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LANGUAGE OF BORDERS IN THE STRUCTURE OF EVERYDAY LANDSCAPE

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INTRODUCTION

Human is a part of the environment so he, together with the rest of natural factors, participates in shaping of landscapes' physiognomy. The nature creates landscapes of a specific structure. Human creates cultural landscapes by imitating those structures through exploiting natural resources. In this process he uses landscape forms, rhythm, colours, proportion etc. that he observed in the nature. However those forms are already transformed in relation to the original, subjected to individual interpretation. For in the process of perception human interprets phenomena that allow the cognition of landscape. Perception is a complex and individualized process in which the environment, observer and observation (result) are related (Richling, Solon, 2002)

Through physical presence in a particular space human makes it subordinated to a specific and permanent scheme – the front is more important than the back, “mine” tops “someone else's”. “Places” are build up on this kind of structure, and meanings of those places create a specific genius loci. Place and spirit of the place have their boundaries often conditioned more by the rules of culture than by the rules of nature.

This article attempt is to describe the structure of everyday landscape that results from the way it's used in. There are private, common and public spaces in the everyday landscape, additionally there is the phenomenon of the borders between them and untransformed landscape. Everyday landscape is the landscape of the closest human's surrounding, where his everyday activities happen – in the perceptive

layer (what man sees around him on everyday basis). Though the everyday space is an existential space in a functional layer (space where man lives his everyday life)(Wiśniewska, 2003).

BORDER RESULTED FROM THE PERCEPTION OF THE CLOSEST LANDSCAPE

Hundertwasser used to claim that man has 5 skins – borders of overlapping spaces that ensure his existence in the world: body's skin, clothing (cultural skin), house, region (a city, a district) where he lives and at last – the Earth. Each of those skins describes his humanity on a different level. (Zaraś-Januszkiewicz, Rabsztyn, 2002). Chinese geomants claimed, that human body ends on the border of his garden. How can one outline an optimal location for a border of a garden or a garden interior that is used as an everyday space of existence?

The research on territorialism conducted by Jan Rylke, carried out on the users of open spaces and home gardens in Poland, set the minimal demanded distance between a person or a group of people and an other (unknown) person for 20 meters. For an European a minimal garden size, in which he feels well (assuming that the area of garden is a skin that surrounds a man) is about 300m². (Rylke, 2000) The smallest community gardens in Poland are of this size. Assuming that the established number (20 m) relates to the distance between people, it requires twice as large intervals, that is interiors of about 1250 m². That kind of interior could be used by small groups of 2 to 12 people (so a small or large family)¹(Rylke, 2000).

As important as the size of the everyday space is, the issue of physiological sensing and perception of an interior, in which the observer is situated, increased by specification of walls (Żurawski, 2000).

Researches on structures of trees and shrubs, (which were carried out to specify an optimal distance between plants and the observer, comfortable for noticing details of shapes, foliage, structure of the crown and flowers) were used to analyse width of roads leading to entrances and flower beds that accompany those paths. (Rylke, Gawryszewska, 1999). The average width of this lane is 2 m to 3,5 m. When considering herbaceous and perennial plants, one should remember that their flowers and foliage is not situated on the height of the sight line (though that's a situation with flowers of shrubs and trees), but lower 0,1-0,3 m above ground.

¹ In two cases a plot was bigger, but only a relatively small part of the plot was assigned for a garden. In the first plot the remaining part of the grounds was used as a vegetable garden. The second piece of land (1,4 ha area) was divided by hedges to make few smaller gardens, 800-1200 square meters area. Such a size is considered as optimal and comfortable (not too small, not too big) for a mature, old English home gardens.

The width of maximum 5 m creates a good perspective, adequate view on blossoming plants growing on very low beds².

The border of sharp vision constitutes an invisible border of an interior, that is created by the path leading to the house entrance. A person who walks on that way should take in only the path that he/she walks on, between two node points (entrance to a property and doors of a building). The path offers many eye-catching accents, such as colours of flowers, diversity of plants' shapes and heights or rhythm of forms. Elements of garden structure are formed not only in a perspective of function (in this case: width of a path that is necessary for comfortable walking or width of bed convenient for cultivation), comfort of perception is also taken into consideration. (Gawryszewska, 2000).

Considering the above, it can be stated that borders, walls of a garden interior, can be constituted by perceptive borders i.e. invisible walls. However; there is a material element needed that creates a point around which the life in a garden interior concentrates, element that sanctions it's function. Trees are such elements. Places created around a tree have been seen in home gardens since at least the 16th century³.

UNIQUENESS OF FORM

It has been noticed that an entrance to a house, a border between public and private space creates along with the entrance to a property an integral structure – pre-garden. Both of those points are functionally connected with a path, an approach to doors of a house. This path is accompanied by decorative elements.

In the case of the analysed objects (polish home gardens and community gardens) an entrance to a property was always decorative. In comparison, entrance in an English garden is tantamount to an exit from a building (although it's possible to find decorative entrances there from a pre-garden's side, but it's usually locked or rarely used, it's not an “official” entrance used by household members or guests).

It was standard in those gardens to have an arranged entrance to a property and a building (house) with pairs of sculptures, shrubs or flower bowls that were called “guardians”.

²The results of the research on this matter have shown that the distance for perception of flowers' structure comprise between 0,7 - 5,3 m.

³Similar interiors can be presently found. They can be seen in designs of famous authors such as Gertrude Jekyll, Herman Muthesius, Willy Lange (przyp. aut.).



Photo 1. Invisible border of garden interior under a tree. *Source: by author.*

Their function is dual: first of all they inform about the entrance, secondly they increase its prestige⁴. What was also characteristic, was a setting for an entrance to a garden in a form of “rose arch”, two rambling rose shrubs, planted on both sides of a gate and spread on a metal, arcade-like construction (2 - 2,2- metre-high)⁵.

Concentration of symmetric and rhythmic forms, rich in symbolic meanings, throughout the entrance space, shows that rhythm and symmetry, aesthetics of classical proportions, play an important role in the space of garden and house, it also stresses out a symbolic passage in the everyday space. Rituals of passage and customs that were connected to them are universal and characteristic not only for European but also for Far Eastern cultures (Gawryszewska, 2004).

We can find tracks of beauty of penetrating (filtering) in the most distant history of humankind.

⁴„Guardians” by the gateway and by the entrance door are elements recommended by the rules of Chinese geomancy. They protect house from negative influence in metaphysical sphere. (Feuchtwang, 1974).

⁵Rose arches play an identical role as “guardians”.

Since the beginning of architecture and urbanism. Penetration of a city wall is in gates of those walls, in battlements and gaps in towers, coats of arms, colourful pennants, sounds of trumpets. Penetrating through a friendly house is a porch, portico, portal, doors and windows, spaces between, peristyle for example. They reveal richness of beauty sources" (Molicki, 1987).

Composition of classical proportions and rhythms in front gardens: gates, portals, balustrades on balconies, fence spans, allows to feel the uniqueness of the surrounding space. It appears regardless of a social status or residents' wealth, by palaces as well as by peasant cottages.

In the European culture "settlement" is an optimal form of spatial existence. It consists of house in a garden (private domain), a neighbouring domain in a form of a common space of a street (road) and areas that belong to the community (marketplaces, squares and greens). There is a place for a spacial development (management) in this structure, that has its specific functions and meanings, but there's also space for spatial "undevelopment" ("unmanagement"). If there are some fragments of natural or semi natural landscapes left in a settlement structure, that proves the biological need to return to untransformed nature. What seems to be extremely important in this situation is the phenomenon of the "passage space" - semi-private and at the same time semi-public spaces, where the language of cultural meanings contained in the garden composition (rhythmical forms, decorations, colourful flowers, sacred symbols, shrines, and sculptures) expresses symbolic isolation and opening, dynamics between private and common domain. It is connected to physiognomically different forms, characteristic for anthropogenic landscapes and spaces less transformed or nearly natural.

STRUCTURE

While researching contemporary home gardens it was observed that in almost all of those gardens, three functional zones can be distinguished. What is characteristic about those zones is that the further they are located from the house the less intimate and safe they are considered. The observed zone division is connected to the changing distance from the house by an emotional programme and garden composition.

Our everyday space is also strongly connected to gardens and front spaces that we pass on our way, walking through the streets. Their role is representative. Borders- fences, gates and doors they have ritual functions (that's where one passes from an "ordinary" space to a house space, bringing guests). Composition of such a space is subdued to a representative function. (Gawryszewska, 2001).

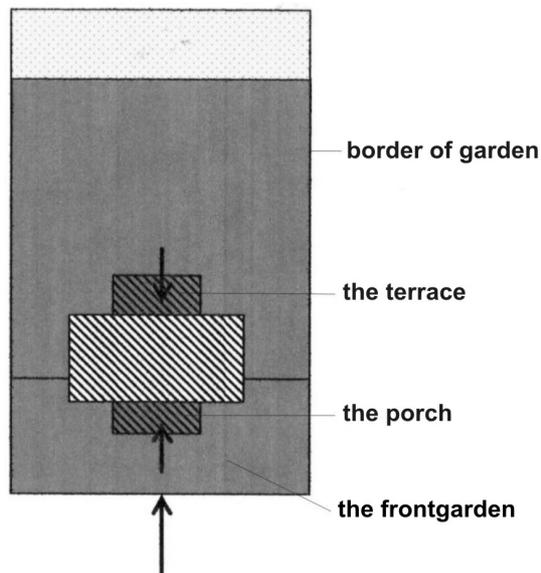


Fig. 1. Border spaces scheme in home garden (spaces of contact): border of garden, the frontgarden, the porch, the terrace. *Source: by author.*

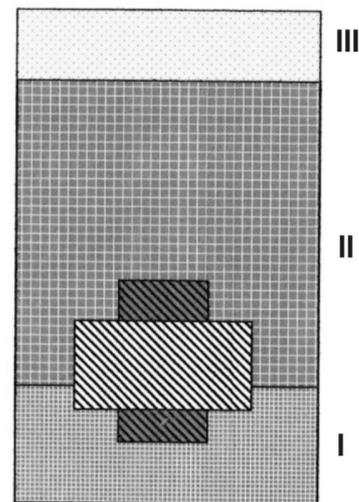


Fig.2. Structure of home garden. Functional zones. I – representative part, ornamental front garden, which is a space of real and underverbal dialog between neighbours; II – applied and recreational part – recreational garden, main garden, vegetable garden, the orchard; III – waste zone – substitute of natural environment. *Source: by author.*

It's essential when it comes to multi-occupied housings and common spaces that are connected with it, where correct articulation of borders between common and private domain is extremely important. These structures exist there in vestigial forms and public and common spaces pay similar role in the life of the community there as house garden in the life of an individual or a family. The role of front garden (zone 1) is taken over by seasonal gardens by the apartment windows, the role of a usable zone – courtyard, the role of undeveloped zone – open spaces around the housing estate⁶.

It is artificiality created in urban landscape but in suburban or rural areas it is a natural continuation of open space areas, slightly transformed by its users (residents).

⁶Based on the research carried out by the author in the space of WSM settlement in Warsaw.

It seems to be indispensable in a complete structure of settled space. If an environment is highly transformed already at the moment of gardens establishing and (what goes along with it) desired spatial structures, then users create a semblance of a natural landscape by giving away to natural processes of succession, a fragment of the property that is the furthest from the house.

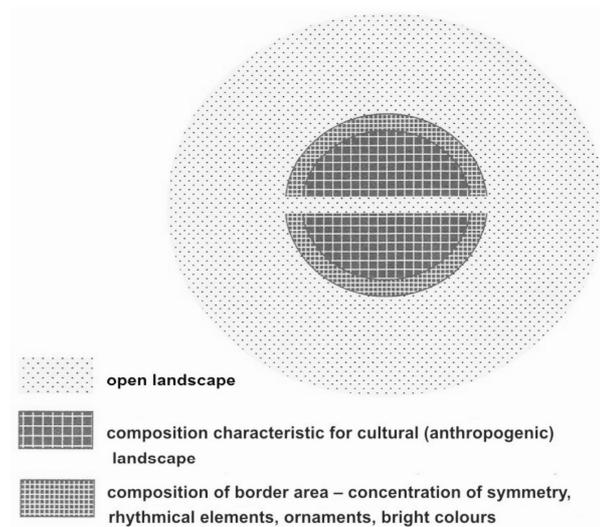


Fig. 3. Scheme of garden composition elements concentration in border spaces.
Source: by author.

Just like spaces in house gardens, common spaces are responsible for non-verbal communication inside a community, and also between neighbouring communities.

Cultural landscape holds a reminiscence of a natural landscape in a form of culmination of a structure of a settlement space with a semblance of a natural landscape – an undeveloped zone or developed extensively (zone 3).

Assuming that symmetry and rhythm indicate anthropogenisation of landscape, border spaces that were described above, intensify forms that are characteristic for a cultural (human) landscape. They are expressed by symmetry and rhythm. What is extremely important: garden composition of those spaces is not a mixture of forms connected with composition characteristic for cultural and natural landscapes. A border in landscape could be rather compared to barricade not to “homogenised” passage space.

CONCLUSIONS

People in natural and spontaneous way aspire to create the structure described above in their existential space. All above can be summed up as follows:

- space that we perceive is conditioned physiologically by our sight but also by culture

and meanings that are assigned to it;

- In the process of space adaptation and appropriation, one identifies with it; building borders between private and public domain plays a deciding role. Borders are expressed through garden programme and architectural form of particular domains;
- Entrance (front) space and spatial passages between architecture and a garden are characterised by a specific composition, permanent in time and identical around the world. This space is based on classical proportions, uses rhythm and symmetry, as well as bright colours. That is also characteristic for passage spaces (of overlapping meanings and functions) described by ethnologists;
- Spatial borders contain important symbolic and cultural meanings (e.g. sacred symbols) that express meanings represented by individuals and communities that are involved in creation of the given landscape;
- Borders in themselves contain an intensified forms characteristic for specific cultural spaces and the language of spatial meanings connected with social dialogue, but not a mixture of cultural and natural forms, (even though while building them one uses natural elements, e.g. plants). A border of a settlement is rather an expression of differences between nature and culture, not a compromise.

Human needs borders in landscape. One is able to outline them, decide on their form and to build them. While conducting researches on abandoned landscape, basing on tracks of former borders one can make conclusions about people that created that landscape. A correct structure of existential space, that exemplifies itself in a form clearly articulated borders between "mine", "our", "their", "human" and "nature" conditions a healthy structure of social relations, where an individual, family, a small local community, and the whole society lives in a symbiosis with landscape. This also translates into a specific spirit of landscape – an order of the cultural space and beauty of place.

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SUMMARY

Human is a part of the environment so he, together with the rest of natural factors, participates in shaping of landscapes' physiognomy. The nature creates landscapes of a specific structure. Human creates cultural landscapes by imitating those structures through exploiting natural resources. "Places" are build up on this kind of structure, and meanings of those places create a specific genius loci. Place and spirit of the place have their boundaries often conditioned more by the rules of culture than by the rules of nature. Home garden and settlement both play main roles in this phenomenological structure

The author focuses on a problem of borders in cultural landscape that express themselves in landscapes as well as in garden composition. This article attempt is to describe the structure of everyday landscape that results from the way it's used in. There are private, common and public spaces in the everyday landscape, but there is also an important phenomenon of the borders between them.