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Hydrotopia [Transforming the American Garden: 12 New Landscape Designs-Exhibitor]

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This garden in the mountains above Malibu is a retreat for scientists, theologians and convicts. Each personality is intended to represent a different aspect of the human psyche: the empirical, the spiritual and the irrational.

Hydrotopia is a symbolic journey into the subconscious using water as the primary metaphor. Water runs throughout the site and can be regarded as a stream of consciousness. It symbolizes the differences in the realities we face—pathos and ethos, rational and irrational, sacred and profane, desire and death, moral and immoral, real and surreal. Water acts as the clarifier and the purifier; it unifies as it distinguishes parts of our existence. Water is collected at various points: some planned by humans; some ordained by nature. It is expressed in various states and its forms include water steps, troughs, chadars, well water, a boiler, a reservoir, a pool, a stream, a creek, a spiral fountain, a water wall.

The mountain is symbolic of alchemy; it is a very risky place. Fire or the absence of water is a necessary ingredient. For some plants, fire is needed to germinate seed pods.

The diagram of this mountain retreat is suc-

cinctly described as an isolated circle that is penetrated solely by a funicular, the only method of entry which brings one to the compound's major area.

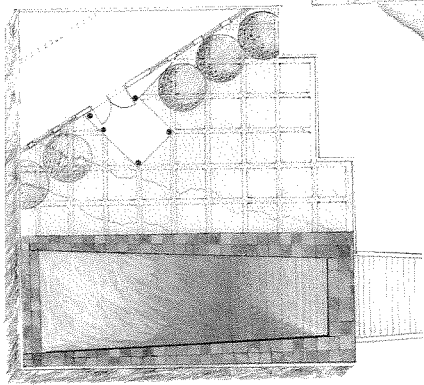
At the center of this glorious circle is the ossarium, the sum of past lives and a place where the past is stored. Located on the steepest of slopes and covered with impenetrable brambles and tangles of the meanest chaparral, it remains permanently fixed in our memory.

The scriptorium library tower, center for knowledge and the exchange of ideas, is crowned by a satellite dish with a radio-transmitting device. The base of the building is marked by a plinth of topiary which encloses outdoor reading rooms used by the scholars, theologians and scientists. The convicts maintain, prune and feed the experimental orchard and vine-covered pergola located just outside these reading rooms. Below, on other curved terraces, new native hybrids are cultivated. Water slithers down the curved terrace wall and emerges from a spiral fountain.

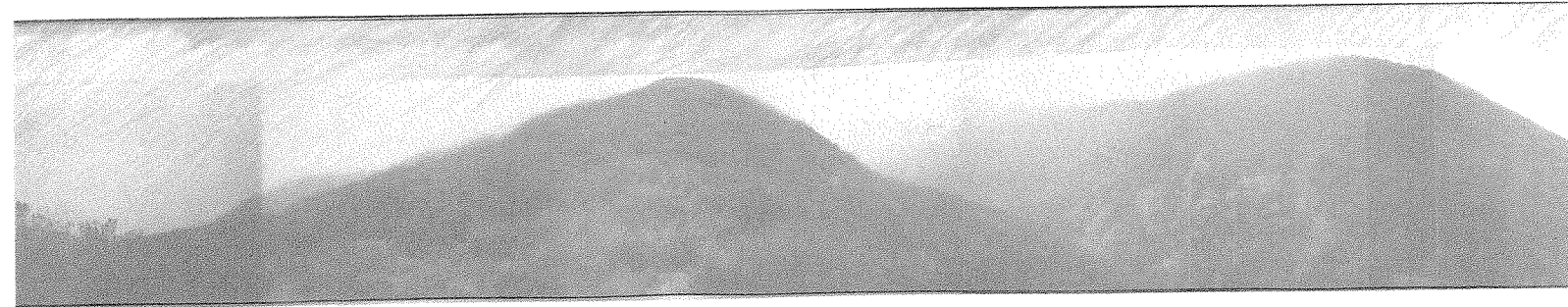
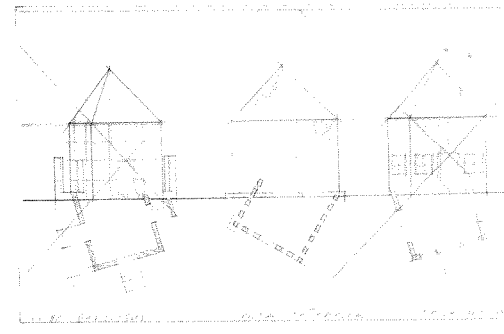
An allegorical garden, Hydrotopia functions as a refuge or retreat in which confrontation and discovery are achieved by synthesizing symbolic elements. Yet while the underlying

theme is the journey into the subconscious, the garden's imagery is superimposed with unrelated, disparate elements. Scattered references in this garden cannot always be reconciled with one another.

Hydrotopia should be viewed as a series of suggestive fragments that can be brought together as a whole only by those who walk its ritual paths. The garden invites this circumambulation, for in a real sense there is no destination other than exploration and self-discovery through interlocking but not cohesive visual metaphors. The French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan has observed that "Discontinuity, then, is the essential form in which the unconscious first appears to us as a phenomenon . . . discontinuity in which something is manifested as vacillation." The discontinuity of Hydrotopia mirrors the vacillation within ourselves. The garden's denizens represent different and fundamentally contradictory aspects of the human mind. In Hydrotopia, landscape becomes something more than a pretty garden; it functions like a language, uncovering through its discontinuities deeper meanings within the mind.



Swimming Pool



VIEW FROM SCRIPTORIUM TOWER