



THE HEDGE MAZE AND THE IMAGINATION'S MAZE AS AN INSPIRING AND SKILL-ENHANCING DRAWING TOPIC FOR STUDENTS OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

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The green maze as a symbol of human life, its toils and hardships, its blind alleys, is an extraordinarily contemporary form. As a conjunction of spirals and interweaving, the maze is also a representation of infinity and perpetual return. It allows the category of time to be transferred to the category of space. At the centre of the maze, a kind of reward often awaited the wanderer; a hill from which they could watch their companions seeking the path, a temple, a square, a place to rest in the shade of a tree, the water of a fountain or pool, a sun dial, a statue or a poetic inscription. In the chaos of the world, we patiently seek the right road, at the end of which, a surprise might await us. Just as we patiently seek creative solutions in the labyrinth of the imagination, uncertain of quite where we are going as we sketch and of what will finally emerge. In the extraordinarily complex contemporary world, the maze seems to be a theme to inspire the imagination of future landscape architects. It offers the potential for the cohesive drawing of organic and architectural forms which are mutually complementary and descriptive. It schools the recognition of the attributes of spatial complexity while, at one and the same time, preserving the readability and simplicity of the message. It also teaches the skills of drawing architectural and plant forms cohesively and of discerning the three-dimensionality in the latter. In the maze, these two forms come to resemble one another, each reflects the other, they continue layout of the lines. Each follows the other's shapes, creating cohesive and rhythmic motifs in the space. The maze is a drawing topic unusually suited to developing the imagination of future garden designers. As an exercise, it teaches them to employ the code of the space through the use of lines, patterns, squares and so forth. Breaks in lines, sudden changes of direction and altered degrees of curve create formally underscored points and hubs, focusing our attention.

Keywords: Drawing education, Architectural drawing, Hedge maze.

Introduction

Apart from pure functionality, garden forms have, from the most ancient of times, also expressed a need for a beauty such as will allow them to be not only a site for the cultivation of edible plants, but also a refuge, a place for rest, relaxation and contemplation. A garden is designed in relation to the landscape surrounding it and the architecture accompanying it. One particularly fascinating form of the encounter between architectural space and greenery is the maze. Geometric meanders, mazes and labyrinths created from plants have long constituted a field for a tour-de-force display of 'arboreal architecture' and the art of topiary.

The maze is a typical example of the ‘unnaturally’ fashioned garden. In this form, the greenery is clad in an architectural costume; in a sense, it is a metaphor of architecture’s acting powerfully upon humankind. When viewing it from above, we read its patterns easily, but once inside, we become lost. As an ‘over-elaborately developed form of disorder’ the maze is difficult to interpret (Harbison 2001: 25). On the one hand, it ornaments the garden and draws the eye; on the other hand, it is a challenge, constituting a space for some interesting amusement. At the same time, it schools the visitor’s sense of direction and their ability to memorize and to draw conclusions from their mistakes.

The Hedge Maze

In the gardens of Western Europe, mazes mostly took the form of a grid of hedges. The favorite trees and shrubs for creating them were hornbeams, yews, cypresses, junipers, boxwoods, laurels and hollies. They were also fashioned in the form of lanes of trees, primarily hornbeams and basswoods. In places where it was not possible to plant a hedge, wood, sand, stones and so forth were used to build them.

By the 12th century, mazes had most probably already appeared in the garths of medieval monasteries and convents, symbolizing the seven deadly sins and the seven virtues, although they could also stand for the Way of the Cross. It is absolutely certain that they occurred in European gardens in the 14th and 15th centuries. The Italian *all’italiana* design, spread by the work of French architect Androuet Du Cerceau and Flemish artist Hans Vredeman de Vries, was predominant (Kaszowski 1996).

An example of one of the oldest is the maze in the Jardin des Cinq Sens in France; dating from the 14th century, it was restored in 1986. The Bouvier d’Yvoire family, who have lived in the castle since 1655, have opened the garden to the public. The maze was created outside a great square that contains a suite of four gardens; taste, which features fruit, edible flowers and fascinating vegetables; smell, containing plants with highly scented flowers and leaves; touch, which holds plants with interesting textures; and sight, with blue and purple camellias. The sense of hearing is represented in the garden by the water in the fountain and the song of the birds. The maze has received numerous awards, *inter alia*, from the Minister of Culture.

The first mazes were created to a circular or square plan, using low boxwood hedges. There is a 16th century, circular maze, with a statue of Venus rising from the centre, at the Château de Chenonceau in France. The hedge, which is one hundred and thirty centimeters, or just over four feet high, was reconstructed in 2003 and is formed from two thousand yews growing in a glade. Within the maze itself, four caryatids, added to the palace façade in the 16th century by Catherine de’ Medici, can be found.

Mazes attained particular popularity in Italian Renaissance gardens such as the one at the Villa Lante in Bagnaia and the Villa d’Este in Tivoli. They were an interesting solution for a modest space and, crucially, they had classic references; the maze at the Villa d’Este was a tribute to the mythical labyrinth of the Minotaur, which was a symbol of life, human fate and its complex nature.

Mazes which were prolate in form emerged later. Initially, the pathways were created along straight lines, turning on a square, rectangular or circular contour. With time, they began to take on other aspects, oval, polygonal and asymmetric, until they reached the unconstrained shapes of English-Chinese gardens. In the 18th century, the labyrinth form was discarded, only to start making a comeback to gardens in its characteristic role as ornament and ‘strolling place’ by the early 19th century. Gradually, it was transformed into a system of complicated pathways, assuming the nature of wild promenades (Siewniak, Mitkowska 1998: 128-129). Examples of this form are the 19th century labyrinths at Hatfield House and Hever Castle. The former was built in 1611 by Robert Cecil, with the gardens being created by John Tradescant the Elder; it was restored in the 19th century, which was when the maze was created.

The labyrinth motif also appeared in China, in Yuan Ming Yuan, the 18th century park of Emperor Qian Long, where it constituted a curiosity imported from the countries of the West.

At the centre of the maze, a kind of reward often awaited the wanderer; a hill from which they could watch their companions seeking the path, a temple, a square, a place to rest in the shade of a tree, the water of a fountain or pool, a sun dial, a statue or a poetic inscription. An interesting example of this is the

garden in the small American town of New Haven where a maze was laid out in 1814 and recreated with shrubs and privet planted between 1939 and 1941. The original had been created with shrubs, vines and flowering plants. Finding the path to the centre of that maze was no simple matter; it was as difficult as finding the way to true social harmony. Originally, a round, log hut stood at the centre; however, following the restoration, a stone temple took its place. The Harmonists were of the opinion that mazes were of help in contemplation.

Likewise, Versailles proffered a French example; there, the seven hundred and fifty meters, or almost half a mile of pathways which made up the no-longer existent maze held an astonishing thirty-five surprises, all of them echoing Aesop's fables. The contemporary Jardins du Monde (Gardens of the World) in Royan contain a maze wreathed in mist, the vapors of which are atomized by a special system. Thanks to this effect, it is uncommonly mysterious and difficult to penetrate. Some interesting modern mazes in France present innovative and original ways of approaching the fashioning of architectural gardens; they include le Labyrinthe des Sortilèges (the Maze of Spells) in Alpes-Maritimes, le Labyrinthe Égyptien (the Egyptian Maze) in Touraine, le Labyrinthe de la Ferme de Gally (the Maze on the Gally Farm) in Yvelines and le Pirate Fordemaïs (Fordemaïs, the Pirate) at Ludale Parc in Pouligny.

Contemporary 'composed forms of disorder' could be seen at the Chaumont-sur-Loire garden festival in 2004, which was entitled *Vive le Chaos! Ordre et désordre au Jardin (Long Live Chaos! Order and Disorder in the Garden)*. There were some interesting gardens designed there, which might be described as the labyrinths of contemporary humanity's imagination. Some astounding solutions were proposed, surrealistic associations were brought into play, forms were presented with their meanings inverted; walls on the ground, a bench and plant containers set otherwise than horizontally and so forth.

In England, the hedges of the garden maze at Hampton Court were planted for William of Orange by George London and Henry Wise between 1689 and 1695 on what might well have been the site where the earlier maze, designed for Cardinal Wolsey, had stood. Hornbeams were initially used for the planting, although the maze was later to be augmented with other plants. It covers an area of around one thousand square meters, or more than four thousand, two hundred and sixty square feet, while the length of the pathways is around 800 meters, or almost half a mile in total. In May 2005, the artists of Greyworld designed an audio installation entitled *Trace* for the maze. Within its green corridors, visitors are accompanied by sounds, fragments of music, laughter, whispered conversations, the barking of a dog, dulcimers, brief excerpts from Jerome K. Jerome's *Three Men in a Boat* and sounds attendant upon sitting on a bench, which are programmed so that they will not repeat.

As a conjunction of spirals and interweaving, the maze is also a representation of infinity and perpetual return. It allows the category of time to be transferred to the category of space. The purpose of the maze seems to be 'the complication of space for its own sake', its complexity, its apparent chaos. The space within it both 'is' and 'signifies' (Hobhouse 2005: 298-299).

The Maze of the Designer's Imagination

In the extraordinarily complex contemporary world, the maze seems to be a theme to inspire the imagination of future landscape architects. It offers the potential for the cohesive drawing of organic and architectural forms which are mutually complementary and descriptive. It schools the recognition of the attributes of spatial complexity while, at one and the same time, preserving the readability and simplicity of the message. It also teaches the skills of drawing architectural and plant forms cohesively and of discerning the three-dimensionality in the latter. In the maze, these two forms come to resemble one another, each reflects the other, they continue layout of the lines. Each follows the other's shapes, creating cohesive and rhythmic motifs in the space. The maze is a drawing topic unusually suited to developing the imagination of future garden designers. As an exercise, it teaches them to employ the code of the space through the use of lines, patterns, squares and so forth. Breaks in lines, sudden changes of direction and altered degrees of curve create formally underscored points and hubs, focusing our attention.

Properly conducted teaching of drawing may be a method of developing an architect's imagination and awareness. A team under the supervision of Prof. Joanna Stożek (with Ph.D. Beata Makowska and Ph. D. Marek Firek) conducting a freehand drawing classes for 1st grade students of Landscape Architecture at Faculty of Architecture Krakow University of Technology in the Department of Freehand Drawing (nowadays under the supervision of Prof. Andrzej Białkiewicz) made such assumption. For the purpose to improve students' skills a suitable set of topics with clearly determined tasks have been selected. One of them was "Labyrinth - a developed form of disorder". This exercise teaches to perceive values of complexity with keeping clarity and simplicity of a medium as well as a skill of keeping balance of elements. It helps to be aware of proper use of a space code expressed with lines, patterns, squares, etc.

Final Conclusions

The green maze as a symbol of human life, its toils and hardships, its blind alleys, is an extraordinarily contemporary form. In the chaos of the world, we patiently seek the right road, at the end of which, a surprise might await us. Just as we patiently seek creative solutions in the labyrinth of the imagination, uncertain of quite where we are going as we sketch and of what will finally emerge. In Herbert Read's opinion, two elements exist in every work of art; by nature, the first is mathematical, giving rise to the category of beauty, and the second is organic, giving rise to the category of vitality (Read 1982: 76, 231). The clearly ambiguous motif of the labyrinth can make a work of art of garden and drawing alike, creating it by means of a dialogue between opposing elements.

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