

SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PHYSICAL GARDENS AND THEIR LITERARY REPRESENTATIONS

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Abstract

As it has been mentioned by many scholars and researchers it is impossible to say whether the first earthly paradise gardens drew their imagination from real, humanly cultivated gardens or whether they in fact inspired, at least in part, the art of gardening in its earliest aesthetic flourishes. What we can say, however, is that we know of these gardens through the written documents that preserve ideas of agricultural and horticultural perfection and that these written documents have inspired many physical gardens. Being governed by the cycles of birth and death, dictated by the seasons or the life spans of the plants, every garden is in some way a re-creation, an altered version of other gardens. Any garden in the Western world and in the East, is never just a garden but always a reminder of paradise, of the Garden of Eden, of Elysium. Gardens were often designed specifically to imitate their literary counterparts, inviting the visitor to read another, often mythological, level of meaning into the landscape. Taking into account that although the uses and ideals attached to the garden have changed over the time, the desire to re-create Eden remains a constant in the developing attitudes and styles of gardens, our paper aims to underline the symbiotic relationship between physical gardens and their literary representations, the correlation of which influenced the development of garden design and of metaphorical gardens in literature.

Key words: garden, artefact, Eden myth, symbolism, visual text