

Le Rendez-vous des Jardins.

(Perspectives d'Utopies, Projet de la CIRCA, La Chartreuse de Villeneuve-lez Avignon).

## First sketch.

As Platonic philosophy is "academic", (from the Temple of the God Akademos), and Stoic philosophy is called after "Stoa", (the Porch of a Temple), so the Epicurean philosophy used to be called, in Antiquity, the "teaching by those of the Garden", (oi apo ton keton). And, in fact, there is an epicurean flavor to gardens: a quality both hedonistic and materialistic. The Gods are absent from gardens. If the Temple is a space cut out from the Republic and reserved for the veneration of the sacred, so the garden is a space cut out from both the Republic and Economy and reserved for the pursuit of pleasure. - But of course: Gods, (like every deep seated urge), can be repressed, but not eliminated. A psychoanalysis of gardens seems to be in order. And this involves an ontological analysis also. This would entail, if it were to be thorough, both a vertical, (historical), and a horizontal, (geographical), research: how did gardens develop, and how do they look like at present in the various surroundings? Results would no doubt be surprising: past and present dialectics between Temple and Garden would very probably be shown to articulate the very dynamics of civilisations. And by doing so, they would very probably also show the dynamics inherent in human existence. -

The Chartreuse is a Temple, and it contains a Garden. Thus the dialectics mentioned above must be at play there. Plato and Epicurus clash there. And so do of course their present avatars: Marx and Freud. The invitation extended by CIRCA is therefore thought-provocative, to say the least of it. I shall take it up in due course.

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Utopias are places, although places nowhere. In fact: they are cut out no-places. They are either Temples or Gardens. Anti-political and anti-economic no-places. Either Kingdoms of Heaven on Earth, (Marxist), or Libidinous Playgrounds, (Freudian). If they are both things, (like the Chartreuse is), they must be victims to their internal contradiction. From a point of view of the Porch, (from a Stoical point of view), they are, if they are both things, vivid examples for the perniciousness of each and every Utopia. Invitations to retire from Temple and Garden into apathy and ataraxy, into "reserved commitment". And this is curious because both Temple and Garden claim to be places of retirement. Stoic positions prove that one may retire even from retirement. To consider Gardens is to have retired from retirement and to look at it from outside. As if a transcendence of transcendence. CIRCA invites precisely to such a feat of mental gymnastics. That challenge must be met.