Battlefields of Memory

Landscape and Identity in Polish–Jewish Relations

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LANDSCAPE AS A BATTLEFIELD

Landscape as a cultural construction of a group serves generally the purpose of creating and/or maintaining the group's identity. To put it more precisely, the construction of a landscape and the construction of identity are inseparable parts of one process, as a result of which landscape becomes incorporated into the group's identity, being one of the symbolic representations of the latter. A typical nineteenth-century definition says, for example, that nation is "a numerous and homogeneous population, *permanently inhabiting and cultivating a coherent territory with a well-defined geographic outline and a name of its own*."[1] For the members of a national group, therefore, territory is their traditional piece of land, on the one hand defining their collective identity[2] and, on the other, symbolically expressing their attempts to morally and intellectually incorporate the physical space—by moral claims ("cultivation") and the process of labeling ("name of its own")—into their cultural self-definition as a nation. In such a way space becomes someone's *territory*, and territory—invested with cultural meaning—becomes *landscape*.

Landscape, however, is not only a culturally defined territory, which becomes a part of a group's identity-building process. It also is a territory with *history*, the history that is to be remembered. Of course, this

"temporal" aspect of a landscape becomes a factor in the identity-building process as well: identity is inevitably connected with the memory of the past. "The core meaning of any individual or group identity," John R. Gillis writes, "namely, a sense of sameness over time and space is sustained by remembering; and what is remembered is defined by the assumed identity."[3] In other words, we are what we remember we were, but, on the other hand, the content of our memory is determined by what we think we are. This "dialectical" relation is possible because the commonly shared past of a group is never identical with the group's history "as-it-really-happened." The past remembered is, as David Lowenthal has observed, always a viable past, the historical self-image selected by and embodied in the group's memory.[4] Of course, what is at a given time selected and embodied depends on what proves useful for the identity-constructs.

Because of its ability to synthesize time (memory of the past) and space (culturally meaningful territory), landscape can be described by the concept of a chronotope, introduced in the theory of literature by Mikhail Bakhtin. For Bakhtin, chronotope meant "the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature."[5] Borrowing this concept, we may say that in the field of collective identities a chronotope is a locus in which time has been condensed and concentrated in space.[6] In other words, chronotope means real but symbol-laden and often mythologized place in which events important for the construction of a group's identity either actually happened according to the group's vision of the "viable past" or are symbolically represented by—for example—monuments, the very arrangement of space, and its social functions.

Landscape as a chronotope is, however, not only the domain of memory. It is at the same time the domain of forgetting. It is so partly because neither individuals nor communities are in a position to remember everything, and forgetting appears as a necessary precondition of remembering. "For memory to have meaning," Lowenthal writes, "we must forget most of what we have seen.... Only forgetting enables us to classify and bring chaos into order."[7] A similar remark, although having its roots in quite different theoretical presumptions, may be found in the work of Niklas Luhmann:

> A conscious system does not consist of a collection of all of its past and present thoughts, nor does a social system pile up all of its communications. After a very short time the mass of elements would be intolerably large and its complexity would be so high that the system would be unable to select a pattern of coordination and would produce chaos.[8]

Unfortunately, the focus of both authors on the intellectual and "systemic" functions of forgetting (bringing chaos into order or enabling a proper functioning of a system), makes them forget the fact that forgetting is never an innocent process. We forget what we do not want to remember, communities forget what in the opinion of their members is against their interest, and both processes have their, often neglected, moral dimension: "To forget," as Herbert Marcuse observed, "is also to forgive what should not be forgiven."[9]

In particular, when two communities dwell on the same territory they tend to turn it into the chronotope of their respective identities. This situation may, and indeed almost always does, lead to a conflict over landscape, since both groups try to symbolically mark their presence in the same physical space. In case of a minority group the situation is more difficult because the dominant group tends to monopolize and control the means of symbolic expression to support its claim to the territory as its "property." In such a way landscape becomes battlefield: a place in which groups compete for the fullest possible representation of their identities, trying, according to the means at their disposal, to structure the landscape and invest it with the meaning that is appropriate with respect to their identities.

The conflict over the landscape does not stop when one of the competing groups is no longer in the competition but turns into a passive conflict of memories. Landscape becomes an arena of both remembering and forgetting, but now it represents only the memory of the surviving group. In such a situation, the memory of the group that perished and its material representations can be manipulated in an unrestricted way by those who remained. Landscape preserves what the group wants to remember; that which the group wants to forget is destroyed, neglected or preserved in a distorted way. Sometimes it is a natural process: when there is no proper memory-keeper, no living

community that would remember its past in an appropriate way, the acts of remembering carried out by the members of other groups must inevitably be distorting. Much more often, however, the memory of the perished groups and the landscape representing this memory are deliberately distorted by those who remain.

This essay describes several manipulations of landscape in southeastern Poland (within the limits of the postwar borders). Before World War II the towns and villages of this region were inhabited by Poles and Jews (and, in the eastern part of the region, by Ukrainians). The Jews usually made up between 30 and 60 percent of a town's population although in some places, as in Lesko or Dukla, they were the absolute majority, constituting over 70 percent of the town's inhabitants. The uneasy coexistence of the two groups was marked by the efforts of the Polish side to minimize the Jewish presence in the landscape defined by the politically dominant Polish Catholic population. On the other hand, the size of the Jewish population and its rich culture developed in the region made these attempts futile. The Jews also actively counteracted the attempts to neglect their presence by making the landscape represent their culture and place in the social structure as far as the situation permitted.

The Holocaust wiped out the Jewish inhabitants of southeastern Poland together with their culture. After the war, the elements of landscape that represented the Jewish presence were to a large extent destroyed and there was nobody to restore their remains and make them again centers of communal life. The towns and villages, which had once witnessed the Jewish and Polish attempts to control their physical and symbolic space, became homogeneous: Polish. Politically, the Communists also attempted to endow the landscape with meaning appropriate from the point of view of their vision of history. Hence, the remnants of the Jewish landscapes were confronted with the nationally homogeneous, Polish landscape on the one hand and with the Communist landscape, on the other.

ŁAŃCUT: THE MATRIX OF POLISH–JEWISH RELATIONS

Łańcut, a town of about 20,000 inhabitants, is known to Poles for its famous seventeenth-century palace, once owned by some of the most powerful noble families in the country. After World War II and the flight of the last owner, the palace was taken over by the state and since that time has served as a museum and the site of important musical events. Jews settled in Łańcut in the sixteenth century and were involved in wholesale trade with the eastern regions, as blacksmiths, goldsmiths silversmiths, tailors, distillers and brewers. Łańcut was a strong center of Hasidism: Elimelekh of Leżajsk lived there for two years and Jacob Isaac, "the Seer of Lublin," visited the town frequently, praying often in the local synagogue. In 1939, shortly before the outbreak of the war, Łańcut had more than 2,700 Jewish inhabitants, about a half of the total population at that time.

If we imagine a line connecting the synagogue building with the local Roman Catholic church, we would have the first axis of the spatial layout of the town (figure 1; cf. map in figure 2). The church is located on the other side of the market place, at a distance of approximately 500 meters. It should be noted that in the region discussed this is a rather typical pattern of arrangement of the town's space. A synagogue was usually built in the center of a town or close to it, but at a certain distance from the local church, being, as a rule, separated from the church by the market place. It was also a rule that a synagogue building must not be bigger and higher than the local church.

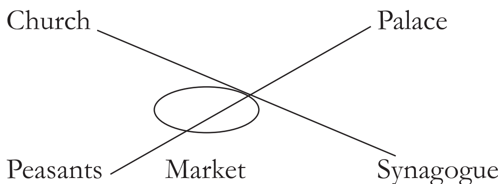

Figure 1.

The second axis of the spatial outline of the town is made by a line connecting the palace with the market and, if we continue the line, symbolically with the peasants living in neighboring villages, the source of the palace's income. The two axes cross near the market, the place

where the Jews, who often worked as middlemen in the service of the palace, would meet the peasants, buying their agricultural products and selling them the goods they needed.

The spatial layout of Łańcut as presented in figure 1 can also be read symbolically as representing the position of the Jews in the economic, religious and social structures of prewar Poland. The axis connecting the church and the synagogue maps out the main religious opposition between the Jews and the Roman Catholic Poles. The latter perceived the Jews through the religious categories interpreted and imposed by the church: as the enemies and detractors of Christianity, those who had rejected and crucified Jesus.[10] On the other hand, as Alina Cała suggests, the Jews were at the same time intrinsically connected with the sacred history of Christianity: they were the witnesses and participants of the mystery of the Passion. For Cała such a situation testifies to the ambiguous position of the Jews within the symbolic coordinates of Christianity. It seems, however, that the hostility and negative perception radically dominated (theoretical) religious affinity. Instead of ambiguity we should rather speak here of a lack of indifference stemming from the fact that the Jews were symbolically located on the same sacred axis as the Poles and not, as it would be in the case of Buddhists for example, outside any context familiar to the Polish population. This lack of indifference, the serious religious concern with the Jews, would even increase the negative attitudes. The opposite location of the religious buildings of the two religions, the fact that the synagogue was "on the other side" of the Polish religious center, was the material embodiment of the Jews' situation encoded in the landscape of the town.

We can speak about the ambiguity of the Jews' position with regard to the axis connecting the palace with the peasants, the secular, economic axis of the town's life. Here the Jews clearly occupied the "in-between" position, mediating the exchange of goods. Thus, on the one hand, they could be perceived as being in the service of the economic power center, symbolized by the palace, but on the other hand they could be seen as helping the peasants to satisfy their needs and, moreover, as being in fact similar to the peasants with respect to the general poverty the Jews shared with the underprivileged masses of Polish society. The Jews' ambiguous position within the secular, economic aspect of the social structure was caused by the fact that, depending on the perspective, they

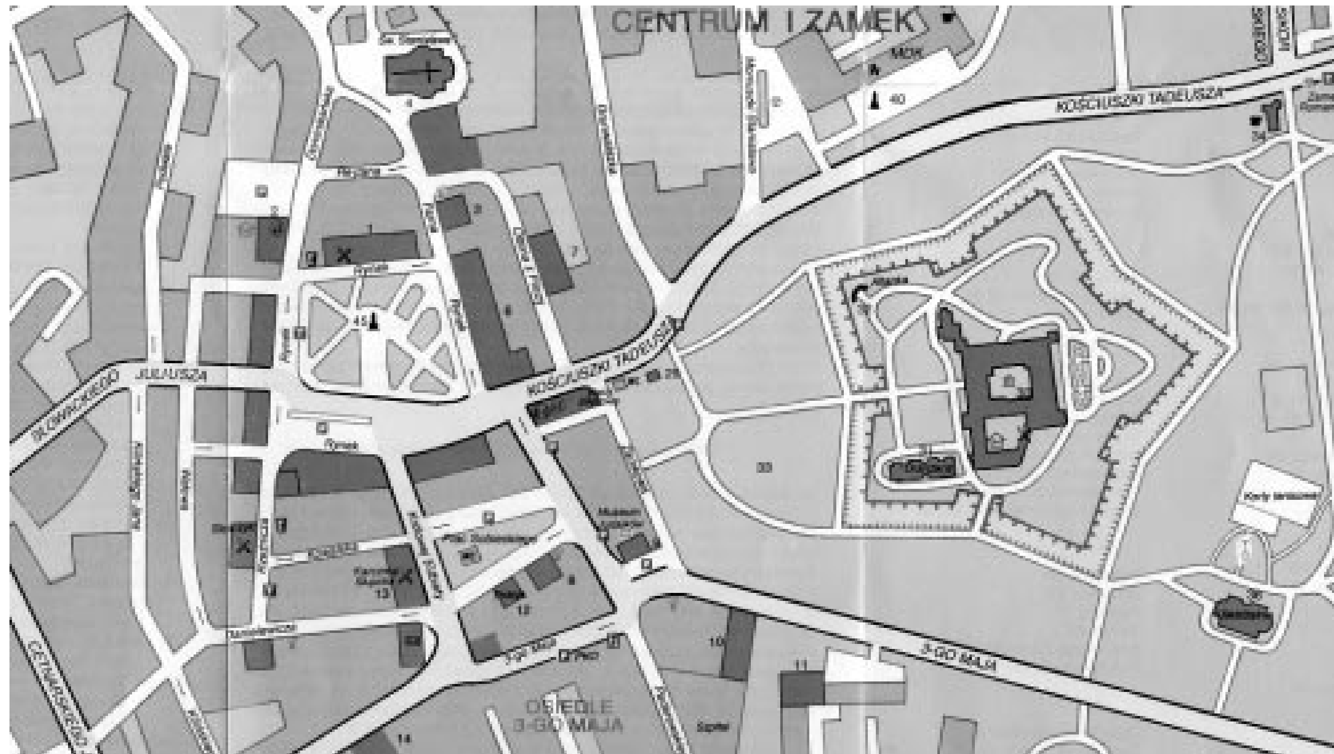

Fig. 2. Map of the center of Łańcut, showing the palace (30) (marked as *Zamek*, literally "castle"), the church of St. Stanislas (4) (Św. Stanisława), the market square (*Rynek*) and the synagogue (9) (marked as *Muzeum Judaików*, Museum of Judaica).

could be seen either as assisting the process of "economic exploitation" or as a potentially dangerous "revolutionary element." Thus, the ambiguous stereotype of "Jewish banker"/"Jewish Bolshevik" finds its material correlation in the position of the Jews in the market square of a small town in Poland.

If we generalize the scheme of Polish–Jewish relations based on the two axes, the sacred and the secular, we would receive the following matrix (figure 3):

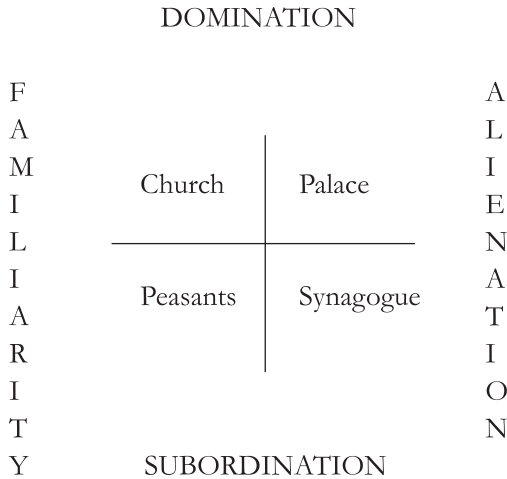

Figure 3.

The Jews, represented in figure 3 by the synagogue were thus, from the perspective of a Polish peasant, religiously and culturally alien and belonged, together with the palace, to the "other world," interesting perhaps but potentially dangerous. On the other hand, the Jews, this time together with the peasants, were in the subordinate position, which for the Jews actually meant double subordination: economic-political and religious (for the peasants the dominating position of the church was balanced by its familiarity). The Jews' ambiguity from the point of view of the underprivileged strata of Polish society could thus be interpreted as their status of being both alien and in a similar position. The second aspect of the Jews' ambiguity lay in their position in the process of economic exchange between the palace and the peasants. In this respect the Jews were perceived as useful but exploitative, enabling the peasants'

households to function but trying to capitalize on their own privileged relation with the landlord. The latter was actually not always favorable to the Jews, exploiting them in his own manner, but in many cases the nobility indeed protected the Jews "belonging" to their sphere of influence.

In the case of Łańcut, the relation between the local nobility and the Jews was quite good, and the very close distance between the palace and the synagogue building may well symbolically represent this relation. In fact, the erection of the synagogue building in Łańcut (1761) had been assisted by the town's owner, Prince Stanisław Lubomirski, and in 1939, when the Germans set the building in fire, Alfred Potocki, the last resident of the palace, used his impressive aristocratic pedigree to persuade the German commandant to put out the fire.

As a result of World War II the matrix of Polish–Jewish relations, with its internal logic, conflicts and alliances, was destroyed. Those Jews of Łańcut who did not manage to escape to the Soviet-occupied territory of Poland were murdered. Alfred Potocki fled the country at the end of the war, escaping the approaching Soviet army. The "alien" dimension of the symbolic universe of Poland ceased to exist, and the fate of the empty palace as well as the synagogue, which was turned into a grain store by the Germans and kept as such by the Poles, testify to this fact. The economic structures symbolized by the axis connecting peasants and palace disappeared too: the peasants received their share in the collectivization of Potocki's land, but their economic position began to be determined to a much greater extent by the developing industrialization. Periodic visits to the market place (where there were no longer any Jews) were largely replaced by regular commuting between their small farms and Łańcut's screw factory, brewery and distillery (the latter two continuing the traditionally Jewish businesses in Łańcut). This meant, of course, the depreciation of the role of the market square and the restructuring of the symbolic space of the town. The palace no longer symbolized domination, the synagogue building had been turned into a grain store, the market square had ceased to be the center of the town's life, and the church, although its tower still dominated the town's physical landscape, had moved significantly in the symbolic landscape: it was now in a subordinate position to the new Communist regime, and thus closer to the believers, while at the same time preserving its spiritual authority

over them. These changing relations in the symbolic matrix are presented in figure 4:

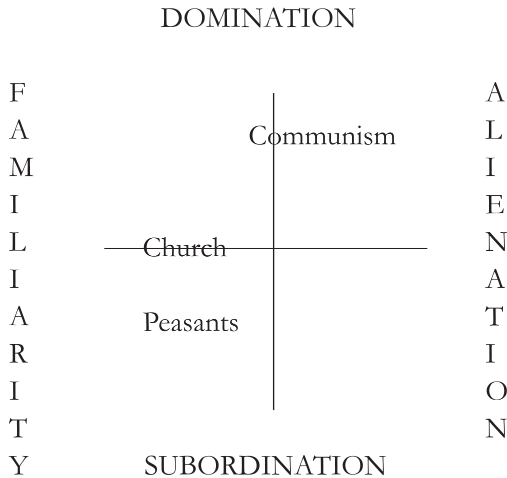

Figure 4.

We can see in figure 4 that communism itself had a rather ambiguous position in the postwar Polish symbolic universe. On the one hand, it had replaced the palace in the position of domination. On the other hand, for a certain part of the underprivileged population, communism was more familiar than the inhabitants of the palace, more promising in terms of improving their position, and indeed created an opportunity for social mobility which some of them seized upon to their benefit. For the other part, however, communism remained an alien, oppressive system, introduced into Poland by the force of the Soviet army. Thus, among the epithets used in popular discourse to label the members of the new privileged class of Communist Party officials, the most popular were "the red aristocracy" or "red bourgeoisie," which clearly indicates that for some the Communists had simply replaced the former privileged classes. Another epithet often used by the Poles was that of "Żydokomuna" ("Jew-Commies") in which the tradition of Polish anti-Semitism, according to which the Jews were untrustworthy people who acted against Polish interests, combined with the perception of the Communists as being located in the "alien" space of the symbolic universe, the space

formerly occupied by the palace. Since the other "aliens" were the Jews (and, as we recall, the Jews had been perceived as being in the service of the palace), the former two dimensions of alienation were synthesized and identified in the popular consciousness.

The Communists reacted by intensifying their efforts to legitimize their position. Their legitimizing strategies often appealed to the Polish national tradition—as with the highly publicized and celebrated thousandth anniversary of Polish statehood in 1966—trying to present the Communist system as a continuation of elements integral to that tradition and at the same time acceptable in terms of the Communist vision of history. Of course when there were no such elements, the useful tradition would have to be created, a strategy that eventually distorted Polish history in many ways. One part of the strategy was to ignore the multinational composition of Polish society, probably to fight the process of alienation and to present the Communist authorities as genuinely Polish. This strategy developed slowly and gained momentum in the 1970s. Before that time the ideological aspect of Polish communism was too strong to allow certain national traditions to be officially remembered and celebrated. For instance, the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising was commemorated by a monument in Warsaw shortly after the end of the war, while the Warsaw Uprising, led by the anticommunist Polish resistance movement, was consigned to oblivion, and the members of the movement were put in jail. Of course such moves inevitably strengthened the perception of the Communist authorities as "alien," "anti-Polish" and "Jewish." Thus in order to gain acceptance, the authorities gradually relaxed their attitude, allowing more and more elements of the Polish national tradition to be present on the surface of social life, but at the same time neglecting those aspects that referred to the multinational and multicultural traditions of the former Republic of Poland. Thus, for example, King Władysław Jagiełło was highly esteemed for his victory over the Teutonic Knights in the battle at Grunwald in 1410, which was included in the official narrative of "Polish resistance against German expansionism," but not as representing the multinational Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

This policy determined particular decisions about what to commemorate, what kind of a monument to erect, which buildings should be restored and which should remain in ruins. The palace in Łańcut, for

instance, was carefully preserved and turned into a museum, while the synagogue building next to it served as a grain store. From the point of view of the Communist authorities it was apparently more convenient to restore and muzealize the palace, which could be explained in ideological terms as "giving the working class access to the national cultural heritage previously appropriated by the class of exploiters," than to restore the synagogue building, which would be massively interpreted as a sign of the "Jewish" provenance of the authorities. It was only at the end of the 1980s that the synagogue building in Łańcut became a part of the museum: in such a way, the traditional ties between the palace and the synagogue were restored. Now both buildings are parts of the local museum. The interior of the synagogue building was carefully renovated, with the financial assistance of the local distillery, and at present it is the most impressive sign of the glorious past of the local Jewish community.

In general, after 1989 a huge effort was made to reclaim Polish history from the Communist distortions. Indeed, much has also been done to reclaim the history of the Jews in Poland. The growing academic interest in Jewish studies and a significant number of popular books and newspaper articles published on Jewish–Polish relations were accompanied by the "discovery" that Poles live among the material remnants of Jewish history and culture. Some of these have been subsequently restored and musealized, some have been displayed as historical objects, where there had previously been no place for them. The guides in areas frequented by tourists started to learn about the history of the Jews in their regions, and young people started to spend vacations visiting the ruined synagogues and desecrated Jewish cemeteries. It is, however, very difficult to change the landscape created in the course of many years, especially since, simultaneously with the multinational and multicultural revisions of history, radically nationalist constructions of the Polish tradition have been created, which also found their representation in the landscape. The recent landscape of southeastern Poland is thus a mixture of the destructive influence of passing time, the stubborn resistance of the material objects of Jewish culture, and of the various manipulative attempts: the tendency to present the landscape as genuinely and homogeneously Polish, the Communists' manipulations of landscape in order to legitimize their vision of history and their claim

to power, and the post-Communist tendency to reclaim space for the representation of the Jewish aspect of the history of Poland as well as to reclaim Polish history from the Communist interpretation. Some of the main features of the landscape that (mis)represent the Jewish past of Poland will be presented in the following sections, where examples from particular places will be given to illustrate different Polish attitudes towards the Jews: oblivion, exclusion, segregation, destruction, muzealization, and preservation.

RZESZÓW: BETWEEN PRESERVATION AND MANIPULATION

The most important landmarks of Rzeszów's Jewish past—two large synagogue buildings, located next to each other—are relatively well preserved. The first, the Old Town Synagogue, was built in 1617 and at present houses local archives and the Jewish History Research Center, an institution that collects documents related to the history of the Jews in the Rzeszów region and promotes studies of the history of ethnic and religious relations in the area. The second one—the New Town Synagogue, built in 1686—serves as an art gallery. Both have plaques explaining the basic facts of their history. The park-like square next to the synagogues covers the area of the oldest Jewish cemetery in Rzeszów which had been closed for burial purposes well before World War II. There is no plaque explaining the history of the place but the square bears the name of the Ghetto Victims, which somehow indicates its connection with Jewish history.

It is interesting that the name "Ghetto Victims" appears rather rarely in the topographies of Polish towns. After World War II the name "Ghetto Heroes" was given to many places in the former Jewish quarters of Polish towns to commemorate the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. The pattern was to commemorate the fighters, identified with heroes, and not the men, women and children who were murdered because they were Jewish. Thus, although there are Ghetto Heroes squares in many Polish towns, there are no Holocaust Victims squares. This seems to be a case of the heroization of death. The death of the Ghetto fighters accorded well with the Polish historical paradigm of glorifying those who died in a hopeless fight. It was therefore much more easily assimilated into the

Polish mental landscape and subsequently into the landscape of Polish towns than the tragedy of the Holocaust. Moreover, the focus on the heroization of death equalized, consciously or not, the situation of the Jews and the Poles: the latter had many heroic fighters too. The unique fate of the Jews, the Holocaust, did not find expression in the Polish landscape, a fact that may explain why, according to sociologists, a significant part of contemporary Polish society believes that Polish and Jewish sufferings during World War II were similar or comparable.[11]

The Ghetto Victims Square over the old Jewish cemetery in Rzeszów does in fact have a commemorative monument. This is not, however, a monument commemorating the Jews of Rzeszów but quite an impressive figurative sculpture with a plaque containing the following text: "On this site the blood-soaked soil from the battlefields, places of execution and martyrdom of the Rzeszów region has been placed as a symbol of our thousand-year-long fight for freedom, national independence, and for the betterment of life of our society." The monument, erected by the local Communist authorities in the 1960s, is a clear sign of a symbolic manipulation aimed at presenting the Communists as heirs of the Polish patriotic tradition. The inscription implies that the Communist Party is an integral part of the Polish tradition, that the Communist attempts to change the social structure are as noble as the Polish fight for freedom and national independence, that both can refer to the ancient lineage of the "thousand-year-long" history, and that the word "our" means both: Communist and Polish, resulting in the equation of these two terms. Moreover, the monument is actually a kind of a symbolic tomb since it is not the sculpture itself but rather the "blood-soaked soil" that has created the monumental value of the place. Whatever motivated the Communists, consciously or unconsciously, to put this tomb-like monument in the former Jewish cemetery, the result is that the Jewish past of Rzeszów, in this place at least, has been erased, and the Communists managed to present their distorted vision of history, which identified their political program with "Polishness," in the form of a monument dominating the landscape.

The landscape of Rzeszów is thus a mixture of attempts to preserve the town's Jewish past, quite exceptional, even if unintentional, commemoration of the Jewish victims, and the Communists' interpretation of history aimed at gaining legitimacy for their rule in Polish society.

ŻOŁYNIA: EXCLUSION. LEŻAJSK: SEGREGATION

Visitors to Żołynia, a little town between Łańcut and Leżajsk, are greeted by a large sign proudly informing them that the town was awarded a military cross for the support given by its inhabitants to the resistance movement during World War II. The memory of the war is evidently carefully preserved by the people of Żołynia. However, upon closer inspection, this memory turns out to be rather selective.

In the corner of the town's main square there is a small monument, crowned by the Polish national emblem, an eagle with outstretched wings. The plaque on the monument says that it was erected "To the memory of the inhabitants of Żołynia, murdered by Hitlerites and fallen for the Fatherland in the years 1939–1945." A list of several names follows. All the people listed are Poles. The other inhabitants of Żołynia, the Jews, were also "murdered by Hitlerites," and in far greater numbers than the Poles executed by the Nazis for supporting or belonging to the partisan troops in neighboring forests. However, the "Community of Żołynia" which erected the monument in September 1983 did not find it appropriate to put the names of the Jews on the monument. This suggests that for some reason the "Community of Żołynia" has symbolically excluded the Jews from the ranks of its fellow town-dwellers. In any case, at present the concept of an "inhabitant of Żołynia" refers only to the Polish inhabitants for Poles alone live there now. By projecting this situation onto the past, the local Poles have excluded the Jews from the town's collective memory. This is clearly a sign of the homogenization of both the mental and the physical landscape. The Jews were eliminated physically by the Nazis; the memory of the Jews has been eliminated symbolically by the Poles. The monument in Żołynia asserts in fact: "This is Poland, the land of Poles, who have their own, glorious and tragic, but exclusively Polish history."

This phenomenon of exclusion has, however, a historical dimension too. The Jews, as we remember from the matrix of Polish–Jewish relations, belonged to the alien world and were not perceived as full members of the "community." The indifference of many Poles to the Holocaust can be partly explained by this fact: the murdered Jews were perceived as alien; they did not quite belong, and hence their history was a separate stream of events, sometimes overlapping with Polish

history but generally going its own way. In the process of homogenization the history of Poland was identified with the history of Poles, and the Żołynia monument is a tool of the symbolic control over the landscape by that dominant vision of history.

The political dimension is also quite interesting here. The monument was erected in 1983 when the martial law regulations, introduced in 1981, were gradually being relaxed.[12] As a sign of that relaxation, the Communist-military authorities again made an effort to show their devotion to Polish history and tradition. Institutions that were established throughout the 1980s, such as the infamous, extremely nationalistic Patriotic Union "Grunwald" (named after the site of the Polish victory over the Teutonic Knights in 1410), to demonstrate the authorities' concern with preserving Polish history and to discredit the opposition, were particularly active in this process.[13] Since at that time nothing could happen in Żołynia without the consent of the local party authorities, concessions concerning local commemorations of the Polish tradition could be ideologically justified as according with the policy of relaxation. The commemoration of other traditions would obscure the clear message the authorities wished to convey and could hinder the attempt to reinforce the legitimacy of the instigators of martial law.

The landscape of Żołynia, defined by the monument which seals the triumph of Polish memory, is an example of the battlefield of memories in which one of the parties was defeated by exclusion, which—even if not intentionally—accorded with the matrix of Polish–Jewish relations and the pattern of its transformation. The landscape of nearby Leżajsk presents a similar example: that of *segregation* of memories. In Leżajsk—unlike in Żołynia—there are material embodiments of both Jewish and Polish memories; the former exist, however, exclusively within the Jewish memory, the latter within the Polish.

For the Poles, Leżajsk is known for its beautiful baroque church with a famous organ. For a long time the church has been the local center of the cult of the Virgin Mary and a destination for Polish Roman Catholic pilgrims. For the Jews, Leżajsk cemetery is the burial place of Elimelekh (1717–1787), a disciple of Dov Ber and intellectually the most powerful leader of the third generation of Hasidism, the teacher of Menahem Mendel and Jacob "the Seer" of Lublin. Visits of pious Hasidim to Elimelekh's tomb on the anniversary of his death (21 Adar) is

probably the earliest example of the characteristic Hasidic pilgrimages to the burial places of the *tzaddikim* (the righteous) in the region. The striking picture of two streams of pilgrims, visiting two different sites in the same town without knowing anything about each other, symbolizes the separation of the two groups, their mutual alienation, which, translated into the language of landscape, meant that although the Jews lived in the same physical space as the Poles, they occupied an entirely different cultural space. "It might seem strange," Diane K. Roskies and David G. Roskies observe, "that two nations living on the same soil would have an entirely different relation to the same place, but that's the way it happened. Jewish geography is simply not the same as goyish geography."[14]

The central point of the landscape of Jewish memory in Leżajsk is thus the tomb of Rabbi Elimelekh, condensing in one place the spiritual tradition of Hasidism in the region and symbolizing the richness of Jewish spiritual life. The landscape of Polish memory, embodied in the baroque church and the painting of the Virgin Mary, which—according to believers—has certain miraculous powers, symbolizes Roman Catholic spirituality, the power and richness of the church, and—to a large degree—Polish identity. The Polish memory is, however, the memory held by living people who permanently occupy the physical space of contemporary Leżajsk, while the Jewish memory exists outside that space, only periodically being brought into it by Jewish visitors.

PRZEWORSK: DESTRUCTION

In Przeworsk, a small town east of Łańcut, the Jews made up half of the prewar population and had developed a rich communal life since the time of their settlement in the sixteenth century. Of particular fame was the community's rabbi, Moses Sofer, and later, in the twentieth century, the local library, which was a center of study and intellectual life. The synagogue building in Przeworsk was not as fortunate as the one in Łańcut and was leveled to the ground by the Nazis, who also removed gravestones from the Jewish cemetery in the town, using them to pave yards in the local sugar refinery. After the war the desecrated space of the

cemetery became the most important battlefield of memories in Przeworsk.

Immediately after the war the area of the cemetery remained empty and untouched until the time of a major project to build a new section of the road connecting Rzeszów and Przemyśl. The construction work damaged the southern side of the cemetery. In 1969 a huge monument commemorating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the liberation of the town was erected. The area of the monument, known as *pomnik Walki i Męczeństwa* (Monument of Fight and Martyrdom), partly invaded the western side of the cemetery. Eventually, at the beginning of the 1980s the municipal council decided to build a bus station on the remaining part of the cemetery. One member of the council, Jan Sasak, a local stonecutter, voted against the decision. Since he was outvoted, he recommended that at least a sign should be put to indicate the previous character of the place. When his idea did not find support, Sasak decided to do something on his own. He placed a modest stone in the northeastern corner of the cemetery/bus station with an inscription commemorating the Jews murdered during the war. A few years later the stone was moved, without his knowledge and consent, to the southeastern corner, next to a taxi stand, which was less convenient for visitors. Apparently the previous location was designated for commercial purposes.[15]

The history of this place is rather exceptional, since the sites of Jewish cemeteries in the region, even if empty and unprotected, are generally not used for construction projects. It shows, however, a general pattern of removing—consciously or not—the Jewish memory from the landscape. Building a road and bus station exemplifies a "functional approach" to the sites of Jewish memory: the Jews are no longer here, the gravestones were already removed by the Nazis, life must go on, and the local people need roads and bus stations. The lack of sensitivity in this approach can be interpreted in terms of open or latent anti-Semitism but it can also be accounted for by the general low level of sensitivity as a result of the war period (the road), and the process of forgetting combined with an increased focus on political events in the 1980s (the bus station).[16] It seems that in this case all three factors played a role.

The Monument of Fight and Martyrdom can be interpreted in a somewhat different manner. This was a deliberate attempt to present the Communist vision of history in a way that would serve the purpose of legitimating the authorities. However, in 1969, when the monument was erected, Poland was still experiencing the results of the fierce governmental anti-Semitic campaign of 1968,[17] a fact that may have influenced the decision about the location of the monument or at least silenced possible hesitation about its appropriateness. The monument itself is a very interesting example of the Communist manipulation of history. It consists of two separate structures: the first, a vertical one, is composed of three columns, probably symbolizing three decades of Communist Poland, with the Communist version of the Polish national emblem: an eagle without a crown (the crown, the symbol of royalty, was removed by the Communist regime from the prewar emblem). Below it is another emblematic eagle, this time the symbol of the first historical dynasty that ruled the lands of Poland from the end of the tenth century, the Piast dynasty. That eagle also does not have a crown since the title of the kings of Poland was granted to the dynasty after the emblem had been established as its symbol.

The monument represents a clear attempt to anchor Communist rule in Polish history; to present it as a logical and legitimate stage in the history of Polish statehood. Indeed, the Communists often positively referred to the time of the Piast dynasty, contrasting it to the later period of the multinational Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The reason for this may have been strictly political—the borders of the Commonwealth had extended far into the areas which later become the western parts of the Soviet Union (and are now regaining and/or constructing their identities as the independent states of Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine)—or ideological: the Commonwealth, according to the official Communist interpretation of history, had been a belligerent, expansionist state based on serfdom and the egoistic exploitation of its resources by the aristocracy. Moreover, the "homogeneity" of Poland from the time of the Piast dynasty was often presented in opposition to the "negative" multinational character of the Commonwealth and the Republic of Poland in the period 1918–1939: in such a way the Communists suggested that the forced homogenization of Poland after World War II, which was a result

of the war and the postwar change of borders, meant in fact a "return to the roots" of Polish statehood.[18]

The second part of the monument, an inverted pyramid slightly resembling a memorial candle, has on its front wall the symbol of the Polish Military Cross and an inscription that reads: "To the heroes of the revolutionary struggles, trusty sons of the Przeworsk soil, those who fought against the oppression of the prewar right-wing Polish government, against the Nazi occupant and against the forces of reaction for national and social liberation, for socialist Poland." The vision of history expressed in the inscription identifies prewar "capitalist" Poland and the postwar anticommunist groups with the Nazis. National liberation has been identified with the Communist political program, so that consequently the noncommunist members of the Polish resistance are excluded from the officially approved pantheon of national martyrs. Together with the symbolism of the eagles, the inscription makes the Communist message clear: Polish history had its telos, that is, "socialist" Poland, and those who did not participate in the process of its "materialization" did not belong to "Us." Consequently, according to this Manichean vision of the world, they belonged to "Them," to the enemy. This vision had no place for the Jews either. Their difference was dissolved into the two main camps defined according to the lines of political division. The Jews had no place in the Communists' homogeneous vision of Poland, just as they had no place—although for different reasons—in the equally homogeneous vision of Poland produced by the nationalists.

History as represented by the landscape of Przeworsk has thus been falsified in a twofold way. Jewish memory has been erased by the destruction of its site and removed from the officially approved and monumentalized vision of history. Polish memory has been denied by the official, Communist symbolism and narrative. The only attempt to preserve Jewish memory was an initiative on the part of one individual and took the form of what can be termed "counter-monumentalization": the modesty and authenticity expressed in Jan Sasak's memorial stone is a striking contrast to the Communist monument.

CONCLUDING REMARKS: FROM MEMORY TO MEMORIALS

This survey of different landscapes in southeastern Poland has shown different forms of conflict between Jewish and Polish memories, expressed in the chronotopes of Jewish and Polish identity which remained after the destruction of the matrix of the relations between the two communities. Oblivion, exclusion, segregation, destruction, the attempts to preserve and monumentalize, together with the resistance of the material sites of Jewish memory, are the activities through which the chronotopes have been created. (There are, of course, several other types of activities, such as the extremely interesting phenomenon of the commercialization of Jewish memory, which have not been analyzed here.)

The Communist interpretation of history turned out to be an important factor which has to a large degree contributed to the creation of the landscapes in their present form. In fact we can speak of three types of memory as expressed in the landscape: Jewish, Polish, and Polish-Communist, the latter created artificially to serve political purposes. It is likely that the Communist chronotopes will gradually disappear together with the mythological vision of history they have contained and supported. However, as the example of Żołynia illustrates, they could be replaced by the equally mythological nationalist vision and its corresponding chronotopes. As Richard S. Esbenshade pointed out, "there is no pure, pristine memory beneath the state's manipulation, for its subjects are caught up in the process and themselves become guilty of mis-remembering; of manipulation of others' memory…."[19] One can of course hope that in a democratic society it will be more difficult to institute one version of memory as the only valid one and that there will be attempts to do justice to the Jewish chronotopes in Poland. However, without living Jewish *milieux de mémoire* in Poland, the Polish landscape will be left with the *lieux de mémoire*, vulnerable to manipulations, misunderstandings, loss of meaning and disappearance.[20] They can be monumentalized or commercialized, which will prolong their material existence; however, they will no longer be the focal points of living memory, at least not for the Poles. The most one can hope for is that they cease to be battlefields and become just memorials instead. For those who have lost *memory*—as Jacques Derrida has observed in quite

a different context—must be happy with memorials. Or perhaps, in an even more optimistic version, the Jewish memorials may make the Poles aware of the fact that Jewish memory has been a legitimate part of the symbolic landscape of Poland and that with the disappearance of Jewish memory Poland has lost a great deal of its own identity.[21]

NOTES

1. Louis L. Snyder, *Encyclopedia of Nationalism* (Chicago and London, 1990), 234 (emphasis added).

2. Arnold M. Rose and Caroline B. Rose, "Introduction," in idem, eds. *Minority Problems: A Textbook of Readings in Intergroup Relations* (New York, 1965), 3.

3. John R. Gillis, "Memory and Identity: The History of a Relationship," in idem, ed., *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton, 1994), 3.

4. David Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge, 1985), 41–46, 199.

5. Mikhail M. Bakhtin, "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel: Notes toward a Historical Poetics," in Michael Holquist, ed., *The Dialogic Imagination. Four Essays by M. M. Bakhtin* (Austin, TX, 1981), 84.

6. Gillis, "Memory and Identity," 14.

7. Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country*, 204–205.

8. Niklas Luhmann, *Essays on Self-Reference* (New York, 1990), 9.

9. Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization* (Boston, 1962), 211.

10. Alina Cała, *The Image of the Jew in Polish Folk Culture* (Jerusalem, 1995), 150.

11. See Ewa Koźmińska-Frejlak and Ireneusz Krzemiński, "Stosunek społeczeństwa polskiego do Zagłady Żydów" (Attitudes of Polish people toward the Holocaust), in Ireneusz Krzemiński, ed., *Czy Polacy są antysemitami? Wyniki badania sondażowego* (Are Poles anti-Semitic? Results of a survey) (Warsaw, 1996), 96–145; Michael C. Steinlauf, *Bondage to the Dead: Poland and the Memory of the Holocaust* (Syracuse, NY, 1997), 140–42.

12. At the end of 1982, some activists of the "Solidarity" movement were gradually being released from the places of internment and prisons where they had been held since the introduction of martial law on 13 December 1981. Although the police continued searching for those still in hiding, the military authorities that functioned as government during martial law ("Military Council for National Salvation") tried to improve the atmosphere and secure some social peace before the visit to Poland of Pope John Paul II scheduled for June 1983.

13. According to Steinlauf, "Grunwald" "became a fixture of the government's many-sided attempts to undermine the opposition, a source of rumors about the Jewish origins of Solidarity leaders and of anti-German and anti-Semitic disinformation. Other initiatives included a … pamphlet on the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising … as well as a book on Polish–Jewish relations that advanced the thesis that the Kielce pogrom had been fomented by Zionists." Steinlauf, *Bondage to the Dead*, 106. The two publications he mentions were actually published in 1983.

14. Diane K. Roskies and David G. Roskies, *The Shtetl Book: An Introduction to East European Jewish Life and Lore*, 2d ed. (New York, 1979), 45.

15. Communication of Jan Sasak to the author.

16. The 1980s were replete with political upheaval: economic crisis, the institutionalization of social discontent, the birth of the independent trade union movement "Solidarity," martial law, and conflicts and negotiations that led to the peaceful and piecemeal dismantling of communism.

17. "It was a campaign," Michael Steinlauf writes, "initiated by Gomułka [then the first secretary of the Communist Party] in a speech after the Six-Day War in June 1967, in which he employed the term 'fifth column' to refer to Jews in Poland. It peaked between March and July 1968, after which Gomułka and the party central committee reined it in. It resulted, during the years 1968–70, in the ruin of thousands of careers, the emigration of some twenty thousand Jews, and in what was perceived as the definitive end of the millennial Jewish presence in Poland." (*Bondage to the Dead*, 76.) Some authors argue that plans for an anti-Jewish campaign had been prepared even before 1967 and that throughout the 1960s Jews were singled out as a convenient scapegoat for the situation of student protests, attempts to revise orthodox Marxism, and conflicts within the party. "The witch-hunt of 1968," writes Robert Wistrich, "was about the manipulation of myths in the service of a battle for power between … warring Communist Party factions…." Robert S. Wistrich, *Antisemitism: The Longest Hatred* (London,1992), 162.

18. In order to legitimize the territorial changes after World War II, as a result of which Poland lost her eastern territories and received "compensation" in the west (the former German lands), the Communist regime tried to present them as a return to the original territorial shape of the Polish state from the 10th century. The national homogenization, a result of the war and the territorial changes, was presented by the first Communist president, Bolesław Bierut, as early as 1946 as one of the six revolutionary changes that would signal a better future of socialist Poland (along with the destruction of the old social and economic relations, the destruction of the old political system, the destruction of

the old legal system, agrarian reform and "nationalization" of industry, banking, trade etc., that is, the elimination of private ownership). See Bierut's New Year speech, published in *Rzeczpospolita*, no 2 (497), 2 Jan. 1946. If in the 1940s and 1950s the nationalist elements were usually hidden behind the "proletarian internationalism" of official Communist ideology, after the return of Gomułka to power in 1957, "a more openly nationalistic ideology became a prominent feature of Communist propaganda. It stressed the 'Polishness' of Poland, which in the post-war era, as a result of the German massacres and territorial changes, had in any case lost its old multi-ethnic character, becoming mono-cultural and virtually homogeneous." Wistrich, *Antisemitism*, 161.

20. Regarding the concepts *milieux de mémoire* and *lieux de mémoire*, see Pierre Nora, "General Introduction: Between Memory and History," in *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, under the direction of Pierre Nora, vol. 1, *Conflicts and Divisions* (New York and Chichester, West Sussex, 1996).

21. The activities of individual people, like Jan Sasak, or institutions, like the Center for Jewish Culture in Kraków or the Society for the Protection of Jewish Monuments in Tarnów, testify that this option is not entirely unrealistic. Regarding the relation between "memory" and "memorials," see Jacques Derrida, "The Pharmakon," in Peggy Kamuf, ed., *A Derrida Reader: Between the Blinds* (New York, 1991), 124–39.