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The study of rituals in sacred gardens and landscapes offers tantalizing insights into the significance of gardens and landscapes in past societies. The authors of this book have moved to a new set of historical questions to be raised about gardens and landscapes. Instead of asking how the images in gardens and landscapes, like a text, mirror the culture from which they proceed, they ask how the practices taking place in gardens and landscapes contributed to the production or the reproduction of the cultural, social, and political world in which they existed. Yet attention to rituals in sacred gardens also raises thorny issues about the definition of a sacred garden or landscape, about differences and links between sacred and profane rituals, and about the changing significance of some rituals. Let us start with two examples, one in Morocco, the other in the United States, before presenting the volume.

New Challenges for Garden Studies

A striking event took place in the Jewish ghetto in Marrakech, the *Mellah*, before the Jews were expelled from Morocco when it regained its independence from the French Protectorate. It happened every year after afternoon prayer at the synagogue on the last day of Passover week, the feast that celebrates the Hebrews' departure from Egypt. Women and youngsters donned Muslim clothes, young men wearing the fez, the turban, or the chechia, a colorful djellaba with the fariya, and white or yellow babuchs. And they walked around the *Mellah* in these clothes.¹ Then, in the evening, the *Mellah* would suddenly be invaded by neighboring Muslims, coming along to visit Jewish families with handfuls of gifts such as flour, bread, flowers, wheat sheaves, almonds, milk, and fish.

This was an extraordinary event, since it was the only moment in the whole year when personal encounters between Jews and Muslims, who lived side by side and traded with each other all year long, occurred. It was clearly linked to the Passover celebrations for at least some of the Jews in the *Mellah*. During the Passover feast, Jews were not allowed to have any yeast in their possession, or any food containing yeast. So Jewish merchants selling yeast would rent out their shops for the week to a Muslim family, and, in the evening of the eighth and last day of the Passover feast, this family would return the keys to their shop and pay for the food they had consumed there. Also, all the Jewish families in the *Mellah* received their first yeast from a friendly Muslim family whose members visited that evening with armfuls of olive boughs, fresh mint, and wild roses, in addition to bread and yeast.

Another feast began the next day, a feast that is of direct interest to us: the *mimouna*. In Marrakech, families prepared a picnic and went from the *Mellah* to the olive gardens of the Ménara, a small Arabic palace set in front of a large water basin amid verdant palm trees. On the way to the Ménara, they would first stop at a spring at Seguia. According to one account, a Jewish woman struck the water seven times with her hand while whispering a prayer, and the men took off their shoes and let their feet hang down for a long time in the running water, a symbol of plenty; then they moistened their chests and faces. Women and children filled bottles with the spring water to take back to the *Mellah* later. An Arab market gardener stopped by and dipped all of his lettuces one by one in the spring water, then strained them carefully, put them back onto his cart, and went away toward the European market of Gueliz.²

¹ Lucette Heller-Goldenberg, "La *mimouna* dans les jardins de la ménara de Marrakech," *Horizons Maghrébins* 45 (2001): 162-68.

² José Bénech, *Essai d'explication d'un Mellah (ghetto Marocain): Un des aspects du Judaïsme* (Paris: Larose, liminaire, 1940), 176-77. Quoted in Heller-Goldenberg, "La *mimouna*," 166.

The families would arrive early in the morning at the gardens of the Ménara, settle down under a palm tree as close as possible to the water basin, and make ritual ablutions. First they would squat near the basin, then take some water in hand and throw it behind themselves, repeating “Terbeh, Terbeh.” This was meant to erase the past and open the way to a new life. In the evening, after picnicking and enjoying the afternoon, all the families would return home to the *Mellah*.

There is no known religious basis for this Jewish feast, and it seems to date back only to the eighteenth century. Its name, *mimouna*, is derived from a North African Arabic word meaning “good fortune,”³ and it should be underscored that the major feature of the garden where it took place is an Arabic palace. Moreover, the ritual encounters between Jews and Arabs on the previous evening, as well as the Jews’ habit of donning Arabic clothes, were not practiced by any Jews outside of Morocco. All of this seems to point to a purely profane ritual feast of Moroccan origin, simply coming after the end of a religious ritual.

Yet things are not that simple. Witnesses have insisted on the solemnity of the feast and on the sacredness of the ablutions both at the Seguia and at the Ménara. In addition, the context of the Passover feast itself invites a sacred reading of the whole *mimouna*. The exit from the *Mellah* toward the Ménara gardens, where hopes for future plenty can be entertained, seems to reenact the departure of the Jews from their ghetto in Egypt toward the promised land, which Passover celebrates. It should also be mentioned that the rabbi would walk with some members of the community in the afternoon of the eighth day of Passover to an olive tree at Djenan El Afia, to give thanks to God for the gift of trees. Thus the trip to the garden of the Ménara seems to have provided an innovative way for Marrakech Jews to prolong the feast of Passover, its promise, and its memories. The profane appearance of the ritual masked its sacred meaning.

However, this interpretation fails to take into account the exchanges with the Muslim neighbors of the *Mellah* and the celebration of brotherhood between Muslims and Jews, which was perceived by members of both communities as auspicious, as a source of good fortune—hence the name of the feast, *mimouna*. All witnesses to this feast concur that this was a celebration of the sense of community shared by Jews and Muslims, and a means toward strengthening the links between these two groups of people separated by religion—that is, by their sense of the sacred. Should we accept this functionalist interpretation and see this ritual as profane? There are some grounds for doubts, since this interpretation glosses over the visit to the source, the picnic, and the ablutions in the water basin of the Ménara. In fact, during the liturgy at the synagogue on the morning of the eighth day of Passover (that is, the day before the *mimouna*) a text was read that celebrated the union of the opposite. It said: “Then the wolf will dwell with the lamb, the tiger will rest with the kid; calf, lion cub and ram will live together and a child will lead them.” Was this text understood as a call for the Jews to fraternize with Muslims, thus making all of the events before and during the *mimouna* part of a sacred celebration of an auspicious unity of all Jews and Muslims? This might help us understand the Marrakech Jews’ point of view, but it would not explain why the Muslims participated, and what the whole event in which they were clearly taking part meant for them.

Thus we can see why we should be wary of the distinction between lay and sacred ritual, and between lay and sacred garden or landscape. Ritual practices that appear at first to be entirely profane may hide some sacred meaning entertained by their participants, and profane gardens or landscapes may become sacred spaces when dedicated to ritual sacred practices. The cloth out of which our lives are created interweaves sacred and profane threads. This calls for special attention when assessing the sacred or profane nature of a ritual event, and for exploring the relative significance of place for ritual practices.

Arnold van Gennep (1873–1957), a Belgian anthropologist who devoted much of his life to the comparative study of European folklore, must be credited with the first theory of ritual that stresses the spatial aspect of ritual practices. He showed that many popular rituals were performed to enable individuals to change cultural status in their society. Thus he proposed a general scheme that would apply to all *rites of passage* such as birth, baptism, circumcision, confirmation, bar and bat Mitzvah, prom dances,

³ Joseph Toledano, *Les Juifs Maghrebins* (Belgium: Editions Brepols, 1989), 160. Quoted in Heller-Goldenberg, “La *mimouna*,” 164.

Rite of passage	Biological/ Cultural order	Give order and definition to the biocultural life cycle
Calendrical rite	Cosmic/Social time	Give socially meaningful definition to the passage of time
Rite of exchange and communion	Individual/ Collective benefit	Create mutual obligations yoking the pursuit of individual desire to the production of an ordered community
Rite of affliction	Disorder/Harmony Impurity/Purity	Restore the self afflicted by events that prevent its participation in the community
Rite of feasting and fasting	Defiance/Obedience to society	Create a sense of community that transcends and reinforces the legitimacy of structural differences in society
Political rite	Human/ Transcendental will	Align social hierarchies with natural or supernatural roles

1. Rites of Passage

dichotomy between nature and culture, yet does not require conceptualization of this dichotomy.

In a sense we may see rituals as exercises in persuasion achieved through collective performance, rather than through words and reasoning, as in rhetorics. It may be useful to highlight them briefly. Rites of passage (Fig. 1) give order and definition to the biocultural life cycle. *Calendrical rites* bring agricultural and cultural or religious events in line with the passage of time and inscribe them in a cycle of eternal repetition. *Rites of exchange and communion* are performed when offerings are made to the gods or under purely secular circumstances. They create a network of mutual obligations harnessing the pursuit of individual desire or greed into the reproduction of an ordered community. *Rites of affliction* are practiced to appease the sufferings and sorrows of painful events such as illness, or such traumas as drought or infestation. They restore the self, afflicted by events that threaten its participation, to a harmonious community. *Rites of feasting and fasting* and *festivals* create a sense of *communitas* that momentarily transcends social inequalities and reinforces the legitimacy of the social order. Last, *political rites* construct and display political power and align social hierarchies with natural or supernatural roles such as baroque entries into cities in the Renaissance, or the pledge to the nation by the president-elect today. These are descriptive categories that may help explore comparisons but should not be conceived of as mutually exclusive. Most of these rites call for some specific organization of space. They can all be found in gardens or landscapes, and they may contribute to the ontological construction of space that applies to any of them.

⁴ Arnold van Gennep, *Les Rites de Passage: Etude systématique des rites . . .* (Paris: A. & J. Picard, 1981). "If, theoretically, the complete pattern of rites of passage comprises *preliminary* rites (separation), *liminary* (margin), and *post-liminary* (aggregation), in practice the three groups are far from equivalent, either for their importance or for their degree of elaboration," 14. (Victor Turner has translated *préliminaire* as pre-liminal.)

⁵ Van Gennep, *Les Rites de Passage*. See chap. 2: "Le passage matériel" (The materiality of passage), 19–33. It consists of several parts devoted to borders and limits; passage taboos; sacred zones; the door, the threshold, the portico; the deities of passage; the rituals of entry; the foundation sacrifices; and the rituals of exit.

⁶ Catherine Bell, *Rituals, Perspectives and Dimensions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 93–137.

marriage, mourning, burial, and so on. It follows a three-tiered pattern: separation from the life-world, experience of passage from an old status to a new one in a liminal space, and reintegration with a new social identity into the life-world.⁴ The second stage, which allows the climactic experience of passage from one status to another, demands a specific place that sets it apart from the life-world. And this place itself receives its own structure from the ritual practices that it renders possible.⁵

Yet not all rituals are *rites of passage*, and there are many ways of describing the huge variety of known ritual practices. Catherine Bell, in her most recent book, *Rituals, Perspectives and Dimensions*, proposes a summary description of basic genres of ritual actions that is made up of six categories.⁶ Each category operates a specific transformation of natural phenomena into cultural practices that aim to disseminate a social or cultural order. They introduce a praxis and a practical knowledge that puts into play a

An interesting example studied several years ago by Elizabeth McKinsey,⁷ and later by John Sears,⁸ may help highlight a few general issues. In the early nineteenth century, Niagara Falls became a celebrated destination for American tourists because of its exceptional scenery and because of the expectations tourists brought to the place. It was visited as an object of national pride because it was known to be vaster than any comparable view in Europe; as an object of aesthetic value because it provided an extraordinary experience that illustrated the well-known analysis of the sublime by Edmund Burke (1729–1797); and as a source of religious experience because, from at least the seventeenth century, it was thought of as a place where God manifested Himself. Thus, many coeval accounts of a visit compare it to a pilgrimage. After 1830, Niagara Falls became a favorite destination for newlyweds, who came in search of a mystical experience confirming the sacred vows of marriage. The sublimity of the scenery was part of its sacred symbolism.

The growing number of visitors spurred the development of a tourist industry that organized ritualized experiences of the waterfalls and produced a list of mandatory visits to different sites (each for a fee) to be experienced by anyone who wanted to have a “complete experience” of Niagara Falls. Tourism businesses also created a path that went down behind the waterfalls and allowed a sublime experience with the only risk that of getting wet. We can see how a complex set of expectations among literate Americans gave rise to a sacral symbolism of ritualized visits, and how it stimulated economic enterprise that further developed the ritualistic aspect of visits, stressing their sacred value. Commercial entrepreneurs also organized dramatic shows, such as a tightrope walker crossing the falls, to make the crowds shudder at the prospect of his falling into the abyss beneath his feet. Thus we can see how, by the dramatization and organization of space and of landscape views, the tourist industry contributed to the ritualization of the place. The construction of space plays a central role here. And it must be stressed that it is the heterogeneity and anisotropy of space created by different ritual practices, rather than homogeneity and isotropy, as could be expected of Cartesian space, that is so important for the complete experience of Niagara Falls to be achieved.

Yet, as time went by, the commercial practices fostered by the tourist industry turned the sacred into a profane visit. Many tourists complained in the second half of the nineteenth century that they failed to achieve any experience of sacrality when visiting Niagara Falls. The rituals of visit remained largely unchanged until the early twentieth century, but American tourists developed new horizons of expectations. Transcendental and sublime experiences were sought farther to the west in the national parks, and Niagara Falls became more and more a purely secular destination.

This example suggests several things: The space of sacred ritual practices in gardens or landscapes may have a life of its own; it may be born out of a development of sacred ritual practices that endow it with social agency; it is differentiated according to the propensities for specific actions that derive from the location of ritual practices within its confines; it may change over time through interlacing with purely secular activities; it cannot be divorced from the dramatization of social practices to which it gives rise; and last and most important, garden or landscape space may pass away like culture, loosening its grip upon people’s minds and behaviors, and thus may be changed into a different world even when its appearances are unchanged. How much of this applies to different historical periods around the world? And how can we account for the cultural impact of sacred rituals in gardens and landscapes? These are some of the issues addressed by this book that call for much more research in the future. At the same time that attention to ritual practices may teach us something about the cultural significance of gardens or landscapes, we may also expect that attention to gardens and landscapes may yield new insights into the significance of space for ritual practices. Let us turn to a short presentation of the various chapters of the book, stressing only their major contributions to the book’s main theme rather than proposing summaries of each chapter as a whole.

The Agency of Gardens

Such words as *garden* and *landscape*, derived from the modern tradition of place-making and nature appreciation in the Western world, have no clearly defined equivalent in any other cultural contexts. The word *garden* may be used to translate a number of

⁷ Elizabeth McKinsey, *Niagara Falls: Icon of the American Sublime* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

⁸ John F. Sears, *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

different names in vernacular languages, corresponding to places that may differ significantly from one another for a native speaker. Therefore, some authors have introduced a culture-specific vocabulary, discussing the *alsos* in Greece or the sacred grove in India, for instance, while others have simply reminded readers that the gardens they discuss belonged to a highly specific culture, such as Japanese, Aztec, or Maroon gardens. Gardens in each of these cases are clearly separated from the landscape within which they exist, either by the kind of nurture they command, their physical layout, or the links to the netherworld—the supernatural world—that they provide. Of course, landscapes and the netherworld can be conceptualized, as much as gardens, in ways that vary according to culture and history.

Thus, it is striking to discover how gardens and landscapes have fulfilled similar roles in very different cultural contexts. Some of the studies of ritual practices in gardens or landscapes presented in this book strongly suggest that gardens and landscapes were in many circumstances powerful agents contributing to human or social action. It accounts for three very different modes of agency, and within each of them differences are extremely important: first, gardens that constitute an anteroom spurring an encounter with the netherworld; second, gardens or landscapes that afford a voyage through a mystical land; and third, landscapes and gardens that enable their dwellers to establish a sense of locality for themselves, thus metaphorically rooting their own identity in a well-defined part of the material world. Each part of the book is devoted to one of these forms of agency. In addition, it will be noted that a different temporality of the use of space corresponds to each of these modes of agency for rituals in a garden or landscape. When garden or landscape space acts as an anteroom between this world and the netherworld, its temporality is reduced to specific moments that frame the experience of a supernatural encounter and may lead to an identity change. When it acts as the realm where a mythical voyage can be reenacted, it allows an epiphany that expands over several days. Finally, when it contributes to the establishment of a sense of locality, it embraces the temporality of everyday life, thus providing a foundation of self in collective and transhistorical identity. Thus rituals seem to specify at the same time a specific sense of space, temporality, and self-identity, understood as an image of self built over time, rather than a structure, as proposed by Freudian authors such as Erik H. Erikson.

Part One: Gardens as Anterooms to the Netherworld

Greek places—gardens and grottoes or meadows in the landscape—that allowed the presence of gods and invited encounters with them, permitted mortals to cross over the limits to the netherworld, something forbidden to most mortals. Although the conditions of crossing over between this world and the netherworld are completely different from one culture to the next, we can see a similar agency at work in gardens and landscapes in Greece, Heian Japan, and in a desert garden of Tenochtitlan and a neighboring hill. It is worth noting in particular that three of the four chapters mention trances as the condition for communication with supernatural forces in these gardens. Thus we can see these gardens, under the particular circumstances created by some sacred rituals, as ontological anterooms separating the human world from the netherworld or, in other words, mortals from gods. They were also used at other times, and some of them could be used for profane purposes, as the naves of medieval cathedrals in Europe could be used for profane discussions. Thus the cultural significance, or the particular meaning attached to these gardens, could vary according to their uses throughout the year. This reminds us that gardens are imbued with several different meanings according to practical circumstances, rather than a single meaning determined by their iconography.

Pierre Bonnechere provides a study of the sacred grove in ancient Greece (*alsos*) in the first chapter. This is a type of garden that seems to elude any clear definition, since it cannot be characterized by its design, its planting, or by the gods to whom it is dedicated. Yet Bonnechere shows that the study of the ritual practices in these groves reveals that they are always a “natural and divine manifestation of a median place between two worlds,” human and chthonian, evocative at the same time of the Golden Age. These places were visited by a large number of pilgrims, a few of whom had some powerful reason to seek direct advice from the gods. The sacred grove, however, is never the place where the meeting with the gods may occur. It is rather an intermediate space where pilgrims can part from the mortal world through a series of rituals lasting up to several days. They would thereafter be led outside of the sacred grove to a place, very often a cave otherwise impossible to access, where they would go through the ritual encounter with the gods. At Lebadeia, pilgrims had to stay at the bottom of a pit, representing the underworld, waiting for the trance in which they would meet with the god. Afterward, they would be brought back to the sacred grove and

would perform more rituals enabling them to prepare for their return to life among mortals. Thus, the space of the sacred grove stands between two ontologically different kinds of space: the space of mortals, and that of the gods, which mortals can enter only at the risk of their lives. It lies between the city and the wilderness inhabited by the gods. The sacred grove is the antechamber to this last space, and it enables pilgrims to test their ability to venture into it, as well as enabling them afterward to leave behind the awe-ful experience of their meeting with the gods, and return, a different person, to the mortal world.

In the second chapter, Claude Calame demonstrates how the conjunction of literary and archaeological studies can contribute to an understanding of rituals in ancient Greek gardens. Many extant lyric poems were presented together with songs and dances as part of the ritual performances on the site of sacred landscapes, and they very often enunciated the ritual acts themselves. They described mythical events, some of which took place in gardens or spaces of legend as if they were taking place before the eyes of the participants in the sacred ritual. Thus, the enunciation of the poem rendered the divinity present and introduced the participants to a moment of communication with the divine. Archaeological evidence indicates that initiates to mystery cults that took place in sacred landscapes such as the garden of the temple of Aphrodite at Lesbos were promised an eternal life in the Elysian gardens of Hades. These gardens, to which only the happy few—heroes, men receiving the favors of a god, and initiates of the mystery cults—had access, were conceived along the model of gardens of love as the Greeks understood them, with their roses, shadowy bushes, light breezes, numerous streams, and blooming flowers. This same model served to imagine the meadows of an erotic encounter between Zeus and any virgin he raped. Thus, the sacred gardens around some temples made possible the epiphany of a god and so allowed ritual participants to encounter a divinity and to prepare themselves for another passage—between earthly life and eternal life—leading them to join in the life of the gods in the gardens of the blessed, rejoicing in the same banquets and erotic pleasures that could be evoked by the sacred poems and the gardens of the earthly ritual. The sacred garden appears, then, as an anteroom where mortals meet gods and may prepare themselves to become gods after death and following another series of rituals, thus acquiring a new religious persona. Here, too, we can see that most mortals who attended these garden rituals would not share this fate, and we must understand that the practices and meanings of sacred gardens could vary according to the participants.

Michel Vieillard-Baron, in his chapter on religious and lay rituals in Japanese gardens, reveals that sacred gardens in Heian Japan played a similar role: “Located between the world of men and the world of nature, gardens were regarded as a kind of border between the world of men and the world of gods.” This chapter examines only rituals that were performed at the imperial court. These took place in the palace courtyards or in the garden with a pond on the south side of the main courtyard. It should be mentioned that all courtyards, with or without a pond, were called by the same name, which today is used to designate a garden. All of these rituals held some symbolic significance for the whole empire, yet they were not all, strictly speaking, sacred rituals, since many of them did not imply direct communication with supernatural forces. These rituals could consist of a banquet with distribution of gifts, dance or music performances, an archery contest, or a wrestling match. The wrestling match did have a religious significance but did not imply a communication with supernatural beings. Several others did. The chapter deals at some length with the ritual of beseeching the rain, which was performed once a year in the Garden of the Divine Spring, a very large garden reserved in the court next to the imperial palace. It shows the central significance of the pond for the performance of this ritual and how it was thought of as the abode of a dragon capable of bringing rain and prosperity to the country.

In the fourth chapter, dedicated to an analysis of a month-long series of rituals that started in a desert garden in the Sacred Precinct of Tenochtitlan before Cortés’s conquest, María Elena Bernal-García explores the surprising relationships between garden space and supernatural space. The small desert gardens of Teutlálpan conjured memories of the mythical island city of Aztlan and of two desert sacred sites where momentous events accounting for the mythical origin of the Aztecs had taken place. The liminal phase of a cycle of rituals spanning the month of Quecholli started and ended in this garden, contributing to the establishment of the perfect circumstances for the accomplishment of a perfect hunt. This hunt set the stage for the reenactment of the foundation of the city of Tenochtitlan in 1324 and of the establishment of the sun on its course through the sky above and below the earth. A procession left from the garden of Teutlálpan heading toward a small hill, Zacatepec, south of Tenochtitlan, where another series of rituals was performed. Yet to grasp the significance of the cycle of rituals beginning and ending at the garden, it is also

necessary to study the rituals that took place during the following two months. The importance of studying any ritual in the context of a whole cycle, already underlined by van Gennep, finds a striking illustration here. This three-month cycle was meant to echo the mythical gestation of the sun that gave rise to its establishment in the sky over the city of Tenochtitlan and its holy landscapes. The hill of Zacatepec in particular appears as a representation of the earth womb, the "place where the sun and the order that would preside over the city of Tenochtitlan were about to hatch," according to Bernal-García. So this hill was not simply a material feature in the landscape but also a supernatural place where past events could be revisited. Thus, the gardens of Teutlalpan were the threshold from which young men could take off on a shamanic trip, metamorphosed into mythical birds who traveled through a space and time that reversed the orientations of the life-world, toward the mythical world and time of the gods. They would come back to the garden transformed into young warriors. This garden provided the threshold across which young men emerged into a new stage of their development as an Aztec.

Part Two: A Voyage through Mythical Lands

We have just viewed the landscape of Tenochtitlan as a cultural construction that allowed shamanic flights into mythical lands, with very little human transformation of the physical landscape. Let us now turn to other parts of the world where gardens or whole landscapes undergoing major transformations were developed and used to allow such trips into mythical lands. These gardens or landscapes are always clearly separated from the life-world, but the enchantment of life that they allowed was achieved only by means of ritual performances. On the other hand, we can see how the efficiency of the rituals depended upon the gardens. Obviously, the gardens provided a number of symbolic features that supported the enactment of the rituals, but primarily they enabled their visitors to engage in performances that carried them away to a supernatural world by prompting them to unusual types of actions. These extraordinary experiences could be sought for different purposes, but it seemed useful to bring together examples of the mutual transformation of self and space irrespective of the social, political, or religious performances at stake.

In the fifth chapter, which is devoted to mythic and sacred gardens in medieval Japan, Richard Stanley-Baker examines the ritual activities in two famous Kyoto gardens to show how these activities introduced a relationship to the past that had direct political significance. The description of a ritual boat trip on the lake of Saionji by the emperor Go-Uda in 1285 indirectly illuminates the meaning of this voyage. It parallels the description of another trip on a lake, in the early eleventh century, in a fictional account in *The Tale of Genji* and is enhanced by allusions to the voyage to the Isles of the Immortals. Thus, the ritual performance of the voyage on the lake tacitly accomplishes a visit to the Isles of the Immortals, introducing visitors to an otherworldly experience that would leave a lasting impression. The intertextuality extends beyond the realm of discourse to the domain of sacred garden practice. Almost two hundred years later, in 1408, after the property came into the hands of another powerful man, Yoshimitsu, it was again used for the reception of an emperor who engaged in similar entertainment on boats. There again the voyage on the lake was intended to produce the impression of a visit to the mythical Isles of the Immortals. Yet it should be noted that there were many more rituals taking place in this garden, and that we should see these events as revealing a layer of intertextuality rather than an essential meaning of place. However, the continuity of the reenactment of the mythical Chinese Isles of the Immortals may hide the changing efficacy of the ritual implied by a new political and religious context. Stanley-Baker moves to the garden of Saihōji to throw more light on this change. He proposes that new practices of meditation by aristocrats and rulers in these two gardens contributed to the establishment of a new political organization founded on the identification of practitioner and cosmic ruler, and of the unity of tangible and intangible realms. Thus, ritual visits to the garden accomplished the legitimization of the new form of shogunal government.

The sixth chapter, by Behula Shah, takes us from Japan to India, to another mythical landscape. Following the disruption of an ancient pilgrimage devoted to Krishna in the city of Mathura by a Muslim ruler at the beginning of the sixteenth century, an influential priest, Narayan Bhatt, established a new pilgrimage in the neighboring region of Braj. It allowed pilgrims to walk in the steps of Krishna, as if retracing his life and the life of his followers in that region. The groves in the flat plain of the Braj, separated from Mathura by a river, thus became the places where Krishna would be met during the twenty-three days of the pilgrimage. Some natural features were enhanced either for practical purposes or to create a cue symbolically linked to the complete

narrative of Krishna's birth, his life as a shepherd among the beautiful *gopi* girls, and his final reconquest of his birthplace, Mathura. In addition to these minimal interventions in the landscape, the groves as a whole were conceived as an earthly projection of a sacred *mandala*, imposing an imaginary geometry upon an irregular landscape. Shah analyzes ritual acts such as walking as a means to achieving the kinesthetic construction of the landscape—identifying landscape as a domain that takes form through experience rather than pure materiality—as well as giving rise to the symbolic meaning of the ritual, allowing its embodiment in each pilgrim. The pilgrimage in this constructed landscape allows each pilgrim to experience the presence of a living Krishna in his or her own life. Shah also points out how the repetition of ritual circumambulation of each grove enables each pilgrim to build up an experience of the landscape as a whole, in which sacred geometry and mythical content (the body parts of Krishna and the story of his life) are embodied. She observes that “the place and the person are mutually transformative.” Her analysis invites a second reading of the preceding chapter.

The next chapter, by Sarah Bonnemaïson, moves the discussion to nineteenth-century India. Here, the city of Ramnagar and its immediate surroundings are transformed into a sacred landscape during a month-long series of festival days dedicated to the reenactment of a poetic version of the *Ramayana*, the epic story of Rama, another avatar of Vishnu. Participants in the daily rituals engage in a mythical trip from the Himalayas to Sri Lanka as they participate in successive events of the *Ramayana* at different places in the landscapes of Ramnagar. Bonnemaïson shows that these rituals somewhat uneasily fit an interpretation as rites of passage in van Gennep's or Turner's terms. On the other hand, they are open to interpretation by contemporary visitors, be they Hindu or not. Bonnemaïson develops her own understanding of interpretation, explaining how she derived a method of landscape interpretation from her reading of Gadamer. She suggests a tentative reading of the landscape as a layered text in which each actor may contribute new meanings within a general framework that links the scenic organization of space, some major alignments, and the dramatic developments of the narratives at different sites. Thus, she proposes an understanding of the landscape as mediating between the fixed text of the poetic narrative and the ever-changing enactment and interpretations to which it gives rise: landscape as a shifting structure supporting the mythical narrative, allowing each participant who contributes to its existence to become closer to him- or herself, in an elevating and spiritual experience. Clearly, action in and reception of the landscape are analyzed in terms quite different from those proposed in the two previous chapters. Yet all three chapters concur in observing how very different landscapes may enable participants in ritual actions to engage in a personal reenactment of a mythical action and to derive a sense of personal elevation from such an experience.

Part Three: The Production of Locality

As opposed to the ritual visits or pilgrimages analyzed in the preceding three chapters that call upon the action of a specific space, which can be visited only at distant moments in a lifetime, some rituals of landscape contribute to a transformation of a dwelling place, to the production of a definite sense of locality. Some of them are clearly rituals of foundation; others belong to the ritualization of everyday life. As opposed to rituals that make gardens or landscapes into an anteroom separating this world and the netherworld and that lead to a momentous individual experience, these are rituals that act upon the shared identities of a whole population. And as opposed to rituals that allow a mythical voyage in a sacred landscape distant from home, they make the living world itself a sacred space, thus allowing all participants to fuse a sense of self and of supernatural identity. Yet this does not imply that these rituals produce sacred objects that stand as symbols of the group in a Durkheimian sense. Rather, we shall see how rituals with very different practical consequences can imbue a place with a sense of locality that reverberates upon the sense of identity of its dwellers, irrespective of the kind of social structure in which they participate. Thus it is the role of space in everyday life rather than social structure that seems to be a discriminating feature of these rituals.

The eighth chapter, by Ángel Julián García-Zambrano, is devoted to ancestral rituals in early colonial Mexico. It calls on an examination of codices, toponymy, and colonial sources to show how rituals of land appropriation after the Spaniards arrived reproduced precolonial modes of land appropriation by a tribe or a group of Nahua people. These rituals of land appropriation were themselves ritual reenactments of myths of origin. This demonstration builds upon an understanding of the specific interlacing of nature and culture achieved by the Nahua people. It shows how their view of the universe was inspired by their attachment

to the gourd, a plant that was a major staple before being supplanted by maize. This attachment led them to conceive of the mythical landscape from which they believed all humans proceeded as deep ravines in the form of a gourd where their ancestors had lived in a lacustrine environment, or as deep caves inside a gourdlike subterranean abode from whence human life had surfaced. A parallel was thus established between gourd and womb, and multiple illustrations are found in ancient codices and their corresponding narratives. When Nahua natives sought a new territory in which to establish themselves, they would therefore look for a deep gourdlike ravine in the mountains with rich lacustrine flora and fauna, close to springs gushing from some imaginary gourdlike caves. Rituals of foundation made the site a sacred place, and this was the condition for allowing ancestors to be reborn in the form of a new population. It points to the importance of the agency of this newly appropriated territory to ensure the fecundity of the incoming group and thus ensure the group's long life. The cove or the primordial spring identified by the Nahua people came to stand as a symbol of the continuity of the group, of its identity. And rituals of land appropriation were used—and may still be used—as modes of resisting cultural invasion by Western cultures.

In the ninth chapter, Richard Price explores a completely different situation, the ritualization of landscapes by Suriname Maroons, showing how the invention of new rituals allows the introduction of new modes of appropriating the landscape, thus ensuring the continuity of a cultural group confronted with a changing environment. If van Gennep insisted on considering each ritual within the context of an entire cycle of rituals, Price shows how important it is to understand the dynamics at work in the ritualization of life to make sense of garden or landscape rituals. Suriname Maroons are the descendants of slaves who escaped from colonial plantations into the forest, established themselves there, and engaged in an ongoing process of discovery of its landscapes predicated upon some predispositions imported from various West African traditions and exchanges of ingenious innovations among groups living in different places. Changes in the relationship of the Suriname Maroons with Western society in their own environment also contributed to this dynamic of ritualization of life and to the correlative ritual appropriation of places, rivers, and seas. In each case, new rituals provide a standard for new practices, thus setting their origins within the frame of Suriname Maroon thinking and giving them cultural legitimacy. As Price develops his presentation as an eyewitness adopting the viewpoint of a Suriname Maroon, it becomes clear that the invention of new gods and corresponding rituals fosters the appropriation of new landscapes, or seascapes, that enable newly discovered places to support new activities in which the Maroons engage. Thus, the discovery of the gods in any new landscape and of the proper rituals to please them enables the Maroons to discover new places that enable them to engage in new kinds of activities.

In the eleventh chapter, "Horse Racing, Hunting, and Praying in the 'Shady Walks and Sacred Woods' of Cetinale," Giorgio Galletti turns to a deliberate attempt to create a new sense of place by designing a new sacred landscape and importing several ritual practices. Cardinal Flavio Chigi engaged in a transformation of his domains in Cetinale, near Siena, in 1651. He created a very unusual place with an enclosed forest near the house, meant to represent a Thebaid, and a closed path running from the house all around the domain, along which were strewn chapels dedicated to the cult of the seven sorrows of the Virgin Mary. More indications confirm the intention to make this into a sacred territory offered to pious passersby as a place for ritual meditations. Yet Galletti shows that the Thebaid served as a hunting ground, and the path of the chapels of the seven sorrows of the Virgin was used every year for a horse race imitating the *Palio* in Siena. He shows, however, that both hunting and *Palio* rituals seem to sit ambiguously between sacred and profane political purposes, unless we acknowledge that politics and religion could not be separated in seventeenth-century Tuscany. His analysis of the relationships between Flavio Chigi, the Grand Duke of Tuscany Cosimo III, and Pope Innocent XI demonstrates that the creation of the sacred landscapes at Cetinale and of the ritual celebrations at the time of Saint Eustace's feast day were meant to bring a new sense of peace and religiosity to this part of the Sienese countryside, emulating the political use and efficacy of the landscape rituals of the *Palio* in Siena.

In the twelfth and last chapter, David Matless and Laura Cameron bring us to the mid-twentieth century in the tidal marshes of Norfolk. "Devotional Landscape: Ecology and Orthodoxy in the Work of Marietta Pallis" presents the creation of a sacred landscape invented for the sake of pursuing personal rituals. To say that it is personal means only that the rituals as well as the landscape were initiated by a single person, the Greek ecologist Marietta Pallis. She entertained very strong feelings about the course of Greek society and religious culture in the context of modernization, and she created a place where she could live

according to principles that ran against this course of history. She was also committed to the protection of the marshes, as a living whole, in the name of her deep understanding of their ecology. Yet she also wanted to express the perfect fit of her interest in the marsh and her engagement with a renewal of orthodox practices returning to principles. Thus, she created a symbolic landscape and ritualized practices of meditation and engagement with nature. Matless and Cameron demonstrate the interlacing of the development of Pallis's personal identity and of the landscape at Long Gores in Norfolk. Only friends were introduced to the landscape and its realm of significance. Although the place was created by Pallis, it became the active support of her own development in such a way that a mutual identification of landscape creator and created landscape came into being.

Propensity as a Form of Agency

This book as a whole demonstrates important links between activities that take place in a variety of spaces such as *alse*, groves, desert gardens, gardens in general, and valleys, rivers, marshes, forests, mountains, or landscapes in general. It demonstrates, through a series of examples, that garden practices cannot be studied with respect only to the garden itself—that is, to its forms, its sensual qualities, and the meanings it presents to visitors. This simple finding results from a shift of attention in garden studies: Instead of studying gardens as a contribution to the development of iconology, this book proposes studies of gardens that contribute to the development of pragmatics, a time-honored discipline in American studies. It asks how gardens contribute to the reproduction or changes of praxis in society, and it calls for an understanding of related practices inside and outside gardens.

Gardens and landscapes seem either to engage people in actions in response to a will that their own place exercises, or to act as modifiers of the will that people bring to the place. Therefore, we are asked to recognize that gardens or landscapes are not reducible to physical things, not even to material signs, but are rather akin to physical and organic matter that embodies cultural propensities. However, we should not be tempted to perceive this embodiment as an essence, but rather to recognize that each garden or landscape is pronged by the rituals it affords into a particular form of social and cultural agency. Even if we find a typology of rituals, such as the one suggested here, useful as a guideline to conduct an investigation, it appears that each sacred ritual practice in a garden or a landscape brings out social, cultural, or political consequences specific to the cultural context of its production. The description of the particulars of each ritual in gardens or landscapes and of its origins and consequences, rather than its identification as a ritual of a certain type, helps us learn about relationships between space and ritual. Thus, we are invited by the different chapters of this book to treat each case as a unique mode of agency and a particular contribution to praxis.

Presence versus Representation

There is, however, a striking difference between two modes of agency that points to a possible direction for future research. Calame's chapter draws attention to the difference between, first, gardens or landscapes that embody a sacred will and, second, literary representation of such gardens. Thus, it points to the difference between embodied knowledge and knowledge encoded into a system of representation. This raises some questions about gardens that represent in physical space such representations of gardens or landscapes by literary texts. A pursuit of this topic invites further discussion that could reverberate in our understanding of the history of garden art since the Renaissance in the Western world. We have seen that gardens, in ancient Greece and Japan, may allow and encourage men to cross over from this world to the netherworld. This allows the encounter with a god to be experienced as a source of individual agency in ancient Greece, or to produce social reproduction of imperial agency in Heian Japan. In both cases, the gods are the source of ethical demands to which the community responds. On the other hand, moving to representations of such places in literature, Calame proposes that they allow the author of the text to become the source of cultural injunctions addressed to the reader. This seems to imply that gardens designed to embody such representations may introduce in their own turn an authorial voice aimed at some particular social agency in the name of a metaphysic of place. This may be exactly what both Galletti and Matless account for. Yet the mediation of the authorial voice radically modifies the pragmatics of agency because, any representation being open to critical discussion, the experience of such a place may be drawn into arguments about the intention represented, its inherent validity, or its authenticity if we choose to speak in contemporary

terms. Thus, when gardens or landscapes become representations of nature produced by an authorial voice, they may stimulate adepts, proselytes, or foes: that is, they open a political debate linked to the cultural issues that they represent, with all the uncertainties of such debates. Therefore, it makes an enormous difference whether gardens or landscapes are places where the gods are present or where they are represented as if they were present.

The chapters by Bernal-García and García-Zambrano suggest, however, that intermediate modes of communication exist between presence and representation. The images and codices upon which they build their arguments invited their Aztec or Mexican users to engage in producing a message that was suggested to them in pictorial form. More generally, gardens could be envisaged as ambiguous sources of information that trigger an activity of interpretation rather than providing clear statements, even less clear injunctions to act. This may provide us with an approach to gardens as places that invite their visitors to engage in a productive process of interpretation or emotional response that is not completely preencoded. In that respect we would see gardens and landscapes as a specific medium of communication that remains to be studied further before it can be fully understood in various cultural contexts.

Engaging Spaces

This book contributes to a critical discussion of the Western understanding of space as a transcendental idea that would reflect the universality of the human mind. It challenges this notion, providing empirical examples of historical or cultural variations of the understanding of space. Let me summarize some of the steps toward a different understanding of space from an ontological, phenomenal, or physical point of view that were presented at the symposium that led to this volume. Presentations of changes by Michel Vieillard-Baron and Richard Stanley-Baker, from the Heian period to the fifteenth century in Japan, show that according to cultural variations within the same religious context, space may achieve a different ontological status. Interestingly, there is no linear development between sacred presence and representation of the sacred or the mythical in the garden. The creation of new rituals may shift the ontological value of a garden space in different directions.

We are also invited to discover important cultural differences between gardens and landscapes in different cultures from either a phenomenal or a physical point of view. By phenomenal point of view, I mean simply the perception of place common to vernacular participants in a ritual practice beyond any individual variation among them. Shah, García-Zambrano, Price, and Bonnemaison have insisted on the fact that gardens or landscapes were not perceived by Westerners in the same way at all as by the people who used them ritually, and each of them has demonstrated a specific construction of phenomenal space within the culture studied. This calls into question the pertinence of the objective descriptions that can be produced in the name of Western attitudes, be they scientific or professional.⁹ It raises very general issues, because it forces a reexamination of the phenomenal relationships that have applied for any historical garden or landscape in the past, before any direct observation of the phenomenal evidence was reported.

Let me insist on only three aspects of the comparative approach to a phenomenology of space as explored throughout this volume: first, the development of a specific mood, a psychological mode of perception of space, which proceeds from specific features of each cultural horizon; second, the links between social changes and changes in perception of natural phenomena; and third, the possibility of multiple levels of experience of space within a particular cultural horizon. Differences in the phenomenal perception of nature are illustrated in many ways in this book. Marietta Pallis's mode of engagement with nature in the fens provides one example, and the demonstration of the specificity of the aesthetics at play in the discovery of the Braj landscape by Behula Shah another. Shah's detailed study of the ritualized cultivation of aesthetic emotions in the celebrations of Krishna's encounters with the cowherds of Braj shows how this aesthetic appreciation is a condition of existence of the landscape itself. In fact, each chapter of this book presents at least one specific phenomenology of perception, and several even deal with changing phenomenologies. This leads to the second aspect.

⁹ This point has been repeatedly raised by Stanislaus Fung in his studies of Chinese gardens. See Stanislaus Fung, "Longing and Belonging in Chinese Garden History," in *Perspectives on Garden Histories*, ed. Michel Conan, *Dumbarton Oaks Colloquium on the History of Landscape Architecture XXI* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1999), 205-20.

Price, in particular, shows how important changes in the relationships that the Maroons entertained with other people in Suriname have led them to explore different territories and reshuffle their understanding of and engagement with the land, the products of the land, the rivers, and the seas. In a completely different context, Stanley-Baker explains how political changes have contributed to changes in aristocratic garden rituals, which did not seem to modify the phenomenal perception of the garden world from the time of Fujiwara Michinaga to that of Saionji Kitsune, but did introduce major changes with the coming to power of Ashikaga Yoshimitsu and the rise of Zen Buddhism among the aristocrats. More examples could be drawn from the presentations, but instead we shall turn to the third point.

Bernal-García shows some differences in the response to the same place, the hill at Zacatepec, by participants from Tenochtitlan, Huexotzinco, and Tlaxcala in rituals in the month of Quecholli. Similar remarks have been made by several authors, but the most striking discussion is proposed by Galletti regarding variations in the forms of engagement with the landscape at Cetinale that called attention to a continuum of devotional attitudes in the same space.

Of course, insistence on cultural differences in the orientation of vernacular users of these gardens or landscapes to the phenomenal world does not imply that we should disregard any attention to the physical world to which they turned. Yet only Stanley-Baker, in his study of Japanese gardens, and Galletti and Matless, in theirs of European gardens, have found formal refinements in the gardens' design significant for the study of ritual practices in gardens or landscapes. Every single example of a garden or landscape used for sacred ritual purposes testifies, however, to the existence of human intervention in creating enclosures, selecting plants, or introducing specific cues such as the cliffs in the desert garden in Tenochtitlan, and yet it must be clear that few of them seemed to qualify for a study of garden art. Therefore, we should see questions of forms as significant in a variety of ways that may be linked to the development of a garden or landscape art form but need not be.

The different chapters demonstrate the existence of several types of attitudes in the transformation of the natural world: selection of natural forms, horticultural improvement of places, imitation of nature and in particular miniaturization, imposition of abstract forms upon the land, and projection of the metaphysical world upon the physical ground, in particular in Mexico and Braj. This may seem obvious since we are dealing with artfully contrived places in nature, and yet the study of gardens and landscapes in Mexico and Braj calls attention to a formal concern that does not exist, as far as I know, in Western garden art. In Tenochtitlan, as well as in the Chicoloapam region of Mexico, the landscape was organized as a way of rendering manifest some formal properties of the divine world, eventually with some inversions of direction. Landscaping in the Braj evinces an even more surprising attitude: the imposition of an invisible regularity onto the landscape inspired by the figure of the mandala, which asserts its presence beyond its invisibility and allows it to be touched at four points in the real world. Here again, the practice of the landscape rather than its visual inspection, or its apparent design on the ground, leads to an awareness of its form.

Thus, these ritual uses of gardens and landscape spaces, differentiated from not only a physical but, more important, a phenomenal and an ontological point of view, allow participants to engage in processes that contribute to social or cultural change. These are but preliminary steps in the study of the social and cultural consequences of garden and landscape uses. Yet, we can already see that very specific forms of engagement, usually over a limited time, may have important consequences well beyond the pale of the gardens. They may rekindle important metaphysical ideas, stimulate a renewed sense of community, enable people to maintain a sense of identity through a diaspora, or open the way to new political actions. But they are also open to outside changes, either economic, political, or cultural, that may deflect their impact or enhance it. Last, we see how their efficacy can be threatened by the dialectic of consumption and religious practice that accompanies the dramatization and growing attendance of large, festive, sacred rituals. All of these questions that underlie different chapters of this book certainly call for more historical research.