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ENGLISH SUMMARIES

On gardens in the Alps and the Alps in gardens – thoughts on the acclimatisation of Alpine plants in the lowlands and on the transformation of Alpine images in the garden

Annemarie Bucher, pp. 10–17

The Alpine garden (known as Alpinum) is a special variety that emerged from the botanical garden and became a characteristic design element in the 19th-century landscape garden. Having developed from the section on vegetation of the “Alps” in botanical collections, the Swiss Alpine garden spread as far as England. By the end of the 19th century, Alpine gardens were no longer only about scientific plant collection but also romantic ideas of landscape and national myths associated with the Alps.

Henry Correvon: the story of a vocation

Anne Vonèche, pp. 18–27

This paper traces the origins of Alpine gardens back to their originator Henry Correvon. Correvon was a Vaudois who continued his father’s horticultural business. Concerned about the destruction of Alpine flora by commercial dealers, he aimed to preserve this flora by setting up a favourable environment for its preservation. He was active in three areas: he created a scientific environment by associating with specialists such as Candolle and Romanes, a pedagogical one by promoting botanical Alpine gardens, and a practical one by selling Alpine seeds, under strict conditions of acclimatisation, to amateurs. His tripartite activities have had a major influence on our present perception of and attitude towards Alpine gardens.

Et in Schwamendingen ego: notes on Zurich’s urban developments built in the 40s and their roots

Johannes Stoffler, pp. 28–41

Present-day infill developments in the suburbs of the Zurich of the 1940s contradict the original urban planning idea for these areas. Zurich’s new “garden cities” were to bring the qualities of rural space into the city. The concept of closely connecting buildings with gardens, green corridors and surrounding landscape was based on the notion that the open countryside and rural elements had a beneficial influence on human beings and their nation. The idea that nature is purifying is rooted in the stock of ideas of the 18th century, which, in turn, goes back to the traditions of classical antiquity.

The Alps on the surface: on the perception of the Alpine landscape and its representation in everyday life, art and the garden

Annemarie Bucher, pp. 42–51

Beyond their geographical space, the Alps are an aesthetic phenomenon. As a morally good and aesthetically beautiful region, they are replete with corresponding meanings and their visual representations are culturally omnipresent. From this perspective, landscape is more culture than nature and it is based on images with aesthetic values and meanings that change in the course of history.

In the 19th century the aesthetic perception of landscape had two far-reaching consequences: the landscape consumerism of tourism and the exploitation of landscape by the media. While using the Alpine landscape for tourism means colonising and reshaping the physical space from the outside, the aesthetic appropriation of

the Alpine landscape through illustration, reproduction and simulation by other media creates a virtual space in the collective awareness which shows up in different contexts.

The Alps as tourist posters see them

Anne Vonèche, pp. 52–63

This paper demonstrates how several factors formed the Swiss identity. First, the mountains, initially perceived as sterile and aggressive, become the setting for a simple and natural way of life. Second, the Swiss citizens, rich and urban, fantasize that they are poor peasants living simple and virtuous lives. These views, essentially developed in the 18th century, still prevail today but with a few additions: the mountains have now been conquered by roads, railways, aircraft and alpinism, as well as by aero therapy with its beneficial moral and psychological effects. Thus, the mountains stand for the national identity of Switzerland.

The proletariat in the Alps:

Kurt Gloor's film "Die Landschaftsgärtner" ("The Landscape Gardeners")

Fred Truniger, pp. 64–67

In 1969, Kurt Gloor's film "Die Landschaftsgärtner" burst in upon the self-satisfied contentment of the post-war Swiss self-image. It is only a "small" film. Nevertheless, it rang in a big change in the Swiss film scene. The well-groomed image of the Alps was subsequently recognised as fiction, debunking the myth of the federal state founded on a peasant class fit to fight that had been used to conjure up national unity, also in Swiss film. Just when the political left was going to revise official Swiss historiography, the little pamphlet of a film came along and challenged this fiction radically and effectively.

Kurt Gloor's film was the signal for re-examining the foundation myth of Switzerland. Its criticism refers not only to the middle-class fiction of the Alps but also more generally to the longing for simplicity, purity and originality firmly established in western civilisation. Apart from being about the Alps, the film is thus timeless and continues to be worth thinking about.