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"Bad Flowers: The Implications of a Phytocentric Deconstruction of the Western Philosophical Tradition for the Environmental Humanities"

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This is an experimental review essay responding to Michael Marder's *Plant-Thinking: A Philosophy of Vegetal Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013). The essay departs from the ordinary structure of comparing three books on a similar theme. Instead three of Marder's concepts, plant "nourishment," "desire" and "language" are explored through readings of Gabrielle de Vietri's installation *The Garden of Bad Flowers* (2014), the story of Daphne from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (8 CE) and Alice's encounter with talking flowers in Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass, and What Alice Found There* (1871). In some ways this essay is like a work of applied theory whereby philosophical concepts are used to advance interpretations of works of art and literature. But, at the same time and in contrast, the works of art and literature brought into dialogue with Marder help to interpret and mobilise the philosopher's concepts. Ultimately, this essay articulates how Marder's strikingly negative critical project is both lively and useful for the Environmental Humanities, especially the fields of ecocriticism and critical plant studies. Moreover, in contrast to many book reviews that begin with summaries of the text and end with suggestions as to where the author might go next, this essay follows that formula for the opening paragraphs, but then suggests where we as readers might go with some key concepts instead. (Text from author's abstract)

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