

FRENCH GARDEN

I walk out into the garden. Greeting me first is a terrace, a viewing platform. If the garden is the body, then the terrace is its head. The French garden is a diagram of order, within which nature is conditioned.

Laid out in front of me, from near to far, is an intricate many-coloured carpet of lawns and flowers, a geometric pattern of parterres, green lawns bordered by box bushes—when crushed with your fingers the leaves give off a distinct and captivating aroma, like pine but with strong undertones of urine. Then a more simple arrangement of parterres, housing between them alleys and paths of crushed gravel, which radiate back and forth to connect a series of grand, bombastic fountains.

Even from a distance I can see the marble figures contorting in the central fountain. One can almost catch them moving as your eye flicks away from the spectacle. I believe it depicts a collection of mythological scenes. For some, it resembles an orgy. A giant marble machine made of bodies, with pressurised jets of water streaming in and out of every open mouth. There is a science to this: Hydroplaisie. The art of shaping water as it comes out of a fountain. These gestures depend upon the force of the water and the shape of the nozzle. The names of the forms created are as follows:

The Tulip

The Double Sheaf

The Centerpiece

The Candelabra

The Bouquet

The Ball in the Air

The Fan

I start to dream. I have water pumping out of my left breast, pinched between two fingers. The water comes out as a bouquet.

I am creating the Milky Way. A group of male figures below catch the spurts of water pouring from my breast into their open mouths. Now I am the water, falling from this breast and into the mouths of the men below. I become three separate channels, falling into three open mouths. I move through copper tubes inside their hard stone bodies, down and out through their three erect penises, streaming through the air into the great circular pool at the base of the fountain. Now I am sucked into a large metal pump and pushed back through the very centre of this structure, bursting out at the top of the heap of bodies, out of a conch raised to face the sky.

Soon I am diverted through one or another of the figures, multiplied again, faced with innumerable options:

Out of the wounds gored into the youth by the Minotaur's horns?

Out of the eyes of the crying Crone?

Spurting out of the crushed grapes at the foot of Dionysus?

Flowing out of the she-wolfs udder?

A computer is a series of logic gates, of electricity moving through a system. One could use water or other fluids (blood, saliva, piss) to perform digital operations as you would with a computer. Fluidics, this is called. Logic gates can be built that use water instead of electricity to power the gating function. These are reliant on being positioned in one orientation to perform correctly. An OR gate is simply two pipes being merged, a NOT gate consists of “A” deflecting a supply stream to produce \bar{A} . An inverter could also be implemented with the XOR gate, as $A \text{ XOR } 1 = \bar{A}$.

A simple fountain could be a Boolean logic gate, a way of creating memory or running a function. Look at these baroque, mannerist fountains we have here in our garden. They are a complicated system, a complicated programme. The theme of them is mainly mythological; they concern the metamorphosis of man into animal into plant into man. What is their function? What memories do they store for their creators?

One could say that sexual interaction is a kind of logic gate, the sex act a diagram of a closed system of two parts. A threesome is a more complicated diagram of the movement of fluids, of saliva, of sweat, of semen: the transference and interpenetration of information. We could talk in terms of dilution: introduce the fluid of one into another, and it becomes part of their body, absorbed, or digested into the operations of that body. The human

species becomes a kind of mode of information storage, of phylogenetic memory stored in the body's fluids, its chemical structures, its DNA, running through processes by moving through bodies. How do the fluids of others influence our bodies? We are complicated chemical organisations, and we proceed to consistently complicate each other further.

A digital operation runs on a binary system, that of 1 and 0, yes and no. An affirmation and a negation. Presence and absence. For this fountain, what if we imagined a new binary, that of 1 and 2, of yes and double yes. Being and Being-together. Instead of the classic balance of the yin and the yang, of a system in perfect harmony, we get an abundance of affirmation, a system tending towards ecstatic termination.

Cupio Dissolvi.

I wish to be dissolved.

Into you.

I wake up. I am not water, nor a fountain.

All of the infinite potential I felt moving through the system is negated. From the outside I can clearly see it is only a system, it is limited, a simulacra of reality. Old water circulating around an old rusted pump. I place my hand down into the pocket of my leather trousers and take out a pack of cigarettes. I put one in my mouth and light it.

I walk down a promenade called Le Chant des Hommes: the song of men. There is a water feature here also, a highly unusual one. Two walls of gleaming copper line the pathway, around three metres high. The walls extend roughly 50 metres down the pathway, with a gap of about one metre between them, and standing on either side of the pathway are men. There must be 100 of them, if my calculations are correct, hired from the local village for events such as this. I believe they perform on special days, royal birthdays and the like. They stand each facing the wall, their trousers around their ankles, their bare asses facing whoever walks by.

On each section of the wall, around knee height, is a bell, which these men can ring by urinating on it. An aura of piss oxidizes the copper around each bell. The copper seems to amplify the bells ringing, and it is said that the men play beautiful waltzes to entertain the passing nobility. I must register as nothing of the sort to them however, for as I walk down Le Chant des Hommes all I get is corrupt disharmony, a jangling atonal cacophony. Perhaps they can sense that I am not like my fellow courtiers. They are leering at me as I pass, eyes moving away from their own dicks to look over their shoulders at me in scorn.

Even as I walk through this garden it is being demolished and reformed. I am witness to the pressing push of progress. A new style of garden is being introduced. The intricate parterres are being dug up to lay the foundations

for the hermits cave. My beloved central fountain is now being torn down to become a temple of philosophy, which will always remain unfinished to represent the incompleteness of human knowledge.

These new gardens at Ermenonville are full of metaphors and symbols to be decoded by the passer by.

French Garden is a text by Justin Fitzpatrick produced on the occasion of the exhibition F-R-O-N-T-I-S-P-I-E-C-E at Seventeen, London.

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