

## THE GARDENS OF HOMERO AND THE FUTURE OF THE LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE (abstract)

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### Proemio

Approximately one million and half years ago, man was conscious of the fact that his coupling with Nature was not so perfect, as that of the animals. At that time man undertook a different road to that of Nature, gradually tearing apart from her, in a minimal way at the beginning and almost in a more intensive way in the last centuries.

The search for that now lost happiness with Nature starts with the knowledge that we did not try as the rest of the animals: with man it was much more adverse. The sensation of a permanent harassment from Nature and for a permanent search of reason, justified man to find in the origins of nearly all the mythologies, the presence of a represented supreme God, for which in each case was the most terrible punishment: the Sun in the Mediterranean and the Tempest in the Europe North. Ra, Apollo and Wotan are adored and they are aware of our petitions of clemency.

And always it appears the origin of our wrong doing with Nature was some serious lack of commitment by our forebears, though the manner of redeeming this apathy is different in the subsequent cultures.

But whatever the origin of our wrong and punishments, and whatever the manner of redeeming them, all the cultures since then knew well how to find the manner of signing an agreement of non aggression with the Nature; and signed an armistice that was consisting of one point alone: THE GARDEN

Because they discovered that the Garden was what Nature owned to us that without the garden Man felt unable to recover the missed feeling of happiness he once recalled having enjoyed. And they invented the Garden, where Man found himself with nature in a non-destructive environment and where they could enjoy once more the feeling of being in perfect harmony with Nature, as once they had felt one million and a half years before. But the encounter wasn't as an animal, because as human beings, a garden was of a less animalistic encounter, since the degree of adjustment that the animals enjoy with the Nature is impossible for man to experience, unless we appear through our aspirations to return to be purely animal.

In Egypt, in Mesopotamia and, above all in Greece, we discovered, through the medium of the Garden, a road to reencounter with Nature; first we find physical consolation of our wrong; and thereafter we find physical consolation, mental and spiritual.

However, now that we are more removed than ever from that happy notion of being in agreement with Nature, when the garden is more needed to compensate that esquizofrénic unbalance that we suffer in relation with Nature and how it has become of our brief but intensive living in this world, precisely now that we have broken the armistice that in their day we signed with her, and during the time that we destroyed it without compassion thanks to that techno - scientific armament that we are so proud of, more we remove ourselves from that genial invention, that it was capable of making us feel happy again.

If we think that thanks to the discoveries of the human genetic map we will go on to be happier, and sound and immortal, then we are indeed the most stupid civilization to have trodden the land. With all this it is true that we may indeed live much more years; but we will have lived them without the Garden and if we live without the garden will have no more than a very bitter life, in the case of having obtained the immortality it will prove to be nothing but a distressing unhappiness of life imprisonment.

To recover what is lost, there is nothing better than to stop a little this insane career and to look backwards: to examine the Hellenic world because, in the first place, to the hour of thinking there is nothing better than to learn from those who taught us to think and, as long as we consider that we have surpassed the Greek thought and, consider it to have died and be forgotten, we will sadly always fall.

## **The splitting**

Long time ago a pre-human being took the decision of not acting according to the Nature's rules; and decided, for him and for all those coming after him, to follow a different road from that taken by their instincts. Probably, without knowing it, the history of just the only unsatisfied spice of the planet began. And from the consciousness of this unsatisfaction blew up all that now we are.

To consider oneself mortal and without protection, obliged them to struggle to find the way to back again to that initial state of happiness and comfort with the Nature. But that was already impossible as animals, but only human beings.

It was a long and hard way; and for thousand and thousand years, Man was splitting from Nature more and more, increasing in such a way his grief and unhappiness.

Carrying for a longer period of time their unable children, from here to there looking for food and shelter, they had disappeared from the edge of the world if they had not discovered the Agriculture; and with the discovery of the agriculture began the way of backing again to the peace with Nature: the constant increasing of knowledge on plants, their function and manipulation opened a different way, the most important of all of them, to sign the definitive agreement with Nature and with himself: the very way to the Garden.

But still five thousand more years should pass by until the Garden could make real, finally, the possibility of regaining that state of happiness between Man and Nature, forgotten one million and a half years ago.

However Man has never been distinguished himself by his own intelligence at the time of having a good relationship towards the Nature. All over his history Man has been tempted to go beyond than accorded. Having reached to forget the Garden in several occasions, causing by this his highest levels of suffering.

## **The Odyssey**

At the time of reviewing and learning about these disappointments between Man and Nature, I will always follow the same way that Odysseus took to come back home, with the only purpose of achieving a happy and long-lasting life in our particular Garden of Itaca.

And I take this way just because the Greeks were the skillets spectators on both human condition and their relationship with the Nature, not even today having been surpassed by either a philosophers or intellectuals.

Besides, they were so greatly skilled to collect them, and to write them after, elaborating those books that are nowadays still considered as the best student's book for learn the meanings of life.

I want to call your attention saying that I am not talking about Metaphysics, Logics, Esthetics, and not even about what we all know as Greek philosophy. I am talking about something that took place before any official philosophy.

## **The Garden from its origin up to Greece**

For those living all around the harsh Mediterranean cradle is very easy to understand the origin of the Garden, because it is very easy for us to imagine the sensation the people from the Old Egypt had when they reached the oasis.

In that very moment in which they knew the methods about the reproduction of plants, it was not too difficult for them to have an oasis in their homes: the palms and the sycamores in the patios of their homes moved them to a new level of comfort in their lives.

The following knowledge on the basic principles about hydraulics completed the main catalog of the ne-

cessary elements to create a Garden: vegetation, water, order and some human beings begging for protection. By adding new elements, all over them the Mathematics essence of the Human rationality –this is to say: the Geometry, and by increasing the ornamental value of more and more trees and bushes, the Garden began its travel along the south Mediterranean coast up to getting Spain.

And when those wonderful Gardeners mixed their experience with the discovery of the Greek texts –yet translated in Spain at that time, they crated, defiantly warning their God, the happiest places even seen on the world: A place where the Mind, the Spirit, The Body and all over Senses turned into a pure poetry of pleasure.

Now you will understand that the loss of that capacity of creation –not because of the lack of money, but due to the loss of the spirit of those people, forces me to find the way to recover it. This loss makes me remember so that Oscar Wild once said: For each man kills the thing he loves, yet each man does not die.

And I think that the reason of this loss is the forgotten Odyssey learning.

### **But, what are these learning of the Odyssey?**

1. Those Greeks already knew, 800 years before Christ, that the supreme pleasure was in the Garden, but in a very freshly green, exuberant paradise Garden, absolutely related to the Gods' Residences.
2. Those Greeks also knew very perfectly the good relationship between animals and Nature; even envying such an harmonic relation.
3. Those Greeks also knew very perfectly that they were very unprotected, feeling themselves quite uneasy, being in the middle of the Gods' immortality, in one side, and the happy life of the animals in the other.
4. Those Greeks also knew very perfectly the anguish that such situation was causing them.
5. Those Greeks also knew very perfectly that they were constantly tempted to leave their anxious feelings by changing into the animality condition (Circe) or the Godity one (Calypso).
6. Those Greeks also knew very perfectly that life relies on overtaking both temptations and once that good relation between Man and Nature was achieved, Gods and animals would surely envy us.

### **The Finding**

And they found it some years later, when Fedro encouraged Socrates to go to the very riverside of the Ilissos. From that moment on the Garden was not anymore an aspiration that only Gods had in the Island where some of them lived.

And then this Garden began its travel along the North Mediterranean coast up to getting Spain, originating the already above said Spanish Nazari Garden: the supreme Garden; absolutely earthly paradise.

By no means I am associating this image of Paradise with the Biblical Paradise. Although we have already heard of plenty of times that the history of Garden is the history of the coming back to the search of Paradise, actually it is the history of its getting away from the Biblical Paradise.

The fact that our Biblical origin takes place in an idyllic Paradise, simply demonstrates that thousands of years ago the human beings already knew that place in which it could be possible to achieve happiness: it was the Garden. As clear as that the one who wrote the Odyssey had it when it happened to write about the idyllic residences of Circe and Calypso.

Because the life of Adam and Eve in Paradise wasn't very different from that carried by Ulysses' crew in the island of Circe, when they were turned into porks. Pure animal happiness.

It could appear a very tempting life, in those moments in which more anguished we are by our own human condition, without being a very sad solution, having as we have to solve it the possibility of the Garden.

## **And what means this for a L.A. today?**

1. The Garden, more than ever today, must achieve the human wanted spiritual comfort. And this comfort is not possible if it is not completed; and this means to achieve the physic, psychic and spiritual comfort. And we must remember, and never forget it, that Circe and Calypso are still alive.
2. The physic comfort: because for everybody the physical comfort at the Garden implies the forgotten of our daily pain caused by the environment, like the heavy sun for the Mediterranean people, but enlarged today with the noise, chemical contamination, and other new presents of the modern urban life. And so that sun may mean for us, may be the rain, the tempest, the cold, the storm, the wind, etc., for other people.
3. The psychic comfort: Once achieved the physic comfort, the pleasure effect of Garden may be lost if we are not careful with the psychic and mental conditions of people. I am not talking here about the more or less neurotic level of the people that goes to the Garden; I am talking here about the lecture that that people may understand about the Garden. A very high level of complexity –if it is not absolutely justified, that makes too difficult the comprehension of the Garden, will imply the reverse effect that we are looking for our work, increasing the level of anguish and discomfort that we would eliminate.
4. About the Spirit. Once achieved the physic and psychic calm, we will be at the very moment of supreme harmony between the Man and the Nature, this is to say: the Garden.

**And the very best of all this history is that we have achieved it as human beings but not as animals.**

## **Epilog: Circe and Calypso are still alive**

Far for any other tendencies, and about tendencies is talking this seminar, I observe that in the current landscape architecture show off this two main ways: the ecological and the very avant-garde one.

Both of them belong to the main and fundamental catalog of every Landscape Architect, and nobody will doubt that a Garden in which these two important aspects have not been taken into account, with no probably it will be a complete Garden. But in many occasions it is possible to observe that if we really tense the string of the avant-garde or the ecologism one, the Garden falls down into the Hades, behaving these over excesses as if they were the Moiras.

The Gardens are those, which in time make the author become immortal, and not the contrary. The rushing feeling to share the bed with Calypso can frustrate the joy of a Garden. Of course, let's welcome those who were able to leave us happy on earth, enjoying the Gardens that once they make, after went towards the bed of Calypso.

And the same regarding with ecologism. An excess of waking things appears natural, most of the time bad copies from Nature, may cause us to feel in the Garden more than animals than people.

We created the Garden to our own enjoy. It never was a piece of Nature in the middle of the city or next-door. This is to say its differences against the untidy and harsh Nature, is what characterizes it, outlaw very specials cases in which Nature gives us it self as a Garden.

We have to be able to fin peacefulness using, as long as possible, those closest elements, the most autochthonous, the most ecological; but without ever forgetting that we are making Gardens, and the Gardens are which make us different from Gods and animals.