

Hybridisation of built city and wild nature

Abstract

The natural is supposedly the “original”, the pristine; consequently urbanity is understood as its “other”, an expression of culture. As simple a contrast as this seems to be, as much nature and culture seem to be united in the practices of landscape design and nature conservation. The cultural landscape is the expression of a harmonious synthesis of both; but nature conservation, at least in Central Europe, somehow always refers to primeval wilderness, denying that its objects of protection are formed culturally. At the same time, wild nature, withdrawn from human control, increasingly establishes itself within urban areas. This is not a new phenomenon: Since the beginning of urbanity it has come along with the existence of nature adapted to humans without being controlled by them. In this way, the two worlds of nature and culture are combined, one is therefore tempted to talk about hybrid situations. Yet hybridisation usually denominates a volitional and controlled crossbreeding of two things of different origin to achieve a higher special benefit. For urban areas as controlled spheres of civilisation, this would mean to endow them with elements of volitional wild nature, for example to intensify urban greening in the light of climate change. In this paper this is discussed by means of the theory of *Außenhaus* (the external house) as a theory of quasi architectural organisation of open spaces in combination with designed and – in this context – also wild urban vegetation.

Keywords

Cultural meanings of nature, nature conservation, open space planning, urban planting design, urbanity