SUMMARY: CHINESE GARDENS IN ENGLAND
Mara Miller

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Lord Burlington

Early eighteenth century English gardens followed formal Continental models. Straight watercourses, balanced curves, and axial paths expressed Man’s divine mandate to subdue Nature, instilled Renaissance humanism, disseminated emergent scientific ideals (1), and exhibited the divine power of the monarch. Yet by mid-eighteenth century, England completely transformed notions of the ideal landscape into the new “English” or “natural” landscape garden (jardin anglais) which soon spread to the Continent and the United States.

This enormous transformation was effected largely by Lord Burlington and his friends, Stephen Switzer, William Kent, and Alexander Pope. Their design experiments (2) were inspired by Chinese gardens, familiar to the English from written descriptions and Chinoiserie (3). Yet the fanciful, exotic, and ultimately unintegrated garden elements from Chinoiserie images cannot explain the restructuring of three-dimensional space and the reformulation of fundamental garden aesthetics Burlington’s circle introduced.

The missing visual links between Chinese and English gardens are two sets of prints of the imperial garden at Jehol, northwest of Peking. The Thirty-Six Views of Jehol, copperplate engravings commissioned by Emperor Kang Xi in 1712 and made by the Italian Matteo Ripa, were given by Ripa to Burlington, yet they have never been closely studied. The Emperor of China’s Palace at Peking, a popular edition of those prints published in London in 1753, is almost completely unknown (4). This paper examines these prints - and the changes made in the later set - to show how they differed from Chinoiserie images and how they provided a basis for the rethinking of the English landscape.

Endnotes
2. Ca. 1715-1720, at Chiswick, the then country home of Lord Burlington (now part of London and open to the public). By 1730, these ideas were established and spread to other estates, such as Stowe, where members of Burlington’s circle also worked out their ideas.
3. These were provided by Sir William Temple (1690), the French Jesuit Father Attiret (1740-1750), and by the royal architect, Sir William Chambers (1770s) See John Dixon Hunt and Peter Willis, The Genius of the Place: The English Landscape Garden, (1975).

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SUMMARY: A WESTERN GARDEN IN CHINA
THE XIYANGLOU OR EUROPEAN SECTOR OF THE CHANGCHUN YUAN FROM A CHINESE PERSPECTIVE
Victoria M. Siu


Summary
My presentation focused on a garden created by the Jesuit court artist-architect, Lang Shining, the Chinese name of Giuseppi Castiglione (1688-1766). Most interpretations emphasize the European elements in his garden, named the Xiyanglou or European sector of the Changchun Yuan or Long Spring Garden (an
eastern annex to the Yuan Ming Yuan, the Qing imperial gardens northwest of Beijing).

In order to understand the Chinese dimensions in the style of design, we explored the garden in two sections. In the first longer section, we examined the Chinese garden components incorporated to meet the approval of the Qianlong emperor (1736-1796). The three major elements of garden design, water, mountains, and buildings, were integrated into the small, narrow horizontal T-shaped strip, thus demonstrating Castiglione's familiarity with Chinese taste.

Research by a French team of specialists has revealed that the Jesuits' garden allowed for both "in position" and "in motion" viewing to make a given area seem compact or expansive, further illustrating how successfully the Jesuits grasped the principles of garden architecture. Furthermore, Castiglione synthesized well the Western features with the Chinese elements. For example, the small 13x8 yard Belvedere has a classic Chinese roof successfully integrated with a typical Florentine building.

In the second section, my study indicated that several elements in the Xiyanglou lend plausibility to the belief that the missionaries deliberately planned to incorporate features with meanings to both Chinese and Westerners that would interest the emperor in exploring subjects dear to Christian hearts.

Because the Xiyanglou in the Long Spring Garden is in ruins, one must turn to the ruins themselves, to photographs of them, and to the Twenty Scenes of the intact gardens as depicted in an album of twenty engravings, executed by the court painter, Yi Lantai, under the direction of the Jesuits. Accounts by Jesuit eyewitnesses and recent Chinese and French studies of the Long Spring Garden also help us discover how this seemingly European garden was attuned to the Chinese literati's concepts of good taste.

Epilogue

Course Development

Although the history of gardens is often considered an arcane subject related to a certain culture and aesthetic, I have designed two courses that use materials on gardens. The course, "Chinese Cultures," is an introduction to historical studies on China with an eighteenth century garden as the focal point. Scholars are gaining a more nuanced understanding of how each major imperial garden and later private gardens have been tied to the development of Chinese history, economics, and technology. For example, thanks to the work of Craig Clunas et al, it is possible to provide a sophisticated analysis of the role the Kiangsu salt merchants of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) played in developing the famous scholars' gardens in Suzhou and Hangzhou.

Han (206 BC – 220 A.D.) and Tang (618-907 A.D.) imperial gardens demonstrate that the growth of science and technology is not incompatible with enhanced Chinese culture. Travelers along the Silk Route brought botanical specimens to and from China to Europe and elsewhere. Tang artists and artisans incorporated new Central Asian techniques to execute realistic frescoes and figures of Buddhist deities as well as of the educated, fashion-conscious women in the imperial court.

A Buddhist nun of the Song dynasty (960-1279), who learned the Indian technique from Tibetan Buddhists, is credited with popularizing inoculation for smallpox in China. But immunology, feared by the earliest Manchu conquerors, was promoted by the three emperors credited with building the perfect imperial garden, the Yuan Ming Yuan, in the Qing dynasty (1644-1911). The Jesuit scientists and artists who served them and fashioned one part of this garden — as well as earlier foreigners, notably Marco Polo, who served the Mongol rulers in the Yuan dynasty (1270-1368) — have left remarkably reliable records of China's advanced science and technology, as well as its society and culture, so admired by the leaders of the European Enlightenment.

In the twentieth century, much research has been done by Chinese scholars on Chinese gardens, especially on the Yuan Ming Yuan. Why? The impetus has been for political ends, for the Yuan Ming Yuan was tragically burned and looted in 1860 by the Anglo-French troops of the Second Opium War or Arrow War (1858-1860). The focus here is not on what divides East and West. Rather the Yuan Ming Yuan serves as the unifying image, much as that imperial garden became the world in miniature for the greatest Qing emperors who envisioned a multicultural cosmos living in peace.

Student learning

The history of Chinese gardens can be used as a means of breaking down the stereotype that Chinese culture advanced at the expense of science and technology. For example, how can one account for the intricate lake/pool and water system within a garden without recognizing superior engineering skills?

Beginning with the Yuan Ming Yuan as the central symbol, we attempt to uncover how different cultures plus science and technology can unite diverse people. Manchus, Han Chinese, Mongols, and even Europeans worked together to create a strong multicultural polity,
symbolized by their contributions to the imperial garden.

This same garden became divisive in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: a symbol of Western imperialism (to the Chinese) and a hallmark of Chinese backwardness (to the Westerners). Respect for one another vanished. How? The Chinese display the ruins of the Yuan Ming Yuan for all to witness how uncultured Westerners are. Westerners, in turn, still belittle the "backward" Chinese army as well as its science and technology which have not pulled the nation out of its developing status. "Traditional" Chinese culture is considered an impediment to advancing towards modern (often identified as Western) government, education, or economics.

Note that the points made above are relevant, when teaching an upper-level history survey course such as East Asian civilizations, to understanding the xenophobic attitudes in eighteenth to twentieth century China, especially from the Opium War onwards.

Our hope is to be forced to set aside our Western cultural framework and be able to find what was central to personal happiness and social order in premodern and modern China.

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**COMMENTARY**

David Goldblatt


**Aesthetics of gardens**

I would like to thank Mara and Victoria for their fine papers. I learned a great deal from them and, perhaps as important for philosophers, the papers drew my attention to more general notions having to do with the aesthetics of gardens. I will make a few remarks about some things that came to me in the course of reading their papers, and I shall try to restrict what I have to say to the inside/outside opposition that headlines our discussion.

Both papers discuss external aesthetic influences with internal realizations of them: elements of Chinese gardens being materialized outside China in Mara’s discussion of eighteenth century England while Victoria’s discussion emphasizes the Chinese elements inside the European sector of Yuan Ming Yuan in China. The inside/outside theme is part of what gardens are anyway – inside a private domestic domain, but outside the household that anchors the estate of which they are an integral part.

**Gardens as objects of representation**

In a section called "The Represented Garden," of his Fruitful Sites: Garden Culture in Ming Dynasty China, Craig Clunas (Duke 1996) suggests that, "If gardens are not a thing transcendentally existing before they become the objects of representation, but instead are crucially created through those representations, then it becomes important to understand those representations not as 'evidence,' but instead to 'substitute for the enigmatic treasure of "things" anterior to discourse,' the regular formation of objects which emerge only in discourse."

That is, the concept of garden is already at work as an organizing interpretation of certain aspects of the world, particularly those that are representative. While one can say this, as Nietzsche suggests, about all our entities, Clunas’s remark helps draw attention to our not knowing the gardens in question inside/out as things in themselves, but only through representations, making commentary about them something like a meta or second level of discourse. We have now, not the foundations in the European sector, for example, but contemporary engravings of them, as well as present day fragments or traces of the once formal garden.

Leaving aside the issues surrounding objects-in-themselves, representations, even when they are of found objects—plucked from the natural world and designated as objects with meaning—are already non-natural. Therefore, the representations of which we speak here are in this sense, representations of representations, artifacts depicting artifacts. So that, for example, in Chinese gardens where rocks are as important as vegetation, rockery used collected stones and boulders to exemplify the mountains from which they were removed (that is they both represented and possessed many of the qualities of the mountains themselves). Thus they signified a range of sacred and non-sacred entities, which was familiar to those occupying the gardens. The meaning of rocks in Chinese gardens is intimately related to the meaning of the mountains from which they come and for which they stand in.

At times, such as in the "false mountain" Shih Tzu Lin at Suchow, large stones were arranged so that they cast a mild illusion of scale for those occupants of garden interiors, so that when inside its ring, they appeared to be surrounded by vast and distant moun-
tains rather than being a mere few yards from strategically placed piles of stones.

The Chinese word, *yuan*, usually translated as "garden," is, according to Clunas, more like a word for land use than it is a name for an object. The Ming derivation for *yuan* is close to the phrase "system of ordering." Here the comparison presents itself with an important remark by the Viennese philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein who, in his later period, says, "The sign itself is dead, only in its use does it become alive." This distinction is important to remember as the land use of gardens shifts from an early economic base where elements of the garden such as fruit or timber trees, or fish were thought of as disposable income, as natural storage, to more of a place of luxury and comfort later in the periods spoken of by Mara and Victoria.

Chinese gardens of the sort discussed here today never quite lose their ties to wealth (although they tended not to stray far from the Confucian calls for modesty and moderation). In each of these papers, we can think of outsiders using elements of Chinese gardens – in and out of China – and incorporating them in agendas of their own.

Victoria's attention is much less linked to the natural world than is Mara's. While she draws our attention to the Chinese elements in a European garden project, it is Europe that has dominated the playing board upon which Chinese moves are made and set in place. This means that Victoria is primarily concerned with manufactured stone: as building blocks, statues, pavements and fountains. In general, her attention is drawn to the buildings of the European Sector at Xiyanglou, but to the exteriors of those buildings, not their insides, buildings seen from the out-of-doors, the eye of the garden walker. (While there was no lack of carefully chosen vegetation in the European Sector, the project is reminiscent of an ill-fated assignment by the deconstructivist architect Bernard Tsumi, who assigned Peter Eisenman and the French philosopher, Jacques Derrida, the designing of a garden at Paris' Parc La Villette, that was to have no vegetation.)

**In position and in motion**

With respect to the occupants of gardens, Victoria has drawn on the distinction between being *in position* and being *in motion* as two aesthetic potentialities that gardens do and ought to allow. Clunas uses Michel de Certeau's distinction between *place* and *space* that I can utilize now to expand on this idea and to bring it closer to the inside/outside theme. Here space, as opposed to place, implies an operation – moving or traveling through – by the garden occupier or walker. The walker, then, becomes part of a narrative that transforms a place (a matter of seeing) into a space (a matter of going).

Thus, still following Clunas, it can be asked of Chinese garden *use* whether the land in question is a *map* – a juxtaposition of represented places, a geographical list of individual features, or a *tour* (de Certeau's distinction), an unfolding series of spaces linked by chronological order where the beginnings, middles, and endings of a designated order that stops and starts, is continuous or discontinuous, becomes significant. This is where the inside/outside idea becomes interesting. Clunas says, "There is a distinct sense that the narrator is on the inside (socially as well as physically), but no sense of where inside and outside are differentiated" (142). In this sense the garden *qua* narrative puts the visitor inside the story without diminishing his/her role as narrator or reader. Here, the creator and character are simultaneously configured. The pace of the narrative can be achieved in many ways: by being led by paths or drawn by certain sights, turned in this or that direction, as Victoria mentioned, or stopped by calligraphy that might add poetry to an already poetic aspect of a pool or flowering tree.

**Garden of the Unsuccessful Politician**

One of the speech acts essential to this "tourism" by way of narrative is the act of naming elements in gardens as flowers, fields, pools, ponds, and the gardens themselves. Thus, to an outsider, at least to a Westerner, Chinese garden names seem enormously poetic, humorous, or exotic: Garden of the Earth Spirit, Returning to the Fields Garden, Garden of the Master of Fishing Nets, Garden of Solitary Delight, and the famous, early Garden of the Unsuccessful Politician.

We can skip the superlatives here, but being in a garden would be like entry into a world of a very different sort – outside quotidian life, but inside a life of art, including architecture, philosophy, nature, and tradition, for a look into the past as well as a perspective over artificial hills and planted orchards or simply a suspending of ordinary time in favor of some kind of temporal contrast. Here each aspect of the garden may blend in a nearly indistinguishable way.

It is this movement "in and through" that belies the idea that in entering a garden one enters a painting. Paintings would not account for the motion of the visitor or the motion of the elements of the garden itself: swaying grasses, running water, and so forth so that it would be more like a narrative film with sound – a motion picture. (The Da Guan garden of the early Chinese novel, *The Dream of the Red Chamber*, is one
literary example of the characterization of the narrative use of gardens.)

William Chambers

William Chambers, who figures centrally in Mara's account, was a member of the Swiss East India Company and an object of controversy, even of ridicule, in his own time. But he recognizes three affective elements that he attributes to Chinese gardens: the pleasing, the horrid, and the enchanted. These were the emotional goals that Chambers thought he was transplanting from Chinese gardens, and their more dramatic or flamboyant materializations in English gardens drew criticism.

We'll remember Mara's comment about Chambers never having been in a Chinese garden, gardens being private property and Chambers an outsider, among other reasons, when he says, "Bats, owls, birds of prey flutter in the grove; half-famished animals wander upon the plains; gibbets, crosses, wheels, and the whole apparatus of torture are seen from the roads ..." As Wang Jiafong writing in Sinorama (Vol. 22, No. 9, September 1997) notes, "Dragons, monsters, thunder and electric shocks, artificial rain showers, sudden gusts of wind, and emptying volcanoes were all supposed to be elements of the Chinese gardens." Here the obvious referents would be firecrackers, fireworks, and general pyrotechnics. As Mara mentioned, Chambers may have gotten only a rough idea of gardens from depictions on porcelain, silks, and wallpaper, but his visit reportedly led him to speak directly with numerous gardeners.

Yuan Ming Yuan

With respect to the Yuan Ming Yuan, either the original or the ruin, Victoria, for this occasion, was wise not to open up the larger and deeper narratives of orientalism, colonialism, and imperialism that couch its construction by a European priest and its subsequent destruction by French and British troops who paid no mind to the aesthetic universe they inadvertently created.

Yet, what we know about a thing, including its historical location, is certainly efficacious with respect to our aesthetic reaction, and our sense of the post-history of the garden can never escape its own lament. It is as if there was the double tragedy of its collapse, one that distinguishes it from Egyptian pyramids and Mayan Palenques whose presence also are merely traces of their former selves, but whose absence was only minimally the result of human undoing.

Thus, the European sector as a ruin is part of an unintended aesthetic whose history of violence, not unlike the Parthenon's, is glued to its original designed condition. And it might be noted, by contrast, that English gardens of the time period of which Mara speaks, have designed ruins, fake ruins meant to look nostalgically unintended, though they were not.

"All of nature is a garden."

Gardens, then, in an unintentional sense, can become ruined in at least two ways – by their living components overgrowing their artificial borders or by their non-living components falling apart or being felled, eroded, or dislocated. Inside nature such boundaries for living things would be a non-issue, and this points to the artifactual use of living and other natural things: inside the natural, in one sense and outside nature in another. Our own placement, whether we are inside the natural or outside, either watching or manipulating or rather part of the natural scene itself, is itself an artifactual, if pragmatic duality.

An additional inside/out metaphor is expressed by Charles Jencks who offers an account of one way the garden was used to cut across deeply held Chinese values: "To be 'natural' was of course to follow the Tao of nature, getting oneself in tune with the underlying rhythms of the seasons, the plants, the universe, so that there was no discrepancy between inner being and outer reality." Thus, the garden became an ideal place, perhaps a site of solitude on some occasions, for the suspending of the binary opposition inside/outside (overcoming a Cartesian dualism one might say) in a topos easily accessible and on a daily basis, for those fortunate enough to have a garden that reflected nature in its flowing, changing forms. But Jencks is quick to remind us of the diversity of uses inside garden walls in China (in opposition to its counterparts uses in England and Japan) where the Chinese garden "was used for solitude as well as entertaining friends, for study as well as the occasional dalliance, for quiet intoxication as well as cultivation, for composing poetry and meditating as well as family outings or boat-parties and, on an Imperial scale, even for war games" (The Chinese Garden, Maggie Keswick, St. Martin's, 1978).

While the Chinese garden held vacillating places inside and outside various categories, the eighteenth century debate in England was as much about the representation of nature as it was any other aesthetic issue. The point of tension here was: Should nature appear as if it were all along anthropological – a friend of humans, but tame and dominated – almost as if we had come upon a part of untouched nature ignoring its grooming or attributing the design to God? Or should nature's humanity be more formalized, more obviously under our green thumb, controlled – taken in hand with
no pretenses that our manifest destiny is to civilize and organize wilderness?

I think the Chinese word, sharawadgi, a word of questionable origin meaning something like "random," "irregular," or just "flavor of the wild," is useful in describing a certain representational relationship with nature. William Kent, also mentioned by Mara, drew the compliment as one who "first leaped the fence and saw that all of nature was a garden."

I can't help thinking that in England, this tension with the natural was carried over from the century before, familiar to those who knew the social contract theories of Hobbes and Locke, who pointed to the state of nature, a pre- or rather non-government situation, where different conceptions of human nature were subjects of a variety of gedanken experiments with political ends in mind. And here, it was nothing less than the Americas that served as a novel example and as convincing evidence of nature's inexhaustible quantity and infinite potential. Thus, I think it could be said, that Chinese gardens as microcosms of nature and embodiments as an out-of-doors artistic embodiment of natural was there and willing to be absorbed by certain segments of English wealth and power.

I hope that these remarks have been helpful in expanding upon Mara Miller and Victoria Siu's fine papers, Thank you.

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