

NON-PLACES OF MEMORY: SPACE, MATERIALITY AND FALSE CEMETERIES

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Abstract

The article deals with the concept of non-place of memory (NPM).¹ Author defines NPM broadly as entity which once created by people lost its perceptive properties as man-made, but at the same time kept its material basis. In the narrower sense of the definition NPM are places of murder and bodies deposition sites which are either unrecognized as such or haven't been yet changed into places of memory. Analysis are based mostly on cases of Roma massacres in Poland which took place during II World War, and compared with history of burials and concept of cemetery. Transitions of NPM is then explained by using the Mary Douglas' concept of anomaly.

Keywords: Non-place of memory, place of memory, genocide, materiality, space

This is, to me, one of the great mysteries in Eastern Europe: it has been my repeated experience that things pertaining to the war are officially invisible. Even though the traces truly exist and are blatantly visible to anyone who would look, an illusion is created: as if, arriving at the gates of Auschwitz, one met people claiming that there were no traces of the camp left, and everyone believed them.²

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¹ This article is the revised version of the paper originally published in Polish as: Łukasz Połuszny, "Fałszywe Cmentarze i Anomalie," in Roma Sedyka, Kinga Siewior, and Aleksandra Szczepan (eds.), *Nie-Miejsca Pamięci. Nekrotopologie*, Warszawa: Instytut Badań Literackich Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 2020.

² Patrick Desbois, *The Holocaust by Bullets: A Priest's Journey to Uncover the Truth behind the Murder of 1.5 Million Jews*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, p. 28.

Introduction

In the article I reflect on two closely related dimensions of non-places of memory that I consider crucial for grasping their very essence: materiality and spatiality. I use an approach related to the study of space inspired by humanistic geography and the cultural biography of things.³ When exploring individual layers of non-places of memory, it is worthwhile to pay attention not only to material remnants (matterscape), but also to their socio-cultural dimension (socoscape).⁴ The presented way of creating a conceptualization of a non-place of memory is embedded in my previous experience and research.⁵ However, the basic empirical material is the data gathered during the research carried out in a project *Uncommemorated Genocide Sites*,⁶ especially at the sites of Roma massacres in Poland (Bielcza, Borzęcin, Szczurowa i Żabno).

³ Igor Kopytoff, "The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process" in Arjun Appadurai (ed.), *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986, pp. 64–91; Anne Kelly Knowles et al. (eds.), *Geographies of the Holocaust*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014; Łukasz Poślusznny, "Przestrzeń, miejsce i nie-miejsce w relacji do pamięci i nie-pamięci" in Zofia Budrewicz, Roma Sendyka, Ryszard Nycz (eds.), *Pamięć i Afekty*, Warszawa: Instytut Badań Literackich PAN, 2014, pp. 309–321; Roma Sendyka, "Pryzma: zrozumieć nie-miejsce pamięci ('non-Lieux de Mémoire')", *Teksty Drugie*, no. 1/2, 2013, pp. 323–344.

⁴ Jan Kolen, Johannes Renes, "Landscape biographies: key issues" in Jan Kolen, Johannes Renes, Rita Hermans (eds.), *Landscape Biographies: Geographical, Historical and Archaeological Perspectives on the Production and Transmission of Landscapes*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2015, pp. 21–47; Arjun Appadurai, "Introduction. Commodities and the Politics of Value" in Arjun Appadurai (ed.), *The Social Life of Things. Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986, pp. 3–63.

⁵ Łukasz Poślusznny, *Przestrzenne formy upamiętniania Zagłady*, Kraków: Aureus, 2014; Joanna Poślusznna, Łukasz Poślusznny, "The Aural Landscape of Majdanek" in Wojciech Klimczyk, Agata Świerżowska (eds.), *Music and Genocide*, Berlin, New York, Oxford: Peter Lang Verlag, 2015, pp. 105–120; Łukasz Poślusznny, "Instytucje Totalne Dzisiaj: Stan Badań, Krytyka, Rekonfiguracje", *Studia Socjologiczne*, no. 4, 2017, pp. 121–145; Łukasz Poślusznny, "Memory and Non-Places in a Cityscape. Synagogues and Parking Lots" in Beata Frydryczak, Alto Haapala, Mateusz Salwa (eds.), *Moving from Landscapes to Cityscapes and Back. Theoretical and Applied Approaches to Human Environments*, Łódź: Przypis, 2019; Łukasz Poślusznny, "Przestrzenno-materialny krajobraz obozu koncentracyjnego", *Przegląd Socjologii Jakościowej*, no. 1, 2020, pp. 120–142.

⁶ *Uncommemorated Genocide Sites and Their Impact on Collective Memory, Cultural Identity, Ethical Attitudes and Intercultural Relations in Contemporary Poland* (Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education, the National Programme for the Development of Humanities)

For this reason, I created a database consisting of partial reports created during research grant and external studies,⁷ which I coded in the MAXQDA⁸ software. I present here only a part of this study, which I considered the most important for my theses. In the article there will be no conceptualizations of structural links between non-places of memory and cemeteries, places of worship, houses, stores, etc. This relationship is undeniable,⁹ and I intend to describe it in a separate, more holistic text on the concept of non-places of memory.¹⁰

In the meantime, I propose to highlight two variants of the definition. In the broadest sense, I call a non-place of memory a type of place, which - once created or marked by people - lost its perceptive properties as man-made, became ahistorical, natural, metaphorically or literally "invisible", although it still has a real, material basis (eg. foundations, body remnants, marks on wall or ground, changes in soil structure etc.). As Patrick Desbois emphasizes in the quoted incipit, there are many traces that remain invisible, although they sometimes become an element of social memory, a vernacular topographical compass that orientates inhabitants in space and

⁷ Patrick Desbois, *op.cit.*; Marta Zawodna, *Martwe ciało w kulturze zachodniej. Sposoby postępowania ze szczątkami ofiar zagłady na terenach KL Auschwitz-Nirkenau i KL Kulmhof w okresie powojennym*, Poznań: Uniwersytet im. Adama Mickiewicza w Poznaniu, 2013; Caroline Sturdy Colls, *Holocaust Archaeologies: Approaches and Future Directions*, Cham: Springer, 2016.

⁸ MAXQDA is a software designed for computer-aided qualitative and mixed data analysis, text and multimedia, and is widely used in sociological research. The codes I used are: human remains (with subcodes: management, exhumation, cemetery, mass grave, hiding), space (hiding place, house/shop/synagogue, mobility, ghetto, killing site, camp, scented landscape, soundscape, orientation), materiality (animals, contamination, movables, ground/surface/facture, vegetation, looting, property, corpses, intermediaries, material witness), memory (oblivion, site of memory, prayer, commemoration, spontaneity).

⁹ Jan Grabowski, Dariusz Libionka (eds.), *Klucze i kasa: O mieniu żydowskim w Polsce pod okupacją niemiecką i we wczesnych latach powojennych 1939-1950*, Warszawa: Stowarzyszenie Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów, 2014; Andrzej Leder, *Prześlona rewolucja. Ćwiczenie z logiki historycznej*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Krytyki Politycznej, 2014.

¹⁰ I believe that the concept of non-places of memory should be considered in a broader sense than in the presented article, pointing not only to the specificity of the execution and the lack of commemoration, but also to the spatial and material relations with the surroundings of the victims. Their "invisibility" is shocking, and therefore the issues of appropriation should be included in the analysis and conceptualization of non-memorial sites.

history, such as the traces left in the language - in the areas studied. For example, the term Cygańskie Górkę (Gypsy Hillock) is the local name of the mass graves of Roma in the forest near Borzęcin village, while the name of its hamlet, Czarnawa (something which is getting black), takes its name from the "blackening" bodies of peasants who died during the Swedish invasion in 1655 and who were forbidden to bury. We might say, after Michel Foucault, that the "invisibility" of non-places of memory understood in the spirit of heterotopia is a certain illusion that enables the creation of a utopian order.¹¹ Such non-places of memory would be, in a broad context, "after" spaces, e.g. cemeteries, houses, shops, factories and synagogues, appropriated and often destroyed or adapted after being left by legitimate owners like Jews or Roma. I would also consider places once created "by" them through slave labor,¹² mainly modern infrastructure like railways, roads, water systems which are overlooked as non-places,¹³ innocent means to the ends;¹⁴ in the narrower sense of the definition – which is the subject of this article and research project – non-places of memory are places of murder and bodies deposition sites which are either unrecognized as such or haven't been yet changed into places of memory¹⁵ and are therefore under transition.

The article begins with a reflection on the relationship between a non-place of memory and a cemetery. I use the term "false cemetery", which emphasizes their mutual closeness, but also a signaled difference. Then, starting from the difficulties in locating non-places of memory, I pay attention to their origins related to spatial dispersion. Remedial and

¹¹ Michiel Dehaene and Lieven de Cauter, *Heterotopia and the City: Public Space in a Postcivil Society*, London, New York: Routledge, 2008.

¹² James A. Tyner, "Dead Labor, Landscapes, and Mass Graves: Administrative Violence during the Cambodian Genocide," *Geoforum*, 52 (2014): 70–77, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2013.12.011>.

¹³ Marc. Augé, *Non-Places: An Introduction to Supermodernity*, London: Verso, 2008.

¹⁴ For theoretical development of the broader definition look at my article about parking lots and synagogues Łukasz Poślusznny, "Memory and Non-Places in a Cityscape. Synagogues and Parking Lots" in Beata Frydryczak, Alto Haapala, Mateusz Salwa (eds.), *Moving from Landscapes to Cityscapes and Back. Theoretical and Applied Approaches to Human Environments*, Łódź: Przystop, 2019.

¹⁵ Pierre Nora, *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, vol. 1 Conflict, New York: Columbia University Press, 1996.

counteracting activities are those focused on gathering the remains and commemoration in a more precisely and spatially defined place of memory. The last part of the article introduces the concept of anomaly, which allows to partially explain the dynamics of changes or duration of non-places of memory.

Non-places of memory as "false cemeteries"

The study of the social and material dimension of a landscape can be complicated mainly because there are sometimes many overlapping places in one space, both diachronically and synchronically¹⁶. The fact that they most often occur in a blurred form, moving from non-places to places and vice versa, makes their recognition even more difficult¹⁷. However, there are types of places with a more pronounced existence and influence, which are significant and crucial to human experience - homes and cemeteries. The home is the first and most basic place in human life, being the center of a particular spatial system. Until recently, it was the place where people were born and died, and some cultures even used to bury the dead in the house, sharing physical and spiritual space with them. It is not without reason, therefore, that the essence of a place reveals itself most fully in the indigenous communities that are fiercely guarding their territory and holy places, seeing the traces of the past - the powers of ancestors or spirits - filling them up¹⁸. Accepting these anthropological diagnoses, and keeping the context of a secularized contemporary society, particular importance should be attached to cemeteries. They are, in fact, places as meaningful as homes (houses), their modern reverses, where the deceased "lives" after the earthly life, having personal and private space reserved for their own. The grave and the cemetery give back the legitimacy to the living, certifying their

¹⁶ Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018; Tim. Dant, *Material Culture in the Social World: Values, Activities, Lifestyles*, Buckingham: Open Univ. Press, 2008.

¹⁷ Joe Moran, *Reading the Everyday*, London; New York: Routledge, 2005; Magdalena Bartnik, „Przestrzenie przepływów” i „przestrzenie niczyje” w hipernowoczesności. Nowe ujęcie przestrzeni według Marca Augé i Manuela Castellsa,” in Maciej Gdula, Aleksandra Grzymała-Kazłowska, and Renata Włoch (eds.), *Nowe rzeczywistości społeczne, nowe teorie socjologiczne: dyskusje i interpretacje*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, 2012.

¹⁸ Marc Augé, *op.cit.*

rights, presence and belonging¹⁹, which is another link between the cemetery and home.

Pointing out this relation is important for three reasons. First, many executions, for example at Szczurowa and Żabno, took place at the cemetery. Secondly, even if this was not the case, after the war there were attempts to exhume the corpses and move them to the cemeteries or, if this was not possible for religious reasons, to create a kind of cemetery commemoration at the execution site (eg. installing tombstone as commemoration). Thirdly, the survivors, community members and historians often compare a non-places of memory to cemeteries (concentration and extermination camps, execution sites and mass burials).

Henryk Jerzy Szczeńniewski speaks rhetorically in his testimony about Concentration Camp Majdanek (KL Lublin) as a Jewish cemetery²⁰. Completely non-metaphorically, the KL Plaszow was established on the grounds of the cemeteries, and the matzevot left behind were used to pave roads on its grounds. The matzevot were also moved from the cemeteries and used as a building material, among others at Majdanek. The first film about the Shoah, made at Majdanek in 1944, is entitled "Majdanek: Cemetery of Europe". In the case of martyrdom museums, a description formula is sometimes used which states that it is something more than the former camp and museum: it is described as a memorial site and compared to a cemetery. A similar, although obviously not fully identical, semantic relationship exists with the non-places of memory produced by the Einsatzgruppen and their helpers – local communities talk of a "without-Kaddish" ("bezkadiszowy") burials, "second pits" ("drugie doły") and use other terms to emphasize abnormality of this sites. On the one hand, this testifies to their partial semantic relationship with the cemetery, and on the other hand, to their indirect, unfinished and liminal status, which distinguishes them from typical grave in cemetery.

¹⁹ Philippe Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death: The Classic History of Western Attitudes Toward Death over the Last One Thousand Years*, trans. Helen Weaver (New York: Vintage Books, 2008).

²⁰ Wojciech Lenarczyk (ed.), *Majdanek w Dokumentach*, Lublin: Państwowe Muzeum na Majdanku, 2016.

The relationship of unmarked single and mass graves with the cemetery concerns also familiarization of space through adopted cultural practices – norms and mores regarding behavior in cemeteries, such as lighting a candle, laying a stone, praying, keeping silence and revering. An interesting example can be found in the activities of the *Pomost Association*, which carries out exhumations of German victims of the Second World War in western Poland. They work in cemeteries and in forests, on private properties and farmlands. These spaces could be defined as non-places of memory, since they usually completely unmarked, and if commemorated, often only temporarily. These are pits with material objects such as dog tags, weapons or clothes that allow us to tell more about the remains resting there. There are bystanders who know the location of the burials, sometimes they visit them, lay flowers, light candles, and pray²¹.

Taking into account the above-mentioned elements, I believe that non-places of memory are intuitively approached by members of the local communities as quasi-cemeteries (hereinafter: false cemeteries), which, however, formally are not sacred spaces, but rather an intermediate form. For this reason, the historical description of the cemetery and the understanding of its significance seem crucial for determining the status of non-places of memory.

The importance of the cemetery as an institution is recalled by Philippe Ariès, who distinguished three periods of the development of the necropolis: antiquity, the Middle Ages (from the 5th century) and modernity (after the 18th century). In antiquity, the dead were buried *extra muros*, outside the city border, along roads such as via Appia in Rome, in family tombs, in private estates or in collective cemeteries under the management of associations. The basic rule was that all deceased were to be taken outside the city because death could have tainted its sanctity. In antiquity, a dead body, especially one marked by murder, was therefore considered unclean, defile and ominous, and its place was far from the living.

²¹ Maciej Frąckowiak, Kornelia Kajda, "Żyjemy w skażonych krajobrazach. Archeologia i przywracanie pamięci o przeszłych zbrodniach", *Biografia Archeologii*, no. 1, 2015, pp. 27–37.

Christianity has radically changed this norm. It was due to the aftermaths of the cult of relics, which allowed the storage and veneration of body fragments of saints or things with which they came into contact in their lives. Faith in their supernatural powers and resurrection made Christians want to be buried as close to their patrons as possible. Chapels and basilicas were built on the tombs of saints, which began to mark the center of the *ad sanctos* (next to the saint) cemetery. Religious inhabitants began to settle in the vicinity of the miraculous graves. The spatial transformations were accompanied by a social change in attitude towards death, the closeness of which for city dwellers has since become indifferent. The ancient experience of impurity and distance from the dead gave way to the Judeo-Christian sense of the sacred place where rests the body. The tombs became a destination for pilgrimages. In the 12th century, the *ad sanctos* principle was superseded by the *apud ecclesiam* formula, which considered the best resting place to be the area of influence of the sacred temple - the episcopal church, parish church or abbey. The burial space also reflected social stratification: the privileged ones were buried in churches, and the best of them near the presbytery or the chapel of Our Lady. The rest had to be content with the church cemetery.²²

This trend continued until the 18th century, when scholars found a link between cemeteries, water contamination and epidemics, and burials became a public matter. The dead body turned threatening and dangerous again. The postulate of allocating an appropriate space for the dead was given legal form in France in the decree of June 12, 1804, which defined the approach to burial to modern times. It forbade funerals in churches, while in cities it ordered the dead to be buried at least 35 to 40 meters from the border of the metropolis²³. I emphasize this fact, because it shaped the way of thinking about the space for a dead body to this day.

It is worth noting that in Europe, between the 5th and 18th centuries, the dead were also buried in mass and nameless graves. While the privileged of those times were buried individually and non-anonymously

²² Philippe Ariès, *The hour of our death: the classic history of western attitudes toward death over the last one thousand years*, New York: Vintage Books, 2008.

²³ *Ibidem*.

within churches, the poor were not even able to identify where the graves of their relatives were. The notion of a grave as a private space that is owned, inhabited and one has an individual right to it appear only in modernity. The grave then becomes more closely related to social relations in earthly life. The growing importance of burial is particularly evident among the rural community and the urban poor. Suffering deficiencies and humiliations in everyday life, they see in it an act of agency and freedom: "The possession of their death is «their right to escape someday from the grip of poverty and the injustices of life. » Death gives them back their dignity"²⁴. What restores it, however, is not only the act of death, but most of all what accompanies it - burial rituals (religious or cultural) and commemoration (material), most often associated with the laying of the body to the grave in the space of a cemetery which is protected both by the sacred and by the law. The lack of these elements seems to be crucial for understanding the status of non-places of memory. Historically, non-places of memory are thus close to solitary graves of the damned, from the Middle Ages considered cursed, frightening or suggesting notoriety and violent death. Such places, where the bodies of the cursed were abandoned, were called "false cemeteries".²⁵ Their cultural closeness to non-places of memory is additionally emphasized by similar practices, e.g. using them as dumps, which should be read as a long-term structure.

To sum up, in antiquity the graves, as unclean and hostile, were located mainly outside the city. The system of their localization was scattered, varied and spatially more extensive than that used by later rites. Christianity made cemeteries concentrate in the sacred spaces established by the relics of saints and the power of temples. Paradoxically, however, cemeteries in the Middle Ages decreased and disappeared, blending topographically with the urban buildings. Ariès even suggested that Western civilization from the Middle Ages to the 17th century had become a civilization without cemeteries. The revolution took place in the 19th century, when vast and modern cemeteries appeared on the maps, inspired and organized in accordance with the principles of designing park landscapes.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 556.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 43.

The growing size of cemeteries resulted from the belief that every man deserves their own grave. On the other hand, the spatial displacement of the necropolis to the periphery should be understood not only as a sanitary act, but also as an indicator of a change in attitude towards death – since then more distant, hidden, and handed over symbolically to appropriate institutions. Non-places of memory I have studied were also located on the outskirts of the town. This situation is well illustrated by the cases of Romani genocide sites, which I recall later in the article. On their basis, three spatial options for the creation of mass graves can be distinguished - "on the spot" (e.g. a pogrom death in/near the house, in a village), on the edge of a village (e.g. a cemetery) and beyond its borders (e.g. a forest, ravine).²⁶

What makes single and mass burials within the cemetery a non-place of memory is the lack of a funeral ritual and commemoration (socio-cultural factors) with simultaneous presence of the body remains (material factor). For this reason, some burials in a cemetery should still be considered as a non-places of memory, despite the fact cemetery is a space neutralizing the negative charge of dead bodies. I am mentioning this because cemeteries were used as crime scenes by the Nazis from the very beginning,²⁷ also in Żabno, where the Jewish cemetery from March till April 1943 was used as a place of execution and burial of about fifty Jews²⁸. The decision to choose a cemetery for a crime scene could be explained and justified in terms of sanitation. Such the explanation, however, is only partial for at least two reasons. First, the place of the murder is deliberately

²⁶ Aleksandra Szczepan, Łukasz Poślusznny, "Bielcza i Borzęcin. Ustanawianie i uśmierzanie pamięci o romskiej Zagładzie" in Roma Sendyka et al. (eds.), *Nie-Miejsca Pamięci. Nekrotopografie*, Warszawa: Instytut Badań Literackich PAN, 2020.

²⁷ Caroline Sturdy Colls, *Holocaust Archaeologies: Approaches and Future Directions*, Cham: Springer, 2016. One can find more about cemeteries as killing sites by looking at research conducted by Caroline Sturdy Colls in a project „Recording Cultural Genocide and Killing Sites in Jewish Cemeteries, [www.recordingculturalgenocide.com/], 20 October 2020,

²⁸ Paweł Domański, *Żabno w Latach Okupacji Hitlerowskiej 1939–1945*, Żabno: [No Publishing House], 1997; Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce, *Rejestr Miejsc i Faktów Zbrodni Popętnionych Przez Okupanta Hitlerowskiego na Ziemiach Polskich w Latach 1939-1945: Województwo Tarnowskie*, Warszawa: GKBZHWP, 1984.

unmarked, which I would interpret as a particularly effective concealment of the crime: bodies buried within a cemetery are never surprising and are not something "out of place". Secondly, as Caroline Sturdy Colls points out, the Nazis used cemeteries to mask mass pits as early as during Action T4.²⁹ Therefore, the practice pretending normatively appropriate handling of the body of the deceased should be considered as misleading and inscribed from the very beginning in the genocidal tradition. I encountered an interesting case in this respect at the Catholic cemeteries in Żabno and Szczurowa, where there were no recorded funeral rituals, markings or commemorations for Roma victims³⁰. Moreover, the bodies were buried at the ends of the cemeteries, away from the rest of the "right" graves, as if separately and "hidden", which is a hint of a symbolic difference between one type of burial and the other within the same spatial frame and evokes an association with a lonely, damned grave, and the term "false cemetery" takes on a new shade of meaning.

Dispersion and concentration

A cemetery as a social institution allows for a better understanding of what a non-place of memory is and what scenarios of social activities are associated with it. Applying Kopytoff's biographical approach to space, it can be said very generally that the social life of the human body usually begins with birth at home or in a hospital and ends with death and burial in a cemetery. However, if we carefully examine this passage in relation to the victims of genocide and look only at its last stage, we will notice that it consists of several intermediate points that, in fact, make it difficult to ascribe one specific location for the dead body. Borzęcin case has shown for example that subsequent exhumations mean that in the last burial place, already in the cemetery, there is practically no trace of the bodies.

²⁹ Caroline Sturdy Colls, *Holocaust Archaeologies: Approaches and Future Directions*, Cham: Springer, 2016.

³⁰ Aleksandra Szczepan, Łukasz Posuszny, "Bielcza i Borzęcin. Ustanawianie i uśmierzanie pamięci o romskiej Zagładzie" in Roma Sendyka et al. (eds.), *Nie-Miejsca Pamięci. Nekrotopografie*, Warszawa: Instytut Badań Literackich PAN, 2020.

Archaeologists Erin Jessee and Mark Skinner created a typology of execution sites (ES), helpful for the study of non-places of memory. It begins with a distinction into two types of executions: those taking place (1) on the surface (SES - surface execution site) and (2) in a previously dug pit (GES - grave execution site).³¹

In the surface execution site (1), two variants are possible - primary deposition site (PDS) and temporary deposition site (TDS). If the bodies are to be buried elsewhere, they are gathered first and then moved, often by machinery, to another place where they can stay for weeks. This exposure influences the decomposition process, making it possible to find out, in the case of later exhumation, whether the corpses had already been deposited. Traces of clothes, personal belongings, blood and bone fragments may remain in the temporary deposition area. In the case of the primary site of corpse deposition (PDS), the scale of material evidence is larger and more spatially dispersed: the bodies have simply been abandoned here and their remains stay on the surface.

Grave execution site scenario (2) assumes burial, i.e. inhumation. Sometimes the natural layout of the terrain is used, but usually the burial pit takes the form of a cuboid, dug by hand or with the use of heavy machinery. The excavator bucket leaves traces in the ground different from the shovel and only careful archaeological work can distinguish these traces. Primary inhumation sites (PIS) are often the same as the place of execution. Then a different process of decomposition is observed and more complete sets of material evidence are found - not only fragments of bodies and soft tissue, but also objects and instruments of crime. However, as in the case of the TDS, the bodies can also be moved to another burial pit.

This takes me to the next phase described by Jessee and Skinner, i.e. moving or unearthing of the bodies and material evidence. They differentiate between secondary inhumation site (SIS) and its specific type related to the concealment of the crime - the looted inhumation site (LIS). In SIS, a remote place is selected and the remains are shifted there, along with

³¹ Erin Jessee, Mark Skinner, "A Typology of Mass Grave and Mass Grave-Related Sites", *Forensic Science International*, no. 1, 2005, pp. 55–59.

the soil, which in this context is important evidence of the crime. The LIS indicates instead destroying and hiding evidence of the crime, most often by burying the bodies in a secret location or, as was the case with action 1005, cremation, grinding and scattering them.

Summing up, the first stage of the dead body biography concerns the execution site, the act of death, which I call the place of the massacre, be it a house, a wall, a synagogue, a cemetery or a pit. It leaves a material evidence such as a cartridge, a bullet, a hole in the wall, blood or a nail in a tree used for hanging weapons, but it does not necessarily have to be a place where bodies are supposed to be buried. In the second stage, the corpses might be left in one place permanently or transported several times, before the next, third stage when they are buried. Later, victims' bodies could be exhumed by perpetrators who try to destroy or hide the evidence of a crime, by robbers or by services and other social actors who want to restore order by moving the body to the cemetery, providing it with an appropriate burial and commemoration.

The aforementioned distinctions make it clear that specific, material evidence such as bullet holes, cartridges, blood, tissue, bones or clothes left in subsequent locations where the corpses reside today prove that a non-place of memory can be understood as a complex spatial structure, a sum of discrete sites, sometimes significantly distant from each other. Jessee and Skinner's theory helps to understand why non-places of memory tend to be scattered and take the form of networks. This means that although material evidence of only one crime may be concentrated in several locations, even kilometers apart, there is still a connection between them - an imperceptible thread that can be called material memory.³² Recognizing this makes it possible to assign successive material elements of the crime to the same network.

³² Anna Izabella Zalewska, "Pamięć miejsca naznaczonego Akcją 'Reinhardt'. Materialne pozostałości po SS-Sonderkommando Sobibor z perspektywy archeologa" in Stephan Lehnstaedt, Robert Traba (eds.), *Akcja "Reinhardt". Historia i Upamiętnianie*, Warszawa: Neriton, 2019.

The non-places of memory need not to be dispersed, even though the cited study of conflict archeologists suggests it is the most common scenario. It is so due to the described actions of the perpetrators, as well as bystanders - detectorists, who are exhuming bodies and extracting objects or even animals digging in the ground. Thus, not only limited perceptive qualities of non-places of memory, but also their spatial dispersion and material incompleteness explain why one is feeling so lost when trying to locate particular place.

The dispersion of non-place of memory raises also the practical problem related to commemoration. Where should it be placed, in which part of the network? The site of the massacre, the first, second or other inhumation? Or maybe in the place indirectly or not related to the crime scene at all? Moreover, if the cultural norm states that human life is socially closed by a funeral in a cemetery, then the scattering of the bodies or ashes creates many complications. Particularly for religious and practical reasons, this normative postulate cannot be fulfilled, e.g. in the case of Jewish victim, therefore often a non-place of memory is symbolically transformed into a kind of monument, temporary memorial, an example of which may be the commemoration performed by the Rabbinical Commission for Cemeteries in Radecznica. At Majdanek, the first commemoration was connected with collecting the ashes of the victims, making a mound of them and fencing it with a wall, which later turned into a Mausoleum.

Another issue is related to exhumation, which if possible, often becomes incomplete. The first problem stems from the difficulty of locating all the graves or recovering intact bodies and objects.³³ Moreover, a large number of corpses may contribute to the formation of the necrosol, a cemetery soil characterized by a disturbance of the original genetic system, the presence of mixed layers in the soil, the presence of artifacts and a significantly increased content of phosphorus³⁴. Should, therefore, the exhumation also take care to transfer the closest material context of the body and to what extent is it possible? Despite the cultural order to bury

³³ Erin Jessee, Mark Skinner, *op.cit.*

³⁴ Ewa Domańska, *Nekros. Wprowadzenie do ontologii martwego ciała*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2017.

and commemorate the dead, non-memorial sites often remain intact for decades.³⁵ Should, therefore, the exhumation also take care to transfer the closest material context of the body and to what extent is it possible? With the death of the last witnesses, they may fall into oblivion and, as such, never become incorporated into collective or cultural memory by subsequent generations. They can be temporarily commemorated in a symbolic, vernacular, and formally unnoticed way that is not public but rather on a small scale, family-like or locally restricted, which sets them apart from places of memory we know. They can become actively uncommemorated, that is, intentionally destroyed, littered with rubbish and distorted. Last but not least is to turn them into a place of memory, most often by installing a monument or plaque and by exhuming and moving the bodies to a cemetery. Even a completely forgotten non-place of memory can become visible by objects or remains pushed out by the ground or revealed during agricultural or construction work. The situation of "exposure" forces action. Sites that are uncommemorated or temporarily commemorated have a blurred transitional status, are non-institutionalized and precarious, therefore they have an equal chance of becoming a place of memory as well as of being forgotten.

The analysis of the network of places related to the extermination of the Roma allows us to examine the dynamics of the transformation of non-places of memory. The first scenario is represented by Szczurowa and Żabno, where the metamorphosis of non-places of memory into places of memory was the easiest, as mass graves were already located in the cemeteries. The second scenario shows the cases in Bielcza and Borzęcin, where there is a mediation stage related to exhumation and burial in cemetery. As a result, the locations of the crimes are not non-places of memory anymore, as their material basis is lost. Nevertheless, on both crime scenes there were temporary commemorations, i.e. birch crosses dug in the vicinity of earlier burial sites. However, in Bielcza the cross was removed, while in Borzęcin it was replaced with an officially approved monument. On the one hand, two strongly connected and mutually influencing places of memory were therefore created in Borzęcin – in the cemetery and in the

³⁵ Martin Pollack, *Kontaminierte Landschaften*, St. Pölten, Salzburg, Wien: Residenz, 2014.

former execution site in the forest. On the other hand, in Bielcza, the execution site is tending to be forgotten, because it has not been commemorated materially nor ritually since birch cross removal.

Anomaly and crisis of order

The above-mentioned scenarios for the transformation of non-places of memory can be understood as a condition which occurs during restoration of the social structures. Military violence destabilizes and disturbs the social order inducing an anomaly. One of the tangible, material effects of violating social norms are the dead bodies of genocidal massacres, but also deserted places of worship, public buildings, houses, furniture and objects,³⁶ or strayed animals.³⁷ In a situation where there are no legitimate owners who will surround their property with protection, the community faces a legal, technical and symbolic problem on a previously unprecedented scale. Animals, scattered and damaged things, empty houses, streets flooded with blood and the bodies lying on them are signs of a crisis that calls for restoration of order. As Mary Douglas states: "if uncleanness is matter out of place, we must approach it through order. Uncleanness or dirt is that which must not be included if a pattern is to be maintained."³⁸ Restoring order consists of a whole spectrum of activities. In understanding the dynamics of transformations of non-places of memory, it may be helpful to think about them in the category of anomaly proposed by Douglas, i.e. entity which does not fit into the categories of the adopted cultural pattern or is difficult to assign.

Douglas notes that each culture has its own recommendations for neutralizing anomalies. First, an anomaly can be reclassified and ambiguity reduced by settling one or other interpretation. Second, the anomalies can

³⁶ About the objects look at: Łukasz Połuszny, "Materialny Świadek, czyli co mówi pasiak obozowy" in Katarzyna Grzybowska, Sylwia Papier, Roma Sendyka (eds.), *Rzeczowy Świadek*, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2019, pp. 249–70;

³⁷ Patrick Desbois, who is mentioned in the article's incipit, recalls the story of the animals wandering around, and a cow that howls in pain the day after the massacre, because the killed owner did not manage to milk her; Patrick Desbois, *op.cit.*

³⁸ Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*, London, New York: Routledge, 1984, p. 41.

be physically controlled. Third, anomalies can be avoided: "a rule of avoiding anomalous things affirms and strengthens the definitions to which they do not conform."³⁹ Fourth, anomalies can be labeled dangerous, induce anxiety when confronting them and therefore trying to move them away. Fifthly, anomalies can be used in rituals to enrich meanings and redirect attention to other dimensions of existence.

Thus, anomalies can be redefined, physically controlled, avoided, moved away (labelled dangerous) and sacralized. How would this flexibility affect the understanding of non-places of memory as anomalies? An example of applying the first strategy of action against anomalies is Jedwabne massacre, where the way to deal with the place of mass grave was uncommemoration, which distorted the information on the memorial plaque and blamed the Germans soldiers instead of Polish citizens. The second way to deal with the tensions around the anomaly of a non-place of memory is destruction of evidence, e.g. demolition of a synagogue, devastation of a cemetery, burning things and bodies, leveling the ground and afforestation of the vicinity of mass graves as in death camps in Chełmno or Sobibór. The third strategy is to avoid the disturbing object by going around it, trying not to disturb it, creating information of prohibitions and submitting to it. The fourth method would characterize labelling location dangerous or moving it symbolically away from the areas used by a given community by letting it to be overgrowth with plants, bushes and trees, marking the area with rubbish and creating unofficial dump there. The last strategy would be sanctified inclusion, i.e. commemorating events through temporary and permanent forms and transferring remains and objects to "their" normatively prescribed spaces, e.g. to cemetery, museums or family members. The first two actions are characterized as exclusion, the next two as active avoidance, and the last as inclusion. Similarly, I analyze the social attitude towards non-places of memory. Here, too, one can indicate at least three analogous actions: oblivion which is exclusion through denial or destruction, uncommemoration which is related to active avoiding or stigmatizing, and commemoration which is inclusion through sacralization, erecting monuments and installing

³⁹ Mary Douglas, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

plaques. Oblivion and commemoration are opposites of each other, while uncommemoration is a neither-nor category, i.e. it keeps in existence an ideal non-place of memory, because it does not destroy it, but also does not allow to transform it into place of memory by commemorating it.

Conclusions

A non-place of memory is not a subjective construct, but has a real material foundation, which nevertheless escapes attention in everyday experience. The material scenery of a non-place of memory is defined by two organizational frames. The first concerns the foundation event and the establishment of the crime scene (body remains, instruments of violence such as weapons and cartridges, or changes in the landscape), which emphasize the starting point in the biography of space marked by event. The second frame is defined by human and non-human factors that generate commemorations and uncommemorations such as social rituals, monuments, destruction or plants overgrowth. Due to the nature of the activities of perpetrators, the formation of a non-place of memory extends in space and time, which makes one think of its nature as dispersed and point-like, although creating one network. Socially and culturally, a non-place of memory is an intermediate, liminal form that becomes an anomaly that disturbs the order and requires actions. Usually, the local community is the first to react, using different strategies to deal with the anomaly, which is undoubtedly influenced by the broader political context and local, particular interests. The cultural biography of non-place of memory indicates that the first responses are temporary commemorations (creating vernacular proto-monuments, installing crosses and signs, lighting candles, saying prayers) or uncommemorations (destroying a site, littering it, moving away by covering or producing entry bans). Both types of practices influence and constitute the identity of the community and the group. The change in attitude to non-place of memory is both endogenous and exogenous. The local community may itself lead to an official, public commemoration, or to cover up any traces of troublesome events. The same actions may result from external political will. In other words, there are three possible scenarios for the development of non-place of memory:

oblivion (destruction, distortion), unofficial precarious temporariness at the local level (either commemorating or uncommemorating it) and official, permanent commemoration at public level.

It is also important to find out what happens when the third scenario is selected. The social norm states that a cemetery is a place for a dead body. This is why the exhumation and transfer of the remains is a practice that neutralizes the anomaly and affectivity of a non-place of memory. The whole process is ritualized and follows the social norms, thus the transfer is accompanied by commemoration, which is a social closure restoring order and changing it into a place of memory.⁴⁰ Commemoration can also be created at the site of a previous burial, which is a way of dealing with the affectivity that is still felt. It should therefore be specified that the most desirable scenario for a non-place of memory seems commemoration through exhumation and normatively appropriate burial in a cemetery or/and erecting a monument at the execution site, which changes it into a place of memory.

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⁴⁰ Antonina Ostrowska, *Śmierć w doświadczeniu jednostki i społeczeństwa*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Instytutu Filozofii i Socjologii PAN, 2005, p. 61.

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