

ONCE UPON A TIME IN ARCADIA

An architectural tale

Texts, mappings and myths construct *a fantasy about a place*, an architectural narrative that attempts to reveal the intangible and fictional, however completely pragmatic in their conventions, interpretations of the place, while contemplating upon the *controversial relationship of the modern man with the idealized perception of landscape*.

The Scenario_ A modern traveller is wandering across the artificial lake of Ladhon in Arcadia, in Peloponnese. He enters the landscape as a spectator and begins in his writings *a parallel wandering in the landscape of his imagination*. During his tour he experiences a transition *from the real fragments of the landscape to their fictional interpretations, refracted through the mythical references*.

Scene 1_ “... *it seemed as if the dragon Ladhon was still sleeping underwater, bellow the gate on which I was standing. I decided to enter...*”

The hydroelectric dam becomes the gateway to the garden of Esperides guarded by the dragon Ladhon. Inside the dam's cavities he fantasizes a descent through fictional structures that highlight its impact upon the landscape.

Scene 2_ “...*invisible threshers rotating in spirals set the landscape back in motion...*”

A half broken threshing field becomes the mechanism that reveals the landscape as a territory of operations. The deserted threshing fields become the gears that restart the landscape by recomposing a process of the past. Sound apparatuses emerge on the threshing fields each producing a distinct melody, all together transcribing the process of threshing into an odd sonic composition.

Scene 3_ “... *When Syrinx and Daphne, exhausted by the chase, begged their father Ladhon for rescue, he turned them into plants. Thus Apollo ended up hugging a laurel and Pan a reed...*”

The ruined stone walls of the terraces turn into an experience of the mythical chase of the nymphs by the gods. The seasonal rise of the water level allows the narrator a fast-forward experience of the landscape: “... *I was overcoming the obstacles one by one, watching the landscape around me transform, while I was making my way towards the land... along the water, chased by the water...*”

Scene 4_ “*Ladhon was blocking my way. The crossing of the river. One location, three bridgings...*”

The stride of the mythical lady of Acova across the river triggers the condensation of the three existing bridges into one compact structure that reinterprets the passage of the water in relation to the landscape: under the water, on the water, over the water. “... *encapsulating all the crossings to reveal the invisible connections between the river banks...*”

We watch the traveller construct a narrative whose projections over the landscape of Arcadia solidify and substitute the reality he sees, leading him to admit towards the end:

“... *Arcadia doesn't impose itself. It is a never fading image on the horizon. When I will leave this place, you will only be left with this story in your minds: representations of timeless events that took place once upon a time in Arcadia. Thus, somewhere between the uncanny but compact world of fantasy and the familiar space of reality you will in your turn say:*

Et in Arcadia ego...”