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Gardening: (De)Constructing Boundaries

Abstract
This paper discusses gardening as a practice that may be useful in reconsidering how landscape boundaries can be experienced. The assumption is that one should think of landscapes as "entities" which are material, but at the same time may be said to exist only insofar as they are experienced by humans. As such, they are always bounded. In order to show how gardening may be helpful in shaping the boundaries of landscapes two approaches to gardening are discussed: one treats gardening as a model of creating order and eliminating all that which is seen as alien to it (Zygmunt Bauman), the other – claims that gardening requires respecting nature (Gilles Clément).

Keywords:
community, gardening, modernity, nature, order

> *The thoughts, feelings, dreams and drives of the designers of the perfect world are familiar to every gardener worth his name, though perhaps on a somewhat smaller scale.*[1]

> *I wanted to make walls without creating boundaries.*[2]

1) Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, 91.
2) Oles, *Walls*, XVI.

1. Introduction: Limits, Landscapes and Gardens

Borders, boundaries, fringes, frontiers: no landscape is free from them. In fact, they define or determine landscapes both experientially and materially. It may be easily seen when one considers the dictionary entries which; based on art history, geography, and sociology; explain that *landscape* may mean either "a picture representing a view of natural inland scenery," or "the landforms of a region," or "a portion of territory that can be viewed at one time from one place," or "a particular area of activity."[3] All these *explananda* imply that a landscape is a whole contained within certain limits.

The inherently limited character of the landscape is also readily recognizable when the abovementioned somewhat still standard approach is left behind in favor of a perspective which is more philosophically inspiring and at the same time acknowledged in contemporary landscape studies, mainly in anthropology.

A number of scholars have recently opted for a stance inspired by phenomenology as proposed by Martin Heidegger and Maurice Merleau-Ponty.[4] Seen in this light, a landscape is "something" which people can access in and through their experiences and hence it does not exist independently from them. To put it differently, a landscape is what it is, or rather – to use the phenomenological parlance – it appears as it does because it is determined by how it is experienced. This does not mean, however, that a landscape is altogether subjective. On the contrary, every landscape transcends every experience in the sense that it can always be experienced in some other way. As Barbara Bender, an anthropologist interested in landscapes, writes;

> "Landscape" is therefore "the world out there" as understood, experienced, and engaged with through human consciousness and active involvement… . The same place at the same moment will be experienced differently by different people; the same place, at different moments, will be experienced differently by the same person; the same person may even, at a given moment, hold on conflicting feelings about a place.[5]

This view is shared by, among others, the anthropologist Eugenio Turri who claims that "the man discovers the world through landscape, which, grossly speaking, means that 'the world is what we experience.'… It is through landscape that an exchange between the man and the environment takes place."[6]

A phenomenological approach implies, then, that we should think of landscapes as "entities" which are both subjective and objective. Thinking of a landscape as a "phenomenon"[7] allows one to approach it in a way that does not reduce it to a set of human experiences nor to the object existing independently from them. In other words, landscape is the world in which a person encounters meaning, while the source of its meanings is the person who encounters it: a landscape is not "a pure representation, or pure presence, but a creation resulting from the encounter of the world with a certain point of view."[8]

Such an understanding of the concept of landscape implies that landscape is an ubiquitous phenomenon. Landscapes are everywhere in the sense that they are "lived environments," that is environments which people inhabit and with which they constantly engage materially, sensorily, intellectually, and emotionally. In fact,

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3) *Merrian Webster Online*, "Landscape (n.)."

4) Salwa, "Landscape, Phenomenology, and Aesthetics."

5) Bender, "Place and Landscape," 303.

6) Turri, *Antropologia del paesaggio*, 103.

7) Le Dantec, "Philosophie du paysage," 80.

8) Collot, *La pensée-paysage*, 18.

human existence may be described as being-in-a-landscape. As Tim Ingold writes, "[the landscape] is *with* us, not *against* us, but it is no less real for that. And through living in it, the landscape becomes a part of us, just as we are a part of it."[9] Human existence may be, therefore, said to consist of "acts of landscaping,"[10] since every action, be it individual or collective, creates a landscape by shaping the way it is experienced by people and/or by transforming the land.

Seen in this light, the limits of landscapes are at the same time, so to speak, immaterial and material. They are determined by peoples' experiential capacities as well as by their individual or collective aspirations, beliefs, emotions, and fears. It is precisely these immaterial factors that are responsible for the fact that people either identify certain material aspects of landscapes as "natural" boundaries (for example mountain ranges, rivers, or sea shores), or mark borders by creating fully material barriers which are supposed to serve various, cultural, economic, social, political, private or public aims. It seems, then, justified to paraphrase and expand the famous Wittgensteinian adage and claim that the limits of one's experience are the limits of his or her landscape and that at the same time the limits of one's landscapes are limits of his or her experience.

Once this path is followed, it has to be acknowledged that being-in-a-landscape and the acts of landscaping inherent to it amount to nothing other than to setting borders, acting within and along them, as well as transgressing and modifying them, both in experience and in the land.

If we think of human existence in these terms we may claim that it always involves what Augustin Berque, a French geographer inspired by among other things phenomenology, calls "landscape thinking" (*pensée paysagère*). He stated;

> [It] does not necessarily require words. The proof is that … people have lived the practice of landscaping in ways that left us admirable landscapes, and this without any landscape theory. People created landscapes in excellent taste; we have indeed objective, material traces of that taste. We can only infer that those people thought – since they were no less "sapiens" or knowledgeable than we are – in ways that created beautiful landscapes… . In short, they obviously practiced landscape thinking.[11]

Berque contrasts landscape thinking with "landscape theory," that is;

> [Landscape thinking is] thought that has the landscape as its object: reflections on landscape. For such thought to exist, one must be able to conceptualize the landscape, that is, to represent it with words making it into an object of thought. Philosophy would say the *noema* of the *noesis*. To be sure, one can feel things with other means than words, but words are needed really to *think* them. This is what happens in Europe during the Renaissance: landscape theory emerges.[12]

The juxtaposition of landscape thinking and landscape theory allows one to think of acts of landscaping as a form of unintentional landscape design which eventually evolved into the field of landscape architecture which was born in early modern Europe as gardening art. Just as landscape theory is not to be seen as a better, truer or more sophisticated form of landscape thinking, so too should gardening art not be conceived of as a more

9) Ingold, "The Temporality of the Landscape," 191.

10) Lorrimer, "Cultural Geography," 85.

11) Berque, *Thinking Through Landscape*, 3.

12) Ibid., 3.

developed form of being-in-a-landscape. This notwithstanding, the practice of gardening as a fruit of landscape theory may be useful in thinking about being-in-a-landscape.

In fact, gardening referred to as a practice based on thought-through premises defined by carefully chosen ideals and involving carefully chosen means, has been used as a metaphor describing on the one hand how people have been inclined to experience the world around them and on the other, how they could or even should experience it. Interestingly, one may notice a clash between a descriptive approach to the idea of gardening and the normative one. According to the former, most notably offered by Zygmunt Bauman in his criticisms of modernity, gardens are ultimately dystopian places where nature is subject to arbitrary human power. The latter, rooted in the age-old paradisiac myth and recently revived to some extent in ecological thinking (or theory), is driven by a utopian belief that gardens may be seen as embodiments of a harmony between people's aspirations and nature's interests.

When confronted, these two approaches to gardens and gardening allow one to reconsider the significance of immaterial and material limits inherent to landscapes, that is to ponder how borders or boundaries may be experienced, felt, and thought of and hence how fringes, frontiers, marches, and the like may be set and organized. The reason why gardening seems to be a good point of reference in this context is the fact that it implies establishing borders.

A garden is always a delimited or defined space, one that is encircled by a fence, hedge, wall, or the famous eighteenth century ha-ha. Even when some sort of physical barrier around a garden is lacking, garden perimeters may be felt.[13] In fact, the term *garden* and its counterparts in many languages, including the word *paradise*, etymologically denote enclosure.[14] Hence, gardening may be considered an activity taking place within the limits of the area of a garden; the limits it establishes cut the garden off from the surroundings. In other words, cultivating a garden consists of separating the within from the without.

What is decisive for the character of the two abovementioned perspectives on gardens and gardening is how garden cultivation is presented, as violence or as interaction and cooperation.

2. The Gardening State

According to Zygmunt Bauman, one of the main dichotomies determining the manner in which a society is organized is the opposition of near-far.[15] Offering a "quasi-phenomenological insight" into it Bauman claims that "near" stands for all that is familiar, obvious, routine: "'near' is such a space inside of which one can feel *chez soi*, at home,"[16] whereas "far away" is all that is unknown, unexpected, problematic, and uninteresting. He justly notes that modern urban utopias – he discusses several examples but his list could be expanded by adding to it garden-cities – were rooted in the belief that cities should be planned in such a way as to make them well-organized and hence familiar, predictable, and so forth, in the eyes of their inhabitants.

It goes without saying that this tendency was not limited to urban areas, but also appeared, whenever modern states and nations were at stake.

> Heavy modernity was – he writes in *Liquid Modernity* – after all, the era of shaping reality after the manner of architecture or gardening; reality compliant with the verdicts of reason was to be

13) Hunt, *The Making of Place: Modern and Contemporary Gardens*.

14) See for example Verdi, "The Garden and the Scene of Power."

15) Bauman, "Urban Space Wars."

16) Ibid., 110.

> "built" under strict quality control and according to strict procedural rules, and first of all designed before the construction works begin. This was an era of drawing-boards and blueprints – not so much for mapping the social territory as for lifting that territory to the level of lucidity and logic that only maps can boast or claim.[17]

The fact that Bauman identifies the paradigm of modernity with, so to say, landscape architecture, is due to the fact that he thinks of setting up a garden and its maintenance in terms of designing and caring for a space where everything may be put under the label "near." A garden is supposed to comprise what is known, familiar, ordered, useful and wanted, while gardening is mainly based on "anthropoemic" strategy, one that implies "*vomiting* the strangers, banishing them from the limits of the orderly world and barring them from all communication with those inside."[18] It is then no wonder that he calls the modern state a "'gardening' state" in which society is "an object of designing, cultivating, and weed-poisoning."[19] Thus, he presents the modern state as "a garden to be designed and kept in the planned shape by force (the gardening posture divides vegetation into 'cultured plants' to be taken care of, and weeds to be exterminated)." Contrary to pre-modern societies which adopted a "confident attitude of gamekeepers," modern societies assume that;

> Nothing should grow unless planted, and whatever would have grown on its own must have been the wrong thing, and hence a dangerous thing, jeopardizing or confounding the overall plan. The gamekeeper-like complacency would be a luxury one could ill afford. What was needed instead was the posture, and skills, of a gardener; one armed with a detailed design of the lawn, of the borders and of the furrow dividing the lawn from the borders; with a vision of harmonious colors and of the difference between pleasing harmony and revolting cacophony; with determination to treat as weeds every self-invited plant which interferes with his plan and his vision of order and harmony; and with machines and poisons adequate to the task of exterminating the weeds and altogether preserve the divisions as required and defined by the overall design.[20]

Architecture (urban planning), gardening (landscape architecture), and medicine: these are the three fields used to construct a desired social order by eliminating whatever is seen as a threat to it.

> Human existence and cohabitation became objects of planning and administration; like garden vegetation or a living organism they could not be left to their own devices, lest should they be infested by weeds or overwhelmed by cancerous tissues. Gardening and medicine are functionally distinct forms of the same activity of separating and setting apart useful elements destined to live and thrive, from harmful and morbid ones, which ought to be exterminated.[21]

What had been hitherto confined to gardens whether they be orchards or princely estates, that is to say "a gardener's vision," was later on "projected upon a world-size screen."[22]

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17) Bauman, *Liquid Modernity*, 47.

18) Bauman, *Postmodernity and its Discontents*, 18.

19) Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, 13.

20) Ibid., 57.

21) Ibid., 70.

22) Ibid., 91.

The practice which is very often seen as the essence of gardening is weeding.[23] Such is also Bauman's view:

> Some gardeners hate the weeds that spoil their design – that ugliness in the midst of beauty, litter in the midst of serene order. Some others are quite unemotional about them: just a problem to be solved, an extra job to be done. Not that it makes a difference to the weeds; both gardeners exterminate them. If asked or given a chance to pause and ponder, both would agree; weeds must die not so much because of what they are, as because of what the beautiful, orderly garden ought to be.[24]

However, whether a plant is a weed or not depends solely on the gardener's vision. No plant is a weed *per se*, it becomes one when is found within a garden fence and does not fit the design of the garden. As a result it has to be "vomited."

> Modern culture is a garden culture. It defines itself as the design for an ideal life and a perfect arrangement of human conditions. It constructs its own identity out of distrust of nature. In fact, it defines itself and nature, and the distinction between them, through its endemic distrust of spontaneity and its longing for a better, and necessarily artificial, order. Apart from the overall plan, the artificial *order* of the garden needs tools and raw materials. It also needs defense – against the unrelenting danger of what is, obviously, a disorder. The order, first conceived of as a design, determines what is a tool, what is a raw material, what is useless, what is irrelevant, what is harmful, what is a weed or a pest… . From the point of view of the design all actions are instrumental, while all the objects of action are either facilities or hindrances.[25]

If gardening is presented in the above manner, then only a little step has to be made in order to see extermination camps as modern gardens:

> Modern genocide, like modern culture in general, is a gardener's job. It is just one of the many chores that people who treat society as a garden need to undertake. If garden design defines its weeds, there are weeds wherever there is a garden. And weeds are to be exterminated. Weeding out is a creative, not a destructive activity. It does not differ in kind from other activities which combine in the construction and sustenance of the perfect garden. All visions of society-as-garden define parts of the social habitat as human weeds. Like all other weeds, they must be segregated, contained, prevented from spreading, removed and kept outside the society boundaries; if all these means prove insufficient, they must be killed.[26]

This is – Bauman states – what inevitably happens when "the world [is] turned into man's garden" and as such has to be adequately cared for lest it turn wild, that is a "far away" space.

Bauman's vision of gardens and gardening is a bit exaggerated and seems to be based on a wide-spread view of formal, Baroque garden aesthetics as epitomized by, for example, Versailles' gardens interpreted as an

23) See for example Nollman, *Why We Garden*, 229–48; Pollan, *Second Nature,* 98–116.

24) Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, 91.

25) Ibid., 92.

26) Ibid.

expression of an absolute political power modelled upon Cartesian philosophy.[27] In fact, Bauman sees gardens as works of topiary, namely a practice which usually accompanies weeding and as such is identified as another essential aspect of gardening. Topiary, the art of shaping hedges, shrubs, and trees in such a way as to obtain desired forms. An art closely associated with formal gardens, mainly Baroque ones, is often conceived of as on the one hand the most tangible expression of human desire to impose an ideal design on nature, and on the other as the most telling example of violence inflicted to nature. As such it may be easily criticized as "utopiary" and discussed as an epitome of all utopian projects showing that every utopia has its reverse and that its creation is always a disguise for destructive activities which cannot be anything but arbitrary.[28]

If one may even agree with Bauman's remarks that modern culture is a utopiarian culture, which finds its expression as much in landscaping thinking as in landscape theory, it should be noticed that it is possible to think of gardens and gardening in a much less critical manner. Such an approach still recognizes the arbitrary character of gardening but at the same time promotes the idea that gardens do not have to be places where nature is ordered and domesticated. This, in turn, changes the approach to the garden as a fenced space where weeding occurs.

3. Planetary Garden

The strength of Bauman's analyses lies in the fact that he shows the extreme consequences of following the garden-as-paradisiac myth. In fact, in the Western tradition gardens have been seen as mundane embodiments of the garden of Eden and as such they were thought to be ideal places where a harmony between people and nature was recreated.[29] Gardening was thought to be less cultivation than culture, that is it was presented as a set of practices based on the knowledge of the natural order and aimed at creating peaceful relationships between people and nature. Gardening amounted to violence-free caring for and managing nature. A good gardener was a steward responsible for nature who also knew how to use it and as a result nature in gardens was thought to be at a higher level of perfection than wilderness. In other words, gardens were places where one could contemplate and use nature in peace and cohabit with it. In other words, they were supposed to allow people to return to Eden.

Today, such an Edenic vision of gardens is contested on different grounds and is usually discussed in historical terms. It has been pointed out that, among other things, it is based on an essentialist view of nature and a paternalistic approach to it. However, the idea of the garden has recently been referred to more when a metaphor has been looked for to describe how people should relate to nature or their landscapes. The revival of the garden topos is due, among other things, to the fact that it has been fully recognized that gardens are spaces where nature is subject to human actions necessarily determined by various cultural, economic, political and social factors. The abandonment of the traditional belief that gardens are places where a harmony reigns and instead the recognition that they are full of numerous tensions, allow one to conceive of gardens as places where people define their relationships with nature.[30] Thus, gardens turn out to be spaces where people are supposed to interact with nature, treating it as active, and appreciating its agency. As a result they are seen as places where a community of humans and other-than-human beings is established and maintained: a community which is dynamic since it is defined by shifting interests of its members. Gardening, then, amounts to establishing and managing such a community which requires taking into account often contradictory needs that may go well

27) Cf. Jay, "No State of Grace."

28) Cf. Burrell and Dale, "Utopiary: Utopias, Gardens and Organization."

29) See for example Fagiolo, Giusti, and Cazzato, *Lo specchio del paradiso*; and Giesecke, Jacobs, *Earth Perfect?*

30) Myers, "From Edenic Apocalypse to Gardens against Eden," 116.

beyond the divide of humans and other-than-human beings. Gardens are hence seen as places which are set by humans, but at the same time are not defined solely by human aspirations and desires. Accordingly, gardening is presented as a practice which is based on particular ethic that is not entirely anthropocentric. It is also said to require certain virtues, such as wonder, ingenuity, perseverance, mindfulness, and so forth: virtues determining one's openness toward nature as a sphere not entirely familiar.[31]

A gardener, or *homo hortensis*,[32] is still a steward but no longer in the position of someone who authoritatively represents nature's interests. Like before, a gardener is supposed to take care of nature, yet he or she has to be aware of the inevitably arbitrary character of his or her decisions and actions. As a result, gardening appears to consist of constantly negotiating with nature and of making various alliances in order to achieve certain goals that have to be recognized as contingent. Such activities are supposed to be accompanied by the awareness that they involve costs on the part of the beings against which these alliances have been made.

In other words, gardens are treated as human creations but ones where the presence of other-than-human beings is recognized and acknowledged as significant and valuable. Despite that there may be little doubt that humans define their relationships with nature in gardens through various ways, from affect-driven to purely instrumental, it may be said that humans and other-than-human-beings participate in gardens as processes of "co-becoming."[33] What is to be underlined is that these processes are only partially determined by people and as a consequence gardens are seen as places where a new form of episteme and a new environmental sensibility may be born.[34] Gardening is thus discussed as a practice that leads to creating a new environmental culture.[35]

> *Homo hortensis* means the gardening man, or, in a more straightforward translation, the one who belongs to the garden. Accordingly, the form of life of *Homo hortensis* is not just working or being in the garden, but organizing its life following the principles of gardening. *Homo hortensis* cultivates its environment in terms of a garden.[36]

Contrary to the traditional paradisiac topos which presented gardens as places where an ideal human-nature harmony was recreated by human hands in order to be enjoyed by people, the contemporary ecology-driven approaches tend to interpret gardens as spaces where people are expected to interact with nature, assume different points of view (not necessarily human), and most importantly limit their demands and expectations. All this is to be backed up by the awareness that humans have to treat other-than-human-beings as partners or kin with which they have to live in constantly changing webs of relations. It is also underlined that gardening is such a particular activity because it does not reduce nature to purely instrumental qualities: a garden "is not only order and is therefore more than a plantation."[37]

Such a view of gardening does not mean, however, that gardens are supposed to be devoid of boundaries and therefore indeterminate or that gardening should no longer include weeding. It rather entails that

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31) Di Paola, *Ethics and Politics of the Built Environment*.

32) Schwarz, "From Homo Faber to Homo Hortensis."

33) Myers, "From the Anthropocene," 297. For an interesting analysis of the phenomenon of gardening as the self-transformative act of regaining a genuine relation with nature see Favara-Kurkowski, "Reclaiming Time Aesthetically: Hadot, Spiritual Exercises, and Gardening."

34) Myers, "From the Anthropocene," 299.

35) Bhatti, "The Meaning of Gardens in an Age of Risk."

36) Schwarz, "From Homo Faber to Homo Hortensis," 113.

37) Huber Markl quoted in Weilacher, "Is Landscape Gardening?," 108.

boundaries have to be considered as necessary, arbitrary, and contingent and therefore open to modifications. Garden fences, hedges, or walls are then less like borders that are supposed to secure that everything "far away" shall be kept outside of a garden, than as porous and inviting fringes set as borderlands of sorts. Consequently, weeding should be seen as a necessary practice which consists of not so much "vomiting" the strangers but as one establishing hierarchies.

One of the best-known exponents of the garden theory sketched above is Gilles Clément, a contemporary French landscape architect who is renowned not only for his gardens and landscapes, but also for the three concepts he has suggested: the planetary garden, the garden in movement, and the third landscape.

> The word *garden* – Clément writes – comes from the German *garten*, which means enclosure, an enclosed place. With the advent of ecology, people realized that this enclosure, though essentially under our control, is an illusion. Butterflies, wind, birds, seeds, even people: everything communicates. If you pour a cup of bleach down the washbasin, it goes off into the ocean. People knew this, but they did not know that the life of the ocean depended on it. It is very shocking, it is one of those things that confront us with a different dimension and a different scale: the horizon is no longer the limit of our landscape since we know what is happening on the other side from now on. Our new garden, from one connection to another (biologically speaking), assumes the scale of the planet. Meanwhile, life itself is once again confined within an enclosure. Instead of being limited to a small space that we control, from now on the garden is placed within the limits of the biosphere. There we have a new enclosure. Once we become aware of this reality, it makes us responsible in our role as gardeners, since we realize that life is in our hands. The planet is almost completely gardened. The spaces that are not gardened are known, surveyed, photographed, and analyzed by satellites, and consequently the total surface of the planet can be compared to a place under surveillance, a garden.[38]

To put it differently, recognizing that the whole Earth is a garden makes us aware that we live within certain limits which, at least for now, seem to be definite, but that all other borders we may find in the planetary garden are human constructions. As a result, Clément wants us to acknowledge the value of "third landscapes," uncultivated spaces that may still be found in urbanized or industrialized areas across the world (for example, abandoned plots, road shoulders, wastelands). Their worth stems from the fact that they are wild and as such are ecological reserves. Finally, the idea of the garden in movement corresponds to the belief that even though gardens have borders, these are constantly crossed in both directions by other-than-human beings and as a consequence gardens turn out to be constantly changing since their design is incessantly modified by the species coming from without. This inevitably means that weeding is debatable and in fact, Clément draws a parallel between weeding and political fundamentalism.[39]

In his work as a landscape architect Clément follows the three ideas since his designs comprise not only areas meant to be cultivated according to his suggestions, but also areas that are in movement as only partially maintained and wild places. When "projected upon a world-size screen," to say it with Bauman, or – to put it differently – when applied to the concept of planetary garden, these ideas tell us that even though we inevitably have to order the world around us in one way or another, we must limit our pretensions in such a way as to accept much of what opposes the order we long for and is seen by us as unfamiliar, unforeseeable and hence problematic.

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38) Clément, "Life, Constantly Inventive: Reflections of a Humanist Ecologist," 79.

39) Quoted in: Donadieu and Périgord, *Clés pour le paysage*, 55.

4. Conclusions: Walls of Support

The Baumanian vision of gardening presents it as nothing other than imposing an order in the name of certain ideals, and the garden as a form of an extermination camp. A garden is an example of the dark side of utopia. According to Clément, gardening does involve ordering, but at the same time it leaves space for the wild, whereas the garden is a space where people and nature may flourish. In this sense, the idea of garden preserves its utopian character, but at the same time it implies the awareness of the violence inherent to gardening.

For Bauman, the epoch of "the Gardener Supreme, the gardener of gardeners" has fortunately come to an end, whereas the era of "intensely mobile gardeners" has begun and "the great world-garden has split into innumerable little plots with their own little orders."[40] And yet, the essence of gardening has not changed: it still consists in setting the fences, weeding, and pruning. What is new is the fact that the "orders" imposed through these activities are "little" and hence open to renegotiations and modifications. Such a view corresponds to a large extent with that which presents gardens as constantly negotiated communities.

Gardening as a practice creating "little orders" on "little plots" is a good field to reconsider what kind of borders and boundaries we want to have and consequently what we want to do within them. As Thomas Oles, a landscape architect writes:

> The boundary is one of the *idées fixes* of contemporary life… Wherever one looks, it seems, boundaries are being built and being broken. Yet despite all this preoccupation with boundaries, somehow a fundamental reality has been lost. It is this: boundaries are not just ideas, not just metaphors or images, but real things of wood and stone, metal and earth. Boundaries, in short, are objects made and maintained by people… Making these objects presents a whole range of ethical and moral problems.[41]

According to Oles, setting boundaries raises a number of general questions which, *toutes proportions guardées,* seem to be important when one conceives of gardening not as utopiary, but as creating a community:

> What is the nature of our obligation when we construct a boundary? How can we bound and at the same time be generous? What is the relation between some people's right to enclose themselves and the rights of others who find themselves excluded? How can boundaries function as places where social relationships are nurtured rather than suppressed? To use Marcuse's turn of phrase, how can we begin to build walls of support rather than walls of fear?[42]

The answers to these questions are not only crucial for every landscape theory, but they are also decisive for landscape thinking. Let us remember that no landscape is free from borders or boundaries and the way we experience them and make them determines our being-in-a-landscape. We may experience them as walls that are supposed to separate us from all that which we do not want or we are afraid of, that is as "walls of fear," and we may build them as fortifications. Or we can experience them as contingent boundaries that in fact do not

40) Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, 219.

41) Oles, *Walls*, XIX.

42) Ibid., XX.

impede contacts, quite the contrary, they favor them as "walls of support," and we make them not to defend ourselves, but to set limits for ourselves.

It seems that the we have learned the lesson modernity gave us – at least in theory[43] – so now it is high time we incorporated it in our thinking. And gardening and gardens are a good point to start.

43) As an aside, there has been a strong tendency toward rewilding landscapes and thinking of the Earth in terms of a wild garden (see e.g., Harris, *Rambunctious Garden*).

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