Space of a Garden – Space of Culture
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Edited by

Grzegorz Gazda and Mariusz Golab

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CHAPTER ONE

THE GARDEN: ECOLOGICAL MEDIATION
AND TRANSFORMATIONS OF CULTURAL TEXT
(INTRODUCTION)

MARIUSZ GOŁĄB

The issues connected with the garden occupy a significant place in the European cultural tradition. The contemporary significance and clarity of its function invokes aesthetic visions and weltanschauungs formed before the close of the 17th century. Under this premise, we are faced with a permanently determined figurative model of signification, which is represented in art and literature. Towards the end of that period garden art was undergoing transformations; out of necessity, new proposals of space formation (the regular French garden, the English landscape garden) offered a polemical approach to the previously established garden topos. Despite an altered understanding of the relation between man and nature, as well as the Romantics’ choice of the English garden as preferred space, the contemporary notion of the garden may appear unchanged. Thus, a question arises: to what extent could those changes, initiated at the outset of the 18th century and confirmed by the subsequent experience of the Romantics, have an impact on the current scope of cultural transformation?

The garden became the subject of a conference for several reasons. One of those is the unquestioned figurative function mentioned above, complemented by a host of attendant axiological meanings. Nevertheless, with this permanent and rather precisely determined meaning, reflecting antique and biblical models, one may wonder at the singular type of interest in the garden as subject. In those instances, it is not openly present as a quotation of a particular principle of the world, but manifests itself in the authors’ less or more conscious structural and thematic reminiscences.

Avoidance of direct references to the garden may be regarded as a strategy, reflecting a weltanschauung or an aesthetic, or else treated as the
theoretical basis of discourse. From this perspective, those features acquire the status of cultural innovation, which enables a modification of those elements in the meaning of the garden which are rhetorically determined. The artistic practices confirmed in the essays that follow may be completely spontaneous and may be related to that which validates the universal features of the imagination (awareness) in the figurative form of the garden. On the other hand, such concealment may be viewed as an attempt to liberate the meaning of the garden from rhetorical functionalization. The entire process slightly resembles the attempts to unfetter metaphor from its linguistic-rhetorical conditioning, undertaken in contemporary philosophy and literary theory. It may also be a reflection of transformations occurring in the field of aesthetics, consisting in endeavors to transcend the border between nature and culture (e.g. the “ecological aesthetic of nature” proposed by Gernot Böhme). We should bear in mind that the garden as a poetic figure, or perhaps such an understanding of the garden, is more of a cultural creation than a natural one.

The feature of rhetorical durability illuminates another reason, i.e. the garden as an exceptional criterion of cultural change. The proof of such a perspective is the conviction, represented by the authors of several papers included herein, concerning the historically conditioned, relative permanence of the meaning of the garden. As mentioned previously, the watershed determining cultural change, as well as the understanding of the garden, is the turn of the 18th century. This issue, interpreted in terms of human awareness, is addressed in the essays of Jarosław Pluciennik and Ivo Pospišil. The former views the garden as an arena where we can observe an interplay of two opposing tendencies: horticultural/garden (possessive) individualism versus forest/sylvan (transcendental) individualism. For the latter scholar, rococo aesthetics represent a period in culture when dramatic attempts at reclaiming the lost unity of the garden’s aesthetic and axiological meaning were undertaken. Those endeavors are confirmed by the figure of the garden understood as a set of structural features and a counterpart of the rhetorical tradition. Regardless of the differences between the findings of the two scholars, as well as the varying extent to which they corroborate the permanence of the garden figure, what is crucial in their work is the attempt to present the garden as meaning which reflects cultural change.

Yet another reason for our choice of conference subject reveals itself at this point. It is the garden as a territory where meanings collide or complement one another: the figure is manifested rhetorically and simultaneously contradicted in the process of contemporary cultural change. Thus, the garden allows us to observe the dynamic process of
those transformations, answering to the needs of the currently postulated transcultural aesthetics.

The conference opened a space for deliberating the symbolic function of the garden; it also “opened” the space of the garden to a part of the cultural realm which had never before been associated with it. Such is the case with the essays of Bożena Tokarz, Małgorzata Liszewska and Anna Gomóła. Tokarz introduces the notion of a “transversal garden”, i.e. a space which annexes urban areas; this concept of garden-as-space, according to the scholar, is present in the work of contemporary Polish writers. A. Gomóła undertakes a similar attempt to determine the relationship between space and axiology, treating the garden as a “space of mediation” between anthropological qualities which have been hitherto regarded as opposites. The author regards the opposition of nature and culture as one such pair. In this case, the garden is revealed as an area into which nature introduces spontaneity. Nature begins to signify an unrestrained, open space; that notwithstanding, the garden retains its ontological, cultural features. A similar process, albeit headed in the opposite direction, is perceived by Liszewska, who describes nature’s tendency to acquire cultural features in the space of the garden. The process is fraught with particular ecological threats which are eradicated in step with proposed transformations of cultural awareness, a consequence of Gernot Böhme’s notion of “ecological aesthetic of nature”\(^1\).

It is worth noting that in all the theoretical propositions presented above the garden is viewed as a space whose demarcation lines begin to represent the boundaries and the evolution of human awareness. Thus, the garden as a space in which awareness operates appears to result from a conceptualization of the world. In this case, it is a perception which requires a renewal in each instance. The problem is indicated by Ewa Kosowska, whose deliberations focus on the notion of the lawn [sic!]. This indispensable element of garden space, precisely determined in terms of geometry (or is it?), begins to function as a form of the garden’s pars pro toto. However, the author deprives the lawn of its concretizing function; as a result, the notion undergoes a conceptual – and therefore eradicable – relocation. The lawn acquires the function of synecdoche with regard to the architectonic design of the garden, in which it plays an essential role.

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The element validates its objectives – its mediatory and transversal qualities – with regard to cultural space, understood literally and conceptually. On account of its inconspicuousness, it may be removed in order to reveal the unmarked space of either nature or culture, depending on the decision of the epistemological subject. This unmarkedness, however, leads to a discomfort which consists in a sensation of being unsettled in the world; on the other hand, it may also substantiate dreams of unrestrained space.

If the garden appears, in the light of the conference deliberations, to be a form of space conceptualization, then the courage to paraphrase the words spoken by one of Chekhov’s characters – “All Russia is our garden” – seems not unfounded. The whole world can thus be our garden. Nevertheless, a limitation appears at this point, or perhaps a change in the aesthetic and epistemological function. The garden may still be regarded as a universal form of perception, but it must be understood in the light of Jakob J. von Uexküll’s concept of theoretical biology as a space restricted by a horizon of individualized experiences and conditions of perception.

The issues of awareness and the formation of the subject’s identity are among the themes which are widely represented in this book. Apart from the essays mentioned above and the concept of individualisms proposed by Pluciennik, this aspect is addressed by, among others, Piotr Domeracki. Solitude, linked to the space of the garden as a representation of the subject’s individual attitude and found in the philosophy of Epicurus, becomes the herald of the crisis of the subject, witnessed by modernity. The garden is also a space which arouses sensual activity (M. Rembowska-Pluciennik, L. Pelletier, A. Śliwa). Reflectiveness and sensual inspirations are various forms of assimilating the space of the garden, even if this space can be as troublesome as the synecdochic shape of the lawn.

A fine example of the garden as a place and as open space is the world of Michel Tournier as interpreted by Magdalena Zdrada-Cok, where space becomes a road characterized by multidimensional axiological qualities. This space, the author maintains, is capable of containing both the distinctiveness of Zen gardens and the proxemic features of European culture. Such space is, therefore, on account of its narratological function, a closed one. The openness of this space, alternatively, is connected with

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2 Cf. the essays by B. Olaszek and T. Nakoneczny herein.
the degree of explicitness in the presented axiological functions. The characteristics of space thus defined are revealed gradually in the process of self-perfection by the awareness of the subject who travels the route physically. Furthermore, the garden becomes the superior classification of space which one traverses or encircles.

The garden is present in literature, as seen in the review of European writing conducted during the conference. For example, much attention is paid to French literature in essays by Krystyna Wojtyn-Musik (S. Mallarmé), Michał Krzykawski (P. Sollers), Louise Pelletier (Nicolas Le Camus de Mézières), as well as in the aforementioned essay by M. Zdrada-Cok, focusing on Tournier. The English tradition is discussed by Marie-Louise Egbert and Jarosław Pluciennik (A. Marvell). Russian writing is the focal point for Barbara Olaszek and Tomasz Nakoneczny.

As regards Polish literature, historical representations of horticultural tendencies, from old Polish literature to contemporary writing, are discussed by Krystyna Złotkowska (W. Potocki), A. Kapusta (C. Norwid), E. Grzęda and Justyna Bajda (K. Przerwa-Tetmajer). The garden may also be read as a text in which the structural line system plays an important role (Krzykawski on Sollers). The diversity of those lines is based on the phenomenon of reading and the varying tendencies of the cultural code (A. Chromik-Krzykawska, I. Pospišil).

Thus, the garden may be interpreted in terms of architectonic forms. Inspiration for such a reading is provided by an example of a particular garden (Chantilly), described by Pelletier, as well as by the essay of Dominik Zieliński, dedicated to palace gardens and the patronage of King Ludwig II of Bavaria. Zieliński’s paper presents the garden as a space in which various arts coexist. Space understood thus confirms Magdalena Rembowski-Pluciennik’s suggestions concerning the garden as a realm of sensual perception. Accordingly, art becomes a validation of the sensual-symbolic function of the garden. What appears constructed is merely a sign, a meaning which has been intensified by art. This is exemplified in the splendid theatrical productions, transferred to “real” space of the grand architectural principles governing the construction of gardens and palaces in the 17th and 18th century. Such an understanding of the garden is confirmed by Urszula Aszyk’s essay on Calderon and Piotr Olkusz’s paper about stage productions in the Versailles, as well as by Anna Kuligowska-Korzeniewska’s comprehensive analysis of Polish garden theatres.

Consequently, A. Gomółka’s concept may be expanded by introducing yet another problem of mediation between the real (although not necessarily natural) and the artificial. The mediatory character of the theatrical and cinematic endeavors represented in Jacek Nowakowski’s
article testifies to the emblematic and iconic character of the garden, the metaphorical formula of which becomes a workable commentary on the world.

Translated by Krzysztof Majer
CHAPTER TWO

TRANSVERSAL GARDENS

BOŻENA TOKARZ

The tradition of gardens reaches, among other locations, ancient Babylon, Greece, China and Japan, also the Arab gardens. It is connected with forms of palace life and with religious faith, such as the garden of Eden present in the Bible in the Book of Genesis, furthermore the Garden of the Hesperides in the Greek mythology. The Arab gardens were formed as palace gardens in which everything: heat, water, flowers, plants providing shade and beautiful women constituted the Afterdeath prize for believers in Allah. A garden as a form of life became art; its vivid development in Europe took place in the 17th and 18th centuries, which are known for magnificent compositions in the Italian style (Boboli Gardens behind the Pitti Palace), in the French style (Versailles Gardens) and in the English style (Kensington Gardens).

The notion garden has always stood for concrete physical space, distinctly separated from open space, and for mental space emerging from contradictions between looking for safety and looking for freedom. It has been a form of nature tamed by an individual and deprived of aggression. An individual has treated nature differently, subordinating it to his will more and less. Assuming that nature is the work of God and a garden is a work of a man, concrete separation took place of the competence of the Creator from the competence of a constructor in the conception of a regular garden (French), or balance was retained in the irregular garden style, featured by the English garden. Constructors and theorists of the two versions of a classic garden were André Le Nôtre (e.g. Versailles Garden, Fontainebleau) and William Kent (who designed Kensington Gardens).\(^1\)

The space arranged by them resulted from the cultural awareness of the

epoch which, in the writings of its philosophers, appreciated the possibilities of the mind logically ordering the world. Power of mind, belonging to human beings, brought them closer to God, to transcendence; however, they could only be constructors.

The domineering rationality, and brain in it, was associated with principles of an order which was organized geometrically and mathematically. William Kent shook it by codifying the theory of a landscape garden. His avoidance of straight lines and garden composition of painting with light-and-shade effects, together with patterns of landscape from Lorrain and Poussin, foreshadowed forthcoming mental changes in the European culture. Their distinct forerunner was sentimentalism, which claimed its participation in life, art and in learning emotions and unhampered freedom. Jean Jacques Rousseau perceived the garden as art of capturing passion. Julie from the New Heloise creates her own garden, escaping from love to her lover and to her husband. She does not unite with nature in her passions, but she forms it making use of her will and knowledge, just like she forms her own emotional reactions. She talks about her garden, displaying the illusion of the place. The mask is worn by a woman; she also wears what was created by her – a garden pretending wild nature, nonetheless deprived of its natural tensions. As a result, the literary landscape presented a protagonist or a subject before Romanticists did. Nature and individuals (their emotions) were submitted to aesthetisation, that is, the existing order was questioned, unnoticeably destroyed to create different order which would act according to the will of an intelligent subject.

Undoubtedly, a garden was an essential mark of the culture of the 17th century, and particularly of the 18th century. It should be read as a text of culture, which expresses an idea of order in its physical and mental form. High value, which was ascribed to it, contributed to metaphoric usage of the notion, in order to emphasize an “exceptional value of some phenomenon” – as Przybylski puts it. Nevertheless, a garden as a metaphor had functioned earlier, among others in the Polish literature, e.g. in writings by Rej, Kochanowski, Potocki. Being a figure of the word, which appears in the long and complicated history of the unchanging garden theme, a garden is

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2 Cf.: J.-J. Rousseau, La nouvelle Heloise, [in:] J.-J. Rousseau: Oeuvres completes. vol. II, Gallimard, Paris 1961 [“Nature, however, controlled by me, has done everything, and there is nothing over here which I do not supervise”].
3 Ibid., p. 21.
4 Cf.: J. M. Rymkiewicz, Myśli różne o ogrodach, Czytelnik, Warszawa 1968 – he writes extensively about history of the unchanging garden theme.
a figure of thought, particularly marked in Classicism. It meant order and depotism of the will, court life, the scenery of the theatre of life, enclosure, delusion and contact with nature despite everything. Its mental space imposes specific physical forms and always depends on the anthropological vision, entranched in the culture, which differentiates the following gardens: Italian, French, English, Arab, Japanese; also the Garden of Eden, and the Garden of Art, a garden by a house and a garden by a convent.

They are different in terms of accepted ways and styles of life in the scope of vertical divisions of culture and horizontal divisions, which are based on metonimic contiguity, in consequence, not on a categorial difference, but on a difference within a particular category. The Garden of Eden and the Garden of Art, although intrinsically different, belong to the sacrum category, just like a garden by a house and a garden by a convent belong to the category of ordinariness. However, they are associated with different ways and philosophies of life.

The illusiveness of gardens was stressed by Boccaccio in *The Enchanted Garden* in *The Decameron*, in the particular way, close to the contemporary attitude towards delusion. A Garden serves deception, which in that case, consists in pretending nature so that individuals could meet their sensual and mental needs. Despite the transformation of garden forms and human demands for relaxation, connected with composure and contact with another form of the physical world, in the European culture a garden and a subsequent park have been carriers of dominance of an individual subject. In order to subdue the extrinsic nature featured in preservation, in senses and empirical experience, the subject has to captivate the intrinsic nature, has to reduce the richness of psychic and emotional life. Although a garden, as physical space, made direct interpersonal communication possible, as classicistically motivated cultural form, it means communication which is adopted from illusion and convention. It extorts forms of playing, pretending, together with doubling one’s own, individual life. The 20th century took a controversial attitude towards gardens. While on the one hand it stigmatized their nonauthenticity, passiveness of imagination, on the other hand it created transversal gardens, that is to say open spaces composed of exceptional

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cultural values such as cultural heritage, and it retained their therapeutic function.

The figure of a garden, in literature and art, is a carrier of passive imagination, imagination that avoids experiencing the reality as a work of art. That figure denotes confined space, safe, mild and static, submitted to the cyclic laws of nature, to the fantasy of individuals who change nature. Therefore mental space possesses the same features which are present in physical space; it also marks the location of communication. No wonder that changing: social structure, science, civilization, forms of life and cultural awareness, created other needs for relaxation, which are not always associated with reflection which participated in the construction of the mental garden. Although marked with enclosure, a garden did not break the natural ties between individuals and nature, despite the fact that it was “well groomed”, moreover, it did not have to doom to loneliness. Creating nostalgic space, it rather separated from the authentic life. Confronted with other forms of popular culture which offer rest (e.g. television) and isolate from reality, a garden can indicate nostalgic space, strange space, or space composing itself as an element of another structure.

The 18th century development of garden art was marked with yearning for skill and for location of immediate communication, not only based on physical contact between people, but also on their relationship with the environment, in consequence on harmony of nature and culture. The development of garden art was accompanied by development of the art of conversation, taking place within the institution of a parlour sanctioned in the 17th century. In case of a garden and a parlour, markedness of meaning is different. Garden communication is characterized by a higher degree of empathy, whereas a parlour attributed more intellectual, artistic and cognitive values to contacts. Both spaces are a little bit different with respect to openness. The space of a parlour does not imitate nature, as opposed to a garden which exists between culture and nature.

Contradictory issues arose in Europe in the 17th and 18th century, significant for the culture of today – a garden and a parlour. They mean different things, although they are both based on direct communication. An artistically sublime garden pretends faith in the laws of nature, transcendence. A parlour is an institution of interpersonal communication, after Welsch. He was the first one to write about transversal mind – W. Welsch, *Vernunft. Die zeitgenössische Vernunftkritik und das Konzept der transversalen Vernunft*, Surkamp, Frankfurt/Main 1995, and about the conception of transculturality - W. Welsch, “Transkulturalität – Lebensformen nach der Auflösung der Kulturen”, *Information Philosophie* 2, 1992, pp. 5-20.
created by a man. Its forms of culture are reaction to the processes of modern urbanization and industrialization, which were initiated at that time. A garden is a passive form, preferring physical contact of an individual with nature and another human being in terms of practically important issues. A parlour – due to the contact adopted from an institution – is a form of active participation in culture.

A parlour may be considered an institution incorporating communication. It later developed into institutions functioning by means of administrative apparatus, using technological facilities. The degree of adoption is continually increasing, up to dominance of a picture in postmodern culture, which with simulacres such as a picture tries to solve earlier tensions in culture between the necessity of safety and the necessity of freedom, at that time, without retaining semblance of authenticity. Functioning of simulacres creates only an illusion of direct contact, being an element of a communicative game. Illusion can be believed in, if wanted, by satisfying yearning for authenticity; or not believed in by including element of a game in the process of multilevel communication – multilevel because the communication is only adopted.

A garden and a parlour are confined spaces. They are talked about using two different aesthetic codes; the garden is controlled by aesthetics locus amoenus, and a parlour – by aesthetics of artificiality. They complemented each other in the 18th century, participating in creating culture which preferred intellect, however, it also admitted existence of nature. Nevertheless, it was the mind which endowed nature with excellence. Romanticism gave priority to nature. It abandoned gardens and parlours making its way to forests and to groves; to the lakeside, seaside, riverside. Cyprian Norwid distanced himself from those distinct attitudes. He clashes both spaces in the poem Assunta, czyli Spojrzenie, in order to sustain the sense of contradictions between feeling and reason. Those categories complement each other by showing transgressive capabilities. The space of a garden and the space of a parlour symbolically condition each other in this poetic composition:

Niech gardzą jedni wszystkiem dla rozumu,
A im przeciwni – dla uczucia wszystkiem.
Z przeciw – uczucia do przeciw – rozumu
Tę wartość drogi widzę jak przebłyskiem.8

Both of those spaces and also figures of the European culture nowadays have functions of masking and are exposed to demasking. A garden is identified with passiveness, a parlour, in the form of its later transformations, with a demagogic and manipulative attitude. At the same time, in the 20th century, they express yearning for direct communication, which is hard to substitute. As far as a garden is concerned, the communication is more associated with emotional and artistic contacts, as to a parlour – it is connected with intellectual contacts, which are guaranteed by the brain.

Against the Norwidian statement, feeling or reason have been blamed over the past and present century. Into view is coming now an attempt to unite, or rather some will to spot, the interaction between the feeling, brain and ethics in the transversal form.9 Transversal gardens definitely exist in literature and art – as Norwid proved it, their physical existence seems to be more problematic.

I adopted the notion transversal from Wolfgang Welsch’s conception concerning the transversal mind, in which the author connected two contradictory features of the human thinking: rationality and metaphysics, the subject not only of the postmodernist discourse. Their changing dominance determined continually improved mechanisms of cultural paradigm transformation. After an epoch aiming towards reason, usually followed epochs admitting other criteria of cognition, based on imagination and on metaphysical values. That regularity appears in philosophy and in aesthetics.10 The transition from the rationalistic perspective of looking at the world to the metaphysical one was not so sudden as Nietzsche viewed it. Human brain also registers and generates information on the world using other functions than reason and feeling. They mitigate contradictions between those functions. These are: sensation and intuition.11 Therefore transformations take place in cycles: from intellectualism with thinking and with dominance of rationalism; through sensation, that is to say postrationalism; through feeling which liberates about both of those spaces in that volume. [“Some people may value reason, the other ones may value feeling. There is a way shining through, which starts in the point where feeling is despised. It leads up to the point where reason is denied”] – Each intertext quotation written in Polish is translated philologically without retaining its artistic value.

9 Cf. the interwar scientism up to semiotics and logocentrism – the subject of the primary role of the brain.
spontaneity, and through subjectivism up to intuition, which contributes to conceptualization of emotions and to contemplation, which are also in the metaphysical nature. Further on, the cycle is repeated, however, within shorter time.\textsuperscript{12} The awareness of certain periodicity was included in Umberto Eco’s thinking, when he wrote that postmodernism was typical not only for the XX\textsuperscript{th} century because similar transitional periods had taken place earlier. Well did manierism illustrate it:

One might say that each epoch is associated with its postmodernism, as each can have its own manierism (I even ask myself a question if postmodernism is not a contemporary name for manierism, which is a metahistoric category).\textsuperscript{13}

Postmodern rejection of the mind was motivated by accusing it of demagogy, presumption, liquidating contradictions.\textsuperscript{14} Although it officially did not exist, the positive proposition of the changing paradigm underlay destructive and emotional actions, which means that sensation and feeling dominated over the perception of the world, leading to the phase of intuition and contemplation. Barbara Skarga claims that eliminating the mind as the means of cognition is a mistake, even though it has lead to numerous mistakes like questioning metaphysics, which evolves throughout philosophy; nowadays it

(…) attempts (…) to analyse the essence of human existence – and that existence as such asks about the scope and kinds of experience, about the borders of rationalism and the ontological status of the mind.\textsuperscript{15}

Welsch defines that ontological status of the mind, which is in the phase close to contemplation, on the basis of changes in the scope of the category of rationality. The contemporary rationality is defined by pluralism, complication and confusion, in consequence today it means multitude and diversification. Protecting from one-sidedness contemplation, which is an autoreflection of the mind, it is able to uncover the mechanisms generating the current rationality. That is why the mind, which acts as a recognition power, functions among different forms of rationality; it is capable of crossing through the “thought with confusion”

\textsuperscript{12} Cf.: S. Piskor, \textit{O tożsamości polskiej}, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Kraków 1988, pp. 181-201 – it generalizes the issue in the form of “a spiral of creation”


\textsuperscript{15} B. Skarga, “Kilka słów w obronie metafizyki”, [in:] ibid., p. 13.
– as Welsch puts it – without hierarchization and it allows the holistic interpretation of the world.16

Held against Welsch: connecting Kant’s thought on practical mind with Nietzsche’s thought which rejected all restrictions in agreement with “joyful knowledge”, is an attempt to liquidate the dichotomy rational – metaphysical in favour of dynamical, that is to say the capability of generating and permanent self-instituting. The concurrence of his conception with Deleuze’s theory is not surprising in that context, since both theories are founded on similar thought bases. That is why Kazimierz Piotrowski calls Welsch’s proposition “nomadology of the mind”.17

Transversal culture is spatial extension of the idea of the transversal mind in the Welsch’s theory. Due to nomadity, the culture is rich. Transversal culture is favoured by, or rather was created by means of communication. Their medial form enables stationary movement. Gelles Deleuze, Paul Virillo, Félix Guattari, Jean Baudrillard and Polish researchers of audiovisual culture18 notice illusoriness in the phenomenon of “stationary travel”, also a simulating function of the mass culture and the development of the audiovisual media. Modern technology is not in the position to create “artificial paradises” of Baudelaire, although it changed the mechanism of generating space together with metaphorical sense, which it was granted. Communication also diminished the space “in between”. All of that causes that in the physical and culturally-mental sense, confined space of a garden became unreachable in the 20th century, beautiful and untrue, which when appearing, is the creation of imagination – recollection and the sign of passing of time or mechanical negation of its original, physical existence (e. g. Mechaniczny ogród by Tytus Czyżewski).

Since the 17th century, a garden has not been functioning as the synonym of happiness, and ever since Romanticism more and more it has appeared as a location of unrest, element and demonic forces. A garden went through the greatest transformation in the 20th century: from appraisal of culture to rejecting essentiality of that figure in the contemporary language of literature. Once it appears, it is an element of contrast meaning inability of such mental construction, being a signal of cultural

16 Ref. after: W. Welsch, Racjonalność i rozum dzisiaj, op.cit.
entanglement of art and an individual, who fight against illusion and at the same time need it, despite the fact that the creation of imagination can be substituted. Faith coexists with unfaith and with play, with convention in the literary space of a garden.

Mental spaces of the 20th century gardens are flexible, of diversified kinds; they unite the English style with French, with a house garden, a park, landscape, also with a cemetery and a rubbish dump. They still carry a trace of former positive valuation, like in Herbert, being gardens of art, but a barbarian broke into its terrain, and its “landscape is now cut through with a sword and a thunder”19, in Andrzej Bursa. Therefore, it may be an element which is marked in games with convention in Bursa and Grochowiak. It changes into a cemetery and a rubbish dump in Grochowiak’s poetry. It is also a garden of life, of the world, but there is no peace and safety in it, because over it “romp locusts”20 in Stachura, although he called his beloved ‘a flower of an apple-tree’. It also means memory of culture connected with memory of nature in questions about human identity, asked not necessarily by the culture for the chosen, but also by popular culture – a song. The example of Jonasz Kofta is not typical for popular culture since he contradicts divisions into artistic values and plebeian values. Singing “remember gardens as you come from those”,21 he refers to the nostalgic memory of the roots of everything which is made by an individual, who, however, more often functions in the self-created world of complicated technologies. He equally belongs to nature and culture, therefore the garden of Kofta is the garden of culture, which according to changing needs of an individual and a community, “groomed” nature, talking about an individual, its gardener.

Using the garden of art and the garden of culture in a creative way means moving around its different areas, of heterogeneous kinds, styles and cultures. Stachura recommended “active poetry”, seeing in it, authenticity of the creative subject and his direct contact with a recipient. Kofta performed his texts on stage, significantly contributing not only to the popular culture. In the 90’s Jerzy Mamcarz referred to his nostalgic and open attitude, as a performer – a singer, a composer and a poet, the author of a poetic book entitled … jeszce tańczą ogrody. The garden space visualizes possibilities of moving around within the area of art

without hierarchizing. Krzysztof Litwin rendered that in his drawings in a volume of Mamcarz’s poetry, which he stylized as Chagalle’s paintings. Chagalle’s oneirism was the cultural space of a garden towards the end of the 20th century. It facilitated connecting melancholy with lyricism and irony, sublimity with commonplaceness, without liquidating existing contradictions.22

An artistic niche group “Ogród”, among other New-Wave poetic groups, was active in Lublin in the 70’s. Its counter-cultural character was ahead of New-Wave in terms of the experience of getting through and the respect for multitude. Had it not been for the poetic volumes published in the 90’s, the group would have only been transitory. The volumes were group signed as “Ogród/Ogród 2”.23 The group comprised poets, artists, musicians, actors and photographers, many of whom united all domains of art in their creation. In Performance Art they united happening activities, paratheatrical ones, cabaret, artistic campaigns, concerts, exhibitions and songs. The garden space was the superior mental space, as space of mutual transgressions, which motivated such actions. The recipients did not impose anything since they called themselves “gardeners”. They cultivated their garden made from different arts. Questioning reality, they revealed the world was in disarray and they showed its mosaic structure. They did not propose any anarchy since the world in their texts, being shattered, flows through the medium of the lyrical subject with high artistic awareness. Quotations, travesties of generally known texts, poetic transformations of Klee’s paintings and artistic pictures of the mass as a whole, together with theatricalization, all serve revaluating the concept of originality of poetry and communicating with the recipient through the language of different arts.24

In the presence of changing visualization of a garden – from a closed form up to increasingly more open, depending on the cultural context – one of its artistic functions remains stable. The garden still expresses emotionally-intellectual states of the subject in the context of specific cultural space. Valorization of that space changes decidedly after the second world war, however, the beginning of those changes can be noticed in the 20-year-interwar period, among others in the form of schematization by Tytus Czyżewski in “Mechaniczny ogród” and in the game with convention in “Spacer antyczny” in the volume Treść gorejąca by Julian Tuwim.

22 Cf.: J. Mamcarz, ...jeszcze tuńczą ogrody, Bellona, Warszawa 1998.
The lyrical subject of Tuwim’s poem plays with the sentimental convention, with love in the scenery of an Arcadian park, which combines the French garden with the English garden, which is illustrated with Arcadia of Nieborów:

Gdzie najsmutniej, dziewczyno, 
Tam potrzebna obecność twoja milosierna,
Na spacerze antycznym, na ścieżce rozstania,
Gdzie szumi mego serca bezsłowność pośmiertna.25

Playing with the role of a sentimental lover shakes faith in the symbol of the happy space, although it also expresses the will to “fictitiously” participate in that space. It marks an ambivalent relation to imagining safety, even though a garden does not stop carrying the traces of the mental and emotional attitude of the subject. Hence, the construct of a garden as the space of closed culture was shaken.

The postwar literature was not in favour of the presence of a picture of a garden because of traumatic war experiences and prevailing ideology, according to which a garden was a “social class hostile” symbol. Continuity of tradition, which was broken off at that time, was resumed after 1956, however, not indiscriminately. A garden meant: lost cultural past, European heritage of art, blemished beauty; also utopia, which deludes with its potentiality; a figure of individual memory and multi-style space of direct communication. A garden may stand for all of the attitudes listed above. They do not exploit twenty centurial evolution of that picture, but are meaningful for changing the space of culture. They all result from a mental stationary journey, which sometimes takes the form of a travel essay.

Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz issued prose entitled Ogrody in 1974. It consists of three parts: Sny dedicated to Julian Stryjkowski Ogrody – to Jerzy Lisowski and Sérénité – to Konstanty Jeleński. The part Ogrody revealed dualism in marking the garden space: with relation to the past and the future. Therefore despite the threat to destroy the chronology, which should be quoted first, is the position of a mature poet, who unites the beginning and the second half of the 20th century, since he renders the essence of the garden space as the culture space. The poet nearing the end of his life treats a garden as mental space – a figure of very personal

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25 J. Tuwim, “Spacer antyczny”, [in:] idem, Dzieła. Vol. 1. Part 2, Czytelnik, Warszawa 1955, p. 183. [“In the saddest locations we see each other, girl. Your merciful presence is necessary over there, on an antique walk, on a separation path, where hums my heart’s posthumous speechlessness.”]
reflection over passing. He sees its cultural dependence and tendency to decline. In order to mark the turning-point, as a motto he uses Różewicz’s words about ‘throat pressure’ in a contemporary poet. After the turning-point, gardens belong to the past and to the world of memories, which is always idealized to some extent. He writes:

Co dawniej poeci widzieli nie tylko jedno drzewo. Widzieli zbiorowiska drzew, którym nic nie groziło, widzieli lasy, widzieli ogrody. Może już wkrótce nie będzie ogrodów. Ogronne połączone ziemi pokryją martwo błyszczące szklarnie i kwiaty jak wszystko inne będą płodem zorganizowanej produkcji, nic z improwizacji, nic z niespodzianki.26

The spaces of his gardens - Tymoszówki, Byszewy, Eaux Vives, La Grange, La Favorita in Palermo, Stawiska – are marked not only with confinement, but also with mysteriousness, however, there are less of those in the gardens of the west. They are gardens of memory – of childhood, of emerging emotional and artistic sensitiveness, of intellectual experience between people – with nature in the background. All of them reflect mental state of the narrator, which relates to different spaces of time in the past. Death appears in them without the dead, who once existed in the memory gardens like Karol Szymanowski – in the garden of Palermo, or it appears as a tangible proof of destruction like a garden-orchard in Stawice. The broken trees in the orchard and autumn landscape remain in agreement with the psychic state of an old ‘human being’. There are no flowers in the garden, but there are the dead: people and animals.

Personal marking of Iwaszkiewicz’s gardens suggests that we think about them in terms of Marcel Proust’s madeleines, since as those lure with their taste, gardens lure with fragrance and atmosphere. That kind of interpretation is granted to them by a narrator. Each of them is different, yet together they form model garden space, which appears as a place of communication and a venue for creators of imagination, feelings, aesthetic impressions and intellectual speculations. Consistence gives them the brain of the one who recollects, and enlivens immemorial pictures. Together they form the space of transition: “Długo nie śpię, a w mej

26 J. Iwaszkiewicz, Ogrody, Czytelnik, Warszawa 1974, pp. 27-28. [“Not only could the poets of the past see one tree, they could see communities of trees, which were not threatened with anything. They could see forests and gardens. Maybe there will not be any gardens soon. Huge tracts of land will be covered with lifelessly glistening greenhouses. What is more, flowers, like all the rest, will result from organized production, without improvisation, with no surprise.”]
pamięci, przed moimi oczami przechodzą ogrody, ogrody, ogrody...”27 They are destroyed by the functionality of the 20th century civilization. What remains is the space of imagination, where forms penetrate one another, becoming its internal contents. In Iwaszkiewicz transversal gardens correspond with a transversal subject. The subject is aware of his accidental character, nevertheless he admits only alternative elements of identity, as much as he is allowed to admit those by the philosophical tradition of Europe (Schopenhauer, Bergson, maybe Freud) and of the East.28 Iwaszkiewicz’s garden evokes multitude of anticipations.

Even a wider formula of transition was proposed by Edward Stachura, for whom that is space of life. “The garden of life” “happens” in the process of being – (of a man) – in – the world.29 Also the subject happens in it, realizing his possible identities, as:

Wędrowka jedną żyje jest człowieka!
Idzie wciąg!
Dokąd? Skąd?
Dokąd! Skąd!

His gardens are jagged, open, deconstructed:

jedna nigdy mi nie była żadna rzecz
tak obojturna
bezbarwna
i rzekoma

jak teraz to
czy będzie dobrze
czy niedobrze będzie ze mną

tak się rozpruć
tak się odsłonić na oścież
po ogrodzie niech hula szarańcza31

27 Ibid., p. 79. [For a long time I cannot fall asleep and in my memory, in front of my eyes walk gardens, gardens, gardens ...]
30 E. Stachura, Wędrowką życie jest człowieka, [in:] Idem: Poezja i proza..., vol. 1, ed. Z. Redecki. Warszawa: 1987, p. 262. [“Human life is one trip. He continues walking not knowing where to and where from.”]
They are intrinsic gardens of the writing subject, as a result – of an artist:

rozliczne bóstwa w nim mieszkać
w ogrodzie jego blisko siebie wiśnia i cedr

Their confined structures are shattered by the transversal subject. He expands the borders of a garden up to the borders of life in the form of continuous becoming until he loses his identification. The traditional picture of a garden as a figure of a safe thought is dead for Stachura, just like “an old Lenten trunk”

z jednego z ludzkich śmietników
z wielu
wytrzasnąwszy ten bagaż
ćwiczyłeś się ku przyszłości

Stachura’s words: “Ignoring another man is insane” harmonize astonishingly with Iwaszkiewicz’s words from Ogrody: “Friendship! It is looking for echo in another man”, regarding an ethical aspect of garden space which is present in those words. A garden as a figure of thought defines the limits of cognition and the limits of existence. Yet, it is also an aesthetic figure of beauty. Introduction of such values as friendship extends its scope of reach to ethical issues. Traditional borders of a garden do not stand the test of time, they are not the experienced reality but a sort of utopia, which is not very likely to be fulfilled. However, the figure itself retains its positive marking, still the content resting in it is unreachable. Rubbish dumps contrast with gardens aesthetically and indirectly – ethically. Such picture of a garden is presented in Stanisław Grochowiak’s poem with the same title:

Jest w naszym ogrodzie pewna suchość form To może
Dlatego drapak zamiast róży Albo
W miejscach hortensji widelec i noże

31 Idem, “Po ogrodzie niech hula szarańcza”, [in:] ibid., p. 15. [“Never has anything been so listless, colourless and alleged. What will things be like for me now, good or not. To open oneself wide, may locusts romp through the garden.”]
32 Ibid., p. 30. [“In it live numerous goddesses, in his garden side by side is a cherry-tree and a cedar.”]
33 Ibid., p. 32. [“Having shaken that burden out of one of human rubbish dumps, you were preparing yourself for the future.”]
35 J. Iwaszkiewicz, Ogrody, op.cit., p. 53.
Transformation of a garden into a rubbish dump and a cemetery, in his poetry is a sign of contaminating culture through egoism and through illusive ideologies, the same sign which led to losing faith in a man. A “self-sufficient” man, that is to say an egoist, is dead, thus he belongs to a cemetery in *Menuet z pogrzebaczem i Agresty* or to a rubbish dump of values. In that way Grochowiak’s aesthetics of ugliness is an interpretation of ethics, serving as a language substitute.

Therefore the space connected with people’s outlook on life was questioned, together with the ethical space of a garden which was reduced to a rubbish dump or a cemetery. However, there is a garden of art where rubbish cannot be located, since as Stachura puts it:

A jednak jest w nas ten gód życia. Ten ogród gdzie taniec
Wiedziemy jak dzieci (…) 39

Andrzej Bursa noticed the complexity of the figure of a garden, nevertheless he did not submit it to transgressional endeavours. His picture

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36 S. Grochowiak, “Ogród”, [in:] idem, *Wybór wierszy*, Czytelnik, Warszawa 1965, p. 58. [“In our garden is certain harshness of forms. Maybe that is why there is a stubby old broom instead of a rose, or instead of hydrangeas there are forks and knives, which are put in the ground in order to let them dry up like photographs in an album.”]


38 E. Stachura, “Oto”, op.cit., pp. 229-230. [“The location of rubbish is a rubbish dump, however, where does the rubbish dump belong? Not in the garden of the world. In the garden of the world there is no place for a rubbish dump since there is not a single piece of trash; even half of a piece. (…) Everything is alive there. Only people Egōists and their ideas last, therefore they are doomed to decomposition.”]

39 S. Grochowiak, *Głód*, [in:] idem, *Nie było lata*, Czytelnik, Warszawa 1969, p. 43. [“And yet there is a hunger for life in us. The garden where we dance like children.”]
of a garden combines properties originating from different spaces of culture, though that picture as a whole is marginalized in the world “touched with a sword and a thunder”. Ogród Luizy does not exist, perhaps it has never existed.

Prostotę tajemnicy ogrodu Luizy
Labiryntów i altan puszczy i klombów kwietnych
Ptaszarni i rykowisk gonów gazel chyżyń
Pojąć potrafi tylko prawy i szlachetny
Prostotę tajemnicy ogrodu Luizy
Którego istnienie zabija jak topór

Only geraniums were left in the balcony in Piosenka chorego na raka podlewającego pelargonie.

Not only does the axiology of a garden best define its transversal character - both in the picture of the garden of the world/ garden of life, but also in the form of the garden of art. In Herbert the utopia of art, to which access is protected by a drum, is contradicted by the reality. One does not need to believe in its restorative power, since it did not rescue the poet from “the tragic outlook on life” expressed in irony, existential homelessness, in picturing the world as a maze. Nonetheless, it created undeniable aesthetic values. That one who was secluded from its continuity enters into it again in Barbarzyńcy w ogrodzie, as if against demasked utopia from Struna świata and against nonexistence of “Luiza’s gardens” or “nonwritten roe-deer” from Szymborska’s poem. In spite of everything, according to Herbert, art creates the world of not only aesthetic values.

The space of a garden had a similar transversal character for the already mentioned Lublin group “Ogród”. Kofta’s poetic song and his continuator’s - Mamcarz’s – refers to these values of the garden of life, the garden of culture and the garden of nature (in understanding authenticity), which are supposed to contradict the superficiality of existence, being targeted at the widest audience, at the public audience of popular culture. They bring out nostalgia, a feeling common in the contemporary culture. Public audience does not associate gardens with a specific culture. They form mental space, which is composed of opening and closing, of the beauty of harmony and of chaos of elements, of culture and nature.

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40 A. Bursa: “Luiza”, [in:] idem, Utwory wierszem i prozą, choise, edition and introduction by S. Stanuch, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Kraków 1969, pp. 102-103. (“Only an upright and high minded person can conceive the simplicity of the mystery of Luiza’s garden, of mazes, summer houses and flower beds, of bird groves and rutts of swift gazelles. Its existence kills like an axe.”)