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## *Landscape and Psychoanalysis*

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Landscape architecture refers to the practice of landscapers. This is not a theory, a doctrine or an ideology, nor a science, a technology or an art. However, each person called landscaper borrows one time or another from these areas, but never imagined to be reduced to one of it and then to lose his professional identity. This hardly allows Universities to include this multidisciplinary field in a category other than ambivalent.

Until the trans-disciplinary logic does not make other lights than those of the complexity of knowledge, couldn't we ask what psychoanalysis could bring to the question of the nature of landscape architecture? Especially since the scientific community can freely make the most of the work of Sigmund Freud, founder of the psychoanalysis (1856-1939).

Freud invented the unconscious to end the questionable identity between consciousness and thought. From his clinical experience, he has shown that attitudes and their diseases were related to relations conducted between the unconscious thoughts, often suppressed, consciousness (the ego), and the judge of the conscience (the superego). He extended, in one of his last works, *Le malaise dans la civilisation*, this interpretation of the individual to his societal environment. According to him, in the process of evolution of the individual, the program of the pleasure principle – to find the happy satisfaction - is maintained as a primary goal; the integration or adaptation to a human community appears as a condition almost absolute towards this goal, happiness.<sup>1</sup>

True happiness is not a reliable value and because of its quest we forget the simple joy of existence<sup>2</sup>. However, it remains one intermittent horizon of the search for well-being. This last value is also one of the aims presented in the European Landscape Convention, Firenze 2000.

What does, in this context of interpretation, the landscape designer of projects of gardens and landscapes produce? Called by a client to transform a place, he develops a project that is inspired both by the perceptible forms of the site, his own imagination and the desires of his sponsor. He is a creator. His unconscious suggests solutions as well as his conscience and his personal ethics.

If the project goal is to create the conditions of individual and collective well-being, is it to treat anxiety, depression, madness and neurosis of the public - of his client? - And to limit the consumption of psychotropic? Not likely. Is it to "gather human individuals in a community bound by the libido"? This is doubtful. Is it just to "get rid of the biggest obstacle to civilization, the tendency of human beings towards mutual aggression? " It is not impossible, as the space solutions in landscape projects are made for societies without otherness, without conflicts. Is it, finally, to suggest new solutions of spatial development to public stakeholders of a planet in crisis? We can dream of it, as the landscapers?

Models of landscape professionals, gardens constitute figures of collective unconscious. In the literary imagination, the gushing fountain and the greenhouse become forbidden places of human passions; the calm

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<sup>1</sup> Chapitre VIII, p. 10 du supplément de *Philosophie Magazine* n° 36, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> R. Enthoven, *Le Bonheur*, *Philosophie Magazine* n° 36, 2010, p. 28.

water of lakes in public parks the mirror of the bourgeoisie activities; the abandoned gardens, the places of the reclaiming for Dionysian nature.<sup>3</sup>

This symbolism continues in the literature and photography and is not threatened with extinction. However, would not the issue of political and landscape action be the convergence of the individual ethics (the superego) and the collective ethics of the common good? At the beginning of last century, S. Freud believed that "a real change in the relations of men regarding the property will lead to better improvement than any ethical command"<sup>4</sup>. Earlier this century, the question is not whether private land is a political issue, and whether the 'neurotic' trends of a society feeling guilty because of the alarming progress of knowledge have to be treated. It is rather to verify whether certain professionals of space planning, as city planners and landscapers, could not be, without limiting individual freedoms, knowledgeable agents of well-being.

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<sup>3</sup> Virginie Prioux,

[http://www.projetsdepaysage.fr/fr/ne\\_jamais\\_dire\\_fontaine\\_je\\_ne\\_boirai\\_pas\\_de\\_ton\\_eau\\_l\\_erotisation\\_des\\_jardins\\_dans\\_les\\_rougon\\_macquart\\_de\\_zola](http://www.projetsdepaysage.fr/fr/ne_jamais_dire_fontaine_je_ne_boirai_pas_de_ton_eau_l_erotisation_des_jardins_dans_les_rougon_macquart_de_zola)

<sup>4</sup> Op. Cit. p. 13