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Green Bonds: Ownership, Friendship, and Kinship in Eighteenth-Century British Gardens

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Article abstract

This article sets out to recapture a sense of the collective and collaborative approach to gardening, arguing that the study of intermediality in the context of eighteenth-century British gardens is not just about the melting pot of *sister arts*, but also the meeting place of *sisters-and-brothers-in-arts*, painters, poets, amateurs, patrons, and professionals alike finding themselves connected in and through gardens—a shift of emphasis onto the human relations and brotherliness forged through the arts, which contributes to the social history of gardens.

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Green Bonds: Ownership, Friendship, and Kinship in Eighteenth-Century British Gardens

LAURENT CHÂTEL

*Two Paradises 'twere in one
To live in Paradise alone*

Andrew Marvell, "The Garden" (1681)

Thus the private pleasures of a man of genius may become at length those of a whole people.

Isaac Disraeli¹

When he wrote what he considered to be the first history of British art in the English language, Horace Walpole (1717–1797) was hard-pressed to find an appropriate title for his book: "instead of calling it *The Lives of English Painters*," he gave "it the title of *Anecdotes of Painting in England*,"² owing to the small number of native artists. Endowed with a great sense of national pride, Walpole declared that a country with such a beautiful countryside would soon produce a school of landscape painters. But one branch of art that deserved instant praise and which could readily showcase English talent was gardening. In 1768, his contemporary George Mason ranked gardens very highly, classifying them under the category of *inventio*: "DESIGN is an extensive

1. Isaac Disraeli, "The Domestic Life of a Poet. Shenstone vindicated," *Curiosities of Literature*, 1st series, New York, William Pearson & Co, 1835, p. 294.

2. Horace Walpole, *Anecdotes of Painting in England, With some Account of the principal Artists; and incidental Notes on other Arts, Collected by George Vertue*, printed at Strawberry Hill, 1762, p. vi.

Province,—Gardening one of its Districts—a District of so various an appearance, as hardly to be known for the same country in different periods of time.”³ In 1770, Walpole followed suit and singled out gardening as a genuine English contribution, interpolating a separate *Essay on Taste in Modern Gardening* in the overall project of his *Anecdotes*,⁴ and proudly advertising the latest “English” ideas on garden design, which were already spreading across Europe. In doing so, he celebrated the intermediality of gardening: “Poetry, Painting, and Gardening, or the Science of Landscape, will forever by men of taste be deemed Three Sisters, or The Three New Graces.”⁵ There could be no clearer upgrading of eighteenth-century gardening than its being christened a *sister*. Placed side by side with poetry and painting, gardening was absorbed within the larger theory of *ut pictura poesis*, which had shaped the European doctrine of the hierarchy of the arts since the Renaissance. Walpole perceived that gardening contributed to a sustained dialogue of the arts, and recognized their extraordinary ability to accommodate and fertilize a whole number of artistic ventures—what one might call their “inter-artiality.” As all-embracing, “total” art forms, gardens were, for the Enlightenment, what cabinets of curiosities had been in the early modern period and what *Gesamtkunstswerke* were to be in the late nineteenth-century. All could be seen and felt within them, or as Monique Mosser once put it, “la réunion des arts est dans le jardin.”⁶ It is the referentiality of garden spaces that Michel Foucault’s concept of heterotopia was meant to highlight—a term Foucault considered more relevant than utopia to convey the idea that, like metonymies, gardens hold “the smallest parcel of the world and also the totality of the world.”⁷ The crowning achievement of eighteenth-century British creativity was thus to offer visitors a sophisticated instance of intermediality. As an assemblage of spatial, architectural, and sculptural features enlivened with inscriptions in verse and prose, as well as occasional paintings, they constituted

3. George Mason, *Essay upon Design in Gardening*, London, J. Dodsley, 1768, p. 1.

4. Horace Walpole, “On Modern Gardening,” *Anecdotes of Painting in England*, vol. IV, chap. VII, printed at Strawberry Hill, 1771.

5. Horace Walpole, manuscript, marginal note in William Mason, *Satirical Poems* (1772); see Paget Toynbee (ed.), *Satirical Poems Published Anonymously by William Mason, with Notes by Horace Walpole*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1926, p. 44.

6. Monique Mosser, “La réunion des arts est dans le jardin,” in Daniel Rabreau et Bruno Tollon (eds.), *Le Progrès des arts réunis 1763–1815*, Bordeaux, France, William Blake & Co., 1992, p. 171–185.

7. Michel Foucault, “Of Other Spaces,” [1967], trans. Jay Miskowicz, *Diacritics*, vol. 16, no. 1, 1986, p. 22–27.

a multimodal “progress” through various connected media. Such a case is a well-rehearsed and well-documented story in the garden literature.⁸

92 However, intermediality may be understood beyond the idea of interplay between distinct types of arts if one shifts the emphasis away from the arts themselves to the human kinship forged through arts. This article sets out to recapture a sense of the collective and collaborative approach to gardening, arguing that hortulan intermediality was not just a melting pot of *sister arts*, but also the meeting place of *sisters and brothers-in-arts*, painters, poets, amateurs, patrons, and professionals finding themselves connected in and through gardens. Such a perception of spaces as a mix of people has been undermined over time by the well-entrenched idea of the garden as *hortus conclusus*—a closed haven for retreat and retirement—and the social history of gardens, long in waiting, is still work in progress, even if recent studies have made amends and compensated for a historiography of design based on isolated, individual achievements.⁹ To begin with, the persistent image of the garden as a closed and private space will be examined, so as to better understand why patterns of interpersonal relations have insufficiently been brought to the fore up till today. Then, I will turn to the articulation between private and public aspirations within gardens, highlighting instances of human interconnections and the entangled stories of “green bonds.”¹⁰

8. The idea of gardens as a *paragone* is more specifically studied in John Dixon Hunt, *The Figure in the Landscape. Poetry, Painting and Gardening during the Eighteenth Century*, Baltimore, Maryland, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976; Stephanie Ross, *What Gardens Mean*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1998; Hervé Brunon and Denis Ribouillault (eds.), *De la peinture au jardin*, Florence, Leo S. Olschki, coll. “Giardini e paesaggio,” 2016. For an exploration of British gardens and the *sister arts*, see Laurent Châtel, “‘The Science of Landscape’: le paragone du jardin et de la peinture en Angleterre au XVIII^e siècle,” in Brunon and Ribouillault (eds.), 2016, p. 151–173.

9. For the shift from design to reception, see John Dixon Hunt, *The Afterlife of Gardens*, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004; Martin Calder (ed.), *Experiencing Gardens in the Eighteenth Century*, Bern, Switzerland, Peter Lang, 2006; Laurent Châtel, “‘Getting A Full Picture.’ Pour une nouvelle histoire des ‘jardins anglais’ des Lumières : perspectives croisées entre conception et réception,” in Pierre Dubois and Alexis Tadié (eds.), *Esthétiques de la ville britannique, XVIII^e–XIX^e siècles. Hommage à Jacques Carré*, Paris, Presses Universitaires Paris Sorbonne, 2012; Stephen Bending, “Introduction,” in *Green Retreats: Women, Gardens, and Eighteenth-Century Culture*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013, p. 1–40; Luke Morgan, “A Reception History of the Italian Renaissance Garden,” in *The Monster in the Garden. The Grotesque and the Gigantic in Renaissance Landscape Design*, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016, p. 27–35.

10. Special thanks go to Valerie Mainz and Rosamund Paice for their friendly reading of

“THAT HAPPY GARDEN-STATE”: PRIVATE DESIGNS?

93 The image of the garden owes a lot to the medieval *hortus conclusus* and its walls that frame it apart or away from the hustle and bustle of the world. Away from the madding crowd. Being alone in the garden is a longstanding longing, which both Western and Eastern men and women have in common, and which seventeenth-century English poet Andrew Marvell conveyed in a very performative way in his poem “The Garden” (1681):

Such was that happy Garden-state,
While Man there walked without a Mate:
After a place, so pure and sweet,
What other Help could yet be meet!
But 'twas beyond a Mortal's share
To wander solitary there:
Two Paradises 'twere in one
To live in Paradise alone.¹¹

Gardens have indeed been associated with retreat and solitude—the experience of a solitary walker given over to plant collection and daydreaming, but garden making itself comes with the satisfaction of being single in one’s own place (see Fig. 1). It takes several English words to cover the rich polysemy of the French word *seul*, which embraces at once being single, solitary, and unique. Singleness is less a feeling of solitariness than a definition of identity, or a legal matter relating to access and property rights; property frames and protects exclusivity and exclusion. In fact, liberty and property are two interconnected sides of the same coin as owning comes with free movement in the circumscribed space, but also the right to shut others out: “I own, therefore I am” can be translated variously as “I am free,” “I am free to roam,” “I am free to be myself,” “I am free to be with myself,” “I am free to bar access to others, or choose to whom I grant access.” The garden clearly marks out a distinct space and as such tends to the individual rather than the collective;

this piece and their apt suggestions.

11. Andrew Marvell, *Miscellaneous Poems*, London, R. Boulter, 1681.

it may easily be perceived as exclusive rather than inclusive. Property legislation in England particularly favoured single ownership for a very long time, notably through primogeniture, as a way of preserving wealth and security, as reminded by Adam Smith (1723–1790):

The security of a landed estate, therefore, the protection which its owner could afford to those who dwelt on it, depended upon its greatness. To divide it was to ruin it, and to expose every part of it to be oppressed and swallowed up by the incursions of its neighbours. The law of primogeniture, therefore, came to take place, not immediately indeed, but in process of time, in the succession of landed estates, for the same reason that it has generally taken place in that of monarchies, though not always at their first institution.¹²



Figure 1. Copplestone Warre Bampfylde, drawing of the Temple of Ceres and grotto at Stourhead, with solitary figure, c.1753, watercolour drawing, 42.32 x 28.71 cm, British Museum, London, no. 1970,0919.20. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

British social and political culture has always been dependent on, or even indexed, to property rights and land ownership.¹³ In the light of such a focus on ownership

12. Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, London, W. Strahan and T. Cadell, 1776, Book III, Chap. 2–3.

13. Of particular importance are the introductory sections and anthology by Stephen

in mind, Joseph Addison's much-rehearsed adage of English garden history may be re-examined here: "But why not a whole Estate be thrown into a kind of Garden by frequent Plantations, that may turn as much to the Profit, as the Pleasure of the Owner? [...] Fields of Corn make a pleasant prospect, and if the Walks were a little taken care of that lie between them, [...], a Man might make a pretty Landskip of his own Possessions."¹⁴ Addison must have felt that ideas about garden making stood a better chance with landowners if it flattered their pride and enhanced their satisfaction in their own land. Eighteenth-century Britain experienced sustained property aggrandizements by way of a series of Enclosure Acts voted in Parliament, which reinforced the stronghold of comfortable landowners who wished to be even more comfortable. The highly ambivalent word itself "enclosure" points to circumscribing, which evokes Daniel Defoe's portrayal of Robinson Crusoe marking out his territory with sticks, "completely fenced in and fortified [...] from all the World":

I should never be perfectly secure till this wall was finished; and it is scarce credible what inexpressible Labour everything was done with, especially the bringing Piles out of the Woods, and driving them into Ground, for I made them much bigger than I ought to have done.¹⁵

Seen through the lens of Oliver Goldsmith's poem "The Deserted Village" (1770), which deplored the tyrannical hand of landlords and the displacement of villages, the growth of Enclosure Acts is a reminder that there was an unequal distribution of land.

⁹⁴ However, and somewhat ironically, it is in England that grew after 1700 the rejection of walls and fences notably because they were associated, if not with the Bastille, at least with the authoritarianism of France.¹⁶ Off with fences, barriers

Bending and Andrew McRae, *The Writing of Rural England, 1500–1800*, Basingstoke, UK, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

14. Joseph Addison, "The Pleasures of the Imagination," in Donald F. Bond (ed.), *The Spectator*, no. 414, 21 June 25, 1712, Oxford, Clarendon, 1987, vol. 3, p. 552.

15. Daniel Defoe, *The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe. Written by Himself*, [1719], London, Nelson and Sons, 1850, p. 73, 94.

16. The suggestion that there was a growing fear with French prisons is conveyed in

and walls! In order to achieve an augmented perception of nature, the garden revolution owed lot to “fence-leaping”¹⁷ and the “*saut-de-loup*,” which the English called “ha-ha” and systematized, thus leading the way for new practices—at least as the story goes in Walpole’s proud English narrative on gardens.¹⁸ There was increasingly a plea for an improved aesthetic appreciation of large tracts of land laid open to view—an open “champaign” for eyes to roam over—with multiplied calls to unite ornament and agriculture and connect what had been disconnected before, paving the way for a greater contact zone between the smooth and the rough, *peigné* and *sauvage*. The idea of freedom in nature is undeniably one of the more radical commitments of English prose, such as Stephen Switzer’s call to free nature:

Neither would I advise the immuring, or, as it were, the imprisoning by Walls, (however expensive they are in making) too much us’d of late; but where-ever Liberty will allow, would throw my Garden open to all View, to the unbounded Felicities of distant Prospect, and the expansive Volumes of Nature herself.¹⁹

It would be mistaken to think that aesthetic claims of visual latitude led to any form of social levelling in Britain: the inclusive injunctions of a “distant prospect” were mostly explicitly relating to space, not people, and one should guard against the temptation of reading any affinity with Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s central tenet

Laurence Sterne’s *Sentimental Journey* when Yorick humourously pretends there is a mental way to dedramatize the walls of the Bastille: “And as for the Bastille (sic)! The terror is in the word. —[...] the Bastille is not an evil to be despised— but strip it of its towers —fill up the *fossé*— unbarricade the doors —call it simply a confinement, and suppose it is some tyrant of a distemper— and not a man which holds you in it —the evil vanishes, and you bear the other half without complaint.” *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy, by Mr Yorick*, London, T. Becket and P.A. De Hondt, 1768, para. II, p. 22–23.

17. “He leaped the fence, and saw that all nature was a garden,” in Horace Walpole, *The History of the Modern Taste in Gardening*, [1771], John Dixon Hunt (ed.), New York, Ursus Press, 1995, p. 56.

18. See Stephen Bending’s pioneering questioning of Walpole’s nationalist rhetoric, “Horace Walpole and Eighteenth-Century Garden History,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, vol. 57, 1994, p. 209–26.

19. Stephen Switzer, “Preface,” *Ichnographia rustica; or, The Nobleman, Gentleman, and Gardener’s Recreation*, London, D. Browne, 1718, p. xxxvi.

in his 1754 *Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité*, whereby it is in vain one attempts to monopolize all the fruits of the earth, as the earth does not belong to anyone:

Le premier qui, ayant enclos un terrain, s'avisait de dire : Ceci est à moi, et trouva des gens assez simples pour le croire, fut le vrai fondateur de la société civile. Que de crimes, de guerres, de meurtres, que de misères et d'horreurs n'eût point épargnés au genre humain celui qui, arrachant les pieux ou comblant le fossé, eût crié à ses semblables : Gardez-vous d'écouter cet imposteur ; vous êtes perdus, si vous oubliez que les fruits sont à tous, et que la terre n'est à personne.²⁰

Visits increased, estates were opened, land stewards lent themselves to being guides for curious visitors, but there was a fee and a distinct channeling of access, and property did remain sacrosanct in British culture.²¹

95 All this explains, therefore, that gardens have mostly been studied as “private places”—sites that could occasionally be opened for show, but were otherwise the exclusive province of lords of the manor (and sometimes of their mothers, wives, dowagers, or aunts as well), free to do as they pleased; their exclusivity has inspired wonder and dread alike, with legislation on trespassing maintaining a constant aura on property. There was, nonetheless, a paradoxical tension or dynamic polarity, in relation to land, between openness and closure, inclusiveness and exclusivity, which cannot be overlooked for the sake of a clear resolution. A concern for

20. J.-J. Rousseau, *Discours sur l'origine et les fondemens de l'inégalité parmi les hommes*, Amsterdam, Marc Michel Rey, 1755, p. 95; “The first man who, after enclosing a piece of Ground, took it into his head to say, ‘*This is mine*’, and found People simple enough to believe him, was the true founder of civil Society. How many crimes, how many wars, how many murders, how many misfortunes and horrors, would that man have saved the Human species, who pulling up the Stakes, or filling up the ditches, should have cried to his fellows: Be sure not to listen to this impostor; you are lost, if you forget that the Fruits of the Earth belong equally to us all, and the Earth itself to nobody.” Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *A Discourse upon the Origin and Foundation of the Inequality among Mankind*, [1755], London, R. and J. Dodsley, 1761, p. 97.

21. For a recent overview of property in British culture, see Guy Shrubsole, *Who Owns England? How We Lost Our Green & Pleasant Land & How to Take It Back*, London, William Collins, 2019.

maintaining rights of way and commons grew increasingly,²² with warnings against excessive enclosures because they undermined the ability for the “poorer relatives” of the countryside to share and care for themselves:

Fence now meets fence in owners little bounds
Of field and meadow large as garden grounds
In little parcels little minds to please.²³

“Commoners” may not have owned, but they had a great feeling of ownership and sense of place through their shared use of commons. Similarly, designed landscapes were not simply places turned inwards. However private and sealed-off gardens were (and they have often remained so to this day), they were not conceived simply as an “exclusive” scenario, but also as places that could lend themselves to opening up and linking up. Solitude or singleness were far from being the only province of the garden, as is clear, for instance, from William Shenstone’s letter to Lady Luxborough about his improvements to his garden in June 1750:

At first I meant them merely as Melancholy Amusements of a Person whose circumstances required a solitary Life. They were so: but I ever found ye solitude too deep to be agreeable. Of late encourag’d by your ladyship and some others I began to covet to have my Place esteem’d agreeable in its way; to have it frequented; to meet now and then an human Face unawares—to enjoy even ye Gape and Stare of ye Mob.²⁴

22. J. M. Neeson, *Commoners: Common Right, Enclosure, and Social Change in England, 1700–1820*, Cambridge, University Press, 1993.

23. John Clare, “The Mores,” in Merryn and Raymond Williams (eds.), *Selected Poems and Prose*, London, Methuen, 1986, p. 92.

24. William Shenstone, “Letter to Lady Luxborough, June 27th, 1750,” *Letters of William Shenstone*, Marjorie Williams (ed.), Oxford, Basil Blackwells, 1939, p. 282.

INTERMEDIALITY REVISITED: SISTERS- AND BROTHERS-IN-ARTS

56 Because of an over-emphasis on the singleness and individual nature of gardening and a propensity to focus on the “father(s)” and “first idea(s)” of original designs, garden scholarship has recently moved away from an understanding of design towards a history of reception, with a greater concern for the “afterlives” of places, thus becoming more “social,” “economic,” and “anthropological.”²⁵ While gardens, as private properties, were conceived as self-contained microcosms, making them comprehensive, autonomous, and self-referential, as artistic creations, they were also places of inter-relationship, inviting connections to be made—ideal, intellectual links as well as human, personal bonds. If co-authorship, sharing, and mutual care are the stuff gardens are made of, it is important therefore to de-singularize the narrative and holistically examine makers, partakers, sharers, tourists, and visitors—a palimpsestuous terrain of layered emotions and ideas.²⁶ A more complex gardening narrative may be told on the basis of those who acted out and bodied forth the *sister arts*: it is the fleshed out story of poetry, architecture, sketching, and painting brought together in unison (*concordia*) or for that matter in tension (*discors*), via the personalities who embodied them.

57 Just as there were “beargarden friends” in seventeenth-century England for the enjoyment of animal sports in bear pits, one may conceive the spectacle of garden-making or garden-sharing to be a show worth experiencing in common. While being neither siblings, nor lovers, “sisters and brothers in arts”²⁷ were men and

25. For the shift to reception, see note 7, and for the more recent social, anthropological, and economic takes on gardens, see Kate Felus, *The Secret Life of the Georgian Garden*, London, I.B. Tauris, 2016 and Roderick Floud, *An Economic History of the English Garden*, London, Allen Lane, 2019.

26. “Palimpsestuous” is coined as a portmanteau word that conflates the archeological meaning of a garden as layers over time and the idea of incestuous relationships, in order to highlight the unexpected, sour, or bittersweet rapprochement between two competing countries (such as France and Britain or Britain and China), or between neighbours, cousins, or friends. See Laurent Châtel, “Stoppard’s ‘English’ Garden(s): Separation and ‘Palimpsestuous’ Connection in Arcadia,” *Lectures de Tom Stoppard*, Rennes, France, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2011, p. 23–49.

27. The idea of “brother gardener” was used by Andrea Wulf, *The Brother Gardeners*:

women actively engaged in sharing advice and support towards the improvement of country house estates. A cautionary caveat is nonetheless necessary: this study is no attempt at sketching out a tableau of eighteenth-century networks, clubs, lobbies corresponding to such and such political or masonic affiliations; in fact, although some see it as a political “campaign” or, in the words of Tim Richardson, a “Whig Project,”²⁸ eighteenth-century British garden-making is conceived here as a nexus of social, cultural, psychological, spiritual, and intellectual dimensions, regardless of any Whig or Tory affiliation (the two main political parties in Britain until the late nineteenth century), even if it inevitably carried ideological implications; there is not much point in ascribing any idea or form to a specific masonic lodge or party influence, and there is not much point in ascribing any idea or form to a specific masonic lodge or party influence. Just as there was the Kit Kat Club (which undeniably was a Whig think tank in today’s parlance), there also was the Brothers Club (1711–1713), which was closer to Tory ideals. Birds of a feather stick together, so it is only natural that the same causes and passions united men. The sense of connectedness experienced through the garden need not be thought of as “coterie,” “brotherhood,” or “fraternity”—as these terms tend to be associated with sects, groups, or lobbies²⁹—but rather as a wide gamut of interrelations between men, between men and women, and between women themselves.³⁰ Within the constraints of this article, it is not possible to tease out the full extent of the gender implications of contact zones between men and women,³¹ but a focus on eighteenth-century British men will help sketch out the

Botany, Empire, and the Birth of an Obsession, London, Heinemann, 2008.

28. Tim Richardson, “While the whigs were wiggling through the wilderness, the Tories were tiptoeing through the treetops” in Richardson, 2007, p. 202.

29. See Betty A. Schellenberg, *Literary Coteries and the Making of Modern Print Culture, 1740–1790*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2016.

30. Pioneering studies of interrelations within gardens are Hunt, 1974; Christopher Thacker, *Building Towers, Forming Gardens: Landscaping by Hamilton, Hoare, and Beckford*, London, St Barnabas Press, 2002; Patrick Eyres, “Arcadian Greens Rural: The Leasowes, Hagley, Enville,” *New Arcadian Journal*, nos. 53–54, 2002, p. 115–132; Richardson, 2007; Sandy Haynes and Michael Symes (eds.), *Enville, Hagley, The Leasowes: Three Great Eighteenth-Century Gardens*, Bristol, Redcliffe Press, 2010; Bending, 2013.

31. The gender, or for that matter, queer dimensions of interconnectedness deserve further academic explorations and it is hoped the discussion here will provide a prompt for

psychological, aesthetic, cultural, and spiritual values of the bonds made possible through gardening. Interconnections embrace a wide range: visitors' encounters, exchanges, and co-creations between neighbours, shared tastes between garden enthusiasts, and friendship in many guises, with embedded ideals stretching back to classical writings on *philia* and *amicitia*, including notions of virtue, intimacy, love, benevolence, brotherliness, mimetic desire, emulation as well as feelings of familial belonging and virtual kinship.

98 Well-known connections can easily be brought to the surface, while lesser known ones may re-emerge. One may think of circles such as those formed by: Addison, Alexander Pope (1688–1744), Dr Francis Atterbury (1663–1732), Lord Allen Bathurst (1684–1775), William Kent (1685–1748), and Lord Burlington (1694–1753); James Thomson (1700–1748), Lord George Lyttelton (1709–1773) and William Shenstone (1714–1763); Coplestone Warre Bampfylde (1720–1791), Shenstone, Richard Graves (1715–1804), and Lord Lyttelton; William Beckford (1760–1844), Henry Hoare (1705–1785), and Charles Hamilton (1704–1786). The diversity of social backgrounds and ages—as evidenced by the contacts between theatre designer Kent and younger patron Burlington, Pope the poet and the fabulously rich Bathurst, modest Shenstone or Graves and the owner of Hagley, Lord Lyttelton, or young Beckford and his uncle Hamilton—is a measure of the creative, hybrid potential of interrelationships. Their bonds were nourished by letters, visits, guidance, consultation, or at times rivalry, with improvements as a major source of commonality. Early on in the century, with his strong links with Kent and Addison, Pope (see Fig. 5) in shaping the model of “brotherliness-in-arts,” bridging poetry, grotto-making, moral philosophy, sketching, and painting.³² He was imbued with classical texts and the contemporary philosophy of the third Earl of Shaftesbury (1671–1713), who advocated virtuous fraternity (and what

others to address avowed or unavowed homosocial connotations and homosexual relations within the garden; a recent inroad in this field is Lisa L. Moore, *Sister Arts: The Erotics of Lesbian Landscapes*, Minneapolis, Minnesota, University of Minnesota Press, 2011.

32. See Helen Deutsch, “Twickenham and the Landscape of True Character,” *Resemblance and Disgrace: Alexander Pope and the Deformation of Culture*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1996, p. 89–90.

“*real Friendship* is not”³³), as illustrated in the portrait of himself and his brother (see Fig. 2) who, against the background of a forked tree, exude shared visions and mutual dependence. Proud of his motto *Libertati & Amicitiae* over the door at Twickenham, Pope forged a construct of kinship through letter-writing: by weaving a connecting thread between his heart, that of his much-cherished friends, and his kingdom of a garden, he fashioned an epistolary love-knot, which served as a prototype for virtual sociability between writers throughout the eighteenth-century and beyond.³⁴ Thus, in March 1721, he wrote to Francis Atterbury (1662–1732), Bishop of Rochester: “I hope the advance of the fine season will set you upon your legs, enough to enable you to get into my garden, where I will carry you up a Mount, in a point of view to shew you the glory of my little kingdom.”³⁵ Even *in absentia*, through virtual and remote mental associations, the garden was the locus and matrix of an embodied friendship:

It is so long since I had the pleasure of an hour with your Lordship, that I should begin to think myself no longer *Amicus omnium horarum*, but for finding myself so in my constant thoughts of you. In those I was with you many hours this very day, and *had you* (where I wish and hope one day to see you really) *in my garden at Twitnam*.³⁶

In fact, friendship was shaped and consolidated through the garden, away from the court or the city, which Pope, even more than Cicero, considered as a vitiating influence.³⁷ “Souls harmonious sounds inspire,” as Robert Dodsley phrased it in his elegy *On the Death of Mr Pope* (1744).

33. See Anthony J. La Vopa, “Shaftesbury’s Quest for Fraternity,” *The Labor of Mind: Intellect and Gender in Enlightenment Cultures*, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, University Pennsylvania Press, 2017, p. 130–32.

34. See Helen Deutsch, “Twickenham and the Landscape of True Character,” *Resemblance and Disgrace: Alexander Pope and the Deformation of Culture*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1996, p. 89–90.

35. “Letter XV to Atterbury March 19th, 1722,” Joseph Wharton (ed.), *The Works of Pope*, London, Longman, Cadell and Davies, 1797, vol. 8, p. 109.

36. “Letter XI to Atterbury, Feb 8th, 1721–2,” *ibid.*, p. 103. (Our emphasis).

37. See Lawrence Leed Davidow, “Pope’s Verse Epistles: Friendship and the Private Sphere of Life,” *Huntington Library Quarterly*, vol. 40, no. 2, 1977, p. 151–70.



Figure 2. John Closterman, *Maurice Ashley-Cooper and Anthony Ashley-Cooper, 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury*, c.1700–1701, oil on canvas, 243.2 x 170.8 cm, no. 5308. © National Portrait Gallery, London.

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The affinities brought about by necessarily collaborative projects constitutes another instance of garden sociability. Mutually involved in shaping Chiswick, Lord Burlington, and William Kent, like most “gentlemen” patrons and amateur landscape designers, enjoyed links of respectful proximity and energizing emulation, despite not being friends as such.³⁸ This was equally the case for “working partners” such as architect John Vanbrugh (1664–1726) and gardener Charles Bridgeman (1690–1738) who worked in tandem briefly at Blenheim in Oxfordshire, at Stowe in Buckinghamshire, at Claremont in Surrey, later at Eastbury in Dorset *in situ*.³⁹

38. “The improbable pair lived together happily in the same house or houses for almost thirty years, from 1719 to Kent’s death in 1748, but without any hint of homosexual attachment.” In Timothy Mowl, *Gentlemen and Players. Gardeners of the English Landscape*, Stroud, UK, Sutton, 2000, p. 108.

39. Nineteen-year-old Bridgeman’s first encounter with Vanbrugh at Blenheim must have been brief as there is no other evidence than a map drawn by Bridgeman in 1709; see Jeri Bapasola, *The Finest View in England: The Landscape and Gardens at Blenheim*, Woodstock, UK, Blenheim Palace, 2009, p. 20.

Professional bonds could also live beyond the grave: a sort of “dialogue with the dead,” or conversation, somehow took place between designers across generations, such as Bridgeman and Kent at Rousham, or Bridgeman, Kent, and Brown at Stowe, or Brown and Repton on hundreds of sites across the country, keeping up ghostly connections. Such conversations highlight the continuous palimpsestuous layering of creativity, thus contradicting teleological readings of gardens with breaks, turning points, and ruptures.

510 Yet another form of connecting is illustrated by place attachment when, after successive contacts, a sense of belonging was felt for a place they did not actually own. Visitors allowed to walk on private estates could acquire a sense of habit, ease, and familiarity with the place, even when no actual interaction occurred with the owners or other visitors; such affective and cognitive projections onto a shared land generated bonding. One paradigmatic case of such virtual ownership is that of architect John Vanbrugh when he was working at Blenheim Palace, Woodstock (Oxfordshire): in 1709, he felt so much “at home” on the estate that he made a celebrated plea to the owner, Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, for the preservation of the ruins of the Old Manor, crediting them with symbolic, historical, national, and aesthetic qualities: “[I]t would make one of the Most Agreeable Objects that the best of Landskip painters can invent.”⁴⁰ The letter was written in vain, since the manor was demolished, and garden historiography has cherished this document ever since as evidence of the first manifesto of a pictorial taste in garden design. But the true story is that Vanbrugh had overstepped the mark, made himself at ease in the ruins and lived there, which explains why he felt such a bond with the place and pleaded for the ruins to be kept! These few examples show that encounters with places and people generated numerous patterns of sharing and connecting, which would be best highlighted here by way of a typology itemizing, one by one, the distinct manifestations that “green bonds” displayed in eighteenth-century British culture: epistolary and literary exchanges, scriptural signs, contacts *in situ* and marks of shared pleasures and guidance. I will focus principally on the poet and landscape designer William Shenstone (see Fig. 3a & 3b).

40. John Vanbrugh, “Reasons Offer’d for Preserving some Part of the Old Manor,” 11 June 1709, British Library, London, Add.Mss. 61, 353 f.62; quoted in J.D. Hunt, *The Genius of the Place*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, MIT Press, 1993, p. 120–121; and discussed in Bapasola, 2009, p. 30–31.



Figure 3a. Anon., frontispiece, in Robert Dodsley, *The Works, in Verse and Prose*, of William Shenstone (London, 1764), vol. 2. Private collection.



Figure 3b. Anon., vignette for "On Publications," in Robert Dodsley, *The Works, in Verse and Prose*, of William Shenstone (London, 1764), vol. 2, p. 3. Private collection.

ENTANGLED STORIES: A TYPOLOGY OF INTERRELATIONS

511 Shenstone inscribed friendship at the core of his writings.⁴¹ In Pope's footsteps, he considered he was placing the shadow of his self in his own letters, at once an autobiographical exercise and a social activity: "I have amused myself often with this species of writing since you saw me; partly to divert my present *impatience*, and partly as it will be a picture of most that passes in my mind; a portrait which *friends* may value."⁴² On learning of the destruction of his letters to his recently deceased friend Whistler, he deplored losing part of his life memory: "I considered them as the records of a friendship that will be always dear to me; and as the history of my mind for these twenty years last past."⁴³ The titles of his books were like a nod at readers as if they were intimate friends, notably his *Poems upon Various Occasions, Written for the Entertainment of the Author, and Printed for the Amusement of a Few Friends Prejudiced in His Favour*.⁴⁴ The reference to friendship could easily be mistaken for a mere trope of the literary and publishing world, but its frequent occurrences document an expectation and a practice that is not simply a conceit.⁴⁵ Robert Dodsley said that Shenstone held as a maxim that "it is not in my nature, to be a half a friend," and also claimed that one of his leading contributions was friendship: "But the talents of Mr Shenstone were not confined merely to poetry; his character, as man of clear judgment, will best appear, from his prose works. It is there we must search for the acuteness of understanding, and his profound knowledge of the human heart."⁴⁶ Seeing Shenstone's heart placed as

41. See John Riely, "Shenstone's Walks: The Genesis of the Leasowes," *Apollo*, vol. 110, 1979, p. 202–209 and more recently David Fairer, "Shenstone, Sensibility, and the Ethics of Looking," *Age of Johnson*, vol. 19, 2009, p. 129–147; and Sandro Jung, "William Shenstone's Poetry, The Leasowes and the Intermediality of Reading and Architectural Design," *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, vol. 37, no. 1, 2014, p. 53–77.

42. William Shenstone, "Letter to Mr Graves, on Social Happiness, about 1745," *The Works in Verse and Prose of William Shenstone Containing Letters to Particular Friends from 1739 to 1763*, London, J. Dodsley, 1769, vol. 3, p. 114.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 269.

44. William Shenstone, *Poems upon Various Occasions: Written for the Entertainment of the Author, and Printed for the Amusement of a few Friends Prejudiced in His Favour*, Oxford, Leon Lichfield, 1737.

45. A dig for the words "friend(s)" and "friendship" reveals numerous entries in his works and correspondence as well as in Richard Graves' *Recollection of Some Particulars in the Life of the Late William Shenstone in a Series of Letters from an Intimate Friend of His*, London, J. Dodsley, 1788.

46. Shenstone, 1769, vol. 1, "Preface," p. 12.

a cornerstone of his achievements, beyond his poetical and prose skills, eerily echoes the heart-shaped pond on his farm at the Leasowes as seen on the map inserted in the published “Description” (see Fig. 4).⁴⁷ His *Elegies Written on Many Different Occasions* often allude to “a friend,” “the tranquility of friendship,”⁴⁸ or to those who cherish friends through time, like Lord Temple, as opposed to others who, “lost to Friendship, lost to love, / Waste their best minutes on a Foreign strand.”⁴⁹ Several threads are woven into the same ethical scheme—gardening, virtue, and constancy—with friendship as a simple seed or hardy plant in permanent residence in the garden:

What tho’ my roofs devoid of pomp arise,
Nor tempt the proud to quit his destin’d way?
Nor costly art my flow’ry dales disguise,
Where only simple friendship deigns to stray?⁵⁰



Figure 4. Map on the facing page of “A Description of the Leasowes, the Seat of late William Shenstone,” detail, in Robert Dodsley, *The Works, in Verse and Prose, of William Shenstone* (London, 1764), vol. 2, p. 332. Private collection.

47. Map on the facing page of “A Description of the Leasowes, the Seat of late William Shenstone,” *The Works in Verse and Prose of William Shenstone... with Decorations*, London, J. Dodsley, 1764, vol. 2, p. 332.

48. *Ibid.*, “Elegy V,” p. 38.

49. *Ibid.*, “Elegy XIV,” p. 59.

50. *Ibid.*, “Elegy XX,” p. 83.

No clearer message could have been imparted than in his “Elegy XXIV” where “he takes occasion from the date of Eleanor of Bretagne, to suggest the imperfect pleasures of a solitary life.”⁵¹ However successful aesthetically and rewarding psychologically, natural retreat and gardening made no sense without people to share it with; soon friendship called:

The groves may smile; the rivers gently glide;
Soft thro’ the vale resound the lonesome lay;
Ev’n thickets yield delight, if taste preside,
But can they please, when LYTTTELION’S away?⁵²

However, it is the mid-century ode “Rural Elegance” (1750) that displayed the clearest and best-known manifesto for a natural polite, tempered sociability, nourished by friendly ties, as opposed to urban, passionate society, which undermined social cont-(r)acts. The poet challenged the labourer out of his narrow utilitarian boundaries:

Why brand these pleasures with the name
Of soft, unsocial toils, of indolence and shame?
Search but the garden, or the wood,
Let yon admir’d carnation own,
Not all was meant for raiment, or for food,
Not all for needful use alone;⁵³

Equally he invited the Duchess of Somerset to keep her senses on the alert for a comprehensive perception of nature, one that is not exclusively visual, but also auditory and olfactive:

Why knows the nightingale to sing?
Why flows the pine’s nectareous juice?

51. *Ibid.*, “Elegy XXIV,” p. 98.

52. *Ibid.*, p. 101.

53. *Ibid.*, “Rural Elegance. An ODE to the Late Duchess of Somerset,” p. 117.

Why shines with paint the linnen's wing?
 For sustenance alone? for use?
 For preservation? Every sphere
 Shall bid fair pleasure's rightful claim appear.
 [...]
 Beneath the British oak's majestic shade,
 Shall see fair truth, immortal maid,
 Friendship in artless guise array'd,
 Honour, and moral Beauty shine
 With more attractive charms, with radiance more divine.⁵⁴

Intermedial the garden was indeed—a space of interconnectedness on two counts, at once a nexus of intermingling sounds, views, and smells and a place to be shared and to seal bonds. The province of gardening, while recognized as a solitary experience, was also, in Dodsley's words, the province of “wit and friendship's reign,” for “[h]ere with his friends the social glass went round.”⁵⁵ The fruits reaped from such commonality are best exemplified by the work and career of Robert Dodsley (1703–1764), who, individually, through his garden friendship with Pope and Shenstone, was enticed first into individual writing of poetical “unconnected thoughts”⁵⁶ and then into editing and publishing collectively all his friends' verse and prose for posterity.⁵⁷ Dodsley clearly perceived the fetichist attachment to Pope's villa, a cradle

54. *Ibid.*, p. 119.

55. Robert Dodsley, “The Cave of Pope. A Prophecy,” *Miscellanies*, London, R. and J. Dodsley, 1745, vol. 1, p. 182–183.

56. Borrowed from the title of Shenstone's seminal piece (only published posthumously, “Unconnected Thoughts on Gardening,” *The Works in Verse and Prose of W. Shenstone*, London, R. and J. Dodsley, 1764, vol. 2, p. 125–147), the literary modality of “unconnectedness” and “fragmentariness” practiced at that time goes a long way to account for the importance at the time of collectively circulating, spreading, and cementing thoughts and people.

57. Dodsley's shop brought to light the works of Jonathan Swift, Alexander Pope, Mark Akenside, Joseph and Thomas Warton, Samuel Johnson, William Mason, Joseph Spence, William Whitehead, Thomas Gray, William Shenstone, Lords Chesterfield and Lyttleton, John Brown, Gilbert West, and Edward Young; see Michael F. Suarez, “Dodsley's ‘Collection of Poems’ and the Ghost of Pope: The Politics of Literary Reputation,” *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, vol. 88, no. 2, 1994, p. 189–206 and the remarkable Betty Schellenberg, *Literary Coteries and the Making of Modern Print Culture*, especially the first section of Chapter 4, “Memorializing a Coterie Life in Print: The case of William Shenstone,” Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2016, p. 133.

of brotherliness in Twickenham, south of London, and foresaw the high interest and expectations, which are still entertained today, about the restoration of Pope's Grotto:⁵⁸

On Thames's bank the stranger shall arrive,
 With curious wish thy sacred grott to see,
 Thy sacred grott shall with thy name survive.
 Grateful posterity, from age to age,
 With pious hand the ruin shall repair:
 Some good old man, to each enquiring sage,
 Pointing the place, shall cry "The Bard liv'd there."⁵⁹

What better embodiment of literary kinship through generations than the garden grotto providing "some small gem, or moss, or shining ore" for visitors to steal, "in fond hope / to please their friends on eve'ry distant shore, Boasting a relick from the cave of Pope."⁶⁰

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Imprinted verbal tokens, albeit published and engraved on paper, needed to be supplemented with extra material signs of presence. A garden could only be complete and alive when peopled, i.e. when human beings "connected" and "dialogued" with the organic matter of plants, shrubs, trees as well as animals. Hortulan epigraphy thus insured that life and people were embedded in the garden. An ode "written in a flower book of my own colouring, designed for Lady Plymouth"⁶¹ is already a gesture that ventured beyond mere wording in order to find materialization *in situ*. The next step was to "engrave" and leave marks on stone—inscriptions—a revival of the age-old practice of *titulus*, which became the hallmark of European "modern gardening" and has endured to this day, whether one thinks of Ian Hamilton Finlay or even more contemporary land art actions. From book titles to mineral tituli. Pope had remembered his mother at the back of his garden with an obelisk as mentioned in John Serle's plan of the garden and as appears in Richardson's portrait of Pope (see Fig. 5) played a key role;⁶² such dramatization

58. For information on the recent restoration of the grotto, see the website popesgrotto.org.uk (accessed 27 February 2021).

59. Dodsley, 1745, p. 182–183.

60. *Ibid.*, p. 183.

61. This poem (c. 1753–1755) was printed in *The Works in Verse and Prose of W. Shenstone*, London, R. and J. Dodsley, 1764, vol. 1, p. 142.

62. Jonathan Richardson, *Alexander Pope* (with the obelisk to his mother), 1738, oil

of one's relatives, perhaps reeking too much of Catholicism, did not appeal to Kent: "Pope in a mourning gown, with a strange view of ye garden to show ye obelisk as in memory to his mothers death, the alligory seem'd odde to me."⁶³ But in the light of this study on relationality, Pope's inclusion of his parent within the planting and perspectival organization partakes clearly of the need to humanize and spiritualize the garden with "relatives." In turn, Lord Lyttelton dedicated an urn "ornamented with clustering branches of the vine, in bas relief" to the memory of Pope, "whose friendship, while living, he was proud to cultivate."⁶⁴ As for the nearby Leasowes, it stood out for its sheer quantity of urns, "named" sites, and inscriptions peppered around. Shenstone "literarily" inscribed several people "on the land" (*sur le terrain*, in the words of the Marquis de Girardin, a keen epigrapher at Ermenonville): he consecrated areas to Joseph Spence, Robert Dodsley, as well as dead poets, notably Virgil (with a Latin inscription on an obelisk), designed a seat to James Thomson and wrote inscriptions to lesser-known figures, such as that on an ornamental urn to one "Miss Dolman, a beautiful and amiable relative of Mr Shenstone's, who died of the smallpox," or even on "a seat at the bottom of a large root."⁶⁵ Two inscriptions to Graves and Somerville, a few metres apart, felt like a private wink to privileged insiders and like a call inside for visitors who felt privy to the club:

To the Friendship and Merit
OF RICHARD GRAVES.
*For thee, the bubbling Springs appear'd to mourn,
And whispering Pines made Vows for thy Return.*
Dryden.⁶⁶

To the genius and friendship
OF WILLIAM SOMERVILLE
W.S. rais'd this urn,
Bedewing the ashes of his poetical friend
With tears.⁶⁷

on canvas, 99.1 x 83.8 cm, New Haven, Yale Centre for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection; <https://collections.britishart.yale.edu/catalog/tms:147> (accessed 12 March 2019).

63. H. Avray Tipping, "Four Unpublished Letters of William Kent," *Architectural Review*, vol. 63, 1928, p. 209. See John Dixon Hunt, "Pope, Kent, and 'Palladian' Gardening," in George Rousseau and Pat Rogers (eds.), *The Enduring Legacy: Alexander Pope Tercentenary Essays*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988, p. 121–133.

64. *A Companion to the Leasowes, Hagley, and Enville*, London, G.G.J & J. Robinson, 1789, p. 65.

65. *Ibid.*, p. 21.

66. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

67. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

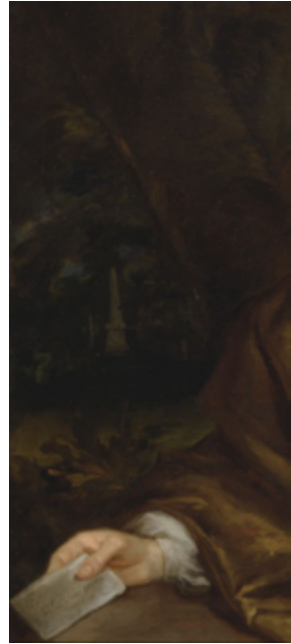


Figure 5a. Jonathan Richardson, *Alexander Pope* (with the obelisk to his mother), 1738, oil on canvas, 99.1 x 83.8 cm. B1973.L49 © Yale Centre for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, New Haven, (detail).

Figure 5b. (Detail).

The lability and adaptability of inscriptions is most evident when dedicatees change names as it were; hence the one spot that commemorated the Earl of Stamford in the 1750s and 1760s then passed on to Shenstone, the creator himself, in the 1780s:

Yet still let Friendship's joys be near,
 Still on these plains her train appear.
 By Learning's sons my haunts be trod,
 And Stamford's feet imprint my sod:
 For Stamford oft hath deign'd to stray
 Around my Leasowes' flowery way;⁶⁸

68. Richard Jago, "Labour and Genius: or The Mill Stream and the Cascade. A Fable. Inscribed to William Shenstone, Esq.," in *Poems Moral and Descriptive by Richard Jago*, London, J. Dodsley, 1784, p. 150.

Indeed, after a while, the guidebook of the Leasowes specified there had been a transfer:

This spot was originally inscribed to the Earl of Stamford; — but the present proprietor has, with abundant taste and propriety, dedicated it to the memory of its late owner, and placed the following inscription against the rude moss-grown trunks which form this recess [...]
Sedem cum Rivo Dedicat E.H.⁶⁹

The degree of emotional and spiritual input, which the garden owner invested onto his place can be gathered from Dodsley's perception of inscriptions:

Yes, 'tis enchantment all — And see, the spells,
The powerful incantations, magic verse,
Inscrib'd on every tree, alcove, or urn, —
Spells! — Incantations! — ah, my tuneful friend!
Thine are the numbers! Thine the wond'rous work!⁷⁰

In two letters to Richard Jago and Lady Luxborough in 1749, Shenstone explained, using the same terms, how he contrived his scriptural “props” by dint of “tablets” like garden stage directions or aids in order to humour the visitor's path in a friendly way:

(To Lady Luxborough) What do you think of my publishing verses once a week upon my Screens, for the Amusement of my good Friends the Vulgar? — My Verses for the present week are publish'd in VIRGIL's *Grove*, and run thus [...] My Method is a very cheap one; I paste some Writing-Paper to a Piece of Deal, then print with a Pen. This serves in Root-Houses and under Cover.⁷¹

69. *A Companion to the Leasowes*, 1789, p. 6.

70. Robert Dodsley, “Verses by Mr. DOSDLEY on his first arrival at the LEASOWES, 1754,” *The Works in Prose and Verse of Shenstone*, London, R. Dodsley, 1764, vol. 2, p. 381–382.

71. Letter to Lady Luxborough, “The Leasowes, June 2nd, 1749,” *Select Letters between the Late Duchess of Somerset, Lady Luxborough... and others... from original copies, by Mr Hull*, London, J. Dodsley, 1778, vol. 1, p. 93–94.

(To Jago) I wrote the following at breakfast yesterday, and they are all I have wrote since I saw you. They are now in one of the root-houses of Virgil's Grove, for the admonition of my good friends the vulgar, of whom I have multitudes every Sunday evening, and who very fortunately believe in fairies, and are no judges of poetry.⁷²

The mirror effect between the two letters also functions like an echo or “connecting aid” that weaves invisible strings between the three friends.

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The emblematic value of inscriptions rose to fame when they were perceived as playing a central role in the progress from the “emblematical to expressive” gardening—a teleological reading that for a long time became the standard narrative of “English” garden history.⁷³ Inscriptions certainly were emblematical, as they carried messages of political, moral, philosophical, and sentimental import. But as such they were also expressive (hence the absurdity of retrospectively fancying a trajectory from early eighteenth-century emblem to later eighteenth-century expression): they expressed present, past, and future attachments and “belongings,” which could be rued, lamented, remembered, or hoped for. Across regions of England and Wales, and no doubt beyond in Scotland and Ireland, too, urns, pedestals, temples all bedecked with “inscriptions” created as many winks from one individual to another, the quick and the dead alike, and contributed to humanizing the garden masonry or infrastructure: if one were to string together the echoes of people’s names from one place to another, they would be “ricocheting” off each other in multiple ways within one county, or across from Somerset to Wiltshire, up to Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire, and one would easily reach out to the Midlands and Yorkshire, at a speed that defied any carriage on even the best kept Turnpike roads at that time.

72. “Letter LVI. To Mr Jago. June 1749,” *Letters to Particular Friends: by William Shenstone, Esq; from the year 1739 to 1763*, Dublin, H. Saunders, W. Sleater, D. Chamberlaine, J. Potts, J. Williams, and W. Colles, 1770, p. 120.

73. See the canonical article by John Dixon Hunt, “Emblem and Expressionism in the Eighteenth-Century Landscape Garden,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, vol. 4, no. 3, 1971, p. 310 and Bending’s review of the historiography of “English” garden history in Bending, 2013, p. 8–15.

Literary and scriptural connections could neither be totally satisfying, nor live up to the physical and psychological benefits of in-person visits: there was a lot to be learnt, a lot to teach, and a lot to be gained when exchanging *in situ* in between close relatives, neighbours, distant friends, and visitors. Taste was correct if shared, polite if polished by one another's contact. One of the most touching visual evidence of *in situ* friendships is the drawing by William Kent showing himself with Pope and his dog "Bounce" enjoying a conversation⁷⁴ (see Fig. 6). Later testimonies of intermedial collaboration and designing consultancy can be found around another pair of gardenists, Henry Hoare at Stourhead in Wiltshire and C.W. Bampfylde at Hestercombe in Somerset (Taunton). Bampfylde's graphic works (Fig. 1 & Fig. 7)⁷⁵ convey a glimpse of his life at Stourhead as he was painting copies of pictures owned by Hoare; and in the company of yet another painter also named Hoare, he passed on advice for the making of a cascade: "Messres Bampfield and Hoare [William Hoare of Bath] have made an ingenious model for the Cascade like Mr Bampfields. And as I have stone quarries on the Hill just above it, I hope to finish it soon in the summer."⁷⁶ Such human interconnections *in situ* are the fleshed-out picture of the crossovers between *belles lettres*, painting, and gardening, which John Dixon Hunt had pioneered in his *Figure in the Landscape* and which can be re-read in terms of individual visitors' experiences of sharing artistic talents—(wo)men of letters, amateur poets, draughts(wo)men, painters, artists all engaged in "environmental interactions," as it were, between words and images. Country

74. William Kent, *Pope's Garden at Twickenham, with Kent, Pope, and the Dog, "Bounce,"* drawing in pen and black and grey ink and brown wash, over graphite, 28.9 x 39.5 cm, British Museum, no. 1872, 1109.878 ; https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_1872-1109-878 (accessed 28 February 2021).

75. A substantial number of watercolour drawings by C.W. Bampfylde constitute an important key to document the Stourhead gardens; see for instance "A View from the Entrance to the Gardens, Showing the Bridge, Temple of the Sun, and Pantheon," 1775, 37.5 x 54.6 cm, watercolour, National Trust, no. 73072, <http://www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/object/730729> (accessed 28 February 2021); and two watercolours recently advertised for sale with "Peppiatt Fine Art", pen and brown ink and watercolour, 1776, 28 x 38, http://www.peppiattfineart.co.uk/display.php?KT_artists=Coplestone+Warre+Bampfylde (accessed 28 February 2021).

76. Henry Hoare to Lord Bruce on 23 December 1765, quoted in Philip White, *A Gentleman of Fine Taste: The Watercolours of C.W. Bampfylde*, London, Christie's, 1995.

house visiting shaped whole generations of gardenists as it provided them with an echoing chamber: brothers-in-arts on the move insured on the one hand “common design” i.e. collectively experienced intents, ideas, schemes, and drawings, and on the other hand “common reception,” i.e. shared feedbacks, echoes, exchanges, and *ekphrasis*, which, in eighteenth-century parlance, augmented the stock of ideas and feelings and legitimized the apparent innocence and lightness of gardening. Visits were interconnected, several estates being strung together as one went from Blenheim to Rousham and Stowe, from Wilton to Stourhead, via Fonthill, or through the trio of Enville, Hagley, and the Leasowes, or even further up of course, Castle Howard, Studley Royal, and Hackfall. Some sites were small, some were larger; some stealing the show (Stowe), others lesser-known, such as Hestercombe in Taunton.



Figure 6. William Kent, *Pope's Garden at Twickenham, with Kent, Pope, and the Dog, "Bounce,"* date unknown, drawing in pen and black and grey ink and brown wash, over graphite, 28.9 x 39.5 cm, British Museum, London, no. 1872, 1109.878. © The Trustees of the British Museum.



Figure 7. Coplestone Warre Bampfylde, *View of Stourhead*, c.1770s, pencil, ink and watercolour on paper, 27 x 52 cm, E.360-1949 © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

915 Befriending other gardenists during visits, for one thing, consolidated one's taste and expertise. With Bathurst, Pope found in Cirencester not only friendship but a terrain of prototypal experimentation for his own Twickenham villa. As Swift put it, "Pope walks, and courts the Muse."⁷⁷ His first visit was in 1718 and he was a co-designer of the estate, conjuring up schemes from one visit to another, and possibly even obtaining lime trees at one point in 1724.⁷⁸

I am with my Lord Bathurst at my Bower in whose Groves we had yesterday a dry walk of three hours. [...] I write an Hour or two every morning, then ride out a hunting upon the Downes, eat heartily, talk tender sentiments with Lord B. or draw Plans for Houses and Gardens, open Avenues, cut Glades, plant Firs, contrive Waterworks, all very fine and beautiful in our own imagination. At nights we play at Commerce.⁷⁹

77. "Dr Swift to Mr Pope," *The Poetical Works of J. Swift*, Edinburgh, The Apollo Press, 1778, vol. 3, p. 162.

78. Marie Draper, *Marble Hill House, Twickenham. A Short Account of its History and Architecture*, London, Greater London Council, 1969, p. 15.

79. Alexander Pope, "Letter XII to M. Blount, June 22, 1724," in George W. Sherburn (ed.), *The Correspondence of A. Pope*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1956, vol. 2, p. 240.

Being a regular resident also meant vigilance about what was being done, notably planting, and at times tree felling, with friendship turning sour as a result, as when Pope expressed his anger in 1728 about the sacrifice of the terrace woody walk.⁸⁰ One may turn to Shenstone again, as he represents the epitome of a nexus of interconnecting places and people. Early on he assisted Robert Graves' brother in making a garden in 1735, which spurred him on indulging into further landscaping schemes. He was well-acquainted with the achievements of aristocratic landowners such as Lord Lyttleton at Hagley, Lord Stamford at Enville (a chapel was erected at Enville in memory of their friendship), Lord Temple at Stowe, and Lady Luxborough at Barrells, as well as the more modest achievements of neighbour Philip Southcote at Wooburn. Competition in between "green brothers" was rife, but benevolence prevailed up to a point: "I am fully bent on raising a neat urn to him [James Thomson] in my lower grove, if Mr. Lyttelton does not inscribe one at Hagley *before* me. But I should be extremely glad of your advice whereabouts to place it."⁸¹ And thus from one site to another, from one friend to another, a string of artistic ventures came into being; there was no knowledge of a place without taking in the other, since one could, for instance, walk across the Leasowes up to Hagley. The guidebook itself "connected" them intermedially.⁸²

916 Writing and sketching were so closely bound up that Pope drew his earliest landscaping ideas for the estate of Marble Hill on the sheets of his Homer translations.⁸³ To reassure Martha Blount that there was no point feeling jealous or left out, he argued that friendly thoughts and garden sketching were interchangeable: "[D]on't let any lady from hence imagine that my head is so full of any gardens as to forget hers. The greatest proof I could give her to the contrary is, that I have spent many hours here in studying for hers, & in drawing new plans for her."⁸⁴ Similarly, Shenstone and Lady Luxborough intermixed letters

80. William Alvis Brogden, *Ichnographia Rustica: Stephen Switzer and the Designed Landscape*, London, Routledge, 2017, p. 193.

81. "Letter LIII. To Mr Jago. Sunday night, Sept. 11, 1748," *Letters to Particular Friends*, 1770, p. 114.

82. This is exemplified by *A Companion to the Leasowes*, 1789; for in-depth triangular study of the three estates, see Haynes and Symes, 2010.

83. The sketches are in the British Library (Add. MS 4808 f.186 and MS 4809 ff. 097 & 161) and have been discussed by Peter Martin, *Pursuing Innocent Pleasures: The Gardening World of Alexander Pope*, Hamden, Archon Books, 1984 and Emma Parker, "'The Taste of the Ancients': The Garden at Marble Hill," *Garden History*, vol. 48, no. 2, 2018, p. 128–153.

84. "Letter to M. Blount, June 22, 1724," Pope/Sherburn, 1956, p. 240.

and sketches in their exchanges, without ever being upon the spot: on 1 May 1749 Lady Luxborough received “a little sketch of alterations in my Shrubbery,” while on 14 May Shenstone was given a “Sketch of your improvements.”⁸⁵ But nothing could replace in situ enjoyments, and fabriques (even when made of bones and hair!) certainly never seemed to compete with human flesh and bones:

I see that your improvements in your Walks and Cascades make your place a Paradise in miniature: yet, though I am its professed admirer, it must permit me to say that the conversation of the master and contriver of the *beauties* I saw there, was to me preferable far to them; so that I regretted less than I should otherwise have done the weakness of my limbs, which prevented my *trampouzing* so much as I used.⁸⁶

On a larger scale, opening the garden to the outside world, even the uneducated, was a guarantee of “connectedness” and a source of sociability. Shenstone admitted so: “Wives, children, alliances, visits, &c. are necessary objects of our social passions; and whether or no we can, through particular circumstances, be happy *with*, I think it plain enough that it is not possible to be happy *without* them.”⁸⁷ Highly emblematic is the way in which repeated visits from a stranger in 1749 grew into endearment and friendship: “His name is Pixell; [...] He gave me an opportunity of being acquainted with him by frequently visiting, and introducing company to, my walks. I met him one morning with an Italian in my grove, and our acquaintance has been growing ever since.”⁸⁸ Even if more visitors, as he once put it, “arrive to see my *Walks* than *me*,”⁸⁹ their presence was necessary for the

85. See Mark Laird’s discussion of the shape of the shrubberies in *The Flowering of the Landscape Garden: English Pleasure Grounds, 1720–1800*, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999, p. 112–120.

86. “Letter CXII dated Barrells, Sept 29th, 1754,” *Letters Written by the Late Right Honourable Lady Luxborough*, to William Shenstone, London, J. Dodsley, 1775, p. 393–394.

87. “Letter XXXIX, To Mr. Graves, on Social Happiness, about 1745,” *Letters to Particular Friends*, 1770, p. 77.

88. “Letter LVI to Jago,” *The Works in Verse and Prose of Shenstone*, vol. 3, 1769, p. 157.

89. “XXVI, June 6, 1752” (his emphasis), *Select Letters Between the Late Duchess of Somerset*, 1778, vol. 1, p. 135.

design to come to life; strangers gave their feedback and their five senses animated the scene, bringing about a sense of self-aggrandizement:

[M]y vanity prompts me to tell your Ladyship that the Earl of Stamford call'd on me with three other Gentlemen, this week, to see my Walks. T^h would make you laugh to say that he was almost mir'd in them, but it was nearly the Case, in some Particular places. However he was much struck with Virgil's Grove, & particularly ye Cascade you were used to admire; gave it preference to the Rock work at Hagley and said obliging things [...] He gave me friendly invitations to Enfield where he is building a Gothick Green-house: his Visit does me Honour in my Neighbourhood.⁹⁰

One of the key features on which hinged an oxymoronic blend of artistic challenge, rivalry, friendliness, and entertainment was the cascade, which exercised thoughts and exchanges between friends. The hydrological works at Hagley, now partly restored thanks to the work of Joe Hawkins, probably provided the impetus to begin similar schemes at the Leasowes and at Hestercombe (see Fig. 8), Bampfylde's more modest garden which nonetheless boasted an extraordinary cascade, also now restored.⁹¹ The best documented exchange over a cascade is undoubtedly Thomas Smith's *A View in Virgil's Grove* (see Fig. 9) and Shenstone's account of his stychomithic dialogue with his "right friendly bard"⁹² James Thomson and neighbour George Lyttelton, with a climax of excitement when "the double entendre was worked up to a point, and produced a laugh": "I don't wonder you're a devotee to the Muses. This place, says Mr L will improve a poetical genius.—Aye,

90. "Letter to Lady Luxborough, Feb 4th, 1750," *Letters of William Shenstone*, 1939, p. 255.

91. For Hawkins's work at Lord Cobham's Hagley, see the website of Hagley Hall <https://www.hagleyhall.com/blog/down-the-rough-cascade-part-2/> (accessed 27 February 2021); for Philip White's restoration of Hestercombe, see the website of Hestercombe, <https://www.hestercombe.com/history/restoration/> (accessed 27 February 2021).

92. "Letter XLVII. To the Fame. Sept, 20th 1747," *The Works in Prose and Verse of Shenstone*, vol. 3, p. 126.

replied Mr T and a poetical genius will improve this place.⁹³ Conversations, verbal puns, and visual displays were supplemented with other sensory pleasures—a reminder that the modern garden need not be reduced to its being picturesque;⁹⁴ music was a friendly addition to the sense of togetherness in the garden:

—Did I ever tell you how unseasonably the three fiddles struck up in my grove about an hour after you left me; and how a set of ten bells was heard from my wood the evening after? It might have passed for the harmony of some aerial spirit, who was a well-wisher to us poor mortals; but that I think, had it been so, it would have been addressed to the better sort, and of consequence have been heard whilst you were here. This by way of introduction to what I am going to tell you. Mr. Pixell has made an agreement with his club at Birmingham, to give me a day's music in some part of my walks. The time is not yet fixed: but, if you were an idle man, and could be brought over at a day or two's notice, I would give it you, and be in hopes I could entertain you very agreeably.⁹⁵

One cannot underestimate the spiritual and therapeutic dimension of befriending oneself to a place and attempting to replace a “relative” with the garden, a new “relation”—an idea that Shenstone had in mind when fashioning his construct of kinship: “[A]mongst the Strangers who visited my Walks this Summer, there were three or more, as their Servants informed us, who had recourse to these Amusements, on the Death of their Relations.”⁹⁶

93. W. Shenstone, “Shenstone and Thomson (1746),” *The European Magazine and London Review*, vol. 37, March 1800, London, Sewell, p. 185.

94. Laurent Châtel, “Le jardin, matrice de paysage. Plaidoyer contre la catégorie ‘jardin pittoresque’,” in Emilie Beck Saiello, Laurent Châtel, Elisabeth Martichou (eds.), *Écrire et peindre le paysage en France et en Angleterre*, Rennes, France, Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2021, p. 25–43.

95. “LVII. To R. Jago. June 11th, 1750,” *Letters to Particular Friends*, 1770, p. 128.

96. “Letter XLIV. To Mr. Graves. Oct. 24, 1753,” *Select Letters Between the Late Duchess of Somerset*, 1778, p. 170–171.



Figure 8. Coplestone Warre Bampfylde, *The Cascade at Hestercombe, near Taunton*, c.1770–1780, watercolour drawing, 34.5x 24.7 cm, E. 336-1949. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



Figure 9. James Mason after Thomas Smith of Derby, "A View in Virgil's Grove at the Leasowes," c.1781, engraving, 13 x 18.5 cm, British Museum, no. 1904, 0819.966.42. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

PARTING THOUGHTS: “A GARDEN OF ONE’S OWN” OR VIRTUAL OWNERSHIP

917 In side-stepping the *ut pictura poesis* definition of the “sister arts,” and focusing on sisters-and brothers-in arts, hortulan intermediality manifests itself as the locus of spatial and relational connections: it reconnects places with people and consolidates the environmental garden history still waiting to be unraveled in the humanities. Instead of dwelling simply on individual creations and creators, the gap between place makers and place tasters is bridged, and the flows of people coming in and out of the garden flesh out the account of a more holistic history of creativity. Gardens in eighteenth-century Britain negotiated a tension between private ownership, seclusion, or retreat on the one hand and inclusiveness and openness on the other hand, displaying a shared terrain of values, practices, and enjoyments. Were garden friends in any way a case of *primus inter pares*, feeling equal side by side? In emphasizing the commonality that came with “green bonds,” one may risk begging the issue of inequality. Not all landowners were equal and Shenstone lived throughout his life with a constant obsession due to the small size of his estate and his modest means. When describing his stone mason employed to build the Gothic Alcove, Shenstone wrote: “He is an honest man, and will be glad to work cheap.”⁹⁷ Knowing his finances were limited, his friends supplied him with plants and cuttings from their own gardens, as when Lady Luxborough sent him flowers to go around his hermitage, and he remained an enthusiast “on a moderate Computation”:

Two hundred Pounds expended in a Rotunda at *Hagley*, on Ionic Pillars! The Dome of Stone, with thin lead underneath, to keep out wet. While *I* propose, or *fancy* I propose to build a Piece of Gothic Architecture, at Sight of which, all modern Castles near shall bow their Heads abased, like the other Sheaves to Joseph’s. I send you the Plan; ‘tis for a Seat on the Bank above my Hermitage, and will amount, on a moderate Computation, to the Sum of fifteen Shillings.⁹⁸

Size of the estate and of the bank account did matter enormously. But the collective experience of improvements went some way to connecting the middling sorts, the gentry, and the aristocracy. What inter-relationality granted through visits and exchanges was not

97. “Letter to Lady Luxborough. Sept. 12th, 1749,” *Letters of William Shenstone*, 1939, p. 233.

98. “Letter XXVI. To Lady Luxborough. June 2, 1749,” *Select Letters Between the Late Duchess of Somerset*, 1778, vol. 1, p. 95.

a legal right over any property, but a feeling of virtual ownership, as if access, inclusiveness, and *jouissance* compensated for not being proprietors of the place. While in 1624 Henry Wotton asserted the material importance of a home as a “kinde of private Princedome; nay, to the Possessors thereof, an Epitomie of the whole World,”⁹⁹ in 1712 Joseph Addison suggested that gardens could provide a visitor with a garden of one’s own:

A man of polite imagination is let into a great many pleasures, that the vulgar are not capable of receiving. He can converse with a picture, and find an agreeable companion in a statue. He meets with a secret refreshment in a description, and often feels a greater satisfaction in the prospect of fields and meadows, than another does in the possession. It gives him, indeed, a kind of property in everything he sees [...].¹⁰⁰

Addison’s enticing thought is that a visitor might feel more entertained from touring round an estate than the owner himself and enjoy “a kind of property in everything he sees”: such a conception of the mental, psychological, and spiritual rewards of a “borrowed landscape” echoes the Chinese annexation of views beyond the immediate garden limits for the benefit of mental travels.¹⁰¹ There is evidence that garden visitors or friends felt appropriated and adopted on lands which they did not own. In 1722, Pope, for whom Cirencester was an enchanted forest, wrote: “I look upon myself as the Magician appropriated to that place.”¹⁰² Shenstone, who saw himself as one of the “tenants of this leafy bower,”¹⁰³ gives us another clue when he suggested that drawing could provide anyone with a heightened sense of ownership: “[B]y sketching out your own plans you appropriate the merit of all you build, and feel a double pleasure from any praises which it receive—.”¹⁰⁴ The vicarious appropriation of estates through visits and commentaries was not a radical political gesture against the commercial excesses of society, but may have contributed to smooth out social differences and weave threads of virtual kinship. Gardens “inter-mediated” men and women who felt connected and entertained delusions of possession and belonging.

99. Henry Wotton, *The Elements of Architecture*, London, John Bill, 1624, part 2, p. 82.

100. Addison, “The Pleasures of the Imagination,” 1987 [1712], vol. 3, p. 538.

101. For an exploration of “borrowings in and out of the garden,” see Yolaine Escande, “L’art du jardin, chemin de sagesse dans la tradition chinoise,” *Études*, vol. 411, no. 10, p. 365–375.

102. *The Correspondence of A. Pope*, 1956, vol. 2, p. 115.

103. William Shenstone, “Inscription on a Seat at the Bottom of a Large Root, on the Side of a Slope,” *The Works in Prose and Verse of Shenstone*, 1764, vol. 2, p. 279.

104. “Letter LVII. To R. Jago. 1749,” *Letters to Particular Friends*, 1770, p. 123.

GREEN BONDS: OWNERSHIP, FRIENDSHIP AND KINSHIP IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY BRITISH GARDENS

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ABSTRACT

This article sets out to recapture a sense of the collective and collaborative approach to gardening, arguing that the study of intermediality in the context of eighteenth-century British gardens is not just about the melting pot of sister arts, but also the meeting place of sisters-and-brothers-in-arts, painters, poets, amateurs, patrons, and professionals alike finding themselves connected in and through gardens—a shift of emphasis onto the human relations and brotherliness forged through the arts, which contributes to the social history of gardens.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet article, par son approche, vise à restituer le caractère collectif et collaboratif du jardinage en soutenant que l'étude de l'intermédialité dans le contexte des jardins britanniques du 18^e siècle ne concerne pas seulement le creuset des arts « sœurs ». Elle concerne aussi le lieu de rencontre des sœurs et frères en art, peintres, poètes, amateurs, mécènes et professionnels se trouvant connectés dans et par les jardins. L'accent ainsi déplacé sur les relations humaines et la fraternité forgées par les arts entend offrir par là une contribution à l'histoire sociale des jardins.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

LAURENT CHÂTEL is a Professor of cultural history and British visual studies at the University of Lille ([CECILLE](#), Centre d'études en civilisations, langues et lettres étrangères ULR 4074). With a focus on the art and aesthetics of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britain, one aspect of his research examines the work of William Beckford, the *Arabian Nights*, and Orientalism (*William Beckford: The Elusive Orientalist*, Oxford, 2016), and another explores the history of landscape and gardens. His recent publications include a chapter co-authored with Monique Mosser on the popularity of English garden design in France in the book *Capability*

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