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Development of the Eighteenth Century English Landscape Garden
and its Relationship to Eighteenth Century and Early Nineteenth
Century English Poetry

A Terminal Project By Eve Erens

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INTRODUCTION

The English landscapes created in the 18th Century and English poetry of the 18th and early 19th Century, were influenced by a pervasive aesthetic philosophy which emphasized emotion and the powers of imagination. The primary emphasis of this paper is placed on the landscape gardener as poet, employing natural forms and architectural elements as emotive symbols, as the poet employs words. This is accomplished by establishing relationships between the art of landscape gardening in 18th Century England, and 18th and early 19th Century English poetry. Secondly, the paper attempts to demonstrate how a particular period in history can produce works of art which adhere to the philosophy of their day, or reflect the spirit of their times.

The paper is organized into three major sections. The first section is introduced by a brief discussion of the foreign influence on the English gardening style. From the 15th to the 17th Century, English gardens were in the spirit of the Italian Renaissance School of gardening, which gave way to a domination by the French and Dutch styles. This discussion leads into the first section, which deals with the major influences leading to a break with the French and Dutch styles, and effecting the creation of the 18th Century English landscape garden.

The first of these influences is discussed as a political overview of England in the 18th Century. Some note is also made on the influence of English topography and climate in the development of the 18th Century English gardening style. Furthermore, the 18th Century descriptive poets; the Grand Tour; the landscape paintings of the Classical Italian School; and the 18th Century aesthetic philosophy, are taken as major influences in the development of the new garden form. The common element of the abovementioned categories is that they all had a substantial effect on the break away from the French and Dutch styles of gardening. They were instrumental in diffusing a new sensibility towards nature, which is reflected in the new approach to landscape gardening in 18th Century England.

The 18th Century aesthetic philosophy is discussed as the final influence on the development of the 18th Century English garden. The

purpose of this discussion is to create a contextual framework for the body of the paper. An emphasis is placed on the relationship of these philosophical ideas to the "emotive" 18th Century gardens and to poetry. In a sense, this section establishes the analogies between landscape gardening and poetry on a philosophical level.

The second major section of this paper deals with the development of the 18th Century English landscape garden. The discussion includes a description of the characteristic styles of some of the major gardeners of the day. The emphasis is placed, not on the English gardener as a technician, but rather on his emotive treatment of the garden, in adherence to the 18th Century aesthetic philosophy. The introduction of poetry in this section supplies the verbal imagery analogous to the visual representation of the gardens.

The final section of this paper deals with the Romantic period in poetry (1798 - 1832) as it relates to the 18th Century English garden. The Romantic poet is inspired by a scene in nature and elevates it to a spiritual level, thus the term "Visionary Landscape". The landscape gardener of the 18th Century was as much a visionary as the Romantic poet. Both were in the mainstream of the Romantic tradition and the culture that formed it; both were preoccupied with the expression of evocative ideas. The main difference lies in the mode of expression. It is with the Romantic poet that the emotive qualities of a landscape can be fully comprehended, for in his verse natural forms and architectural elements become symbols. This section draws analogies between the 18th Century landscape garden and this extremely evocative poetry.

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS: INFLUENCES AND DEVELOPMENTS

I Foreign Domination of the English Gardening Style

15th - 17th C

English gardens in the spirit of the Italian Renaissance Garden: architectonic approach; the garden a series of outdoor rooms; formal; symmetrical.

Mid - Late 17th C

English gardens in the French style: scale of magnificence; formal; symmetrical; largely depending on massed trees and topiary; emphasis on vistas; straight allees; parterres.

1689

William & Mary introduce the Dutch gardening style in England: rigid architectural design; more intimate than the French style; successive spacial units; boundaries in canals and ditches; largely relying on flower color.

II The Development of the 18th Century English Landscape Garden

A. Early Development; The Irregular Garden - Early Phases of The Landscape Park

1712

Joseph Addison in his "Essays on the Pleasures of Imagination" mocks the formal French style and calls for a wilderness garden; initiates the discussion on the Beautiful and the Sublime which was to continue throughout the century.

1716

Steven Switzer, landscape gardener, publishes his "Iconographia Rustica" advocating a break from the symmetry of the French style; towards a freer gardening style.

Early 18th C

Men of taste taking the Grand Tour and exposed to the Classical Italian Renaissance School of painting (Claude Lorrain, Gaspar and Nicholas Poussin, and Salvator Rosa).

1718

Alexander Pope, poet and amateur gardener, creates his landscape garden at Twickenham. In his writings he advocates a break from the geometry of the French style, towards a freer expression in the garden; credited with being the primary

mover in promoting the practice of the new English gardening style; in his theory on gardening, which greatly influenced successive landscape gardeners, Pope emphasizes prospect, surprise, variety, concealment, and a respect for the "genius of the place."

1684 - 1748

William Kent: leader and credited with being the first great artist of the new 18th C. English garden movement; first to create landscapes using the principles of painting; created an art that realizes painting and improves nature.

Note: Kent and the artists who followed him were very much influenced by the classical landscape painters (Claude, Poussin, Rosa). They went to nature for elements and forms, unlike the French, who went to architecture and geometry. However, they didn't go all the way back to nature, for they adhered to Addison's philosophy that nature is at her happiest when she comes nearest to art.

1726

James Thomson: publication of the first installment of "The Seasons"; poetic form in blank verse as opposed to the traditional heroic couplet; focussed his attention on nature.

1714 - 1763

William Shenstone: poet and amateur gardener.

Mid - Century

Shenstone creates his ferme ornée at the Leasowes, the ornamental farm (about the same time that Lord Lyttleton landscaped his estate at Hagley). Publication of Shenstone's "Unconnected Thoughts on Gardening."

1765

B. Mid Development: The Landscape Park (Phase II)

1716 - 1783

Lancelot Brown: first professional exponent of the new English gardening style on a large scale; improvements on numerous estates; lawns right up to the house; water with irregular outlines; serpentine paths; circular tree clumps.

1772

William Chambers publishes his "Dissertation on Oriental Gardening" criticizing Brown's landscapes and advocating inspiration from the Romantic east.

1752 - 1818

Humphry Repton: first landscape gardener to break away from the extreme notion that landscapes should follow painting; emphasis on utility; advocated formal treatment in the vicinity of the house; natural, scattered tree plantings rather than circular tree clump technique employed by Brown.

C. Late Development: The Picturesque

1792

William Gilpin publishes his theories on the "Picturesque"; credited with being the founder of the Picturesque School of landscape gardening (extreme Romantic School); this school advocated that garden scenes are picturesque if they are eminently suitable for painting: a picturesque scene is characterized by roughness, grotesqueness, and varied surface, as in a wild and rugged landscape.

1796

Richard Payne Knight publishes his didactic poem "The Landscape" criticizing the Brown-Repton school and advocating the Picturesque movement.

1801

Uvedale Price publishes his "Dialogues on the Distinct Characters of the Picturesque and the Beautiful"; the other major leader in the Picturesque School of gardening.

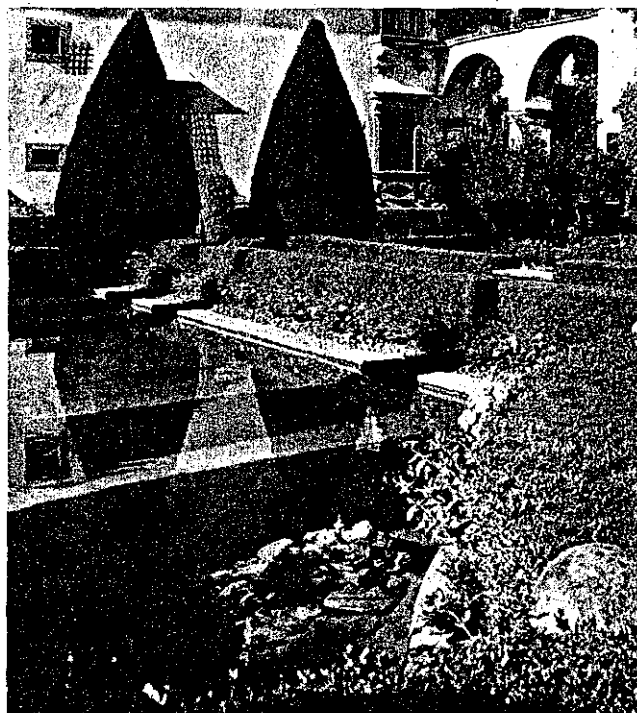
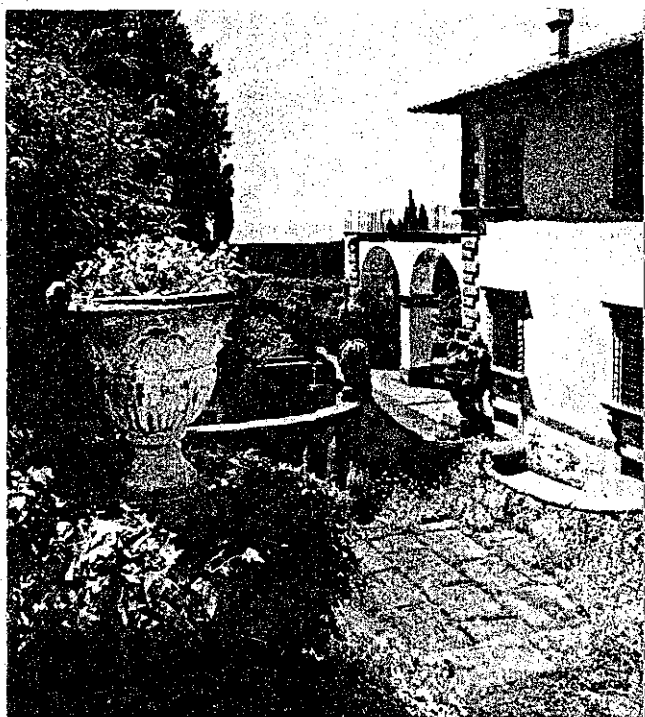
INFLUENCES LEADING TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY
ENGLISH LANDSCAPE GARDEN

English gardens from the 15th to the 17th Century were in the spirit of the Italian Renaissance garden (Figs. 1 - 3). These gardens were architectural in conception. They were considered an extension of the house, comprised of a series of outdoor rooms providing settings for social activity. The design was formal, symmetrical, and usually rectangular, without regard to natural form.

The Italian garden gave way to a domination of gardening from France and Holland. These too were formal, geometric, and unnatural. The French style (Figs. 4 - 8) was characterized by grounds laid out in rectangular plots bordered by straight allees, sometimes paved with vari-colored sand, edged with formal hedges of box and holly. The turf was inlaid with parterres and set, at even distances, with yew trees clipped into geometric forms and fanciful topiary work. Other common elements of the French style were elaborate terraces, fountains, statuary, bowling greens, arcades, espaliers, and artificial mazes. The entire garden was enclosed by a wall, setting it off from the surrounding countryside.

The Dutch gardens, introduced in England by William and Mary in 1689, were divided into successive spacial units, the boundaries more often in canals and ditches than in hedges. The rectangular outlines and parterres of box were after the French. The division of the compartments was often in 20 foot hedges of beech, hornbeam, or oak. Yew and box were often cut to resemble brick walls, pyramids were treated in verdure, and artificial formal grottoes and solar clocks were other common features.

Although the French style was on a grand scale largely depending on massed trees and topiary, and the Dutch style was more intimate, depending to a large extent on flower color, rigid architectural design characterized both styles. These gardens invaded the wilderness and exemplified Le Notre's principle of the dominance of art over nature. According to Beers (1966), there is an analogy between the French garden, with its trim regularity



Figs. 1 & 2: Aspects of the Villa Gamberaia, an Italian Renaissance garden started in the 16th Century.



Fig. 3. Villa Garzoni Garden, late Renaissance Italian garden.

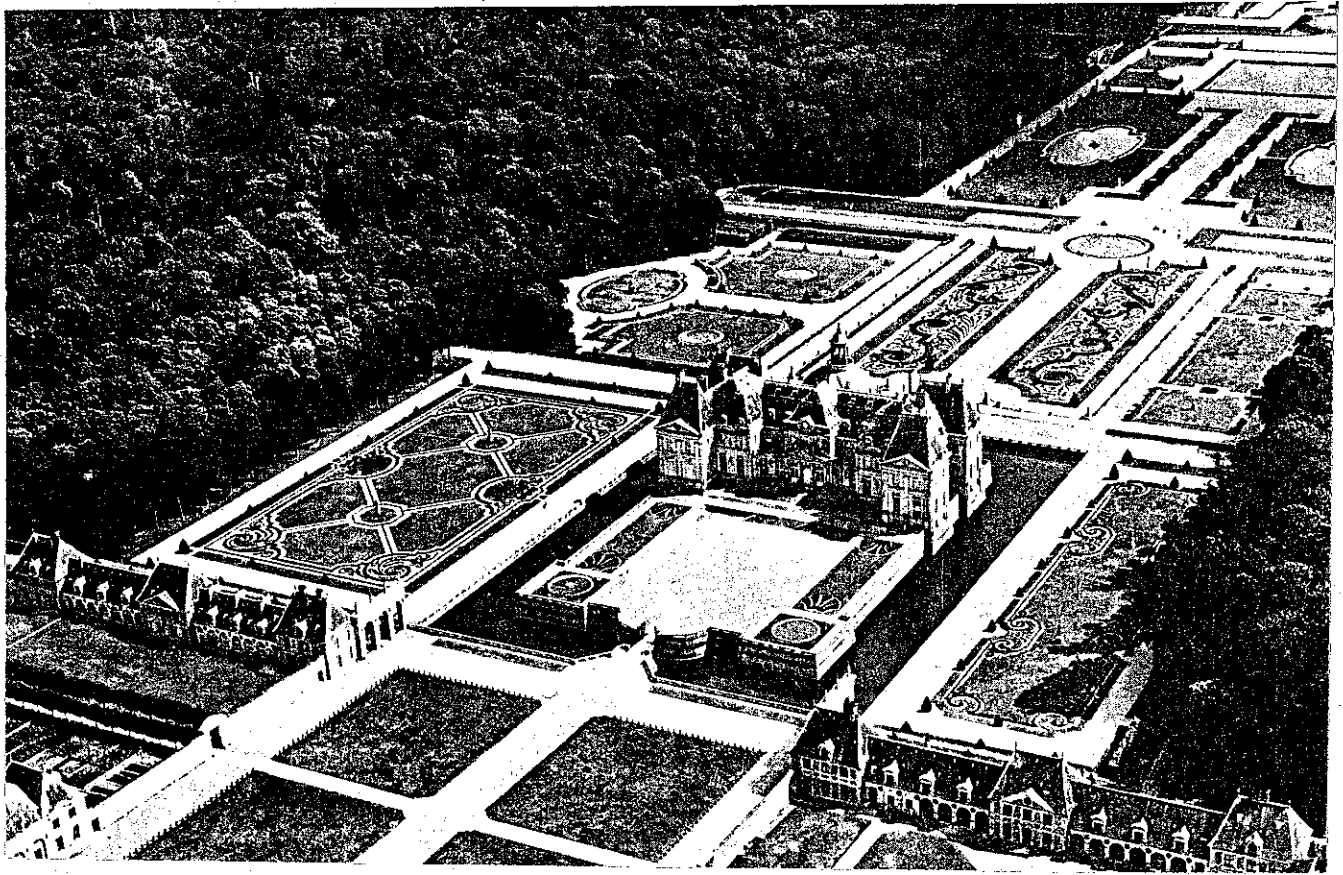


Fig. 4. Vaux-le-Vicomte: Le Notre's masterpiece.

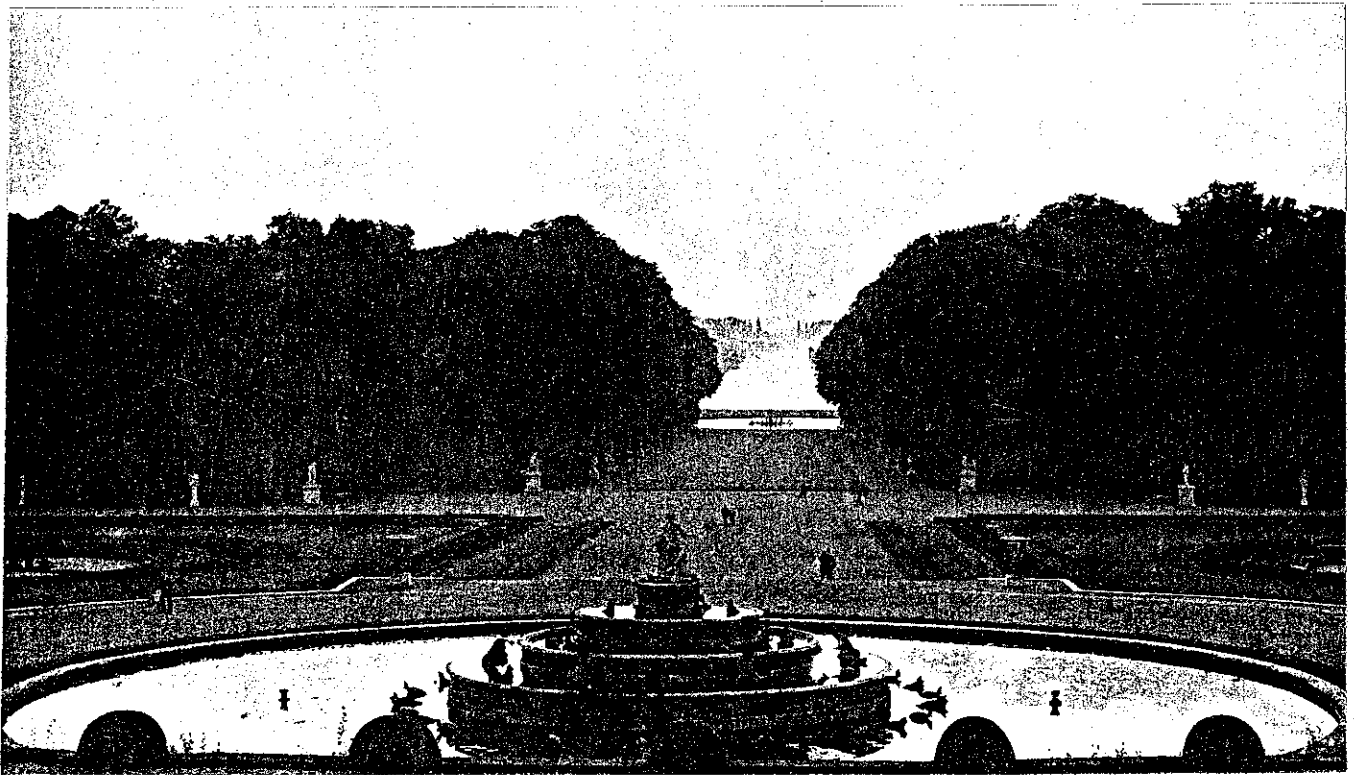


Fig. 5. Versailles: the grand vista with fountain of Latona.

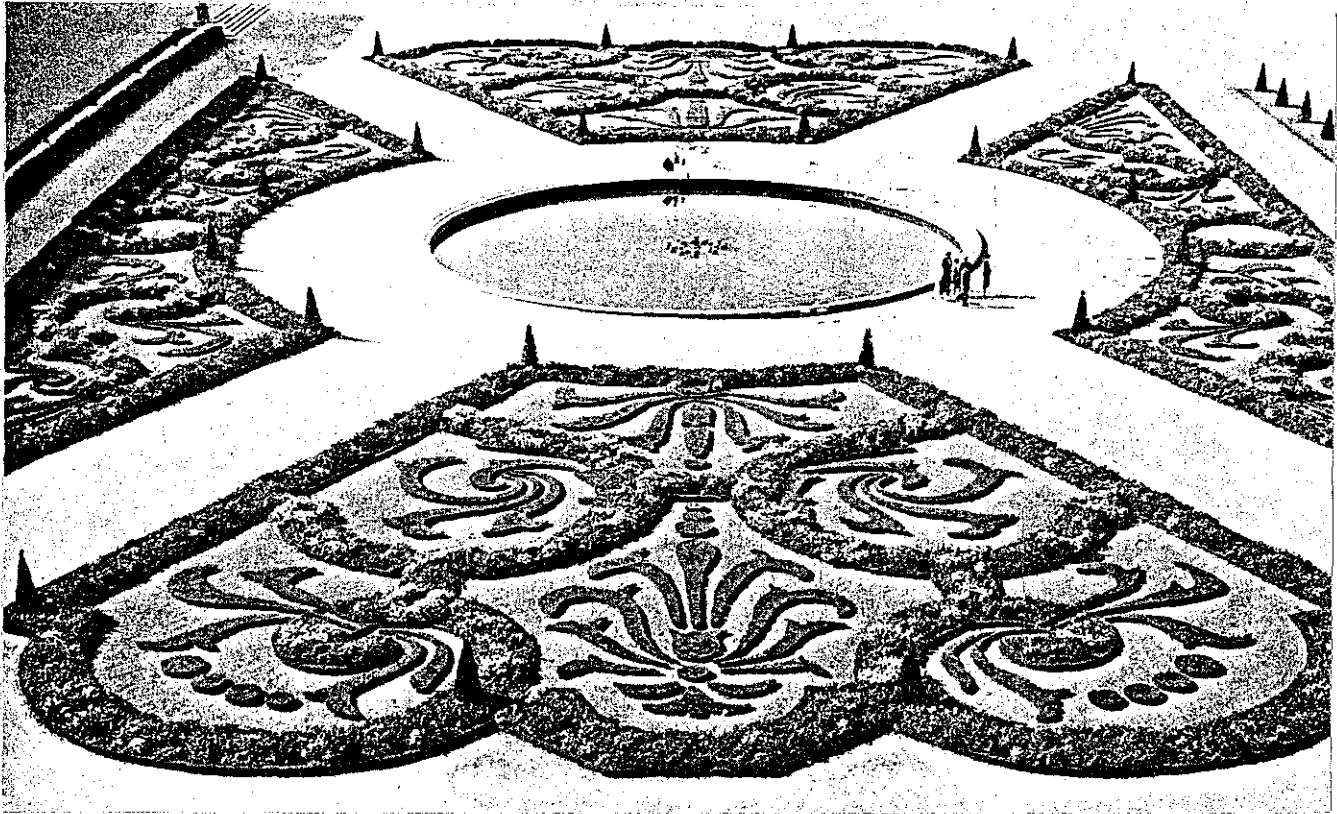


Fig. 6. Parterre: Versailles.



Figs. 7 & 8: French treatment of vegetation: topiary work.

and artificial smoothness and Pope's couplets. The same principles of regularity and formal balance are true of the Italian architecture copied from Palladio and introduced in England by Inigo Jones and Christopher Wren. In "Epistle to Lord Burlington" (1731) Pope ridicules the reigning French mode, however in a poetic style analogous to the regularity of the French garden:

His gardens next your admiration call,
 On every side you look, behold the wall!
 No pleasing intricacies intervene,
 No artful wildness to perplex the scene;
 Grove nods at grove, each alley has a brother,
 And half the platform just reflects the other.
 The suffering eye inverted nature sees,
 Trees cut to statues, statues thick as trees;
 With here a fountain, never to be played;
 And there a summer house that knows no shade;
 Here Amphitrite sails through myrtle bowers;
 There gladiators fight, or die in flowers;
 Unwatered see the drooping sea-horse mourn,
 And swallows roast in Nilus' dusty urn."¹

Influence of Nationalism

Clark (1948) attributes the development of the English garden to the intrinsic love of naturalism and liberty on the part of the English people. This feeling was accentuated by the return of the Whigs to power resulting in a pervasive anti-French policy in England. The autocratic French gardens were opposed to the English spirit of Constitutional Monarchy. "Le Notre's gardens came to symbolize autocracy and the absolute rule of man over nature, the English irregular gardens, constitutionalism and man's alliance with nature."²

Malins (1966) is of a similar opinion in his belief that, in the long run, a greater freedom in landscape design in England was inevitable. He attributes this to the fact that the French garden had none of the strong Whig virtues of benevolence, moderation or reason, as well as requiring an extravagant expenditure of money, which the English and their monarchs didn't have. Malins also points to the English rolling terrain and heavy rainfall as factors influencing the break from the French style. Finally, the smooth,

wide walks of grass so common in the English gardens provided an opportunity for the English love of exercise, unknown to the French and Italians. "The imitation of Nature in Gardens, or rather in laying-out of ground still called gardening for want of a Specific term to distinguish an art totally new, is Original and indisputably English."³ (Notes for William Mason's "Heroic Epistle to Sir William Chambers.").

Hyams (1971) points out that Chinese Sharawadgi, the Chinese system of gardening based on artificial rudeness, was a prevalent argument in favor of change from the regularity of the Dutch and French styles to a new irregularity. However, it is Hyams' contention that the English broke away from the geometric Dutch and French styles and created one of their own, not in imitation of the Chinese, but because it was in their nature to do so, thus reinforcing the arguments of Clark and Malins.

There is surely a correspondence between this new taste for picturesque gardening which preferred freedom, variety, irregularity, and naturalness to rule, monotony, uniformity, and artifice, and that new taste in literature which discarded the couplet for blank verse, or for various stanza forms, which left the world of society for the solitudes of nature, and ultimately went, in search of fresh stimulus, to the remains of the Gothic ages and the rude fragments of Norse and Celtic antiquity."⁴

Henry A. Beers

Influence of the 18th Century Descriptive Poets

The landscape poets of the 18th Century had a great influence on the development of the English landscape garden. Thomson, Shenstone, Akenside, and Dyer, to name just a few, were pioneers in the return to nature ethic. The leading poems of this period were of a new type. They were somber, Gothic in manners, architecture, and language, exhibiting a propensity towards the study of nature, and composed in blank verse as opposed to the traditional heroic couplet. However, these poets were basically passive in their treatment of the landscape. The natural world

was not evocative of strong passions, as was the case with the later Romantic poets. Their thoughts would drift out lazily over an imposing view.

Thomson's "The Seasons" came out in 1726, and was to have a great influence on succeeding poets in the realm of focusing their attention on nature. In "The Seasons" Thomson treated the landscape in a simple descriptive or pictorial manner. According to Beers (1966), "the romantic note is not absent from 'The Seasons' but it is not prominent. Thomson's theme was the changes of the year as they affect the English landscape, a soft, cultivated landscape of lawns, gardens, fields, orchards, sheep-walks, and forest preserves. Only now and then that attraction toward the savage, the awful, the mysterious, the primitive, which marks the romantic mood in naturalistic poetry..."⁵

O bear me then to vast embowering shades,
To twilight groves and visionary vales,
To weeping grottos and prophetic glooms;
Where angel-forms athwart the solemn dusk
Tremendous sweep, or seem to sweep along;
And voices more than human, through the void,
Deep-sounding, seize the enthusiastic ear;

(Thomson, "Autumn", lines 1030 - 37).

Joseph Wharton, in his "Essay on Pope" (1756), credited "The Seasons" with being "very instrumental in diffusing a taste for the beauties of nature and landscape."⁶ This influenced the rise of the natural school of landscape gardening. Alicia Amherst, in History of Gardening in England (1896) credits the poets with being pioneers in this school of nature. "Dyer, in his poem 'Gronger Hill' and Thomson, in his 'Seasons', called up pictures which the gardeners and architects of the day strove to imitate."⁷ Thomson, in "Spring" (lines 467-79) brings out the difficulty in creating these "pictures" with words. Yet his readers thought that he had been successful.

Behold yon breathing prospect bids the Muse
Throw all her beauty forth. But who can paint
Like Nature? Can imagination boast,
Amid its gay creation, hues like hers?
Or can it mix them with that matchless skill,
And lose them in each other, as appears
In every bud that blows? If fancy then
Unequal fails beneath the pleasing task,
Ah, what shall language do? Ah, where find words
Tinged with so many colours...

Influence of the Grand Tour

In the 18th Century it became fashionable for men of taste and wealth to travel in Europe. This custom was referred to as the "Grand Tour". Here they were exposed to the scenery of the Swiss Alps and the romantic landscape of Northern Italy, the Italian Alps. These new landscapes were first met with feelings of awe, but on the return journey, when the novelty had worn off, the men of taste learned to appreciate these landscapes for their beauty and sublimity. In Italy they learned to see nature through the eyes of the classical Italian school of landscape painters (Claude, Nicholas and Gaspar Poussin, and Salvator Rosa).

In their landscapes, the English gardeners tried to recapture some of the emotions experienced during the Grand Tour. In "The Prelude" (Book VI, lines 619-33) Wordsworth isolates these emotions, which he experienced upon crossing the Alps:

Downwards we hurried fast,
And, with the half-shaped road which we had missed,
Entered a narrow chasm. The brook and road
Were fellow travelers in this gloomy strait,
And with them did we journey several hours
At a slow pace. The immeasurable height
Of woods decaying, never to be decayed,
The stationary blasts of waterfalls,
And in the narrow rent at every turn
Winds thwarting winds, bewildered and forlorn,
The torrents shooting from the clear blue sky,
The rocks that muttered close upon our ears,
Black drizzling crags that spake by the wayside
As if a voice were in them, the sick sight
And giddy prospect of the raving stream...

Influence of Landscape Painting

According to Hyams (1971 b), the landscape painters were responsible for teaching 18th Century landscape gardeners the use of landscape elements in creating great works of art. The English gardeners, "...instead of using paint on canvas to create their works, used trees, shrubs, rocks, water, bricks and mortar, and as their canvas, a countryside."⁸ This quote captures, in essence, the great influence painting had on the development of the English

garden. Emphasis was placed on training the eye to perceive visual qualities in nature which the painters had isolated. Christopher Hussey, in The Picturesque, writes "Pictures were in each case taken as the guide for how to see, because painting is the art of seeing... but as soon as the imagination had absorbed what painting had to teach it, it could feel for itself, and the intermediate process... could be dropped."⁹ This goes along with the general philosophy of the day, which stressed sight as the most important sense in aesthetic experience.

The influence of the Italian Renaissance School of Claude, Poussin, and Salvator Rosa (Figs. 9-13) were apparent in the works of the 18th Century landscape gardeners. This school of painting was characterized by a combination of appreciation of natural scenery and deep rooted classical influences leading to the creation of "Ideal Landscapes." According to Clark (1948) "...this landscape was not a construction, mathematically composed in terms of the golden rule, it was animated by a dream, the beauty of which lay in its strangely changing views. Herein lies the quality of strangeness to be found in these gardens."¹⁰

Claude (Figs. 9-11) contributed to the English garden in his serene and idealized scenes, and associations with classical Greece in his depiction of ruins of classic temples. He transformed his artificial landscapes through a pervading golden light, as through a colored mirror. Rosa (Fig. 12) depicted awe inspiring, rough scenes in nature. According to Clark (1948) "His canvases, peopled with hermits and banditti and filled with twisted trees, tumbled rocks, cliffs, ruins, and racing skies, enabled the traveller to reexperience the delightful horror of such scenery and to appreciate its significance when met with in poetry, the paintings of other artists and in the landscape."¹¹

Constable, greatly influenced by Claude, depicted the drama of light and shade in nature with an air of freedom. He achieved tremendous massings of light and dark in his depiction of the comforting, rejuvenating aspects of nature, as in scenes of majestic architecture set in idyllic landscapes.

A major analogy of these paintings to landscape gardening lies in the fact that in both cases, nature is depicted as an



Fig. 9. Claude Lorraine:
sketch for
landscape.



Fig. 10. Claude Lorraine:
source of forms
used in the land-
scape park;
arching trees, lake
water, ruins.

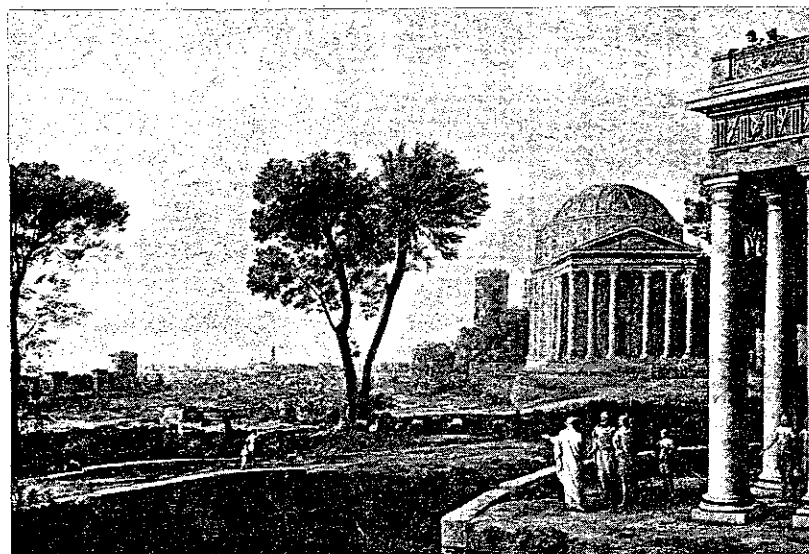


Fig. 11. Claude Lorrain:
'Coast View of
Delos.'



Fig. 12. Salvator
Rosa: tree
& hermit.

Fig. 13. Nicholas
Poussin:
engraving.



ideal vision, not as it actually is. This strong inclination to "improve" on nature through art is an underlying theme in the 18th Century English landscape garden.

Kent's works were described by Hyams (1971 b) as aspiring to garden-pictures of the ancient, man-made Italian landscape. Brown's "painted" landscapes were based on the Roman Campagna school of landscape painting as well. The Picturesque school of gardening advocated the use of studying pictures for improving real landscapes. The merits of a landscape depended on its suitability as a subject for painting. This school held the belief that gardening must be guided by the principles of painting such as composition, grouping, harmony, unity, breadth, and the effects of light and shadow. Humphry Repton managed to free himself from this extreme idea of similarity between painting and gardening, in his stress on utility rather than picturesque beauty in garden design, and the distinction between the perception of a painting as compared to viewing a three dimensional landscape. Repton's style and philosophy will be discussed in greater detail below.

Philosophical Background: The Beautiful and The Sublime

The Romantic philosophy placed a strong emphasis on the free activity of the imagination, the role of instinct, intuition, and spontaneity of feeling over the purely logical faculties of the mind. There was a return to the philosophy of Longinus who advocated freer landscapes, and the doctrine that art should strive to emulate nature, and nature is supreme only when the art underlying it is unnoticed. Reality was thought to be subjective, and external objects were perceived in terms of their evocative powers. The natural landscape was comprised of elements which could elicit emotions within the observer.

The Romantic movement was the awakening of sensation, of curiosity and the quickening of the mind's eye, the imagination. The Romantic movement originated in England and the landscape garden, a truly romantic conception, was the fruit of its first experiments.¹²

Joseph Addison's "Essay on the Pleasures of the Imagination" (1712) initiated the long discussion on the beautiful, the sublime, and the picturesque. By pleasures of imagination he means "such as arise from visible Objects, either when we have them actually in our View, or when we call up their Ideas into our Minds by Paintings, Statues, Descriptions, or any the like Occasion."¹³ By the term imagination, Addison is referring to a conglomerate faculty of presentation, of memory, of conception, and of association. A distinction is made between the primary pleasures of imagination, derived directly from objects before our eyes, and secondary pleasures flowing from the ideas of visible objects, when the objects aren't actually before the eye, but are called to memory, or formed into pleasant visions of things which are either absent or fictitious. The first case applies to the emotive powers of actual gardens, and the second instance can apply to a poet's reaction to a particular landscape, when it is not actually in sight, calling it to memory, as exemplified by the Romantic poets. Coleridge referred to this secondary imagination in terms of the coloring by a mood of a remembered or present scene, terming it the shaping imagination.

Addison isolates three sources for the primary pleasures - the great, the uncommon, and the beautiful. He associates the aesthetic sublime with physical magnitude.

By Greatness I do not only mean the Bulk of any single Object, but the Largeness of a whole View, considered as one entire Piece. Such are the Prospects of an open Champian Country, a vast uncultivated Desert, of huge Heaps of Mountains, High Rocks and Precipices, or a wide expanse of Waters, where we are not struck with the Novelty or Beauty of the Sight, but with that rude kind of Magnificence which appears in many of these stupendous Works of Nature."¹⁴

For Addison, gaiety is the emotion associated with beauty, and beauty is a function of the observer's perception rather than a property inherent in objects absolutely. Addison maintains that the best effect is achieved in the combination of beauty and sublimity.

In his essay Addison compares the emotive power of gardens with that of poetic description of natural forms.

I look up on the Pleasure which we take in a Garden, as one of the most innocent Delights in humane Life. A Garden was the Habitation of our first Parents before the Fall. It is naturally apt to fill the Mind with Calmness and Tranquility, and to lay all its turbulent Passions at Rest. It gives us a great Insight into the Contrivance and Wisdom of Providence, and suggests innumerable Subjects for Meditation.¹⁵

However, Addison maintains that description in words of visible objects may produce livelier ideas than the objects themselves due to the poet's power of selection and combination.

...because the imagination can fancy to itself Things more Great, Strange, or Beautiful, than the Eye ever saw, and is still sensible of some Defect in what it has seen; on this account it is the part of a Poet to humour the Imagination in its own Notions, by mending and perfecting Nature where he describes Reality, and by adding greater Beauties than are put together in nature...¹⁶

This concept, where Addison is referring to poetry, also embodies the prevalent theme of "improvement" upon nature by art among landscape gardeners of the 18th Century.

William Hogarth, in "The Analysis of Beauty" (1753) reduces figures, attitudes, and actions to a combination of elementary lines. He isolates the principles of beauty as fitness, variety,

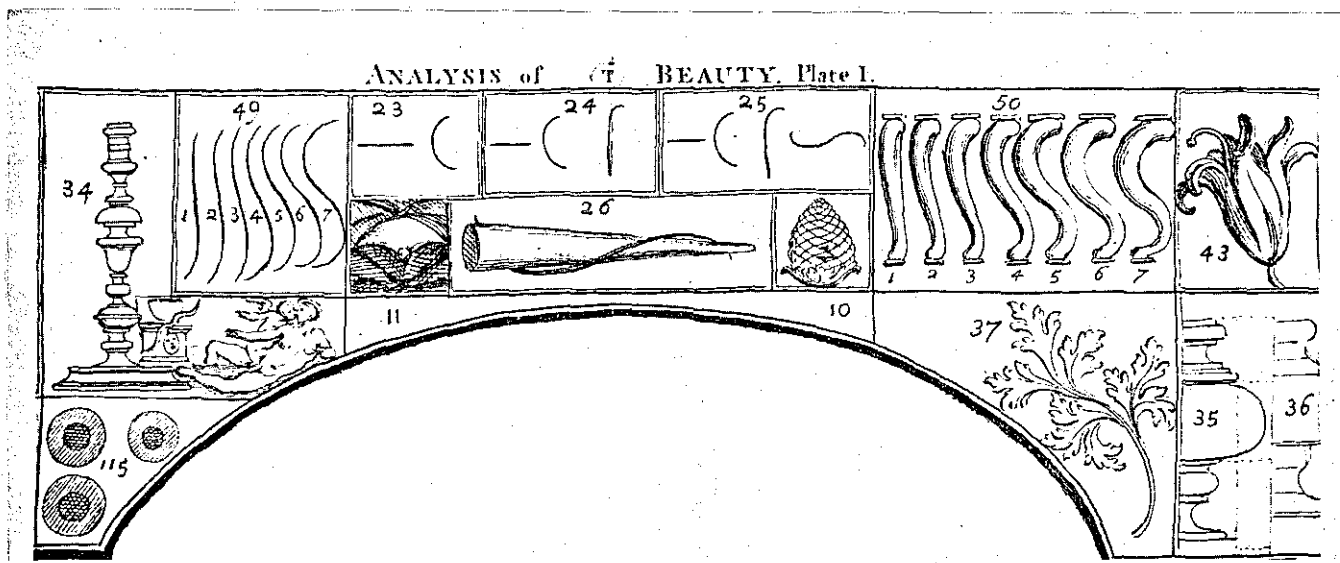


Fig. 14. William Hogarth: Analysis of Beauty.

uniformity, simplicity, intricacy, and quantity. In relation to design, fitness is a beauty adapted to particular circumstances. Variety is a beauty of a higher order than fitness, "I mean here, and every where indeed, a composed variety; for variety uncomposed, and without design, is confusion and deformity."¹⁷

Simplicity is agreeable since it facilitates perception, and intricacy, due to the instinctive love of pursuit and delight in moderate exertion. This theme is carried through in Romantic poetry, for a major premise of these poets rested on a "recollection in tranquility" paralleled to the moderate exertion in Hogarth's philosophy. In Hogarth's theory, intricacy is a mode of variety whereas uniformity and simplicity are its limits.

Hogarth's main interest is in linear variety, naming the waving line the "line of beauty" and the higher order serpentine line the "line of grace", varying in three dimensions. For Hogarth composition, as in design, is varying well, or the use of various kinds of lines in differing relations to one another without destroying simplicity. Hogarth's influence is apparent in studying the landscape gardens of the 18th Century with their serpentine lawns, streams, lakes, and walks. Finally, as in the 18th Century garden, color is treated by Hogarth in gradations of shading.

To these principles of beauty Hogarth adds certain emotional associations. Fitness excites a pleasure similar to that of truth and justice, and uniformity and regularity elicit a sense of contentment. Variety excites a lively feeling of wantonness and play, intricacy brings about a joy like that of pursuit, and quantity excites the pleasure of admiration and wonder. Here Hogarth isolates the emotive powers of design, and the emotional response of an observer, in this case the poet, who responds to various landscape elements and their treatment, and, in turn, verbally uses these elements to elicit emotion.

Alexander Gerard in "An Essay on Taste" (1759), attributes taste to the improvement of those principles which are commonly called the powers of imagination, considered as internal or reflex senses. These are reducible to the sense of novelty, sublimity,

beauty, imitation, harmony, ridicule, and virtue. Gerard associates sublimity with quantity or amplitude, and the sublimity of the passions and affections is explained by association with their causes, objects, or effects. Terror is similar in its feeling to the sublime, implying astonishment and occupying the entire soul, however terrific objects are only sublime when regarded detachedly.

Gerard maintains that poetry has no resemblance to the sensible objects signified. A poem is an imitation, not of its particular subject, but of nature. The real subject is the poet's conception, which resembles, but is never identical with, existing things.

In a word, poetry is called an imitation, not because it produces a lively idea of its immediate subject, but because this subject itself is an imitation of some part of real nature. It is not called an imitation, to express the exactness with which it copies real things; for then history would be a more perfect imitation than poetry. It is called an imitation for the very contrary reason, to intimate that it is not confined to the description only of realities, but may take the liberty to describe all such things as resemble realities, and on account of that resemblance, come within the limits of probability.¹⁸

Edmund Burke, in "A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful" (1757), was perhaps the most influential thinker on the 18th Century English landscape movement, as well as the aesthetic thought of the day. Burke's concept of beauty had a profound effect on all the visual forms of the 18th Century.

The discrimination of relative pleasure, that arising from the remission of pain, from absolute pleasure, is the foundation of Burke's distinction of the sublime from the beautiful. Burke describes the sublime as a tranquility tinged with terror, and associates it with greatness of dimension.

...if pain and terror are so modified as not to be actually noxious; if the pain is not carried to violence, and the terror is not conversant about the present destruction of the person, as these emotions clear the parts, whether fine or gross, of a dangerous and troublesome incumbrance they are

capable of producing delight; not pleasure, but a sort of delightful horror, a sort of tranquillity tinged with terror; which, as it belongs to self-preservation is one of the strongest of all the passions. Its object is the sublime.¹⁹

Burke characterizes the sublime as a twofold movement of the soul, a response to the object and self reflection, or going beyond the limits of the object. In the same way, the Romantic poet was inspired by physical nature, but in his verse elevated nature to a spiritual realm.

Beauty is described by Burke as the quality or qualities in bodies by which they cause love, or a similar passion. The properties of beauty are smallness, smoothness, gradual variation, delicacy, and colors of various hues, low saturation, and high brilliance. These are some of the major qualities characterizing the 18th Century English landscape garden.

Hugh Blair in "Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres" (1790), discusses beauty and sublimity in literature, as well as attributing moral associations to these emotions. He characterizes the moral and sentimental sublime as an effect similar to what is produced by the view of grand objects in nature, which fill the mind with admiration and elevate it above itself. Sources of the sublime are great power, vastness, and unboundedness of space, time or number. In relation to design, objects removed from us in space or time, as through antiquity, are sublime. In the 18th Century English garden, the use of antique elements, as well as allusion to them in Romantic poetry, produces an impression of the sublime. Moral sublime is characterized by magnanimity, heroism, generosity, and, in essence, human nature at its highest elevation. According to Blair, the foundation of the sublime in writing is in the nature of the objects described.

Blair conceives beauty as something residing in the object which raises the pleasant sensation. "Such as raises in the reader an emotion of the gentle placid kind, similar to what is raised by the contemplation of beautiful objects in nature; which neither lifts the mind very high, nor agitates it very much, but diffuses over the imagination an agreeable and pleasant serenity."²⁰

Blair goes on to define ultimate beauty as nature adorned by art, which was a principle turned into a reality by the 18th Century landscape gardeners.

Perhaps the most complete assemblage of beautiful objects that can any where be found, is presented by a rich natural landscape, where there is a sufficient variety of objects: fields in verdure, scattered trees and flowers, running water, and animals grazing. If to these be joined, some of the productions of art, which suit such a scene; as a bridge with arches over a river, smoke rising from cottages in the midst of trees, and the distant view of a fine building seen by the rising sun; we then enjoy, in the highest perfection, that gay, cheerful, and placid sensation which characterizes Beauty.²¹

Herein lies the beauty of the 18th Century English landscape garden.

Sir Joshua Reynolds in "Fifteen Discourses of Art" (1797), places a strong emphasis on the imagination in relation to nature and art. His contention is that the great end of all art is to make an impression on the imagination, and the real test of art is not whether the production is a true copy of nature, but if it produces a pleasant effect on the mind. "My notion of nature comprehends not only the forms which nature produces, but also the nature and internal fabrick and organization, as I may call it, of the human mind and imagination."²²

Reynolds makes a distinction between mere copying on the one hand, and invention, recombination, and improvement of nature on the other. Improvement on nature is of a higher order than mere copying, and the landscape gardeners of the day created their works in the spirit of this concept. "Upon the whole, it seems to me, that the object and intention of all the arts is to supply the natural imperfection of things, and often to gratify the mind by realizing and embodying what never existed but in the imagination."²³ Here, succinctly stated, is the philosophy of improvement underlying the 18th Century landscape garden.

Archibald Alison, in his "Nature and Principles of Taste" (1790) contends that the effect produced in the mind by objects

consists in evoking an associating activity of the imagination.

...when we feel either the beauty or sublimity of natural scenery, - the gay lustre of a morning in spring, or the mild radiance of a summer evening, the savage majesty of a wintry storm, or the wild magnificence of a tempestuous ocean, - we are conscious of a variety of images in our minds, very different from those which the objects themselves can present to the eye. Trains of pleasing or of solemn thought arise spontaneously within our minds; our hearts swell with emotions, of which the objects before us seem to afford no adequate cause; and we are never so much satiated with delight, as when, in recalling our attention, we are unable to trace either the progress or the connection of those thoughts, which have passed with so much rapidity through our imagination.²⁴

Alison goes on to isolate some design principles which specifically relate to the gardening of the day. He characterizes form as the essence of objects, and, like Hogarth, treats it linearly. In relation to form he enumerates the following rules: an expressive form should be selected as the ground of the composition; the variety of parts should be adapted to the nature of this expression; in independent forms, the beauty is greatest when the character is preserved; in dependent forms, the beauty is greatest when the character is best adapted to that of the milieu. "Relative beauty" is the term Alison uses in differentiating art from its natural subject. He considers art a product of design which is adapted to an end, where both the fitness of the adaptation and the utility of the end affect us. Although form is beautiful where the expression of utility is preserved, the beauty of character is of a higher order, and expression of design should be subject to expression of character.

In reference to the moral influence of external nature, typified by the regenerative affect of nature on the poet, Alison writes:

While the objects of the material world are made to attract our infant eyes, there are latent ties by which they reach our hearts; and wherever they afford us delight, they are always the signs or expressions of higher qualities, by which our moral sensibilities are called forth...There is not which is not fitted to awaken us to moral emotion;

to lead us, when once the key of our imagination is struck, to trains of fascinating and of endless imagery; and in the indulgence of them to make our bosoms either glow with conceptions of mental excellence, or melt in the dreams of moral good...²⁵

The subjectivity of Alison's ideas can be compared to the subjectivity of the Romantic poet's personal reaction to a natural scene, as the scene elevates the spirit above itself.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE 18TH CENTURY ENGLISH
LANDSCAPE GARDEN

Early Development: The Irregular Garden - Early Phases
of the Landscape Park

It is Hyams' (1971 b) contention that it was the poets and men of letters first to suggest that it was time to make a change from Italian and French geometry in the garden. Alexander Pope, poet and amateur gardener, celebrated the natural beauty of Windsor Forest and was very influential towards a freer expression in the garden. He set the way for the emergence of the English landscape garden, in which art serves nature, while nature improves art.

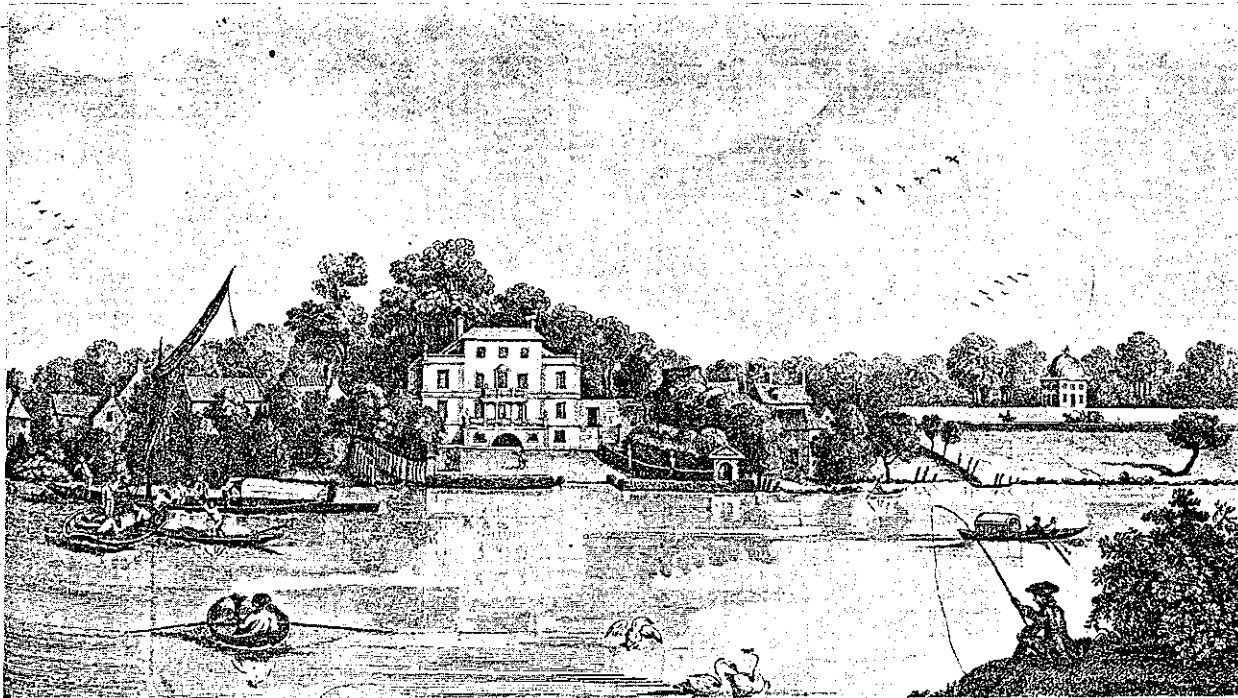


Fig. 15. Pope's house at Twickenham.

Pope saw his own five acre estate at Twickenham (Fig. 15) as a symbol for the nourishment of reason and imagination. In a description of his elaborate grotto, he transforms the visual image into poetical terms:

Nymph of the Grot, these sacred Springs I keep,
 And to the Murmur of these waters sleep;
 Ah, spare my slumbers, gently tread the Cave!
 And drink in silence, or in silence lave!

"You'll think I have been very Poetical in this Description, but it is pretty near the Truth. I wish you were here to bear testimony how little it owes to Art, either the place itself, or the image I give of it."²⁶ Pope sees his garden as a place from which those with noble thoughts, especially the poets, could gain inspiration.

Pope had a tremendous influence on his contemporaries. His main rules on gardening are a respect for the genius of the place and "Contrasts, the management of Surprises and the concealment of Bounds."²⁷ By contrasts he means varied planting in irregular patterns and serpentine lines. The element of surprise can be achieved by the placement of architectural features to suddenly confront one on turning a corner. By concealment of bounds, he means allowing the eye an uninterrupted view to infinity by accentuating vistas through careful planting. The following passage from "Epistle to Lord Burlington" (Moral Essays IV, lines 47-64), is the essence of Pope's ideas on gardening:

To build, to plant, whatever you intend,
 To rear the Column, or the Arch to bend,
 To swell the Terras, or to sink the Grot;
 In all, let Nature never be forgot.
 But treat the Goddess like a modest fair,
 Nor over-dress nor leave her wholly bare;
 Let not each beauty ev'ry where be spy'd,
 Where half the skill is decently to hide.
 He gains all points, who pleasingly confounds,
 Surprises, varies, and conceals the Bounds.
 Consult the Genius of the Place in all;
 That tells the Waters or to rise, or fall,
 Or helps th'ambitious Hill the heav'n to scale,
 Or scoops in circling theatres the Vale,
 Calls in the Country, catches opening glades,
 Joins willing woods, and varies shades from shades,
 Now breaks or now directs, th'intending Lines;
 Paints as you plant, and, as you work, designs.

Alexander Pope

Due to Pope's friendship with William Kent, the formulation of Kent's taste can somewhat be attributed to Pope's influence. With William Kent, landscape gardener, architect, and painter, emerged

the English irregular garden.

Kent was a direct ideological descendent of Stephen Switzer, professional landscape gardener. In his "Iconographia Rustica" Switzer advocates the submission of landscapes to nature. He advises against wall building, promotes a measure of formality and regularity in the vicinity of the house, and puts forth the notion that gravel and sand walks should informally run through the entire estate, even through cornfields. Kent, in the Switzer manner, created landscapes without formal avenues, clipped hedges, or pleached allees, but rather laid the adjacent countryside open to view from an idealized natural setting (Figs. 16-18).

According to Clark (1948), Kent was the first to make landscapes using the principles of painting and to use new forms based on the direct observation of nature. His tree clump techniques (Fig. 16), sinuous lakes, and serpentine streams were reproduced in later phases of the landscape park. In "The Seasons" Thomson describes a scene from Esher Park, a Kent landscape:

Heav'ns what a goodly prospect spreads around,
Of hills, and dales, and woods, and lawns, and spires!
And glittering towns, and gilded streams, till all
The stretching landscape into smoke decays.

Walpole wrote in relation to Kent, "He leaped the fence and found all nature was a garden...Thus the pencil of his imagination bestowed all the arts of landscape on the scenes he handled. The great principles on which he worked were perspective, and light and shade."²⁸ Walpole further remarks on Kent's versatility:

He was a painter, an architect, and the father of modern gardening. In the first character he was below mediocrity; in the second, he was the restorer of the science; in the last, an original and the inventor of an art that realizes painting and improves nature. Mahomet imagined an Elysium, but Kent created many.²⁹

A fine early landscape garden deserving mention is George Lyttleton's estate at Hagley (Fig. 19). Lyttleton, himself a poet, was a patron of James Thomson in "The Seasons." The poem was revised at Hagley in 1743, and was replenished with illustrations by William Kent.

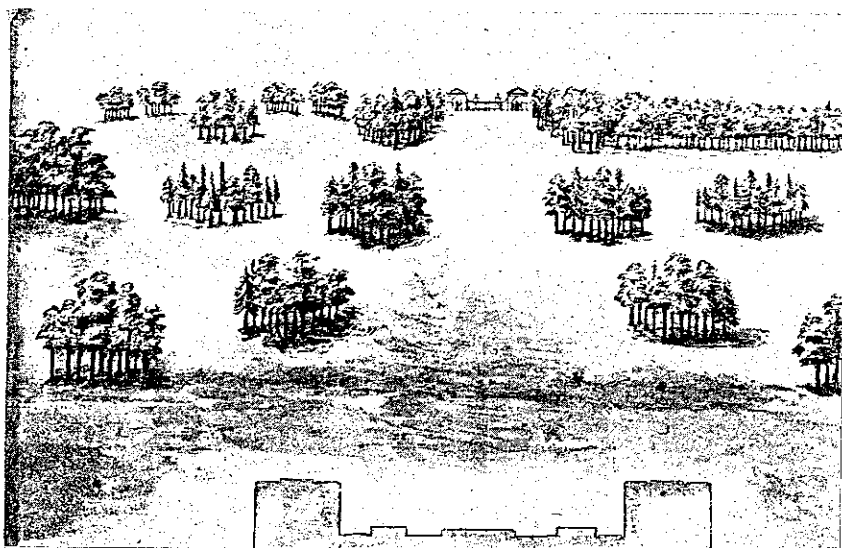


Fig. 16. Wm. Kent: the invention of tree clump technique.

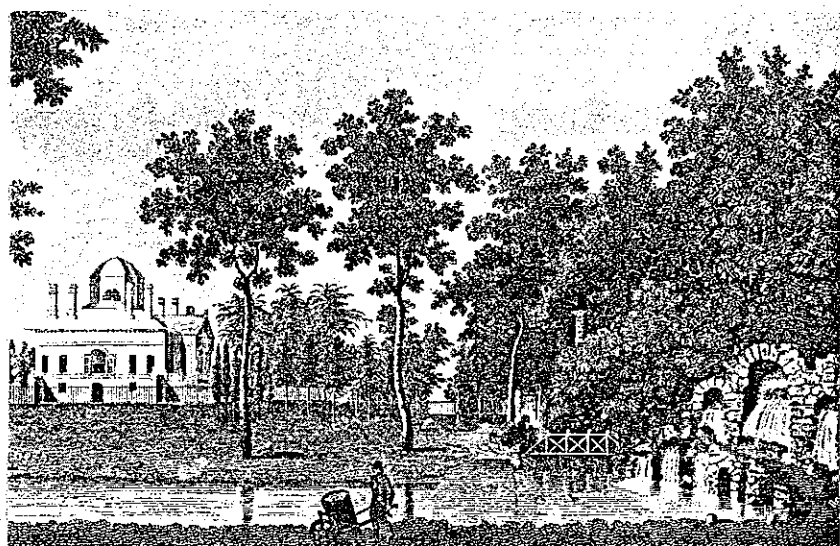


Fig. 17. View of house & gardens at Chiswick, with Kent's cascade.



Fig. 18. Serpentine river at Chiswick.

This picturesque garden scene was characterized by spacious lawns, a hermitage, and an ivy-clad ruined castle. The castle inspires that melancholy contemplation associated with things past. Other emotive elements in this landscape, derived from changes made in 1756, consists of a fine Palladian house, a grotto, statues of Venus and Appollo, a cascade, mossy seats, an urn dedicated to the memory of Pope, and a rotunda supported by ionic pillars. In 'Spring' of "The Seasons" (lines 895-903) Thomson describes a scene at Hagley associating its beauty with the emotion of contentment:

...feels an inward bliss
 Spring o'er his mind, beyond the power of kings
 To purchase. Pure Serenity apace
 Induces thought, and contemplation still.
 By swift degrees the love of nature works,
 And warms the bosom; till the last, sublimed
 To rapture and enthusiastic heat,
 We feel the present Deity and taste
 The joy of God to see a happy World.

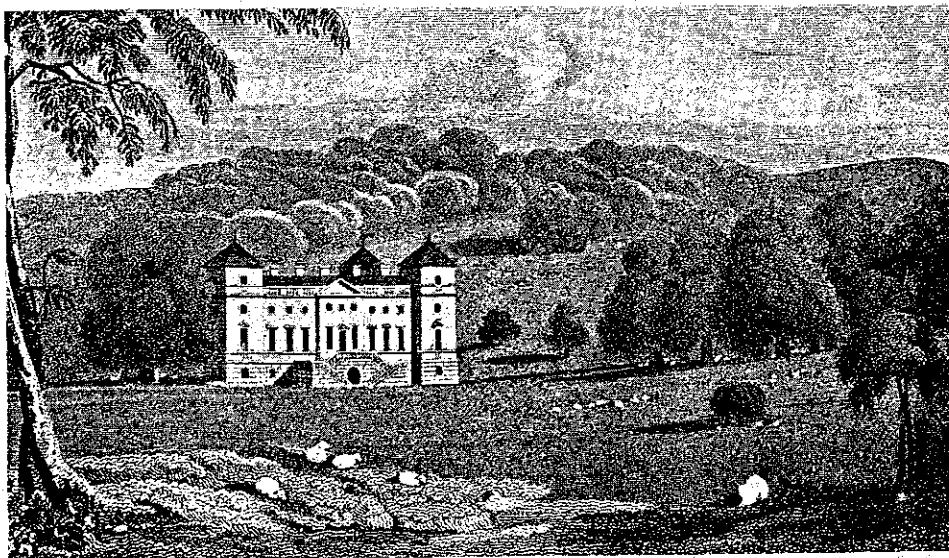


Fig. 19. Hagley Park, Worcestershire: Lord Lyttleton's landscape park.

Thomson goes on to isolate some of the picturesque qualities of the scene in 'Spring' (lines 909-13):

There along the dale
 With woods o'erhung, and shagged with mossy rocks,
 Whence on each hand the gushing waters play,
 And down the rough cascade white-dashing fall
 Or gleam in lengthened vista through the trees...

In keeping with the French and Dutch tradition, these early irregular gardens were formed along strong axial vistas, although they were not symmetrical. In these gardens the imitation of nature signified primarily a respect for the "genius of the place." The view of nature was modelled after the classical Italian school of painting, and a strong emphasis was placed on prospect. On the advice of Joseph Addison, who felt that "fields of corn make a pleasant prospect",³⁰ the Ferme Ornees (ornamental farms) resulted. One such example was Shenstone's Ferme Ornee at the Leasowes.

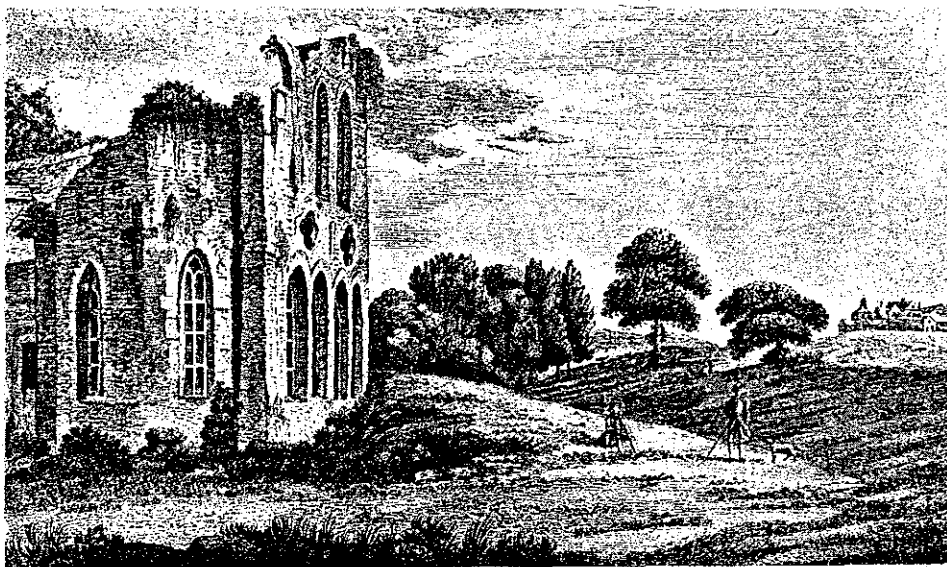


Fig. 20. The Leasowes, Worcestershire: the priory ruin and William Shenstone's house.

Shenstone was both a poet and a landscape gardener. His essay, "Unconnected Thoughts on Gardening" was published after his death in 1765. In the essay Shenstone deals with a pictorial treatment of the landscape. He advocates the use of methods employed by painters, and forms which stimulate the imagination. He places an emphasis on the variety which natural scenery supplies everywhere. In his essay, Shenstone specifically deals with his achievements at the Leasowes. In a series of pictures, he creates a variety in tone, texture, and the positioning of objects. In his compositions he contrasts urns, seats, and other architectural features with the natural tree groupings and sweeps of lawn. He advocates the use of ruins which "afford that pleasing melancholy which proceeds from a reflection on decayed magnificence."³¹ A sense of novelty is

achieved by woods suddenly opening to reveal a prospect, or by the careful placement of urns and obelisks at unexpected points, as on suddenly turning a corner. Most of Shenstone's naturalistic principles were taken up by the picturesque followers at the end of the century.

According to Sir Thomas Whately in Observations on Modern Gardening (1771), Shenstone thought that "the most important end of all poetry was to encourage virtue and cyclically, that virtue grew from the landscape that was the inspiration for the verse." It was doubtful "whether the spot inspired his verse; or whether in the scenes which he formed, he only realized the pastoral images which abound in his songs."³²

These early gardens, in their search for prospect and in their adherence to Pope's three conditions of surprise, variety, and concealment, led the 18th Century gardener from the irregular to the picturesque.

So the quest for 'prospect, animated prospect' and the art of arranging natural materials to the forms of painting, using nature's undulating line, planting clumps of trees as screens, emphasis on punctuation, and comprehending the beauties of light, shade and buildings as a painter would do, became the mission of all men of taste.³³

H. F. Clark

Mid-Development: Phase II of the Landscape Park

Lancelot "Capability" Brown had more to do with the transformation of the English landscape than anyone, for he was widely imitated. He was born in Kirkharle in Northumberland in 1715, and was the first kitchen gardener at Stowe in 1750, where he met and learned from William Kent.

Brown followed the aesthetic philosophy of Burke and Hogarth, and his landscapes exemplified that ideal vision of nature seen by Claude. He derived some of his methods from Southcote's ornamental farm (the perimeter belt), Shenstone, and Kent (tree clump technique). Brown was widely criticized primarily for his ruthlessness in improvement, and Christopher Hussey in The Picturesque, calls him "that most dangerous phenomenon, a practical man inspired by a theory. But a theory, moreover, that although derived from visual qualities had become intellectual and standardized."³⁴ Hussey quotes a passage by Hannah More where Brown explains his methods in literary terms: Now there, said he, pointing his finger, I make a comma, and there, pointing to another part (where an interruption is desirable to break the view) a parenthesis - now a full stop, and then begin another subject."³⁵ However it is Clark's (1948) contention that the next paragraph was a repetition of the first, and Brown never did begin another subject.

In Brown's typical work (Figs. 21-22), the garden was separated from the surrounding countryside with a belt of trees encircling its perimeter. The inner edge of this belt was irregular and serpentine, projecting and receding in accordance with the contours, softened by tree clumps planted in groups of two or three. The middle ground of this picture landscape was often enlivened by water, the stream or lake being dammed to a level below the base of the trees, to fully reflect their form. The water's edge was concealed either by sloping, planting, or by an architectural feature such as a small bridge. His undulating lawns were brought to the very walls of the house, which commanded an uninterrupted view by the use of a ha-ha (sunken fence). Brown's ruthlessness

is evident in his "improvement" of the natural courses of rivers, as well as the complete remoulding of level ground into gently rolling terrain. William Cowper writes of Brown's ruthlessness in "The Task" (Book III, lines 765-83):

Lo, he comes!
 Th'omnipotent magician, Brown, appears!
 Down falls the venerable pile, th'abode
 Of our forefathers - a grave whisker'd race,
 But tasteless. Springs a palace in its stead,
 But in a distant spot; where, more expos'd,
 It may enjoy th'advantage of the north,
 And aguish east, till time shall have transform'd
 Those naked acres to a shelt'ring grove.
 He speaks. The lake in front becomes a lawn;
 Woods vanish, hills subside, and vallies rise:
 And streams, as if created for his use,
 Pursue the track of his directing wand,
 Now murm'ring soft, now roaring in cascades -
 Ev'n as he bids! Th'enraptur'd owner smiles.
 'Tis finish'd, and yet, finish'd as it seems,
 Still wants a grace, the loveliest it could show,
 A mine to satisfy th'enormous cost."

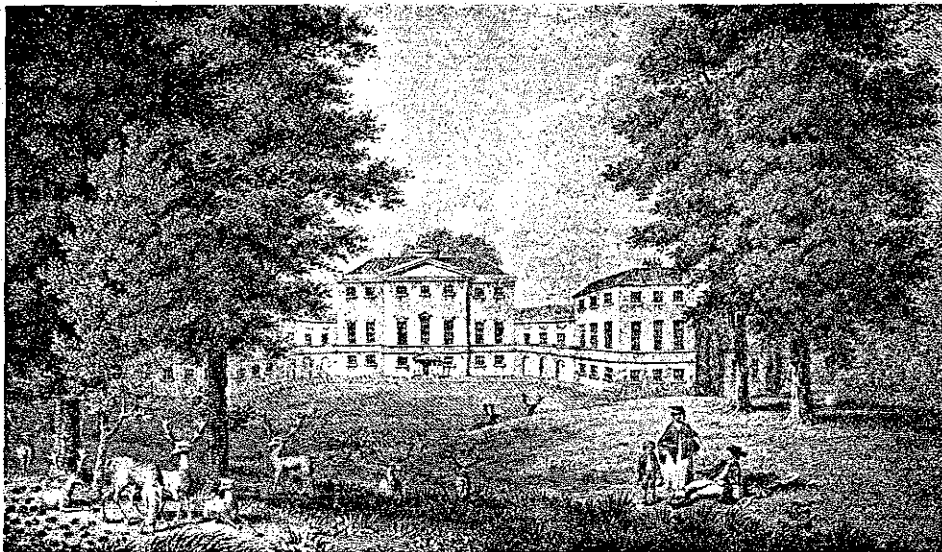


Fig. 21. Nuneham, Oxon: The house and Brown's landscape park.

In his sweeping turf accented by majestic trees, gentle slopes to water reflecting the tones and forms of the trees, and in the far distance, rising ground meeting the horizon, Brown exemplified the ideal of improvement of rough nature through art. He saw nature as striving for perfection, only able to achieve it through man's intervention. Brown's motif was the selection of nature's best, and the elimination of false accidents which she

may have made. He followed Burke's ideas on beauty, for whom the rotund had a noble, sublime effect. Furthermore, Burke's ideas on beauty are seen in Brown's smooth, gentle lawns and slopes, with an openness, brightness, and clarity throughout, and in his gradual variation in serpentine, linear patterns. However, Brown's vastness of dimension never inspired awe or dread, and therefore never reached Burke's sublime. Brown adopted Hogarth's line of beauty in his serpentine lakes, rivers, and lawn edges.

Brown's landscapes were subject to much criticism throughout the remainder of the century, chiefly on the basis of the austerity of his shaven lawns, and his unnatural circular tree clumps. However, in the following quote, Clark (1948) captures the essence and significance of the Brownian landscape:

And now that venerable maturity has been reached in the few survivors of Brown's parks, and now that those famous clumps have been thinned and the serpentine streams overhung with trees, one can whole-heartedly applaud his achievements.³⁶



Fig. 22. Blenheim Palace, Oxon: A view of Brown's artificial lake.

In 1772, Sir William Chambers, architect to George III, published his "Dissertaion on Oriental Gardening" where he advocated inspiration in gardens from the romantic East (Fig. 23), and malignantly attacked Brownian landscapes in the sense that they

failed to entertain or amuse.

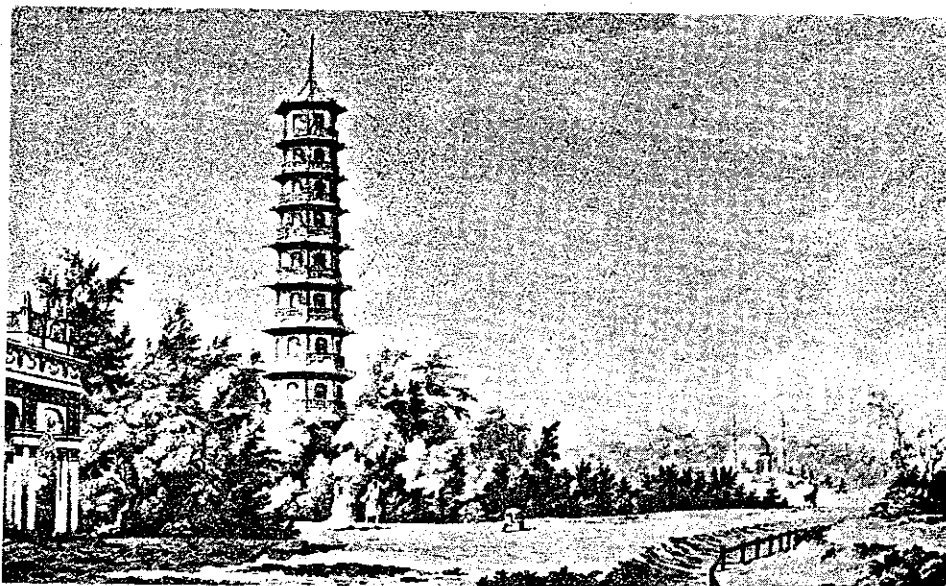


Fig. 23. The great Pagoda at Kew by William Chambers.

In his search for novelty Chambers got into the realm of the bizarre. He isolates three emotive scenes: pleasing, horrid (like the sublime), and enchanted (like the picturesque). In the sublime he advocates such horror inspiring elements as impending rocks, dark caverns, gloomy woods, ruined buildings, crosses, wheels, and the whole apparatus of torture to be visible from the road.

Hyams (1971 a) views Chamber's dissertation as pure nonsense, since Chambers had never actually set eyes on a Chinese landscape, however, Hyams does credit it with a validity in advocating a richer plant material in the garden. In his discussion of the use of color in the garden, Chambers was well ahead of his time. The lack of color in the 18th Century garden was primarily due to the strong influence of painting on landscape gardening, where the main concern was with chiaroscuro, and the only acceptable colors were Claudian golds and browns, associated with the sublime.

In a retaliation poem against Chambers' dissertation, William Mason praises Brown's natural scenes. In his poetry, Mason discarded the heroic couplet for blank verse, which he thought allowed for more variety, and parallels this new poetic form, with its variety, to the freedom of the natural landscapes created by the 18th Century landscape gardeners. According to Mason in "The English

Garden", variety

Assists the Balance; 'gainst the barren crag.
 She lifts the pastur'd slope; to distant hills
 Opposes neighb'ring shades; and, central oft,
 Relieves the flatness of the lawn, or lake,
 With studded tuft, or island. So to poize
 Her objects, mimic Art may oft attain:
 She rules the foreground. She can swell or sink
 its surface; here her leafey screen oppose,
 And there withdraw, here part the varying greens,
 And there in one promiscuous gloom combine
 As best befits the Genius of the scene.

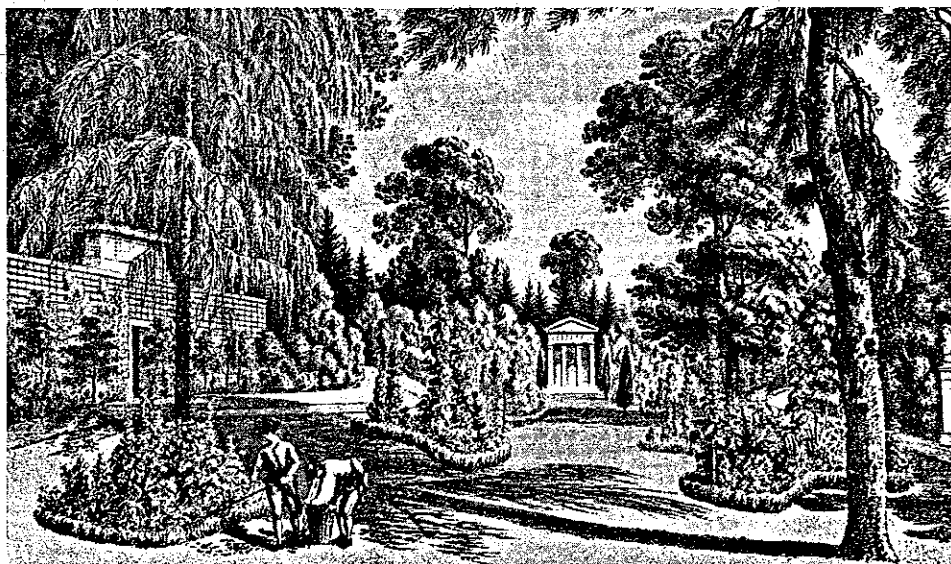


Fig. 24. The landscape flower garden by William Mason

With the death of Brown in 1783, a controversy ensued on the role that landscape painting should play in influencing landscape design. Repton, the new "Monarch of Landscape" advocated an independence from painting, whereas the leaders of the picturesque school, Richard Payne Knight and Uvedale Price, after the philosophy of William Gilpin, argued in favor of subservience to painting.

Humphry Repton was born at Bury St. Edmunds in 1752. Repton had a rather sound education in poetry, music, and the art of drawing. From this stems his technique of "before and after" illustrations by means of superimposed drawings in the forms of

hinged flaps (figs. 25-26)



Fig. 25. South front of Harlestone Park before improvement.

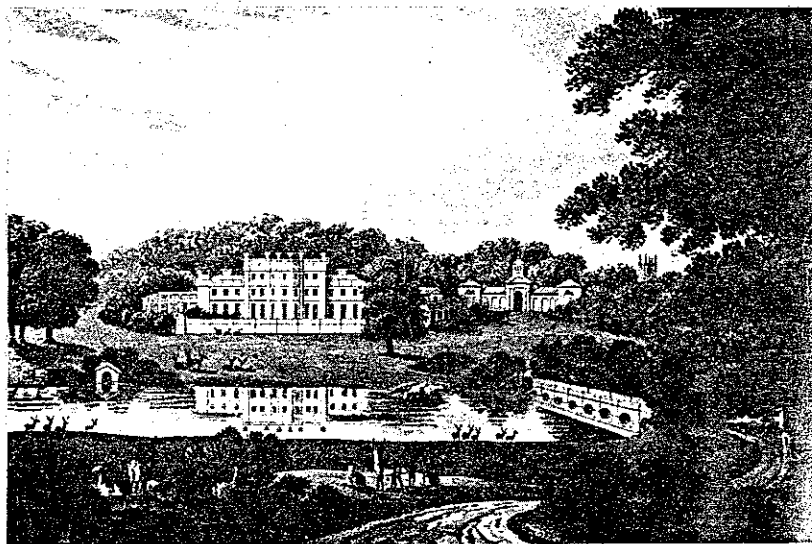


Fig. 26. South front of Harlestone Park after improvement.

According to Marie-Louise Gotheim in History of Garden Art (1928), Repton "was the first man to free himself from the exaggerated idea of a similarity between painting and landscape gardening. He laid his finger on the difference between them, caused by the constant alteration in the spectator's point of view, and by changes of light in the garden."³⁷

Repton's overall theory on gardening consists in the following: a landscape garden should be a work of art, but

strictly following nature, not in imitation of the art of landscape painting; a garden should be picturesque, but not simply a picture since a painting is viewed by a standing spectator in a constant light, while a garden is viewed by a spectator on the move and in a light which is continually changing in direction and quality; the garden artist must aim at creating a beautiful work, but must never sacrifice comfort and utility; finally, the house and garden must be treated as a unity. Repton adopted Burke's idea of scenic beauty consisting in smoothness and perpetual change, and advocated that a garden must be congruous with its natural setting, adhering to Pope's rule that "the genius of the place" must be preserved.

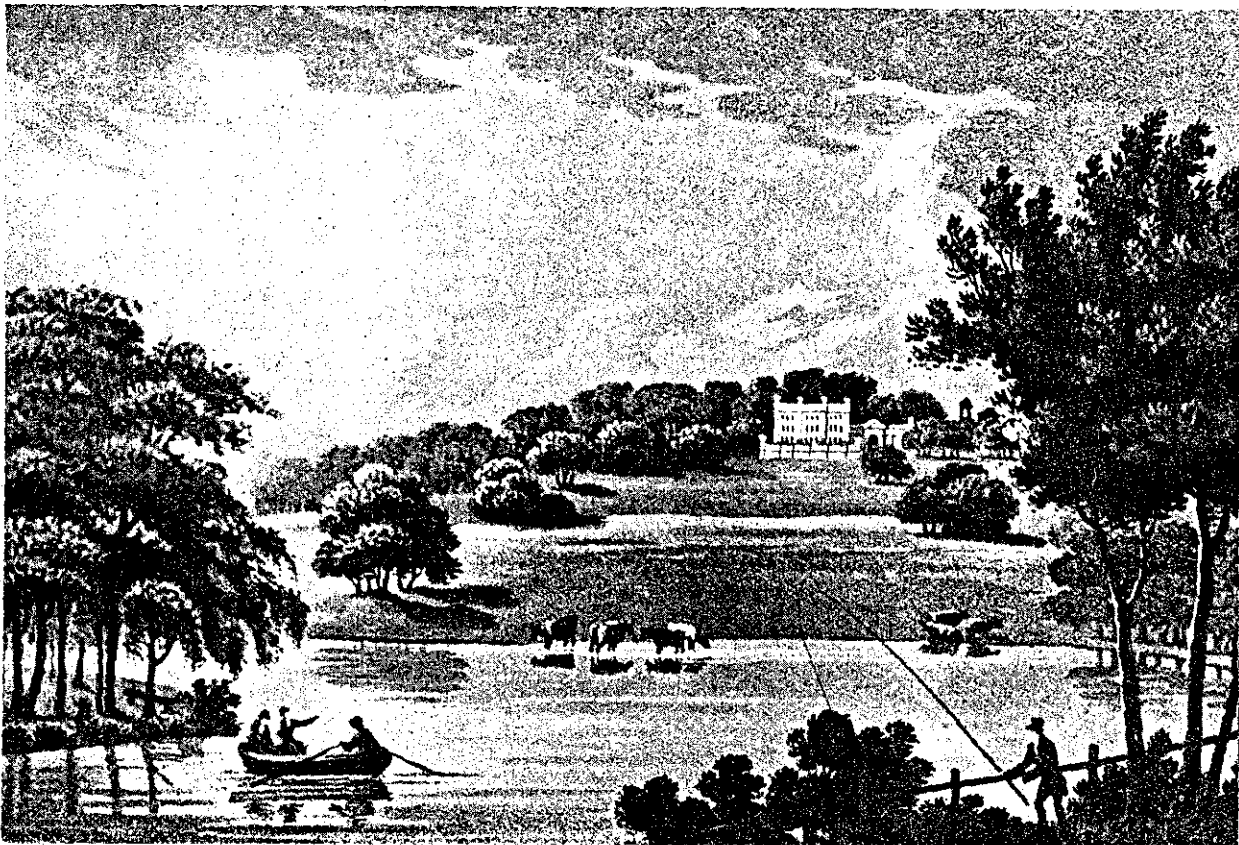


Fig. 27. Sketch by Humphry Repton: A gentleman's park.

Repton's work differed from Brown in his belief that a house needed a formal base to link it to its natural setting. This was achieved by constructing terraces and parterres in the vicinity of the house, rather than isolating the house in a sea of lawn in the

Brownian manner. Repton's treatment of plantings is fuller, with trees cascading into the valley below following the natural contours, as opposed to Brown's circular "tree bonnets" on hilltops. Repton also criticized Brown for unnecessary serpentine, in his belief that a straight line will inevitably curve upon crossing contours. Repton placed great emphasis on utility and convenience. Instead of hiding the kitchen gardens as Brown did, he placed them near the stables for easy transport of manure. With the same emphasis on utility, he felt that an approach from park gate to the house should take the shortest route. Repton was against Brown's method of planting a belt of trees around the perimeter of the garden, due to its exclusionary nature. However, in spite of these differences, Repton was a fervent defender of Brown from the attacks of the Picturesque (extreme Romantic) school of gardening.

Repton was also a prolific writer. In "Sources of Pleasure in Landscape Gardening," Repton expounds his theories, touching on the emotive aspects of landscape gardening. He finds association a source of delight. By local accident, remains of antiquity, personal attachment to long known objects such as the seat, tree, walk, or spot, are endeared by remembrance of past events. He contends that such personal or historical circumstances involve association with concretes rather than with abstract qualities. For Repton, utility, fitness, and design all include associations depending on the properties essential to the objects. It is only as far as they are associational that utility and fitness are aesthetic. Repton's main principle on gardening is that gardens should be laid out, not with a view to their picturesque beauty, but to their uses and enjoyment in real life. Their conformity to these purposes constitutes their beauty. Furthermore, Repton allowed for deception in the imitation of nature, "...it is only by a pleasing illusion that we can avail ourselves of the means that nature herself furnishes even in tame scenery to imitate her bolder effects; and to this illusion, if well conducted, the eye of genuine taste will not refuse its assent."³⁸ In this sense a parallel can be made with the later Romantic poets who are concerned with the subjectivity of reality, and in turn, the motifs of

deception, evidenced in some of the dreamlike imagery used in their verse.

According to Hyams (1971 a),

However great Capability Brown's influence had been, and not least, as we have seen, on Repton himself, Repton's was more widespread if only because he wrote and published his ideas, and in so doing converted his practical experience into a working theory of his art which enabled others to study it.³⁹

Late Development: The Picturesque

William Gilpin's "Essays on Picturesque Beauty" (1792), established him as the founder of the Picturesque school of landscape gardening. The term "picturesque" was used to describe any scene eminently suitable for pictorial representation. In his essays, Gilpin distinguishes the picturesque from the beautiful and the sublime. The picturesque is characterized by a greater degree of complexity and intricacy, epitomized by roughness of texture, than either the beautiful or the sublime (Figs. 28-29).

In 1796 Richard Payne Knight brought out "The Landscape", a didactic poem addressed to Uvedale Price, attacking the Brown-Repton school of gardening, and outlining his theories on the picturesque (Fig. 30-31). He despised Brown's clumps, belts, and shaven lawns (Fig. 30).

T'improve, adorn, and polish, they profess;
But shave the goddess, whom they come to dress,
Level each broken bank and shaggy mound,
And fashion all to one unvaried round;

.....
Shav'd to the brink, our brooks are taught to flow
Where no obtruding leaves or branches grow,
While clumps of shrubs bespot each winding vale,
Open alike to ev'ry gleam and gale.

Hence, hence! thou haggard fiend, however call'd,
Thin, meagre genius of the bare and bald;
Thy spade and mattock here at length lay down,
And follow to the tomb thy fav'rite Brown.
Thy fav'rite Brown, whose innovating hand
First dealt thy curses o'er this fertile land.

Richard Payne Knight, "The Landscape"

Figs. 28 & 29 are aquatints from William Gilpin's three essays.

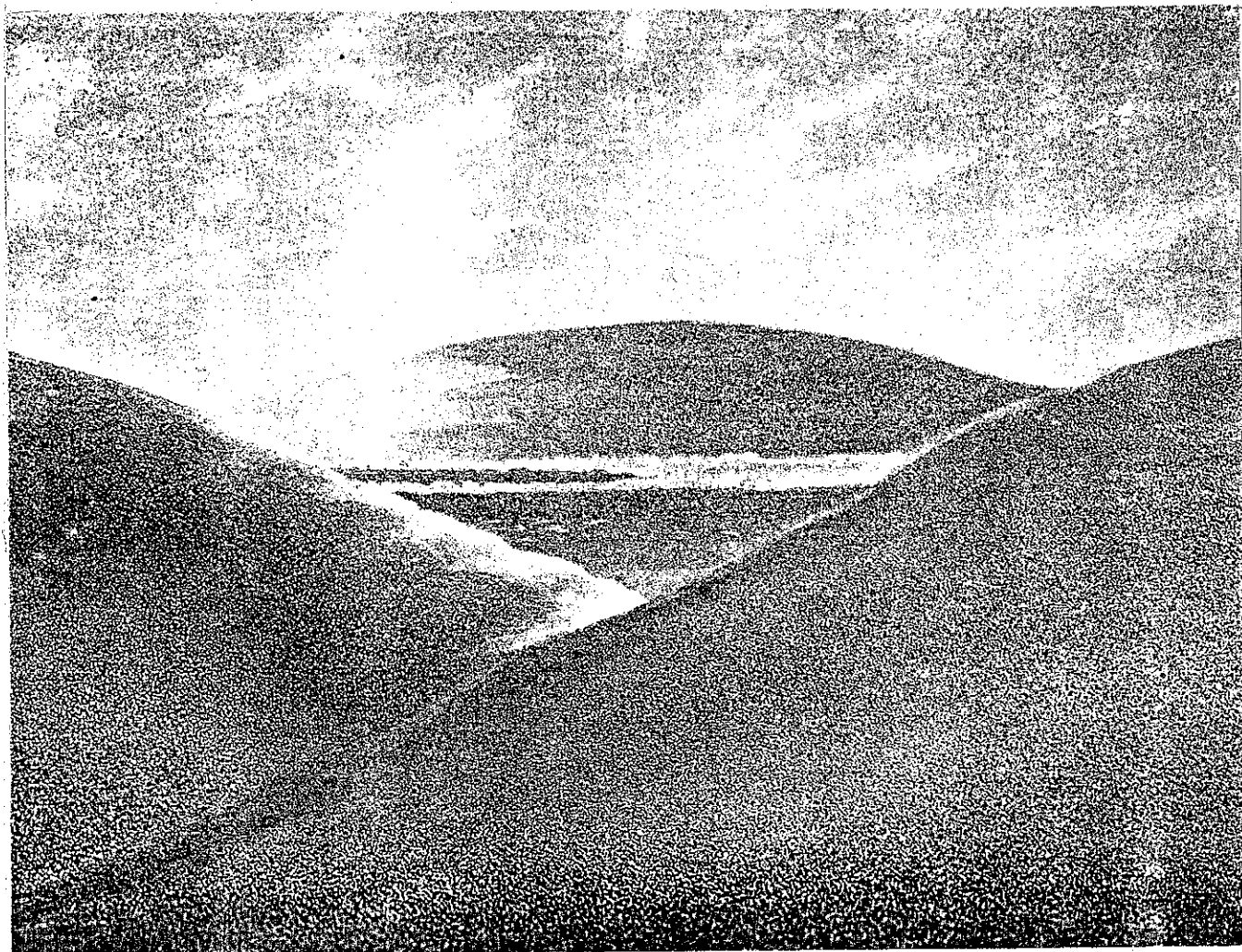


Fig. 28. A scene without picturesque adornment.

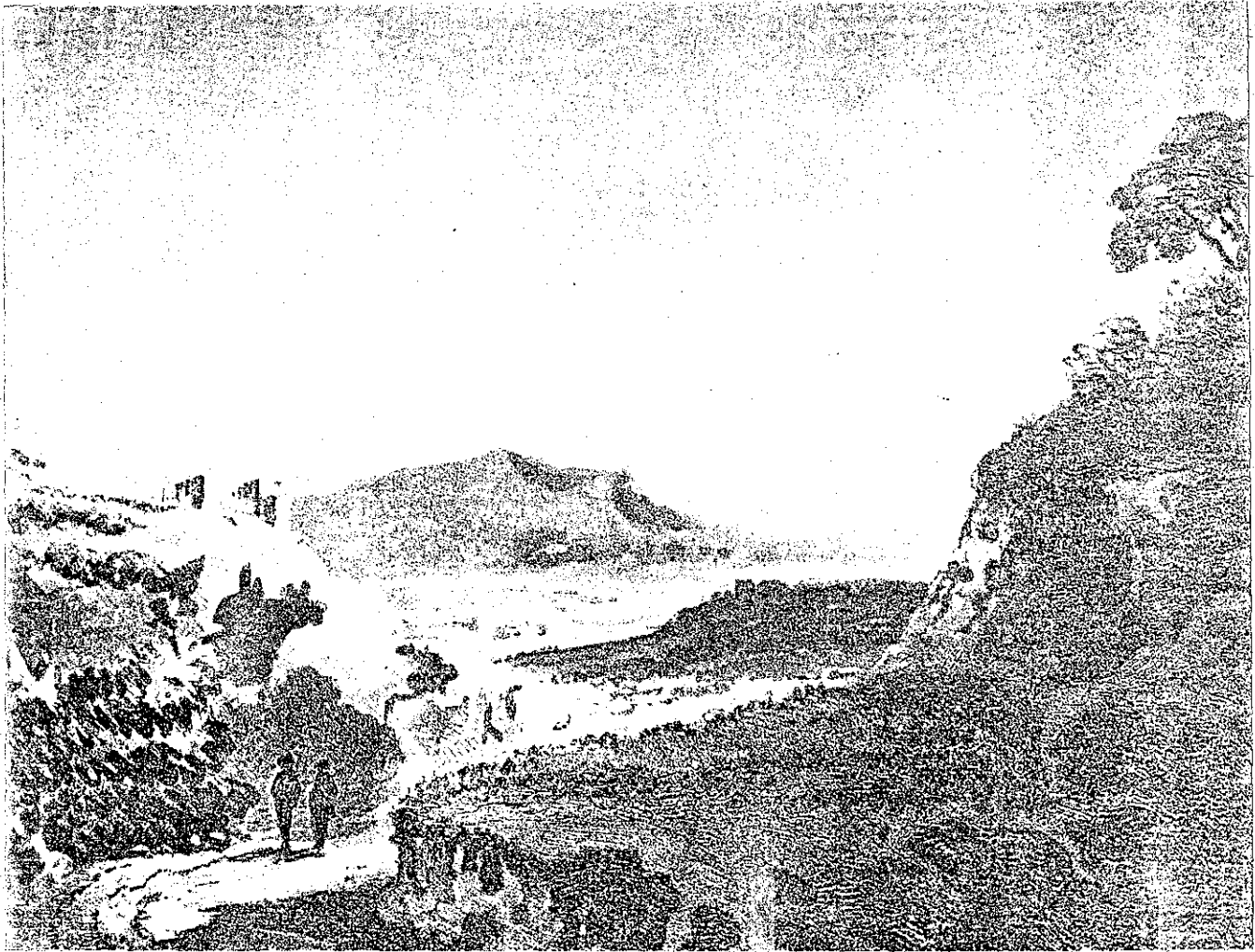


Fig. 29. The same general scene enhanced by picturesque composition.

Figs. 30 & 31 are engravings from Richard Payne Knight's
"The Landscape."



Fig. 30. A Palladian house unembellished by a picturesque gardener.



Fig. 31. Gothic house landscaped in the picturesque manner.

In Book II of "The Landscape" Knight gives some practical advise for his ideal landscape (Fig. 31).

...Again the moss-grown terraces to raise,
 And spread the labyrinth's perplexing maze;
 Replace in even lines the ductile yew,
 And plant again the ancient avenue.
 Some features then, at least, we should obtain,
 To mark this flat, insipid, waving plain;
 Some vary'd tints and forms would intervene,
 To break this uniform, eternal green.

Knight isolated three essential features of the picturesque as roughness, irregularity, and sudden variation. According to Sypher (1960), for Knight, the picturesque was a mode of vision, a way of looking at scenery which recalled paintings, especially those of Claude, Salvator Rosa, or the Dutch masters. The memories aroused by a picturesque scene were only of paintings previously seen. Knight sees the picturesque in poetry only if it has beauty which belongs exclusively to the sense of vision, weighted with memories of history. In "Analytical Inquiry", Knight adds landscape gardening to the six other arts of poetry, eloquence, music, painting, sculpture, and the stage, all of which he considers emotive of the pleasures of imagination.

The other leader in the picturesque movement is Sir Uvedale Price, who advocates the study of paintings for the improvement of real landscapes. However, Price stresses that in a garden, one must not "imitate" painting but rather be guided by the principles of painting. He was interested in isolating the qualities in objects and words which produce certain emotions. It "...is not in what sense certain words are used... but whether there be certain qualities, which uniformly produce the same effects in all visible objects, and, according to the same analogy, in objects of hearing and of all the other senses..."⁴⁰

Price distinguishes the picturesque from the beautiful. The beautiful is characterized by smoothness and gradual variation, which are the qualities limiting the intricacy and roughness essential to the picturesque. He associates beauty with ideas of youth and freshness. The picturesque is characterized by roughness,

irregularity, and sudden variation as in old mills, Gothic cathedrals, gnarled trees, and the paintings of Salvator Rosa, largely dependent on associations with antiquity and even decay. Price differentiates the picturesque from the sublime in that the sublime is great, infinite, often uniform, evoking emotions of awe and terror. The picturesque, on the other hand, is not limited by dimensions, is intricate and varied rather than uniform, and can be either gay or grave.

Price criticizes the improvers in their intent to create natural landscapes, but instead only creating a new formality, and in their constant repetition of smoothness and flowing lines, thus missing the essential trait of beauty, which lies in transition. For Price, the ultimate effect is beauty coupled with the irregularity and roughness of the picturesque.

PARALLELS BETWEEN 18TH CENTURY ENGLISH LANDSCAPE GARDEN AND
ROMANTIC POETRY

The poetical impression of any object is that uneasy exquisite sense of beauty or power that cannot be contained within itself; that is impatient of all limit... the imagination will distort or magnify the object... The province of the imagination is principally visionary, the unknown and undefined.

William Hazlitt

The Romantic period in literature can be denoted by the span between 1798, the year in which Wordsworth and Coleridge published their "Lyrical Ballads", and 1832, the year of Sir Walter Scott's death. In England this was the beginning of a new age. It was a period of political unrest prompted by the French Revolution, as well as economic transition from a primarily agricultural society where wealth and power were concentrated in the landowning aristocracy, to a modern industrial society with a growing middle class. During this period the landscape of England began to take on its modern appearance. The open rural areas were subdivided into a checkerboard of fields enclosed by hedges and stone walls, and the factories and trading cities cast a layer of smoke over new areas of slum tenements.

In their works the Romantic poets reflected the spirit of their age; an age characterized by experimental boldness and a release in energy of creative power. The poetic spontaneity and freedom so apparent in Romantic poetry was influenced by the 18th Century philosophy, which placed an emphasis on feeling and instinct, resulting in a free activity of the imagination. In this same philosophical climate the great landscapes of the 18th Century were created. According to Clark (1948),

The eighteenth century was an age which believed that it was the association of ideas set up by an object or a view which produced the beautiful effect and not the object itself. The imagination was stimulated to conceive a connected train of thought in sympathy with that first suggested by particular forms, so that these forms could be called beautiful for having been the parent of such ideas. Garden scenes were made not only to please the eye but also to excite the imagination and produce sensations of grandeur, melancholy, gaiety, and sublimity.⁴¹

During the Romantic period the natural scene became a primary poetic subject. A parallel can be made to the landscape gardening movement of the 18th Century, which sought inspiration from nature, and created landscapes after nature, improved by art. However, here the parallel ends. Although the poet found inspiration from nature, Wordsworth, in "The Prelude" finds that the essence of poetry is in the poet's mind and feelings, and the ultimate source is within the individual poet rather than the outside world. Coleridge reinforces this theme in "Dejection: An Ode" (lines 39-46):

My genial spirits fail;
 And what can these avail
 To lift the smothering weight from off my breast?
 It were vain endeavor,
 Though I should gaze forever
 On that green light that lingers in the west:
 I may not hope from outward forms to win
 The passion and the life, whose fountains are within.

The Romantic poet gained inspiration from the observation of nature, and rediscovered this in moments of intensely heightened vision. From this springs the term "Visionary Landscape." According to Kenneth Clark, "moment of vision" is a "moment of intensified physical perception" during which, often as a result of allowing the mind and eye to dwell at length upon some natural object, "unconsciously thought and perception are merged."⁴² Wordsworth and his contemporaries were literally possessed by the scenes they contemplated, and sought a passionate and personal relationship with nature. In "Tintern Abbey" (lines 102-110) Wordsworth writes:

...Therefore am I still
 A lover of the meadows and the woods,
 And mountains; and of all that we behold
 From this green earth; of all the mighty world
 Of eye, and ear - both what they half create,
 And what perceive; Well pleased to recognize
 In nature and the language of the sense
 The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
 The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
 Of all my moral being.

Like the 18th Century descriptive poets, the Romantic poets describe natural phenomena with a high degree of accuracy, since the poet's eye becomes steadily fixed on some natural object. However, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, and Keats differed from the 18th Century descriptive poets since their verse is not purely descriptive, but imbues the landscape with life, passion and expressiveness. In this sense the Romantic poets view natural objects as symbols corresponding to the spiritual world. Wordsworth found a set of symbols in nature, and in the following lines from "The Prelude" (Book V, lines 586-605), he finds nature in the symbolic verse of the poets:

...he, who in his youth
 A daily wanderer among woods and fields
 With living Nature hath been intimate,
 Not only in that raw unpracticed time
 Is stirred to ecstasy, as others are,
 By glittering verse; but further, doth receive,
 In measure only dealt out to himself,
 Knowledge and increase of enduring joy
 From the great Nature that exists in works
 Of mighty Poets. Visionary power
 Attends the motions of the viewless winds,
 Embodied in the mystery of words:
 There, darkness makes abode, and all the host
 Of shadowy things work endless changes - there,
 As in a mansion like their proper home,
 Even forms and substances are circumfused
 By that transparent veil with light divine,
 And, through the turnings intricate of verse,
 Present themselves as objects recognized,
 In flashes, and with glory not their own.

Wordsworth reinforces this strong evocative quality characterizing Romantic poetry in "The Prelude", characterizing all good poetry as the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings. Blake, Coleridge, and Shelley also saw poetry as an expression of emotion, or the poet's private imaginative vision. As the poet used words to express emotion, so the 18th Century landscape gardener used natural forms and architectural elements as emotive symbols. According to Sypher (1960), the "Picturesque can be a kind of scenery giving pleasure to the eye or resembling painting; but it can also, and more creatively, be a way of projecting moods into scenery until landscape becomes a symbol."⁴³

In their verse the Romantic poets explored visionary states of consciousness, in their concern with dreams, nightmares, and the occult. This tendency is especially apparent in the works of Keats and Coleridge, who delved into the mystery and charm of the far away and long ago. Coleridge envisioned an organic theory of imagination, the power to reach a higher order of reality, or even create one's own reality as in a dream. This is evidenced in his imaginary, dreamlike journey in "Kubla Khan" (lines 1-5):

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure dome decree:
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.

This concern in Romantic poetry with reverie and the strangeness added to beauty can be paralleled to the 18th Century English landscape garden, a dreamlike landscape whose beauty lay in its strangely changing views. Clark (1948) quotes a Chinese poet, Chang Ch'ao in the following epigram:

There are landscapes on earth, landscapes in painting,
landscapes in dreams and landscapes in one's breast.
The beauty of landscapes on earth lies in depth and
irregularity of outline; the beauty of landscapes in
painting lies in the freedom and luxuriousness of the
brush and ink; the beauty of landscapes in dreams
lies in their strangely changing views; and the
beauty of landscapes in one's breast lies in the
fact that everything is in its proper place.⁴⁴

The Gothic ruins common in these 18th Century English gardens, and motifs advocated by the Picturesque school such as gloomy grottoes, ivy-clad ruins, and the associated awe and terror with sublime scenery, make up the darker aspects of this dream.

Both the Romantic poet and the English 18th Century landscape gardener borrowed from the past in creating their idyllic dreams. This stems from the 18th Century's preoccupation with time. As Sypher (1960) so aptly put it:

...perhaps the essence of romanticism is the discovery that the field of human experience is time, especially the sense of the past, which brings a new meaning to fatality, the sense of the future, which brings a new meaning to destiny.⁴⁴

This sense of the past is very apparent in the borrowing of elements from antiquity to stimulate emotion, in both Romantic poetry and the 18th Century landscape garden. The classic temples, Grecian urns, and obelisks are just a few examples of the elements commonly used in the landscape garden and Romantic poetry to stimulate that melancholy associated with times past.

In his verse, Keats brings out the emotive quality of elements borrowed from antiquity. In "Ode on a Grecian Urn", where the urn captures moments of intense experience and freezes them into marble forever, Keats found the ideal correlative for his longing for permanence in a transient world (lines 1-10):

Thou still unravished bride of quietness,
 Thou foster child of silence and slow time,
 Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
 A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:
 What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy shape
 Of deities or mortals, or of both,
 In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
 What men or gods are these? What maidens loath?
 What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
 What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

(lines 11-12)

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
 are sweeter:

(lines 40-50)

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
 Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
 With forest branches and the trodden weed;
 Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
 As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!
 When old age shall this generation waste,
 Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
 Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
 'Beauty is truth, truth beauty; - that is all
 Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.'

In his poem "On Seeing the Elgin Marbles for the First Time", Keats reacts to marble statues and friezes from the Parthenon. They seem to him time worn memorials:

My spirit is too weak; mortality
 Weighs heavily on me like unwilling sleep,
 And each imagined pinnacle and steep
 Of godlike hardship tells me I must die
 Like a sick eagle looking at the sky.

Yet 'tis a gentle luxury to weep,
 That I have not the cloudy winds to keep
 Fresh for the opening of the morning's eye.
 Such dim-conceived glories of the brain
 Bring round the heart an indescribable feud;
 So do these wonders a most dizzy pain,
 That mingles Grecian grandeur with the rude
 Wasting of old Time - with a billowy main,
 A sun, a shadow of a magnitude.

In "Ode to Psyche" (lines 50-63), Keats symbolically builds a temple ("fane") in his mind:

Yes, I will be thy priest, and build a fane
 In some untrodden region of my mind,
 Where branched thoughts, new grown with pleasant pain,
 Instead of pines shall murmur in the wind:
 Far, far around shall those dark-clustered trees
 Fledge the wild-ridged mountains steep by steep;
 And there by zephyrs, streams, and birds, and bees,
 The moss-lain Dryads shall be lulled to sleep;
 And in the midst of this wide quietness
 A rosy sanctuary will I dress
 With the wreathed trellis of a working brain,
 With buds, and bells, and stars without a name,
 With all the gardener Fancy e'er could feign...

A sense of the past is best realized in the use of ruins in both Romantic poetry and the 18th Century English garden. These ruins were a form of nostalgia, a sentimental attitude towards architecture. In essence, ruins were the most striking evocative symbols, for they epitomize the metaphor of man, history, and the landscape. In "The Ruined Cottage" (lines 513-25), Wordsworth writes:

I well remember that those very plumes,
 Those weeds, and the high spear grass on that wall,
 By mist and silent raindrops silvered o'er,
 As once I passed, did to my mind convey
 So still an image of tranquillity,
 So calm and still, and looked so beautiful
 Amid the uneasy thoughts which filled my mind,
 That what we feel of sorrow and despair
 From ruin and from change, and all the grief
 The passing shews of being leave behind,
 Appeared an idle dream that could not live
 Where meditation was. I turned away,
 And walked along my road in happiness.

For William Gilpin, of the Picturesque school of gardening, ruins were symbolic of history - the stains of weather, moss, were like imprints of memory, animated by historical meaning; a memory falling like a shadow over Gothic ruins. Wordsworth captures this spirit in "Eliagic Stanzas" (lines 49-52):

And this huge Castle, standing there sublime,
I love to see the look with which it braves,
Cased in the unfeeling armor of old time,
The lightning, the fierce wind, and trampling waves.

(lines 13-16)

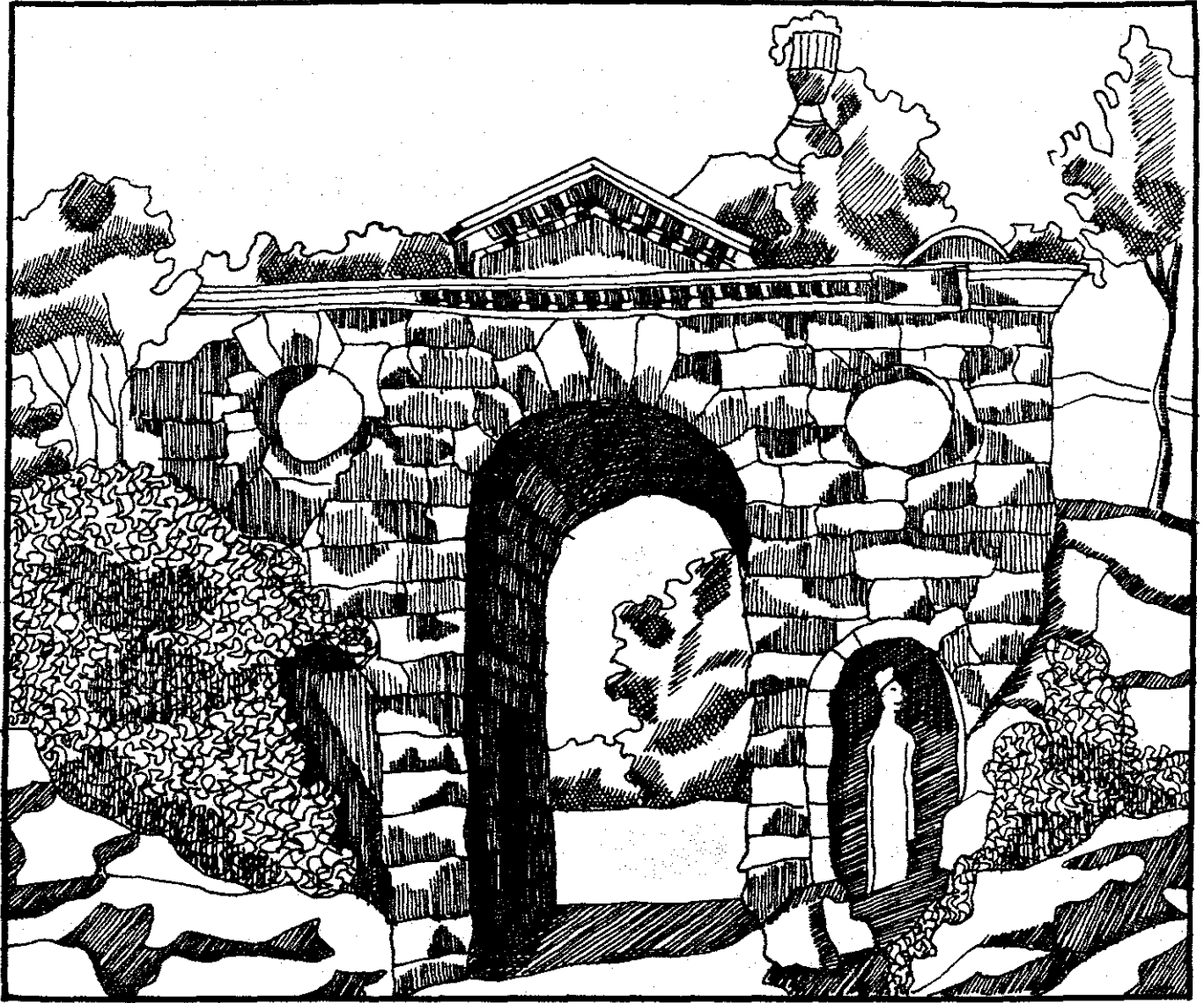
Ah! then, if mine had been the Painter's hand,
To express what then I saw; and add the gleam,
The light that never was, on sea or land,
The consecration, and the Poet's dream;

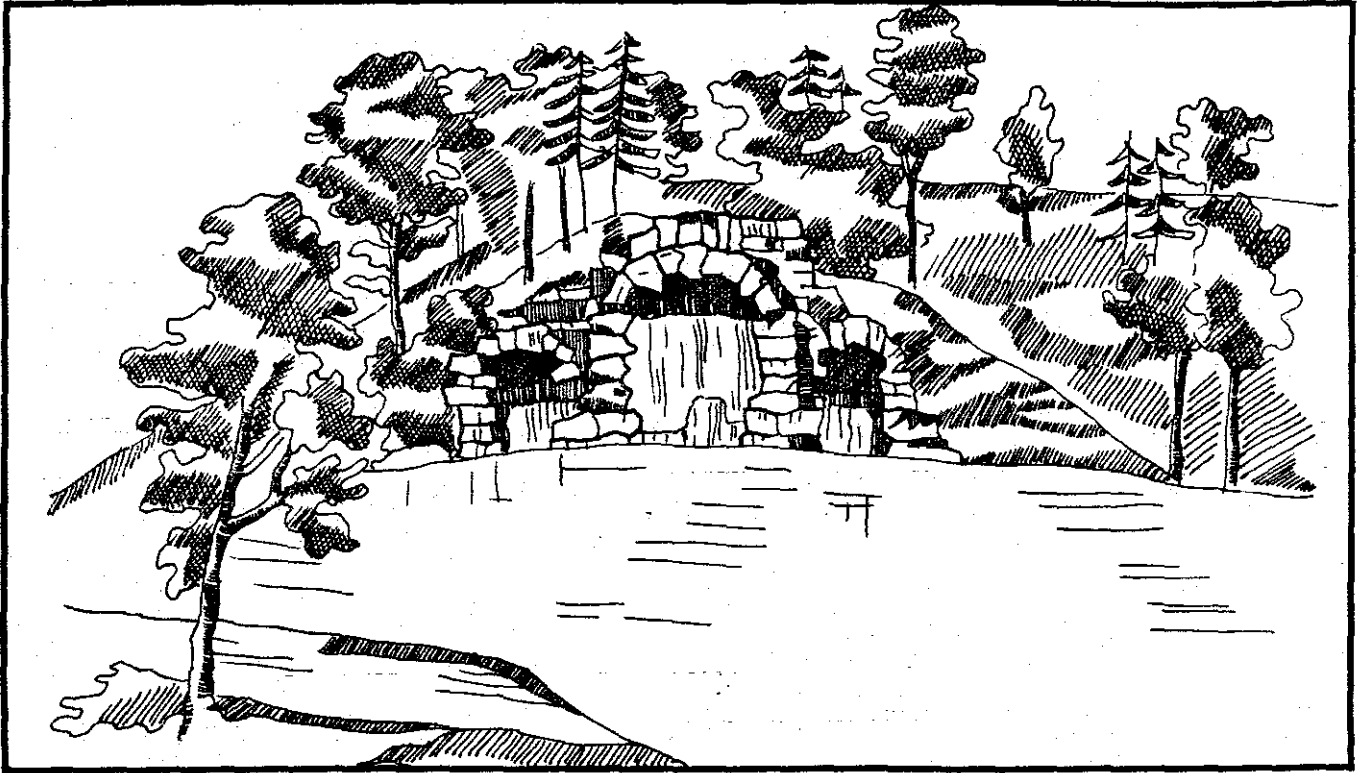
According to Sypher (1960), Wordsworth's verse typifies how sensuous experience can be elevated to rapture. He compares his verse to the picturesque landscape movement:

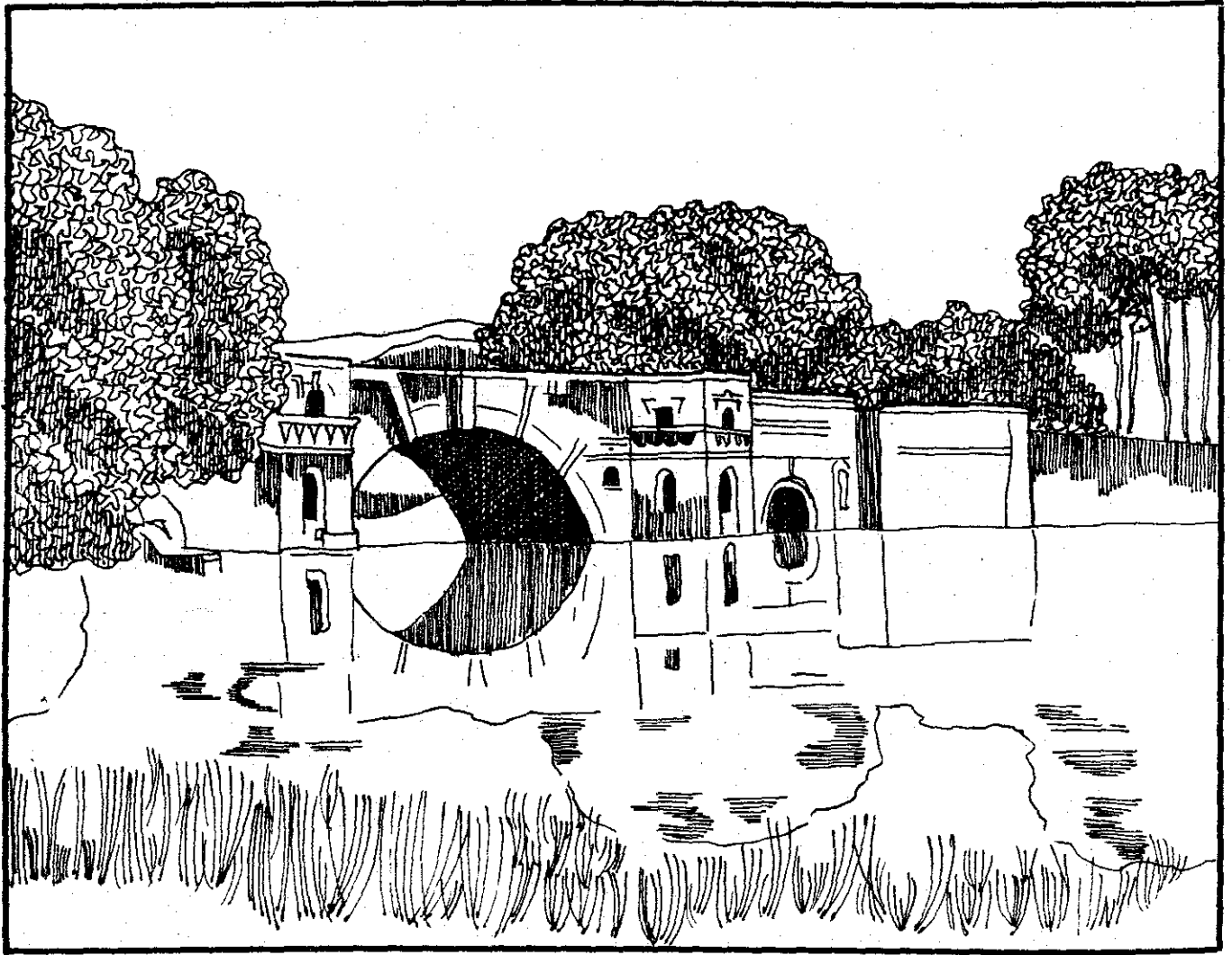
Wordsworth's verse is the highest achievement of the picturesque in literature, which, in Alison's sense, is a way of seeing the world emotively, a means of associating a mood with objects until the contour of a landscape becomes the image of one's consciousness.⁴⁵

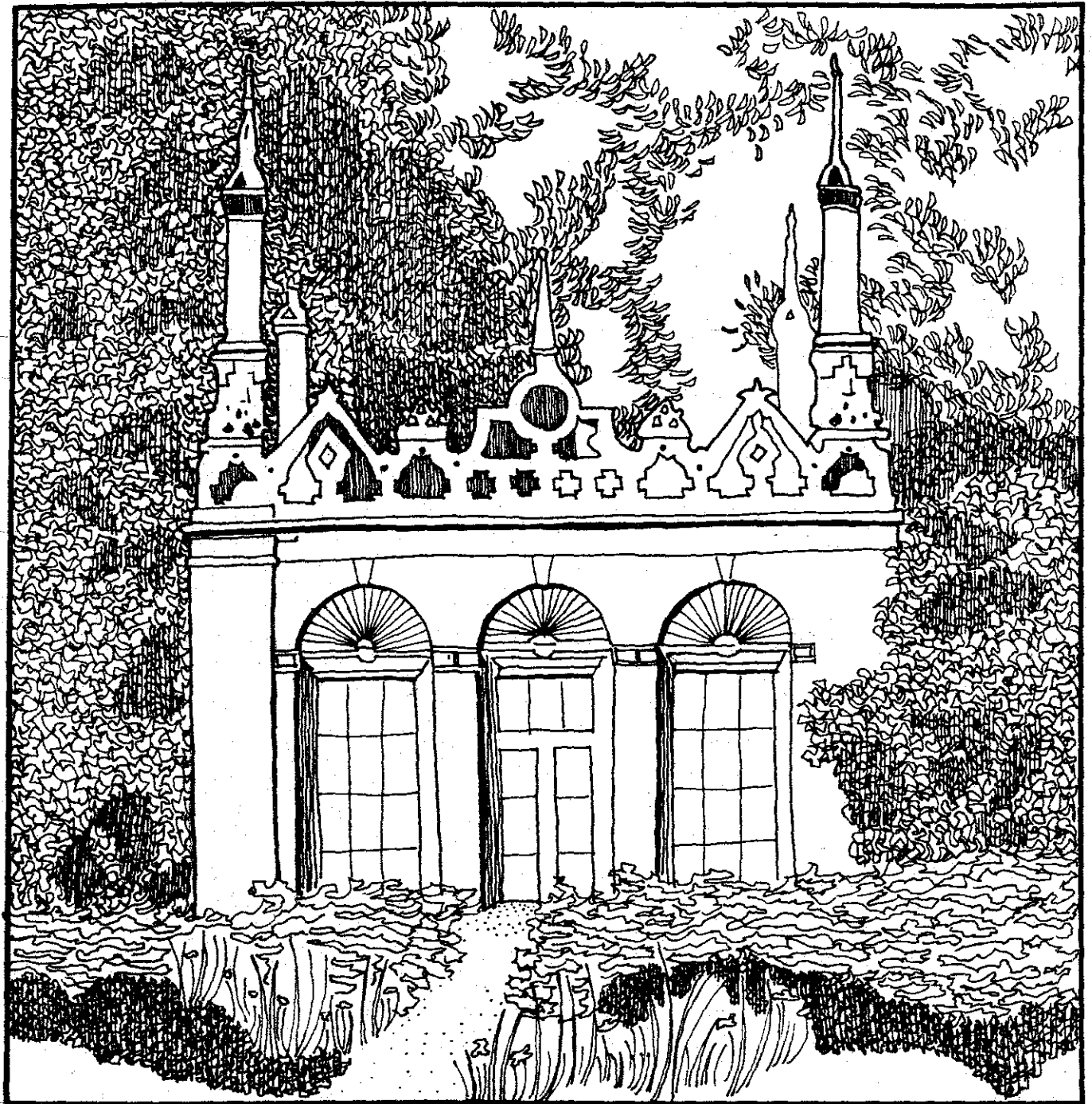
DETAILS: SKETCHES OF ELEMENTS USED TO ELICIT EMOTION IN THE 18TH
CENTURY ENGLISH LANDSCAPE GARDEN

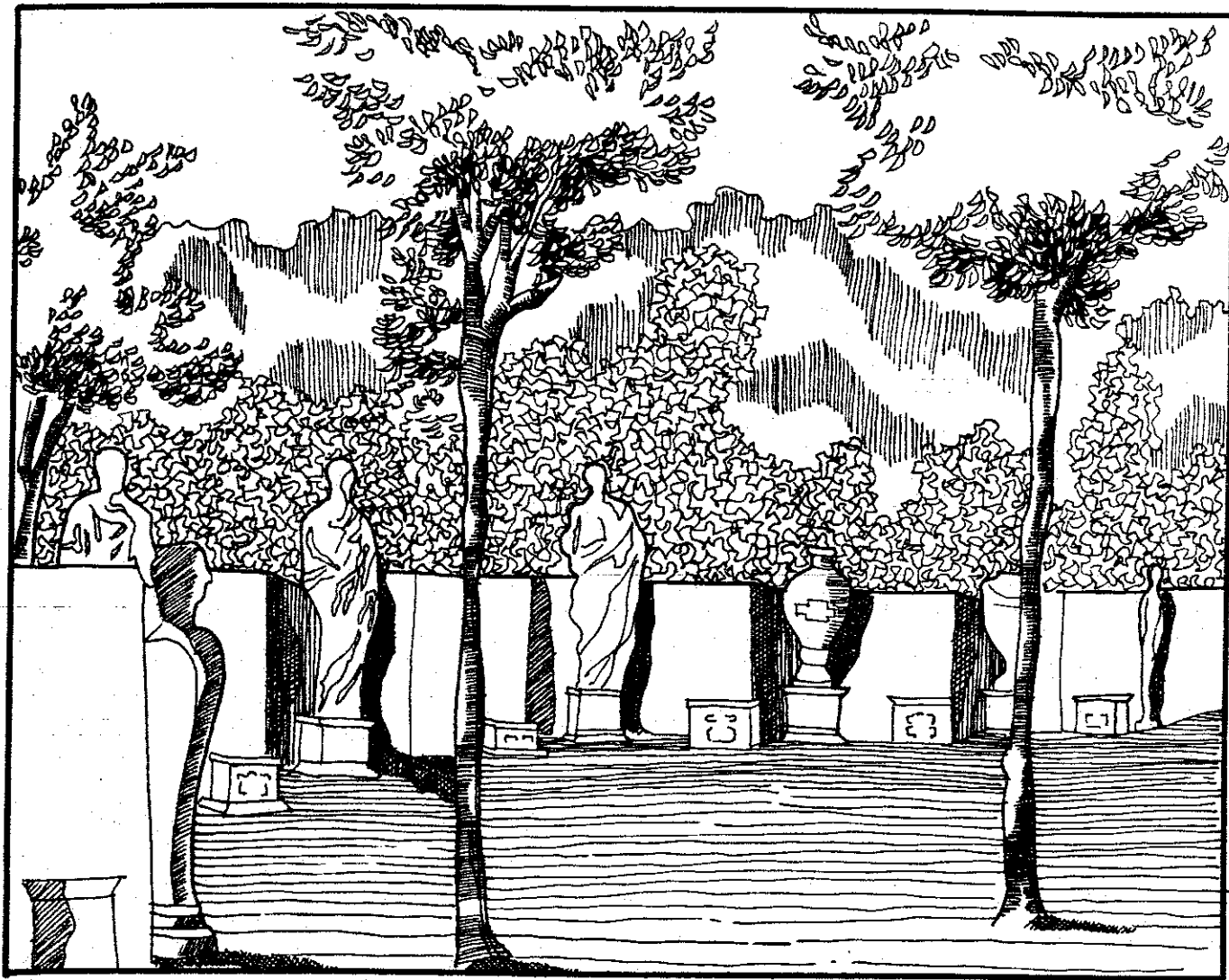


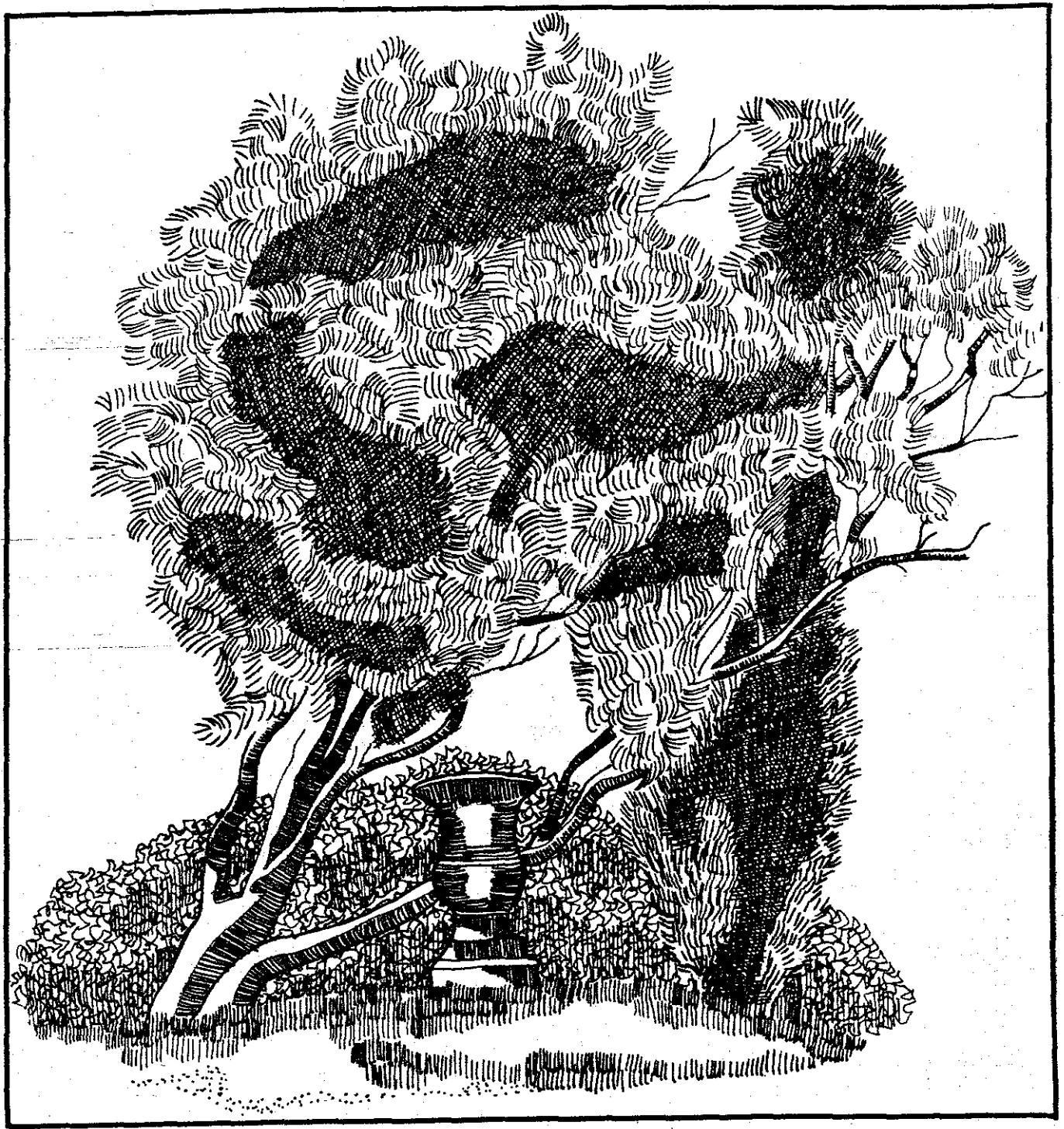


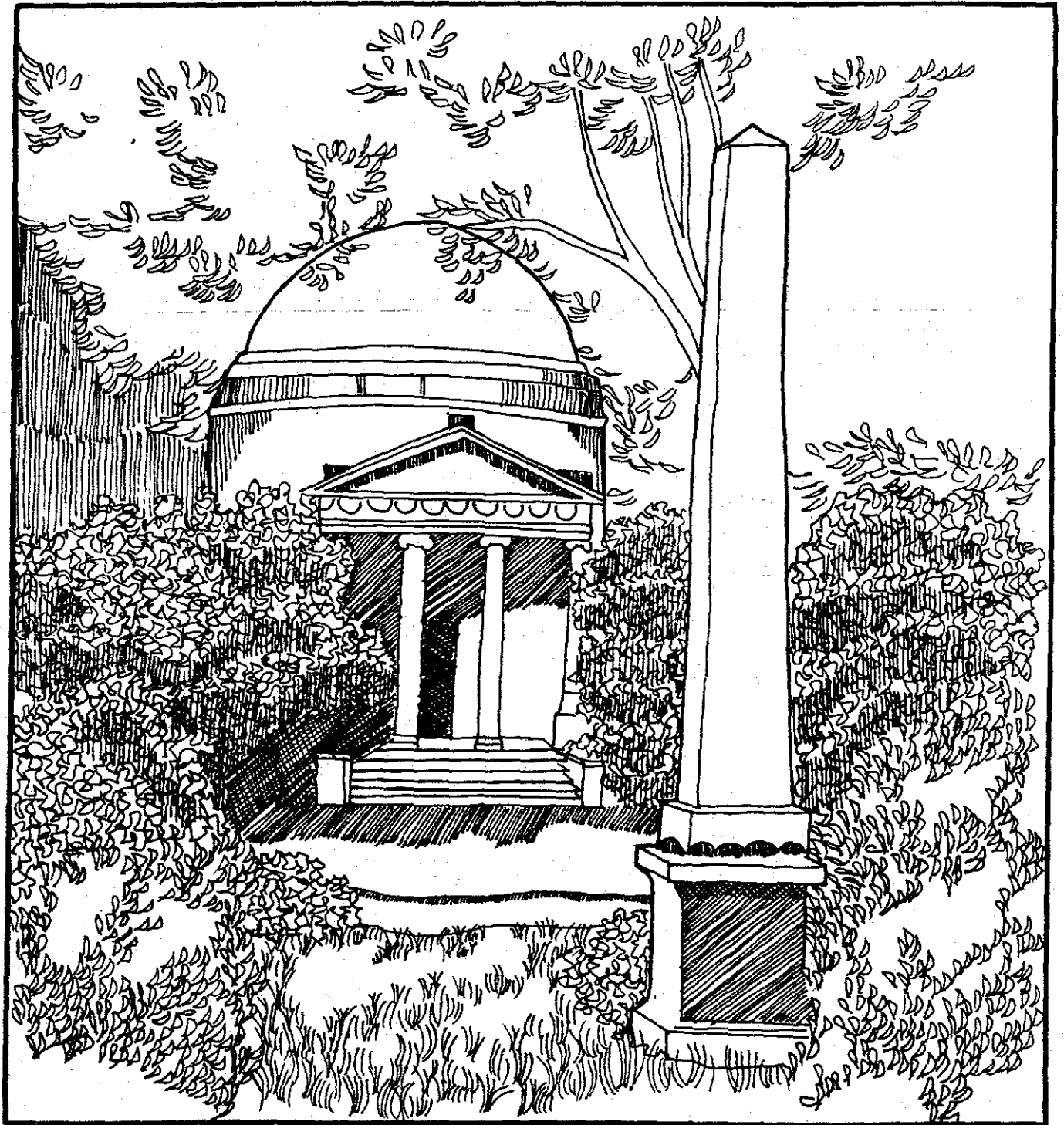












FOOTNOTES

¹ Henry A. Beers, A History of English Romanticism in the Eighteenth Century (New York: Gordian Press, 1966), p. 121.

² H. F. Clark, The English Landscape Garden (London: Pleiades Books Ltd., 1948), p. 10.

³ Edward Malins, English Landscaping and Literature: 1660-1840 (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1966), p. 118.

⁴ Op. cit., Beers, pp. 128-29.

⁵ Ibid., p. 114.

⁶ Ibid., p. 118.

⁷ Ibid., p. 119.

⁸ Edward Hyams, A History of Gardens and Gardening (New York: Praeger, 1971b), p. 238.

⁹ Walter John Hipple, The Beautiful, The Sublime, and The Picturesque In Eighteenth Century British Aesthetic Theory (Carbondale: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1957), p. 190.

¹⁰ Op. cit., Clark, p. 3.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 19.

¹² Ibid., p. 7.

¹³ Op. cit., Hipple, p. 14.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 17.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 21.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 22.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 58.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 77.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 91.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 131.

²¹ Ibid., p. 131.

²² Ibid., p. 136.

- 23 Ibid., p. 140.
- 24 Ibid., p. 162.
- 25 Ibid., p. 180.
- 26 Op. cit., Malins, p. 35.
- 27 Ibid., p. 37.
- 28 Op. cit., Clark, p. 11.
- 29 Ibid., p. 12.
- 30 Ibid., p. 16.
- 31 Ibid., p. 25.
- 32 Op. cit., Malins, p. 69.
- 33 Op. cit., Clark, p. 16.
- 34 Ibid., p. 27.
- 35 Ibid., p. 27.
- 36 Ibid., p. 28.
- 37 Edward Hyams, Capability Brown and Humphry Repton (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1971a), p. 131.
- 38 Op. cit., Hipple, p.
- 39 Op. cit., Hyams (1971a), p. 193.
- 40 Op. cit., Hipple, p. 203.
- 41 Op. cit., Clark, p. 17.
- 42 Peter Quennel, Romantic England (New York: Macmillan, 1970), p. 173.
- 43 Wylie Sypher, Rococo to Cubism in Art and Literature (New York: Vintage Books, 1960), p. 91.
- 44 Ibid., p. 98.
- 45 Ibid., p. 101.

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ERRATA

- p. 12 2nd line through
- p. 16 last paragraph discrimination
- p. 19 6th line of quote conscious
- p. 26 3rd line imitation
- 4th line below picture methods
- p. 28 2nd paragraph 3rd line method
- end of 2nd paragraph beginning quotes