

## IDENTITY OF LANDSCAPE

The term is understood in two ways: 1) in the spirit of cultural landscape research, as elements forming a specific whole, constituting the uniqueness of a given landscape in relation to others and influencing the identity of groups; 2) psychologically, as a category of description of the identity of individuals and groups from the point of view of their *place-identity*.

It should be stressed that each place, by definition (Heidegger), has an identity. It is therefore extracted from the whole, endowed with *genius loci*, has historical continuity, is an oasis of security and is authentic (Lewicka). Places without identity are for this reason called non-places and are opposed to the former.

Sauer emphasises that the identity of the landscape is based on a specific constitution, which determines the specificity of the place, while at the same time separating it from others and influencing the experience of the landscape as "the form imposing itself on the viewer". Myga-Piątek distinguishes seven groups of factors determining the identity of the landscape (in relation to Żuławy Wiślane): 1) natural (e.g. fertile muds and abundance of water), 2) biopsychic (e.g. diligence, organisation), 3) religious (e.g. persecution that affected the Dutch settlement), 4) social (e.g., differentiating the character and location of buildings), 5) political and administrative-legal (e.g. anti-Mennonite edict depriving of the right to lease and possession of property), 6) historical and cultural (e.g. Roman and Scandinavian influences), 7) civilisation progress (e.g. land reclamation infrastructure).

The term can be used in a narrower sense, in the context of identity processes and with reference to groups, nations and societies and their relations with places and landscapes. Cosgrove points out that landscapes, on the one hand, construct collective identities, on the other hand, they are their expression. An example is the national state and national identity, which, in order to be constituted, required the establishment of relations between the images of nature (native) and people (nation) living in a certain territory. This process seems to have emerged in Germany, where the notion of homeland, home (German: *Heimat*) was geographically linked to the landscape. For example, the mountain topography of the Hercynian period, dense forests and moors began to be described as Germanic, and thanks to literature and painting they became icons. Protection of landscapes and natural and cultural heritage has become an expression of the creation of identity of places and groups, which is reflected, for example, in the idea of national parks, the founding of which (19th century) coincided with the creation of national states.

A different factor, supporting the care for the identity of the landscape and places, are activities focused on regionality. An example of caring for the pearls of local heritage as the goods of civilisation are the works of UNESCO, while the cultivation of native cultures on a global scale is illustrated by the initiative of *cittaslow* (Italian and English slow city). *Cittaslow* is a movement of cities (up to 50,000 inhabitants) around the world, which aims to nurture local identities, protect natural and cultural heritage, social involvement and sustainable development. In this way, *cittaslow* creates a strategy that resists the homogenising

processes of globalisation and nationalisation, ensuring the protection of localism and the identity of the place.

[Ł. P.]

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