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Rural Landscape as a Value of Cultural Heritage*

Rural landscape is an especially sensitive and valuable quality.

(Engineer Architect Bogna Lipińska, Ph.D.)

Abstract: The Author – ethnologist and anthropologist of culture – defends the thesis that rural landscape is an important component of cultural heritage. Virtual “cyberspaces” assume the role of an alternative life environment. Physical space loses the basis for explaining the world and for shaping human experience. The degraded rural cultural landscape is the proof of erroneous conceptions and rural space gathers the effects of a deficit of sensibility to “long continuance”. In opposition to postmodernist assessments the Author objects to the attempts at destabilising culture. Culture is significant. The protection of rural landscape as a particularly sensitive and valuable quality has a sense. In the conclusion of her article the Author suggests that a more thorough humanistic reflection is needed to make it possible to optimally implement the recommendations of the European Landscape Convention.

Key words: culture, values, cultural landscape, rural space.

1. Introduction

Prior to discussing the issue formulated in the title of the article I would like to make an indispensable comment. The subject I have chosen to discuss may seem to be somewhat problematic when viewed from the perspective of a postmodern

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society. First and foremost, this is due to the actual weakening of the continuity of modern culture, its fragmentation, and loss of internal cohesion. Secondly: in the current epoch, which breaks with the normative character of tradition, care for the desirably full transfer of culture's valuable resources may seem an overly ambitious task. In the conditions of the so-called *hybridisation of culture*, efforts to ensure the widest possible scope of protection to the elements of cultural heritage seem to exceed actual possibilities. Efforts in favour of preserving the memory of and preserving these elements of cultural heritage to successive generations of people may nowadays look like a Utopian¹ plan. Thirdly: due to the reluctance to refer to the past, which is "quite symptomatic of modern sociology and social psychology" (Ossowski 1967, p. 261), my undertaking may appear purposeless. And, last but not least, as a result of the opinions about the weakening or even severance of ties between three levels of reality, namely, space, culture and social community, which dominate in public discussions, my reflection woven round cultural heritage may, apparently, sound anachronistic. However, against the background of described circumstances which characterise the so-called "*fluid modernity*" (a notion introduced by Zygmunt Bauman) I will try to defend the approach to the subject, as proposed herebelow, namely that it is justified and necessary to perceive the value of rural landscape as an element of cultural heritage. This by no means is exclusively attributable to the mythical nostalgia for something gone and lost for ever.

2. In culture's perspective

Culture is – to quote the words used by Andrzej Tyszka – the cult of values. Each particular culture represents a definite, unique, specific, and characteristic system of values. This assertion is supported by my ethnological experience and, consequently, my mistrust in and also reserve with which I treat the currently fashionable "de-essentialisation of culture". Attempts at undermining the role of culture as the "existential foundation" have their counterpoint in opinions stressing that despite all exertions to destabilise culture, it, ultimately, proves to be significant. In spite of all twists and turns, and rapid changes brought about by (the galloping) globalisation, culture is an expression of "long continuance". Suitable

¹ The tendency to treat tradition and community as a burden is, in the opinion of Jarosław Flis, characteristic of the left-wing option, of liberal approach and of the so-called "grey, anti-party populism". In the context of Polish political scene, tradition and community is, according to Flis, perceived as a burden by such political parties as SLD [Democratic Left Alliance] and PO [Civic Platform]. Conversely, on the right side of the political scene tradition and community, recognized as a value, unites chiefly the supporters of PIS. (Flis 2015, pp. 93–103).

for the description of what I have in mind would be a metaphor drawn from the observation of a forest. Foresters have to make long-term plans for the execution of their tasks. They know that new plantations they establish will yield a crop not to them, but to their successors, in a hundred or even two hundred years from now. Long distance that characterises the continuation of culture is also necessary to make it possible to think about the foundations of long-range development of Poland. This idea, seldom present in public discussions now, became noticeable, which I record here with satisfaction, against the background of reports presented during the 10th Civic Congress in Warsaw in 2015. One of the participants in the Congress debates expressed it in a very simple way. "I keep repeating that culture represents not only a link with the past but also a starting-point for the future. [...] Why is culture so important? First and foremost because it shows what is the best, the most beautiful and timeless in us" (Sołtysiński 2016, p. 169). It would be right to interpret it in the anthropological way as an inalienable feature of the *homo sapiens* species. Irrespective of whether I add to culture a mono-chronic or a poly-chronic feature, of whether I consider yet another paradigm of culture as a hope for a new *metanoia* for the survival of human race and discover new contexts for culture, its invariable feature remains the cult of values. Let me present a short example of such reflection: "it is important or even crucial to restore correct proportions between rationality and reason, between economy and ecology, between natural and artificial time, between care for the present day and care for the future, between current and distant goals as well as between mono-chronic and poly-chronic culture" (Sztumski 2008, p. 129). It is known, owing to an inventory made in 2008, that there are two thousand protected objects of cultural heritage on the territories administered by the institution Lasy Państwowe (State Forests) alone. Apart from various natural monuments [individual trees and the so-called memorial forests] protection covers: palaces, manor-houses, chapels, bridges and viaducts. Conservator's protection is ensured also to historical buildings and facilities constructed for defence purposes: castles and their ruins, and fortifications. Protection also includes archaeological sites: remnants of medieval cities, burial grounds, settlements, burial mounds and mounds built to mark important events. Movable objects having the status of monuments, e.g. locomotives and cars for narrow-gauge railways, sculptures forming a part of garden and park architecture, are also covered by protection schemes (Grzywacz 2016, p. 162). It is absolutely necessary to extend this index of monuments by adding to it the enchanting temples from the southern part of the Małopolska region and from the Podkarpacie region, which have been put on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

In this article I stick to the assumption of mutually related time sequences – the past-the present-the future – in the process of transferring culture. I do not

go into the distinction concerning the linear and circular model of time. What counts is the fact that my assumption reflects the conviction that “living now we are living simultaneously in the past and in the future because it is impossible to think of what there is now without thinking of what was earlier and what will be later on” (Sztumski 2008, p. 135). Such a perspective makes it reasonable to attach proper importance to heritage rooted in tradition. Besides, surveys show that Poles would like “to live in a country cultivating native tradition” (Łaciak 2016, p. 32). This is a sufficient authorisation to undermine oppositions of the *rural society* – *urban society* type that are rooted in the modernist thought as well as similar antitheses proposed by the classics. I do not think that there is a conflict between the attachment to native tradition and openness to and tolerance of dissimilarity as it is being often described now in an overly simplified way. Although classic scholars such as Robert Redfield, Ferdinand Tönnies, Emil Durkheim, William Sumner and George Simmel have created a model of principal tension between the opposed contexts: village – town, I am of the opinion that the repeated use of these contexts during present-day discussions may lead to irritating simplifications. My reflection represents considerations of an ethnographer, an ethnologist and an anthropologist of culture and not a sociologist-empiricist. For me culture is, which I emphasise strongly, the cult of values. In other words it also is a resource from which people draw inspiration to describe the situation they are in. It also is a system of rules forming a frame within which people communicate. Hence, it is far easier for me to reflect upon the subject of cultural landscape when I adopt an anthropological and not a sociological point of view. Moreover, anthropological approach permits me to question things that are apparently obvious. My anthropological attitude provides me with insight into the world of my own experience as well as private interpretation of what is meant by the formulation “rural cultural landscape”.

In accordance with humanistic approach, interactions of individual social actors are a reaction to the resource and order of accepted values, norms and regulations present in the patterns of culture. My position is close to that formulated by social anthropology in which patterns of culture, values, norms and customs (despite their changes in time and space) are precisely the factors that determine human behaviours in the strongest way. However, this determination is not meant to deprive people of free will, creative activity and possibilities to choose behaviours. On the contrary, it should provide reasons for opposing devastation and defilement of rural landscape, and for protecting these resources of the heritage which deserve to be protected. The problem needs to be urgently solved in the face of depreciation of physical space as the basis for explaining the world and as the foundation of real experience.

Virtual cyberspaces created with the help of audio-visual transmitters begin to play the role of an alternative environment for people to live in. In addition to

promising opportunities to create virtual space as an alternative life environment, the horizon of the emerging *techno-culture* brings about threats of, as yet, not fully defined nature. In the first place, human mind suffers due to insufficiency of experience and tools needed to diagnose actual reality. This prompts a study – with greater intensity than before – of the issues of spatiality as well as architecture created ever more frequently by computers – which are becoming specific *machines which help people see*. Let me ask, therefore: is it possible *to exist to the extent fully reflecting human capacities* in these landscapes and media-scapes? I will not answer this question which remains unanswered also by the author of the book where I have found information about audio-visual space (Banaszkiewicz 2011). This, however, is a key question even if it seems too early to formulate an answer to it.

3. In the domain of values

Culture's values signify culturally conditioned opinions on what is favourable or desirable. It is obvious that "people wish to live in good societies. They desire harmony in social life" (Bogunia-Borowska 2016, p. 13). However, it is worth recalling here that this harmony relates to two aspects of collective life – community (*communitas*) and society (*societas*). On one hand, it covers everything that links people in the sphere of symbolic culture and, on the other hand, everything that organises the life of a community in the institutionalised and formal spheres. I will recall here that according to Stanisław Ossowski there exist in social life incommensurable value scales from among which people have to choose. Since, however, it is ever more difficult in the real conditions of contemporary life to find common measures for various categories of values, the only possible solution is to refer to some broadly agreed assumptions. This relates to the sphere to which anthropologists of culture applied such terms as: culture axes, culture patterns, culture framing. What they had in mind is sometimes expressed with the help of terms: code or canon of culture, specific *habitus*, unconscious archetype or definite *narrative*. They are linked by a special function which consists in permitting them to constitute common – for people of a given culture – forms of and directions for expressing mental and psycho-physical reactions. They also cover directions for behaviours – every day and festive – concordant with the accepted values. It is wrong, then, to believe that "values are a sort of a social commodity which can be acquired at will, in single pieces or packages, or which, figuratively speaking, can be bought by catalogue" (Misztal 2016, p. 123). It is crucial to understand that values function as axionormative systems, as specific configurations which cannot be composed in accordance with the market rules to form a package suiting needs and circumstances distinguished and defined in this or that way. It was good to

hear Bronisław Misztal draw attention to this problem in his report, presented at the 10th Civic Congress, in which he tried to provide an answer to the question about *values on which Poland's development should be based*. I must say that he was one of a few authors who, in my opinion, did not commit the anthropological mistake in regard to the issue of values. The same idea – although formulated in a different way, was expressed by Bronisław Wildstein who pointed out that he did not share fascination with the proposed “emancipation” of man to successive cultural conditions. This is not in contradiction with the conviction that “if we are to be a community we need to have common values” (Wildstein 2016, p. 42). This means that we do not have to rid ourselves of tradition, of national community, but we should go beyond “the egoism of a generation and the egoism of an individual [...] and this calls for the recognition of fundamental values” (Wildstein 2016, p. 43). It would be good to be guided in this search by knowledge, but also by idealistic and not ideological² assumptions in order to prevent individual preferences from intensifying conflicts³ to an excessive degree. It is not without reason why culture's crisis manifests itself in efforts to manipulate the system of values. This manipulation is being accomplished, among other things, through the creation of a vision of a permissive society. The latter looks like a utopian vision but it also represents a conscious negation of the community of culture as the accepted hierarchy of values. But we, modern people who claim to belong to the circle of the Western civilisation, find the archetypical threads of our common heritage in the classical works of Greek and Roman philosophers. I was reminded about this fact a short time ago when I read a review by Stefan Małecki-Tepicht which was given a title ending in a question mark: *Ekonomia jest piękną nauką?* (Economics is a beautiful science?) (Małecki-Tepicht 2016, p. 197). Plato's triad: truth – good – beauty, has become the groundwork of philosophy and the foundation of modern (Western) civilisation. There is no doubt that the basic categories of the Western thought are only more or less expanded contributions to Plato's triad. Thanks to them we are able – as the inheritors of Western culture – to see the degradation of landscape with the naked eye. We are able to notice and diagnose threats brought about by wasteful exploitation of space.⁴ This phenomenon relates chiefly to rural and small-town space and the space of small towns, which is due to the immense scale

² There are authors who seek to rehabilitate the notion of ideology in contemporary social sciences (compare Rawski 2015, pp. 105–116). I prefer to speak of a discourse rather than of ideology.

³ Conflicts are inscribed in the life of a society, but (intensifying) conflicts connected with the use of space have a destructive impact on the cohesion of rural communities.

⁴ Before the accession to the European Union some authors perceived the initial position of Central European countries, Poland included, in the light of their ability to “avoid mistakes in the space management policy that had been committed by the ‘old’ EU Member States” (Baranowski 2002, p. 43).

of transformation and the rapid pace of changes. This is the reason why landscape is threatened with unprecedented devastation.

Going back to the subject of culture as the feature of the *homo sapiens* species and, at the same time, the proof of man's creative abilities I have to say that we – modern people, can feel alarmed by the vision of an extreme situation: the triumph of uniform, unvarying and completely anonymous space or, as Paul Ricoeur has stressed, the triumph of consumer culture, which would be a presage of absolute nihilism. This is the first reason for a serious reflection.

4. Landscape – understanding the notion

At the start of these considerations I would like to stress the continually growing popularity and specific “career” of the concept of landscape. The connotations of the word – usually derived from physical geography – were linked with natural aspects, i.e. physiography, sculpture of the earth's surface. At present, however, the term landscape is ever more frequently accompanied by the adjective “cultural”. The *Dictionary of Notions Used in Socio-Economic Geography (Słownik pojęć z geografii społeczno-ekonomicznej)* contains only an entry devoted to “cultural landscape”. In this entry it is explained that cultural landscape means natural landscape **transformed by man** [underlined by M.W.]. It is also stated that such transformation entails deforestation, replacement of natural plant formations with fields of cultivated plants, regulation of rivers, construction of artificial water reservoirs. In general, the entry provides information about various forms of man's activity that are designed to adjust the terrain to the requirements of agricultural, industrial, residential construction and transport activities (Runge, Runge 2008, p. 169). The thematic profile of the dictionary may be seen as the reason why the term “cultural landscape” has been defined in this way. On the other hand, the definition provided lacks proper reference to culture, and culture is crucial for the processes of perception, diagnosis and protection activities in space. The awareness is becoming more and more widespread that landscape – or the specific, material “picture of life”, perceived as a visual record of the history of successive generations, is a mark of man's activity preserved in physical space.⁵ However, the decision to perceive landscape as a humanistic reality (Kupidura, Łuczewski, Kupidura 2012, p. 27), had to be preceded by the adoption of a methodological perspective

⁵ This awareness is manifested at different levels of decision-making among the leaders of European countries. It also has an institutional sphere, which I intend to refer to in the conclusion of the article. It also exerts an influence on the increasing social sensitivity to environmental issues. It finds expression in the concepts of sustainable development and actions designed to protect the landscape (Raszeja 2002; Kupidura, Łuczewski, Kupidura 2012).

which the Polish and world sociology owes to Florian Znaniecki. The so-called *humanistic coefficient* proposed by Znaniecki played an essential role in this change of the methodology of social studies. We know at present that the perception of landscape as a humanistic reality covers not only the sphere of consciousness, including the accepted and felt values, meanings, symbols and attitudes, but that it also is expanded to include the whole spectrum of human experience. Apart from consciousness this experience entails the participation of all senses – not only of sight, which is considered to be the most important in the perception of landscape, but also of feeling, smell, taste and hearing. “We feel the strength of wind and the warmth of the sun on our skin, we discern scents, hear the voices of birds, we feel the refreshing effect of cool air” (Kupidura, Łuczewski, Kupidura 2012, p. 28). It is not without reason that sensory experiences are taken into account in new plans designed to use attractions offered by rural landscape for the purpose of developing tourist services. The term landscape does not boil down to the fragments of space or to individual elements – monuments. It grasps the general look of the entire spatial arrangement. Some time ago I wrote a text about “spontaneous reactions of the heart” in thinking about rural landscape, where the word “heart” was used in full consciousness. The heart is the place where intellect and senses, volitional and affective elements meet. The heart lies in the border zone of man’s intellect and sensuality. Such phrases as “wisdom of the heart” and the “heart of reason” signify the ability to grasp the gist of the matter in a split second. It was not by accident that king Salomon prayed for an “understanding heart” (*leb szomea* in Hebrew). Over the passing centuries spontaneous reactions of the heart link these people who – being sensitive to beauty – understand that landscape, too, is the evidence of truth about man’s economic activity.

It does not require much imagination to travel in mind to a beautiful village situated in the mountain range of the Western Beskid Mountains. It does not require expert knowledge to assess the implementation of plans designed to modernise the life of the village’s residents. Words of encouragement addressed to them by an investor who offered to build a new road to improve transport between Poland and Slovakia met at first with a positive reaction. The road was chiefly expected to make it easier for the population to commute to work outside the village. Some of the villagers succumbed – like Faustus lured by a promise of development, to the temptation of gaining access to modern communication with the world. The project required no mean engineering skills since it provided for the construction of a tunnel in the mountains.

Construction work was started and gradually the moods of the villagers became mournful. The incessant noise of mechanical saws cutting trees day after day and night after night, quickly changed the attitudes of people who began to dream of

silence and beauty of the place. They felt uneasy about the devastated landscape, about the tons of clay and mud sticking to the wheels of their vehicles, and also about their empty water-wells. Promises of construction of a water-supply system were received with reserve by the villagers who also thought sceptically about the possibility of living to see new trees planted on the bare tracts of land remaining after the cut down forest. The blame for the “modernist desire” which ignores the diversity and beauty of landscape, valued by Europeans since the times of ancient Greece, should be put on the type of reasoning based on distorted *technè*, insensitive to the spontaneous reactions of the heart. This relates, for example, to destructive actions taken – in the name of illusion of flexibility of the conquered world – vis-à-vis manorial-palaces, manorial-parks and grange compounds as well as vis-à-vis the original arrangement of villages. Verdicts condemning larger farms owned by rich farmers (kulaks) as well as flour-mills, windmills, water-wells, ponds and orchards owned by inhabitants of villages were accompanied – in the later years, by decisions creating spatial chaos. While assessing the destructive effects of the wrong approach to space it is advisable to refer to the history of Poland, which abounds in dramatic and tragic developments. I have in mind the activities of occupational authorities and the consequences of unsuccessful risings which led in the past centuries to the sequestration of family estates. I think of the trauma of the last war: burnt villages, abandoned households of farmers who were forced to resettle or to flee. I ponder on the painful effects of reprisals in the period following the Second World War when due to a change in boundaries the specific landscape of Eastern Borderlands disappeared from the territory of Poland. Due to changes in the political system and because of ideological reasons the palace-grange-park compounds of the former landowners became subject to mass devastation. The verdict condemning the nobility’s residences and palaces, well maintained parks abounding in interesting plants, access alleys lined with trees shading them from sunshine deeply affects the hearts and minds of people sensitive to the perishing beauty of cultural achievements. I do not deal with facts that can be blamed for leading to the evident ugliness, chaos and falseness in the rural cultural landscape. A separate dissertation would be needed to discuss them. However, I find it necessary to draw attention to the easily observable fact that damage is still being done to the spatial arrangements of valuable goods of culture. As far as the ongoing period of systemic transformation, started after 1989, is concerned, it is necessary to mention “the avalanche-like character of the action to restructure the former state-owned farms (PGR)” which currently look like “their own caricature” (Lipińska 2002, p. 51). Researchers draw attention to the termination of logical continuation of existence in landscape and stress that society no longer feels that such actions are sensible. Architects have been alarmed for quite a long time now

by irreversible damage, unrestrained activities, cacophony, dissonances, disorder, and spatial chaos. These obvious weaknesses of urban and rural planning have their source in departure from tradition, memory and awareness of the meaning of sites planned and managed by people. To put it simply, they also are the result of insufficiently humble attitudes towards the matters of long continuance in the natural and cultural environment.⁶

My reflection – approving or critical, covers harmonious or deformed interiors of villages, wide stretches of fields, abodes (Raszeja 2002, p. 11 and the following pages). I touch upon the issue of natural and cultural components of the shaped physical space, including geological relief, the arrangement of fields, meadows, pastures, forests, ponds, roads, residential houses and farm buildings. “Rural landscape is full of hidden signs and symbols – spatial codes stemming from the unique history of individual places” (Raszeja 2009, quoted after Kupidura, Łuczewski, Kupidura 2012, p. 21).

I admit that the notion of landscape is not very precise⁷ but, on the other hand, the notion of landscape represents – which I consider to be an advantage – such level of generalised perception which it is impossible to attain by means of fragmentary, partial observation. The latter is taken into account in quantitative analyses useful in statistics. It could be stated that the use of the term landscape provides an occasion for transition “from the results that are certain but not very important to the results that are important but uncertain” (Ossowski 1967, p. 275). To explain what I have in mind I will quote a remark made by the late film director Krzysztof Kieślowski, which seems very *apropos*. I saw it inscribed as a *motto* on the wall of the building housing the Audio-Visual Institute in Warsaw: “It is possible to look and see nothing, to look and see little, or to see selectively. It is not exclusively important what you see; it is important how you look at people and the world.” The

⁶ “Late modernity is characterised, on one hand, by the disappearing need for a uniform, continuous and authoritative historical narration and, on the other hand, by the diminishing importance of institutions that have been using such narration for legitimisation or control purposes. Paradoxically, however – which I wish to stress – obsession with time is being replaced with [...] interest in the use of spatial metaphors which ever more frequently serves the purpose of determining features of identity.” (Kapralski 2010, p. 26). I perceive this specific “return to space”, which is linked to the problems of identity and memory, as a source of increasing interest in the aspects of cultural space, even if this interest may be chiefly stimulated by marketing, tourist or recreational purposes.

⁷ To the researchers who feel the need for formalized statements, proofs and definitions this notion, like many other notions in humanities, may look like *an empty eggshell* because it is insufficiently precise, too enigmatic and its meaning is not clear enough. Being aware of such stand I refuse, however, to surrender to these charges. I wish to recall – quoting the opinion of Stanisław Ossowski, that “[...] a humanist deals with the conveyance of thoughts by means of language symbols mainly, which offers access to even the most subtle content of intellectual and emotional life of people who lived hundreds or even thousands of years ago, to their motivations and attitudes” (Ossowski 1967, p. 260).

decision to give up precision does not mean that I succumb to a sort of mannerism of perceiving the social world in the categories of *fluid modernity*. Although it is decisive for the tone of contemporary sociological analyses, humanistic approach to the subject by an anthropologist of culture seems urgently needed to provide the indispensable counter-balance. For this reason I propose such an approach in this article.

5. Conflicting views

Now, I will deal with the problem that I consider to be the most difficult, i.e. with the state of research concerning rural areas, rural character, rural-urban relations, and with the assumptions adopted to carry out such research. I do not aspire to discuss all tensions that occur in this sphere of studies. I merely want to stress that landscape is being treated as the opening of a completely new perspective of research. Much is being said about the “new rural character”, about different landscapes in the indivisible physical space, about the expanded scope of country planning. Attention is being drawn to the sensory, corporeal aspect of experiencing landscape. The matter has led to the emergence of a line of division between research based on the so-called representational theories and research concordant with a new non-representational or more-than-representational approach. I think it necessary to stress that the result of decisions to stick to just one of the possible approaches is often equal to throwing out the baby with the bathwater. The rejection of the context of values and meanings in favour of emphasising sensory experience in the approach to the perception of space arouses my doubts. I also think there are no grounds for putting strong emphasis, which I see being done, on other senses than sight. In the examination of the perception of landscape, the role of the remaining senses is being overestimated to balance the hitherto privileged position of sight – as the feature attributed to Western science and culture. My intuition suggests that the turn towards a “new” perspective, outlined here, is the result of a desperate effort to find a way out of the entanglement of inconclusive discussions and to put an end to the cognitive confusion in matters pertaining to rural community and its space rather than the result of internal “maturity” to change the present paradigm.

Civilisation tensions that occur between the phenomena of localisation and de-localisation result in the critical assessment of the signs of *hyper-modernity*. A tendency to contest the so-called *non-places* is becoming observable. The existence of these *non-places* [in the transit space of airports, in shopping centres, railway stations], where *everything starts to resemble everything else*, results in the yearning for the idea of a place *resounding with tradition* (Burszta – introduction, Auge 2010). Attention is being drawn to the wealth of different types of landscape

characterising Europe. This wealth is being perceived as a result of the combination of natural conditions in which people settled, cultivated land, and built houses, with the sphere of culture of many different local communities. The members of these communities – farmers, shepherds, fishermen, inhabitants of forest settlements, laid the foundations for economic systems which, owing to their regional diversification, form Europe's rich cultural landscape. Hence, I subscribe to the opinion that "rural landscape demands exceptional caution in the transformation of its naturally and culturally diverse environment" (Lipińska 2002, p. 45).

I see no reasons for separating landscape from culture, values and meanings. My experience indicates that there is room in culture for both "affective turn" and "sensory turn", and for identifying and bringing to light various – often ideologically tinged, controversies. On the contrary, I believe that the approach proposed in this article is necessary. It helps understand the phenomenon of increased environmental sensitivity, of *slow* tourism, of the renaissance of tradition – often invented or concocted, and also of growing expectations of consumers to "be present in landscape" to the extent suiting their "own world". The starting point for such movements is the diagnosis of the landscape's condition visible with the "naked eye". Different consumers interested in space use their own, often narrowly defined, standards for the purpose of such diagnosis. Local councils, motivated by the (**short-term**) interest of the communes' budgets, concentrate their attention on the prices of land needed for investment sites. New settlers, who come from urban areas, try to realize their conceptions of living close to nature and often contest agricultural practices, which leads to conflicts with other members of rural communities. An ever smaller group of the original inhabitants of villages, i.e. farmers, are trying to find their place in rural space. And, last but not least, architects warn about degradation, chaos and lack of spatial order. These interests and intentions overshadow dilemmas of theoretical nature which, it should be stressed, are of decisive importance since they determine the assumptions of knowledge and actions relating to how rural space is being valorized and managed. Opinions – quite frequently expressed in scientific and public discussions, that rural community is an anachronistic being and that it is purposeless to maintain its existence (Kowicki 2011, p. 79) have their source in some concepts of modern society formulated a long time ago. For example, the saying that "town air makes one free" dates back to the Middle Ages. The contemptuous tone of statements referring to matters of rural community – such as the statement about the "idiocy of rural life" known from the "Communist Manifesto", has its continuation. The latter is evident mainly in the character of reasoning underlying contemporary sociology, which is modernist and which centres on urban issues. I wish to draw attention to the urban orientation which has exerted a strong influence on economic geography.

It seems that the proponents of metropolitan development fail to notice the negative results of *suburbanisation* or the **urban sprawl**. The fact that towns with their characteristic structures spread out loosely and irregularly into the countryside, creating spatial chaos, is unfavourable for both aesthetic and economic reasons. There is no doubt that the dispersed type of development is costly. Thus, there is evidence confirming that “economists do not always perceive urbanisation [...] as a negative phenomenon” (Bach-Głowińska 2014, p. 79). It is so because they assume that transformations of rural space have a universal character and that big cities create model impulses for innovativeness, creativity and for the so-called “intelligent space”. Technology, talent and tolerance are to be the three main values (from the desirable and expected package of features) that should determine the shape of the future. The proponents of metropolitan development link this shape chiefly to urban and not rural space. However, it is obvious that big cities are like “desert oases” – places isolated from their surroundings. It is not without good reason that big cities are being described as “cathedrals in the desert”. Thus, practice has shown that the assumption of an innovative “conveyor belt” linking cities with the areas around them is incorrect. Negative effects of the suburbanisation process lead to the devastation of rural landscape. This phenomenon is perfectly illustrated by photographs taken by ethnographer Antoni Kroh, which show historical wayside shrines – that unique element of rural landscape, surrounded by billboards, advertising posters and commercial placards. This sad picture is a telling example of neglect in the sphere of space management (Kroh 2014, p. 168 and the following pages). The pathology of dispersed development in the countryside is a discouraging proof of the effects of the absence of space management which has fallen a victim to the shortage of planning conceptions (Kowicki 2011, p. 76). Economic opportunism that underlies present discussions on the planning and management of rural space is far from the values which still in the 19th century served to define the basis for environmental thought in Poland. Suffice it to mention the admonitions of father Eugeniusz Janota who in 1865 launched efforts to encourage the population of the region of Podhale in the Tatra Mountains to protect marmots and goats which were threatened with extinction.⁸ It is also worthwhile to recall the activity of general Dezydery Chłapowski who in the early years of the 19th century pursued the policy of managing his estate in Turwia in accordance with the principles of

⁸ The beginnings of work to shape attitudes conducive to the protection of natural environment (or environmentally-friendly attitudes as we would say today) were recalled by Dr Katarzyna Bienkowska after her visit to the Museum of Agriculture in Szreniawa in June 2016. Such individuals as Eugeniusz Janota, Władysław count Zamoyski, Ignacy Lyskowski, Antoni Strzelecki and many others contributed greatly to the discovery and protection of natural heritage. To people living then “the necessity to enhance the beauty of the country” was, differently than it often is at present, as important as the economic aspect.

beauty and usefulness. Plough-land and water, trees along country roads and trees growing in clumps in the fields, parks and gardens surrounding palaces – they all formed the natural basis of rural cultural heritage. Both large estates and smaller farms, as well as peasant-owned tiny family farms made their contribution to that heritage. Different ways in which the farmers' households were grouped to form villages decided about the existence of characteristic types of settlements and unique systems of such settlements in the individual regions of Poland. Originally designed villages, such as those with houses standing along a street, and those having many roads, those circular or oval in shape, those in the form of a chain and those typical for woodland settlements have, unfortunately, become deformed now due to the disorderly construction of new buildings. The earlier described types of villages currently remain only in the form of entries in dictionaries and specialist publications, attesting to the original and no longer used concepts of space arrangement. Such components of rural space as water-wells, flour-mills, sawmills, weaving-mills, fulling-mills, smithies, fish ponds, but also stone bridges and underpinnings reinforcing water-wells, dikes and dams were the proof of ties linking the so-called landscape architecture of rural areas to the resources of the natural environment (Myga-Piątek 1999).

6. Conclusions

In the conclusions of this article I would like to refer to the situation connected with the implementation of the European Landscape Convention. The Convention, signed in Florence in 2000 and ratified by Poland in 2004, came into force on January 1, 2005. Since that time discussions conducted by representatives of academic circles and various associations in the public forum have clearly become more intensive. However, inspirations provided by the Convention's provisions are not being followed. It is a paradox that impressive and pioneer achievements of Polish researchers of the 19th century have still not attained the level of practical application that is necessary and desirable from the point of view of the current circumstances. In my opinion it is not enough to say that *landscape is losing to business*. It is not enough to complain about the lack of a coherent definition of landscape as the object of protection and about the absence of implementation of such definition as a binding law. A thorough reflection is needed before indispensable work is started on the formulation of conceptions and the formulation of a comprehensive methodology for the identification, delimitation and valorization of the units of landscape (Degórski et al. 2014, p. 313). What I have in mind is humanistic studies covering a long period of time. Some things are better and more clearly visible when observed from a distance.

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Krajobraz wiejski jako wartość dziedzictwa kulturowego

Streszczenie: Autorka – etnolog i antropolog kultury – broni tezy, że krajobraz wiejski jest ważnym komponentem dziedzictwa kulturowego. Wirtualne „cyberprzestrzeń” urasta ją do alternatywnego środowiska życia. Przestrzeń fizyczna traci podstawy wyjaśniania świata i kształtowania doświadczeń człowieka. Zdegradowany krajobraz kulturowy wsi jest świadectwem błędnych koncepcji, a przestrzeń wsi skupia efekty deficytu wrażliwości na „długie trwanie”. W opozycji do ujęć postmodernistycznych autorka przeciwstawia się próbom zdestabilizowania kultury. Kultura jest ważna i ma znaczenie. Ochrona krajobrazu rolniczego jako szczególnie wrażliwej i cennej jakości ma sens. W konkluzji sugeruje pogłębienie refleksji humanistycznej, aby można było wdrożyć w sposób optymalny zalecenia Europejskiej Konwencji Krajobrazowej.

Słowa kluczowe: kultura, wartości, krajobraz kulturowy, przestrzeń wsi.