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Citation for published version:

Prezelj, B 2022, 'The allure of the flap', *Thresholds*, no. 50, pp. 321-330.
https://doi.org/10.1162/thld_a_00770

Digital Object Identifier (DOI):

[10.1162/thld_a_00770](https://doi.org/10.1162/thld_a_00770)

Link:

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

Document Version:

Peer reviewed version

Published In:

Thresholds

Publisher Rights Statement:

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The Allure of the Flap

In the late eighteenth-century Humphry Repton coined the term “landscape gardener” and gradually became the first professional landscape architect.¹ A considerable part of his success was based on his *Red Books*—landscape proposals of suggested improvements to the estates of the English landed elite.² What most clearly distinguished Repton’s approach from the one of his predecessors was his use of “the flap”—a graphic device used to showcase the *before* and *after* of the proposed transformation. A simple visual trick turned into a marketing tool transformed otherwise conventional watercolor illustrations into seductive client presentations. By sleight of hand, anything undesirable suddenly vanished from view and the designed landscape revealed itself, instantaneously giving way to an envisioned future. It wasn’t only the flap as a representational method that was inexhaustible—communicating liveliness, restlessness and futurity—but importantly also its appeal. Even today, the *Red Books* are evoked as soon as the topic of representation in landscape architecture is touched upon, and praised for their innovative depiction of time, movement, and landscape change.³ Repton’s illustrations were one of the first widely admired and repeatedly evoked examples of landscape architectural representation I was introduced to at the start of my bachelor studies. And yet, as far as the reason for their enduring influence goes, I have remained unconvinced: surely the power Repton’s use of the flap exerts upon the

¹ John Dixon Hunt, “Humphry Repton and Garden History,” *The Journal of Garden History*, 16, no. 3 (September 1996): 218, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14601176.1996.10435645>.

² André Rogger, *Landscapes of Taste: The Art of Humphry Repton’s Red Books* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 59–60.

³ See, for instance: James Corner, “Representation and Landscape: Drawing and Making in the Landscape Medium,” *Word & Image: A Journal of Verbal/Visual Enquiry*, 8, no. 3 (1992): 243–75; Charles Waldheim and Andrea Hansen, eds., *Composite Landscapes: Photomontage and Landscape Architecture* (Ostfildern, Germany: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2014).

field must be attributed to something more than mere presentation of the existing scene being replaced by the proposed improved one. Why, really, does the allure of the flap linger?

Repton's practice is heavily researched and commonly discussed in relation to the English landscape movement, along with its three traditional categories of aesthetic value—the beautiful, the picturesque, and the sublime.⁴ Whereas the discussion around the notions of taste, style, and visual pleasure helps to grasp the complexity of the eighteenth-century garden histories, the persuasive quality of the *Red Books* calls for an examination beyond pure representation. In this paper, I build on André Rogger's acclaimed monograph on the art of the *Red Books*,⁵ yet look at Repton through a different lens. Rogger primarily focuses on *Red Books*' formation, formal characteristics, possible model sources, and the role they played in Repton's practice. In contrast, I will principally focus on flaps and examine the turning of overlays as a performative engagement with surfaces. In what follows, I will explore Repton's aesthetics through its affective potential and learn from the mechanics behind presenting a particular design argument that placed thinking *in the event* and thought *in action*.

Before becoming a landscape gardener, Repton had tried a series of other occupations, all of which had left him unhappy and/or penniless. His professional life had been anything but steady: He had attempted to run a textile business and serve as a private secretary, he had made an effort getting into the transport business, he had tried being a writer, a critic, a country gentleman, and an artist.⁶ In 1789, with firm ambitions to join members of polite

⁴ John Dixon Hunt, *The Figure in the Landscape* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976).

⁵ Rogger, *Landscapes of Taste: The Art of Humphry Repton's Red Books*.

⁶ David Marsh, "Repton and His Business," The Gardens Trust (blog), January 6, 2018, <https://thegardenstrust.blog/2018/01/06/repton-and-his-business/>.

society and with little in riches to justify his desired social rank, he moved to London to become a professional improver—a job that brought him success and ultimately transformed him into a leading practitioner of the English landscape style.⁷ Repton did not act as a contractor, only as a consultant, which meant his popularity primarily stemmed from his skilful use of watercolor and his ability to shape aesthetic tastes by cleverly combining written description and painted scenes.⁸ These were elegantly bound in red Morocco leather and by the end of Repton’s career in 1818 commissioned in hundreds. At times, they were commissioned by the landed gentry, whose sole purpose in obtaining a *Red Book* was to delight in Repton’s proposed vision, without ever intending to actually transform their estates.⁹

The reason behind Repton’s fame wasn’t only his talent but to a large extent also the social and political period in which he worked. In the eighteenth century, the English landscape garden was in the process of perceptible change, with land representing an opportunity for both aesthetic proposition and political emancipation on the side of the landed elite.¹⁰ The garden was created in order to demonstrate the landowner’s polite taste, intellect, sound judgement, political power, and therefore his ability to shape and direct broader aesthetic and political concerns.¹¹ The prerequisite for such lavish motivations was the private ownership

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ John Macarthur, *The Picturesque: Architecture, Disgust and Other Irregularities* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 11.

⁹ Ibid., 11.

¹⁰ Stephen Bending, “A Natural Revolution? Garden Politics in Eighteenth-Century England,” in *Refiguring Revolutions, Aesthetics and Politics from the English Revolution to the Romantic Revolution*, ed. Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 1998), 242.

¹¹ Ibid., 241–66.

of land along with the landowner's economic ambitions.¹² To bring an end to the customary rights over land and profit from rental fees as well as large-scale cultivation, landowners wielded their power to appropriate common land in a process known as "enclosure".¹³ This led, among a number of other social, economic, and political changes, to an expansion of the elite's pleasure grounds, where they were now able to enjoy exclusive rights of enjoyment.

Contrary to the Continental formal gardens, which expressed the power of the elite through their centralized perspective, infinite vistas, and vast symmetrical parterres, the English landscape garden rejected formalism and insisted on appearing "natural."¹⁴ The garden was freed from formal rigidity and remodelled according to liberal standards—geometrical features were replaced by undulating lawns, streams were dammed and large lakes introduced, and meandering roads altered the topography.¹⁵ With the public act of gardening and with the garden's ability to naturalize political power, large-scale landowners were enabled to present themselves as passionate proponents of constitutional liberty and chief possessors of polite taste. Soon they came to own one of the main instruments of national identity formation, with a particular garden aesthetics paving the way for that ownership to

¹² David Worrall, "Agrarians against the Picturesque: Ultra-Radicalism and the Revolutionary Politics of Land," in *The Politics of the Picturesque: Literature, Landscape and Aesthetics since 1770*, ed. Stephen Copley and Peter Garside (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 251.

¹³ Roderick Floud, *An Economic History of the English Garden* (London: Allen Lane, 2019), 65.

¹⁴ For the influences behind the "natural" appearance of the landscape garden (such as classical landscape and architecture of Rome and ancient Greece, landscape painting and Chinese garden art) see David C. Streatfield, "Art and Nature in the English Landscape Garden: Design Theory and Practice, 1700 - 1818," in *Landscape in the Gardens and the Literature of Eighteenth-Century England*, by David C. Streatfield and Alistair M. Duckworth (Los Angeles: University of California, 1981), 1–87. For the economic factors behind the phenomenon of the English garden (such as cost in making and maintenance, labour, plant trade, technology and landscape productivity) see Floud, *An Economic History of the English Garden*.

¹⁵ Stephanie Ross, "The Picturesque: An Eighteenth-Century Debate," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 46, no. 2 (1987): 237.

appear both rational and just.¹⁶ Aesthetic theories not only dictated how to properly use the land but also validated a specific, peculiarly English, version of liberty.

Within such a political and social context, Repton's job was to continue in the steps of his predecessors, William Kent and Lancelot 'Capability' Brown, and to define a new genre of the garden as superior and exclusively English in character and origin. Repton had little time to ease into his newly discovered occupation and immediately found himself at the center of a heated debate around the aesthetic category of the picturesque and landscape's pictorial value. As David C. Streatfield writes, Repton's work provoked Richard Payne Knight and Uvedale Price, chief proponents of the picturesque movement, who "argued for the primacy of painting as the guide for landscape improvement ... Repton argued for [landscape aesthetics'] independence."¹⁷ Despite criticism, Repton found it hard to accept the picturesque's basic premise of an aestheticized view,¹⁸ favoring movement,¹⁹ experience of motion, and the pleasure of changing views instead.²⁰

¹⁶ Bending, "A Natural Revolution? Garden Politics in Eighteenth-Century England," 245. See also: Stephen Copley and Peter Garside, eds., *The Politics of the Picturesque. Literature, Landscape and Aesthetics since 1770*. (Cambridge, EN: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 5-8.

¹⁷ Streatfield, "Art and Nature in the English Landscape Garden," 63.

¹⁸ Ann Bermingham, "The Picturesque and Ready-to-Wear Femininity," in *The Politics of the Picturesque. Literature, Landscape and Aesthetics since 1770.*, ed. Stephen Copley and Peter Garside (Cambridge, EN: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 86.

¹⁹ "Others prefer still life – I delight in movement." Humphry Repton, *The Landscape Gardening and Landscape Architecture of the Late Humphrey Repton, Esq.: Being His Entire Works on These Subjects*, ed. John Claudius Loudon (London: Printed for the editor, and sold by Longman, 1840), 604, <https://archive.org/details/landscapegardeni00rept>. See also Hunt, *The Figure in the Landscape*, 199.

²⁰ David C. Streatfield emphasizes how Repton felt that nature "should be enlivened by movement." He observes how Repton's interest in movement manifested, among other things, in ways he animated landscape scenes – from the inclusion of grazing cattle to garden maintenance to Repton's peculiar "insistence that a fire always be kept alight in a cottage on the outlying part of the Endsleigh estate." Streatfield, "Art and Nature in the English Landscape Garden," 69.

It is little surprise then that Repton's famous *Red Books* are imbued with movement. In a cunning move, Repton managed to bring together the elite's picturesque appetites for painterly scenes and his continued fascination with change—stable watercolour sketches and dynamic flaps. The resulting image was both flattened-out and three-dimensional, dynamic and still. The move was not only an experiment in representation but primarily an experiment in marketing and persuasion, with *Red Books* serving as a tool Repton used to convince wealthy aristocrats to commission work from him.²¹

Opening animated watercolour flaps, or slides as Repton called them, revealed the proposed transformation: from an uninspired scene with the flap down and an improved version with it, the overlay, removed. The scale of the revealed landscape was exaggerated, perspective adjusted, views altered; trees were painted lush and grass greener. Moreover, during his production process, Repton disrupted the temporal logic that the before-and-after flaps suggest, deliberately painting the current landscape scene last. As André Rogger argues: “[The present view] could only be painted after the watercolor of the ideal situation was completed, and such a retrospectively composed image must, *a priori*, appear less organic and lively.”²² In order to justify the superiority of the proposed ideal scene, the actual landscape on the ground needed to disappear or, at the very least, implicitly raise doubts about the value of the existing landscape. Repton recognized what only those most astute notice: If the ground of previously held beliefs loosens, creating a climate of doubt, chances are greater that something new might take hold.²³ The present scene, similarly fabricated and

²¹ Rogger, *Landscapes of Taste*, 1–2.

²² *Ibid.*, 70.

²³ Paul Chan, “Odysseus as Artist,” *Los Angeles Review of Books Quarterly Journal* 16 (2017), <https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/odysseus-as-artist/>.

staged as the proposed one, was never meant to be a truthful representation of the existing landscape. Rather, its falsehood constituted the means by which Repton's proposal secured its superior position over fiction and enabled his improvement to stand unambiguously outside it.

In the first of Repton's *Red Books*, his proposal for Brandsbury, the 'before' image depicts a boundary fence, running along the property limit and preventing the three polite visitors to take in the view (Figure 1). Once the flap is removed, the improved 'after' scene reveals an open view across the countryside, with rolling meadows, mature trees, and grazing cattle (Figure 2). Repton's intention was to visually open the estate and create vistas that would extend the property's limits—if not of a real property, then at least of a visual one.²⁴ While the effect of this sudden change of scenery is particularly apparent in Repton's proposal for Brandsbury, the same method of unexpected reveal achieved through movement is present in every *Red Book*, as well as in Repton's written design descriptions. There, he speaks of inventing affects, or sudden "bursts"—effects achieved by proposed alterations that will ensure landscape's prominent features "burst at once upon the view."²⁵

²⁴ Macarthur, *The Picturesque: Architecture, Disgust and Other Irregularities*, 182.

²⁵ Repton, *The Landscape Gardening and Landscape Architecture of the Late Humphrey Repton, Esq.*, 143.

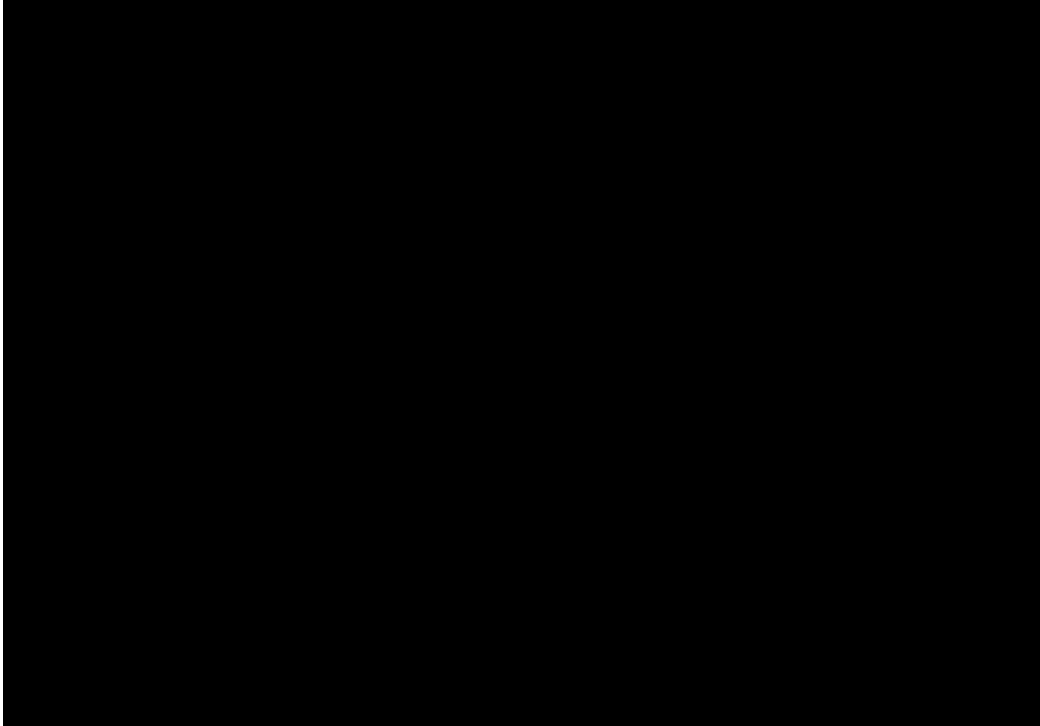


Figure 1. Humphry Repton, Brandsbury (“before” image), 1795. Aquatint illustration, 18 x 25.8 cm. In: *Sketches and Hints on Landscape Gardening*, London. (Image courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art.)

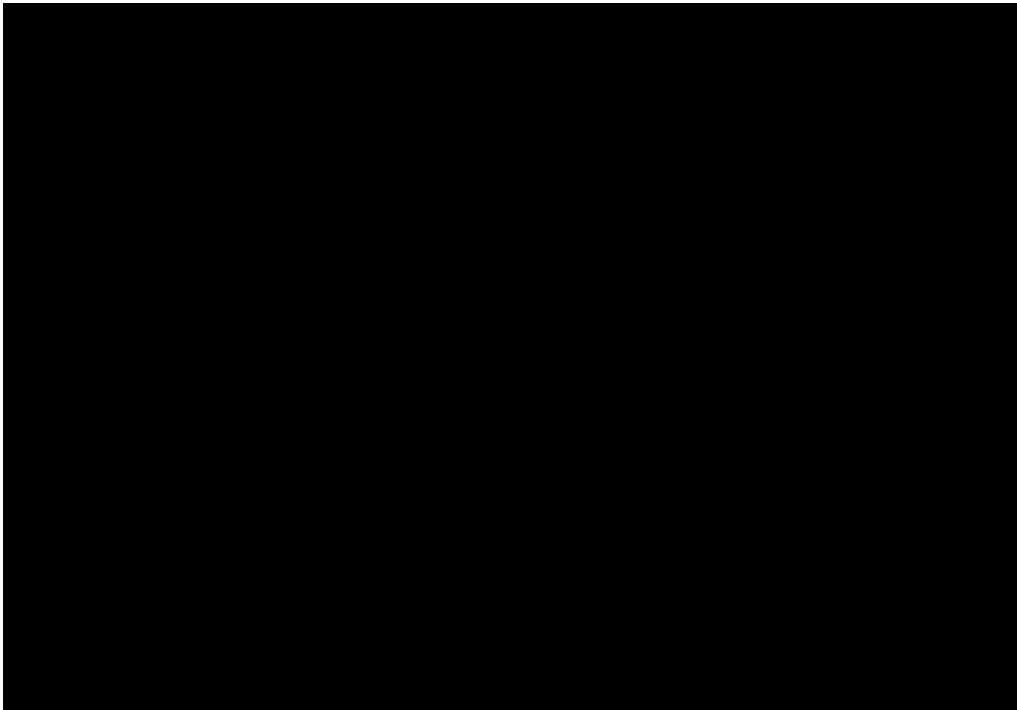


Figure 2. Humphry Repton, Brandsbury (“after” image), 1795. Aquatint illustration, 18 x 25.8 cm. In: *Sketches and Hints on Landscape Gardening*, London. (Image courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art.)

Repton's colleagues, who saw Repton's novel representational technique as an illusionistic sleight of hand, recognized it as deceitful.²⁶ They readily doubted the flaps' accuracy, and it was speculated that Repton used his proficient drawing skills to carefully stage the drawings' reception and persuasively argue for the superiority of his improvement.²⁷ John Loudon, one of his harshest critics, called Repton's experiment "a mere piece of quackery"²⁸ and challenged Repton's claim of "having invented the slides,"²⁹ showing how a similar technique has long been in use, for teaching astronomy, for instance.³⁰ Since Loudon, scholars have identified a number of possible influences on the *Red Book* formula, one of them being Thomas Malton's treatise on perspective,³¹ which features three-dimensional paper schemes and diagrams that move, fold up, and fold out.³² Apart from the obvious parallels between the chosen representational method, Malton and Repton are linked also

²⁶ Stephen Daniels, "Scenic Transformation and Landscape Improvement: Temporalities in the Garden Designs of Humphry Repton," in *Representing Landscape Architecture*, ed. Marc Treib (London, EN: Routledge, 2007).

²⁷ Rogger, *Landscapes of Taste*, 70.

²⁸ J.C. Loudon, *A Treatise on Forming, Improving, and Managing Country Residences; and on the Choice of Situations Appropriate to Every Class of Purchasers* (London: Printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, by C. Whittingham, 1806), 708, <https://archive.org/details/atreatiseonform01loudgoog>.

²⁹ "To make my designs intelligible, I found that a mere map was insufficient; as being no more capable of conveying the idea of the landscape, than the ground-plan of a house does of its elevation. To remedy this deficiency, I delivered my options in writing, that they might not be misconceived or misrepresented; and I invented the peculiar kind of slides to my sketches..." Repton, *The Landscape Gardening and Landscape Architecture of the Late Humphrey Repton, Esq.*, 31. Later in his life, Repton suggested that it was his friend Robert Marsham, a pioneer of phenology, who advised him on *before* and *after* scenes to illustrate landscape change, yet there is no mention of slides as a chosen technique. See: Humphry Repton, *Humphry Repton's Memoirs*, ed. Ann Gore and George Carter (Norwich : Michael Russell, 2005).

³⁰ "I do not question Mr. Repton's right to the merit of having first applied slides, or folding slips of paper, to sketches for improving landscape scenery; though I deny what he affirms in several parts of his works, that he is the inventor of them. Slides upon a similar plan have long been in use for various purposes, and were employed by the late Mr. Walker, of Edinburgh, in teaching astronomy upwards of thirty years ago." Loudon, *A Treatise on Forming, Improving, and Managing Country Residences*, 705.

³¹ Thomas Malton, *A Complete Treatise on Perspective in Theory and Practice, on the Principles of Dr. Brook Taylor* (London: Printed for the author, 1775).

³² Rogger, *Landscapes of Taste*, 113.

through their discussions on perspective, with Repton including perspectival calculations as part of his *Red Books*. As Rogger suggests: “Being or seeming ‘scientific’ was important to Repton, and the integration of a medical discourse lent further authority to his discussions of perspective.”³³ Repton knew very well how important the questions of reception were in his line of work, which led him to incorporate in his writing drawn explorations of the human visual field in relation to the anatomy of the eye.³⁴ Scientific discourse is repeatedly evoked in Repton’s work, integrated in his thinking, and working as he was in the shadow of the Enlightenment project of the eighteenth century, such embracing of universally applicable and widely accepted principles could only work in his advantage.

If Repton made use of medical discourse to support his writings on perspective, I wish to suggest he was equally aware of examples of contemporary (and historic) anatomical representations. From at least the sixteenth century onwards (some two hundred years before Repton’s time) medical knowledge was widely circulated in the form of so-called “fugitive” anatomical sheets—paper arrangements of hinged flaps that when opened flat exposed the human body to the viewer and revealed its interior (Figure 3 &4). The animated anatomical image invited user’s engagement and allowed the dissection, fragmentation, and detailed scrutiny of bodily parts.³⁵ In early modern anatomy textbooks, fugitive sheets produced medical knowledge in print and served as a didactic material that not only popularised but also challenged print form itself, enabling, as Rosemary Moore writes, “new forms of visibility produced by the idea of cutting.”³⁶

³³ Ibid., 114.

³⁴ Ibid., 113.

³⁵ Rosemary Moore, “Paper Cuts: The Early Modern Fugitive Print,” *Object* (2015), <https://doi.org/10.14324/111.2396-9008.004>.

³⁶ Ibid., 59.

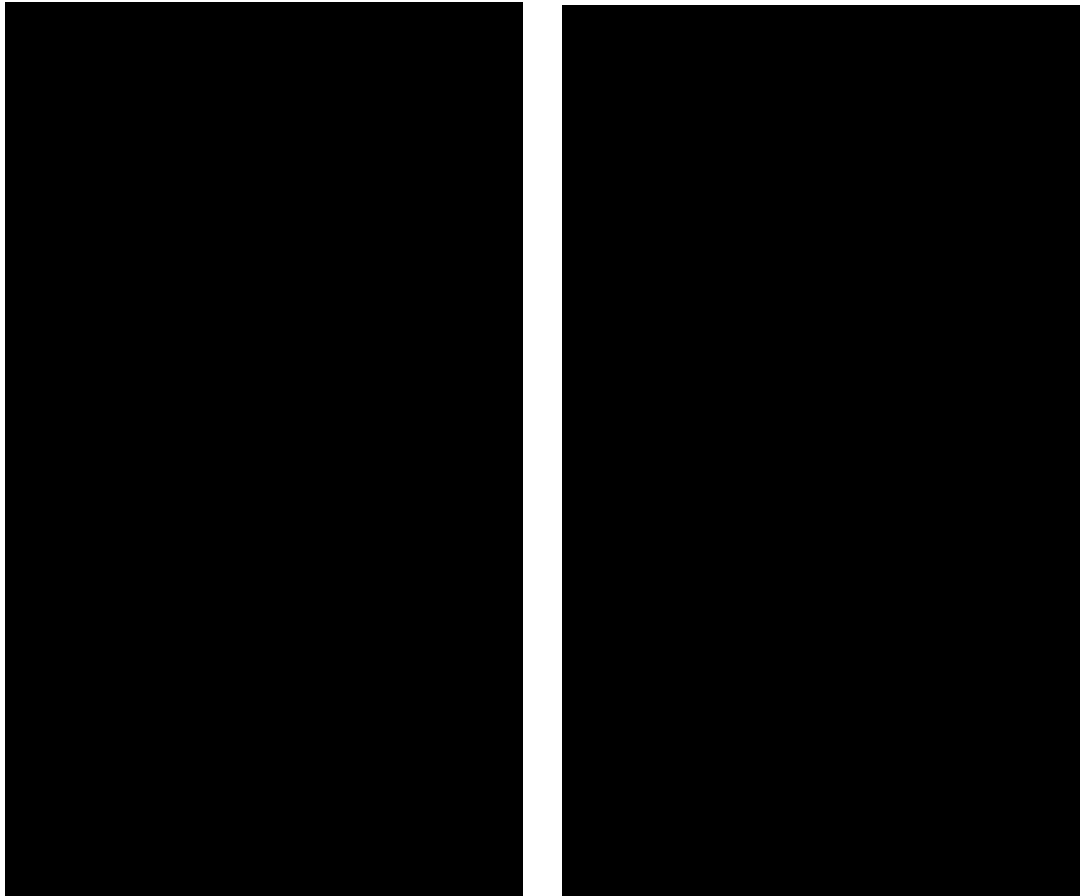


Figure 3 & 4. Anonymous printer, *Female anatomical figure from the Wittenberg triptych of fugitive sheets*, 1573. Woodcut, 37 × 31 cm. The Wellcome Library, London. (Image courtesy of The Wellcome Library.)

What seems pertinent to me in placing fugitive sheets and Repton's flaps side by side is not a mere resemblance of a particular representational technique but also the direct link between the two. In an age when reason, scientific method, and the idea of progress were the hallmarks of merit, the use of a known scientific method to put forward a landscape design proposal is unprecedented and ingenious, particularly from a marketing and argumentative point of view.³⁷ But the extent of Repton's cunningness fully comes into focus only when the flap is laid open. Where we would expect to see landscape anatomy, perhaps something similar to Humboldt's geological illustrations of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth

³⁷ Repton's artful move suggests an early example of a scientific worldview being used as a framework of authority to advance a proposed improvement, not unlike contemporary landscape practice's use of ecology.

century, or an early analytical drawing akin to McHarg's layer cake method of 1969, we are confronted with a bold design proposal.

Repton reappropriated existing tools but also reimagined and disrupted them. He leapt from the flap serving educational purposes to the flap advancing a particular design argument—an interpretation not an objective fact. The existing uses and meanings of the flap were turned on their head, with the principles of the picturesque and the contemporary habits of design presentation challenged. This suggests that Repton, as a man on the cusp between the rational Enlightenment and Romanticism, realized that reason, while significant, will alone not necessarily lead to desired action—in his case a secured garden commission. Repton understood that a pure reason-based approach is motivationally inert and, unaided, incapable of achieving his transformative ambition. Edward S. Harwood shows, through Barbara Warnick's work on the general shift in rhetoric in the seventeenth and eighteenth century,³⁸ how “[around Repton's time] attention shifts from the invention of a superbly crafted, rational argument to the question of the tools through which one might most effectively engage and influence how an argument is received. The recognition here is that an argument is a failure, no matter how brilliant it might be as a display of adamant logic, if the audience is not affected by it. Sheer reason alone will not carry the day.”³⁹ As Harwood notes, this shift in emphasis first appears in France but is firmly established in British theory by the mid-eighteenth century.⁴⁰ Repton's use of the flap thus stems from a broader preoccupation with how to engineer experience by exploiting reason.

³⁸ Barbara Warnick, *The Sixth Canon: Belletristic Rhetorical Theory and Its French Antecedents* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1993).

³⁹ Edward S. Harwood, “Humphry Repton and the Idea of Association,” *The Journal of Garden History* 16, no. 3 (September 1996): 197–98, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14601176.1996.10435644>.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 198.

The design presentations were created with their audiences in mind. Since large-scale landowning was open only to the elite, the *Red Books* aspired to entice men of taste whose mind, as Payne Knight argued, “[is] richly stored,”⁴¹ possessing the sensibility and knowledge required to perceive the intricate associations Repton put forward, a mind possibly well-versed in medical knowledge and the use of fugitive anatomical sheets. The eighteenth century saw the growing worth of scientific method and prized a scientific persona capable of revealing nature’s true self.⁴² Repton recognized this and, in his ambition of uncovering and restoring landscape to its “proper condition”, used the anatomical flap to reveal landscape’s “true interior,” the only landscape worthy of being true. If, in the case of fugitive sheets, as Moore notes, “the user’s hand performs much the same probing exploration of [the] paper assemblage as the anatomist performs on the cadaver,”⁴³ similarly, the tactile interaction with Repton’s flaps places the viewer in the role of an improver, with the purported legitimacy of a scientific method behind the desired transformation. The event of the *Red Books* therefore makes the landscape proposal ‘speak’ on behalf of Repton. All argumentation is handed over to the motion of the experiment, and movement, registered in bodily sensation, *testifies*.⁴⁴ What I want to propose is that Repton employed his argument

⁴¹ Richard Payne Knight, *An Analytical Inquiry into the Principles of Taste* (London: T. Payne, 1805), 143, as cited in David Marshall, “The Problem of the Picturesque,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 35, no. 3 (2002): 429.

⁴² Peter Galison, “Objectivity Is Romantic,” in *Humanities and the Sciences*, ed. Peter Galison, Jerome Friedman, and Susan Haack (American Council of Learned Societies Annual Meeting 1999, Philadelphia, PA, 2000), 22.

⁴³ Moore, “Paper Cuts,” 74.

⁴⁴ Isabelle Stengers, *The Invention of Modern Science*, trans. Daniel W. Smith (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 83.

aesthetically, through affect, realizing that action is driven as much by the mind as by the body, with not all of thought on the side of reason.⁴⁵

There is no doubt that there and then the staged landscape transformation did not take place, except on paper. What took place instead was a display of a proposition that operated as a lure, a burst whose felt potential lingered. Repton counted on the power of this lure, where conscious contemplation and qualitative judgement arrive only after, and where future possibility is directly, instantly felt. This might be why the turning of the flap was seen as a trick. It placed thinking in action, *in the event*, on the pre-reflective side. By challenging established ways of perception, it immersed viewers in the experience of revelation, worked instantaneously, left a mark primarily on the body and only secondly on the rational mind. As such, it revealed that affect, as the movement of thought,⁴⁶ embodied, cannot be stage-designed⁴⁷ but is, for better or worse, open to (and an effect of) manipulation.

Albeit in different contexts and via different means, present-day representations of landscape design propositions also partake in exploiting the power of affect, with visually seductive imagery of future transformations designed as bait, revealing a hidden impulse of those with a business eye. As long as thirty years ago, James Corner argued that “such [images] are eminently consumable, affording a visual feast for those with the appetite, while remaining ineffectual with regard to the actual production and experience of landscape.”⁴⁸ When images

⁴⁵ Brian Massumi et al., “Affect and Immediation: An Interview with Brian Massumi,” *DisClosure: A Journal of Social Theory* 28 (2019), <https://doi.org/10.13023/DISCLOSURE.28.09>.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 113.

⁴⁷ Hélène Frichot, “Infrastructural Affects: Challenging the Autonomy of Architecture in Architectural Affects after Deleuze and Guattari,” in *Architectural Affects after Deleuze and Guattari*, ed. Hélène Frichot and Marko Jobst (Abingdon: Routledge, 2020), 10-25.

⁴⁸ Corner, “Representation and Landscape,” 263.

are thought of as static elements of scripted interactions, the process of negotiated exchange is easily foreclosed, leading to a homogenization of experience and a deadening of attention. Repton, on the other hand, shows us that images of transformation, while inviting and persuading, need not function as passive displays and can resist closure—if only we are able to critically engage with affect as a promise *and* as a threat.⁴⁹

When a *Red Book* was closed and a decision was made, Repton's attempts at securing a job might fall through; a garden commission did not always follow. Captivating as encounters with the flaps must have been, there were many more *Red Books* than successfully realized projects. Although failures were bad for business, even Repton's uncompleted works point to his core skill, namely an ability to devise cunning ways of attaining, holding, and shifting someone's attention and to shape the relationships generated in the midst of it. When a difference between *before* and *after* took place—in thought and action, not only in represented view—the diverse players that constituted the experiment were changed and made more complex in the process, they "... *gain[ed]* in their definitions through [the] event, through the very trials of the experiment."⁵⁰

While the reasons behind the eighteenth-century allure of Repton's flap firmly lie in the social and political conditions of the time, there is a deeper, and fully contemporary, lesson to be learned from the performative quality of the *Red Books*: For transformative ambitions to take hold, they require impetus as much as rational deliberation. I have argued that Repton made the best use of the emerging scientific worldview, creating landscape

⁴⁹ Gregory J. Seigworth and Melissa Gregg, "An Inventory of Shimmers," in *The Affect Theory Reader* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 10.

⁵⁰ Bruno Latour, "From Fabrication to Reality. Pasteur and His Lactic Acid Ferment," in *Pandora's Hope. Essays on the Reality of Science Studies*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 126.

presentations whose full-bodied, experiential quality proved to stand the test of time. Since Repton, the world has considerably changed, yet recognizing the necessity of sensation, of movement, and of thought remains as timely as ever.