides and travel agencies; they will include in their offers significant places of history and culture—both Polish and Jewish. At the Jewish cemetery in Leżajsk, more and more often we can

meet groups of Poles who have learned about this place as "must see" one. At the same time the very cemetery and its surroundings have been designed to enable longer stays for Hasidim. The cemetery, formerly looked after by a nearby living Polish family is currently under in care of the Preservation of Jewish Heritage Foundation. In the vicinity of the cemetery "The Simon's House" has been built, run by the Hasidic Foundation, dedicated to the memory of the Holocaust surviving philanthropist Simon, a son of Yehuda Laiba Nissenbaum, accommodating a hostel, prayer room and ritual bath.

Przeworsk: memory destroyed

In Przeworsk, a small town east of Łańcut, Jews constituted half of the population before the outbreak of World War II. The Jewish community, since settling in the city in the 15th century, developed a rich social and cultural life. Among those enjoying a special reputation in earlier times was a local Rabbi Moses Sofer. In the twentieth century a local library became a centre of Jewish intellectual life. The synagogue Przeworsk did not share the luck of the building in Łańcut and was destroyed by the Nazis, who removed the gravestones from the cemetery, using them to pave roads. During the occupation of the city the cemetery was the place of the execution for many Jews who did manage to escape from transport to the death camps and were hiding in the neighboring area. After the war, the same cemetery became an area of a very complicated memory conflict.

Immediately after the war, the cemetery area had remained empty until construction works on the new road section Rzeszów—Przemyśl were started, to bypass the city center. Construction works included the southern part of the cemetery, and the accompanying exhumations were reportedly carried out hastily and without due respect for the human remains.

In 1969, in the western part of the cemetery, a considerably large monument, the so-called Monument to Struggle and Martyrdom, was built to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the town liberation (entering the Red Army). (Photo 5)

In the early 80s, 20th century, on the remaining part of the cemetery, upon the local authorities' decision, a local bus station was built. John Sasak, a local stonemason and a counselor, spoke out against the location, but was outvoted. He was also not supported by the city council members in his idea of commemorating the place with a monument or commemorative plaque. Finding no support for his ideas Mr. Sasak made his own memorial stone with a plaque commemorating the Jews of Przeworsk murdered during the war and placed it in the north-east corner of the cemetery/bus station. A few

Photo 4 Obelisk to the memory of the Jews in Przeworsk

Photo 5 Monument to Struggle and Martyrdom in Przeworsk

years later, the stone was moved to the south-east corner of the cemetery, without Mr. Sasak's consent, as its previous location proved to be more attractive for local commercial projects.

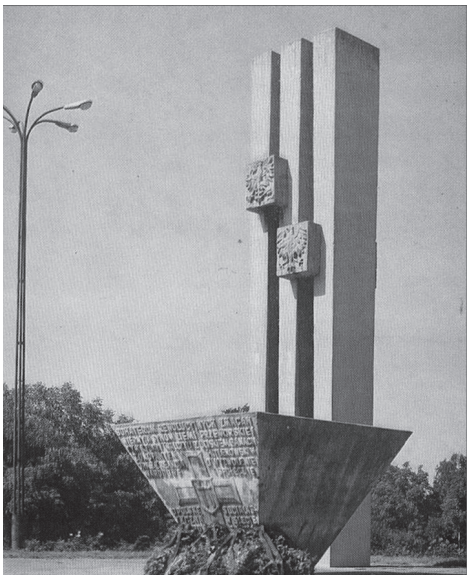

Photo 6. Monument to Struggle and Martyrdom in Przeworsk

The history of this place is rather unique since as Jewish cemeteries in the region, even though abandoned, empty and not protected, are usually used as construction sites. It reveals, however, a general pattern of the Jewish memoryscape erasure, more or less conscious. Construction of the road and the bus station is a sign of what can be described as "functional approach:" the Jews are no longer here, gravestones were removed by the Nazis,[3] life must go on, we need roads and bus stations. The construction of the monument took place at a very specific period when the anti-Semitic campaign was sponsored by the communist party which used nationalism for "legitimate" reasons, which was certainly not conducive to nurturing the multicultural character of the local memoryscape. It is also noteworthy that in the local museum there are a lot of examples of preserved Jewish memories exposed at the permanent exhibition, along with the display case devoted to "The Repressed Jewish population."

The message carried by that monument is indeed worth a special attention as an attempt to enforce the subordination of space and imposing, by a new framework of memory, the reorganization forming social memory with the

[3] Although sometimes we forget to add that even by the local population. In July 2009, during the inventory works at the Catholic cemetery in Przeworsk it was discovered that the tomb of the girl who died in the 60-ies of the XXth was made of Jewish gravestone granite (http://www.nowiny24.pl/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20090706/REGION00/175762116).

Communist view of history. This monument contained two components—the first one being the three columns, symbolizing the most likely three decades of the communist Poland, with the two emblems—the remnants of PRL era showing a crownless eagle and the second one—with the Piast eagle, also deprived of its crown.

We deal here with the desire to anchor the communist reign in Polish history and present it as a logical and legitimate stage of the Polish state history. Communist historiography had often successfully appealed to the time of the Piast dynasty, contrasting it with multinational Jagiellonian Poland, extending over large areas of the later Soviet Union. Following the interpretation of the time it was and expansionist state, based on the exploitation of the subjects, and directed by the selfish interests of the aristocratic families. What's more, the ethnic-national "homogeneity" (if this notion can be used) of Piast Poland was contrasted against negatively evaluated multinationality of Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (and indirectly also IInd RP). In this way the communists tried to suggest that the homogenization of Poland done through violence, being the result of the war, the Holocaust, and postwar changes of borders and associated with it more or less forced population movements, was, in fact, "going back to the roots" of the Polish state, which was to be evaluated positively.

The second element of the monument, the inverted pyramid, somewhat reminiscent of a memorial candle, holds the casted Cross of Grunwald and the inscription: „To the heroes of the revolutionary struggle, the faithful sons of the Przeworsk land, who fought against the oppression of "Sanation," with the Nazis and the forces of response of national and social liberation, the socialist Poland. The vision of history encrypted in these words identifies practically the pre-war Poland and post-war anti-Communist underground with the Nazis. It further identifies the liberation with the national project of the communist society, excluding the representatives of other political options from the official pantheon of "national martyrs." Along with the symbolism of the two eagles the inscription on the monument reveals the communist definition of the Polish history as a history of having its *telos*—"socialist" Poland—and clearly defining those who do not participate in its materialistic drive as not covered by the definition of communist community. According to the Manichean vision of social fragmentation, characteristic of Communist ideology, those excluded from the history and the community must remain the enemies. Therefore for them, like for the Jews, there is no place in the communist vision of history. In this vision, according to the dream of earlier Marxists, the Jewish distinctiveness blurs the fundamental economic and political dichotomy.

History, as represented by Przeworsk memoryscape, was thus falsified in two ways. Jewish memory has been erased through the destruction of its tangible element and removed from officially endorsed and monumentalized vision of history. Polish memory (at least in its most commonly spread branches) has been officially denied by Communist symbolism and the message carried by it. The only effort to preserve Jewish memory was a single initiative, which took, so to speak, the form of "counter-monumentalisation:" modesty and authenticity of the memorial stone by Mr. Sasak as the opposition to the dominant materially official monument.

The public space de-communization after 1989 took a very specific form in Przeworsk. The described monument has not been eliminated but transformed in a very interesting way. In 2000, to one of the columns symbolizing the decades of communism a crossbeam was attached and on the cross shaped structure a figure of crucified Christ was hung up.

The crucified Christ is a powerful symbol of communist repression which was suffered equally by Catholic memory and identity. It is also an alternative *telos* of Polish history, replacing the role of the Communist narrative: the true essence of Polish national identity was liberated after decades of oppression, and the oppression, once again in Polish history, was transformed into the triumph of the oppressed. Thus this is the impression

Photo 7 Monument to Struggle and Martyrdom in Przeworsk—with the Christ's figure

of triumph of the romantic-religious vision of Poland as "Christ of nations", as in the *Undivine Comedy* Galilean wins, which clearly shows, that the social and political revolution without God or even against God cannot ultimately win; you cannot build a better world without God.

The second semantic layer of the monument transformation refers both to the religious concept of redemption as well as to the secular form of real estate transformation into historical continuity and the case in the sense. The cross is the ultimate sign of redemption confirming the belief that any kind of evil which happened in history, can be redeemed. Thus the Christ's figure on the monument, which was supposed to represent the Communist view of history, refers not only to the historical victory of "real" Polish identity, but also the redemption of evil, due to the fact that this identity was oppressed for such a long time. As part of the national discourse, Przeworsk (new) memoryscape can be defined as the location of cultural practices of collective immortalization that allows for denial of historic discontinuity by showing „the future which can be imagined through the past (McCrone 1998: 52). Modern nationalisms, which Anderson mostly referred to, take place in the framework of secular discourses of a political nature. More traditional nationalisms, in which religion plays an important role as a factor of national unity, can use religious discourses to achieve it. In 2000 the inscription on the second element of the monument was changed. It now reads as follows:

„OPEN THE DOORS TO CHRIST!"
(JOHN PAUL II)
TO VICTIMS OF FIGHTS FOR FREEDOM AND HUMAN DIGNITY
IN THE MILLENNIUM YEAR
TO CELEBRATE
JOHN PAUL II PONTIFICATE
POLISH POPE
PRZEWORSK COMMUNITY

The new inscription redefines basic values for the Polish history and identity (this time it is not a socialist Poland, but freedom and human dignity), binds them to Christianity (by reference to the Christ and the second Millennium) and supports the authority of Pope John Paul II.

The Christ's figure stretched on the years of communism can also be interpreted as a sign of internal conflict of Polish memory and desire, to show the true nature of Polish culture, continuing despite the ongoing breakthroughs performed by the evil. It is also a sign of national eschatology and theodicy. This enables us to understand why the local authorities did not show and do not show willingness to commemorate the Jews in this

place: Jewish cemetery became homogeneously Polish memoryscape, the territory in which the symbolic representation takes place, with the symbolic representation of Polish identity, redemption of history sins and manifestation of the unity of nation history. From the point of view of the authority transforming this space into a memorial (whether communist or post-communist) the inclusion of Jews in the landscape would be a distraction to the main performance, would undermine the belief of homogeneous Polish character. It perhaps, would point to the evil even worse than the one of the three decades of communism and the recollect the people who suffered more in history than the suffering Poles did. Therefore, they had to be "erased" from the memory. Przeworsk thus becomes a Polish space of collective immortality allowing Poles to imagine themselves as „community of history and fate 'and thus achieving' the scoop of immortality" which gives individuals hope that their achievements will be preserved in memory, as "they will live and bring fruit in the community." (Smith 1986: 175)

Tarnów: memory preserved

Tarnów in the interwar period was a large (reaching 50% of total population) and internally diverse Jewish community with a highly developed social and cultural life, which left several traces in urban areas. There was also a small Jewish community after the war.

When it comes to Jewish memory, Tarnów is a unique place, as since the late 80s of the 20th century, the local museum, on the initiative of its Director, took care of the Jewish memory traces, by starting cooperation with Jewish organizations, the Hasidic groups from the US, Jewish foundations, as well as activating the local people, the region lovers.

The Museum takes care of the Jewish cemetery, in which Holocaust memorial is located, built after the war by the survived Tarnów Jews; it's the main element is a cracked column—the only remnant of the destroyed by the Nazis the New Synagogue. At the cemetery there are also plaques informing about Tarnow Jewish community and its more illustrious members, buried in this place. From the point of view of contemporary "politics of remembrance" it seems also interesting that the authentic gate leading to the cemetery is now part of the exhibition in the Museum of the Holocaust in Washington; this information is written on a plaque at the gate copy. Thousands of Jews from Tarnów and its neighboring areas passed through this gate to be later shot on the cemetery. The Holocaust of Tarnów Jews is also commemorated in memorial plaques placed at the corner of Żydowska St. /Jewish/ and the Market, which was left along with a special piece of

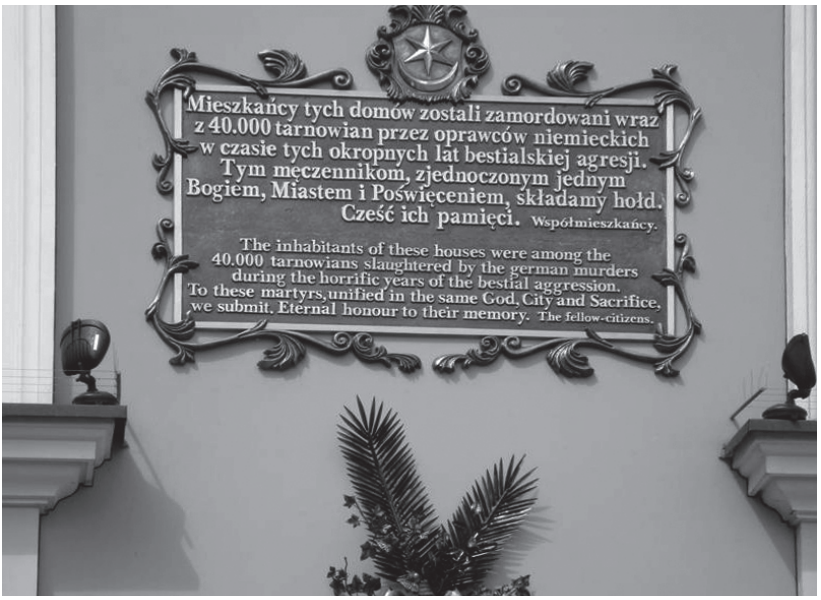

Photo 8 Commemorative plaque in the corner of Żydowska St. and the Market in Tarnów

the original pavement as a sign of the memory of the Jews shot in the city center during the liquidation of Tarnów ghetto in 1942. One more plaque to commemorate the extermination of the Jews has joined the others, lately, founded and designed by an Italian entrepreneur who has settled in Tarnów.

The text on the plaque, characterized by a certain "overexpression" of a text , is an interesting example of finding a "unified memory" of the Jewish Holocaust and World War II victims. The number "40 000" can mean all the inhabitants of Tarnów, Jewish and non-Jewish, who were official Holocaust / World War II victims (25.000 is the estimated population of Tarnów, just before the war). It may also refer to the total number of murdered Jews of Tarnów and its region. If the first interpretation is correct, then we are dealing with the alignment of Jewish and non-Jewish fate, officially adding it to "God, City and Sacrifice" as another factor building Jewish-Polish „community of memory." Then, in spite of noble intentions, it would be a community based on the blurred specifics of Holocaust, corresponding to the widespread Polish conviction that the Jews and Poles equally suffered during the war. (Krzemiński 2004)

Marking the Jewish presence in the city of Tarnów is reflected in the publishing initiatives, conferences and artistic events, such as traditional music concerts held around the bimah, the only remains of the old synagogue in Tarnów.

Memory—space—identity: the paradox of the typology

Relations of memory with identity and space are based on an interesting paradox. According to D. Lowenthal (1985: 41-46) the shared vision of the past is an essential element of the identity of those who treat this past as theirs, and the answer to the question: "Who are we?" must somehow refer to the question: "Who were we?" On the other hand, it is the present identity of a group which makes its past real being: "live" past is always someone else's past, the past for someone. As J.R. Gillis put it (1994: 3), the preservation of identity in time and space, essential for individual or group identity, is sustained by memory and what we remember, is determined by the identity recognized by us as our own.

A similar relationship exists between memory and space. Space, on the one hand, contains the accumulated historical experience: imposing the layers of past events that were significant enough to take its toll in space and survive in its system and the objects located therein. In this sense, the space serves as a "model of anything:" representation of the remembered past—using C. Geertz's term. (1973: 90-91) On the other hand, space can be consciously designed by those who have power over it at a given moment, to highlight the components of the past, which have for them some justifiably significant reason. In this sense, space is a "model for something," an instruction for our memories, "frame memory," in which some memories are more likely to occur than others, regardless of the "objective" scale of events that are subject to them.

Empirically speaking, the presented oppositions or paradox sides may be treated as two continua poles. In the first of theme we would have place societies for which past the is foundation of their identity, perceived as sustainable and trouble-free; on the other hand—societies, which are certain

Table 1 Memory—space—identity: a theoretical model.

	Memory and identity		
		Past → the present „we"	The present „we" → past
Memory	Space as memory model	A	B
	Space as a model for memory	D	C

only of the fact that they exist (now), and have to invent their past. In the latter case we would have, on the one hand, spaces passively accumulating their past and on the other hand spaces that are actively manipulated in order to gear social memory to the desired vision of the past. By combining the two dimensions shown we obtain a model which allows us to organize the different types of relationships between memory, space and identity.

Type A is represented by traditional communities, the incumbent, homogeneous (or heterogeneous, but free from significant conflicts), of well-established authority relations, with a sense of continuity and of long duration, conservative, defined by the past, living in the a permanent spatial and free from its manipulation.

Type B is represented by "new" communities (e.g. immigrants, new immigrants), characterized by the coexistence of a variety of social memories, having to "imagine themselves" in the presence and later "invent" a common tradition; they colonize the existing spatial system, which includes accumulated past of other groups which once lived in this territory, but rather than manipulating the space try to adapt to it, living next door and ignoring the ambient heritage of the past; or—sometimes—to take over the past saved in the space as their own. As a historical example the advanced cases of cultural conquest by barbarian invaders may serve as a historical example.

Type C is a new community, defined primarily by its presence which they have to invent and which actively manipulate space to be built in their new traditions (e.g. "Reclaimed Lands") as a political spatial construct functioning legitimately and connected with practices of erasing German history from local memory space and "incorporating" in the existing space the elements which would attest their genuine Polish character.

Type D is a traditional community, by definition based on the message, actively manipulating their space, i.e. to remove the contained in its memory traces of other groups or ideologies, with the imposed on them vision of history, or the opposite—in order to extract silenced or erased memories from oblivion. This may be a case of different postcolonial societies which retain a sense of a common past, and the case of de-communization of space in Eastern Europe.

The types A (traditional community) and C ("manipulative" community), are in a sense the "natural" ones, in which there is some consistency between the way of shaping the identity and nature of the memory contained in the space. However, the most interesting are the types B and D, as they are characterized by a conflict between the production of identity and spatial planning. In both groups living space is inadequate to the process of establishing their identity: Type B is the community constructing in the

present, or without reference to their identity of inhabited space (very rare case), or acquiring memories contained in its new space, and declaring them as "their own," no matter to what extend the distortion of the process could take place. Type D, however, is a traditional community, which somewhat contrary to its nature must manipulate the space to eliminate the memories understood by its members as "alien" and/or imposed by violence, and—in another variant—to emphasize those elements of inherited memoryscape. They are functional through the process of group identity reproduction.

The boundaries between the types are flexible and it is possible for various communities over time to change their identity characteristics and their attitude to the space. Communities new and "constructed" are aging and overtime become traditional. On the other hand, traditional communities may modernize and—for example, under the influence of deep social-political transformation they need to face the necessity of re-inventing themselves. Communities manipulating their space in order to materialize their vision of the past in them can be successful—and since then they can treat their space as the untouched model in their memory. In communities which imposed their memory on space, after years there may occur "the inquisitive ones" trying to discover the traces of available other memories and undermine the official symbolic memory. Communities which do not manipulate space can suddenly feel the need to change (see: Ziółkowski 1991).

All the relations of memory, space and identity in the presented model as a reference to ideal types, and its application to specific cases require a dynamic approach assuming flexibility of presented categories and the possibility of their overlapping.

Let us look at the discussed villages from this perspective try to describe, in the proposed language, what happened to them after World War II. Their history is usually recognized as a continuation of the pre-war history, and the only significant change (yet fundamental) is the transformation resulting from the acquisition of political power by the communists. Meanwhile, these were the communities in which a considerable exchange of population took place—almost half of their previous inhabitants had been murdered, but those few who survived, as a rule, chose not to return (or were often discouraged to do it by the second half). In their place new residents arrived, peasants from the surrounding villages, gradually moving to the cities in search of better living conditions, and returnees from the former eastern territories of the Polish Republic (see Karwińska, Pucek 1991). After the war they formed communities that could not be clearly classified following the above categories. On the one hand they were "traditional"—in the sense that half of the people were living in a given place for generations. On the other, however, they were new—the emptiness after the Jewish inhabitants was

gradually being filled with immigrant population. "The incumbent" and "the inflow" had to "invent" a community, unable to use this common tradition, as it was often not there. As a rule, the newcomers have adapted to the "standard of identity" dictated by "the incumbent," and did it by blurring it, bringing into the space towns in which they settled, their own, often rural traditions. They were not especially interested in still visible, here and there, traces of Jewish presence: their main task was the integration with the living, and among them Jews were not present.

The fate of Żołynia, in this regard, was rather specific. According to the data of 1921 the village was then inhabited by 569 Jews, who constituted 60% of the town population (Potocki 2004: 206-207). In 1939, there lived 598 Jews who were then, however, only 12% of the total population (Kątnik-Smith 2002: 76). This dramatic decline in the percentage of the Jewish population may find a fairly simple explanation. In 1919, an initiative appeared to connect Żołynia town with Żołynia village. The first was characterized by a significant decline in the population of which number dropped from 1711 in 1900 to 954 in 1921. Żołynia village was also losing its population, but the process had been slower. Besides, it was much more numerously inhabited (3 954 inhabitants in 1921). Finally, the joining of the two happened in 1928. Since Żołynia village was practically not settled by the Jews, their proportion in the new established structure was considerably lower as compared to the previous town Żołynia. This was indeed reflected in the political representation: if at the last Żołynia City Council before World War I, Jews comprised 12 out of 18 members in total; in the first elections after the merger none of the council members were Jewish. (http://www.zolynia.org/betweenwars.html).

Therefore, the change of Żołynia social profile constituted before the war as well as the post-war population replacement was not as significant as in other towns. Therefore, post-war Żołynia community can be considered as traditional: the process of building a tradition had been made earlier, and after the war it was only complemented by a common experience and heroic partisan narration. Since the Jews, even before the war, began to be "invisible" in Żołynia (i.e. had no representation in the local government), and during the war the materials representing their identity were destroyed, the postwar exclusion, symbolized by the discussed earlier obelisk, happened, so to speak, spontaneously.

With reference to the above scheme Żołynia can be located between types A and D (although slightly closer to A). On the other hand, with modern „revival" of the Jewish cemetery and growing interest in the Jewish past, it could mean slight evolution toward C. In consequence this could also mean an adequate need for a new definition for a community as well as introducing

changes into the spatial memory so that the inhabitants would direct their attention to the so far excluded aspects of the past.

Tarnów, where the Jewish before the war comprised at least 50% of the total population, after the war and the after the extermination of Jews experienced one of the most extensive population exchange. It was primarily associated with the fact that Tarnów was an industrial centre playing an important role in the communist industrialization strategy. Jewish memory, although very mutilated, had its *milieux* in Tarnów: during the war (more precisely at the beginning of the 70s, 20th century), there was a small group of Jewish extermination survivors. Perhaps this is why the non-Jewish inhabitants of Tarnów and Rzeszów were not really interested in the Jewish traces in space, assuming that it was something which the Jews needed to deal with. Since the latter did not have enough resources (or perhaps preferred to remain "invisible"), Jewish spatial memory elements were gradually infected by the deteriorating time flow, or taken over by the municipal authorities. Sometimes the devastating effect of time found its allies in Tarnów; some stories could be heard of peasant wagons coming to the city from the surrounding villages to dismantle former Jewish houses to be used as building materials.[4] In the houses which remained the repatriated families were located, among others. On the other hand it should be emphasized that at the cemetery, after its functioning as a burial ground, a lot of tombstones survived, yet nobody one came up with an idea to rename the Goldhammer's St. so the name survived.[5]

The post-war Tarnów can be described as—essentially—the representation of B Type, with its necessity to integrate new residents, as present element, and create a common identity with the people of the old one; this can be described as very modest intervention in the memoryscape, which was essentially left to itself (and the communist authorities). With reference to the 60s of XXth century, however, we can talk about a completed integrative processes to a large extent, and the two communities in the city of the period could be characterized as similar to the type A. On the other hand, the increase interest of the Jewish with their past the 80s of XXth century, as well as their widely developed commemorating activities lead to the interference with the memoryscapes, and a result of highlighting whatever Jewish has been left with incorporating these elements in the urban landscape. Thus

[4] I owe this information to Bartosz A., Director of the Regional Museum in Tarnów, who heard it from witnesses of the time. This story, however, may include some reminiscent of the characteristic rural-urban conflict for Tarnów related significantly to the post-war change of population and integration difficulties of new residents.

[5] Elijah Goldhammer, a widely respected lawyer, a Jewish deputy mayor of Tarnów in the period just before World War I.

contemporary Tarnów moves on to the characteristic elements of D type: identifying itself with a common past and at the same time manipulating the memoryscapes—this time in order to extract what has remained from the Jewish past.[6]

Leżajsk and Łańcut, in turn, the cities which lost about 40% of its population during the Holocaust, were undergoing the post-war process of population exchange relatively easy, resulting from the fact that they had "always" been in the transition stage between a town and a village , in which their Jewish past is revealed—the fact that they were Jewish *shtetl*, small towns, where space, as A. Markowski (2004: 344) writes,

> ... [B] was somewhere between the social space of a village and city. The form acting as a joining element between village—city, not only in the economic area, but also in culture (especially folk), religion (through objects of worship) and certain traditions and mentality.

It should be underlined that Leżajsk played its prominent role as a local Marian devotion centre, with the radiating and binding effect of its inhabitants onto other surrounding villages. It is noteworthy that in Leżajsk there are two symbolic spatial dominants in the city: the Basilica and the tomb of Tzadik Elimelech, which still remain major features of memoryscape, even after the war. In this situation, even the destruction of the other elements of Jewish memory could not have lead to erasing Jewish elements of history from memory. It was still present in consciousness (or rather subconscious) of inhabitants, as knowledge about the fact that their city carried significant for the Jews elements maintained in memory through annual pilgrimages of Hasidic. Leżajsk thus appears as an example of the village, where the space-time post-war identity was evolving between A and B types and finally can be classified as a pure type A: today's Leżajsk community is a traditional one and the memoryscape has preserved the most significant part of the Jewish history, about which, however, most of contemporary residents do not really care. The latest "space expansion" of Jewish memory taking place (including hostel house with a the prayer hall and the mikveh) as well as the growing popularity of the Tzadik's grave as tourist attraction are not related to the local initiatives, but—respectively—they are rather the consequence of the activities of Jewish organizations and the developing tourism industry. Jewish memory and the Christian memory remain separated, just as their representations: the Basilica and the tomb, located on the opposite sides

[6] In the case of Tarnów effort is being made to build in the city space Hungarian memory, present in Tarnów identity discourses by the character General Józef Bem, „the Polish and Hungarian hero" who was born in Tarnów. The signs of this memory are Szeklerska Gate, Siedmiogród Panorama, mausoleum and the statue of General Bem.

of the town. There is a chance, however that the activities of the newly established museum in Leżajsk, located approximately half-way between these memory centers, may become space which will seek to integrate both forms of memory, as much as possible. Therefore the activities of the museum are worth observing.

Łańcut, on the other hand, with a starting point similar to Leżajsk, evolved in the recent years more into D scheme, which has been expressed by "musealization" of the Łańcut sunagogue building, as a reproduction of old relationship between „the palace" and the Jewish community. The existence of an important element of the Jewish past in the Jewish urban landscape making it a model of memory and suggesting that the Jewish tradition possesses something worthy to be included in the concept of the urban heritage of history, was unfortunately temporary. The synagogue was vested as a return of the communal property to the Foundation of Jewish Heritage Protection and it is rather difficult to predict its future. However, the history of other similarly vested synagogue buildings suggests that if the synagogue resumes its religious functions, even if they are performed occasionally, the community center will have the opportunity to see that the Jews are not only "part of the past and memory." Besides, the religious functions of the synagogue do not exclude its cognitive ones and these of the museum; the synagogue in Bobova acquired in a similar way, is accessible to the public, the restored synagogue in Rymanów from its restoration has become a centre of Polish-Jewish "Memory Days" referring to the history of Jewish community in Rymanowa. It is an interesting commemorating ritual which additionally performs numerous practical functions unrelated to this memory. Yet another consequence of the "de-musealization" of Jewish memory in Łańcut may be transferring the aroused interests of museum keepers to the other elements of Jewish memoryscape, such as a modest and unobtrusive Holocaust memorial, located on one of the cemeteries.

Finally Przeworsk, a city that has also lost about 40% of its residents—murdered Jews, which so brutally treated the remaining part of the cemetery. With reference to the postwar period can be categorized as a mixture of A and C types, and in the period after 1989—as a mixture of D and C types, with the so characteristic for it the de-communization of space, in an attempt to save the new vision of history. It corresponded to the post-communist official redefinition of the community and the continuity to remain silent about the Jewish memory in the public space, in which only a private sign of memory becomes an insignificant gap.

Literature

Anderson Benedict, 1991, *Imagined Communities*, Verso, London.
Appadurai Arjun, 1996, *Modernity at Large. Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, London.
Bonusiak Włodzimierz (ed.), 1998, *Dzieje Żołyni*, Rada Gminy Żołynia, Żołynia.
Cała Alina, 2005, *Wizerunek Żyda w polskiej kulturze ludowej*, Oficyna Naukowa, Warsaw.
Fuerer Benzion, 1983, *Parting*, in: B. Fuerer, J. Berger, F. Vogel Stary (eds.), The Rymanow Book. (Sefer Rymanów), Cheder Hametargemim, Tel Aviv.
Geertz Cliff ord, 1973, *Religion as a Cultural System*, in: C. Geertz, The Interpretations of Cultures, Basic Books, New York.
Gillis John R., 1994, *Memory and Identity: Th e History of a Relationship*, in: J.R. Gillis (ed.), Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey.
Gupta Akhil, James Ferguson, 2004, *Poza „kulturę": przestrzeń, tożsamość i polityka różnicy*, translated by J. Giebułtowski, in: M. Kempy, E. Nowicka (eds.), *Badanie kultury. Elementy teorii antropologicznej. Kontynuacje*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa.
Jałowiecki Bohdan, 1985, *Przestrzeń jako pamięć*, „Studia Socjologiczne," No. 2 (97), pp. 131-142.
Karwińska Ann, Zbigniew Pucek, 1991, *Zrożnicowanie postaw kulturowo-cywilizacyjnych w badanych zbiorowościach*, in: Z. Pucek (ed.), Cywilizacyjne wymiary społeczności lokalnych, T. 8, Towarzystwo Naukowe Organizacji i Kierownictwa, Branch in Rzeszów, Rzeszów.
Kątnik-Kowalska Magdalena, 2002, *By zdarzeń nie zatarł czas*, Gminny Ośrodek Kultury w Żołyni, Żołynia.
Krzemiński Ireneusz, 2004, *Polacy i Ukraińcy o swoich narodach, o cierpieniu w czasie wojny i o Zagładzie Żydow*, in: I. Krzemiński (ed.), Antysemityzm w Polsce i na Ukrainie. Raport z badań, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, Warsaw.
Lowenthal David, 1985, *The Past Is A Foreign Country*, Cambridge University Press Cambridge.
Markowski Artur, 2004, *Przestrzeń społeczna* sztetł *na przełomie XIX i XX w.—studium przypadku Wasilkowa na Białostocczyźnie*, in: K. Jasiewicz (ed.), Świat NIEpożegnany. Żydzi na dawnych ziemiach wschodnich Rzeczypospolitej w XVIII–XX wieku, Instytut Studiów Politycznych PAN, Oficyna Wydawnicza Rytm, Warszawa—Londyn.
McCrone David, 1998, *The Sociology of Nationalism. Tomorrow's Ancestors*, Routledge, London.
Muzaini Hamzah, Brenda S.A. Yeoh, 2005, *War Landscapes as "Battlefields" of Collective Memories: Reading the Reflections at Bukit Chandu, Singapore*, "Cultural Geographies," No. 12, pp. 345-365.
Nijakowski Lech M., 2007, *Domeny symboliczne. Konflikty narodowe i etniczne w wymiarze symbolicznym*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, Warsaw.

Potocki Andrzej, 2004, *Żydzi w Podkarpackiem*, Wydawnictwo Libra, Rzeszów.
Roskies Diane K., David G. Roskies, 1979, *The Shtetl Book. An Introduction to East European Jewish Life and Lore*, KTAV Publishing House, Inc., Jersey City, NJ.
Smith Anthony D., 1986, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, Blackwell, Oxford UK, Cambridge USA.
Steinlauf Michael C., 2001, *Pamięć nieprzyswojona. Polska pamięć Zagłady*, translated by A. Tomaszewska, Wydawnictwo Cyklady, Warszawa.
Young James E., 1993, *The Texture of Memory. Holocaust Memorials and Meaning*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London.
Ziółkowski Marek, 1991, *Wspólnota przestrzeni i odmienność tradycji—sąsiedzkie kultury etniczne*, "Kultura i Społeczeństwo," no. 4, pp. 59-71.

Internet sources
http://www.zolynia.org/betweenwars.html
http://www.nowiny24.pl/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20090706/REGION00/175762116

Sławomir Kapralski

The (Non-)Presence of Jews in the Memoryscapes of South-Eastern Poland

Abstract

The author employs the concept of memoryscape (derived from the vocabulary of Arjun Appadurai's theory) to explore memories of Jews that have been recently re-emerging in Poland's countryside in various spatial layouts or the lack thereof. This complex process includes the phenomenon of 'virtual' Jewishness produced in essentially Polish "realms of memory," simultaneously evoking the country's multicultural past as a value, a moral obligation, a symbolic resource in the production of local identities, and a commodified resource for tourism. On this backdrop the author studies three main problems: (1) the presence/absence of the Holocaust in spatialized commemorative activities, (2) the impact of the restitution of Jewish communal property, and (3) the process of "decommunization" of Polish public memory. The interplay of factors involved in these processes has in recent years significantly transformed Poland's memoryscape, sometimes extinguishing certain forms of virtual Jewishness or nostalgic redefinition of the past, and sometimes fruitfully confronting Polish remembrance with a real, if only periodic, Jewish presence. The text concludes with an attempt to present a typology of various attitudes towards memory, space and identity which contextualizes and deconstructs Polish "memory of Jews."

Keywords: Arjun Appadurai's theory "memoryscape," Polish "memories of Jews," Holocaust.