

SURROUNDINGS

An area stretching around a place, closely connected with it, established by human activity. It has a spatial (topographical) and symbolic character. An unknown surroundings can be learned by wandering around it.

The neighbourhood surrounds the place as a space inhabited by humans. In Ingold's concept it is a "given space" in which purposefulness, practical action and everyday activity take place; in Heidegger's concept it is a space in which understanding takes place.

Surroundings defines the periphery of places, connects them by means of a network of roads and paths that we mark out and travel through in the everyday process of living; it acquires meaning for the human being in the process of learning about the places and landmarks that are connected and bonded by the roads that run around it. In this sense, it is subject to topographical experience. Being on the road is not only a way of getting to know the neighbourhood (in the topographical, social and cultural sense) and giving meaning to it; it is also a way of filling it with our presence. Thanks to wandering (movement) the neighbourhood is updated by people, can expand, acquires directions and sides. With time, the directions fill up with meanings (they lose their objective character as points on the map), acquire the qualities of subjective sides, which we distinguish on the basis of previous experiences, which we fill up with individual contents (Buczyńska-Garewicz). The wandering takes place in time, which means that the neighbourhood combines space and time (recognition and creation of the neighbourhood takes place over time).

The environment is a space of life and action in which humans leave their traces (material and symbolic), recorded in its topographical, material and symbolic shape, resulting from the ways of living, the economy, use of land; it is reflected in the image of fauna and flora, cultural activity, including that what determines identity (Edensor).

In the experience of the surroundings one should distinguish between the perspective of the resident and the perspective of the tourist. From the perspective of the inhabitant, it has the character of a living space (already explored, a look "from the inside"). From the tourist's perspective, it is a space for exploration, which can be assessed from an aesthetic or recreational point of view (a look "from the outside").

Nowadays, the meaning of the term is changing due to the development of technology. The surroundings can be the whole world, and a computer and smartphone can be a tool that mediates the perception of reality. The place becomes the view displayed on the monitor screen, the road – the route displayed by GPS. We inhabit the whole world (or its fragments present in the media and subjected to interpretation), because it becomes our experience, even if mediated by the screen of the monitor. In a sense, the neighbourhood is reduced here to the role of a view (to which it is in significant opposition), experienced by means of computer applications with the sense of sight. Topographical experience, however, cannot be reduced to the route that one has travelled physically. The surroundings interpreted in this way becomes a source of identity understood not in geographical terms, but as a community of interests (concerns, fear, passion, etc.).

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