

WHAT IS THE ROMANTIC LANDSCAPE?

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Romanticism, to a greater extent than we perceive, still affects the way we think about the world today. Its roots lie in the Western European movement that occurred roughly between the years 1760 and 1830. So completely do we take for granted its premises now that we lose sight of how the premium Romanticism put on individuality completely revolutionized society and how human beings thought about themselves and one another.

The Age of Romanticism was one of great political upheavals and the overthrow of absolute monarchy as a form of government. It was the age in which a vast sea change in the arts occurred. Music, literature, drama, painting, sculpture, architecture, and landscape gardening had previously emanated almost exclusively from royal, princely, and ducal courts. During the late eighteenth century and throughout much of the nineteenth, the rise of democratic forms of government either violently overthrew or gradually eroded the aristocratic cultural monopoly. This vast movement toward democracy was accompanied by the birth of patriotic sentiment and the glorification of the nation state. The period was moreover one of tremendous economic change. It witnessed the Industrial Revolution and the rapid enlargement of cities, the rise of middle-class commerce accompanied by the political empowerment of the bourgeoisie, and a growing respect for the common man.

This was the world into which Prince Hermann Ludwig Heinrich von Pückler was born in 1785, just four years before George Washington took the oath of office as president of the United States and the start of the French Revolution (Figure 1). He died in 1871, the year that Germany's numerous duchies and principedoms became united as a nation-state under Prussian leadership with Bismarck at its helm and Wilhelm I as newly crowned Kaiser. That event rendered virtually powerless all the minor nobility of which he was a member. Clearly, the prince's era was one of tremendous cultural and political transformation.

But our concern here is not with Romanticism as a social and political movement but as a *philosophical* phenomenon of international dimensions. In this light, we want to examine its effect on garden theory and to trace its influence on the designed landscapes of France, England, Germany, and America. Only in this way will we be able to fit Pückler into the context of his time, understand him as an artist, and compare his



Figure 1: Hermann Prince of Pückler-Muskau, c. 1838. Lithograph by Wilhelm Devrien; courtesy Stiftung Fürst-Pückler-Park Bad Muskau.

work with that of other landscape designers whose work can also be classified as Romantic.

Speaking in the broadest generalities, we can characterize English Romanticism as primarily literary and historical as well as painterly, a movement centered on Englishness itself, an Englishness that endears the green pastoral countryside with its hedgerows, fields, and grazing cattle. This gentle landscape has been gilded by the words of Shakespeare and the great Romantic poets, Wordsworth, Keats, and Shelley as well as by the paintings of Constable. What may be termed English Romanticism in

landscape design is in fact the picturesque garden ornamented with Gothic, rustic, and nostalgically recalled Classical architectural forms. French Romanticism as applied to landscape design, on the other hand, is more theatrical in character. Drawing on the philosophy of Rousseau, it is a landscape of idealized sentiment in which set-piece scenes are created for the purpose of eliciting a certain emotional response. Italian Romanticism is perhaps an oxymoron because of that country's overwhelming debt to its ancient classical and Renaissance past. This made the relatively brief nineteenth-century craze for the English-style garden there a later embarrassment in cases where it had caused the eradication of fine old villa gardens. By contrast, German Romanticism is inherently passionate and deeply nature-loving, an expression of national soul that is identified with forest and folk—the German land and German people. The German artist Caspar David Friedrich carried Romanticism to a fever pitch with his highly charged scenes of an imaginary nature in its most extreme manifestation and history in its most mysteriously evocative form. German Romanticism is rooted in a mythic attachment to the Fatherland and is equated with moral virtue and social harmony. American Romanticism is essentially religious in character. In a new democratic nation of continental dimensions the sublime scenery of untamed Nature was seen as the work of divine creation, a source of soul-stirring revelation, an expression of Ralph Waldo Emerson's transcendentalist philosophy. The artists of the Hudson River School, beginning with Thomas Cole, celebrated it, and the German-born master Albert Bierstadt portrayed the scenery of the Far West in terms of glowing dramatic and majestic grandeur.

For Frederick Law Olmsted, naturalistic park design was meant to be spiritually uplifting and to have a civilizing effect on the ethnically diverse population in the country's rapidly growing industrial cities. While inflected differently according to diverse national temperaments, the cross-currents of Romantic influence coursed from country to country. At its core was the emphasis on individual emotional experience as opposed to acceptance of societal norms and universal precepts based on reason alone.

To understand better the similarities and differences between French Romanticism, German Romanticism, English Romanticism, and American Romanticism with regard to garden art, we must examine both novels and treatises on landscape theory and design of the period. Two of the great literary figures tower over the Age of Romanticism: Rousseau and Goethe, each of whom wrote a novel in which a garden is both a Romantic metaphor and a design prescription. In terms of actual garden design theory, we must look to *De la Composition des paysages* (Essay on Landscape) published in 1777 by Rousseau's admirer and patron René Louis de Girardin and to Christian Cay Lorenz Hirschfeld's five-volume *Theorie der Gartenkunst* (Theory of Garden Art) published between 1779 and 1785.

In Rousseau's novel *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, the protagonist Julie has converted an old orchard into an "Elysium," a *hortus conclusus* symbolizing the heroine as chaste matron. According to Saint-Preux, Julie's tutor, erstwhile lover, and still secretly enamored family friend:

The dense foliage which surrounds it makes it impervious to the eye, and it is always carefully locked. . . . The turf, green and thick but short and close, was interwoven with wild thyme, mint, sweet marjoram, and other fragrant herbs. . . . I encountered here and there some shady thickets, as impervious to the sun's rays as it they were in the densest forests; these thickets were composed of trees of the most flexible wood, the branches of which had been made to bend round, hang down to the ground, and take root, by a process similar to that which mangrove trees follow naturally in America. . . . I followed winding and irregular walks bordered by these flowery thickets and covered with a thousand garlands of woody vines. . . while under foot we had smooth, comfortable, and dry walking upon a fine moss, with no sand, no grass, and no rough shoots. . . . All these little paths were bordered and crossed by a limpid and clear stream, sometimes winding through the grass and the flowers in almost imperceptible rivulets, sometimes running in larger brooklets over a pure and speckled gravel which made the water more transparent.¹

Rousseau has Julie tell her visitor that her garden is virtually maintenance-free. Anyone who has ever built a wild garden knows that it is not a simple matter of rearranging nature here and there and leaving things alone. But Julie's creation in *La Nouvelle Héloïse* is not meant to be understood as a practical venture; it is merely an argument for the charms of natural simplicity and rustic taste. However, as such, it was extremely influential. Girardin's garden at Ermenonville stands as the most prominent example of a Rousseau-inspired landscape.

Although an aristocrat of the old order, Girardin was a man of liberal sympathies, believing, no doubt, that the democratic ideals that were in the air in the years immediately prior to the French Revolution would be sufficient to bring about certain necessary social changes without completely destroying the *ancien régime*. It was natural, then, for the marquis to befriend the author of *The Social Contract*, published in 1762, a year after *La Nouvelle Héloïse*. Rousseau spent the last years of his life at Ermenonville as the guest of the marquis, and upon his death in 1778, Rousseau was buried in the garden on a small poplar-encircled island at one end of the lake. His legion of admirers subsequently made pilgrimages to this spot, and imitations of Rousseau's poplar-surrounded gravesite became one of the great garden design tropes of the late eighteenth

century. Rousseau's influence impregnates the garden at Ermenonville, as Girardin's *Essay on Landscape* attests. In his *Essay*, Girardin quotes "a man whose every word is a sentiment" (undoubtedly he is referring to Rousseau):

Nature flies from frequented places; it is at the tops of high mountains, in the depth of forests, and in desert islands, that she displays her most enchanting beauties; those who love her, but can not go so far to seek her, are reduced to offer her some violence, and to force her in some measure to come and dwell among them;—this cannot be some without some little illusion.²

Here we come to the central issue in our attempt to define the Romanticism in relation to landscape design. Rousseau, as quoted by Girardin, clearly subscribes to the notion of the sublime as defined by Edmund Burke in his famous *Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1777). For Burke, the sublime stimulates the kind of pleasurable terror that causes one to gasp with astonishment. Accordingly, the exalted and intensely emotional experience associated with this aesthetic category was most likely to be found in wild, untamed nature. But country estates are not situated on the tops of mountains, in the depths of forests, or on desert islands. In making a garden, according to Rousseau, the designer is reduced to inflicting some violence on nature—cutting away undergrowth, excavating soil to create lakes, and so forth. His attempt to create scenery that is a combination of art and nature inevitably falls into an intermediate aesthetic category between Burke's beautiful and sublime, one that its proponents called the picturesque.

The garden that the marquis de Girardin, with Rousseau at his side, created was a garden of *sentiment* in which emotions were evoked by visual reminders and literary associations, a garden in which the beauty of nature was enhanced by artistry. The marquis intended it to be an animated landscape painting made with nature's own materials. The alliance between actual landscape painting and landscape design forms the chief principle upon which Girardin laid out Ermenonville. In his *Essay*, he states that in order to make a garden, "you must understand that a landscape plan can neither be imagined, sketched, drawn, colored, or retouched, by any but a landscape painter."³ He instructs the reader, whom he assumes to be an estate owner like himself, to become familiar with the advantages of his property and after doing so to bring a painter to the site.

He goes on to say, "If from the saloon objects obstruct your sight, go up to the top of the house, from thence choose the best distance and background, taking care not to destroy such of the buildings and plantations as are already there, and will suit the composition of the land-

scape: and now the painter may make a sketch, composing a fore-ground to correspond with the distance you have determined upon the country."⁴ Thus, Girardin did not think that a topographical plan was necessary; the studied views of the painter would provide sufficient guidance in laying out his grounds.

Echoing Rousseau, he draws attention to the difference between the romantically inclined picturesque style and the truly Romantic sublime:

If picturesque beauty gives pleasure to the eyes; if a poetical scene interests by bringing before us the happy pictures of Arcadia; and it is in the power of the painter or poet to produce these—some situations there are which nature only can give, and which I will call *romantick*. . . .⁵

He goes on to write,

Here the mind wanders with pleasure, and indulges those fond reveries, which become necessary to such as are open to soft affections, and know the just value of things: We wish to dwell in these scenes forever, for here we feel all the truth and energy of nature.⁶

Thus, the trick in picturesque garden design was to produce such artfully contrived naturalistic scenery as to induce the Romantic occupation so prized by Rousseau: solitary reverie.

Let's turn now to Germany and Goethe, the towering genius who sparked the romantic *Sturm und Drang* (Storm and Stress) movement and then went beyond it to achieve a philosophical middle ground between unbridled emotion and Enlightenment reason. In this regard, it is useful to compare Goethe's 1809 novel *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* (*Elective Affinities*) with Rousseau's *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, published forty-eight years earlier. A further comparison between Christian Cay Lorenz Hirschfeld's (1743–92) five-volume *Theorie der Gartenkunst* with Girardin's *Essay on Landscape* will confirm our understanding of the difference between French and German Romanticism with regard to landscape design.

In the elegantly constructed plot of *Elective Affinities*, the action takes place to a large extent in a garden in which the author's personal knowledge of the principles of landscape design is evident. Unlike Rousseau's imaginary garden, this one is not the setting of reverie but of tragedy. It is not a *hortus conclusus* like Julie's Elysium but quite the opposite, a garden in which expansive views are as important as secluded spots adorned with rustic structures. The building of the garden is central to the plot of *Elective Affinities*, and Goethe approaches the subject from both a poetical and a practical perspective.

Like Julie, Charlotte, one of the four protagonists, is the mistress of a Romantic garden. The opening scene in the book takes place in the newly finished moss hut she has designed. This feature is typical of the Rousseau-influenced garden. But for Goethe, a sound landscape design was not merely a collection of charming, evocative features arranged in a naturalistic setting. With the entrance of another protagonist, the Captain, an experienced engineer, it becomes apparent that an overall plan encompassing the entire property should be made, with consideration as well of the views of its surrounding scenery. The Captain sets to work, and “the topographical map on which the estate and its surroundings had been drawn in pen and wash—with graphic accuracy in a relatively large scale, its precision thoroughly checked by the Captain’s trigonometric measurements—was soon finished.” Eager not to offend Charlotte because her plans for the garden are being superseded, the men decide to “bring out those illustrated English estate descriptions.”⁷

The books—undoubtedly those of Humphry Repton, the influential English landscape designer—revealed, according to Goethe, “in each instance a map of the area and a view of the landscape in its natural state, then on separate flaps the change artfully made to utilize and enhance its original good properties. From this the transition to their own estate, their own surroundings, and what could be made of them, was an easy one. Now it became a pleasant task to consult the map the Captain had made, although at first it was hard to tear themselves away from Charlotte’s original conception of the project.”⁸ Practical Charlotte frequently reminds them of the costs new plans will involve.

The consideration of the layout of paths in terms of the best views to be achieved as one moved through the landscape was of critical importance. Here, the fourth principal character in the book, Charlotte’s beautiful ward Otilie, plays a role:

Putting her finger on the highest part of the rise, Otilie said: ‘I would build the summer house here. You wouldn’t see the manor from there, of course, since it would be hidden by the clump of trees; instead, you would be in a new and different world, with the village and all the houses hidden from sight. The view of the lakes, toward the mill, the hills, mountains and countryside, is extraordinarily beautiful; I noticed it as we went past.’⁹

Thinking in terms of a comprehensive plan; the retention of some picturesque structures while opening the garden up to broad views of the countryside; partially hiding a village from view while integrating it into the overall scheme; understanding (if nevertheless disregarding) the high costs involved in executing such a grand project; reliance on Repton’s books for inspiration; the consciousness that the scenery revealed by

movement through the landscape is critical in large-scale park design, thus making the layout of roads and pathways of the essence—in these ways *Elective Affinities* is almost a treatise on landscape theory in the guise of a novel.

An actual treatise with which Goethe was undoubtedly familiar did exist at the time of the novel's publication: C. C. L. Hirschfeld's *Theory of Garden Art*.¹⁰ Hirschfeld provides an entirely new perspective on the garden as a moral force in society. He makes the case, moreover, for landscape as an important—in his opinion *the* most important—branch of aesthetics. As Linda Parshall explains in the introduction to her translation of the *Theory of Garden Art*:

The broad attraction of the *Theory* was largely due to its mingling of genres: part musings on the joys of living close to nature, part philosophy of aesthetics, part historical survey, part travel book, part poetry anthology, part moral and political tract. It offered inspiration and encouragement to would-be garden designers, travelers, poets, to any and all who deemed themselves people of sensitivity and sensibility.¹¹

Although, unlike Goethe, Hirschfeld never designed a garden, Parshall imagines one that, based on the *Theory*, he might have created:

What should strike us most in a Hirschfeldian garden is the omnipresence and loveliness of nature. Although we may recognize the contribution of art in a small monument or pavilion, on benches inscribed with poetry, or in the design of a rustic bridge, although we may notice less obvious additions such as an artificial ruin, a cascade, a pond, or a picturesquely planted group of trees, nature should prevail. Such a garden cannot be surveyed from any one vantage point, cannot be understood just by looking. It demands that we move through its scenes and interact with its beauties. Hirschfeld's garden is an inclusive one, variable, integrated with the landscape around it, and finally elusive of precise description.¹²

Hirschfeld is nationalistic in his attitude. A man of social conscience, he favors public access to landscape experience, advocating the creation of *Volksgärten*, or people's gardens. He believes that Germans, being lovers of nature, are possessed of strong moral character. Although Hirschfeld does not employ the fervent language that would characterize the true Romantics of the next generation, the Romantic notion of something never completely resolved and always becoming is inherent in his theory. His insistence on the dominance of nature itself as the main landscape motif, the subservience of picturesque features to a harmonious totality,

the necessity of moving through a landscape in order to regard its scenery in multiple perspectives, and the desirability of creating parks for the people anticipates such nineteenth-century parks as Central Park in New York City.

As we have remarked, Prince Herman von Pückler-Muskau was born in the years when the power of the aristocracy was in its twilight phase. Turning his back on public life after a period of serving in the military, he made cultural pursuits, travel, and the landscaping of the estate he inherited in 1810 his principal spheres of activity. Like Girardin before him, Pückler was a liberal aristocrat inspired by the writings of Rousseau. He sought to better the lives of his tenants and encouraged local industrial production with the development of his alum works and mining operations. He incorporated the existing town of Muskau in his landscape plans and made public access to his park a point of pride. He employed two hundred full-time gardeners and day laborers. The Muskau park, however, unlike Central Park, which would take shape only a few years later, was not the result of civic weal primarily. Rather, it was intended to be a monument to family honor and an example for other noble landowners in estate beautification and good stewardship.

Pückler was as lively a writer as he was engaging in person. He turned his acute observations and astute impressions during his travels abroad into several books, the most popular and influential of which was *Briefe eines Verstorbenen* (literally, “letters of a dead man”; translated as *Travels of a German Prince in Holland, England, and Ireland*), where he describes many great country estates as well as London’s parks. At the time he visited these places in 1828, he was already well advanced in his great project of making Muskau, his vast estate straddling the River Neisse a combination of park, pleasure garden, and model of sound agricultural practice and beautification. In scope, Pückler’s efforts were comparable to the transformation of the barren rock-studded land in the middle of Manhattan Island into Central Park. Boldly imaginative and unrestrained in his spending habits, Pückler had set about turning Muskau’s sandy flatlands into orchards, grain fields, and broad meadows for grazing. His forested hills were managed according to the best timber practices of the day. The property contained a village as well as mines and industrial works. All of this outlying landscape was included in the prince’s grand scheme, and views of it were intended as part of his comprehensive design.

In addition to the soil improvement and tree cutting and replanting he undertook for his agricultural lands and forests, Pückler rechanneled the Neisse in places in order to create a more desirable alignment of the river as he was building his park and pleasure garden. As was the case in the creation of Central Park, the artistically embellished part of his

grounds involved dredging lakes, creating new streams, moving massive amounts of earth—and a very large expenditure of funds.

The prince's identity as a distinguished landscape designer was already firmly established by 1834 when he published his most influential and enduring work *Andeutungen über Landschaftsgärtnerei* (*Hints on Landscape Gardening*). This magnificent volume of garden theory, illustrated with hand-colored engravings and fold-out "before-and-after" views of the Muskau park, was clearly modeled on Humphry Repton's beautiful books with their fold-out views.¹³

Unlike Girardin's purely painterly approach to landscape design, Pückler, like the Captain in *Elective Affinities* and also like Olmsted and Calvert Vaux in Central Park, developed a topographic plan that gave a much more explicit rendering of the entire property, including what can only be shown in plan, namely, its circulation system of roads and paths. Color diagrams illustrate good and bad ways of laying out paths with regard to the appearance of the landscape and the way that Pückler wished his visitors to move through it in order that its unfolding scenery would produce an orchestrated visual and emotional experience.

The *Andeutungen* would have been an extraordinary memorial to Pückler's work at Muskau had the park there ceased to exist, which fortunately is not the case. Though inspired by Repton's landscapes as well as by the contents and example of his expensively produced, lavishly illustrated books, Pückler's *Andeutungen* displays the prince's originality and independence of mind. In spite of the fact that Pückler called Repton "the hero of our art" and Capability Brown "the Shakespeare of gardening," his gardening principles were not mere echoes of those of these admired English landscape designers. They were German at the core and very much his own. The *Andeutungen* is, above all, imbued with the same nature-loving, nationalistic spirit as Hirschfeld's *Theory*.

Frederick Law Olmsted was aware of Pückler's park in Muskau at the time he advised his young associate Charles Eliot to visit it on his tour of Europe in 1883, and some have suggested that there may have been a direct influence of Pückler's work on the designers of Central Park. It is unlikely, however, that Olmsted and Calvert Vaux were familiar with the *Andeutungen* at the time they prepared their Greensward Plan. One way to account for some of the design similarities between Central Park and Pückler's creation Muskau is by the common inspiration these men drew not only from the landscapes of the great country estates and the newly redesigned royal parks in England with which they were familiar but also from nature and the ethos of Romanticism that pervaded the culture of their time.

Movement through and around varied kinds of naturalistic scenery—meadows, woodlands, lakes—is the common principal of their respective

designs. At the same time, both designs rely on sound engineering, particularly with regard to the construction of bridges, roads, and paths, the all-important means of circulation that revealed the scenery of each of the two parks as it was meant to be viewed: sequentially, with carefully contrasted types of landscape creating variety and surprise while remaining part of an integrated and comprehensible whole. Perhaps the most obvious and striking similarity is their mutual scenic ideal: the long meadow. Both Olmsted and Pückler used sweeping greenswards with indefinite borders as the most expressive element in their respective designs (Plates 2 and 3, page 182).

But however physically similar these lovely greenswards are, there is a basic difference in their underlying design intention and purpose. For Olmsted and Vaux, it was essential to create a sense of illimitable distance within a park that was surrounded by a city, and they employed considerable finesse to emphasize distance while screening boundaries. Ironically, what ultimately made Central Park truly Romantic was exactly what was *not* intended—the growth of the skyscraper city defining its edges in such a way as to create an impression that one can only characterize as the *urban sublime*. Whereas Olmsted and Vaux were presented with a rectangular piece of land within an engulfing metropolis, Pückler had a natural valley surrounded by agricultural countryside with which to work, and his objective was to dissolve apparent boundaries between his forested hillsides and the rural areas beyond by strategically opening up views in various places. While the Olmsted and Vaux parks are in fact inwardly oriented without seeming to be so, Muskau is an interiorly focused landscape that turns outward. Moreover, Pückler's long meadows, though similar in appearance to those of the American designers, are not meant to look as if they simply dissolve in the distance. If one stands on his castle terrace, it is apparent that they fan out through the pleasure ground and the park toward the Neisse and beyond, each to a particular terminus. These view lines, obscured for so many years due to management neglect and reforestation, are fortunately being cooperatively restored today by Muskau's respective German and Polish park administrations.

Central Park, by contrast, has but one axially aligned focal point: the Belvedere, Calvert Vaux's Victorian Gothic miniature castle atop Vista Rock, which was originally visible from the Mall, Central Park's principal promenade. Its other buildings are tucked as inconspicuously as possible into the landscape, and the rustic summerhouses crowning the park's beautiful rock outcrops of Manhattan schist are small scenic overlooks rather than eye-catching follies.

Finally, the basic premises upon which the parks were built were fundamentally different. In the case of Muskau, although the town was

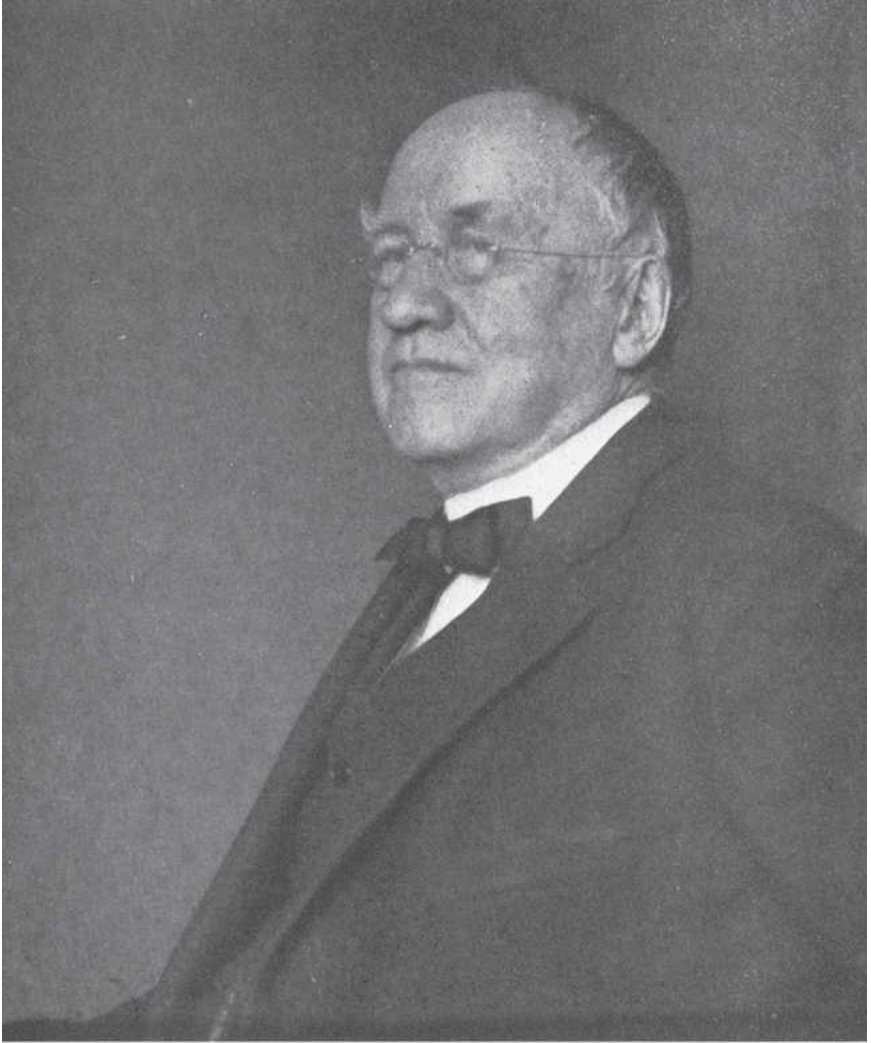
part and parcel of the park and Pückler was proud to employ as many as two hundred men and make it accessible to them and their families for outings, his was not what Central Park was intended to be, a democratic people's park. His motive was aristocratic family pride, and his work an act of noblesse oblige as well as the obsession of an artist to create. He well understood that the forces of democratic capitalism were at work, inalterably transforming the world into which he had been born. Muskau, then, can be read as a Romantic memorial to a vanished society.

We may conclude that, drawing inspiration from a common source and with many of the same landscape ideals, Pückler's park at Muskau and Central Park nevertheless remained independent creations and that it would be wrong to claim that the German park is ancestor to the American. What both have most in common is their debt to Romanticism. Their similarities rest upon their designers' profound belief in Nature as civilization's best nurse and as an expression of each nation's fundamental identity.

If Olmsted's work was along somewhat parallel lines as Pückler's but not directly influenced by it, it is another story with that of his successors. Interestingly, Pückler, not Olmsted, became for Samuel Parsons, Calvert Vaux's partner and successor as New York City Parks Department landscape architect, "the hero of our art" (Figure 2). Thanks to Parsons, who had visited Muskau in 1906, a translation of Pückler's *Andeutungen* into English was published in 1917.¹⁴

In his textbook *The Art of Landscape Architecture* published two years earlier, Parsons quotes large sections of the *Andeutungen*. It is clearly evident that he was looking over the translator's shoulder as he wrote. Not only does Parsons quote Pückler at length, more than a quarter of the forty-eight illustrations he included in the book are of Muskau. The others, mostly of Central Park and of country estates in the vicinity of New York City, are portrayed as examples of Pückler's design principles. Confirming his reliance on Pückler as his supreme authority, he makes his chapters parallel Pückler's exactly, often with the same titles and in the same order. His book, in effect, is not the product of original thought but rather a verbatim American version of the *Andeutungen*.

One can only speculate why Parsons holds up Pückler as his principal role model and makes practically no mention of Olmsted in a book intended to instruct American landscape architects. Perhaps this is so because of Parsons's close association with Calvert Vaux and the fact that both men felt slighted because of Olmsted's greater renown as Central Park's co-designer and of his later reputation as America's preeminent landscape architect. In this case, Parsons must have felt remarkably fortunate to have discovered in Germany an alternate role model who designed along the same lines as Olmsted. Parsons's textbook for landscape architects represents a last stand for the Romantic picturesque park. By



Samuel Parsons

Figure 2: Samuel Parsons. From Mabel Parsons, *Memories of Samuel Parsons* (1926).

the time Parsons wrote, architects and landscape architects had moved in an entirely new direction. American designers trained at the *École des Beaux-Arts* in Paris and at the American Academy in Rome were designing neo-classical and Italianate mansions and gardens. Even Frederick

Law Olmsted, Jr., who inherited his father's practice and became a founder of the American Society of Landscape Architecture, combined a neo-classical urban design vocabulary with a naturalistic landscape style in his practice.

But the legacy of Romanticism continues, and fortunately it is being preserved, as in Muskau. Romanticism itself, though not entirely dead today, has undergone a sea change. As scientific materialism gained force in the nineteenth century, the notion of nature as a manifestation of divine handiwork and source of religious comfort turned out to be only a way station on the path toward twentieth-century existentialism. Pückler and Olmsted were products of an age before Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* (1859) forever altered human understanding of nature and man's estate. Darwin's pioneering insights and the subsequent discoveries of other scientists proved nature's workings to be those of an impersonal mechanism, however deeply felt their effect on us. Nevertheless, the Romantic park has endured and remained popular. Some contemporary landscape architects now employ Olmsted and Pückler's design principles in their work, and the revival of their reputations, combined with the ongoing restoration of their historic creations, have given their respective German and American visions of nature-based landscape design relevance once more. And under certain conditions of light and weather, they are indeed very Romantic.

Notes

¹ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, trans. Judith H. McDowell (University Park, 1968/1987), 304 ff.

² René Louis de Girardin, *An Essay on Landscape*, trans. D. Malthus (London, 1783; reprint, New York, 1982), 17.

³ *Ibid.*, 21–22.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, 141–42.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 147.

⁷ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Elective Affinities*, trans. R. J. Hollindale (Harmondsworth, 1971), 46, 68–69.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 69.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 76–77.

¹⁰ Linda B. Parshall's fine translation: Christian Cajus Lorenz Hirschfeld, *Theory of Garden Art* (Philadelphia, 2001).

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹² *Ibid.*, 9.

¹³ Humphrey Repton, *Sketches and Hints on Landscape Gardening* (1794). *Observations on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening* (1803), and *Fragments on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening* (1816).

¹⁴ (Boston, 1917).