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Writing and landscape – setting scenes for critical reflection

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> By its means he can both reveal and conceal himself, and give form to every fancy, and reality to every mood. By its means he can exhibit the object from each point of view, and show it to us in the round/. . ./gaining in this manner all the richness and reality of effect that comes from those side issues that are suddenly suggested by the central idea in its progress, and really illumine the idea more completely . . .
>
> To arrive at what one really believes one has to speak through lips different than one's own.[1]

Reading Oscar Wilde's description of the philosophical dialogue I picture the critic as a performer dancing around on a stage addressing the object of his criticism, the work of art, through different disguises, that is, from different positions. This is the necessary process, Wilde appears to argue (speaking through the lips of his character Gilbert), it is only by performing this 'dance' around the object that one might 'arrive at what one really believes.' Whether dialogical or essayistic, critical discourse operates by the setting of scenes, that is staging arguments *around* the topic under consideration.[2] Critical writing is in effect inherently architectural, or topographical, in this respect. Whether explicitly or not the text establishes, draws, a room, or a landscape, to house objects and critical reflections. The specificity of this topography and the objects brought into it, determines the nature of its discourse.

In this article I will develop this argument by presenting my own PhD dissertation *Ramble, linger, and gaze – dialogues from the landscape garden* in which I explore the literary genre of philosophical dialogue, as a mode of representing the eighteenth century landscape garden and the theoretical discourse concerning its representation. An existing landscape garden (Hagley Park) serves in this text as the site for the encounter between two eighteenth century writers on gardening theory (Thomas Whately and Joseph Heely) and a twentieth century architect and PhD student (Katja Grillner). I will discuss the dissertation in terms of its performance as a piece of critical writing and consider it as an example of so-called research by architectural design.

Writing and landscape

> I wanted to explore the garden as it unfolded within this field of language, thought and material groundwork. A clear distinction between the arts of architecture and landscape gardening was necessary to the eighteenth century mind, in sharp contrast to the previous century with its architecturally ordered gardens. Within the landscape garden, however, the boundary was of a more transient nature. Here the building was a point, a position, on the undulating ground, and its nature was shifting depending on the way you approached. This landscape was defined by its scenes, and I by them.[3]

In *Ramble, linger and gaze – dialogues from the landscape garden* the story constructs an imaginary space of a landscape garden. It conjures up a site of

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discourse, and makes that discourse present in the here and now of my own, and of the reader's imagination. The landscape garden is established as an epistemological figure of thought. In building a fictional structure and presenting the reader with a narrative dialogue the work is unusual among PhD dissertations. The textual construction as such is however not original: neither in relation to the site, the landscape garden, nor in relation to the discursive culture of the eighteenth century. Many eighteenth century philosophers such as Shaftesbury, Berkeley, Addison, and Hume wrote their important works in the form of dialogues, dialogues that often took place in gardens.[4]

The garden has a long history as a philosophical site. Withdrawn from the world it was a site for contemplation, and its physical structure offered an order to which reflections could be attached. The notion of garden (*jardin*, *hortus*) was classically imbued with the double meaning of garden and philosophical system. A botanical garden ordered the world of plants. A philosophical garden ordered the understanding of the world. It was a symbolic manifestation of divine order.[5]

The landscape garden makes a radical break from this early-modern model. The object of understanding (the divine order) is now inseparable from the medium (landscape). *Nature* is presented as the ideal landscape itself, and aspects of *human life* are presented in the scenes of the garden: the grotto, the hermitage, the ruin, the cottage . . . There is no evident order to its structure. A wide range of subjects is proposed for the visitor's imagination: in the 'unboundable' prospect the Divine, original power of creation, is presented as a sublime force present within the world. In the dark hermitage the inner workings of the reflective mind are evoked. At Hagley's hermitage two 'perspective peeps' are the eyes of this externalised mind, allowing only a limited view of the world. At the ruin the idea of a past is evoked. The visitor imagines herself part of an historical continuity, while at the same time lamenting the absence of past life. Memory and ruins are equated. In the cottage, or at the ornamented farm, the gentleman steps out of his everyday life to experience a rural alternative.[6]

While a renaissance garden could be regarded as encyclopaedic, comparable to a cabinet of curiosities in its ambition to represent the order of the world, the landscape garden tells a different story. It never offers a view of the whole. The visitor must explore the territory and only over time a sense of wholeness is collected. One remains *within* the garden. It has no outside. In this sense the landscape garden is narrative and fictional. The philosophical system it suggests is radically different from conventional epistemological ideals.[7] Knowledge is bound to points of view. *Ramble, linger and gaze* aims at presenting, from within, this epistemological process in operation, a process where points of view intersect and evolve across real and imaginary landscapes.

I shivered. It was an efficient metaphor, but the idea of walking on a giant body . . . As the Lilliputians walked on Gulliver. Too big to ever be fully explored, a body of which our knowledge would always be limited? Even though Whately now gave a very humble impression as a theoretician, in reality, in the book, he spoke of the garden as a controllable whole. The outside was drawn into its

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appearance. The rest of the world, the parts of the body that did not appear from within the garden, they did in fact not exist. From the perspective of gardening the garden was a limited whole, but it had no exterior. The boundaries were only experiential boundaries from within. Like the hermitage, but on another scale.

– Consider for example the riding, continued Whately. Its purpose is to extend the idea of a seat. It is in fact a particularly interesting subject in modern gardening. By a cleverly arranged riding a whole country can be appropriated to the mansion.

– A less expensive amusement perhaps?

– Not always, said Whately. You have to consider that sometimes you ought to correct the façades of a village, redirect the road, add plantations and build beautiful bridges. But it is true that in this species of gardening variety and beauty are the effects rather of attention than of expense. [8]

The story

How different the ideas were that their texts formed: Whately of an inhabitable landscape, where a giant hand shaped its ground, dropped its woods, drew the outlines, and even changed the colours of the trees until it fitted the image of his ideal. Heely of a landscape that was already given as art. We understood of course that it had been manipulated too, that it had a history. But while within it, its landscape remained a fact to our experience.[9]

The account of Thomas Whately, Joseph Heely and Katja Grillner's meeting at Hagley Park is a fictional construction. It is based on textual historical sources and a visit to Hagley Park. Whately and Heely's characters are drawn from the author's interpretation of their voices in their own texts. Thomas Whately is not well known as an historical person, but his treatise on the art of landscape gardening *Observations on Modern Gardening* published in 1770, was widely read throughout Europe. It was the first comprehensive treatise written on the subject.[10] Neither was Joseph Heely particularly well known. He might have been a clergyman. His descriptions of the gardens of Hagley, Envil and the Leasowes were however very popular. They were first published anonymously in Birmingham 1775. Two years later, in 1777, Heely stepped forward as the author, and transformed the descriptions into a series of twenty letters to an imagined friend: *Letters on the Beauties of Hagley, Envil and the Leasowes.*[11] Thomas Jefferson is supposed to have used both Whately and Heely's texts as guides to his travels in England.[12]

While Whately's and Heely's roles in *Ramble, linger, and gaze* are to discuss the garden from their respective points of view, and to present the reader with probable modes of thinking landscape and representation in the eighteenth century, Grillner has a different role. She is a visitor to their world and her questions are driven by a double agenda: her desire to understand the thinking of their world and her concerns with crucial questions of her own time, remarkably present in the landscape garden. She never takes on their perspectives entirely, but interprets, intervenes, objects and suggests.

– Well, [said Whately] that is exactly my objection.

One perspective is never enough to make

the reader understand the garden. Written descriptions give a much truer illustration of the examples, a much more appropriate understanding. One image is never enough! The varied scenery of a garden is far too complex. At least I have never found such good representations that they could compete with the written word.

We looked up and rested our eyes, following the lawn down to the crimson-red bushes. It was a very soft sweep and I found it very peaceful.

– Here we have another scene, said Heely. The Alcove viewed through that natural avenue: it is the prettiest picture. This could perhaps be captured in a painting?

– Yes it is a very concentrated scene, Whately replied. It shoots through the hollow narrow valley, its steep sides crowded with trees. It is beautiful. It engages my eye. What more can you demand? Of course a skilful painter could catch the beauty of this idea. But still, in the garden, it does not stand in isolation. Two hours ago we stood there, at the alcove looking towards this rotunda. Now we are here. Between the two we have walked, contemplated a lovely grotto scene and lingered through a lovely forest. Our experience of this view does not focus only on this image that we see, in it we gather our recollections of this day, and associations to other landscapes, or ideas. It is much more complex indeed. Of course a garden can serve as a model for landscape painters, but a painting should never be studied as a model for a garden. Reality is the first school.[13]

The text is at once a dialogue on questions of representation in the landscape garden, *and* a presentation of a landscape garden as experienced by the three characters. While the narrative timeframe spans over little more than one day spent almost exclusively at Hagley, the three characters' perceptions of the garden are limited to the time of their own descriptions or experience (1770, 1777, and 1999). The narrator interferes with the dialogue in reflecting on her experience and what is being said, but remains always within the time and space of the narrative. She never indicates a far away position, for example of being home and looking back at the event. The narrator is present throughout the whole itinerary beginning at a railway platform in Birmingham and ending by the leaning obelisk above Hagley. In spite of a few references to events outside this frame, the narrative constructs essentially a 'here and now' representation of their meeting at Hagley.

The topics of the dialogues are directly linked to specific situations that are encountered at Hagley, but they also refer the reader to a discursive space where Whately's *Observations on Modern Gardening* and Heely's *Letters on the Beauties of Hagley, Envil, and the Leasowes* have the most prominent positions. Joseph Addison, Lord Kames, Edmund Burke and William Gilpin are other frequent voices on this discursive level. The continuous link between the dialogue and the garden produces a narrative movement *around* its central questions. From different angles the same question reappears. The three characters are at times self-contradictory. The questions that their dialogue involves concern the complex notions of representation, imagination, fiction and reality in the landscape garden. When these characters meet at Hagley these notions are *shown* at work, not drawn

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out of their context to be objectively examined and discursively explained.

– When you regard the buildings as objects, they are ornaments for you, aren't they? I asked Whately. Like a beautiful button or a colourful jewel on an elegant dress?

– That is not such a bad comparison, said Whately. As an architect, I suppose you consider a building in terms of a whole body. And that body is the focus of your attention. You know where it is situated, its closest neighbours and so on, but the building is the body around which the whole world moves.

– That isn't necessarily true of the way architecture works today, I said. But I understand what you mean. From a traditional architectural point of view the building might be considered a limited whole resting on its own merits.

– Yes. But in the garden it must be different. We just own a beautiful spot on the body of nature. This we dress and embellish to its greatest advantage. The rest we cannot control. We adapt to the surroundings, sometimes by simply screening it off.[14]

The actual encounter between Grillner, Whately and Heely, at Hagley, is contained only within the story itself. As the landscape garden itself, this story resists objective representations. There is no short cut or quick review to be made. It is what it is. A story to be read. Yet, its stubborn 'silence' is challenged again and again (as for example in this article and in the many presentations I have myself made of it). It is a potential conflict built into the dissertation itself. The story is surrounded with layer after layer of additional discourses. In the two hundred and twenty six page long account, there are no less than three hundred and twenty three footnotes. They offer the reader an immediate way out of the garden, a recourse to a seemingly factual space, providing the 'scholar's' perspective. Then it is followed by a postscript, reviewing the story in terms of both form and content, complementing the historical analysis and its philosophical discourse. Next, a bibliographical essay providing the reader with an overview of the sources considered in the research leading up to the dissertation, and finally a complete bibliography. The academic context provoked me to operate with layering different discursive spaces in order to allow complementary stories to be told and yet to keep them quite firmly apart.

Dialogue

– Well, that is a manner of speaking, I said. Have you ever seen a scientist pursuing such a friendly conversation with nature? Nature is always conceived as a source, not as a counterpart to open a dialogue with. She is literally waiting passively to be discovered and dressed by you, or meticulously organised by the scientist. Perhaps we could put that question aside, and stop thinking of nature in terms of a *being*, whether feminine or masculine, which we desire to explore, and also drop the idea of a divine counterpart to ourselves, anchored in the other world. Wouldn't you then recognise landscape as a ground upon which humans, men and women, different and alike, meet and discover each other?

– It seems a beautiful idea, said Heely, but I'm not sure that I understand where you are heading.

> I do believe that we actually think of the garden in those terms that you suggest. Are we not, in fact, doing exactly what you say here today? We have plenty of time to continue practising that idea.[15]

The dialogical mode of writing widens the discursive possibilities of a text. By creating a polyvocal discourse, concepts and phenomena can be approached from different angles as it were simultaneously. A common understanding of a philosophical dialogue involves at least *two* characters. One of them can often be easily identified as the author's voice, and the other as a representative of the idea the dialogue is designed to overthrow. In the Socratic dialogues Socrates plays the game of being ignorant, and poses supposedly innocent questions. He nevertheless compares himself to a midwife delivering truth from his disciples. Ideally, and according to Platonic philosophy, there exists a truth to unravel, and in these dialogues a guide takes the reader through this process.[16]

In his book *Philosophical dialogue in the British Enlightenment* Michael Prince identifies a crisis that appears for the classical (what he calls the metaphysical) dialogue in the eighteenth century. In its most simplistic forms it had been a very convenient mode of presenting religious, and religiously based philosophical arguments. But with the increasing scepticism about a priori suppositions, the path towards truth could no longer be outlined by one authoritarian character.[17] Prince describes an alternative understanding of a concept of dialogue which opens up possibilities for representing a multiperspectival world, as it appeared during the eighteenth century, and continues to characterise our own time. If etymologically examined, the concept of dialogue proves to be much richer than the initial understanding indicates. While *dia-* is commonly interpreted as meaning *two*, its Greek meaning was rather *through* or *across*, but even *apart. Logos* we understand as body of learning, or discourse, its related word *legein*, meant, to say, choose or to gather. This leaves room for a number of evocative interpretations of what a *dialogue* could be.[18]

Michael Prince discusses two modes in which dialogue has been understood through history: 1) The metaphysical dialogue, referred to above, emphasises *logos*, which for a moment is divided into two or more voices, in order to make a unified truth comprehensible. Here dialogue makes a dialectic movement, in providing different perspectives with *synthesis* as its final goal. 2) The antimetaphysical dialogue emphasises the prefix *dia-* in its meaning of transition or passage thereby focusing on the activity being pursued, a movement *across* logos. Truth is here only perceived in perspective, and the offered perspectives can be compared. This type of dialogue lacks overarching perspective.[19]

None of the three characters of *Ramble, linger, and gaze* aspires to the Socratian role of guiding the others and the reader towards an absolute truth hidden within the landscape garden. As we have seen they even contradict themselves at times. Within the given structure the narrator could have taken on this role. She could have used the form to present the contemporary reader either with a firm, historical interpretation of the eighteenth century landscape garden; or perhaps with an alternative theory of landscape gardening, refuting the merits

of Whately and Heely. But she does not seem to be interested in intellectual take-over. Rather she is critically curious. She wants herself and the reader she addresses, to see, not only through her, but through their eyes too. To present in one narrative a multiple perspective, which has its evident parallel in the landscape garden itself.

Prince argues that it is possible to consider the emergence of the philosophical novel as a response to the crisis of the metaphysical dialogue. It introduces character, plot and circumstance; and erodes the idea of disembodied philosophical argumentation.[20] While expanding the notion of a philosophical dialogue this far away from the literal encounter of two or more voices on paper might considerably weaken its usefulness as a critical concept, it serves to shed light on the interrelations between different forms of critical writing. Essays, dialogues and other forms of story-telling, may all, through character, plot and circumstance, draw topographies and situations in which to make and withdraw claims, to argue and propose, to examine and to play. A space of writing is constructed that belongs as much to academia as to the rest of the reading world.

The setting of scenes – site construction

I tried to understand these two levels of experience – the object-mode and the character-mode. I saw the object-reality before my eyes as a silent film – pure visuality. The camera lens moving around, zooming in and out, without any physical sensation at all. An abstract world. Switching into character-mode I felt my cold feet, remembered sinking into the green, velvet couch in the prospect-room, the warming rays of the afternoon sun, I heard the blackbirds sing and smelled the green grass. I really was here. I thought back at our conversation by the rotunda. Whately's stubborn refusal to accept engraved perspectives to illustrate his treatise. It was already illustrated, he claimed; 'by descriptions'. Now it became clearer to me what dimension he was afraid of losing. The 'ideal presence' that Lord Kames saw best represented through words or drama, depended on the expression of time and experience. This also constituted the experience of character: the transition from merely contemplating the beautiful rotunda from afar, to enter with all your senses and your understanding into its philosophical mode of life.

– When you regard the buildings as objects, they are ornaments for you, aren't they? I asked Whately. Like a beautiful button or a colourful jewel on an elegant dress?[21]

Research by Architectural Design is the term employed at The Bartlett School of Architecture for the practice-based research pursued within the MPhil/PhD programme in architectural design directed by Jonathan Hill. Research by architectural design differs from other fields of architectural research in its focus on the architectural design project as the site where critical issues are explored and developed and as, in itself, a vehicle for research. But what is an 'architectural design project'? How wide are our views of what manifestations might hide under such a label? As the phenomena of practice-based research in architecture develop further I think we shall see as many varieties of responses to that question as we have already seen in more scientifically or scholarly based kinds of architectural research.[22]

But what are the objectives of developing research by architectural design? Jonathan Hill emphasises the importance of the academic site offering architects a space (at a critical distance from practice) to speculate *as* designers.[23] In academia a critical discourse may develop that does not aim to feed back into practice directly. Rather it makes a detour in offering, as research results, texts and works that stir and disturb our habitual ways of thinking architecture, and thus finds its way back to practice obliquely. There are important differences between this acknowledgement of academia as offering a critical space for architectural design, and the desire to position research within design practices outside of academia. While there are interesting potentials in both strategies they answer to quite different demands. As 'design-based research' intertwines with 'research-based design' difficulties arise in relation both to the integrity of the research team, and its willingness openly to share and discuss its research results.[24]

Might an 'architectural design project' be pursued through writing exclusively? As well as drawings, images, films or models, the text serving to establish a fictional site, a 'project', in which scenes of, or points for, critical reflection may be tested out and specified? Exploring and experimenting with modes of writing is probably one of the most crucial ingredients in the development of research by design. In any PhD developed through a design project, tools through which to develop critical counterpoints to your own work are essential. You have to find the means of getting out of the universe of your own project. Developing a sensitivity and control over language helps to jump between positions, to take on the role of the critic. This is also an essential requirement for academic *research* projects in contrast to other art, architecture, or design projects: a research project *must*, in some way, open up for discursive encounters. By developing a critical perspective on her or his work, the author/architect behind a project invites others to participate, not in awe, but in critical discussion.

They went their way, and I mine. I found a taxi taking me back to the hotel. Further down the road was a cemetery I hadn't noticed in the morning. The next day I returned. I walked up the Witchberry hill to see the great obelisk, yesterday's most important eye-catcher. On coming closer I saw it was leaning. The red-grey granite stones were threatening to fall down. A sign proclaimed danger. I couldn't come closer. When I looked back towards Hagley Hall I saw everything. The ruin, the house, the church. I traced yesterday's path through the groves and over the meadows. Behind the firs I finally discovered the Grecian temple, built by James 'the Athenian' Stuart like a smaller copy of an authentic temple. In terms of architectural history it was the most significant building at Hagley. But costly to keep. The secretary told me it had been recently restored with the help of state funding. Now its interior was covered with graffiti. In the ceiling the plaster was falling down, sooty from the flames of an inexplicable fire. To prevent further mishap, it was protected with a barbed wire fence. A war-zone.

– I do hope, said the secretary, that the barbed-wire doesn't show on your photos. It looks very depressing!

– It can always be fixed, I replied.

She desired a different appearance. One that did not so bluntly point towards its present-day social reality, but preserved the ideal of the past. My impulse was to object: why hide the impact of social change? On the other hand, why not? The landscape garden had never been concerned with honesty in this very sense. Appearances, carefully selected appearances, were in focus. This one was not selected. It was just a 'natural' melancholy scene.[25]

Notes

1. Oscar Wilde, *The critic as artist* (Green Integer, København 1997), pp. 121–122. This dialogue has a rather classical structure: Gilbert appears to be Wilde's alter ego, and Ernest as the character to be persuaded.
2. An excellent example is Virginia Woolf's essays where she pulls the reader into different scenes and situations to consider the problem at hand. Read for example in *Three Guineas* her criticism of the professions in which a 'conspiracy of silence' rules. She takes the reader to a bridge over the Thames: 'It is a place to stand on by the hour, dreaming. But not now. Now we are pressed for time. Now we are here to consider facts; now we must fix our eyes upon the procession – the procession of the sons of educated men. There they go, our brothers /.../ most of them kept in step, walked according to the rule, and by hook or by crook made enough to keep the family house /.../ We are here, on the bridge, to ask certain questions. And they are very important questions /.../ we have to ask ourselves, here and now, do we wish to join that procession or don't we?/.../ But you are busy; let us return to facts. Come indoors then, and open the books on your library shelves.' [Virginia Woolf *A Room of One's Own/Three Guineas* (Penguin 1993), pp. 183–187.]
3. Katja Grillner, *Ramble, linger, and gaze – Dialogues from the landscape garden* (PhD dissertation, KTH, 2000), p. 12.
4. More recent examples of literary experimentation in the field of architectural theory and history are Alberto Pérez-Gómez's rewriting of *Hypnerotomachia Poliphilii* (*Polyphilo or the Dark Forest Revisited)* (MIT Press, 1992), and Denise and Jean-Pierre le Dantec's *Reading the French Garden: Story and History* (MIT Press, 1993); and Tom Stoppard's theatre-play *Arcadia* has been read by garden and literature scholars as a source of garden historical speculation (John Dixon Hunt '"A break-through in dahlia studies" on *Arcadia* by Tom Stoppard' in *Landscape Journal*, Vol. 15, No. 1, Spring 1996, pp. 58–64; and Anja Müller-Muth 'Re-presenting representations: the landscape as a sight/site of difference in Tom Stoppard's *Arcadia*', in *Word & Image*, Vol. 15, No. 1, 1999, pp. 97–106.
5. In my M.Arch thesis, *Automata, Perspective and Music: Poetic Instruments in the written garden of Salomon de Caus*, I analysed the Palatinate gardens at Heidelberg from this perspective (pp. 107–123). For further reference see my articles: 'Theory and Practice of Artistic Creation in the Early 17th Century: The Poetic Model of Salomon de Caus', in *EAAE Conference Proceedings 1996*, and 'To See the World as a Limited Whole: Human and Divine Perspectives on the Works of Salomon de Caus,' in *Chora*, No. 3 (McGill, Queens University Press, 1998).
6. This shift from a transcendental idea of meaning, to one that finds meaning in the process of human life itself, recalls the paradigmatic leap made by Ludwig Wittgenstein from the logical positivism of *Tractatus* to his *Philosophical Investigations*. In the latter he writes: 'Every sign *by itself* seems dead. *What* gives it life? – In use it is alive. Is life breathed into it there? – Or is the *use* its life?' (P. 128e, §432.)
7. Michel Baridon discusses the interesting relationship between the landscape garden and eighteenth century epistemology in 'The Gothic Revival and the Theory of Knowledge' in eds , Valeria Tinkler-Villani and Peter

Davidson, *Exhibited by Candlelight* (Editions Rodopi, Amsterdam 1995), pp. 43–56.

8. Grillner, *Ramble, linger, and gaze*, p. 153.
9. Grillner, *Ramble, linger, and gaze*, p. 88.
10. Thomas Whately, *Observations on Modern Gardening* (Dublin, London 1770). He is listed as the author of three books on quite different subjects: in addition to *Observations*, he also wrote *Considerations on the Trade of this Kingdom* (London 1766); and *Remarks on some of the Characters of Shakespere*, which was published posthumously by a Joseph Whately in 1785. Though frequently referred to in garden historical studies, no comprehensive critical study of Thomas Whately, and his writings, has yet been published.
11. Joseph Heely, *Descriptions of Hagley, Envil and the Leasowes* (Birmingham, 1775); and *Letters on the Beauties of Hagley, Envil and the Leasowes* (London 1777).
12. John Dixon Hunt in the preface to the Garland Publishing facsimile edition of Joesph Heely's *Letters on the Beauties of Hagley, Envil, and the Leasowes* (New York, London 1982).
13. Grillner, *Ramble, linger, and gaze*, pp. 82–3. Whately's objection to engravings is recounted by the French translator (F. de P. Latapie) of *Observations on Modern Gardening* in his introduction to the French edition.
14. Grillner, *Ramble, linger, and gaze*, p. 152.
15. Grillner, *Ramble, linger, and gaze*, p. 49.
16. There are of course many different and conflicting interpretations of Plato's Socratic dialogues. With some reservations, the Swedish philosopher Bengt Molander presents the Socratic dialogue as a model for 'genuine communication', and he interprets its relative openendedness as an acknowledgement of the impossibility to come to finite conclusions, leaving the reader with a possibility to continue the learning process on her own (Bengt Molander *Kunskap i handling*, Daidalos, 1996, pp. 84–99). In appointing himself the mid-wife, Socrates nevertheless takes control, and following the actual conversations one sees that the other participants are not provided with voices of their own. This kind of 'genuine communication' then seems to pre-suppose a master-disciple situation, which appears to be a questionable basis for respectful mutuality.
17. Michael Prince *Philosophical Dialogue in the British Enlightenment* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1996), pp. 10–14.
18. Prince, *Philosophical Dialogue*, pp. 1–2; and *Compact Etymological Dictionary* (Blackie & Son Ltd, London).
19. Prince *Philosophical Dialogue*, pp. 1–20.
20. Prince *Philosophical Dialogue*, pp. 18–19.
21. Grillner, *Ramble, linger, and gaze*, pp. 151–2.
22. For a more detailed speculation by the author concerning the possible varieties of practice-based research in architecture and design, and where the different sites in which it develops may be found see Katja Grillner and Lars-Henrik Ståhl 'Practice-based research in architecture and design (Sweden 2003)', *Nordic Journal of Architectural Research*, 2003: 1. In Sweden the National Research Council has issued since 2001 special grants for the development of practice-based research in the arts. As a result of this government venture, an 'Academy for the development of research by design in architecture' has been formed as a collaboration between the architecture schools at KTH, LTH and Chalmers, with the objective of developing research projects and an epistemological discourse concerning this field.
23. Jonathan Hill, 'Building a Drawing and Drawing a Building' in *Nordic Journal of Architectural Research,* 2002: 4, p. 19.
24. From a few years ago, frontline architectural practices typically have claimed to perform 'research-based' design practice (for example OMA, UN-Studio, MVRDV, FOA, Greg Lynn to mention a few). This claim

to research is somewhat disturbing as it carries such obvious rhetorical benefits. It ought to 'sell', since an architecture based on 'research' in the eyes of the client might very well appear a safer bet than a traditional practice just claiming to produce high quality architecture. Where an open critical discourse is in place, which systematically challenges the principles applied and the results, research-based design practice gains credibility and may also develop into 'design-based research'.

25. Grillner, *Ramble, linger, and gaze*, p. 225.