

AN INITIATORY JOURNEY THROUGH THE GARDEN OF ILLUMINATION

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Do you not know, Asclepius, that Egypt is an image of heaven?
(Asclepius, *Hermetica*, III 24b)

[...] to achieve the truth there is no need to go to Egypt.
Remove the cloud, the sun [of eternal truth] will be in front of you.
(*Kandor or the Revelation of Egyptian Secrets*)

When Princess Elizabeth Stuart arrived at Heidelberg to take up her place at the side of her much loved husband, Frederick V, Elector Palatine, Heidelberg became «the scene of a brief idyll of enlightenment, culture, learning and toleration»¹. In their honor the Huguenot architect, garden designer, hydraulic engineer and former tutor of Elizabeth, Salomon de Caus (1576-1626), projected *Hortus Palatinus* or Garden of the Palatinate, the «Symbol of proto-Enlightenment»². That extraordinary garden, created between 1614-1619, unfortunately was never completed, and yet it was called the «Eighth Wonder of the World» by contemporaries. The *Hortus Palatinus* symbolized their love, Frederick's sovereignty, and nature.

Although this spectacular garden was destroyed during the Thirty Years War, Salomon de Caus left a precious document about it: his book, *Hortus Palatinus a Friderico rege Boemiae electore Palatino Heidelbergae exstructus Salomone de Caus architecto* (Frankfurt, 1620), that is «one of the finest records of garden-design»³. This work provides an accurate description of the project of the garden and suggests that the complicated structure of the *Hortus Palatinus* was conceived of as an enigma to be deciphered⁴ which induced modern interpretations of the *Hortus Palatinus* to see it as a hermetic or enigmatic garden.

¹ McIntosh 2005, 71.

² Curl 2011, 37.

³ *Ivi*, 38.

⁴ Zimmermann 1992, 110.

The title page of de Caus' book, like the garden itself, is full of those symbols that would have such a dominant presence in the century of Enlightenment that was to follow. McIntosh interprets de Caus' frontispiece saying that «One cherub [...] holds a torch of knowledge, while the other holds a mirror, signifying that the human arts are merely a reflection of divine creation»⁵, while Curl points out that this cherub or *putto* holds «a torch for Illumination, Exposition, and Truth»⁶. This interpretation would appear to be based on the rumors that de Caus was a Rosicrucian and that he had encoded secret magical wisdom within the motifs of the garden, since for the Rosicrucians the garden represents a botanical cosmos with a coded secret in its design⁷.

The idea of the garden, together with buildings, i.e. the landscape and the architecture, as the place(s) of illumination, wisdom and truth will be present throughout the eighteenth century. The Freemasons, in particular, saw the garden as the real and symbolic representation of their philosophy and ideology and the eighteenth century is the period when Enlightenment, Philosophy, Illumination and Freemasonry seemed to intertwine and come together. The Enlightenment ideals, like virtue, morality, progress, equality and truth were reflected in iconography, design, and architecture, just as in the landscape gardens of the time: «The eighteenth century was the great age of garden-design, especially in relation to the evolution and proliferation of the English landscape garden [...] it was also [...] 'the great era of Freemasonry'»⁸.

Gardens of this period, particularly the *Hortus Palatinus*, were associated with mysteries, and mysteries with initiation rites and Egyptian cults. It was actually Giordano Bruno who had been first to preach a Reformation based on Egyptian wisdom and mysteries. Later, in the eighteenth century and at the beginning of the nineteenth century this evolved into Egyptomania, the phenomenon of Western fascination with Egypt, Egyptian culture and history which has been present at various stages in Western culture⁹. The highpoint of Egyptomania took place at the beginning of the nineteenth century, as a result of Napoleon's

⁵ McIntosh 2005, 73.

⁶ Curl 2011, 37.

⁷ «The notion of 'reading the book of nature' was an important element in their [i.e. Rosicrucians'] program, as they believed that divine truth is revealed in nature as clearly as in scripture» (McIntosh 2005, 72; see Morgan 2007, 19-20).

⁸ Curl 2011, 199.

⁹ Curl 1994.

campaign in Egypt (1798-1801) and especially as a result of research on ancient Egypt¹⁰.

But the Egyptian revival, which surely flourished under Napoleon and exerted considerable influence of the arts and the cultural tastes of the time, was not limited to the sphere of influence of the Emperor of the French nor did it follow just that cultural trend¹¹. The fascination with Egypt is actually connected to the debate on ancient secrets and mysteries, i.e. the mysteriosophy that was spreading throughout Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and which was particularly strong for Freemasons, who «saw the origin and the model of their own rituals and not a historical and archeological interest in ancient culture»¹². It was one of the central motifs of the Egyptomania of the eighteenth century: therefore not a fascination with pharaohs or similar recurring elements, but with the idea of mystery that had developed in ancient Egypt, so that we can talk about two kinds of Egyptomania whose points of contrasts are clearly seen if we compare Mozart's *The Magic Flute* and Verdi's *Aida*¹³.

There is one eighteenth century work which must be taken into account in this discussion because of the considerable influence it exerted on (Masonic) Egyptomania, primarily in terms of establishing the conceptual framework of Freemasonry during the Enlightenment¹⁴: *Séthos, histoire ou vie tirée des monuments, anecdotes de l'ancienne Égypte* (Paris, 1731), written by French abbot Jean Terrasson (1670-1750), who was a professor of classical Philosophy at King's College and a member of the *Académie française*. *Séthos* is a fictional story, which the author says he took from an anonymous Greek manuscript, whose author had apparently had access to Egyptian sources. Although Terrasson's work has now been almost completely forgotten, one should keep in mind Scott Abbott's claim in connection with the fictional works of Freemasonry in the German cultural environment: «[...] any post-1730 work of fiction that describes a ritual education owes at least an indirect debt to Terrasson's novel»¹⁵. Generally speaking, *Séthos* had a long literary life and was popular during and after Napoleon's campaign in Egypt¹⁶. The success of Terrasson's novel

¹⁰ De Boisy 2008, 45-48; see Bednarski 2005.

¹¹ Curl 1994, XIV.

¹² Grafton *et al.* 2010, 302.

¹³ See Assmann 1998, 143; Mc Calla 1998, 282; Grafton *et al.* 2010, 301.

¹⁴ Reil 2009, 317.

¹⁵ Abbott 1991, 34.

¹⁶ In 1732 *Séthos* was published in London: *Life of Sethos, Taken from Private Memoirs of the Ancient Egyptians*; it was also translated into German: *Geschichte des ägyptischen*

is largely attributable to the fact that it was a mystification: Terrasson combined the various Egyptian and Greek elements, and captured the attention of readers by stressing the allegedly historical origins of the text and the secrets that were contained therein¹⁷.

The central theme of Terrasson's novel is the initiation of the young man Séthos into the Egyptian mysteries which Terrasson described in the ten books that make up the so-called «Sethos saga». In ancient Egypt, initiation consisted of a period of learning the arts and sciences which culminated in enlightenment. The renewed interest in Egyptian esotericism, the art of transmutation, the initiation of young men (in this case a sovereign), and the secrets of Memphis found their confirmation in Terrasson's novel. The unusual and interesting way of blending the irrational world of Egyptian secrets with world of rational intellect is achieved by having the young prince be led to enlightenment by his teacher while walking through a garden: «[...] every thing was there in the most exact order, according to their kinds and species: Plants as yet unknown, had in some manner their places assign'd them; and botany seem'd here to be compleat, independent of its parts, which in all appearance will never be so»¹⁸.

It is important to note that during the young man's initiation journey, the garden, with its «emblematic landscape»¹⁹, through which he passes, is referred to as the Elysian Fields – an image which reflects the changing modes and currents of gardening in the eighteenth century:

Sethos advancing yet farther, came to an enchanted place call'd, The Elysian Fields. Here we must represent to ourselves a garden of about three quarters

Königs Sethos (1777). There was an Italian edition (1734), and three French editions in the eighteenth century, together with several imitations and elaborations (De Lantier, 1813). Abbot Terrasson was very popular among Enlightenment intellectuals: Kant mentions Terrasson in several of his writings and he possessed the German version of another of Terrasson's works that was published posthumously and was edited by D'Alembert, *La philosophie applicable à tous les objets d'esprit et de la raison* (*Philosophie nach ibrem allgemeinen Einflusse, auf alle Gegenstände des Geistes und der Sitten*, 1756). Terrasson is mentioned by Voltaire too, who wrote about Egyptian rites in *Des rites égyptiens, et de la circoncision*, just as François Pascale (1661), John Sturmy (1728), Edward Young (1730) and Charles Marsh (1737) did. Also a German actor and librettist Emanuel Schikaneder (1751-1812) was inspired by this work of Terrasson's primarily in terms of the Masonic elements in order to put together the libretto for Mozart's *The Magical Flute*.

¹⁷ Lefkowitz 1996, 111-112 (see Spieth 2010, 51).

¹⁸ Terrasson 1732, 64-67.

¹⁹ Whately 1770, 150-151.

of a league in length from north to south, according to the situation of the pyramids, and of eight hundred paces broad from east to west. This breadth began the last third of the whole square, reckoning from the superior temple. Eight large parallel walks, which travers'd at equal distances the whole subterranean city, led to these Elysian fields, and began in some measure the garden, because they were adorn'd on both sides with great vases of flowers or fragrant shrubs.²⁰

There is nothing unusual about *Séthos* being led through a garden as part of his rite of passage since this was «the era when the English style of gardening spread to the continent of Europe along with another phenomenon of British origin, namely Freemasonry»²¹. So too there was nothing strange about the fact that an orangery in Potsdam was built to look like an Egyptian temple, and that there were sphinxes on terraces, and pyramids, labyrinths and obelisks in its gardens. «Many of the nobles and landowners who became Freemasons were also builders of gardens»²². And as McIntosh asserts:

It was of course not only Freemasons who were caught up in the enthusiasm for things Egyptian. However, Freemasons, with their interest in the notion of ancient wisdom and in metaphors taken from architecture, would have been particularly drawn to Egyptian motifs. It would be most surprising if these and other Masonic themes had not found their way into gardens. Indeed, in the case of certain gardens there is clear evidence of Masonic influence in the design.²³

In the minds of many Masons, «especially those of more esoteric leanings, this lost knowledge was linked with traditions such as hermeticism, alchemy, Kabbalah and astrology. Another motif is that of the symbolic, initiatory journey undertaken by the Mason»²⁴.

One must bear in mind in this regard that «The combination of English garden design and initiatic motifs found particularly fertile ground in the German lands»²⁵, since it was in the German lands, precisely in Göttingen that a PhD degree was conferred on Atanasije Stojković (1773-1832), Serbian scientist and writer, member of Russian academy, professor and rector of the Kharkiv University, author of the first Serbian book about

²⁰ Terrasson 1732, 261-263.

²¹ McIntosh 2005, 91.

²² *Ivi*, 92.

²³ *Ibidem*.

²⁴ *Ivi*, 93.

²⁵ *Ivi*, 95.

physics and of the first modern Serbian novel, *Astrid i Natalija* (1801). In Göttingen Stojković had the opportunity to consult more than a thousand Cyrillic books²⁶ and it is not to be excluded that in some way the Göttingen cultural milieu is linked with his book *Kandor iliti otkrovenje egipatskih tajni* («Kandor or the revelation of Egyptian secrets»; Buda, 1800) that has all the elements of the initiation novel²⁷ including the esoteric components typical of the (literary) architecture of the Masons.

Numerous elements suggest that Stojković could have been in touch with the Masons: in particular he was in contact with Dositej Obradović (1739/42-1811), the most significant South Slavic enlightener, and there are many indications that link Obradović to Freemasonry²⁸. It is also known that Stojković constantly informed the metropolitan Stevan Stratimirović (1757-1836)²⁹ about the important generation of the Göttingen professors: Gesner, Heyne, Schlözer, Eichhorn³⁰. In Göttingen, which is home to the most prominent university of the German *Aufklärung*³¹, in the second half of the eighteenth century a French Masonic lodge existed, while numerous Göttingen students were members of the Bavarian secret movement known as *Illuminati*³² and other secret societies³³. The so called «Göttingen School»³⁴ was actually a group of scholars interested in antiquity and the process of «human social development»³⁵. One of the Göttingen professors that Stojković knew, Christian Gottlob Heyne (1763-1812), who taught his students to read myths in order to understand human societies, said that Freemasonry was a «dangerous plant» and «magischer Unsinn» which has spread so much that it even touched his family³⁶. It cannot be excluded that Stojković was in contact with such circles and ideas, even though

²⁶ Lauer 1995, XVIII

²⁷ Radulović 2005 and 2009.

²⁸ Nenezić 1987, 145-148; see Kostić 1954, 7, 11-12; Radulović 2013.

²⁹ Stevan Stratimirović was listed as a member of the *Vigilantia* lodge in Osijek (created in 1773).

³⁰ Radonić 1953, 109.

³¹ The University of Göttingen exercised notable influence in several areas during the Enlightenment and introduced practical studies in the applied sciences, such as botanical gardens (Burns 2003, 35; Reill - Wilson 2004, 240).

³² One of the leaders of the *Illuminatis* was Mozart's friend and patron Joseph von Sonnenfels (1732-1817), a figure who was significant for the culture of the Southern Slavs (Thomson 1977, 16).

³³ Roehr 1995; see Brüggmann 1941; Le Forestier 2001.

³⁴ Carhart 2007.

³⁵ *Ivi*, 4.

³⁶ Heyne 1788, 395.

they were sometimes no more than «magical nonsense». It is, however, undeniable that the Göttingen scholars developed a concept of culture that functioned as a «tool» for investigating human social development. Moreover, August Ludwig Schlözer (1735-1809), professor *extraordinarius* at Göttingen, who «was well acquainted with English political culture» and a «convinced Anglophile and an ardent admirer of British political institutions»³⁷, told Stojković: «Ihr Vaterland braucht Aufklärung»³⁸ and advised him to work with Stratimirović on the spread of education.

It is in this context of the spread of education and the illumination of the people that the work of Atanasije Stojković, *Kandor or the Revelation of Egyptian Secrets* must be interpreted. In light of the European narratives of Egyptomania, a fundamental question must be addressed regarding *Kandor*: «To which genre does this text belong?». There are a variety of answers to this question: Josef Dobrovský³⁹, and Lazar Bojić⁴⁰ argue that *Kandor* is a novel. Jovan Skerlić says only that it is an instructive and symbolic novel, with the presence of pantheistic concepts⁴¹. For Svetislav Marić this book is not a novel, but a writing with philosophical content⁴². Jovan Deretić, in turn, associates *Kandor* with Voltaire's *Candide* (1759) and suggests the similarity between the names of the characters largely determines and directs Stojković's writing and represents a certain referential point⁴³.

Kandor, however, has been defined as an initiation novel by Nemanja Radulović who followed the intuition of Sava Damjanov about this genre⁴⁴:

We call initiatory the type of novel that describes the introduction of the hero into a mostly secret, learning system, i.e. his path to a particular type of knowledge, symbolism is present and the character experiences a change in himself.⁴⁵

³⁷ Van Horn Melton 2001, 19.

³⁸ Radonić 1953, 26-27.

³⁹ Dobrowsky 1814, 216.

⁴⁰ Boić 1815, 91-92.

⁴¹ Skerlić 2006, 107.

⁴² Marić 1950, 159-165.

⁴³ However Deretić emphasizes that the story had been treated by many writers before and after Stojković, including Voltaire in his philosophical novel *Zadig*. Elsewhere Deretić adds that *Kandor* has a «poetic nature», and that it can be located between philosophy and imaginative literature, between debate and the novel (Deretić 1983, 200).

⁴⁴ Damjanov 1988, 93.

⁴⁵ Radulović 2005, 447-448, and 2009, 20 (unless otherwise indicated, all translations are mine).

The definition of the genre of *Kandor*, in fact, is closely intertwined with its topic and cannot be separated from the question «What is this text about?». In this sense Marić on one hand identifies the presence of philosophical elements in *Kandor*, mostly taken from Kant's moral philosophy⁴⁶. Radulović, however, believes that the initiatic structure of the novel is clear⁴⁷ and that Stojković's novel has as its basis Masonic symbolism and ideology, and perhaps to some extent Christian esotericism of the eighteenth century. He adds that this Masonic orientation of *Kandor* can be seen on two levels, the symbolic one and the level of ideas, but that the novel lacks the transformation of the initiated candidate, «which in part can be attributed to non developed literary technique».

The various phases of Kandor's initiation are symbolized in the architecture and landscape design of the garden through which he must pass. Moreover, as Nemanja Radulović has already pointed out⁴⁸, the story contains all the elements of Masonic esotericism, including symbolism related to sleep and wakefulness, light and darkness, the four points of the world (from West to East), the temple, books and candles. Radulović also observed the presence of another layer of symbolism associated with the eighteenth century esotericism: the bretheren, the old doctrine of the four elements, the division of the three kingdoms of nature, a particular attitude towards the truth, the creation/initiation chain. Stojković, according to Radulović, «believes in a certain genealogy of knowledge»⁴⁹ Adam - Pythagoras - Socrates - the Saviour, then charity, the body-soul dichotomy⁵⁰, and the garden about which the critic interprets simply as an «ideal»⁵¹.

It is in that «ideal» garden that the ritual journey of a young man, under the guide of an old man, starts – a fact which is emphasized explicitly three times in the book. On one hand the garden confirms the initiation or esoteric structure of the narrative, but, as the old man points out, Kandor's peregrination is not necessarily connected with Egypt: «The idea of a journey through various compartments, with vestments for each stage, before a goal is reached, is not confined to ancient esoteric Egyptian mystery-cults»⁵². On the other hand the structure of *Kandor's* garden

⁴⁶ Marić 1950, 11.

⁴⁷ Radulović 2009, 20.

⁴⁸ *Ivi*, 23-27.

⁴⁹ *Ivi*, 27.

⁵⁰ *Ivi*, 32.

⁵¹ *Ivi*, 25.

⁵² Curl 2011, 49.

actually contradicts that same initiatic structure connected with esoterism, leaving space for a general Enlightenment interpretation.

From the very beginning of *Kandor* there is a powerful description of nature: the dawn, all the beings are asleep, silence reigns, and in the field only larks can be heard, their sweet chirping and flashing wings in the clean air – in this idyllic scene Kandor, who is 22 years old, wakes up and goes to the mountain above the city. The mountain is a common element in spatial allegories that have truth as their topic: it is a symbol of approaching divinity and as such is known in many cultures. Often clouds surround the mountain peak suggesting a luminal space between the human and the divine. This symbolism embodies the ancient concept of the cosmic mountain as *axis mundi*. Holy mountains, such as Olympus, Fuji Yama or Sinai often become symbols of God's power. The allegorical motif of mountains and climbing mountains is present in the *Bible* and the holy mountain *par excellence* is, of course, the Sinai, as is said in *Exodus* (19,12-13)⁵³. In the *Divine Comedy*, the mountain is referred to several times and has different meanings (*Inf.* XV, 63; XVIII, 33; XXXIII, 30), but allegorically it represents happiness and a life of virtue, and the earthly paradise is set on top of the highest mountain in the world (*Inf.* XXVI, 135). In the East, however, the mountain is often a model for the temple. One of the most important visual representations of allegorical mountains is the mosaic *Allegoria del Colle della Sapienza*, located in the Cathedral of Santa Maria Assunta in Siena – the mountain is surrounded by the stormy sea and the message of the allegory of *Mons Veritatis* or *Mons Sapientiae* is clear: truth and virtue can be achieved but they must be reached through an arduous journey.

When Kandor sets out on his journey he first sees the aurora that «opens the gates of heaven» and then a fiery circle which illuminates the darkness and makes treetops golden, announcing a wonderful day. Then all nature awakes and Kandor enjoys the beauty of it. Young Kandor prays and suddenly an old man appears before him. The old man, dressed all in white and decorated with silver colored pearls, is holding a book in his right hand and a white candle in his left hand. He informs Kandor that the mountain is a sacred place and that no unilluminated person should be on it; he then sets three crucial questions to Kandor: «Who are you?», «What do you want?» and «What are your intentions?» which correspond to the questions of the initiatic rite that characterized the German secret society of *Illuminati*: «Wo kamen Sie her?», «Wohin wollen Sie?», «Wen

⁵³ See Harris 1985.

suchen Sie da?» or «Was erleuchtet Sie?»⁵⁴. It is interesting that Kandor answers that he came to the mountain because he intends «to see the Sunrise for the last time», which is the last answer in the order of *Illuminati*: «Das Licht, das in mir wohnt, und nun angezündet ist»⁵⁵.

At this point there is a vibrant description of nature: the sun is on the horizon, all nature is clothed in gold, on the mount birds are singing and flying through the luxuriant foliage, in the valley there are lambs and shepherds playing the fife and from the distant hills arrives a song. To the East a shining stream can be seen that meanders through the green meadow covered with flowers, and the sun is reflected in the stream; «[...] the East is a place of light, a symbol of mental and spiritual illumination»⁵⁶. The old man asks Kandor who had advised him to go to Memphis. Kandor replies that no one had advised him to go to Memphis but that he had decided on his own to go there and to dedicate himself to the secrets of the sages. Although his parents had told him that an ancient science had existed in Memphis for thousands of years and that the local priest's family had built themselves an eternal throne, Kandor does not believe that the truth is hidden in Memphis alone. From the moment the old man confirms Kandor's suspicion that the secrets of life can be found not only in Memphis, but in other places as well, the initiation of the young man begins.

Kandor tries to sleep but fails, then climbs the mountain and sees the old man praying. As soon as the prayer finishes, the old man calls the youth to follow him: they go through a valley and Kandor sees a path which until then he had not known about. Through the valley extends crystallized water and in it there is a small island covered with flowers. Once they have passed through the valley, they enter the wood; the deeper they go into the wood, the denser it becomes and eventually they come to a point so thick that the sun cannot penetrate. The old man then turns toward the East, pronounces some incomprehensible words and opens a door into a field where he puts a candle and a book.

The young man at that moment enters into a magnificent garden: he sees two rows of majestic and perfectly identical cedars, as if all had been planted on the same day. Cedars, famous for their longevity, are considered to be «trees of God» and only the wrath of God was said to be mightier than the cedar: «The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars;

⁵⁴ [Faber] 1788, 142.

⁵⁵ Bonds *et al.* 2000, 119.

⁵⁶ Curl 2011, 98.

Yes, the Lord breaks in pieces the cedars of Lebanon»⁵⁷. They symbolize healing, purification, immortality and incorruptibility⁵⁸. The path through the garden is lined with these trees whose tops are hidden in the clouds. The air in the garden is something that the young man has not yet experienced, and there are so many different birds singing. Stojković underlines that «it is impossible to describe the beauty of this wonderful place»⁵⁹. The two travelers come to a point from which they are able to see the whole garden. As soon as they head to the East, the old man turns to the left and Kandor notes a magnificent palace and thinks he must be «in a garden planted by a heavenly hand»⁶⁰. The circular palace looks like an amphitheater that has many rooms within its inner circle. Everything is made of marble, and on the rocks there are bas reliefs of the Elysian Fields. Every virtue has its representation and even vice and iniquity have their symbols. In the middle of the amphitheater there is a room that has been specially prepared: a candle is burning on the table, and also a book lies open beside it. The old man breaks the silence saying to the young man:

I brought you into the garden, which is inaccessible to those who are not enlightened and I love you like a father loves his son. There is nothing to be afraid of. Here the eyes of reason will open to you; here your thirst for science will be quenched, here you will see the very naked truth: but first it is necessary that you tell me everything about your life.⁶¹

Kandor then begins telling his story of how he grew up in the humble and friendly environment of a hut. He spent his childhood in the meadows and woods around the hut, tending the sheep. He emphasizes that he was happy but he was not aware of it and then he describes the area around the hut: a thick forest, broad fields, woodland birds sang so that the listener was induced into quiet sleep. Then one summer night a stranger had come to their hut whom he and his parents welcomed; the morning after the visitor said he was from the big city, where at that time science was in bloom. He invited Kandor to follow him to the city and after a few days Kandor was introduced to the universities, but the deeper he delved into the realm of science, the vaster it appeared to him. He was not yet

⁵⁷ *Psalm* 29, 5.

⁵⁸ Eckenwalder 2009.

⁵⁹ Stojković 1800, 16.

⁶⁰ *Ibidem*.

⁶¹ *Ivi*, 17.

ready for all of this, but Kandor was unable to extinguish his desire. At that point, addressing the old man who was leading him, Kandor says: «Open to me, divine man, the way to truth! Open to me the secret of human happiness!»⁶².

At that time Kandor was not yet prepared for the revelation of the Secret:

Central to any basic understanding of Freemasonry is the role of Memory [...]. Esoteric knowledge [...] was not safe in the hands of the ignorant or the profane, so it was safer for initiates to remember such material, possibly using Emblems as aids to memory, rather than to commit secrets to a page [...] the student had to remember the *route* through the building, so that the rooms, with their features, became associated with key elements in the text, with concepts, with faces, or even with specific words or phrases.⁶³

In fact, the old man explains how the truth, that has been sought after by all mankind from the ancient Egyptians, from Orpheus to Europe via Greece, has been conveyed from one person to another as a secret and how Pythagoras has been a key figure in that chain of communication. He emphasizes the exclusivity of the enlightened mind that is the only one that can perceive the secret⁶⁴. The old man informs the young man that from Adam onward, although many attempts at finding the truth had been made, nothing was really known until the Egyptians, and that they, the Egyptians, of all the peoples were the closest to the truth. However, the truth could not come forward naturally because in Egyptian culture it was conveyed only under duress. The old man goes on to explain how all those «wise Greeks» had also sought the truth, but it had looked to them as if the truth had been built in the clouds. The only one who passed through the door of truth was Pythagoras; unfortunately his mistake was that he wanted to introduce everyone to the truth and began to teach everybody, even those who did not have the heart or the head for something like that, and after his death the truth was extinguished. Thousands of mortals have continued to seek it through the labyrinth. After the «virtuous» man Pythagoras the truth had fallen under a black darkness, till the Savior. Pythagoras then, waited patiently and reverently (unlike many others) for initiation into the profundity of secret truths. To that end,

⁶² *Ivi*, 22.

⁶³ Curl 2011, 39.

⁶⁴ Jacob 1991, 8: «From the earliest records Continental (as well as British) freemasons distinguished themselves from 'the common people' to whom those truths fit only for 'the man of merit' should not be communicated».

he spent 22 years in the temples of Memphis and there he met all the teachers and received from them the knowledge. This is significantly the exact age of Kandor when he decides to learn the secrets and know the truth, and like Pythagoras, Kandor's journey towards the truth follows a labyrinthian trajectory.

«The Labyrinth as an emblem or as a form», as Curl points out, «is a number of communicating passages, arranged in great complexity, through which it is difficult to find one's way without guidance: it is also called a Maze, and it is an intricate, tortuous arrangement of features designed to mystify»⁶⁵ and «the soul moves through various states represented by parts of a garden, through the Maze (representing the confusion of Life's Journey)»⁶⁶. The old man then takes Kandor into the palace located in the magnificent garden and leads him into a small room with no windows where the light of truth penetrates through a little hole. All nature is silent, the sun sets, the darkness is everywhere, only the tops of the cedars are gilded by the fiery rays of the sun. Kandor entreats the old man to lead him to a way of life. Shortly before the dawn the old man invites the young men to pray. Here begins a lengthy prayer which glorifies happiness, truth, reason, immortality and eternal life through reason, wisdom and beneficence.

After the prayer the old man takes the young man by the hand and leads him to another room, which is more brightly lit and where words have been written on the marble walls in golden letters: «Senses - Pleasure; Spirit - Wisdom; Man - Benefactor - Immortality - Perfection»⁶⁷. In the meantime, the sun turns around the earth. Then the old man leaves Kandor to his own thoughts and after a while leads him into the garden to show him the beauty of creatures: the sun is shining, it is warm, the birds are singing in the shade or in dense cedar leaves, every flower opens and in place sheltered from all harm they come to the evening. They go down a lane in which the sun rays drop through the thick trees and the old man talks to Kandor about the first being that was created. An infinite world imparts its eternal truth to all bodies, like the sun, illuminating and enlightening the spirit. The old man points out in that moment that those who have not come to the throne of the pure world have blind eyes and spend their days in the dense darkness.

⁶⁵ Curl 2011, 49.

⁶⁶ *Ivi*, 37.

⁶⁷ Stojković 2011, 39.

Kandor then realizes that he is in such a blissful place that he begins to feel true happiness and he wants this feeling to continue forever. They then come to a cave. Caves are humanity's most ancient shrines and many considered them as the entrances to «another world», as the locus of cults where heroes are born, and as residences of prophets, clairvoyants, hermits or saints. Caves are the meeting places of the symbolic and chthonic worlds. They are often identified with a niche that is seen as a substitute for a «universal cave», a cave of prayer (*mihrab*), a place that enhances the sense of security that prayer gives⁶⁸. On both sides of the cave there are large lakes into which the various steams in the garden flow. In allegories a lake often stands for the sea and the waves of the sea may appear as high mountains⁶⁹. Swans as white as snow are swimming on the lake and animals are playing nearby, but, when they see an old man standing on the hill, they go toward him. Then the old man begins his speech which emphasizes charity and says that this divine kingdom is nearly perfect and that perfection should be sought not outside of men but inside. For humanity to go forward, rules of action are needed. These rules of action are given to us by our reason which is a blessing that can lead the way to our spiritual and physical happiness. In a moral world we can find the happiness that is lost in a purely physical world. The old man goes on to say that the philanthropist in this world cannot be perfect, but that such thoughts are not for everyone. He then invites Kandor to inspect the physical world, to apply a general rule to make the world moral. The old man tells Kandor to rejoice because in the physical world the action of the Almighty can be seen in its highest form: the intensity and variety of green, the balsamic fragrances that are brought by the zephyr, the marvelous nightingales that sing for the loved one; all the parts of the body waste and break down, and yet it appears that in fact nothing is wasted, but we come to be in a new state in which all remains. Kandor thus approaches closer to the truth because he sees that we should carry within our hearts truth, philanthropy and charity whether we are young or old.

There follows a poem about eternity, righteousness and immortality. The old man again takes Kandor's hand and they return to the palace. The sun once again overshadows the country and spills its splendor throughout the garden in bloom. The cedars along the lane are thick, and the night birds start singing their sad songs. Kandor and the old man arrive at the palace and have dinner.

⁶⁸ Biedermann 1999, 104.

⁶⁹ See Grbić 2010, 182.

They awake to find a morning that is full of dark clouds from the East that prevent the sun's rays from shining on the ocean. From afar comes terrible thunder, a storm begins to move over the high cedars and they bend their heads to the ground to hide from the shock while the dust rises. There are dark clouds that cover the entire sky, rocks crumble, darkness reigns everywhere and fear spreads across the land: now the whole of nature that Kandor sees before him seems terrible and it all seems like the last day. This dark imagery seems to imply that «In gardens [...] a route might suggest Life, or even the Journey through Life to Death, and so could convey the idea of a Pilgrimage»⁷⁰. The petrified soul pilgrim Kandor looks at the old man who is on his knees, his hands raised towards heaven, pronouncing another poem in praise of Almighty God who created the clear streams and high cedars. Kandor's elderly guide then calls for proud men to fall on their knees before the deity. The storm calms down and once again Kandor asks the old man to teach him the truth. The old man takes Kandor under a garden canopy and continues to speak about the purpose of the role of benefactor and the rule of human action: we must strive to get closer to perfection and reason commands everyone to do good works. The old man points out that we need to submit to God, God is truth, in God we find the truth. There follows another prayer after which the old man returns to the palace, leaving Kandor on his own. When the weather is once again sunny they both go to the cave and the old man again starts speaking about charity, harmony, happiness, mercy, justice and holiness. Suddenly the sun rises high on the horizon and all the glittering flowers turn their crowns to the sky and all the bugs come out to warm themselves under the sun. Then the nightingales sing joyful songs to the Creator, larks sing and fly off. Joy is felt everywhere in the air and everything seems to have an air of loftiness. Life is in nature.

Kandor spends some time in this state of happiness and the old man calls Kandor to enter the temple of wisdom which is now open. He takes the young man's arm, leading him to a forest whose leaves catch the wind. Kandor sees from afar that the temple is lit, and the closer he gets, the faster his heart beats. In the middle of the temple there is a fire surrounded by twelve rooms and in every room there is a candle. Around those rooms there is a stream. The twelve rooms are actually twelve «ways of the world», and the river symbolizes time because no matter what reason contemplates, it does so within the confines of time. Around

⁷⁰ Curl 2011, 202.

reason there is a wall that mortals are not allowed to cross. This is the wall of space beyond which our limited senses do not allow us to pass. Reason would probably still keep going through space, if we were not limited by our senses⁷¹.

At this point, the old man turns into an angel of God. Kandor falls to the ground and realizes that he has been in the maze of life, but now the truth has been revealed. Stojković's work ends with the prayer that everyone be sensible, honorable and happy.

The type of garden which leads to the discovery of truth and illumination, as the garden in *Kandor* does, is the manifestation of a contextualization of space and spatial turns in the allegories that were typical during the Enlightenment. In the same way that space is created, and there is no a priori space because it is made up of a relationship, not of structures⁷², so too in allegorical modality space becomes contextualized in full service to allegory. It actually stands there «for» something. It follows that in allegory the garden, just as space and text, is open to interpretation. In other words the representation of space in literature conditions all the elements in the act of reading and interpretation⁷³. In this allegorical modality, present in the initiation of Kandor, the garden is an idea, not just what we see, but it is primarily a reflection of our mental structure, or view of the composition of the world, and the landscape is «a way of seeing the world»⁷⁴. In *Kandor* the garden is the key component in the creation of meaning. It is a matrix not only of values and connotations but also of borders and the crossing points between those borders. It is the site of cross-cultural discourse and the spatial-temporal intersection of nature and architectural design – an exemplification of «the art of framing»⁷⁵ and a perfect terrain for the formulation of metaphysical concepts, particularly on «holy places»⁷⁶. This imaginary garden acquires in this way its physical form, in contrast with the *Hortus Palatinus*, an actual physical garden that was transformed into an idea, and whose borders become a metaphor of journey and the act of teaching, learning and attainment of truth⁷⁷: «Briefly, conceived space corresponds to mental or

⁷¹ See Boscovich 1763, 273.

⁷² Warf - Arias 2009, 75.

⁷³ Jouve 2010, 53.

⁷⁴ Cosgrove 1984, 13.

⁷⁵ Cache 1995, 2.

⁷⁶ Deleuze - Guattari 1987, 413-415.

⁷⁷ Hunt 1976, 44-47.

represented images of space»⁷⁸. The garden in *Kandor*, just as any other area in the allegorical modality, does not exist on its own but is part of the cultural network, i.e. it is a constructed entity. In his «trialectics of spatiality» according to which space is perceived, lived and conceived, Edward Soja sees designed or conceived space as a space that is created in the mind and has cognitive forms, expressed in the system of signs and symbols in written and spoken form⁷⁹. And it is this kind of imaginary space, which contains complex symbolism, like the garden in Atanasije Stojković's *Kandor* (i.e. site of ritual initiation), that is the dominant and the most widespread in society⁸⁰.

Moving within these imaginary, symbolic and allegorical boundaries and structures of the garden space means shifting through the moral concepts and ideas that were prevalent in the eighteenth century, and which were filtered through the notion of truth as one of the key concepts that triggers an allegorical peregrination, even before the Enlightenment morality had begun to be considered as something separate from religion. In the laic sense, just as in the religious one, the notion of truth remains a referential point around which to form an allegory and around which space was shaped. Significantly, the notion of truth had been related to the allegory of space even earlier, in the previous century⁸¹: Bartolomeo Del Bene (1514-?) in his *Civitas veri sive morum* (1609) represented an allegory of truth in the form of a city that has its origins in the medieval allegory, primarily from the work of St. Augustine⁸². Actually Del Bene's poem is an allegorical recasting of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. It describes a week-long spiritual journey undertaken by Margaret, Duchess of Savoy, who travels through the City of Truth, from its five portals (one for each of the senses) through its various palaces, gardens included, and the journey culminates in visits to the Temple of Intelligence and the Temple of Wisdom. This is literary architecture⁸³ that imagines a true Christian society; the spatial structure of truth has a complex geometry⁸⁴ and is symbolized through a city divided into sectors and the inner senses lead to intellectual virtues that are in the center⁸⁵.

⁷⁸ Jaworski - Turlow 2010, 7.

⁷⁹ Soja 2001.

⁸⁰ Lefebvre 1974, 33.

⁸¹ Praz 1975.

⁸² Yates 1988, 111-116.

⁸³ Arnaudo 2009.

⁸⁴ Feuerstein 2008.

⁸⁵ See Mynott 2009, 149; Rosenfeld 2011.

Unlike de Caus' garden that grew from the real to the idealized structure, Stojković's garden represents a consequence of the fictional garden landscape and architecture: it exists only in the story about the initiation of a pure young man dedicated to the truth, so Kandor actually is a «mental traveler» who turns into, through a hypothetically Masonic initiation, an «earth wanderer» (just as William Blake would say), who seeks truth and whose aim is humanity and benevolence. The garden thus, just as it used to be «a mirror of the age of Enlightenment»⁸⁶, actually becomes a mirror of the initiation journey, typical of secret societies, Freemasonry included. The initiatory journey of Kandor goes from the state of blissfulness and idyllic landscape through the marvelous garden, that is then transformed through the penumbra of a storm into a funerary garden⁸⁷, and then back again to the clarity of a divine garden. There are many gardens that suggest an initiatory journey, as McIntosh explains⁸⁸, but in the case of Stojković's work, the garden represents imaginative material very similar to the imagery and symbolism of Freemasonry. This is evident from the so-called «language of gardens»⁸⁹ from which we are able to say that a number of symbols that appear in the garden are Masonic: «[...] there are, indeed, in certain instances, some sorts of connection or connections between Freemasonry and garden-design»⁹⁰. There are three structural elements that the garden in *Kandor* shares with the landscape garden design associated with Freemasonry: (1) the form of the garden as a whole; (2) the objects that are created or placed in the garden to which specific meanings are attached; (3) the plants in the garden and the meaning they are given (in *Kandor* the symbolic meaning of plants is associated almost completely with initiation).

Yet, if we were to compare the garden described in *Séthos* to the one present in Stojković's *Kandor*, we would see that the beautiful gardens of the journey of the young Egyptian prince initiated into the Egyptian mysteries are much richer than the garden through which the young Kandor passes: for Kandor too the initiation takes place in a garden, but Stojković's basic initiatory garden model is condensed compared to Terrasson's expanded descriptions and is essentially luminary, which is actually stressed by the name of the protagonist himself. Nemanja Radulović

⁸⁶ Humbert 2006, 192.

⁸⁷ *Ivi*, 193.

⁸⁸ McIntosh 2005, 91-112.

⁸⁹ *Ivi*, 3.

⁹⁰ Curl 2011, 198.

points out that even though all the elements characteristic of the esoteric and initiatory tradition are present in *Kandor*, the novel lacks the transformation of the candidate (which should have been presented through trials or symbolic death). «Enlightenment (*photismós*), initiation as a *mystérion*, and *sýmbolon* (password) are terms that are present in Antiquity in the contest of initiation. The term *mystérion* signified the obtaining of esoteric wisdom after some kind of endurance-test involving trials, or ordeals, had been passed»⁹¹. The lack of trials or ordeals in *Kandor* is related to the character himself and the story that surrounds his past. Nevertheless the passage through initiation is manifested in the description of nature and the garden. If the young man Kandor emphasizes, at the very beginning, that he was actually happy *before* going on the journey and that he was *not aware* of it, it is hardly likely that an initiatory transformation need take place. The garden frame actually refers, from the beginning to the end, to the luminous, Edenic descriptions. The *locus amoenus* exists before Kandor sets out on the journey through the garden which is, as a matter of fact, «blacked out» by the dark room and the storm, when everything is eclipsed. However the static architectural design of the garden with its idyllic elements remains the same throughout the story and undergoes no change. Neither Kandor nor the garden evolve, there is no transformation since the young man is already «Kandor», i.e. *pure* from the beginning, just as the landscape surrounding his birthplace is pure from the very outset. The description of the natural landscape that surrounds the hut where he grew up before setting out on his journey through the garden of illumination is almost indistinguishable from that of the garden. It could be that the relationship between images, places and content «might be extremely obscure (or even incomprehensible) to all except the person involved in the exercise»⁹², but we cannot ignore the fact that there is no space for transformation, but only for awakening (and we should remember that at the beginning everything was asleep in the pastoral landscape). Rather than a metamorphosis there is a raising of consciousness about something that the young man already carried within himself and which was part of his destiny. The moment the young man opens his eyes and there are no longer any clouds, it means simply that he has become conscious of himself and his role in the world, of something he already had

⁹¹ *Ivi*, 47, 49: «Apuleius tells us of Degrees of Trials, of Oaths, of Secrecy, of Passwords of Hidden Truths, of passages from Darkness to Light, and of a Victory over Death in the Isiac mysteries».

⁹² *Ivi*, 40.

within himself and the journey through the garden was the means that helped him become conscious of it, for a garden «may provide mnemonics of those ideas, feelings, thoughts, or concerns»⁹³. In the garden of illumination, therefore, the literary architecture seems to confirm the past, the previous state of those who are pre-destined to convey light, to achieve consciousness and convey the meanings from the garden to the vast expanses of reason.

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⁹³ *Ivi*, 198.

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