Working with stories

Kolding 10.-11.11

Karin Esmann Knudsen

How do gardens tell stories

2

Gardens can be read as narratives, with different points of view and with tropes and figures. This presentation will show how different gardens from Denmark, England, Italy, France and Germany can be divided in different *categories*, after their way of telling stories and using figurative language. As a concrete example I will focus on the narrative of one of the earliest landscape gardens in Denmark, called Sanderumgaards Have, the garden of Sanderumgaard, near Odense. The garden is created 1793 according to nature's own principles, constructed with organic lines, clumps of trees, streaming water, silent lakes and furniture as so called 'follies', that is pavillions, temples, bridges and memorial stones. This type of garden is in opposition to the French formal garden with its straight lines and topiary where nature is completely controlled by man. In the garden of Sanderumgaard Johan Bülow (1751-1828) found a satisfying new life after he had been fired from the Danish court where he during many years had had great influence. We do not know exactly why, but many historians agree that the firing was an injustice to Bülow. In the private life he had married Else Marie Hoppe (1768-1834) few years earlier, and the garden is among other purposes produced as a tribute to her and their marriage, In a wider perspective it can be regarded as a retreat where Bülow could enjoy nature and art and invite friends. Since the middle of the nineteenth century Sanderumgaard has belonged to the family Vind. From 2008-2010 the garden has been renovated by the present owners Erik and Susanne Vind thanks to money from the Realdania Foundation.

3

Then: What is a garden? In the book *Greater Perfections*, John Dixon Hunt focuses on gardens as a third nature. This notion goes back to the Italian renaissance. Jacopo Bonfadio writes in a letter to a fellow humanist in 1541: "Per li giardini... la industria de' paisani ha fatto tanto, che la natura incorporata con l'arte è fatta artefice, e connaturale de l'arte, e d'amendue è fatta una terza natura, a cui non saprei dar nome" (Jacopo Bonfadio in La Villa, Milano 1559) – in English translation: *For in the gardens... the industry of the local people has been such that nature incorporated with art is made an artificer and naturally equal with art, and from them both*

together is made at third nature, which I would not know how to name. (Hunt 2000, s. 33)

4

The term *First nature* goes back to Cicero, and it means both the raw materials of human industry and the territory of the gods. We may call it wilderness - *The second nature* (he calls it *alteram naturam*) is the cultural landscape. Cicero writes: We sow corn, we plant trees, we fertilize the soil by irrigation, we dam the rivers and direct them where we want." –We talk about gardens as a *The third nature* (according to Italian humanists, for instance Bonfadio) in the sense that gardens are a special combination of nature and culture. Gardens are more sophisticated, more deliberate, more complex in the mixture of culture and nature than agricultural land (John Dixon Hunt: *Greater Perfections*, p. 33). That is to say: gardens, even those gardens where the ideal *is* wilderness, are created by man.

5

In this special combination of nature and culture we find two so-called Ur-gardens. Each of them represents an idea of what gives pleasure. The first ur-garden is a model of an orderly paradise.

The examples I have chosen is the Italian renaissance garden at Villa Lante, Bagnaio, and the cloister garden in the church Santa Maria Nouvella, Firenze. This type of garden is protected behind walls, and in the center is a water source, maybe a well, from which channels carrying the water go north, east, south, and west, dividing the garden into quarters. These quarters can be divided again, once more and so on. This model goes back to the four rivers of paradise, described in Genesis: "A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers" (Genesis, English version 2007).

6

The second type of the two ur-gardens lets the surrounding nature in. I have chosen one of the most characteristic English landscape gardens, Rousham with a view to the so-called *Eye Catcher*. The Eye Catcher is a false ruin, a construction placed several kilometers away. The point is that it is part of the panorama from the garden. It is outside the garden, but at the same time it is an important element of the garden. The architect behind this design was William Kent (1685 - 1748), one of the first to introduce the landscape garden. He had a background as a theater painter. Horace Walpole (1717 - 97), the great chronicler of English landscape gardening said about him that he 'leaped the fence and saw that all nature was a garden' (1771-80), in Hunt and Willis: *The Genius of the Place* 2000, s. 313). But even if nature is the ideal in this type of garden, the example shows that it is artificial, it is formed by man.

The illusion of the natural garden: you see the Eye Catcher on close hand, from the back. The construction is obvious.

8

Now I'll turn to the narrative and rhetorical per'spective of gardens. According to *The Poetics of gardens* by the architects Charles W. Moore, William J. Mitchell and William Turnbull (1997), gardens can be divided into four categories: *Settings* are gardens where the relationship of the elements in the garden is so clear that you can talk about one idea of the garden. In this way it is related to metaphor in literature. In *The Poetics of Gardens* they put it like this: 'the rest of the world is illuminated to us' (p.49). *Collections* are gardens where fragments and elements from different realms are put together. These fragments evoke their origins, and in that way these gardens can be seen as metonymies. *Pilgrimages* are gardens that tell a story, unfold like a narrative as we move through them. And the last category they call *patterns*, they are laid out in geometric shapes, perhaps in repetitive rhythm or in symmetry about a center or an axis. Of course those categories can overlap each other, they are not exclusive.

9

As an example of a *setting* we can take the garden in Lago Maggiore: Isola Bella from the 17th century. It is a renaissance garden which makes a vision of a magic beflowered galleon in the middle of the lake, a fairy tale where every element points to beauty and pleasure.

10

Villa Adriana in Tivoli near Rome indeed is a *collection*. The emperor Hadrian (emperor 117-138) has filled an enormous area with souvenirs from his empire, a memory of his travels. You can say that the villa mirrors Hadrian's conception of the Empire, seen as a plurality of cultures, each with its own unique identity, for instance the *Canopus* that evokes a sense of the canal that united Alexandria and the city of Canopus on the Nile delta.

11

A *pilgrimage* garden has the space, but its designer must add the time dimension by establishing a sequence movement through it. As an example of a *pilgrimage* you can take the English landscape garden: Stourhead, designed by its owner Henry Hoare (1705-85) who has placed it around a lake with references to the journey of Aeneas from the ancient work of Vergil. Around the lake are classical buildings, temples, but there are also references to the national past, for example a gothic house and king

Alfred's tower, so that the pilgrimage can be interpreted into the politics of the Whiggish owner. The garden tells a story of democracy, in opposition to the garden at Versailles where every element points at the absolute power of the sun king. The classical temples refer to the antique world as the first democracy. The narrative of course was more well known to Hoare's classically educated contemporaries than to most of us.

12

"All gardening is landscape painting" Alexander Pope (1688-1744) suggested. He is one of the famous contemporary garden theorists. Stourhead is inspired by a painting of Claude Lorrain from the 17th century, "Coast view of Delos With Aeneas" (1671-72). Claude Lorrain made a series of six paintings illustrating episodes from the Aeneid. The composition in Claude's paintings was mirrored in many English landscape gardens.

13

The garden at the castle of *Frederiksborg* (Frederiksborg have) in Denmark is an example of the type of gardens called *patterns*. The model is the foursquare garden pattern that has the possibility of innumerable variations. You find this prototype in all renaissance and baroque gardens, and also in the Islamic paradise gardens. It refers to order, paradise order, and also the order of the absolute monarch. In the garden of Frederiksborg which was restored some years ago the four squares consist of four monograms: of Christian 6th, Frederic 4th, Frederic 5th and the present Margrethe 2th.

14

Another type of patterns is used in the moderne Parc de la Villette in Paris. The follies/pavillions of the garden is laid of in a totally regular 'grid-net' as you see in this plan.

15

Now I'll turn to the garden of Sanderumgaard, a Danish landscape garden. As you see it is based upon nature's own principles, and thus it is cathegorized as the second of the two ur-gardens. Here Johan Bülow has created a perfection of the landscape that was at hand at the end of the 18th century when he bought Sanderumgaard, in order to make a place full of beauty, pleasure and spirit, far away from the Danish court. This is one of the few landscape gardens in Denmark that is created from the ground and not upon an existing formal garden. The architect was Johan Bülow itself. The challenge was to make a garden out of the very marshy and swampy aerea. He drained it and made gentle rivers and lakes with bridges and boats, he planted trees and flowers, and he added 'furniture', that is different buildings. The paths and

streams shape organic lines, and you can walk or sail by boat from place to place and enjoy the different views in the garden. The garden can be compared with the famous German garden, Wörlitzer Park, created in the same period, in the regency of Duke Leopold III of Dessau-Anhalt. Wörlitzer Park too is situated in a flat area with the river Elben running through.

This is a prospect made by the Danish artist C.W.Eckersberg 1783-1853, and you see the main building in the back ground and a worker – maybe Bülow himself – in the foreground, lawns, clumps of trees, a lake with an urn – Bülow lost his young daughter, six years old in the year 1793 (check). So the garden also contains sadness and melancholy.

16

Bülow was inspired of the German garden theorist, Christian Cay Lorenz Hirschfeld, professor at the University of Kiel. It was Hirschfeld who made the English landscape garden well known in Denmark.

His famous work was Theorie der Gartenkunst where he writes in the Preface: Die Natur liefert den GartenKünstler den Platz, auf welchem er bauet; Zwischen den bepflanzten und offenen Theilen müssen Wege seyn, die nach allen Scenen des Gartenplatzes zuführen. That is: *The garden must be built on the existing conditions of nature. Between the different places in the garden must be paths who lead to all scenes of the garden.*

17

We know that Bülow had read an important English work of gardening too. That is Horace Walpole: *The History of the Modern Taste in Gardening* (1771-80). Walpole writes: "But of all the beauties he [William Kent] added to the face of this beautiful country, none surpassed his management of water. Adieu to canals, circular basons, and cascades tumbling down marble steps, that last absurd magnificence of Italian and French villas. The forced elevation of cataracts was no more. The gentle stream was taught to serpentize seemingly at its pleasure, and where discontinued by different levels, its course appeared to be concealed by thickets properly interspersed, and glittered again at a distance where it preserved their waving irregularity. (fra Hunt: The Genius of the Place 2000, s. 314)

18

The ideals of the landscape garden are also expressed of Alexander Pope in *An Epistle to Lord Burlington*.

To build, to plant, whatever you intend,

To rear the Column, or the Arch to bend,

To swell the Terras, or to sink the Grot;

In all, let Nature never be forgot.

Consult the Genius of the Place in all,

That tells the Waters or to rise, or fall,

Or helps th'ambitious Hill the heav'ns to scale,

Or scoops in circling Theatres the Vale,

Calls in the country, catches opening Glades,

Joins willing Woods, and varies Shades from Shades,

Now breaks, or now directs, th'intending Lines;

Paints as you plant, and as you work, Designs.

Begin with Sense, of ev'ry Art the Soul,

Parts answ'ring Parts, shall slide into a Whole,

Spontaneous Beauties all around advance,

Start, ev'n from Difficulty, strike, from Chance;

Nature shall join you; Time shall make it grow

A Work to wonder at – perhaps at Stow.

From Alexander Pope: An Epistle to Lord Burlington (1731)

The key words are marked with red: Let Nature never be forgot, The Genius of the place and Parts answ'ring parts, shall slide into a Whole.

Let Nature never be forgot, the Genius of the Place – that means: use what is at hand but develop it into greater perfection. As we have seen, the landscape garden is not 'natural,' it is created by man according to the idea of nature. It has gone through a process with certain aesthetic ideals. Parts answ'ring Parts shall slide into a whole – that sentence refers to the storytelling, the narrative of the garden.

The garden of Sanderumgaard is a very well documented garden in paintings, drawings, literature and Bülows own precise descriptions day by dag. So although the garden has grown up, and many of the elements have gone, we can get an impression of the original idea of the garden. Of course that was a great help at the restauration of the garden.

20

The garden is built upon two principles. According to Popes demand of following the Genius of the Place the water is very important. So the garden consists of Water and bridges. "The gentle stream was taught to serpentize seemingly at its pleasure", Walpole had written, and so it did in Bülows garden.

21

According to Hirschfeld as well as Pope, 'parts answered parts' along the paths and along the stream. This is the other principle. The elements of the garden were first and foremost the simple cottages. There were 13 in all when the garden was finished. Only two of them still exist, other two have been rebuilt under the restauration.

22

But it was exactly according to Bülows idea that the elements would disappear. They were made of organic material, they were part of the nature – as the bower or arbour on this prospect of Eckersberg – a kind of memento mori: everything comes to an end.

23

There is a connection between the ideal of beauty formulated by William Hogarth in *The Analysis of Beauty* (1753) and the English landscape Garden. You can see Hogarths *line of beauty* it in the old plan that shows the reorganizing 1798-1804 of the park around *Frederiksberg slot* (the Castle of Frederiksberg) that altered the garden from at formal garden with straight lines and symmetry, a garden where every detail was an expression of man's control over nature. In opposition to that the new garden of Frederiksberg is constructed on basis of the organic lines, natures own lines.

24

The style is fulfilled by Lancelot Brown (1716-83), called Capability Brown, because he saw what was special in each site and formed the garden from that. You can say that he never forgot the genius of the place. Browns gardens can be named as a kind of minimalism, the very kind of nature with great lawns and clumps of trees, and with perfection of the elements, as here in Blenheim, his first work, where you can see his bridge over a sea.

25

This is the garden plan – rebuilt, but upon the existing construction. Water, trees, paths in organic lines, sceneries and views

26

This is a list of the furniture in the garden – the stars mean that the element still exists. The names: Runesten* (runic stone)

- Familiemonument* (family monument)
- Elsehøj (the hill of Else)
- Tankefuld* (Thoughtful)
- Kildehytten* (the cottage at the spring/the cottage with pure water)
- Johanneslyst (Joy of Johan(ne))
- Marieshvile* (Marie's rest)
- Fiskerhytten (the fisherman's cottage)
- Sommerlyst* (Joy of summer)
- Julies Urne (Julie's urn)
- Den norske Hytte (the Norwegian cottage)
- Mindestøtte* (memorial column)
- Sneglehøj* (the winding/spiral 'snail' hill)
- Det lille Tempel (the little temple)
- Løvhytte (bower)
- Obelisk (obelisk)
- Hjertesø* (the heart lake)

The names refer to different realms: the family (Johan and Else Marie), the pleasure and love (joy, rest, heart), simple life (fisherman) ancient world (nordic, greek, egyptian/roman, foreign countries (Norway) memento mori (thoughtful)

27

Now we'll go for a walk in the garden at Sanderumgaard. It is important to stress that there is no intention of a strict route through the garden. But if you take a walk along the paths og sail along the gentle streaming water in a boat, you are *offered* different experiences. You may ask two fundamental questions. One is concerning the narrative: Which story is told when we follow the path? The other is concerning the rhetorical: Which views and experiences are we offered and how do the different parts 'slide into a Whole'. Maybe you can say: The garden tells a story, but when you walk in the garden, *you* make the discourse. It is up to you to choose if you will go to the right or to the left. What matters are the different expressions that Bülow has created – but it is up to you to experience it. Let's have a look at these sceneries.

At the right we have *Sommerlyst* – according to a prospect by Eckersberg and a photo that shows how it is rebuilt today. It is the biggest of the pavillons in the garden, a summer house where guest could stay. It is inspired by the Italian Villa, with a classical front with columns. But at the same time it is covered with a roof of straw that makes it look like a simple and primitive cottage. Maybe the model is the primitive hut at left. It is an illustration from the theoretical work *Essai sur l'architecture* 1753 by Marc Antoine Laugier. Four trees draw a square. The trunks are the columns of a temple and the branches and the leaves refer to the temple front. It is said to be the origin of the antique temple and thus of all architecture. Many of the cottages in the garden of Sanderumgaard are built from that model. The owner were familiar with Rousseau's dictum: 'back to nature'. But some of the cottages were more primitive than others, for instance *Tankefuld* (Thoughtful) where you could retire and think of Death.

29

We'll take a look at some of the other elements. Here *Kildehytten*, also one of the primitive cottages where you can drink water – and noting else.

30

At *Marieshvile* you can retreat and enjoy the peace of nature.

31

The entrance of Marieshvile

32

You can enjoy the panorama from *Sneglebakken* og the silent water in the lake that has the form of a heart: *Hjertesøen*

33

The garden is a place of memory: Mindestøtte

34

The first cottage was *norske hytte*, an element you could find in many gardens. Denmark did not have the sublime nature, so the surroundings of the norwegian cottage should remind you of wilderness, a more dark and dangerous nature, maybe experience 'the sublime' with reference to Edmund Burke. The Norwegian cottage represents the northern parts of the country. At that time Norway was a part of Denmark. The national past is represented in *runestenen*. In the garden in England it was the gothic house that took care of that function.

Now I'll return to the four categories: Gardens as *settings*, gardens as *collections*, gardens as *pilgrimages* and gardens as *patterns*. First I'll call the garden of Sanderumgaard a *pilgrimage* – it is a narrative who tells a story. But there are several questions to ask

- 1) Whose story is told? It is the story of Johan Bülow and his life? But after his death the garden grew up and was not taken care of. In the restauration you can say that it also is Erik and Susanne Vind who tell a story. Is it a 18th century garden or a garden from our time.
- 2) How can you characterize the naming and the use of words? Words fix the meaning, this is a very remarkable feature in this garden with the names of the cottages and other inscription, for instance the path to Tankefuld is filled with memento mori quotations.
- 3) How does the intertextuality work? Johan Bülow's knowledge of the art of gardening, of architecture and philosophy and literature is obvious, and there are many references til other gardens of that type. But are there also references to oder gardens. For instance the memento mori is an old phenomenon. And how is the relation between the paintings, drawings and poems and the garden itself. What is text and what is context?
- 4) How/by what means is the story told? Is there a beginning, middle, and ending? You can walk around in the garden, but you have the freedom to choose your own way, so there is not a strictly defined beginning, middle and ending. In fact the garden walker becomes the narrator and gives meaning til the garden.
- 5) So who is the narrator? Nature itself sets it marks on the garden the plants grow, the storms destroy, plants die and so on. And the experience depends on the viewers knowledge of what is meant.

In fact much of the meaning has become dead metaphors. A great number of parks are designed after the model of the landscape garden, and you can say that it has been naturalized. But the modern people and the people from the 18th century share the experience of retreat and relax, I guess.

36

I'll also call the garden of Sanderumgaard as a *collection*: Johan Bülow was a collector (of books, of coins, of art, of prehistoric find). But also the garden itself is indeed *the owners place* – a place where he represents himself: I'm rich, I'm cultural, I'm modern, I'm a loving husband - In our walk through the garden we have seen how 'Parts have been answ'ring parts' – and has opened to different realms, different worlds, Geographic (from Norway to Greek and Egypt), Social (from elegant upper

class to the dream of a primitive and simple life), Cultural (with reference to the ancient and national past)

37

But most of all I'll call the garden of Sanderumgaard a *setting*. It is a metaphorical garden – and its meaning points in three directions: *First* the garden is a metaphor for nature itself. *Second* the garden is a metaphor for the modern, enlightened man. And *Third* the garden is a metaphor for the modern way of life: a retreat in privacy.

38

Bülow's spade

Maybe we can add: And *Fourth:* the garden is a metaphor for freemason ideas. We know that Bülow was a member of the Freemasons Organization, and you can find symbols that may have its origins in this movement, for instance the thought of Death and Rebirth. Bülow's spade is another symbol of the freemason movement. This spade he always brought with him and it was laid upon his coffin when he had died. The problem is that if you read the garden as a freemason garden it becomes very specific and special – and cuts off perspectives of common interest.

How do gardens tell stories?

Marts 2011
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Gardens tell stories

- Gardens can be read as a text with a certain narrative, with different points of view and with tropes and figures.
- The two 'ur-gardens'
- The four categories of gardens
- A Danish example: Sanderumgaards Have, near Odense, created by Johan Bülow 1793 and restaurated by Erik and Susanne Vind 2008-2010

Gardens as 'third nature'

- Per li giardini... la industria de' paisani ha fatto tanto, che la natura incorporata con l'arte è fatta artefice, e connaturale de l'arte, e d'amendue è fatta una terza natura, a cui non saprei dar nome (Jacopo Bonfadio 1541)
- (For in the gardens... the industry of the local people has been such that nature incorporated with art is made an artificer and naturally equal with art, and from them both together is made at third nature, which I would not know how to name.)

The two natures – according to Cicero

- The first nature: the raw materials of human industry and the territory of the gods
- The second nature (alteram naturam): the cultural landscape
- The third nature (according to Italian humanists): gardens are a special combination of nature and culture

John Dixon Hunt: Greater Perfections

The two ur-gardens Enclosed behind walls





The two ur-gardens To let nature in





The Illusion of the natural garden



Four categories of gardens

- Settings (metaphor)
- Collections (metonymy)
- Pilgrimages (narrative)
- Patterns (geometrical shape)

Moore, Michell and Turnbull: *The Poetics of gardens* 1997

Settings Isola Bella



Collections Villa Adriana



Pilgrimages Stourhead





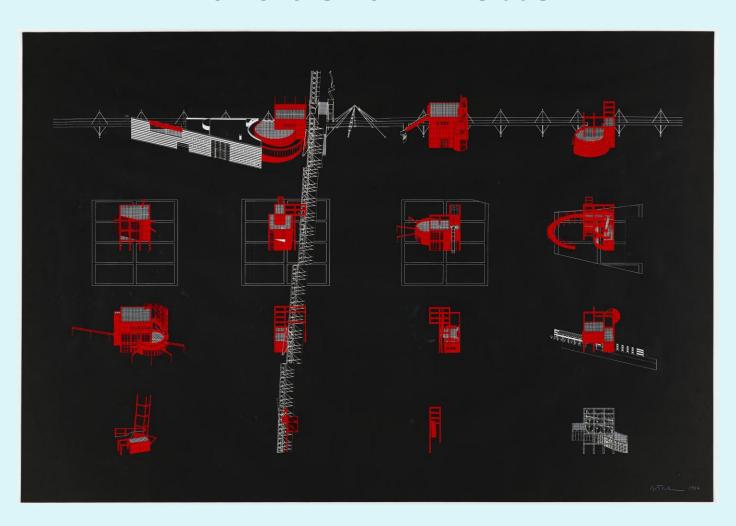
Claude Lorrain: Coast view of Delos With Aeneas 1671-72



Patterns Frederiksborg slotshave



Patterns Parc de la Villette



Sanderumgaards Have Johan Bülow 1793



C.C.L.Hirschfeld: *Theorie der Gartenkunst* 1779-1785



- Die Natur liefert den GartenKünstler den Platz, auf welchem er bauet;
- Zwischen den bepflanzten und offenen Theilen müssen Wege seyn, die nach allen Scenen des Gartenplatzes zuführen

Horace Walpole: The History of the Modern Taste in Gardening (1771-80)

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The landscape garden according to Pope

- To build, to plant, whatever you intend,
- To rear the Column, or the Arch to bend,
- To swell the Terras, or to sink the Grot;
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- Consult the Genius of the Place in all,
- That tells the Waters or to rise, or fall,
- Or helps th'ambitious Hill the heav'ns to scale,
- Or scoops in circling Theatres the Vale,
- Calls in the country, catches opening Glades,
- Joins willing Woods, and varies Shades from Shades,
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- Nature shall join you; Time shall make it grow
- A Work to wonder at perhaps at STOW.

From Alexander Pope: *An Epistle to Lord Burlington* (1731)

Documentation

- Prospects of C.W.Eckersberg (1783-1853) 1808
- Etchings of J.F.Clemens (1748-1833)
 - From his own drawings
 - From the illustrations of Johan H.T. Hancks ill. to the book of poems: Mathias Winthers Sanderumgaards Have. Digtninge (1824)
- Collected works of art in Johan Bülows Kunstbog (N.Abildgaard, Wiedewelt, Jens Juel, Pauelsen, Lund, Chodowiecki, C.D.Gebauer, Samuel Mygind)
- The diaries of Bülows 1795-1827
- Poems, letters and descriptions: Mathias Winther (1824),
 J.H.Smidt (1823), Chr. Molbech, B.S.Ingemann....

Water and bridges



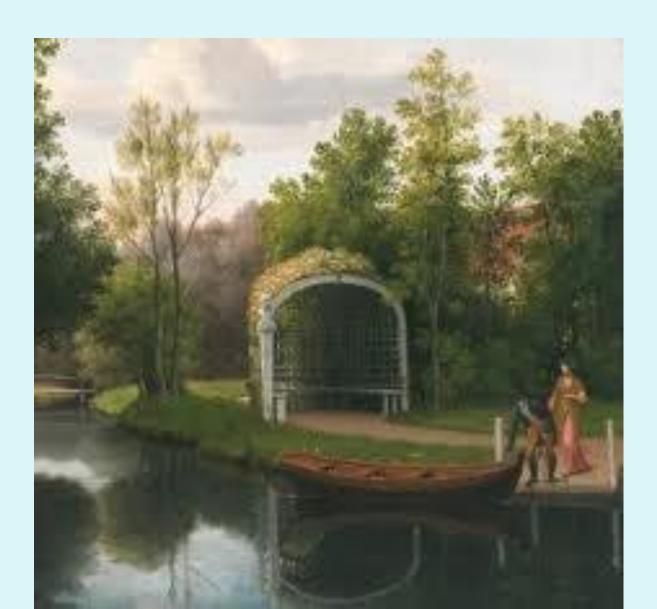


Cottages

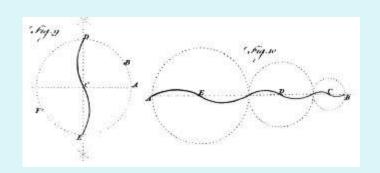


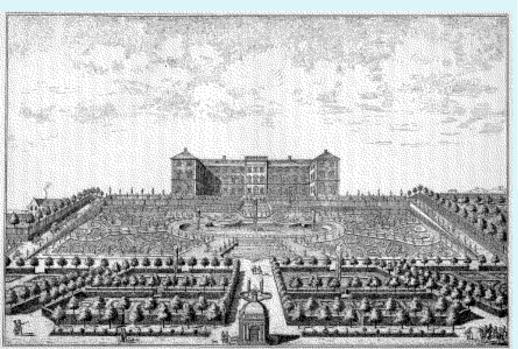


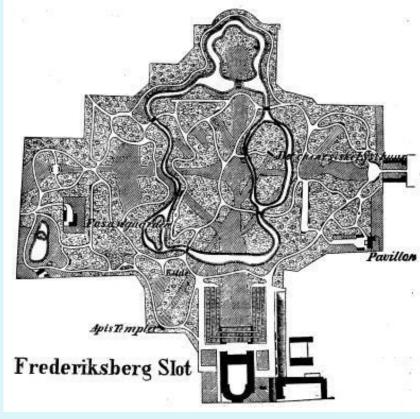
Bowers- come to an end



The *Line of Beauty* and the landscape garden











Follies

- Runesten* (runic stone)
- Familiemonument* (family monument)
- Elsehøj (the hill of Else)
- Tankefuld* (Thoughtful)
- Kildehytten* (the cottage at the spring/the cottage with pure water)
- Johanneslyst (Joy of Johan(ne))
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- Obelisk (obelisk)
- Hjertesø* (the heart lake)

Along the *Line of Beauty* in Sanderumgaards Have

- Concerning the narrative: Which story is told, when we follow the path?
- Concerning the rhetorical: Which views and experiences are we offered, and how do the different parts "slide into a Whole"?



Kildehytten (cottage at the spring) recreated





Marieshvile (Marie's rest) - recreated



The Entrance at Marieshvile

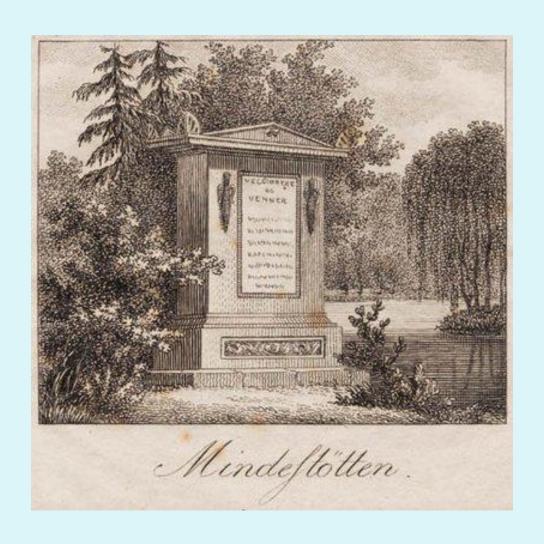


Sneglebakken (snail hill) and Hjertesøen (heart lake)



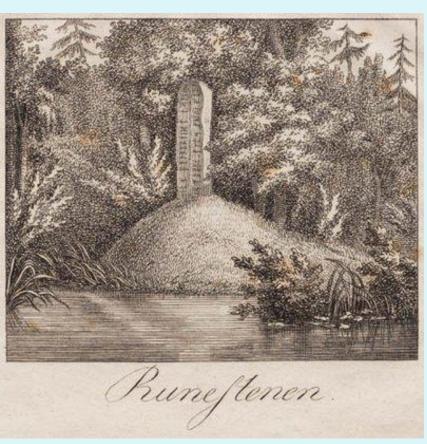


Mindestøtte (memorial column)



Den norske hytte (Norwegian cottage) and Runestenen (runic stone)





Sanderumgaard as a pilgrimage – a narrative?

- Whose story is told?
- How/by what means is the story told?
 - Naming and the use of words
 - Intertextuality
 - Beginning, middle, ending
- The viewer as the narrator?

Sanderumgaard as a collection

- The owners place a presentation: I'm rich,
 I'm cultural, I'm modern, I'm a loving husband
- Parts answ'ring parts opening to different realms, different worlds
 - Geographic
 - Social
 - Cultural

Sanderumgaard as a setting?

- The garden is a metaphor for nature itself
- The garden is a metaphor for the modern, enlightened man
- The garden is a metaphor for the modern way of life: a retreat in privacy

The end

