



The Invention of the Park: Recreational Landscapes from the Garden of Eden to Disney's Magic Kingdom

Karen R. Jones, John Wills

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The word 'park' conjures a kaleidoscope of bucolic images. Childhood frolics in urban playgrounds. Strolls through the country estates of Stourhead and Versailles. Wilderness adventures in the Serengeti. White-knuckle thrill rides at Blackpool Pleasure Beach and Coney Island. The Invention of the Park explores our fascination with making parks. In a broad-ranging environmental and social history, authors Karen Jones and John Wills search for a common set of ideas that inform park design. From Greek philosophers wandering sacred groves in the ancient world to today's kids watching Mickey Mouse in Disney's Magic Kingdom, the park has inspired and thrilled in equal measure. In a work spanning all five continents and several thousand years, Jones and Wills chart the evolution of the park idea. They ponder the intersection of the green pleasure ground with notions of democracy and freedom, welfare and consumption, conservation and nature. They forward the principle of a universal park idea malleable enough to survive war and revolution. Contributing to a growing literature on global environmental history, the Invention of the Park explores how the park idea has come to transcend national boundaries and found appeal among a worldwide audience. Jones and Wills situate the park as a complex product of natural and cultural forces. Their work is of interest not just to students and scholars of environmental philosophy, history, and landscape design, but to amateur gardeners, rollercoaster 'adrenalin junkies' and all those who like to take a 'walk in the park.'

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