



Green Wrocław: Urban narratives of three post-war generations of Wrocław's inhabitants

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Abstract

This study is an invitation to reflect on issues that fall within the area of collective memory, an area that awaits further in-depth analysis. More specifically, this article is a proposal of a broader study on cultural landscape and places of memory than that which is dominant in the sociological literature. In particular, I examine the relationship between the inhabitants of the Polish “Western Lands” and the material German heritage of the cities in which they happen to live. I mainly focus on the relation between socially constructed memory and greenery—a “negligible” part of the space of human life. As I demonstrate in the article, the “green” narrations about Wrocław created after World War II are lasting and are still present in the stories of city's inhabitants today.

Key words:

Polish Western Lands, social memory, cultural heritage, greenery, Wrocław

The cultural landscape as a lived landscape: A sociological perspective

The starting point of my reflections is the concept of cultural landscape, which I understand as „a record of history in a specific space whose shape and identity are composed of both primary (coming from nature) and secondary (resulting from human activity) factors” (Kornecki 1991, 19). This definition, however, requires a clarification in the sociological perspective I adopt. The postulated „record of history in a specific space” is carried out by researchers most often in the macrosocial context—as in the definition of the cultural landscape proposed by Beata Frydryczak:

the cultural landscape is the result of human work and activity and of historical time. Traces of these activities are still legible. They can be read both in the topography of the landscape (roads, fields, avenues of trees), revealing its subsequent layers of meaning (landscape archaeology, stories, legends), and artifacts (monuments, historic buildings, memorials), which means going beyond nature towards historical human testimonies. (Frydryczak 2014, 198)

The artifacts distinguished by the researcher—historic places, memorials, and monuments—co-create the collective identity of a community, most often a national identity.¹ They are also part of the cultural landscape, which is most often the object of interest to sociologists.² In this study, I propose to adopt a different perspective on research surrounding the cultural landscape—a microsociological one. In this approach, the social researcher is interested in fragments of the everyday landscape³ present in the narratives of users of a given space:

adopting a perspective close to ... the subject's everyday life makes the researcher concentrate on everyday things and events marked by intimacy.... Shortening the cognitive distance changes both the aesthetics and the scale of the landscape. It's like giving up a panoramic landscape in the style of Johannes Vermeer in favor of the multitude of microperspectives characteristic of the style of Bruegel. (Julkowska 2017, 5)

The cultural landscape understood in this way is inscribed in the phenomenological category of the lived world (*Lebenswelt*): “It is the world we encounter in everyday life, given in a simple and direct experience—especially in observation and its derivatives: memory, expectation, etc.—independent from the scientific interpretation and primary to it” (Gurwitsch 1989, 151). An important feature of the lived landscape is its active presence in the life of recipients:

The space occupied by people is the area of past, ongoing, and future events, the scene, and the result of activities; it is the location of objects created by people. It is constantly shaped and transformed, being a material but also an ‘inspirer’ of certain forms of behaviour,

1 A thorough description of the legitimizing function of material commemorations co-creating national identity has been given by Barbara Szacka (2006). The relationship between the landscape and national memorial sites is presented in Frydryczak (2017).

2 Sociological studies relate primarily to various types of material evidence of the past that can be collectively referred to as, following Lech M. Nijakowski, a „monument”: „By a monument, we mean various commemorations and places symbolizing important events of the past, such as marked battle sites, houses inhabited by great figures, and death camps” (Nijakowski 2006, 66).

3 I subscribe to Kazimierz Wejchert's concept of the everyday landscape. He wrote about the social functions of an ordinary, inconspicuous human environment as follows: „the role played by minor impacts created by the everyday environment in the formation of individuals and communities is still underestimated, [and] one of the most important factors shaping individuals, so far lost in the shadow of other factors, is the organization of the surrounding space, the everyday architecture” (Adamczewska-Wejchert and Wejchert 1986, 38).

through the shapes, functions, and values given to it, which are read and perpetuated in the consciousness of its users on a daily basis, both in the form of images and beliefs. (Nózka 2016, 104)

The lived landscape is an important element in creating a sense of belonging and attachment to the inhabited space (see Kühne 2017; Dwyer and Alderman 2008).

The lived landscape is the lens through which I look at the social structure of Wrocław, one of the largest urban centers of the “Western and Northern Territories” or “Western and Northern Lands”—areas added to Poland after the Second World War as a result of the arrangements of the conferences in Potsdam and Yalta. It is a city that has undergone a violent and profound change in identity as a result of military operations and political arrangements:

In 1945, the city suffered the most severe shock that could be imagined. In the last weeks of the war, one of the most beautiful metropolises in Europe was transformed into a gigantic pile of rubble, and because soon afterwards the victorious powers of World War II decided that Wrocław was to be a Polish city from that moment on, a total population exchange took place there. In just three years, all the Germans were deported to the west and replaced by Polish settlers from the east. (Thum 2005, 16)

Wrocław—a city without memory?

The settlement process in the Western and Northern Territories, begun in 1945, was difficult and complicated. For people who experienced the transition, the landscape of the pre-war eastern borderlands of Germany was foreign, even hostile. It was also incomprehensible—towns and villages annexed to Poland were more prosperous and more developed than those from which their post-war inhabitants came—mostly uneducated people, living in poor rural areas. The traumatic experiences of people subjected to forced displacement from the eastern borderlands of Poland—areas of Poland incorporated into the Soviet Union after the Second World War—should be added to the above difficulties. In the most ruined cities (like Wrocław), the post-war landscape was repelling, with ubiquitous destruction and hardships in everyday life—there was no food, water, electricity, or glass in windows, and armed gangs circulated around the city (see Thum 2005; Grzebałkowska 2015; Halicka 2015). The post-war image of the Western and Northern Territories was supplemented by an uncertain political context that caused living in the “Recovered Territories” to be associated with a lack of stability and security—verbalized in the repeated slogan “the Germans will return” (see, for instance, Thum 2005).

The indicated circumstances of the post-war landscape of the Western and Northern Lands also affected Wrocław as it became a Polish city—they left their mark on the urban narratives shared by successive generations of Wrocław's inhabitants. The key

in this context was the “crack between the place and the society” created in the first post-war years (Dyak 2011, 137). Its consequence was an ambiguity of existence in post-war Wrocław that lasted for decades. The living environment of the inhabitants of Wrocław was the surviving fragments of the city’s German landscape—the surroundings were filled with architecturally alien buildings, infrastructure, signs, books, everyday objects, etc. However, this whole space of everyday life has remained “unnamed,” “unspoken,” and “unexplained” for decades, both on the level of the everyday life of the inhabitants⁴ and in public discourse filled with slogans about the morally and historically justified return of Wrocław to the Fatherland:

A repatriate from over the Bug River or a settler from central Poland were going to the new territory as an area incorporated into their homeland.... In the construction of this new ‘small homeland,’ they were reassured by the faith and certainty that they were not colonizers in foreign areas, but they settle in the lands that, although once belonged to Germany, were reincorporated into Poland as a result of the war. They had a sense that the changes were just. (Nowakowski 1967, 183)

After 1989, the German history of the city began to be gradually included in public discourse, though often under the slogan of the multicultural past of the city—obscuring the problematic heritage of Breslau:

a specific myth of multiculturalism of parts of the Western Lands, for example, Wrocław or Gdańsk, acts as a factor weakening or “softening” the former Germanism visible on a daily basis, especially in the architecture and the civilizational shaping of the landscape. (Zawada 2015, 93)

Nowadays, the problems of the difficult pre-war heritage of Wrocław are more and more visible in the scientific studies of literary scholars (Rybicka 2011; Zawada 2015; Zybura 1999), culture studies experts (Miściorak 2015; Saryusz-Wolska 2011), historians (Praczyk 2017; Thum 2005), pedagogues (Kamińska 2017), and sociologists (Czajkowski and Pabjan 2013; Kłopot and Trojanowski 2015). What is more, some researchers postulate, based primarily on common sense beliefs, that subsequent post-war generations of Wrocław’s inhabitants adopt and accept the difficult heritage of their city. Here is one such enthusiastic voice:

⁴ As Stanisław Bereś, a Wrocław resident and professor at the University of Wrocław, recalls: „I lived in a German house where for generations German children had been born and old people had died. I slept on a German couch, looked at German paintings, bathed in a German bath, ate from German pots and plates.... Sometimes it occurred to me: ‘Jesus, we live on stolen things.’... Since childhood we had been raised in hatred and fear of the Germans, and at the same time our whole world, the whole cosmos of our everyday life, even our tastes, had been formed within the objects, equipment, forms, and spirit of Germany. Do you realize that? Do you think it does not affect a person in any way?” (Nowicki (Bereś) 1993, 51).

Wrocław has been conquered! It is already the second generation of the native inhabitants of Wrocław that have come into the world in a city incomparably more “their own” than that of their parents. They were not only seeds but young sprouts of local identity... the end of the struggle for the face of the inhabitants’ own identity is also related to the opening of the discourse to important areas that were previously excluded. I am thinking primarily of the German heritage of Wrocław but also its Czech and Austrian legacy. (Łaska 2006, 23)

Other scholars point out, however, that the Breslau wound, created decades ago and never cared for, has not yet healed and affects the modern processes of inhabiting the city: “The process of Polish citizens taking over the city of Wrocław has lasted for three generations and has not ended yet” (Dzikowska 2006, 167), and that “there has been a breakdown of long-term social structures, and, as a result, the subsequent, now third generation living in this area has become a participant in the dispute over memory” (Margiela-Korczewska 2011, 176).

At present, there is little to be found at the level of qualitative research, about the living landscape structures of modern Wrocław from the perspective of ordinary residents of the city.⁵ This is a subject that I undertake in the following study. The center of my reflections is the everyday landscape of the city present in the narratives of the inhabitants of Wrocław—more precisely, one of its aspects rarely addressed by social researchers: nature and its role in the processes of inhabiting a culturally alien space. In the case of Wrocław, this is a topic deeply rooted in the narratives of post-war residents and significant for building their sense of “being at home” in Wrocław.

Analyzed empirical material

Exploring the (non-obvious) themes of the cultural landscape of Wrocław, I reached for the rich literature on the subject—among others, the aforementioned studies by historians, sociologists, and cultural scholars, discussing various manifestations of post-war identities of Wrocław’s inhabitants from various perspectives. Published diaries and memoirs of the inhabitants of the Western Territories were also a valuable reference point and a source of information for me (see, for instance, Halicka 2015; Grzebałkowska 2015), including those of the inhabitants of Wrocław (see Bierut and Pęcherz 2015; Konopińska 1987; Mielewczyk 2018; Nowicki (Bereś) 1993; Suleja 1995; Tuszyńska 2003; Zawada 2015). In the following pages of the study, I will refer in more detail to two research projects. The first of these is the publication *Związani*

⁵ In 2014 and 2015, Katarzyna Kajdanek—a researcher dealing with, among others, the relationship between the public space and the cultural identity of Wrocław—conducted 20 free interviews with Wrocław experts—local politicians, city officials, journalists, architects, art historians, urban activists—see Bierwaczonok, Dymnicka, Kajdanek, and Nawrocki (2017).

z miastem. Opracowanie i fragmenty wypowiedzi nadesłanych na konkurs: Czym jest dla Ciebie miasto Wrocław? [Attached to the City; A compilation and excerpts of the statements sent in for the contest: What is the city of Wrocław to you?], which contains extensive fragments of memoirs written by the inhabitants of Wrocław in the second half of the 1960s (Jałowiecki 1970).⁶ The second is my research on the post-war processes of settling the city and the generational transmission connected with it. In this study, I will refer to the pilot studies I conducted from May to September 2018. The research consists of 18 narrative interviews conducted with representatives of the second (born in the 1950s) and the third (born in the 1970s) generations of citizens of Wrocław. An important aspect of the conducted research was to reach ordinary residents of Wrocław—not experts or activists of urban communities, whose knowledge and narration had already been used by researchers of urban processes.

The pioneer period—familiar greenery

The published memoirs of the first settlers arriving in the “recovered” areas of the Western and Northern Territories are dominated by the images of post-war destruction and ubiquitous unfamiliarity, already outlined earlier in this study.

In these narratives, there are also visible practices of searching for familiar elements in the surrounding landscape, on which one could build a sense of “being home.” Poles relied on the assurances of the communist authorities about their moral right to live in these lands:

What I have, in fact, once belonged to someone else, some German. And what will happen if they want to regain their property? This created a state of conflict and a sense of insecurity and instability. This in turn caused a more and more intense need to justify one's residence in the area and to justify possession of property (mine, not mine) given... These justifications were strengthened in the new ideology and in the ideologically determined type of national pathos, which was manifested in many historical falsifications presented in the media at the time and in the speeches of political activists at the central and local level. This ideology began to be assimilated. (Hess and Leoński 2001, 194)

However, apart from the internalized propaganda motifs, in the memories of the settlers, one can find more individual practices of taming the new space:

⁶ The publication contains the winning and distinguished written statements submitted for the competition „What is the city of Wrocław to you?,” announced and completed in 1966 by the Wrocław Branch of the Polish Sociological Association and the Department of Culture of the Presidium of the National Council of the City of Wrocław. The jury of the competition was composed of significant representatives of Polish sociology: Józef Chałasiński, Jan Szczepański, Aleksander Wallis, Janusz Goćkowski, and Bohdan Jałowiecki.

There was no day off work in which I would not travel across the city in search of objects unknown to me and facts to be learned. That is how I was attached to Wrocław for an indefinite time, and the city absorbed me completely. (Jałowiecki 1970, 239)

That sense of familiarity resulting from personal contact with the space was facilitated by the nature that was present in the destroyed cities.⁷ For example, Ludwik Ejsmond, recalling the beginnings of his residence in the ruined Głogów, wrote that

families lived in ruins and basements. There was no water, electricity, or coal gas in the city. The people who lived in it ran a primitive way of life—dishes were prepared on artificially built hearths, water was taken from brooks, and wood or coal was retrieved from buried cellars... And yet I remained there—filled with faith in the possibility of rebuilding the city—full of flowers and greenery. (Ejsmond 1973, 189)

The greenery that survived the war's turmoil and overgrew the city's ruins provided a respite and a sense of normality in the hardships of post-war existence—it was an aesthetic, but also a therapeutic, escape from the ubiquitous destruction. However, it was not only solace but also something recognizable, something you could identify with—something you could grasp. The cultural landscape of the Western and Northern Territories was semantically empty for the post-war inhabitants—deprived of the artifacts mentioned above and, importantly from the community perspective, deprived of cultural points of reference—deprived of memories, legends, and stories of previous generations. Olga Tokarczuk notes that the life of the first post-war generation settled in the area was marked by a specific emptiness:

Hunger for a myth, hunger for a tale that will integrate this broken world, that will tame space and time.... Why was this little chapel built in the forest?... Who lived in the palace? Is it true that there was a windmill on the pass? Where did the road lead that ends suddenly in the forest?... Our predecessors took their memories with them, and we were thrown into the world without memory. (Tokarczuk 2001, 49; see Browarny 2008).

⁷ Małgorzata Praczyk (2018), based on several hundred diaries of settlers in the Western and Northern Territories, describes in detail the functions that nature (both vegetation and animals) played in their lives. Praczyk defines the issue of the relationship between man and the images of the natural environment, landscape, and its cultural formation as environmental memory: „Environmental memory is a type of human memory whose subject is the natural environment. Man, as one of the elements of the natural environment, enters into multidirectional and feedback relationships with its individual elements. These relationships are described in various narratives about nature, as well as in other cultural manifestations of human activity that reflect human experience related to the natural environment” (Praczyk 2018, 333).

In that meaningless landscape of towns and villages, greenery was an understandable reference point, a link to a safe past—I will again refer to the diary of Joanna Konopińska:

Today, in front of the house, under a high birch, I found early violets, not yet fully developed, but already pleasing to the eye. I made a small bouquet of them and carried them to my grandmother. “Put them, my child, on the bedside table,” she said, “they will remind me of my youth. The same flowers grew in Rakoniewice, and they smelled the same too.” (Konopińska 1987, 212)

The 1960s—the green Wrocław

The motif of greenery in narratives about Wrocław did not disappear with the post-war reconstruction of the city—clearing it of ruins and transforming it according to socialist standards. On the contrary, the analyzed narratives from the 1960s indicate that urban nature remained an important reference point for defining the identity of the post-war city. The authors of the memoirs published in the aforementioned volume *Attached to the City*, while answering the competition questions “Does Wrocław have its own image?” and “What is most characteristic about Wrocław?” very often begin their replies with descriptions of urban green areas—parks, gardens, and squares:

The city has pleasant and beautiful corners. This is visible on the quiet and majestic Ostrów Tumski, the beautiful streets, gardens, and squares of Karłowice, or, in my opinion, the most beautiful corner, stretching from Sępolno to Biskupin, with the grounds of the Olympic Stadium, Szczytnicki Park, the zoo, and the People’s Hall. (Jałowiecki 1970, 124)

I see the features of a big urban center in the beautiful parks and green areas of Wrocław, and especially in the vast expanse it covers, which is interestingly connected with a number of satellite settlements. This area and the abundance of greenery, and especially the Oder, which does not divide the city, but integrates it in some strange way, make up Wrocław’s own image. (Ibidem, 223)

For a full understanding of the role of urban greenery in the creation of the post-war identity of the city, it should be added that the parks so often present in the narratives of Wrocław residents—mostly founded in the nineteenth century or earlier—are the cultural heritage of Breslau.⁸ Designed on a grand scale, planted with exotic trees and enriched with infrastructure enabling spending free time in

⁸ For a detailed discussion of the history of Wrocław’s urban greenery, see Bińkowska (2011), Bińkowska and Szopińska (2013).

a way unknown to post-war residents (including inns and restaurants, canals for kayaking, fountains), they trace back to a wealthy middle-class culture. Looking from that perspective upon these fragments of the urban space, one could assume that they would constitute another motif of the city's alienation. However, the city parks of Wrocław are treated in the analyzed diaries as areas devoid of incriminating German origin. The green architecture in the discussed memoirs most often appears in contemporaneous term.⁹ It is also an element integrating Wrocław's community (*our greenery*). The extent of the urban greenery being *our own* can be seen in the following excerpt, demonstrating the two most important motifs contributing to the post-war familiarity of Wrocław—greenery (“magnolias in Szczytnicki Park”) and references to the Piast family's legacy (“Piast Eagles”):

First, an ardent search for all traces of the Polishness of Wrocław—Piast Eagles, historic churches with their old chapels, sarcophagi, tombstones, portals, tympana. Making sure that we walk on our streets and alleys. Every effort to clean up, and later to rebuild fragments of the city, pleased the eye. The heart was joyful when discovering magnolias in Szczytnicki Park, a charming pergola near the People's Hall. (Jałowiecki 1970, 263)

Defining the city's identity primarily with reference to its green architecture says a lot about the processes of taming the space in Wrocław in the 1960s. The image of the city emerging from these memoirs confirms the divergence between the matter of the city and its inhabitants indicated at the beginning of the study. The pre-war architecture, apart from the—accepted by the then authorities as “Polish heritage”—Gothic, Renaissance, and sometimes Baroque, is carefully avoided in the images of Wrocław sketched by the authors:

Someone once asked me what is worth seeing in Wrocław. A difficult question: what is there to choose, should we show them the historic, mossy districts—Ostrów Tumski, with its numerous monuments, or the new districts, scattered around the city? I think I would take the visitor to the Market Square, as we did with my wife and her relative who had regularly visited Wrocław for several years from abroad. That, in my opinion, is the center of Wrocław—as it was centuries ago. (Jałowiecki 1970, 169)

The advantage and the attraction of Wrocław are its magnificent historic places, mostly Gothic, less Renaissance and Baroque....The Gothic monuments are mostly loosely scattered sacred buildings (except the Town Hall). In the future, they will be a quiet

⁹ In only one case does one of the authors, using the term *for a long time*, indirectly indicate an awareness of the pre-war origin of the green spaces of Wrocław: “However, I hope that Wrocław, which has had many green areas for a long time, will remain beautifully green and spacious, that it will not be so bricked up like Warsaw. For there I felt like a person from the lowlands, who, being thrown into the mountainous surroundings, feels the lack of space” (Jałowiecki 1970, 215).

haven, a diversification among the monotony of modern buildings and the only souvenirs of the magnificent and rich past of the city. (Ibidem, 120)

Other architectural epochs—first of all buildings from the 19th century and from the first half of the 20th century—appear in the analyzed publication sporadically—in descriptions of destroyed tenement houses:

If after leaving the station [a traveler] goes to the left, it will not be so bad, because there are relatively wide streets and quite a lot traffic there.... If, however, our traveler goes to the right, it will be a little worse. He will come across the hideous, shabby, dirty, ex-German tenements that line streets like Pułaskiego, Traugutta, Miernicza, and others. There are more such areas in the city. I realize that it's not our—Poles'—fault. Repainting these tenement houses would involve large costs, made larger given all the sculptures “adorn-ing” the walls would have to be eliminated. That is why addressing the ugliness of these districts in a complete way is, in my opinion, impossible at the moment. (Jałowiecki 1970, 132)

The fact that the Wrocław of the 1960s is, at the narrative level, full of architectural areas of oblivion (first of all, the indicated 19th century and modernist architecture) is a consequence of the communist authorities' policies, which consistently surrounded “the nineteenth century with a barrier of silence in the history of the city” (Thum 2005, 356). Interestingly, an unique part of the city, eagerly included by the writers in their stories about their “own” Wrocław, is Wielka Wyspa (the Great Island)—a part of the city located in the north-east, separated from the center by the Oder and its tributaries. It is an area where important fragments of German cultural heritage can be found—the People's Hall, the zoo, and the workers' garden-like housing estates built in the 1930s: Biskupin and Sępolno, as well as Szczytnicki Park. This is a space that had not suffered as a result of warfare, and is full of gardens, squares, and parks.

21st century — the city of recreation

Reading the memoirs of Wrocław pioneers and diaries published in *Attached to the City*, I asked myself about the cultural functions of green urban architecture in contemporary Wrocław. I will answer this question by reaching for the empirical material collected during my own pilot studies. In the interviews gathered, greenery, just like half a century ago, is a key thread in the tale of urban space. It remains the most important reference point for questions about noticed urban architecture, and about the architectural identity of the city. For example:

KB: What is the most Wrocław-like in Wrocław? What architecture?

AK: The parks.

KB: The parks?

AK: The parks ... so, erm, what I like and what I think that is.. in Wrocław is that, that I think it is just a nice place to live, the parks among other things. The things that are happening here along the Oder. [interview 16]

KB: What do you like about the city architecture?

PŚ: It's hard to enumerate. Well, I like the whole city. I adore the parks in Wrocław, the big ones, you know. Szczytnicki Park, Millennium Park, Kozanowski Park. We often ride our bikes there with my son. [interview 6]

Wrocław's greenery—above all the urban parks—are the most frequently indicated architectural (or maybe “architectural”) themes in the city. The respondents refer to greenery equally often as to the two most important fragments of the city in terms of the city's image and tourist attractions—the Market Square and Ostrów Tumski. Based on the pilot studies, it is difficult to answer the question about the reasons for this. Perhaps the indication of urban greenery as the city's architecture in this context results from a sense of lack of discursive competence that makes it possible to express opinions on buildings. Such knowledge is not part of everyday experience. On the other hand, parks are a component of the city that is understandable, noticeable, and (to some extent) subject to reflection. Wrocławians talk, walk, and ride bikes in the city parks. In other words, they make that space a part of their everyday lives.

However, awareness of urban architecture cannot be reduced to the ability to name architectural styles. Architecture is a carrier of values, certain social visions—it is a discourse which should be understood as “a form and a set of practices used to communicate social meanings and maintain the vision of a social world whose shape is subject to constant cultural and political negotiations” (Prośniewski 2014, 15-16). Architecture, or rather its social reception, contributes to the identity of the city; it is also the voice of the past, the heritage of every city. Therefore, perhaps, the focus on urban greenery present in the narratives of subsequent generations of Wrocław residents is a way of avoiding facing the Prussian architecture of Wrocław, which still gives it a significant architectural trait.¹⁰ A good example of how one can read buildings is Andrzej Zawada's description of his contact with the architectural foreignness of Wrocław in the 1960s:

¹⁰ I will only mention as a side note that by adopting this view on the significance of architecture, one can take a different look at the places most frequently cited by the respondents: Ostrów Tumski and the Market Square. These parts of the city, which during the Polish People's Republic co-created the image of the „recovered” Polish Wrocław, may still be woven into the narrative because of this particular story of a familiar medieval past.

I felt like an immigrant in Wrocław for a long time... Whenever I went outside, I felt like I was abroad. And although I could hear the Polish language around me, it did not diminish the power of that feeling. The soaring gothic of the churches, the barracks-like rhythm of the neo-gothic, dark red facades of numerous schools, hospitals, offices, the faces of the neoclassical tenement houses, lined with gray-yellow clinker, all that gave the city a sharp edge of Germanic rigor. (Zawada 2015, 9-10)

What clearly links the narratives from half a century ago with current ones is the absence of the 19th century architecture—the type of buildings still characteristic of Wrocław despite the passage of years—in the constructed images of the city. In the interviews I have collected, 19th century tenement houses are only present in the narratives of people who lived or still live in such buildings. Here is a fragment of an interview with a person who spent their childhood and part of their adult life living in such a building in the city center. It is worth noticing that the description of the urban space begins with an indication of the urban greenery:

KB: What do you like in Wrocław?

MW: (a long moment of reflection) I don't know, you know. I mean, I surely like a lot of greenery, a lot of old trees. (moment of reflection)... Certainly those districts where those old five-story houses are. The revitalized ones are especially nice. Unfortunately, the streets spoil them, because they are not done yet and so on. [interview 15]

The Prussian architecture being “unnoticed” by Wrocław residents is also described by Katarzyna Kajdanek, a researcher who analyzed the results of quantitative research on the cultural identity of Wrocław (as well as Gdańsk and Gliwice). Discussing the answers of the inhabitants of Wrocław, Kajdanek states that

the picture of Wrocław emerging from the results brings to mind a glossy folder in which from page one we can see an aesthetic city, inhabited by young, open people—a city vibrating with an energy of investments and new ideas. The historic buildings are part of this picture, a part not subjected to in-depth reflection, accepted with a sort of unconsciousness of where it came from and what its meaning is. (Kajdanek 2017, 143)

And perhaps it is this, shared by successive generations of the inhabitants of Wrocław, the unconsciousness of where the inherited architecture came from and what its meaning is, that is the cause of the narrative turning away from it and the focusing in the stories on the motif of a “green Wrocław.” As Karl Schlögel notes, “only those who know something can notice anything. Those who know nothing will not notice anything” (Schlögel 2009, 56).

In the narratives I gathered, urban greenery is referred to in the places in Wrocław in which my interlocutors “feel at home.” The city's green spaces are where the

residents of Wrocław like to stay, second only to their own neighborhoods. It is worth noting that my interlocutors no longer really understand the question “what is Wrocław-like?” in the city space—a question that the authors of the memoirs from *Attached to the City* broadly answered. Contemporary residents of Wrocław were happy to answer the questions “what they like in Wrocław” and “where they feel at home in Wrocław.” And the answers to these questions are the empirical material analyzed in the pages of this study. These are mainly depictions of the city parks and green areas of the Great Island. In other words, the image of the city emerging from contemporary narratives consists of the same motifs that were used by the writers of the diaries in Wrocław in the 1960s:

KB: Where do you feel at home in the space of Wrocław?

WW: Certainly not in Krzyki (laughs). Because I am from this “fraction” which belongs to the Szczytnicki Park area, it is my whole life. Szczytnicki Park, the Olympic Stadium, that is Opatowicka Island. That is, the Oder, the park, the greenery and the area of the Great Island between the Great Island and Grunwaldzki Square. [interview 11]

KB: Where do you feel at home in the space of Wrocław?

PŚ: Południowy Park. Wonderful. One of my favorite parks.... It is nicely restored; there are beautiful trees, a small puddle in the middle. You can sit on the grass, I don't know, you can eat cotton candy ... now there are some food trucks, something like that. Well, it's quite nice. And then the People's Hall area. The pergola, the Japanese Garden. Beautiful Szczytnicki Park, wild, great. One of the largest parks in Poland. [interview 6]

Despite this significant similarity (continuation) of the motifs describing the “familiar” city, in the analyzed empirical material one can notice a significant transformation of the context of the functioning of the greenery. Wrocław citizens, writing about their city half a century ago, created a public, official picture of the city. These green areas were part of a wider and important theme that is present in all the memoirs in the analyzed volume—the defense of Wrocław as a friendly and indisputably Polish city. In other words, the admiration of Wrocław's parks legitimized the Polishness of the city—which in terms of green architecture was not inferior to Warsaw or Cracow, or even outranks them in that context, for example:

Our greenery is very Wrocławish, after all, it is hard to find such wonderful parks anywhere else in Europe. I consider Szczytnicki Park and its Japanese Garden as first-class gems. Południowy Park is also valuable. (Jałowiecki 1970, 113)

The abundance of greenery is a plus side of our city. I knew we had a lot of it, but nevertheless I was surprised to read in the press that Wrocław had the most green areas among the municipalities in Poland. Until then I was inclined to assume that Szczecin

was ahead of us in that respect, where streets, or rather the avenues, are just drowning in green, and Cracow, where, willingly or unwillingly, wherever you go, you can always come across Planty Park. (Ibidem, 131)

In today's narratives of the inhabitants of Wrocław, the reference to public discourse about the city is disappearing. The indicated greenery is first and foremost a part of the residents' favorite private space—these are the places where they rest, where they escape from urban noise:

KB: Where do you feel at home in Wrocław?

LC: Well, above all, in my neighborhood. My neighborhood, that is Psie Pole, Zakrzów,... and Pawłowice surprisingly—there is this park there, there is the castle, I like to stay there, I also like to walk, ride a bike, and yes, those areas, plus Kielczów. [interview3]

KB: Where do you feel at home in Wrocław?

MB: Hmm, at home, in the garden [smile]—well, it's Old Zakrzów, there are single-family houses and gardens—and under my apple tree. Each of us has their own intimate place in the world—old people have their armchairs, don't they? Well, I don't, I have this apple tree [laughs]. [interview 2]

KB: Where do you feel at home in Wrocław?

BW: Here [quiet laughter] in this district ...somewhere in Huby, Krzyki...When I don't go to work, I move around Krzyki, I don't like to go to the center [laughs]. Somehow, for example, I am in the Market Square very rarely these days. Somehow, I am not attracted to it, there is more greenery here, more peace I think.... I prefer to stay here. [interview 12]

Conclusion

In this study, I set myself two goals. Firstly, I wanted to show that the lived landscape contains socially significant motifs that are inconspicuous, trivial, or almost unnoticeable to an external observer (researcher): “significant elements—omitted so far, marginalized, ideologized one-sidedly—of the multicultural history of the city can also be found ‘between,’ ‘at the junction,’ ‘underneath,’ on the edges and scraps, in voids, gaps, breaches, holes, and pieces of junk” (Taraneck-Wolańska 2013, 151; see Kamińska 2017). These details, lasting in all their inconspicuousness somewhere “in between” the themes forming the official image of the city, affect the experience of the urban space and of the socially (narratively) established images of that the space.

The second aim of the article was to present these fragments of the lived landscape of Wrocław, which, despite the passage of years and the changes to which

the city and its residents have been subjected, are still an important (albeit hardly noticeable from the perspective of public discourse) reference point for creating the identity of post-war generations of Wrocław residents. The city's greenery, although shifted narratively from the official image of the city to a private, socially shared one, has functioned since the 1940s as a way to deal with the still-difficult and often silenced architectural heritage of the German Breslau.

Greenery, in all the urban stories I analyzed, both those from the 1960s and those of today, has a rooting, settling, and soothing function (see Praczyk 2018, 328). Interestingly, even for the first generation of Wrocław residents, the greenery motif is not sentimentally colored—in those memories there is no longing for landscapes from their earlier lives, the places of their childhood and adolescence. The image of Wrocław emerging from the collected material is an image of a city living in a timeless present—as one of my interlocutors notes:

In Wrocław, we are having fun now. It's here and now. And whatever happens later, we will worry about it later. In Poznań, everyone is worried in advance. We have to provide children with this and that, what will happen, what about this, what about that. And they worry all their lives. And in Wrocław it is here and now and we will worry later, right? It's a lot... it's cooler". [interview 6]

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