



ZSÓFIA KRONAVETTER **ON THE BOUNDRY OF THE GARDEN**

Enclosed garden as an archetype in contemporary architecture

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theses
2019

ABSTRACT

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The space of the enclosed garden, transcending its literal meaning, has been present in architecture since the beginning. Even today, in an age unsure about its relationship with nature and symbols, architects in every part of the world draw by their hands this ever prevalent form.

In my dissertation I attempt to examine this segment of architecture from the point of view of the practicing architect. My approach is one that seeks possible answers to the same questions taking different approaches, those questions being such as:

Why and what kind of enclosed gardens are designed in the 21st century?

What kind of relation do those gardens have to their classical predecessors?

How can the general laws and individual characteristics of this type of space be described using concrete examples?

The question arises whether the architectural essence, the unchangeable character of the enclosed garden can best be examined and revealed through means of philosophy, typology or history of space. The three-tier structure of my dissertation – outside of the garden, on the confines of the garden, in the garden – attempts a special approach to the subject. To think about the garden, to build a garden and to be in the garden: these can be ways of knowing the same thing, only from different points of view. Writing,

designing and experiencing can happen simultaneously as abrupt changes in view points happen characteristically when employing an architectural mode of thinking. The buildings described in the dissertation were chosen from built works of architecture from the period ranging from the second half of the 20th century to our present day, marked by a clear architectural concept of articulating enclosure and enclosed space (while also admitting to the selection being a subjective one).

Outside the garden: an examination of the context in a broad sense. Description of three phenomena related to the enclosed garden – enclosed space, enclosed garden and Hortus Conclusus. A review of the related problems in typology and the history of architecture.

On the confines of the garden: an architectural examination of the space wall and the enclosing structure through examples of different designers' concepts of pavilions, cemeteries, museum buildings, workplaces and residential buildings. Just as the most literal focus of the architect is creating borders to enclose space, in a symbolic way man himself also stands on the confines of the garden (as put by Peter Zumthor, whose words were chosen as motto of this dissertation).

In the garden – an examination of the central point and the space open to the above. By looking at quadrums of monasteries, two notions, symbol and paradox emerge as a possible, albeit subjective way of understanding the present-day relevance of the enclosed garden.

On entering the garden, its paradoxical, multi-layered space leads us into a multi-dimensional view of the world – one that is seemingly antinomic according to the rational logic – this way opening us up for "faith, as life in a paradox".¹ This realisation gave me an answer to the initial question (borne out of more personal than scientific leanings) that urged me to research this topic, namely, what makes enclosed gardens and cloisters so appealing even today.

1 • HALÍK, Tomás: A gyóntató éjszakája - A kishitűség ellentmondásai posztmodernista korunkban. Kariosz Kiadó, Budapest, 2010: 240.

Framing or enclosure as architectural means encloses and thus distinguishes a given part from its surroundings. The two sides are still in contact with one another, their relationship – a notable theme in contemporary architecture – is determined by the way they are bordered.

The walls of sheep stables were built of stones found on the spot, the only artificial element was the handiwork of the men who built them. Signs of coexisting with the landscape as well as modifying it in subtle ways came to be slowly, in decades. As opposed to this, when an untouched forest is enclosed by massive white reinforced concrete walls (like Fujimoto Garden House or the Sanctuary Circle in Mexico) natural and built come in sharp contrast. The digestible section of space put in front of a neutral, ethereally pure background helps understand and interpret the world outside the walls. The material, relative height (to man), proportions in space, whether it fits or not the lie of the land, thickness and layeredness are all means to express architecturally the relationship and transition between the outside world (landscape) and the enclosed part (garden).

The enclosed garden is simultaneously both a type of space and a symbol/notion, a phenomenon which has been significant in architecture up to the present day.

The sources used for this research often refer to the enclosed garden as one or the other while still maintaining its other meaning. The enclosed garden has a special place within gardens in general because as a result of the enclosure (which by definition is always emphatic) the enclosed space becomes metaphoric. It is also peculiar as an architectural archetype because stemming from its close bond with nature it speaks to the deepest levels of the human soul. In the sense of the Jungian archetype, its basic motive – which exists independent of its cultural context – can only be understood by ways of symbolic thinking. Consequently, the enclosed garden is a specifically ample vehicle for forming symbolic ideas with the help of architecture, such as it happens in the case of the 'paradise place' in the Kersteen Geers architectural firm's plan or the way the experience, significance and protection of nature is represented in the Austrian Expo design.

The architectural context and references of the enclosed garden, due to its historical roots, always extends beyond the given physical space. The development of this type of space carries a historical context, while the various meanings attached to it represent unmissable cultural context.

The historical and cultural context work on the user of the garden as subliminal archetypes and those images and impressions influenced by the tradition evoked determine the way the garden is experienced. As architects, we redraw versions of the same garden again and again, when designing enclosed gardens.

The different characteristic features of the enclosed garden can act in themselves as basis for the architectural concept. This type of reduction is typical in contemporary designs.

A körbezárt kert archetípusa olyan gazdag rétegzettségű, hogy egy-egy jellemzője is kibontható, kifejthető a kortárs művészet és építészet eszközeivel. Lehet ez akár a horizontális zártság és vertikális nyitottság (Little Sparta), a felülről jövő fény játéka (Piz Uter), a természet modell-szerű megjelenítése vagy hiánya (Novartis Irodaház, A-Art House), a határon lét költői megfogalmazása (Serpentine Gallery), vagy a térarányok kimért rendje (Noguchi). Kiemelt helyzetben, absztrakt környezetben mindezek talán tapasztalhatóbbá válnak a 21. századi ember számára, aki jobban megnéz egy fát ha az egy múzeumban van, mintha az erdőben lenne.

Living on the edge of the enclosed garden is a special way of living. The always present space which is open to the above acts as a focal point and transcends the basic needs dictated by the living space: it is not only a spatial addition but also a difference in approach and mindset.

The structure of the house situated on the edge of the garden is not homogeneous but it has a focal point (or points), which is not the living room or the dining room, but the garden. Nature (the flora, the lights, the temperature or simply the noises) becomes an organic part of the home. The changes in weather and the different parts of the day can be experienced in a milder way, in this protected form.

Many, if not all the characteristics of the enclosed garden meet in the unified harmony of the central gardens of medieval cloisters, the quadrums and their 20th century and contemporary versions. These enclosed spaces contain metaphoric meanings, which interpret the relationship between man and nature – therefore, their proportional system is always man-centered. At the same time their multi-faceted symbolism help express pairs of notions carrying opposing meaning (paradoxons).

The types of aesthetic and intellectual beauty demonstrated in examples shown in this dissertation can also be found in medieval quadrums. Similarly to the well of the Le Thoronet abbey (lavabo), they represent a never-ceasing source of architectural ideas, both in terms of spatial design, structure, propositional systems and use of materials. They transmit the model of a complex but coherent worldview, which can be deconstructed to several layers, all meaningful on their own terms. Quadrums can be read and understood best, even if they have many and often attached realms of meaning, not on an intellectual level, but by ways of experience.

The enclosed garden is an architectural space which functions as spatial symbol. The closer it is related to its archetype, that is, the more it contains opposing ideas, the stronger impact it has on the person present in it.

The enclosed garden embodies many opposing ideas, such as built and natural elements, outside and inside, open and closed type of spaces, horizontal and vertical axis, finiteness and infiniteness, permanency and change. Upon entering the symbolic space, the simultaneous perception of all these has the same effect on every person, as a result of its archetypal nature. The ancient stillness of cloister gardens, marveling at the order of nature or experiencing as one's attention turns inwards evoke collective substances.

