One is spread outside left to endure the harsh conditions of the New England climate, the other is sheltered inside and kept in pristine condition. The first is filled with rocks and other unappealing features, while the second is occupied with bright, vibrant flowering plants. The former's mysterious, unfamiliar layout is almost over shadowed by the exciting yet practical array of colorful pedals in the latter. Among the other wide spread differences, the Rock Garden and the Show Room, respectively, of The Smith College Botanical Garden share several key similarities. Both are modeled after popular European styles of gardening between the 17th to 19th centuries; the English natural fashion and the more orderly, geometric French method. However, it is through their varying characteristics that the Rock Garden and Show Room are able to attain the ultimate goal in the education and appreciation of the different spectrums of botanic gardening.

The Rock Garden is a near perfect representation of the ideals behind the movement of the 18th century and 19th century in England, more specifically. This movement was pioneered by the drastic change in taste from "the clipped and manicured formal garden which had been the old horticultural ideal" to a more natural looking garden that could be hard to distinguish from wilderness. This shift revolutionized gardening as a whole and can be easily seen demonstrated in the Rock Garden.

Several indicators that allow the viewer to make the connection between the Rock Garden and the influence of the English gardens of the 18th and 19th centuries, but the most

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important is composition. The arrangement of the garden is particularly significant because one of the most prevalent themes of this new found method of gardening was natural compositions. Although the locations of certain plants were obviously predetermined, the objective was to make it appear as if the garden could of grown naturally without human influence. The Rock Garden demonstrates this aspect in several different parts, along the paths especially, where the alpine plants interact with the rocks and other plants to hold the impression they are completely wild. Keith Thomas explains how the wilderness began to evoke certain feelings in observers when he writes, ”The wilder the scene, the greater its power to inspire emotion.”

The one path leading up to the Flowering Crabapple tree in the Rock Garden creates a serene or romantic sensation for the viewer that Thomas is describing in this quote. It was because of people’s unfamiliarity with this type of landscaping that left them with different impressions than the previously popular styles of gardening.

During the momentous shift in taste during this time, mountains and alpine climates took on a whole new role and representation in nature. Previously, people had been afraid of them and disliked the mountains due to their fear of the unknown. Once again Keith Thomas explains the shift by writing, ”The mountains which in the mid seventeenth century were hated… had a century or so later become objects of the highest aesthetic admiration.” This is important to recognize because the Rock Garden is made up of plants hailing from alpine environments. This can also be directly connected to the Royal Botanic Garden, Kew, in England in which I believe the Rock Garden to be modeled after the alpine environments.


\[3\] Thomas, Keith 259
collection there. Thus, further linking the Rock Garden to the popular ideas and landscaping styles of the English in the 18th and 19th centuries.

On the complete opposite side of the spectrum, the Show Room models a more French style of garden. As shown most famously in the extensive garden of the Palace of Versailles, the French had a very different view of Nature and how to manipulate it. From the water, to the bushes, to the grass and flowers, everything in the garden had been governed. As Nicola Courtright explained in her lecture of the Palace of Versailles, “The bushes were always trimmed and the plants were always flowering.”4 This was the French’s way of showing dominance over nature and it can be seen readily in the Show Room as well. The plants have been arranged in strict rows and columns on tables and draped on the walls. Color, size and type of species all are ways in which the plants are organized. Once again I turn to Keith Thomas for he declares simply in his writing, “that order was the essence of beauty.”5 The orderly, symmetrical arrangements of gardens in France during the 17th and 18th centuries are clearly modeled in the composition of the Show Room. This shows the capability of gardeners to have power over their landscape that compares to the King’s longing for opulent supremacy over his land.

The Show Room defies the English style of gardening in the Rock Garden for obvious reasons. And although different in color, texture and most importantly arrangement, the two gardens are able to provide similar services to the public. They offer two very distinct types of botanical gardens that have been modeled after famous movements in history. The art and craftsmanship of these gardens are direct reflections of those in the past. The opposing styles not only represent how the practices and tastes of landscaping have

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4 Nicola Courtright, FYSE 114 English Garden Lecture, Amherst College, Nov. 3, 2011
5 Thomas, Keith 257
changed over time but also how they are continuing to influence and shape the gardens of the present. After complete analysis, I truly believe that the keen differences in these gardens are indeed the means of connection between the two. Most simply put, without one garden to compare with, the other would seem less impressive and have an insignificant impact the ones who view them.

ABIGAIL BLISS

Hey Abbey, Your paragraphs were great. very little needs to be changed. But here are my responses below.

Kevin

Intro:

Positive: Impressed. Your vocab and descriptive techniques in the intro are great and really start your essay off on the right foot. Words like “undulating” and “vivacity” in context really separate your intro from others.

Negative: unsatisfied. There is very little I would change in your intro. Maybe one more descriptive word in your last sentence to compliment raw would make your point stronger in the last sentence of your intro.

Conclusion:

Positive: Satisfied. I felt that you clarified and summed up your arguments well In the conclusion by stating the effectiveness of each of the gardens and how they relate to the goals of the pamphlet.
Negative: displeased. I think one last strong sentence at the end of your conclusion to better complete your thoughts would be helpful.

-----Original Message-----
From: Abigail Bliss 15
Sent: Wed 11/30/2011 12:20 AM
To: Kevin Curry 15
Subject: RE: rewrite

Hey Kevin!

Overall, i think you did a great job with your paragraphs. My more specific positive and negative emotional responses are below. Let me know if you have any questions or need clarification!

Abbey

INTRO:

Positive: Intrigued. My interest is piqued by your vivid descriptions of the Rock Garden and Show Room. Also, you do a great job introducing the ideas of the French and English garden ideologies so your reader knows exactly where you’re headed.

Negative: Confused. It’s just a small thing, but I had to read the first sentence a couple of times. What might make it easier to navigate is if you added verbs and a comma so it read, “One is spread outside, left to endure the harsh conditions of the New England climate, the other is sheltered inside and kept in pristine condition.” Same with the second sentence: “The first IS filled...” Also, it might be clearer if you named the rooms earlier on instead of having to reference “the first” and “the latter” and the “second location.” Just in general, I guess, it would help to avoid vague terms, which includes “varying characteristics” and “key similarities.”

CONCLUSION:
Positive: Grounded. It’s great to see the clear connection between the French and English styles introduced in your first paragraph and their reappearance in your conclusion. It is easy to imagine that your body paragraphs stuck to one argument instead of going off on tangents. In addition, you do a good job of connecting the past with the present addressing how previous practices continue to shape the way we think today. Also, I found your use of the word “I” very interesting and wonder if you had used it at all throughout the rest of your essay. Often, the use of your own voice is a great means by which to persuade your reader.

Negative: Unsatisfied. I guess that with the introduction of your own voice and the hype about the styles transcending time and the introductory clause of “After complete analysis,” I was really expecting a killer last sentence to tie it all together and perhaps even push your argument further. “I truly believe that the keen differences in these gardens are indeed the means of connection between the two” just confuses me as I don’t understand how the differences connect. It is possible, however, that my confusion just stems from the fact that I didn’t read the rest of your essay.

LYNSAY EWING

Lindsay, Here are my responses to your paragraphs. Let me know if you need clarification.

Kevin

Intro:
Positive: Hooked. The last two sentences at the end of your introduction not only made it clear as to what you would be talking about but the way in which you formed them as a question is an interesting method and definitely makes me want to read on to see how you answered them.

Negative: unsatisfied. I would only change a few things. Some of your word choice becomes a little repetitive when you use artistic and aesthetic a couple times in the paragraph. Also maybe condensing some of the lists in your sentences might help to make your points more concise.

Conclusion:
Positive: Impressed with your ability to connect your arguments to the reading in regards to the “supermarket tomato”. It made it easy to tie it all together with an example so concrete.

Negative: Annoyed. I feel like you are over using the parenthesis and quotations in your conclusion. With so many in every sentence, these techniques become distracting and your conclusion longer than it may need to be.

-----Original Message-----
From: Lindsay Ewing [mailto:lindsayaewing@gmail.com]
Sent: Wed 11/30/2011 12:42 PM
To: Kevin Curry
Subject: Comments

Hey Kevin,

Here are my comments. Let me know if you have any questions. Good luck!

Lindsay

Introduction:
*Positive- Intrigued* I like the way you compare the two rooms without directly saying what they are in your first two sentences, and I think the parallel sentence structure is very soothing and successful (the one... other and first... latter (though I think you should say either former/latter or first/second)). It is intriguing because it is slightly confusing... I was eager to keep reading to find out what you were comparing.

*Negative- Confused* I'm not sure exactly where you are going with your essay, because the last sentence (your thesis I presume?) contains a lot of information and you have lots of things going on--are you saying that despite the differences in appearance, they have the same purpose (education and appreciation)? Also, you mention the mention of the French and English styles... is that something you are going to explicate during your essay? Otherwise it is just a bit distracting/confusing from your main point. Maybe you could mention it in an earlier sentence.

Conclusion:

*Positive- Impressed* I am impressed with the claim that the differences between the two gardens makes them similar. It is very bold, and I feel like you are taking a risk there... which is a good thing.

*Negative- Wondering* It seems as though you concluded two things: 1. The Show Room defies the English style of gardening in the Rock garden. 2. The differences between the two gardens cause a connection between the two. I am left wondering how you came to these conclusions, because I'm not sure how they relate exactly to your thesis. It is interesting on the one hand because you likely had a lot of movement in the body paragraphs because I did not see these themes in your intro, but also concerning because it
is also possible that I just do not understand your argument. Maybe just try to clarify exactly what you are trying to accomplish in the intro, and then the conclusion will make more sense.