

## hortopia II

2024, Jan Albert Eckert

**«At the heart of the garden, the uncontrolled forces of life and its inventions, the dream of man and his utopias, both defining from one day to the next the unpredictable trajectory of evolution.»**

(Clément, 2008, p.33)

The quote from the French landscape architect Gilles Clément on the subject of the 'Planetary Garden' became a central starting point for the exploration and formulation of the Hortopia concept, as can be read in the blog post 'Hortopia I' (Eckert, 2024). In particular, the physical location and its spiritual counterpart played an important role. One difference that emerged during the initial deliberations on Hortopia in comparison to the historical 'hortus conclusus' (Cluitmans, 2021, p. 90) was the fact that the hortus conclusus usually referred to a fenced-in piece of land that was primarily intended to serve people and their needs. Hortopia, inspired by Gilles Clément's Jardin Planétaire (Clément, 1999; Clément et al., 2015), breaks down these walls and adds a planetary dimension to the garden. The hortus is not only there to serve humanity, but humanity also takes responsibility for the planet. After all, what happens in one part of the planet can have an impact on the other side of the globe (Clément, 2008; Clément et al. 2015, p. 79f).

In addition to this responsibility, another aspect plays an important role in Hortopia: letting go of the supposed human control over nature. As the above quote from Gilles Clément suggests, we all too often underestimate the evolutionary forces of nature to which our actions and thoughts, indeed our very existence, are subject. Hortopia respects and integrates these forces, seeking to create space for co-evolutionary processes between human beings and the planet.

One element that seems relevant in this context is the dream mentioned by Clément. It is precisely the tension between the evolutionary forces of nature and the dreams of human beings that harbours a highly creative and at the same time destructive potential: a conflict that could not be more topical, as the much-discussed polycrisis of our ecosystem shows. Based on this preliminary consideration, this blog post is dedicated to the aspect of dreaming and the different qualities that dreaming can take on in the context of Hortopia.

### **Qualities of dreaming**

The importance of dreaming for the connection between people's need to interact with nature and the garden as a space that can fulfil this need is discussed in Clément's two texts 'Jardin Planétaire' (Clément, 1999; Clément et al. , 2015, p. 33) and 'Toujours la vie invente: réflexions d'un écologiste humaniste' (Clément, 2008; Clément et al. 2015, p. 82). In order to arrive at a more precise definition of the concept of hortopia, it is therefore necessary to take a closer look at the element of dreaming and its different qualities.



In one of the earliest texts on dreams, the *Oneirocritica* (Daldianus, 1864, 2011, 2020), the imperial dream-interpreter Artemidor of Daldis (2nd century AD) examines the connection between the human psyche and higher levels of human reality. He distinguishes between two types of dream, *enhypmia* and *oneiroi*. He describes *enhypmia* as dreams caused by physical or emotional stress, fears, desires or unresolved situations. *Oeniroi*, on the other hand, he describes as dreams that lead to a transcendental dream world that can give people information about the unknown or the future.

The dream world, dreams and their connection to the unconscious have been a historical topic since ancient times. Sigmund Freud, Carl Gustav Jung, Medard Boss, Gaston Bachelard and Michel Foucault are just a few of the protagonists who have contributed significantly to the modern discussion of dreams. Without claiming to be a complete historical overview, the following is an outline of some of the cornerstones of modern dream literature, before moving on from Michel Foucault's cultural-historical study to Nastassja Michel's most recent publication in this context.

Sigmund Freud's 'The Interpretation of Dreams' (Freud, 1900) revolutionised the way dreams are viewed in the modern Western world. For Freud, dreams were the 'royal road to the unconscious'. Similar to Artemidorus' *enhypmia*, he saw them as coded messages from our subconscious, reflecting our repressed desires, fears and conflicts. Building on this, Freud developed a complex method of dream interpretation, distinguishing between the manifest content of the dream (what we remember dreaming) and the latent dream idea (the real, hidden meaning).

Carl Gustav Jung, who developed his own theory as a student of Freud, expanded our understanding of dreams to include messages from the collective unconscious and introduced the concept of 'archetypes of the collective unconscious' (Jung, 1933-55) into dream interpretation. The Swiss psychoanalyst Medard Boss, who was a member of Jung's working group, was strongly influenced by Heidegger's existential philosophy and developed the theory of *Daseinanalysis* (Boss, 1979). This to some extent leaves the depths of the unconscious and locates the human being in 'being in the world'. Dreams are interpreted as direct expressions of this being, not as coded messages of the unconscious, but as direct manifestations of our existential situation and our relationship to the world.

In the French tradition, thinkers such as Gaston Bachelard have explored the relationship between dreams, imagination and creativity by developing a philosophical approach to dreams. Bachelard's work '*La Poétique de la Rêverie*' (Bachelard, 1960) is an important contribution to this philosophical reflection in that he sees dreaming as a creative act that expands and deepens our perception of the world. For example, Bachelard describes how, in a moment of reverie, simply looking at a flower can become a cosmic experience: the flower becomes the centre of an entire universe, reflecting the microcosm and the macrocosm. This kind of poetic reverie, Bachelard suggests, allows us to connect more deeply with the world and with ourselves, opening up new dimensions of experience and understanding.

Michel Foucault, on the other hand, approached the subject of dreams from a different perspective. In his early work 'Binswanger et l'analyse existentielle' (Foucault, 1954) and later in 'Les mots et les choses. Une archéologie des sciences humaines' (The Order of Things) (Foucault, 1966), Foucault considered dreams in the context of the history of knowledge and discourse. For him, dreams were not only individual psychological phenomena, but also expressions of cultural and historical structures. He saw the interpretation of dreams as a form of self-knowledge and self-fashioning, closely interwoven with social norms and power structures.

More recently, the French anthropologist Nastassja Martin has taken up this cultural-historical view of dreams. In her book 'In the East of Dreams' (Martin, 2024), she revisits the dream discourse and extends it to an ethnographic perspective. In the context of her research on the indigenous Even people of Kamchatka, Martin distinguishes between two types of dreaming, reminiscent of Artemidorus' concepts: "projective" and "performative" or "animistic" dreams (Martin, 2024, pp. 161f). Projective dreams are similar to the understanding of enhypnia and reflect personal experiences and anxieties. In contrast, performative or animistic dreams are considered to be real experiences in another dimension that can have a direct impact on reality. Martin's work is particularly valuable in the context of Hortopia because it builds a bridge to indigenous knowledge, which is often neglected in modern humanities.

In one episode, when Martin discusses dreams with Darja, an Even woman, she says of Nastassja Martin's dream: 'You didn't go anywhere, you didn't meet anyone' (in your dreams) (Martin, 2024, p.162), referring to the so-called encounter dreams, often described by indigenous people as dreams in which people encounter animals that give them clues to a successful hunt (Martin, 2024, p.164). During her time with the Even, Martin realised that we who have grown up in a Western world seem to have forgotten how to cultivate such a performative way of dreaming that taps into the unconscious. It takes time, retraining and effort to reacquire ourselves with the wisdom and skills of our ancestors.

### **From dream to garden to dream**

It is obviously beyond the scope of this concept to incorporate all the considerations of dream interpretation and research into the further formulation of Hortopia. However, based on Gilles Clément's ideas about the planetary garden, the dream takes on a special significance in the relationship between man and the planet. A meaning that, in the context of the unfolding ecological crisis, can take on two interpretations: the dream as the trigger of the man-made problems of the so-called Anthropocene, and the dream as the starting point for designing a new, more harmonious future for humanity and the planet - Hortopia. I would therefore like to highlight some aspects of the qualities of the dream and make a first attempt to translate them into the concept of Hortopia and its design.

From Boss's thoughts on dreams as an expression of 'being in the world' and Artemidorus' and Martin's reflections on the qualities of performative dreaming



and the poetic dimension as described by Gaston Bachelard, the following can be deduced for Hortopia: Dreams can be an expression of our being and can also be realised in future versions of that being. Furthermore, these manifestations of being can inspire further dreams. Hortopia can thus be reflected in places that are able to concentrate the visionary creative power of people's dreams, and that are able to promote 'active dream work' in the sense of Oneiroi, performative dreaming or poetic contemplation in the sense of Bachelard.

This can go in different directions: if we design a place in the spirit of hortopia, it can embody our dreams, visions and hortopias, be they individual dreams in an individual garden or collective dreams in a planetary sense. At the same time, the garden can actively promote dreaming by being a consciously designed dream landscape that encourages contemplative moments and active dream work. A look at the history of gardens shows numerous examples of both dynamics, from the Persian Pasargadae (Olonetzky, 2017, p.28f) to the culture of Zen gardens (Nitschke, 2003) and contemporary urban gardens and garden landscapes such as those of Piet Oudolf (Stappmanns-Kries, 2023, p.144).

In summary, it can be said that dreaming itself can take on different qualities and that hortopia can be associated with people's dreams in different ways. If we now transfer this idea into a design principle for Hortopia, a project based on Hortopia could always embody one of the two aspects mentioned:

**Manifestation of dreams:** Hortopia as an embodiment of individual or collective dreams and visions. In this case, the garden becomes a physical expression of our inner landscapes, our hopes, desires or emerging futures (Scharmer, 2018). In a sense, these gardens can be understood as dream spaces or 'runways' for future dreams (Scharmer, 2018).

**Catalyst for dreaming:** Hortopia as a consciously designed space that encourages active dreaming and contemplation. These gardens invite people to enter into a state of contemplation and poetic or performative dreaming, where the boundaries between 'being in the world' according to Boss and the animistic dream world described by Martin may become blurred.

In practical terms, this could mean that Hortopia projects include elements that embody concrete visions and dreams as well as spaces that are consciously designed for contemplation and dream work. Furthermore, this duality of Hortopia as a manifestation and catalyst of dreams opens up a variety of possibilities for the use of such spaces. Together with the evolutionary character and the loss of human control over nature, Hortopia creates spaces in which the boundaries between dream and reality, between man and nature, between the individual and the collective become blurred. The transformative power of dreams opens up a multitude of dream qualities that can be explored, manifested and experienced in design.

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