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"Thinking through Botanic Gardens"

Heyd, Thomas

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This essay discusses ways of thinking about botanic gardens that pay close attention to their particularity as designed spaces, dependent on technique, that nonetheless purport to present (and preserve) natural entities (plants). I introduce an account of what gardens are, how botanic gardens differ from other gardens, and how this particular form of garden arose in history. After this I contrast three ways of understanding the function of botanic gardens in the present time: as sites of recreation, of conservation or of encounter with nature. Finally I develop the idea that these gardens may serve as archetypes of collaboration with nature. I conclude that, in principle, botanic gardens can model alternative, creative new ways for human beings to relate to the natural environment. (Source: The White Horse Press)

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