

FORM AND LANGUAGE: THE LANDSCAPE OF THE ARCHITECTURAL

Anna Hooper

Abstract

As part of my doctoral research I have constructed a play using Platonic dialectic to explore the concept-construct of “form.” I am borrowing from the origins of western philosophy to explore the acquisition of knowledge, as well as the landscape of language to articulate the architectural. Ultimately I am asking a question that all students should ask: What is the shape of an idea, that is--what constitutes “form”?

The play’s protagonist is Plato. Using his own voice is very much intentional as Plato wrote dialogues never having himself as the interlocutor in any. Early Greek philosophers Heraclitus and Parmenides appear as herms, and the poet Homer appears as a ghost. The dialogues are purely hypothetical and the “voices” of these characters, as well as Plato’s, are based on their own words and writings. However, the voice of Pan, an interloper between the characters in the play and the readers of it, is purely fictional. Finally, every protagonist needs an antagonist, so I have introduced a gardener.

My thesis question is “what is the shape of an idea, that is--what constitutes “form”?” The gardener challenges Plato’s theory of The Forms to promote an alternative theory of form, that of the shape-idea. I have replaced exemplars that Plato uses to explain his theory in his own texts with paradigms that are subsequently explored in the play.

Keywords

Form, becoming, language, knowledge, the architectural.

Introduction

This short play (with annotations in red) has been created to explore the concept-construct of form. Beginning with a question “what is the shape of an idea...” two players, Plato and a gardener, engage in a dialectic dialogue to reveal “...what constitutes form.” Unseen by Plato or the gardener, a third player, Pan, muses about the discourse and its possible permutations while cameo players are given voice in various guises.

When not abroad during the 4th century BCE, Plato engaged his pupils in philosophical discussion in his own garden at the Academy outside Athens. Though nothing extant remains of it today, one can imagine how it may have been. Similarly, one can imagine how the garden in my play might be. The garden is an abstract construction, a landscape of language, of writing and of the mind itself. This is important in the context of the play, as part of the approach to understanding what is meant by a lexical

landscape is founded on an understanding of the Greek meaning for the term form, which Plato introduces in the opening scene. He then exemplifies this with his theory of The Forms.

I have not sought to interrogate Plato's writings on the subject of The Forms in this play, but have extrapolated them as abstract concepts for the purposes of the play's dialectic – a process of learning, of acquiring knowledge. Notwithstanding Pan's words, and the gardener's (whose voices are purely mine), the dialogues are purely hypothetical and based on my interpretation of the writings of the aforementioned players.

In summary, dialogue provides an opportunity for discussion in the original sense of the word, that of conversation. My research is embedded in an ongoing conversation that promotes a higher understanding of things-in-themselves as ideas. It is one of how education, philosophy, and the architectural are all constructions, and without language they would remain unknowable. That is not say that a finite conclusion has been, or can be, reached with regard to knowledge acquisition. Learning is ultimately a process, one of unlearning and relearning. It is perpetually becoming. Perhaps it is this becoming that is the true form of knowledge.

The Setting

Within the landscape of an ancient forest a garden is created; one of sacred groves and deified temples, of shadowy caves and sun-warmed meadows, of meandering streams and cultivated flowers. Beyond is the sea, bound only by the horizon.

Scene I: Early morning on the first day of Spring in 355 BCE. Plato and the gardener enter a grove engaged in discussion. Above them, among the branches of an olive tree, Pan muses poetically about the nature of becoming.

Pan: (Reclining idly, he smiles to himself and begins to recite his poetic conundrum).

**If Boundary is the Threshold of Openness
Of what is yet Undisclosed and therefore
Embraces all Potentiality**

**And Building is the Openness of Expression
Between Man and Space and the Poetic that
Creates the (not-) Being of Ideal Form
Does Language Inhabit the Interstices
Collapsing the Internal and External and
Open the Way through becoming?**

(He hears Plato and the gardener approach and falls silent).

Pan's nine-line conundrum can be analysed by examining the language tropes he employs, the wordplay that is inherent in all of his musings. Each line in the poem can be thought of as an aspect the concept-construct of becoming. In concert with an analogous interpolation of the lexical landscape it provides a frame of reference for the dialectic discourse between Plato and the gardener. In order to establish the concept-construct in Pan's conundrum I will begin not with Being or (not-) Being but with becoming.

Open the Way through becoming?

To begin to comprehend this term it is necessary to inquire first into the nature of becoming and secondly into the meaning attributed to it by Pan. Becoming equates to perpetual impermanence, a process that is ever-continuing. By definition

then becoming is forming, then deforming, and then subsequently reforming ad infinitum. Given the topic that our interlocutors are debating, it can be argued that becoming is an important element in the question of what is the shape of an idea as this implies form. However, what Pan means when he uses it is yet to be made knowable. Open and Way suggests Reveal and Path. Therefore the final line can be read as Reveal the Path through perpetual impermanence? This appears nonsensical until the rest of the conundrum is exposed so I will return to the opening lines of the poem that precede Scene I of the play:

If Boundary is the Threshold of Openness Of what is yet Undisclosed and therefore Embraces all Potentiality

The first three lines are the framework for the ensuing dialogue between Plato and the gardener. The first line indicates that there is a gateway into another landscape. The second line suggests that there exists a "thing" as yet "unknown" to us as it has not been spoken of. The third line unites the ideas of an "unknown" and "thing" by inviting us to imagine what this might be. These lines can be interpolated as If Frontier is the Gateway to Revelation/Of what is yet Unsaid and therefore/Encompasses all that is Imaginable. What then is this frontier and, even more intriguingly, what will there be beyond the gateway? Enter Plato and the gardener.

Plato: (Entering the grove with the gardener, he appears intrigued and slightly amused). I think your question is a very interesting one. What is the form or shape of an idea? If I propose that the word eidos can mean not only shape, but

also idea, that is, two forms of form, that is an interesting proposition in itself. However, I have a more challenging proposition. What if I propose that there is yet a different form of form, a Perfect Form, and that all other forms are merely imperfect copies of this? This question is even more complex and requires proper discussion as there are really two distinctly separate ideas at hand.

Gardener: (Playfully). There is of course a further possibility--that they are neither one or the other, but are one and the same and manifested through the dynamic of the shape-idea. Take, for instance, the landscape of the architectural. I suggest to you that the architectural is a form merely becoming a thing-in-itself.

Plato: (Surprised). An obvious example of the architectural is the Form of Temple. The Form is absolute, stable. It symbolizes Order to which all else is subjugated. Without Order there can be no Arrangement, no Propriety, no Proportion. The Form of Temple would not be knowable. One must fully comprehend The Forms to recognise in them the architectural. This is ultimately revealed through the immutable Form of Knowledge.

Gardener: I disagree. Knowledge is born of ideas. Order, arrangement, propriety, and proportion are ideas in the landscape of language through which form is revealed. Only through the becoming of language can form be known.

Plato: The landscape of language merely reflects form. To explain this I will return to the idea of the Perfect Form. The Form is a First Principle, intangible, the Perfect Idea. To truly know the First principle as a Form one must engage

in rigorous and disciplined discourse until all possible suppositions are overturned. I believe there are four stages of acquiring knowledge. The first is conjecture, and the second, belief. Thereafter follows understanding and, finally, rational intuition. Borrowing from the great Socratic style of dialogue I have constructed what I call the Platonic dialectic. It is a useful tool to further debate your question. Would you care to join me on my walk and discuss this?

Gardener: (Enthusiastically). Indeed. I would enjoy the opportunity to debate the merits of both arguments. Let's take this path and see where it leads. (She joins Plato on the path and they disappear beyond the grove).

Pan: (Lowers himself from the branches to the ground). Ah, the realm of the Perfect Form. Is it an immutable reality that exists beyond the landscape of language? Or is language indeed the becoming of form? Let's follow our interlocutors and listen further to their dialectic. (Flute in mouth, he leaves the grove).

The dialogue thus far can be interpreted as Plato proposing a set of First Principles, a system by which all things are measured. The gardener rejects Plato's concept of The Forms as First Principles upon which all else is based. Instead the gardener asserts that language is the construct that facilitates knowledge and through its perpetually becoming form is made knowable. Tropes enrich the dialectic: a play of words within a play of words within a play (of words). Pan then summarises the scene and reiterates the critical premise before the next lines of the poem are discussed.

And Building is the Openness of Expression Between Man and Space and the Poetic that Creates the (not-) Being of Ideal Form

In these lines the architectural as trope is articulated. Implicit within the first line is that form gives meaning to ideas. The second line suggests the architectural is revealed through thought and language, and subsequently, as a constructed form. Finally, the concept-construct of unreal-reality, the mythical, the imagined, or virtual form is introduced: And Form is the Revelation of Meaning/Between Humanity and the Architectural and the Muse that/creates the (un-)Reality of the all-embracing Shape-Idea.

Scene II: Plato and the gardener are sitting on the steps of a temple, facing the grove. A warm breeze carries the scent of spring. Pan is sitting cross-legged inside the frieze, his hand cupped to his ear. Plato and the gardener continue their discussion.

Plato: (Running his hand down a column). Let's look at this temple to more deeply examine your question and my proposition. The temple has language but that of the Forms of Order, of Arrangement, of Propriety, and of Proportion. As such they also constitute the Form of Language upon which your landscape of imperfect language is based. The relationship between the landscape of language and the Form of Language is analogous to order and Order. (He pats the column). Indeed the orders are real, that is, tangible, but they are merely the physical expressions of a higher intangible Order, a Form.

Gardener: (Not convinced by Plato's argument). I will argue otherwise. Take the relationship

between this temple and the sacred grove. (Pointing first to the trees and then to the temple columns she continues). The columns of this temple are the petrification in stone of the tree trunks in the sacred woods. The symbolic nature of the temple and its context has now acquired a different lexical relationship, that of trope, a language/form paradigm. The column, the temple, they are part of the landscape of language.

Plato: Not so; the language/form paradigm does not change the immutability of the Forms. The relationship remains the same as the temple can only be the manifestation of The Form of Temple. The same principle applies equally to The Form of Garden.

Gardener: (She stands and looks directly at Plato). The garden and this temple are part of the landscape which is ever-changing. Through my own hand and those before me, and through Nature, it continues its becoming. Therefore, I argue there can be no Form of Garden. Or Form of Temple. Or anything else for that matter!

Plato: (Smiling, he continues). Indeed there is, though it is not known to you yet. Continue this dialectic and I am sure you will come to know the language of the Form of Garden. It will not be perpetually becoming as you would have it, but Perfect, the Ideal. The purity of the Form of Language and the Form of Garden will be revealed. (He smiles). Yours, though beautifully arranged, proportioned, and so on, is only an imitation.

Gardener: (Shaking her head). Language, landscape, form. I am not alone in my proposition. There are others, poets and storytellers, who

have come before us and have said (and written much) that is worth considering about form. As well, their poetry, tropes, and narratives are forms themselves.

Plato: Bear in mind, however, those whose voices you cannot substantiate, and those who you know to be disavowed by others, unless you are prepared to defend them in their absence. But first I want to address the subject of poetry and tropes. Let's continue along the path. (Plato and the gardener descend the steps and rejoin the path beyond the temple out of sight).

Pan: There is much fun to be had in this garden if only the voices of the ancients could be heard, for they too have had some influence on our philosopher. Let us invoke them so that he may contest his point of view against their propositions. I will have him answer to Homer, whom he at once disparages and admires, and to Heraclitus and to Parmenides, whose theories he has tried to reconcile. (He springs from the frieze laughing, and disappears into nearby myrtle shrubs).

The dialectic has become more polemic. The gardener seeks to admit other voices into the dialogue whereupon Plato expresses his opinion about the veracity of secondary sources that Pan intends to exploit to further the dialectic between the interlocutors. The next line in Pan's conundrum contextualises the next two scenes. That it is embedded within the broader conundrum is significant and as such is explored in Scene III and subsequently in Scene IV.

Does Language Inhabit the Interstices

The tropes in this line have great import as will

be revealed by the propositions of the voices of others who appear in various guises. Their own tropes reinforce the significance of the translation of this line in the conundrum: Does Dialectic Dwell in the In-Between as the use of "in-between" here suggests not only a lexical but a spatio-temporal application.

Scene III: Plato and the gardener enter a clearing near a cave entrance. Pan is perched on a rocky ledge above them. From deep within the cave can be heard the echoes of water coursing over time-worn rocks fed by an ancient underground source. Echoes give way to unintelligible utterances, then a not-quite-human murmur, and finally a strong, bellowing voice. Plato and the gardener stand transfixed.

Homer: (His rich orator's voice swells).

Within the armoury of language the words of the poet

Are broader than the sword – and more eloquent

In their defence of epic deeds of heroes

And of battles lost and won

The valour of such men is recounted

As they sleep eternal in Elysium

Impassioned verse and lyric ode

Of lands before our time

Of Nature, Gods, and mortals

Their odyssey beyond our realm

Courageous feats we hold in memory

The ancients and their history

(The voice weakens, becomes utterances and finally it is gone. Pan blows a kiss and offers up silent applause towards to the cave).

Gardener: (She turns and smiles at Plato). It would seem that there are vestiges of history that still resonate today. It is from Homer that we learn of

our forefather's battles and it is from him that we can imagine the glory of the ancients and the language of their heroic deeds. Homer's poetic tropes allow the imagination to see the gardens of kings, and the resting place of the immortals. It allows us to wander in those landscapes long after they have become lost to us. Homer uses the landscape of language to invite us to dwell within these gardens to become part of the language itself.

Plato: (He waves his hand in a negative gesture at the cave). I too enjoy poetry and have even tried my hand at it. But for pleasure, not the retelling of history. At worst it is a falsehood, at the very least it is a myth and myth-leading (He laughs at his own pun and winks). Homer composed his poems more than four hundred years after the wars with Troy. How could they possibly be first-hand accounts of battle? They cannot be presented as truth, as fact. How could Homer even claim to know details of such events, or such gardens of the kings? No this is conjecture, fantasy, and does not serve you well if you wish to know the truth of a matter.

Gardener: (Somewhat frustrated). Surely you would agree that accounts must be kept to record the events of history and that the evocative style of the orator engages the listener and transports the mind to faraway places and times, and that this is not harmful but to be encouraged in the imagination. Depictions of foreign forms are not only intriguing but also useful to scholars and architects, and I suggest that they build upon the concept-construct that is the language of the architectural.

Plato: Poets and their words have much to answer for. They capture the minds of men with fantastic tales as a general would capture an

enemy with cunning and deception. They make false claims to lead the unwitting to believe unreality is reality and fiction is fact.

Gardener: (Really frustrated, she begins to pace backwards and forwards). Plato, you have stated that the temple in this garden is an exemplar of first principles and that it is merely an imitation of a Perfect Form. Moreover, you argue this garden is similarly a copy. But what of Nature and its changing form? You reject the possibility of the landscape of language therefore you reject the language of the poet. Are not a poet's words ordered like a well sited garden, or so choreographed like the temple columns, to be pleasing in pattern and rhythm? Is not the structure of a poem as well considered as the garden or the temple within it? Is the landscape not only a garden of the architectural but also of the philosophical? Again you reject the reality of the landscape of language that contributes to our understanding of things-in-themselves, to our knowledge.

Plato: (He continues calmly). I am afraid that you have been seduced by the writings of the poets, both ancient and more recent. Unlike the poetic trope of the poet, the Form of Knowledge is stable and this is the true pursuit of the philosopher. Let me give you an example using the landscape of the city-state. The city-state is more than a collection of buildings and its inhabitants. It is a structure, an organisation, an ordered system of stable parts. All parts must work in harmony or the integrity of the structure of the city-state will be compromised. Equally the city-state is not simply the collective citizenship, it is also the embodiment of the individual, therefore the stability of the city-state rests with the stability of the individual. Only then

will knowledge be made manifest in its Perfect Form.

Gardener: (Alarmed). So, you are saying that language of the city-state must be so ordered that it has no poetry within its collective embodiment? Can the individual never dwell within the landscape of becoming which, I argue, is as bound to philosophy as shape-idea is to language? (They continue along the path in silence for a while).

Pan: (Alights from the ledge). Language is indeed the gardener's tool as it is the philosopher's. Each cultivates a form of language yet which will yield? There, my friends, is a little pun for you to ponder. (He winks and skips off in the direction of Plato and the gardener).

The landscape of language is made poetic through the voices of three Greek writers and thinkers. After hearing the oratory of the epic poet, Plato questions the validity of poetry as a means of communicating origins or imparting understanding about a subject. Using an analogy to underscore his argument, Plato is challenged by the gardener who draws upon the concept-construct of the architectural as a contextual referent within dialogue which is then further contested by both. Not only has Plato reinforced the Forms though the exemplar of the temple and subsequently through the analogy the superstructure of the city-state, he has dethroned the language of the poet-king in favour of the philosopher-king. The gardener continues to counter Plato's assertions through her tropes and Pan sums up the scene with yet another riddle. To reiterate, having been introduced in this scene, the translated line in Pan's conundrum Does Dialectic Dwell in the In-

Between is further explored in the next scene.

Scene IV: The path emerges from behind a copse of laurel trees and hugs the embankment of a meandering stream. A footbridge spans the banks. Heraclitus and Parmenides, two philosophers, are embodied in stone at the bridge crossing. Pan assumes the posture of a stone herm on the far side of the bridge. Shrubbery obscures the fourth herm, beyond which what appears to be a temple can be seen through some trees.

Plato: I can see that you are frustrated but it would be a shame not to continue the dialectic. (The gardener nods and Plato continues). As I have said, The Forms govern all things. All things are subject to them. They govern the shape of language because they govern the form of ideas. Yet we do not know the Form of Idea. We have not yet come to understand what constitutes a True Form. Do you follow my course of reason?

Gardener: I do; however, I find it very problematic. The relationship of Form and imitation is not plausible. Thought, like this stream, meanders and turns on itself, carving out form from the landscape of language. To demonstrate this let's revisit the language/form paradigm. We think of an idea and want to give it shape. We conjecture about what form it should be. Having conferred upon the idea a shape we know what the form is. Therefore, thought and language is the becoming of form. (Plato is about to speak when one of the herms interrupts, startling both philosopher and gardener alike. Pan changes his pose and puts his hand to his mouth).

Heraclitus: (Aloof). All is flux, like the river turning on itself at each bend in the landscape. Like

language, what is formed must be deformed and reformed differently according to the landscape. It is the same and also not the same form for the many. I, Heraclitus, know this as landscape is [??] pattern, the structure of language, of form, and it is perpetual. We cultivate it, we build upon it, and we dwell within it. Yet we do not read it. The blind man has no sight yet he is not insensible to the language of the moist earth, or the drying winds, the flaming fire or the flowing stream, and knows that without each he cannot dwell. All is in flux, impermanent; earth and air, water and fire. And all turn in on themselves and each other, conflating languages and that is the becoming of form. (He suddenly becomes mute again. Pan covers his eyes to convey blindness).

Plato: Ah, the voice of the philosopher Heraclitus ... (Parmenides abruptly interjects).

Parmenides: (Authoritatively). There is no flux, no conflation, no impermanence. When Heraclitus speaks of form he speaks of tropes. His is mere opinion, not a truth arrived by rigorous inquiry. I, Parmenides, argue that through inquiry a truth will be revealed and that you will find that form is not representative of the many, but that it is The One, constant and immutable. Earth and air, water and fire are but opposites, and remain so. Rather they, and all else exists only through The One. (He falls silent. Pan uncovers his eyes, winks, and assumes his original pose).

Gardener: (Intrigued by both propositions). Well, what do you make of the philosophers' words?

Plato: (Stroking his beard, he thinks for a while). Indeed, what do I make of these two philosophers' propositions? I suggest they both have merit – but only to a degree. In my own

philosophical inquiry I admit that I have tried to reconcile aspects of both Heraclitus's argument about the many and Parmenides's counter-argument regarding The One.

Gardener: (Quizzically). How so?

Plato: To explain this I will use, for example, the Form of Idea, and the Form of Soul which we will call the Form of Mind. The Form of Idea can only reside in The Form of Mind and as such unite as an immutable Oneness. Therefore, all other forms of idea must reside in the minds of the many.

Gardener: (She ponders this point and then responds). You posit Form as a construct, yet it is intangible. You argue that it is unchanging, immutable. For instance, you argue that The Form of Language is the model for all language. I say to you that your reasoning is not only flawed but your rationale is implausible. I argue language is dynamic. Furthermore, abstract forms are shaped in the minds of many, made materially different by the many, that is, through the becoming of language of the many. So, I do not accept that there exists a Perfect Form for each and every form, but I am sure you wish to persuade me to think otherwise!

Plato: (Gently). Persuasion is not the aim here. In order that the truth of a matter becomes known is only through logical deduction, through dialectic, which is what we have been engaging in, especially the Form of Language which has, of course, been the mediator between The Forms and forms in our debate. (He turns and points in the direction of the trees). Let me ask you a question: What is immediately beyond those trees; what can you see?

Gardener: (She looks first at Plato, then through the tree canopies, then smiles and looks back at Plato). I see a temple. Or rather, part of one.

Plato: (He waves his forefinger about). That is conjecture. How do you actually know that what you see is a temple?

Gardener: (She looks hard at Plato). I believe I know what a temple looks like.

Plato: And why do you believe it to be the temple? It is barely visible through the tree canopy.

Gardener: The language of the temple is easily read.

Plato: (Smiling slightly). Let me put it to you this way: You see and perceive this object, this form, exists, you believe it to be what you see it as, and you believe this because you can read the language of the form, am I right? (Plato looks to the gardener for confirmation. She nods several times). Tell me then, how you know it to be a temple? For all you know it could be another type of building. Might I suggest that if you were to look at the form from a different angle you might be able to ascertain whether it is indeed a temple or not?

Gardener: Yes, then the form will be known!

Plato: (Begins to cross the stream). Let's cross the bridge and continue on the path until we reach higher ground. We began with the Form of Temple (and of Order, of Arrangement, of Propriety and of Proportion) which lead us to the discussion of the Form of Language and then the Form of Ideas and the Form of Knowledge. But we still have further to go. (The gardener

crosses the bridge and joins Plato on the path. They continue in silence until they reach the top of the incline. Below them is a splash – Pan, having fallen asleep as a herm, has toppled into the stream).

Notwithstanding the words of the dead philosophers are from opposing arguments, they contextualise the dialectic as a process for learning, for inquiring into the landscapes of philosophy, of language, of the architectural; the landscape of forms. Can a landscape of Perfect Forms even exist at all? Further, can it be made manifest as an imperfect copy, and if so, how?

Collapsing the Internal and External and Open the Way through becoming?

In the final scene the dialogues are framed by the two last lines of Pan's poetic conundrum. (To recapitulate, the last line reads: "Reveal the Path through Perpetual Impermanence"). Plato has, by now, led the gardener through three of his four stages of learning; conjecture, belief, and understanding. This final scene draws together these three stages to reveal the fourth, rational intuition. Pan has posited a final problematic: the making of one shape-idea from two inherently independent ones (the Immanent and the Transcendent). Analysis of the penultimate line is fundamental to recognising Pan's meaning of becoming - Conflating the Immanent and the Transcendent and - which offers the possibility of an answer to the conundrum (or does it?)

Scene V: Plato and the gardener stand under a shade tree. Nearby is a double-colonnaded temple. Inside, a carved figure of Demeter gazes out over the landscape. At Demeter's

feet sits Pan, crossed-legged, his head in the stone folds of her dress. He feigns sleep. Plato and the gardener approach the temple.

Gardener: (Laughing, she points at the temple). Well, what do you say to this? I was right. The temple grammar is true to form. (She laughs at her trope thinking she has outwitted Plato in the challenging dialectic).

Plato: (He smiles). Indeed it is the form of a temple, but it is not a Perfect Form. The elements are indeed a temple form, but you read this too literally.

Gardener: How so?

Plato: (Standing outside the temple columns). Again I refer back to The Forms of Order, of Arrangement, of Propriety, and of Proportion. They are not literal but are each a projection of the Form of Idea that constitutes the forms you read in the language of the temple. This is the architectural made manifest. Let me put it this way: We have discoursed and debated form until we have ultimately intuited the nature of Form and that is the pinnacle, the essence, the point at which we have true knowledge of a thing. What I speak of are Ideas known only through rational intuition premised on dialectic discourse which has led to the highest form, that of the Form of Knowledge. Therefore to know the Form of Temple you do not need vision. Like the blind man, you are not insensible to the knowledge of the Perfect Form.

Gardener: (Standing within the temple columns). So, The Forms of Plato, if I may call them, exist not in the realm of ideas, of thought, of language, but are anterior to these landscapes. You argue that The Form of Idea, which resides in the Form

of Mind, is then the Perfect Form of Knowledge. These constitute the many, but together are The One that you talked about earlier.

Plato: Indeed. And so we have reached the conclusion of our discussion.

Gardener: (Smiling, she continues). I put it you that you have undone your own argument. You have consistently argued that The Forms exist outside the landscape of language yet the form that has enabled this dialogue is language, its becoming and poetic abstraction. Dialectic or poetry, discourse or prose--all are different in their measure and their rhythm, that is, their order, arrangement, their propriety, and proportion. This, I argue, is the articulation of the architectural. This is the true form of the landscape of language. Therefore, there can be no Perfect Form of Language. So you see we are not yet finished with this dialectic.

Plato: (He clasps his hands and shakes his head). Regrettably, we have for now. I must make my way to the Academy to continue my work there with some new students. I do, however, look forward to continuing our dialogue in your garden at another time.

Gardener: Perhaps I will see you again next Spring. (She laughs and runs down into the garden where she has seen a young man gathering flowers).

Plato: (Calling out after her). You didn't tell me your name or who bequeathed you the garden.

Gardener: (Faintly from a distance). My name is Persephone and this was my mother's garden.

Plato: (Unable to discern what she has said, he

simply waves in her direction and then dismounts the four steps of the temple and scurries along the path muttering). Aristotle is waiting, Aristotle is waiting...

Pan: (Opening his eyes he leaps to his feet and puts his forefinger to his forehead and taps it twice. A riddle within a riddle within a riddle, my friends. Within the temple are the many, in which lies the potential of the oneness, and the potential of the oneness is made manifest only through the many. (He then bows a deep sweeping bow and weaves his way through the columns, down the steps, through the garden, and disappears).

What is Pan asking us to interpret through his riddle? Pan gives a clue when presenting it. He taps the side of his forehead which, of course, is his temple, thereby constituting a pun on both the form of the mind and the architectural form itself. He tells us that "within the temple are the many." What are "the many"? They are myriad shape-ideas, or forms. In the many, he suggests, "lies the potential of the oneness." What is "the oneness"? It is the perpetual impermanence of knowledge, the forming, deforming, and reforming of ideas in the mind. He reinforces this when he further says "and the potential of the oneness is made manifest only through the many." This last phrase is the key to resolving the riddle and actually reinforces the first two phrases. Decoded the riddle reads thus:

In the house of the mind there are the many, that is, shape-ideas or forms, in which lie the potential of the oneness of knowledge, and the knowledge of the potential of the oneness is made manifest only through the many.

How can knowledge exist in the many and at

the same time the many exist in knowledge? The answer is disarmingly simple: Man and Space and the Poetic. Through tropes mankind dwells within the poetic landscape of becoming. Through the landscape of shape-ideas mankind constructs tropes. Language, the temple, and the garden as tropes are all formed, deformed, and reformed. By its very nature, the landscape of language as the becoming of form has perpetuated the dialectic. Without it there can be no discourse about the Form of Knowledge or even an imperfect imitation. Without it the architectural cannot be revealed.

References

- Barnes, J. (2001). Early Greek Philosophy. London: Penguin Books.
- Cudden, J. A. (1999). The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory. London: Penguin Books.
- Ching, F. D. K. (1996). Architecture: Form, Space, and Order. (2nd ed.). New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold.
- Harrison, R. P. (2008). Gardens: An Essay on the Human Condition. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Hobhouse, P. (2002). The Story of Gardening. London: Dorling Kindersley, Ltd.
- Homer. (1987). The Iliad: a new prose translation. (M. Hammond, Trans.). London: Penguin Books.
- Long, A. A. (Ed.). (1999). The Cambridge Companion to Early Greek Philosophy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Martienssen, R. D. (1968). The Idea of Space in Greek Architecture (with special reference to the Doric temple and its setting). Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.
- Mautner, T. (2000). The Penguin Dictionary of Philosophy. London: Penguin Books.
- Melchert, N. (1995). The Great Conversation Volume 1: Pre-Socratics through Descartes. California: Mayfield Publishing.
- Plato. (2007). The Republic. (D. Lee, Trans.). London: Penguin Books.
- Plato. (1977). Timeaus and Critias. (D. Lee, Trans.). London: Penguin Books.
- Steirlin, H. (2001). Greece: Mycenae to the Parthenon. Cologne: Taschen.
- Turner, T. (2005). Garden History Philosophy and Design 2000BC – 2000AD. London: Spon Press.
- Urmson, J. R. & Ree, J. (Eds.). (1993). The Concise Encyclopedia of Western Philosophy & Philosophers. London: Routledge.
- Wishton-Spinn, A. (1998). The Language of Landscape. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Anna Hooper

Following horticultural studies I was accepted into the inaugural undergraduate degree in Landscape Architecture (University of Melbourne) which, after two years, I articulated into a Bachelor degree in Environmental Design (University of Tasmania). A post-graduate year with high first class Honours allowed entry into a higher research degree (PhD) and I was awarded an APA. I am in my second year. A cross-disciplinary approach to my work – through language and philosophy - has allowed me to pursue my interest in articulating a nexus between landscape, design, and form, through which the concept of the architectural is enriched. I have been teaching at the School of Architecture and Design (UTAS) in the history and theory units for over three years and am a tutor in the 5th-year Honours research programme, and am the current representative for post-graduate students on the School's research committee. Anna.Hooper at utas.edu.au