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Garden, Landscape, Natural Environment

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Editor: Endre Szécsényi

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In the essay No. 89 for *The Tatler* of 1709, Richard Steele wrote: ‘What we take for diversion, which is a kind of forgetting ourselves, is but a mean way of entertainment, in comparison of that which is considering, knowing, and enjoying ourselves. The pleasures of ordinary people are in their passions; but the seat of this delight is in the reason and understanding. Such a frame of mind raises that sweet enthusiasm which warms the imagination at the sight of every work of nature, and turns all around you into picture and landscape.’ This is one of the first formulations of the modern aesthetic consciousness (or ‘frame of mind’) which can offer higher pleasures than the mere delights of everyday diversion, and can re-shape the whole world around us, can transform indifferent or even ominous natural prospects into enjoyable landscape. At the same time, this aesthetic activity is an opportunity for the beholder to improve or to re-create her mind in order to be in harmony with herself and with the whole, natural and social-cultural, world. It is a dynamic and complex experience of nature which has inspired several interpretations and theories, and led to the invention of new conceptions in gardening, new considerations on the relationships between nature and art in general, and new reflections upon the human attitudes to natural environment. Considering this historical process from the early modernity onwards, several intriguing questions can be raised. How can a natural prospect become a landscape in a historical, theoretical or practical sense? How can the model of the landscape and garden experience be applied to the aesthetic and/or moral perception of nature and to other arts? How can the complicated interrelationship between landscape or garden design and fine arts or literature be interpreted? What can be the lessons of the modern theories of landscape and garden for contemporary landscape restoration and environmental aesthetics?

Five of these papers presented here were originally delivered in the symposium *Garden – Landscape – Landscape Garden: From Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Theories to Environmental Aesthetics* held at the University of Aberdeen on 27–28 May, 2016.¹ This event was meant to be a brainstorming meeting where academics of different fields (like philosophy, aesthetics,
intellectual history, anthropology, cultural and art history, architecture, human geography) and also a garden professional could share their ideas about the given broad subject. The current collection ranges from philosophical and intellectual historical approaches to literary criticism and to the contemporary problems of nature restoration and environmental aesthetics. Of course, it cannot exhaustively map the whole territory of ‘landscape – garden – landscape garden’ from the dawn of modern aesthetics onward, still, at least, it can exhibit the wide trajectory of most of the associated discourses.

As a kind of motto to this collection, it is quite appropriate to quote from Ronald W. Hepburn’s seminal article of 1966. Professor Hepburn graduated and got his doctorate from Aberdeen, and taught moral philosophy there and later at Edinburgh until his retirement in 1996; and with his articles of the mid-60s, he established environmental aesthetics. ‘We have not only a mutual involvement of spectator and [natural] object, but also a reflexive effect by which the spectator experiences himself in an unusual and vivid way; and this difference is not merely noted, but dwelt upon aesthetically. The effect is . . . both more intensely realized and pervasive in nature-experience [than in art, especially in architecture] – for we are in nature and a part of nature; we do not stand over against it as over against a painting on a wall . . . Some sort of detachment there certainly is, in the sense that I am not using nature, manipulating it or calculating how to manipulate it. But I am both actor and spectator, ingredient in the landscape and lingering upon the sensations of being thus ingredient, rejoicing in their multifariousness, playing actively with nature, and letting nature, as it were, play with me and my sense of myself.”

Endre Szécsényi
University of Aberdeen and
ELTE Eötvös Loránd University
October 2017

Cover: The plate after p. 92 of Powerscourt Waterfall from the extra-illustrated copy of Arthur Young’s A Tour of Ireland, with General Observations on the Present State of that Kingdom, Made in the Years 1776, 1777, and 1778, and Brought Down to the End of 1779 (London, 1780). National Library of Ireland LO 10203.
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1. Gardens and discourses of hierarchy

Gardens have long figured in two seemingly distinct discourses of nature and hierarchy. The first of these discourses addresses hierarchies *within* the natural order. Distinctions have been made between, for example, ‘higher’ and ‘lower’ animals, or between ‘living’ and ‘barren’ landscapes, or ‘essential’ and ‘accidental’ aspects of nature. A nice and familiar example of a hierarchical conception is the idea, prevalent in the Christian West until well into the eighteenth century, that mountains were blemishes on nature that should never have been there.

A second discourse – or better, set of discourses – concerns hierarchical relationships *between* nature and what is deemed to be ‘Other’ than nature. In several religions, for instance, the natural world has been conceived as occupying a place on a scale with hell at the bottom and heaven at the top. More germane to the topic of this paper, there is a long-standing debate over the relative positions of nature and *culture*. From the Daoist sages of ancient China to Rousseau, Thoreau and Robinson Jeffers, there have been those who have elevated the natural condition over culture and civilization. Equally there have been those, from Confucius and Socrates to J. S. Mill and Bertrand Russell, who would agree with Matthew Arnold that

> [M]an hath all which Nature hath, but more,  
> And, in that more lies all his hopes of good . . .  
> Man must begin, know this, where Nature ends.1

One of many things that makes the garden a place of philosophical and cultural interest is the way it is situated in both these themes or discourses of nature and hierarchy. That it is so situated owes to the claims made by makers

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and admirers of gardens alike about the expressive powers of the garden. Gardens, it has been held, are able to express and communicate the ‘essence’ or ‘truth’ of nature. Equally, it has been maintained, they are able to represent or exemplify important aspects of the relationship between nature and what is Other than nature – the divine, for example, or the realm of culture. It is difficult to see how the garden could achieve any of this without making or presupposing hierarchical distinctions – between, for example, ‘authentic’ and ‘superficial’ features of nature, or between the value and status of nature relative to those of divine being and human artifice.

The garden then is a good place to explore in order to reflect upon the themes of hierarchy, for it is a place in and through which men and women have communicated their conceptions of nature and of the relationship between nature, culture and the divine. There is good sense in the encouragement, in Chinese and Japanese traditions of garden making, to ‘regard the universe as a garden’ and the garden as ‘the world in miniature’. Experience of the garden may aid, as well as reflect, people’s understanding of the cosmos and of their place within it.

In this paper, I want to consider some of the ways in which gardens have been designed or perceived to communicate or exemplify conceptions of both the essence of nature and of nature’s relationship to what is traditionally contrasted with nature, notably human culture. Having considered these ways, I draw some lessons that might contribute to the themes and discourses of nature and hierarchy.

Let me begin, by way of illustration, with a well-known kind of garden that was manifestly intended to express something about both nature itself and nature’s relationship to what might be labelled ‘non-nature’. I have in mind the so-called Paradise gardens of the Islamic and medieval Christian worlds. These were gardens that were meant to recall the Garden of Eden, from which human beings were expelled, and to anticipate heaven, to which they should aspire. Typically, a Paradise garden was fertile, well-watered, and a place of evident peace and order in which men and women might enjoy harmony with their surroundings and other creatures, such as birds. This was nature as God had intended it, unlike the barren, desert landscapes to which Adam, Eve and their descendants were exiled after the Fall. Such landscapes were degenerate forms of nature, the result of human sin and not part of God’s original plan for the natural world. If the Paradise garden represented authentic nature.

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2 Examples of such metaphors are given in Jean C. Cooper, *An Illustrated Introduction to Taoism* (Bloomington IN, 2010), Ch. 11.
– nature as it should be – it also depicts the ideal relationship between nature, the divine and the human. It depicts a place where there is harmony between the three, a place designed by God for human life to flourish in.

2. Gardens and ‘the essence of nature’

The East Asian metaphor of the garden as the world in miniature encourages the thought that a garden may reflect and convey the ‘essence’ of natural things and be ‘a distillation of the universe’.

This thought is not, of course, confined to Asia, and in this section I identify three broad conceptions of the garden that have in common the idea that gardens may distil, exemplify or otherwise express fundamental aspects of nature as a whole. I shall call the gardens that respectively correspond to these conceptions ‘structuralist gardens’, ‘gardens of transience’, and ‘vitalist gardens’.

(i) According to a long and varied tradition, the garden can and should expose the underlying forms or structures of nature that, it is held, constitute the essence or fundamental reality of nature. This is an idea embraced by several important eighteenth-century writers on gardens. Sir William Chambers, for example, insisted on garden designers’ respecting a distinction between ‘true’ and ‘vulgar’ nature, their job being to represent only the former. In a similar vein, Horace Walpole urged that gardeners should ‘restore’ to nature her ‘honours’, by removing the blemishes and excrescences that may otherwise disguise her true character.

The general thought attested to by Chambers and Walpole goes back much further than the eighteenth century. The fourth- to third-century garden of Epicurus was intended to be ‘a form of education in the ways of nature’, above all by representing in its lay-out the ‘greater harmonies’ of the cosmos.

This ambition of the garden was inherited by Renaissance writers and garden makers. In what was in effect a secular version of the ambition of the Paradise

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5 Ibid., 316.
garden, such prominent figures as Leon Battista Alberti and Marsilio Ficino saw the task of the garden designer, like that of the architect, to be one of rendering salient the concinnitas (congruity, harmony) that underlies and characterises the universe as a whole. As contemporary projects such as Charles Jencks’ ‘Garden of Cosmic Speculation’ indicate, the ‘structuralist’ idea that gardens have the capacity to exemplify and communicate the fundamental forms or essence of nature is still alive today. This is despite the familiar accusation that structuralist gardens, which are typically formal and regular in design, are unacceptable ‘impositions’ on nature, exercises in effect of human domination. This is not an accusation that garden designers inspired by such figures as Chambers and Alberti could accept. They were not saying ‘Nature is a mess that needs replacing by well-ordered human artefacts’: they were claiming, rather, to be revealing how nature really is beneath its often messy surface.7

(ii) According to a second tradition – also ancient and varied – the garden is an ideal vehicle for embodying and communicating the essential ephemeral of everything in the natural world. Gardens of transience, as I called them, serve to convey that nature is an ever-changing process, that even apparently stable and enduring things are, in reality, only slowly unfolding events. Gardens of this kind are especially prominent in countries strongly influenced by Buddhist philosophies in which ‘impermanence’ (annicatā) – the rising, passing, changing, and disappearance of things – is held to be one of the three fundamental ‘characteristics of existence’. Permanence, in effect, is an illusion that mindful experience of appropriately designed gardens can help to dispel. This is why it has been said of Buddhist gardens in Japan, for example, that they afford and confirm a view the world ‘as it appears to a Zen-enlightened sensibility’.8 A predilection for viewing the garden when blossom is falling from trees, and the practice of scattering dead leaves on the path leading through the garden to the tea room, are among the many testimonies to the intention that the garden should offer intimations of the ephemeral.

Gardens of transience, however, are not confined to Buddhist tradition. Several twentieth-century English garden designers, for example, emphasized that the garden, precisely because it so clearly subject to change, is able to provide a sense of the transient quality of nature at large. Characteristic of

these designers was, for example, the use of techniques of planting that would make salient, and even exaggerate, changes wrought by the cycle of the four seasons. Of Sissinghurst – the garden made by Vita Sackville-West and her husband – it has been said that it is a place that ‘cannot be visited twice: it has always in the meantime become something different’.9 Sissinghurst, it seems, conveys - and was intended to convey - the same conception of an ever-changing world as Heraclitus’ flowing river, in which, he held, it is impossible to step twice.

(iii) The third tradition I identify is that of, as I label them, ‘vitalist’ gardens. Many visitors to the 2016 Royal Academy Exhibition, *Painting the Modern Garden*, were struck by the large number of paintings – by Monet, Matisse, Kandinsky, Klimt and others – that depict the garden as a cornucopia of growth, fertility, energy and abundance.10 The gardens portrayed in these works are, one might say, microcosms of sublime nature – of nature that exceeds or overflows the boundaries and categories that human beings construct in a vain attempt to regiment the natural world. The sublime, for these artists, may be encountered in one’s own backyard as much as among mountains and gorges. It is no accident that the painters of these works were contemporaries of the most famous European philosopher of the day, Henri Bergson. The gardens that figure in the paintings are testimony, in effect, to the *élan vital* that, according to Bergson, courses through the universe and that, indeed, is responsible for there being a world for us to experience. Tundra, scrub and desert may be natural landscapes but they do not authentically manifest – do not ‘body forth’, as it were – the vital energy that is the essence of nature. The gardens that figures such as Monet both made and painted exemplified this essence in miniature.

The vitalist conception of nature as fertile or erotic energy inspired other garden makers of the period, notably such champions of the ‘wild garden’ as William Robinson.11 The wild garden was not wild in the sense of being untended or uncultivated, but in that of giving powerful expression to the processes of abundant growth that in turn embodied the *élan vital* with which nature, in the final analysis, is identified. Wildness is there to experience in the garden, for those who are receptive to it, as much as it is in a virgin wilderness.

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The vitalist conception of the garden did not, however, begin in the nineteenth century. Some picturesque gardens of the previous century were inspired by paintings that, like those of Monet and Matisse, depicted nature in its wild abundance. Earlier still, during the Renaissance period, there were painters for whom the ideal garden was precisely a place of unordered plenty and energy. Jan Brueghel the Elder’s painting, Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, for example, depicts this paradise—very differently from the Islamic and medieval Christian works mentioned earlier—as teeming with prowling, powerful animals and luxuriant, untamed vegetation.¹² The tiny human figures in the distance add to the impression of nature as a sublime force to which they, like everything else, are subject.

There, then, are three traditions of garden design and the horticultural imagination that attribute to the garden a power to capture, express and communicate conceptions of the essential character of nature. In the following section, I turn to traditions of gardening that seek to do the same for the relationship between nature and human culture.

3. Culture and nature

The garden, we saw earlier, has been credited with the capacity to express important truths about the relationship between nature and what is Other than nature. The idea, for instance, that it may express truths about nature in relation to what is deemed to transcend it—the divine or some other less theistically conceived spiritual realm—has been an important one in the past. And perhaps it is still with us. Gardens commemorating the fallen of the First World War, modern-day Shinto shrines, and New Age kitchen gardens come to mind. Arguably, such gardens are simply places that are hospitable to religious feelings or spiritual moods rather than ones that—in the manner of the Islamic Paradise gardens—seek to represent or otherwise express something about nature’s relationship to a divine or spiritual order. Be that as it may, it is clear that, in recent times, it is with nature’s relationship with human culture that has been the larger concern of people who make or reflect upon gardens. And it is with this relationship that I am now concerned, as I proceed to identify three garden traditions that have been inspired by, and that in turn have

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contributed to, reflection on this relationship. These traditions have respectively issued in what I shall label ‘triumphalist’, ‘sanctuary’ and ‘productive’ gardens.

(i) The intent of the ‘triumphalist’ garden is to proclaim the superiority of human civilization over ‘mere’ nature. In its crudest form, such gardens may be announcements of the personal power of people who congratulate themselves on their achievements and status. Such is the usual judgement on Louis XIV’s gardens at Versailles. It is French gardens like this that Arthur Schopenhauer described as ‘tokens of [nature’s] slavery’ in which ‘only the will of the possessor is mirrored’.

(ii) There is a long history of the garden as a place of sanctuary – not in a narrow religious sense of the term but, more generally, in the sense of a place of retreat or escape from the world outside. At its simplest, entering such a garden erases ‘memories of a bumper-to-bumper ride from work’ along a Los Angeles freeway. But the deeper thought that inspires sanctuary

15 Thomas D. Church, *Gardens are for People* (Berkeley, CA, 1995), 6.
garden is that human beings have lost something important through becoming caught up in the frenzy and busy-ness of urban working life — something that these gardens might help to retrieve and protect. It is in such a garden that Andrew Marvell not only sought ‘Fair quiet’ and solitude, but a recollection of ‘innocence’. But it is perhaps among Chinese poet thinkers that the ideal of the sanctuary garden has been most prominent. The famous ‘literati’ gardens of Suzhou and other cities were places where harassed officials and civil servants could, however intermittently, recapture a relationship to nature and a spontaneity that their professional lives threatened to destroy. The eleventh-century Sima Guang’s ‘garden of solitary delight’ was a place where he could be ‘uninhibited’, his life once more ‘under [his] own control’. Some centuries later, another writer referred to his garden as affording escape from ‘the dust and grime of the city’, not just in the literal sense but also in the figurative one of protection against everything that is most detrimental to the spirit in frenzied urban existence.

It would be a mistake to think of the sanctuary garden as necessarily being a place in which a person simply rests and contemplates, for it may also be a place where people pursue various activities, where they conduct their lives for a good deal of their time. The modern idea of garden 'rooms' is that areas of the garden, like the rooms inside the house, invite people to do things — play, cook and eat, feed birds, make music, swim or paddle, and pursue a hobby, as well as engage in gardening. Whatever it is that people do in these ‘rooms’, the wider thought behind the sanctuary garden is that of an arena in which lives become less cramped and constricted by the conventions and economic constraints that govern our activities, beyond the garden wall, in the outside world. The garden, so imagined, allows at least some of that contact with the natural world, largely lost to us, that is essential to leading lives that are more authentic, more truly human, than the ones most of us have now come to lead. A picnic on your lawn, beneath an apple tree, may represent a better relationship to food, nature and other people than a sandwich gobbled down in your car during a traffic jam on the freeway.

(iii) The third of the traditions I discuss is that of the ‘productive’ garden. As the name suggests, I have in mind, in part, kitchen gardens and allotments — gardens that yield ‘produce’. When people are asked why they like to ‘grow

their own’, they will usually cite reasons of cost and of the freshness of what they eat. But it is difficult not to suspect that, often, there is a deeper reason that they may be shy or unable to articulate. This is the sense that productive gardening affords of drawing upon, cooperating and creatively engaging with nature. The productive gardener merges his or her own energy and resources with those of nature in order to grow things that are beautiful to look at or good to eat and give to friends.

This sense of cooperation and engagement with nature is not confined to kitchen gardening. In one of the rooms housing the Royal Academy exhibition, Painting the Modern Garden, mentioned earlier, there was a striking photograph of Wassily Kandinsky. Fit, tanned, muscular and hoe in hand, the proud figure of the artist in his garden in Bavaria conveys – like some of his own paintings – the idea of the garden as a source for a person’s productive energy that is then expended on the garden itself. The productive garden, like the photograph, exemplifies the conception of a place in which through cultivating plants in cooperation with nature, people are also cultivating themselves. Implicit here is an ideal of a human life that, drawing upon and charged by nature’s energies, is itself vital, creative and productive.

In this and the preceding section, I have briefly described a number of traditions of garden making and commentary. They have in common the thought that the garden is able to express or exemplify important truths about the natural world or the relationship of human beings to nature. The task is now to connect those traditions to the issues of hierarchy with which this paper began, but before proceeding to this I want first to emphasize two points that, I hope, emerge from my survey of these garden traditions.

The first is that the aspiration of garden makers to express and communicate truths about the world and ourselves is neither absurd nor trivial. The conceptions of nature and our relationship to it that I have rehearsed are ones that deserve to be taken seriously. This will not happen, however, unless one resists the modern prejudice to the effect that only the natural sciences can have anything valid to say about nature. The sciences of course provide accounts of nature that are essential for various purposes, notably those of predicting the course of natural events and thereby enabling us to have some control over them. But there is no reason to privilege such accounts over conceptions of nature that are closer to human experiences of nature than is the theoretical and mathematical understanding furnished by the sciences. Bergson’s perception of nature as manifesting vital energy, or a Buddhist perception of it as a cauldron of transient, impermanent phenomena are not
of a kind that the findings of physics or biology could dispel, and they clearly correspond to how nature becomes experientially present to many people.

Second, it is not only possible for the garden to express conceptions of nature and our place in relation to it, it is surely an especially apt vehicle for such expression. There is no more reason to think that a garden is an ‘illusory representation’ of nature, on the ground that it ‘simplifies’ nature,19 than to suppose that a painting by Turner is a purveyor of illusion because it cannot possibly register every feature and nuance of the natural landscape. Nor should we accept Hegel’s judgement that the garden is an ‘imperfect art’ because of its special dependence on the cooperation of nature. Indeed, it is precisely the intimacy or ‘dialectic’ between human practice and natural processes of growth in the art of gardening that makes it an especially apt means for communicating conceptions about the interface between culture and nature.

4. Hierarchy, nature and culture

How might reflection on the garden traditions I have described contribute to discourses about hierarchy, both within the natural order and between this and what has been held to be Other than nature, above all human culture? The first thing that it shows, crucially, is that the two allegedly distinct discourses or issues – about nature and about its relationship to culture – are in fact inseparable. This is because a conception of nature typically carries with it a view of human beings’ relationship to it, and vice-versa. Consider, for example, the insistence on a distinction between ‘true’ and ‘vulgar’ or ‘degenerate’ nature that informed some garden traditions, such as the ‘structuralist’ one. This typically pairs off with a conception of human beings as ‘stewards’ or ‘improvers’ of nature – charged with returning to nature her ‘honours’, as Walpole put it. Human beings are related to nature as creatures who are blessed or burdened with a responsibility to care for nature, to bring out and emphasize its essential character, perhaps by returning it – not least through garden making – to its condition before the Fall.

Or consider the idea of the garden as a ‘sanctuary’ in which people are able to live more authentically and spontaneously than in the convention-bound and utilitarian world beyond the garden. This idea typically pairs off with a view of nature as itself a realm of spontaneity, one that is free from the dictates of

purpose and deliberation. For the Daoist sages and poets, the garden is a place in which to cultivate one's own true, spontaneous being precisely because one is engaging with natural processes that are themselves without artifice and constraint. Or, finally, consider the vision of an \textit{élan vital} that courses through nature: this is typically found in conjunction with a corresponding vision of men and women as essentially creative beings who, as suggested by the Kandinsky photo, at once draw upon nature’s energy and – not least in the garden – are sustained by this energy in shaping their environment.

The conclusion that such examples make compelling is that conceptions of how nature fundamentally is and how we stand in relation to nature cannot be finally separated from one another. Each serves to shape the other. But if this right, then it must also be right that conceptions of nature and of culture are not finally separable. This is because a crucial ingredient in any culture is precisely some conception of nature, one that is bound, in turn, to be culturally charged. It is not just gardens, but other cultural practices like dress, cuisine, painting, music, sport and much else that both register and help to form people’s understanding of their relationship to nature. All significant forms of cultural practice, arguably, are always already informed and influenced by perceptions of nature, just as these perceptions are always already constrained and moulded by these practices. This is the element of truth, surely, in Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s remark that ‘it is impossible to say that nature ends here and that man or expression starts here’.\footnote{Maurice Merleau Ponny, ‘Eye and Mind,’ trans. Carleton Dallery in idem, \textit{Basic Writings}, ed. Thomas Baldwin (London, 2004), 290–323, 319.} This remark was prompted by reflecting on the interface between Paul Cézanne’s paintings and the natural scenes that these depict. It could just as well, and perhaps more appropriately, have been inspired by reflecting on the art of gardening, for the garden is a salient exemplification of the interdependence between experience of nature and creative human practice.

Earlier, we came across several rival claims concerning the rank order, as it were, of nature and culture. In one corner stood those, like Arnold and Hegel for whom culture is ‘higher’ than nature; in the opposite corner, those, like many of the Romantics, for whom nature has greater worth than any culture could have. Claims of this kind immediately become problematic once it is accepted that not only are conceptions of nature and culture interdependent – ‘dialectically’ related, one might say – but that our respective experiences of nature and cultural practice mutually inflect one another. The idea, crucial to any hierarchical judgement on the rank order of the two – that we could first
consider nature and cultural activity in separation and then compare them and weigh them against one another – is now dispelled.

If some ways of conceiving of nature may seem to place it above culture, then this needs to be corrected by recognizing that it is precisely our cultural practices that have made possible these ways of thinking about nature. If, conversely, some ways of assessing the achievements of culture seem to place it above ‘mere’ nature, then it needs to be recalled that it is only because of traditions of experiencing and engaging with nature that these achievements have been possible.21

Ultimately, therefore, there is something deeply confused in those age-old attempts to compare nature and culture and award the prize to just one of them. It is possible, of course, to focus on this or that cultural practice, or this or that aspect of the natural world, and express a preference. Many of us, for example, prefer trees in their natural state to topiary, or an imaginatively planted parterre to a dull expanse of tundra. But it is illegitimate to move from such particular comparisons and preferences to the passing of judgement on the relative merits of nature and culture at large. Acquaintance with and reflection upon the garden is as good a way as any to come to appreciate the artificiality of setting nature and culture up in contrast, even opposition, with one another. The good gardener, who at once exercises an art shaped by cultural tradition and cooperates with and understands the environment in and on which he or she works, is someone with a living sense of an indissoluble intimacy between the natural and the cultural.

Durham University

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1. A Contradiction in Terms

The terms ‘garden’ and ‘landscape’ are mutually contradictory. The garden is created through human creativity from the raw materials of nature. The landscape, by contrast, is already there, primed for us to go out and find it. The garden is subject to our control, while the landscape exerts its dominion over us. The garden is kept separate from the rest of nature, and as such is a totum, whereas the landscape is pars pro toto, a component of infinite nature. In the garden, our relationship with nature is as an active participant, but of the landscape we are mere beholders.

The garden starts with its enclosure, which cordons off domesticated nature from its wild cousin. In many languages this starting point is reflected in the word for ‘garden’, and the etymology of the word ‘paradise’ can be traced back to the construction of a wall or fence around an area of land, to a garden encircled by a barrier of earth or stone. A garden surrounded by high walls or hedges, arcades or buildings, shuts out external nature, the landscape that carries on where the garden ends. As Walpole explained, ‘When the custom of making square gardens enclosed with walls was . . . established, . . . nature and prospect [were excluded]’.2

In the Renaissance, inspired by the traditions of ancient Rome,3 the landscape, alongside considerations of defence, comfort and utility, was readopted as one of the criteria for villa architecture, and significance was once more accorded to the setting of a building in its natural environment, but at this time ‘nature and prospect’ still played no part in villa gardens. In book V of

2 Horace Walpole, An Essay on Modern Gardening (1771; Canton, PA, 1904), 19.
3 See, first and foremost, the two famous letters by Pliny the Younger, in which he describes his properties at Laurentum and Etruria. The Letters of Pliny the Younger, II, 17 and V, 6.
his *De Re Aedificatoria*, Alberti not only offered a wealth of practical tips (such as locating one’s country estate within manageable distance of the town and making sure that, neither on the journey into town of a morning, nor on the way back home in the evening, would the sun shine directly into one’s eyes), but also devoted great attention to the decorative properties of the landscape, as seen through the frames of the villa’s windows. ‘The rooms used by the prince for receiving guests and for dining should be given the noblest setting. This may be achieved with an elevated position and a view over sea, hills or broad landscape.’\(^4\) Alberti also mentioned paintings of landscapes among his recommended decorations. One thing he did not consider, however, was that the dignity of the place, inasmuch as it derives from the landscape, ought to be in harmony with the gardens, which, for reasons of security, were still deemed to require perimeter walls.\(^5\)

Villas in the Italian Renaissance were intended to reproduce the ancient Roman tradition of the private life of the countryside, as opposed to the public life of the city. This model of behaviour, of a lifestyle filled with recreation, diversion and meditation, could be satisfied with the contrasting opportunities provided by contemplatively taking in the pulchritude of the scenery or by perambulating the garden, socialising, enjoying theatrical performances and having parties.

The enormously extensive French garden, with its regular floral architecture, its geometric arrangement and its avoidance of elevation changes, was a form of absolutist representation *par excellence* of the lifestyle of the sovereign and the aristocracy. Even nature, in its entirety, was subject to the ruler, to order and intellect. With its repetitions, its optical illusions and deceptions, and the reflections generated by artificial water surfaces, the overall impression was one of infinity. The garden around the country mansion – which could also, from a different perspective, be regarded as an outdoor extension of the building, as a continuation of the architecture by other means – became, almost in itself, a kind of ‘broad landscape’. This fostered a kind of dialectic relationship between the landscape and the garden.

In what did this relationship inhere? As far as political representation is concerned, there arises the notion of utopianism, of bringing order to the chaos of nature, so that rational human thought may transform the landscape,

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5 Ibid., IX, 4.
over as much of the surface of the Earth as possible, into a tamed, controlled garden. This idea may also be understood as the restoration of how things were believed to be in some past golden age. According to a proposition laid down by a theologian in the late seventeenth century, the ‘Divine Art and Geometry’ of the ‘first Earth’, ‘before the Deluge’, was ‘smooth, regular, and uniform; without Mountains, and without a Sea.’

The true history of the interrelationship between the landscape and the garden begins, however, not with the transformation of the landscape into a garden, but vice versa, with the determination to convert the garden into a landscape. The prerequisite to this conversion was disdain for the artificiality of the garden combined with admiration for nature in its unchanged, ‘natural’ state.

As Shaftesbury put it:

Even the rude rocks, the mossy caverns, the irregular unwrought grottos and broken falls of waters, with all the horrid graces of the wilderness itself, as representing nature more, will be the more engaging and appear with a magnificence beyond the formal mockery of princely gardens.

According to Addison, meanwhile:

The Beauties of the most stately Garden or Palace lie in a narrow Compass, the Imagination immediately runs them over, and requires something else to gratifie [sic] her; but, in the wide Fields of Nature, the Sight wanders up and down without Confinement, and is fed with an infinite variety of Images, without any certain Stint or Number.

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Under the pen of Horace Walpole, the geometric, formal garden was criticised from the perspective of history. He derided such gardens as ‘sumptuous and selfish solitudes’, in which ‘every improvement that was made, was but a step farther from nature’. Also, in his opinion, ‘The compass and square were of more use in plantations than the nursery-man.’

By the 1770s, the three main characteristics of the English landscape garden movement (which soon spread throughout the world) were becoming apparent: these were the avoidance of geometric regularity in the garden, the removal of enclosures, and a newfound respect for the particularities of the landscape, that is, its ‘capability’, or – to put it in loftier, more Virgilian terms (via Shaftesbury and Alexander Pope) – the ‘genius of the place’. The open garden implied demolishing the walls that kept the landscape out. Marie Luise Gothein described the change in her classic history of the garden:

The wall once provided the architectonic garden with its own support and justification, and kept it separate and away from the surrounding landscape, so that it could feel like a world apart and develop as such; this idea was clung to even in the great French style, so deeply beloved was the prospect as a veduta with which to crown the allées. Now, however, there were no longer any enclosing frames for the eye, and the garden became little more than a foreground for the broad landscape behind it.

One of the main techniques now employed was to construct a sunken fence or wall, known as the ‘ha-ha’, which was believed by Walpole to be an English invention, and which gained popularity as such when it spread across Europe. Charles Joseph, 7th Prince de Ligne, embarked on a tour of eminent European gardens in the late eighteenth century, which also took in the park of Esterházy Palace in North-West Hungary; he described the fact that the palace overlooked one of the most beautiful natural lakes in the world (and not some artificially designed body of water) as one of its greatest advantages, but on the other hand he wondered, ‘Why is everything so closed in? Here they should use the ha-has of the English. The Hungarians love open spaces just as much as [the English] do.’

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11 Charles Joseph de Ligne, *Der Garten zu Belœil nebst einer kritischen Uebersicht der meisten*
2. The Landscape Garden

The conceptual antithesis between the garden and the landscape is a model of the dichotomy between our active and passive attitudes towards nature. Active is when nature is treated as a material to be shaped in accordance with human will, and though the ways of doing so are infinite, they are obviously always constrained within certain limits. Beyond these limits, which – though their lines may be shifted – can never be removed completely, lies the domain of ungovernable nature, unyielding to our aims and intentions, and prone to induce thoughts in us of endless freedom, or else of endless bondage. One of the images and metaphors of this indomitability, culturally defined in its historical genesis and in its evolving forms through history, is the landscape. The garden is nature cultivated, and as such, the word, even in its etymological sense, is part of our culture; the landscape, meanwhile, is a concept that embraces our cultural understanding of that aspect of nature that cannot be reworked or manipulated for human needs. In this sense, the polarity between culture and nature is manifested in the concepts of the garden and the landscape.

In the face of this ideal-typical contrast, the term ‘landscape gardening’, an oxymoron in the light of the preceding paragraph, poses a whole spectrum of questions. (The phrase ‘landscape gardening’ only replaced the word ‘improvement’ at the end of the eighteenth century.) If I return, at random, to the work by de Ligne quoted from just a short while ago, I can see that, in another suggestion of his, taking the features of the landscape as his starting point, he proposed turning the garden of Prince Esterházy, the ‘Neptune of Hungary’, into a quasi ‘theme park’, as it were, with lighthouses, pirate legends, fisherman’s huts, shipwreck inscriptions, fantastic marine monsters, a temple to the god of the sea, stone steps and railings, gondolas and boats.12 The garden is not only the material of nature, but also a work of architecture, and alongside the mansion or country house itself, the garden boasts its own unique structures and edifices: antique and Gothic temples, triumphal arches, mediaevalque fortresses, Palladianesque bridges, manmade grottos, monopteroi (rotundas with roofs supported by columns but without enclosed spaces, built as belvederes), kiosks, hermitages, ruins (often imitation, but also frequently imported from abroad and partly reconstructed) – the list of building types goes on, and what they all have in common is a mythological, historical or political

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12 Ibid., 118 ff.
allusion of some kind. At the same time, following the tradition established by
the Cortile del Belvedere, the garden is an open-air museum, exhibiting stat-
ues, fountains, vases and urns, obelisks, herms, sphinxes and even sarcophagi.
John Dixon Hunt, following the first systematic work on landscape garden-
ing, made the distinction between the emblematic garden and the expressive
garden, where the former demands an allegorical or symbolic reading, and
requires background knowledge, while the latter is intended to provoke a vari-
yety of passionate emotions.13

The history of the garden was long interwoven with the iconographic
programmes of Italian gardens. Versailles was conceived around the myth
of Apollo; in Stowe, Buckinghamshire, built between 1733 and 1749, ancient
virtues were contrasted with (debased) modern ones, the classical past with
the national; this would later inspire the famous gardens of Ermenonville;
a similar park was built in Wörlitz by Leopold III, Duke of Anhalt-Dessau
and a fervent champion of the Enlightenment, who admired the work of
the archaeologist and art historian Johann Joachim Winckelmann. The names
given to the styles used for emblematic buildings in themselves spoke volumes
(antique, ‘druid’, fortress-like early medieval, Gothic, Renaissance-Palladian,
Rococo, rustic [cottage ornée], Egyptian, Moorish, Turkish, Indian, Chinese,
Japanese), and, in addition to the iconographic dimension, this also draws
our attention to something else: the symbolic ‘staffage’ buildings with which
landscape gardens were decorated in fact served as experiments in miniature
for the different revivalist styles (such as neo-Palladianism, Gothic Revival or
Greek Revival) that would later flourish in the monumental stylistic plural-

13 Cf. Thomas Whately, Observations on Modern Gardening. An Eighteenth-Century Study of
the English Landscape Garden, introd. Michael Symes (1770; Woodbridge, 2016), 129.
John Dixon Hunt, ‘Emblem and Expression in the Eighteenth-century Landscape
Garden’ in idem, Gardens and the Picturesque. Studies in the History of Landscape Architecture

14 ‘The first place where the abundantly variable formal system of the baroque style
spectacularly fell apart was in the garden, where it was replaced by buildings derived
from the most diverse range of periods, styles and tastes. This was the start of the
stylistic freedom of romanticism and eclecticism’. Géza Galavics, Magyarországi
angolkertek [English Gardens in Hungary] (Budapest, 1999), 30. Several authors
have pointed out that country houses and their gardens were often designed in
contrasting styles, which can also be understood in the context of eclecticism. E.g.
Rudolf Wittkower, ‘English Neo-Palladianism, the Landscape Garden, China and
177–90; Joan Bassin, ‘The English Landscape Garden in the Eighteenth Century:
The Cultural Importance of an English Institution’, Albion: A Quarterly Journal
relegated to the role of a parergon, a by-work to the garden as a whole and this chimes in with a classical sentiment, quoted by Goethein from an unidentified source: ‘le cose che si murano sono superiori a que si piantano’ (things that are built are superior to those that are planted).¹⁵

Alongside architecture (and the literature that divulges its messages), another important partner in the art of gardening is the theatre, which also tends to treat nature as a mere backdrop. Indeed, as we are informed by Alberti, who took the information from Vitruvius, the décor for the third type of drama after comedy and tragedy, namely satirical plays (‘singing of countryside delights and pastoral romance’), was always a woodland landscape.¹⁶ Here we should not confine our thinking to performances held on garden stages, but should also include walks through the park, where the illusionistic impact of the combined dramatic effects had the capacity to make ramblers feel as though they were watching, or even acting in, a theatrical event.¹⁷ In addition to architecture, literature and drama, yet another strand links landscape gardening to landscape painting, but that subject merits a chapter of its own.

As a consequence of the accumulation of meanings and interpretations, landscape gardening experienced a revolution in tastes and style, which spawned a purist – even ‘naturalist’, if one may say so here – movement, which drastically reduced allusions, connotations, reading materials and landmarks, renounced iconographies and eliminated allegories, whilst giving greater rein to individual reception and sensory stimulation. This was indeed a return to nature, in the sense that the central focus and effort now lay once more on highlighting the landscape. The landscaped parks that were shaped in the 1750s, 60s and 70s radically rejected every form of regularity; this is not to deny, of course, that more cautious and varied precursors of anti-geometric order had already been around for decades. Lines of trees were eschewed, as were patterned flowerbeds; artificial ponds and canals were out of the question;

¹⁵ Marie Luise Gothein, Geschichte der Gartenkunst, 192.
instead, vast, grassy meadows were composed, with clumps of trees scattered strategically. ‘Walled enclosures close to the house were demolished, and the boundary between the grazed ground of the park and the lawns around the mansion was now marked in its entirety by a sunken fence or haha.’

We can, of course, hardly proceed any further without mentioning the name of Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown (1715–83). As I am no specialist, I shall offer no opinion as to whether Brown was a radical, innovative pioneer, as affirmed most pronouncedly by Nikolaus Pevsner, or whether (as is the predilection of modern research) ‘just’ the most famous and most fashionable among many talented and proficient gardeners of the age, who – together with the amateur gentleman designers and commissioners of gardens – devised the concept and practice of the English garden in the second half of the eighteenth century.

In any event, the most interesting innovation ascribable to Capability Brown or to the Capability Men meant that:

> certain ways of experiencing the park [which had existed for centuries, hitherto always independently of the garden] were now being given particular emphasis. The attention paid to approaches, and the proliferation of rides and drives, indicate that the landscape was now considered not simply as a collection of static views, but as something to be experienced in its entirety, and experienced through movement, especially on horseback or in a carriage.

This echoes one of Burke’s examples of the beautiful, deemed by him to be one of the most apt: ‘Most people must have observed the sort of sense they have had, on being swiftly drawn in an easy coach, on a smooth turf, with gradual ascents and declivities.’ To this must be added the opportunities

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for boating that were often provided in landscape gardens and parks, and – first and foremost – the promenades. Some writers aver that the art of walking was discovered in the eighteenth century. There is a wealth of literary material (such as Shaftesbury’s *The Moralists*, Rousseau’s *Reveries of a Solitary Walker*, Schiller’s famous poem *Der Spaziergang*, Goethe’s *Elective Affinities*, and the novels of Jane Austen) from which we may glean a sense of the sensory and intellectual benefits of partaking in a walk in the garden or in the landscape, and, last but not least, of the phenomenon of taking in the landscape in motion. One of the key tasks of a garden designer was to plan out the possible routes and resting points, or at least to recommend the kinetic mechanism for best enjoying the recreational properties of the park.

3. The Landscape Garden and The Landscape Painting

One of the quotes given above contrasted the kinetic reception of the landscape with the ‘collection of static views’ (see note 20), by which we should primarily understand the vistas visible from Italian Renaissance villas – prime examples being the Villa Medici in Fiesole and Palladio’s La Rotonda in Vicenza – and the images framed by the villa windows, a familiar and much imitated tradition. The novelty now, however, lay in the fact that ‘Astutely sited country villas were residential belvederes’. In his writing on Italian villas, Walter Benjamin – almost channelling the spirit of René Magritte – described the landscape as hanging in the window frames, signed by the magisterial hand of God. The divine imagery in the villas (and often also in city palaces) was accompanied by artworks by mortal masters, consisting of frescos and oil paintings depicting the landscape, often as illusions intentionally aiming to deceive the viewer; these marked the beginnings of landscape painting, a genre that would eventually reach its pinnacle in the panoramic canvases of the nineteenth century.

The link between the actual landscape and landscape painting is provided by the framing, specifically the act of viewing an image of the world through the four edges of a frame, which is degrees of magnitude more static than

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experiencing the landscape while in movement, even if on one level it has its own peculiar dynamism (the close-up and distant view of pictures, the sense of “walking” inside a picture). Throughout the eighteenth century, the landscape gardening movement was inescapably concerned with searching for an analogy to landscape painting, especially that of seventeenth-century Italy. New knowledge about painting, with particular regard to the great landscape painters of the previous century, engendered an attitude that looked upon the landscape as though it were a series of paintings.\textsuperscript{25} As early as 1734, Alexander Pope famously told his friend, Joseph Spence, that ‘All gardening is landscape-painting’,\textsuperscript{26} and this notion was put into practice by William Kent (1685–1748), the leading garden designer in the era preceding that of Capability Brown. Hunt, the pre-eminent expert on English Gardens, wrote:

What is carried over from the connoisseurship of fine art into landscape design, as opposed to landscape appreciation, are: first, an attention to colours, lights and shades, and a peculiarly English version of perspective . . . and second, a relish of different kinds of scenic values, an awareness of different painter’s responses to different topographies, and eventually a recognition of Nature herself as the true and only painter.\textsuperscript{27}

Paintings by Claude Lorrain, Salvator Rosa, Nicolas Poussin, Gaspard Dughet (also known as Gaspard Poussin), and by their disciples in France and England in the eighteenth century, were held up as models for gardens.\textsuperscript{28} One of the reasons for this was the intention to recreate Roman villas and the classical Arcadian landscape ‘in England’s green and pleasant land’, coupled with the literary context of Theocritus, Virgil and the entire pastoral tradition, as well as Roman history,\textsuperscript{29} and the desire to give form to the newly rediscovered

\textsuperscript{27} John Dixon Hunt, \textit{The Picturesque Garden in Europe} (London, 2003), 41.
\textsuperscript{29} One famous example of how the classical landscape and architecture were recreated in England is at Stourhead in Wiltshire; the ‘Pantheon’ and bridge in this country estate are often directly associated with the painting by Claude Lorrain titled \textit{Coast View of Delos with Aeneas}, which was in the art collection of Henry Hoare, the owner,
sublime landscape. The didactic poems that were extraordinarily widespread during the century took this as the basis for shaping the paradigm of beautiful Claude and sublime (or picturesque) Salvator. The two almost obligatory landscape experiences of the Grand Tour, which was firmly established by that time, were the crossing of the Alps and the Campagna around Rome – the former was epitomised by Rosa, and the latter by Claude. (The two Poussins, meanwhile, were responsible for ‘noble, heroic scenery’.) The other reason was the concept of mimesis in landscape painting, with its insistence that a painting should reflect – even to the point of trompe l’oeil – a realistic (though obviously idealised) landscape, so that the painting could later be converted back into an actual landscape. I shall return to this theoretical problem a little later.

Capability Brown’s landscape gardening movement in the three decades starting in 1750 strove to demolish this system of cultured allusions. After Brown’s star faded, the Herefordshire squires – Richard Payne Knight and Uvedale Price – based their sharp criticism of Brown on reference to the picturesque (although the consequences of this in practice were negligible). Yet even during the period when purism in landscape gardening was at its zenith, there was no sudden end to the system of allusions, for they remained in the landscape parks that already existed and continued to develop and exert an influence, in new gardens created or commissioned by designers and landowners whose tastes different from those of Brown, and in the extensive body of literature on the subject. Paradoxically, it was even present in the reception

30 Nikolaus Pevsner, Visual Planning and the Picturesque, ed. Mathew Aitchison (Los Angeles, 2010), 119.
of Brown himself, who was exalted by many as a great painter, to the extent that comparing him to Claude, Salvator Rosa, Poussin or ‘Risdale’ became rather a cliché.\footnote{Cf. Christopher Hussey, \textit{The Picturesque. Studies in a Point of View} (1927; London, 1967; 2nd edn), 138 ff.}

The original meaning of the word ‘picturesque’, in line with its Italian roots, meant neither more nor less than being worthy of an artist’s brush; even William Gilpin, who is regarded as the initiator of the picturesque revolution, having enthusiastically laid down the principles of picturesque beauty in 1768, interpreted the term in essentially the same way. Price was the first writer to elevate the picturesque into a category of equal rank with the beautiful and the sublime, preserving its origin, but nevertheless releasing it from its constraints, not only in painting, but in visuality as a whole (in Price’s estimation, Haydn and Scarlatti, for example, composed picturesque music).\footnote{Cf. Uvedale Price, \textit{Essays on the Picturesque as Compared with the Sublime and the Beautiful; and, on the Use of Studying Pictures, for the Purpose of Improving Real Landscape} (1795; London, 1810), 80.} Knight, on the other hand, was keen to isolate the concept of the picturesque to a visual mode of beauty, to the act of seeing (pre-empting, to a certain extent, the theories of Konrad Fiedler by a good half century).

For both Price and Knight (who dedicated his didactic poem of 1795, titled \textit{The Landscape}, to Price), even though they held opposing theoretical presuppositions,\footnote{Price regarded the category of the picturesque as a property of the object, alongside the beautiful and the sublime, whereas Knight (following Hume) considered it subject to the judgment of the observer. Price’s objectivity and Knight’s subjectivity were analysed by Hipple. See Hipple, \textit{The Beautiful, The Sublime & The Picturesque}, 278–83. See also R. K. Raval, ‘The Picturesque: Knight, Turner and Hipple’, \textit{The British Journal of Aesthetics} 18 (1978), 249–60.} the starting point and main objective of their endeavours was the analysis of landscape gardening and the landscape, and their common stylistic criticism was disrelish for Lancelot Brown. They disparaged his work using terms such as monotony and baldness, mechanical commonplace, doctrinarism, insipidity, spiritlessness, and a new formalism to replace the old, whose key word was serpentinity. When Brown, or his followers, set about levelling the ground, this would mean, in Price’s view:

\begin{quote}
adieu to all that the painter admires – to all intricacies, to all the beautiful varieties of form, tint, and light and shade; every deep recess – every bold projection – the fantastic roots of trees – the winding paths of sheep – all must go; in a few hours, the rash hand of false taste
\end{quote}
completely demolishes, what time only, and a thousand lucky accidents

can mature, so as to make it become the admiration and study of a

Ruysdal [sic] or a Gainsborough; and reduces it to such a thing, as an

oilman in Thames-street may at any time contract for by the yard at

Islington or Mile-End.34

Without resorting to such caustic language, we could summarise these objec-
tions as a criticism of simplicity itself, or rather – linking in with the similarly
argued condemnation of neo-classicism – of noble simplicity and quiet gran-
deur.35 Among the properties that constitute what is beautiful, smoothness was
defined by Edmund Burke as:

a quality so essential to beauty, that I do not now recollect anything
beautiful that is not smooth. In trees and flowers, smooth leaves are
beautiful; smooth slopes of earth in gardens; smooth streams in the
landscape.36

This smoothness, brought about by levelling and flattening the soil, would
now become the main cause for complaint, and furthermore, in conscious
association with the concept of the beautiful. Here, Price touched upon some-
thing not entirely unknown to Winckelmann, the doyen of neo-classicism,
although he made no mention of it in any of his public apologies for classical
beauty, but in a private letter. ‘The old masters sought to complete their works
in perfect beauty, therefore they rarely experimented with variations. Because
beauty is extreme, and in extremes there is no variation.’37 But this variability
is of cardinal importance to Price. Likewise, the other extreme, the sublime,
would also be subjected to criticism should it become too frequently character-
ised by uniformity. In classical discourse, beauty creates uniformity, and even
Burke’s liberation of the sublime was used to rebel against it, even though it
is apparent that the sublime can also uniformise with its concept of greatness
and littleness. Here, Price came up with a crucial observation: ‘to create the

34 Price, Essays on the Picturesque, 31 ff.
35 Most recently Hunt attempted to interpret Brown’s œuvre in the context of neo-
(2016), Suppl. 1, 18–27.
36 Burke, A Philosophical Enquiry, part III, section XIV.
37 Johann Joachim Winckelmann’s letter to Adam Friedrich Oeser, from the first half
of April 1756, in Johann Joachim Winckelmann, Briefe. In Verbindung mit Hans
sublime is above our contracted powers’. As we pursue the improvement of nature, the effect of the sublime can be accentuated or moderated to a certain extent, but it can never be created from scratch.

The picturesque, then, is destined to occupy a broad area between the extremes of the beautiful and the sublime, in which Price’s objective is to narrow down the scope of human-created beauty to the classical, and to keep it there. In sculpture, the supreme genre of classicism, there is no picturesque at all. A new facet appears, already signalled in an earlier quotation: time. Time belongs to nature, while a classical building or sculpture is timeless in its idealness. The beautiful, accordingly, is fresh and youthful (the obvious reference here is the eternal spring in Winckelmann’s description of the Apollo Belvedere), whereas the picturesque is tied to the period, to the passage of time, and therefore also to evanescence. It follows on from this that an intact Greek temple – whether in real life or in a painting – is beautiful, whereas one in ruins is picturesque. The ‘splendid confusion and irregularity’ of the Gothic church is another example of the picturesque. The Gothic Revival had long equipped itself with similar principles. “The Grecian is only proper for magnificent and public buildings. Columns and all their beautiful ornaments look ridiculous when crowded into a closet or a cheesecake house. The variety is little, and admits no charming irregularities.” When the young Goethe first discovered the Gothic, he associated it with organic nature. The main realm of the picturesque is nature, the landscape; its difference from the beautiful is characterised by roughness and variety, intricacy and irregularity, by sudden change, even by rupture. These are all properties of the landscape itself, and that famous comparative drawing which was published in one of Knight’s didactic poems, showing a park before and after intervention by Capability Brown, allows us to deduce that the ideal objective of the ‘improvement’ carried out by the Herefordshire squires was the formation of the natural state, which was recognised, with great erudition and connoisseurship, in landscape paintings, and subsequently recommended to gardeners.

38 Price, Essays on the Picturesque, 102.
39 Ibid., 83.
4. Nature and Art

We now return to the question of whether our starting definition of the contradiction in terms between the garden and landscape is not, in fact, neutralised by the emergence of landscape gardening and landscape architecture; or whether – when nature is perfected and embellished, when its faults are corrected, when streams are diverted along new beds, earth is piled up into hillsides, pathways are cut, in short, when the landscape is altered – the antithesis between nature and art, between what is given by nature and what is created by human hands, actually becomes relative. The first step involves separating the utilitarian purposes of the garden (vegetable patch, flowerbed, orchard, vineyard, herbal garden, pasture, etc.) from its hedonistic pleasures.\footnote{William Shenstone, for example in his 1764 work titled *Unconnected Thoughts on Gardening*, distinguishes between kitchen-gardening, parterre-gardening, and ‘landskip’ or picturesque gardening. See Hunt & Willis (eds.), *The Genius of the Place*, 289.}

In practice, of course, the majority of gardens were also farms, and their useful parts were clearly separated. Even Lancelot Brown built walls around the vegetable garden.

According to Lord Kames, gardening evolves from a practical art into a fine art by breaking away from its practical function and becoming an object of pure enjoyment. As for the role of the gardener, ‘to humour and adorn nature, is the perfection of his art; and that nature, neglecting regularity, distributes her objects in great variety with a bold hand’.\footnote{Henry Home, Lord Kames, *Elements of Criticism*, ed. Peter Jones (1762; Indianapolis, 2005; 6th edn; 2 vols), II, 688. (Chapter XXIV: Gardening and Architecture).} There is a soupçon of uncertainty in this definition (is this art or nature?). We must not forget that both Shaftesbury and Addison, the previous generation’s two leading thinkers on matters of art (among other things), had, more or less simultaneously at the start of the century, placed great emphasis on the primacy of nature over art. This remained the dominant idea in British philosophical thinking on art.

Gardening has never integrated itself as an autonomous art into the modern – or more precisely, the classical modern, or aesthetic – system of art,\footnote{Cf. Paul Oskar Kristeller, ‘The Modern System of the Arts’ in idem, *Renaissance Thought and the Arts. Collected Essays* (1951; Princeton, NJ, 1990), 163–227; Jacques Rancière, ‘Des régimes de l’art et du faible intérêt de la notion de modernité’ in idem, *La partage sensible esthétique et politique* (Paris, 2000), 26–45.} although from the sixteenth century onwards, practitioners have attempted to elevate it above the status of a handicraft with the same fervour as their counterparts in the fine arts. In the seventeenth century, the French
garden managed to achieve equal rank with the traditional artistic genres as the leading national art, the representative art of the Grand Siècle, and an art built up around one great, central creative genius, André Le Nôtre (1613–1700); it found itself included in several experiments at classification, undertaken by the likes of Perrault and even Kant. Elsewhere, however, it was mentioned in the same breath as agriculture.

The ultimate failure of the art of horticulture to be canonised as grand art can be attributed to a number of reasons. The ornamental garden was part of elite cultural practice, but mainly on the part of the commissioner or observer, rather than that of the creator. This elite was on the ascendant; the French garden was the express privilege of the king and the aristocracy, whereas the English garden could be designed and/or commissioned by both the nobility and the cultured bourgeoisie. Even more importantly, gardens – like art collections and museum initiatives in this period – were often open to the wider community of the upper classes. But the new cultural practice of art, namely high art, which crystallised around the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, was characterised by certain fundamental criteria that could only be fulfilled in gardening to a very limited extent.

Let us examine them in order: (1) Even when it came to the increasingly well-defined character and need for objectivation of art, it was hard for the garden to meet this criterion in the long term, for compared with certain other artworks, such as a painting, a poem or a musical composition, which can be regarded as having a certain permanence, completeness and conclusion, the garden is far more exposed to constant change and intervention, and far less likely therefore to be classified as a work of art. There is no way of conserving a garden indefinitely, and gardens cannot benefit from the same kind of institutional guarantee enjoyed by works in other arts, such as a museum, a ‘Salon’, a publication (whether book, print or sheet music), a system of performances, copyright, and so on. (2) Secondly, innovation, when applied to garden design, took on a sense without any analogies with the other arts, in that the great renewal was the practical implementation of ‘Retour à la nature!’, as opposed to the geometrical, formal gardens that were considered artificial. It may also be worth mentioning that in the new philosophical aesthetics – those of Kant and Schiller (and in traces, even as early as Addison) – the quasi-natural character and function of completed artworks were accorded great value, and in artistic practice, in order to achieve this, efforts were made to wipe out all trace of

human intercession, in a metaphorical sense, of course; gardening, however, not only worked with real nature as its material and medium, but also had real nature as its ultimate goal, and this, with regard to artistic judgment, produced an irreconcilable paradox. (3) Another such paradox arises from the fact that the autonomy of an artwork is barely present in cases where the objectives are to promote the effective functioning of nature and to eliminate all obstacles that stand in the way of hedonistic worth. (4) Idealisation is more closely associated with landscape gardening than objectivation, innovation and autonomy, for the ideal landscape and its attendant idealised ways of life (pastoral, ‘beatus ille’, etc.) have their own long-standing cultural histories. However, the purist landscape gardening movement embodied by Brown was not in the least interested in transplanting the Italian or Grecian landscapes into the British Isles, and was more concerned with reducing the amount of architecture, allusions and other tools of idealisation employed in gardens. Essentially, the movement’s overarching goal was to simplify every landscape and to help it achieve its own character. As for the modern aspect of idealisation, whereby the audience of a work of art is – in an ideal world – the entire human race, private gardens were as alien to this as possible. By the time public gardens began to fulfil this requirement, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, they could at best be regarded as heteronomous products of the applied arts. (5) In autonomous works of art, a kind of dematerialisation came into being, as a new aspect of idealisation, which implied a reduction in the importance of the material. The intrinsic value of the material (which could be immense, as in medieval goldsmithery, for example), considered independently of the work itself, gradually diminished in relative significance; this resulted in works of art being distinguished from treasure, and – at least in part – from luxury items. In gardening, though, such spiritualisation could never be accomplished, for the further gardening progresses from architecture, the greater value is accrued by its material, which is nature itself. This material, consisting of earth, grass and trees, is evidently sturdier and more potent than the material used by any other art. The ideal of the Apollo Belvedere, to persist with the most notable example of the age, is incorporated in the marble it is made from, and this is the property which suppresses its materiality, as Winckelmann so emphatically asserted. But the garden – in particular the English garden – cannot repel its own natural material, with its direct, sensory presence, and even its final objective can only consist of earth, grass and trees. The reception of the garden became extraordinarily spiritualised, but at the price of being accepted not as art, but as the work of nature. (6) The historicism that is so typical of high
Artworks are considered as serving more than the present living generations, and must never lose sight of their historical past and future. The garden is poorly suited to this, for the reasons elucidated upon in point 1 above: the mutable, uncertain, fluid nature of its objectivation, and the constant natural corrections taking place in its fabricated being. Naturally, the landscape garden not only has objective historical connections, but also others that are reflected upon and made conscious, but the way these are conceived is more reminiscent of the historic consciousness of a chronicler than it is of actual historic consciousness. When its forebears (such as ancient Roman villas) are reconstructed, then the historical time separating the new from the old is, as it were, destroyed. (7) Finally, the social and intellectual character of the creators of landscape gardens was incompatible with the classical, modern system of art. The path pursued by the musician, the poet and the painter – that is, the path of transformation into a true artist, which was typical of the late eighteenth and the whole of the nineteenth century – was not followed by the gardener, or at least not to the same extent or with the same certitude. The importance of genius and originality in artistic creation grew inexorably (and the concept of the *Originalgenie* gained increasing currency), while gardening remained the realm of the master craftsman, the specialist, or the dilettante nobleman.

The question of whether gardening deserved a place alongside the great arts was debated throughout the eighteenth century, only coming to a conclusion at the century’s end. The resounding success of the French garden in the preceding century opened the way, on the one hand, for people to attempt to canonise the art of gardening in a general sense, and on the other hand, for actions against the former style to be dressed up as the art of a new nation, this time Britain. The design and presentation of gardens was accompanied by a surprisingly large amount of literature on gardening, often in the form of didactic poetry. Famous gardens were often described both in words and in illustrations.

The eighteenth-century gardening movement was explicitly regarded by some contemporaries as a new direction for the arts, as summed up in Horace Walpole’s famous aphorism: ‘Poetry, Painting, and Gardening, or the Science of Landscape, will forever by men of Taste be deemed Three Sisters, or The Three New Graces who dress and adorn Nature.’ Those conversant in the...
history of art theory, however, will obviously recognise that it only became possible to speak of ‘Three New Graces’ because two had already been spoken of for two hundred years. Specifically, the Renaissance theory of *ut pictura poesis*, originating from Horace, adopted gardening as its third art. This enabled Stephanie Ross to refer to *ut hortus poesis* and Hunt to coin the phrase *ut pictura hortus.* By the end of the seventeenth century gardens and drama shared with painting a theory of representation and presentation of action that was one of the final flowerings of the Renaissance doctrine of *ut pictura poesis.*

In the eighteenth century this doctrine was not affected by any new impulses, but until a new system could provide a better answer to the question of how the arts were interrelated, the neo-classicist, humanistic theory (Winckelmann, Sir Joshua Reynolds), together with general understanding, still upheld the principle of poetic painting, painterly poetry, and the complementarity of the two, while the garden continued to feature elements that were analogous to those in both poetry and painting. The poetic or painterly garden could represent the same things as the other two arts. They offered mutual enlightenment, or more precisely, mutual decipherment. This decipherment allegorised the poem, the painting and the garden alike. Iconographic programmes, parables and allegorical symbols surfaced as a network of references, in which everything played a role, as in some *Gesamtkunstwerk*: the poetic text, the painting (as a model), the three-dimensional work, and nature itself. There was no stable theoretical foundation to all this, however, and in fact, in several fundamental ways, the landscape garden, which was increasingly tasked with portraying or recreating nature, contradicted this tradition. Since the doctrine of *ut pictura poesis* was inseparable from the mimetic approach to art, there were difficulties – as we shall see – when it came to addressing the question of how nature could be imitated with nature itself. Moreover, according to humanistic teachings, art had a duty, first and foremost, to imitate human activity. This is what may have prompted Rensselaer W. Lee, the author of what is still the

by Horace Walpole (Oxford, 1926), 43. Cited by John Dixon Hunt in several sources, e.g. ‘Emblem and Expression’, 75.


48 Ibid., 114.

most important examination of this question, to write that in the eighteenth century, the doctrine:

> was steadily undermined by forces that were in the long run to make for its destruction. Opposed to the humanistic point of view was the growing interest in external nature with whose freshness and irresponsible freedom Rousseau, the apostle of emotion, was to contrast the life of human beings freighted with custom and constrained by the ‘false secondary power’ of the reason.\(^50\)

Truth be told, Walpole’s comment (much quoted since it was first published in the twentieth century), written not in a formalised essay on gardening but in an ephemeral letter, is not so much a new idea as a conventional one. The debate about rank, which originally aimed to emancipate painting but ended up with a thematic hierarchy that placed poetic history painting right at the top, at least lost a large part of its intellectual energies. Viewed from a different perspective, the process of comparing the different branches of the arts and arranging them in some order found more of a common basis in shared traditions than in any receptiveness towards novelty and innovation; compared with the autonomous openness of the artwork, for the arts, now cross-referenced with each other, there was more to be gained by having a self-contained attribution of meaning.

5. Nature as Landscape

The theoretical elaboration of the picturesque has nothing to do with the doctrine of *ut pictura poesis*, although it sometimes occurs as a commonplace. Instead, the intention was to legitimate landscape gardening with a greater and far older art,\(^51\) which would provide a way of seeing and indeed teach one how to see. Inevitably, one of the factors at play in all this was the fact that the squires, all of whom had partaken of the Grand Tour, tended to look down on Brown, who had been bred a gardener and had never explored beyond the borders of his home kingdom; indeed Brown – unlike Claude, who had

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been bred a pastry-cook in the previous century – was never acknowledged as having risen above his low-born status. A new invention, and a desideratum of any gentleman embarking on a picturesque tour, which almost caricatured the objective of legitimating the reception of the landscape with painterly vision (and which today seems nothing short of absurd) was the so-called ‘Claude glass’, a mirror tinted golden brown, which promised to cast a veneer of Claudian colour over the landscape. In a certain sense, the picturesque was a tableau vivant, or a series of them, and the connection between landscape design and the ‘living image’ performances held as social entertainment was highlighted in Goethe’s *Elective Affinities*.

In any event, compared with *ut pictura hortus*, and indeed with allegorical or symbolic gardening in general, the picturesque brought about a radical theoretical change in the common attitude towards nature:

Nature in its direct effects is only possible when it ceases to be thought of primarily as a carrier of allegorical meaning. The shift to the picturesque, therefore, frees nature from the control of ideal forms. That freedom makes possible an aesthetics of nature and implicitly shifts the aesthetic paradigm from ideal beauty that is embodied in the lesser forms of actual nature available to the senses to natural feeling that is located in the response of the sensitive viewer.

It is somewhat surprising that the main enemy of theorists of the picturesque was Brown (who was no longer alive by the time these theorists arrived on the scene), because it was essentially his movement that had enacted the fundamentally important paradigm shift from lyrical, allegorical, emblematic parks to those conceived in a reductionist, purist, anti-allegorical style. What irked them most about Brown was that he had failed to reformulate the relationship with the corpus of landscape painting, something that devotees of the picturesque revolution were strongly in favour of; in other words, Brown had relinquished not only poetry but also painterliness, and thus had taken the anti-intellectual tendency to the extreme, which the Herefordshire connoisseurs were not prepared to accept.

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52 Ibid., 242 ff.
Nevertheless, the image of nature borrowed from painterly experience could not escape its inner contradiction, whereby the extent to which the image of nature accrued by culture took precedence over actual nature, compared with the extent to which it was merely an enhancement of the sense of nature, depended solely on emphasis. Sometimes the picturesque preferred nature over painting, in accordance with the Shaftesbury–Addison tradition and the spirit of the Enlightenment; but sometimes painting legitimated nature, by which we mean not only the way in which educated noblemen, veterans of the Grand Tour, flaunted their supposed cultural superiority, but also remnants of the neo-classical taste, whose essential doctrine, formulated by Winckelmann but already foreshadowed by Alexander Pope (“To copy Nature is to copy them.”55), was that it was right and proper to leave the direct representation of nature to those who, in their own art, had already perfected the imitation of nature.

It is true, of course, that aesthetic intervention could be used in order to present nature as landscape not only in painting (and poetry), but also in landscape gardening; but whether this intervention is the mimesis of nature, the pre-eminent art of representation, or rather the ministration of nature, the protection and ornamentation of actual, pre-existing nature (the latter being how gardening is often understood, even in abstract terms), is a matter of utmost uncertainty.56 Indeed, when a hill is built, when a stream is dammed to form a lake, or when the ground is levelled to create a meadow, this can also be thought of – as it actually was thought of – as imitating nature. Nevertheless, this representation soon manifests itself once again as a naturally created landscape (after all, nature, even if it has been moulded by human hands, can never be regarded as a trompe l’œil), and in the long term, all that remains of human creativity are the buildings and other garden ornaments that ‘frame’ the landscape, and the pathways that traverse it. Since this question never reached a proper resolution, gardening was ultimately classified in the modern system of art among the heteronomous and not the autonomous arts. The definition put forward by Lord Kames – ‘gardening is not an inventive art, but an imitation of nature, or rather nature itself ornamented’ – underlines this point.57  

Joachim Ritter, author of the classic philosophical study of the landscape,

57 Home, Elements of Criticism, II, 692.
misunderstood what Kames intended when he interpreted it, in his excursus on the landscape garden, from the point of view of German idealism:

The innovation and qualitative difference of the landscape garden in the whole of the aesthetic mediation of nature, however, lies in the fact that in the landscape garden, nature is moulded into landscape through the mutational and formative intervention of man, and is employed to deliver its own aesthetic presentation. It was in this sense that Home described the landscape as ‘nature itself ornamented’.58

Lord Kames could hardly have used this phrase ‘in this sense’. In one of his approaches, the garden imitates nature. This is not the art of invention, he contends, so it is therefore an imitative art, low down in the academic hierarchy, just as landscape painting is classified at a lower level than poetic (i.e. narrative) painting.59 In mitigation, the other possibility he sees is that the garden improves upon found nature by identifying its strengths and removing all obstacles that hinder its full potential.

The creators and observers of the English landscape garden, together with all the participants in the extensive discourse on the subject, took the primacy of nature over art quite seriously. Thomas Whately writes that gardening ‘is as superior to landskip [sic] painting, as a reality to a representation’.60 According to his friend, William Gilpin, works of art are less apt to spark feelings of passion than works of nature. ‘The idea of the great original is so strong, that the copy must be pure, if it do not disgust.’ Hipple, who cites these words, is correct in observing a paradox:

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58 Joachim Ritter, *Subjektivität. Sechs Aufsätze* (Frankfurt am Main, 1974), 189. (The emphasis is mine – S. R.)

59 When referring to the equality of gardening in the style of the ‘ut pictura…’ theory, the analogy comparing the garden to landscape painting occurs less than that comparing it to history painting, which is of course facilitated by the fact that the classical landscape paintings taken as models were themselves intended to elevate histories set in landscapes onto a higher shelf in the academic hierarchy. This hierarchy of themes only lost its currency in the nineteenth century.

60 Whately, *Observations on Modern Gardening*, 31. This assertion, stated in the introduction, is later clarified, for a ‘landskip painter’ may select or ‘exclude all objects which may hurt the composition’, and can ‘determine the season of the year, and the hour of the day, to shew his landskip in whatever light he prefers’. The works of a great master are ‘fine exhibitions of nature’ and can ‘form a taste for beauty’, but he warns us that ‘their authority is not absolute; they must be used only as studies, not as models’. Ibid., 126 ff.
a system which isolates a certain property of nature for admiration, a property defined by its excellence as a subject for art, comes at last to reject the art for the nature which was at first only its subject.61

But this paradox, this inner tension, is precisely the point. We must not forget that the ‘landscape experience’ offered by landscape gardens – as different variants of the same basic effects – was very much in line with the idea that prompted people to travel in natural landscapes, with their own unchanging properties. This desire was catered for, from the beginning of the eighteenth century, by the pedagogical institution of the Grand Tour, which took participants across the Alps, affording them a landscape experience that was almost a by-product of the journey, and later on by the picturesque tours of homegrown areas of natural beauty, where the landscape experience was the central aim (and whose main propagandists included the very same William Gilpin).

Both Addison, at the beginning of this period, and Price, at its end, felt the need to search for an answer to the paradoxical relation between art and nature:

But tho’ there are several of these wild Scenes, that are more delightful than any artificial Shows; yet we find the Works of Nature still more pleasant, the more they resemble those of Art: For in this case our Pleasure rises from a double Principle; from the Agreeableness of the Objects to the Eye, and from their Similitude to other Objects: We are pleased as well with comparing their Beauties, as with surveying them, and can represent them to our Minds, either as Copies or Originals. Hence it is that we take Delight in a Prospect which is well laid out, and diversified with Fields and Meadows, Woods and Rivers; in those accidental Landskips of Trees, Clouds and Cities, that are sometimes found in the Veins of Marble; in the curious Fret-work of Rocks and Grottos; and, in a Word, in any thing that hath such a Variety or Regularity as may seem the Effect of Design, in what we call the Works of Chance.62

These are the reasons for studying copies of nature, though the original is before us, that we may not lose the benefit of what is of such great moment in all arts and sciences, the accumulated experience of

past ages; and with respect to the art of improving, we may look upon pictures as a set of experiments of the different ways in which trees, buildings, water, &c. may be disposed, grouped, and accompanied, in the most beautiful and striking manner, and in every style, from the most simple and rural, to the grandest and most ornamental.63

At the end of Addison's more profound reflection we may identify a precursor to Kantian 'purposiveness without a purpose'. Price, meanwhile, is indebted to Hume's 'test of time'. It is worth noting that both men sought to explain how and why culture also had a role to play alongside the direct experience of nature. We could also say that in these aesthetic considerations, what must be proven is the role of art, whereas later, at least from the aesthetics of Hegel onwards, it is that of nature. Schiller, who was not as familiar with the visual arts as he was with most others, and who was quite uninformed when it came to gardening, was definitely right in noting that 'an attentive observer could not fail to notice that the delight that fills us when we look upon the spectacles of the landscape is inseparable from the notion that these are not the works of an artist but of free nature'.64

The primacy of nature expresses the spirit of the age, and the efforts of gardening to open up the landscape, to present itself as a landscape, and to unencumber various notions of the landscape, are all expressions of this priority. It is well known that this spirit made a significant contribution to the development of the sensory culture of the individual, and occasionally led to exaggerated enthusiasm for sentimentality that sometimes verged on caricature. At the same time, the socio-politico-cultural mission of this spirit is evinced by the fact that, all over Europe, during the eighteenth-century revolt against the throne and the altar, the French garden became a metaphor of anti-natural autocracy, as opposed to the liberal naturalness of the English garden. The two opposites proposed – and symbolised – radically different forms of living. The philosophy of liberty was even able to express itself using such images:

Many persons, no doubt, sincerely think that human beings thus cramped and dwarfed, are as their Maker designed them to be; just as

63 Price, Essays on the Picturesque, 4 ff.
many have thought that trees are a much finer thing when clipped into pollards, or cut out into figures of animals, than as nature made them.\textsuperscript{65}

Aside from the pleasures of a thriving communal life and the acquisition of the sensory enrichment and social ideals that come with it, the sense of nature is also inseparable from a complex set of existential feelings that is diametrically different from this. In his \textit{Philosophical Enquiry}, Edmund Burke described this using phrases such as sublime, self-preservation, terror and delight. Human sociability appears in landscape constructions that are historically and culturally defined, but in every landscape (all of which are, in the final analysis, indomitable) we are confronted simultaneously with the existential limitation of mankind, with the constant presence and inevitability of death, illness, and possibly pain. As defined by Endre Szécsényi:

\begin{quote}
Beauty, refinement and civility may be interpreted in the medium of \textit{sensus communis}; unlike the sublime experience of an infinitely expanding physical universe, which is related to the horror of existence of the solitary individual, it iterates the philosophical and existential preconditions which are not determined by the social sphere, but which nevertheless describe the outer limits of all human existence.\textsuperscript{66}
\end{quote}

The iteration of our existential limitation, such a frequent element of the landscape experience (and one that results in the landscape becoming \textit{a memento mori}), may lead not only to horror, but also to rapture, and moreover not only in the (often morally ambiguous) sense of delaying or eluding direct danger, which played a certain part in Burke’s conjecture. The source of this feeling may be acceptance of the natural order, as opposed to – and radically distinguished from – acceptance of the social order.

\textit{ELTE Eötvös Loránd University}

In his *Walkscapes*, Francesco Careri claims that ‘before erecting menhirs . . . man possessed a symbolic form with which to transform the landscape. This form was walking, a skill learned with great effort in the first months of life, only to become an unconscious, natural, automatic action.’ By means of ‘walking man has been able ‘to construct the natural landscape of his surroundings.’ After the basic needs of finding food and information for survival have been satisfied, ‘walking takes on a symbolic form that has enabled man to dwell in the world. By modifying the sense of the space crossed, walking becomes man’s first aesthetic act, penetrating the territories of chaos, constructing an order on which to develop the architecture of situated objects.’ So ‘walking is an art’ from which different artistic forms stem like ‘the menhir, sculpture, architecture, landscape.’

In what follows, I shall not go so deep into the human soul and so far back in time as Careri did, I will only endeavour to outline a historic reconstruction of how walking, the evolving new taste of natural landscape and emerging modern aesthetic experience related to each other in the late seventeenth and the early eighteenth centuries, of how the authors of this period rediscovered walking as a performative art which, at the same time, was shaping both a new landscape of prospects of rude or bare nature and a new state or disposition of mind in the beholder – since, as Solnit remarks, ‘imagination has both shaped and been shaped by the spaces it passes through on two feet’. Thus the experience of landscape itself can be regarded as performative art – in a double sense: on the one hand, Nature as such (or God) can be conceived as the performer who expresses herself in the ever-changing, dynamic and stream-like character of the natural prospect.
something always happens even in a seemingly static prospect, growing and declining, the changes of light, weather, season, etc.), and, on the other, the walker or the wanderer can be a performer who moves across the space and is embellishing or enriching the natural prospect, transforming it into a landscape with personal, emotional and spiritual significance. Walking is always an exercise, while shaping a landscape is a kind of spiritual exercise. I shall apply the latter meaning when I am speaking about the performative character of landscape experience.

In a recent article, John Dixon Hunt speaks of two crucial ideas of the eighteenth century: ‘the familiar development of the picturesque’ and ‘the less noticed interest’ called the ‘art of walking’ after John Gay’s Trivia of 1716. Hunt emphasises the importance of walking, he focuses on ‘what happens during walking’, on how ‘the mind respond[s] to motion in and through landscape, as opposed to an insistence on the visual experience.’ Since ‘motion prompted (at least) emotion’, more optimistically, ‘ideas and also emotions’. Traditionally, however, the picturesque is thought to rely on the visual nature of a prospect, that had produced an ‘overly static idea of landscape, a notion that in its turn got unhappily transferred to making landscapes as if they were pictures.’ Hunt’s aim is to offer a new argument for the importance and timelessness of the picturesque through rediscovering the art of walking.3 While Hunt’s historical survey ranges mostly from the eighteenth century (after John Gay) to the present, from Denis Diderot to Ian Hamilton Finlay4 and Georges Descombes, I am going to inquire into the prehistory of this development. By the same token, I will suggest that the rediscovering of the ‘art of walking’ preceded the ‘development of the picturesque’, and that, in a sense, the latter stemmed from the former.

Finally, in this proem, I mention Ronald W. Hepburn’s posthumous article, in which he claims that ‘we do often aesthetically enjoy both vast spaces and minute spaces: we enjoy resting in space and moving through space.’5 I shall discuss mostly vast spaces and the action or performance of the ‘moving through space,’ and suggest that they had certain priority in forming and shaping of the modern aesthetic experience. I endeavour to exhibit seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century landscape as a (performatif) art of

moving in nature (whose constitutive parts are walking, wandering, expatiating, or travelling), as contrasted, in a sense, with gardening as a (creative) art of dwelling in nature. I will recommend this dichotomy at least as a useful tool to understand the early developments of landscape theory, and to suggest that the modern non-architectural notion of garden or gardening could be conceived from the angle of the new model of (performative) landscape in the early eighteenth century. I consider this model as something different – even though sometimes not clearly distinguishable – from walking in a garden or in a pastoral (or georgic) countryside. In the latter cases, the walkers meet familiar scenes, and contemplate and enjoy those in ways they have earlier appropriated mostly from Classic literature, or, in the case of the hortus conclusus tradition, originally from the Vulgate. In the case of the emerging landscape tradition, however, we can frequently find the following key words: ‘discovery’, ‘surprise’, ‘astonishment’, ‘novelty’ and like; walking is an expedition, not only a survey, it is an encounter with the (partly) unfamiliar or even with the unknown. Walking is something which the walker is “creating”, it is something which is inevitable for the landscape experience (while we can enjoy a garden standing in a single point, from un point de vue).6 And walking opens new dimensions of personal or individual depths, partly because it always offers an opportunity to the walker to radically reconsider the dynamic relationship between Nature and herself. Of course, there are several parallels, both the garden and the new landscape experience appeal to all the five senses, and both require activity for the beholder-walker’s part; still in the first case activity rather means a skilful application of the inherited cultural tools and schemes, while in the second it means a discovery of new spaces outside and inside, a permanent invention of new forms of grasping this complex experience. I try to show the theoretical potentials in this new, walkable landscape experience in the mirror of the “aesthetic” writings of Joseph Addison throughout this article, especially in its concluding part.

6 As, in his seminal article of 1966, Hepburn also suggests: ‘On occasion [the spectator] may confront natural objects as a static, disengaged observer; but far more typically the objects envelop him on all sides. In a forest, trees surround him; he is ringed by hills, or he stands in the midst of a plain. If there is movement in the scene, the spectator may himself be in motion, and his motion may be an important element in his aesthetic experience.’ Ronald W. Hepburn, ‘Contemporary Aesthetics and the Neglect of Natural Beauty’ in idem, ‘Wonder’ and Other Essays: Eight Studies in Aesthetics and Neighbouring Fields (Edinburgh, 1984), 9–35, 12.
1. Gardens, landscapes, early aesthetics

In the first part of his influential *Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* of 1725, Francis Hutcheson mentions the example of the garden (or gardening) only once – when not a mere element of an enumeration, such as ‘architecture, gardening, dress, equipage, and furniture of houses’ –, but does it in an interesting context:

> [S]ome Works of Art acquire a distinct Beauty by their Correspondence to some universally suppos’d Intention in the Artificer, or the Persons who employ’d him: And to obtain this Beauty, sometimes they do not form their Works so as to attain the highest Perfection of original Beauty separately consider’d; because a Composition of this relative Beauty, along with some degree of the original Kind, may give more Pleasure, than a more perfect original Beauty separately. Thus we see, that strict Regularity in laying out of Gardens in Parterres, Vista’s, parallel Walks, is often neglected, to obtain an Imitation of Nature even in some of its Wildnesses. And we are more pleas’d with this Imitation, especially when the Scene is large and spacious, than with the more confin’d Exactness of regular Works.7

To be sure, gardening did not have a distinguished theoretical position in the first philosophical aesthetics of Europe, Hutcheson did not use it as a paradigmatic example of the perception of beauty. Still gardening or garden design is exhibited as an art, undoubtedly one of the noblest human arts, which can produce a special kind of blend of ‘relative’ and ‘some degree of original’ beauty. The beauty in gardens is one of the patent examples which shows that certain imperfectness can cause ‘more Pleasure’ than the perfection of ‘original Beauty’ would do in the same circumstances. There is no formula or any distinct rule of how to achieve or to judge the proper measure of imperfectness, it seems that it can be realised and justified solely by the amount of pleasure received. In the case of gardens, the irregularity of ‘Wildnesses’ makes us capable of tasting the deformity, or, in a sense, the chaos, within the world of order and design which is most purely manifested in the geometrical forms of ‘original beauty’ in Hutcheson’s *Inquiry*. Since the late seventeenth century, the insight that regular works may not be so effective, though formally more

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beautiful, than partly irregular, wild, deformed ones has been mostly discussed in the context of the *je-ne-sais-quoi*, or in the context of the mountain experience (later: natural sublime) or immensity. It is not by chance that Hutcheson immediately associates this type of blended beauty with the experience of ‘large and spacious’ scenes.

Still this special (in the fashionable discourse of *délicatesse*: “secret”) pleasure is understood here in the conception of the organized beauty of garden. As if the ‘Imitation of Nature even in some of its Wildnesses’ would simply be an increase of the variety within the framework of the familiar Hutchesonian formula of beauty as the ‘uniformity amidst variety’. Thus, in the case of the garden, the irrational and, in a sense, inhuman element of ‘Wildnesses’ would be domesticated in the blended type of beauty.

Hutcheson’s Irish patron was Lord Robert Molesworth, the author of *Considerations for Promoting of Agriculture and Employing the Poor*, for whom aesthetic and political improvement was equally significant. As Michael Brown writes: ‘For him, the logic of philosophical enquiry was harmonised with a desire to defend liberty, improve the country and to create an aesthetically pleasing environment.’ Their life-long friendship began in Molesworth’s Irish estate, Breckdenston. Beside its agricultural improvement (generally elaborated in his *Considerations*), Molesworth was interested in its aesthetic improvement, too. This estate was conceived primarily as a garden in the new Dutch manner, and was ‘a blend of stately formalism and the informality of wilderness.’ Breckdenston ‘emphasised the need for a mixture of formality and natural expanses, informing the viewer of the authority of the owner over the estate and enabling the viewer to relax and meditate on the natural landscape through which he moved.’ On this spacious garden ground, however, ‘natural landscape’ was realized primarily as different spots of ‘wilderness’ (amongst other elements like parterre garden, cherry orchard, kitchen garden, bowling green, etc.), and not as open and broad views to the wild, uncultivated (or only partly cultivated) country prospects beyond the stoned walls.

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8 Ibid., 28.
10 Ibid., 46.
11 For the diagram of Molesworth’s landscape from John Rocque’s *Map of the County of Dublin*, see Finola O’Kane, *Landscape Design in Eighteenth-Century Ireland. Mixing Foreign Trees with the Natives* (Cork, 2004), 13 (Fig. 5).
12 ‘Two hundred length “of walling . . . necessary for securing the ground and gardens” were built in 1709, despite the growing fashion for opening out the garden to the surrounding landscape.’ Ibid., 14.
Breckdenston’s wildernesses basically meant ‘densely planted’ places with narrow winding walks from where the ‘axial effect of an avenue was more intensely appreciated’.13 As such, it is a perfect prefiguration of Hutcheson’s garden with some touches of ‘Wildnesses’ in his Inquiry. This eclectic environment shaped by various types of gardening and the similarly eclectic but inspiring social circle he found in Molesworth’s house had a significant influence on Hutcheson’s thought as he was working on his Inquiry.

Beside the example of Molesworth’s inspirational gardens, there are some textual precedents of Hutcheson’s remark on ‘Wildnesses’ in gardens, and on its association with ‘large and spacious’ natural scenes, even if these precedents, as we shall see, possesses more potential in the context of nature and art than that Hutcheson elaborates in the above-mentioned passage of his Inquiry. The closest ones can be taken from Lord Shaftesbury’s and Joseph Addison’s writings. The oft-cited loci are some passages of The Moralists (1709) and those of The Spectator Nos. 414, 417, which belong to “The Pleasures of the Imagination” series, and 477 (1712). Lord Shaftesbury emphasises the distinction between rude nature and formal gardens, and seems to attribute both aesthetic-moral and political significance to this, saying:

Even the rude rocks, the mossy caverns, the irregular unwrought grottos and broken falls of waters, with all the horrid graces of the wilderness itself, as representing nature more, will be the more engaging and appear with a magnificence beyond the formal mockery of princely gardens.14

The violence or oppression over “nature” in formality is a clear sign of a morally and politically intolerable power whose activity results in an “aesthetically” absurd ‘mockery’. Lord Shaftesbury speaks about some intrinsic values of some rude, irregular and raw elements of nature outside the man-made and man-designed gardens, and claims that ‘even the rude rocks, etc.’ are better representation of nature than the absurdities of formal gardens, but it would not necessarily mean that these scenes of ‘horrid graces’ are the optimal

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13 Ibid., 16. ‘Despite its complex formality of twisting paths and geometric clearings, the wilderness was considered to be the most informal and natural part of the early eighteenth-century garden, where nature made its more determined assault upon art. Its complex patterning was thought to represent nature...’ Ibid. It has hardly anything to do with the sublime landscape or the picturesque.

representation of nature or that of the compatibility of human beings to nature. Still, these uncustomeary and inhuman scenes of intrinsic value – like, for example, a desert – can be enjoyed without domestication, without the familiar and cosy framework of a garden:

All ghastly and hideous as they appear, they want not their peculiar beauties. The wildness pleases. We seem to live alone with nature. We view her in her inmost recesses, and contemplate her with more delight in these original wilds than in the artificial labyrinths and feigned wildnesses of the palace.15

In Shaftesbury’s conception, these natural elements were meant to stimulate some significant experience which the beauty (of forms and/or of order) in itself could not do, not even simply to stress or to intensify the effects of beauty by contrast. They have their own rights, and they would successfully resist a Hutchesonian attempt of domestication within a garden design. The remark on the ‘feigned wildnesses of the palace’ might be an anticipated criticism of Hutcheson’s conception of ‘Imitation of Nature’ in gardens (and also of Molesworth’s gardens in Breckdenston). Shaftesbury insists that during the experience of a desert scene, ‘we seem to live alone with nature’ – nature in its ‘original’, untouched state, nature as a whole. This appears as an eminent occasion of the encounter with the divinity of nature.16

If we consider another locus of The Moralists17, we can clarify the status of the above distinction between ‘rude rocks’ and ‘princely gardens’. This is

15 Ibid., 315.
16 In his Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections of 1728, Hutcheson seems to share Shaftesbury’s opinion on the intrinsic value of wilderness: ‘may not a Taste for Nature be acquired, giving greater Delight than the Observations of Art? And: ‘Must an artful Grove, an Imitation of a Wilderness, or the more confined Forms on Ever-greens, please more than the real Forest, with the Trees of God? Shall a Statue give more Pleasure than the human Face Divine?’ Francis Hutcheson, An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections, with Illustrations on the Moral Sense, ed. Aaron Garrett (Indianapolis, 2002), 114–15.
17 This is a long dialogue in which the interlocutors themselves are walking in nature – as it was fashionable from Dominique Bouhons’ Entretiens d’Ariste et d’Engin of 1671 or Jean Desmarests de Saint-Sorlin’s Les délices de l’esprit of 1677 to George Berkeley’s Three Dialogues of 1713, and, of course, later in the eighteenth century. At the same time, for example, at the outset of his Entretiens sur la Metaphysique, sur la Religion of 1711, Nicolas Malebranche claims that we always need a study-room to hear the voice of the reason, and not a garden or a walk in nature: the enchanted places and charming sensations are disturbing to the contemplation.
another scene (as well as the desert was above) of a long imaginative, dream-like, journey from the distant regions of the universe to the familiar spheres of human life. In the middle of this trip, we enter a ‘vast wood’ of ‘deep shades’:

The faint and gloomy light looks horrid as the shade itself, and the profound stillness of these places imposes silence upon men, struck with the hoarse echoings of every sound within the spacious caverns of the wood. Here space astonishes. Silence itself seems pregnant while an unknown force works on the mind and dubious objects move the wakeful sense. Mysterious voices are either heard or fancied, and various forms of deity seem to present themselves and appear more manifest in these sacred sylvan scenes, such as of old gave rise to temples and favoured the religion of the ancient world. Even we ourselves, who in plain characters may read divinity from so many bright parts of earth, choose rather these obscurer places to spell out that mysterious being, which to our weak eyes appears at best under a veil of cloud.\(^\text{18}\)

The phrases ‘read divinity’ and ‘spell out’ can refer to the old metaphor of reading the book of nature, but here it is not the understanding – the clarity and light of the eye and the intellect –, but the overwhelming emotional effect of silence and obscurity that triumphs. The divine being who inhabits in nature can be more appropriately approached when experiencing privation: through vast scenes with the lack of light and (articulated) sounds. The traditional primacy of vision is also challenged here by, on the one hand, the preferred obscurity, and, on the other, by the equal stress on audible experience. This passage can serve as a more general framework for understanding the complexity of Shaftesbury’s conception of nature and natural beauty: ‘we ourselves, who in plain characters may read divinity from so many bright parts of earth’ may refer to the human-like order, also manifested in architectural gardens, and to the intellectually comprehensible forms and regularity gained by the light of the intellect, and still there is a secret inclination in us towards ‘obscurer places’ where we can feel those aspects of the ‘mysterious being’ which would be too powerful for ‘our weak eyes’.

\(^{18}\) Lord Shaftesbury, *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, 316. – I have already discussed this passage from another point of view in my ‘Francis Hutcheson and the Emerging Aesthetic Experience’, *Journal of Scottish Thought* 7 (2016), 171–209, 189–90.
The obscure and vast sylvan landscape offers a fuller, more profoundly emotional experience of the divine in nature, than the clear and transparent prospects of a garden or the bright pages of the book of nature. As if ancient religious practices (as, for example, of the Druids) associated with such natural scenes may overcome the mitigated rational theology (or physico-theology) of the age. Beside the triumph of the ‘unknown force’ over the power of intellect, it brings forward a “temporal factor”, the astonishment of this sylvan experience partly comes from the encounter of the ancient past, so this imagined travel is being undertaken in both space and time. Nevertheless, in these examples from Shaftesbury’s *Moralists*, we can see that certain natural prospects and views (from the rude rocks to desert and vast woods) are more appropriate occasions to encounter Nature in its genuine form or as a whole, and to feel or to relish its divine force than those designed gardens offer independently of their imitated natural elements and ingredients. Moreover, the form of imaginative journey is not accidental: it refers, on the one hand, to the indispensability of movement, and, on the other, to a special state of mind, both are needed to see and to relish these scenes.

Another textual source or reference of Hutcheson’s above cited passage can be a less-discussed essay written by Joseph Addison in *The Tatler* No. 161.19 In this we can read a long description of a dream: the dreamer is dreaming a journey in the Alps. After Shaftesbury’s desert and sylvan scenes imagined in an enthusiastic state of mind, this is a dreamed series of mountain scenes20:

I fancied my self among the Alpes, and, as it is natural in a Dream, seemed every Moment to bound from one Summit to another, ‘till at last, after having made this Airy Progress over the Tops of several Mountains, I arrived at the very Centre of those broken Rocks and Precipices. I here, methought, saw a prodigious Circuit of Hills, that reached above the Clouds, and encompassed a large Space of Ground, which I had a great Curiosity to look into. I thereupon continued my former Way of travelling through a great Variety of Winter Scenes, ‘till I had gained the Top of these white Mountains, which seemed another

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19 Even if excerpts of this essay are presented together with passages from the more familiar ones of *The Spectator* (Nos. 37, 414, 417 and 477) in Hunt’s and Willis’ canonical anthology, cf. John Dixon Hunt and Peter Willis (eds.), *The Genius of the Place. The English Landscape Garden 1620–1820* (London, 1975), 139–40.

20 To be sure, I could also cite descriptions of mountain prospects from the same imaginative journey of *The Moralists*. Cf. Lord Shaftesbury, *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, 315–16.
Alpes of Snow. I looked down from hence into a spacious Plain, which was surrounded on all Sides by this Mound of Hills, and which presented me with the most agreeable Prospect I had ever seen. There was a greater Variety of Colours in the Embroidery of the Meadows, a more lively Green in the Leaves and Grass, a brighter Chrystal in the Streams, than what I ever met with in any other Region. The Light itself had something more shining and glorious in it than that of which the Day is made in other Places. I was wonderfully astonished at the Discovery of such a Paradise amidst the Wildness of those cold, hoary Landskips which lay about it; . . . The Place was covered with a wonderful Profusion of Flowers, that without being disposed into regular Borders and Parterres, grew promiscuously, and had a greater Beauty in their natural Luxuriancy and Disorder, than they could have received from the Checks and Restraints of Art.21

The last scene of a garden (a Paradise) contains that kind of “aesthetic” experience (‘the greater Beauty in . . . Disorder’) from 1710 to which Hutcheson would refer fifteen years later.22 Addison is dreaming about a constellation of the ‘cold, hoary Landskips’ of Alpine mountains and the Paradise-like garden of ‘the most agreeable Prospect’.23 The garden is rounded by a ‘prodigious


23 We can find other examples of this combination of garden with some kind of natural wilderness in Addison’s writings, like in his letter of 1699 to William Congreve on Fontaine-bleau’s garden, and also in his Spectator essay No. 37 (1711) on Leonora’s garden who was inspired by romances. Cf. Walter Graham (ed.), The Letters of Joseph Addison (Oxford, 1941), 11, and The Spectator, ed. Donald F Bond (Oxford, 1965; 5 vols), I, 158. (from now own, I refer to this edition with volume and page number in parentheses) And most famously, in his Spectator No. 414: ‘our English Gardens are not so entertaining to the Fancy as those in France and Italy, where we see a large Extent of Ground covered over with an agreeable mixture of Garden and Forest, which represent every where an artificial Rudeness, much more charming than the Neatness and Elegancy’ of English gardens. (III, 551) This locus seems another evident source of Hutcheson’s paragraph cited above, though Addison mentions ‘nobler and more exalted kind of Pleasure’ here, and not simply ‘more Pleasure’.
Circuit of Hills’, which maintains a view and a regard of that ‘wonderfully astonishing’, ‘spacious Plain’ where this irregular garden is located. It has nothing to do with some imitated wilderness in a garden, mountain scenes in their raw naturalness, vastness and inhumanity are indispensable elements of the whole experience of this dreamt journey. Moreover, the movement is highly emphatic in this description. We are moving through different types of mountain prospects until we reach and ‘discover’ the place of beauty which is also ‘spacious’ in itself. The Paradise garden with its beaming colours, vividness, wonderful profusion and fecundity is very like the examples of beauty Addison takes as the third type of the pleasures of the imagination in The Spectator No. 412. (III, 542–4) 24 Greatness and novelty – the other two types of the pleasures of the imagination – belong mostly but not exclusively to the mountain scenes: hills with ‘broken Rocks and Precipices’ offer great prospect, the ‘great Variety of Winter Scenes’ are novel. Thus the course of experience starts off the great (sublime) mountain landscapes through the amazingly varied novel scenes to the brightness, profusion and exuberance of a spacious plain, the beautiful garden-like landscape of meadows and streams.

The movement of the perspective is not accidental, it suggests that Nature as a whole can be expressed only through all of these three aspects of natural views, that is, through all the “aesthetic” qualities which permanently strengthen each other, and which are perceived in course of time by a dreaming spectator-walker. This encounter with the totality in nature needs not the regard of a painter, but that of a wanderer, and not an ordinary state of mind, but that of a dreamer. (As in the case of Shaftesbury’s sylvan and desert scenes, here ‘Paradise’ may also refer to an ancient or genuine state of nature, so this journey too is happening in both space and time.)

However, despite the conspicuous parallels between these two earlier texts and Hutcheson’s passage of the Inquiry, it is telling that the systematic philosophical treatise discusses neither the intrinsic values of natural scenes, nor the inevitability of movement (walking, wandering, etc.), nor that of a special state of mind. In his Inquiry, Hutcheson tries to appropriate the new landscape experience in the form of imitated ‘Wildnesses’ of a ‘large and spacious’ scene within the framework of man-made garden design. His domesticating efforts

24 Addison speaks about the beauty perceived in another member of the same species (connecting this to the erotic attraction and eventually to the propagation of the species), which beauty ‘work[es] in the Imagination with . . . Warmth and Violence’, and the beauty of colours in which ‘the Eye takes most Delight’. While he just fleetingly – as it were, obligatorily – mentions here the beauty in ‘the Symmetry and Proportion of Parts’, and in ‘the Arrangement and Disposition of Bodies’.
may indirectly signify the new, uncommon energy arisen in the soul of a walker on the series of views of (rude, untouched) nature. Here, as in his mountain landscape dream of *The Tatler* essay, Addison too finds ‘a Paradise amidst the Wildness’ which, at first sight, can remind us of Hutcheson’s description of the blended beauty of garden, but it is a natural or “original” garden, a Paradise, not the result of human design and cultivation, and actually it shows a different approach to the relationship of garden and landscape. While Addison considers the garden-like form as the fulfilment of his mountain experience lived intensively in his dream — in the same way as beauty ‘gives a Finishing to any thing that is Great or Uncommon’ (III, 542) —, Hutcheson uses the element of wilderness only as an effective tool for ‘more’ (not even higher) pleasure offered by man-made gardens. This ‘more Pleasure’ is not identical with any kind of astonishment, Hutcheson’s spectators of the garden seem to preserve their ordinary state of mind before and during the experience.

Finally, the transcendental overtone is completely missing from Hutcheson’s passage on the beauty of garden, while Shaftesbury associates his sylvan scene with the past of Druids and the encounter of the mysterious Being otherwise not accessible, and Addison immediately populates (and allegorizes) his ‘happy Region’ of ‘spacious Plain’ with ‘the Goddess of Liberty’. In sum, the elements of the intrinsic value of nature in her genuine state, the movement of the beholder, the special state of mind and the hints of transcendence (which is expressed neither in the visible order or design of the Creation, nor in a mystical union with the divine) are constitutive for the emergence of modern landscape.

2. Steps outside

Before I proceed, I want to make it clear that by landscape I mean some natural view or scene (or, more exactly, a series of views or scenes) and not a piece of landscape painting. I agree with Lang who claims, concerning the fashion of landscape gardens from the eighteenth century onwards, that nobody before Horace Walpole ‘mentions Claude in connection with gardening . . . There are

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25 *The Tatler*, II, 398. – In the description of ‘Greatness’ (natural sublime) of *The Spectator* No. 412, Addison will already write that ‘a spacious Horison is an Image of Liberty’ (III, 541), which may retrospectively refer to the fact that this Paradise garden is closer to the sublime nature than to a designed garden, and may also mark the change of the usage of emblems in the explanations of natural experiences.
several more objections to the theory of an influence of Claude and Gaspard’ on the design of landscape gardens at least until the middle of eighteenth century. By the same token, I think that the invention of the “aesthetic” or “proto-aesthetic” experience of landscape in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries was also independent of the canvasses of Lorrain, Poussin, Dughet or Salvator Rosa. It is quite telling that his much-discussed essay of *The Spectator* No. 414, Addison speaks about natural prospects, then artificial ‘Landskips’, finally gardens (in this linear order) in the context of the comparison and interaction between nature and art. The second point could have given a perfect occasion to him to discuss landscape painting, instead, he tells us about ‘the prettiest Landskip [he] ever saw’ which was the projected image of a camera obscura (probably seen in Greenwich Park, according to the editor, Donald F. Bond). Camera obscura was an intriguing technical and scientific experiment, and also a well-known metaphor of mind in philosophical texts of the time; to Addison, however, here it offers an exceptional experience of a living and moving (!) picture of the natural prospect of a ‘navigable River’ and ‘a Park’ on the wall of that dark room. Beside the ‘Novelty of such a sight’ which is naturally pleasant to the imagination, ‘the chief Reason [of its Pleasantness] is its near Resemblance to Nature, as it does not only, like other Pictures, give the Colour and Figure, but the Motion of the Things it represents.’ (III, 550–1) Neither in this essay nor in the other pieces of the Imagination series Addison has a single word about landscape painting.27

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27 When Addison analyses the effects of literary description, earlier, in 1697, in his ‘Essay on Virgil’s *Georgics*,’ cf. Richard Hurd (ed.), *The Works of Right Honourable Joseph Addison* (London, 1954; 4 vols), I, 154–61, 158; or later in *The Spectator* No. 416, he writes: ‘Words, when well chosen, have so great a Force in them, that a Description often gives us more lively Ideas than the Sight of things themselves. The Reader finds a Scene drawn in stronger Colours, and painted more to the Life in his Imagination, by the help of Words, than by an actual Survey of the Scene which they describe. In this Case the Poet seems to get the better of Nature; he takes, indeed, the Landskip after her, but gives it more vigorous touches, heightens its Beauty, and so enlivens the whole Piece, that the Images, which flow from the Objects themselves, appear weak and faint, in Comparison of those that come from the Expression.’ (III, 560–1) We might apply it to landscape painting (by substituting words with well-chosen colours, touches, or skilful figuration), but probably Addison would disagree. Even if he uses extensively the metaphors of painting in this literary context, or in the explanation of the operation of imagination in general. In No. 412, he writes: ‘the different Colours of a Picture, when they are well disposed, set off one another, and receive an additional Beauty from the Advantage of their Situation’ (III, 544) – but this is a general remark about the effects of the dexterous disposition of colours which concerns neither the particular subject of the picture, nor the comparison between
Elsewhere, generally speaking, rather classical literary genres (georgic and pastoral) make an impact on him when he wants to formulate the landscape experience.28

In this section, through examples taken from two seventeenth-century authors, I am going to show that the invention of modern landscape was possible only by reducing the “allegorization”29 of the garden and overturning the vertical structure that derived from the relatively “static” contemplation of the highest position provided mostly by Christian-Neo-Platonic discourse. In the evolution of landscape as an “aesthetic” experience it was a crucial point when the element of vertical elevation was replaced with some kind of horizontal comprehension or embrace of the natural prospect.30

My first example of the modern stepping out into nature, is taken from an influential and still densely allegorical novel, El Criticón written by Baltasar Gracián in the middle of the seventeenth century. It is a pilgrimage. The second chapter of its first book tells the story of Andrenio who had been slumbering in a cavern of a mountain in the island of Saint Helena, then he was freed and awakened by an enormous earthquake. Andrenio set his eyes on the presence of the object and its representation in art.

28 Before the Spectator essays, we can see that approach in his ‘Essay on Virgil’s Georgics’ or in Dialogues upon Ancient Medals (the beginning of Dialogue III). Cf. Mavis Batey, Oxford Gardens. The University’s Influence on Garden History (Amersham, 1982), 95–8. – In The Tatler No. 218, he is very explicit: ‘Those who are conversant in the Writings of polite Authors, receive an additional Entertainment from the Country, as it revives in their Memories those charming Descriptions with which such Authors do frequently abound.’ The Tatler, III, 140. It seems that literary memories (and schemes) are not the constitutive elements of the natural experience, only offer ‘additional’ pleasures. In the Dialogues, Addison reflects also on the exaggerations of poetical imagination: ‘It is Cicero’s observation on the plane-tree that makes so flourishing a figure in one of Plato’s dialogues, that it did not draw its nourishment from the fountain that ran by it and watered its roots, but from the richness of the style that describes it.’ The Works of Joseph Addison, ed. George Washington Greene (Philadelphia, 1867; 6 vols) II, 113.


on the world outside of the cave for the first time in his life. His position of seeing is not a view from a summit or a tower top. (He did not climb a mountain, on the contrary, his mountain had had to be collapsed before he could see.) In this chapter, Andrenio, as an allegorical figure of *mundo natural* is talking to Critilo, the allegorical figure of *mundo civil* about his first impressions on the newly discovered natural world. Albeit the whole initial situation is conceived and fully allegorical, Andrenio’s reactions are still noteworthy.\(^3\)

Having stepped out into the world from his cave, he is astonished and shocked by the view of the ‘grand Theatre of Heaven and Earth’:

> I would here express, but it is impossible, the intense violence of my Affections, the extravagant Raptures of my Soul . . . I beheld . . . the Sea, the Land, the Heaven, and each severally, and altogether, and in the view of each I transported my self without thoughts of ever ending, admiring, enjoying, and contemplating a fruition which could never satiate me.\(^4\)

In this description some elements are especially emphatic, namely the vision of the objects together as a whole and separately in themselves, the strong and rich emotional effects which stemmed directly from the natural scenes (not as the results of some later or additional spiritual reflection), the theatrical nature of this prospect (which may refer to both the inevitable position of a special spectatorship and to the performative character of the view), and the profusion and the inexhaustibility of the sensuous experience. Critilo’s reflection on it is also intriguing:

> O! How much I envy thee . . . this unknown happiness of thine, the only priviledge of the first Man, and you, the Faculty of seeing all at once, and that with Observation, the Greatness, Beauty, Harmony, Stability,

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\(^3\) Especially if we consider a very similar example in Boyle’s *Usefulness of Natural Philosophy* of 1671 (which is far from being an allegorical fiction), in which Boyle speaks about the case of a maid who was blind in the first eighteen years of her life: the girl’s vehement and emotionally strong reactions on the visible world are very like Andrenio’s. Cf. *The Works of the Honourable Robert Boyle* (London, 1772; 6 vols), II, 6.

and Variety of this created Fabrick... For we enter into the World with the Eyes of our Understanding shut, and when we open them unto Knowledge the Custom of seeing hath rendred the greatest Wonders, neither strange, nor admired at the Judgments disclosure. Therefore the wise Worthies have repaired much of this defect by reflections, looking back again as it were to a new Birth, making every thing, by a search and examination into its Nature, a new subject of astonishment; admiring, and criticizing on their Perfections. Like those, who walk in a delicious Garden, diverted solely with their own Thoughts, not observing at first the artificial adornments, and variety of Flowers; yet afterwards return back to view each Plant, and Flower with great Curiosity: So we enter into this Garden of the Universe walking from our Birth, until our Death, without the least glance on the Beauty, and Perfection of it: unless some wiser Heads chance to turn back, and renew their Pleasure by a Review, and Contemplation.33

In and by his first vehement sensory impressions of the natural world, Andrenio possesses the theologically and morally distinguished regard of the first man, who is capable of seeing everything at once, and also separately, and of fully and deeply enjoying the order of the cosmos – not in the framework of the ancient Greek theoria tou kosmou,34 but in the “proto-aesthetic” qualities of ‘Greatness, Beauty, Harmony, Stability, and Variety’, in which we can see perhaps the best prefiguration of Addison’s above-mentioned “aesthetic” triad of ‘Greatness’ (i.e. sublime), ‘Beauty’ and ‘Novelty’. Since harmony is the beauty of sounds, and stability and variety together can constitute the dynamic structure of novelty.35

In this discourse, albeit it is still evidently allegorical, the vertical structure of ascent was replaced by a horizontal one: by ‘a search and examination into’ the nature of things to discover wonders in them. Moreover, the mode of this

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33 Gracián, The Critick, 16; idem, L’Homme detrompé, 18–19.
34 According to Ritter, the Christian–Neo-Platonic vocabulary of the ascent of the soul from the body to the Soul relies on this earlier Greek philosophical tradition which dealt with nature (physis) for its own sake, that is, tried to grasp the Whole in it, to participate in the divine in it, without any practical interests of glory or profit. Cf. Joachim Ritter, ‘Landschaft: Zur Funktion des Ästhetischen in der modernen Gesellschaft’ in idem, Subjektivität. Sechs Aufsätze (Frankfurt am Main, 1974), 141–63, 143–4.
experience of nature, at least the reformed or regained way of it, is figured in the form of a walk in ‘this Garden of the Universe’. To be sure, both ‘walking’ and ‘garden’ are metaphors here, still the description may suggest that these terrestrial, sensuous, ordinary scenes are ever-amazing and enjoyable, they constitute eminent occasions for the walking beholder to experience the presence of the divine. To reach this prelapsarian state of mind other ones need enormous efforts of reflection by the aids of the wisest, but it is not impossible. Nevertheless, Andrenio – through his regard of ‘the first Man’ – discovers nature by her “proto-aesthetic” qualities in a horizontal structure where the beholder can and must move to gather the series of views and scenes. Andrenio’s path is different from a purgatorial ascent, it is rather a winding walk among the terrestrial and sensuous things during which he is capable of ‘making every thing . . . a new subject of astonishment’. Of course, walking may contain several moments when one stops and stands to “contemplate” the view, nonetheless walking (expatiating, travelling, etc.) in itself provides a new model in which nature as landscape could gradually emerge.

The movement of the beholder as a major feature of the experience offers a new mode of perception in which the walking or wandering beholder can acquire or touch the transcendence in and not beyond the view. My next example is taken from John Dennis’s reports on his Alpine journey as a part of his Grand Tour, which was published in 1693. In his oft-cited letter dated 21 October, 1688, Dennis writes:

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36 This seems an “innocent” state of mind, and this innocence may be echoed in Addison’s famous phrase of ‘innocent Pleasures’ in his Imagination series (No. 411). At the same time, as Picciotto writes, during the seventeenth century, innocence begins meaning ‘objectivity’ in the discourse of the new experimental sciences, ‘the physical world itself could become an object of originary desire. As instruments of innocent perception, these observers seek to restore their readers to the world in which they already live.’ Moreover, ‘Addison and Steele’s persona [in The Spectator] was identified with an ideal spectatorial body, modelled on the artificial organs of the microscope and telescope: a walking instrument of truth’. Joanna Picciotto, Labors of Innocence in Early Modern England (Cambridge, MA, London, 2010), 510 and 567.

At the same time, the earlier interpretation of innocence also plays an important role in Addison’s “aesthetic” theory, for example, in The Spectator No. 477, one of the most famous essay of his aesthetics of garden, Addison explicitly claims that ‘the most innocent Delights in Human Life’ offered by gardens can be traced back to the pleasures of the Paradise, ‘the Habitation of our First Parents before the Fall.’ (IV, 192)

37 It is only very probable that Addison read the French or English translation of Gracián’s novel – as he remarks: ‘there are very few celebrated Books, either in the Learned or the Modern Tongues, which I am not acquainted with’. (I, 2.) –, but it is quite sure that he knew Dennis’s letters, as we can see, for example, in the phrases
We entered into Savoy in the Morning, and past over Mount Aiguebellette. The ascent was the more easie, because it wound about the Mountain. But as soon as we had conque’d one half of it, the unusual heighth in which we found our selves, the impeding Rock that hung over us, the dreadful Depth of the Precipice, and the Torrent that roar’d at the bottom, gave us such a view as was altogether new and amazing. Its craggy Cliffs, which we half discover’d, thro the misty gloom of the Clouds that surrounded them, sometimes gave us a horrid Prospect. And sometimes its face appear’d Smooth and Beautiful as the most even and fruitful Vallies. So different from themselves were the different parts of it: In the very same place Nature was seen Severe and Wanton. In the mean time we walk’d upon the very brink, in a literal sense, of Destruction. . . . The sense of all this produc’d different motions in me, viz. a delightful Horrour, a terrible Joy, and at the same time, that I was infinitely pleas’d, I trembled.

The traveller’s aim was to pass through the mountain not to climb it for the top view (or for its own sake); here the route itself at an ‘unusual heighth’

he used in the report on the round-trip around Geneva Lake in his Remarks on Several Parts of Italy, &c in the Years of 1701, 1702, 1703 (1705; London, 1767), 258–61. See also Robert Doran, The Theory of the Sublime from Longinus to Kant (Cambridge, 2015), 127. – Richard Steele, in The Spectator No. 364, appreciates the useful ends of a Grand Tour as a part of education, and, in a later omitted passage, he warmly recommends Addison’s Remarks on Italy (cf. III, 369n) as the best guidebook, but he mentions neither the exceptional experience of Alpine mountains or countryside landscapes near Rome, nor the pieces of Roman landscape painting amongst the benefits of a Continental tour. In his classical book, Hussey claims: ‘The awakening in England to an appreciation of landscape was a direct result of the Grand Tour . . . Not only did the passage of the Alps and the journey through Italy compel some attention being given to scenery, but in Italy the traveller encountered landscape painting.’ Both such landscape poets as James Thomson and John Dyer, and the landowners who improved their grounds ‘adopted, as a model of correct composition, the Claudian landscape.’ Christopher Hussey, The Picturesque. Studies in a Point of View (London and New York, 1927), 12. But we cannot find the tokens of this picturesque fashion in The Spectator essays, see also footnote 27.

38 John Dennis, Miscellanies Verse and Prose (London, 1693), 133–4.

39 In the scholarship, there is a deeply rooted tradition which considers Francesco Petrarca’s ‘for its own sake’ climbing of Mont Ventoux near Avignon as a corner stone in the history of landscape or landscape painting, and also in that of modern aesthetics. I have no space here to give an account of the different interpretations of this famous expedition and its possible connections to the present topic. For Petrarca and Mont Ventoux, see, for example, Kenneth Clark, Landscape into Art (London, 1949), 6–12; Simon Schama, Landscape and Memory (London, 1995), 419–21;
on the mountain is the point; the ascent was ‘more easie’, while the emotionally demanding part of the journey consisted of the walk ‘upon the very brink . . . of Destruction’. In addition, this height does not provide an open view, a visually comprehensible vastness of the horizon, not even a portion of sky (altogether it was very far from the “picturesque”). The extraordinary effects of the passage, the famous ‘delightful Horrour’ and ‘terrible Joy’ come from the very blocking of the view, the hindrance of the free prospect. The ‘misty gloom of the Clouds’ around the close opposite mountain, and also the ‘impeding Rock’ above and the only audible roaring torrent below constitute a very different position for the beholder. He is not elevated but swallowed by the experience which is unfolding before his eyes and in his ears, and is changing from the ‘horrid Prospect’ to the ‘Smooth and Beautiful’, valley-like scene. The ever-changing views and sounds amount to the most important part of the experience: it is ‘altogether new and amazing’. It has nothing to do with a fixed point of view.

About a hundred and thirty years earlier, in the middle of the sixteenth century, when he returned home from Italy, Pieter Bruegel the Elder took approximately the same trip across the Alps, during which he drew a series of Alpine landscapes, necessarily always from a fixed point of view (this series is considered as a milestone in the history of European landscape painting⁴⁰). In most of these drawings, the rude rocks and gloomy cliffs appear as parts of a dark or threatening background, and some vast and open prospect of a valley (sometimes with a river, or a distant town, or with some human or animal figures, groves, bushes, etc.) stands in the centre of the composition. Bruegel stopped and began to draw where the view opened to some peaceful, familiar and human prospect amongst the wilderness. Dennis’s description shows and appreciates a completely different aspect of this passage, it reports an evolving experience in which the series of mostly bare, inhuman and closed scenes produces shocking and exceptionally astonishing but enjoyable impressions.

on the traveller. And the continuous changing of perspectives which comes from the movement of the beholder seem to play an eminent part in transforming the merely horrid views into delightful ones.

In Dennis’s letter, the traveller whose mountain experience unfolded immediately in time was swallowed by the spatial dimensions and was overwhelmed by the stimuli of the sensuous: the obscure visible and the extreme audible. Obscurity, moreover, has a potential – not yet fully exploited here by Dennis, but, as we have seen, acknowledged by Shaftesbury in his sylvan scene – to activate, to warm, to inspire the imagination, and, with this, to maintain movement and dynamism in mind and, so to speak, to avoid tranquillity. It seems that the soul needs enrichment from the terrestrial instead of getting rid of its impulses and stimuli for some more spiritual elevation or purgation.

Three days later, having mentioned the traditional contrast – a commonplace in the growing literature of Grand Tour – between the garden of Italy and the crude, uncultivated and threatening mountains of the Alps, Dennis claims that these mountains were not parts of the original Creation, so they cannot be explained within the framework of some providential plan. The mountain experience of the traveller is beyond the ‘delight that is consistent with Reason, a delight that creates or improves Meditation.’ This signifies the inapplicability of some traditional intellectual schemes to grasp and understand that experience: neither the traditional Neo-Platonic–Christian ascent from the sensuous to the meditative-spiritual, nor the Protestant tradition of empiricist meditation cultivated by Joseph Hall, Robert Boyle and other seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century scientists and divines41 provide the right approach here.

…transporting Pleasures follow’d the sight of the Alpes, and what unusual transports think you were those, that were mingled with horrours, and sometimes almost with despair? But if these Mountains were not a Creation, but form’d by universal Destruction, when the Arch with a mighty flaw dissolv’d and fell into the vast Abyss . . . then are these Ruines of the old World the greatest wonders of the New. For they are not only vast, but horrid, hideous, ghastly Ruins. . . . [Later when we] descend[ed] thro the very Bowels as it were of the Mountain, for we seem’d to be enclos’d on all sides: What an astonishing Prospect was there? Ruins upon Ruins in monstrous Heaps, and Heaven and Earth

confounded. The uncouth Rocks that were above us, Rocks that were void of all form, but what they had receiv’d from Ruine; the frightful view of the Precipices, and the foaming Waters that threw themselves headlong down them, made all such a Consort up for the Eye, as that sort of Musick does for the Ear, in which Horrour can be joyn’d with Harmony.42

Inspired by Thomas Burnet’s *Sacred Theory of the Earth* (1681, 1684), Dennis offers an explanation of the existence of this ‘astonishing Prospect’: the Alps are the results of a gigantic destruction (produced by the biblical Floods), a cataclysm which left behind an enormous ruin (of the original symmetrical Paradise-garden).43 Thus the transcendental cause of the current view is a series of “events” in historic time, and not an eternal divine “production”. The wandering beholder is literally swallowed in the ‘Bowels . . . of the Mountain’, and is shocked by uncommon and horrid prospects and sounds. We cannot be farther from an open summit-view associated with elevation and spiritual consummation.

Yet the transcendence is directly given: ‘Ruins upon Ruins in monstrous Heaps, and Heaven and Earth confounded’. The divine in nature is not a rationally grasped order, nor even a comprehensible Whole in an open horizon, but it is an evolving experience in which we are entangled with sensuous vastness, we are experiencing the depth (not height) where the sensuous and the spiritual, earth and heaven are inseparably bound together. It is the gradually unfolding perception of an immense irregularity (which was itself the result of “historical” events: the Fall of man and the Floods), a chaos that can only be born through transporting feelings.44 Beyond the sphere of pastoral

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42 Dennis, Miscellanies Verse and Prose, 138–9.
43 From Gilbert Burnet’s *Travels* (1687) through James Thomson’s *Liberty* to Edward Young’s *Night Thoughts*, there are several works containing parts inspired by the idea of the cosmic ruin of *Sacred Theory*. Cf. Nicolson, *Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory*, 225 ff. – At the same time, there were critics also, as, for example, Richard Bentley who claimed that originally Eden must have been ‘a land of Hills and Valleys with an infinite Variety of Scenes and Prospects’ in one of his Boyle lectures. Cf. Martin C. Battestin, *The Providence of Wit. Aspects of Form in Augustan Literature and Arts* (Oxford, 1974), 37.
44 The whole description has a Longinian overtone (Dennis was one of the first critics who exploited *Peri Hypsous* in his literary criticism), this distinction between ‘delight’ and ‘transporting Pleasures’ may originate in the Greek text, especially, but not exclusively, in its section xxxv. As also, the passages of Burnet’s *Sacred Theory* about the quality later called ‘natural sublime’ can be interpreted as an ‘extended paraphrase’ of section xxxv. Cf. Doran, *The Theory of the Sublime from Longinus to Kant*, 86–8.
harmony, beyond the sphere of meditative elevation, Dennis offers a fresh look, a new regard: let us consider these ‘monstrous Heaps’ of ‘Heaven and Earth confounded’. This regard transforms these uncommon, inhuman, irregular natural scenes into ‘the greatest wonders’ of our world: an astonishing and moving mountain landscape. It seems to me that the movement of the beholder makes these ‘transporting Pleasures’ possible, makes them intensively ‘transporting’. Passing through this extraordinary space makes the experience deeply lived and felt, makes this “moving” in the emotional sense. Earlier the sensual or natural offered the occasion of raising lofty thoughts and considerations about the spiritual, in Dennis’s case the theological or cosmological perspective of the Creation as a gigantic ruin prepares the mind of the walker to see, to hear, to taste, to feel the series of natural scenes as enjoyable landscape of divine Nature.

This regard can be considered – in Hepburn’s words – a ‘metaphysical thought-component [which] is externally related to [the] scene’; but there is another version of the exercise of ‘metaphysical imagination’ when ‘the metaphysical imaginative schema is better described as internal to the appreciative experience itself, since it is concerned, perhaps, with the relation between subject and object’.45 This will be the case with Addison when he speaks about the landscape experience in the context of polite imagination, and when he connects that primarily to the ‘Great’46 and the ‘Novel’ qualities of natural scenes. Being epistemologically mostly Lockean, Addison’s version of the imagination is not a purely creative faculty which would be capable of fully determining the form of our experience from within,47 yet his imagination or


46 Tuveson claims that the ‘category of the “great” . . . is a means of implementing the ideal of the horizontal comprehension of nature.’ And here Tuveson refers us to the last essay of The Spectator written by Henry Grove, in which the universe is described as an ‘immense theatre’, within which man is a spectator, but his ‘spiritual ascent consists in increased capacity to grasp the grandeur of the scene and to understand the “hidden springs of Nature’s operation.”’ Thus comprehension of wider and wider circles of knowledge, rather than spiritual ascent in the strict sense of the phrase, is the vision of the heavenly life; and the natural sublime offers this experience ‘here on earth.’ Tuveson, The Imagination as a Means of Grace, 105–6.

47 According to Myers, Addison, following Locke, thinks that though ‘the initial reception of the [retinal] image is passive’, ‘we learn from experience to interpret [the two-dimensional visual idea] as having depth’, that is, by means of ‘Judgement’ and ‘an habitual custom’ (Locke’s words) we can perceive convex body; so this ‘notion that what we perceive is partly the result of our judgements about optical data allowed Addison to present the imagination as an active and creative process,
fancy – which is closely connected to dreaming activity – must be much more than a delicate instrument, a kind of fine filter, through which we can, so to speak, mechanically discover new aspects and shades of the natural world during our walks.  

3. Addison, walking, aesthetic experience

Addison liked walking from his years at Magdalen College onwards and also writing about interesting walks during which he perceived and enjoyed significant natural experiences usually associated with some other-worldly connotations. For example, in the pastoral essay of *The Tatler* No. 218, he tells about a Spring-time walk into the countryside in order to ‘divert [himself] among the Fields and Meadows, while the Green was new, and the Flowers in their Bloom’; the ‘unspeakable Pleasure’ offered by the fields and meadows during walking accompanies with the reflection on ‘the Bounty of Providence, which has made the most pleasing and most beautiful Objects the most

filling the gap between sensation and perception’. Katherine Myers, ‘Ways of Seeing: Joseph Addison, Enchantment and the Early Landscape Garden’, *Garden History* 41 (2013), 3–20, 7–8. I do not have space here to elaborate this topic, but I think that it is much more complicated, let it suffice to mention only the famous Lockean distinction between judgement and fancy or wit, which was exploited by Addison himself in his *Spectator* essays on wit; according to this, judgement is the means of intellect, while imagination is sharply differentiated from understanding in Addison’s Imagination series.

Walking or the walkable landscape is not the only model to Addison for describing “aesthetic” experience of nature, he also applies, for example, the old metaphor of theatre (as we have seen in Grove’s essay of *The Spectator*, No. 635 or in *El Criticón*:

‘[T]he whole Universe is a kind of Theatre filled with Objects that either raise in us Pleasure, Amusement or Admiration.’ (III, 453) At the same time, the “performative” character is essential in this case, too.

Cf. Batey, *Oxford Gardens*, 91–103; idem, ‘The Pleasures of the Imagination: Joseph Addison’s Influence on Early Landscape Gardens’, *Garden History* 33 (2005), 189–209. – Similarly, in his inaugural lecture delivered before the community of Glasgow University, Hutcheson calls forth his fond memories of his student’s years, amongst them he stresses the particular site of their ‘gentle, friendly convers[ation]’: ‘we walked in the gardens of the university or in the lovely countryside around the city, which the Glotta [i.e. the River Clyde] washes with its gentle stream. As I recalled all these things, my departure for Scotland seemed happy and cheerful and full of joy’ Francis Hutcheson, ‘On the Natural Sociability of Mankind’ in idem, *Logic, Metaphysics, and the Natural Sociability of Mankind*, eds. James Moore and Michael Silverthorne (Indianapolis, 2006), 189–216, 192.
ordinary and most common’. In *The Spectator* No. 110, he reports on ‘a long Walk of aged Elms’ to ‘the Ruins of an old Abby’ when already the cawing of ‘the Rooks and Crows that rest upon the Tops’ of the rocks is considered as ‘a kind of natural Prayer to that Being who supplies the Wants of his whole Creation’ (I, 453). In respect of landscape and walking or touring, some passages of his *Remarks on Several Parts of Italy*, the report of his Grand Tour of 1699, can be connected to that mountain-feeling tradition whose major earlier proponent was Dennis. In the history of the garden and especially the landscape garden, Addison’s essay of *The Spectator* No. 477 has had an eminent importance in which a new taste in gardening was influentially formulated. The same essay also proves that the garden was conceived from the perspective of walkable natural landscape: even the ‘Humorist in Gardening’, Addison himself, is ‘pleased when [he is] walking in a Labyrinth of [his] own rising, not to know whether the next Tree [he will] meet with is an Apple or an Oak, an Elm or a Pear-tree.’ (IV, 189 – my emphasis, E. Sz.) Despite the evident signs of reconciliation or synthesis between the conceptions of garden and landscape here and in other essays, the distinction between the two remains alive and intriguing. In *The Spectator* No. 417, for example, he gives a spectacular comparison between different writing styles and the qualities of his new “aesthetic” triad: ‘Iliad is like travelling through a Country uninhabited, where the Fancy is entertained with a thousand Savage Prospects of vast Desarts, wide uncultivated Marshes, huge Forests, mis-shapen Rocks and Precipices.’ Thus the sublime (or great) natural landscape expresses best the heroic style of Homer, while ‘Aeneid is like a well-ordered Garden, where it is impossible to find out any Part unadorned, or cast our Eyes upon a single Spot, that does not produce some beautiful Plant or Flower.’ The architectural garden, the man-made artificial nature represents the beautifying manner of Virgil. Finally, ‘when we are in the Metamorphosis, we are walking on enchanted Ground, and nothing but Scenes of Magick lying round us’ (III, 564) Homer’s sublime scenes and Ovid’s enchanted prospects belong to some natural landscape, while Virgil’s beautiful plots to the designed garden. What is telling is that we are – of course, metaphorically, still – ‘travelling through’ the Iliad’s landscape, and are ‘walking’ on the marvellous ground of the Metamorphosis – the characterization of Virgil’s garden, however, is lacking the active verb expressing some passing-through of the beholder.52

50 *The Tatler*, III, 140 and 143.
51 Cf. footnote 37.
52 There are further similar examples in *The Spectator*, for example, in No. 160, Addison
Besides the acknowledgement of the inevitability of the movement in the cases of the sublime and the uncommon, this distinction between walkable landscapes and contemplative and/or pleasure garden can indirectly support my presupposition that the former somewhat preceded and established the new ideas concerning gardening, and this natural landscape associated with walking, expatiating, discovery, surprise, novelty, the uncustomary and the like – or in the Imagination series, with ‘Great’ and ‘Uncommon’ – meant the “engine” of the shift or transformation from the purely geometric, architectural and contemplative to the early eighteenth-century aesthetic which centres a new, live and dynamic relationship between the beholder and her object. At the same time, on a large scale, Addison as Neo-Classical critic, scholar and poet inclined towards preferring Virgil’s style.

It is not without precedent in the scholarship, that the conception of garden and landscape is considered as a central issue or model in Addison’s aesthetics in general. Michael G. Ketcham devotes a section entitled ‘Esthetic Perception and the Metaphor of the Garden’ to this topic in chapter iii (‘The Psychology of Time’) of his monograph. According to him, ‘The Spectator in effect dramatizes Locke’s account of duration.’ It can be illustrated also in the stream of impressions attributed to Mr. Spectator. . . . The Spectator’s scenes allude to our succession of perceptions as one essay follows the next in a kinematographic image of social life, but they can be lifted out of time, isolated, and moved into a form of timelessness.”

This dynamism (or tension) characterizes the Spectator project in general. ‘Both the continuity and the intensity of time are elaborated in Addison’s imaginary of the garden’, and garden imaginary as a manifestation of this effort. ‘The esthetic psychology of time, however, is characterized less by consciousness of succession than by a consciousness

speaks about two classes of poetical geniuses, in cases of Virgil or Milton ‘a rich Soil in a happy Climate’ is ‘laid out in Walks and Parterres, and cut into Shape and Beauty by the Skill of the Gardener’, while Homer’s or Shakespeare’s poetry ‘produces a whole Wilderness of noble Plants rising in a thousand beautiful Landskips without any certain Order or Regularity’ (II, 129). Or in No. 476, Addison characterizes two types of writing, the one, the ‘Methodical Discourse’ is associated with order, design, and ‘regular Plantation’, while the other, the essay-writing, with wildness, irregularity, and ‘Wood’: ‘You may ramble in the one a whole Day together, and every Moment discover something or other that is new to you, but when you have done you will have but a confused imperfect Notion of the Place’. (IV, 186) – Tranquil contemplation of the whole prevails in the first, rambling and discovering new in the second, which, at the same time, because of its ‘Irregularity and want of Method’, needs more genius and knowledge for the author’s part.

of the moment that Addison typically represents through the image of the garden. The garden is used as a metaphor concerning memory, composition and style, the pleasures of the wise man, and “aesthetics”. The man in the garden . . . is no longer the man in contemplative retirement. Instead, he is the figure of the spectator whom we see in No. 206 [by Steele] – the man who enjoys a walk on a sunshiny day, and who attends to the movements of his mind."54 Ketcham acknowledges the distinctive role of movement, at the same time he dissolves the emerging conception of walkable landscape into that of ‘expansive’ garden. Addison’s garden described in No. 414 ‘is laid out to provide the visitor with changing perspectives and with a variety of psychological effects that both stimulate and mirror the movements of the mind. The garden thus becomes an emblem of time not as continuity but as psychological expansion of a single moment.’55

In his recent book, Sean Silver sets up an intriguing parallel between Addison as a collector of medals and as a gardener, saying that these two practices ‘were in his mind related.’ From these activities, a dualism arises which makes its way into the aesthetic of the Spectator: ‘Design and digression would appear to cross purposes with one another. The one is governed by Cartesian geometry even as it constructs a Cartesian self; the other relies on the abstracted logics of bodily movement to govern strange topographies of time and space.’56 Based on The Spectator No. 447, Silver claims that ‘paths’ and ‘walks’ basically express custom and association, ‘[t]he mind as a whole develops channels or associative “paths” according to the single calculus of pleasure’.57 Moreover, it appears that designed gardens and plantations have a priority to landscape walking, rambling or ‘digression’. ‘[I]t was during the years that Addison was most thoroughly engaged in the pleasures of planting that he presented to the public his most formal aesthetic remarks; his own garden in Bilton Hall and the “walks” named after him in this Warwickshire garden, and in Oxford, or in the National Botanical Garden of Ireland (built by his botanic friend, Thomas Tickell), show the preference of “straight lines” and the “triumph of design, the articulation of method”. This traditional taste appears in his implicit and explicit allusions to the Classics: ‘The most

54 Ibid., 86. – my emphasis, E. Sz.
55 Ibid., 87.
57 Ibid., 139.
common way that a landscape can set Addison a pleasant associative task is by reminding him of Virgil's \textit{Georgics}.\footnote{Ibid., 144–5 and 147.}

Both scholars put the conception of a garden into the centre of Addison's "aesthetic" thinking, and natural landscape is conceived from the viewpoint of a garden designer or 'Humourist in Gardening'. Their interpretations seem to have a similar structure: 'succession' is overcome by 'intense moment' (Ketcham), 'digression' by design (Silver); that is, eventually, walking and expatiating amongst (rude) natural scenes are overcome by the standards and values derived from Addison's Neo-Classical taste. Ketcham and Silver are probably right in general, even if the interpretations of Addison's conception of landscape garden show a more balanced picture in the reception from the eighteenth century onwards. Still I argue that Addison was aware of the new potential in walkable natural landscape which could undoubtedly include or absorb both the elements of the pastoral and georgic,\footnote{These two genres were built around the preference of the peace of the countryside to the turmoil of urban life: the pastoral around the life and world of a shepherd, and the georgic around the life and world of a husbandman. At the same time, there is a difference between nature as landscape (which is a modern invention) and nature as manifested in countryside or associated with rural life; in the latter, nature remains always familiar, homey, and closely related to human working and industry. Cf. Ritter, "Landschaft", 146–7.} but its core was that uncustomary and astonishing experience of rude nature which were formulated in Burnet's, Dennis's and Lord Shaftesbury's writings in the framework of passing-through. The way of the appropriation of this natural experience might seem difficult for Addison, and not without ambiguities. To take only one example, the prospect of a 'desart' is either one of the eminent views of “aesthetic” great or sublime (cf. \textit{The Spectator} Nos. 412 and 417, or the earlier No. 387), that is, it is regarded as the 'rude kind of Magnificence' which causes 'pleasing Astonishment' in the spectator (III, 540), or the sample of that bare and inhuman prospect which remains necessarily outside of the "aesthetic" or 'enchanted' sphere of innocent pleasures (cf. No. 413), it represents that bareness, formlessness, irregularity and inhumanity which is unbearable for a Neo-Classicist, as it is expressed in the retrospective view of an ignorant man's life (cf. No. 94). At the same time, 'desart' appears as a present physical reality in the former cases, while it is only a traditional metaphor in the latter cases.

The Neo-Classicist tendency, as Ketcham and Silver – and of course others, like, for example, Youngren, Saccamano, Syba\footnote{Cf. William H. Youngren, 'Addison and the Birth of Eighteenth-Century Aesthetics',} – suggest, is becoming domi-
nant already in the Imagination series or in No. 477; applying to our current
topic, some new features of the walkable natural landscape are appropriated
in the framework of designed garden (similarly to Hutcheson’s example on
blended beauty), and by means of stressing the connection between these
features and those of the ‘Great’ and the ‘Novel’ as the sources of the pleas-
ures of the imagination, the new conception of landscaped garden is born.
At the same time, I think, there is an intriguing affinity between walkable
landscape and the transcendence which is significant in the mirror of the
emerging modern aesthetic. This experienced affinity or relationship between
the sensory, physical or spatial and the spiritual and eternal means something
new, something which is neither the heir of the traditional mystical experience,
 nor a simple derivation from the contemporary natural philosophical insights
on the divine order of the Creation.

As we have already seen in The Tatler No. 161 above, natural (mountain)
landscape can preserve its own rights: besides the fact that the non-designed
paradise-like garden was the final accomplishment of that dreamed journey,
this prospect did not annihilate or even appropriate the experience or qualities
of the series of prior mountain scenes. This series was experienced through a
travel in a dream. And this dream can refer to that special state of mind which
also differs from some traditional attitudes like mystical elevations or even from
a Shaftesburian Platonic enthusiasm. Briefly, the original sensory impressions
become more intense and more vivid in a dream, the passions more intensively
felt than in the ordinary state of mind, and the soul becomes free from the
mechanical constraints of the body, and deals ‘with numberless Beings of her
own Creation . . . She is herself the Theatre, the Actors, and the Beholder’ (IV,
229) as Addison writes in The Spectator No. 487 on dreams.61 During walking,
the beholder’s moving body in the space – partly emancipating from its inertia
and heaviness – stimulates and maintains a dream-like state for the mind, and
vice versa the mind is enriching the same space with intensive impressions,
and altogether transforming it into an “aesthetic” landscape.62 In The Spectator

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61 I have no space here to elaborate this topic, but the complex relationship between
dreaming, imagination, and ‘innocent delusions’ can be traced back to Sir Thomas
Browne’s insights on dreams in his Religio Medici (1643) and in his posthumous essay
On Dreams. Addison lengthily quotes and interprets Browne’s Religio Medici in No.
487.

62 Ross emphasizes the interaction between imagination and movement in Addison’s
No. 413, this dream-like and walking state seems the general condition of an “aesthetic” spectator of nature: ‘our Souls are at present delightfully lost and bewildered in a pleasing Delusion, and we walk about like the Enchanted Hero of a Romance, who sees beautiful Castles, Woods, and Meadows; and at the same time hears the warbling of Birds, and the purling of Streams’. (III, 546 – my emphases, E. Sz.)

In The Spectator No. 565 – its motto comes from Virgil’s Georgics: ‘since there is a god in everything, earth and the expanse of sea and the sky’s depths’ (trans. A. S. Kline) –, the first piece of a series of meditations (entitled Essays Moral and Divine) on eternity and infinitude, Addison tells the story of a ‘Sun-set walking in the open Fields’ when later ‘the full Moon rose at length in that clouded Majesty, which Milton takes notice of, and opened to the Eye a new Picture of Nature, which was more finely shaded, and disposed among softer Lights than that which the Sun had before discovered to us.’ (IV, 529)

And this sight of the walking Moon amongst the constellations of the stars entails the serious question after David (Ps. viii. 3–4): ‘what is man’ from the viewpoint of his Creator? This ‘new Picture of Nature’ means the opportunity of a new connection between the terrestrial to the celestial during a walk. (IV, 529)63 The first passages of this essay exhibit a moving picture, so to speak: ‘the Night insensibly fell upon’ the beholder (this is also an allusion to the almost imperceptible nuances and shades the Moon- and stars-light offer), and gradually shows or opens a new view of nature, and it is, at the same time, a gradual shift from the earth to the sky. Spectators can experience another type of profoundness during an evening walk than the sun-light can give them. The abundance of experience after sun-set has nothing to do with, for example, the multitude of species, or the detailed contrivance of creatures, or the design of the whole creation, as it can be familiar from physico-theological discourses; instead, this expresses a new, somehow secret and inexhaustible case, saying that ‘a central feature of our enjoyment of gardens, and of other natural landscapes as well, is imagining ourselves performing some sort of action in that landscape, or in response to it, coupled with the possibility of actually going on and doing one or all of these things.’ She calls this feature the ‘invitation’ of gardens or landscapes. ‘We take up these invitations by exercising our imagination, our senses, and our bodies.’ Stephanie Ross, What Gardens Mean (Chicago and London, 1998), 166–7. This approach, however, suggests that there is no essential difference between the experience of a traditional hortus conclusus and that of a natural landscape.

63 Walking as a model of “aesthetic” perception is applied by other authors of the time, like Richard Steele in The Spectator, No. 454 on urban flânerie, or George Berkeley in his Essay on Pleasures, Natural and Fantastical of Guardian No. 49.
dimension, which is simultaneously outside in the immense space and inside in the depth of human soul.

It might seem that we are reading an occasional meditation in the manner of Joseph Hall or Robert Boyle. The scientifically exact, observable physical facts of the experience trigger elevated thoughts, here, thoughts on the existential status or destiny of human beings in the created universe. Yet, there are some significant differences between Addison’s and Boyle’s empiricist contemplations. In the preliminary discourse to his popular *Occasional Reflections*, Boyle cites the very same lines of David that we can find in Addison’s essay No. 565. This locus from the Book of Psalms is the starting point of a contemplation. Boyle’s recommended meditative practice, ‘Meleteticks’, ‘awakens good thoughts, and excites good motions... This friendly property to Devotion... is a very easy and genuine off-spring of the marriage of the two others: The Beams of Knowledge, acquired by such Reflections, having in them, like those of the Sun, not only Light but Heat.’ Then, having cited the words of David, of ‘the truly inspired Poet (who, by his omitting to speak of the Sun, seems to have composed this Psalm in the night)’, Boyle promises a ‘few short Reflections’ on the theme of the Moon. Based on certain physical or astrophysical features and attributes of the Moon and its relationships to the Earth and to the stars, a series of similitudes and emblems ensue with moralizing interpretations on ‘the mutability of humane things’.

In Boyle’s meditation, the Moon provides, via similitudes, resemblances and emblems, different moral lessons. These were meant to be moving lessons on the inevitable imperfectness of the human mind, both in a cognitive and a moral sense. However, it is a static image of the Moon, despite the information about its changes. This Moon can be only an illustration from a book, or

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64 Commenting Boyle’s *Occasional Reflections* of 1665, Smith characterizes this practice as follows: ‘this method of “attentive observation” to “a multitude of particulars” in nature could offer the observer “some new practical consideration”. . . , but it could also offer “Examples to imitate, or shew him the Danger, or Unhandsomeness, or Inconvenience of some thing that he should avoid, or raise his thoughts and affections Heaven-wards”. . . Close attention to nature accessed both physical facts and clues about God’s will for humanity.’ Smith, *Empiricist Devotions*, 35.


66 Ibid., 50–1.

67 Ibid., 55.
can be a recalled memory of the meditator, its actual presence is not necessary at all. While, in Addison’s passages we cannot find emblems or similitudes (only two textual allusions to Milton and David), but we can read about a real process, both in the form of the spectator’s walking and that of the gradual Moon-rise. The physical and mental vividness, rendered by the poetical diction, and stimulated by the movement itself, is an essential part of this experience. The spectator meets – is walking into – the immensity of the universe (as the first, “aesthetic” version of infinitude and eternity), and he is not only thinking on it (as an intelligent naturalist), he is not only being affected or inspired by its moral lessons (as an empiricist meditator), but he is experiencing or facing the immensity with his full personality, and, at the same time, is feeling or tasting his own existential status in the Creation. This is an astonishing encounter, which could be a clear example of the primary pleasure of natural sublime from The Spectator No. 412; at the same time, it may remind us the anxiety of the 72. fragment of Blaise Pascal’s Pensées of 1669, or of a very similar passage from Lord Shaftesbury’s The Moralists of 1709.68

The ‘new Picture of Nature’ in the Moon- and star-light relates to that ‘another Light’ in which a ‘Man of a Polite Imagination’ is capable to look ‘upon the World’ and to discover ‘in it a Multitude of Charms’. This exercise of imagination makes the spectator feel ‘a greater Satisfaction in the Prospect of Fields and Meadows, than another does in the Possession’ in the Imagination series. (III, 538)

A Man should endeavour ... to make the Sphere of his innocent Pleasures as wide as possible, that he may retire into them with Safety, and find in them such a Satisfaction as a wise Man69 would not blush to take. Of this Nature are those of the Imagination, which do not require such a Bent of Thought as is necessary to our more serious Employments ... but, like a gentle Exercise to the Faculties, awaken them from Sloth and Idleness, without putting them upon any Labour or Difficulty. (III, 539)

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68 Cf. Shaftesbury, Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times, 298–9. – Eventually, the Pascalian anxiety about the loss of the individual ‘amidst the Immensity of Nature’ will be solved by the ‘Consideration of God Almighty’s Omnipresence and Omniscience’ in the following reflections of this essay.

69 The reference can connect the Imagination series to both the Nos. 93 & 94 on the pleasures of the wise man and the Cheerfulness series (Nos. 381, 387, 393).
Addison emphasizes that the attentive approach to nature via the imagination is easy, it is a ‘gentle Exercise’, it does not require efforts and diligence of the spectator, and consequently is available to everybody in principle, just as the ‘unspeakable Pleasure’ of the natural beauties in the case of the countryside walk of *The Tatler* No. 218, while the empiricist meditations can be exercised only by an intellectual elite through hard labour and pertinence.  

In the last piece of his Cheerfulness series, *The Spectator* No. 393, in which Addison deals with this ‘Habit of the Mind’ (which I incline to call “aesthetic”), he acknowledges that  

> Natural Philosophy quickens [the] Taste of the Creation, and renders it not only pleasing to the Imagination, but to the Understanding. It . . . considers the several Ends of Providence . . . and the wonders of Divine Wisdom . . . It . . . raises such a rational Admiration in the Soul as is little inferior to Devotion. (III, 475)

Until this point, Addison seems to follow Boyle’s meletetics, as Robert Mayhew also remarks upon in his important book;  


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70 Even if Boyle, for example, tried to convince his readers that it is not the case in his preliminary discourse of *Occasional Reflections*. At the same time, there is some ambiguity in Addison’s Imagination essays between the ‘Polite Imagination’ of a cultural elite and the seemingly universal availability of the pleasures of the imagination to everybody.
The Cheerfulness of Heart which springs up in us from the Survey of Nature’s Works is an admirable Preparation for Gratitude. . . . A grateful Reflection on the Supreme Cause who produces it, sanctifies it in the Soul, and gives it its proper Value. Such an habitual Disposition of Mind consecrates every Field and Wood, turns an ordinary Walk into a Morning or Evening Sacrifice, and will improve those transient Gleams of Joy . . . into an inviolable and perpetual State of Bliss and Happiness. (III, 475–6)

In her oft-cited article, Zeitz claims that ‘Addison’s psychology of aesthetic perception grows out of a shared aesthetic argument in physico-theological thought. The Spectator’s observations on human responses to nature . . . are in part inspired by a similarly “affective” and “aesthetic” component in some of the period’s popular “design arguments” for the existence of God.’72 Accepting the profound influence which William Durham, John Ray, Isaac Barrow, Boyle and others could have on Addison’s religious and “aesthetic” thought, I think, however, that this ‘habitual Disposition of Mind’ cannot be interpreted simply as the “aesthetic” version or extension of the design argument.73 This ‘habitual disposition’ is conspicuously different from the ‘rational Admiration’ endorsed by physico-theologians and empiricist meditators of this period. The religious or devotional interest in this walkable landscape experience is not about the divine wisdom by means of which the Creation was designed and built. It requires only a general reflection upon the existence of the Author of nature by the spectator-walker; it is enough to know or rather to feel that everything around exists for our sake as a personal gift from the divine. In the first piece of the Cheerfulness series, Addison makes that clear: this ‘chearful State of Mind’ is ‘a constant habitual Gratitude to the great
Author of *Nature.* It 'is an implicit Praise and Thanksgiving to Providence under all its Dispensations. It is a kind of Acciescence in the State wherein we are placed, and a secret Approbation of the Divine Will in his Conduct towards Man.' (III, 430) Through cheerful mind we can contact the providential God (and not the wise designer-Creator); his Will becomes felt, not his intellect or wisdom understood and adored with delight. The divine volition becomes a felt reality for the walking beholder whose position may remind us of that of the ‘Devout Man’ in *The Spectator* No. 465. Here Addison discusses five methods of how to strengthen faith ‘in the Mind of Man;’ the fourth is ‘more Persuasive’ than the previous practical-rational and moral ones. This is the method of ‘an habitual Adoration of the Supreme Being’74: “The Devout Man does not only believe, but feels there is a Deity. He has actual Sensations of him; his Experience concurs with his Reason; he sees him more and more in all his intercourses with him’. (IV, 143) Walking in nature, in untouched nature, can be an eminent exercise to gain the series of these intercourses with the divine being. Though this experience does not contradict reason (otherwise it can run into intolerable zealotry or enthusiasm), but it is not identical with ‘rational Admiration’. It is true that ‘the imagination could be discussed as a God-given faculty designed by the Creator for specific ends’75, and we can also find detailed teleological explanations of the possibility of the imaginative pleasures in the great, the uncommon and the beautiful in *The Spectator* No. 413, but these natural theological or even theodicean accounts do not play a major role, if any, in the particular, direct and immediate, “aesthetic” experience.

In No. 393, there is a direct link between the ‘secret Satisfaction’ of our ‘pleasing Instinct’ affected by the natural beauties of the spring and the ‘perpetual State of Bliss and Happiness’. The gap between the two can be bridged by means of ‘a religious Exercise’. The outcome of this exercise is a state of mind, cheerfulness, which is not simply delighted by certain perceptions of ‘lively picture’, ‘gay embroidery’, ‘elegant symmetry’ in nature – to cite these phrases from one of Isaac Barrow’s popular sermons76, but this state of mind actively ‘consecrates every Field and Wood, turns an ordinary Walk

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74 Interestingly, the last method Addison mentions is the traditional ‘religious Meditation’ in ‘retirement from the World’, he puts it in the context of court and country, but he does not compare it with the ‘habitual Adoration’ (cf. IV, 143–4).


into a Morning or Evening Sacrifice’; supposedly, the evening walk of No. 565 is the result of the same consecrating process.\textsuperscript{77}

I think that in the case of No. 565 we can see the “sublime” version of an “aesthetic” walk during which the spectator creates an enjoyable and transcendentally engaging and committed natural landscape; and in the case of No. 393 we can see its “novel” version connected to spring-time natural scenes. Both the ‘gentle Exercise’ motivated by a polite imagination and even more the ‘habitual Disposition of Mind’ of cheerfulness can be easily associated with and, in a sense, modelled by the dynamism of walking through ever-changing natural prospects. Cheerfulness as a habitual state of mind is not contemplative, it is rather an agile, active, productive attitude to the world outside and inside, it can permanently re-shape or “re-create” the world as our world and can render natural scenes sanctified reality in which the ‘transient Gleams of Joy’ of the spatial and bodily is being improved into the perpetual state of celestial bliss of the temporal (eternal) and spiritual: it is not an elevation, but an improvement – the word which will be used in the context of building gardens and landscape gardens throughout the eighteenth century. ‘The Creation is a perpetual Feast to the Mind of a good Man, every thing he sees cheers and delights him’ (III, 475), being ‘a good Man’ is the result of a permanent exercise. Walking through life in the manner of wandering in a natural – great, novel and beautiful – landscape. And this permanent activity and movement is a ‘way of Life’\textsuperscript{78} which is inseparable from the idea of ‘the true Spirit of Religion’, as a little bit later, in No. 494, Addison claims:

Religion contracts the Circle of our Pleasures, but leaves it wide enough for her Votaries to expatiate in . . . the true Spirit of Religion cheers, as well as composes the Soul; it . . . fills the Mind with a perpetual Serenity,

\textsuperscript{77} As Norton claims interpreting \textit{The Spectator} No 393: ‘To appreciate the world’s aesthetic splendours . . . is for Addison an inherently spiritual, even reverential act’. Brian Michael Norton, ‘\textit{The Spectator} and Everyday Aesthetics’, \textit{Lumen: Selected Proceedings from the Canadian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies} 34 (2015), 123–36, 129.

\textsuperscript{78} Cf. Pierre Hadot, \textit{Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault}, transl. Michael Chase, ed. Arnold I. Davidson (Oxford, Malden, MA, 1995). Several recent papers by Christian Maurer, Laurent Jaffro, or John Sellars discuss the Socratic-Stoic tradition of meditation in the early eighteenth century, primarily in Lord Shaftesbury’s works. Here I can cite Steele’s words: ‘There is no life, but cheerful life . . . Whatever we do we should keep up the Cheerfulness of our Spirits . . . The Way to this is to keep our Bodies in Exercise, our Minds at Ease . . . When we are in the Satisfaction of some Innocent Pleasure, or pursuit of some laudable Design, we are in the Possession of Life, of Human Life.’ (II, 65)
uninterrupted Cheerfulness, and an habitual Inclination to please others, as well as to be pleased in it self. (IV, 254. – my emphasis, E. Sz.)

Walkable landscape elaborated by Dennis, Lord Shaftesbury and Addison during the emergence of the modern aesthetic opens a new dimension of the relationship between man and nature, eventually between man and God, and the encounter with wilderness during walking in nature offers opportunity to grasp the spectator’s individuality and the direct presence of the divine. As such, walking in nature can be the model or at least the paradigmatic example of the modern “aesthetic” versions of spiritual exercises, everyday practice and ‘habitual Disposition of Mind’ as a way of life.

University of Aberdeen,
ELTE Eötvös Loránd University
Shakespeare and the Garden-Path of Method in Early British Aesthetics
Veronika Ruttkay

‘A beautiful prospect delights the soul, as much as a demonstration…’
The Spectator, No. 411

1. Introduction

‘Those who tread the enchanted ground of Poetry, oftentimes do not even suspect that there is such a thing as Method to guide their steps’ – Samuel Taylor Coleridge remarked in 1818. Imagery of enchanted grounds may be traced back through a long literary tradition, including Spenser’s Bower of Bliss, or Shakespeare’s several forests and magical island. Ideas of quest and romance associated with all these lend a somewhat fantastical colouring to Coleridge’s emphasis on method. Method, like Prospero’s magic, guides the reader through the pleasures of poetry, while the text itself is figured as enchanted ground. But Coleridge’s overall argument is far less poetical, or only in the sense in which, as he wrote earlier in the Biographia Literaria of 1817, ‘Poetry . . . had a logic of its own, as severe as that of science’. His point about poetic method appears in a work entitled General Introduction; or, Preliminary Treatise on Method, a lengthy and rigorously argued text that sets out to formulate the essence and importance of method not only in the fine arts but more generally, in all branches of intellectual activity including philosophy and the experimental sciences. The Treatise is one of Coleridge’s less frequently studied pieces, although I. A. Richards called attention to it already in 1936 in The Philosophy of Rhetoric, remarking that it has ‘more bearing on a possible future...

1 This paper was supported by the Bolyai János Research Scholarship of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.
for Rhetoric than anything I know of in the official literature. If scholarship has been reluctant to engage with the text, it is probably due to its complicated publishing history: there is no authorized version available, only the printed one heavily edited by Coleridge's publishers. However, if we accept the fact of limited authorial control, we might as well take into account the context in which it first appeared: an emerging field of scientific discourse in which disciplines like the newly scientific 'criticism' were carving out a space for themselves.

The Treatise was originally written as an introduction to a new publishing venture the Encyclopaedia Metropolitana, and was printed in its first volume in January 1818. The project, in which Coleridge participated first enthusiastically and later with regret, was meant to revise the encyclopaedic tradition and, specifically, two of its key representatives. The primary target was the Great Encyclopaedia of Diderot and d'Alembert (1751–66), which was being re-structured as Encyclopédie Méthodique and in the process of publication at the time (TM, vii). Less conspicuously, the Metropolitana was also aimed to rival the influential Encyclopaedia Britannica, which, by 1797, had already reached its third edition.

The Britannica itself was advertised by its Edinburgh publishers as being arranged 'on a new plan'. Instead of 'dismembering the Sciences' through the alphabetical definition of terms, its authors expounded 'the principles of every science in the form of systems or distinct treatises'; that is, the Britannica included lengthy and structured articles on the sciences and the practical arts, such as medicine, metallurgy, or metaphysics, themselves arranged alphabetically. The discussions were based on both established and more recent sources, as well as on new research, thus making available to the general British reading public important segments of the scientific and philosophical achievements of the Scottish Enlightenment. The distinguishing feature of the Metropolitana, in turn, was to be its innovative 'method': it was arranged in an entirely thematic, not alphabetical, order. When Coleridge rewrote his

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7 William Smellie (ed.), *Encyclopaedia Britannica; or, A Dictionary of Arts and Sciences, Compiled upon a New Plan* (Edinburgh, 1768–1771; 1st edn; 3 vols), I, v.
Treatise as a series of essays for The Friend later in 1818, he still emphasised that ‘the alphabetical arrangement of a common dictionary’ should not be called ‘methodical’. Carefully planned and proportioned in advance, the discussion of different areas of knowledge in the Metropolitana was intended to move systematically from the abstract and general (the ‘pure sciences’ such as geometry) to the more empirical (the ‘mixed’ and ‘applied sciences’). As Richard Yeo observes, this unique design reflected the editors’ intention to counter the disintegration of knowledge that resulted from increased specialization in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, although, arguably, it also contributed to the crystallization of disciplines at the same time. In any case, Yeo calls the Metropolitana ‘the last significant attempt at a philosophical ordering of subjects’ in the encyclopaedic tradition.

It was the task of Coleridge’s general introduction to establish the principles justifying such an arrangement, and he deduces them from the idea of method. Method, according to the Treatise, ‘literally means a way, or path, of transit. Hence the first idea of Method is a progressive transition from one step in any course to another’ (TM, 2). What Coleridge finds important in this etymology is not that method makes intellectual journeying more efficient (something that many earlier authors had emphasised) but that its movement involves a primary mental orientation or ‘pre-conception’:

[W]here the word Method is applied with reference to many such transitions in a continuity, it necessarily implies a Principle of Unity with Progression. But that which unites, and makes many things one in the Mind of Man, must be an act of the Mind itself, a manifestation of intellect, and not a spontaneous and uncertain production of circumstances. (TM, 2)

8 Coleridge, The Friend, I, 457. It may be noted that Samuel Johnson’s Dictionary was considered ‘methodical’ precisely because of its alphabetical arrangement. See Robin Valenza, ‘How Literature Becomes Knowledge: A Case Study,’ ELH 76 (2009), 215–45.

Coleridge therefore argues that philosophical or scientific investigation cannot begin with the gathering of data; in this sense, it can never be a purely inductive process. A methodical inquiry must start with a question, an idea, or mental ‘initiative’, even if this does not guarantee that the inquirer will safely arrive at an answer. Coleridge also admits that an exuberant mind may be led ‘to generalize and methodize to excess’, and concludes that method, according to its most comprehensive definition, ‘must result from the due mean, or balance, between our passive impressions and the mind’s re-action on them’ (TM, 5).

According to Alice D. Snyder, Coleridge’s models included Schelling’s *Vorlesungen über die Methode des akademischen Studiums* of 1803 and Carl C. E. Schmid’s *Allgemeine Enzyklopädie und Methodologie der Wissenschaften* of 1810 (TM, xxii). Since her 1934 edition, considerable attention has been paid to the influence of German idealism on Coleridge’s thinking, especially that of Schelling, who inspired the tripartite structure envisioned for the *Metropolitana.*

However, in order to complement such inquiries and to complicate still standard assumptions about Romanticism’s ‘transcendence’ of earlier British thought with the help of German Idealism, this paper focuses on a line of thinking in eighteenth-century English and Scottish aesthetics to which Coleridge also responded, one that used the concept of method to account for ‘enchantment’ in poetry, figured alternately as a garden or a forest, wild or well-cared-for. Based on the careful reading of a number of examples from this tradition, the present paper investigates how descriptions of the aesthetic experience in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century made use of the concept of method, together with its disparate contexts in rhetorical, logical and scientific discourse.

2. Johnson’s Forest

Coleridge illustrates ‘the strictest Philosophical application’ of the principle of method in the fine arts through ‘one single evidence’: Shakespeare, to whom he devotes several pages of his preliminary *Treatise.* Clearly, this is meant as a provocation, as British readers, for a long time, had been taught to consider

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11 Cairns Craig challenged this way of thinking in ‘Coleridge, Hume, and the Chains of the Romantic Imagination’ in Leith Davis, Ian Duncan and Janet Sorensen (eds), *Scotland and the Borders of Romanticism* (Cambridge, 2004), 20–37, 23.
[Shakespeare’s works] as eminently immethodical (TM, 16; emphasis in the original). Coleridge points to ‘schools of foreign taste’ as responsible for such a view, later bringing up Voltaire by name, but the critic who looms large in this context is the English Samuel Johnson, one of Coleridge’s foremost adversaries – and sometimes covert inspirations – in literary criticism. Up to Coleridge’s day, Johnson’s Preface of 1765 to his edition of Shakespeare set the tone and the key terms of discussion. It was reprinted in several publications (e.g. the Variorum editions of Shakespeare used by Coleridge for his literary lectures) and excerpted for the Shakespeare entry of the Encyclopaedia Britannica of 1797, among others. In a magisterial sentence, Johnson sums up his overall sense of Shakespeare’s artistry as follows:

The work of a correct and regular writer is a garden accurately formed and diligently planted, varied with shades, and scented with flowers; the composition of Shakespeare is a forest, in which oaks extend their branches, and pines tower in the air, interspersed sometimes with weeds and brambles, and sometimes giving shelter to myrtles and to roses; filling the eye with awful pomp, and gratifying the mind with endless diversity.¹²

The work of art as garden offers all the variegated pleasures that result from good design and diligent ‘culture’; it is evidently the product of conscious effort on the part of its author(s) and should be appreciated as such. The work of art as forest is felt, bafflingly, as if it had no design at all, either in the sense of a well-laid-out plan, or in that of having a design on the reader: it seems to exist in absolute disregard of a potential audience. But for Johnson, this is exactly what makes the experience of reading Shakespeare so overwhelming. Verbs like ‘extend’ and ‘tower’ express the sense of sublimity or ‘awful pomp’ that is contrasted, along Longinian lines, with the calculated effects of correct works that even Voltaire could admire, such as Joseph Addison’s Cato (the subject of Johnson’s previous paragraph).¹³ These verbs may also be linked to

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¹³ Johnson’s Life of Addison suggests that what was missing from Cato was precisely the enchanting power that Shakespeare’s plays possessed: ‘Nothing here “excites or asswages emotion”; here is “no magical power of raising phantastick terror or wild anxiety”. The events are expected without soliciitude, and are remembered without joy or sorrow’ Samuel Johnson, The Lives of the Poets, ed. John H. Middendorf (New Haven and London, 2010; 3 vols), II, 656.
Alexander Pope’s earlier comparison between Shakespeare and Gothic architecture, which concluded his *Preface* of 1725. But Johnson translates Pope’s history-laden image to a description of natural scenery, making Shakespeare’s work transcend human time, albeit with its own characteristic mixed temporality spanning the *longue durée* of grand oaks and pines and the ephemeral existence of weeds.

‘Weeds and brambles’ indicate Johnson’s frustration over Shakespeare’s carelessness: his tendency to waste his powers on what the critic regarded as unworthy pursuits. According to Sean Keilen, ‘the wildness of the natural world serves Johnson as a metaphor for the “barbarity” of Shakespeare’s period, the unruliness of the English language at that time and the “extravagance” of the poetic licence that Shakespeare took’. But of course it also conveys Johnson’s admiration for his profuse creativity. ‘Myrtles and roses’ are conventional metaphors for local beauties that might be discovered by attentive readers and collected in anthologies or *florilegia*. The imagery, on the whole, evokes the concept of the Latin *silva*, meaning ‘woods, brush, forest’, but, as Walter J. Ong explains, also ‘meaning an abundance or congeries or quantity, as in Cicero, Suetonius, and Quintilian’. Ong shows that Renaissance rhetoricians often relied on this notion, as well as on the related Greek *υλή*, and tended ‘to think of the “matter” of discourse in terms of woods to be dealt with by a process of “sorting out” or “cutting out” or “arranging”’. Thus, Ben Jonson entitled his verse miscellanies *The Forest* and *Under-woods*, and his commonplace-book *Timber, or Discoveries upon Men and Matter as They Have Flowed Out of His Daily Readings*. Shakespeare’s works had been themselves subjected to ‘commonplacing’ long before Johnson’s time: readers had started to gather passages to be re-used in their own writing or conversation almost from the moment of their first production. Later, printed collections of his ‘beauties’ (most influentially, William Dodd’s *The Beauties of Shakespeare*, first published in 1752) became commercially successful. However, what all

17 Ibid., 119.
the abundance of Shakespeare’s works could not yield, according to Johnson, was their own plan; they just happened to be the way they were, without any perceivable order, leaving literary travellers to their own devices to find their way into, or out of, the wilderness.

3. Addison’s Garden

While Johnson’s passage is essentially static, suggesting a place that the reader might not even want to leave, Addison’s earlier and closely related discussions are all about movement. The connection is somewhat ironic, since Johnson had already referred to Addison to compare his play, tactfully but ultimately unfavourably, to those of Shakespeare, but the very comparison of the regular garden and the Shakespearean forest is arguably based on the same author. As it has been amply documented, Addison’s meditations in *The Pleasures of the Imagination* series had a formative influence on both the theory and the practice of eighteenth-century gardening and especially the landscape garden. Johnson was probably aware of this, when he implicitly described Addison’s own kind of regular drama as analogous to an ‘accurately formed and diligently planted’ garden, ‘varied with shades, and scented with flowers’. Compared to the magnificence of Shakespeare’s forest, this is all meant to sound a bit underwhelming.

However, a glance at *The Spectator* papers shows that Addison himself had developed a far more generous stance towards gardening, one that could welcome forms of disorderly nature, including marshes and forests. As he points out in *The Spectator* No. 414, the very countryside may be turned, with slight improvements, into a work of art (a ‘landscape’, as in painting), if the beholder-proprietor wishes so:

> A Marsh over-grown with Willows, or a Mountain shaded with Oaks, are not only more beautiful, but more beneficial, than when they lie bare and unadorned. Fields of Corn make a pleasant Prospect, and if the Walks were a little taken care of that lie between them, if the natural Embroidery of the Meadows were helped and improved by some small Additions of Art, and the several Rows of Hedges set off by Trees and

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Flowers, that the Soil was capable of receiving, a Man might make a pretty Landskip of his own Possessions.\textsuperscript{20}

The secret lies in discovering art in nature, and then enhancing it a little further, for instance by adding a conscious frame or border to the natural ‘embroidery’ of fields through well-cared-for walks or rows of hedges. One might speculate about the importance of such features to Addison’s overall scheme; arguably, walking paths lend structure to beautiful prospects when seen from afar, but even more crucially, they determine both the changing perspective and the rhythm of experience enjoyed by the appreciative walker. According to Stephanie Ross, a path receding into the distance is ‘the quintessential example of an “invitational” landscape feature’ in Addison’s writings.\textsuperscript{21}

Movement plays an important role also when Addison discusses literature in terms of landscape, as when he compares three classical authors in \textit{The Pleasures of the Imagination} (Spectator No. 417):

Reading the \textit{Iliad} is like travelling through a Country uninhabited, where the Fancy is entertained with a thousand Savage Prospects of vast Desarts, wide uncultivated Marshes, huge Forests, mis-shapen Rocks and Precipices. On the contrary, the \textit{Aeneid} is like a well-ordered Garden, where it is impossible to find out any Part unadorned, or cast our Eyes upon a single Spot, that does not produce some beautiful Plant or Flower. But when we are in the \textit{Metamorphosis}, we are walking on enchanted Ground, and nothing but Scenes of Magick lying round us.\textsuperscript{22}

Reading each classical work is like passing through a natural scene. It is also, simultaneously, like creating landscapes of the mind, for it is the Fancy that is being ‘entertained’, especially in a less regular work like the \textit{Iliad}, to envision all kinds of fantastic vistas. There seems to be no road to guide our steps through Homer’s ‘uninhabited’ country, while the ‘enchanted Ground’ of Ovid might even be purposefully misleading, like a labyrinth. As Katherine Myers has shown, effects of ‘enchantment’ in eighteenth-century gardening could be created through highly artificial means since, from the beholder’s

\textsuperscript{21} Stephanie Ross, \textit{What Gardens Mean} (Chicago, 1998), 167.
\textsuperscript{22} \textit{The Spectator}, III, 564.
subjective experience, ‘illusion became a tool of the designer’. \(^{23}\) Thus Horace Walpole wrote about the ‘simple enchantment’ of the sunk fence, ‘which enabled Kent . . . to use “the pencil of his imagination” (the visual idea) to bestow “all the arts of landscape [painting] on the scenes he handled”’. \(^{24}\) In Addison’s passage, the art responsible for the creation of such enhanced realities is called ‘Magick’, which puts the reader of Ovid in a precarious position, as signalled by the quaint phrase ‘when we are in the Metamorphosis’. It seems to be precisely this kind of experience that Coleridge attributes to the unsuspecting reader of (Shakespearean) poetry: the ground is ‘enchanted’, that is, it only seems to be entirely natural. While in gardening Addison was strongly in favour of such effects, in classical poetry he had other preferences: between the rudeness of Homer and the subtle artfulness of Ovid, the critic praises the human order of Virgil’s epic as both safe and natural (in a familiar, cultivated way), expressly meant for the reader’s delight.

The complexity of Addison’s position when he is thinking of belles lettres in terms of landscape is most clearly visible in *Spectator* No. 476, which is devoted to the question of method. This is also the text in which rhetorical and scientific contexts enter into dialogue in what might be recognised today as early aesthetic theory:

> When I read an Author of Genius who writes without Method, I fancy my self in a Wood that abounds with a great many noble Objects, rising among one another in the greatest Confusion and Disorder. When I read a methodical discourse, I am in a regular Plantation, and can place my self in its several Centers, so as to take a View of all the Lines and Walks that are struck from them. You may ramble in the one a whole Day together, and every Moment discover something or other that is new to you, but when you have done you will have but a confused imperfect Notion of the Place; in the other, your Eye commands the whole Prospect, and gives you such an Idea of it, as is not easily worn out of the Memory.\(^{25}\)


\(^{25}\) *The Spectator*, IV, 186.
Addison’s connection between immethodical discourse and genius calls to mind Shakespeare, the most irregular genius according to the criticism of his time. Such a link may easily be assimilated to later romantic convictions, for instance William Blake’s proverb in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*: ‘Improvement makes strait roads, but the crooked roads without Improvement are roads of Genius’ (plate 10). ‘Improvement’, of course, is a central eighteenth-century pursuit, whether in agriculture, urban planning, or in gardening. But if Addison here seems to be drawn to the romantic-Blakean view, associating genius with irregularity, this too might be a trick of perception, for apart from a few exceptional cases he deems the pursuit of method a far more advisable strategy. His own writing, he admits, represents both kinds: there are some papers ‘written with Regularity and Method’, and others ‘that run out into the Wildness of those Compositions, which go by the Name of *Essays*’. In the regular works, he has ‘the whole Scheme of the Discourse in [his] Mind’ – exactly as recommended by rhetoricians. This framework of Addison’s thinking comes to the fore when he talks about method as a ‘great help to . . . Invention’ (i.e., rhetorical *inventio*): the man who has a clear plan of his discourse, ‘finds a great many thoughts rising out of every Head’.

On the whole, Ong finds that in the rhetorical writings of Agricola, Ramus and their followers, oral-auditory models were losing ground to give way to an ‘inexorable disposition to represent thought and communication in terms of spatial models and thus to reduce mental activity to local motion’. The association of method with ‘way’ or ‘path’ proved particularly useful in this context. Melanchton, for instance, writes that method ‘opens a way through impenetrable and overgrown places (loca), through the confusion of things, and pulls out and ranges in order the things (res) pertaining to the matter proposed’. Addison’s description of the clear ‘Lines and Walks’ in methodical discourse, and his recurring conception of reading as walking, are later manifestations of the same tendency, although he shifts the focus, characteristically, to the reader rather than the writer/orator. Clearly, Addison’s way of

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27 *The Spectator*, IV, 185.
28 Ibid., IV, 186.
thinking is dependent on the same phenomenon that Ong believed to have informed the momentous change: the spread – or, in Addison’s case, the flourishing – of print culture. It should be noted, however, that in his *Spectator* paper Addison also considers method in conversation (as Coleridge also will, in the *Treatise on Method* complaining of too many ‘Coffee-house Debates’ in which, ‘after the three first Sentences’, the original question is entirely lost. It is significant that Addison in a little narrative episode at the end of the paper associates the immethodical speech of ‘Tom Puzzle’ with free-thinking and religious scepticism, while his opponent ‘Mr Dry’ seems to be regular both in his thinking and in his morals.31

As Peter Mack observes, when Addison became a model for polite writing in the course of the later eighteenth century, it was not his ‘wilder’ compositions (i.e., the essays, in the sense used in No. 476), but his regular treatises – especially on moral and religious subjects – that were recommended for study and imitation.32 In all probability, it was easier to assimilate this body of work into the new courses on rhetoric and belles lettres (e.g. those of Hugh Blair, who offered minute analyses of Addison’s style), as they shared distant ties to the same traditions. ‘Method’ first rose to prominence in the context of Renaissance education, offering a ‘shortcut’ to knowledge. Traces of this educational aspect are still observable in Addison’s paper when he writes that methodical discourse is easier to follow and thus to retain in memory. Instead of successive partial views, it offers a totalising visual idea in which ‘your Eye commands the whole Prospect’.

4. The Forking Path of Method

*The Spectator* No. 476 was translated into French and a substantial part of it was included in Diderot and D’Alembert’s *Encyclopédie.*33 The long entry on ‘Method’, of which it became a part, illustrates a major transformation

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described by Paul K. Alkon as follows: ‘From the essentially rhetorical conception of method as the technique of effectively organizing thought for communication – presentational method – there was a gradual shift to the more Cartesian conception of method as a means of inquiry.’

This transformation had not been completed until the nineteenth century saw the ultimate disruption of rhetorical modes of thinking and the simultaneous emergence of the sciences in the modern sense; thus, the editors of the Encyclopédie (just as Coleridge in the Encyclopaedia Metropolitana) still presented method as, simultaneously, a rhetorical, logical, philosophical and scientific concept. The French version of Addison’s text appeared in the section on the ‘arts and sciences’ written by Louis de Jaucourt, who even warned his readers not to put too much emphasis on method. But it is not at all difficult to see why Addison’s approach appealed to the encyclopaedists: its postulation of central perspectives from which it is possible ‘to take a View of all the Lines and Walks’ clearly resonates with the kinds of argument made in other sections. Diderot, despite his general preference for Newton and experimental science, states that the Cartesian rules of mathematical (or geometrical) method are equally valid in all the sciences. In a sub-section on grammar, he refers to method as ‘the means of arriving at an end by the most convenient route’. A map-like view, such as the one available from one of the ‘several Centers’ of Addison’s geometrical garden, would certainly prove useful in deciding which route would be the shortest and most convenient of them all.

In his Discourse on Method, Descartes repeatedly employed the metaphor of method as path or route, but often in a way that is messier than anything in Addison. Perhaps most memorably, he recounts in the third discourse his firm resolution ‘to follow no less constantly the most doubtful opinions, once I had

35 Cf. Ibid., 101–102. For Jaucourt’s text see Encyclopédie, X, 460.
36 ‘La méthode dont nous venons de prescrire les regles, est la même que celle des Mathématiciens. On a semblé croire pendant longtems que leur méthode leur appartenait tellement, qu’on ne pouvoit la transporter à aucune autre science. M. Wolff a dissipé ce préjugé, & a fait voir dans la théorie, mais surtout dans la pratique, & dans la composition de tous ses ouvrages, que la méthode mathématique étoit celle de toutes les sciences, celle qui est naturelle à l’esprit humain, celle qui fait découvrir les vérités de tout genre.’ Ibid., X, 445.
37 ‘Une méthode est donc la manière d’arriver à un but par la voie la plus convenable.’ Ibid., X, 446. Cf. Simpson’s point that ‘the encyclopedic enterprise retains a clear affiliation with a Ramist-Cartesian tradition, a tradition arguably critical in the formation of the encyclopedic ambition itself’. David Simpson, Romanticism, Nationalism, and the Revolt against Theory (Chicago and London, 1993), 71.
determined on them, than I would if they were very assured’. Adhering to this maxim, he imitates travellers ‘finding themselves astray in some forest’, who:

must not wander, turning now this way now that, and even less stop in one place, but must walk always as straight as they can in a given direction, and not change direction for weak reasons, even though it was perhaps only chance in the first place which made them choose it; for, by this means, if they do not go exactly where they wish to go they will arrive at least somewhere in the end where they will very likely will be better off than in the middle of a forest.38

According to this, the path of method is not available (and especially, not measurable) in advance: it comes into being through the very activity of the intellectual traveller. This is in fact surprisingly close to Coleridge’s understanding, who wishes to unite rhetorical and scientific concepts of method and insists that what initiates the intellectual ‘progress’ is always an idea or at least an ‘intuition’ (his examples include those of a circle and a triangle), and acknowledges how difficult it can be to adhere to it in actual practice:

It requires, in short, a constant wakefulness of mind; so that if we wander but in a single instance from our path, we cannot reach the goal, but by retracing our steps to the point of divergency, and thus beginning our progress anew. (TM, 4)

Such discipline has to be learnt and practiced; Descartes recalls that he used to put aside some time ‘now and again’, ‘to exercise the method in the solution of mathematical difficulties, or even in that of some others which I could make almost like mathematical problems’.39

When eighteenth-century writers were describing the experience of reading poetry, it was often in terms of a leisurely stroll through ‘enchanted grounds’, without the pressing need to find one’s way or to reach a destination. However, this was also the period when a new kind of discourse was emerging, one that ventured to use a self-conscious theoretical framework and a more specialized terminology in order to account for the aesthetic experience, at times making works of art appear ‘almost like mathematical problems’. For it was not only

39 Ibid., 50.
Coleridge who insisted on a secret affinity between poetry and science: such a connection was already implicit in the works of a number of writers before him, most importantly, the Scottish associationist critics of the second half of the eighteenth century. Henry Home, Lord Kames, unapologetically states in the ‘Introduction’ to his *Elements of Criticism* of 1762 that his principal aim was to turn criticism into a ‘rational science’. Just how strange such a proposition may have felt for his contemporaries can be guessed from a short conversation among members of Samuel Johnson’s circle, as transcribed by James Boswell:

> Johnson proceeded: ‘The Scotchman has taken the right method in his *Elements of Criticism*. I do not mean that he had taught us anything: but he has told us old things in a new way.’ *Murphy*. ‘He seems to have read a great deal of French criticism, and wants to make it his own; as if he had been for years anatomising the heart of man, and peeping into every cranny of it.’ *Goldsmith*. ‘It is easier to write that book, than to read it.’

These casual remarks suggest that the discourse of the *Elements* could be felt abstruse and foreign (in spite of the fact that Kames vigorously defended Shakespeare against French neoclassicism), and that the relationship between abstract concept and empirical ‘fact’ was problematic. In fact, Kames’s venture involves a series of startling manoeuvres regarding method: he is compelled to combine the concept of method as articulated in connection with poetry (traditionally an area of rhetoric) with the issue of scientific method (‘anatomising the heart of man’), and then find the ‘presentational method’ (in Alkon’s term) most adequate to the communication of his findings (a matter closely linked to education). Kames stressed the experimental nature of his project and that his results could only be tentative, nevertheless, his work was greatly influential in Britain and in America, as well as on the Continent (especially in

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42 James Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.* (Ware, 1999), 296.
The success of his disciplinary innovations is also indicated by the fact that his ‘Introduction’ to *Elements of Criticism* was reprinted in the 1797 *Encyclopaedia Britannica* article on ‘Criticism’.

‘Avoid a straight avenue directed upon a dwelling-house: better far an oblique approach in a waving line, with single trees and other scattered objects interposed’ – Kames advises in his chapter on the art of gardening.44 The reason is that a ‘direct approach’ cannot command the attention for too long, while winding walks open new vistas ‘at every step’; they also convey a sense of freedom and leisure: ‘my intention is not to make a journey, but to feast my eye on the beauties of art and nature’.45 Ultimately it all boils down to the question of whether one needs a ‘road’ or a ‘walk’, i.e., utility as opposed to aesthetic pleasure (and let us not forget that gardening, for Kames, was a ‘useful art’ before it became ‘fine art’). For any useful purpose a straight road is invaluable, while in a ‘pleasure-ground’ walks ‘ought not to have any appearance of a road’.46 Of course, a similar question may be raised in connection with Kames’s project of establishing a new kind of critical discourse. Is it meant for pleasure, or does it have some other purpose such as finding or communicating knowledge? In theory, the answer to this question should be inextricable from the method of presentation, i.e. whether the author creates ‘straight roads’ to convey knowledge, or ‘winding paths’ for entertainment. But in the *Elements* such differences are not as clear-cut as that. Johann Gottfried Herder, an early and careful reader of Kames’s work, even compared it to a forest, very much in the sense as Johnson had used the image earlier, to refer to its rich but unsystematic nature.47


44 Lord Kames, *Elements of Criticism*, II, 694.

45 Ibid.

46 Ibid.

47 ‘Home presents a forest of experiences, observations, and phenomena relating to the soul; but in keeping with his intention, it remains a forest. . . . His book has therefore no system; the fundamental concepts are not progressively elaborated; there is, strictly speaking, no order in its plan.’ Johann Gottfried Herder, *Selected Writings on Aesthetics*, trans. and ed. Gregory Moore (Princeton and Oxford, 2006), 276. The irony of the fact that Herder’s own treatise belongs to his *Critical Forests series (Fourth Grove, on Riedel’s Theory of the Beaux Arts)* is pointed out in Leroy R. Shaw, ‘Henry Home of Kames: Precursor of Herder’, *Germanic Review* 35 (1960), 16–27.
Kames in his ‘Introduction’ states that his aim was not ‘to compose a regular treatise’ but to impart his discoveries ‘in the gay and agreeable form of criticism: imagining that this form will be more relished, and perhaps be no less instructive, than a regular and laboured disquisition’. Criticism is therefore essentially pleasurable; however, it is also instructive. The role of ‘scattered objects’ arranged along a walking path is taken by illustrative examples, or what Kames calls ‘facts and experiments’, from which he plans ‘to ascend gradually to principles’. By this point, the method of science and of pleasure seem to go hand in hand: according to Kames, the genuine scientific method also moves from ‘particular effects to general causes’, but it has its own aesthetic benefits as well, for ‘we feel a gradual dilation or expansion of mind, like what is felt in an ascending series, which is extremely pleasing: the pleasure here exceeds what arises from following the course of nature’. The ‘natural’ course, for followers of Pierre Ramus, would have been to argue from general principles in order to demonstrate their particular consequences, i.e. the ‘synthetic method’, but Kames feels certain that the analytic is ‘more agreeable to the imagination’.

Thanks to its pleasurable quality, the method of criticism offers an entry into higher-level education. It ‘inures the reflective mind to the most enticing sort of logic’ because it creates a habit of reflection, which ‘prepares the mind for entering into subjects most intricate and abstract.’ Disciplined thinking was thus the result of practicing criticism. On these grounds, Kames proposes a new scheme of instruction in which the study of the fine arts would play the role of ‘a middle link, connecting the different parts of education into a regular chain’. In this, as in other respects, he is closely allied to his fellow thinkers of the Scottish Enlightenment, most crucially Adam Smith, whose Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres were sponsored by Kames and attended by many influential contemporaries. John Millar in a letter to Dugald Stewart gave the following account of Smith’s scheme in his lectures:

The best method of explaining and illustrating the various powers of the human mind, the most useful part of metaphysics, arises from an examination of the several ways of communicating our thoughts by

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48 Lord Kames, Elements of Criticism, I, 18.
49 Ibid.
50 Ibid., I, 25.
51 Ibid., I, 26.
52 Ibid., I, 15.
53 Ibid.
speech, and from an attention to the principles of those literary com-
positions which contribute to persuasion or entertainment. By these
arts, every thing that we perceive or feel, every operation of our minds,
is expressed and delineated in such a manner, that it may be clearly dis-
tinguished and remembered. There is, at the same time, no branch of
literature more suited to youth at their first entrance upon philosophy
than this, which lays hold of their taste and their feelings.\(^{54}\)

Such considerations about method – in both the educational-rhetorical and
the scientific sense – clearly informed the emerging discourse of British scien-
tific or ‘philosophical’ criticism. William Richardson, the author of a series of
critical analyses of Shakespeare’s characters (and a student of Smith’s) stresses
the educational benefits of the study of poetry in a similar vein, stating that it
conducts us ‘to the temple of truth, by an easier and more agreeable path than
that of mere metaphysics’.\(^{55}\) The scope of George Campbell’s *The Philosophy
of Rhetoric* is different (although rhetoric, for him, still includes poetry), but the
justification of his project is similar:

> Besides, this study, properly conducted, leads directly to an acquaint-
> ance with ourselves; it not only traces the operations of the intellect and
> imagination, but discloses the lurking springs of action in the heart. In
> this view it is perhaps the surest and the shortest, as well as the pleas-
> antest way of arriving at the science of the human mind.\(^{56}\)

The newly scientific study of rhetoric (Campbell also calls it ‘criticism’), is
not only the most pleasant, but also the most efficient and reliable way to
the understanding of the mind. Given the difficulties involved in observing
the minutiae of mental activity, it might even be argued that it is the only way
Campbell can think of.

\(^{54}\) Adam Smith, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, ed. J. C. Bryce (Indianapolis, 1985), 11.
\(^{56}\) George Campbell, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (London and Edinburgh, 1776, 2 vols), 1, 16.
5. Coleridge and Kames

There is a notable tension in all these passages between the emphasis on pleasure (which might be still instructive) and the writers’ ambition to conduct a rigorously scientific investigation (which might be rather less delightful for a general readership). As we have seen in Kames, the shortest road is hardly the most pleasurable one. The emerging discipline of ‘criticism’ – which overlaps with what might be called early British aesthetics — was carefully balanced between its two modes of communication, and often found itself stuck between them. This can be observed in the very first chapter of Elements of Criticism, in which Kames feels obliged to apologize to his readers for having to explain some abstract principles in advance, and – foreshadowing Coleridge’s move in the Biographia Literaria – he asks those with ‘an invincible aversion to abstract speculation’ to ‘stop short here’. The problem is not only that of ‘disposition’ – i.e., of arranging his arguments in the best possible order. It is a problem concerning scientific method. For, as the above excerpts clearly show, the new philosophical criticism was not content with critiquing the effects of rhetoric or poetry by referring to the established principles of mental activity. It also wanted to discover them first. It is true that a fundamental approach was already provided by associationism on which all of these authors relied; however, they make clear that there are still large areas of the mind unexplored by philosophy, to which poetry (or rhetoric) might provide the only entry. In his ‘Introduction’ Kames notes that the analysis of how poetry works might be instrumental to the understanding of mental operations in general. His primary aim was criticism, he concedes, but ‘he will not disown, that all along it has been his view, to explain the nature of man, considered as a sensitive being capable of pleasure and pain’.  

57 Cf. Robin Valenza’s analysis: ‘Attempting to imitate physics’ extraordinary success, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century moral philosophers aimed to “introduce the experimental method of reasoning into moral subjects.” However, unlike the physicists, moral philosophers fostered the belief that a popular and a scholarly work could be coextensive, that a single book could advance a discipline and still be readable by a broad audience.” Robin Valenza, Literature, Language, and the Rise of the Intellectual Disciplines in Britain, 1680–1820 (Cambridge, 2009), 35.

58 Lord Kames, Elements of Criticism, I, 27.

59 Ibid., I, 14.
It is in this context that Shakespeare’s oeuvre again comes to the fore, and not only as the object of critical scrutiny, but also as something that makes such scrutiny possible. Kames and, following him, several other critics, attempt to trace the laws of the mind from the ‘experiments’ of Shakespeare’s plays. In order to certify, for instance, how the different passions modify thinking, Kames studies the language of Othello and Hamlet, and based on the insights he gleans from them, he proceeds to judge how far other writers manage to ‘follow nature’ in various selected passages. Nature is thereby not so much ‘methodized’ as Shakespeareanized. Thus, when Coleridge in his Treatise cites the speech of Hamlet and of Dame Quickly from Henry IV, Part 2, in order to show how Shakespeare ‘exemplifies] the opposite faults of Method in two different characters’ (TM, 23), he is squarely working in the Kamesian tradition, even if he makes a pointed reference to Schlegel, ‘a foreign critic of great and deserved reputation’ who had discovered that Shakespeare ‘gives us the history of minds; he lays open to us, in a single word, a whole series of preceding conditions’ (TM, 20, emphasis in the original). In fact, this was very much the kind of thing that Kames was also after, although he considers the ‘single word’ always in its associative relation to others (however, the expression ‘whole series of preceding conditions’ might point in the same direction). In any case, it is hardly a coincidence that the very same passage by Dame Quickly is analysed in the first chapter of Elements of Criticism to illustrate the association of ideas, right before Kames’s discussion of method.

Editors of Coleridge had assumed that he came across this example in a German book, J. J. Engel’s Anfangsgründe einer Theorie der Dichtungarten. However, a glance at this work confirms that Engel himself is deeply indebted to Kames: he not only relies on the concept of ‘Ideenreihe’ (no doubt, Kames’s ‘trains of ideas’), but also introduces a distinction between dramatic ‘representation’ (Darstellung) and undramatic ‘report’ (Berichtung), which is a re-working of Kames’s pair of ‘expression’ (‘expressing a passion as one does who feels it’) and ‘description’ (‘describing it in the language of a spectator’). Significantly, Engel had already published, with his friend Christian Garve, a revised translation of the Elements in 1772. Thus, whether Coleridge had found the example of Mistress Quickly in Engel’s work, or in Kames (which I think more likely, ...
based on its proximity to his discussion of method), or even in Alexander Gerard (who also cites it in his *Essay on Genius*), the framework is still provided by Scottish associationism. At this point we might conclude that Coleridge’s indebtedness to Kames and generally to the Scottish Enlightenment is ripe for further investigation. What seems to be clear, though, is that from the eighteenth to the early nineteenth century Shakespeare’s works provided the ‘ground’ where various concepts of method could be explored – paths of rhetorical analysis, educational schemes, or of scientific discovery, that sometimes met but more often diverged – all playing a crucial role in the emergence of the new discipline of ‘criticism’. Conceptual metaphors of gardens, forests, or enchanted landscapes offered a way of working out such interconnections, suggesting points of affinity, but also of resistance, between how literature and gardening could be conceived.

*ELTE Eötvös Loránd University*
In 1651 Andrew Balfour, later one of the founders of the Edinburgh Botanic Garden, visited Blois in France, where the physic garden developed by Robert Morison, then physician to the Duc d’Orléans, had become famous for its collection of plants that could be exploited for medicinal purposes. Morison, from Aberdeen, had left Scotland after being wounded fighting on the Royalist side against Cromwell’s forces in the battle of the Bridge of Dee in 1639. Having, like many other royalist exiles, taken up residence in France, he obtained a doctorate in medicine at Angers and went on to study botany in Paris with Vespasian Robin, then prominent in the introduction of North American plants into European horticulture. Balfour’s meeting with Morison was to lead to a lifelong friendship in which each supported the other’s botanical studies. Morison returned to Britain with Charles II in 1660, to become the King’s physician and subsequently Professor of Botany at Oxford; Balfour, having developed a reputation as a doctor first in St Andrews and then in Edinburgh, extended his medical practice by establishing, along with his cousin Robert Sibbald, who had also trained in France, a ‘physic garden’ to emulate those on the Continent, many of which Balfour had visited while on a ‘grand tour’ with the young Earl of Rochester during the years 1661–4.

Balfour and Sibbald’s physic garden was transformed into a botanic garden after the unexpected death in 1671 of one of Balfour’s protégés, Patrick Murray (or Morray), Baron of Livingston (or Levengstone), who had been on a tour of the gardens of France. Murray had built a collection of more than a thousand plants at his estate in West Lothian, a collection that Balfour and Sibbald transferred to Edinburgh in order to extend their ‘physic garden’ into something more substantial, gaining the support of Edinburgh City Council both for improved premises (now the site of Waverley Station) and for the salary of a gardener, James Sutherland, who would subsequently be appointed as Professor of Botany. Sutherland’s *Hortus Edinburgensis* of 1684 gave the first listing of all the plants in a garden whose collection had been extended by Balfour’s exchanges of seeds not only with Morison, who was by then
in charge of the Botanic Garden in Oxford, but also with botanists on the Continent.¹

It was an increase which was to be vastly extended as new plants began to arrive from the Americas, and subsequently from explorations in Africa, India and Australasia. As in many areas of imperial expansion, Scots were disproportionately represented in botanical exploration, in part because the Scottish universities were training more medical graduates than the country could employ;² with the result that many of them ended up as naval or army surgeons who found time for botanical investigations alongside their professional duties. Some of these, like William Roxburgh in Calcutta, became founders or directors of botanic gardens, providing gateways to the transmission of plants both to and from the United Kingdom. Historians of the international network of imperial botanic gardens tend to present Kew as the centre of the botanical network because of the presiding influence of its unofficial director, Sir Joseph Banks, in the period between 1771 (after his return from Cook’s first voyage) and his death in 1820. But it is less often noted that Kew was very much a projection of Scottish botanical interests:³ its creator and promoter was James Stuart, the third Earl of Bute and the first Scottish Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. Bute was a devoted botanist – he published in 1785 his *Botanical Tables Containing the Families of British Plants* – and he set out to develop Kew in the 1760s in competition with the achievements of Philip Miller, who had been gardener and *de facto* director of the Chelsea Physic Garden since 1722. Miller too was of Scottish background, his father having been trained as a gardener in Scotland and then

¹ The details of Balfour’s life and his partnership with Sibbald are derived from John Walker, ‘Memoirs of Sir Andrew Balfour’ in *Essays on Natural History and Rural Economy* (London and Edinburgh, 1812), 347–71, which itself derives in part from Sibbald’s *Memoria Balfouriana* (Edinburgh, 1699), an account both of Andrew and his older brother James, whose *Historical Works* were published by subscription in 1824 from manuscripts in the Library of the Faculty of Advocates.

² It is estimated that the Scottish universities produced ten thousand medical graduates between 1750 and 1850, when Oxford and Cambridge were producing only hundreds; see R. H. Girdwood, ‘The Influence of Scotland on North American Medicine’ in Derek A. Dow (ed.), *The Influence of Scottish Medicine: an historical assessment of its international impact* (Carnforth, 1988), 39.

³ Tim Robinson, *William Roxburgh: The Father of Indian Botany* (Chichester, 2008), notes that ‘It is generally accepted that it was Sir Joseph Banks who was the promoter of colonial botanic gardens’, as in McCracken, *Gardens of Empire* (London, 1997), 13, but goes on to suggest that ‘There are grounds for believing, however, that the idea of a Botanic Garden in the Madras Presidency was suggested by Roxburgh’. Ibid., 125.
setting up a garden business in Deptford, where Philip learned his trade. Like many other Scottish gardeners, Miller was not only expert in gardening, he was expert in communicating what he knew: not only did he turn the Chelsea Physic garden into one of the leading botanic gardens in Europe\(^4\) but in his *The Gardener’s and Florist’s Dictionary* of 1724 and *Gardener’s Dictionary* of 1731, he produced two of the most admired works on the science of cultivating plants, which led not only to many subsequent and expanded editions but to a European reputation as *hortulanorum princeps*.\(^5\) According to A. A. Tait, Miller had a preference for apprentices from his own country (or his father’s), and was responsible for so many Scots becoming head gardeners in the estates of England.\(^6\) He was certainly responsible for recommending William Aiton, one his deputies at Chelsea, to oversee the development of the gardens at Kew, a position which Aiton and, subsequently, his son, William Townsend Aiton, between them maintained till 1841. In that year William Jackson Hooker was appointed as Director after having spent 21 years as professor of botany at Glasgow University, where he was involved in the laying out of the new site for the botanic garden, and he was in turn succeeded in 1865 by his son, Joseph Dalton Hooker, who was educated in Glasgow and graduated in medicine from Glasgow University in 1839.\(^7\) The Scottish genealogy of Kew is matched in the genealogy of many of the botanic gardens in the Empire. William Roxburgh, who oversaw the development of the Calcutta Botanic Garden, had been a student of John Hope, Professor of Botany at Edinburgh University and Keeper of the Edinburgh Botanic Gardens. Roxburgh first arrived in India as a ship’s surgeon in 1772, became Assistant Surgeon at the General Hospital at Fort St George in 1776 and had his first scientific paper published in the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* in 1778. In 1770 he

\(^4\) See Henry Field and R. H. Semple, *Memoirs of the Botanic Garden at Chelsea* (London, 1878), for an account of the commitment to producing not just a ‘physic garden’ but a ‘botanic garden’ (22–3), and also for an estimate of its European importance, indicated by a visit from Linnaeus, who was a correspondent of Miller’s, in 1736. Peter Collinson, a fellow botanist, wrote of him, ‘He has raised the reputation of the Chelsea Garden so much that it excels all the gardens of Europe for its amazing variety of plants of all orders and classes and from all climates as I survey with wonder and delight this 19th July 1764’, quoted in Gill Saunders, *Victoria and Albert Natural History Illustrators: Ehret’s Flowering Plants* (London, 1987), 11.

\(^5\) John Claudius Loudon, *An Encyclopaedia of Gardening* (London, 1825), Book 1, 1103; Loudon renders the Latin as ‘The Prince of Gardeners’, but it might more properly be ‘the leader or the first of gardeners’.


\(^7\) Mea Allan, *The Hookers of Kew, 1785–1911* (London, 1967) might equally have been titled *The Hookers of Glasgow*. 
combined his surgeon’s role with that of the East India Company Botanist, subsequently becoming Superintendent of the Calcutta garden from 1793 to 1813; his *Flora Indica or Descriptions of Indian Plants* was, however, only posthumously published in 1820 after his death in Scotland in 1815. Similarly tangential was the career of James Hector, founder of the botanic garden in Wellington, New Zealand: Hector studied medicine at Edinburgh University, taking courses in botany and geology, and was appointed in 1857 as both surgeon and geologist to John Palliser’s expedition to Western Canada, as a result of which he was not only elected to the Royal Society of Edinburgh but appointed as Director to the Geological Survey of Otago in New Zealand, a role which was then turned into a national one as Director of the Geological Survey and Colonial Museum in Wellington, from which position he oversaw the establishment of that city’s botanic garden. The botanic garden in Sydney, Australia is also a Scottish creation – initiated by Lachlan Mcquarie during his period as Governor of New South Wales (1810–21), it was turned into a major imperial garden by Charles Moore, originally from Dundee, who was Director from 1848 to 1896, and who came from a family of botanic gardening specialists, since his brother David was Director of the Glasnevin Botanic Garden in Dublin, a role which David’s son was to fulfil in the early twentieth century. Scotland’s involvement with Kew and with Colonial botanic gardens was to continue into the twentieth century when David Prain, who had worked his way through university to achieve a medical degree, and had then risen to be Director of the Calcutta Royal Botanic Garden (1898–1905), was appointed Director of Kew (1905–22), while as late as 1916, John Davidson, who had been a demonstrator in the University of Aberdeen, was establishing the botanic garden of the University of British Columbia.

This Scottish engagement with botanic gardens was taking place in the period when landscape gardening was – under the influence of William Kent, ‘Capability’ Brown and Humphry Repton – seeking to create the impression of an ‘informal’ or ‘natural’ landscape, of the kind that came to be known as the *jardin anglais*, in contrast to the geometrical formality of Italian and French...
garden design was an ‘imitative’ art insofar as what it imitated was Italian nature, producing a ‘profusion with which Temples, Ruins, Statues, and all the other adventitious articles of Italian scenery was lavished’ that ‘became soon ridiculous’. The *jardin anglais* was created, Alison thinks, by the subtraction of the distinctive Italian elements of the imitated landscape:

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11 Ibid., 95–6.
12 Ibid., 102.
The power of simple Nature was felt and acknowledged; and the removal of the articles of acquired expression, led men only more strongly to attend to the natural Expression of Scenery, and to study the means by which it might be maintained or improved.\textsuperscript{13}

Given the extent to which ‘taste’ was dominated by classical art and the associations of classical literature, such a change could not have come about without the creation of a new literary context through which the natural world was to be appreciated, and that change was provided by Thomson’s *The Seasons* (1726–30):

The publication, also, at this time, of the Seasons of Thomson, in the opinion of a very competent judge [Dr Warton], contributed in no small degree, both to influence and to direct the Taste of men in this Art. The peculiar merit of the work itself, the singular felicity of its descriptions, and, above all, the fine Enthusiasm which it displays, and which it is so fitted to excite, with regard to the works of Nature, were most singularly adapted to promote the growth of an infant Art, which had for its object the production of Natural Beauty; and by diffusing everywhere both the admiration of Nature, and the knowledge of its Expression, prepared, in a peculiar degree, the minds of men in general, both to feel the effects, and to judge of the fidelity of those scenes in which it was imitated. By these means, and by the singular genius of some late masters, the Art of Gardening has gradually ascended from the pursuit of particular, to the pursuit of general Beauty; to realize whatever the fancy of the Painter has imagined, and to create a scenery, more pure, more harmonious, and more expressive, than any that is to be found in Nature itself.\textsuperscript{14}

The English landscape tradition is nature purified of the artworks that had littered the imitations of Italian or, later, Chinese gardens, and raised its various elements to a level of harmony that nature by itself could never produce. The art of subtraction was also a matter of subtracting those discordances which would or could be discovered in even the most beautiful or sublime of natural prospects.

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\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 103–4.
While landscape gardeners were seeking styles which would seem ever more natural, even when, as in the 'picturesque', they were effectively imitations of a style of landscape painting, in the botanic garden art was being developed in a very different direction. In 1736 Georg Dionysius Ehret, a German botanist and illustrator of botanical specimens who had worked with Carl von Linné (Linnaeus), arrived in London and lodged with Philip Miller, taking specimens from the rich holdings of the Chelsea Physic Garden as the subject of his illustrations. There he met and married in 1738 Miller's sister-in-law, Susanna Kennet, and began to specialise in the illustration of the newly discovered exotic plants that were increasingly arriving in the Chelsea Physic Garden: the art of botanic illustration – previous botanists like Robert Morison had provided illustrations for their own works – was combined with the aesthetics of novelty in order to disseminate knowledge of plants which many gardeners might never be able to raise themselves.

Part of the impact of Ehret's illustrations were their close attention to the elements of the plant which corresponded with Linnaeus's 'sexual system' of plant categorisation – the plants in Ehret's illustrations looked impressively realistic but at the same time were abstracted to focus on the elements of interest to botanical classification.

![Illustrations by Georg Ehret](image)

They also incorporated elements which outlined the plant's development and decay, so that although the main focus of the illustration was the plant at the time of its greatest beauty, the illustration would often include an illustrative
timeline representing the seed, through its initial growth and back to its generation of new seeds. The illustration, in other words, was not purely mimetic of a particular moment in time, nor did it seek to display the plant in its natural environment: as with a rare specimen in a botanic garden, the plant is presented in isolation and not as an element in an original ecosystem.

The influence of this technique can be seen in the works of those ‘plant hunters’ who were also plant illustrators, such as Sydney Parkinson (1745–71), originally from Edinburgh, who accompanied Joseph Banks on Cook’s first voyage of circumnavigation, and Francis Masson (1741–1805), from Aberdeen, who went on the second voyage as far as South Africa, where his explorations resulted in his sending back more than 400 new species. Given the difficulties and hazards of transporting seeds, let alone plants, across vast stretches of dangerous oceans made more dangerous by conflict between European nations, illustrations were crucial as a record of what the plant hunters had discovered, even if the specimens never made their way back to the United Kingdom. The works of Parkinson and Masson both underline the botanical style as developed by Ehret: the plant is shown in isolation against a neutral backdrop, but with detailed emphasis on the structure of the stem and leaves and with enough variety in terms of roots, flowers and seeds to indicate its life cycle, and therefore to make identification possible at whatever stage a live – or dying or dead – version of the plant is encountered.

In India, William Roxburgh was to produce an even more interestingly abstract representation of plants by using local artists, and though he tried

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to train them in Western conceptions of perspective and the use of light and shade, many of drawings retain the tradition which William Tennant, a Company chaplain, described as deriving from ‘the laborious exactness with which they imitate every feather of a bird, or the smallest fibre on the leaf of a plant’.16 The Kew website on Roxburgh describes the drawings as being ‘pattern-like in appearance, the plants, flowers and seeds arranged decoratively across the paper, almost like pressed specimens’,17 producing an outcome which turns ‘nature’ into a series of almost geometrical patterns. By such developments botanical art was moving in the opposite direction from landscape art: rather than the integration of plants in a harmonious environment – Alison’s emphasis on a ‘scenery, more pure, more harmonious, and more expressive, than any that is to be found in Nature itself’18 – botanic art was concerned with isolating individual plants, and identifying the structural elements which would be common to all plants of that type and which would, therefore, make identification possible. In the visual re-enactment of a plant’s lifetime development, the representations of the botanic artist turned time into space, with the consequence that mimesis turned into montage.

The hybrid of Western and Indian styles of painting developed under William Roxburgh’s direction.

The illustrations of the botanical artist had a scientific purpose in cataloguing the wealth of nature but they also spurred the desire on the part of the public to own such plants, and thereby also spurred the gardening trade which could profit from that desire. A prime example of these interactions

16 Robinson, William Roxburgh, 95.
is the Vineyard Nursery of Lee and Kennedy, established by two Scottish gardeners – James Lee (1715–95) from Selkirk and Lewis Kennedy from Dumfries (1721–82) – around 1745, on ground which had previously been used for growing grapes. Lee and Kennedy’s nursery was famous for its collection of exotic plants – *Hortus Kewensis* names one hundred and thirty-five plants introduced into England, or first known as cultivated by, the Vineyard Nursery during the lifetime of James Lee\(^1\) – most of them sent by Lee’s correspondents in North America and Australia, but some of them coming from dedicated ‘plant hunters’ such as Francis Masson. Lee became famous as a result of publishing, in 1760, *An Introduction to Botany* (effectively, a translation of the work of Linnaeus) but became wealthy as a result of his ability to naturalise exotic plants and to sell them at a significant profit: when the first fuchsia came into his hands, for instance, he was able to sell the plants grown from his cuttings at a guinea a time. Lee’s daughter Ann was an illustrator of the plants by which Lee and Kennedy made their fortune, encouraging the taste for the exotic which would create a market for the nursery’s products.

Such enrichments of the British garden would not have been possible, however, without the development of the ‘hot house’ to provide an artificial environment suitable to plants from very different climates. James Justice’s *The Scots Gardiners Director* of 1759 begins with instructions on how to build a walled garden, but the first wall to be built should be the northernmost wall, facing south, which will have furnaces and flues to heat the brickwork and create a warm environment to allow the growing of grapes and other fruits not native to Scotland. The ‘hotwall’ was to be combined with a moveable set of glass coverings which could be shifted to particular locations along the hotwall to ‘force’ the unseasonal development of particular plants.

The eighteenth-century use of glass as an accompaniment to the hotwall was to develop in the nineteenth century into the ‘glass-house’ or ‘winter garden’, which could create the specialised climate necessary for the sustained growing of exotic plants. As Walter Nicol’s *The Scotch Forcing Gardener* of 1796 put it: ‘In the cultivation of exotic plants and fruits in hot houses, regard must be had to the climate of their nativity; and the best endeavours be used to imitate it in the hot-house; introducing the natural changes of the seasons with equal care’.\(^2\) The art of imitation is no longer the art of representing the exotic but the art of artificially maintaining a climate sufficiently similar to that from which ‘exotic’ plant species derived that they are able to flourish in despite

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of the angle at which the sun’s rays strikes the earth in a northerly latitude. The construction and maintenance of the hothouse became perhaps the major issue for professional gardeners in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries: their employers expected them to provide the nectarines, grapes and pineapples which were a sign of achieved wealth, and some, at least, were prepared to pay to have special hothouses built to suit the requirements of each fruit: Nicol, for instance, has specific instructions for the construction of cherry houses, grape houses and houses for pineapples. In the first two decades of the nineteenth century, however, the ‘domestication’ of the hothouse led to its removed from being a specialised building to being integrated into the house as conservatory: as John Claudius Loudon, one of the principal innovators in greenhouse design, suggested in his *Green-House Companion* of 1824 (which went through many editions in the following two decades);

According to our ideas of the enjoyments of the green-house, it is essential that it be situated close to the house; not merely near, but immediately adjoining; and attached to it either by being placed against it, forming a part of the edifice; or by means of a corridor, veranda, or some other description of covered passage. The most desirable situation is unquestionably that in which the green-house . . . shall communicate with, and form as it were an additional apartment to the library, or breakfast parlour. If it communicates by spacious glass doors, and the parlour is judiciously furnished with mirrors, and bulbous flowers in water-glasses, the effect will be greatly heightened, and growth, verdure, gay colours, and fragrance, blended with books, sofas, and all the accompaniments of social and polished life.

The garden of exotics becomes, quite literally, an extension of the domestic interior, one which can be continuously rearranged as the plants come into season: as Loudon notes, the advantage of a green-house plant in a pot is that the plant ‘acquires a sort of locomotion’ and because it can be moved in and out of the house it ‘becomes, as it were, thoroughly domesticated’. The mobile exotic, both in the domestic interior and in the garden, offers an entirely different kind of aesthetic experience from the ‘natural landscape’:

21 Ibid., Chapters 3, 4, 8.
23 Ibid., 1.
instead of permanence it offers continuous refreshment; instead of an imitation of nature it offers the experience of many different kinds of nature; instead of the comfort of the familiar it thrives on the experience of novelty. The domestic garden, with its conservatory and greenhouse, becomes, in effect, a miniature botanic garden, in which the plants do not form an imitation of a natural environment but are displayed to underline their individual differences. Striking juxtaposition rather than a merging harmony becomes the governing principle by which the garden is arranged, as though each plant was the living embodiment of a botanical illustration.

Loudon’s career and influence is emblematic of the changing aesthetics of landscape in the first half of the nineteenth century, and also of the influence of the Scottish gardening innovations from the eighteenth century. One of Loudon’s early publications was titled *The utility of agricultural knowledge to the sons of the landed proprietors of England... illustrated by what has taken place in Scotland* (1809). Although his *Treatise on Forming, Improving and Managing Country Residences* in 1806 is addressed to the kinds of large landowners whose properties had been redesigned in the ‘natural’ or ‘informal’ fashion by ‘Capability’ Brown and Humphry Repton. Loudon made his first fortune as a ‘landscape architect’, a term he coined, by challenging their versions of the relationship between nature and landscape. The artificially ‘natural’ was, for Loudon, an evasion of the artistry by which gardening transformed nature into art: the garden should not imitate nature but assert its difference from nature. By the end of his career his prime audience was, in the title of his book of 1842, *The Suburban Horticulturalist*, someone who probably lives in the kind of semi-detached villa which Loudon had himself first designed (the design producing the house at No. 3–5 Porchester Terrace in London for his own family’s use24) and illustrated in his *The Suburban Gardener and Villa Companion* of 1838.

Loudon’s technical inventiveness is nowhere better exemplified than in his contribution to the development of the hot-house. In his *A Short Treatise on Several Improvements Recently Made in Hot-Houses* of 1805, Loudon was not only extolling the benefits of an iron and glass construction, but was promoting a new aesthetic of building design: according to Kohlmaier and van Sartory,

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In his writings . . . there is formulated for the first time in the history of building the principle that glass and iron structures possessed just as much of an aesthetic claim to beauty as masonry architecture. He even went a step further: in a call to battle against stylistic architecture, he proclaimed that beauty and function are of necessity bound together and mutually dependent.25

In his ‘Sketches of Curvilinear Hothouses’ of 1818, Loudon emphasised that, in the design of a landscape, garden hothouses had to be concealed because they looked like utilitarian ‘lean-to’ sheds; he proposed, instead an alternative mode of construction which would make the hothouse itself an aesthetic addition to the garden, with fine, curved metal columns allowing the maximum of light to reach the interior. To achieve this, Loudon had worked with the London firm of W. and D. Bailey to create a new ‘rolled-iron glazing bar which could be curved in any direction with no loss of strength’.26 John Hix, in The Glass House, describes Loudon’s invention as having ‘opened a new era in curvilinear construction, replacing curved bars made of several short pieces’,27 an invention which, after their initial application in 1817,28 allowed the building of ever larger and more elegantly curved structures: Loudon, for instance, proposed a ‘conical glass dome over 200 feet in diameter and 100 feet high’29 in his design for the Birmingham Botanic Garden in 1831.30 Glass houses on such a scale transformed the public spaces offered by the botanic garden into a year round attraction: ‘winter gardens’ became the places of resort for the leisured, combining recreation and education, and extending the aesthetic appreciation of plant types and providing inspiration for the introduction of new plants into the domestic conservatory. Loudon’s notion of the plant that ‘acquires a sort of locomotion’ was fulfilled in the Winter Garden, since the plants had travelled from quite different parts of the world, had been set out in displays that would change as plants came into and went out of season, and would steadily migrate to the domestic garden or conservatory.

26 Ibid., 141.
29 Ibid., 197.
30 The proposal was rejected as being too ambitious and too costly but the eventual building incorporated Loudon’s design for curvilinear construction. Ibid.
The artifice of the hothouse and the conservatory combined to produce a new botanical aesthetics based not on the imitation of ‘nature’ but on the exploitation of many natures, not on the reproduction of the familiar but on the radical conjunctions and disjunctions of the unfamiliar. This Loudon described as ‘the gardensque’, a style which adopted from the botanic garden the need to present exotic specimens in relative isolation so that their unique features could be appreciated:

There are various other beauties besides those of the picturesque, which ought to engage the attention of the landscape gardener; and one of the principal of these is, what may be called the botany of trees and shrubs . . . Mere picturesque improvement is not enough in these enlightened times: it is necessary to understand that there is such a character of art, as the gardensque, as well as the picturesque . . .

For the picturesque wide spaces were required, but the gardensque – what Loudon also called ‘scientific ornamental gardening’ – could flourish in an urban or suburban space. What the gardensque underlined and what the picturesque tried by its imitation of the natural world to conceal was that ‘as every garden is a work of art, Art should be everywhere avowed in it’.32

The return to art and artifice in the gardensque of the 1830s and 1840s reveals how false is the narrative against which John Dixon Hunt rails in his Greater Perfections: The Practice of Garden Theory, and which he traces to Horace Walpole’s History of the Modern Taste in Gardening:

Now ‘informal’ is pitted against ‘formal’, and other nations, against the English. We are entertained to a wonderfully agile, often amusing, and horribly persuasive argument for the supremacy of one mode of gardening, one that is above all ‘natural’, modern, English and worthy to be acclaimed among the pre-eminent fine arts. Walpole’s achievement has to be saluted all the more when it is realized that single-handedly he determined (or distorted) the writing of landscape architecture history to this day.33

31 Gardener’s Magazine 8 (1832), 701.
In the Scottish context, nature was too wild to encourage the belief that a garden ought to imitate nature or that the landscape could be made simply ‘picturesque’. Loudon, for instance, states in a section on Scottish gardens in his *Encyclopaedia* that, ‘The country residences of Scotland in general excel those of England in the prominence of their natural features, being generally backed by hills or mountains, encompassed by a river or a stream; or situated on a lake, or the seashore’, and he was to wage a long campaign against the designs of ‘Capability’ Brown. According to A. A. Tait in his history of the landscape garden in Scotland, however much Scottish landowners and gardeners invested in the planting of trees in order to enhance the natural environment, they continued the earlier tradition of a formal garden, often with a parterre, close to the house, as in the case of Drummond Castle, whose gardens were redesigned in the 1820s and 1830s ‘around a sixteenth-century obelisk sundial’ that had, itself, been the centrepiece of a much earlier formal garden. Loudon’s ‘gardenesque’ may have been aimed primarily at suburban gardeners around London, but it had deep roots in Scotland’s botanic and gardening traditions.

Drummond Castle Garden from an old postcard.

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34 *Encyclopaedia of Gardening*, 1249.
36 Ibid., 234.
Arthur Young’s Study of Landscape Gardens and Parks
for his Publication “A Tour in Ireland 1776–1779”

Finola O’Kane

Arthur Young’s *A Tour in Ireland 1776–1779* established his reputation as a critical observer of entire countries, at a scale beyond that of the English county studies which had occupied him for many years. In his Irish tour, Young attempted to dissect the country’s rural geography as a composite structure of hierarchical and nested elements that depended particularly on the landed estate and the tenanted farm. As Young attempted to map his English experience onto the Irish environment, the physical and aesthetic boundaries between the more specific categories of regional geographic landscape, gentleman’s estate, gentleman’s park, landscape garden and yeoman’s/tenanted farm were frequently both indistinct and contradictory. Yet his tour remains an interesting and provocative record of an Englishman’s perception and subsequent classification of Ireland’s many landscapes. It is particularly valuable for his nuanced interrogation of the Irish landscape garden and of how this predominantly aesthetic paradigm, perfected by Lancelot “Capability” Brown among others, became difficult to interpret in Ireland, where it was muddied both by Irish landholding patterns and the natural form of the landscape itself. This article seeks to unpick some of Young’s landscape classifications, the implications of when he abandoned them and the practical use that can still be made of his observations today.

1. The Irish Eighteenth-century Landscape Park, Garden and Tour

The landscape garden, as it evolved in the second half of the eighteenth century, was designed to invite and encourage movement. Unlike the long straight axes of canals, clipped allées and avenues that were characteristic of the Baroque garden and best appreciated from a fixed, central focus point, the landscape garden demanded a twisting circumnavigation from its users. Approach routes, tree-belt rides and clumps created a designed parkland tour, implicitly to be enjoyed by carriage or on horseback, not by foot. The
concept of making a tour to enjoy and appreciate a landscape predates the eighteenth century. In 1652 John Evelyn had praised the educated traveller over someone who was merely ‘making the Tour as they call it’ in his publication *The State of France*.¹ According to the Oxford English Dictionary, one of the first instances of the use of the verb ‘tour’ comes from the pen of Mary Delany, who prepared ‘to tour in the park’ of Cornbury, Oxfordshire, with her husband in 1746.² Gradually the concept of circumnavigating a defined area to better understand and appreciate it was adopted at the nested scales of gentleman’s park, county, country and nation.³ At the scale of the landscape park, the landscape design frequently stressed the park’s property boundary, using tree belts and a high stone wall to distinguish the designed landscape, typically equivalent to the area of the gentleman’s park, from the surrounding tenanted farmland. Yet designed landscapes in such tourist locales as Killarney, Lough Erne or the Wye valley tended to express property boundaries in a less definitive fashion by extending the circuit of a tour, such as that contemplated by Mary Delany, to areas far beyond the park. It is therefore not surprising that some of the landscape garden’s keenest observers were the writers of tour guides. Of these, the most influential, certainly regarding perceptions of Ireland, was undoubtedly Arthur Young (1741–1820).

Young came to Ireland in 1776, embarking at Dun Laoghaire near Dublin, as was the general practice for foreign visitors of the time. In Dublin, he was particularly impressed by the lower riverside regions of the Phoenix Park as an area where the river Liffey’s ‘variety of landscapes’ had made it ‘the most beautiful environ’ of the capital city. In Young’s *A Tour in Ireland, 1776–1779*

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¹ John Evelyn, *The State of France as it stood in the IXth year of this present Monarch, Lewis XIII* (London, 1652), Prefatory Letter: ‘But this [becoming an accomplished young gentleman] he shall never attain unto, till he begin to be somewhat ripened and seasoned in a place; for it is not every man the crosses the Seas, hath been of an Academy, learned a Corranto, and speaks the Language, whom I esteem a Traveller (of which piece most of our English are in these countryes at present) but that he (instead of making the Tour as they call it) or, as a late Embassador of ours facetuously, but sharply reproached, (like a Goose swims down the River) having mastered the Tongue, frequented the Court, looked into their customes, been present at their pleadings, observed their Military Discipline, contracted acquaintance with their Learned men, studied their Arts, and is familiar with their dispositions, makes this accompt of his time.’

² Mary Delany, *Autobiography and Correspondence* (London, 1861; 3 vols), II, 443: ‘The coach is ready for D[r]. D[elany]. and me to tour in the park, and to see my lord’s improvements.’

such designated ‘landscapes’ could exist independently of parkland, particularly in Killarney, or Sligo and Ballina (but not in Galway⁴), where the naturally occurring mountains and lakes were not instances of designed ‘improvement’ but had an innate beauty, invariably connected to the variety of prospects that they could afford. Such places were described by Young as ‘picturesque’,⁵ and he made a precise comparison to the painter Claude Lorrain’s compositions when regarding Turk Mountain, Killarney.⁶ Landscape gardens could lie adjacent to such landscapes, or contribute to them, but Young does not generally categorise discrete parks or demesnes as ‘landscapes’.

In his *Tour in Ireland*, Young distinguished carefully between parks (sometimes called ‘domains’) and farms where improvements were taking place. Farms, for Young, were typically substantial areas of land leased from a great landowner, such as that in Rathan, Co. Offaly (King’s Co.) leased by ‘the Norfolk bailiff’ Mr. Vancouver from Lord Shelburne.⁷ Descriptions of such farms invariably focused on practical farming improvements rather than their visual assessment as designed landscapes. When describing landscape parks rather than farms, he usually gave a clear impression of their identity, using the words ‘seat’, ‘park’ or ‘domain’ (he did not spell it in the Irish tradition as ‘demesne’). The park at Carton was one of the easiest for Young to distinguish as a landscape park that ranked ‘among the finest in Ireland’ consisting of ‘a vast lawn, which waves over gentle hills, surrounded by plantations of great extent, and which break and divide in places, so as to give much variety.’⁸ He noted that ‘the domain’ of Luttrellstown, Co. Dublin was ‘a considerable one in extent, being above 400 acres within the wall, Irish measure’ and sometimes gave the entire area of the relevant gentleman’s wider estate.⁹ He generally listed the constituent parts of the landscape garden: the lawn, the undulating unadorned land forms, the water feature, the rides, the tree belts, the lawns

⁴ ‘I should remark, as I have now left Galway, that that county, from entering it in the road to Tuam to leaving it today, has been, upon the whole, inferior to most of the parts I have travelled in Ireland in point of beauty: there are not mountains of a magnitude to make the view striking. It is perfectly free from woods, and even trees, except about gentlemen’s houses, nor has it a variety in its face.’ Arthur Young, *A Tour in Ireland 1776–1779* (Shannon, 1970; 2 vols), I, 285.
⁵ Ibid., 354.
⁶ Ibid.
⁷ Ibid., 65.
⁸ Ibid., 31–2.
⁹ ‘From this building [Carton’s prospect tower] his Grace has another sort of view; not everywhere to be met with; he looks over a great part of 60,000 acres, which lie around him nearly contiguous’. Ibid., 32.
and the circuit walk. Woodlawn Co. Galway, the park most clearly identified by Young’s description as one containing a landscape garden, possessed all these elements:

Woodlawn, is a seat improved entirely in the modern English taste, and is as advantageous a copy of it, as I have anywhere seen. The house stands on the brow of a rising ground, which looks over a lawn swelling into gentle inequalities; through these a small stream is converted into a large river . . . the grounds, which form the banks of this water, are pleasing and are prettily scattered with clumps and single trees, and surrounded by a margin of wood.10

At Dundrum, Co. Tipperary, Young described what had been swept away by the aesthetic of the landscape garden:

Lord de Montalt’s, at Dundrum, a place which his Lordship has ornamented in the modern stile of improvement: the house was situated in the midst of all the regular exertions of the last age. Parterres, parapets of earth, straight walks, knots and clipt hedges, all which he has thrown down, with an infinite number of hedges and ditches, filled up ponds, &c. and opened one very noble lawn around him, scattered negligently over with trees, and cleared the course of a choaked up river, so that it flows at present in a winding course through the grounds.11

For Young landscape parks and the subset of landscape gardens that they sometimes contained were clear instances of unambiguous practical and aesthetic improvement by an educated civil society of gentlemen, such as Speaker Foster, of Collon desmesne, Co. Meath.12 At Collon Foster had ‘made the greatest improvements’ Young had met anywhere in Ireland, changing ‘a waste sheep-walk’ with ‘the cabbins and people as miserable as can be conceived’ into a visibly improved landscape, complete with a demesne that demonstrated Foster’s advanced landscape design and agricultural expertise. Improvement was important in eighteenth-century Ireland – it distinguished

10 Ibid., 277–8.
11 Ibid., 392.
12 ‘This great improver, a title more deserving estimation than that of a great general or a great minister, lives now to overlook a country flourishing only from his exertions. He has made a barren wilderness smile with cultivation, planted it with people, and made those people happy.’ Ibid., 113.
and provided a rationale for the superior claims of one group of people over another – Protestant over Catholic, English over Irish, newcomer over native—with the dialectic complicated by many families’ mixed and mutable identities.13

Capability Brown’s aesthetic of lawns, clumps and modulated earth forms reached its apex by the mid-eighteenth-century, with the landscape garden gradually evolving into a subset of the landscape park. Earlier designers, in particular Charles Bridgeman and William Kent, had contributed to the formation of the pre-Brownian landscape park but Brown’s ubiquity subsumed all the components: tree belts, demesne stone wall, lawns, clumps and the water feature (typically a river turned into a lake) into the Brownian landscape garden.14 Many great Irish houses – Rockingham, Shane’s Castle and Belvedere to name a few discussed by Young – were built close to great lakes. This negated the need for a manmade water feature in the grounds such as that formed by Capability Brown at Blenheim. In such situations, the boundary between the picturesque landscape (worthy of being composed into a landscape painting) and the landscape park became indistinct and the parkland’s boundaries, in effect, bled out into the surrounding countryside. All of Young’s most admired Irish landscapes share this watery and mutable edge condition: the harbour of Cork, the lakes of Upper and Lower Lough Erne, Lough Neagh and Lough Lein in Killarney.

Arthur Young completed many illustrations for his *Tour in Ireland 1776–1779*, which he could not afford to include as plates in the final publication.15 He completed two particular concentrations of views for Lough Erne (four) and Killarney (five), both burgeoning tourist destinations in eighteenth-century Ireland. Each locale enjoyed the benefit of large central lakes around which the local landowners’ demesnes clustered.16 Using the techniques of borrowed landscape, each landscape park invariably became part of other landscapes’ composition. The mid-eighteenth-century landscape painter, Thomas Roberts,

16 For Lough Erne: Castle Caldwell, Castle Hume, Bellisle. For Killarney notably Muckross House & Kenmare House.
completed two pendant views of Lough Erne in 1771. One was painted from the demesne of his patron Samuel Molyneux Madden and the other from the opposing lands of Sir Ralph Gore. ‘The unorthodox nature’ of painting pendant views of the estates of different owners, ‘was both unprecedented in an Irish context and practically unknown in British art’.17 By ignoring the issue of ownership, Roberts advanced a landscape aesthetic that tried to disentangle itself from the mere expression of landed property. Although property remained a powerful subtext, by blurring the borders between the various gentlemen’s parks, Roberts advanced an aesthetic that could easily be put to use in the creation of the larger national and regional tourist routes, where such limits were constricting and reductive.

Fig. 1 View of Lough Erne from National Library of Ireland (NLI), LO 10203 Extra-illustrated copy of Arthur Young, A Tour in Ireland; with general observations on the present state of that kingdom: made in the years 1776, 1777, and 1778. and brought down to the end of 1779, vol. 1/1, London, 1780: Plate after p. 168a.

Arthur Young arrived on the shores of Lough Erne in 1776, and proceeded to circumnavigate the lake in an anti-clockwise direction. He reached Belleisle from Castle Caldwell on 15 August. The two views he completed of Belleisle included no depiction of the house, nor was it possible to discern where the Belleisle parkland stopped and that of other estates began (Figs. 1 & 2). His careful recording of the size of Luttrellstown demense or the exact area of Carton’s reach into the surrounding Kildare countryside was forgotten at Lough Erne, where his eye was entirely taken up with ‘landscape’ — a landscape independent of parks, boundary walls, tree-belts, approach routes and great houses. All the structural attributes of the landscape garden or park became subsumed into the wider touring landscape of the informed traveller.18

2. Dunkettle Demesne and the composite landscape of the Lee Estuary

If Young is helpful for exploring the links between landscape aesthetics, landscape tours and landscape analysis, he is invaluable for understanding landscapes where no sources for their design and composition now exist, save for the landscapes themselves. In the absence of landscape paintings, demesne maps and other visual sources, Young’s descriptions sometimes allow the eighteenth-century design to be understood and repositioned on the ground. Dunkettle House and its demesne of some two hundred acres are located on the northern ridge of land above Cork city and the river Lee (Fig. 3). With the city itself built on low-lying marshland, many of Cork’s great families built their villas along this ridge that ‘afford[ed] a fine prospect of a great part of Cork harbour and the river Lee up to the city’ with ‘gardens slope[d] to the water (Fig. 4).’19 The banker Dominick Trant owned Dunkettle in 1780 and his

18 ‘To Belleisle, the charming seat of the Earl of Ross. It is an island in Lough Earne, of two hundred Irish acres, every part of it hill, dale and gentle declivities; it has a great deal of wood, much of which is old, and forms both deep shades and open, cheerful groves. The trees hang on the slopes, and consequently show themselves to the best advantage. All this is exceedingly pretty, but is rendered trebly so by the situation. A reach of the lake passes before the house, which is situated near the banks among some fine woods, which give both beauty and shelter. This sheet of water, which is three miles over, is bounded in front by an island of thick wood, and by a bold circular hill which is his lordship’s deer park; this hill is backed by a considerable mountain. To the right are four or five clumps of dark wood—so many islands which rise boldly from the lake; the water breaks in straits between them, and forms a scene extremely picturesque.’ Young, *A Tour in Ireland 1776–1779*, 1, 197.
19 Charles Smith, *The Ancient and Present State of the County and City of Cork* (1750; Cork,
‘Expenditure and wages account book … 1780–89’ in the National Library of Ireland is the only surviving document, map or painting that dates from his occupancy. As the accounts refer to the slating of the Dunkettle offices and to the insertion of a new chimneypiece, but not the construction of a substantial house, the identity of the principal protagonists and the sequence of Dunkettle’s construction remains unclear. Trant also paid regular sums of money into LaTouche’s bank in Dublin ‘for Dunkettle’ suggesting that he had mortgaged the property.

Trant was certainly in occupancy in 1776 when Arthur Young visited the property. Young found Dunkettle to be ‘one of the most beautiful places’ he had ‘seen in Ireland’ where a ‘hill of some hundred acres’ was ‘broken into a great variety of ground by gentle declivities, with every where an undulating outline, and the whole varied by a considerable quantity of wood’. The density

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1893; 2 vols), I, 148.
21 Ibid.
of the tree planting varied across the site, from thick ‘close groves’ to ‘scattered thickets and a variety of single groups’ (Fig. 4). He described Dunkettle’s geography as a ‘hill, or rather a cluster of hills . . . surrounded on one side by a reach of Cork harbour’ and on the other by a ‘vale, through which flows the river Glanmire’, whose ‘opposite shore’ had such ‘variety that can unite to form pleasing landscapes for the views from Dunkettle grounds’ (Fig. 4). This variety consisted of ‘narrow glens’, ‘a pretty, cheerful village’, ‘large inclosures’ and ‘a milder variety of fields’.  

Fig. 3 Photograph of Dunkettle House c.2008 taken from the approach route.

In 1776, Trant was ‘making a walk around the whole’ hundred acres taking care ‘to bend to the inequalities of the ground so as to take the principal points in view’. Young found one section of the circuit walk as being particularly beautiful. Leaving ‘the upper part of the orchard’, which had ‘one of the most luxuriant prospects’ Young had seen, he walked along ‘the brow of a hill which forms the bank of the river of Glanmire’ admiring ‘the opposite woods of Lota’. He then walked up ‘to the top of the high hill which joins the deer-park’, where he could ‘look down on a vale which winds almost around at your

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feet, finishing to the left in Cork river, which here takes the appearance of a lake, bounded by wood and hills, and sunk in the bottom of a vale, in a style which painting cannot imitate.' He then fixed his exact position with reference to views in both directions: To the right he could see ‘towards Riverstown’ and ‘a bridge of several arches unit[ing] two parts of a beautiful village’ (presumably Glanmire). ‘To the left, a wooded glen rising from the vale to the horizon, the scenery sequestered, but pleasing; the oak wood which hangs on the deer-park hill, an addition.’

Fig. 4 View from the approach route of the foreground and distant ground composition of the front park. Arthur Young would have progressed along the tree-lined ridge in the distance towards the Glanmire riverside.

He then went ‘down to the brow of the hill, where it hangs over the river, a picturesque interesting spot.’ Young's account indicates that he climbed to the highest point of the estate overlooking the Glanmire River. The highest point of Dunkettle ‘hill’ is now occupied by Woodville, ‘a Georgian house, originally the seat of the Mannix family; leased from 1803 by the Cummins family’ and now surrounded by a suburban housing estate (Fig. 5). Levels are given on the first edition of Ordnance Survey map rising in sequence from the river edge and a route down to the riverside from Dunkettle, if not from Woodville, is marked (Fig. 6). Young's description is helpful for identifying the principal features of the eighteenth-century landscape design, although it is not always possible to do so definitively.

Dunkettle also formed a key element in the composite designed landscape of the Lee Estuary. The ambition to create a large-scale landscape to enhance individual demesnes was well established in eighteenth-century landscape

design theory. Landowners were aware that cooperation in matters relating to planting and landscape design was to their mutual benefit. Of all such composite landscapes in Ireland, Young found Cork the most attractive:

Before I quit the environs of Corke, I must remark that the country on the harbour I think preferable, in many respects, for a residence to anything I have seen in Ireland. First, it is the most southerly part of the kingdom. Second, there are a great many beauties of prospect. Third, by much the most animated scene of shipping in all Ireland, and consequently, Fourth, a ready price for every product. Fifth, great plenty of excellent fish and wild fowl. Sixth, the neighbourhood of a great city for objects of convenience.24

Fig. 5 View of Woodville at the apex of Dunkettle hill c. 2008.

Young also found the Lee’s northern banks ‘much better planted, particularly at Lota, Dunkettle, &c. [where] the ground rises in bold ascents, adorned with many beautifully-situated country-houses’ (Fig. 7). Taking a boat from Trant’s river quayside to enjoy vistas of Lota and Dunkettle, Young followed the eighteenth-century preference for appreciating fine landscapes from the water (in particular those of Killarney’s Loch Lene and the sequence of demesne landscapes around Lough Erne). From the water Dunkettle House was ‘almost lost in wood’, and ‘with more woods above it than lawns below it’.

24 Young, A Tour in Ireland 1776–1779, I, 341.
As Young was rowed out into the estuary ‘the woods of Lota and Dunkettle unite[d] in one fine mass.

3. Conclusion

Improvement was the general eighteenth-century strategy for making Ireland more like England in manners, religion, agriculture, taste and all matters of design. For Arthur Young, landscape parks and gardens were clear demonstrations of improvement and of the eighteenth-century civil society that Ireland was intended to become. Landscape design also represented the balanced and ideal hierarchy of that society. The ideally proportioned social relationships between gentleman, yeoman tenant and cottier were spatially replicated at
the relative scales of demesne, farm and cottier holding and by great house, farmer’s house and cabin. Gaps in the hierarchy were observed by Young, such as when he found ‘a better yeomanry than is common in Ireland’ in the county of Leitrim, where the farms ranged ‘from 100 to 250 acres’ in size.25 Yet the ever declining scale of Irish landholdings, as they were splintered by both gavelkind and the middleman, continued to upset his classifications. The Irish middleman proved to be a particular challenge as he complicated the ideal hierarchy of these relationships, providing a worrying instance of imbalance and exploitation.26 It also made the landscape more difficult to categorise and criticise, as those in occupancy were not necessarily those who held the lease.27 Although Young follows a descriptive hierarchy for both social and spatial relationships throughout much of his tour he does occasionally choose not to. The nature of the tour sometimes required him to record an Ireland where such boundaries and relationships were less significant. In the great scenic enclaves of Ireland’s lakes and harbours the boundaries of the individual demesnes became muted and indistinct with Young’s emphasis falling firmly on the larger scale of composite designed landscape. In this he follows the evolving practices of landscape painters and the growing fashion for touring the wider countryside and not just the gentleman’s park.

Fig. 7 View of the Lee estuary from the approach route c. 2008

25 Ibid., 212–3.
26 ‘There is a great deal of letting lands in the gross to middle men, who re-let it to others; these middle men are called teney begs, or little landlords, which prevail very much at present. Thes men make a great profit by this practice.’ Ibid., 189–90.
On a more practical note, Young’s careful record of a tour within a landscape park (such as Dunkettle, Co. Cork) has ensured that the structure of Dominick Trant’s design can be identified on the ground, and efforts made to conserve it. Without his careful visual record and close attention to a site’s prospect lines these landscapes would continue to be substantially erased by modern development. By walking the ground and carefully describing what he could see, both near and far, he made it easier to prove today that such designed landscapes date from the eighteenth century and possess substantial cultural significance, not least due to their association with the great travel writer and landscape analyst, Arthur Young.

University College Dublin
Henry David Thoreau, Walden Woods, and an Aesthetics of Garden

Laura Smith

‘Gardening is civil and social, but it wants the vigor and freedom of the forest and the outlaw…’

‘Each town should have a park,’ Henry David Thoreau (1817–62) wrote in his journal on October 15, 1859,

or rather a primitive forest, of five hundred or a thousand acres, where a stick should never be cut for fuel, a common possession forever, for instruction and recreation . . . inalienable forever. Let us keep the New World new, preserve all the advantages of living in the country. There is meadow and pasture and wood-lot for the town’s poor. Why not a forest and huckleberry-field for the town’s rich? All Walden Wood might have been preserved for our park forever, with Walden in its midst, and the Easterbrooks Country, an unoccupied area of some four square miles, might have been our huckleberry-field.¹

It is Thoreau’s provocation on the park that offers a segue to discussion of his aesthetic reflections on the garden and landscape in mid-nineteenth century Concord, Massachusetts. Taken together with the quote which provides its epigraph,² this essay considers how, why, and in what contexts Thoreau employs a garden-gardening rhetoric in his works. A critique of Thoreau’s aesthetics


² Henry David Thoreau, A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers (1849; Newton Abbot, Devon, 2001), 32.
of garden offers a new reading of Thoreau’s environmental philosophy and writings, for it unpacks the intersections, collisions, and contingencies that surround what is often considered by Thoreau to be a misnomer for ‘nature,’ and uses this to review and revisit Thoreau’s relationship with, and sentiment towards, nature. Here, ‘garden’ is employed both as process (to garden) and consequence (a garden) to examine Thoreau’s commentary on nature and wildness. A focus on an aesthetics of garden also casts Thoreau as gardener — and it is this idea that has major import for this essay. For it is the voice of Thoreau the gardener, Thoreau the botanist that continues to resound and echo in contemporary calls to protect, conserve, restore Walden Woods.

This essay begins by placing the garden in Thoreau’s writings, and examines the ways in which the garden-as-motif, -metaphor, or -allegory features in commentary on — and is used to make particular arguments about — nature and landscape. The second part explores Thoreau’s arguments on the processes and practices of gardening, especially Thoreau’s tending of his bean field in Walden Woods. In the third part, Thoreau’s endeavours as a botanist and natural historian are analysed, before the final part examines how Thoreau’s garden aesthetic and botanical observations and records coalesce in ecological restoration strategies in Walden Woods.

1. Thoreau and the garden

When Thoreau writes of the garden, it is a garden moulded and informed by American Transcendentalism, and by an American version of the romantic pastoral. The garden aesthetic occupies an interesting position in Thoreau’s writings, for it is often employed as anathema to his observations on nature and wildness. For Thoreau, the garden is comparable to the cultivated field and pasture, to the urban industrial; it is ‘under the sway of man . . . tamed and broken by society,’ while ‘all good things are wild and free,’ and ‘in Wildness

3 For further discussion on Thoreau and the American pastoral, see e.g: Leo Marx, The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America (1964; Oxford, 2000); also Greg Garrard, ‘Wordsworth and Thoreau: Two Versions of Pastoral’ in Richard J. Schneider (ed.), Thoreau’s Sense of Place: Essays in American Environmental Writing (Iowa City, IO, 2000).
is the preservation of the world. It is in the untamed, uncultivated lands that Thoreau finds emotional and spiritual solace, contemplation, strength:

The wilderness is near, as well as dear, to every man. *Even the oldest villages are indebted to the border of wild wood which surrounds them, more than to the gardens of men.* There is something indescribably inspiriting and beautiful in the aspect of the forest skirting and occasionally jutting into the midst of new towns, which, like the sand-heaps of fresh fox burrows, have sprung up in their midst. The very uprightness of the pines and maples asserts the ancient rectitude and vigor of nature. Our lives need the relief of such a background, where the pine flourishes and the jay still screams.

Thoreau’s retaliation against an aesthetics of garden is at its most vehement in his writings in praise of wildness and wilderness – and especially in describing his ascent of Mount Katahdin in Maine in 1846. In his essay, ‘Ktaadn,’ he notes,

*Nature was here something savage and awful, though beautiful . . . This was that Earth of which we have heard, made out of Chaos and Old Night. Here was no man’s garden, but the unhandselled globe. It was not lawn, nor pasture, nor mead, nor woodland, nor lea, nor arable, nor waste-land. It was the fresh and natural surface of the planet Earth, as it was made forever and ever, – to be the dwelling of man, we say, – so Nature made it, and man may use it if he can.*

Thoreau also parodies a garden aesthetic in ‘Chesuncook,’ to draw a distinction between the wilderness of Maine’s North Woods and Walden Woods:

*Those Maine woods differ essentially from ours. There you are never reminded that the wilderness which you are threading is, after all, some villager’s familiar wood-lot, some widow’s thirds, from which her ancestors have slugged fuel for generations, minutely described in some old*
When he writes of the absence of ‘some villager’s familiar wood-lot, some widow’s thirds’ in the Maine woods, Thoreau acknowledges and concedes the degree to which Walden has been slowly tamed and domesticated to meet the needs of the neighbouring towns of Concord and Lincoln. It is not until Thoreau’s immersion in the Maine wilderness that he begins to question and recast his perception, experience, and engagement with the wildness and wilderness of Walden; to re-evaluate his place in, on nature.

In a similar way to the wildness and wilderness found on Katahdin, Thoreau also uses the wildness of the swamp as a means of refuting an aesthetics of garden. As Daniel B. Botkin argues, it is the image and metaphor of the swamp (rather than the mountain) that is echoed and revisited throughout Thoreau’s wildness writings. Such is Thoreau’s attentiveness to and love of swamps that Rod Giblett declares Thoreau the ‘Patron Saint of Swamps.’ As Thoreau argues,

Hope and the future for me are not in lawns and cultivated fields, not in towns and cities, but in the impervious and quaking swamps. When, formerly, I have analyzed my partiality for some farm which I had contemplated purchasing, I have frequently found that I was attracted solely by a few square rods of impermeable and unfathomable bog,—a natural sink in one corner of it. That was the jewel which dazzled me. I derive more of my subsistence from the swamps which surround my native town than from the cultivated gardens in the village... A town is saved, not more by the righteous men in it than by the woods and swamps that surround it.

Indeed, an early restoration sensibility can be found in Thoreau’s writings on swamps when he suggests that, ‘redeeming a swamp... comes pretty near to making a world.’

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9 Botkin, *No Man’s Garden*.
Evident throughout Thoreau’s writings is the parity of ‘gardening’ with ‘edgelands’ – a parity that Thoreau both celebrates and admonishes. Such ‘edgelands’ run the gamut of the swamps and forests that border Concord (which are valued and lauded as the antithesis of gardens), to the lawns, gardens, and cultivated fields within the town (where the garden is presented as antagonistic, a hybrid). In this respect, gardening, as well as the garden, might be read as a synonym for the encroaching of Concord – whether by its infrastructure or townsfolk – into a Walden Woods edgelands.

It is in Thoreau’s writings on an aesthetics of garden that he teases out and unpacks some of the tensions and refrains that manifest in his (more extensive) writings on farms, farming, and agriculture. Through analogy and comparisons to gardens and gardening, Thoreau seeks to question and challenge engagement and experiences in nature – and to interrogate the valuing of nature. As he remarks, ‘The gardener sees only the gardener’s garden. Here, too, as in political economy, the supply answers to the demand.’13 What Thoreau advocates is a valuing of the wild and wildness in nature, of nature unconstrained and unregulated – a value that goes beyond natural capital; beyond the cultivated and monetized. The aesthetics of garden in Thoreau’s writings provides a platform to critique nature’s place in society, and society’s place in nature – his agitation is expressed when speculating, ‘When we walk, we naturally go to the fields and woods: what would become of us, if we walked only in a garden or a mall?’14 Again, it is nature unbounded and unconstrained that Thoreau praises, while cautioning against the confines of the tamed, controlled, managed nature of the garden.

But this rhetoric in Thoreau’s writings also encourages a reconfiguring and reimagining of what constitutes a garden, and gardening; revealing a more holistic positionality:

We are wont to forget that the sun looks on our cultivated fields and on the prairies and forests without distinction. They all reflect and absorb his rays alike, and the former make but a small part of the glorious picture which he beholds in his daily course. In his view the earth is all equally cultivated like a garden.15

311.
14 Thoreau, ‘Walking,’ 229.
15 Henry David Thoreau, Walden, ed. J. Lyndon Shanley (1854; Princeton, NJ, 2004; 150th anniversary edn), 166.
It is this contradiction and struggle that underpins this essay’s discussion of Thoreau’s aesthetic reflections on the garden; a struggle that is further echoed in Thoreau’s own gardening endeavours.

2. Thoreau-as-gardener and his Walden bean field

For all Thoreau’s writings on the perils of an aesthetics of garden, he also acknowledges how practices of gardening, agriculture, and cultivation are mirrored in his beloved Walden Woods as a working landscape. In the nineteenth century, Walden Woods (and Walden Pond) was subject to ‘wood-chopping, ice-cutting, or the like business.’ In early 1852, Thoreau records this wood-chopping in his journal, noting on January 21, ‘This winter they are cutting down our woods more seriously than ever, – Fair Haven Hill, Walden, Linnaea Borealis Wood, etc., etc. Thank God, they cannot cut down the clouds!’ and then on January 30, ‘Though they are cutting off the woods at Walden, it is not all loss. It makes some new and unexpected prospects.’

By 1855, the felling of Walden’s wood-lots had intensified, leading Thoreau to lament on March 6,

> Our woods are now so reduced that the chopping of this winter has been a cutting to the quick. At least we walkers feel it as such. There is hardly a wood-lot of any consequence left but the chopper’s axe has been heard in it this season. They have even infringed fatally on White Pond, on the south of Fair Haven Pond, shaved off the topknot of the Cliffs, the Colburn farm, Beck Stove’s, etc., etc.

Thoreau’s individual gardening and cultivation practices are revealed in the tending of his bean field beside his cabin at Walden Pond. As Thoreau wrote of his two-year residency in a cabin he built by himself on the shores of Walden Pond between July 1845 and September 1847, ‘I went to the woods because

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I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived.19 As Leo Marx suggests, Thoreau’s *Walden*, published in 1854, presents ‘the report of an experiment in transcendental pastoralism.’20 Thoreau’s bean field offers one example of the pastoral or Arcadian idyll; of a return to the land, and the (emotional) commitment, investment, and intimacy with the land that follows.

Such is the significance of the bean field to Thoreau’s experience at Walden, that ‘The Bean-Field’ is the subject of *Walden*’s seventh chapter, and opens not only with a description of the plot, but also offers an insight into Thoreau’s relationship with his plot:

> I came to love my rows, my beans, though so many more than I wanted. They attached me to the earth, and so I got strength like Antæus. But why should I raise them? Only Heaven knows. This was my curious labor all summer, – to make this portion of the earth’s surface, which had yielded only cinquefoil, blackberries, johnswort, and the like, before, sweet wild fruits and pleasant flowers, produce instead this pulse. What shall I learn of beans or beans of me? I cherish them, I hoe them, early and late I have an eye to them; and this is my day’s work . . . But what right had I to oust johnswort and the rest, and break up their [wood-chucks’] ancient herb garden?21

Thoreau rallies against the taming of nature whilst practicing it – the bean field allows Thoreau to explore the tensions and interdependencies that arise between gardener and garden. Further commenting on his commitment and intimacy with his plot, Thoreau notes how,

> There the sun lighted me to hoe beans, pacing slowly backward and forward over that yellow gravelly upland, between the long green rows, fifteen rods, the one end terminating in a shrub oak copse where I could rest in the shade, the other in a blackberry field where the green berries deepened their tints by the time I had made another bout . . . As

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I had little aid from horses or cattle, or hired men or boys, or improved implements of husbandry, I was much slower, and became much more intimate with my beans than usual.\(^{22}\)

For Leo Marx, *Walden*’s ‘The Bean-Field’ chapter sees Thoreau ‘[turn] his wit against the popular American version of pastoral,’ and the chapter presents ‘a seriocomic effort to get at the lesson of agricultural experience.’\(^{23}\) Marx’s characterization and discussion of Thoreau’s venture as a husbandman further speaks to an aesthetics of garden and to Thoreau’s intimacy in the *knowing, meaning, and value* of his beans, and of labour in his bean field.

The bean field reappears in Thoreau’s writings nearly a decade and a half after his sojourn at Walden Pond, for in April 1859, Thoreau replants trees on the site of his former bean field in Walden Woods. This endeavour reveals an early example of ecological restoration and an explicit example of a Thoreauvian restoration sensibility. As Thoreau records in his journal,

\textit{April 19. . . . P. M. – Began to set white pines in R. W. E.’s Wyman lot.}

\textit{April 20. . . . Setting pines all day.}

\textit{April 21. Setting pines all day. This makes two and a half days, with two men and a horse and cart to help me. We have set some four hundred trees at fifteen feet apart diamondwise, covering some two acres. I set every one with my own hand, while another digs the holes where I indicate, and occasionally helps the other dig up the trees. We prefer bushy pines only one foot high which grow in open or pasture land, yellow-looking trees which are used to the sun, instead of the spindling dark-green ones from the shade of the woods. Our trees will not average much more than two feet in height, and we take a thick sod with them fifteen to eighteen inches in diameter. There are a great many more of these: plants to be had along the edges and in the midst of any white pine wood than one would suppose.}\(^{24}\)

\(^{22}\) Ibid., 156–7.
In rewilding the bean field – the garden – Thoreau recasts the role of ‘gardener’ as perhaps ‘steward,’ and begins a renewed commitment and intimacy with not only the plot, but also the wider woods.

3. Thoreauvian studies in natural history and botany

Nathaniel Hawthorne’s description of Thoreau offers an overview of the scrutiny and rigour awarded to all of nature by Thoreau-as-observer.

Mr. Thorow [sic] is a keen and delicate observer of nature – a genuine observer, which, I suspect, is almost as rare a character as even an original poet; and Nature, in return for his love, seems to adopt him as her especial child, and shows him secrets which few others are allowed to witness. He is familiar with beast, fish, fowl, and reptile, and has strange stories to tell of adventures, and friendly passages with these lower brethren of mortality. Herb and flower, likewise, wherever they grow, whether in garden, or wild wood, are his familiar friends. He is also on intimate terms with the clouds, and can tell the portents of storms. It is a characteristic trait that he has a great regard for the memory of the Indian tribes, whose wild life would have suited him so well; and strange to say, he seldom walks over a ploughed field without picking up an arrow-point, a spear-head, or other relic of the red men – as if their spirits willed him to be the inheritor of their simple wealth.25

It is to Thoreau’s ‘keen and delicate’ observation of Concord’s natural history that discussion now turns, with his studies in botany underpinning and steering an intimacy and commitment to nature. And it is here that the aesthetics of the garden again appears, as a means of encouraging a long view – arguing in his essay ‘Autumnal Tints,’ ‘Only look at what is to be seen, and you will have garden enough, without deepening the soil in your yard. We have only to elevate our view a little, to see the whole forest as a garden.’26 In calling for this

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long gaze, he continues, Why not take more elevated and broader views, walk in the great garden, not skulk in a little “debauched” nook of it? Consider the beauty of the forest, and not merely of a few impounded herbs?²⁷

Moreover, an aesthetics of garden – and of a garden idyll – is also echoed in Thoreau’s botanizing and natural history observations.²⁸ Thoreau’s observations, recordings, and collection of flowering trees and plants are not confined to Concord, but extend across Concord, Lincoln, Walden, Estabrook Woods, Mount Wachusett, the Maine Woods, and Cape Cod – with the whole of ‘Thoreau Country’ read as Thoreau’s garden. In ‘Thoreau as Botanist,’ Ray Angelo argues,

Thoreau was not the first to botanize in Concord, Massachusetts . . . [He] certainly was not the last to botanize here. His writings have fueled an interest in the flora of Concord that extends uninterrupted over a century and a half to the present day. There is probably no other township in New England that has had such long-standing and continuous attention devoted to its plants.²⁹

Angelo’s study offers an insight into the events that ‘[stimulated] Thoreau’s interest in systematic natural history,’³⁰ and traces the development of Thoreau’s scientific and technical botanical knowledge, and his mastery of Concord’s flora and fauna. (Thoreau’s scrutiny of, and intimacy with, the Walden landscape is further echoed in his land surveying as environmental inquiry – epitomized in his 1846 survey of Walden Pond.)³¹ Commenting on Thoreau’s library, Angelo notes how it ‘reflects the relative dearth of botanical

²⁷ Ibid., 393.
³⁰ Angelo, ‘Thoreau as Botanist,’ xxix.
³¹ Thoreau, Walden, esp. 286, also Patrick Chura, Thoreau the Land Surveyor (Gainesville, FL, 2010); cf. James Fenimore Cooper, The Chain-Bearer; or, The Littlepage Manuscripts (London, 1845).
references of the time. He owned almost all the volumes that would pertain to Concord’s vascular flora and a number that were only marginally relevant’ – while Thoreau’s herbarium ‘(numbering in the end more than 900 specimens) was no doubt one of the larger collections in eastern Massachusetts at the time.’32

Both Walden and the Journals reveal a fascinating insight into the processes and practices of Thoreau’s botanical and natural history observations. For Robert Kuhn McGregor, the journal ‘was at once a faithful record of natural phenomena and a presentation framed in prose poetry – science and art.’33 In a journal entry from December 4, 1856, Thoreau reflects,

> About half a dozen years ago I found myself again attending to plants with more method, looking out the name of each one and remem-bering it. I began to bring them home in my hat, a straw one with a scaffold lining to it, which I called my botany-box . . . Still I never studied botany, and do not to-day systematically, the most natural system is still so artificial. I wanted to know my neighbors, if possible, – to get a little nearer to them. I soon found myself observing when plants first blossomed and leafed, and I followed it up early and late, far and near, several years in succession, running to different sides of the town and into the neighboring towns, often between twenty and thirty miles in a day. I often visited a particular plant four or five miles distant, half a dozen times within a fortnight, that I might know exactly when it opened, beside attending to a great many others in different directions and some of them equally distant, at the same time.34

The above passage is one such indication from across the Journals of the much larger project Thoreau sought to undertake; to compile what he sometimes referred to as his Kalendar or Book of Concord. As Bradley P. Dean notes,

> After reading John Evelyn’s *Kalendar Hortense, or Gardener’s Almanack* (1664) in the spring of 1852, Thoreau occasionally referred to this large project as his ‘Kalendar.’ Apparently he intended to write a comprehensive history of the natural phenomena that took place in his hometown each year. Although he planned to base his natural history of Concord

32 Angelo, ‘Thoreau as Botanist,’ xxxviii, xxxix.
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upon field observations recorded in his journal over a period of several years, he would synthesize those observations so that he could construct a single ‘archetypal’ year, a technique he had used to wonderful effect in Walden.  

On the ecological (and botanical) significance of Walden, Edmund A. Schofield attests, ‘it is remarkable that a literary work should contain such an ecologically meaningful catalogue of species for one site. The fact that Walden does contain such a catalogue demonstrates the intimate link between Walden the book and Walden Woods.’ Richard B. Primack also comments on the ecological and botanical rigour of Walden, in noting how Thoreau was ‘a keen observer of changes in the seasons and differences in the landscape from one year to the next. Walden contains chapters devoted to individual seasons, and he intended to expand his later observations into a book entirely about the seasons.’ This focus and emphasis on Walden’s seasons and natural patterns as an organizing narrative device is also explored by Leo Marx, noting, ‘the organizing design of Walden has been made to conform to the design of nature itself; . . . the sequence of Thoreau’s final chapters follows the sequence of months and seasons. This device affirms the possibility of redemption from time, the movement away from Concord time, defined by the clock, towards nature’s time, the daily and seasonal life cycle.’

Thoreau published only one essay during his lifetime devoted to the field of botany – ‘The Succession of Forest Trees,’ in 1860 – with two further botanical essays published posthumously – ‘Autumnal Tints,’ and ‘Wild Apples,’ both in 1862. But it is two more of Thoreau’s works – both published for the first time within the last twenty-five years – that consolidate and, perhaps, better illustrate Thoreau’s endeavours as a field scientist, and the breadth of his

37 Richard B. Primack, Walden Warming: Climate Change Comes to Thoreau’s Woods (Chicago, IL, 2014). In Walden Warming, Primack and his team pair Thoreau’s nineteenth century observations with their own observations from across the first two decades of the twenty-first century, to examine the effects of climate change on the flora and fauna of eastern Massachusetts.
39 These three essays are included in: Collected Essays and Poems.
scientific inquiry: Faith in a Seed: The Dispersion of Seeds, and Other Late Natural History Writings, and Wild Fruits: Thoreau’s Rediscovered Last Manuscript.\textsuperscript{40} It is in these works that the beginnings of Thoreau’s Kalendar project are writ large, providing insight into his thinking on plant-animal interactions, succession, natural selection and adaptation, and more.

4. How Thoreau’s field observations are helping to restore Walden

Thoreau’s call for the need of public parks – where ‘All Walden Wood might have been preserved for our park forever, with Walden in its midst’\textsuperscript{41} – serves as a leading (if not the) galvanizing action for Walden’s environmental and literary activists and campaigners alike, with Thoreau’s botanical (and wider natural history) observations co-opted (and politicized) in defence of Walden. Thoreau’s writings are synonymous with this New England pond, and vice versa – making it extremely difficult to extricate Walden especially (but also the Journals) from Walden Pond and Walden Woods. And so, it is perhaps little surprise that Thoreau’s legacy, his environmental philosophy and writings, continue to resound so loudly across this wooded landscape. This tie has been exploited, with the purpose of allowing Thoreau to continue to ‘speak a word for Nature, for absolute freedom and wildness.’\textsuperscript{42}

Whenever Walden Woods has been threatened by development pressures, Thoreau’s philosophy and writings have occupied a prominent position in the arsenal of environmental campaign groups – including the Thoreau Society’s Save Walden Committee, the Thoreau Country Conservation Alliance, Walden Forever Wild, the Walden Woods Project, and Friends of Thoreau Country. Whether it is the restoration of Red Cross Beach, shoreline restoration around Walden Pond, the protection of Bear Garden Hill and Brister’s Hill from

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\item[41] See footnote 1.
\item[42] Thoreau, ‘Walking,’ 225.
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development, the restoration of the former Town of Concord landfill, the installation of Thoreau’s Path on Brister’s Hill, the unsuccessful campaign to save Deep Cut Woods from sports field expansion, or defeating the decision to build a bus depot at the site of the former Concord landfill, Thoreau’s words have been instrumental in shaping an ecological response. Each time, it is Thoreau’s commentary on the ecological condition, and his extensive and detailed observations and records of Walden’s flowering trees and plants, that serve as a reference model to underpin the management program or restoration strategy for a particular site.

One example of translating Thoreau’s observations from page to place can be found in the trail improvements that accompanied the shoreline stabilization at Walden Pond. Along one stretch of the pond, it was neither possible to rebuild the sandy slope at its prior angle, nor maintain the slope at a lower gradient, and so field stones (disguised with topsoil and native planting) and light fencing were used to stabilize and prevent further erosion of the shoreline. These stones raise some concerns from visitors, but echo the Walden narrative:

> in *Walden*, when Thoreau describes the path around the pond, he talks about it being ‘regularly paved’ with stones, almost as if someone had put them there . . . if we are going to be real purists, we could take the trail out completely, but Thoreau talked about there being an Indian path, which means that people were using it – but it could have been a foot or two wide, rather than four.

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45 Walden Pond State Reservation. Interview, 13 July 2007.
Indeed, in a journal entry from September 4, 1851, Thoreau observes,

For roads, I think that a poet cannot tolerate more than a footpath through the fields; that is wide enough, and for purposes of winged poesy suffices . . . And now, methinks, this wider wood-path is not bad, for it admits of society more conveniently. Two can walk side by side in it in the ruts, aye, and one more in the horse-track. The Indian walked in single file, more solitary, – not side by side, chatting as he went. The woodman's cart and sled make just the path two walkers want through the wood.46

And during the installation of Thoreau's Path on Brister's Hill, a mile-long interpretive trail, Thoreau's words again cross from page to place – informing the tree replanting and restoration strategy, favouring pitch pine stands over white pine,47 and appearing as quotes on granite and bronze markers placed along the trail. One of the markers references the pitch pine directly: ‘I see in the open field . . . a few pitch pines springing up, from seeds blown from the wood a dozen or fifteen rods off . . . in a few years, if not disturbed, these seedlings will alter the face of nature here.’48

It is against Thoreau’s refrain that ‘gardening is civil and social, but it wants the vigor and freedom of the forest and the outlaw’49 that restorationists work in Walden Woods; endeavouring to temper, balance, preserve Walden's vigour and freedom with material restoration strategies. What restorationists have achieved, across several sites, is a retelling and reimagining of Thoreau's botanizing and scientific inquiry, as well as his wider environmental philosophy.

46 Thoreau, Journal II, 455, 457.
49 See footnote 2.
1. Introduction

This article discusses how the ideas of ‘gardening’ and of ‘gardens’ are mobilised in global debates around land restoration, on the one hand, and in conflicts over ideal landscapes in Iceland, on the other. We will discuss the different approaches to land restoration in Iceland and the different notions of ‘ideal’ landscapes, of ‘natural’ processes, of ‘natural’ landscapes and gardens, and of the place of humans in nature that inform these different approaches. Of central importance to current land restoration debates in Iceland is the question over the use of the Alaska lupin (*Lupinus nootkatensis*). Soil erosion has been a major concern in Iceland for some time and over fifty years now the Alaska lupin has been widely used in soil conservation and restoration projects around the country due to its powerful soil binding characteristics. However, its use in land restoration projects has lately become one of, if not the most polarising issue in Icelandic nature politics; an issue that seems to divide land restorationists, and many ordinary Icelanders, into different ‘camps’ of supporters and opponents of the use of the lupin, even of the lupin itself. As a consequence of this, and in turn intensifying the debates even more, the lupin has recently acquired status as an ‘alien invasive species’ in Iceland.

In global discussions around land restoration and the fight for biodiversity, an important distinction is often made between ‘nature’ and ‘natural landscapes’ on one hand and ‘gardens’ as artificial landscapes on the other. This distinction, in turn, is closely linked to a contrast that in these debate is often drawn between the ‘natural’ and the ‘native’, on one hand, and the ‘unnatural’ and ‘alien’ on the other. Here the notion of ‘invasive alien species’ is crucial. The distinctions that inform debates around land restoration in Iceland in many ways echo debates that have taken place, and are taking place, over gardening and nature, the ‘natural and native’ and the ‘unnatural and alien’ in other national and, indeed, international arenas. The lupin’s journey to become ‘an invasive alien species’ is the most acute example of these debates in the
Icelandic context. At the same time, however, the distinctions that informed and are reproduced in the Icelandic debates, reflect particular local concerns. Here the debates over the presence and uses of the lupin in Iceland become caught up in the enduring importance that a particular myth of origin has in the country; the importance of an ongoing national fantasy of a return to that origin; myth and fantasy that continue to inform contemporary identity formations in Iceland not least as these are understood to unfold in an increasingly globalised world. We argue here that while global debates around land restoration and biodiversity – debates where the notion of ‘gardens’ features heavily – are hugely important, it is vital still to pay attention to the particular local reflections such debates have. We suggest, furthermore, that doing so allows us to see more clearly how the distinctions themselves, important as they are, are somewhat ignored in actual land restoration practice. There, we suggest, lies the hope for locally and culturally meaningful struggles for biodiversity that a focus on more global debates can draw our attention away from.

2. Research process and research context

This article is based on fieldwork with actors taking part in the lupin debate in Iceland, the lupin conflict we might even call it. These actors include land restorationists, nature managers, foresters, conservationists and members of volunteering groups some of whom support the use of the lupin, others that seek to eradicate it from Iceland, at least in particular places or even entirely. In this paper we are interested in describing these actors and their perception of, relationships to and work with or against the plant. While public agencies have used and promoted the use of the lupin for soil conservation for decades, the last few years have seen the emergence of voluntary groups that seek to eradicate the plant at least from certain areas and to keep those areas free of the lupin. In this context a distinction between ‘nature’ and ‘gardens’ has emerged through the fieldwork. ‘You cannot attend to nature as you would to a garden’ is a statement made by those who criticise the proposals to eradicate the lupin from Iceland, in part or whole. The statement points to and highlights the continuous work that has to be done by nature volunteers and land managers in order to keep specific sites, let alone the whole country, lupin-free. Critics of plans to eradicate the lupin point out the time-consuming, energy-intense and on-going work of clearing and weeding that would be necessary to achieve this, work that is surely characteristic of the endeavour of gardening. This,
they add, is ironic as the desire to eradicate the lupin is to a large extent driven by a desire to restore a ‘natural’ Icelandic landscape. However, denouncing the work of others as ‘just gardening’ is a tactic to be found on both sides of the lupin debate. The lupin’s aesthetic appeal, and the fact that it is widely used as a garden plant around the world, has led some to argue that the continuing use of the plant amounts to the transformation of all of Iceland into one big garden. In the process, the argument goes, the promoters of the lupin will only succeed in destroying ‘wild’, ‘untouched’ and ‘uniquely Icelandic’ landscapes, made up of deserts, lava fields and low-growing, ‘native’ vegetation.

Why is the comparison with, the contrast to, gardening, as different from ‘proper’ land restoration, such a widely-used reference in Iceland? What does the statement ‘you cannot attend to nature as you would to a garden’ mean and what does it do? Why is a garden not ‘real’ nature and why is the practice of gardening unlike, even antithetical to that of ‘proper’ land restoration? What distinctions and boundaries are made and upheld here, why are they important and what do they achieve? To consider these questions more carefully, this article will first discuss in detail the different approaches to land restoration in Iceland and the specific example of the debate over the use of the Alaska lupin within restoration projects. Afterwards, we will direct attention to the scholarly debate over the similarities and differences between land restoration and gardening and contextualise the Icelandic example within this wider framework. Consequently, this article will consider what the lupin example can tell us about the kind of ‘boundary maintenance’ surrounding the attempts at separation of ‘nature’ and ‘gardens’, of ‘wild’ and ‘cultivated’ and of land restoration and gardening.

3. Restoring Icelandic nature and the lupin controversy

Though often imagined as a place of ‘untouched’ nature – and now aggressively promoted as such to foreign tourists – Iceland actually has a long history of land degradation. While it is estimated that at the time of human settlement (around 850 AD) woodland coverage of the island amounted to 25–40%, in the late twentieth century it was estimated that forests covered only 1.2% of the total land area.1 Connected to this history of deforestation

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1 Björn Traustason and Arnór Snorrason, ‘Spatial distribution of forests and woodlands in Iceland in accordance with the CORINE land cover classification’, *Icelandic Agricultural Sciences* 21 (2008), 39–47, 40. Þröstur Eysteinsson, ‘Forestry in
is the country’s problem with soil erosion: not only were 95% of the original forest cover permanently destroyed\(^2\) but furthermore it is estimated that 40% of the Icelandic surface has been lost since human settlement.\(^3\) Today, large areas of the country remain affected by soil erosion and about 35 to 45% of the country is classified as desert.\(^4\)

It is numbers like these that make some argue that Iceland is the most ecologically devastated country in Europe. Even though considerable disagreement exists over the historical as well as the present context of environmental destruction, a broad scientific consensus appears to be emerging. And so while it is widely acknowledged today that factors such as the harsh climate and quite frequent volcanic activity played their part in deforestation and soil erosion, scientists now largely agree that the poor state of the land has to a large extent been brought about by unsustainable land practices introduced by the first human settlers.\(^5\) In the twentieth century, reclamation efforts became a crucial part of the national agenda, linked to a project of nation building following independence in 1944.\(^6\) These efforts were couched in terms of a powerful moral obligation of every modern Icelander to reverse the damage that their ancestors had caused to their land in their effort to at least survive if not thrive there. Ideas of a moral duty to ‘repay the debt to the land’ were of central importance in these efforts.\(^7\) Planting trees became a symbol of national pride and patriotism, understood as part of the dedicated and collective effort to repay the debt to and restore the land. The fulfilment of this duty was, in turn, now understood to be possible because of the economic progress that Iceland had enjoyed in the course of the twentieth century, itself understood to be linked to restored political independence.\(^8\)

\(^2\) Ibid.
It is in this context that the lupin arrived in Iceland: the plant was deliberately introduced to the country in 1945, the year after Iceland declared full independence from Denmark, for soil erosion control. The lupin was chosen carefully due to its ability to establish itself in barren areas and because of its nitrogen-fixing qualities. Initially, the lupin’s spread was actively encouraged by specialists, governmental agencies, as well as the general Icelandic public, the lupin being seen as an important ally in the project of ‘healing the land’. It was used both by the Icelandic Forest Service and the Icelandic Soil Conservation Service, the two biggest institutions concerned with land reclamation in Iceland. However, while the lupin is still highly valued for its soil-enriching properties, the plant has recently attracted considerable concern for what is termed its ‘invasive’ behaviour. Many ecologists, for example, are wary of the lupin’s fast spread and the way it outcompetes and replaces low-growing, ‘native’ vegetation. The changing views of ecologists have reached the general public and as a consequence of this, the plant’s status has experienced a shift from ‘miracle plant’ to ‘invader’ in Icelandic public discussions.

The shift that the lupin has experienced is in the Icelandic context the most visible and important example of a recent emphasis on the control of alien invasive species in the fight for local biodiversity that is to be found in many different national and indeed international contexts. This emphasis on the control of invasive species has in turn resulted in heated debates about what belongs and what does not belong in different local and national ‘natures’. Tied to these debates are further discussions around what roles human inhabitants should assume here, if any.

In Iceland disagreements have, on the one hand, arisen as to whether nature should be reclaimed at all or would be better off ‘left to its own devices’. Iceland’s barren landscapes are not only perceived as ‘wastelands’, as we have described above, but also understood to have their own particular aesthetic quality and beauty. Here, the lupin is part of a wider debate between

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10 Cf Crofts, *Healing the Land*.
two visions of Icelandic nature, namely ‘whether dark sands or green forests should be the image of Icelandic nature’. Promoters of the two visions are colloquially described as ‘green’ and ‘dark’ protectionists respectively. The green protectionists argue for the importance of reclaiming land and restoring it to the state of settlement times. For them green forests are the ideal of Icelandic nature. The lupin is the green protectionists’ most important ally in this struggle but one that leaves them in something of a double bind: in restoring the land to its pre-settlement state they are reliant on a plant that was not in any way part of that land, indeed was markedly absent from that land. The dark protectionists, in contrast, claim that barren landscapes such as lava fields and dark deserts are uniquely Icelandic and worthy of protection as such. For them the use of the lupin is a double insult, as it were, an alien plant being used to destroy the very beauty of the land. As one participant in the public debate on the lupin said in an interview carried out during fieldwork:

I can't travel around the country anymore because the lupin has gotten everywhere. It bothers me because it's not supposed to be there, it's not Icelandic. It's not natural and it's changing the landscape. I like the sight of barren hills, it's Icelandic nature to me. Now some people apparently can't see the beauty in our county and think it needs improvement. They want to bring in new trees and plants and grow it all up like a garden. But I personally don't think that our country needs such a drastic plastic surgery – I think we should value it for the uniqueness and beauty that is inherent in it.

Here, we can see one way in which the reference to gardening and gardens appears in discussions about the lupin. In this instance, planting lupins and other ‘foreign’ species such as trees other than ‘native’ birch, is seen as creating an artificial landscape akin to the artificial looks created by ‘plastic surgery’. The lupin-clad hills and mountains are for this interviewee not Icelandic nature precisely because dressed like that, the hills have been diminished, reduced to a garden dependent on human endeavour for its existence, no longer the

(Seattle, 2011), 39.
14 Interview excerpt, 19 April 2016.
wild and untamed nature that for this interviewee is the essence of Icelandic landscape.

On the other hand, the lupin does not only spark debate between ‘green’ and ‘dark’ protectionists, but also within the Icelandic restoration movement itself. For example, while both the Icelandic Forest Service and the Icelandic Soil Conservation Service agree on the importance of reclaiming land, the lupin has brought up questions concerning how to rightfully do so. This in some ways is a reflection of the fact that the lupin’s status has not only experienced a shift in Icelandic public discussion, but also on an institutional level. For example, while many forestry advocates continue their support for the lupin, the Icelandic Soil Conservation Service has quite drastically changed its attitude towards the plant. They were instrumental in putting up new guidelines concerning the management and control of the plant, leading to its recent categorisation as an ‘alien invasive species’ by the Icelandic Ministry for the Environment. Criticisms of the new measures towards controlling the lupin have often been met with references to international conventions and contracts that Iceland is a part of. For instance, a biologist and head of the Icelandic Environment Association wrote in a newspaper article published shortly after the introduction of the new guidelines to explain that:

The Convention on Biological Diversity defines biodiversity as ‘the variability of all life on Earth and the network that it forms’. This definition is independent of the criteria of good and bad. According to the convention, the lupin is not inherently better or worse for biodiversity than moss. Iceland, however, has to protect the moss at the expense of the lupin because the moss is native to this country. When discussing the restoration of damaged ecosystems on the basis of the convention, it is always focused on restoring as best as possible the native, original ecosystem, not creating a new and foreign one.

This view echoes the sentiment many nature managers and conservation volunteers have voiced towards the lupin: it is a very strong land restoration tool, and a great way of getting back ‘lost’ ecosystem functions, however it is

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just ‘too aggressive’, ‘too foreign’, ‘too prominent’ in the Icelandic landscape. An ecologist and prominent nature conservation volunteer has described the lupin thus:

The lupin is a beautiful and a very striking plant, whether it is green, blue or brown. It adds to the diversity of the country to see it here and there. But if it is not possible to look out the car window without seeing lupin everywhere then it has gone too far. When that happens then it is too late to have any effect on the spread of the lupin. The spread of the lupin must be halted no later than now!17

The fact that the lupin is so hard to control, that it can only be controlled through a lot of continuous work, is particularly worrisome for many. The article continues:

It is possible to slow the spread of the lupin . . . This requires many willing hands. Nothing will do but annual monitoring for a decade or more because new plants come up all the time, both from the roots that remain and of the seeds which lie dormant in the ground for years.18

This is precisely the kind of work that the statement we evoked earlier, ‘you cannot attend to nature as you would to a garden’, is directed at. Many lupin advocates criticise this need for continuous work that has to be done by nature volunteers and land managers in order to keep a specific site lupin-free: the time-consuming, energy-intense and on-going work of clearing and weeding. In a discussion on the topic, a lupin supporter put it the following way: ‘Can we not all agree that growing ecosystems are never the same for two moments – and it is not for us to design and manage it like the parks and gardens of Versailles.’ The wish to protect low-growing, native vegetation against the ability of the lupin to outcompete them in their ecosystems, is for many lupin enthusiasts just another indication of their opponents’ status and approach as ‘gardeners’. In a discussion on the eradication of lupins in lava fields covered in moss, a lupin supporter stated the following:

18 Ibid.
Are mosses and lichens not the first stage of ecological succession and grass and flowers another level? If the lupin does not grow into the moss fields, then something else will over time... Nature is versatile... I welcome all vegetation but look with suspicion at all destruction of vegetation. Other laws apply for gardening in backyards, parks and public spaces in urban areas. There, regulations of the organised, man-made environment prevail. These methods cannot be used in wild nature. If people try that then they will become like Don Quixote fighting windmills.19

Moss, lichens, and other low-growing vegetation are seen as only one, ‘low’ grade of ecological succession – at some point they will and should be replaced by something else, a ‘higher’ form of vegetation. Not introducing efficient, ‘alien’ species, but freezing these kinds of landscapes in time, is seen as the ultimate ‘artificial’ act. Here, the central qualities of ‘gardening’ are the human desire to help some plants to survive and protect them from other, hardier plants, just because one wants them there. Applying the continuous work that is needed for this gardening ideal to materialise is seen to be an almost impossible task. The image of the gardener as a Don Quixote is a powerful and prominent one in this context. For instance, a forester also made this reference in an interview: ‘Fighting the lupin is like fighting a windmill – it’s a force of nature, you are not going to stop it’.20

As this section has shown, the lupin debate enters into questions over the very basis of what is to be considered ideal Icelandic nature, what is to be considered ‘authentic’ Icelandic nature, and what it can and should go on to be in times of global environmental change. The lupin issue raises important questions regarding the distinction between land restoration and gardening, that we want to discuss in more detail: When is landscape restoration not restoration and ‘just gardening’ and why is it important to police or guard the boundaries of ecological restoration? The two following sections will discuss these questions in turn.

19 Interview excerpt, 10 August 2016.
20 Interview excerpt, 15 June 2016.
4. Gardening versus land restoration

As we have noted already, in the practices of and the discourses around soil conservation and land restoration in Iceland, an important and powerful distinction appears to be made between land restoration and gardening. This distinction is part of a wider, international scholarly debate amongst land managers, ecologists and other interested parties.

For instance, comparing different approaches to land restoration in the United States and Italy, environmental historian Marcus Hall posits the following distinction:

If one believes that human activities can best improve land, then one restores in a process likened to gardening; yet if one believes that natural activities can best improve land, then one restores in a process that might be called naturalizing – or perhaps rewilding. A gardener promotes culture on a natural landscape, whereas a naturalizer promotes nature on a cultural landscape.21

Discussing different types of restoration, Eric Higgs draws upon Hall’s typology. If land is damaged through neglect and restored by careful artifice, then one is engaged in the work of ‘maintaining the garden’. If cultural practices are understood to be responsible for the degradation of landscape, but the sought after ideal condition is still a garden, then one is engaged in ‘gardening the degraded’. Finally, one is engaged in ‘naturalising the degraded’ if one aims at restoring ‘natural processes’ in order to counteract human tendencies to either improve a landscape through ‘gardening’ or devastate it as a ‘wasteland’. In this scenario the ideal landscape is ‘untouched’, and ‘pristine wilderness’ – before human corruption.23

These ‘types’ of restoration can, to a certain extent, be identified in the lupin debate in Iceland. An important point to make is that all of Hall’s types depend on culturally informed notions of what is ‘degraded’, what is ‘valuable’ and what is ‘ideal’ in nature and landscapes. Those notions in turn inform what should be restored, how and to what state. Ideas of degraded landscapes,

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plans to restore such landscapes and expectations of their ideal state are in each case complex and very likely to be contested. The Icelandic example of land restoration and the lupin debate illustrates this nicely. We could say that those who seek to eradicate the lupin from the Icelandic Highlands and restore them to a state they see as ‘wild’ and ‘pristine’, are ‘naturalising the degraded’ in Hall’s terms. For those engaged in this practice, as now for many others, ‘ideal’ nature in Iceland is imagined as ‘untouched’ and ‘wild’. Interestingly, for those who support the use and presence of the lupin in the Highlands, this ‘naturalising the degraded’ looks very much like gardening as it requires constant attending to by humans in order to stay ‘wild’ and ‘pristine’. The pro-lupin side, especially on the forestry side, stands in opposition to the idea of an ‘untouched’ nature, and advocates a certain kind of domesticated or cultural landscape. Still, it is a cultural landscape quite different from the ‘traditional’ Icelandic one of free-grazing sheep and soil erosion; rather it is a landscape of trees, lupins and other forms of vegetation.

For lupin supporters in Iceland it makes no sense to speak of ‘untouched’ or ‘pristine’ nature in a place with such a long and profound history of land degradation as the Icelandic Highlands in particular. For others, again, it is not clear how land can be damaged ‘naturally’ or how human influences can present an improvement. For some people it is the biggest environmental crime in Iceland to rip out any plant, let alone a plant that grows so well there and improves the condition of the vulnerable Icelandic soil. However, for many it is clear that the biggest environmental crime in the country is actually spreading lupins, turning a ‘wild’ landscaped into an artificial ‘garden’.

The history of land restoration in Iceland is not simple, and the story of the lupin and the relationship of various actors to the plant are its most illustrative examples. Moreover, as Higgs has argued, this does not only hold true for the Icelandic case, or the lupin, but could be argued for land restoration in general. The point of distinguishing land restoration from gardening is most often made with reference to the notion of alien, invasive species. This notion has informed changing land restoration practices in Iceland and played into the restoration and gardening debate.

It is not debated in the case of Iceland that the lupin is not a native species. It is clearly understood by all parties to the debate that the lupin is an alien species, one very recently and very deliberately introduced to the country by humans. Even so, in Iceland, people will debate whether the lupin should be

24 Ibid., 86.
25 Ibid., 86ff.
regarded as an invasive species or not, and the place, if any, it should have in the Icelandic landscape. What is the purpose of identifying something as an alien invasive species and what can be achieved by such identification? Consider the following quote from a leading authority in the field, Peter Del Tredici:

Implicit in the proposals that call for the control and/or eradication of invasive species is the assumption that the native vegetation will return to dominance once the invasive is removed, thereby restoring the “balance of nature.” That’s the theory. The reality is something else. Land managers and others who have to deal with the invasive problem on a daily basis know that often as not the old invasive comes back following eradication (reproducing from root sprouts or seeds), or else a new invader moves in to replace the old one. The only thing that seems to turn this dynamic around is cutting down the invasives, treating them with herbicides, and planting native species in the gaps where the invasives once were. After this, the sites require weeding of invasives for an indefinite number of years, at least until the natives are big enough to hold their ground without human assistance. What’s striking about this so-called restoration process is that it looks an awful lot like gardening, with its ongoing need for planting and weeding.

Del Tredici’s point is powerful: in this scenario where possibly might we draw the distinction between land restoration and gardening, would the time ever arrive when ‘gardening’ in Tredici’s sense becomes unnecessary? It would appear that the answer might be ‘no’. That answer lends support to the suspicion that behind the distinction between land restoration and gardening, and the importance attached to this distinction, there lies an even more basic concern over what is and what is not ‘natural’. In his *Keywords* of 1976, Raymond Williams famously declared that the word ‘culture’ is one of the most complex words in the English language. ‘Nature’, as so often the opposite of culture, is similarly complex. It and its derivatives – natural, unnatural – carry a number of different meanings that only partially overlap. The same

27 Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (New York, 1976).
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go for the Icelandic equivalent náttúra and náttúrulegur – nature and natural respectively. Náttúra is simultaneously the natural world, for example the natural world of Iceland, íslensk náttúra, and essence or defining characteristic. Náttúrulegur is both of nature and normal, right, proper. Of course, the meanings often combine to powerful effect as when the lupin might be described as unnatural in the context of Icelandic nature. Here unnatural can simultaneously suggest that the lupin has no natural place in the Icelandic landscape and that its presence is somehow immoral. To some extent, we are suggesting, the distinction between land restoration and gardening maps onto and is informed by this distinction between the natural and the not-natural. These are distinctions that are of clear importance in the Icelandic ethnographic context. They are distinctions that people make and from which they draw powerful arguments in important debates not least in relation to invasive alien species. What we want to highlight here, an issue we develop in the following section, is the work that needs to take place to uphold these distinctions. This is so not least now, if we have truly arrived at the epoch of the Anthropocene, when separating the ‘truly natural’ from that which has been subject to ‘human’ influences is surely an impossible task. So why is it still clearly such an important task?

5. Boundary maintenance

Comparing the work of some nature conservationists and land restorationists to that of gardening often points towards how they both entail a certain kind of work aimed at the maintenance of boundaries. Here, the focus is on the gardener’s care for desirable plants, while eradicating undesirable ones. Kay Milton, with reference to Mary Douglas’s famous work on dirt as ‘matter out of place’, 29 speaks of weeds and alien species as ‘plants out of place’. 30 What is seen as valuable to restore within land restoration is, according to Milton, based on the maintenance of important boundaries, for example and not least the boundary between humans and nature. A distinction between gardening

and naturalising a landscape is often based on whether human presence in landscapes is accepted and maybe even valued, or if ecological processes, in opposition to human influences, are placed on the top of the agenda. This rests on a basic dichotomy between ‘human’ and ‘non-human’ and the related idea of ‘alien’ versus ‘native’ species. Discussing a campaign to eradicate ruddy ducks from the UK, Milton ponders the way nature conservation often entails work directed at the maintenance of certain categories and boundaries. The ruddy duck was introduced to the UK, as was the lupin to Iceland, from North America. Starting in the 1980s the ruddy duck was increasingly seen as an ‘alien invasive species’ in the UK that threatened to interbreed with the native, and rarer, white-headed duck. Milton describes how nature conservationists put forward a set of boundaries important to police and uphold: between the two duck species, between alien and native species, but also between human and non-human processes. Of course, nature conservation is itself a form of human agency, of human intervention, directed towards nature; demonstrating how problematic while interesting the distinctions between ‘nature’ and ‘culture’ are, even within conservationist discourses. However, as Milton describes it:

In the Western concept of nature, nature is seen as separate from humanity; the boundary between human and non-human processes defines the natural. The conservation of nature, as conservationists understand it, thus requires the preservation both of the separate things that constitute nature (the species, sub-species and ecosystems) and of the quality that makes them natural (their independence from human influence). This makes conservation, inevitably, a boundary-maintaining exercise. In order to conserve the things that constitute nature, the boundaries that separate them must be maintained . . . and in order to conserve nature’s ‘naturalness’, the boundary between the human and the non-human must be preserved. So it is not surprising if conservationists sometimes appear . . . to be acting like nature’s housekeepers, obsessively restoring order by putting things where they belong – eliminating species that are in the wrong place, returning them to where they used to be – tidying up the mess that others (sometimes, ironically, other conservationists) have created.31

This focus on boundary maintenance is precisely the point of contention for many pro-lupin activists, land-users, and foresters in Iceland. People who want to maintain a separation between ‘wild’ and ‘tamed’ nature, ‘natural’ and ‘cultural’ landscapes, ‘alien’ and ‘native’ species are understood and portrayed as being engaged in upholding their own theoretical categories, not ones that are of relevance to Icelandic reality and needs. A good example here is the priority given to the Icelandic Highlands, an uninhabitable area that covers much of the country’s interior and seen by many as ‘Europe’s last true wilderness’. Aiming to keep the Highlands lupin-free, the new set of guidelines concerning the management of the lupin include the aim of the complete eradication of the plant in all areas 400 meters above sea level. To this end, the use of glyphosate, including Monsanto’s highly controversial herbicide ‘Roundup’, was suggested. Critics of these measures argue, as we have hinted at already, that the Icelandic Highlands are to such a big extent influenced by the history and ongoing presence of free-grazing sheep, as well as other land-use, that their differentiation from lowland areas and protection from ‘outer’ influences, such as the lupin, can only be made to rest on an imagined ideal of ‘pristine nature’. Ironically, these critics continue, the Highlands are very far from being ‘pristine nature’ and would be more accurately considered a ‘man-made desert’. What is more, the suggestion of using possibly toxic herbicides in sensitive areas in the name of ‘protecting nature’ is seen as an example of ‘improper’, hypocritical nature conservation and land restoration, aimed more at maintaining ideal boundaries than attending to ‘real’ problems. Similarly, the idea that only native birch trees should be planted in Iceland has been met with criticism by many forestry advocates, emphasising the better growth rate and resilience of some ‘alien’ species. The emphasis on ‘native’ birch, they argue, rests on the same kind of ideal boundary maintenance as is evident in the construction of the Highlands as pristine, wild nature. One interviewee put this bluntly thus:

There are those that only want to plant native birch. But what, exactly, is native birch? We have heavily influenced the genetics of our birch by selectively cutting out all the largest trees for such a long time and overgrazing the hell out of it. So I think this whole thing is a lot based on feelings instead of facts.32

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32 Interview excerpt, 15 June 2016.
In many respects, then, the lupin debate resembles a wider, current discussion within nature conservation and restoration. Accelerating global environmental change has led to profound disagreements on how to manage nature in the Anthropocene. One reaction to the dominating influence of humans on the global environment that the notion of the Anthropocene signals, is to highlight the responsibility of nature conservation ‘to maintain the boundary between the natural and the non-natural, between human and non-human processes’.33 This very approach is criticised as not maintainable by others. Paul Robbins and Sarah Moore argue that at the core of such a critique lies the realisation that ‘if there ever was a “rightful” natural condition to which to return, it is inaccessible to us in a world of global environmental change’.34 Energy and resources put into this form of ‘boundary maintenance’ might be better used by embracing emerging ‘novel ecosystems’,35 and the increasing functions that introduced and invasive species will take on in them.

However, the dichotomy between those who wish to conserve ‘pure’ nature and its boundaries, and those who do not, quickly proves too simple when we look at the practice of land managers in the broadest sense. Working with invasive species on a practical level often involves complex and continuing decision-making which is rarely a straight-forward matter of ‘eradication’. Head and her colleagues have argued that ‘the actual practice of weed management challenges those academic perspectives that still aspire to attain pristine nature’,36 and they look towards the ‘practice and experience of invasive plant managers to show what it means to live with invasive plants’.37 Similarly, when we look at conservationists and nature volunteers involved in on-the-ground work of controlling the lupin in Iceland, we realise that most of them are well aware of the difficulty of controlling the lupin, while at the same time keeping up a remarkable long-term commitment to their management practices. As one interviewee put it:

37 Ibid., 312.
Fighting the lupin is very hard work. I know that we are not going to stop it on all of this land. But we still come here regularly and keep this small part of the land free of it. It’s partly just for ourselves and our connection to this landscape. But I have also planted lupins before! I know how powerful this plant is, and I am a land restoration supporter, so there are some parts of this country where I think it should be. But we don’t want it everywhere, there are other methods that we can use for other areas that are more sensitive to the kind of vegetation that is already here so that we don’t lose them.38

The quote above mirrors several characteristics of the management of alien, invasive plants in the Anthropocene that Head and her colleagues identify: for example, land managers continually face pragmatic trade-offs, have to consider and bring together a diverse set of views, even within one stakeholder group, and face tensions with the policy sector.39 A forester and lupin supporter also spoke about the decision-making process in their day to day work in Heiðmörk, a conservational and forestry area just outside Iceland’s capital Reykjavik:

It’s a little bit difficult, with my opinion on the lupin I kind of find myself sometimes in between. We have the red hills in Heiðmörk, it’s a place where the British army excavated a lot of material to make the airport. It’s a pretty special place geologically, with all this red in the soil. So it’s protected now and it’s a kind of a special place. I don’t want the lupin there, because I want to see the red soil in the hills. I want the lupin all over Heiðmörk, but maybe I think that that is kind of a place that is special, it has some unique characteristics that the lupin could cover. So I have eradicated lupins there many times. But maybe that is not feasible.40

Following the actual work of land managers on both sides of the lupin debate tells us that managing and living with alien invasive species is a much more complex process than often assumed. As Head and her colleagues argue:

38 Interview excerpt, 25 June 2016.
40 Interview excerpt, 15 June 2016.
Managing invasive plants is often just one part of a wider set of land management responsibilities, and needs to be incorporated into ongoing routines. It is a job that is never finished. Too often, though, living with invasive plants is interpreted to mean mere apathy, that is giving up on attempts to prevent their spread. However, managers must continue to make complex decisions about when, where, and how to intervene.  

6. Conclusion

In this paper we have discussed how the idea of ‘gardening’ and ‘gardens’ emerges in disputes surrounding the use of the lupin in land restoration in Iceland. This is a dispute, we have noted, that has become particularly acute as the lupin has been classified as an alien invasive species in Iceland. We have traced how the distinction between gardens and ‘wild nature’ is linked to the notion of ‘alien species’ that in turn, we have argued reflects and works to maintain a distinction between the ‘natural’ and the ‘not-natural’. Our aim is not to say that the boundaries that arise within conservationists concerns, or the problems that alien, invasive species bring with them, are not real. Milton emphasises that whether the boundaries policed within the campaign against ruddy ducks in the UK are real or not is not for her to judge, but that the aim is to show that ‘like all ideas they can be contested’. As Higgs has said specifically in relation to the distinction between gardening and land restoration:

If we extend a line between gardening and restoration, somewhere along the line, the border separating the two is going to become a matter of convention and judgment . . . The various points along the line are constituted of different values, practices, and histories. Thus, restorationists, reclamationists, ecologists, landscape designers, and gardeners have different ideas in mind for how nature should look and function. Each has a different way of approaching problems, of seeing what needs to be done, and of justifying answers. Yet each also has elements that are bound to the concerns of restorationists; they are

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41 Head et al., ‘Living with Invasive Plants in the Anthropocene’, 312.
The Idea of Gardening and Landscape Restoration in Iceland

turning to a prior condition for guidance and are focused to a greater or lesser extent on ecological integrity.43

What has become evident in our discussion of the lupin in Iceland is that the plant’s ambiguity does not allow for a straightforward national conversation on nature conservation and restoration. As Susanna Lidström and her colleagues have shown, the knowledge surrounding complex environmental problems ‘is replete with uncertainty and tends to resist formation into easily comprehensible narratives’.44 Disputes surrounding alien invasive species have been described as involving ‘a contemporary concern with patrolling the physical and conceptual boundaries of “proper” places’.45 This is particularly relevant in Iceland, where ‘the facts of nature are part and parcel of Icelandic history’.46 Faced with global change, the lupin debate demonstrates the significance that the myth of origin, and references to a continuity with the past, have for current concerns with nature in Iceland.

The manuscripts that contain the Icelandic Sagas and related writings describe the settlement of Iceland and the establishment of the country’s original parliament. They describe a time when Iceland was an independent commonwealth. The Sagas suggest the year of settlement in Iceland as 874AD and while that is no longer accepted by archaeology, it has remained as the official year of the island’s settlement. The Sagas are something all children encounter in school, if not at home, and they are treated by many as at least partly historical. They provide, moreover, a linguistic link between the present and past in Iceland. In this way Iceland possesses a strong myth of origin. But it also possesses a fantasy, we suggest, of a return to this origin. When Iceland, for example, celebrated full political independence in 1944 the event was spoken of as a homecoming. The then prime minister, Ólafur Thors, declared: ‘Icelanders, we have arrived home. We are a free nation.’ Historian Guðmundur Hálfdanarson remarks that this suggests that the independent nation state is ‘not primarily a political form but a home where the nation

46 Kirsten Hastrup, Icelandic Topography and the Sense of Identity’ in Michael Jones and Kenneth R Obwig (eds.), Nordic Landscapes: Region and Belonging on the Northern Edge of Europe (Minneapolis, 2008), 53–76, 63.
can find peace in its own country'.

It was thus ‘considered natural that the republic was established at Þingvellir, the place where the nation locates its symbolic origin and where the original Commonwealth and the new republic become one’.

In the Sagas Iceland is described powerfully as covered in forest from mountain tops to the sea shore. The loss of this lush cover is in Icelandic national discourses linked to the loss of independence in the thirteenth century, a loss the same discourses depict later political independence as overcoming. It has, as we have discussed, been understood as the aim and the duty of Icelanders to return the land to this condition, to repay their debt to the land, to return it to its original state. This is what the lupin was supposed to help to achieve. Only, ironically, the lupin itself was never part of the original landscape. Eradicating the lupin now, by a similar token, would simultaneously involve the kind of constant human attention characteristic of gardening, and restore the land to state of significant human impact, after the loss of the tree cover through human use. In the debate on the presence of the lupin in Iceland specifically, as well as in the work of restorationists more broadly, different ‘natural’ landscapes are evoked to different ends. They do not represent (Icelandic) nature the way it is, but rather speak to powerful images and values that have more to do with Iceland nature as it is supposed to have been and what it should be.

It is in this context that the charge of gardening, thrown in turn at both lupin supporters and detractors, takes its meaning in Iceland. It is here that the importance of the status of the lupin, as both a miracle and an alien plant, lies. However, while this state of affairs has certainly lead to a focus on boundary maintenance within nature conservation and restoration circles in Iceland, embracing the ambiguity that surrounds many invasive species might ultimately be more constructive than trying to seek a conclusive account. Therefore, rather than pitting gardening against ‘proper’ land restoration, we might consider the approach that Higgs has continued to argue for:

The challenge is not, in my view, to describe which type of restoration is purer; rather, it is to be clear about the kinds of assumptions that generate the perceived needs and goals of any specific restoration project. We would be guilty of hubris if we were to suggest otherwise – to insist
that we have somehow got everything right and know for certain the enduring meaning of ecological restoration.\textsuperscript{49}

A field of lupins does not only prompt discussions on the practical matters of the plant’s introduction and eradication. It also provokes deeply philosophical questions concerning the very basis of what is natural, how to take care of nature, and what kind of nature to care for. This article has aimed to show that while questions like these keep proving ambiguous in the case of the lupin in Iceland, finding answers to them will necessarily have to involve considering the plant from a variety of directions as it has become meaningful beyond its ecological context.

\textit{University of Aberdeen}

\textsuperscript{49} Higgs, \textit{Nature by Design}, 91.
The construction of the contemporary human landscape have basically followed the ‘gardenisation’ paradigm, an ubiquitous approach which seeks to manipulate the environment from the perspective of a man-made order. Garden cities, garden towns, garden communities became universal concepts and slogans for different governments across continents, aiming to build utopias on various scales. Unlike the ‘Hortus Conclusus’, the enclosed gardens derived neither from the Old Testament nor the ‘Chahar Bagh’, the four-fold gardens developed from the Qur’an; contemporary gardens shifted more into the form of parks, the public and open spaces which have not been enclosed with walls or hedges. However, this revolution has not redefined the ontological meaning of garden. Gardens are still the daily living environment built by human hands. The landscape of nature, for instance, vegetation, water, earth, has been generally considered as the major characteristic of gardens. The so called ‘nature’ in the gardenised landscape is not nature itself but, precisely speaking, the quasi-nature that has been aesthetically processed by human principles. It belongs to the realm of the artificial world. In the era of ecological civilisation, this gardenisation paradigm was challenged rethinking of the relationship between human beings and under in the context of an ecological understanding. Is there an opportunity for human landscape to associate with the first nature? Is there a possibility to introduce wilderness into our gardenised living environment? These are the major questions of our present investigation.

1. Rejection of Wilderness

People’s attitude towards nature depends on the way in which they make their living. As a result of the knowledge accumulated by humanity in the course of its development – more than any other species on earth – mankind has not only taken resources lavishly from nature but, at the same time, attached
human significance to the subdivisions of nature, and made them an object for aesthetic activity – that is, transformed nature into landscape. Landscape is the ideology of aesthetic perception or cognition of nature. It varies spontaneously with changes of human beings’ niche in the ecosystem and, moreover, is affected by the sociocultural structures that people created.

In China, the ideology of landscape was significantly shaped by four ancient systems of thought.

(1) The ideas of Junzi can simply be interpreted as the gentleman or the gentlemanly. Confucianism and Taoism both stand in a tradition of humanising the natural landscape. They attached the compositions of nature, for instance, water, pine and cypress, to the moral features of the gentleman. For example, Confucius (B.C. 551–479) himself said that, ‘only when the cold season comes is the point brought home that the pine and the cypress are the last to lose their leaves.’ Lao zi (about B.C. 571–471) also has similar expression, ‘Highest good is like water. Because water excels in benefiting the myriad creatures without contending with them and settles where none would like to be, it comes close to the way.’

(2) The idea of the hermit – being a hermit is not about how individuals choose a certain way of living, but stands for a traditional culture on the national level in ancient China. People who armed themselves with extraordinary life wisdom often tired of the mundane world. They retreated to the natural environment, became hermits to implement their life philosophy. Nevertheless, there is also another kind of hermit, the utilitarian hermit, who utilised the title of hermit to earn reputations (because hermits were generally considered as wise people and were often recommended to official positions) in order to gain employment by the government. Actually, these people wanted their names to be spread rather than to be isolated from society. So they chose a natural environment where they could attract many visitors and remain connected to the outside world.

(3) The ideas of Zen: Junior Zenists meditate in mountains to look for their own enlightenment because the nature of Zen and the nature of Nature are regarded as homogeneous. However, Zen is not a door of self-salvation. On an upper level, it has an obligation to society. In one of the Zen stories, a student asked his master, ‘What’s the meaning of being a monk?’ The master answered with a metaphor: ‘rain fell in spring, then thousands of mountains turned into green.’ To ‘turn mountains into green’ means that the higher

pursuit of a Zenist is to enlighten ordinary people and, therefore, requires that the student go back into society.

(4) The ideas of pastoral life: for thousands of years, agriculture has been magnified as the foundation of ancient China by the whole nation, emperors and governors, scholars and peasants. Pastoral poetry, which was founded by the great poet Tao Yuanming (A.D. 365–427) in the fifth century and flourished throughout the Middle Age, introduced rural landscape into the realm of aesthetics. Cottage, orchard, crop field, indeed the whole scenery and lifestyle of countryside became something worth appreciating and praising.

These four ancient thoughts collaboratively expressed the bias for a humanised nature. They are essentially anthems of humanity and civilisation, in which the wilderness plays no part. Those thoughts influenced significantly on the environmental preference for dwelling in and responding to the aesthetics of landscape. Chinese geomancy, that is, Feng Shui studies, all indicate that the wilderness is neither practically nor aesthetically suitable for living. One famous book of Feng Shui studies, *Yang Zhai Zuo Yao* (*Synopsis of Housing*) written in the nineteenth century claimed that wilderness without people living there was thick with Yin Chi, so the house located in the middle of wilderness was generally regarded as a haunted place. The wilderness has been similarly exiled in Chinese landscape paintings. The eleventh century eminent painter and theorist, Guo Xi (about A.D. 1000–1090) said that as the object of a painting, the landscape should better be ‘walk-able’ and ‘view-able’, furthermore, best be ‘stroll-able’ and ‘live-able’. From the eyes of painters, the artistic value of landscape lies in its being a humanised place, rather than an untouched one.

All these proofs indicate the most desired environment in eastern culture is the garden. Although numerous writers and artists in the past praised trees and flowers, hills and brooks again and again, they were subconsciously appreciating the domesticated nature that had been manipulated by man’s force.

Western culture has the same tradition of rejecting wilderness. In the Old Testament, wilderness has been described as a land full of thorns, a cursed place where Adam and Eve found themselves after they were expelled from the Garden of Eden. In the Middle Ages, gardens were designed as lattice-like layouts, in which water and vegetation were organised in the shape of a cross. As in the words of the Song of Songs, ‘A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.’ People appreciate the gardens through the glasses of Christian culture, and since the Renaissance, when landscape was

3 Guo Si and Yang Bo, *Linguangzouzi* (Beijing, 2010), 19.
finally introduced as the object of aesthetic appreciation by landscape paintings and, later, according to the notions of the picturesque, wilderness was still cast away from the door of civilisation. In the eighteenth century, when Daniel Defoe travelled through the Lake District in England, he thought that the landscape was barren and wild, and found nothing aesthetically pleasing but only a terrifyingly inhospitable environment where local people believed it a place haunted by ghosts and goblins.

The American moral philosopher Joseph R. Des Jardins writes: ‘The wilderness is often taken to refer to a wild or untamed area’, it is ‘cruel, harsh and perilous’, ‘a threat to human survival’. This viewpoint can be supported by scientific approaches. Starting from a combination of biological and psychological perspectives, the ‘Biophilia Hypothesis’, which was introduced by a social psychologist Erich Fromm, and was popularised by a biologist Edward O. Wilson, suggests that in the millions of years of mankind’s evolution we maintained a close relationship with the natural environment. The outcome is a common preference for natural things; but not all natural things are welcome. The ‘Savannah Theory’, which was proposed by the ecologist Gordon Orians, proved that this common preference did not include the wild landscape. Orians claimed that searching for suitable habitat was embedded deeply inside humanity’s behavioural choice mechanisms. Consequently, people would instinctively find pleasure in the domesticated landscape, rather than the barren wilderness.

In these historic and contemporary contexts, human’s rejection of wilderness came from both east and west, and was attributed to both biological and cultural origins. Without the comprehensive and scientific knowledge of the environment, theists abandoned the wilderness because it was considered as a world of supernatural beings; utilitarians abandoned the wilderness because it was functionally useless to them. As a result, no positive value has been attributes to wilderness throughout humanity’s prehistory or the mainstream development of civilisation. The rejection of wilderness became, in effect, a genetic burden that impeded the advent of an era of ecological civilisation.

2. Rethinking the Significance of Wilderness

During the period of industrialisation, particularly after World War II, science, technology and economy developed at an unprecedented speed, invading the world’s wildernesses for the resources of energy and space to maintain the rate of development. Wilderness has been brutally demolished by industrial civilisation. This unrestrained intrusion directly gave birth to the eco-crisis which, in the 1960s, finally prompted the public awareness of the environmental value of wilderness. In 1964, the Wilderness Act was established by the US government and became the first legislation in human history aimed at the preservation of wild landscapes. It led people to rethink the significance and to discover the value of wilderness rather than treating it as a dispensable environmental resource.

What is the significance of wilderness?

(1) Facilitating eco-equilibrium. According to the definition given by the Wilderness Act, a wilderness ‘is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain.’ The Chinese environmental philosopher Ping Ye said, ‘The notion of wilderness, in a narrow sense, specifically refers to the wild lands. But generally, it can imply all the terrestrial and non-artificial environment that operates itself under, but not necessary thoroughly under the natural mechanisms.’ Although each definition is subtly different in description, however, there is a key point that does not change: mankind is never the dominator of the place. Without human interference to the dynamic of the wilderness eco-system, balance between the environment and its species would be maintained by natural laws. The eco-equilibrium of the earth has been largely threatened by the industrial over-development of last century. It indeed changed but was still relatively stable because there is still a considerable amount of wilderness that can mend the damage caused by man. The hope is that eco-equilibrium on earth will continue to exist, if some wilderness can survive.

(2) Breeding lives and civilisation. The wilderness offers water, air, sunlight and many other inorganic elements which are essential to the earliest lives on earth. Under the dynamic of ‘natural resistance’ and ‘natural conductance’, the rhythms of life and death, every species evolved toward a higher formation.

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8 Holmes Rolston III, ‘Can and Ought We to Follow Nature?’, Environmental Ethics 1
All lives came from the wilderness, so did mankind. When apes appeared over thirty million years ago and finally evolved into Homo sapiens, human civilisation began to reveal itself in the form of what we called history. Through the periods of hunting and fishing civilisation, agricultural civilisation, industrial civilisation and ecological civilisation, each of them is created by the interaction between man and wilderness. The wilderness breeds all forms of human civilisations, even though it has itself been humanised step by step during the progress of history. As Aldo Leopold said, ‘Wilderness is the raw material out of which man has hammered the artefact called civilisation.’9 The foundation of ecological civilisation is not the synthetic but the spontaneous ecology that consisted of numerous, immense and diverse wildlands. The human—nature relationship in the past stages of civilisation manifested itself as the rejection and manipulation of wilderness. For the future stage, it will be substituted by the conservation and respect of wilderness.

(3) Spiritual and religious entailment. Mankind are emotional as well as rational beings. People would believe that the earth has an actual life like every creature in the world, and they would do this even without any scientific evidence. Moreover, they would believe that nature has a human-like spirit which links to mankind owing to the biological and archaeological fact that man came from the nature. Henry David Thoreau once said, ‘The earth I tread on is not a dead, inert mass; it is a body, has a spirit, is organic and fluid to the influence of its spirit.’10 Eastern culture has a long history of the oneness cosmology which can be simplified as a thought of the unity of heaven and earth or heaven and humanity.11 People, besides Confucianists, Taoists or Zenist, all have worshiped and been awed by the spirit of nature, the spirit of heaven and earth. And the spirit of nature always reveals itself as an imaginary of wilderness. On the one hand, wilderness provides water and foods for life in general, and, on the other, it brings about natural enemies to all creatures. The competitions of life and death have been constantly allegorised as battles between brightness and darkness, and hence have been one of the original debates in religious narratives. The wilderness preservationist and pioneer of environmental philosophy, John Muir, encourages people to revere wilderness

9 Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There* (New York, 1968), 188.
as the way they revere god, as in his oft-cited lines he formulates: ‘In God’s wildness lies the hope of the world — the great fresh unblighted, unredeemed wilderness. The galling harness of civilisation drops off, and wounds heal ere we are aware’\textsuperscript{12} The wilderness accommodates innumerable and indescribable mysteries which are far beyond knowledge and imagination, and therefore granted it the power of deterrence. This deterrence stimulates individuals’ feelings of divinity and awe while they are experiencing the flow of their lives, the shift between dark and light in wilderness. It makes the wilderness spiritually or religiously valuable to mankind.

(4) Recording history. The forms of life have existed for billions of years while human beings merely appeared in the last millions. Fortunately, the wilderness has written down the history of prehistory period albeit in the language of geology, biology and meteorology. The American ecologist Holmes Rolston III said that the wildlands ’provide the profoundest historical museum of all, a relic of the way the world was in 99.99 percent of past time.’\textsuperscript{13} Archaeologists and geologists have been devoted to unveiling the missing history of nature through the research of fossils of ancient creatures and layers of soils and rocks. By 2016, with the joining of Western Tien-Shan across Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, the number of world natural heritage sites included in the list made by UNESCO has reached 203. From the convention text given by the Organisation since 1972, ‘physical and biological formations’ and ‘geological and physiographical formations’ have been attached with crucial significance in two of their three principles to define the natural heritage sites.\textsuperscript{14} All these formations are gifts from the nature which hide in the wilderness. They are the witness of the history of all living beings on earth.

(5) Aesthetic appreciation: the notion of natural heritage, of course, involves awareness of its aesthetic value. The final principle to evaluate a natural heritage site is to assess its ‘outstanding value from the point of view of science, conservation or natural beauty.’ The unknowable mysteries of the wilderness bestowed themselves with freedom and infinity and thence granted endless possibilities for aesthetic appreciation. In 1790, Immanuel Kant wrote:

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…whereas nature in those regions, extravagant in all its diversity to the point of opulence, subject to no constraint from artificial rules, can nourish his taste permanently. Even bird song, which we cannot bring under any rule of music, seems to contain more freedom and hence to offer more to taste than human song, even when this human song is performed according to all the rules of the art of music, because we tire much sooner of a human song if it is repeated often and for long periods.15

Kantianism delivered a two-dimensional judgement on the natural beauty: nature possesses the greatest quantity and the best quality of the things which are constitutive of beauty. Therefore, wilderness, as pure Nature, must similarly boast the greatest quantity and the best quality of beauty.

In an aesthetic context, the sublime traditionally holds a superiority over gentle beauty. What kind of environment on earth is the most representative exemplification of sublime? Assuredly the wilderness. Sublime is ‘produced by the feeling of a momentary inhibition of the vital forces followed immediately by an outpouring of them that is all the stronger.’16 In wildlands, the forceful tension between ‘natural resistance’ and ‘natural conductance’ urge lives to compete and evolve, and hence stimulate the feeling of sublime.

3. Conceptualising Ecological Landscapism

The notion of ‘gardening’ has been widely developed into ‘landscaping’ since the second half of the eighteenth century. No matter how the concept has been built, its ‘Artificial Quality’ remains unchanged. Wang Juyuan, one of the founding fathers of Chinese landscape architecture claimed that landscaping involved both the knowledge of engineering and art. This early definition directly conducted the engineering approach and artistic approach to design and build the landscape in both academic research and empirical practice. In the era of ecological civilisation, the notion of ‘landscaping’ should be imbued with a new dimension, a perspective of ecology. The approaches to make a landscape would not only belong to engineering and art, but also ecology. The aims of landscaping would no longer stick to the well-being of mankind, but

16 Ibid., 98.
to the well-being of all inhabitants in a particular environment. We called this ideology 'ecological landscapism'.

(1) Ecological civilisation is the soul of ecological landscapism. Gardenised landscape has been considered as the ideal living space for humans due to its environmental supportiveness of survival and living. It possesses a huge variety of natural beings which makes people feel like they are returning to nature itself. This feature should be continually inherited in the era of Ecological civilisation, but additionally, it should be extended to an eco-level.

The distinctions between gardenised landscape (GL) and ecological landscape (EL) can be summarised in three points. First, the environmental service of GL is primarily towards humanity, while that of EL is unbiasedly to all species. Second, GL emphasises stationary aspects, for instance the perceptual and functional significance of landscape, while EL is focused on the dynamic mechanism of the environment. Third, GL regards landscape as a physical space assembled with different combinations of individual beings, while EL aims at a whole interconnected organic system with various degrees of diversity and sustainability.

As the successor of GL, the way to EL could not simply jump over engineering and artistic approaches. But the presence of ecology brings different limitations to these two approaches, for none of them should cross the line of eco-equilibrium. Judging simply by appearance, GL and EL might look identical. Lush trees, blossoming flowers, chirping birds, all these images could be contained in the visual description of both GL and EL. However, behind the similar images are aesthetic significances distinguished by different rules.

Under the context of ecological landscapism, the beauty of a landscape is not merely stimulated by pure perceptual experience. It also involves cognitive information about its eco-system. The beauty of EL essentially lies in the equilibrium of its eco-system, rather than just the sceneries, sounds, winds, or smells of nature.

(2) Ethics mediates conflicts in the relationship between humanity and nature: social or religious ethics have played a fundamental part in shaping gardens by developing different physical layouts that are accorded a variety of allegorical meanings. For instance, in early Persian or Islamic formal gardens, the pavilion built in the centre of the garden’s cross-axis has been generally regarded as a display of power. In the Christian world, the cloister of a medieval monastery garden has always symbolised the Virgin Mary or the terrestrial garden where Adam and Eve lived after they have been cast out of Eden. And in Chinese gardens, pine, cypress, and bamboo were extremely highly thought
of because people believed these forms of vegetation epitomised all the noble moral values. In the era of EC, another dimension, the environmental ethics should be encouraged to join with social and religious ethics to co-operatively re-shape the significance and appearance of human landscapes.

‘Eco-justice’ is the core of environmental ethics.17 It indicates an interspecies justice which considers vegetation, animal and human life as of equal value. The notion of eco-justice carries an obligation for mankind to overcome species discrimination and overturn the radical consequences of human-centrism. Beyond eco-justice, mankind should cultivate an ‘eco-conscience’ that develops respect and sympathy for all natural beings. Peter Singer, an early American moral philosopher claimed, ‘If a being suffers, there can be no moral justification for disregarding that suffering, or refusing to count it equally with the like suffering of any other beings’.18 To have commiserations on all natural lives is not enough, we should instil in ourselves a feeling of ‘eco-reverence’ of the kind the German philosopher Albert Schweitzer indicated when he appealed not only to sympathy for natural creatures, but a reverence of nature which would be achieved of Aufhebung transcending the alienation between mankind and other beings.19 This ‘eco-conscience’ and ‘eco-reverence’ are the cornerstones of all values of moralities that are founded on environmental ethics.

(3) Introducing wilderness into human landscape: the ‘gardenisation’ paradigm of urbanism has transformed cities into ‘mankind properties’ than the previously shared environment inhabited by other species. If there is a hill in the city, then urbanists will tend to develop it into an attraction. If there is a lake in the city, they will prefer to put a housing or commercial project around it. This paradigm diminishes the wilderness step by step from cities and towns, meanwhile steadily corrupting the spontaneous eco-system. Why do we gardenise every piece of land in urban area? Why do not we introduce wilderness into human landscape rather than remove it from there? Why do not we think through landscapism, instead of urbanism, to create shared habitats rather than private properties?

Both categories of landscape, gardens (or parks) and wildlands are necessary for the appreciation of urban environment. We enjoy garden landscape

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19 Albert Schweitzer, The Awe of Life [Duì shēng mìng de jìng wèi], trans. Chen Zehuan (Shanghai, 2006), 160.
because it embodies more the gentle beauty, the beauty of art. We also admire wild landscape because it embodies more the sublime, the aesthetic quality of pure nature. Imagine an urban fabric which multiples pieces of wildlands interwoven with the sites of houses and skyscrapers! People could live simultaneously in a city and in a wild jungle and on a beach, enjoying both the convenience brought by urban infrastructures and the refreshment produced by breath and a scene of wilderness. What a magnificent landscape it would be!

(4) Conserving landscape identities: the conservation of landscape identities is never a merely cultural movement, it also contains ecological meanings. Landscape architects and urban designers advocate the utilisation of local species and natural terrains to maintain the sense of place on the one hand, and sustain the native eco-system on the other. Exotic species which are considered as economically, functionally or aesthetically meaningful have been migrated by man since the Agricultural Civilisation. Some of them became invasive or dominative species due to the lack of natural enemies and therefore disturbed the food chain and the equilibrium of local eco-system. This eco-crisis endangered landscape identities and even human lives or societies. In the context of eco-justice, environmental engineering, planning and design should take the existing ecosystem into account to avoid the violation of the rights of any inhabitants.

4. Separational Harmony and Boundary Philosophy

Empirically, how to harmonise gardens and wildlands in a human landscape since they respectively belong to the two poles of nature? The answer is to keep the boundaries of each, and create a separational harmony.

The idea of harmony has had two forms in the ancient oriental wisdom; we can call them Integrational Harmony and Separational Harmony.

(1) Integrational harmony means the unification of individual beings under a certain force. Zuo Zhuan, one of the Confucian classics which written in the fifth century B.C. provided a brilliant account for the integrational harmony. It says that soup is the best metaphor to harmony. Under the force of fire and water, salt, fish, vegetable and any individual ingredients are unified as soup, and eventually, are melted into only one taste, which is the harmony.20

In Chinese ancient philosophy, harmony was the consequence of Yin-Yang reciprocal dynamic. When this dynamic is reflected in the relationship between humans and the natural world, it is embodied as ‘Tian ren he yi’, the oneness cosmology that we have discussed in the second part of this essay. In the Book of Changes, people harmonise themselves with nature (or with heaven and earth) by synchronising their principles of action and thought with the laws of nature. An ancient philosopher and politician Guan Zi (About B.C. 723–645) noted that the beauty of nature came after the unity of heaven and humanity. A contemporary Neo-Confucianist Fang Dongmei summarised that in the eyes of most Chinese ancient philosophers, the relationship between man and nature were always flawlessly harmonious.

(2) We can speak about Separational harmony when natural beings, although interconnected with each other to some extent, as the Butterfly Effect suggests, keep a relative independence in the experiential world, so that we perceive the world in its diverseness, since it consists of a multitude of individual species and individual life beings. This separational harmony has also been discovered and developed in Chinese philosophy. Confucianism claimed that the political method to govern the country was to develop and implement the systems of Li (lǐ) and Yue (yuè). Li means rites, includes both etiquettes and religious rituals. In the system of Li, people followed different tiers of rites based on their social identities. Yue means music. Chinese philosophers and politicians regard music as a discipline of both politics and the arts because every citizen across different tiers of classes could all enjoy and be united by the very same kind of music. Therefore, like the book Yue Ji once said, ‘Yue implies integration while Li indicates separation.’ When the separational harmony reflects on the relationship between human beings and the natural world, it manifests itself as the notion of ‘Tian ren xiang fen’, the opposite theory of the oneness cosmology. The book Xun Zi, which is one of the most representative works of this theory, said that humanity and nature were separational, just as heaven and earth were dissociated. They could not be confused as one because each of them have different roles to play in the universe.

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21 See The Book of Changes, chapter of Wenyan Zhuan.
22 See Fang Xuanling, Liu Ji (annot.), Liu Xiaoyi (ed.), Guan Zi (Shanghai, 2015), 300.
24 See Wang Wenjing (annot.), Annotation and Explanation of Record of Rites [Lì jì yì jì] (Beijing, 2001), 531.
25 See Xun Zi, Xun Zi, annot. Sun Anbang, Ma Yinhua (Taiyuan, 2003), 188.
The essential distinction between Integrational Harmony and Separational Harmony is that the former is more idealistic and stresses on spiritual significance, while the latter is more pragmatic and emphasises empirical achievements.

Separational harmony is a specific expression of eco-equilibrium from the perspective of inter-species relationships. Although the everyday world is filled with races between life and death, preys and predators, natural laws have created natural enemies for each species to guarantee that no one could wipe out the others. The existence of natural enemies maintains the diversity of lives and facilitates eco-equilibrium, as each species is maintaining its self-independence while continuing to relate to others. That is the very manifestation of the phenomenological meaning of separational harmony. However, with the accomplishments of human civilisation, especially in science and technology, the natural enemies for human beings have become more ambiguous than in the earlier epochs of evolution and civilisation. If mankind steps over the rules that govern the balance produced by natural enemies, eco-equilibrium will collapse and with it will end this interspecies separational harmony.

Integrational harmony remains the purest idealistic pursuit because at the current stage of human civilisation it is impossible to avoid contradictions with the natural world. Neither ideological schemes nor pragmatic technics are properly qualified to produce the requirements of EC. Separational harmony is therefore the alternative which can provide a solution to the contemporary relationship of humanity and nature. If we cannot integrate the different aims of economy and politics, ethics and aesthetics, together with ecology, at least we could introduce the eco-world into human society while, at the same time, restricting the impact of human civilisation and maintaining its distance from the eco-world. Culture and nature co-exist in a human landscape but the boundaries need to be preserved. This ‘boundary philosophy’ offers an initial strategy to step into the early stages of EC. Before any development of landscape architecture, we have to set up or even to legislate boundaries for ecology, covering qualitative and quantitative, spatial and temporal issues. More specifically, we should introduce a certain number and quality of wildlands into our cities and towns, committing not only a certain area to such developments but ensuring that they last for a certain span of time. Wildscape and cityscape should be woven together but simultaneously should retain their individual independence in the fabric of human landscape. This hypothetical fabric is the scene of separational harmony. On the one hand, it would be of benefit to urban ecology, and, on the other, formulate an unprecedented
aesthetic quality in this evolutionary formation of the human landscape. The emphasis on the boundaries between civilisation and ecology might be regarded as an exacerbation of the process of alienation between humanity and the natural world but, on the other hand, it is essential if there is to be a truce between humanity and nature since our current epistemology has failed to reconcile the conflict between civilisation and ecology. As was the intention of the ancient Chinese rites system, the classification of people is only a strategic policy to avoid social conflicts and achieve internal stability.

In well-developed metropolitan areas, people maintain the tradition of introducing a 'second nature' into the human landscape: Regent's Park and Hyde Park in central London, Central Park in New York, Villa Doria Pamphili in Rome, the Luxembourg Garden in Paris, Jingshan Park in Beijing, Ueno Park in Tokyo – all these gardenised landscapes offer people and other inhabiting species a certain extent of eco-system services, but still there is neither eco-justice for other life beings nor for the environment itself. These pieces of second nature need to be constantly 'maintained' in order to satisfy the aesthetic or utilitarian needs for human. The first nature, the wilderness is still being blocked out of the everyday horizon, 'well-preserved' in the anti-human landscape which we call 'national parks'. Note how ironic is that even after we banished the wilderness from our territory, we still name it as a 'park'.

Situations get worse in those regions which are densely populated and now experiencing an increasingly intensive urbanisation progress. For instance, Wuhan, a city situated along the Yangtze river in China, was once called the Lake City because it holds more than a hundred wild lakes. Unfortunately, under the impulse of urbanization, dozens of lovely lakes have been demolished and re-planned for commercial, industrial or residential land use, so that today there are only twenty or so large lakes left, which have proved, as yet, too difficult to demolish. This brutal and irreversible consequence of urbanisation was triggered by the urban environmental crisis, but it effectively erased the landscape identity of this city.

Ecological civilisation can be regarded as a rejection of linear conceptions of human history, in order to allow different 'stages' of history to intersect with one another. In an ecological civilisation, ideologies and actions would manifest the evolution of this new era, while avoiding tipping over into idealistic fantasy. Instead of following the path of aggressive preservationists, we propose a strategic theory, ecological landscapism, which would aim to naturalise the human landscape and facilitate its ecoequilibrium by introducing wilderness into cities. One might say, from a common sense perspective, that
wilderness would cease to exist once it has become a part of the everyday life of cities and, thus, that a wilderness in a city is not a wilderness anymore. However, the perspective of ecological landscapism defies such common sense. Wildscape and cityscape could achieve a non-aggressional balance in which each respected the boundaries of the other. They could coexist in the form of a separational harmony.

Throughout the time from the Stone Age to Industrialisation, human history has been a war between mankind and the wilderness, but that would change with the advent of ecological civilisation. As environmental issues have risen in public concern, people have become desperate address so-called ecology issues without even pondering the sophisticated interrelationship between nature and culture. By developing the notion of ecological landscapism, we hope to provide an ideological foundation for engineering, planning and design. It would be unfortunate if we disregarded rewilding as a possible approach to urbanisation, because cities and towns originally came from ‘first nature’. It may take centuries, or even millenniums, to generate the sustainable coexistence of nature and culture but now, at least, it is on the horizon.

Wuhan University
Notes on Contributors

**Arnar Árnason** is Senior Lecturer in Social Anthropology at the University of Aberdeen. He co-edited the volumes *Comparing Rural Development: Continuity and Change in the Countryside Western Europe* (Ashgate, Farnham, 2009) and *Landscapes Beyond Land: Routes, Aesthetics, Narratives* (Berghahn Books, Oxford, 2012).

**Wangheng Chen** is Professor of Aesthetics, and Director of the Centre of Cultural Research and Planning of Landscape at Wuhan University, China. His important academic posts include Vice-president of International Advisory Council of International Institute of Applied Aesthetics, and Vice-president of the Asian Society of Art. He is the author of over a hundred papers on Chinese aesthetics, and more than thirty books including *Gardens, City Life and Culture: A World Tour* (co-edited, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 2008) and *Chinese Environmental Aesthetics* (Routledge, London, New York, 2012).

**David E. Cooper** is Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at Durham University. He has been a Visiting Professor at universities in the USA, Canada, Germany, Malta and Sri Lanka, and has been the Chair of several learned societies, including the Aristotelian Society. Among his many books are *A Philosophy of Gardens* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2006), *Convergence with Nature: A Daoist Perspective* (Green Books, Dartington, 2012), and *Senses of Mystery: Engaging with Nature and the Meaning of Life* (Routledge, London, New York, 2017).

**Cairns Craig** is Glucksman Professor of Irish and Scottish Studies, and the Director of the Research Institute of Irish and Scottish Studies at the University of Aberdeen. His books include *The Modern Scottish Novel: Narrative and the National Imagination* (Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1999), *Associationism and the Literary Imagination: From the Phantasmal Chaos* (Edinburgh

Pingting Hao is PhD student of Landscape Architecture at Wuhan University, China. She is the author of several papers on landscape art and history, and Chinese environmental aesthetics. Her doctoral dissertation focuses on Song Dynasty gardens of Luoyang based on the Record of Famous Gardens in Luoyang.

Anna Kuprian is PhD student in Social Anthropology at the University of Aberdeen. Her research interests include landscape change, nature politics and environmental narratives. She has done fieldwork on human-environment relationships in Iceland. Her dissertation focuses on a debate surrounding an introduced plant, namely the Alaska lupin (Lupinus nootkatensis) in Iceland and the way it has become meaningful in ecological, as well as political, economic and socio-cultural contexts.

Finola O’Kane is Associate Professor of Architecture at University College Dublin’s School of Architecture, Planning and Environmental Policy. She was elected a member of the Royal Irish Academy in 2017. Her books include Landscape Design in Eighteenth-Century Ireland: Mixing Foreign Trees with the Natives (Cork University Press, Cork, 2004), William Ashford’s Mount Merrion: The Absent Point of View (Churchill House Press, Tralee, 2012), and Ireland and the Picturesque: Design, Landscape Painting and Tourism in Ireland 1700–1830 (Yale University Press, New Haven, London, 2013).

Jun Qi is PhD student of Landscape Architecture at Wuhan University, China. His research interests are the history and the contemporary theory of landscape architecture, particularly environmental and landscape aesthetics, landscape and human flourishing.

Sándor Radnóti is Professor Emeritus of Aesthetics at the ELTE Eötvös Loránd University of Budapest. His books include Stilpoche: Theorie und Diskussion. Eine interdisziplinäre Anthologie von Winckelmann bis heute (co-edited, Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main, Bern, 1990), The Fake: Forgery and its Place in Art (Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham, MD, 1999), and Come and See! The Rise of Modern Concept of Art: Winckelmann and the Consequences (Atlantisz, Budapest,
2010) in Hungarian. He is about to complete a monograph entitled *The Philosophy of Landscape* also in Hungarian.


**Laura Smith** is Honorary Research Fellow in Geography at the University of Exeter. Her papers have been published in *Western American Literature, Ethics, Policy & Environment, Ecological Restoration*, and *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, moreover in the edited volume *Critical Insights: Southwestern Literature* (Salem Press, Amenia, NY, 2016).