***Moving Landscapes in the Transatlantic World***

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Over the last fifty years, some of the most compelling work on designed landscape – on both side of the Atlantic – has focused on its symbolic power, on its ability to speak of nation and of national imagining.[[1]](#endnote-1) But it is also striking during that time how much histories of garden design have remained trapped within these imaginings of national landscapes and their geographies. This special issue explores the apparently ‘national’ character of gardens in the context of their transatlantic connections during the long eighteenth century: it focuses on shared cultures and outlooks even as it recognises the powerful influence of local geographies and claims of national distinction. Central here is a focus on understandings of designed landscape as, at once, constructed and contested by communities that define themselves both in terms of the shared and the disparate. Our aim is to explore the experiences of location and dislocation that might be played out on both sides of the eighteenth-century Atlantic world.

By bringing together researchers who work at disciplinary boundaries, these essays challenge understandings of the garden which continue to emphasize the borders of nation states and national geographies; and, by focusing on the relation between nationhood, economics, and individual desires, they acknowledge the well-known disjunctions between the designed landscapes of Europe and North America while also exploring the ways in which the eighteenth-century transatlantic world imagined, felt, and articulated the relation between them. To understand gardens in these terms is to understand the larger physical and imaginative landscapes in which they are set, and so authors are also concerned with how the garden might be imagined in relation to: the farm, the city, or the plantation; the native and the national; the past and visions of progress. Thus, a central concern of all of the essays which follow is to explore what those who travelled, and those who stayed at home, saw and felt in the experience of landscape.

In a collection of essays focussed so closely on gardens, on national histories, and on changes in designed landscapes on either side of the Atlantic, one question, of course, is why gardens? Why focus on a form of designed landscape which can so easily be dismissed as insignificant in the face of larger economic and political concerns, and which—by its very nature—can seem nothing if not slight? The answer we offer, in part, is that it is in these designed landscapes that eighteenth-century individuals—whether designers, owners, or simply visitors—so often find themselves exploring their sense of place with a peculiar intensity, with an acute sense of one’s place in a world as at once physical and metaphysical, emotional and symbolic. That is, our focus on the physical making of landscape—in the form of the garden—acknowledges the peculiar status of the garden as a space at once abstractly symbolic and personally emotive, a space in which shared experience and national difference are repeatedly confronted. This is not peculiar to our period, of course, but for those who write of gardens in the transatlantic world, they characteristically recognize the garden’s ability to invite an experience at once intensely—even solipistically—personal, and insistently symbolic in ways which knit the individual back into the cultures they inhabit.[[2]](#endnote-2)

In part, of course, this is because gardens are *always* microcosms, they are always an account of how one imagines oneself in the world; and like all forms of landscape, they come into being with a point of view. Not simply a product of vision, however, gardens are also an experience of emotion, a merging of geography, self, and sensation. They may focus attention on the local and the particular, on the generalized and the abstract, on the national or the global, but a tension remains between physical forms and what is imagined to be beyond, or represented by, those forms. That is, a concern with location often brings with it other forms of dislocation. And gardens confront us not only with the problem of what a particular location might locate, but they rely on forms of representation that are always inviting us to see something else, or in relation to something else.

If we need to ask ourselves why gardens, we might also, of course, ask ourselves what is a garden? These essays offer a range of answers, and those answers turn, in part, on vocabulary and on a set of terms so often used that may seem self-evident, but which—when interrogated as they are in these essays—create more complex and shifting landscapes. To place gardens in the context of the landscape of which they are a part, is also to think of landscapes in relation to the terminology that we use to describe them. As Tom Williamson rightly contends, British and American scholars can seem united in an easy acceptance, and casual use, of terms like ‘landscape garden’ and, in particular, ‘nature’ and ‘natural’ – the latter a dangerous practise given that nature, as Raymond Williams famously observed,  is the ‘most complex word in our language’.[[3]](#endnote-3) Along with nature and the natural, we might add other touchstones, such as simplicity, pastoral and the picturesque. What is striking throughout this set of essays is just how many of these terms are apparently shared across the Atlantic and yet how many misunderstandings they produce if we fail to interrogate them. ‘Nature’ (or ’nature’) is perhaps always to be the worst offenders here, its universalism and particularity allowing radically different inflections within even the boldest of claims. But as Jonathan Finch’s essay clarifies for us, we also need to question the idea of the ‘estate’ in the different contexts of Britain, North America and the Caribbean, along with its relation to the farm, the plantation, the landscape and the garden. Other key terms we seek to interrogate with the aid of a transatlantic perspective are tradition, progress, problems of stylistic analysis, nation and ‘national’ characteristics, productivity and economic oppression, pastoral as fantasy and pastoral as politics; home; town and country/urban/suburban. And all of these terms hinge somewhat on reception, a concept which is shifted when we rescope gardens into their transatlantic contexts, which, in turn, raises the troublesome question of who represents the nation? Historically, English and French gardens are often portrayed in a cycle of imitation and antagonism,[[4]](#endnote-4) while American gardens appear as a late arrival to that same dynamic. There is an important truth to this otherwise reductive account of garden design—often played upon, indeed, by contemporary writers—but it also tends to hide a rather richer and more complex set of understandings which turn less neatly on easy caricatures of national difference and which offer us instead shared interests, common anxieties and a belief in the garden as a place in which the private must inevitably meet the public, where national difference and a common heritage might be played out, and where the comfort and discord of one’s physical and metaphysical lives will inevitably be confronted.

**Seeing Differently: Gardens in the Transatlantic World**

Traditional garden histories stress style and national difference, but in doing so occlude alternative views. Because the definition of a garden was not fixed or uniform in the eighteenth century, especially in the New World, we still need to ask, what is a garden and how do we see it? If we focus on design, do we become trapped in a style chronology that causes us to overlook significant issues that are part of the shared world of transatlantic experiences? Do we see gardens in isolation, along the trajectory of a style chronology, or as part of the larger landscape that takes into account both the similarities and differences that existed in the British Isles, America and the Caribbean? How does a transatlantic perspective invite us to see differently and to see different things?[[5]](#endnote-5) Significantly, within triangulated networks of trade and circulating ideas, we would like to stress issues of movement, transfers, translations and traditions. To shift focus away from garden histories that focus on the nation, we intentionally set our horizons on the broader transatlantic world so we might emphasise the movement of people and ideas, disparate locations and shared cultures, and then we have asked, what do we gain by looking at these places together rather than separately?

Of late, critical writing on transatlantic literature has begun to emphasise the detrimental power of apparently self-evident national frameworks to silo writing on either side of the eighteenth-century Atlantic into entirely separate critical fields. But as the authors of a recent work on transatlantic feminism have argued, a shift in critical thinking has emerged as scholars of eighteenth-century literary cultures start to explore “their deep connections, and their telling differences”. Such approaches encourage us “to think about culture as taking shape along *routes* of movement and exchange rather than as having exclusive *roots* in one homeland”, to focus on “how ideas and words travel, freely and unfreely, in print and in the minds and mouths of people set loose by history, across oceans, through seaports, cities, and across frontiers”.[[6]](#endnote-6) To this we add what may seem a less likely movement, that is, of land as it is reshaped into landscape, and most especially into that highly charged space which is the garden.

Nothing if not physical, the stuff of gardens lends itself to nationalist identities so often linked to soil and to place; but, just as plants increasingly moved from one side of the Atlantic to the other, the movement of soil is the basis on garden creation, and decisions about where to move it, and how to shape it, have always had a transnational outlook –if only in order to distinguish the ‘natural’ gardening of home from the artifice of elsewhere. In the eighteenth century, that sense of what was done elsewhere, and the rivalries that this might entail, became a central part both of garden formation and of the stories it was believed gardens might tell about the nations that created them. Those stories might insist on a national agenda, but they might also recognise, and respond to, ideas and traditions well beyond their physical location. It is this sense of movement—the movement of ideas and of ideals, of economic axioms, of norms and of variations—that forms the focus of this collection.

While the urge to think predominantly in terms of visual cues about how gardens ‘look’ different on either side of the Atlantic remains strong, and while myths of national character offer a similar allure, this set of essays turns to the wider range of physical elements, cultural narratives, and economic imperatives which create a garden. It turns, that is, to the shared languages though often disparate agenda of those who claim Enlightenment ideals; to the economic and social structures and assumptions which underpin but also complicate our use of terms like estate, farm, plantation, or garden; to the lure of an imagined past and an ideal future; to that material culture of plant collecting and transportation which speaks of Nature but which makes plants mean different things in different places; and to the abiding sense that a garden is always about something else and puts one somewhere else. Our title ‘moving landscapes’ therefore gestures not only to the movement of ideas, of earth, of plants and of persons, but also to the sense that all of these may move the people who experience them, both ideologically and emotionally.

When we talk of transatlantic landscapes, where do we start? Mostly this volume is concerned with Britain, France and North American, but as John Dixon Hunt insists in his essay, gardens trail their heritage with them, they utilise and rely upon gardens in other places and from other times. With such a large geographical reach—stretching from western Europe to North American and the Caribbean during the long eighteenth century, these essays are not offered as an exhaustive study, but rather as a series of interventions which can help us to reshape our understanding of the creation and experience of gardens in a period at once deeply nationalistic and acutely aware of shared heritage, at home with the violence of colonialism and with the championing of individual liberty. While moving between countries and colonies, city gardens and large-scale estates, between plants and transplantings, emotive prompts and theoretical deconstructions, the essays in the collection coalesce around a set of four closely interrelated concerns about the designed landscape. Effectively, these are disciplinary concerns of garden history informed by national frameworks, the types of stories that are told, the spaces deemed worthy of attention, and the varied workings of reception.

1. ***What do we mean by national styles?***

Placing gardens within a national framework, by writers and artists with distinct political and cultural agendas, is a product of Enlightenment thinking. During the eighteenth century, gardens were brought into focus as objects of intense philosophical and aesthetic reflection. Since that time, garden history has been concerned with the nation, national styles and national chronologies. In part, this is the result of an Enlightenment mindset that sought to categorise in order to understand and to share knowledge, relying on empirical methods of comparison that allowed writers about gardens to define one experience in relation to another.[[7]](#endnote-7) This same mindset sought to organise and catalogue on an encyclopaedic scale, which caused both viewers and readers to perceive gardens in stylistic and national terms through difference. Georges-Louis Le Rouge’s monumental series of 492 engravings, for example, was released in 21 *cahiers* (portfolios) between 1776 and 1789.[[8]](#endnote-8) While his initial project is indicated by the title of the first *cahier*, *Détail des nouveaux jardins à la mode*, in aiming to document and stimulate gardens in the latest fashion, subsequent cahiers began to turn reception towards a national framework. We thus shift from groups of images that present gardens seen to be of a modern and fashionable taste (*á la mode*), to collections that present examples according to taste that is defined in national terms, with titles such as *Jardins Anglais* or *Jardins Chinois*. Gardens in the ‘French style’ were presented as the standard (simply *jardins*) and others were a variation, with departures from that tradition as established in the designed landscapes of Versailles.

It is at this point that gardens made in England, in a style that offered an alternative to the formal gardens of Versailles (as the architype of garden design at the end of the seventeenth century across Europe), became denoted as English gardens. This is a phraseology of comparison (*this* is not *that*), but also one that is put to political and cultural purpose by writers like Horace Walpole, who had a distinct nationalist agenda.[[9]](#endnote-9) Such an agenda, developed at a time when nations and national identity are being formed across the transatlantic world, coincided with a fervent interest in writing about the effects of gardens as designed spaces, in which landscapes are reformed with affective purpose.[[10]](#endnote-10) Because of what might be seen as a coincidental relationship between nation building and the rise of garden design as a thing of contemplative focus during the late eighteenth century, the history of gardens themselves at this period became inextricably linked to the historical narratives of nations.

We have inherited this national perspective on garden design, not only because we turn to eighteenth-century garden images and writing as authoritative sources in establishing that history, but also because garden history has traditionally been taught through a subset of art historical methods, where style comparisons defined the field for most of the twentieth century. This has resulted in a history of gardens which epitomises the designed landscape as a large-scale object to be seen, which emphasises their status as works of ‘art’ created by ‘garden makers’ for important patrons or by talented amateurs.[[11]](#endnote-11) Such histories tend to emphasise notions of stylistic progress and, in the eighteenth century, tend also to read gardens as expressions of nationhood.

A focus on the transatlantic character of eighteenth-century gardens suggests something rather different: in particular, that these gardens did not exist in isolation but rather were intimately connected in design and in land use despite their geographical separation. As Williamson points out in his opening essay here, the national frameworks through which we view gardens as ‘French’, ‘English’ or ‘American’ presupposes a relatively unitary and definable character, which cannot be supported by the variety of gardens that were created in the transatlantic world. We can only begin to understand that variety when we contemplate the impact that the movement of people, plants and ideas had on garden making around 1800. Many of the authors contributing to this special issue take up this issue of the impact of transatlantic movement on the design of gardens, whether as through the movement of people (Finch and O’Kane Crimmins), plants (Hyde and O’Malley) or ideas (Cooperman and Manca). Important here, too, is that a focus on movement leads to further questions about how we read design and its apparently symbolic function.

If people can use the same ‘landscape’ to represent themselves in radically different ways, as Irish travellers did when they described the same experience of the landscape to different readers (O’Kane Crimmins), how do we interpret the symbolic function of gardens as changeable in relation to the visitor’s sense of place and self (Hyde)? Even visitors standing in one place were able to interpret (and represent) the garden differently to define their identity in connection with family, nation or place in the wider world. These issues apply not only to visitors to gardens, but also to garden makers who created the gardens that are seen as national landscapes: Jefferson at Monticello and Washington at Mount Vernon. This raises the more troublesome question of who represents the nation and, as a consequence, whose stories do we choose to tell?

1. ***What kind of stories do we want to tell?***

A typical choice, when we take up the history of gardens from this period, is to tell the story of ‘great men’. Garden history has celebrated the ‘genius’ of Capability Brown, the ‘philosophy’ of Walpole, and the ‘revolutionary ideas’ of Jefferson.[[12]](#endnote-12) Practically, this is understandable. Large scale designs, theoretical texts and the estates themselves were the property of men of political, cultural and social significance. Consequently, the archives support research directed in this way, because they are most rich in sources that relate to the men who built, described, represented and defined gardens in England and America, circa 1800. Manca’s essay is highly typical then, in focusing on George Washington as master of the garden space. As that ‘master’ (in every sense of the word), Washington created the vision that garden history subsequently constructed *for* him and *of* him. Crucially, as Manca shows, Washington understood the designed landscape as part and parcel of his place in the world, as developed for posterity. He shaped the space with this in mind, and it has either distorted or eclipsed other stories that might be told. Thus, Washington is seen as the ‘artist’ of the gardens at Mount Vernon, when in fact, a number of people (draftsmen, gardeners and enslaved people) were responsible for the resulting design as it appeared in the landscape. We don’t tell their stories, unless it is through the lens of seeing Washington and his forging of the landscape in a new nation. And it is here that John Dixon Hunt’s remarks about the stories of landscape’s unveiling is so useful. History has told the stories of Washington’s Mount Vernon because that history is concerned with America’s unveiling. If we push the timeframe back to circa 1700, we might say the same about the stories that history has untold about English gardens and the unveiling of that nation’s new position of authority – economic, cultural, political – secured more fully in the century that followed. The stories of garden history played a role in this, both at the time, and in telling the story of the unveiled English landscape to visitors to garden spaces in the students of the discipline in the centuries that followed.

Part of our aim in rethinking English and American gardens of the eighteenth century through the lens of a transatlantic world of garden design was to break this focus on great men and the unveiling of national landscapes. We encouraged our authors to think about other stories that should be told, informed by an understanding of garden spaces that extended beyond national boundaries. We asked them to delve through their own knowledge of the archives and different garden spaces to find the basis for that storytelling. For O’Kane Crimmins, Finch, Hyde and O’Malley, this meant exploring archival holdings for evidence of transnational experiences, expressions, exchanges and transformations. Those stories tell of a shifting sense of the self and one’s place in a wider world. Crucially, they question what it means to understand this period of history as one of imagined communities and shared cultures, but also seeks to define moments when the movement of people, plants and ideas turned into notable points of imperial expansion, national difference and cosmopolitan outlook.

By moving the issues beyond the stories of ‘great men’ and iconic gardens, essays such at Emily Cooperman’s focus on gardens that sit both within the English tradition and outside it, and consequently should be understood not in national garden terms but as setting up their owners to be perceived as men of cosmopolitan taste through their knowledge of English traditions and status as prominent Americans – or more precisely citizens of Philadelphia. Similarly, Finch’s story is one of imperial expansion through the commerce of plantation estates in English colonies, but its crux is in the reformation of the English landscape through that contact so that we can no longer see the gardens of Harewood as defined solely by their Englishness. Elizabeth Hyde causes us to see French and American gardens differently because of the seeds and plants that moved between them. Her story is one that tells of transnational plants that invariably caused people to see gardens as spaces beyond the national contexts in which they were set. Moreover, it aligns with O’Malley’s narrative about the East India ‘Company garden’ as the foundation of gardens in the transatlantic world. It is a story largely forgotten because we tend to focus on people rather than plants, in the history of garden design. Yet, for contemporaries, the availability of plants, their relative rarity and their point of origin, remained crucial to their reception as a place apart from the local landscape.

Which points to quite a different story of gardens and landscapes that Crawford and Casid set out to tell. These are stories of where and how landscapes are made. For Crawford, it is a story with roots in georgic narratives which describe gardens in relation to labour, productivity and empire. By tracing the georgic roots in the poetic notion of the cottage garden, Crawford determines that the idyllic stories told of farming and gardening on both sides of the Atlantic turned to Virgil for justification. Casid’s essay is more troubling and demands attention be paid to what is suppressed in the stories we tell about gardens and their making in a transatlantic world defined by slavery. While we tend to look to physical location for the source of landscape’s power (a power that is increasingly framed and understood circa 1800 as synonymous with a nation’s power), Casid’s narrative suggests that a landscape’s most powerful affects may be generated in entirely different location by insisting on the link between territory and violence. Her conclusions intend to shift our attention away from a history of garden design that turns on ‘nation’ to one that accounts of the garden space as the product of a transatlantic affliction. It is a story not easily told, but critical to any (re)evaluation of landscapes designed on the institution of slavery.

1. ***What spaces are worthy of attention?***

As our account of national styles and of overarching narratives suggests, histories of gardens in the Atlantic world have tended to focus on large-scale design. They take as their object of study gardens such as Stowe and Stourhead, Mount Vernon and Monticello, and they see in the large-scale earth-moving of the likes of ‘Capability’ Brown a self-evident announcement and confirmation of significance. Of course, in some respects this is so, but by focussing tightly on the designed space of the garden, such studies occlude the larger landscapes of which gardens were a part. Those larger landscapes merged the designed space of the garden with the more expansive—but equally carefully designed—spaces of agricultural production, and these productive landscapes, in turn, were hardly curtailed by the extent of an estate or even by national borders. As Finch argues in his essay, a single family’s ‘estate’ might spread across continents, and this might in turn mean that apparently distinct forms of design and agricultural production cross-fertilise rather than simply acting to confirm an imperial vision radiating from the metropolis. Equally, while many of the essays in this volume note similarities in design features and disparate uses and interpretations of those features, we might take this a step further and explore gardens as spaces made significant not primarily—or at least not only—by design, but by use. One reason that smaller-scale gardens—kitchen gardens, flower gardens, and even the larger suburban gardens explored by Cooperman—remain so unknown to us is not simply because ephemeral forms leave fewer archival or archaeological traces, but because garden history’s emphasis on design-led changes over time has little place for gardens which seem hardly to change their layout at all. Without appealing narratives of shifting design—ideally mapped to intellectual and political upheaval—the majority of gardens in which the majority of people found themselves tend to fall from view. And yet, as Cooperman, and Crawford, and O’Malley all demonstrate, there is a wealth of ways in which we might explore the meanings and emotions generated by small gardens and by gardens for which we now have no physical traces.

If, as Cooperman notes, we are often left to read negative evidence, that evidence can sometimes disrupt our confidence in the significance of transatlantic garden features, whether ‘old fashioned’ or new. As Crawford argues, a garden’s presence may be felt most powerfully in its fragmented literary appearances—where the gathering of those fragments can help us to imagine garden experiences stretching beyond the limits of physical design. And, as O’Malley notes when following another kind of garden fragment—the pelargonium—a small but intensely-felt garden might be characterised by the travels of a single plant. What O’Malley’s meticulous gathering of evidence also demonstrates, of course, is just how fluid and dynamic the garden’s conception of place might be: if she offers us the small garden, the garden located by time and place, she offers us also the garden which spills beyond all borders. Like Hyde, she offers us a garden at once contained and expansive, the occasion for an imagined space quite as much as a physical one. Here, it is not that the physical locations of botanic cultivation—on whatever side of the Atlantic—are unimportant, but that, as Hyde argues, for her French and American botanists, the most exciting garden history they created was neither in France nor in America but in the relation between the two. In this sense, intellect and emotion create gardens quite as real as any physical presence or traditions of design. To see the garden as wholly contained by its borders is, then, to see only part of the garden.

1. ***Whose garden?***

As Manca shows us, it is possible to reconstruct in great detail key aspects of Washington’s gardens at Mount Vernon, and this is also the case, of course, for Jefferson’s Monticello, and for any number of ‘great’ gardens on the other side of the Atlantic such as Stowe, Stourhead, Hagley, or Harewood (which is considered by Finch in his essay in this volume). But the archives of great estates are nothing if not partial in their emphasis on labour costs rather than individual labourers; on the vision of male landowners rather than—for example—women’s use of landscape; and on the mechanics and aesthetics of design rather than on reception and experience. Alongside these limitations to estate archives, however, we might also note a willingness of historians to collude in the valorising of economics, aesthetics and politics at the expense of more ‘ephemeral’ concerns, and to mine archives in search of familiar narratives of national significance and national difference. Cooperman’s essay signals just this problem, highlighting how little information we often have about smaller-scale gardens but also about how they were understood. Poets might write panegyrics on Mount Vernon, but it is far harder to reconstruct either the agenda for creation, or the public understanding, of suburban gardens in Philadelphia or London. As Cooperman notes, then, we also need to ask what archival absences tell us, not least because to do so is to challenge the settled assumptions of scale and significance, national and provincial. Such questions return us to the problem of transatlantic difference. Thus, for example, older accounts of gardens in the transatlantic world tend to see American gardens as ‘old-fashioned’ or outdated, but as Williamson argues this may be entirely misleading: if we compare provincial (rather than ‘great’) gardens on each side of the Atlantic, their similarities—at similar moments in the century—become much more apparent. Equally, as Finch’s essay shows us, questions of scale and ‘greatness’ are themselves muddied once we recognise that the shared language and economic assumptions of the ‘estate’ begin to unravel once we set English farms alongside Caribbean sugar plantations, or the landed estates of a geographically confined Britain alongside the sometimes huge plantations on America’s eastern seaboard.

We might think about where our attention falls in another way, too. While garden history tends—for quite understandable reasons—to focus on a physical location as the basis for interpretation, designed landscapes’ most powerful affects may be generated in quite different locations, and their assertions of political or aesthetic value may hide other concerns. Notably, the valorising of aesthetics or pleasure in gardens regularly and deliberately occludes the violence and oppression which so often accompanies their creation. As Casid’s account of revolutionary France in the 1790s insists, the structure of Parisian entertainments marks the foundations of, and demonstrates, landscape as ideological vision rather than unmediated ‘terrain’, and highlights even as it attempts to suppress the violence of terrain’s transformation into territory.

If these forms of violence can be seen in the new technologies of the 1790s, they can also be seen in cultural structures with much longer and apparently more benign histories. It has long been recognised, for example, that the classical traditions of pastoral and georgic were regularly co-opted to justify the lives of a leisured elite. Gardens—reliant on labour for their construction and maintenance—speak of leisure, and often—as their size increases—of the national good. Georgic, in particular, could work powerfully as a founding myth of national endeavour and made the garden a site of labour at once physical and spiritual, a venture both personal and patriotic. But for all that, georgic’s emphasis on labour is inevitably problematic, for it raises the question of who labours, who claims the benefits of labour, and (as Finch notes), with its willingness to treat that labour as an abstraction, as part of the human condition after the Fall, could prove highly effective in masking vast inequalities of wealth. Most notoriously, of course, the form of labour most insistently masked was slavery. In Europe, physical distance might at times draw a convenient veil over financial dependence on slavery, but this knowing occlusion is a close parallel to the forms of visual manipulation designed into those great plantation gardens of American’s Founding Fathers. As Manca demonstrates in this collection, for example, Washington’s continual reshaping of Mount Vernon increasingly excluded slavery from his garden even as the larger landscape of which it was a part remained tightly organised around forms of economic oppression. Similarly, at Monticello the juxtaposition of the ornamental West Lawn with the slave quarters along Mulberry Row continues to raise questions about Jefferson’s attempts to negotiate the language of liberty and a reliance on slavery.

Jefferson’s garden design invites us to see other forms of exclusion too. At Monticello Jefferson clearly wanted his slave population to been seen, with Mulberry Row immediately adjacent to the formal gardens of the West Lawn. He also wanted the women of his family to been seen—but only in a certain way. In this Jefferson was hardly alone. Indeed, throughout the eighteenth century—and on both sides of the Atlantic—well-to-do women tended to be associated with the domesticated spaces of the flower and kitchen garden, rather than with the ‘manly’ world of design. And histories of gardens have tended to replicate that division by making ‘significant’ gardens the story of significant men. In some sense this is of course true, because far fewer women owned land on a large scale, and far fewer also therefore had the ability to design ‘major’ gardens. But this is of course to miss the wealth of evidence we do have for women’s engagement with gardens, and in particular, for the ways in which women shaped their lives in relation to them.[[13]](#endnote-13) Much of this work is still to be done, with the likes of Lady Jean Skipwith in Virginia, Elizabeth Drinker in Philadelphia, and Anne Bleeker in upstate New York offering a wealth of material to explore. That these stories are only partially told raises another question for us, too, which is how we might reconstruct the experience of gardens when the physical remains of those gardens have long disappeared. One answer—as suggested by Crawford in this volume—is to recognise that gardens inhabit a world beyond their physical presence, that the experience of a landscape is as much the myths, the associations, the personal memories and the half-remembered quotations which people bring with them when they enter or recall a garden. For Crawford that involves the exploration of one of the garden’s most important mythic structures, the relation between pastoral and georgic; and for other writers in this volume, that same sense that gardens are far more important than their physical forms remains a touchstone for the exploration of their meaning.

***Some concluding remarks***

Our focus is on gardens because they are spaces that, by design, provide alternative expressions of, and responses to the wider landscape, which gardens can engage with, reshape or ignore. As such, the ideas that are expressed in gardens and through garden design offered an opportunity to explore one’s sense of place in the world. But, as these essays show, that understanding of place in the long eighteenth century was a complex relationship of variables connected to concepts of movement, through which the experience of one place was often inflected with memories of, or references to another.

Gardens played a role in the development of national identity in this period because they are spaces in which the self is explored through its connection with the (natural) world and wider landscapes. Yet rather than focus on national identity itself, we asked our authors to read against it – that is, to consider *not* how an idea of nationhood is formed and expressed in garden spaces, but rather, how gardens of the long eighteenth century are a combination of references to experiences that are shared across the transatlantic world. As a whole, what we hope this volume provides to readers is a better understanding of the movement of ideas about and within gardens created at a time when concepts of nationhood were forming, but by no means set.

While land may seem immutably connected to nation, and while geographical location may seem self-evidently the ground on which we settle a sense of place, both place and nation draw their identity from the world around them, from the larger economic structures of which they are only a part, and from the ideas, the emotions, and the desires of those who bring these terms into play. Gardens remained important for so many people living in the eighteenth century because in them they were confronted by their conception of a natural world at once threatening and tamed: gardens were the occasion for productivity, the place of labour, but the place too of leisure and delight. As the essays in this collection demonstrate, the ways in which these quite different experiences might be brought into play by men and women on either side of the Atlantic might be radically different at times; but so, too, might they offer a shared set of interests—from the emotional to the economic—and a shared sense that in gardens one could find one’s place in the world. Conversely, and for all the optimism of such an analysis, we should also recognise that gardens confront us with the tensions and conflicts of the long eighteenth century. As these essays also demonstrate, patriotic narratives of national progress and civilised leisure work hard to deny the economic inequalities that enable their creation, and while the rhetoric of pleasure and useful productivity remaining powerfully present, so too does the transatlantic world’s, at times, easy acceptance of aggressive imperialism and continued reliance upon slavery.

The adoption of transatlantic perspectives allows us to see beyond the national boundaries that have continued to dominate so much of garden history over the last century. This is not simply a matter of turning to alternative archives but of rethinking the questions we might ask of them. As the essays in this collection demonstrate, our idea of the garden in the long eighteenth century must confront not only the variety of forms that gardens might take, but the larger landscapes of which they were a part, and the radically different ways in which they might be experienced by those who created or encountered them. While national styles retain a powerful influence, and were crucial to the nation-building rhetoric of the transatlantic world, so too was a sense that gardens might offer quite different forms of self-fashioning, at once more local and more transnational in their understanding of place and of identity.

1. Some examples include: Allen S. Weiss, *Mirrors of Infinity. The French Formal Garden and 17th-Century Metaphysics* (Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, 1995); Chandra Mukerji, *Territorial ambitions and the gardens of Versailles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Elizabeth Hyde, *Cultivated Power: Flowers, Culture, and Politics in the Reign of Louise XIV* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005); Joseph Manca, *George Washington’s Eye: Landscape, Architecture, and Design at Mount Vernon* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012); and Timothy Mowl, *Gentlemen & Players: Gardeners of the English Landscape* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2004). Popularising this way of looking at American gardens, in particularly, among a much wider readership is Andrea Wulf’s *The Founding Gardeners* (New York: Knopf, 2011). [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. One study that considers gardens in Britain and America is *The Pleasure Garden from Vauxhall to Coney Island*, ed. Jonathan Conlin (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press). As with our collection, it draws on scholarship across a range of disciplines to trace the cultural history of pleasure gardens from the seventeenth to the twentieth century. The essays in this volume focus on specific pleasure gardens in their local contexts, without taking a transatlantic perspective. Nevertheless, Naomi Stubbs essay “Pleasure Gardens of American: Anxieties of National Identity” is useful to this project in the ways that tensions between nationhood and self are explore in garden spaces (pp. 127-149) [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London: Flamingo, 1983), 219. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. See Brigitte Weltman-Aron, *On Other Grounds: Landscape Gardening and Nationalism in Eighteenth-Century England and France* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000); and John Dixon Hunt, *The Picturesque Garden in Europe* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2002). [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. One parallel example of a study that causes us to see different things is *An Economy of Colour: Visual Culture and the Atlantic World, 1600-1830*, eds. Geoff Quilley and Kay Dian Kirz (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2003). [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Lisa L. Moore, Joanna Brooks, and Caroline Wigginton, eds., *Transatlantic Feminisms in the Age of Revolutions* (Oxford, 2012, pp.6-7. As one of the first critical works focused on rethinking the Atlantic world, see Paul Gillroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993). [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. In the early history of gardens, we see this in the writings of Christian Cay Lorenz Hirschfeld, especially his *Theory of Garden Art* published between 1179 and 1785. See the edition under this title translated by Linda B. Parshall (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001). [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Complete sets of Le Rouge’s volumes are held at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris and the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles. For biographical information on Le Rouge, see Bernard Korzus, “Georges Louis Le Rouge. Un cartographie franco-allemand du XVIIIe siècle” in V. Royet Le Rouge, Les Jardins anglo-chinois (Paris, 2004). [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Horace Walpole, *The History of the Modern Taste in Gardening* (New York: Ursus Press, 1995), with an Introduction by John Dixon Hunt. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. A few examples from the period include: Joseph Addison, The Spectator, 4.vols. ed. G. Gregory (London: First Everyman Edition, 1907), 411-421; René-Louis de Girardin, *De la composition des paysages* (Seyssel: Champ Vallon, 1992); and Claude-Henri Watelet, *Essay on Gardens. A Chapter in the French Picturesque*, ed. and trans. Samuel Danon, with an Introduction by Josephn Disponzio (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003). [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. John Dixon Hunt, *Garden and Grove. The Italian Renaissance Garden in the English Imagination, 1600-1750* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986). [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. See, for example: John Phibbs and Joe Cornish, *Capability Brown: Designing English Landscapes and Gardens* (New York; Rizzoli, 2016); Timothy Mowl, *Walpole* (London: Murray, 1996); and Peter Hatch, *A Rich Spot of Earth: Thomas Jefferson’s Revolutionary Garden at Monticello* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012); [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. Stephen Bending, *Green Retreats: Women, Gardens and Eighteenth-Century Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013). [↑](#endnote-ref-13)