



Gary Backhaus
John Murungi
Editors



Symbolic Landscapes



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Preface

In planning for our annual conference in 2005 of the International Association for the Study of Environment, Space, and Place, we decided on the theme, “Symbolic Landscapes.” This topic emerged through our interest in human/cultural geographical/environmental study and the research of specific geographers such as D. W. Meinig, J. Douglas Porteous, Denis E. Cosgrove, and J. B. Jackson, among others. More broadly, the study of symbolization crosses many disciplines and thus we believed that we had chosen a conference theme that would be successful in drawing scholars from the many disciplines. And, indeed, the conference was quite successful, with presenters from philosophy, geography, religious studies, history, literature, various social sciences, art history, various arts, architecture, musicology, and so on. We could not know in what direction our preliminary studies and conference-gathering would lead us in terms of subsequent projects, but we would assuredly be learning a great deal from each other. What we learned in terms of our editorial context was that each of the areas had something interesting and exciting to contribute. We became fascinated by the fact that both actual and imaginary landscapes were presented, but that both real and ideal components were constitutive of each. This distinction and its blurring would lead us to organize this volume in two parts: the first part dealing with “actual landscapes” and the second part dealing with “imaginary landscapes.” I put quotations around these terms due to our contention that the interrelation of perception and imagination at deeper levels blurs this distinction.

This edited volume is a subsequent project, but it is not to be construed as conference proceedings. The essays in this volume are invited papers and not all of them started as a presentation from our conference. Our first task in the creation of this volume entailed researching an array of literature for the sake of establishing a basic orientation from which a volume could be organized. Those treatises written by semioticians that we subsequently read were helpful with their technical distinctions. Nevertheless, they also promoted confusion in that the more fundamental epistemological and ontological implications were not considered, and the various positions were contradictory to one another in complex ways such that the notion of symbol itself became problematic. It was important to us as editors not to accept the authority of experts and then to proceed, but to critically engage the seminal works for insights leading to the development of our own position. Moreover, the

works by geographers concerning symbolic landscapes are extremely rich in illustrations, examples, case studies, and thus served to motivate us to put together an edited collection. Yet, even according to the admissions of several prominent geographers, these inquiries were exploratory and provisional without founding a definitive conception of symbolic landscapes. It became apparent that we were not going to be able to depend on making a critical selection from amongst geographical perspectives, but could only depend on them for providing sophisticated presentations of landscape symbolisms. So the works of geographers revealed themselves to be of utmost importance as explorations of the topic, yet philosophically unsatisfying. Still, the geographical corpus did suggest philosophical points of view from which a deeper grounding might establish a doctrine. Ernst Cassirer's work in this area certainly is philosophically satisfying and quite developed, yet we are not in agreement with his position. It has been Maurice Merleau-Ponty on whom we have leaned in order to stake out our philosophical theory.

In terms of creating an edited volume, it was important for us as editors to have a sense of making a case, of creating a doctrine putting forth a perspective. As always, we started with our fundamental principle, "geographicity," literally—earth inscription, meaning the spatiality of all phenomena. "Phenomena" is then taken to do with spatial meanings—productions, processes, and structurizations. The principle of geographicity initiates our transdisciplinary geographical turn. The geographical turn can be made in all forms of inquiry, which means that the geographicity of any phenomenon at issue is to be made thematic—framing the spatial dimension of the phenomenon. We maintain that without the geographical turn, which takes seriously the spatial characteristics of phenomena as a constitutive agency, an inquiry remains fundamentally at a greater level of abstraction from the life-world.

But the thematic of symbolic landscapes obviously involves spatiality in the term "landscape," and so at first glance the geographical turn does not seem to get us very far. In other words the sense of the concept seems to engender a thematic that includes spatiality. We maintain that even so, the geographical turn need not be made. The key strategy for us in this instance for initiating the geographical turn had been to inquire after the geographicity of symbol. In our study of semioticians and the philosophy of Ernst Cassirer, we noted the prevalence of an intellectualist bias in the treatment of symbol. By "intellectualist bias" we mean that the Kantian distinction between form and matter/contents is operative. Symbolization is treated as a cognitive form that establishes the meaning of the contents: a cognitive act of symbolizing something results in a symbolized object. A most egregious example of the intellectualist position is the neo-Kantian position that envisions the life-world as an inchoate (unstructured/meaningless) reality only receiving meaning (rational organization) on the basis of socio-cultural cognitive formations. Symbolization is interpreted as a process that requires a special cognitive act; otherwise then the meaning of something remains non-symbolic. In our response, we eschew intellectualism as well as the symbolic/non-symbolic distinction. We were reminded of Merleau-Ponty's gestural theory of language, which involves the intentionality of the lived-body and the precognitive gesture, which is

already meaningful and which is the genetic source for language. Symbolic meaning emerges on the level of the human life form, but from the interrelation of the lived-body with its milieu—the field of spatial productivity or what Merleau-Ponty calls “behavior.”

We came to the conclusion that language is not the only domain of symbolization that has its origin in this precognitive spatializing/spatialized field of meaning, but that all symbolization genetically arises on this basis. Merleau-Ponty, however, emphasizes the intentional structure of the lived-body, whereas we have made a case for the co-constitutivity of the lived-body and the EarthBody. EarthBody is our technical term that refers to the constitutive agency of the earth’s morphological structuring—it is correlative with the lived-body. Thus, instead of speaking about the structures of behavior, as does Merleau-Ponty, we think in terms of enactive geographicity, which includes the sense of behavior, but is preferred by us in order to envision the co-constituting spatial event, a field of meaning encompassing of the lived-body and the EarthBody. This move does not contradict Merleau-Ponty, but we believe is a move that is more consistent with his own later development of the ontology of the flesh.

Thus, we advocate a non-intlectualist, precognitive, embodied (spatializing/spatialized), genetic theory concerning symbolization. We have sought to begin development of this theory through this study of “symbolic landscapes.”

We use the word, “advocate,” because, given the nature of an edited volume, this theory is not given the rigor necessary for a thorough articulation and establishment. In phenomenological literature much use in titles is made of the notion, “towards.” “Towards” suggests the opening up of an area, description that clears the way for a further line of inquiry, initial efforts of examination necessary for later more refined studies that would not be possible otherwise. Our initial exploration presented here in our two introductions clears the way for a more articulated and established doctrine concerning symbolic landscapes, but in the meantime it is supported by no less than the sixteen diverse studies that make up the chapters of this book. These studies provide instances for thinking about the efficacy of our proposed theoretical doctrine. They are meant to be read in light of our proposal and to have been framed with our orientation in mind. Nevertheless as case studies, each has its own merit and each articulates a particular phenomenon in a rich and interesting way. The excellence of case studies is their detailed attention to a particular phenomenon, adding flesh and blood to the bare bones of theoretical exposition. These studies have tremendous merit even if they are not read on the basis of supporting a new doctrine. The empirical study of symbolic landscapes in itself is fascinating because it engenders the most meaningful ways in which humans engage a milieu.

The co-editors have been co-organizing annual international conferences since 1999 and this is our seventh volume. Each of our publications is progress in our scientia, which we have named “Geophilia,” and this science employs the geographical turn and promotes the principle of geographicity. The basis for our terminology and conception is quasi-phenomenological and compatible with the science

of self-organizing systems and open dynamic systems. Each of our works contains lived geography (spatial experience) as an aspect of our research. This aspect of the spatiality of lived experience is well represented in this volume as well. The International Association for the Study of Environment, Space, and Place promotes development of our scientia, beginning with members making presentations at our annual conferences. Members of our association contribute to our continual research and to our edited volumes. Please visit the website: www.towson.edu/iasesp.

We thank Dr. Rita Marinho (former) Dean of the College of Liberal Arts at Towson University, for her support of the 2005 conference that served as a necessary step in developing this volume. We appreciate Marion Wielgosz at Loyola College in Maryland for helping with the word processing and computer preparation of this volume. We also thank Jeep Watson at Uptown Press in Baltimore, Maryland for his expertise in improving the quality of the figures and preparing them to meet specs. We especially thank Maja de Keijzer and Anita Rachmat at Springer for patiently working with us.

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Table of Contents

Preface.....v

Contributors.....xv

List of Figures.....xvii

Part One: Places—Worlds

Introduction I: The Problematic of Grounding the Significance of Symbolic Landscapes 3

Gary Backhaus

I.1 Symbol – Landscapes – Symbolic Landscapes 3

 I.1.1 Semiotics: The Problematic of Defining ‘Symbol’..... 4

 I.1.2 Geographical Literature and Symbolic Landscapes..... 7

 I.1.3 The Problematic of Defining ‘Landscape’ 11

I.2 Toward the Geographicity of Symbolic Landscapes:

 A Phenomenological Grounding 12

 I.2.1 The Leading Clue: Merleau-Ponty’s Gestural Theory of Language..... 14

 I.2.2 Human Behavior: The Field of Meanings that is the Ontological Source for Symbolism 17

 I.2.3 Spatiality.....20

 I.2.4 The Spatiality of Sensation as a Gestural Expression.....22

 I.2.5 Symbolic Landscapes.....23

 I.2.6 New Trends in Cultural Geography 25

I.3 Conclusion 25

I.4 Overview of Part One 26

1 The Road to Indian Wells: Symbolic Landscapes in the California Desert..... 33

Alex Zukas

1.1 Introduction: Symbolic Landscapes 33

1.2 Confronting Postmodern Symbolic Landscapes in California’s Coachella Valley 37

1.3	Confronting Pre-Modern Symbolic Landscapes in the Coachella Valley.....	47
1.4	Two Ways of Being and Becoming in the California Desert.....	53
1.5	Conclusion: Thinking About Landscape	54
2	Wilderness as <i>Axis Mundi</i>: Spiritual Journeys on the Appalachian Trail	65
	<i>Kip Redick</i>	
2.1	Introduction.....	65
2.2	Defining Wilderness	66
2.3	The Rise of Wilderness as Symbol in the Intertwining of Lived-Body and Milieu of the Shepherd Nomad.....	67
2.4	Wilderness as <i>Axis Mundi</i> in Judaic and Christian Scripture	68
2.5	Wilderness and the American Milieu	72
2.6	Wilderness and the Sojourner	74
2.7	Appalachian Trail as a Place of Spiritual Journey.....	76
2.7.1	Historical Background.....	76
2.7.2	A Pathway through the Wilderness.....	76
2.7.3	A Work of Art with Religious Implications.....	77
2.7.4	The Experiential Spirituality of the Appalachian Trail.....	80
2.7.5	Pilgrims on the Appalachian Trail	80
2.7.6	Communitas and Liminality in the Intertwining of Lived Body and Milieu	82
2.7.7	Time.....	85
2.8	Conclusion	86
3	Pu‘u Kohola: Spatial Genealogy of a Hawaiian Symbolic Landscape	91
	<i>RDK Herman</i>	
3.1	Introduction.....	91
3.2	Tides of Time.....	93
3.3	Layers of Space, Time, and Meaning	94
3.3.1	Physical Geography.....	95
3.3.2	Conquest.....	96
3.3.3	The Hawaiian Kingdom and Westernization	98
3.3.4	American Colonization.....	99
3.3.5	The Harbor	100
3.4	Embodying Transformation	101
3.5	Navigating the Present	105
4	Mythological Landscape and Landscape of Myth: Circulating Visions of Pre-Christian Athos.....	109
	<i>Veronica della Dora</i>	
4.1	Introduction.....	109
4.2	Xerxes’ Canal.....	113
4.3	Alexander’s Mountain	116

4.4	From Emblem to Field	119
4.5	Conclusion	125
4.6	Coda	126
5	At Home on the Midway: Carnival Conventions and Yard Space in Gibsonton, Florida	133
	<i>Charlie Hailey</i>	
5.1	Introduction	133
5.2	Mediated Yard Spaces	134
5.3	Gibsonton's Boot: Ready-to-Wear Signs and Other Systems of Symbolism	136
5.4	Siting Gibsonton	138
5.5	Clearing Space: Town as Midway	140
5.6	Remaking Yard Space as Carnival Midway	142
5.7	Breaking Camp: Gibsonton as 'Lived Symbol' Between Arriving and Departing	147
5.8	Speculative Spaces: At Home in the Front Yard	151
6	Crossing the Verge: Roadside Memorial—Perth, Western Australia	161
	<i>Dennis Wood</i>	
6.1	Introduction	161
6.2	Location: The Geography of Roadside Memorial Sites	162
6.3	Excavating the Sites	163
6.4	Historical Perspective and the Meaning of Memorials	164
6.5	Ritual and Rite of Passage	166
6.6	Spontaneity of the Sites	169
7	Life on "The Avenue": An Allegory of the Street in Early Twenty- First-Century Suburban America	173
	<i>John Srygley</i>	
7.1	Introduction	173
7.2	From Main Street to Lifestyle Retail Development	174
7.3	An Allegory of the Street	178
	7.3.1 City Monumentality and Urban Amnesia	180
	7.3.2 Suburban Idealization: The Paradox of Private Public Space ...	182
8	Metaphor, Environmental Receptivity, and Architectural Design	185
	<i>Brook Muller</i>	
8.1	Introduction	185
8.2	Metaphor: Redesigning Design and Its Culture	187
8.3	Organism As Bauplan For Architecture	192
8.4	Furnishing Our Primary Inhabitation	194
8.5	Design as Hinge: The Architectonic of the Intraworldly	197

8.5.1 Extending and Compounding Green Metaphors: Watermark.....	198
8.5.2 Entertaining New Vocabularies: Edge/Corridor Effects.....	199
8.6 Conclusion	199

Part Two: Geographical Sensibilities in the Arts

Introduction II: An Apology Concerning the Importance

of the Geography of Imagination	205

Gary Backhaus

II.1 Sensibility, Geography, and the Arts.....	205
II.2 Geographies of the Imagination and Science	207
II.3 The Cartesian Paradigm: Banishing the Imagination from Scientia.....	210
II.4 The Relevance of the Geographies of the Imagination	212
II.5 Merleau-Ponty's Doctrine of the Imagination.....	214
II.6 The Artwork.....	215
II.6.1 Literature	216
II.6.2 Painting.....	217
II.7 Spacings and Human Creativity	218
II.8 Overview of Part Two	222

9 Semblance of Sovereignty: Cartographic Possession in Map

Cartouches and Atlas Frontispieces of Early Modern Europe.....	227

Christine M. Petto

9.1 Introduction.....	227
9.2 The Meaning of Maps.....	229
9.3 Colonial Possessions.....	230
9.4 Martial Activities in Europe.....	233
9.5 Jurisdictional Control.....	238
9.6 Conclusion	245

10 Symbolism and the Interaction of the Real and the Ideal: Scenery in Early-Modern Netherlandish Graphic Art

Anat Gilboa

10.1 The Prevailing View in the Art-Historical Research: The Exploration of Realism in Early-Modern Art.....	251
10.2 Imitation and Invention of Nature in Early-Modern Art	253
10.3 The Real and the Transitory in Early-Modern Landscape Views.....	255
10.4 Local and Foreign Settings	257
10.5 Cartographic Ambiguities	259
10.6 Conclusion.....	261

11 Traversing One's Space: Photography and the *féminine*

Panizza Allmark

11.1 Introduction	265
11.2 Theoretics and Approaches to Photography	267

11.3	Examples of My Photographic Project	273
11.4	Conclusion	276
12	The Philadelphia Flower Show and its Dangerous Sensibilities	283
	<i>Gary Backhaus</i>	
12.1	Experiential Therapeutics	283
12.2	Symbolizing Experiences of Springtime	285
12.3	Experiential Structure of the Symbolizing Experience.....	287
12.3.1	The Dangerous Sensibility	288
12.4	The Physical Layout	289
12.5	The Major Exhibitors: Symbolizing Ideal Landscapes.....	290
12.6	Characterizing the Artificiality of Place-Worlds	294
12.6.1	Genius Loci	295
12.6.2	The Commerciality of Place-Worlds.....	297
12.6.3	The Instant Environment Machine	299
12.7	Concluding Remarks.....	301
13	Gardening at a Japanese Garden	305
	<i>John Murungi</i>	
13.1	Introduction	305
13.2	The Subjective Path	306
13.3	The Objective Path.....	307
13.4	The Right Path	308
13.5	The Double Pre-Understanding	309
13.6	Face to Face	310
13.7	Handwork—Bodywork.....	312
13.8	Spatial Activity as Identity.....	314
13.9	Japaneseness.....	315
13.10	Concluding Remarks.....	320
14	Symbolic Space: Memory, Narrative, Writing.....	323
	<i>Arndt Niebisch</i>	
14.1	Introduction	323
14.2	Space in Ancient Mnemonics	324
14.3	Narrative (Kleist: “Das Erdbeben von Chili”)	328
14.4	Writing Space.....	331
15	Vienna’s Musical Deathscape	339
	<i>Linda Ardito</i>	
15.1	Introduction.....	340
15.2	Joseph Haydn.....	342
15.3	Overtones of the Deathscape in Documents	343
15.4	The Church and Redemptive Death	344
15.5	Nature’s Role in the Deathscape Phenomenon.....	346
15.6	Vienna and the Question of Suicide.....	347

15.7	Redemptive Versus Nihilistic Death.....	351
15.8	Death's Inspiration	352
15.9	The Deaths of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven.....	354
15.10	Conclusion.....	356
16	Crusoe's Island and the Human Estate: Defoe's Existential Geography.....	363
	<i>Dennis E. Skocz</i>	
16.1	Introduction	363
16.2	<i>Robinson Crusoe</i> : Map and Allegory	363
16.3	Are We All Castaways?	365
16.4	Remaking the Land	369
16.5	Ready-to-Hand and One's Own.....	371
16.6	Of Empire and Technology	373
16.7	Deciphering Crusoe's Geo-Scripting.....	375
16.8	Enter the Nameless Other	378
16.9	Enter Friday.....	381
16.10	Defoe's Symbolism: What It Says and How It Works	382
	Index	389

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List of Figures

Fig. 1.1:	California Route 111	39
Fig. 1.2:	Map of Coachella Valley	40
Fig. 1.3:	Esmeralda Interior	42
Fig. 1.4:	“Lake Esmeralda”	43
Fig. 1.5:	Tahquitz Waterfall	50
Fig. 1.6:	Palm Canyon	53
Fig. 1.7:	The Sleeping Chief.....	57
Fig. 2.1:	Two hikers walking through an old farm site: barn and fence posts with AT white blaze visible on a foreground post, near to Double Springs, Tennessee	78
Fig. 2.2:	Climbing to the Sun	78
Fig. 2.3:	Drying wet socks and boots over a fire at Lake Watauga in Tennessee	83
Fig. 2.4:	Hikers gathering after a thunderstorm and filling water containers, on Whitetop Mountain, Virginia.....	84
Fig. 3.1	Pu‘u Kohola sits atop the hill for which it is named. Visible halfway down is the older less-known Mailekini <i>heiau</i> . The rocks in the water may be the remains of Hale o Kapuni <i>heiau</i> , believed by some to have been destroyed in the 1946 tsunami. The beach area to the left is Pelekane Bay, site of the original village and royal residence. Here Vancouver dropped off cattle in the 1790s, and Liholiho (Kamehameha II) greeted French explorer Freycinet in 1819. Picture is taken from the coral flats that were part of the 1950s harbor construction.	92
Fig. 3.2:	Kawaihae’s location relative to the five volcanoes that comprise Hawai‘i Island	95
Fig. 3.3:	Ceremony as embodiment: Mel Kalahiki (center, with helmet and whale-tooth necklace) and his entourage in ceremonial dress, before the Saturday morning procession. Mel wears a replica <i>mahiole</i> (feather helmet) and <i>kihei</i> (feather cape), traditional signs of the <i>ali ‘i</i> . His guards, in <i>malo</i> (loincloths) and <i>kihei</i> (capes), carry replica spears, daggers, and a shark-tooth weapon. Pu‘u Kohola is visible in the background.	103
Fig. 4.1:	The peninsula of Mount Athos as seen from the International Space Station (NASA)	112
Fig. 4.2:	Supposed site of Xerxes’ canal	115

Fig. 4.3:	Cristoforo Buondelmonti, map of Mount Athos, fifteenth century, Ravenna, Class. lat.308, f.61	116
Fig. 4.4:	Pietro da Cortona, Acquaforte representing Pope Alexander VII and Dinocratic Athos, c. mid-seventeenth century	118
Fig. 4.5:	Fischer von Erlach's Dinocratic Athos in <i>Entwurf einer Historischen Architectur</i> , 1712	120
Fig. 4.6:	Pierre-Henri de Valenciennes, Mount Athos carved as a monument to Alexander the Great, 1796, oil on canvas	120
Fig. 4.7:	Plan of Xerxes' canal in Choiseul-Gouffier's <i>Voyage pittoresque de la Grèce</i> , 1791	124
Fig. 5.1:	Aerial view (1995) of Gibsonton, Florida. Alafia River to the north, Interstate 75 to the east, Symmes Road to the south, and East Tampa Bay to the west. Giant's Camp is located at the apex by intersecting roads south of the Highway 41 bridge over the Alafia River.	135
Fig. 5.2a:	Giant's Camp, Gibsonton, Florida: Al Tomaini's boot on display at the Giant's Camp entrance along Highway 41	136
Fig. 5.2b:	Giant's Camp, Gibsonton, Florida: Al Tomaini, "The Giant," at Giant's Camp in the 1950s	139
Fig. 5.3a	Observation Wheel: Ferris Wheel, Midway of World's Columbian Exposition, 1893	143
Fig. 5.3b:	Observation Wheel: Ferris Wheel in Gibsonton yard	144
Fig. 5.4:	Concession Stand: Gibsonton front yard	146
Fig. 5.5:	Matrix ground support for roller coaster during setup of the Florida State Fair Midway	149
Fig. 5.6:	Marion Post Wolcott, "Guest at Sarasota Trailer Park, Sarasota Florida, beside her garden made of shells and odds and ends. The camp has a garden club for members." 1941	150
Fig. 6.1:	Roadside Memorial Site-In-Process	170
Fig. 7.1:	Aerial View of "The Avenue at White Marsh"	174
Fig. 7.2:	The Avenue Streetscape from the Plaza	179
Fig. 7.3:	The Avenue Streetscape, Looking West	179
Fig. 7.4a:	Baltimore: Read Street, View Corridor	181
Fig. 7.4b:	Baltimore: Charles Plaza, View Corridor	181
Fig. 8.1:	The role of metaphor in Louis Kahn's design for the Phillips Exeter Library, 1969	190
Fig. 8.2:	A metaphor galvanizes awareness of shared visions within design culture	191
Fig. 8.3:	IBN Nature Research Institute, Wageningen, The Netherlands (Behnisch & Partner, 1996): diagram "Organizational Spine/Adaptable Limbs (L) and model plan view (R)	193
Fig. 8.4:	Gallery design as a part of the 2001 Glenn Murcutt Master Class	195

Fig. 8.5:	Traditional center-periphery orientation (L) and extension of bounding entity with “architecture-as-furnishings” (R)	196
Fig. 8.6	Architecture as Organism: crystallization of intention encourages weakening of form	198
Fig. 8.7	Metaphor (re)entering the ethos/architecture atmosphere	200
Fig. 9.1	Title Cartouche from Jaillot’s <i>Provinces-Unies des Pays Bas</i> . 1983 Folio 49.	234
Fig. 9.2	Scale Cartouche from Jaillot’s <i>Provinces-Unies des Pays Bas</i> . 1983 Folio 49.	235
Fig. 9.3	Frontispiece from Jaillot’s <i>Atlas Français</i> . 1973 Folio 17, vol. 1.	236
Fig. 9.4	Title Cartouche from Jaillot’s <i>Comté de Namur</i> . 1984 Folio 3, vol. 1.	237
Fig. 9.5	Title Cartouche from Jaillot’s <i>Provinces-Unies des Pays Bas</i> . (1695).1973 Folio 17, vol. 2.	238
Fig. 9.6	Title Cartouche from Nolin’s <i>Les Etats de Savoye et de Piemont</i> . 1984 Folio 3, vol. 1.	239
Fig. 9.7	Title Cartouche from Jaillot’s <i>La Généralité de Paris</i> . 1973 Folio 17, vol. 1.	242
Fig. 10.1	Willem Pieterszoon Buytewech, <i>Ruins of the Huis te Kleef near Haarlem</i> , 1621, etching, paper 87 mm x 125 mm, Amsterdam, <i>Het Rijksprentenkabinet</i> (RP-P-1883-A-6805), (Hollstein 4, p. 75, nr. 37–1).	257
Fig. 10.2	Hercules Pieterszoon Seghers, <i>Valley with Wooden Frame</i> , c. 1620–1630, Ink on paper treated with brown paint, etching, 132 mm x 188 mm, Amsterdam, <i>Het Rijksprentenkabinet</i> (RP-P-H-OB-808).	259
Fig. 10.3	Claes Janszoon Visscher and Pieter Bast, <i>Profile of Amsterdam from the River IJ</i> , 1599 and 1611, engraving and etching, 445 x 1432 mm, second state of the two, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (RP-P-AO-20–22/3), (RP-P-AO-20–22/2, RP-35584). ..	260
Fig. 11.1	Hong Kong, 22 July, 1999	274
Fig. 11.2	Cairo, 18 July, 1999	275
Fig. 11.3	Athens, 27 June, 1999	277
Fig. 11.4	Arles, 9 July, 1999	278
Fig. 12.1	Gateway to America. First exhibit observed when entering on the right.....	290
Fig. 12.2	Philadelphia Flower Show, 2005: Floor Plan. Right Entrance: Major Exhibitors. Middle Entrance: Competitive Classes. Left Entrance: Marketplace.....	291
Fig. 12.3	An example of a fantastic landscape. The pond is in the shape of an artist’s palette. Notice the paintbrush!	292

Introduction I

The Problematic of Grounding the Significance of Symbolic Landscapes

Gary Backhaus

I.1 Symbol – Landscapes – Symbolic Landscapes

The editors of this volume, Backhaus and Murungi, find “themselves” in an uncomfortable situation. Our last two volumes concerned concept-formations for which the tasks of epistemological and ontological grounding and development were our own responsibility—“lived topographies” and “ecoscapescapes.” But for this volume, we have taken the concept of “symbolic landscapes” from the literature of cultural geography, toward which this collection of essays makes a contribution. Back in 2004 we entertained the concept of symbolic landscapes and concluded that it would be a legitimate and viable thematic for our projects—a three-day international conference and subsequent publications, one of which has become this edited volume. During the time that we were soliciting submissions, we began writing this introduction. We had all along assumed that we sufficiently understood the sense of the concept, for we were familiar with major works in cultural geography that had explored geographical symbolism. We had heard some great presentations at the conference and were in the process of reviewing the essays that you will read in this volume. Nothing arose that led us to question the adequacy of our preparation, an informed, preliminary conceptualization from which we had proceeded successfully with our projects. Too optimistically perhaps, we presumed that we would be able to explicate the concept of symbolic landscapes to our philosophical satisfaction, based upon the expectation of apprehending a sound articulation of the concept, which we intended to extricate from the important theorists. But when we sought to provide a sophisticated, deeper grounding of the significance of symbolic landscapes on the basis of our scientific orientation, Geophilosophy, we ran headfirst into a very problematic state-of-affairs. The senses given for the concepts in the available literature, ‘symbol,’ ‘landscape,’ and thus ‘symbolic landscape,’ had been found to be unsettled/tenuous. We were confused as to whether disagreements arise on the basis of judgment-formations, or referent-distinctions, or both.

Having philosophical minds, we stimulated our thoughts by raising questions. Can we make the distinction between symbolic landscapes and non-symbolic landscapes? Does the notion, non-symbolic landscape, denote a thing-in-itself? If

it does, then do we say that we can know it as a thing-in-itself, or, do we claim like Kant, that a thing-in-itself is unknowable? If it is unknowable, then it follows that we only know symbolic landscapes? If we only know symbolic landscapes, then what is the point of calling them symbolic landscapes, when indeed the word, landscapes, would mean the same thing? If we can know non-symbolic landscapes as phenomenal unities, then what is their ontological status? What then in this case is the status of the symbolic? Is it that we only experience non-symbolic landscapes, but when we form knowledge about them, they become symbolic? Or, are some categorial meanings symbolic, while others non-symbolic? Could it be that the very notion of the non-symbolic is itself symbolic? These are philosophical questions about which we did not expect would be directly entertained by non-philosophical theorists. Nevertheless, we expected that the concept of symbolic landscapes would be sufficiently articulated so that we would be put on a path that would allow us to address these questions.

1.1.1 Semiotics: The Problematic of Defining ‘Symbol’

In approaching discussions that might give us insight into our ontological and epistemological questions, we engaged the literature to find out what the experts in various fields had formulated. We commenced with an obviously basic research question: so what then is a symbol? We began with consulting those experts who arguably are in the best service to answer—semioticians. Two well-known texts were consulted, both of which exhibited an egregious difficulty, but in two different ways. In his book, *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language*, Umberto Eco provides a chapter, “Symbol,” in which he discusses many theories concerning its meaning. Eco does recognize family resemblances in the definitions but notes a peculiar characteristic concerning component properties. If a compilation of component properties from the various theories are *a* through *i*, then we can have a theory that exhibits properties “*a* through *e*” and another “*f* through *i*.” There are then at least two theories that share no properties. So, given this radically disjunctive trait of family resemblance, there is no definitive definition upon which semioticians have agreed. On the other hand, if we do uncover a general sense that all the theories share, we move into a genus that includes more than just symbol, conflating it with various other concepts such that specific differences are obfuscated. If we subscribe to collecting all of the definitions, we introduce a state of confusion with inconsistencies and incompatibilities. Concerning Lalande’s gathering together of collaborators for the entry on symbol in the *Dictionnaire de philosophie* (1926), Eco writes, “it has been suggested that a symbol can be everything and nothing. What a shame.”¹ And so even what we (the editors) thought we understood in preliminary fashion, upon a more serious investigation becomes very problematic due to the lack of agreement in attempts to promote a fundamental sense to the term, symbol. Eco’s meta-analysis seems even to strip us (the editors) of confidence in our initial provisional sense.

In Robert E. Innis' edited volume, *Semiotics: An Introductory Anthology*, 15 different semioticians provide their definitions of the meaning of symbol and symbolism. Although much can be learned from studying this volume, which includes important "classic" essays written by the seminal semioticians, one does not take away a definitive meaning—thus corroborating Eco's observation. Perhaps there is a way to organize the positions of the semioticians into a few camps, but the task is beyond our research goals.

Still, let us scrutinize the definition of symbol provided by the well-known semiotician, Charles S. Peirce, for we do need some articulated notion from which to start. Peirce distinguishes between icon, index, and symbol.

An *icon* is a sign which would possess the character which renders it significant, even though its object had no existence; such as a lead-pencil streak as representing a geometrical line. An *index* is a sign which would, at once, lose the character which makes it a sign if its object were removed, but would not lose that character if there were no interpretant. Such, for example, is a piece of mould with a bullet-hole in it as a sign of a shot; for without the shot there would have been no hole; but there is a hole there, whether anybody has the sense to attribute it to a shot or not. A *symbol* is a sign which would lose the character which renders it a sign if there were no interpretant. Such is any utterance of speech which signifies what it does only by virtue of its being understood to have that signification.²

The "streak" possesses the character of a line regardless if it represents it or not. Remove the hole in the mold and there is no sign of a bullet-hole. Otherwise there is a bullet-hole regardless of whether or not someone cognizes it as indicating such. The symbol only is a symbol on the basis that an interpretant takes it as such; otherwise there is no connection. Yet, symbol is not disconnected from icon and index. Peirce gives the example of the word, "loveth." We associate the mental icon of one person loving another with this symbol. Even if no one loved another, the icon would still possess this character; it does not have to represent. The sentence, "Ezekiel loveth Huldah," also contains indices. "The effect of the word 'loveth' is that the pair of objects denoted by the pair of indices Ezekiel and Huldah is represented by the icon, or the image we have in our minds of a lover and his beloved."³ Take away these objects and there is no sign of a lover and his beloved. Yet if they remain, the lover and beloved are manifesting, they are indices regardless of whether anyone cognizes it. Peirce tells us that any ordinary word is a symbol: "it is *applicable to whatever may be found to realize the idea connected with the word.*"⁴ The icon's qualities resemble those of the object. But the icon is unconnected with the object. The indexical makes an organic pair with the object, but the mind has nothing to do with the connection, except to remark about it. The symbol is connected by virtue of the idea of the symbol-using mind. Peirce states that we think only in signs, which are of a mixed nature—the symbolic aspect is called a concept. "If a man makes a new symbol, it is by thoughts involving concepts. So it is only out of symbols that a new symbol can grow. A symbol, once in being, spreads among peoples. In use and in experience, its meaning grows. Such words as *force, law, wealth, marriage*, bear for us very different meanings from those they bore to our barbarious ancestors."⁵

Let us reflect upon Peirce's distinction. If we speak about a "mountain," then the word, 'mountain' is a symbol. The symbolic aspect of this word is, according to Peirce, a concept. To say that a concept grows must mean that it involves a genesis of meanings, that is, it becomes contextualized in a meaning-context, a thematic field, by which other symbols are genetically arranged and generated. To say that it spreads among peoples must mean that a concept involves the socio-historical transmission and sedimentation of meaning. This sense is explicated by the next sentence in the above quote, which makes the case that concepts change over time. What does this mean if concepts change? Are we still symbolizing the same thing? There is a referent—the mountain. Does this change? Indeed, concepts change. But do they change in such ways that they come to refer to different things? If the referent does not have ontological characteristics that make it the kind of thing that it is, then there is nothing stopping, for example, the concept of a mountain being attached to, for example, a razor blade, over time. But this is absurd, unless you are a radical, post-modern thinker perhaps. Peirce meets such an exaggeration by maintaining that symbolization involves "a law" and we can symbolize anything that realizes such a law.

Following Peirce we gain some excellent distinctions. However, if indeed, according to a meta-theoretical analysis, the various experts leave us with a plethora of disjunctive characteristics, what is the law that is applied to the concept 'symbol' itself? There is not sufficient agreement and this situation leaves the editors between a rock and a hard place. We either go on talking about a concept when we have to admit that on a definitive level we do not know what we are talking about, or we have to be heavy-handed and through our editorial power legislate a definition. There is nothing wrong with this, but it seems inappropriate for an edited volume, whereby others will be advocating senses of the term on the basis of the theorists to whom they subscribe. But perhaps we can take the approach to forge our fundamental epistemological and ontological insights from our own scientific orientation—Geophilia, or the standpoint of its subdiscipline of lived geography (how symbols are experienced). We can pave the way for the concept of symbolic landscape to be articulated on the basis of the geographical turn—thematicizing the concept's geographicity. Or, perhaps it is sufficient to consult those specialists in geography that work in the field of geographical symbolism. We would then come to working definitions on the basis of an inductive strategy.

But, let us think as philosophers once more. It seems that the words (symbols), 'the mountain peak,' do not constitute its referent—the mountain peak—as a symbolic landscape. The words as symbols involve a sense that points to the referent, but in this case the symbolic meanings of words do not exude from the material entity, a symbolic dimension of the landscape itself (at least not in the standard theories of language). But, in the case whereby the symbolism is an aspect of the landscape, not all meanings, then, seem to have a symbolic significance. Everyday significances do not seem to make of the mountain peak a symbolic landscape. A mountain peak is just that—a mountain peak, the apex of a naturally raised significant elevation of the earth's surface. Or, does symbolism manifest here too, even in the everyday realm, or in the most literal of senses? Yet we are clear on

this point, we are not after the words, ‘the mountain peak,’ which are symbols; we are referring to the entity that we can experience, remember, or imagine—the mountain peak—which is to be taken as a symbolic landscape. Architectural theorist, Norberg-Schulz, has stated that: “‘Symbolization’ ... means a representation of a state of affairs in another medium.”⁶ As will be shown later, we, the editors, do not subscribe to the language of representation, and in fact, Norberg-Schulz revisits the notion of symbolization in a later volume, providing a better articulation. “Symbolization implies that an experienced meaning is ‘translated’ into another medium. A natural character is for instance translated into a building whose properties somehow make the character manifest. The purpose of symbolization is to free the meaning from the immediate situation, whereby it becomes a ‘cultural object.’”⁷ We shall later explicate how this “translation” occurs when we submit the notion of symbolic landscapes to our notion of geographicity. The mountain peak qua mountain peak, that is, its “straightforward” apprehension does not seem to be a symbolic landscape. But, if the mountain peak symbolizes for us the pinnacle of achievement or the heights of esoteric knowledge, then the mountain peak carries symbolic meaning, for it translates states of affairs in the medium of mountain peak experience into the media of action and thought, respectively. But are mountain peaks *ever merely/only* mountain peaks, do they not always carry a symbolic dimension? Moreover, even if we are interested in the symbolism of the landscape, symbolism if conveyed in words counsels us not to abandon language, that is, not to exclude language as an aspect of our theoretical grounding.

1.1.2 Geographical Literature and Symbolic Landscapes

Denis Cosgrove, perhaps more than any other geographer, has written and edited works concerning symbolic landscapes. In the “Introductory Essay for the Paperback Edition,” a new, additional introduction that reflects on his famous work, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape*, he writes, “‘Symbolic landscape’ is nowhere precisely defined. I was astonished to find that it does not even appear in the index, and the theory of symbolism underlying the work is left unclear.”⁸ This state of affairs is not atypical of other pertinent literature in geography. Does this mean that geographers are irresponsible, that they do not know what they are doing? No, geographers, generally, have taken a different path—extensive definition. Geographers present ostensive, symbolic landscapes through case studies. They do offer intensive definitions, but these are working definitions, offered in case study testing grounds, which lack in the elaboration necessary for theoretical demands of rigor. Still, there is much to be learned from these definitions that guide geographical case studies, which through exhibiting great exploratory richness on the empirical level, promote the promise of certain definitions, advocating adoption through example.

Let us apply Peirce’s view in terms of the symbol-referent. We apprehend a landscape in “an image”: a perceived, remembered, or imagined profile or set of

profiles. Image is not meant in the sense of imitation, but rather apprehension in terms of a material entity's very manner of displaying its embodiment. It is worth noticing that the words, 'perceive' and 'conceive,' are related; they are formed through the Latin, *capere*—to take. On the cognitive level, we perceive and conceive together in a synthesis of acts, but the perception is not related to the conception in some strictly determined way, which perhaps allows for non-symbolic and symbolic strata of meanings to be displayed by the referent. Perception allows us to take something as something, but whatever *the something is* that is perceived, requires conception/ideas.

Image becomes symbol.... Images are not symbolic in themselves.... Images such as landscape, seascape, garden, city, mountain, valley, desert, cave, island, are symbolic in context.... A garden is just a garden, until it has two people and a snake in it. An island is just a small piece of land surrounded by water, but when John Donne says 'no man is an island,' then the island takes on additional meaning ... [The] straightforward object contains a hidden depth of meaning.... A symbol stands for something beyond itself.⁹

If we think of the mountain peak, this image (Peirce's icon, but not necessarily a "picture") only becomes a symbol if indeed it carries with it contextual meanings that transcend its intensive definition. If we see a hillside in the woods filled with blooming wild flowers, there is the straightforward perceived image that is what it is. But, is it possible to demarcate a non-contextualized realm of meaning? If we subscribe to the notion that consciousness is structured as a dynamic field, about which Aron Gurwitsch informs us,¹⁰ every theme in the focus of attention is necessarily contextualized in a thematic field; the notion of an atomic sense datum, a dictum of logical positivism, is erroneous. The image never presents itself merely in a thematic focus; it necessarily is presented within a thematic field. And that thematic field seems to inevitably include symbolic meanings that contextualize the theme. The hillside of blooming wildflowers is perhaps contextualized in a thematic field that includes symbolization: the freshness of renewal, the excitement of a new start, as well as indicating the arrival of spring, which then includes the various symbolic meanings associated with spring. Or, are there human beings that merely think only in the most literal of terms? Even the cigar crunching industrial capitalist sees the new industrial plant as a symbol of technological progress and not just as an index for how much richer it will make him. Clothes are mundane objects, but do they not always carry a thematic field of meanings, symbolizing attitude, life-style, etc.?

If we refer to landscape as, "an earthly expanse," some geographers make the distinction between the ordinary sense of landscape (an earthly expanse) as manifest in our everyday encounters and then symbolic landscapes that are culturally encoded with meanings that represent something more than the meanings of everyday pragmatic engagement. Some see this something more as *cultural values*, indeterminately conveyed, which allow for a broad range of interpretations and evaluations. In his study of maps, J. B. Harley sees maps as a species of *value-laden images*. "It is often on this symbolic level that political power is most effectively reproduced, communicated, and experienced through maps."¹¹ But are not all images value-laden, and thus symbolic? Perhaps we can talk about symbolic versus

non-symbolic levels of meaning but insist that landscapes always carry both levels. But does not everyday pragmatic significance carry value? Sure it does. Draw the conclusion—(i.e., the everyday, too, involves symbolization)!

Dorá Drexler states, “Landscape is not only the complex system of environmental elements such as air, water, soil etc. Landscape is also a mental institution, a symbol.”¹² But then, air, water, etc. too carry their symbolic dimensions or context. Drexler investigates the differences in landscape symbolism of the French, Germans, and Hungarians. Daniels and Cosgrove state, “A landscape is a *cultural* image, a pictorial way of representing, structuring or symbolizing surroundings” [*italics mine*].¹³ But notice that in this quote it appears that landscape as a cultural image is a symbolic landscape, whereas ‘surroundings’ is used as a substitute notion for the non-symbolic significance of landscape. Empirical science attempts, or gives the impression of, the separation of fact from value. Are “surroundings,” then, the scientific version of landscape, whereby “the natural” is the apprehended non-symbolic (acultural, perhaps) characteristic? Daniels and Cosgrove point out that “in human geography the interpretation of landscape and culture has a tendency to reify landscape as an object of empiricist investigation.”¹⁴ More stridently Peter Fuller charges that “geography became stripped in the post-second-world-war years of its aesthetic and ethical dimensions. In the 1950s and throughout the 1960s, a positivistic ‘scientism’ began to fall.”¹⁵ The goal of the positivistic project is to find a level that conforms to “natural reality” by which causal conditions can be made manifest in empirical/experimental investigation—the apprehension of facts. It appears we would then have found the non-symbolic level of reality. But isn’t this heavy-handed delineation of the natural itself engulfed in symbolism? Naturalism is a metaphysical orientation, and metaphysics involves speculation concerning the whole, which is ungraspable. Thus, metaphysics, in its very essence, is a symbolic system. “Objects may be arranged into *systems* which describe the world.”¹⁶ This system, naturalism, is a symbolic thematic context, and its pretension of having extracted values (the anthropomorphic) is a farce, because it projects its own value of a value-free level of reality onto phenomena (scientism). It seems, then, that the alleged non-symbolic is indeed another form of the symbolic.

In *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape* Cosgrove pursues the thesis that “relates ideas about the cultural significance of landscape to ways in which land is materially appropriated and used.”¹⁷ This methodological integration also characterizes Hugh Prince’s approach to landscape painting: “to look for iconographic rather than empirical representations of the countryside, or rather to see empiricism in landscape painting as much an iconographic issue as its apparent absences.”¹⁸ Does this mean that the non-symbolic is a mode of the symbolic—a Hegelian approach? But Cosgrove seems to offer the converse—a Marxist approach, “Part of the iconography of landscape is thus to be disclosed by relating it to the material appropriation of land itself.”¹⁹ Perhaps there is always a dialectical relation between the symbolic and the non-symbolic, necessarily relating the symbolic dimension or ideal super-structure to the non-symbolic or real landscape

conditions, *but in a co-constitutive manner*. For Cosgrove, a landscape idea concerns a way of appropriating, which corroborates Drexler's notion of landscape perception that is culturally informed. But if this is the case, can we actually ever have a non-symbolic landscape? How do we put aside the cultural filter and see the landscape in itself, or in its value-free and ahistorical, real condition? Is it possible to grasp a landscape devoid of symbolic interpretation? Can we unmask our ideologies and utopian projections and uncover the "bare" landscape? But if we cannot grasp a non-symbolic landscape does this mean that the landscape is not something real, is it merely social construction? It appears that Cosgrove wants to allow the dialectical tension to stand between cultural ideas/production (symbolic meanings of landscapes) and material real conditions (non-symbolic meanings of landscapes).

Continuing this discussion, Douglas Davies offers a "qualified no" answer to the last question above.

To speak of symbolism ... is to presume that both perceiver and perceived are set within a mutual system of information yielding a higher order of knowledge than exists at the outset.... The symbolic arena embraces the thinker, the object of thought—a tree for example—and the medium of historical and cultural imagination which integrates them in the act of symbolic reflection.... Within my own autobiography it assumes a higher order significance.... [Symbols] possess a peculiar appropriateness arising from their historical significance and their physical features. Very often symbols are what might be called a physical manifestation of ideas.... We are now in a position to say that the attractiveness of trees lies both in their physical nature and in the creative metaphorical capacity of the human mind.²⁰

It is not that we do not perceive the physical characteristics of the tree, but it is the case that these characteristics are not perceived outside of the medium of historical and cultural imagination, the creative capacity. The physical and symbolic dimensions are moments and any separation involves abstraction, if indeed, it is possible to even conceptually separate them so that an abstraction can be performed. In a case study concerning trees and woodlands, Stephen Daniels shows how they have been symbolically "exploited to represent ideas of social order."²¹ How do we separate the ideas of social order from real conditions when ideas are concretized in reality and thus in fact are an aspect of the material of reality? Davies' case study seems to suggest that a separation of the ideal from the real is a problematic abstraction.

We have been engaging in a philosophically rich inquiry and gaining insight into the problematic by raising questions. We have raised problematics concerning "vertical and horizontal structures." We have shown that separating conception (symbolic) from perception (non-symbolic) is problematic (the vertical) and distinguishing ideal from real (the horizontal) is also problematic. So far we have been emphasizing 'symbol,' and it now seems appropriate to focus on the notion of 'landscape.'

1.1.3 The Problematic of Defining 'Landscape'

J. B. Jackson writes, "For more than twenty-five years I have been trying to understand and explain that aspect of the environment that I call the landscape. I have written about it, traveled widely to find out about it; and yet I must admit that the concept continues to elude me."²² D. W. Meinig states that landscape is "an ambiguous term" and then proceeds to define landscape in a series of definitional overlappings with related but different terms. "Landscape is related to, but not identical with, *nature*." "Every landscape is a scene, but landscape is not identical with *scenery*." "Landscape is ... related to but not identical with, *environment*." "Landscapes are related to, yet not identical with, *places*." "Landscape is a portion of the earth's surface, related to, but not identical with, region, area, of geography."²³ In another essay Meinig provides what he calls ten *versions* of the same scene. Germane to our symbolic theme is the manner in which he constructs these versions using the word "as": as Nature, as Habitat, as Artifact, as System, as Problem, as Wealth, as Ideology, as History, as Place, and as Aesthetic. "As" is used for constructing a simile in which two different things are likened to one another. In this case, I would argue that there is an ambiguity such that both "as" and "is" carry sense. For example, a landscape is a system, but system does not exhaust landscape, so it is the case that landscape can be interpreted as a system in that both terms seem to overlap, yet maintain differentiation. Landscape is more than a system (unless it is contextualized in a notion of system that captures all of its possible aspects). It can be argued that an aspect of landscape is abstracted and thematicized, perhaps leading to reduction. But this is why I want to maintain the is/as ambiguity. Maintaining this ambiguity in interpreting how Meinig establishes a "version" in the first place allows for the symbolic aspect of landscape interpretation.

Meinig states:

We regard all landscapes as symbolic, as expressions of cultural values, social behavior, and individual actions worked upon particular localities over a span of time. Every landscape is an accumulation, and its study may be undertaken as formal history, methodically defining the making of the landscape from the past to the present. ... And every landscape is a code, and its study may be undertaken as a deciphering of meaning, of the cultural and social significance of ordinary but diagnostic features.²⁴

But there is tension in Meinig's orientation. In another essay he asks a series of questions, three of which are especially pertinent to this discussion. "What were the landscapes which have served as the bases for these symbols really like?" "How do actual landscapes become symbolic landscapes?" "How do we define and assess the significance of the difference between the ideal and the real?"²⁵ These questions imply a non-symbolic layer of meaning. But perhaps we can put forth that purely symbolic landscapes and purely non-symbolic landscapes are limiting concepts? Perhaps this tension points to a fundamental ambiguity? It can be argued that Meinig unwittingly is allowing the notion of ideology to influence how he uses the word, 'symbol.' And thus what he is after is the attempt to

unmask the ideological aspect of ideas, rather than find the non-symbolic. The ideological may be a dimension of symbolization, but should not this dimension be distinguished without positing a non-symbolic dimension?

An illustration may help. In a chapter, “The Stylish House or Fashions as an Ecological Term,” in the book, *Reading the Landscape: An Adventure in Ecology*, May Theilgaard Watts provides a description that admits of the ambiguity with the notion of style. She begins: “This is going to be an account of a certain old house, and the plants in its life. There has been a definite succession of these plants; and the major ecological force in determining this succession has been *style*.”²⁶ The modifications of the yard and its plantings are described over the succession of five generations from 1856 through 1941 and beyond. There seems to be a non-symbolic level of meaning that corresponds to the mere planting, for example, of a snowball bush. Yet, along with material economic conditions that make the snowball bush available, there is a layer of meaning, a function of style that points to a symbolic context that is unintelligible outside of a context involving the purchasing and planting of a plant—real material conditions. The mere planting of a type of a bush, and even the selection of its colors, involve a symbolic context. So, we may indeed put to service the symbolic and non-symbolic distinction, but it will always be problematic.

We come to the conclusion that the distinction is inherently problematic, for there is a primordial ambiguity about which we have not given account. Even though our strategy of perusing the literature on symbolic landscapes seems very promising and has provided much insight into the problematic, the state of *aporia*, induced by the semioticians, remains. The next strategy is to explore our methodology of the geographical turn and submit “symbolic landscapes” to our notion of geographicity. We find that Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s notion of the intentionality of the lived-body helps us to provide a genetic phenomenology that starts with the precognitive emergence of the symbolic level. We offer a precognitive and thus novel account for symbolic landscapes. Following Merleau-Ponty, if at the level of sensibility there is already meaning, if “material” is already pregnant with “form,” then an intellectualist account of symbol provides an insufficient explication. And if there is a field of experience prior to emergence of “thing” and “consciousness,” then it is impossible in such a field to partition the real and the ideal, the symbolic landscape from the non-symbolic landscape.

I.2 Toward the Geographicity of Symbolic Landscapes: A Phenomenological Grounding

We have explored the literature that provides us with a thematic meaning-context concerning the notion of symbolic landscapes. Still, philosophically, the notion “floats on an uncharted sea” and there is much in the discussions that fails to satisfy our scientific orientation—Geophilia. For this, we shall submit the notion of symbolic landscapes to our methodology—the geographical turn. This may sound

redundant, for if we are dealing with symbolic landscapes, how can we *not* make the geographical turn? Nevertheless, the “geographical turn” requires a commitment to meanings in a way that takes into consideration the co-constitutivity of the EarthBody. A commitment to meanings, a phenomenology, may be conducted in a way that views constitutivity as solely the function of intentionality. But the geographical turn recognizes the co-constitutivity of the worldly-embodiment: Earth Body is our technical term. The geographical turn involves the notion of geographicity—the spatial manifestation of all phenomena: the notion that meanings inhabit all embodiments. Literally, geographicity means exhibiting the spatial character of earth writing—inscribing spatial meanings. “Symbolic landscapes” is an earth-writing; so where do we find the source of this meaningful embodiment? Cosgrove’s approach whereby he accounts for both cultural ideation and material appropriation indicates for us, regardless of how rich his analyses, a fundamental problem, a residuum of Cartesian dualism. From our standpoint, both intellectualist and empirical accounts miss the geographicity of symbolic landscapes. The attempt to account for both transcendental thought and material causality is, in the end, as dissatisfying as Descartes’ two-way interactionism between two substances.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty, more than any other thinker, has challenged the vestiges of Cartesianism that continue to permeate and haunt all of Western theoretics. Merleau-Ponty provides an orientation by which we can discover the geographicity of symbolic landscapes.

If we are truly serious about re-rooting ourselves to the earth (the eros of our scientific viewpoint, Geophilia), we must recognize the embodiments of meaning and their spatializing/spatialized processes. Fleshing out meanings at the precognitive level is an essential aspect of our research in lived geography (experiential geography). We will exhibit the presence of symbolic meaning within precognitive experience. Symbolization is an embodied enactment of meaning, a spatializing production/spatialized construction. And, as spatializing/spatialized, the experiencer (whether the active producer of, or the “witness” to, symbolization), the symbol itself, and the symbolized constitute a system, a meaningful field manifesting geographically in the world. Prior to intellectual articulation is this ambiguous, but meaningful, precognitive field. In lived geography, symbolization emerges as an ambiguous spatial event between the lived-body and its milieu (EarthBody). It is ambiguous because the field involves a co-constitutivity that conflates the roles of agency and patient.

Our move to precognitive experience allows us to distance ourselves from the neo-Kantian position of Cassirer in his *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*. In Kantian thought, reality is unknowable in-itself, so the forms of understanding must make experience intelligible. According to Cassirer, symbols are the instruments of a priori thought, the necessary organs that establish the conditions for knowing the world. In *An Essay on Man*, Cassirer writes: “Physical reality seems to recede in proportion as man’s symbolic activity advances. Instead of dealing with the things themselves man is in a sense constantly conversing with himself. He has so enveloped himself in linguistic forms, in artistic images, in mythical

symbols or religious rites that he cannot see or know anything except by the interposition of this artificial medium.”²⁷ Merleau-Ponty does find aspects of Cassirer that are worth reference.

[Cassirer] takes Kant to task for having most of the time analyzed only an ‘intellectual sublimation of experience’ ... when he tries to express, through the notion of symbolic pregnancy, the absolute simultaneity of matter and form.... When Cassirer takes up the Kantian formula according to which consciousness can analyze only what it has synthesized, he is manifestly returning to intellectualism despite the phenomenological and even existential analyses which his book contains and which we shall have occasion to use.²⁸

By contrast, we take the position that meanings are established through the primordial interrelation between the lived-body and its milieu, the field of Being that reduces to neither one. This means that symbols arise in the ambiguous field of embodied experience, not in intellectual or cognitive judgment as organs of thought, and that as prior to spatial productions/constructions they are neither the result of external empirical forces determining associations nor internal transcendental formations of thought.

1.2.1 The Leading Clue: Merleau-Ponty’s Gestural Theory of Language

Almost all theories concerning language treat words as conventional signs—arbitrary symbols that represent objects. This characterization of words as conventional and arbitrary is challenged by Merleau-Ponty in his gestural theory of language. For both empiricist and intellectualist psychologies the word is simply an empty shell. In empiricism the word appears on the basis of neurological mechanics and association, and in intellectualism, it is pure thought that carries meaning. The word is considered to be merely its external accompaniment. In empiricism, there is no subject who speaks and in intellectualism there is only a thinking subject, not a speaking one. But in Merleau-Ponty’s doctrine of the lived-body’s intentionality, whereby sensation is already a meaningful level of experience, meaning is embodied in the *physiognomy* of the words themselves—the geographicity of the word—words are indeed gestures expressing the world.²⁹ “The word, far from being the mere sign of objects and meanings, inhabits things and is the vehicle of meanings.”³⁰ This contradicts Peirce who puts forth that, as we have seen, the word *represents* the thing, and to do so, the word is connected to a concept, an idea. This connection to an idea (intellectualism) makes it a symbol. But Merleau-Ponty shows us that at the precognitive level, generated through lived-body intentionality, the word is a *quality of the object*, and that the word does not await the concept to have a meaning, but rather it already carries, is pregnant with, meaning, without being conceived.

Merleau-Ponty’s gestural theory digs below the subject and object dichotomy to which standard theories presuppose. On the precognitive level of embodiment there

occurs an *intertwining* of the lived-body and world. A subject does not associate or form a sign that represents an object that is maintained to be epistemologically an other. The word autochthonously emerges on the basis of the intertwining. The word is an aspect of the entity, just as other properties such as color, yet, it also is the manner in which the lived-body *in-corporates* the entity and expresses it through its behavioral schema (*ex-stasis*). “Through its ‘sensory fields’ and its whole organization the body is, so to speak, predestined to model itself on ... the world. But as an active body capable of gestures, of expression, and finally of language, it turns back on the world to signify it.”³¹ The lived-body immediately transcends itself as it recuperates the world. The body schema, the meaningfully organized morphology, sensorium, viscera, etc., is ambiguously a field structured on the intertwining of both lived-body and perceived-complex (*milieu*), which sets in motion a vertical genesis of meaning from sensation to cognition. “The meaning of words must be finally induced by the words themselves, or more exactly, their conceptual meaning must be formed by a kind of deduction from *gestural meaning*, which is immanent in speech.”³² For the speaking subject, thought does not precede speaking; “his speech is his thought.... The listener does not form concepts on the basis of signs.”³³ The word designates neither thoughts nor things; rather an existential meaning inhabits words, which allows thought to achieve presence in the phenomenal world. All meanings are sensory generated and all *sensa* manifest as spatializing/spatialized. Words are gestural responses to existential situations. By acknowledging the spatial embodiment of words as a species of expressive gestures, we can discover the geographicity of the word.

The word is then neither some meaningless sound employed by pure thought nor sense data’s associative laws arising as a representation of something in the world. The word is an expressive gesture that already expresses the organized ambiguous field that arises from the interrelation of the lived-body and the perceived-complex (figure-ground). The word-gesture is contextualized in a specific existential situation. Nevertheless, the “expressive gestures ... announce the constitution of a symbolic system capable of redesigning an infinite number of situations. They are a first language.”³⁴

Merleau-Ponty’s position will seem an exaggeration unless the seemingly obvious conventionality of words and the role of concepts can be given an account. How can the words of different languages, tree, *arbre*, and *baum*, be anything but arbitrary conventions? First, there is a distinction to be made between originary/authentic speech and the conventionality of language. Just as a cry or moan expresses feelings that disclose the significance of an existential situation, words in the originary sense are lived-body gesturings that disclose the sensory feel of world-significance—attuned to the organization of sensory experience. Authentic speech is attuned speech, attuned to the world such that it is just as correct to say that the world speaks through the lived-body (in-corporation) as to say the lived-body speaks the world (*ek-stasis*). This originary attunement to the world becomes shared and then codified, and the sedimented conventionalities then stand in place of this originary attunement or authentic speech. The originality need not be brought to bear just as we can use a calculator without performing the mathematical

operations ourselves. Only poetry and creative enactments of speech revitalize this original attunement. The covering over of this dimension by conventionality motivates us to believe falsely that words are merely arbitrary shells, which then must represent concepts/ideas that alone supply meaning. Concepts are indeed at a higher level of cognition but they depend upon, and were at least once generated from, the more fundamental existential level in which the incarnate subject is enveloped. The sedimentation of speech acts, in which expressions are intersubjectively shared and render a common world, lead us to the intellectualist position—of a realm of ideas, a repository. Indeed in a sense there obviously is this repository, but only as the result of prior acts of speech that have expressed the world in an existential way.

These points concerning language will help us to better describe the structure of a symbolic landscape, when, for example, it is said that America came to be personified as the goddess Columbia, symbolizing independence, freedom, and wisdom.³⁵ It is to the situated embodiment, the existential immersion in life, that the American landscape is resonant of those meanings, such that there is an analogue in the geographicity of symbols. There is a resonance between geographcities. At the precognitive level, symbol is not the relating of two disparate provinces (thought and thing), but rather resonates the body schema that is the source for both of them in an analogical geographcity. The genetic source for the symbol is the experienced resonance in the body schema of the lived-body, whereby the felt sense of the American landscape resonates with its embodied personification in Columbia. The image of Columbia in turn reiterates analogically the felt sense emerging from the landscape, which resonates with the geographcity of the words, independence, freedom, and wisdom. Prior to the cognitive sense of symbol, which relates two disparate realms of meaning, the lived-body experiences an attunement that does not know of different realms. I purposely chose this example, because some will not find “resonance” with this symbol. But this “non-resonance” allows me to make the point that their “disagreement” is based in experience, not the positivistic or intellectualist fact of the symbolization.

That this sense of symbol (as resonance rather than the relation of meanings from different contexts) can be maintained at the level of precognitive experience must be examined. It will be shown that lived-body intentionality at the level of humanity is inherently capable of symbolic behavior. In his example of playing an organ, Merleau-Ponty states that three ensembles communicate internally. The geographcity of the melody, the musical text, and the gestures of playing participate in a single structure—“a single nucleus of signification.”³⁶ “The expressive value of each of the three ensembles with respect to two others is not an effect of their frequent association: it is a reason for it.”³⁷ In other words, embodied gestures are intentional and not mechanical, and are wedded to the virtual, imagined possibilities of enactments.

And now the locution, “symbolic landscape,” and the earthly expanse, symbolic landscape, do not seem so different, for the source of the expression of both of their geographcities concerns the body schema, which manifests the intertwining of the lived-body and the entity-complex, whether words or landscape, in an

ambiguous field. And in the originary expression of words the gesture is a property of the sensory object, an attunement in the body schema, which provides a felt resonance.

1.2.2 Human Behavior: The Field of Meanings that is the Ontological Source for Symbolism

In his now classic, *The Structure of Behavior*, Maurice Merleau-Ponty classifies behavior in terms of three structural levels: syncretic forms, amovable forms, and symbolic forms. Animal types are distributed continuously along this scale according to which forms are most typical for them. Syncretic behavior remains wedded to a prescribed behavioral framework in which all responses are addressed to *vital situations*. A frog will continue prehensive behaviors even when separated from an earthworm by a sheet of glass, because vital significances prescribe such. The behavior is “rigid” because the response is based on a complex of stimuli, rather than particularities of a situation to which higher structures of behavior would behaviorally adjust. With amovable forms, *signals* appear that are founded on structures that are relatively independent of the materials in which they are realized. Amovable forms of behavior are not merely prescribed responses to vital situations, but rather the animal is capable of *selecting*, and thus acting on the basis of the selected meaning according to the intending of a goal. The limitations at this level of behavior can be understood by observing the behavior of a chimpanzee. The chimpanzee learns to use the box-as-seat and it learns to use the box-as-instrument (for obtaining bananas). But it does not behave in a way that shows that it recognizes that these are two aspects of the same *thing*. The two objects always appear clothed in a vector with a functional value. Behavior at the level of signal is only conducted on the basis of *immediate*, and not according to *virtual*, possible-values. The chimpanzee is incapable of seeing that a branch in a tree is the *same thing* as the stick it uses to obtain bananas. It does not break off the branch in order to make itself a stick-tool. The box-as-seat is wedded to that function and so is not seen to be one possibility among many virtual functions for which the box could be used. Amovable behavior is limited to concrete immediacy and does not reach the level of *creative possibilities*. The thing-structure only emerges along with the structural level of *symbolic forms*, which opens the world-horizon to virtualities. If I cannot get a doorstep to work, a book taken from the table becomes a way for me to stop the door by jamming the book between the door and the floor. The book/doorstop is possible on the basis of grasping the thingly nature of the object and enacting one possibility of many. Concerning symbolic behavior, Merleau-Ponty states: “Here behavior no longer *has* only one signification, it *is* itself signification.”³⁸ Human beings are capable of choosing points of view; human meaning is constituted on the basis of the possible, the virtual, from a multiplicity of perspectives. Someone who knows how to play a musical instrument is capable of executing melodies never before heard, seen, or

played, due to the virtual structure of gestures, which can enact/express “the stimulus” as its own free conduct. In other words, the stimulus is not an externality; rather it is its own virtual possibilities that are expressed as a moment of its repertoire for creative engagement.

The above paragraph serves to provoke an initial reaction in the reader. Why does a volume dedicated to symbolic landscapes make a turn in the discussion to behavior? Behavior occurs in landscapes and can be an element of its symbolism, and behavior too can be symbolic, but the discussion seems to be an aside, not on “topic.” First, we must allude to Peirce that a symbol is only a symbol *for* an experiencing being who “takes” something as a symbol. This fundamental point should not be left aside when dealing with symbolic landscapes, otherwise our treatment, no matter how sophisticated, becomes objectivistic and will suffer from its fundamental naivete. The point posed here is that the very being who functions as “the dative of manifestation,” the being for whom symbolization is possible, only functions as this dative of manifestation because its own ambiguous embodiment functions symbolically. Stated in another way, human beings recognize symbols at the cognitive level, because, at the precognitive level, their embodied relationship to the milieu, being-in-the-world, engenders symbolic engagements. We turn to the discussion of behavior, as understood via Merleau-Ponty, not only to emphasize the precognitive, embodied aspect concerning symbolization, but because it is the genetic source for all symbolization.

Behavior is a dynamic field of meaning, the primordial interrelational structure of lived-body—milieu, and this allows us to flesh out from the very source, the geographicity (spatial manifestation) of the symbol. The lived-body and its milieu are asymmetrical poles that are constitutive of the autochthonous emergence of a “spatializing/spatialized field,” a Gestalt, an existential situation. The structure of this field can neither be reduced to thing (the objectivism of natural science) nor be reduced to consciousness (transcendental subjectivism). Thus, human behavior is not “merely human”; human behavior belongs to a landscape as much as it belongs to the human; it is a worldly event. If behavior is inherently ontologically ambiguous, then it is the necessary clue for understanding the sense of symbolic landscapes.

The event of perception involves the body schema; in our terminology we might say that the body schema is the geographicity of the sensorial event. The body schema is a behavioral pattern, a spatialized/spatializing event. The body schema is an *in-corporation* of the milieu—the meaning of the situation as it is constituted through the qualities of the lived-body’s gesturing. The behavioral event however “takes place” *in-the-world*; it does not belong to the Cartesian interpreted internal physiology that has been “bumped” by external stimuli. The geographicity of the perceptual field autochthonously arises as a dialectic event *ambiguously* polarized by the lived-body and milieu, a “circular causality,” which manifests as a spatialized/spatializing, processual event—a concretized/concretizing dynamic display of the meaning. Meaning at the level of the precognitive is ambiguous, both subjective and objective, or if you will, neither subjective nor objective. At the level of perception, there is no individual I, but rather an anonymous,

prepersonal “one” contextualized in a world of incarnate meanings. Thus the gesture is as much from the prepersonal subject as the milieu that solicits it. Both the lived-body and the perceived object are poles constitutive of an ambiguous field that is rendered as situation. The tree sees itself through the gesture of seeing just as much as it is the impersonal one who sees the tree. The body schema is a *co-constitutive field*—it is formed from both the structures of the lived-body and the structures of its perceived world (EarthBody) in an *inextricably intertwined gestalt*. In terms of the meaning genesis of symbolic landscapes, their structural sense must be traced back to this ambiguous constitutivity, gesturally enacted.

How is human behavior a site for symbolic meanings? Merleau-Ponty writes that a normal person “enjoys the use of his body not only in so far as it is involved in a concrete setting, he is in a situation not only in relation to the tasks imposed by a particular job, he is not open merely to real situations; for, over and above all this, his body is correlated with pure stimuli devoid of any practical bearing; he is open to those verbal and imaginary situations which he can choose for himself or which may be suggested to him.”³⁹ In the study of persons with brain disorders (Schneider is Merleau-Ponty’s exemplar), we find that Schneider can scratch his nose with no problem at all if it itches, but he cannot point to it. Schneider is unable to abstract from concrete situations. If he is asked to perform a salute he must put his whole being into the situation and make it “real.” A normal person treats the performance merely as an imaginary situation and performs only the movements necessary for the salute gesture. “In the case of the normal subject, the body is available not only in real situations into which it is drawn. It can turn aside from the world, apply its activity to stimuli which affect its sensory surfaces, lend itself to experimentation, and generally speaking take its place in the realm of the potential.”⁴⁰ One organizes “the given world in accordance with the projects of the present moment, to build into the geographical setting a behavioural one, a system of meanings outwardly expressive.”⁴¹ Thus, it seems we can only separate out the so-called real (the non-symbolic from the symbolic) only through pathology!

By being able to enact behavior from the standpoint of the realm of the potential, behavior takes on a “virtual character.” Virtual spatiality allows for the same bodily movement to take on variable meanings according to situations to which it is a constitutive pole. These movements can enact virtual spatialities, symbolizing situations on the basis of gestural expression.

This insertion of our factual situation as a particular case within the system of other possible situations begins as soon as we *designate* a point in space with our finger. For this pointing gesture, which animals do not understand, supposes that we are already installed in virtual space—at the end of the line prolonging our finger in a centrifugal and cultural space. This mimic usage of our body is not yet a conception, since it does not cut us off from our corporeal situation.⁴²

But expressive gestures have no meaning in themselves; they express meaning in the context of a situation. This is not to say that gestures are an empty shell, but rather that this characteristic emphasizes the primordially of the field-relation between the lived-body and milieu.

At the level of body schema, virtualities may be “played out” as ghost gestures. I see a chair and if my attention is drawn to it, the gesture of sitting down is already “rehearsed” through the ghost gesture. The ghost gesture in the potential realm is “different than” (actually a symbolic simulation in an embodied imagination) the concrete gesture in the existential situation. This symbolic simulation merely takes place through the organized nervous system of the lived-body, which involves an in-corporation of the entity into the lived-body. The lived-body can then express this meaning in-the-world, which at once ambiguously belongs to itself and the chair. In some cases the ghost gesture passes over into observable gestures, yet without the object. If I think of eating a lemon, my throat and mouth begins all sorts of behaviors that are not only ghost gestured, whereas if I think of making a fist, my muscles do not have to tense up in order to experience the feeling of making a fist. Nevertheless, fist-making is a symbol that can be used to define situations. I can slam my fist on the table to express anger, but I can slam my fist on the table when the home team scores a goal, or then again when I have just had an “aha!” experience. Ghost gestures appear as a nascent symbolic behavior, for, even though the ghost gesture merely happens, it does not become a project unless consciousness takes it up as a project to fulfill (even if at a hardly noticed habitual level). The ghost gesture of sitting down must become a conscious project to be realized, as a project of completing the perception of the chair through an enactment. But the project need not be an articulated judgment; it is a fulfillment of the promise of perception.⁴³ Until then it remains as a virtual possibility in the realm of the potential, a nascent symbol of an act of dining perhaps, or taking my seat on the bus, or taking the witness stand. Merleau-Ponty states that “the body, in so far as it has ‘behaviour patterns,’ is that strange object which uses its own parts as a general system of symbols for the world, and through which we can consequently ‘be at home in’ that world, ‘understand’ it and find significance in it.”⁴⁴

In sum, symbols arise in precognitive, embodied experience. Words are first expressive gestures before thought, and expressive gestures already entail a sign-system that is inherently spatial. Expressive gestures involve an ambiguous relation, a behavioral field that is constitutive of both the lived-body and its perceptual milieu. The spatiality of this field is the source for grasping the significance of symbolic landscapes. It is necessary to uncover the structure of this spatiality characterizing the lived-body-milieu field.

1.2.3 Spatiality

The gearing of the lived-body onto its world is the origin of space.⁴⁵ Spatial meanings arise on the basis of the structure of the lived-body—its morphology, sensory apparatus, and functions, in relation to the morphology and functions of the EarthBody. The spatial field that arises is qualitatively differentiated and admits of

providing a basic qualitative spatiality to all our meanings. The following sayings all owe their sense to spatial orientation.

Keep on the good *side* of life! That was *over* the *top*! He is really *out there*! That would do a *world* of good! We are just going *around* in circles! He runs *rings* around me! He is really going *downhill*! We need to get *on* the ball! Stay on the straight and narrow! He's *in the groove*! Stay *on course*! What a *square*! He is *out* of it!

Spatial orientation is gained through establishing spatial level. The establishment of spatial level is achieved when the lived-body's motor intentions "receive the responses they expect from the world."⁴⁶ In establishing spatial level the lived-body gears into the world. "He is spaced-out," speaks of a non-functional comportment. Our primordial encounter with the world involves being situated. Embodiment gains orientation by casting an anchor in some setting and in establishing the lived-line-of-horizon. Up is distinguished from down, or to summarize, a general direction in space becomes established. The perceptual world is only graspable by inscribing direction, which orients us and by which elements of the milieu gain spatial significance.

Already, it is upon the basis of this most important aspect of embodied experience that many symbolic meanings owe their source: "getting it together," "being on the level," or "doesn't know up for down" are some examples.

The ability to stand up depends upon establishing the spatial level. Morphological asymmetry provides qualitative significance to the upright posture. When dizzy we cannot establish the spatial level, and thus have trouble assuming the upright posture. "He is an upright citizen!" "He stands straight and tall!"

The asymmetry of the lived-body is the source for many symbols. Our head is different from our feet, the front of the body is different from the back and the left side is incommensurate with the right side as exhibited by the inability of the hands to match each other's spatial location. It would make no sense to say, "on the one hand" and "on the other hand," if indeed the hands were spatially commensurate. In locomotion we move in the direction that our feet and sense organs point. "I am getting ahead of myself." "We are going backwards." Locutions such as "getting ahead in the world" and "going backwards," or "making progress by leaps and bounds," are examples of symbolizing the locomotive relation with the milieu. But we do back into position to sit down. "He's back in the saddle." Reclining is further backing into place. "He is very laid back."

We also create symbolic language on the spatial functions of parts of the body. What is the sense of saying: "he put his foot in his mouth."—why foot? Because to "move ahead" we put "our best foot forward." Putting our foot in our mouth means that what we have said "stops us dead in our tracks" due to our own actions. What are the senses of: "he is all thumbs," "he's got his head up his ...," and "he doesn't know his elbow from a hole in the ground?"

Dimensionality based on bilaterality, the left and right, leads to a valuing discrepancy promoted throughout the entirety of Being, and this valuing discrepancy is found across a vast number of cultures. R. Hertz writes of the hands and the relation to sacred powers. "Only the right hand is fit for these beneficial relations,

since it participates in the nature of the things and beings on which rites are to act. The gods are on the right, so we turn towards the right to pray. A holy place must be entered right foot first. Sacred offerings are presented to the gods with the right hand....The contrary movement and position, in similar circumstances, would be sacrilegious and unlucky.”⁴⁷ But for magic: “The left hand is at home here: it excels at neutralizing or annulling bad fortune, but above all in propagating death.”⁴⁸ F. Steiner writes, “In Polynesian belief, the parts of the body formed a fixed hierarchy which had some analogy with the rank system of society.”⁴⁹

1.2.4 The Spatiality of Sensation as a Gestural Expression

Merleau-Ponty states, “The subject of sensation is neither a thinker who takes note of quality, nor an inert setting which is affected or changed by it, it is a power which is born into, and simultaneously with, a certain existential environment, or is synchronized with it.”⁵⁰ All senses are spatial; the geographicity of the senses manifests as a motor physiognomy, patternings throughout the body schema. Color, for example, experiences itself through my body schema, by my body adopting an attitude. The intentionality of sensation consists of a rhythm of abduction—opening up to the world, or adduction—pulling away from the world. But all senses are subordinated to body schema, and so synaesthesia is the rule. To say that the color orange is loud is not really a metaphor, for the orange and loud resonate in a corroborative patterning. One *sees* the softness of a sweater, the hardness of a rock. Thus, sensory qualities of elements of our landscapes and the landscapes themselves accrue symbolic meanings. The locution, “he is a warm person,” is a symbolic use of warm borrowed from the sensory quality of a landscape, but again the patternings across the body schema are the resonating source. And, when I say the word ‘warm’ in an attuned manner, ghost gestures, quasi-sensations, prepare the body for warmth. But because of synaesthesia, sensations from other aspects of experience are brought to characterize landscapes. “The land of milk and honey” does not mean that the products are literally milk and honey, but rather the experiencing of the sweetness of milk and honey is symbolizing of natural abundance and the easy life, and this locution can describe an actual landscape. “He is on the edge,” involves the body schema resonance of a certain mental state of stress and the felt sense of nervousness with the precarious experience at the edge of a cliff.

In sum, directionality and dimensionality issuing forth from the lived-body in relation to its milieu are aspects of what Edward S. Casey calls, *implacement*. *Implacement* is the collusion of the lived-body and place.⁵¹ Casey’s *implacement* is a promising notion remaining true to the epistemological framework that respects the primordially of the relational moment. Casey’s treatment of *implacement*, however, favors or emphasizes the lived-body pole of the relation. Much more exploration concerning the place-pole of the relation is needed. And, this is of utmost importance for us in terms of the theme of this volume. By further elaborating the structures of *implacement* we shall be able to discuss the notion of symbolic

landscapes. In terms of the co-constitutivity of the EarthBody, we turn to Norberg-Schulz's description of the earth-sky relationship, which due to its qualitative manifestations four landscape types are differentiated.

1.2.5 Symbolic Landscapes

A phenomenological genetic analysis of symbolic landscapes has led us to the pre-cognitive relation of the lived-body and its milieu. A discussion of the structure of the lived-body in terms of what it brings to the ambiguous body schema has been essential, but inadequate. We must take into consideration the co-constitutive agency of the EarthBody. The earth-sky relation is a fundamental facet of this constitutivity. Obviously it is in relation with the lived body that the earth-sky relation manifests symbolic significance.

Norberg-Schulz classifies landscapes into four fundamental types on the basis of the earth-sky relationship: Romantic, Cosmic, Classical, and Complex Landscapes. The sky or earth may dominate, and still there may be an equal "interaction" between them. Where the sky dominates, the cosmic order is primary and in others, the changing atmospheric conditions are decisive. Where earth predominates, there is the presence of archetypal things as well as variations in scale. Let us concentrate on the North/Romantic and South/Classical complementarity.

The Romantic Landscape constitutes the qualities of the Nordic region. In the Nordic forests the ground is discontinuous, subdivided in varied relief. The sky is narrowed through the trees and rocks, and continuously modified by shifting clouds. The sun is relatively low and ethereal; it plays in spots and shadows. Water is an ever-present dynamic element in mountain streams, storms and wind-swept lakes. The air changes from moist fog to refreshing ozone. As a whole this world is characterized as mutable, incomprehensible, filled with surprises; Norberg-Schulz uses the words: dematerialization, fragmentation, deformation, and metamorphosis.⁵² "A general unifying order is lacking."⁵³ Nordic nature is to be approached with empathy in a direct participation in an intimacy that is not social. Each individual finds his hideout—security involves the introverted heaviness of going into nature. The essential properties are earth dominance of the earth-sky tensionality (low-lands tucked beneath steep mountains), mood-shifts (ever-changing weather), microstructurization (the relational details of earth, rock, water, trees/flora), and weblike dissolution of forms (the multitude of places breaking up the landscape into discontinuity).

The classical landscape, which includes the Italian landscapes in which Renaissance architecture emerged, is neither characterized by monotony (the cosmic landscape of the desert) nor the multifariousness of the Nordic. There, intelligible composition shows clear delimitation of elements, which results from "a strong and evenly distributed light and a transparent air which gives the forms a maximum and sculptural presence."⁵⁴ The earth-sky tensionality is in equilibrium. "Here the individual neither is absorbed by an abstract system [desert], nor has to

find a hiding-place [Nordic]. A true 'gathering' thus becomes possible, which fulfills the most basic aspects of dwelling."⁵⁵ The equilibrium in the earth-sky tensionality is reflected in the Greek ideas of proportion, moderation, and harmony. These ideals, embraced by the Romans in their façade appropriation of the Greek orders, are exactly the ideals revived in Renaissance architecture.

In *Nightlands*, Norberg-Schulz emphasizes the element of light as a major factor of difference. "Nordic light creates a space of moods, of shifting nuances, of never-resting forces, even when the light is withdrawn and filtered through an overcast sky."⁵⁶ The mood of the South is stability as the sunlight "permeates space and encompasses all things."⁵⁷ "The extensity of southern space: sun saturated and homogeneously whole, it is limited only by the horizon and the vaulted sky."⁵⁸ Bathed in the light of the South, each thing is brought to full presence, lucid and clear. In the ethereal, diffuse half-light of the Nordic, things lose their identity—corporeality dissolves. The land is unsurveyable, tight but boundless. Space is "an aperture that humans have created in the unsurveyable."⁵⁹

Of Romantic (Nordic) architecture, Norberg-Schulz states that it is "distinguished by multiplicity and variety."⁶⁰ It is not easily understood in rational terms and its atmosphere is mystery, phantastic, intimate, and idyllic. Its form is of organic growth. Volumes are avoided and its character is the transparency of skeletal structures "where the *line* becomes a symbol of force and dynamism."⁶¹ "In Norway, finally, the Nordic character culminates in the eminently romantic structures of the stave-church and the *loft*, and in the white-painted houses which concretize the Nordic summer night.... Before, the houses were dark, reflecting the mystery of the winter sky, which is also the light of the stave-church interior. In the stave-church it makes sense to talk about 'dark light.'"⁶² The Nordic Gestalt lacks the roundedness quality of the South's 'wholeness'—gable and spire replace arcade and cupola. Gables and spires are essentially anticlassical. The Northern gestalt that it is often decomposed, such that the outline becomes compound and mobile. The spire takes its form from the forest. Accentuating the vertical, "the *skeleton* is the matrix of the Nordic elevation, rather than the massive walls of the South. *Aperture* therefore becomes *compartment* ... and not hole."⁶³ The built form rises as if an earthly germination, a tree growing from its roots. It is the Gothic system in which "massivity" is drawn into dematerialization through vertical linearity and diaphanous walls. In general, the wholes of Nordic architecture seem incomplete, in the state of becoming.⁶⁴

In the Florentine Renaissance, "we find the wish for giving the buildings individual plastic presence and anthropomorphous characterization, in combination with simple, intelligible construction."⁶⁵ In his *De re aedificatoria* (1550), Alberti begins with the circle and on it basis geometrically constructs squares and polygons. He ends up with nine basic geometrical figures for all churches. Ratios of one to two, two to three, and three to four (the intervals of octave, fifth, and fourth in music) were to provide harmonic proportions. These simple clear shapes and proportions constitute 'intelligible construction.' The anthropomorphic character comes from the idea that the human body extends "exactly into the most perfect geometrical figures, circle and square" (Wittkower, 1971, 14).⁶⁶ Thus the

Renaissance emphasizes the proportion of man and his intelligible geometry, and it is these characteristics, seen as universal, work themselves into the environmental fabric of the South. Because of its abstract geometrical perfections, the classical style of architecture is later incorporated into Nordic regions (and the United States), especially during the reign of neo-Classicism (Georgian architecture). But, it must be noted that neo-Classicism was appropriated by Enlightenment ideology to serve its idea of universal reason.

1.2.6 New Trends in Cultural Geography

The journal, *Geoforum*, devoted to a whole issue what is labeled, “enacting geographies.”⁶⁷ In discussing “materials, movements, shapes, [and] gestures,” the authors state: “We want to suggest that such things may be considered enactments, neither subjects nor objects, signs of referents, but processual registers of experience.”⁶⁸ These theorists owe a lot to Merleau-Ponty as they take the spatial emergence of the event seriously. They emphasize “performances” as contributions of expressions in the world; we take a role in making visible spatial events. But, “affects are not about *you* or *it*, subject or object. They are relations that inspire the world.”⁶⁹ In the article “Rematerializing Social and Cultural Geography,” Peter Jackson argues for the importance of the material culture perspective. “Geographers are already contributing in significant numbers to the revival of interest in material culture.”⁷⁰ The approach advocated in this introduction would broaden the sense of material culture—not just of objects/things, but of all spatializing/spatialized events. In short, all phenomena exhibit geographicity and thus can be seen as belonging to the study of material culture. What the geographical turn does in emphasizing geographicity is to make all study less abstractive. If we recognize material culture as spatial enactments of expression, these two recent articles together display quite well what the contributors of this volume are doing. Symbols are spatially generated enactments of meaning and they are always embodied materially. The sources for symbolization are the objectifications of behavioral enactments of meaning through the body schema, which in turn, are co-constituted through the ambiguous field of the lived-body and the EarthBody. Symbolic landscapes are not a partitioned ideality from the material landscape, but an intertwined physiognomy expressive of existential life.

I.3 Conclusion

A genetic phenomenological approach has allowed us to break through the difficulties concerning the symbolic/non-symbolic distinction posed by the intellectualism/empiricism duality. We have found an ambiguous source for symbolization that is neither consciousness nor a thing, but rather a spatial field, behavior/gesture

patterning of a body schema, which are at once an in-corporation of world and an ek-stasis of existential meaning. Symbol arises between the lived-body and its milieu in gesture that freely enters virtual space. In this way meanings are translated across contexts. Symbolic landscapes depend upon the co-constitutive agencies of the lived-body and the EarthBody, both of which set up resonations in the body schema. Attunement to the body schema allows us to experience the source of symbolization in our existential experience. Poets and artists may be those who are most attuned to these resonances, however the cultural geographer, e.g. J. B. Jackson, Denis E. Cosgrove, and D. W. Meinig, is highly attuned to landscape symbolism. What has been accomplished in this introduction has been a grounding of the concept, symbolic landscapes.

I.4 Overview of Part One

In chapter one, “The Road to Indian Wells: Symbolic Landscapes in the California Desert,” Alex Zukas presents an experiential/phenomenological study interwoven with historical geography in dialogue with the theoretical explications of the major theorists of landscape symbolism. In line with our notion of embodied symbolism, Zukas describes his own experiences in a desert region that has been constructed in a way that contradicts the natural conditions of the desert in order to serve as a golf playground/luxury resort for the affluent. The utter negation of the desert ecology is juxtaposed with his experiences in the surrounding Coachella Valley, where the Cahuilla Indians have lived in harmony with the desert environment since 500 BCE. By witnessing the disconnection of these two historically layered sociogeographies, Zukas explores various geographical theories of symbolic landscapes using Indian Wells/Coachella Valley as a case study.

Kip Redick, in chapter two, “Wilderness as *Axis Mundi*: Spiritual Journeys on the Appalachian Trail,” examines the spiritual transformation, the irruption of the sacred, that takes place for those who hike the Appalachian Trail. He explores religious history concerning the symbolic meaning of the wilderness, especially the notion of *axis mundi*—the connection of heaven to earth. True to our position that symbolization is generated in embodied experience, Redick recounts experiences of those who have hiked the Appalachian Trail, explicating these experiences on the basis of the structure of spiritual/sacred experience. An important aspect of this experience is *communitas*, which is the notion of unmediated communication. This is developed in the dialogical character of the testimonies.

In chapter three, “Pu‘u Kohola: Spatial Genealogy of a Hawaiian Symbolic Landscape,” RDK Herman argues that a Time-Geography is necessary to understand the meaning of an annual symbolic ritual—commemorative ceremony. Herman argues that an embodied participation (of which Herman has been a participant) is necessary for a transformational experience. Time-Geography allows for the recognition of a spatial genealogy in which socio-geographical layers are temporally displayed. Herman advocates a gestalt shift that is analogous to the experience

in a canoe. Instead of perceiving the canoe moving, it maintains its place while the ocean shifts underneath it. The same can be done with time, which allows for the sense of time not as passing, but as depositing layers of meaning in a particular place—Hawaii. And it is through this form of historical geography that allows us as non-participants to understand not only the symbolic significance, but how the ceremony is meaningfully experienced. And although we are unable to undergo its transformative potency, we nevertheless are able to empathize with the embodied experience of the ritual.

In chapter four, “Mythological Landscape and Landscape of Myth: Circulating Visions of Pre-Christian Athos,” Veronica della Dora examines the long history of Athos as a landscape of myth—more real in geographical imagination than as a physical geography. Two prominent meanings come from antiquity: as a place of barbarian hubris as well as Greek rational wisdom. Della dora establishes how landscape is a medium that engenders mythology—symbolic. But landscapes can “move” from one place to another and are constructed through, and embodied in, various media as a “landscape of myth,” a circulating referent of the imagination. She finishes her chapter with an account of the remodiment of the myth in the actual field—the scientific discovery of the remains of Xerxes’ canal.

In chapter five, “At Home on the Midway: Carnival Conventions and Yard Space in Gibsonton, Florida,” Charlie Hailey selects this unusual “townfield” for its quality as a paradoxical space, which opens a unique opportunity to study symbolic meanings in place-making. Gibsontown is the winter home of carnival people that at once fulfills functions of campgrounds, yard-spaces, reconstruction of carnival midway spaces in which contradictions and ambiguities abound. Gibsonton is a place that can be said to exhibit a quotidian life of spectacle and a vernacular architecture by way of government ordinance. Here, equipment is “planted” each year like a garden. As both campers and locals these carnival folks are both in and out of character. But Gibsonton, as strange as it is, allows us to recognize a vital sense of home—as a place that is ever-changing, allowing for the development of different perspectives and new ways of seeing reality. And through this notion Hailey then is able to provide insightful criticism of the New Urbanism, with its oppressively static qualities that are the antithesis of this vibrant sense of home.

In chapter six, “Crossing the Verge: Roadside Memorial—Perth, Western Australia,” Dennis Wood examines in particular the social symbolism that manifests through the roadside memorial phenomenon. With the emergence of modern society came the loss of a sense of community. This even shows forth with the privatization of grief/mourning. The roadside memorial phenomenon is a confirmation of a new sense of community. Wood argues that the private and everyday items placed at the site insert the private person into the public realm such that a sense of community emerges. He sees community as being imagineered—imaged and constructed—or shall we say, both real and ideal.

In chapter seven, “Life on ‘The Avenue’: An Allegory of the Street in Early Twenty-First-Century Suburban America,” architect John Srygley provides a specific case study in order to examine the symbolism of a new phenomenon in lifestyle

retailing development—the appropriation of the main street as a private public realm. Srygley interprets the main street-like development as presenting an allegory that critiques both the suburban landscape that it extols and the urban landscape that it shuns. It presents this allegory through the architectural oxymoron of a private public space. Nevertheless, due to an urban, historical amnesia, whereby people no longer understand what quality urban space is about, this allegorical critique is not experienced, rather, the ersatz main street makes for a “successful” con. It is precisely the absence of a veritable embodied urban experience that allows for a cheap imitation “to work.”

In chapter eight, “Metaphor, Environmental Receptivity, and Architectural Design,” Brook Muller discusses the important role of metaphor in architectural design. He is concerned with environmental degradation and the need to design and build life-enhancing and life-sustaining environments. In order to do this Muller argues for a reflective strategy recognizing that the designer must reach a deeper attunement to the earth, which is greatly aided through the use of metaphor. Muller examines the notion that metaphor both highlights and hides through a coherent set of entailments. He looks at the modern notion of the machine metaphor and new green metaphors of architecture as organism and as the furnishing of a large room. In this way he can be critical of modern architecture without being wholly dismissive. He shows how metaphors can be agents of communication and trajectories of conceptualization from which he offers ways for metaphor to initiate manners of thought and modes of practice in the design process. Architecture is recognized as the embodiment of the metaphor that had motivated the design process.

Notes

- 1 Eco, *Semiotics*, 131.
- 2 Peirce, “Logic as Semiotic,” 19–20.
- 3 Ibid., 17.
- 4 Ibid., 18.
- 5 Ibid., 19.
- 6 Norberg-Schulz, *Intentions in Architecture*, 57.
- 7 Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci*, 17.
- 8 Cosgrove, “Introductory Essay,” xxv.
- 9 “Symbolism.”
- 10 Gurwitsch, *Field of Consciousness*.
- 11 Harley, “Maps, Knowledge and the Power,” 279.
- 12 Drexler, “Landscape Perceptions.”
- 13 Daniels and Cosgrove, eds., “Introduction: Iconography and Landscape,” 1.
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 Fuller, “Geography of Mother Nature,” 12.
- 16 Norberg-Schulz, *Intentions in Architecture*, 54.

- 17 Daniels and Cosgrove, "Iconography and Landscape," 1.
- 18 Prince, "Art and Agrarian Change," 98.
- 19 Cosgrove, "The Geometry of Landscape," 254.
- 20 Davies, "Evocative Symbolism of Trees," 33.
- 21 Daniels, "Political Iconography," 43.
- 22 Jackson, "The Order of a Landscape," 153.
- 23 Meinig, "Introduction," 3.
- 24 Ibid., 6.
- 25 Meinig, "Symbolic Landscapes," ?
- 26 Theilgaard Watts, "The Stylish House," 197.
- 27 Cassirer, *An Essay on Man*, 25.
- 28 Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 127n.
- 29 Ibid., 176–177; 184
- 30 Ibid., 178.
- 31 Merleau-Ponty, "An Unpublished Text," in *The Primacy of Perception*, 7.
- 32 Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 179.
- 33 Ibid., 180.
- 34 Merleau-Ponty, "An Unpublished Text," 7.
- 35 Cosgrove, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape*, 174.
- 36 Merleau-Ponty, *Structure of Behavior*, 121.
- 37 Ibid.
- 38 Ibid., 122.
- 39 Ibid., *Phenomenology of Perception*, 108.
- 40 Ibid., 109.
- 41 Ibid., 112.
- 42 Merleau-Ponty, "An Unpublished Text," 7.
- 43 Mead, *Philosophy of the Act*.
- 44 Ibid., *Phenomenology of Perception*, 237.
- 45 Ibid., 251.
- 46 Ibid., 250.
- 47 Hertz, "The Hands," 120–121.
- 48 Ibid., 121.
- 49 Steiner, "The Head," 125.
- 50 Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 211.
- 51 Casey, *Getting Back into Place*.
- 52 Norberg-Schulz, *Nightlands*, 19.
- 53 Ibid., 42.
- 54 Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci*, 45.
- 55 Ibid., 46.
- 56 Norberg-Schulz, *Nightlands*, 2.
- 57 Ibid.
- 58 Ibid., 3.
- 59 Ibid., 9.
- 60 Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci*, 69.
- 61 Ibid.

- 62 Ibid., 70.
- 63 Norberg-Schulz, *Architecture*, 170.
- 64 Norberg-Schulz, *Nightlands*, 18–19.
- 65 Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci*, 76.
- 66 Wittkower, *Architectural Principles*, 14.
- 67 Dewsbury et al., “Enacting Geographies,” 437–440.
- 68 Ibid., 437.
- 69 Ibid., 439.
- 70 Jackson, “Rematerializing Social and Cultural Geography,” 13.

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Chapter 1

The Road to Indian Wells: Symbolic Landscapes in the California Desert

Alex Zukas

Editors' Note: The approach of this chapter demonstrates symbolization not to be an intellectualist deduction or Kantian construction, but rather an existential generation from pre-cognitive embodiment. Moreover, it exhibits theoretical tensions that we point out in the introduction concerning the relation between the symbolic dimension and material conditions. What strikes us is that the author's attunement to his lived experiences, his own embodiment in relation to the experienced milieu, is the motivation for trying to understand the meaning of this particular landscape through an engagement with the layers of its symbolic history. It is the non-resonance within the author's own body schema that manifests as the uncanny in his felt experience. His awakened attunement to this feeling is what drives him to research the symbolic landscape with which his embodied gestures has had to negotiate. His discussion of the genius loci of the Coachella Valley, the contemporary affluents' and the prior Cahuillas' embodied experiences, and their respective symbolizations, illustrates the notion that the genesis of symbolic landscapes (symbolic meanings) involves the lived-body in relation to the milieu (EarthBody) that is enacted in the body schema and objectivated in social/cultural practices and beliefs.

1.1 Introduction: Symbolic Landscapes

The last thing I expected on my trip to Indian Wells in August 2004 was to be astonished by the landscapes I encountered. In fact, I am still struggling to understand what I discovered. This essay is my attempt to make sense of the multiple and often conflicting landscapes that I experienced in a southern California desert. The contrast between the exuberant excess of the Coachella Valley's post-modern cities and the austerity of the surrounding desert environment was uncanny. My sense of uncanniness was further heightened when I quickly came across an earlier indigenous presence in this same desert region. Once the shock of these contrasts had receded, my historical and philosophical curiosity got the better of me. As I thought about my reactions to this experience, I was struck by the predominantly

symbolic nature of the post-modern and pre-modern material objects around me. What started as a car journey from San Diego to Indian Wells (about 140 miles) to participate in an annual planning retreat sponsored by my university turned into something unexpected: a walking journey through desert canyons, a historical journey from ca. 500 BCE to the present, and a symbolic journey through historically and socially layered landscapes. I had no idea what was in store for me when I left home that August morning. Mostly I was dreading a few days of long meetings, sitting, and executive presentations.

Driving into Indian Wells I was aware that certain aspects of the relationship between this urban landscape and its larger environment stood out to me. I was conscious of the fact that I was critically experiencing this landscape and interrogating many of its features. In attempting to puzzle out later what I experienced in these landscapes, including being taken out of “the taken-for-granted,” I turned to some exemplary works in the field of symbolic landscapes. My attention turned to Denis Cosgrove’s pioneering work that appreciated the complexities, ambiguities, and expressive power that landscapes embody. One of these ambiguities concerned the tension between “an unalienated, insider’s apprehension of the land—of nature and a sense of place,” and “a more critical, socially conscious, outsider’s perspective.” This tension led Cosgrove to interpret landscapes not only iconographically but also as arenas for the everyday experience of life and work.¹ In his exposition he raised a point that will be another leitmotif of this essay: landscapes are not only natural formations; they are human creations crafted under specific geographical, social and cultural circumstances: “Landscape denotes the external world mediated through subjective human experience in a way that neither region nor area immediately suggest.”² The historian Simon Schama’s meticulously researched *Landscape and Memory* looks at the human production of landscape in Europe and North America over the last five centuries and notes that “[I]t is difficult to think of a single such natural system that has not, for better or worse, been substantially modified by human culture.”³ While I think he goes too far in celebrating modern human re-engineering of the natural environment and linking it to an enduring regard for nature as sacred,⁴ many of his insights have informed my perspective in this article. My understanding of landscape has also benefited from the work of W. J. T. Mitchell who writes that landscape should be thought of “as a process by which social and subjective identities are formed” and interpreted not only by what it “it ‘is’ or ‘means’ but what it *does*, how it works as a cultural practice.”⁵ I also examined the geographer David Harvey’s work on postmodern urban design, a form which fractures space, invents architectural collages, and mixes styles. Harvey’s admonition that “if as Barthes ... insists, ‘the city is a discourse and this discourse is truly a language,’ then we ought to pay close attention to what is being said, particularly since we typically absorb such messages in the midst of all the other manifold distractions of urban life”⁶ focused my scholarly attention on the operating assumptions of postmodern architecture. Finally, Gary Backhaus and John Murungi have called my attention to the dialectic that takes place when people encounter, transform, and live within a particular landscape: “Through its placial qualities, a landscape exhibits its own identity called *genius*

loci But on the other hand, human activities obviously modify landscapes. So, the processes of landscapes as human expressive activities results in objectivations that modify the *genius loci*, which, in turn, modify human identities and relations.”⁷

In the introduction to this volume, Backhaus notes that symbolic landscapes are a form of geographicity or “earth-writing.” As he writes,

Symbolization is an embodied enactment of meaning, a spatializing production/spatialized construction. And, as spatializing/spatialized, the experiencer (whether the active producer or the ‘witness’ to, symbolization), the symbol itself, and the symbolized itself constitute a system, a meaningful field manifesting geographically in the world In lived geography, symbolization emerges as an ambiguous spatial event between the lived-body and its milieu.⁸

His thoughts have helped me to frame my reflections on my experience. And it will become obvious later in this chapter that, beyond its academic pursuits, the chapter also narrates my embodied experience of living the geography of this desert milieu and trying to make sense of the fields of meaning which I entered and helped constitute. The symbolic landscapes I encountered resonated with my lived-body’s schema in ways I will try to enumerate.⁹ Looking beyond my own experience I also think that, following Backhaus’ invocation of Peirce in the introduction to this volume, symbols involve “the socio-historical sedimentation of meaning”¹⁰ and it was to understand the historically and geographically specific sedimentation of meaning that I turned to some other sources.

Specifically, I examined regional expositions of the history of the California desert and its inhabitants, most notably Marc Reisner’s *Cadillac Desert* and Lowell Bean’s *Mukat’s People* among other works. The native people who had lived in the area around Indian Wells for hundreds of years, the Cahuilla, assumed on material and symbolic levels “that man was an integral part of an interlocking system ... consistent with the close relationship of the Cahuilla with his environment.”¹¹ In contrast, Reisner notes that in the modern California desert, “Everything depends on the manipulation of water—on capturing it behind dams, storing it, and rerouting it in concrete rivers over distances of hundreds of miles. Were it not for a century and a half of messianic effort toward that end, the West as we know it would not exist. The word ‘messianic’ is not used casually. Confronted by the desert, the first thing [modern] Americans want to do is change it.”¹² Where Christian Norberg-Schulz regarded the desert as a “cosmic landscape” because the sky dominates the visual horizon and the experience of the desert (although the lived body also experiences the extreme desert heat and cold), modern Americans kept their eyes on transforming the desert at ground level to meet their needs. Because the Cahuilla lived in the desert, however, they did not find the region “monotonous” as later Americans might and as Norberg-Schulz characterized the earth-sky relationship of the desert.¹³ For them it was a varied landscape with hundreds of micro-niches and since the Cahuilla believed that the landscape of the Coachella Valley, its environs, and its inhabitants were composed of *?iva?a*, the basic generative force of the universe, they probably did think it had cosmic significance.¹⁴

In this chapter I am mainly concerned with the spatiality of the symbolic landscapes I experienced in the western Coachella Valley. I am also concerned with the way the three-dimensional symbols embedded in these landscapes have changed with transformations in habitation, modes of production, and cultural life in the past 200 years. These landscapes consisted of objects of human and natural design which embodied and produced cultural meaning.¹⁵ People dwelled within and around these symbolic spaces which were also social and economic spaces for the production and reproduction of life. Some of Mitchell's postulates have enriched my thinking about symbolic landscapes. He writes that "Landscape is a medium of exchange between the human and the natural, the self and the other" and "Landscape is a natural scene mediated by culture. It is both represented and presented space, both signifier and signified, both a frame and what a frame contains, both a real place and its simulacrum, both a package and the commodity inside the package."¹⁶ I will return to the commodified nature of postmodern landscape but Mitchell's postulate leaves out the possibility of a non-commodified symbolic landscape that I believe is an important element of pre-modern apprehensions of the material world. Also, as my study will make obvious, I do not accept his idea that landscape, "as such, ... is like money: good for nothing in itself, but expressive of a potentially limitless reserve of value."¹⁷ While it may have limitless exchange or symbolic value, I do not believe that landscape has to be empty of use value for those who dwell in it.

In the scholarly literature on symbolic landscapes, "landscape" has traditionally been conceived in a particular way: as an artistic form of representation of the natural world that arose in the arts of Renaissance humanism. According to Cosgrove, who studied the rise of landscape art as a genre of representation and a way of *seeing* the physical world, it was the view of the outsider and a term of order and control. It denoted the artistic and literary representation of the visible world that emerged at a specific point in history which in turn influenced the reshaping of physical landscapes and townscapes in Renaissance and post-Renaissance Europe.¹⁸ He writes, "I attribute the origins of the landscape idea to the experience of the bourgeois citizens in the Italian city states in relation to the land, and to the humanist culture generated out of their experience, paying specific attention to the spatialities connected to new technologies of vision and representation (linear perspective)."¹⁹ It is in landscape painting, in particular, that the symbolic element has been keenly analyzed in the academic literature but the symbolic nature of actual landscapes has recently come under scrutiny.²⁰ An author writing in a postmodern idiom goes as far as asserting that "This collection of essays proposes that landscape and its representations are a 'text' and are, as such, 'readable' like any other cultural form."²¹ Like Mitchell, I would like to go beyond modernist essentialism and postmodernist semiotics and interrogate not just what a landscape is or means in absolute terms but also what it *does*, how it works and changes in terms of cultural practice.²² Interestingly, the term "landscape" entered English discourse as a Dutch import (*landschap*) at the end of the sixteenth century and carried with it a number of meanings: it was a political jurisdiction, a territory and its scenery, and the human communities that lived and worked in it.²³

In what follows I make use of the opportunity of being taken out of the taken-for-granted, my experience of the uncanny, to interrogate not only the landscapes I encountered in light of theoretical postulates but also to interrogate the theoretical postulates to see how well they illuminate the construction of these uncanny material landscapes and my experience of them. Such an analysis involves a constant interaction (dialectic) between theory, practice, and experience. I use the word “construction” purposefully because human beings modified the *genius loci* of the landscapes I encountered in the Coachella Valley in material and symbolic ways to suit their needs and they were modified by these landscapes in turn. Cosgrove would undoubtedly point out that I had a critical “outsider’s” point of view (which helps explain why I could not take the landscapes for granted) but as a result of my experience and research I do not think that this point of view can always be appropriately set against an “insider’s” unalienated view as a logical and experiential opposite as he maintains because such a move reifies the distinction between inside and outside. It also begs troubling questions: Do outsiders eventually become insiders? Who is indigenous? Do indigenous people never feel alienated from their environment? The architecture and landscape within the City of Indian Wells are clearly an outsider’s architecture and landscape with little relation to the *genius loci* of the area but they are extolled by the new inhabitants. In what follows I will be considering landscapes as arenas for the everyday experience of life and work but I will not always celebrate the human transformations of landscapes, symbolic and otherwise, as Schama has done because I am critical of the social, economic, and cultural practices and identities that these new landscapes embodied and represented in their “socio-historical sedimentation of meaning.” Such a critical perspective will also inform my discussion of the ways the various landscapes I traversed resonated with my lived body’s schema.

Little of this, of course, was part of my intellectual apparatus or experience as I set out for Indian Wells. I was enjoying a leisurely drive on a windy two-lane open highway with little traffic, few traffic lights, small towns, and no ambient urban noise.

1.2 Confronting Postmodern Symbolic Landscapes in California’s Coachella Valley

As I traveled California Route 371 east over the San Jacinto Mountains in the Peninsular Ranges of Southern California, the August air was dry and sharp. I was about an hour out of San Diego and I noticed the terrain change as I ascended the mountain range. High chaparral country soon gave way to a mixed-coniferous forest of Ponderosa pine, sugar pine, and white fir at 5,000 feet above sea level. The temperature had remained around 83°F ever since I had left San Diego. I crested the San Jacintos and discerned the Coachella Valley in the distance. From my vantage point at 5,000 feet I was able to experience the overall geography

and structure of the Coachella Valley's environment before I ever ventured into it. I would later realize that it was this initial bird's eye view that provided a critical context for my subsequent experiences and reactions. Had I driven to Indian Wells via Interstate 10 and remained on the desert floor, it is likely that I would not have taken much notice of the environment of the Coachella Valley since I would have merged into it gradually. Instead, as I descended the mountain the chaparral reappeared and I pulled into a turnout because I could not believe what I saw: between two dry, brown desert mountain ranges, the San Jacintos and the Little San Bernardinos, was a broad stripe of green running the length of the valley, a series of linked oases in the desert. At first I thought that I might have been driving too long without drinking water and that I was possibly experiencing a mirage. It was an amazing apparition, this patch of deep green in an arid and hard-baked landscape. How did this desert valley get so green? I realize now that it was the experience of the incommensurability of these conjoined landscapes that awakened a sense of the uncanny in me. What could be the cause of the landscapes of difference, the geography of difference, that I noticed a mile above the desert valley?

My curiosity was further aroused by my violent experience of severe geographic and climatic differences: the temperature outside my car rose a degree for every 250 feet I descended. By the time I reached the valley floor in 20 min, the outside temperature was 105°F. The superheated air burned and dried the inside of my nostrils and I could feel the sweat pouring down my face and torso as moisture was being sucked out of my body and borne away. Heat radiated all around: from the road, the buildings, and the air. This intense bodily experience of blasting heat and dryness is not one that I will soon forget. In a short time it had become painfully obvious that I was an outsider to this extreme environment. Later, I discovered that the average annual rainfall in the Indian Wells area is 4 inches (It is 30 inches in the San Jacinto and Santa Rosa Mountains) and the summer temperature ranges from 105°F to 125°F with 0% humidity. The typical vegetation of the desert floor and the foothills below 1,000 feet above sea level (known locally as the Lower and Upper Sonoran zones) are plants that require little water like chaparral, cactus, creosote bush, manzanita, sagebrush or oasis plants like the California fan palm.²⁴ How could people live with such an intensely dry and severe geography?

Merging onto California Route 111 and hugging the scorching foothills, I headed south toward Indian Wells. On the way I passed numerous desert resort cities, Palm Springs, Cathedral City, Palm Desert, and Rancho Mirage, havens for enormously wealthy people but none could match the hyperbolic wealth inscribed on the landscape of Indian Wells. All of these municipalities lay in the northwest section of the Coachella Valley, which sits at the western limit of the Colorado Desert of California, a sub-region of the larger Sonora Desert. The Colorado Desert (so named because it lies west of the lower Colorado River in California) stretches far into Baja California and the Sonora Desert extends into southern Arizona and northern Mexico. Instead of the sparse vegetation I had driven through on the way down the eastern slope of the San Jacinto Mountains, California Route 111

(Fig. 1.1) looked like the imperial road to Babylon. These cities and their landscapes are not reducible to the desert environment and its *genius loci*. Majestic royal palm trees lined both sides of the highway from Palm Desert to Indian Wells, about 8–10 miles. These were not the native California fan palms I had seen crowded in the foothill canyons. They were imported palms grown in nurseries in the area and transplanted because of their aesthetic appeal.

The iconic vision of CR 111 was unmistakable: I was motoring through a methodically organized landscape that presented a morally ordered civic society inspired by the imperial images of ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt found in old books and Cecil B. De Mille movies. I should not have been surprised by my feeling that I was entering a Hollywood set because, as I found out, in many ways it was.²⁵

By the time I neared Indian Wells, I had already passed dozens of golf courses, their sprinklers dispersing a constant spray of water in the late afternoon. About ready to turn on my car's air conditioning to give my desiccated nasal membranes and basted skin a break, I began to wonder about the cost of the truly monumental use of water that was needed to keep the desert at bay and this parched land so green. I realized that much of the green I had seen from my perch on the crest of the San Jacinto Mountains was the melding of scores of golf courses on the desert floor. I learned later that an ancient aquifer below the desert floor supplied 30 billion gallons of water annually to 62,000 homes, 30 thousand swimming pools, 233 hotels (including four dozen resorts), and 72 of the 115 golf courses in the urban



Fig. 1.1 California Route 111 (All figures by author, unless otherwise noted)

areas of the Coachella Valley (Fig. 1.2).²⁶ Colorado River water was used to re-charge the aquifer with water (a controversial move because of the higher mineral content in Colorado River water) and to irrigate crops, but water was still being withdrawn from the aquifer faster than it was being replenished.²⁷

I soon found the resort where the university was holding its meeting, the Renaissance Esmeralda Resort. At the corner where I waited to make a left turn into the resort, I couldn't help but notice three large fountains shooting jets of water into the arid air. The moment heightened the uncanniness of Indian Wells: I was baking in the desert heat, water was being drained out of my body as I waited for the light to change and, rather than conserving a precious desert resource, water was playfully scampering down the sides of these conical fountains. It was surprising that any water made it to the base of the fountain for recirculation. Lush vegetation was arranged behind the fountains with small groves of stately palm trees enhancing the sense of an oasis from the heat. The landscaping continued as I neared the entrance of the resort. Dozens upon dozens of royal palms edged the road, occupied the median, and shaded wonderfully green and lush lawns. All of

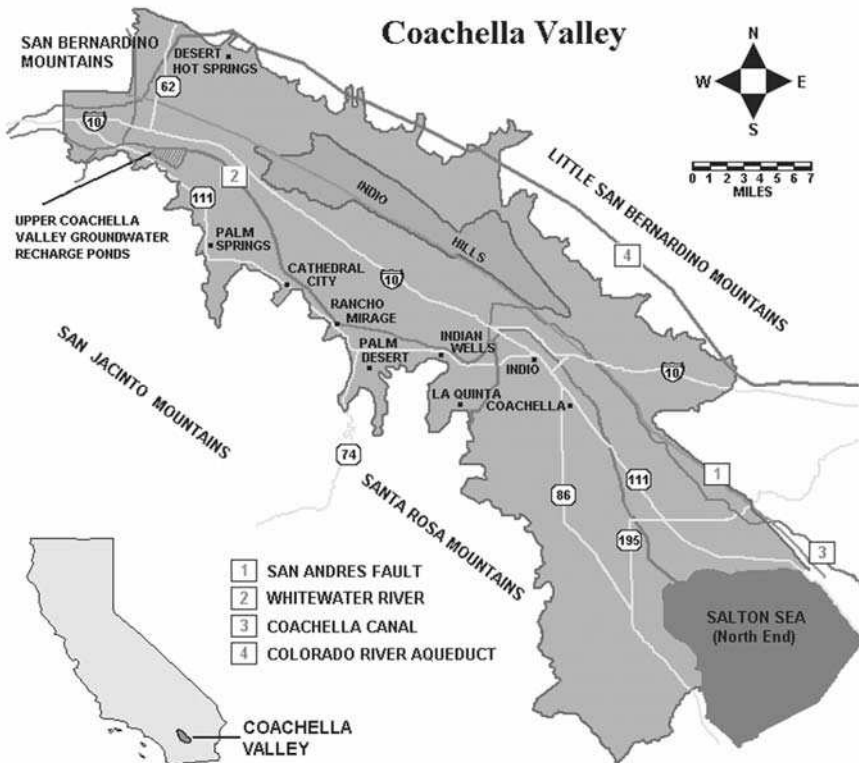


Fig. 1.2 Map of Coachella Valley (http://employees.oneonta.edu/baumanpr/geosat2/Bighorn_Sheep/Peninsular_Bighorn.htm)

the contiguous greenery and lushness was out of place in this harsh, dry, desert environment. I pondered the paradox of a fabricated Eden in the desert and wondered about its causes as I checked into the resort hotel. My historical curiosity piqued, I was going to do some research between meetings.

My historical approach to symbolic landscape dovetailed with that of Kenneth Olwig who was critical of theorists who regarded landscapes as only symbolic representations (simulacra) and insisted that landscape involved direct human experience and articulated a collective social and symbolic order within a specific geographical, environmental, and historical context: "It is not enough to study landscape as a scenic text. A more *substantive* understanding of landscape is required ... [which] recognizes the historical and contemporary importance of community, culture, law and custom in shaping human geographical existence—in both idea and practice."²⁸

The first Anglo-American to pass through the area was the rugged mountain man Jedediah Smith who wrote in 1825 that it was "a complete barrens, a country of starvation"²⁹ that should be avoided for settlement. In 1880, Indian Wells was an oasis stagecoach stop of clapboard houses and huts. To people passing through to somewhere else, it symbolized a hard and unattractive desert life with limited water. Marc Reisner provided me with a clue to unraveling the paradox of a green desert. He wrote that "In the West, it is said water flows uphill toward money. And it literally does ... as it is shoved a thousand feet out of the Colorado River canyons to water Phoenix and Palm Springs and the irrigated lands around them."³⁰ Indian Wells changed in the 1950s when developers transformed it into a *high-maintenance* vacation and retirement oasis on the model of Palm Springs, an older tourist luxury resort town 13 miles to the north which had attracted movie stars, directors, and developers since the mid-1920s.³¹ Until air conditioning was introduced in Palm Springs hotels in the mid-1950s, it was exclusively a winter playground for the rich and famous of Hollywood. A former mayor of Palm Springs, Frank Bogert, who began his career in the city as a public relations man for the El Mirador resort in the 1930s, wrote that "To many of today's residents, it is surprising how few people stayed in the village [i.e., Palm Springs] during the summer. By the middle of June, primarily Indians, business owners, their employees and their families remained.... It was often said in the 1940s that you could shoot a cannon down Palm Canyon Avenue anytime in the summer and not hit a soul."³² It did not become a permanent residence for wealthy white suburban Americans until the 1960s but tourism was to become the economic basis for rapid growth in the valley.

Mr. Bogert was also a developer and decided in the late 1940s that golf would attract more tourists to the desert than horseback riding, which along with polo had been the major outdoor attraction for tourists, and increase resort revenues. Many early developers also owned local water companies, so they saw no problem in building water-intensive projects like golf courses in a desert environment. Home lots went up for sale around the fairways and were purchased by people like Bob Hope, Bing Crosby, Phil Harris, and Hoagy Carmichael. Not satisfied with the economic opportunities in Palm Springs, in 1958 a breakaway group of developers

led by Paul Prom and Desi Arnaz (of *I Love Lucy* fame) started the Indian Wells Country Club in Indian Wells.³³

As the official Indian Wells website notes, “To ensure Indian Wells would remain a community characterized by distinctly fine residential/country club living and resort hotels, in 1957, E. M. ‘Pete’ Peterson, who became the city’s first mayor, established the first property owners association.”³⁴ These property owners and developers spearheaded the municipal incorporation of Indian Wells in 1967 because, as Bert Cavanagh recalled at the 20th anniversary celebration, “Indian Wells incorporated primarily for self protection. There were other cities eyeing the area and we wanted to take control rather than be annexed.”³⁵ With that control they engineered resorts in an arid American desert based on models from rain-fed Western Europe, especially Italy, France, and Germany.³⁶

When I pulled into the Renaissance Esmeralda Resort, I could not help but notice the three fountains at the hotel’s broad entrance plaza tossing 2-foot diameter columns of water 4 feet into the air only to let them burble down conical pyramids of brick in the scorching desert heat. The exterior was not especially noteworthy but the interior resembled a very large roofed Mediterranean patio enclosed on four sides. Rooms were located on each of the stories. Standing at the bottom bathed in bright sunlight, one could look up seven stories to the opaque roof covering, marvel at the hardwood and marble double staircase nearby, and watch water cascade down an interior fountain, flow under plate glass, and end up in large troughs in the exterior patio area. Venturing outside, I discovered “Lake Esmeralda” next to the hotel and adjacent to the swimming pool. The location of



Fig. 1.3 Esmeralda Interior

this mammoth body water simmering in the desert sun seemed completely illogical to me. It was not for use at all. No one swam in it or fished in it. It simply sat there evaporating into the desert air, embedded in a post-modern geography of incongruities. At a conference where I later presented my experience at the Renaissance Esmeralda Resort a colleague said that the interior staircase (Fig. 1.3) and the lake of the Esmeralda reminded her of the seventeenth-century exterior staircase and the bodies of water surrounding the palace at Fontainebleau in France. Looking at pictures of Fontainebleau subsequently, I was startled by the resemblance³⁷ and realized that the copies at the Renaissance Esmeralda Resort had symbolic significance, evoking a stately and opulent residence. Still, “Lake Esmeralda” (Fig. 1.4) was a baffling, irrational “use” of water that existed in complete disregard of the desert environment. It was a denial that there was a desert in the area at all. It was a fairly futile attempt to negate the desert since after all the Coachella Valley was not the lush countryside of central France. The lake was draining the aquifer but it was not the only attempt to deny the desert. Golf courses have notoriously high irrigation requirements³⁸ and nearly every resort constructed large bodies of water in and around their buildings and the golf courses followed suit.³⁹

Returning inside the Esmeralda I re-experienced the bodily shock of an intensely air-conditioned interior environment. I felt as if I had walked into a giant bubble in the desert. The air temperature went from a scorching 105°F to a chilly 65°F. While I have previously felt major temperature changes when going into air-conditioned buildings in southern California, none of the changes were ever as severe as this one and, in addition, this was the first time I had experienced these changes with a heightened awareness of the geography of incongruity



Fig. 1.4 “Lake Esmeralda”

and the geography of disparity which defined the Coachella Valley resort towns. In my state of taking nothing for granted, the “bubble effect” of an air conditioned existence only heightened my sense of uncanniness that had begun earlier in the day when I first crested the San Jacintos. At the front desk I picked up a brochure about the resort. The cover read “Desert oasis ... paradise found” and showed the hotel behind the water traps on the golf course with the dry San Jacinto and Santa Rosa Mountains in the distance. Amid more pictures of surplus water inside the brochure, patrons were assured that “the views are framed by *tropical* gardens, *alluring* mountains, and *lush* fairways [emphasis in original]. At Esmeralda, it’s easy to get lost in paradise.” Folding the brochure out completely, I learned of “the Luxury to Indulge” and “the Tranquility to Renew” myself in the spa garden with cascading waterfall baths and massages, among other amenities. Walking to my room, I could not help but think about the immense amount of energy that was being consumed to maintain large symbolic pools of water on the resort grounds and a chilled ambience in the resort buildings while the sun roasted the landscape outside the plate-glass windows. Marc Reisner captured the paradox of wanting to live in, but not be part of, this desert *Umwelt* well when he wrote,

Confronted by the desert, the first thing Americans want to do is change it. People say that they ‘love’ the desert, but few of them love it enough to live there. I mean in the real desert, not in a make-believe city like Phoenix with exotic palms and golf-course lawns and a five-hundred foot fountain and an artificial surf. Most people ‘love’ the desert by driving through it in air-conditioned cars, ‘experiencing’ its grandeur. That may be some kind of experience, but it is living in a fool’s paradise. To *really* experience the desert you have to march right into its white bowl of sky and shape-contorting heat with your mind on your canteen as if it were your last gallon of gas.⁴⁰

This intended negation of the desert may be a fool’s paradise, but it is also a result of what Mitchell called the “dreamwork of ideology.”⁴¹ Water is a scarce and diminishing resource in the Coachella Valley. In a desert, water not only symbolizes life, it allows life. The extravagant, wasteful display of water, which I encountered everywhere I looked in Indian Wells, symbolized vast amounts of surplus disposable wealth, of a carefree sense of power over nature—and maybe a fool’s paradise. Given the 30% evaporation rate that occurred in this desert during the summer, the fountains, decorative palm trees, and idle bodies of water that dotted the landscape were certainly symbols of immoderation, ecological misuse, and *conspicuous non-consumption*.

Conspicuous non-consumption and ecological misuse of water have strong roots in the Cadillac desert: “In the West, lack of water is the central fact of existence, and a whole culture and set of values have grown up around it. In the East, to ‘waste’ water is to consume it needlessly or excessively. In the west, to waste water is *not* to consume it—to let it flow unimpeded and undiverted down rivers. Use of water is, by definition, ‘beneficial’ use ... even if it ... is shot five hundred feet into 115-degree skies.”⁴² I had to ask myself who benefited from this symbolic use because it was not obvious to me. Excessive wealth was in abundant evidence in the public and private spaces of Indian Wells and I remembered that Reisner said that, in the West, water flowed uphill toward money. Given my

Marxist theoretical grounding, I was ready to take the walk uphill and relate, in Cosgrove's words, "ideas about the cultural significance of landscape to ways in which the land is materially appropriated and used."⁴³ I found that this would be a fruitful way to interrogate the symbolic landscapes surrounding me in the Coachella Valley.

In 1998 "Indian Wells was listed as the city with the highest ... [personal] income" in the United States.⁴⁴ Its population in the 2000 census was 3,816, it had the highest rate of millionaires per capita of any city in the United States, and the racial makeup of the city was 96.33% White, 2.96% Hispanic or Latino, 1.49% Asian, 0.39% African American, 0.21% Native American, and 1.57% other.⁴⁵ The city and its environs clearly reflected the preferences of this white, rich, and exclusive population. City planners and resort architects designed the city and resorts to symbolically embody the power, control, and surplus disposable wealth of a late capitalist society, often turning for inspiration to models from early capitalism and absolutist grandeur, as in the Fontainebleau staircase at the Esmeralda. In discussing the design of early-modern French palaces and their ubiquitous and extravagant lakes and fountains, Simon Schama wrote that they "behaved themselves, as decorously as a Cartesian proposition.... They do not initiate anything; they reflect ... the controlling intelligence of their witty and elegant *seigneur*."⁴⁶ If, as Cosgrove believed, "Landscape constitutes a discourse through which identifiable social groups have historically framed themselves and their relations with both the land and other human groups,"⁴⁷ then what was reflected symbolically in the fountains, lakes, and water traps found in Indian Wells was the power, sensibilities, and imagination of postmodern capitalist entrepreneurs as they shaped the environment into a very profitable leisure paradise where landscape was treated as theater. Since economy and culture interpenetrated and related dialectically, each structuring the other, I wanted to look more closely at the relationship between Indian Wells' economy and built environment.

Proponents of postmodern architectural design conceded that "postmodernism in architecture and urban design tends to be shamelessly market-oriented because that is the primary language of communication in our society" and one result was to see history as "an endless reserve of equal events" that architects and urban planners used in any way they wanted.⁴⁸ That is, postmodern architects and entrepreneurs conceived of history as a field of interchangeable accessories, "gestures" and symbolic elements which they incorporated as a pastiche into buildings and urban spaces to evoke an historic "feel" which often had no relationship with the actual site of the building or space. Perhaps it is this Hollywood-derived sense of transferable "history" which owes nothing to place or space (or time for that matter) that helps explain my shock at the designs of Indian Wells' resorts but David Harvey noted that "Imaging a city through the organization of spectacular urban spaces becomes a means to attract capital and people (of the right sort) in a period (since 1973) of intensified urban competition and urban entrepreneurialism,"⁴⁹ the period when Indian Wells came of age.

Like other Southern California communities whose existence stemmed from the fantasies of land developers to turn open acreage into remunerative properties,⁵⁰

Indian Wells was the product of land speculation and development by wealthy entrepreneurs, many with connections to Hollywood.⁵¹ These sorts of debt-financed, speculative ventures (an important demarcator of postmodern service capitalism from modern industrial capitalism) are what David Harvey called “fictitious capital ... which creates its own fantastic world of booming paper wealth and assets.”⁵² Stock market futures, the dot com surge, the gambling casino boom, and land speculation fall into this category: purchases are made and investment attracted on the promise of future, not current, high productivity or returns on investment. With its high proportion of millionaires and multi-million dollar resort development projects, it is no surprise that Indian Wells became the Coachella Valley’s financial center with the completion of its Wall Street West office building in the late 1990s.⁵³ Harvey saw a connection between postmodern capitalism and postmodern architecture that is relevant to my sense of unease about the uncanny feeling of Indian Wells: “The fact that postmodernist architecture regards itself as being about *fiction* rather than *function* appears, in the light of the reputations of the financiers, property developers, and speculators that organize construction, more than a little apt.”⁵⁴

When I entered Indian Wells, I entered a fictitious landscape—a landscape that was purely symbolic but nonetheless “real.” I could touch it and move within it. Exchange and market values clearly fashioned this colonized, alien landscape with imported species, irrigated vegetation, and a manufactured ecology. The existing landscape had little use value; it had to be transformed into a commodity for tourist consumption if entrepreneurs were going to realize a high return on investment.⁵⁵ As Cosgrove noted about land development in general under capitalism, “land is a commodity whose value lies in exchange ... [and] the value of land ... relates in part to its productivity in sustaining human life. Thus ‘improved’ land commands a higher price on the market than unimproved land. [However under], capitalism improvement may be entirely unrelated to the capacity of the land in ensuring human life.”⁵⁶ Water did not have to irrigate anything organic because more than anything it was brought to the surface or piped in to “irrigate” a landscape of social and economic power in the form of a pleasure garden. The display of water was a part of a planned aesthetic and represented an inscription of technological (but not ecological) reason across a harsh landscape. I can appreciate why Stephen Daniels emphasized the duplicity of a (post)modern manufactured landscape: its allure as personal experience and enjoyment masked its role as a public expression of authority and ownership and extraction of surplus value.⁵⁷ While I did not enjoy the trappings of the desert resort, I can imagine that other tourists did—otherwise, the Esmeralda and other resorts would have closed long ago. At such resorts the production and consumption of landscape as commodity, as ambience, dominated all other uses. As Cosgrove noted, in tourist viewpoints landscape took on the properties of a generalized commodity whose connections with nature and a mode of production were deliberately mystified.⁵⁸ Landscape as a saleable commodity became a powerful symbol, a fetish that had the power to create enjoyment.

The landscape at Indian Wells represented a historically specific way of experiencing the world, developed by and meaningful to, certain social groups. I did not belong to them and it did not resonate with me. It represented a way in which “certain classes of people signified themselves and their world through their imagined relationship with nature, and through which they have underlined and communicated their own social role and that of others with respect to external nature.”⁵⁹ The second day of my meeting I wandered by the concierge’s desk and found another brochure. It was titled “Indian Canyons” and was published by the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians. It mentioned that the Cahuilla developed complex communities in the area and “with an abundant water supply, the ... Cahuilla thrived. They grew crops ... they gathered plants and seeds” and left rock art and artifacts. Once again my curiosity was piqued and I decided to walk the canyons to see how someone could live in what I thought was an arid and hostile environment. That same day I found out the city of Indian Wells was named after deep open wells in the area that the Cahuilla people had dug into the aquifer and used for hundreds of years. They exist now purely as symbols, as tourist lore, part of the erasure of the past that postmodernism heralds with its emphasis on surfaces, ruptures, and discontinuities⁶⁰; fittingly, I suppose, these physical and symbolic links with the past were filled in by developers to make way for the Indian Wells Racquet Club.⁶¹

1.3 Confronting Pre-Modern Symbolic Landscapes in the Coachella Valley

What I was coming to understand during my stay in Indian Wells was that landscape constituted “a vast network of cultural codes ... a physical and multisensory medium (earth, stone, vegetation, water, sky, sound and silence, light and darkness, etc.) in which cultural meanings and values are encoded, whether they are *put* there by physical transformation of a place in landscape gardening or architecture, or *found* in a place formed, as we say, ‘by nature.’”⁶² My trip to the canyons at the base of the San Jacintos would provide the opportunity for me to see how another people dwelled in this same landscape and found or created meaning there.

I ventured into Tahquitz Canyon with a park ranger guide. It is about 10 miles north of Indian Wells and to the west of Palm Springs. It remains a sacred site to the Cahuilla. Tahquitz (sometimes spelled Taqwuš) was the first Cahuilla shaman given great powers by the Creator, Mukat. He did things to hurt his people like put tannin in acorns, run off the antelope, and steal souls. He was banished from the tribe, went into depths of Tahquitz Canyon, and is reputed to still dwell in that landscape. A green light symbolized his presence. He is believed to feed on (eat) the souls or spirits of tribal people and kidnap maidens to serve him and to be most active at night and the early morning hours. Tahquitz was one of the numerous

primal beings who connected the past and the present and represented the forces of creation.⁶³ “Tahquitz commonly manifests himself as thunderbolts and lightning. As a guardian spirit for shamans, he served as a source of great power.”⁶⁴ He was an aspect of the *genius loci* of this landscape for the Cahuilla.

The terrain of Tahquitz Canyon is a harsh, rocky, and arid landscape. The Cahuilla adapted successfully to their environment which included the Coachella Valley as well as the San Jacinto and Santa Rosa Mountains. In 1770, about 5,000 people inhabited 2,400 square miles (an area roughly 44 by 33 miles).⁶⁵ There were archaeological traces of recent occupancy in Tahquitz, Palm, and Murray canyons and I pondered the temporality of landscapes. The Cahuilla were inventive and tenacious and remained hunters and gatherers until the 1860s.⁶⁶ They produced pottery and basketry and lived in small lineage-based villages whose members had common and some individual “property rights” to resources in several ecological zones (from the Lower Sonoran desert zone below 1,000 feet above sea level to the Canadian-Hudsonian zone 7,000 feet above sea level) to ensure their survival through access to a wide variety of floral and faunal resources.⁶⁷ The Cahuilla moved seasonally through their territory hunting and gathering foodstuffs. There was no time when an entire village moved to another place but as food ripened in different zones, discrete groups moved out of the village temporarily to harvest food sources and to find more clement weather. Desert plants bloomed and were harvested in spring when the temperature was still mild but early to mid-summer was the most active time to harvest desert food sources. By late summer, people moved into higher and cooler elevations to harvest acorns and then pine nuts in late fall. In early November, people returned to the permanent villages in the low foothills where it was warmer.⁶⁸ The Cahuilla used elevation differences to avert the effects of dramatic seasonal climate changes in the region. Their mobility kept them closer to the landscape and provided physical relief without the use of air conditioning, although wood fires were used in winter and cold nights for heat.

Tahquitz Canyon was formed by Tahquitz Creek which flowed above ground much of the year due to winter rain and spring snow melt from Mt. San Jacinto and sank into the aquifer before exiting the canyon.⁶⁹ Records show that villages tended to be built near streams and springs at the mouths of canyons. They were usually located well above the canyon floor to avoid the flash flooding that occurred when a hard rain hit or snow melted quickly in the sun.⁷⁰ At Tahquitz, families of the *kauisiktum* lineage lived at the mouth of the canyon and water from the creek and underground springs supported their lives as well as the lives of the flora and fauna on which they depended.⁷¹ Water was too valuable and precious an asset to be used for conspicuous waste and display. Water was integral to the functioning of the indigenous ecosystem which had grown up in response to significant fluctuations in precipitation⁷² and the flowing of Tahquitz Creek was unplanned, aesthetically beautiful, and useful. The spirit Pa’akniwat was thought to live in springs and “owned” the water places. The Cahuilla requested permission from him to use the water sources which symbolized his presence.⁷³

Continuing 2 more miles to the end of the canyon I came upon Tahquitz Waterfall (Fig. 1.5). I could not believe that water could flow in such abundance in such an arid landscape. The waterfall flows year round and met the needs of Cahuilla who lived near it. What was remarkable, given my experience in the city of Indian Wells, was that no extra energy expenditure was needed to bring the water to surface or pump it through pipes for hundreds of miles. Gravity flow worked as part of the natural landscape and its overall effect was beautiful as well as functional.

As I returned to the mouth of the canyon, I passed by a pictograph—one of many that existed in these canyons. Drawn on a large boulder that supported another flatter rock, making a slight cave, it was a red ochre image of a (shape-shifting) shaman with a tail, big head and hands. Like Tahquitz, shaman were revered and feared because of their great power to divine, treat disease, control natural elements, and occasionally change into animal forms⁷⁴ and a pictograph often meant that the site was sacred to a particular shaman. Rock art sites were associated with rituals and the Cahuilla considered them as well as many caves, rock shelters, and springs (especially hot or mineral) creation sites or sources of residual sacred power.⁷⁵ Pictographs are found in numerous canyons in the San Jacinto and Santa Rosa foothills. Many were powerful iconographic inscriptions which created sacred symbolic landscapes for the Cahuilla who invested them with great spiritual and existential meaning. Some pictographs were not religious symbols but marked trails and conveyed other important information about water, food stores, and game for journeying Cahuilla.⁷⁶ In their daily lives, in the structure of their villages, and in religious ceremonies, they showed a great reverence for nature and natural cycles. A contemporary Cahuilla, Katherine Saubel, stated that:

This [land] is a sacred area. This land was given to us by our creator, to take care of it, to live here in harmony with it, and that's why we were put here—to protect it.... I remember we were told as youngsters that you never destroy plants around you, or trees around you, or rocks around you. They are alive. That is where you get your energy, from these things all around you. So you don't destroy all these things.⁷⁷

The Cahuilla dwelled within a symbolic landscape and, contrary to Cosgrove's theory, recognized and celebrated it as such.⁷⁸ The symbols were indigenous to the landscape and expressed and embodied the Cahuilla worldview. They were material representations of the forces of nature which shaped Cahuilla life; that life in turn operated in ways that recognized the specific *genius loci* within the various Cahuilla habitats. In many respects, the whole landscape was a fetish but it was not only that: it was also a place for the production and reproduction of life. The symbolic and material elements of life interpenetrated and shaped each other. "As a fetishized commodity, landscape is what Marx called 'a social hieroglyph,' an emblem of the social relations it conceals,"⁷⁹ but however fetishized, the Cahuilla landscape was not a commodity to be sold, at least not before the advent of Anglo-American capitalism. The Cahuilla landscape was a "natural hieroglyph" which the Cahuilla could read even if they could not fathom all of its powers, dreaded many of them, and turned to shamans for help and guidance. The landscape was not always hospitable: earthquakes changed the course of creeks and springs; hard

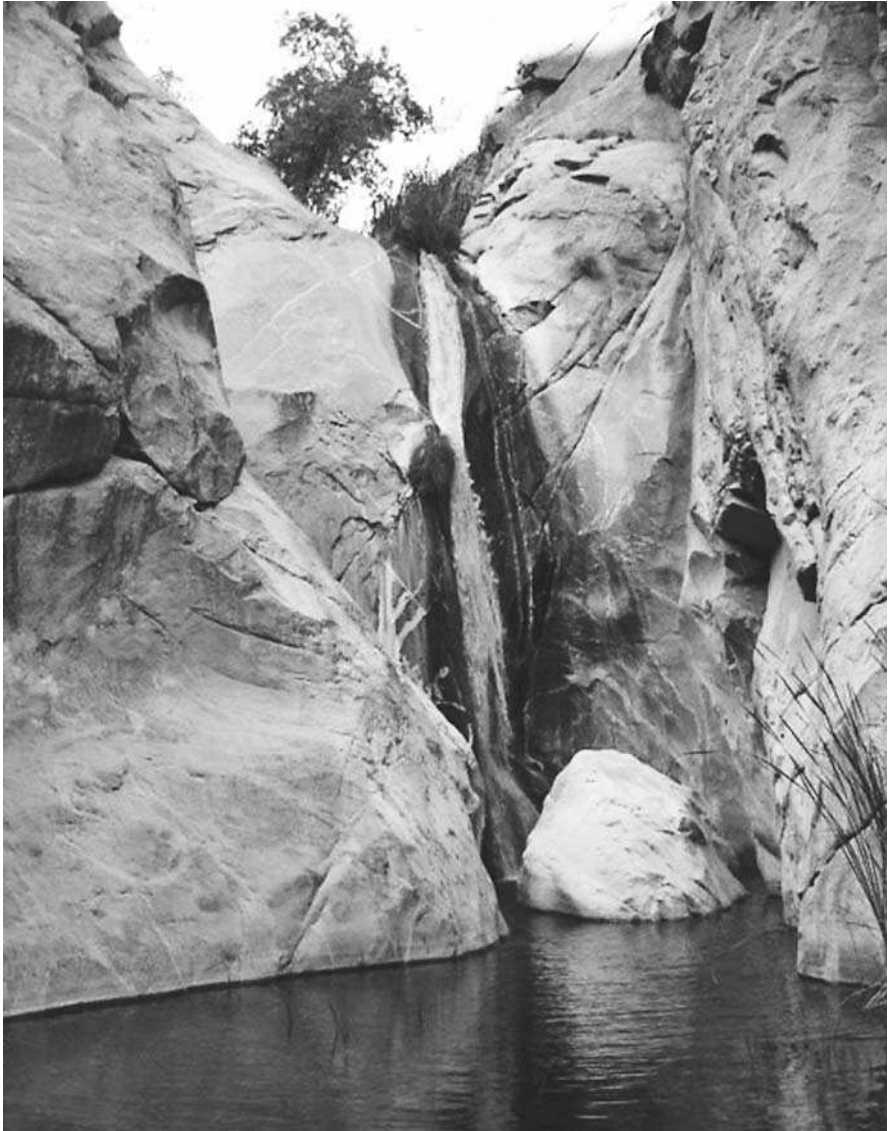


Fig. 1.5 Tahquitz Waterfall

winter rains created flash floods that destroyed villages and killed people; dry spells meant hardship and starvation in some years; extensive brush fires often disrupted and changed the environment.⁸⁰ The Cahuilla were used to the landscape shifting without notice and they had no illusion that they had much control over such forces of nature. As Lowell Bean, the anthropologist with the greatest experience living with the Cahuilla and writing about them, concluded, the Cahuilla saw their environment as “unstable, erratic ... and subject to unpredictable change.”⁸¹

As far as the Cahuilla were concerned, the land was alive and its heart was the fire that created the hot springs and the earthquakes.⁸²

Relevant to a discussion of symbolic landscapes, the anthropologist Lowell Bean and the Cahuilla scholar Katherine Saubel noted in their book on Cahuilla knowledge and use of plants, *Temalpakh* ("from the earth"), that

Among the Cahuilla plants were not viewed simply as objects which might or might not be useful to man, but as living beings with whom one could communicate and interact. Plants were one of a number of life forms such as rocks, elemental forces, animals, birds, and spirits that could communicate with those who knew how to "listen." Plants play their own anthropomorphic roles in Cahuilla traditional lore and in the epic-length cosmogony and oral literature. This role of plants was not simply metaphorical or literary, however, since Cahuilla oral literature was considered to be an accurate representation of past events and a natural reality that was on-going in the present.⁸³

Humans were in a reciprocal relationship with nature which was appreciated for its material, life-giving and life-sustaining resources and which was venerated symbolically through rituals which acknowledged indebtedness to the plant and to the supernatural agencies responsible for its fertility and generation.⁸⁴ The symbolic and material aspects of Cahuilla culture were mutually constitutive as well as locally generated and consumed.

When I went to Shelter Rock in Andreas Canyon a few days later I saw more pictographs and evidence that this was a sacred place to the early Cahuilla and their descendants. A cave shelter contained a petroglyph in red and black. According to a Cahuillan elder, other pictographs at the mouth of the canyon depicted the history of the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla including the legend of a Palo Verde tree that grew on the spot in Andreas Canyon where Tahquitz abducted his first female victim.⁸⁵ The Andreas family of the *painiktem* lineage lived at the canyon's entrance and the same earthquake in 1857 that turned Tahquitz Creek from a perennial to a seasonal creek had the opposite effect on Andreas Creek: it began to run year round rather than just in the winter.⁸⁶ The *morteros* or grinding stones below the sacred Shelter Rock were family property. They were fashioned by men and worked by women. The large *morteros* were for grinding acorns, mesquite beans, and palm dates while the small ones for grinding medicines and herbs. My visit to Andreas Canyon showed me that, while the Cahuilla revered the landscape, they also used it as a source of tools, food and medicines. They did not stand in opposition to it in the manner of tourist entrepreneurs who created the resorts at Indian Wells but dwelled within it. Besides hunting large and small game animals like mule deer, mountain sheep, rabbits, rats, squirrels, quail, ducks, lizards, tortoises, and crickets, the Cahuilla used several hundred plants for food, raw materials, and medicine.⁸⁷ Although they did not alter the landscape as drastically as the developers of Indian Wells would do (the Cahuilla would regularly set California fan palm groves on fire to kill insect and parasite infestations and boost palm date output),⁸⁸ they lived in a landscape that they shaped to meet their needs. In this context it was worth remembering Simon Schama's injunction that human cultures modify all natural systems.⁸⁹

However, there is more to the interaction with nature than Schama allowed. As Cosgrove noted, in any social formation,

the economy conceived as the production of material goods, and culture conceived as the production of symbols and meaning, coexist and continuously reproduce social relations through the actions of living human beings. Economy and culture ... interpenetrate and relate dialectically, each structuring the other.... The production of meaning, of symbols, and their material expression is complex. It includes historically and geographically specific symbolic systems.⁹⁰

I would add that economy, culture, and *nature* interpenetrate and relate dialectically in any social formation. In the Cahuilla's hunting and gathering social formation, the interpenetration is fairly apparent to the Cahuilla and to us as well. In the postmodern capitalist social formation that dominates Indian Wells, the interpenetration is still there—the desert is ever present and requires air-conditioned spaces for tourist comfort—but it is denied: the whole urban development in the Coachella Valley is an attempted negation of the desert environment which taxes the aquifer and requires huge expenditures of resources and money to maintain its bubble in the desert. It is Reisner's fool's paradise symbolized by the water in the artificial lakes, and on the golf greens, evaporating at a rate of 30% every day.

I visited one more canyon during my stay, Palm Canyon (Fig. 1.6). Palm trees are indigenous to the area. The main one is the California fan palm (*Washingtonia filifera*) and Palm Canyon with its continuous flow of water was home to extensive palm groves. The California fan palm produces a small date and each tree produces several hundred pounds a year. The Cahuilla used palm fronds to construct houses and other buildings and to create tools and utensils, and utilized their fibers to make clothing, sandals, and baskets.⁹¹ California fan palms were not used to line the various city boulevards in the Coachella Valley, however, although Palm Springs got its name from these very palm trees: the fan palm does not have the same stately appearance as the royal palm (its dead fronds do not fall off but hang in dried bunches all the way down the trunk), so this more proletarian tree was left in its niche in the well-watered foothill canyon oases where the Cahuilla built their permanent villages while the cities of the Coachella Valley engaged in another post-modern symbolic gesture/erasure.⁹²

Palm Canyon was home to many Cahuilla lineages, most notably the *qawi'siktem*. Cahuilla oral history told the story of one of the leaders of the early settlers who turned himself into a rock and "he is there in the rock yet."⁹³ There are many such "power" rocks in the Cahuilla territory and "any large rock formation in the Cahuilla area is likely to be such a transformed personage or a place of residual supernatural power from the Cahuilla 'beginnings.'"⁹⁴ Not all rock sites are sacred or had supernatural significance but they could have cultural significance and involve historical and proprietary symbolism. An area in Palm Canyon now called Indian Portero is the reputed site of the Palm Springs lineages' bashing the brains out of the defeated Seven Palms lineages who were encroaching on Palm Canyon. The Cahuilla name for the place means "place of many brains"⁹⁵ and "the presence of petroglyphs in the area signifies the territorial claims of one



Fig. 1.6 Palm Canyon

group over another.”⁹⁶ At the entrance to Palm Canyon was a flat rock with mortar holes for grinding food and, similar to the *morteros* at the mouth of Andreas Canyon, these work spaces and “tools” within the landscape were also owned by individuals and families whose village was nearby.

1.4 Two Ways of Being and Becoming in the California Desert

As should be apparent from my wanderings through this desert valley, landscape is not the same as place. Landscape involved physical and symbolic interactions with the environment, that is, the molding of land by human labor and human subjectivity (i.e., land is “scaped”). It did not occur in an historical vacuum either: it emerged over time under specific geographical, social and cultural circumstances⁹⁷ and it changed as those circumstances changed through human actions. Land that had been socially and individually appropriated to produce for use in a hunting-gathering regime became socially and individually appropriated to create commodities for exchange in a postmodern tourist capitalist regime and that difference greatly affected the appearances and meanings associated with the landscapes of the Coachella Valley.⁹⁸ Endorsing an idea of Simon Schama, Cosgrove noted that the significance of landscape to humans draws on deep sources of myth, memory, and hope⁹⁹ and this insight holds for both the early Cahuilla and the postmodern desert landscapes of the Coachella Valley. These landscapes

expressed the myths, memories, and hopes of the people who created them. I am hard pressed, however, to detect Schama's redemptive nature myths of Western (i.e., European) culture in the landscape of Indian Wells or, as he opined, "To see the outline of an old landscape beneath the superficial covering of the contemporary is to be made vividly aware of the endurance of core myths."¹⁰⁰ The old landscape was paved over, much like the original wells used by the Cahuilla, to be replaced by another landscape. The new landscape did not evoke the landscape of the Cahuilla; the "old" landscape it evoked had no history in that place. The memories, myths, and hopes the new landscape embodied were those of uninterrupted material progress and enjoyment, of the ability of technology to trump nature, and of money buying anything. These myths, memories, and hopes had to be imported into this landscape in order for the rich and the leisured to be comfortable there.¹⁰¹ It is hard to discern a *genius loci* in post-modern Indian Wells.

Landscape is both a physical and symbolic construction expressive of collective social norms within a specific geographical and environmental context. As I discovered in my experiences and reflections in the Coachella Valley, landscape is a dimension of human existence that is collectively produced, maintained, and lived. The layered, overlapping landscapes of Indian Wells and the Indian canyons illuminated historically different modes of being and becoming in the California desert as well as two different modes of material and symbolic production. At Indian Wells, water irrigated an alien, unproductive landscape of golf greens, imported palm trees, and faux European resorts whose postmodern symbolic "gestures" denoted class privilege, excess wealth, and conspicuous consumption. It was a landscape modeled on the water-saturated landscapes of Europe or of the Nile, Tigris, and Euphrates floodplains; in the arid California desert, it was an isolated air-conditioned landscape at war with its surroundings and conspicuously out of place. It was a landscape for people who did not want to experience the desert and its maintenance came at great cost to the 10,000-year-old Coachella Valley aquifer. In the Indian canyons, water from seasonal rains and snow melt irrigated an indigenous landscape whose flora, fauna, and human population worked symbiotically. It was not a "virgin" landscape by any means and Schama was certainly right in that regard: even landscapes we assume are free of culture may turn out to be its product.¹⁰² The Cahuilla manipulated and shaped the environment to meet their dietary needs (e.g., burning palm groves to increase date fruit production), to facilitate travel, and to move and store water. Their environment was thick with symbols and many of the symbols were thought to be alive (certain rocks, hot springs, etc.) and had an effect on the quality of human life.

1.5 Conclusion: Thinking About Landscape

I would like to situate my reflections in this article within the broader field of landscape studies. Simon Schama argued in his massive tome that there is nothing inherently shameful about the human occupation and shaping of land to meet

human material and aesthetic needs—a proposition this study itself supports—but he then jumps to the conclusion that we should celebrate all instances of such transformation—a proposition this study does not affirm. He wonders, rather coyly, “Would we rather that Yosemite, for all its overpopulation and overrepresentation, had *never* been identified, mapped, emarked?”¹⁰³ The question becomes who is the “we” in his question? The answer is obviously European-Americans since the Ahwahneechee identified and occupied Yosemite long before Europeans arrived in California. They probably mapped it as well, just not on paper or vellum. It was not a park or game preserve since it was the place where they worked, hunted, gathered, and lived. Their answer to his question might very well be “yes” but it was not a question meant for them but for modern Americans who enjoy their parks even if bears rummage through McDonald’s cartons.

Denis Cosgrove’s approach to landscape has deepened my awareness as well as directly informed many of my reflections on landscape in the California desert. In particular I appreciate his suggestions that “Landscape is a *social* product, the consequence of a collective human transformation of nature” and a “collective investment of meaning in places by those who make and keep them.”¹⁰⁴ These perspectives made great sense to me. However, based on my study of symbolic landscapes in the Coachella Valley, I have more difficulty with another key idea of his:

For the insider, there is no clear separation of self from scene, subject from object.... He is an ‘existential insider’ for whom what we may call landscape is a dimension of existence, collectively produced, lived, and maintained.... The element of control which we noted in the relationship implied by the landscape idea is missing, although communities may use a variety of symbolic and ritualistic means in attempting to wrest a degree of control over the physical world. For the insider the external world is unmediated by aesthetic conventions.¹⁰⁵

I think Cosgrove can make that assertion only because he is not paying attention to indigenous aesthetic conventions. Landscape is indeed a dimension of existence for the Cahuilla but it is also an external world mediated by symbolic exchanges and cultural meaning. The Cahuilla were insiders but they could and did separate themselves from their environment: they had to be constantly on guard even as they strove to live reciprocally with the other beings that inhabited their environment. As Lowell Bean pointed out, for the Cahuilla,

all matter was subject to unpredictable change. This instability was true from the beginning. Creation of earth and life itself was fraught with indecision, mistakes, and conflicts of power between Mukat and his creation in the “beginning.” The Creator himself was unpredictable and unstable because he tricked people into performing acts which were harmful to them.¹⁰⁶

They shared this world with other beings that were not always beneficent and this world’s heart of fire could change the flow of springs, torrential rains could wipe out villages, last year’s allies could be this year’s enemies, a shaman may use his power for evil and harm, and Tahquitz could steal young daughters away.

Finally, my approach to landscape has strong resonances with John Brinkerhoff Jackson’s notions that landscape was intimately tied to social and economic

activity in a specific geographic setting and represented one of the ways those who shaped it signified themselves and their worlds. For him, landscape was anchored in human life and people dwelled within the landscape socially. In contrast to Cosgrove's view, Jackson held that a landscape is a place for living and working and it can have symbolic significance for those who are "insiders." Finally, Jackson also regarded landscape as a political and cultural construction which changed over the course of history.¹⁰⁷

History, of course, moves on and it would be a great mistake to essentialize the Cahuilla as a people frozen in time and space. Few Cahuilla now live as their forebearers did and none lived in the canyons I visited. Palm, Andreas, Murray and Tahquitz Canyons are now Tribal Reserves (tribal parks) operated by the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians.¹⁰⁸ It was their brochure I saw in the hotel. They still consider the canyons sacred; however the lives of the Agua Caliente Band changed radically when a smallpox epidemic in 1862 reduced its number from around 10,000 in 1860 to 2,500 people. In 1876 their land was broken up into 1-square-mile parcels. The U.S. government returned the even-numbered lots to the Agua Caliente while the Southern Pacific Railroad got the odd-numbered parcels for 10 miles on either side of railroad right-of-way to subsidize railroad construction. Their homeland legally and symbolically broken up, the Agua Caliente's sections fanned across the desert and foothills in a checker-board pattern which inscribed a new symbolic system on the land based on U.S. surveying methods and property relations. In 1877 the government established reservation boundaries which left the Agua Caliente Band about two-thirds of their land.

Fortunate enough to retain ownership of their sacred canyons, the Cahuilla worked for white settlers as cowboys, laborers and domestics.¹⁰⁹ The situation changed after the 1960s with recognition of Native American sovereignty¹¹⁰ and the legalization of gambling on Indian reservations in California. Of the Agua Caliente Reservation's 52,000 acres, 6,700 acres lay within Palm Springs' city limits. On one of the urban parcels the Cahuilla contracted with developers to build a gambling casino. The site of the Mineral Springs Spa Resort and Casino had been a Cahuilla gathering place for hundreds of years. The Cahuilla believed the springs had "magical" powers to cure illness and it was a physical and symbolic shrine, "a place of power." Today, the casino's website boasts, with a pastiche of postmodern historical gestures, that "The same springs bubble from that spot today with luxurious embellishments which rival the Roman baths of old and the outstanding spas throughout the world."¹¹¹ The springs have been transformed from a natural to a social fetish/hieroglyph to allow the Cahuilla to participate fully in the region's postmodern tourist and casino economy and in the circulation of fictitious capital. Since knowing the land is no longer a direct source of their livelihood, many Cahuilla have forgotten the meaning of the petroglyphs, rock outcroppings, and sacred and secular canyon sites.¹¹² Many have become outsiders to this landscape even if they still feel an elective affinity with it.¹¹³ They no longer dwell in it as their forebearers did but learn about it in museums and tribal parks. Today there are about 290 registered Cahuillas as recorded by the tribal



Fig. 1.7 The Sleeping Chief

headquarters.¹¹⁴ In 1955, with the Cahuilla language dying, their ceremonies fading, and the younger generation leaving the old ways, the death of the tribal leader was the final straw. Since no one knew enough to take his place, the Agua Caliente decided to burn their ceremonial house, the most historic and political symbol of Cahuilla identity.¹¹⁵ The Cahuilla then created a new social organization of space for themselves as part of a new material and symbolic economy and they will continue to change as a people. Karl Marx would not have been surprised.¹¹⁶

There are still symbols sleeping in the Cahuilla landscape. As I left Andreas Canyon, the park ranger wanted me to see the Sleeping Chief. In the hills to the west of Andreas Canyon, many Cahuilla see a chief sleeping. He pointed it out to me and guided my eye so I knew what to look for in the distance. By this time I was used to the idea that landscape is not simply the raw world we see: it is a construction, a composition of the world, a way of seeing the world. If you look at the mountain ridge, you can see the outline of the head of the chief (Fig. 1.7). His chin is just to the left of the palm tree in the middle of the picture. Moving left, one's eyes pass over the outline of his lips, nose, and sloping forehead. His chest is visible above the fan palms on the right. Upon leaving Andreas Canyon I got a better view of the chief's whole body all the way down to his feet. The park ranger said that the story associated with this natural representation of a human form concerned a chief who was unhappy with young people because they did not show adequate respect for the elders and the old ways of living. He decided he would go to sleep in the landscape until they could find their way and live properly. He may be slumbering for some time.

Speaking of slumbering, my university's meeting was as bone-crushingly dull as I had feared. Still, it gave me the opportunity to ponder landscapes that I otherwise would not have encountered and made some of the hours in those

hermetically-sealed, air-conditioned rooms less tedious and mind-numbing than they otherwise would have been.

Notes

1 Cosgrove, *Social Formation*, xi.

2 Ibid., xi, 13.

3 Schama, *Landscape and Memory*, 7.

4 Ibid., 14, 18.

5 Mitchell, *Landscape and Power*, 1.

6 Harvey, *Condition of Postmodernity*, 66.

7 Backhaus and Murungi, "Introduction: Landings," 1.

8 Backhaus, "Introduction I: The Problematic," 13.

9 Ibid., xiv, for a discussion of situated embodiment and symbolic resonance.

10 Ibid., iv.

11 Bean, *Mukat's People*, 180.

12 Reisner, *Cadillac Desert*, 12.

13 See Norberg-Schulz, *Nightlands*, for his use of the terms romantic, cosmic, classical, and complex in relation to landscape types on the basis of the earth-sky relationship.

14 Bean, *Mukat's People*, 161–162.

15 See Williams, *Culture*, where he discusses how cultural products represent mediations between human consciousness and the material world through human physical activity, both individual and social. In Williams's words mediation "is a positive process in [constructing] social reality, rather than a process added to it by way of projection, disguise or interpretation," 98–99. The anthropologist Marshall Sahlins saw nothing remarkable in the fact that these material processes or mediations operated through symbolic codes. As far as he was concerned, being symbolic did not detract from their materiality. He argued that these codes were at one and the same time "a specific cultural technology and a specific form of practical consciousness" and thus "a unified and material social process." See Sahlins, *Culture and Practical Reason*, 58–59. See this idea as a thesis in: Harris, *Cultural Materialism*.

16 Mitchell, *Landscape and Power*, 5.

17 Ibid.

18 Cosgrove, *Social Formation*, xiii–xvi, 9, 36.

19 Ibid., xvii.

20 For example, the majority of chapters in Mitchell, *Landscape and Power*, and Cosgrove and Daniels, eds., *Iconography* deal with pictorial representations of landscapes, but Cosgrove, *Social Formation*, Schama, *Landscape and Memory*, and Olwig, "Recovering the Substantive Meaning of Landscape," 630–653, analyze pictorial representations as well as physical landscapes created by architects, engineers, and designers since 1500. Landscape architect Jellicoe treated the symbolic underpinnings (derived mainly from myth and public memory) of landscape design in his book, *Studies in Landscape Design*. Pugh, *Garden, Nature, Language*, applies terms from literary criticism to the study of humanly constructed environments like gardens of the upper-class English, supporting Cosgrove's contention that the physical ideal of the "landscape idea" influenced the construction of actual landscapes during and after the Renaissance.

By the mid-twentieth century, French historians like Marc Bloch and Fernand Braudel were studying medieval and early-modern landscapes in France and the Mediterranean and contributed

a great deal to our knowledge of these areas but their interests were much broader: they were interested in recovering the total social history of a region using, in part, economic and cultural geography. They did not focus on the symbolic meaning of the landscapes they studied but focused instead on its transformation by human labor into a historically variable habitat. See Bloch, *French Rural History*, and Braudel, *The Mediterranean*.

21 Pugh, ed., *Reading Landscape*, 2–3.

22 Mitchell, *Landscape and Power*, 1.

23 Olwig, “Recovering the Substantive Meaning of Landscape,” 630–631, 635–638; Schama, *Landscape and Memory*, 10.

24 Bean and Saubel, *Temalpakh*, 11–13; Bean, *Mukat’s People*, 25–29.

25 To play off the Hollywood-like contrived nature of much of the modern and post-modern development in the Coachella Valley, the title of this chapter deliberately invokes the many “Road to” movies of the 1940s starring Bing Crosby and Bob Hope who never ventured out of the studio environment to make those pictures (e.g., “Road to Singapore,” “Road to Zanzibar,” “Road to Morocco,” “Road to Rio”). Crosby and Hope were among the early homeowners in the Palm Springs/Indian Wells area.

26 On annual water use in the urban areas of the Coachella Valley, see the report of Emerson of the Coachella Valley Water District. On the number of resort hotels and golf courses in the Coachella Valley see Bogert, *Palm Springs*, 280. The remaining golf courses rely on recycled water. See Spillman, “Balancing Growth and Water Supply.”

27 See Spillman, op. cit. The Coachella Valley underground aquifer holds 30 million acre feet of water. An acre foot of water equals 325,851 gallons. Since 1936, the aquifer has diminished by 5 million acre feet. Currently the aquifer is overdrafted by 150,000 acre feet a year, enough water to supply 300,000 households. See also “Aquifer Subbasin,” which states that the Coachella Valley Water District hopes that through new recharge measures the Valley can be assured of adequate groundwater supplies until 2037 and “Coachella Valley Water Management Plan.” “Because as much as 80 percent of domestic water use occurs outside the home, however, CVWD has been working closely with cities in the Coachella Valley, encouraging them to adopt a uniform water efficient landscaping and landscape maintenance ordinance. Such regulations encourage the use of native and other low water-usage vegetation, and discourage vast expanses of turf and use of heavily water-dependent vegetation found in urban, Coastal Southern California.”

28 Olwig, “Recovering the Substantive Meaning of Landscape,” 645.

29 Reisner, *Cadillac Desert*, 21.

30 Ibid., 12.

31 Bogert, *Palm Springs*, 83–163. Movie stars like William Powell, Cary Grant, Bob Hope, Frank Sinatra, Clark Gable and others had homes in Palm Springs and many stars like Gary Cooper, Jackie Cooper, John and Lionel Barrymore, and John Wayne made it their desert playground.

32 Ibid., 88, 178.

33 Ibid., 245–248.

34 City of Indian Wells, California, “The 50s and 60s.”

35 City of Indian Wells, California, “Becoming a City.”

36 Indian Wells Tourism site, “Our Resorts.”

37 Howe, “Renaissance Architecture: Palace at Fontainebleau.”

38 Golf courses in the Coachella Valley use one million gallons of water per day. See Soilmoisture Equipment Corporation, “The Greening of America”: “Each of those 57 golf courses in Palm Springs—as the name suggests, basically an oasis in a desert—uses a millions gallons of water per day. That’s roughly 57 million gallons, 365 days a year.” With the Coachella Valley’s

115 golf courses, that is 115 million gallons of water a day to irrigate the area's golf courses alone!

39 Photos of Indian Wells on the Internet are replete with resorts reflected in large pools of water surrounded by palm trees and brown, rocky hills. See "Indian Wells Photo Tour."

40 Reisner, *Cadillac Desert*, 3–4.

41 Mitchell, *Landscape and Power*, 7.

42 Reisner, *Cadillac Desert*, 12.

43 Cosgrove, *Social Formation*, 1.

44 City of Indian Wells, "Silver and Beyond."

45 "Indian Wells, California." Wikipedia.

46 Schama, *Landscape and Memory*, 338.

47 Cosgrove, *Social Formation*, xiv.

48 Harvey, *Condition of Postmodernity*, 77, 85.

49 Ibid., 92.

50 See, for example, Bogert, *Palm Springs*, 83–93; 165–176; 243–251.

51 City of Indian Wells, California, "The 50s and 60s" and "Becoming a City."

52 Harvey, *Condition of Postmodernity*, 357.

53 City of Indian Wells, "Silver and Beyond."

54 Harvey, *Condition of Postmodernity*, 107–108. Harvey concluded that "What is surprising is the way in which indebtedness and fictitious capital formation have accelerated since [the mid-1960s], at the same time as massive defaults and devaluations have been absorbed ... within the financial apparatus," 194.

55 See Mitchell, *Landscape and Power*, 14–15, for a discussion of landscape in relation to use value and exchange value.

56 Cosgrove, *Social Formation*, 62.

57 See Daniels, "Marxism" 196–220.

58 Cosgrove, *Social Formation*, 11.

59 Ibid., 15.

60 Baudrillard, *America*, 1–11; 27–36; 52–64.

61 Bogert, *Palm Springs*, 266.

62 Mitchell, *Landscape and Power*, 13–14.

63 Bean, *Mukat's People*, 166–168, has some of the lore on Tahquitz.

64 Bean, Vane, and Young, *Cahuilla Landscape*, 85.

65 Bean, *Mukat's People*, 81–82.

66 Bean, Vane, and Young, *Cahuilla Landscape*, 5–6.

67 Bean and Saubel, *Temalpakh*, 21–22; Bean, *Mukat's People*, 17–19, 25–28; 83–88, 125–129.

68 Bean, *Mukat's People*, 36–45; Bean and Saubel, *Temalpakh*, 19–21.

69 Francisco Patencio, a Cahuilla chief, said in 1943 that he remembered an earthquake (probably in 1857) that changed Tahquitz Creek from a perennial to a seasonal (winter and spring) following stream. See Patencio, *Stories and Legends*, 58.

70 Bean, Vane, and Young, *Cahuilla Landscape*, 7–8.

71 Bean, Vane, and Young, *Cahuilla Landscape*, 54.

72 Bean, *Mukat's People*, 29–30, mentions significant dry and wet spells for the Coachella Valley that occurred in cycles of 20 or so years.

73 Ibid., 166–167.

74 Ibid., 108–116.

75 Bean, Vane, and Young, *Cahuilla Landscape*, 3.

76 Patencio, *Stories and Legends*, 103.

77 Dozier, *The Heart is Fire*, 55, 61.

78 Cosgrove, *Social Formation*, xi. Here Cosgrove enunciates a tension between “an unalienated, insider’s apprehension of the land—of nature and a sense of place” and “a more critical, socially conscious, outsider’s perspective: what I call the landscape ‘way of seeing.’” Cosgrove believes that it is inappropriate to apply the term *landscape* to the surroundings in which people live and work as insiders: “The visible forms and their harmonious integration to the eye may indeed be a constituent part of people’s relationship with the surroundings of their daily lives, but such considerations are subservient to other aspects of a working life with family and community.” Cosgrove, *Social Formation*, 19. He suggests that living on the land precludes the possibility of symbolic involvement with the land and he considers the symbolic regard of landscape as a result of the capitalist *gaze* where land becomes an abstract commodity that can be bought (alienated), controlled, and shaped. While he may not be wrong concerning the role of the capitalist gaze, the Cahuilla experience indicates that land can be regarded symbolically yet still be regarded as a means of production and livelihood.

79 Mitchell, *Landscape and Power*, 15.

80 Bean, *Mukat’s People*, 29–34.

81 *Ibid.*, 35, 163.

82 Dozier, *The Heart is Fire*, 56.

83 Bean and Saubel, *Temalpakh*, 15.

84 *Ibid.*, 16.

85 Bean, Vane, and Young, *The Cahuilla Landscape*, 21.

86 *Ibid.*, 20, 62–63.

87 Bean, *Mukat’s People*, 36, 56–67.

88 Bean and Saubel, *Temalpakh*, 149; Bean, *Mukat’s People*, 45.

89 Schama, *Landscape and Memory*, 7, 9.

90 Cosgrove, *Social Formation*, 56.

91 Bean, *Mukat’s People*, 44–45.

92 Bean and Saubel, *Temalpakh*, 148.

93 Patencio, *Stories and Legends*, 33.

94 Bean, Vane, and Young, *Cahuilla Landscape*, 15.

95 Patencio, *Stories and Legends*, 89.

96 Bean, Vane, and Young, *Cahuilla Landscape*, 18; Dozier, *The Heart is Fire*, 110.

97 See Cosgrove, *Social Formation*, xi, 1.

98 *Ibid.*, xvi and 41–45, see for the basic Marxist concepts.

99 *Ibid.*, xi.

100 Schama, *Landscape and Memory*, 16.

101 Reisner, *Cadillac Desert*, 3–14, 330–335.

102 Schama, *Landscape and Memory*, 9.

103 *Ibid.*

104 Cosgrove, *Social Formation*, 14, 18.

105 *Ibid.*, 19.

106 Bean, *Mukat’s People*, 163.

107 See Meinig, ed. *Ordinary Landscapes*, 288–289.

108 Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, “Political History.”

- 109 Agua Caliente Cultural Museum, "About the Tribe"; "A Little Information about the Cahuilla"; Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, "Our Heritage."
- 110 Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, "Political History."
- 111 Spa Resort Casino, "Welcome."
- 112 Dozier, *The Heart is Fire*, 67, 109–110, 113–114.
- 113 Ibid., 55–56, 59.
- 114 Agua Caliente Cultural Museum, "A Little Information about the Cahuilla."
- 115 Agua Caliente Cultural Museum, "About the Tribe"; on the ceremonial house, see Bean, *Mukat's People*, 72–73, 104–105.
- 116 Marx, *Grundrisse*, 94–95.

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Chapter 2

Wilderness as *Axis Mundi*: Spiritual Journeys on the Appalachian Trail

Kip Redick

A footpath for
Those who seek
Fellowship with
the Wilderness¹

Editors' Note: The author provides discussion of religious and historical literature concerning the relation of wilderness experience and its symbolism to religious experience and its symbolism. But this literature concerns fact reportage or the transmission of religious truths, losing the experiential genesis. Such knowledge disconnected from experience suggests a cognitive source for symbolization. But important to our thesis is that the author explores his own experience and the contemporary experiences of others showing the genesis of symbolism and spirituality through the body schema in the spatial enactment of meaning along the Appalachian Trail. The author is sensitive to the co-constitutive role of the EarthBody, and this sensitivity is motivated due to the disruption of ordinary sociality as new meanings are to be negotiated on the basis of the genius loci of the milieu. The author finds corroborating evidence in the generation of spirituality through embodied experience with what can be cognitively learned in religious and historical literature. This corroboration confirms our notion of resonances between “poetic” language and gesture when indeed we are attuned to the felt significances of the body schema.

2.1 Introduction

Contemporary recreational activities involving extended hikes in the wilderness, along pathways such as the Appalachian Trail, are relatively new cultural phenomena. It was not until the late nineteenth century that a public, rather than a few vocal individuals, perceived wilderness as a place to experience such action. Hikers began venturing forth into back country forests at the same time that national parks such as Yellowstone and Yosemite were being established. Treks into the wilderness became for some, journeys to and through places that were the center of focus. Though backpackers were engaging in a new kind of journey, a retreat into the wilderness, their pathways and actions were not unprecedented. Religious

adherents also set forth on journeys, stepping out of the routines of profane daily action, seeking solace in a sacred place. Many who walk the narrow pathway through the wilderness provided by the Appalachian Trail (hereafter referred to as the AT) may be experiencing a pilgrimage that does not fit into any particular religious tradition, but involves a spiritual journey.

2.2 Defining Wilderness

Recalling the discussion into problematic aspects of symbolic versus non-symbolic landscapes in the introduction to this book,² it is difficult to distinguish between wilderness as the real landscape and wilderness as the social construction. Roderick Nash writes, "There is no specific material object that is wilderness. The term designates a quality (as the '-ness' suggests) that produces a certain mood or feeling in a given individual and, as a consequence, may be assigned by that person to a specific place. Because of this subjectivity a universally acceptable definition of wilderness is elusive."³ He continues in the attempt at definition writing that wilderness "is so heavily freighted with meaning of a personal, symbolic, and changing kind as to resist easy definition."⁴ Nash traces the etymology of the word to mean the place of wild beasts implying "the absence of men," and "a region where a person was likely to get into a disordered, confused, or 'wild' condition."⁵ In wilderness all cultural orientation is absent and the person who wanders there becomes "bewildered." Wilderness is a landscape where humans have not left artifacts of habitation or as Nash articulates, predominately the environment of the non-human.⁶ Michael Frome notes that wilderness is "more than a place," it is also "an idea, a principle, a state of mind, even a dream. While the state of wilderness exists in the mind, it does so only to the degree it exists somewhere on the ground."⁷

Frome's characterization shows the dialectical relation between wilderness as symbol and non-symbol as discussed in the introduction to this book:

Perhaps there is always a dialectical relation between the symbolic and the non-symbolic, necessarily relating the symbolic dimension or ideal super-structure to the non-symbolic or real landscape conditions. ... Characteristics are not perceived outside of the medium of historical and cultural imagination. The physical and symbolic dimensions are moments and any separation involves abstraction, if indeed, it is possible to even conceptually separate them so that an abstraction can be performed.⁸

An exposition of the dialectical relation between the real landscape and ideal super-structure starts with an abstract characterization shared by various real landscapes that makes them identifiable as wilderness. The United States Congress has given us such a characterization in defining wilderness through the passage of the Wilderness Act of 1964:

A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain. An area of

wilderness is further defined to mean in this chapter an area of underdeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which (1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable; (2) has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation; (3) has at least five thousand acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; and (4) may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.⁹

The difficulty of distinguishing between physical and symbolic dimensions is evident in this definition. Specifications 2, 3 and 4 are articulated as social constructions.

2.3 The Rise of Wilderness as Symbol in the Intertwining of Lived-Body and Milieu of the Shepherd Nomad

Wilderness as symbolic landscape involves its rhetorical history, the language, and narratives that describe wilderness. Wilderness is the English term Bible translators used most often to express the Hebrew *midbar* and the Greek *eremos*, as well as other Hebrew and Greek words meaning desert, barren, and solitary places. Judaism is a religion birthed in the solitary landscape of the Fertile Crescent. Max Oelschlaeger calls attention to the symbolic import that nomadic peoples ascribed to their dwelling beyond the cultivated fields of more fertile landscapes.

The shepherd-farmer mythology 'bespeaks a deeper psychic conflict' than any simple antipathy between herders and farmers. It represents a persistent opposition to civilization. In this mythology the wilderness assumes a deep symbolic meaning, representing both (in Genesis) the shepherd's departure from the detested city (itself symbolic of the high cultures) and the exodus from slavery into the desert to face Yahweh's challenge.¹⁰

Symbolic meaning arises for the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, shepherd patriarchs, in the "ambiguous field of embodied experience."¹¹

The intertwining of lived-body and milieu in the context of shepherd nomads of the Fertile Crescent involves people subsisting in an extremely arid landscape. Sheep and goats grazing on large tracts of land to survive were the center of life for pastoral cultures. This milieu is conducive to an experience of extreme interdependence between domesticated animals, indigenous flora and fauna, and human beings. The relationship between people and domestic animals is illustrated by one of the questions Jesus asks in the gospels: "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it?"¹² This aphorism does not make sense in a system where domesticated livestock do not wander over great distances and their reproduction is benefited by arable pastures and permanent shelters. Living in cultivated landscapes alters the value of time because now fields must receive labor. Leaving the 99 in search of one would seem a waste of

resources, not worth the trouble. The agricultural system, more closely juxtaposed to urban centers, provides inhabitants with alternative lived-body resources and subsistence from hunting and gathering is eliminated.

Shepherd nomads are much closer in culture to hunter-gatherers than are their rivals in a more arable milieu. Nearly every aspect of lived-body experience is associated with tending livestock, hunting, and gathering wild fauna in landscape that would not support more densely populated groups of people.

The spatial experience is of a rocky and sparsely vegetated earth under a vaulted and dominating sky. The horizon extends miles in the distance when viewed from elevated vantages, large flat plains, or atop plateaus. Dry river beds following rugged valleys may become places of death during unexpected flash floods where no rain falls in the locale of the devastation. There are both mountainous and flat regions. Those who live in these harsh places are able to thrive on solitude where they form autonomous clans, valuing independence and austerity. Their values clash with groups who dwell in less formidable places.

The rivalry between shepherd nomads and those in closer proximity to urban centers is expressed in Genesis 46:34 in connection with the children of Jacob who are moving to Egypt as a result of famine. Joseph, Jacob's favorite son who has become one of Pharaoh's lieutenants, asks the Egyptian king for permission to bring his family to the Nile region. In the exchange Joseph describes his family as shepherds and thereby receives instructions to let Israel dwell in Goshen, "for every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians."

When the offspring of Jacob depart from Egypt centuries later, Moses leads them into the wilderness where they stay for 40 years of wandering. During their spiritual journey in the wilderness they reconnect with their nomadic roots and become acquainted with the God who is associated with the shepherd patriarchs.

2.4 Wilderness as *Axis Mundi* in Judaic and Christian Scripture

Abraham, *pater familias* of Israel, is first placed in Ur of the Chaldeans.¹³ From the heart of the civilization of Sumer, Abraham's family moves to Haran in northern Mesopotamia. It is while dwelling in Haran that Abraham hears instructions from God to leave family and home and go "to the land I will show you."¹⁴ He journeys to Canaan, a mountainous region between the two great ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia and Egypt, and establishes a point of orientation.

At Bethel, the house of God, Abraham experienced an hierophany: "So he built there an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him."¹⁵ Mircea Eliade writes that "the cosmicization of unknown territories is always a consecration; to organize a space is to repeat the paradigmatic work of the gods."¹⁶ Building the altar constitutes establishing a sacred place in the spatial milieu. This place becomes the point of communication between Abraham and his God. Eliade notes that "communication is sometimes expressed through the image of a universal pillar, *axis mundi*, which

at once connects and supports heaven and earth.”¹⁷ It is significant that the sacred place, Bethel, is in the mountains of Canaan. Evan Eisengerg uses the term world-pole in place of Eliade’s *axis mundi* writing, “For the Canaanites, the world-pole was the Mountain: the wild place sacred to the gods, the font of life-giving water. For the Mesopotamians, it was the Tower: the ziggurat that rose in the midst of the city.”¹⁸ So the sacred place of the shepherd patriarchs is established beyond the borders of civilization where towers symbolize the connection between heaven and earth. It is in the wilderness that Yahweh manifests himself.

Belden C. Lane, in discussing the transformation that a place undergoes when it moves from being experienced as ordinary to extraordinary, calls attention to two different words that the Greeks used for place, *topos* and *chora*. The Greeks used *topos* to mean “a mere location, a measurable, quantifiable point, neutral and indifferent,” whereas *chora* meant “an energizing force, suggestive to the imagination, drawing intimate connections to everything else in our lives.” Lane asserts that transformation occurs when “participation in deliberate ritual activity is what invariably occasions the transition from experiencing a place as *topos* to encountering that same place as *chora*.”¹⁹ Abraham experiences the transformation of wilderness as *topos*, the place where he was grazing his flocks, to *chora*, the place of hierophany.

A second story involving wilderness as *axis mundi* has Jacob, Abraham’s grandson, as the focus, Genesis 28. Jacob is fleeing from his twin brother Esau after a family argument. On his way to seek refuge in Haran, while still journeying through the hinterlands, Jacob dreams of a ladder stretching between heaven and earth. Jacob then sees God in his dream. Eliade writes, “Every sacred space implies a hierophany, an irruption of the sacred that results in detaching a territory from the surrounding cosmic milieu and making it qualitatively different.”²⁰ Through the dream Jacob received instructions similar to those given to Abraham concerning the land. Just as his grandfather consecrated the place of God’s manifestation, Jacob wakes from the dream and says, “Surely the Lord is in this place; and I did not know it.... How awesome is this place! It is none other than the house of God and this is the gate of heaven.”²¹ Eliade writes, “The symbolism implicit in the expression ‘gate of heaven’ is rich and complex; the theophany that occurs in a place consecrates it by the very fact that it makes it open above—that is, in communication with heaven, the paradoxical point of passage from one mode of being to another.”²² So Jacob “took the stone which he had had put under his head and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it,” calling the place Bethel and thereby establishing it as sacred ground.²³

The story of Jacob’s dream calls attention to the embodiment of the milieu and the co-constitutive agency of the EarthBody.²⁴ The stone that had been used as a pillow is given voice. Both Jacob and the stone are embodied agents brought together in the seemingly common act of sleeping. The dream alters time and place, and Jacob’s attention toward heaven involves this stone. This particular stone stands out and speaks to all other embodied creatures that pass this way, “Jacob encountered Yahweh in this place, while his head rested in this particular embodiment of earth.” This stone symbolizes the translation of *topos* to *chora*.

Another story reiterating the symbolic import of wilderness as sacred place in contrast with more fertile landscapes involves Abraham and his nephew Lot. After dwelling together since leaving Haran, strife erupted between the herdsmen. Abraham suggested that each go his own way. "And Lot lifted up his eyes, and saw that the Jordan valley was well watered everywhere like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt."²⁵ So Lot moved his herds to the Jordan valley while Abraham continued to dwell in the mountains of Canaan.²⁶ The story plays out with Lot moving into the city of Sodom, located in the valley. Eventually God destroys the city because of the depravity of its inhabitants. Lot escapes the destruction, moving back into the hills of Canaan, Genesis 18–19. The story suggests that God prefers those living in the wild versus urbanites, or that a wilderness lifestyle is less conducive to moral depravity.

When Moses escapes into the desert after killing an Egyptian, he finds a home in the wilderness and becomes a shepherd. It is while tending his flocks that Moses encounters Yahweh's hierophany in the burning bush. The location of the encounter is described as the back of the desert, *midbar* in the Hebrew, a clear indication of the remoteness of the place.²⁷ This is the place where Moses meets Yahweh, who introduces himself as "the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."²⁸ God also instructs Moses to bring the people of Israel from Egypt back to this mountain.²⁹ It is here that the people who have been living in the cultivated landscape of Goshen will be reacquainted with the God of their shepherd patriarchs, the God of the wilderness. It is here that the people will be sheltered from the oppression of Egypt but at the same time be tempered in the ordeal of living in this harsh environment.

Lane outlines the Judaic perspective of wilderness being rooted in religious history and providing a *topos* of meaning: "Yahweh is a God who repeatedly leads the children of Israel into the desert, toward the mountain.... Having once been taken to the edge, they view all succeeding passages into the wilds of unpredictability in light of that metaphorical paradigm."³⁰ Israel's various attempts to symbolize Yahweh were mediated through human artifacts resulting in punishment and in more difficulty in the foray into the wilderness. In this light, the symbolic action of wilderness, its isolation from civilization and its arable landscape, worked to shatter human reliance on artifacts that had been effective in Egypt. The golden calf was destroyed in the midst of the wilderness, a place void of human culture. Artifacts that serve to order reality in a domestic landscape hinder the process of adapting to desolate places beyond the boundaries of civilization. Wilderness as *axis mundi* in the context of Israel orients the people to an experience of the Holy associated with the intertwining of live-body and milieu in a place that bewilders domestication. Rudolph Otto has characterized the Holy as *mysterium* and *tremendum*, "that which is quite beyond the sphere of the usual, the intelligible, and the familiar, which therefore falls quite outside the limits of the 'canny,' and is contrasted with it, filling the mind with blank wonder and astonishment."³¹ The characterization is experientially related to what Otto calls "creature-consciousness" or creature-feeling. It is the emotion of a creature, submerged and overwhelmed by its own nothingness in contrast to that which is

supreme above all creatures.”³² The wilderness of the Sinai is an experiential geography where the intertwining of lived-body and milieu produce feelings of nothingness, of astonishment in the vast spatial field of barren rock, sand, and sky. Experience with place is translated into the experience with the Holy.

Wilderness becomes symbolically active as a liminal place, a place of ambiguity, a bewildering place where nothing is as it seems because there are no points of orientation. Victor Turner writes that “liminality is frequently likened to death, to being in the womb, to invisibility, to darkness, to bisexuality, to the wilderness, and to an eclipse of the sun or moon.”³³ The ambiguity of wilderness rests in the shattering of order associated with the domestic human world; all humanly constructed boundaries are erased. Lane writes of the place that “you quickly come to the end of what you have depended upon to give continuity and meaning in your life.... In short, the liminality of desert and mountain terrain redefines every boundary giving shape to one’s life.”³⁴

Peoples who lived in urban centers and cultivated landscapes viewed the wilderness as a wasteland. The children of the patriarchs who were raised in Goshen wanted to go back to the arable landscape of Egypt after a very short time in the harsh climate and difficult environs of the desert: “We remember the fish which we ate freely in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic, but now our whole being is dried up.”³⁵ An alternative Hebrew word translated as wilderness, *tsiyah*, also may be used in connection with a barren, dry land. A related word, *tsisyiy*, may mean wild beast or nomad. The place beyond civilization was considered a vast landscape of desolation and those humans who dwelt there carried the same name as the wild animals therein.

Greek culture also viewed wilderness as a horrid place as evidenced in their mythology. Roderick Nash elaborates on the mythological characterization of a place that evoked fear:

Greeks who had to pass through forests or mountains dreaded an encounter with Pan. Indeed, the word “panic” originated from the blinding fear that seized travelers upon hearing strange cries in the wilderness and assuming them to signify Pan’s approach. Related to Pan were the tribe of satyrs—goat-men of a demoniacal character devoted to wine, dancing, and lust. They were thought to appear only at night and then solely in the darkest parts of the forest. According to Hellenic folklore, satyrs ravished women and carried off children who ventured into their wilderness lairs. Sileni and centaurs completed the Greek collection of forest spirits. These monsters had the torso and head of a man and the body and legs of a goat or horse. Usually, they were represented as carrying a club in the form of an uprooted tree which also served as a reminder of their favorite habitat.³⁶

In these stories Yahweh is revealed as a God in opposition to the gods of Egypt and Mesopotamia, and one who manifests himself in wilderness hierophanies: the burning bush and pillars of fire and of smoke for example. These stories become the symbolic origin of wilderness as a place of refuge and at the same time of trial.

Wilderness also played a prominent role in the gospel narratives. The *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* defines the Greek term *eremos* as an empty place, without inhabitants. It may also mean abandonment.³⁷ In regards to

the ministry of Jesus, this is the place “where nothing separates Him from God and which He therefore seeks when He wants to escape the crowds or when He tries to find a place of quiet for His disciples.”³⁸ It is the place where Jesus spends 40 days of fasting after being consecrated by John the Baptist.

John the Baptist is introduced as one preaching in the wilderness. He follows in the tradition of Hebrew prophets whose messages are proclaimed through speech, location, and through visual imagery. John is wearing camel’s hair secured by a leather belt. He lives on wild honey and locusts. His message is simple, repent.³⁹ All of these elements coupled together resonate with the wilderness narratives described above. John is calling his own generation out of a symbolic Egypt. He identifies with the shepherd patriarchs, wearing their clothing and eating their food. He points to the ancient *axis mundi* in the wilderness, the original point of origin, the primal point of communication for the children of Abraham. Here there is a clearly expressed symbolic manifestation of the spatial event between the lived-body and its milieu. Wilderness as symbolic place undergoes another shift in meaning as a new group of people encounter a different milieu.

2.5 Wilderness and the American Milieu

The Puritans who left England for America understood their experience as being similar to Israel’s departure from Egypt. Though the American wilderness of New England has none of the concrete geographical qualities that one may experience in the Sinai, the English colonists did experience the place through the symbolic action of Biblical narratives. Peter N. Carroll traces this dramatization of the wilderness as a place of refuge, a potential promised land, and at the same time, the dwelling place of the devil where only “savages” lived. It was their view of the place as sanctuary that kept them crossing the Atlantic.⁴⁰ The pietistic Puritans identified with Israel through the filter of the English Bible.

Though at the time of the translation of the Bible into English there was arguably little wild landscape in England, wilderness entered the cultural imagination in association with Hebrew mythology. Translators had to find English terminology that would convey the meaning of several Greek and Hebrew words for landscape that is beyond the boundaries of civilization. *Midbar* and *eremos*, mentioned above, are two of more than a dozen Greek and Hebrew words that were translated as wilderness. The Hebrew word *tohuw*, sometimes translated as wilderness, is coupled with *bohuw* in the Genesis creation myth forming a poetic repetition of formless and void. Ideas of emptiness, confusion, and nought are associated with *tohuw*. When *eremos* is adjectival and attached to *topos*, early English translators most often chose desert for the Greek term. But when *eremos* is substantive, wilderness was the term chosen for translation. As English Bibles became available to the public, the Coverdale Bible was completed in 1535 and the Geneva Bible was completed in 1560, wilderness as symbolic landscape became a rhetorical commonplace.

The Puritan experience of wilderness as a place of trial dominated their early rhetoric. William Bradford alludes to the exodus of Israel and the terror of a prospective wilderness in his description of the Puritan arrival to New England:

What could they see but a hideous and desolate wilderness, full of wild beasts and wild men? and what multitudes there might be of them they knew not. Neither could they, as it were, go up to the top of Pigsah, to view from this wilderness a more goodly country to feed their hopes; for which way soever they turned their eyes (save upward to the heavens) they could have little solace or content in respect of any outward objects.⁴¹

J. Robert Cox notes that Europeans experienced both physical and spiritual alienation in their exodus to the Americas. In addition, "Nature in the wild was a deception, a false reality and, accordingly, had no value except as a place of testing for God's chosen people."⁴² Though wilderness was a place to be feared, land hungry settlers began moving into the western provinces of the colonies from the early days.

As these Europeans moved beyond the boundaries of parish and familiar cultural habitat, they either imposed a European agricultural order upon the settled land or adopted some of the Native American techniques for survival.⁴³ It is in adopting new ways of dwelling in the land that mythic figures such as Daniel Boone find a place in the American imagination. Writers such as James Fenimore Cooper expanded on the mythological synthesis between civilization and wilderness living with his "Leatherstocking Tales," including *The Pioneers* (1823) and *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826). Natty Bumppo, the central figure in the stories, is a Daniel Boone type character, and the books enter the American culture just as the real mythic character dies in 1820.

A new experience of wilderness rises with Transcendentalist literature and Hudson River landscape art. Henry David Thoreau epitomizes the former and Thomas Cole is looked to as the first among American landscape artists. Wild landscapes were the dominant subjects on which followers of Cole such as Thomas Moran, Asher B. Durand, Frederick Church, Albert Bierstadt, George Inness, John Kensett, and Jasper Francis Cropsey focused. They brought views of the wilderness into urban centers. These paintings along with the poetry and prose of Transcendentalist writers helped to soften the age old hatred that urbanites have had for wild places.

Thoreau's rhetorical statement, "in wildness is the preservation of the World," makes wilderness a new kind of *axis mundi*.⁴⁴ Whereas a specific wilderness was the place of salvation for the children of nomad patriarchs, Thoreau points to wilderness in general as a World Centre. Cox writes that Thoreau held nature as both "a concrete phenomenon and as a mirror of spiritual truth."⁴⁵ The Transcendentalist claim is consistent with Eliade's description of sacred space, "Whatever the extent of the territory involved, the cosmos that it represents is always perfect."⁴⁶ Eliade notes that the territory could be as large as an "entire country," or as small as "a sanctuary." That wilderness may refer to a vast territory or enclosures of at least 5,000 acres as indicated by the Wilderness Act of 1964 is also consistent with Eliade's characterization of the Cosmic Centre: "we must not envisage this

symbolism of the Centre with the geometrical implications that it has to a Western scientific mind.... The plurality of 'Centres of the Earth' within a single inhabited region presented no difficulty."⁴⁷ Cox goes on to write that Transcendentalists believed spiritual truths are "most clearly revealed" in wild nature.⁴⁸ Later in the century the naturalist John Muir would write, "The clearest way into the Universe is through a forest Wilderness."⁴⁹

Writers and artists of romanticist genres introduced the idea of the sublime to landscape. Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* published in 1756, was a comprehensive attempt to distinguish between the aesthetic categories of the sublime and the beautiful. Burke's examination rests at least in part on the work of Longinus. Burke's definition of the sublime sets it forth as the strongest emotion that can be produced and caused by something awesome: "Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the *sublime*; that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling."⁵⁰ A further description of the sublime in nature involves a passion of astonishment, which is said to be "that state of the soul, in which all its motions are suspended, with some degree of horror. In this case the mind is so entirely filled with its object, that it cannot entertain any other, nor by consequence reason on that object which employs it."⁵¹

An experience of the sublime, evoked by wild places, destabilizes human reliance on an artificially constructed world and reveals a transcendent value; an action that has precedence in the tradition of Judaism. The symbolic action of wilderness, an evocation of the sublime, reveals the Transcendent Other through an *axis mundi*. As was the case in the example of Israel discussed above, the symbolic action of wilderness reemerges in the industrial age. Where traditional symbols of a Transcendent Other are co-opted by modernity's tendency to make them profane—for instance through mass production and commodification—wilderness stands outside of human ordering. Symbols used by humans to order their world fall apart in the face of the natural sublime. In the modern age of reason, the era of mass production and consumption, wilderness is oppressively silent and obscure; it is not subsumed by human ordering. This wilderness that stands beyond human ordering, speaking from beyond culture, reveals something other than humans at the center. The sublime signals a transcendent reality. The wilderness would not be sublime if it were experienced as an ordered place.

2.6 Wilderness and the Sojourner

Because wilderness is not a place of permanent human habitation those who have lived within its desert or mountain milieu have been called sojourners or some variation thereof. Shepherd nomads are an example of cultural adaptation to a wilderness milieu. Their lived-body experience involves keeping domestic animals

which survive in places that a group of hunter-gatherers would perish. Their adaptation is a technological tether, a life-line.⁵² The experience of temporarily living in the wilderness, moving with the domestic stock as grass supply is exhausted, becomes symbolic as it translates to the medium of religious experience. The Hebrew patriarchs, shepherd nomads, become pilgrims moving toward a place of promise, a place of abundant sustenance and peace.

Returning to Judaic and Christian scripture for illustration of the spiritual journey symbol coincides with the examination of wilderness as *axis mundi*. The Hebrew Bible is filled with references to pilgrims, exiles, strangers, and aliens. Israel is referred to as a stranger in Egypt. Yahweh promises to give the land of Canaan, the place of Abraham's pilgrimage where he was a stranger in the land, to Israel during their journey in the Sinai.⁵³ The New Testament picks up the theme in numerous references to Christians as "strangers and pilgrims." The rhetoric of spiritual journey in this context evokes desire to dwell in a promised place, a land of milk and honey. The pilgrim is in a strange and forbidding place where sustenance for the lived-body is thin. Just as the resources for sustaining the lived-body are not enough in the wilderness, the spirit looks to find peace in an analogous place, a place of uninterrupted communion. The promised land of the spirit is a place where the pilgrim is in communication with the Holy.

The rhetoric of spiritual journeys implies solving a communication problem. Egypt is the place where Israel is in danger of losing touch with Yahweh. After the destruction of the Jewish temple in 586 BCE, a period of exile ensued. The exile is marked as a time of alienation where communication with Yahweh is interrupted by the destruction of an *axis mundi*. The Christian is an alien while in this world for the New Testament points to a spiritual dwelling, the Kingdom of God. The problem of communication therefore involves a spatial orientation, a dwelling in the presence of God.

Early Christian Monastics retreated to the wilderness to solve the problem of communication. Rather than becoming entangled in a world of corruption, an interruption of communion, they followed the example of Jesus and sought a place where they could communicate without interruption. In this case the symbolism of the land of milk and honey relates to communion and shifts from arable landscape to wilderness, which has become the place where clear communication takes place between human beings and the divine. Jesus had responded to a temptation from the devil while in the wilderness with the statement, "Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."⁵⁴ The medium of the lived-body experience is translated into the medium of spiritual vitality. The pilgrim is one who recognizes the potential problem in communicating with God that comes as a result of being too caught up in a competing world system. Domesticated places promote independence rather than interdependence. The sojourner is one who depends on the charity of the Wholly Other. A monastic retreat into the wilderness is a radical enactment of living as a sojourner.

Many who enter the American wilderness on pathways such as the Appalachian Trail have a monastic motivation. They are inheritors of a society where symbolically active, pervasive technology—technology being the means of ordering the

world—has altered the world in such a way that it has obscured the transcendent ground of their world. Many feel alienated from any transcendent reality. They become sojourners, finding no true dwelling in the world of artifacts, and seek to reestablish communication with a Transcendent Centre. The Appalachian Trail has become a place where contemporary seekers find spiritual meaning in the wilderness.

2.7 Appalachian Trail as a Place of Spiritual Journey

2.7.1 Historical Background

In 1925 the Appalachian Trail Conference (hereafter referred to as ATC) was founded to coordinate volunteers for creating and managing the AT. The recognized originator of the AT, Benton Mackaye wrote “An Appalachian Trail: A Project in Regional Planning,” published in the *Journal of the American Institute of Architects*, 1921. He advocated the benefits of creating a trail that stretched from New England to the Carolinas, following the crest of the Appalachian Mountains. In that article Mackaye described some of the benefits of the Trail as providing:

possibilities for health and recuperation. The oxygen in the mountain air along the Appalachian skyline is a natural resource (and a national resource) that radiates to the heavens its enormous health-giving powers with only a fraction of a percent utilized for human rehabilitation. Here is a resource that could save thousands of lives.⁵⁵

Most of the established national parks, monuments, and forests were in the western United States and too far to travel to for easterners. Mackaye noted that eastern urbanites would be “within a day’s ride from centers containing more than half the population of the United States.”⁵⁶

The trail was finished in 1937. Earl Shaffer, the first thru-hiker, did not complete the distance in one year until 1948. Between its completion and the mid 1960s there was a continual struggle to maintain the trail because much of it passed over private land. President Johnson gave the AT a boost by signing the National Trails System Act in 1968. President Carter authorized US\$90 million to purchase a buffer of land averaging a thousand feet in width and extending the length of the AT. By 1999 there were only 21 miles of trail left in private hands.⁵⁷

2.7.2 A Pathway Through the Wilderness

The thru-hiker (thru-hiker is a term designating a person who walks the entire 2,100 miles in one 12-month period) will begin the journey from one of two official *termini*: Springer Mountain, Georgia in the south and Mount Katahdin,

Maine in the north. Hikers pass through 14 states, and except for crossing highways and walking through a few towns, they experience a rugged wilderness. Though the Appalachian Mountains never get higher than 7,000 feet, the rise and fall of the trail and the often rocky terrain make for extremely difficult walking. In some cases the hiker must mount 2,000 feet in less than 3 miles of trail: Pond Mountain, Tennessee for example. Unlike the wilds of the arid West, deciduous and coniferous forests of the eastern mountains are covered with dense vegetation, often arching over the trail and forming a tunnel. Sometimes the hiker, carrying 40 or more pounds of supplies and paraphernalia on her back, ascending and descending thousands of feet on any given day, must, at the same time, crawl over or under fallen trees.

Though the AT passes through several wilderness areas and is called a wilderness trail, signs of human beings are clearly present along the trail. Sections of the trail are maintained by various clubs, and their handiwork is evident, but not to an extent which intrudes on the wilderness experience. Outside of encountering other hikers, the clearest sign of human presence on the trail are the shelters located at intervals of about 6–15 miles; about the distance an average person would travel carrying a heavy load over difficult wilderness terrain in a day.

On the wilderness trail hikers encounter each other repeatedly and form relationships in the process. Many camp together at the shelters and sometimes hike in groups. Throughout the spring months the human population of the trail is swollen with those starting from the southern *terminus*. The shelters, towns, and other hikers provide a stark contrast to the miles of solitude and thickly wooded mountain landscape stretching from Georgia to Maine.

Well over 1,500 people left Springer Mountain, Georgia in both 2003 and 2004 on their journey toward Maine. About 700 of them made it to Harpers Ferry, West Virginia and less than 600 completed the hike to Mount Katadhdin.⁵⁸

2.7.3 *A Work of Art with Religious Implications*

Even though the AT does not traverse 2,100 miles of wilderness, it is still considered a wilderness trail and provides a wilderness experience. The 100 mile wilderness in Maine, the last section of the trail for those hiking the entire distance from south to north, is the longest stretch of uninterrupted trail. Volunteers who maintain the trail work to create a pathway with minimum artifices through the wilderness. The ATC works to purchase land that buffers the trail, further creating an experience for the hiker of walking through a wilderness (Fig. 2.1). Land that had been previously developed is allowed to return to a condition that appears absent of human habitation.

This work constitutes a form of negative landscape art, art that is consistent with the presentation of wilderness as a symbol (Fig. 2.2). Rather than a human artist solely producing a work, this art involves setting an area aside so that nature sculpts the



Fig. 2.1 Two hikers walking through an old farm site: barn and fence posts with AT white blaze visible on a foreground post, near to Double Springs, Tennessee (All photos courtesy of Kip Redick)



Fig. 2.2 Climbing to the Sun

landscape. The policy of purchasing land for a buffer is a kind of redemption. The land is acknowledged as having intrinsic value and freed from a system that does not permit it voice. Nature as EarthBody, not just is, but becomes experienced and acknowledged as, a co-constitutive agency. Each hiker is invited to experience wilderness as it is with only minimal guidelines. The guidelines open the way for an existential participation between hiker and wilderness by merely preserving the space rather than imposing a hermeneutical frame. The ATC bylaws imply the invitation to existential participation and point to the goal of preserving wilderness and the "primitive experience of the Trail": "The purpose of this organization shall be first to promote, construct, and manage ... a connected Trail, with related side trails ... to preserve and restore the natural environment of the Trail and its adjacent lands; and to provide an educational opportunity to enjoy the Appalachian Trail, related trails, and adjacent lands."⁵⁹

Trail management is guided by ATC policy so that "care should be taken not to inadvertently overdevelop or improve the Trail tread or facilities in these environments.... Trail improvements, including shelters, privies, bridges, and other facilities, should be constructed only when appropriate to protect the resource or provide a minimum level of public safety."⁶⁰ This management policy extends into the future and a relationship with the Federal Government is addressed. Concerning Federal Policy, it is noted that when the Trail is reconstructed or relocated

that its primitive quality is not lost. What are seen as Trail improvements may sometimes be steps in a prog-ressive [sic] loss in simplicity of the footpath. Lands retaining a sense of the wild and primeval will be maintained with a special concern for these values. Trail design, construction, and maintenance should reflect a concern for safety, without detracting from the opportunity for hikers to experience the wild and scenic lands by their own unaided efforts, and without sacrificing aspects of the Trail that may challenge their skill and stamina.⁶¹

The AT separates humans from their established cultural systems, erases the hierarchical structures of society, and provides a place where relationships of equality are the norm. The wilderness eliminates elitism for there are no cultural constructs that reinforce such behaviors. The AT is a place where hikers practice these characteristics. Walking long hours in the company of a set of companions, sleeping on the ground or in a shelter, sharing a fire for warmth and to cook meals, experiencing the visually sublime aspects of the wilderness are all instances that facilitate equality and camaraderie.

Not only do hikers draw close to each other but the close proximity produced by living in the open creates a situation where each living being is attributed immanent value. Rather than ranking or comparing individuals hierarchically, each person is seen as having intrinsic value in and of themselves. Though there may be individual hikers who attribute hierarchical structures and value rankings to their fellows on the trail, the ATC does not recognize such rankings and even thru-hikers are not viewed as any more valuable than the weekend hiker.

The unique spatial situation of the trail with its sublime characteristics contributes to the atmosphere of valuing others intrinsically and of freedom. The wilderness appears to be so vast that the hiker is swallowed up in the surround milieu. In

addition, each hiker who is immersed in this sublime wilderness has the same mode of transportation, walking, and a relatively similar means of surviving.

Religious art sometimes involves the paradox of producing an artifact that is not understood to be an artifact. Some icons are believed to be direct impressions of deity and not made with human skill and are thus examples of artifacts that transcend the category of mere artifact. Sacred scripture as a text is believed by many to be inspired by God and not crafted by a human writer. The corridor of wilderness surrounding the AT can be interpreted as symbol for sacred ground. The idea of negative landscape art involves nature as producer of the place and humans as being engaged in an existential relation with that place.

2.7.4 The Experiential Spirituality of the Appalachian Trail

The thesis of this chapter has been informed by an examination of religious history linked to wilderness and pilgrimage that serves to clarify the experiences of many AT hikers. These hikers traverse a place that heightens their sense of and sensitivity toward life's meaning, meaning that comes to light in relation to a feeling of transcendental importance and reverence. Spirituality infuses experience when self importance is deflated by an encounter with a transcendent other and hikers humbly surrender to the greater situation. The AT is experienced as having intrinsic value and gives hikers a sense of mutual respect and surrender. An acute sense of community emerges and grows as hikers traveling along the AT attribute intrinsic value one to another. Each hiker's life is interpreted as sacred, as precious, engendering a tender care that is directed or redirected in wholesome ways. Life is renewed as meaning emerges from transcendent experience that encompasses and nourishes. The enacted meanings set forth in the following exposition resonate with historical religious literature confirming the significance of pilgrimage and wilderness.

2.7.5 Pilgrims on the Appalachian Trail

Considering the AT as a symbol for sacred ground opens the way to understanding the phenomenon of going into the wilderness as a late modern pilgrimage. Noel Grove writes, "In their search for a retreat, hikers and monastics have more in common than they realize. On the trail, hikers revert to lives of simplicity, denying themselves modern comfort, seeking purification in an uncorrupted world. Monkishly, a thru-hiker from Connecticut told me that he wished somehow he could walk it indefinitely—for the simpler life-style."⁶² Hikers become pilgrims sojourning through the spatial milieu of the wilderness. The AT opens hikers to a time that transcends the chronology of clocks and a space apart from the familiar urban, suburban, or rural habitat of their profane dwelling. Whereas the shepherd

nomad used domestic livestock to survive in the difficult terrain of wilderness, hikers carry provisions on their backs, a tether connecting them to a survivable world. The domestic livestock gave shepherd nomads the ability to identify with the land and to become wanderers. Backpackers experience themselves living in a place void of other human habitation.

Grove's account of hiking the AT, "foot travelers meeting, sharing shelter, exchanging food, information, and nicknames,"⁶³ implicates the social aspect of pilgrimages that Victor Turner refers to as *communitas*, that is, "social antistructure," "a relational quality of full unmediated communication, even communion, between definite and determinate identities, which arises spontaneously in all kinds of groups, situations, and circumstances. It is a liminal phenomenon which combines the qualities of lowliness, sacredness, homogeneity, and comradeship."⁶⁴ Like pilgrims along some medieval route in Europe, these twentieth-century sojourners seek some experience that only a journey will suffice, and along the way they meet fellow seekers, find fellowship, and find spiritual fulfillment as a result. Most of these seekers are described by Grove as "people at some transitional point in their lives—divorce, job change, or just self-discovery.... It's a pilgrimage not unlike those made in the Middle Ages."⁶⁵

Those who seek relationships that transcend the means-to-ends utilitarian structures that dictate both spiritual and community-oriented relationships in technologically saturated societies, who seek meaning beyond the profane chronology that such societies create, still have the option of spiritual journeys. On such journeys societal norms lose their orienting power. Turner claims that pilgrimage in the modern classification "serves not so much to maintain society's status quo as to recollect, and even to presage, an alternative mode of social being, a world where *communitas*, rather than a bureaucratic social structure, is preeminent." And, the modern pilgrimage "may be seen as providing live metaphors for human and transhuman truths and salvific ways which all men share and always have shared, had they but known it."⁶⁶

As noted above, many of those that are drawn to hike the AT are at some transitional point in their life. The circumstances that trigger the transition serve as a catalyst to motivate the journey. One hiker writes that he is a "laid off Telecom worker taking a break from job hunting and contemplating life, love, family[,] and God. The woods breathes life and hope back into my soul—a break from the rat race."⁶⁷

Another, discovers the AT and loses his job at the same time: "For Xmas I received and read the book 'Into the Woods' by? (can't remember—sorry). At the same time, I was laid off by Discovery.com. These two events have inspired me to hike as much of the AT as possible and rethink my career—Dicom World [sic]."⁶⁸ A 20-year old from North Carolina in the midst of college—another cultural rite of passage—with the trail name "Sweeper" writes that he took a "semester off from Chapel Hill to hike my dream and figure out what I wanna do w/[sic] my life."⁶⁹

2.7.6 *Communitas and Liminality in the Intertwining of Lived Body and Milieu*

Turner writes that pilgrimage is “the great liminal experience of the religious life. If mysticism is an interior pilgrimage, pilgrimage is exteriorized mysticism.”⁷⁰ One hiker with the trail name of “Rookie” puts it this way:

It has been remarkable. The trail, in and of itself, is like a separate civilization and culture. It's like a utopia in that my heart and mind have been free to wander and ponder—all in the midst of unspeakable [sic] free and valuable persons of the world. I'll not soon forget the feelings and appreciation of such a unique experience.
Peace and Love⁷¹

Liminars, those engaged in the ritual stage of liminality, writes Turner, “pass through a cultural realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state.”⁷² One hiker, “Rocket,” describes this state where ordeal and alternative situations are characteristic: “I love hiking but I don't think it's the best part of the trail, I think the different experiences make the trail so great like: hitchhiking, being completely wiped, trail angels/magic, weather, food, and so on. Can't wait for more of these experiences and hope everyone hiking is having a great time.”⁷³ Hitchhiking, the joyful exhaustion of hiking a rugged mountain wilderness in all weather conditions, eating trail food, and encountering people and situations that can only be labeled as angelic or magical are all indicative of a state that does not resemble the intertwining of lived-body and milieu that preceded the experience of those on the AT. Turner continues, “Liminars are stripped of status and authority, removed from a social structure maintained and sanctioned by power and force, and leveled to a homogeneous social state through discipline and ordeal.... In this no-place and no-time that resists classification, the major classifications and categories of culture emerge within the integuments of myth, symbol, and ritual.”⁷⁴ This “no-place and no-time,” or better, sacred place and time, enveloping the pilgrim with religious narrative, symbol, and ritual, is captured in the following two quotes: “what an incredible experience that we have had thus far. What a grand + beautiful gift to take some time + reflect on all the goodness we have been given of God and nature and people. It's good just to sit in silence a moment ... let it cover over you.”⁷⁵ The second is a poem inscribed by a two time thru-hiker:

I am soooo blessed to be here again
The kiss of the sun for pardon
The song of the birds for mirth
Surely one is closer to God's heart on the AT
Than anywhere else on earth.⁷⁶

It is out of this liminality, this place of transience where pilgrims search for new identity, that *communitas* happens. As indicated by some of the trail register quotes above, many thru-hikers adopt monikers, new identities in this place away from milieu where old names previously held meaning. The symbolism of place, of spatial orientation in the boundlessness of wilderness, merges with the symbolism of personal identity, which is formed in the spatial milieu of the journey.

Those sharing the liminal state sometimes realize their new name as a result of some experience along the way; or in the case of a hiker who had almost reached the halfway point realizing that s/he needed another new name: “I disowned the trail name (Sage). I didn’t earn it.”⁷⁷ In the intertwining of the lived-body and milieu of wilderness, structures of society fall apart and even naming is done in unusual ways.

The following entry by “Boy Howdy” is indicative of communion between hikers and their relationship with the Trail itself (Figs. 2.3 and 2.4). Here the EarthBody is given voice as it is acknowledged in the existential mutuality of embodied dwelling. The opening lines are characteristic of countless entries wherein fellow travelers are addressed:

To everyone I’ve met out here and to everything that has inspired me: I won’t get gushy (I left a longer note at Blackburn if you want Howdy mush) but thank you so much. No words can express the depth of my gratitude and appreciation for everything [I] have experienced out here. This is *definitely* the top of a lifetime. And no matter how hard it is at times, it is *always* worth it, especially now at the end. Over the long hard days have shaped me for the better [sic]. Don’t give up, the flood of emotions [I] feel now is so powerful that everything I have endured seems now fated to set up this moment, this day. These last few weeks have been spectacular, weather, people[,] and trail have converged to form a perfect ending. Thanks to everyone for sharing it with me and most of all thanks to the trail for giving me these past months.

Share the Journey⁷⁸



Fig. 2.3 Drying wet socks and boots over a fire at Lake Watauga in Tennessee



Fig. 2.4 Hikers gathering after a thunderstorm and filling water containers, on Whitetop Mountain, Virginia

The experience of walking a narrow trail for weeks or months facilitates *communitas*. Hikers pass each other over and over again, flip-flopping between resting and sleeping places, often staying together for days, forming traveling bands and creating memorable experiences where EarthBody and fellow wayfarers become integral aspect of the whole journey. Someone with the trail name of “Thru-Thinker” reflects on the emergence of *communitas* after approaching the psychological halfway point in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia:

My thoughts on leaving VA behind and hiking 1,000 miles are hard to put into words. From the very first mile of the Approach Trail to Springer on March 15th, when a father (+son) walked by me + said “God Bless you” like he really meant it, to meeting my great new friend Leif the very next morning + hiking 50+ straight days with him, Popeye + so [double underline] many other great friends ... to the infamous winter storms in GA + the Smokies ... to the infamous “Eagle” encounter at Fontana ... to the awesome climbs, trail magic @ Max Patch, the Banner Elk Bistro, + many other places too! ... to the incredible # of kind people who gave us rides + words of encouragement ... to my wife + family who have struggled to understand my need for this journey +, over time, have come to be my biggest sources of support ... to awesome oases of goodness like Bears Den, Tellico Guys, Keith’s Cabins, etc. ... to the cold rain, fog, snow, sleet, thunder, rain, mud, + SUNSHINE ... its been the most awesome time of my life! Whatever happens from here, I’ve learned, loved, laughed, cried + prayed with more *life* + *intensity* than ever ... I hope I never forget to live life so large, + to help others as the gateway to helping myself! May your trails always bring you *LIFE* [underlined three times].

God Bless + Hike On⁷⁹

Turner writes “that there is a connection between the pilgrims’ discipline and privations and their sense of *communitas*.”⁸⁰ The following poem captures the spirit of both discipline and privation:

There are days when it seems that your pack could sprout wings
And you’ll fly all the way to the sun.

Then a mountain comes in and you fall again
 Got to tell you, it isn't much fun.
 There are days when you feel that it couldn't be real
 That they let you do this with your life.
 Then the rain starts to pour, and your muscles get sore
 And you're missing your kids and your wife.
 Then there are days bad and good, but now neither one should
 Make you leave, nor should one make you stay.
 So whatever its like, keep on hiking your hike
 Cause this trail isn't walked in a day.⁸¹

Another entry, this time in prose, illustrates the existential interconnection of lived-body and EarthBody on the AT: "Hiked in the rain for a few miles. It was a monsoon. My hands are chapped[;] my lips are chapped and about to fall off. This is a great place to dry off for a while. [smiley face drawn] My feet are soaking wet and it is cold! I love it! Well, gonna make food and be out."⁸² The experience of AT hikers is consistent with more traditional pilgrims as "the weariness of the body is submitted to hard, voluntary discipline, loosening the bonds of matter to liberate the spirit."⁸³

Another form of privation and experience of the lived-body and milieu is the food that the hiker must eat. Everything must be carried and luxuries are quickly abandoned in favor of lightweight necessities. One of the culinary staples of the trail is peanut butter. The inside cover of the 1996, May through July, Double Springs Shelter Register has a hand drawn color rendering of George Washington Carver with a barn and field, including the plowed furrows, in the background. The left side is a red border of peanuts and the inscription states, "This shelter register is dedicated to the memory of George Washington Carver the great African-American scientist who invented, among many things, peanut butter. Thanks George." After eating freeze-dried meals, dried fruit, nuts, oatmeal, and peanut butter for weeks on end, the thru-hiker dreams of chocolate, ice-cream, and a host of other delicacies. In the camaraderie that is typical of the trail community one hiker encourages another with the promise of better food:

Note to *Buttercup*—Don't even take off your pack!!! Imagine wrapping your fingers around that waffly-textured cone, the sharp delight of that first icy-sweet taste as the cold cream melts across your tongue and glide[s] delectably down your throat. Mmmmm. Can you feel it? Why, when heaven is an itty-bitsy 10 tiny miles away, would you dwell any longer in Power-Bar Purgatory? (When you get excited about p-bars, you *know* its time to go into town Buttercup, your destiny calls, in the form of double dip twisty one dipped in chocolate. Listen, you can hear it if you try. Don't try to deny it. If you but follow the call, the miles will melt away beneath your feet. Go little Buttercup, go! Go to find your bliss!⁸⁴

2.7.7 Time

Another important aspect of living in the wilderness is a different sense of time. The chronology of the mechanized world gives way to the rising and setting sun,

the movement of the seasons, the rhythm of daily walking along a path through the forest, and meeting and parting from fellow travelers. “Trapper” and “Okie” write,

Heading towards Harper’s Ferry today with mixed emotions. We are pleased to be nearing the halfway mark on this [AT, a symbol is drawn] journey. Hiking with the Howdy Train has been a pleasure; our band will likely disperse tomorrow. The days are passing quickly now, sometimes too fast, making me aware of each moment. I have very much enjoyed the fellow pilgrims—you are wonderful folks.⁸⁵

In the same vein an anonymous hiker writes, “I’ve been out here for about 75 days and it flew bye [sic] so quick.”⁸⁶ After walking for weeks through the Appalachian terrain, one place on the trail often looks the same as a thousand other stretches. Stepping along the pathway the pilgrim loses touch with minutes and hours, perception of time changes. Three or four days of constant rain can seem like years, climbing a difficult hill can take an eternity, sleeping can seem like a “blink and a nod.” Moments turn into days and days turn into moments in this time away from the chronology that previously held the hiker in its grip before the journey.

2.8 Conclusion

Wilderness, as experienced by agricultural and urban peoples, has been shown to be a place, *topos*, beyond human habitation, barren, deserted, and solitary. The same place may be experienced by hunter-gatherers or pastoralists as a *topos* of habitation. Shepherd nomads, as described in the Hebrew Bible, experienced wilderness through an embodied relation whereby the meaning of the landscape was translated to symbolize the people’s relation with the Holy. In this way *topos* shifts to *chora* in the existential situation of Israel’s journey from tribal to religious nation. The symbolism of wilderness as *axis mundi*, the place of Yahweh’s manifestation, merges with the symbolic experience of sojourning. The people are passing through an empty and barren place on their way to a habitable and sustaining place, a land of milk and honey. During the journey the people experience transformation and are thereby enabled to inherit the land of promise.

An interpretation of the AT in light of the symbolism of wilderness as *axis mundi* and place of spiritual journey reveals that it is active in some cases as a pilgrimage route. Reading the shelter registers reveals an experience of AT hikers that has many similarities to modern pilgrims within the context of traditional religion. Wilderness can be understood to be symbolically active as a place of liminality and *communitas*, providing an experience of *axis mundi* for many who seek healing or some change of consciousness that traditional religious rituals provide. The AT itself is a place of potential spiritual journeys because its spatial qualities act to change those who experience it. Those who hike the AT and open themselves to a spiritual journey may experience the 2,100-mile ribbon of wilderness as sacred place, an *axis mundi*.

Notes

1 From a bronze plaque at the top of Springer Mountain, Georgia which begins: Appalachian Trail Georgia to Maine.

2 Backhaus, "Introduction I: The Problematic." See especially the section subtitled, "Geographical Literature and Symbolic Landscapes": "It is not that we do not perceive the physical characteristics of the tree, but it is the case that these characteristics are not perceived outside of the medium of historical and cultural imagination. The physical and symbolic dimensions are moments and any separation involves abstraction, if indeed, it is possible to even conceptually separate them so that an abstraction can be performed," 10.

3 Nash, *Wilderness*, 1.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid., 2.

6 Ibid., 7.

7 Frome, *Battle for the Wilderness*, 11.

8 Backhaus, "Introduction I: The Problematic," 10.

9 Wilderness Act, Sec. 2.C.

10 Oelschlaeger, *Idea of Wilderness*, 48–49.

11 Backhaus, "Introduction I: The Problematic," 14.

12 Luke 15: 4. Also see Matthew 18:12, "If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine and go to the mountains to seek the one that is straying?"

13 Gen. 11:31.

14 Gen. 12:1.

15 Gen. 12:7.

16 Eliade, *Sacred and the Profane*, 32.

17 Ibid., 36.

18 Eisenberg, *Ecology of Eden*, 70. Eisenberg clarifies his use of world-pole writing, "Although I have used 'world-pole' because it is plainer than Mircea Eliade's *axis mundi*, I would almost rather say 'world-pipe,' for the act of connecting heaven and earth would be meaningless if stuff could not move from one to the other. Like the trunk of a tree, the world-pole is something through which life flows," 71.

19 Lane, *Landscapes of the Sacred*, 39.

20 Eliade, *Sacred and the Profane*, 26.

21 Gen. 28:16–17.

22 Eliade, *Sacred and the Profane*, 26.

23 Gen. 28:18.

24 Backhaus, "Introduction I: The Problematic," 23.

25 Gen. 13:10.

26 Gen. 13:11–12.

27 Ex. 3:1.

28 Ex. 3:6.

29 Ex. 3:12.

30 Lane, *Solace of Fierce Landscapes*, 43.

31 Otto, *Idea of the Holy*, 26.

32 Ibid., 10.

- 33 Turner, *Ritual Process*, 95.
- 34 Lane, *Solace of Fierce Landscapes*, 38–39.
- 35 Num. 11:5–6.
- 36 Nash, *Wilderness*, 11.
- 37 Kittel, *Theological Dictionary*, 657.
- 38 Ibid., 658.
- 39 Matt. 3:1–4.
- 40 Carroll, *Puritanism and the Wilderness*, 10–14, 18.
- 41 Bradford, *Plymouth Plantation*, 43.
- 42 Cox, “*Loci Communes*,” 8.
- 43 See Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, for an extensive examination of the interplay between ecological practices of Native Americans and European colonists.
- 44 Thoreau, “Walking,” 609.
- 45 Cox, “*Loci Communes*,” 9.
- 46 Eliade, *Sacred and the Profane*, 42.
- 47 Eliade, *Images and Symbols*, 39.
- 48 Cox, “*Loci Communes*,” 10.
- 49 Oelschlaeger, *Idea of Wilderness*, 177.
- 50 Burke, *Edmund Burke: A Philosophical Enquiry*, 39.
- 51 Ibid., 57.
- 52 A former student of mine, Kelly Garner, coined the phrase “technological tether.” See Garner, “What We Bring With Us.”
- 53 Ex. 6:4.
- 54 Matt. 4:4.
- 55 MacKaye, “An Appalachian Trail,” 325–330.
- 56 Ibid.
- 57 See “Trail History: Since 1968.”
- 58 Appalachian Trail Conservancy Information Center, “Appalachian Trail 2,000-Miler Statistics.”
- 59 Appalachian Trail Conference, “Managing the Trail.”
- 60 Ibid.
- 61 Ibid.
- 62 Grove, “A Tunnel Through Time,” 229.
- 63 Ibid., 235.
- 64 Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage*, 250.
- 65 Grove, “A Tunnel Through Time,” 235.
- 66 Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage*, 39.
- 67 David Lesser Shelter Register, May 1, 2001; (unpublished trail journal: each AT shelter provides a notebook for hikers to write down their thoughts) hereafter cited as DLS. In order to convey an accurate portrayal of the shelter registers, abbreviations and other symbols will be retained in the text of register quotes. I will only alter the quotation when clarity requires it.
- 68 DLS January 15, 2001.
- 69 Bears Den Register, April 9, 2001; (unpublished trail journal: each AT shelter provides a notebook for hikers to write down their thoughts) hereafter cited as BD.
- 70 Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage*, 7.
- 71 BD May 17, 1999.

- 72 Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage*, 249.
- 73 BD April 18, 2001.
- 74 Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage*, 249–250.
- 75 DLS June 26, 2001.
- 76 DLS June 11, 2001.
- 77 BD June 3, 2001.
- 78 DLS May 9, 2001.
- 79 DLS June 8, 2001.
- 80 Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage*, 133.
- 81 DLS July 9, 2001.
- 82 DLS March 21, 2001.
- 83 Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage*, 95.
- 84 Abingdon Gap Shelter, June 27, 1996.
- 85 DLS May 8, 2001.
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Chapter 3

Pu‘u Kohola: Spatial Genealogy of a Hawaiian Symbolic Landscape¹

RDK Herman

Editors’ Note: This chapter highlights our contention that symbolization is not merely an act of cognition, but rather a process of enactment. Historical events are lived on the basis of how they manifest in the shaping of the present. Experiences of contemporary Native Hawaiians reflect the presence of past layers that are a precognitive witnessing through their body schema, the behaviors that express the meaning of their existential situations. The Pu‘u Kohola commemorative ceremony lends credence that an intellectualist notion of symbolization is anemic, an insufficient constitution of meaning. Hawaiians have taken care to enact a symbolic event that resonates with their experiences, expressive of a lived-history, the sedimentation of layers of existential meaning that needs to be symbolically gestured in the confirmation of identities. The ceremony translates this meaning of the “who—landscape intertwining” into a spatialized/spatializing symbolic incorporation/ek-stasis, intensified and heightened through an embodied participatory sociality.

3.1 Introduction

Above the dry shores of Kawaihae on the Island of Hawai‘i stands the most impressive of all Hawaiian temples: Pu‘u Kohola *heiau* (Fig. 3.1).² Perched above the only bay for many miles around the coast, this massive stone platform is one of several sites that attest to the importance this location held in the past. At times the abode of high chiefs, the area is marked by the much older Mailekini *heiau*, its origin and purpose obscure but in part, at least, a way station for travelers. Below, in the waters of Pelekane Bay, lie the remains of Hale o Kapuni, an underwater *heiau* where it is said human sacrifices were laid to be consumed by black-tip sharks. On the shore nearby stands Kikiako‘i, a stone upright where it is said chief Alapa‘i Ku-palupalu Mano watched the sharks dine. In the hills behind, ancient tombs, now raided and empty, mark the burial sites of unknown chiefs from the more remote past.



Fig. 3.1 Pu'u Kohola sits atop the hill for which it is named. Visible halfway down is the older and less-known Mailekini *heiau*. The rocks in the water may be the remains of Hale o Kapuni *heiau*, believed by some to have been destroyed in the 1946 tsunami. The beach area to the left is Pelekane Bay, site of the original village and royal residence. Here Vancouver dropped off cattle in the 1790s, and Liholiho (Kamehameha II) greeted French explorer Freycinet in 1819. Picture is taken from the coral flats that were part of the 1950s harbor construction. (All figures by RDK Herman)

Despite its stony silence and two centuries of neglect, Pu'u Kohola is a landscape that embodies Hawaiian unity. Its construction over 200 years ago marked the turning point in the political and social unification of the Hawaiian Islands. In the 1700s, there was not a single unified Hawaiian nation. All of that changed 200 years ago and the building of this temple played a pivotal role. In the two centuries that followed, this temple would sit in silence while the world around it changed.

Since 1992, groups of Native Hawaiians have gathered at Pu'u Kohola every August for a commemorative ceremony. This annual event aims to draw together the disparate groups of Hawaiians that make up that nation, to heal the 200-year old social rift, and to consider the fate of the Hawaiian Nation today. This series of ceremonies evokes this site as a symbolic and sacred space, meaningfully linking the situated present with the past. Participants come in traditional dress. They perform chants, oratory and dance in the ancient style. And they make offerings to the temple. These symbolizations are embodied, enacted, and ritualized, constituting the physiognomy of a truly lived-geography.

Pu'u Kohola has thus been brought back to life. And this new incarnation symbolically manifests its geographical history. The purpose of this study is to unfold the layers of time and meaning wrapped up in the symbolism of Pu'u Kohola—to explore the *spatial genealogy* that it embodies.

3.2 Tides of Time

Backhaus argues in the introduction that “Symbolization is an embodied enactment of meaning, a spatializing production/spatialized construction. And, as spatializing/spatialized, the experiencer (whether the active producer of, or the ‘witness’ to, symbolization), the symbol itself, and the symbolized constitute a system, a meaningful field manifesting geographically in the world.”³ But as these meanings are temporally conditioned, I join Meinig⁴ in arguing that Pu'u Kohola and other symbolic landscapes cannot be understood outside of historiographic analysis: what did it symbolize at its birth? What meanings have been encoded into the interface of culture and place since then? We must work through a genealogy of space and meanings, conditioned as they are by political, economic, and social forces, to understand the complexity of symbolism for contemporary society.

Meinig regards all landscapes as symbolic, as “expressions of cultural values, social behavior, and individual actions worked upon particular localities over a span of time. Every landscape is an accumulation, and its study may be undertaken as formal history, methodically defining the making of the landscape from the past to the present.”⁵ This study follows Meinig’s call for a historical approach to the study of symbolic landscapes. This entails a genealogical approach that excavates socio-spatial inscriptions, representations of space and place emerging from geo-historical forces, that themselves accrete and erode over time, reshaping into a symbolic/discursive landscape in the same way that the work of wind and water does a physical landscape. But it must also survey how meaning is also inscribed through the field of lived-body experience and activity, and manifested through actions and practices that resonate *in situ*.

Time-Geography, as initiated in the works of Torsten Hägerstrand⁶ and further developed by Allan Pred⁷ and others, provides a somewhat multi-dimensional approach for looking at geo-temporal phenomena. Time-Geography studies “trajectories” through space and time: how subjects move simultaneously geographically and temporally, here one moment, there the next. This approach is generally applied to human beings moving through time and space. Yet it poses space as a fixed, geometric surface. The question arises, how can we apply a time-geographic approach to places themselves?

A solution is to reconceptualize the relationship between time and space. The present study takes what might be called a “Polynesian” approach. Hau‘ofa⁸ conceptualizes the Pacific as “a sea of islands,” emphasizing the ocean over which Pacific Islanders traveled as a medium that connects rather than separates. On an oceanic voyage, the passengers remain in the same location the entire time: in the canoe. One can then say that what moves is the ocean beneath them. Between departure and arrival, the people have always been in the canoe, but during that time, the space underneath the canoe has moved, bringing the destination to them. New Zealand Maori extend this notion of the canoe into a metaphor for time. Referring to the ancestral canoes in which they arrived in Aotearoa (New Zealand), Maori speak of the canoe as a vessel in which members of descent groups (*iwi*) still

“travel” today. As a unit, the *iwi* travels through time, and the metaphorical canoe is the vehicle for this journey of generational advancement.

In the case of Pu‘u Kohola, this stone platform has remained on the hill from which it takes its name since 1792, but since then the waves of time have moved underneath it, bringing it and the Hawaiian nation to a very different spot in their journey. Winds have blown, currents have changed, and tides have come and gone. The *heiau* is now in a different *place in time* than it was before.

Time, like the ocean, is a powerful and transformative force. It has currents and tides that shift and change the journey of whatever travels on it. So too, places are affected by the growth and expansion (and decline) of phenomena that reach across space and time, affecting regions and populations, shifting trajectories, re-making futures, reshaping the world. Thus the journey is a product of these overlapping forces—social, cultural, political, and economic—and the meanings that accompany them. We can read these geo-temporal forces as a *spatial genealogy*, one leading to another, each wave both eroding and depositing on what was there before. Historical meanings are spatially inscribed, constituting a lived-geography that is always hermeneutically experienced. This spatial genealogy underpins the ways in which the experience of symbolic space is embodied, enacted, and ritualized. The lived-dimension of history provides the anchor without which the symbolic ceremony would be merely a simulacrum. Here, ceremony is rooted to the place through the invocation of the past events that took place in that same soil, and of the trajectory that brought the participants to the current moment. In the case of Pu‘u Kohola, the geo-temporal forces include the expansion of a chiefly domain into a unified kingdom, the expansion of the United States and its ideas of democracy, the expansion of American Protestant missionaries into what they deemed “heathen” territories, and perhaps most importantly, the expansion of global capitalism.

If one were to employ visualization technologies like Geographic Information Systems (GIS), as Kraak⁹ and others have done for physical geography phenomena, we would use *layers* to present and interpret such a spatial genealogy. This paper analyzes the symbolism of the modern ceremonies at Pu‘u Kohola by mapping out such dynamic, geo-temporal layers that have affected the *journey of meaning* this place has undergone during the past 200 years. To map out this course is also to mark a trajectory through the historical landscape of the Hawaiian Islands as a whole, as they have moved from a series of Polynesian chiefdoms to their position today within the 50 United States.

3.3 Layers of Space, Time, and Meaning

Any such spatial genealogy must entail a consideration of the place itself: the physical environment. In a geological conceptualization, this too has its genealogy. But for our purposes, it is sufficient to consider the state of the land at the beginning of Pu‘u Kohola’s journey. These are not without culturally encoded understandings.

Indeed, the meaning of land (and place) is one of the important changes that occur over time. Engaging first with the land as a bottom layer, we can more clearly see these waves of change as they wash over this place.

3.3.1 Physical Geography

The land divisions (*ahupua'a*) of Kawaihae lie at the juncture of two volcanic shields (Fig. 3.2). The Kohala mountain system is the oldest on the island and reaches up above 6,000 feet; Mauna Kea ("white mountain"), named for its seasonally snow-capped summit, rises above 13,000 feet. The juncture of these two volcanic shields creates a natural bay, making Kawaihae important first, as a landing place for canoes, and second, as the access point from the sea to the cool and fruitful upland plains of Waimea. Thus while other settlements along the coast in this area have dwindled if not disappeared, Kawaihae remains on the map.

It is not a hospitable place. Hawaiians divided the land sections of Kawaihae into five or six different zones based on elevation and vegetation, recognizing the biological complexity of this area. The Kawaihae coast is actually the driest spot in the entire Hawaiian archipelago. The lowlands are dominated by grass, dry and burnt looking half the year, greening up briefly in the "rainy" season. Moisture

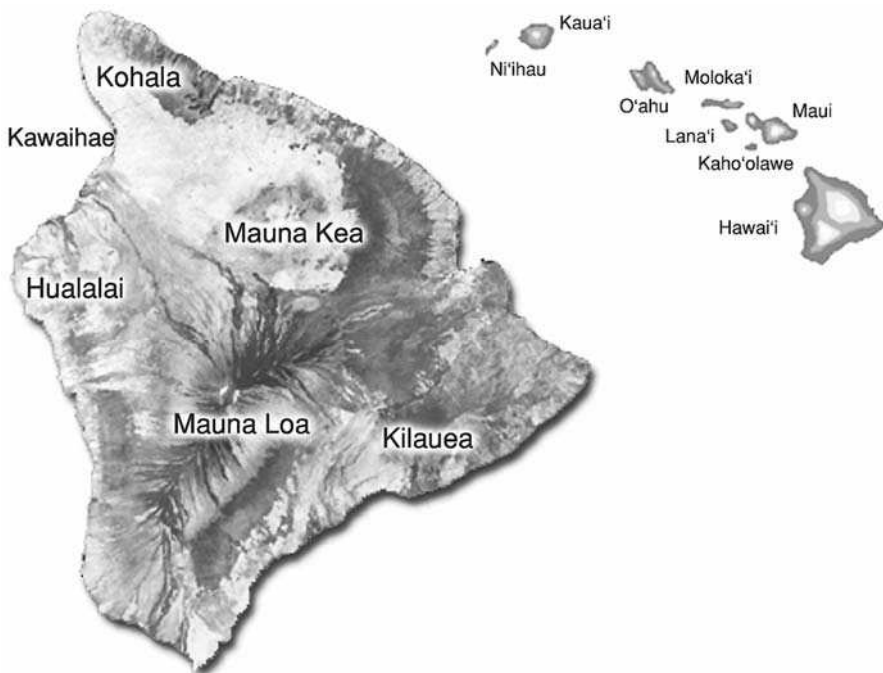


Fig. 3.2 Kawaihae's location relative to the five volcanoes that comprise Hawai'i Island

increases with elevation, leading eventually to dry forest and finally a wet forest towards the crest of the mountain. In ancient times, this altitudinal zonation divided the residents between the coastal fishing village and upland agricultural settlements.

What the land lacked, the bay compensated: Kawaihae supports the best coral reef system on this island. Until recent times, residents survived predominantly on fishing, and the fish were plentiful. The reef also provided the *wana* (sea urchin), the *ha'u**uke'u**ke* limpet, turtles, and various types of edible seaweed. Fishing thus characterized the livelihood for most residents of Kawaihae, from antiquity up until the mid-twentieth century.

3.3.2 Conquest

The second layer, and it is a cumulative one, is the struggle for power among island chiefs. For reasons of its location, Kawaihae became a focal point for wars of conquest between the Maui chiefs and the Hawai'i chiefs, and also for Hawai'i chiefs from different districts fighting for supremacy over the island. Hawaiian society was stratified, with birth determining status among a limited group of aristocratic families (*ali'i*), and the bulk of the population being commoners (*maka'ainana*). In any sovereign domain, a high chief or *ali'i nui* held supreme authority. Portions of the archipelago were controlled by different chiefs. Battles were frequent, and at the time of Captain Cook's visit, a new generation of ambitious chiefs were vying not only to unite the island of Hawai'i, but the whole archipelago. One present at Cook's death was a young chief named Kamehameha.

The rise of Kamehameha is well documented.¹⁰ A young chief of not the highest rank, he made effective use of circumstances, and in this sense, the geotemporal rise of Kamehameha is inextricably linked with the arrival of foreign vessels in the island, signifying the entry of the islands into the expanding reach of capitalism. At this time (late 1700s), the number of foreigners was minor and their overall impact on Hawaiian society was limited. But the arrival of Western weaponry—and advisors to show how to use them—played a critical role in tipping the balance of power. Kamehameha's conquest was accomplished with the aid of two British seamen who trained his forces in British weapons and tactics. But while this influx of Europeans, and their ideas and technologies, begins the interweaving of Western influence into Hawaiian historical geography, it was still largely a footnote to the dynastic struggles that were in process at the time.¹¹

The building and consecration of Pu'u Kohola was part of this struggle. After a decisive battle boosted his control over Hawai'i island, Kamehameha sent an emissary to speak with a seer on the island of Kaua'i, asking what must be done for Kamehameha to unite the entire archipelago into one kingdom. The seer, Kapoukahi, told the emissary, "build a great house for the god, and mark out its boundaries, at Pu'u Kohola. If he makes this house for his god, he can gain the kingdom without a scratch to his own skin."¹² When he received this instruction, Kamehameha

set about building this great edifice. Nineteenth-century historian Fornander recorded that "Relays of people were ordered from Kona, Kohala, and Hamakua to repair to Kawaihae to carry stones and assist in the building. Chiefs of the highest degree and common natives worked side by side, and Kamehameha himself set the example of carrying stones to the building."¹³

Fornander himself conversed with a centenarian Hawaiian who described "the thousands of people encamped on the neighboring hillsides, and taking their turns at the work, of their organization and feeding, their time of work and relaxation, the number of chiefs that attended, and who, as the old man said, caused the ground to tremble beneath their feet; and the number of human victims that were required and duly offered for this or that portion of the building."¹⁴

The right of the chiefs to rule was cemented through their consecration of *heiau luakini*, what might be termed "temples of state." Pu'u Kohola was such a *heiau*, and like other *luakini*, its consecration involved human sacrifice.¹⁵ Thus Pu'u Kohola *heiau* is *kapu* (taboo—sacred, thus off limits to most people) and would have been a fearsome place in its time. For the consecration of the *heiau*, Kamehameha invited his cousin and rival Keoua Ahu'ula, a chief of the Kona district of Hawai'i Island, to attend. When Keoua arrived at the beach of Kawaihae, he was quickly seized and put to death, his body later laid on the altar of Pu'u Kohola.

By 1806, Kamehameha had achieved conquest of the archipelago, establishing what would become the Hawaiian Kingdom. He assumed the role of *ali'i nui* over all the islands, and ruled until his death in 1819. During his time, the royal court moved between the sheltered harbor of Honolulu on O'ahu and the village of Kailua-Kona on Hawai'i. Kawaihae also remained a royal residence. Kamehameha's heir Liholiho resided here and met French explorer Freycinet. Queen Emma, wife of Kamehameha IV, is said to have been born here. John Young, one of Kamehameha's British advisors, married a chiefess and raised his family in Kawaihae, not far from the *heiau* complex. His son became an important figure in Hawaiian politics.

Within the traditional system that Kamehameha maintained up until his death in 1819, a system of sacred laws (*kapu*) governed the relationships and behaviors among chiefs and commoners. The economy was largely communal, based on a systematic program of land-and-sea management overseen by the chiefs and their officers. Land itself was not owned outright but controlled and allotted in a hierarchy from the ruling chief to lesser chiefs and on down to the commoners. This bound chiefs and commoners together in a system of reciprocity that afforded checks and balances both on power and on environmental exploitation.

Kamehameha's unification of the islands added a new layer to the power hierarchy, displacing local rulers, usually through enormously bloody conflicts. His unification consequently remains a divisive point among Hawaiians today. Some see him as a largely benevolent uniter, while other Hawaiians still today see Kamehameha as a ruthless conqueror, a usurper. Resentment over this historical grievance still resounds.

The role of Pu'u Kohola and other Hawaiian temples came rather abruptly to an end shortly after the death of Kamehameha in 1819. The *kapu* system of religious

and legal codes that ruled Hawaiian society was overthrown, opening an avenue for change in the socio-political arena. But change came much more rapidly than was expected, when New England missionaries arrived later that same year. Thus a shift in the legal, religious, and political landscape in 1820 begins a new era of the nascent Kingdom of Hawai'i.

3.3.3 The Hawaiian Kingdom and Westernization

The arrival of missionaries marks one of two forces that shaped the Hawaiian Kingdom. The Hawaiian Islands lie strategically about midway between the West coast of North America and the ports of East and Southeast Asia. After Captain Cook put the islands on the map, Western ships frequented the waters, trading for provisions and engaging with the chiefs. A short-lived trade in sandalwood developed, followed by an even greater traffic of whaling ships. While these external forces roped the islands more tightly into the global economy, the internal action of the American Protestant missionaries operated on a different but related political economy.

As Americans, the missionaries espoused strong beliefs in several areas other than Christianity. They preached and guided a cultural transformation in the direction of American values of democracy, private property, and commercial gain. And as resident experts in Western culture, they quickly gained the ears of Hawaiian rulers trying to cope with the penetration of Western imperialism into their previously isolated realm. During the early decades of the kingdom, both French and British warships arrived and temporarily seized authority. Preserving the Hawaiian Nation as a sovereign entity was a delicate business, and the missionaries served increasingly as advisors, some leaving their pastoral duties for positions in the government.

By 1840 the Kingdom had its first constitution, going on to make treaties with over 22 countries and entities. The monarchs were educated, sophisticated and multilingual. The populace was literate: by the 1890s, over 100 newspapers were published in the Hawaiian language. All the while, the Hawaiian leaders were fighting to stave off Western powers who threatened to annex this strategic archipelago to their empires. The real threat, however, was from within.

The penetration of capitalism took root in the form of Western-owned sugar plantations. In part under pressure from the missionary advisors, Kamehameha III privatized land ownership in 1848, in a series of acts collectively known as the Mahele.¹⁶ Land passed quickly out of the hands of Hawaiians and into the hands of Western plantation owners.¹⁷ That period marked the transition from the traditional form of land ownership under Hawaiian chiefs with its communal and reciprocal economy, to a free-enterprise system in which land served as a commodity as well as being the means of production. Tensions grew between the Hawaiian monarchy and the increasingly powerful white economic oligarchy. In 1886, a constitution was forced on King Kalakaua, stripping him of most of his powers.

After his death, Queen Lili'uokalani tried to install a new constitution, and this prompted a *coup d'état*. The white businessmen took over the government in January 1893 using American troops, and by 1898 had achieved their long-sought goal of annexation to the United States. Thus the kingdom that had stood for nearly 100 years, and had developed rapidly from a Polynesian chiefdom into a modern nation, was subsumed by the U.S.¹⁸

During this time, two other important developments had taken place. The first is the breakdown of the communal economy in the face of capitalist penetration. In becoming a "modern" nation, the Kingdom quickly began imposing taxes to be paid in cash. This and other economic forces pushed more and more of the population into wage labor. Accompanying this was the introduction of plantation agriculture (sugar from 1835 to 1900, then including pineapple). Previous family farmlands were bought up and transformed into cane fields. Second and related is the import of migrant labor (Chinese, then Japanese, Korean, Filipino, and others), creating a socio-racial stratification in which most Hawaiians, whose experience with wage labor was brief, moved rapidly to the economic bottom of society. A hundred years later, 1992 study found them to still be at the bottom in many socio-economic indicators.¹⁹

Kawaihae became a backwater as the rapidly Christianized Hawaiian Kingdom evolved into a small player on the world stage. Pu'u Kohola played no role in the post-1820 Christianized Kingdom, lying neglected on its hill above Kawaihae. The small village continued to serve as the harbor for commerce in and out of Waimea, a town growing in the cool highlands up on the plain between the two volcanoes. Merchants set up shop at Kawaihae's wharf, supplying whalers with produce from Waimea. Cattle, introduced by Captain Vancouver in the late 1700s, had become a major industry as well, and until refrigeration, were shipped live from Kawaihae to Honolulu. Thus Kawaihae as a port grew with the expansion of commercial activity in the islands.

3.3.4 *American Colonization*

In 1898, a mere five years after the Kingdom was overthrown by white businessmen who sought annexation to the United States, President McKinley brought the islands into the U.S. realm. The new U.S. Territory of Hawai'i was then run for 60 years as a feudal fiefdom, largely under the monopoly control of five plantation families who had consolidated their grip on productive land. Under federally appointed governors, Americanization was implemented: English became the official language, Hawaiian newspapers were shut down, and Hawaiian children were punished for speaking Hawaiian in schools. U.S. military arrived in large numbers, taking over land, harbors, and strategic coastlines. The colonization of the islands and the imposition of American hegemony were thorough. Young Hawaiians today are four or five generations removed from the Kingdom era, and to varying

degrees struggle with their sense of Hawaiian-ness within this Americanized context.

To displace the oligarchy, residents voted for Statehood in 1959, though there were no other options offered besides the status quo. Statehood was, in some ways, the “last nail in the coffin” for the Hawaiian sense of place. Where some sense of communal economy and environmental conservation still existed, National legislation threw open the lands and seas for full commercial exploitation.

Under American rule, a local civic club fought in the 1970s to have the site of Pu‘u Kohola recognized as a National Historic Site, resulting in its complex being designated a National Park. Today the entire area, on and off shore, falls under the aegis of the National Park Service, and is covered by Federal restrictions.

Shifting this political landscape is the 1993 Apology Bill, signed by President Clinton. This bill recognizes the illegality of the overthrow and annexation, though it makes no movement towards reparations. But the Apology Bill threw gas on the simmering flames of Hawaiian nationalism. A plethora of groups, formal and informal, mobilized or coalesced rapidly and promoted a wide diversity of approaches to sovereignty.

So today, within the context of (contested) American rule, the Hawaiian sovereignty discussions press on in many and often contradictory or even hostile directions. Hawaiians themselves reflect on the degree of diversity and dissent among them. But they also pose the question (to external criticisms) as to why they should be any more unified than any other people.

3.3.5 *The Harbor*

A different layer that spans across time is the deeper economic change that has transformed the islands. In Kawaihae, the cash economy largely meant cattle. Cattle were first introduced to the islands here at Kawaihae, dropped off by Captain George Vancouver in the late 1790s. Placed under *kapu*, they multiplied and devastated the landscape, until the Kingdom hired John Palmer Parker (a foreign-born Kawaihae resident) to hunt them and bring them under control. At 175,000 acres in size, Parker Ranch in Waimea is now the largest private ranch under single ownership in the United States.

Kawaihae served as the shipping port for live cattle. Twice a week the cattle drive would come through town. The steamer would arrive from Honolulu, and cattle were driven out to a small boat, where they were attached by the neck and taken out to the steamer. There they were loaded one at a time and taken to Honolulu for slaughter. Refrigeration eliminated the need for shipping live cattle in the mid-twentieth century, but the role of Kawaihae as a port had already been growing independently.

Kawaihae is the only harbor servicing the northern part of Hawai‘i island. After a tsunami in 1946 destroyed the docks, followed by another in 1960, businesses and transportation companies pressed the (now) State Government to expand the

harbor facility. Their plan was bold: it involved destroying the village of Kawaihae and building a huge platform with breakwaters. Consequently, around 1956 the town of Kawaihae was condemned. Families were given token payments for their lost properties and were told to move out. The village itself was destroyed, and vast amounts of coral were dredged up and pumped out to create an enormous platform known today as the “coral flats.”

Today this is a landscape of commerce: oil tanks, port facilities, tug boats and barges. The lights burn all night long, an eyesore from atop of the *heiau*. The change in near-shore waterflow ruined the fishing industry. Tourist-oriented businesses, like dive shops and art galleries, have taken root. A handful of old residents still remain in the hidden corners, but otherwise, the harbor construction scattered the community of Kawaihae to other parts of the Islands. And there continues to be pressure to expand the harbor even further.

3.4 Embodying Transformation

The evolving Hawaiian population also journeyed through these changes and has been transformed by them. Modernized as Americans, they bring to Pu'u Kohola the embodiment of spatio-temporal forces that have swept under the islands these past two centuries. They walk an accreted terrain of identity whose topography bears marks of past and present forces. This *journey of meaning* manifests specifically in Melvin Kalahiki's attunement to resonances within his body schema. Historically, after Kamehameha's last battle at Nu'uaniu (on the island of O'ahu), a chief on Kamehameha's side went down into the village of Kane'ohe and married a woman of consequence from the now-defeated rival force. Generations later, “Mel” is a living descendent of this union between the foes of that battle. He was raised both in Kane'ohe and later in Kawaihae. Thus Mel very consciously identifies with the time of Conquest.

The Kawaihae that Mel grew up in was a product of local tradition, American colonization, and capitalist penetration.²¹ It was a small town on a long white beach. Mothers caught crabs for their children's lunches.²² Cattle were still driven to the pier near the old post office. Children attended the one-room and later two-room schoolhouse, and gathered at Chock Hoo store for the ice cream truck that came on Saturdays. On Sundays they went to the village church. Old-timers remarked that the small community was close knit like one big family.²³

Then the harbor construction evicted his family from their traditional land. Mel recalls,

I always was concerned about that place, so when I came back from Mainland and I went back over there, the first time I got back over there, the Kawaihae I knew—my grandfather's place—was wiped out from the harbor coming in. They had condemned the place for public purposes. And I really wanted to know what my uncle had done, whether he had sold the place, and if he did.

So one day I saw my uncle, and oh man, he had nothing but bad words for the [Government]. He said they condemned the place and they gave him \$248 for it, and he's *still got that check*. You know, that's the kind of stuff that drives me to what I'm doing today.²⁴

Mel received what he calls “the nudge”—an intuitive urging to engage in fostering unity among Hawaiians. Drawing on his background as descended from families of opposing sides in Kamehameha's war, Mel began organizing events that commemorated Kamehameha's conquest, recognizing that this is still a point of contention for some Hawaiians. But he was not alone. A Hawaiian renaissance that began in the 1970s, and an increasing mobilization of legal forces to recognize the illegality of the overthrow of the Kingdom (resulting in the 1992 Apology Bill) and to set Hawaiians on a new path towards some form of sovereignty, had increasing numbers of Hawaiians struggling to make sense of “being Hawaiian” at this point in their historical trajectory.

Thus in 1992 Mel participated with a handful of other Hawaiian leaders and put together a ceremony to be held at Pu'u Kohola, commemorating this temple as the foundation of the united Hawaiian kingdom. The idea was simple: if we are to understand ourselves as a Hawaiian nation, we need to go back to where our nation began. Since Pu'u Kohola embodies the power with which Kamehameha succeeded in his unification of the islands, it is the site to return to in order to consider where the nation has been since then, and where it is going now. Thus the ceremony can only be understood in the ways in which it embodies the transformations of the past 200 years.

First and foremost, the entire event is held in traditional dress. Mel emphasizes that traditional dress is the tribute paid to the ancestors, to the people of old. It is also clearly a means of connecting with a bodily geography that is distinctly Hawaiian. Even with modern materials, this resonates a powerful re-animation of Hawaiian comportment, presenting bodily gestures as a symbolic field upon the landscape. For men, this includes the *malo* (or loincloth) and *kihei*, a robe worn over the shoulder. Bowing to modern standards of modesty, women's dress includes a blouse along with the *pa'u*, a traditional skirt, and the *kihei*. Footwear aims to conform to the spirit of the event. Watches and other jewelry, other than island ornaments, are removed. Yet given how ubiquitous modern dress has become here, there is a fine line between seeing this as a “costume” event, and seeing it as genuinely Hawaiian. Mel states that many men he has invited balk at the notion of having to wear a loincloth, pointing to the tension that has developed with modernization and Americanization. At the same time, to see this site adorned with participants dressed in *malo*, *kihei* and *pa'u* is to see this *heiau* transformed from a sterile archaeological site to a living, vibrant Hawaiian institution. The presence of these traditionally dressed bodies holds the key to reconsecrating this site as a sacred space.

But dress is not itself enough (Fig. 3.3). The second aspect of embodiment is language. The medium is the message: speaking as the physical projection of language combines not only sound and communication but ontology, cultural resonances and emotional responses, making the act of speaking another important modality

of comportment. The Hawaiian tongue has been making a strong comeback in the past 20 years, both in university classes and in hula schools. An increasing number of younger Hawaiians are now fluent, and many more have some understanding. For those who do not, English translation is sometimes provided during the more secular portions of the ceremony. So one not only *sees* this site as “Hawaiian,” one also *hears* it through the gestural, physiognomic resonances of the language.

This feeds into the third aspect, which is the employment of ceremonial activities. Some attendees—groups who train in traditional Hawaiian martial arts (*lua*) in particular—place themselves under *kapu*, which includes eating only traditional Hawaiian foods and maintaining strict protocols of behavior. Protocol itself is an important aspect of this ceremony. Persons of chiefly descent are recognized and attired accordingly, and the higher chiefs have retinues of guards and assistants. All are trained in traditional protocols, and admonished to take these duties seriously. Certain aspects and spaces of the ceremony are designated *kapu* and restrictions are applied.

Then the entire event itself is a series of ceremonies with breaks in between. The two main days are divided into the private or closed ceremonies of Friday and the open or public ceremonies on Saturday. Participants, many of whom camp at



Fig. 3.3 Ceremony as embodiment: Mel Kalahiki (center, with helmet and whale-tooth necklace) and his entourage in ceremonial dress, before the Saturday morning procession. Mel wears a replica *mahiole* (feather helmet) and *kihei* (feather cape), traditional signs of the *ali'i*. His guards, in *malo* (loincloths) and *kihei* (capes), carry replica spears, daggers, and a shark-tooth weapon. Pu'u Kohola is visible in the background.

the beach below, rise around 3:30 in the morning, and many take a cleansing dip in the ocean before dressing. They then assemble in the dark near the base of the hill, and march by torchlight up to the temple area. Women split off and go to Mailekini *heiau*, while men proceed up to Pu‘u Kohola itself. Shoes are removed at the entrance, and participants proceed barefoot onto the temple platforms.

Here ceremonies are conducted that commemorate those who passed away since the previous year. This is the only event that takes place specifically on the *heiau*, and here people take the opportunity to speak their thoughts on community, nation, and the meaning of this annual ceremony for the future of Hawaiians. By the end of this ceremony, dawn has broken, and a chant for the rising sun is performed.

The middle parts of both days are occupied with workshops, providing an opportunity for participants to learn ancient skills. These are an important part of the educational purpose served by this weekend. At this time also, political discussions are held. This is a non-sacred portion of the day, and most participants abandon some or all of their traditional dress for modern clothing. Training in Hawaiian arts takes the form of modern workshops.

Friday afternoon, an ‘*awa* ceremony takes place on the Park grounds adjacent to the *heiau*. ‘*Awa* is the root known more commonly as *kava*, or *kavakava*, and produces a mildly intoxicating beverage used in ceremonies throughout the Pacific. This ceremony is closed to the public, and full dress protocols are observed. White-topped *kapu* sticks designate the sacred space for the ceremony and warriors guard the perimeter. Participants are chanted onto the ceremonial grounds, and there are prayers and chanting over the preparation of the ‘*awa* itself.

Saturday is the main ceremony. This is open to public spectators, as part of the arrangement with the National Park Service. This ceremony begins usually around 9 a.m. In this case, the procession begins at Park headquarters above and behind the *heiau*. An image of the Hawaiian god Ku is carried in front, and is accompanied by two feather *kahili*, symbols of Hawaiian royalty. Then follow the three chiefs and their entourages, who come down the front of the *heiau* and take up positions beside the field below. The high priest and some attendants take positions atop the *heiau* itself.

Prayers and then offerings are then made to the temple. Each gift is chanted up to the priest attendant, who then chants in acceptance, acknowledging the origin and nature of each item before passing them on to be placed on the altar. These gifts generally consist of local and traditional agricultural products, but also crafts, and sometimes soil, water, and live plants from different parts of the archipelago. Hula performances are also offered, with chanters beating traditional drums.

After these formalities, two opposing groups of Hawaiian warriors come out and challenge each other to battle. There are group battles, and then there are individual duals with specific weapons or techniques. All is done in the spirit of friendly rivalry and respect. There are then closing chants, and a procession back up to the Park service headquarters.

This event presents the fullest embodiment of the overall event. Coming together here is traditional dress, ceremonial protocol, Hawaiian language (there is

almost no English used here), hula, *lua*, and offerings at the temple of traditional crafts and products of the land and sea.

The final event is another afternoon *'awa* ceremony, this one open for public viewing. Again, full protocols are in place. But then the *kapu* is lifted, and the event is open to performances, some put on by organized hula troops, and some spontaneous. *'Awa* continues to flow, and food which has been days in the preparation is served on coconut-leaf platters woven during the weekend. The ceremonial activities for the year are thus drawn to a close. But the next morning, Sunday, many members will attend a beachside church service. For the man who serves as high priest on the *heiau* is also an ordained Catholic priest.

3.5 Navigating the Present

It can be seen, then, that when Hawaiians gather here each August to re-consecrate this *heiau*, the layers of the past mediate the event. Overtly, this ceremony is positioned as an opportunity to bring Hawaiians together on the Temple of State, to talk about the future of the nation in the presence and spirit of the ancestors. Hence the logo for this event is *Ho'okuikahi*—to stand as one, to unite. Reconciliation is an underlying theme: that Hawaiians need to unite in a way that Kamehameha himself did not accomplish, in order to meet the challenges posed today. To do this, the divisions of the past that stem from Kamehameha's conquest need to be reconciled. But reconciliation in a contemporary context must account for the other layers of transformation that have interceded in the past 200 years. Hence the re-consecration of this *heiau* today bears an epistemological load different from what it held in the past, and thus it requires an embodiment of meanings that resonates with these layers of spatial transformations—sedimentations to be expressed through the geography of enactment. To be symbolically enacted, to be taken up into the body schema are gestures symbolizing this reconciliation, not as mere mental representation, but as expressed bodily—the enacted symbol is the physiognomy of the reconciliation.

Here is a place where the Maui warriors of Kamalalawalu fought and fled before the forces of Lonoikamakahiki. Today the Maui warriors come as Hawaiians, and as American citizens, and as friends to engage in amicable sparring. They come by jet to reconnect with the old ways, engaging in reconciliation, both among peoples and between past and present. To be a Hawaiian warrior today, as with other martial arts, one trains for personal strength, discipline, integrity, unity of body and mind, and but now, in this case, for pride of identity. In the social and economic powerlessness experienced by many Hawaiians, here is a venue wherein pride and strength can manifest a sense of continuity with a more meaningful past.

Here is a place of high chiefs, but while chiefly descent is still traced by many today, the social and political context for that system is gone. William Akau, who has been recognized as high chief at Pu'u Kohola, insists that he is simply playing that part. He argues that the structure is gone, and one cannot truly be a chief

anymore. There is no context for those responsibilities. "You just want us to show how the things were in the past," he says, "so people can think in their mind, 'Oh, that's right....' Because we don't have our organization together as Hawaiian people. We're all on our own."²⁵ But others take the *kapu* very seriously. So there is a tension between those intent on manifesting the old ways, and those for whom it is a tug of war between their American acculturation and Hawaiian tradition.

Here in this place, U.S. Federal representatives in the form of Park Service personnel are proud to work closely with Hawaiians using this protected site for cultural revitalization. It is an unusual reconciliation between the State forces of protection and preservation, and Hawaiian forces of indigenous nationalism. Even the U.S. military loans the army cots for participants to sleep on, and the military commander is honored at the *'awa* ceremony. So the theme of reconciliation takes a broader context than even the participants may recognize. It is a reconciliation of the previous waves of change, so as to steer the canoe of the present on a more balanced course.

Here is a place where once Hawaiians were laid in sacrifice to achieve unity by force. But in this ceremony, the ancient *kapu* is gone and democratized Hawaiians come together freely. Instead of human sacrifice, upon this temple they conduct a ceremony mourning the passing on of their elders and kinsfolk; and in so doing, acknowledge the journey through time that their community is taking. Like voyagers in a canoe, this group observes their passage through time and meaning, as elders are lost, younger people ascend to elder status, and children rise to adulthood. It acknowledges where they are now in this journey, and from whence they have come.

The talk is of unity, but the enemy is not other Hawaiians. It is the social, economic and political forces facing a community united through conquest by Kamehameha, and united through dispossession by capitalism and U.S. imperialism. The ongoing effect of the loss of the land, the related socio-economic ills that face Hawaiian people, and the opportunities for change implicit in the Apology Bill—these are the political issues today.

Pu'u Kohola is now a place where Americanized Hawaiians of the twenty-first century, steeped in the consumer culture of modernity, work to reconcile their identities as Hawaiians and as modern people. Here they aim to reconcile a past that was glorious and spiritual yet rigidly structured, with American democratic principles and the free-for-all of values and belief systems available. Here the legacy of loss blamed on missionaries comes up against the widespread adherence to Christianity.

Most Hawaiians do not come to this event. The fact that it is held at this temple, and that it is "traditional" in its way, seems to be off-putting to the modern sensibilities of many Hawaiians. So for all its attempts to draw Hawaiians together, this event actually serves a fairly small community of adherents.

But from conversations with those who do attend, including those who attended once in the past and then came back after many years, this is a profound experience for Hawaiians.²⁶ There is simply nothing like it anywhere in Hawaii today. The ritual enactment at this heiau reaches physically and symbolically across the

tides of time to connect Hawaiians of today to Hawaiians of Kamehameha's time. The spatial context of the site is the constant that anchors this experience. It is the metaphorical "canoe" that rides across time. Thus despite its concessions to 200 years of change, the transformation of Pu'u Kohola into a living symbolic landscape is powerfully transformative to those who participate. This ceremony is one cross-section of space-time that involves an earnest effort to embrace the traditional forms of life and to reframe them for Hawaiians today.

To understand the ceremony at this site is to trace back through the many geotemporal waves that have washed the shores between this temple's inception and the present. Inasmuch as these tides have eroded away the trappings of tradition for many people and covered them with the sediment of modernity, and inasmuch as, in post-modernity, many are reaching back to traditions that provided meaning and guidance. We must understand this event as a point in a journey, and see what it teaches about the struggle to make sense of, and find our place in, this world.

Notes

1 Much of the research informing this study was done for the *Pacific Worlds* educational website. This project, funded by the Hawai'i Council for the Humanities, involved interviews with past and present Kawaihae residents, as well as bibliographic research.

2 *Heiau* refers to the varieties of Hawaiian temples, which traditionally consisted of stone platforms topped by temporary buildings. Today only the platforms remain in most cases. Traditionally there were several categories of *heiau* for different religious purposes. *Marae*, the more familiar Polynesian word for such structures, is not used in the Hawaiian Islands.

3 Backhaus, "Introduction I: The Problematic," 13–14.

4 Meinig, "Symbolic Landscapes."

5 Meinig, "Introduction," in *Ordinary Landscapes*, 6.

6 Hägerstrand, "What about People in Regional Science?"

7 Pred, "The Choreography of Existence."

8 Hau'ofa, *New Oceania*.

9 Kraak, "The Space-time Cube."

10 Kamakau, *Ruling Chiefs of Hawaii*. See also Desha, *Kamehameha*.

11 Hannah Springer, personal interview for *Pacific Worlds*, Waimea, Hawai'i, August 2005.

12 Kamakau, *Ruling Chiefs*, 149–150.

13 Fornander, *Ancient History of the Hawaiian People*, 328.

14 *Ibid.*, 328.

15 See Valeri, *Kingship and Sacrifice*.

16 Kame'eleihiwa, *Native Land and Foreign Desires*.

17 Wise, "History of Land Ownership in Hawaii."

18 The Mahele and the Overthrow remain major topics of political discussion in the islands today, as they concern land rights and other rights of Hawaiians. The best documentation on the processes leading to the Mahele is Kame'eleihiwa, *Native Lands and Foreign Desire*. There are several contemporary books documenting the overthrow of the monarchy, including: Coffman, *Nation Within*.

- 19 Native Hawaiian Study Commission, *Culture, Needs, and Concerns*.
- 20 Melvin David Lonokaiolohia Kalahiki, personal interview for *Pacific Worlds*, August 2004.
- 21 Ululani Carvalho, personal interview for *Pacific Worlds*, August 2004.
- 22 'Ilima Mo'iha, Pua Tavares, Ku'ulei Nagasawa McCarthy and Jeannine Matos, personal interviews for *Pacific Worlds*, August 2004.
- 23 Melvin Kalahiki, personal interview for *Pacific Worlds*, August 2004.
- 24 William Akau, personal interview for *Pacific Worlds*, Kawaihae, August 2004.
- 25 At this writing, the author has attended the ceremony for five years.

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Chapter 4

Mythological Landscape and Landscape of Myth: Circulating Visions of Pre-Christian Athos¹

Veronica della Dora

Editors' Note: This chapter anticipates Part II of our volume, for the symbolisms of Athos become detached from the anchorage of the landscape to become “free-floating images” within a geography of the imagination. But this chapter is appropriately placed here in Part I, for geographical/archaeological exploration eventually returns these free-floating images to Athos, anchoring them once again to their originary embodiment. The “uprooting” of the myth and then the nineteenth-century geographical discovery and evidence found in the landscape exhibit well the doctrine of the interrelation of perception and imagination along a continuum, where one or the other can become dominating. During the course of its “uprooted history,” the “free-floating” images take on various forms of embodiments, in cartographies and various of the arts, which then enter into processes of development and transmission throughout European culture. This chapter corroborates our notion that spatial expressivities of existential situations through embodied experiences become available as gestural potentialities in a plethora of virtualities. Virtualities of enactment can be used over and over again to be expressed in ever new and different situations—in this case, enacting a geographically grounded meaning in various spatial modalities that through development lose anchorage to the original spatial enactment. What is remarkable here is how the geography of imagination allows for a landscape symbol to take on various new and different embodiments, expressive of meanings in a map, an architectural treatise, or a sculpture or painting. So, the generation of symbol allows it to take on multiple embodiments through its translation into different expressive modalities. This example is one by which myths have been returned to their geographical roots, many do not.

4.1 Introduction

There are places that are charged with an extraordinary symbolic potential; places that have accumulated several layers of meaning over time; places that few people actually end up visiting, but whose fame extends well beyond its physical boundaries.

Mount Athos is one of these. A 31-mile mountain peninsula in the Chalcidic (Northern Greece), Mount Athos is topped by a majestic 6,700-foot-high peak, after which it is named (Fig. 4.1). Today it is known as the Holy Mountain of Orthodox Christianity and as the only example of a monastic republic in our contemporary world. Frequented by hermits as early as the mid-ninth century, about 100 years before the foundation of the earliest existing monastery by Saint Athanasius, Mount Athos has remained a self-ruled monastic community for some 1,000 years and it continues to represent one of the main pilgrimage destinations in the Orthodox world.² But Mount Athos boasts also a remarkable pre-Christian past: a past plunging into myth and persisting over the centuries through the complex intertwining between the peninsula's dramatic physical geography and Classical imagination. Moreover, this past persists through the circulation of later visions of the ancient mythology connected to it.

According to the legend, Athos was an unruly giant who threw that whole stony mass against Poseidon during a clash with the gods.³ In the *Iliad* (book xiv), Homer referred to Mount Athos as Era's intermediate stop on her way from Olympus to Lemnos. Since then (at least), Athos' peak has continued to constitute a most important node in an extensive net of mountain-landmarks, fundamental in coastal navigation (*cabotage*). When visibility is good, it is possible to observe Athos' majestic summit from a distance of 93–105 miles.⁴ Inevitably, Athos' height and visual prominence stirred the imagination of many classical authors. Strabo argued that "those who live on its crest see the sun rise three hours before it rises on the seaboard."⁵ Pomponius Mela maintained that the summit of Athos "is so tall that it is believed to be even higher than the place from which the rains fall."⁶ Apollonius Rhodius went as far as arguing that at sunset its shadow reached the island of Lemnos.⁷ For Aeschylus, Athos was a node in the chain of beacons between Troy and Argos, and it was thanks to its height that the news of victory was promptly relayed to Agamemnon's queen.⁸

In Classical geographical imagination, the wild nature of the peninsula both reflected on its ancient inhabitants and shaped legendary accounts. Athos was the site of five ancient cities populated, according to Pliny the Elder, by viper-eating inhabitants who lived up to "a hundred and forty years."⁹ But Athos also provided ancient authors with a perfect setting for some of the most amazing challenges to nature ever dared by humans. Herodotus relates that after a terrible shipwreck off Athos' stormy cape (492 BC), the Persian king Xerxes was determined to cut a canal on the peninsula's neck. In this way, he thought he would avoid its circumnavigation and thus exorcise a similar tragedy.¹⁰ According to Vitruvius, because of its spectacular majesty and wilderness, Athos was selected by Dinocrates, Alexander the Great's architect, as the site for the foundation of Alexandria.¹¹ The mountain was to be sculpted into a gigantic human figure (by implication that of Alexander). In his left hand, the colossus would hold the city of Alexandria, and the right hand, a bowl gathering the waters of all the streams flowing down the mountain.

Dinocrates' bold project was rejected by Alexander on logistical grounds, whereas Xerxes' canal apparently collapsed soon after its excavation, leaving no visible trace. Both the colossus and the canal nevertheless remained evocative

visions both in the Classical world and in contexts historically and geographically removed from it. They both represented extreme examples of “the tendency widely recognized in antiquity for absolute kings to wish to express their power by altering the face of nature”—a tendency harshly criticized by ancient philosophers, and yet so compelling for modern Europeans.¹² Later authors, like Lucian of Samosata, took Xerxes’ challenge to nature as an act of arrogance, and Alexander’s refusal as an example of virtue. The canal and the colossus were exploited as powerful rhetorical devices. Athos, a place none of these authors ever visited, became a famous ‘moral landmark’ embodying contrasting metaphors: on the one hand, barbarian foolishness; on the other ‘Greek’ equilibrium.

With the rediscovery of the Classics during the western Renaissance, both myths found for the first time graphic expression. From textual landmark, Athos’ symbolic landscape became a prominent visual presence on maps, atlases, engravings, book frontispieces, paintings, and even coats of arms. Tamed by Dinocrates and Xerxes’ visionary gazes, Athos abandoned its eternal anchorage to wander through the complex circuits of western culture: from Ancient Greece to Renaissance Italy, but also from Baroque Vienna to Revolutionary France, and well beyond. The peninsula with its majestic rocky peak and flat isthmus left its stable abode to become a free-floating referent moving across space and time; to become a ‘*landscape of myth*’: a place visited by few, but alive in the geographical imagination of many. By receiving graphic expression, the myths took on new forms of embodiment. The myths were expressed through those new modalities and as such needed not be traced back to their original geographical embodiment. As free-floating, or uprooted from place of origin, this allowed them to be further developed in the geographical imagination.

Simon Schama has argued that “once a certain idea of a landscape, a myth, a vision, establishes itself in an actual place, it has a peculiar way of ... making metaphors more real than their referents; of becoming, in fact, part of the scenery.”¹³ Located on the imaginary boundary between the East and West, between Xerxes’ ‘barbarian hubris’ and Alexander’s ‘rational wisdom,’ Athos’ massive presence has nonetheless been far from ‘fixed.’ Landscape’s physical specificities are “not perceived outside of the medium of historical and cultural imagination.”¹⁴ Landscape, it has been observed, “is a dynamic medium, in which we live and move and have our being, but also a medium that is in itself in motion from one place to the other.”¹⁵ The first part of this chapter explores such a process. Mount Athos is a physical geographical object able to strike the imagination and layer mythological narratives. But it also is a referent appropriated and re-appropriated in different contexts: as one of the most quoted mountains in Classical texts and as a symbolic landscape represented by poets, writers, and artists who never saw it. This part of the chapter thus explores Athos as a mythological landscape, and as a ‘landscape of myth’ constructed ‘from outside’—often very far from its geographical location. It does so, mainly through the examination of two different modes of graphic representation: the cartographic and landscape views. Edward Casey has suggested the complementariness of these modes: “maps orient us in the practical

world, landscape paintings possess the decidedly non-practical function of helping us to appreciate the natural world's inherent beauty and sublimity."¹⁶

'Mapping' and 'portraying' a highly mythicized and moralized place such as Mount Athos inevitably disrupts the boundaries between these categorizations, generating odd paradoxes: on the one hand, Xerxes' 'barbarian irrationality' ended up enduring through the centuries by means of 'rational mapping'; on the other, Alexander's 'western rationality' was ironically commemorated through artistic landscape representations of the 'irrational' project he was said to have rejected. The first and second sections of the chapter examine examples of early cartographic representations of the Athonite peninsula (with Xerxes' canal) and landscape representations of the Dinocratic myth, as it was envisaged in Western Europe, from the Renaissance to the French Revolutionary period.

Each in its own way, maps and landscape representations helped the memory of mythical pre-Christian Athos to persist through the centuries and circulate well beyond its physical boundaries. But what happened when eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europeans, for whom Athos had remained a pure textual presence, actually got there? How from 'landscape of myth,' from pure vision, did Athos become a 'real place'? Did this encounter mean the obliteration of myth from landscape? Seeking to shed light on these questions, the last section of the chapter shifts from pure representation, from maps and landscapes as mental images and material 'circulating objects' to the phenomenological processes of observation and mapping of/on 'sound territory.' It moves from Mount Athos as an emblem, as a 'landscape of myth,' to an actual field through which myth is re-embodied.

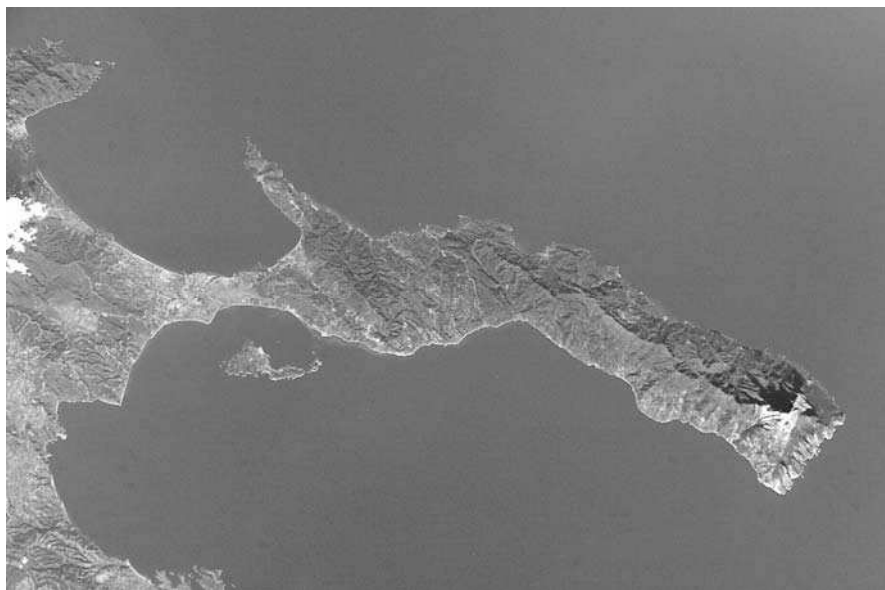


Fig. 4.1 The peninsula of Mount Athos as seen from the International Space Station (NASA)

4.2 Xerxes' Canal

In the first place, since the first expedition had come to grief as [the Persians] sailed around Athos, for about the last three years early preparations had been made to deal with Athos. Triremes were anchored off Elaëus in the Chersonese; and men from these, composed of all nations in the army, were set to work digging a channel, which they did under the lash, and they went to the task in relays.... The Persian was determined to turn [the cities on the Athos peninsula] from mainland into island cities.... They drew a straight line near the city of Sane; and, when the channel grew deep, some of the men stood at the bottom and dug, and others handed over the spoil, as it was dug out, to others, who stood higher, on steps, and they, receiving it, to others higher still, until they came to those at the top.... As far as my guess goes, it was out of mere arrogance that Xerxes made them dig the channel, because he wanted to show his power and leave a memorial behind him.¹⁷

Herodotus disdained the image of Xerxes challenging the neck of the fierce Athonite peninsula with a straight line. The historian envisioned in this act a dramatic expression of Xerxes' megalomania, geared towards a self-complacent display of Persian power. Through the 'physical' evidence of the canal dug in the rock, Herodotus implicitly opposed barbarian arrogance (even before the forces of nature) to the Greek ideal of equilibrium; to the peaceful conciliation between man and environment expressed in Classical architecture.¹⁸

An icon of the Persian king's 'bold' desire to modify the 'immutable text of nature,' the canal was used by ancient authors to effectively illustrate the 'barbarian stereotype,' but also the uttermost negative extent of human passions. An artificial (and maybe imagined) geographical feature, the canal soon turned into a literary *topos*. In his *Epitaph*, Lysias (c.459–c.380 BC) unveiled the perverse mechanisms behind the 'great enterprise.' "Despising alike the effects of nature, the dispositions of Heaven and the purposes of men," the Athenian orator critically recorded, "[Xerxes] made him a road across the sea, and forced a passage for ships through the land by spanning the Hellespont and trenching Athos; none withstood him, for the unwilling submitted, and the willing chose to be traitors. The former were not capable of resisting and the latter were corrupted by bribes."¹⁹ Similarly, in his *Panegyricus*, Isocrates (380 BC) remarked:

What orator, however eager to overshoot the mark, has not fallen short of truth in speaking of this king, who rose to such a pitch of arrogance that thinking it a small task to subjugate Hellas, and proposing to leave a memorial such as one would mark a more than human power, did not stop until he had devised and completed the execution of a plan whose fame is on the lips of all mankind—a plan by which, having bridged the Hellespont and channeled Athos, he sailed his ships across the mainland, and marched his troops across the sea.²⁰

The paradoxical image of Xerxes 'navigating Athos' and 'marching on the Hellespont,' '*kai aei o Athōs pleisthō kai o Ellēspan pedeuēsthō*' was later repeatedly exploited by Lucian of Samosata as an effective rhetorical device.²¹ In Greek literature Xerxes' barbarity was generally portrayed as childish irrationality. "Pride and the insolence which the Greeks called *hubris* [carried] him to foolish rebellion

against things as they are; then like a child, who has fallen down and beats the earth in a passion of rage, the foolish savage [tried] to ‘take it out’ of what the wise man knows is stronger than all of us.”²² Emblematically, Herodotus also recounts that when Xerxes’ first attempted at bridging the Hellespont and failed because of a great storm, he grew furious and ordered that the sea be punished.²³

Alexander the Great himself, according to Plutarch (AD 45–125), blamed Xerxes’ plans and regarded the canal as the physical embodiment of ‘Oriental’ conceit. While rejecting Dinocrates’ project, the Macedonian king would have declared to the architect:

Let Athos remain as it is. It is enough that it be the memorial of the arrogance of one king [Xerxes]; but my imprint the Caucasus shall show and the Emodian range and Tapais and the Caspian Sea: these will be the image of my deeds.²⁴

While the canal seemed to have collapsed soon after its construction as the result of a strong earthquake and no visible trace of it remained (Fig. 4.2), the Persian king nevertheless succeeded in his ‘arrogant purpose.’ He indeed left behind him a powerful landmark not only in western geographical imagination, but also in the actual cartography of Athos.

The idea that once-upon-a-time the Athonite peninsula was an island had a particular appeal among western cosmographers and mapmakers. Mount Athos in a round insular shape was a common feature on Ptolemaic maps. Based on the famous Ptolemy’s *Geography* (a second-century-AD text containing tables of names and coordinates), these maps started to be compiled in western Europe only since the late fifteenth century, with the rediscovery of the text by Greek savants and its divulgation in the Latin west. The most authoritative geographical text in Renaissance Europe, Ptolemy’s *Geography* represented the main source for shaping the Mediterranean coastlines at least until the end of the sixteenth century. Newly acquired data, territories unknown to Ptolemy himself, and Classical myths were integrated into this model alike, rather than challenging it.²⁵ In this sense, Renaissance maps became true *Wunderkammern*, gathering disparate (and often contradictory) pieces of information.

The Florentine priest Cristoforo Buondelmonti, the founding father of the genre of the ‘*isolario*’ (or island book) and precursor of Renaissance antiquarianism and western Ptolemaic maps, personally visited Athos and described it as “a palace of angels.”²⁶ He depicted the peninsula in a round shape, and, bringing together ancient and modern topographies, he explicitly reminded the observer that “at the time of Xerxes [the Athonite peninsula] was crossed by the sea and it was an island,” as we read in proximity of the isthmus (Fig. 4.3).

Mount Athos in a round insular shape remained a common place on western Renaissance maps and *isolari*. Verbal cabinets of curiosities, grouping unsystematized historical notes, geographical descriptions, and accounts of local costumes, or exotic natural objects, cosmographies and island books inevitably privileged the insular.²⁷ But the cartographic representation of Athos as an island had far more profound echoes. As argued by Yi-Fu Tuan, “the island seems to have a tenacious hold on human imagination, especially in the West. After all, it is ancient



Fig. 4.2 Supposed site of Xerxes' canal (Photograph by Veronica della Dora)

Greece that gave birth to the myth of the Island of the Blessed, a place where heroes led easeful lives, and in Medieval and Renaissance Europe, Eden itself was situated on an island.²⁸

Evocatively, sixty years after Buondelmonti, the same insular pattern was imposed on Athos and further elaborated by the German Henricus Martellus in his *Insularium Illustratum*, an island book built on the model of Buondelmonti's.²⁹ Somehow echoing Eden's insular spatiality as traditionally portrayed on Medieval *mappamundi*, Martellus' map of Athos, with its insular shape, its fortified monasteries and towers, its gentle slopes and rivers, in the sixteenth century might have served as a template for representations of Moore's Island of Utopia.³⁰ The invisible presence of Xerxes' canal in a way legitimized the distinction between 'sacred Athos,' the land of the monks who had set themselves out from this world to pursue life eternal, and the secular world itself. In this way, Mount Athos was characterized and narrated as a 'real utopia,' as a 'moral space' different from its surroundings, as a sacred entity with a life (and a geography) on its own.

With the peninsula mutating its shape from 'insular' into cruciform, the memory of Xerxes' canal continued to remain well alive on the map. On his 1697 map of the north Aegean, Vincenzo Maria Coronelli, the founder of the Academy of Argonauts in Venice and 'official' cosmographer of the Republic, beside his observations on 'sacred Athos,' included a detailed note on the canal, similar to Buondelmonti's. Furthermore, he also marked Athos' shade projecting onto Lemnos, and even the spot where the Persian shipwreck was thought to have occurred. Thanks to the intrinsic rhetorical power of maps and their ability to be reproduced and circulated, Xerxes' canal persisted as a characteristic feature of Athonite geography. To a public well acquainted with Classical literature, it served as both a

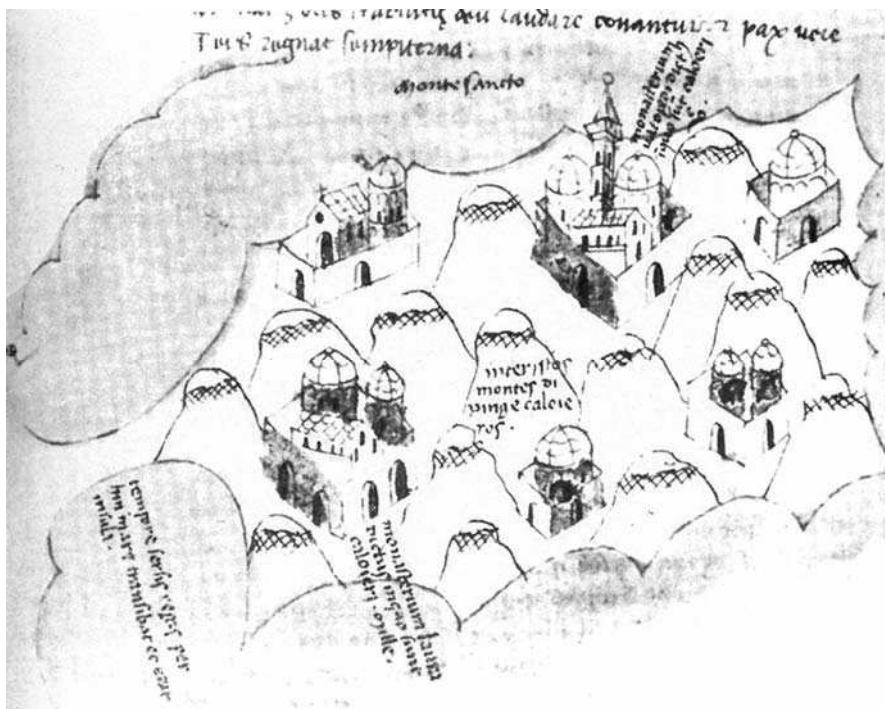


Fig. 4.3 Cristoforo Buondelmonti, map of Mount Athos, fifteenth century, Ravenna, Class. lat.308, f.61 (Biblioteca Classense, Ravenna)

mysterious vestige of the ancient world and as a powerful moral landmark. In this sense, the map constituted an effective metaphysical link between past and present, myth and reality, interior and exterior worlds.

4.3 Alexander's Mountain

[Dinocrates] was, I should state, a man of tall stature, pleasing countenance, and altogether of dignified appearance. Trusting to the gifts with which nature had thus endowed him, he put off his ordinary clothing, and having anointed himself with oil, crowned his head with a wreath of poplar, slung a lion's skin across his left shoulder, and carrying a large club³¹ in his right hand, he sallied forth to the royal tribunal, at a period when the king was dispensing justice. The novelty of his appearance excited the attention of the people; and Alexander soon discovering, with astonishment, the object of their curiosity, ordered the crowd to make way for him, and demanded to know who he was. 'A Macedonian architect,' replied Dinocrates, 'who suggests schemes and designs worthy your royal renown. I propose to form Mount Athos into the statue of a man holding a spacious city in his left hand, and in his right a huge cup, into which shall be collected all the streams of the mountain, which shall then be poured into the sea.'³²

Through the centuries, Dinocrates' vision proved no less powerful than Xerxes,' and the myth of the unrealized colossus no less persistent than the invisible canal. But if the latter remained first of all a 'cartographic' myth intrinsically grounded on territory, the former underwent a progressive disembodiment. While originating from Athos' prominent physical geography, from its insistent 'thing-ness,' Dinocrates' colossus remained a 'pure' a-territorial emblem appropriated and re-shaped in very diverse contexts.

With the rediscovery of Vitruvius in early Renaissance architecture, Dinocratic Athos became an emblem of excess: the antithesis of the ideal of 'Classical proportions' and equilibrium. Leon Battista Alberti employed Dinocratic Athos as a negative model in his influential treatise (*De re aedificatoria*, vi, 4), whereas Buonaccorso Ghilberti's embarrassment with the legend was such that he eventually had the young Macedonian architect "withdraw the whole idea after second thoughts, offering elaborate explanations of its impracticability."³³

Dinocrates' bold project, however, never stopped to lure the imagination of egocentric personalities, such as Alexander VII Chigi, the Pope who during his pontificate completely transformed the urban landscape of seventeenth century Rome. Seeking ever more sophisticated ways to flatter their patron, artists working at the pontifical court found in Dinocratic Athos an effective device.

Pietro da Cortona (1596–1669) succeeded in expressing the pope's pragmatism as an active urban planner, as well as his visionary character: on his *acquaforte*, we see the Pope engaging an active dialogue with his two obsequious architects, Pietro da Cortona and his mythical predecessor Dinocrates.³⁴ After all, as the upper inscription explained, the Pope's "greater virtue makes art of [such] bold ventures" (Fig. 4.4).

Roma Alexandrina was itself incorporated on the lower part of the mountain, echoing the imaginary city located in the right hand of the colossus. The two cities—one real, and the other imaginary—were linked through a river flooding out from the bowl in the left hand of the rocky giant; a river flowing from Dinocrates and Alexander the Great's mythical past to the Pope's 'real' present. This movement seemed to create an almost 'natural' connection between ancient glory, incarnated by the figure of the Macedonian king, and the grandeur of modern Rome. Imaginatively superimposed on the Tiber, the river generously lavished the copiousness of pontifical prosperity, along with the imaginative powers of Alexander VII.

The Pope, who bore the same name as the great Macedonian king, was indeed megalomaniac in his architectural aspirations. He suffered from '*mal di pietra*,' a fatal 'building mania,' that nearly disrupted the state finances.³⁵ Aiming at beautifying his *Caput Mundi* in the same way the great Roman emperors had done in antiquity, during the twelve years of his pontificate (1655–1667), Alexander VII literally revolutionized the map of the city. As poor Roman citizens had to abandon their houses to make space to the open spaces of sumptuous piazzas, the Pope was parodied in the streets as the '*Papa di grande edificazione*.'³⁶ As Chigian coats of arms started to crowd the streets and squares of Roma Alexandrina as visual reminders of Alexander VII's commitment to public work and of pontifical power,

Athos itself became a Chigian mount, incorporating the same 'official' iconographic elements in the coat of arms: the star (on the top) and the oak (at its feet).

In the following decades, Dinocratic Athos continued to endure as an emblematic landscape of myth. In Baroque Italy it was printed on the frontispieces of theses



Fig. 4.4 Pietro da Cortona, Acquaforte representing Pope Alexander VII and Dinocratic Athos, c. mid-seventeenth century (British Museum)

as a symbol of distinction. It also entered cabinets of curiosities, and even carnival parades, such as that of Naples in 1686.³⁷ Shaped and reshaped in the oddest fashions and circulated through the most diverse means, Athos ended up separating completely from its original referent: it became pure ‘symbol.’

In 1712 the Viennese Johann Bernard Fischer von Erlach attempted the graphic reconstruction of the myth (Fig. 4.5). In so doing, the baroque sculptor turned the mythical mountain into a bizarre cabinet-of-curiosity object set in a fantastic scenario including exotic palms and camels, as well as more familiar pine-trees. Wearing helmet and military garments, in its majesty the Dinocratic colossus stood as an immortal cultural landmark between ancient Greece (the supposed cradle of European civilization) and the Orient.

This illustration was part of a unique ‘atlas,’ in which von Erlach not only graphically reconstructed the Seven Wonders and the most remarkable monuments of antiquity, but also situated them on a map of the Eastern Mediterranean and the Levant. At the opening of the first book of the *Entwurf einer Historischen Architectur*, such a map was more than a summary illustration: it was a map that had long animated the geographical imagination of western Renaissance antiquarians, artists, and collectors. For most of them, the geographical region represented by the Viennese sculptor echoed with colossal enterprises, whose vestiges were nevertheless to be found only in Classical texts. The Pharos of Alexandria, the Colossus of Rhodes, the Labyrinth of Crete, or Dinocratic Athos all represented ‘symbolic landmarks,’ each embedding a story and a moral teaching: they constituted prominent nodes in a complex web of myth. It was, however, only in the course of the following century that western scholars engaged themselves in the systematic exploration of such a web.

4.4 From Emblem to Field

Despite its centrality in Classical studies, the eastern section of the map of the Mediterranean—portrayed by von Erlach—had for centuries remained largely unexplored. As late as the 1750s, Greece itself still represented some sort of far-removed ‘*terra incognita*’ only sporadically visited by a few adventurers and ‘desperate scholars.’³⁸ Eighteenth-century Grand Tourists generally did not venture farther than Naples, and classical knowledge was inevitably mediated through Imperial Rome.³⁹ If Ottoman Greece remained both geographically and culturally too distant from Europe, Mount Athos remained even farther. Physically isolated, it was a hard to reach destination. Not only had the traveler to cope with an obsolete street system, or with an often stormy Aegean; he had to face also threats like malaria, brigandage, and piracy. Greece, Macedonia, and Mount Athos remained for the most part ‘landscapes of myth,’ alive in western scholarly imagination only. For European artists, they remained powerful moral emblems embedded in the verdant settings of the Roman countryside, or Fontainebleau forest—the places with which they were familiar.



Fig. 4.5 Fischer von Erlach's Dinocratic Athos in *Entwurf einer Historischen Architectur*, 1712 (Getty Research Institute Special Collections)

In 1796, for example, the French painter Pierre-Henri de Valenciennes (1750–1819) reworked the Dinocratic myth as a bucolic scene, which he exhibited at the salon of the Republican Year VIII, when enthusiasms for the Ancient Greek world and the ‘cult of nature’ were at their height (Fig. 4.6). The Dinocratic colossus therefore became “the perfect icon of benevolent republican sovereignty, where the impossibly exquisite landscape, verdant and gently watered, is shown directly dependent on the mountainous authority of the paternal state.”⁴⁰ Part of a verdant ‘landscape of myth,’ Dinocratic Athos here paradoxically emblemized exactly what Alexander,



Fig. 4.6 Pierre-Henri de Valenciennes, Mount Athos carved as a monument to Alexander the Great, 1796, oil on canvas (The Art Institute of Chicago)

“the epitome of the ruthlessly autocratic monarch,” and his megalomaniac empire were *not* about.⁴¹ The innumerable historical landscapes exhibited in the festivals of the Revolution were ‘political landscapes,’ for they provided the claim “to establish a society on the model of nature” with visual form.⁴² Dominating Valenciennes’ Arcadian, almost dreamlike landscape, Dinocratic Athos ironically conveyed to its Parisian viewers the impression of moral (and thus social) order. The mountain portrayed by the French artist, however, was no longer Athos, the majestic cone emerging from the waters of the Aegean; nor was it the mountain Dinocrates had presented to Alexander the Great; it was an ethereal fantasy, a free-floating vision.

At the turn of the century, the visual ‘disembodiment’ of symbolic landscapes in the Eastern Mediterranean (such as Athos) nevertheless started to be paralleled by the opposite process. With the spread of the Hellenic Ideal across turn-of-century Europe and the improvement of transportation, scholars no longer contended with a distant contemplation of ‘landscapes of myth’: they urged the physical localization of the past on the map. To become ‘real,’ but also ‘tamable,’ or just able to be narrated, ‘the Classics’ needed to be backed by a sound ontological foundation: by territory. From ideal, the Classical past was reified into a foreign country, and this foreign country was localized in the southeastern Mediterranean, with Ottoman Greece its epicenter.⁴³

Diplomats, scholars, clergymen, artists, and other categories of western travelers sharing the same solid background in Classical education and Romantic passion for the ‘land of the Ideal,’ started to invade Ottoman Greece in pursuit of material vestiges of the past. Directed by an imaginary map built in the course of their years of study, these travelers envisaged the ancient past in the actual Greek landscape features they moved through. In the open barren fields they recognized the settings of famous battles; in the lofty peaks the abode of ancient divinities; in the gentle hills and water streams the immortality of poetry. At the beginning of the nineteenth century Edward Dodwell wrote: “Beyond the Ionian Sea almost every rock, every promontory, every view is haunted by the shadows of the mighty dead. Every portion of the soil appears to teem with historical recollections.”⁴⁴ It was in such a context that from abstract emblem, or remote landscape of myth, Mount Athos eventually turned into an ‘actual place.’ Somehow paradoxically, however, direct experience seemed to exacerbate, rather than erase myth.

Mount Athos, the Holy Mountain and ‘spiritual beacon’ of Orthodoxy in Ottoman-dominated Greece and one of the ‘most narrated peaks’ in Classical literature, inevitably constituted a unique destination for European travelers who were after physical traces of the ‘the Ideal.’ For committed Philhellenes like David Urquhart (1805–1877), a Scottish writer and diplomat who, following Lord Byron’s example, set out for the Greek War of Independence as a volunteer at the age of twenty-two, mythical Greek mountains were “immortal monuments of the nation.”⁴⁵ The most ‘stable’ and ‘durable’ signs of nature, mountains legitimized the presumed ancestral origins of Greece, and thus its continuity to the present. If the single mythical peaks worked as landmarks of memory, taken as an organic whole, as a part of a broader mountain system, they also constituted the skeleton of the Hellenic

imagined nation-state, one extending well-beyond the political boundaries of the new Kingdom of Greece in the mind of its inhabitants and of the visionary Philhellenes.⁴⁶ In a lecture delivered at Oxford in 1872, for example, Henry Fanshawe Tozer, fellow and tutor of Exeter College, compared Greek mountains to the backbone of the nation, and regarded them as the most distinctive features in the Hellenic landscape, their names “occur[ring] continually in the Greek poets from Homer downwards.”⁴⁷

Urquhart had a special fascination with lofty peaks. Like many of his contemporaries, he ended up climbing some of the most popular ones in the Ottoman Empire. Captured by his Philhellenic visionary gaze, Greek mountains turned into sublime, titanic living presences which spoke silently about the past, serving as a powerful ‘naturalizing’ link with the present and future of the ‘new nation.’ In 1828 the Scotchman visited the Athonite peninsula and ascended its peak. From the mountains of Macedonia, where it could be visually embraced in its wholeness, Athos appeared to him as:

A man lying on his back; for as the nose and chin would so be raised in the air, and an interval would appear between the chin and the breast, so the elevated portion of the extremity of the mountain seems detached from the rocks that lie below, and which spread on either side as if were the shoulders; then they seem narrow and to rise in the centre and mark the navel; then spread towards the hip; then the abrupt escarpment of a mountain across the isthmus, seems to give the outline of the knees, bent and drawn up; after which the land, suddenly sinking, narrows where the joined feet might be supposed to touch the earth.... This ... must have been the view of Stesicrates⁴⁸ when he endeavored to persuade Alexander to complete the resemblance.⁴⁹

Like the unrealized Dinocratic colossus, the non-presence of Xerxes’ canal continued to stir western imagination and desire in nineteenth-century Europe. But if the Philhellene’s gaze from afar was sufficient to re-embody the Dinocratic giant into Athos’ majestic outline, envisioning the canal required more serious efforts. If the Dinocratic myth remained an impossible vision projected onto rock, the canal required committed scientific investigation and elaborate topographical surveys.

In the past, the supposed site of the canal had been visited by the sporadic European travelers to the Holy Mountain. The French naturalist Pierre Belon, for example, examined it in 1547, but while he was able to identify in the outline of the peninsula “*la figure d’un homme reverse la quel estant de moult longue estendue, & située sur le propre patrimoine d’Alexandre en Macedoine,*” of Xerxes’ canal, he had to admit, he found no trace.⁵⁰ Two centuries thereafter, the famous Orientalist Richard Pococke, ‘half scholar and half lunatic,’ decided to add Athos to his collection of ‘rocky conquests.’⁵¹ A pioneer in alpinism, the Englishman had climbed Mont Blanc, but also the Pyramid of Gizah, Vesuvius, Ida, and had also first-hand experience of Olympus.⁵² But Pococke was a true Enlightenment man, whose empiricism prevented uncritical acceptance of written sources. His visit to the supposed site of Xerxes’ canal (and consequent denial of Herodotus’ account) gained him the reputation as one of the most illustrious ‘skeptics’ traveling to Greece in the eighteenth century:

[Athos] is a promontory which extends almost directly from north to south, being joined to the continent by a neck of land about a mile wide, thro' which historians say Xerxes cut a channel, in order to carry his army a short way by water, from one bay to the other; which seems very improbable; *nor did I see any sign of such a work.*⁵³

For Pococke and his 'Enlightened' contemporaries, objectivity was mainly understood as a matter of observational method.⁵⁴ Their observation was nevertheless limited to surface, to what "they could see."⁵⁵ The existence of Xerxes' canal could be 'proved' (and thus Herodotus' authority re-affirmed) only by turning 'sight' into 'vision.' This shift began to take place few decades thereafter.

In 1784 the site of Xerxes' canal, or rather, the 'non-presence' of the canal itself, was for the first time systematically surveyed. The operations took place within the expedition to Greece organized by Choiseul-Gouffier, the newly appointed ambassador at the Sublime Porte. The French diplomat, accompanied by a small army of *litterati*, had embraced the difficult task of rescuing the past glory of the Greek nation out of its current murkiness.⁵⁶ This goal was to be achieved especially by means of historical topography. The rhetoric of truth spoken by maps and plans was to bring the ancient world back to life in the most convincing way: what could not be 'seen' on the inhospitable Greek territory—so different from the bucolic sceneries painted by Valenciennes!—was to be envisaged under its surface.

On the canal's plan (Fig. 4.7), the boundaries between reality and imagination, science and myth, antiquarianism and cartographic 'rhetoric of truth' evocatively blurred. The map as a 'scientific statement' unraveled all its rhetorical power, persuading even the most disenchanted observer of the canal's presence. The last was reinforced by the presence of two coins from the ancient towns of Athos (fifth century BC) on the map. 'Material' witnesses of the past, under the surveyor's gaze, these coins were 'rationalized' and turned into archaeological rarities, as in a collector's showcase. The true rhetorical power of this plan, however, laid in the geometrical lines traversing the isthmus. Unlike Urquhart, Choiseul-Gouffier's object of longing was not Athos' overwhelming stony mass waiting to be challenged by the heroic muscle of the western 'climbing body.'⁵⁷ It was rather an invisible line the French Ambassador and his men envisaged crossing the plain fields on Athos' isthmus; a line alive and meaningful solely *on* and *through* cartographic representation.

Choiseul-Gouffier's work gave impulse to further elaborations. If the French ambassador could boast to have proved the actual existence of the canal and its feasibility, in 1806, lieutenant-colonel William Martin Leake, an officer of the Royal Regiment of Artillery and the most indefatigable of all travelers and topographers, made no secret of his ambitious fantasies. Having conducted a careful investigation of the site, he confidently reported that Xerxes' canal "might without much labor, be renewed; and there can be no doubt that it would be useful to the navigation of the Aegean."⁵⁸

Leake's words did not pass unnoticed by the Royal Navy. In August 1838 another British officer, Lieutenant Spratt was sent to survey the Isthmus of Mount Athos.⁵⁹ The results were published in the *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London* in 1847, and illustrated with a detailed map. Spratt's mapping of

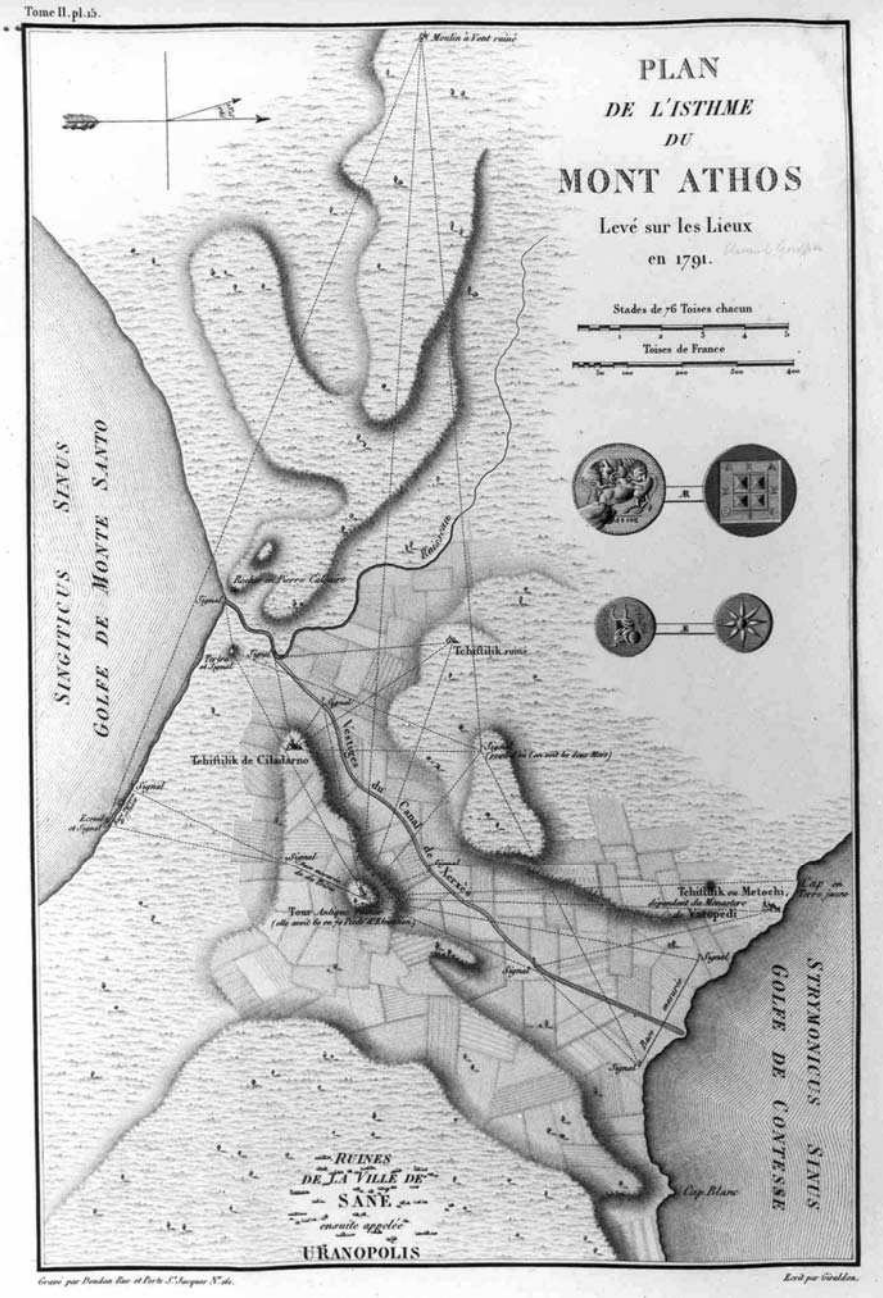


Fig. 4.7 Plan of Xerxes' canal in Choiseul-Gouffier's *Voyage pittoresque de la Grèce*, 1791 (Getty Research Institute Special Collections)

Xerxes' canal was a metaphysical project, and yet one resting on pure 'scientific evidence,' on empirical observations for the most based, as he said, 'on the geology of the district.' Where Choiseul-Gouffier's team legitimized the existence of an invisible feature on the basis of the materiality of objects 'on the surface,' (like coins and ruins), Spratt did so through the championing of soil 'below the surface' and its direct comparison to the original account given by Herodotus 'on the manner of carrying on the work of excavation.'⁶⁰ The officer's resulting map consequently spoke the language of science. Geometric fields turned into complex geomorphic forms. Flat territory became a three-dimensional presence, an organism pulsating with life. The 'signs of nature'—the most unchangeable and thus most 'reliable' of all signs—overcame artificial ruins. Studies of ancient coins also disappeared: they were no longer prerequisites to prove truth. Hachures, numbers, and measurements did more convincingly. Segmented in five sections, Xerxes' canal looked 'more real' than the continuous line traced by Choiseul-Gouffier's civil engineers. The gaps between one segment and the other were to be filled without difficulty by the imagination of the observer. The invisible presence of the canal had been definitely brought 'back' to life.

4.5 Conclusion

It has been argued that 'objects anchor time,' and that landscape, itself constituted by objects, materializes memory, "fixing social and individual histories in space."⁶¹ In this chapter I have tried to show how Mount Athos, one of the most prominent geographical objects in the Aegean and famous landscapes in the Mediterranean, not only anchored time and fixed shared stories, but reified myth. Its highly visible summit and less visible isthmus became not only simple 'settings' for legendary accounts, but they also gradually came to embody moral values, to materialize racial stereotypes (in the characters of Xerxes of Persia and Alexander the Great of Macedonia), to give visual consistency to abstract ideals and imagined cultural boundaries, such as that between the 'East' and the 'West.'

Landscape has been defined as 'a way of seeing the world', implying the 'active engagement of the subject with the material object.'⁶² But 'landscape' indicates also the material (or textual) outcome of such engagement, be it "in painting on canvas, in writing on paper, in earth, stone, water, and vegetation on the ground."⁶³ Through the example of Mount Athos, I have sought to examine the relationship between these different modes. I have tried to show how a 'material landscape' of rock, water and vegetation was signified as a mythological landscape, but how it also became a 'landscape of myth,' a place alive in collective imagination only.

'Symbolic landscapes' become 'landscapes of myth' thanks to their ability to circulate 'outside of their physical boundaries.' If considered as mobile objects, or, in the words of the science historian Bruno Latour, as 'circulating references,'⁶⁴ landscape representations and maps, constitute primary media for the spatial and

geographical movement of places (real and imagined) through the complex circuits of culture.⁶⁵ Yet, in the course of such a process they do not necessarily keep their original meaning and form attached. They are rather subject to a constant reshaping and re-signification. As shown by James Clifford, migration always implies modification.⁶⁶

It becomes clear through the transmutation of a symbolic landscape into a landscape of myth that Backhaus is correct in maintaining that a viable cultural geography entails both the geography of perception and the geography of imagination. The complex intertwining of perception and imagination remains even when, in an instance like this one, landscape imagination is freed to develop images on its own, for a return to the perceptual is implicated in the imaginative expressions that then pre-construct or prefigure our subsequent perceptions.

Informed by centuries of (mainly Classical) textual representations, mythical Athos floated in western Renaissance geographical imagination as a powerful and yet changeable emblem, as a disembodied landscape of myth beyond the direct experience of most Europeans. Majestic peak, utopian island, abode of monks and ancient legends, while moving out of its physical boundaries, Athos was literally appropriated and reshaped for the most disparate artistic and political purposes, from that of cartographic utopia to instrument for 'personal exaltation' (as in the case of Pope Alexander VII), or for the promotion of revolutionary ideals (as in the case of Valenciennes).

But once on the spot, eighteenth and nineteenth-century western Europeans, more or less consciously, re-embodied myth through their direct phenomenological engagement with territory: through their own embodied gaze and field practices. Symbolization is after all "an embodied enactment of meaning, a spatializing production and spatialized construction. And as spatializing/spatialized, both the experiencer ... the symbol itself, and the symbolized, constitute a system, a meaningful field manifesting geographically in the world."⁶⁷ Approaching it from a distance, Urquhart materialized the Dinocratic colossus through the encounter between his gaze and the outline of the majestic Athonite stony mass. On a closer 'on-site' examination, Choisseul-Gouffier's topographers and Royal Navy surveyors went even farther, resurrecting Xerxes' canal among the barren fields; giving life to a metaphysical non-presence. Beside Classical erudition, what all these individuals shared was their visionary character, their ability to grasp the invisible, not beyond, but *through* landscape and territory.

4.6 Coda

Xerxes' canal has remained more than pure fantasy. Having received 'scientific' legitimacy thanks to the work of the British Surveyors, it continued over the following century to appear on common topographical maps of the Chalcidic peninsula as a 'real' presence (and not just as a historical note, as on Renaissance maps). In 1901 it was object of another survey by the Germans, and endured as a common

feature even on Second World War military maps.⁶⁸ Today its uncanny non-presence continues to find space not only on topographical maps of the region, but also on territory. Approaching the Athonite peninsula by car, one encounters on the road, among the fields, the bilingual sign ‘*Diōrux Xerxē/Canal Xerxes*,’ a marker of what Crang and Travlou have defined as a “site of memory.”⁶⁹

Dinocrates’ vision has not died either. In summer 2002, Mount Kerdyllion, a craggy cliff in sight of Mount Athos, was proposed to be carved into a 240-foot likeness of Alexander the Great.⁷⁰ Conceived by a Greek-American sculptor no less eclectic than Dinocrates, the project bore clear political echoes at a time when Greek national pride was still smarting over the ‘Macedonian question.’ Object of animated disputes between local authorities, environmentalists, and archaeologists, the project has eventually remained unrealized—like Dinocrates.⁷¹

Notes

1 This chapter has been drawn from chapters Two and Three of my doctoral dissertation *Geographies of the Holy Mountain: Post-Byzantine and Western Representations of the Monastic Republic of Mount Athos*, UCLA, 2005. A shorter draft of this paper has been presented at the Symposium, *Imaginary Landscapes: Discourses on Space and Places of the Imagination*, organized by the Johns Hopkins Classics Department, Baltimore in September 2005.

2 Sherrard, *Athos*, 6.

3 Kadas, *To Agion Oros*, 9.

4 Livieratos, “Athō perimetrou metamorfōseis,” 21–22.

5 Strabo, *Geography*, vii, 33.

6 Mela, *Description of the World*, ii, 31.

7 Rhodius, *Argonautics*, 601–606.

8 Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, vv, 281–316.

9 Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*.

10 Herodotus, *History*, vii, 22–24.

11 Vitruvius, *De Architectura*.

12 Purcell, “Town in Country and Country in Town,” 190.

13 Schama, *Landscape and Memory*, 61.

14 Backhaus, “Introduction I: The Problematic,” 10.

15 Mitchell, *Landscape and Power*, 2.

16 Casey, *Representing Place*, xiv.

17 Herodotus, *History*.

18 Scully, *The Earth, the Temple and the Gods*.

19 Lysias, *Speeches*, ii, 28–29.

20 Isocrates, *Speeches and Letters*, iv, 88–89.

21 Lucian, *Works of Lucian of Samosata, Rhet. Teach.*, 17; *Dialogues of the Dead*, vii, 414.

22 Dawkins, *Monks of Athos*, 75.

23 Herodotus, *History*, vii, 35.

24 Plutarch, *Moralia*, 335: 17–20.

- 25 One of the most ancient and popular manuscripts is preserved in the library of Vatopedi on Mount Athos and dates back to c.1300. See Livieratos, "Athō perimetrou metamorfōseis", 47. See also Cosgrove, *Apollo's Eye*, 110; Fiorani, *Marvel of Maps*, 84.
- 26 Buondelmonti, *Liber insularum Archipelagi*, 1420; Weiss, "Un umanista antiquario," 108.
- 27 Lestringant, *Mapping the Renaissance World*.
- 28 Tuan, *Topophilia*, 118.
- 29 Weiss, "Un umanista antiquario", 109.
- 30 See Scafi, "Mapping Eden," Parzalē and Livieratos, "Ou topos ē topos Orous?," 241–254.
- 31 Hercules' traditional attributes.
- 32 Vitruvius, *De Architectura*, ii, 1–2.
- 33 Schama, *Landscape of Memory*, 404.
- 34 Metzger Habel, *Urban Development of Rome*, 310.
- 35 Krautheimer, *Roma Alessandrina*, 1.
- 36 Metzger Habel, *Urban Development of Rome*, 8.
- 37 Frankfort, "To oros tou Alexandrou."
- 38 Tsougarakis, *Eve of the Greek Revival*, 1.
- 39 Eisner, *Travelers to an Antique Land*, 64.
- 40 Schama, *Landscape of Memory*, 404–405.
- 41 Speake, *Mount Athos*, 14.
- 42 Warnke, *Political Landscape*, 98.
- 43 Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country*.
- 44 Quoted in Stoneman, *Land of Lost Gods*, 144.
- 45 Peckham, *National Histories*.
- 46 Peckham, *National Histories*.
- 47 Tozer, *Lectures on the Geography of Greece*, 13, 35.
- 48 Plutarch referred to Dinocrates as Stesicrates.
- 49 Urquhart, *Spirit of the East*, 189.
- 50 Belon, *Les Observations de Pierre Belon*, 75; Belon, *Portraits*.
- 51 Schama, *Landscape and Memory*, 464.
- 52 Silvestro. *Western European Travellers to Mainland Greece*, 188.
- 53 Pococke, *Description of the East*, 144; emphasis added.
- 54 Adler, "Origins of Sightseeing."
- 55 Simopoulos, *Xenōi taxidiōtes stēn Ellada*, 188.
- 56 Grell, "Les Ambiguïtés du Philhellénisme," 224.
- 57 Lewis, "The Climbing Body," 58–80.
- 58 Quoted in Speake, *Mount Athos*, 12.
- 59 Spratt, "Remarks," 145.
- 60 Ibid., 146.
- 61 Tuan, *Space and Place*, 187; Knapp and Ashmore, *Archaeologies of Landscape*, 13.
- 62 Cosgrove, *Social Formation*, 13.
- 63 Cosgrove and Daniels, eds., *Iconography of Landscape*, 1.
- 64 Latour, *Pandora's Hope*.
- 65 Cosgrove, *Mappings*.
- 66 Clifford, "Traveling Cultures."
- 67 Backhaus, "Introduction I: The Problematic," 13.

68 See Billetta, *Der Heilige Berg Athos*, 76–81; Livieratos, *Orous Athō*, 249–252.

69 Crang and Travlou, “City and Topologies,” 161.

70 *The Vintage Radio Cellar*, 27 Aug. 2002.

71 Della Dora, “Alexander the Great’s Mountain.”

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Chapter 5

At Home on the Midway: Carnival Conventions and Yard Space in Gibsonton, Florida

Charlie Hailey

Editors' Note: This chapter affords us a special opportunity to examine the confluence of two embodiments in person and in landscape: carnival freak/local-neighbor and carnival midway/backyard-in-a-neighborhood, which result in the confluence of symbolizations. What appears to be an oxymoron, contradiction, or bizarre overlay is shown to be a workable way of life, especially the qualities of mobility and itinerancy against a staid notion of home. Gibsonton is the objectivation of a particular form of lived-experience, symbolizing its ambiguous embodiment and it succeeds due to its enactive participatory process of negotiating symbolic meanings. The author uses Gibsonton as a foil to critically examine New Urbanism. New Urbanism attempts to manufacture life through symbols that are not lived embodiments, because its strategy is to reify and to control behavior by erecting strict building codes that will coerce certain acceptable patternings of life, spatially inscribed through its pre-fabricated symbolizations. Body schemas may not conform with its behavioral modeling and non-resonance with its symbolizations will make the manufacturing of life an unsuccessful venture. Gibsonton allows us to rethink the fundamental significance of home as an adventure in the vernacular—a creative engagement with situational spatialities.

5.1 Introduction

Residential yards characterize the identities and spatial practices of their inhabitants. As the result of habitual and conventional use, the public nature of a yard combines the conditional and the concrete, the everyday and the extraordinary, and the expedient and the necessary. The symbolic potential of such habitual spaces allows for an understanding of multivalent meanings and confluences of public and private as well as itinerancy and domesticity. Everyday yard symbolisms have been studied with significant insights into place-making, from J. B. Jackson's "popular yard" to Robert Mugerauer's Midwestern yards.¹ What has not been adequately reviewed is the confluence of yard spaces with additional sets of symbolic conventions. Gibsonton, Florida, with its aggregate of yards and camping grounds,

serves as a case in which spaces of daily life and performance co-exist and signify conceptions of home. Here, in the winter season, residents live within an ad hoc, though highly symbolic, reconstruction of the carnival midway's spaces. The spatial implications and resulting significance of these 'midway yards' elide contradictions of time and place, mobility and fixity, and disparate locations without denying the complexity of either yard or midway. This inquiry ultimately seeks to understand how such paradoxical spaces inform an understanding of symbolic spaces in contemporary place-making, a practice increasingly characterized in many places (like Gibsonton) by itinerancy. In Gibsonton, the mobility of home is not simply metaphoric but is concretized as space, located in place, and defined by the redeployed apparatus of the carnival midway with all of its phenomenal conditions. The symbolism of the midway within Gibsonton's layout and its residential yards suggests new ways of reading the spaces of contemporary home.

Gibsonton is an unincorporated collection of trailers and mobile homes on the south side of the Alafia River in Hillsborough County, Florida. Gibsonton has been home to many of the nation's sideshow performers like Melvin Burkhart, the original "Human Blockhead," Percilla the Monkey girl, and Lobster Boy. Not immediately visible to the auto-traveler, this curious local identity occupies a seemingly unremarkable setting typical of much of Florida's exurban landscape with its uneven assortment of vehicles and houses, both mobile and immobilized. Most recognizable is Giant's Camp Restaurant that makes up the formal nexus of Gibsonton and greets the south-bound traveler along Highway 41. As a political entity, Gibsonton and its boundaries are more difficult to define. While governmental overlays have impacted the area's zoning and its edges, Gibsonton's assemblage of semi-permanent housing units and commercial apparatus eschews classification as a "town." Known locally and colloquially as Gibtown and Showtown U.S.A., Gibsonton falls between the conventional denotations of town and city.² Instead, what might be termed its "town-field" gains some definition from geographic features, at once isolating and propitious, with the Alafia River to the north, Interstate 75 to the east, and East Bay's tidal flats to the west (Fig. 5.1). What truly identifies the "town" and its many connotations is the unexpected yet not surprising encounters: with concession stands carefully placed in front yards, with a Ferris wheel rising from behind a mobile home, or with residents' accounts of caged lions and tigers roaring across sideyard fences. Today, the camp-town maintains an idiosyncratic yet communal identity, its carnival history visible in the only United States post office with a special counter for midjets, in a museum of dirt collected on camping excursions around the world, and in its yards.

5.2 Mediated Yard Spaces

Previous research of yard spaces looks at the symbolic constructions associated with conventional yard elements and modes of landscaping. Yards mediate public and private zones and natural and artificial spaces. Typically, the meanings found



Fig. 5.1 Aerial view (1995) of Gibsonton, Florida. Alafia River to the north, Interstate 75 to the east, Symmes Road to the south, and East Tampa Bay to the west. Giant's Camp (where the photographs in Fig. 5.2 were taken) is located at the apex formed by intersecting roads south of the Highway 41 bridge over the Alafia River

in yard space are derived from the arrangement of commonly held symbols of public and private life: lawn, fence, driveway, path, garden. As an extension of private spaces and activities into the public realm, the Midwestern yard for Robert Mugerauer defines ten zones that signify “codes of access” through their adjacencies and hierarchies. Fundamentally, yards operate as connectors and separators within the ontological progression of “body, house, yard.”³ For its public function, such mediation relies on the legibility of typical patterns of spaces within a neighborhood or community. With the idea of yard as space of freedom for expression, J. B. Jackson cites the popular yard as the means by which residents express their public opinion and contribute to a civic green space. The introduction of natural elements, or “green accents,” into the “increasingly artificial urban environment ... produces a new and welcome symbolism in our cities: greenery as a way of communicating with others, which tells the public that we are thinking of them, thinking of the community and its appearance, and asking for good will and approval.”⁴

In Gibsonton, many of these ideas of yard are also found: yard as spatial mediator, yard as zone of public expression, and yard as site for the arrangement of symbols and symbolic gestures. Two conditions, itinerancy and performance, characterize Gibsonton's particular situation and thus the way we frame symbolization as a phenomenal process and ultimately understand its significance. As will be seen, the symbols of the carnival midway operate as both ordinary and extraordinary elements in their activation of the yard spaces. The symbol is not just mediator but

also event, with its own phenomenal significance. Additionally, the midway reconstructions are not merely instances of free expression but are indicative of a quotidian life of spectacle.⁵ As a result, these symbols operate consistently in two ways: associationally, as reconstructions of the idea of the carnival, and habitually, as expressions of daily performances carried out by its residents in their seasonal work. What makes this type of symbolization unique as a topic of inquiry is not the potential distinction of the associational and the habitual, but the confluences of these modes, which lead to conclusions about intersections of yard and midway as a way of re-thinking possible significations of home.⁶

5.3 Gibsonton's Boot: Ready-to-Wear Signs and Other Systems of Symbolism

Driving south on Highway 41 having just crossed the Alafia River and passed Giant's Camp Restaurant, one passes a black boot mounted on a concrete block pedestal (Fig. 5.2a). Ostensibly the boot identifies the local business "Rock's Monuments" run by Giant Al Tomaini's daughter Judy, who carves gravestones for the area's two carnival performer cemeteries.⁷ The boot also operates as a symbol of the concurrently hyperbolic and habitual life of the carnival performer, in this case the Giant. In his work with semiotics and logic, C. S. Peirce has outlined a system of symbols that serves to frame the multivalent nature of the Giant's boot as well as Gibsonton's spaces, which will be the focus of this chapter. Based on his interpretation of phenomenology, Peirce's symbol is "the general name or description which signifies its object by means of an association of ideas or habitual connection between the name and the character signified."⁸ Such a symbolic condition



Fig. 5.2a Giant's Camp, Gibsonton, Florida: Al Tomaini's boot on display at the Giant's Camp entrance along Highway 41 (Photograph by the author, 2000)

allows for both extraordinary and conventional (as in repeated, accepted, or commonly held usage) meanings. The boot's attributes associate with the idea of carnivalesque performance and with such commonplace acts as slipping on an old piece of footwear. The boot itself points to the Giant's extraordinary dimensions; at a height of 8' 4½", his feet take a size 22 shoe. Indexically registering the lost but memorialized body, the boot rhetorically asks the universal question whether the viewer can "fill these shoes." In its metonymic power, it also stands for clothing that is worn daily, as much during the carnival performer's work on the road as the domestic work of home in Gibsonton. Such a symbol oscillates between a life's paradoxes (mobility and fixity, performance and privacy) and thus can be associated with a particular kind of experience in which the confluence of movement and home is commonplace. As a memorial and an ad hoc votive presence, the boot operates similarly to classical Greek *herms* that were placed along ancient roadways to commemorate a person or event.⁹

Although significant in Gibsonton's historical background and town layout, the boot itself becomes a locational marker. Like the classical Greek *herms*, its spatial meaning works by extension into space and as a node between which movements in space might occur. But what happens when a symbolic condition accommodates space itself, when in Gibsonton's case the reconstruction of the carnival midway becomes yard space? Within the framework of Peirce's semiotics, this exploration proposes a symbolic condition that can be experienced spatially, what might be termed the "lived symbol." Building on the symbolic potential of the boot with its associational and habitual attributes, this paper expands the field of inquiry to include Gibsonton's spatial phenomena in order to understand how yard and midway converge to symbolize home. Looking closely at the yard-scale and urban-scale modifications of Gibsonton over time provides a ground for studying Peirce's claim that "symbols grow." In the second part, the relation of codes and symbolic ground in Gibsonton shows how this organic growth is then partially concretized or formalized in spatial and planning terms. Next, the flexibility of the symbolic condition within the semiotic set (for which Peirce formulates the triadic grouping of symbol, icon, and index) gives an understanding of the 'indefinite future' that characterizes symbols that are spatialized and ultimately experienced, or more precisely 'lived.' The Giant's boot is a commemoration that fixes the site for remembering. In its hermetic even hermeneutic role, the boot is both messenger and communication, allowing us to participate in, or experience, the process of sitting Gibsonton. Echoing the lived symbol that is Gibsonton's yard space, the boot becomes a living symbol as a place of translation, where both tourist and local might move from uncanny recognition ("that is an oversized boot") to an understanding of this surreal place ("this is Gibsonton").

5.4 Siting Gibsonton

*Symbols grow.*¹⁰

Gibsonton's position between Tampa and Sarasota along Highway 41 has made it a convenient location for performers and operators in the carnival and circus business during the winter season. In the early 1920s, Eddie and Grace LaMay were the first carnival performers to settle in the fish camp that had formed adjacent to the Highway 41 bridge on the north side of the Alafia River. The LaMays decided to make this location their winter home after they stopped to fish during an overland tour in the carnival off-season and were unexpectedly welcomed by those living in the camp. In the late-1930s Al and Jeanie Tomaini, who became famous in carnival performances as the Giant and the Half-Girl, began parking their travel trailer along the river in the Alafia fish camp during the winter season. Ruth Pontico, who lived in nearby Tampa and performed with the Tomainis as the "fat lady" in circus sideshows, had introduced the couple to the area.¹¹ In 1940, the Tomainis purchased 3½ acres on the south side of the river. As noted by their daughter Judy, the rationale behind the purchase included the favorable fishing location but was primarily a function of the parcel's location immediately south of the Alafia Bridge.

The Giant Al Tomaini established the eponymous Giant's Camp at the apex of this wedge-shaped plot that is flanked by Highway 41 on the east and Lula Street to the west (Fig. 5.2b). The Tomainis continued to develop the campsite through 1952 in a process of clearing and filling the swampy areas of the property for trailer sites as well as more permanent one-room cottages. Judy Tomaini notes that Frank Lentini, the three-legged man from Miami and a close friend of the couple, had encouraged Tomaini to name "the place" Giant's Camp in order to attract both tourists and seasoned carnival performers.¹² The Tomainis constructed a bait shop to service the fishing community and maintained the existing bar as a restaurant, which is the extant Giant's Camp Restaurant. The original bait shop was destroyed in 1997 after Cargill Phosphate, the company that owns the bay access, refused to honor the Tomainis' waterfront lease.¹³

Although the site's general location is a function of the natural resources available from its proximity to river and bay, its specific placement and orientation is directly tied to the Tomainis' decision to re-site the settlement. With this purchase, the Tomainis sought to achieve the greatest impact on travelers approaching what would become Giant's Camp from the north along the highway. Their experience with the layout of sideshows and midways in fairgrounds influenced the placement of the camp on the right side of the highway immediately south of the bridge. This "first addition to Gibsonton on the bay" followed rules learned from observed human nature at the carnival midway where visitors, consumers, and fairgoers typically turn to the right when entering a new space. Judy Tomaini repeats this carnival precept practiced by her parents, "when setting up on a show lot, the most desirable location was first in, on the right."¹⁴ From the outset, the



Fig. 5.2b Giant's Camp, Gibsonton, Florida: Al Tomaini, "The Giant," at Giant's Camp in the 1950s (Collection of Judy Tomaini)

Tomainis conceived of the camp as a fairground and foresaw the potential for Gibsonton's expansion to the south, with their camp forming the nexus and the threshold of the larger settlement. With the Alafia Bridge serving as the entry gate, Giant's Camp, "first in, on the right," remains the cultural and spatial focus of contemporary Gibsonton.

In addition to this fortuitous and symbolic location of Giant's Camp, siting Gibsonton entails the carnival performer-residents themselves. Person, persona, and personality are inextricably linked to the symbolic potential of Gibsonton's places. As "campers" in Gibsonton, the performers gain an anonymity—becoming "locals" within a temporary home-site affording them the place to be simultaneously "in" and "out" of character.¹⁵ But this anonymity also hints at an ambiguity that is fundamental to a preliminary understanding of Gibsonton as a place and its yards as intersections of domestic space and carnival. The performers are itinerant symbols who, in their unique combination of mobility and changeability, can move fluidly from side-show to side-yard at home. In at least one case, this characteristic flexibility allows for the Gibsonton resident known as the "Enigma" to appear (almost seamlessly) as himself on an episode in the *X-Files* television series.¹⁶ Though filmed on location in Gulf Breeze, Florida, the show ostensibly takes place in Gibsonton where Fox Mulder and Dana Scully are investigating the death of the "Alligator Man."¹⁷ With his name changed to the "Conundrum" in the episode, the Enigma serves as a poetic device linking the plot lines and symbolizing the difficulties of solving a mystery in a place where all characters and attributes are "suspect."¹⁸ Watching the Enigma move through this televisual non-place, we might begin to understand how the equally poetic characters of the "actual"

Gibson-ton live within the equally ambiguous, even enigmatic, spaces of our own increasingly mobilized campsite-world. Gibson-ton's spaces and its residents can thus be read as sites and personas of intentionally obscure metaphoric capacity—making up a parabolic story to be experienced as much as read (or viewed on television).

5.5 Clearing Space: Town as Midway

In general, the carnival midway can be understood as both, mode of passage and destination. This dual meaning works both conceptually and historically. The term “midway” derives from Chicago's Midway Plaisance, which Frederick Law Olmsted designed as a linking boulevard between lakefront Jackson Park and inland Washington Park in the early 1870s. Although never completed to Olmsted's specifications, the Midway Plaisance did however serve as a component of the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 and consequently gave its name to subsequent carnival expositions and fairs. Thus, in this particular instance, the Midway Plaisance served as a wide connecting corridor between two park districts and showed its potential as a more static destination place functioning as the site for the Exposition's carnival and fair component. The concept of the midway is symbolic itself particularly in its ambiguity as a zone that links one place to another (threshold) and signals an arrival to conclude a mode of passage (edge). As a midway space, Gibson-ton enfolds the passage of tourists and maintains a liminal position along the geographic feature of East Bay. The concept of the midway also symbolizes the process of clearing, preparing, and marking a site—integral to making a campsite into a homesite.

Anchored by the precisely located Giant's Camp, Gibson-ton as midway articulates both a connecting mode of passage and a stopping point for tourists. From the 1920s up to the installation of the Interstate system, Highway 41 served as a major north-south corridor between Miami and the upper peninsula of Michigan.¹⁹ The town of Gibson-ton is thus sited along one of the main connectors of tourists and vacationers as well as the carnival performers themselves. In this reconfigured midway space, vehicular traffic along Highway 41, specifically winter season “snowbird” migrations from Canada and the northern United States, substitutes for the foot traffic of fair-goers in the summer season, and the performers' off-season hometown remains a well-traversed public corridor. As midway, the town is also a destination, a spatial hesitation between other points of interest. By the early 1950s, Tomaini had established the tourist camp around his eponymous restaurant; and the Giant himself, along with the highly regarded fishing, served as the place's main attractions. The town's location was fortuitous, providing an alternative to Tampa's urban density and occurring at the midpoint between Miami and common stopping points to the north, such as Valdosta in southern Georgia.²⁰

In early American fairs, the midway zone occurred outside the fenced area of the agricultural fairground. Fred Kniffen notes that this model was common in

American fairs by the middle of the nineteenth century.²¹ Performers set up their show tents and temporary lodging in this location of exclusion. Similarly, Gibsonton maintains a peripheral relationship to the city of Tampa. "Gibtown," as it is identified by its residents, remains unincorporated and occupies the East Bay zone where power plants, phosphate companies, and landfills have traditionally been located.²² As a camp-town, Gibsonton can be read generally as the zone outside the city walls, analogous to the open fields of the Italian *campo*,²³ the Campus Martius of Rome, and more generally Greek *chora* as opposed to the *polis*.²⁴ In the American landscape, early tourist camps of the late 1910s were sited as informal arrangements for overnight stays in a farmer's yard, chosen for the availability of well water.²⁵ In Gibsonton, these residual spaces are potential sites for installation of the midway apparatus along the town's public edges, particularly those spaces along Highway 41. Although less formalized campsites remain in the easements and interstitial spaces of Gibsonton's half-places (*mi-lieu*), the camp-town as a whole is in the process of becoming what Michel Serres calls "*milieu*."²⁶ In this process of growth, the excluded middle (*mi-lieu*) becomes *milieu*, just as the supplemental or "receptacle" space of *chora* becomes increasingly occupied. And American midways and tourist camps (such as Gibsonton) develop into more permanent destinations. Within this process of parasitic "becoming," the midway and the camp remain essentially "threshold places."

In the specific case of Gibsonton, Giant's Camp was understood from its inception as a semi-permanent winter quarters and the planned anchor for a larger camp settlement. Having founded the Camp with his wife Jeanie, Al Tomaini served as the "Lot Man" for the Camp's development over time. On the midway, the Lot Man typically organizes, divides, sets up, and eventually breaks down the rides and show venues. Just as Tomaini cultivated the siting of Giant's Camp through time, the Lot Man oversees the process of making each iteration of the midway, allotting and siting each component of the temporal assemblage. Moreover, Giant's Camp becomes the entrance-threshold to the community, just as the Midway serves as the gateway to the fair.²⁷ This relationship continues with the Lot Man's understanding of the emblematic carousel (or more traditionally the Ferris wheel) as the "key" to the midway.²⁸ Additionally, the camp-town's characteristics of the excluded middle transform the typical differentiation of the public and the private. In this ad hoc urban planning, the distinction between campground and fairground is blurred, allowing for the private camp to serve a performative function and for the publicly oriented fair to achieve a degree of privatization. This process is not a simple inversion but a type of overlap and mixing—what might be called the *milieu* of the public and private.²⁹ Along Highway 41, the resulting uneven development mixes mobile homes, trailers, commercial buildings, and large-scale carnival trailers (typically displayed in the town's parking lots)—all fronting onto the main thoroughfare.³⁰

5.6 Remaking Yard Space as Carnival Midway

*Those the ground of whose relation to their objects is an imputed character
... may be termed symbols.*³¹

Peircean symbols require an interpretant.³² About the symbolic ground, Peirce notes that “it cannot be prescinded from a reference to an interpretant.” This form of symbolic representation occurs in Gibsonton as a result of the *engagement of the audience-performer relation*. Symbolization as understood in the geography of enactment augments the Peircean definition by requiring an embodied genesis of symbolization; symbolization is not merely a cognitive act, but a spatially inscribed event. Thus, these spaces of performance and spectacle require a viewing public, or at least a community of fellow performers-viewers, for their completion. Also, as an “imputed” relation, the function and meaning of the yard space as both midway and home occur as a negotiation both internally with the Gibsonton community and from the outside with governmental overlays.

In addition to the relation between town plan and midway layout, the reconstruction of the carnival midway’s spaces occurs at the scale of the individual yards in Gibsonton. When the carnival performers set up their dwellings on the road during the summer season, the midway serves as the primary space to which the dwelling space is attached. The midway becomes the performer’s yard. The owner’s lodging takes the form of campsites, trailers, and tents that are often set up directly behind their concession stand, ride, or sales booth. This situation is reversed in the town of Gibsonton; the yard is often transformed into a reconfigured midway space. As a primarily symbolic overlay, the midway apparatus, though it is now secondary to the site’s primary use, characterizes the identity of the place. The yard not only signifies home but becomes a symbol of performance. This situation occurs most dramatically with the relocation of a Ferris wheel in a yard of mobile home trailers.

George W. Ferris designed the original “observation wheel” for the World’s Columbian Exposition in 1893. Centered along both major and minor axes, the wheel anchored the Midway’s spaces not only in its monumentality but also as an attraction with panoramic views of Chicago and its surroundings (Fig. 5.3a). Accordingly, the wheel was both functional and symbolic. The wheel represented the possibilities of combining recreation and leisure with industrial and manufacturing progress. In spite of its extraordinary dimensions and scale, the Ferris Wheel proved to be an ephemeral archetype and was dismantled in early spring 1894.³³ The mobilized wheel was reassembled twice before being sold for scrap metal: in the Hyde Park neighborhood of Chicago between 1895 and 1903 and at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis 1894.

In the tradition of this kit-of-parts assembly, a decommissioned observation wheel has been rebuilt in a Gibsonton backyard (Fig. 5.3b). Serving its traditional purpose as the “key” to the midway, this wheel becomes the symbolic anchor to the carnivalesque spectacle constructed in the off-season; and this resident, having



Fig. 5.3a Observation Wheel: Ferris Wheel, Midway of World's Columbian Exposition, 1893 (Paul V. Gavin Library, Illinois Institute of Technology)

painstakingly relocated the wheel, becomes its private lot man.³⁴ While much smaller than the original Ferris wheel, its relative scale is comparable to its surroundings, set against the domestic dimensions of parked mobile homes. With the reconstruction of the wheel in the space of the backyard, the now completely privatized and partially defunct wheel becomes wholly symbolic. Referencing the experience of the fair and carnival, the apparatus signifies the vertiginous experience of suspension and the unfolding of panoramic space (of fairgrounds, or in



Fig. 5.3b Observation Wheel: Ferris Wheel in Gibsonton yard (Photograph by the author, 2003)

this case townscape) with each revolution of the wheel. In this case, the private Ferris wheel refers to the invisible and inaccessible spaces of the resident's backyard, to the spatiality of the potential panoramic views of Gibsonton's yards, and ultimately to the town's relation to the Bay and to the city of Tampa. In other instances of yard as midway, the spatiality of the symbol itself is evident.

*A symbol is a law or regularity of the indefinite future.*³⁵

Gibsonton, as reconstructed midway and as camp-town, has developed its own subtle codes of place-making, but its early success ironically came out of the planning and zoning rules adopted by Hillsborough County. This re-zoning of the area

in and around Gibsonton has resulted in the settlement's rapid expansion and growth. In the 1950s, a zoning overlay called "Residential Show Business" was added to allow for the display of carnival equipment in the front yards of performers and operators who were increasingly drawn to Gibsonton's emerging community. This zoning revision recognized the area's ad hoc community (the area known locally as "Gibtown" and colloquially referred to as "carnietown" by non-residents) and coincided with Sarasota's restrictions on such public exhibits. Attempting to alter its own image as a winter haven for carnival and circus performers and to augment its growth as a retirement village and cultural center for southwest Florida, Sarasota revised its planning and zoning ordinances explicitly to prohibit the display of circus paraphernalia on residential property. The Ferris wheels, funnel cake stands, and lions and tigers moved north to the front yards of Gibsonton. The Show Business (SB) district in Hillsborough County expressly accommodates "the special needs of business and residential uses related to circus, carnival, and other show business activities" and provides "opportunity for the special housing patterns needed by these business persons," ultimately to encourage the "grouping of those land uses having specific interrelationships with the show business activity."³⁶ The intentioned publicity that began with the siting of Giant's Camp continues at the scale of individual sites with the introduction of publicly displayed equipment in private yards, whether under repair or in partial service.

Along Highway 41 and other main roads of Gibsonton, carnival rides occupy commercial yards and parking lots. Roller-coaster rides, with their structural and rail components laid out and inventoried in the open yard, rest on trailer beds adjacent to box trucks with rear doors thrown open, lingering in a partially unloaded state. Other roadside displays call for the more active participation of viewers and passersby. Along the east-west road called Gibsonton Highway, a concession stand selling cotton candy and popcorn occupies the southeast corner of a yard with a structure that is ambiguously commercial, with a dwelling attached to its north side. The stand presumably services the bus-stop immediately across the sidewalk and advertises to drivers heading west into Gibsonton from Interstate 75. Another assembly of carnival components, also along Gibsonton Highway, is anchored by the "Midway Stop and Shop" around which a sausage stand, shooting gallery booth, fun-house, and tilt-a-whirl are for sale. Erected with a design and intentionality directly linked to the midway's own layout, the carnival pieces clearly define a central space in which the tilt-a-whirl ride is protected by the moveable fencing components typically used along the midway to organize the carnival-goers' circulation and queue spaces. In a residential lot, another concession stand advertising popcorn and candy apples has been parked in the front yard's corner so that its glazed service windows face onto the street and into the yard space (Fig. 5.4).

In addition to its identifiable character as carnival town, Gibsonton's residences are primarily mobile homes, trailers, manufactured houses, and site-modified versions of each. This zoned reformulation of private yard usage is matched by a consideration of the questions of permanence associated with mobile home communities



Fig. 5.4 Concession Stand: Gibsonton front yard (Photograph by the author, 2003)

ties. Ironically, zoning classification of lots for mobile homes and trailers is divided into “temporary” and “permanent” designations. Undefined within the county’s *Comprehensive Plan*, Temporary Mobile Home permits are processed through the Hillsborough County zoning counselor on a case-by-case basis. The entry for Permanent Mobile Home installations reads:

Zoning for Permanent Mobile Homes: Mobile homes may be located on all legally created agriculturally zoned properties (except AS-1 and AI), as well as residentially zoned properties with a MH designation. In zoning districts that allow mobile homes, only one dwelling unit is allowed on a lot. Often there are cases when someone would like to place an additional residence on a property (e.g. medical hardship, farm worker housing, etc.).³⁷

Through the exclusion of the term “temporary” from its administrative text, the *Comprehensive Plan* recognizes the historical and practical precedent for the permanence of mobile home placement. Summarizing the typical fixity of mobile homes, the architect Paul Rudolph, who practiced in this area of central Florida, states what the *Comprehensive Plan* presupposes: “Once they are there, then they are there. The portability is a misnomer to a degree.”³⁸ The Plan’s terminology “permanent mobile homes” identifies a paradoxical situation of time, place, and home. The temporal nature of the mobile home, even in its zoned permanency, provides a place conducive for the spectacle of the grand outdoor storage spaces.

Gibsonton also maintains and transforms the local and national political apparatus. Gibsonton’s collection of performers and their concomitant culture of the carnival have led to the County government’s recognition of a community not only in the Show Business Overlay but also in the Gibsonton NFZ, or No Fee Zone:

This program administers Hillsborough County’s five (5) general government impact fees: transportation, right-of-way, park, school, and fire. These fees are charged to new development, both residential and non-residential, to help pay for the structure’s impact on the road, park, school and fire network. The County also has impact fee relief programs such as the No Fee Zone (limited duration) and the Affordable Housing Relief Program to encourage development in economically distressed areas. Economic development

incentives are provided to qualified business creating quality jobs in Hillsborough County.³⁹

Similar in conception to the Urban Enterprise Zone, the NFZ is an area that is determined by a need for impact fee relief, allowing economic development to forego paying fees for the expected impact on existing infrastructure (roads, parks, school and fire network). Another way governmental bodies have attempted to delineate Gibsonton's unincorporated community is evident in the United States Census' characterization of the area as a "Census Designated Place" (CDP). The Census Department defines the CDP as follows:

A statistical entity, defined for each decennial census according to Census Bureau guidelines, comprising a densely settled concentration of population that is not within an incorporated place, but is locally identified by a name. CDPs are delineated cooperatively by state and local officials and the Census Bureau, following Census Bureau guidelines. Beginning with Census 2000 there are no size limits.⁴⁰

The loose aggregate of Gibsonton's community is further defined by governmental superimpositions that benefit the camp's population but are not required for its internalized identity.

These attributes outline situations and practices of simultaneous attachment and detachment. At the territorial scale, these features can be mapped in terms of zoning regulations, aerial photographic research, and governmental directives. But in each case at this scale, the Gibsonton community maintains its unique characteristics *by way of* (rather than *in spite of*) these governmental regulations, overlays, and "overviews." This contradictory relationship actually inverts typical relationships to zoning ordinances held by unincorporated areas and represents a vernacular construct that parasites the politic of power. In a sense, Gibsonton zoned itself drawing from the midway's conventions and traditions and using the existing apparatus of governmental regulation. This unique self-regulation is paradoxical in its reliance on a system-in-place, which can be appropriated and used to regulate its own blurring of the temporary and the permanent and the public and the private. This process of re-invention is inherent in siting Gibsonton's camp and in setting up the midway. Robert Segrest writes, "The Midway lingers—residual, delinquent—as a premonition, a possible model for a less possible architecture. The Midway wanders only to repeat its parasitic manufacture in a succession of marketplaces."⁴¹ In such a system, the "excluded middle," or parasite, is both a component of the relation and the producer of change within the relational matrix of the system. And it is the fluidity of Gibsonton's camping community that has allowed for this condition.⁴²

5.7 Breaking Camp: Gibsonton as 'Lived Symbol' Between Arriving and Departing

They [symbols] enable us, for example, to create Abstractions, without which we should lack a great engine of discovery. These enable us to count; they teach us that collections

*are individuals (individual = individual object), and in many respects they are the very warp of reason.*⁴³

*Schuman says the best plan for Bridgeville is to tear it down, but he concedes it might make a good summer recreation area, perhaps an RV campsite.*⁴⁴

The activity of breaking camp, in the cyclic sequence of camping practice, is rarely understood as a final operation within the process. Instead, breaking camp, like disassembling the carnival midway, occurs between making and re-making and is essentially the methodological and practical linkage between iterations of camp or midway. Midway spaces, like camp spaces, accommodate both arrivals and departures; and as camp-town, Gibsonton makes room for the spatial conventions of the midway in its yards.⁴⁵ Within these symbolic constructions, building details demonstrate the paradoxical coincidences of the temporary and the permanent as well as the itinerant hesitation typical of Gibsonton's carnival performers. In one case, blocking supports the trailer hitch of a mobile home that has not been moved in 40 years. This constructional method is also conventionally found in temporary midway foundations and in single supports and matrices of smaller supports for roller-coaster rides (Fig. 5.5). In its abstraction as a "field condition," the latter system of support represents, in the framework of this study, what Peirce refers to as that "great engine of discovery" that allows us to understand a logic behind the paradoxes found in the town of Gibsonton. As a non-hierarchical, even paratactic, built environment, the camp-town relies on the matrix of interactions among its array of performative spaces for its consistency as a community—a pulling together that allows for continuous arrival and departure.

Departing reverses the often ineluctable movement from the temporary to the permanent. With the exodical shift, situatedness and permanence are again returned to a transience. Beginning in November 2002, the sale of the town of Bridgeville, California, on eBay complicates the classification of camps. The proposition that the town become a recreational vehicle (RV) campsite represents not only a movement from public to private but also a departure from the expected permanence of cities and towns to the more temporary occupations of a camp. Ironies are redoubled: mobile homes return to the road, and cities become camps, and one moves both "from campsite to campsite" and "from camp(site) to campsite."⁴⁶ In Gibsonton, this sequence, both cyclic and episodic in nature, moves from carnival midway to yard midway. Such a paradoxical process is not characterized by demolition or eradication but by a more subtle, incomplete transformation that blends making and un-making. Camping and carnival assembly procedure are evoked in the refrain: siting, clearing, making, breaking, siting, clearing, and so on.

Moreover, the possibility of renewed movement permits nonstandard usage of the site. The yard becomes the garden that its etymology implies.⁴⁷ The private carnivals and circus displays are remade or "grown" with the return home each season. Equipment is not simply stored but "planted" and shown to a general audience made up of neighbors and tourists. This public gardening, an arrangement of signs,⁴⁸ is similar to the process exemplified in a shell garden photographed by



Fig. 5.5 Matrix ground support for roller coaster during setup of the Florida State Fair Midway (Photograph by the author, 2003)

Marion Post Wolcott in Sarasota's City Trailer Park (Fig. 5.6). Shell gardens were commonly used to decorate the supports of the trailer hitches, the inherently locative points of the campsite.⁴⁹ Accordingly, the garden is located around the trailer component that is connected to the ground through a temporary support—the procedural nexus of planting and uprooting.⁵⁰ The initial impermanence and potential uprooting of the mobile home thus characterizes a sense of relocation that also qualifies the identification of home.

In camps and camping, the mobility of home suggests a rhetorical territory unique to vernacular constructions.⁵¹ If the yard displays are the private demonstrations of home (one version of domestic life countering the neutrality of factory-produced mobile homes), then the public aggregate of homes within the camp becomes a political entity defined by an internalized identity and an externalized parasitism of the municipality. This communal concept of home among the camp's ad hoc citizenry reflects one aspect of J. B. Jackson's working definition of the vernacular. For Jackson, vernacular constructions are identified with the adherence to a commonly held idea about place and community, often apart from political influence.⁵² Describing what he refers to as the "rhetorical territory" of home, David Morley elicits Philip Tabor's "spaces of belonging" as "mutually dependent processes of exclusion and identity construction."⁵³ As a vernacular construction, Gibsonton "camp" follows Jackson's pattern without being completely separate from political influence. The camp-town's "rhetorical territory" maintains and transforms the local and national political apparatus.

The town's territorial attributes do not however remain solely rhetorical, and Gibsonton's symbols are not static. The organic nature of Gibsonton's symbolic



Fig. 5.6 Marion Post Wolcott, “Guest at Sarasota Trailer Park, Sarasota Florida, beside her garden made of shells and odds and ends. The camp has a garden club for members.” 1941 (Library of Congress, Farm Security Administration)

environment is tied directly to its tradition of transience. Out of necessity, carnival performers work on the road. In this case, mobility is not metaphoric, as in Morley’s argument, but real. The spaces of Gibsonton’s yards accommodate the dual movement and simultaneous transformation of camp to town and town to camp. Such temporal existence is defined seasonally, spatially, and economically. The pairing of midway and home allows for continuity between winter and summer seasons. Summertime means movement from fairground to fairground and from campsite to campsite. During the winter season, a tentative permanence concretizes the midway-home relation in the spatial symbolism of the yard constructions. The spectacle that is created is not image but instead activates experience through spaces that mediate street, yard, and house. As a lived symbol experienced by the viewer-interpretant and performer-resident alike, the reconstruction of the midway

serves to locate the carnival performer's home. Any space in the region becomes *some place through* the construction and performance of the midway.⁵⁴

5.8 Speculative Spaces: At Home in the Front Yard

*[A symbol] cannot indicate any particular thing, it denotes a kind of thing.*⁵⁵

*Trucks, boats, campers and trailers, Airstream types, excepted, shall be parked in rear yards only.*⁵⁶

The understanding of the "kind of thing" to which Peirce refers requires the experience of the place and situation in which the symbols actually occur. The symbol thus becomes a process of geographical enactment, recalling Peirce's aphoristic statement "symbols grow." More precisely, the symbolization that occurs within Gibsonton provides an actualized space in which the particular meaning of the place might unfold. The content, or symbolic meaning, of the place cannot be presupposed or assumed, but must be experienced in a process of discovery that at the same time does not disallow conjectural modes. In fact, *symbol* and *conjecture* are linked through their etymological derivations: "to throw together."⁵⁷

This type of symbolic process is open-ended. Its longevity of structure and meaning (and time of duration) is contingent on what Peirce identifies as an "indefinite future."⁵⁸ Itinerancy defines aspects in the life of Gibsonton's performer-residents: the midway's transience and the mobile home trailer's semi-permanence. This indefinite status coexists however with the rules of settlement, which ultimately delimit and denote yard.⁵⁹ Yard as midway then signifies a *kind* of home(place). Although individualized, Gibsonton's midway-yards do not directly reference a particular iteration of the carnival midway or a specific instance of home-making but present an aggregate of differences in kind. These yards represent the kind of spaces found on the midway and in a community of mobile homes. As ad hoc constructions that vary from year to year, these spaces are quite literally "thrown together"—in a communal environment that maintains its differences, those paradoxical conditions found in places of chronic itinerancy and private spectacle.

Such differences in kind contrast with the differences in degree that are found in the quantitative sameness of New Urbanism developments such as Seaside and Celebration.⁶⁰ Spatial difference in such constructions as Seaside remains wholly internalized, relying on rigorously defined typologies and categories.⁶¹ Seaside's Urban Code defines seven building types, and its Architectural Code among other criteria requires "white painted wood picket fences," with paint selected from manufacturers' stock numbers specified in the document.⁶² Seaside's fences exemplify both the lack of true differences of kind and the flattening of symbolic space. Fence variations remain surface treatments and disallow explorations into the layering of traditional street spaces or the relation of such attributes as porosity and proportion to public and private spaces. Celebration, Florida, a second-generation

New Urbanist community associated with Walt Disney World, was founded on qualities that the town's planners saw as typical of successful communities. For Peter Rummel and Michael Eisner, these established "cornerstones," a symbolic naming of attributes, identify the new town's value system: education, wellness, technology, place, and community.⁶³ To achieve the planners' intention of formal diversity, these characteristics are then quantified in the stylistic categories, formal arrangements, and representational systems of the Pattern Book. As in Seaside, Celebration's fences play a significant role in defining this image. However, in this system, the town's fences remain a static symbol of home. One resident notes the feelings elicited upon seeing the fence at yard's edge: "I always feel an enormous sense of relief whenever I see that white fence.... When I see that fence, I know I'm home. It's like my heart rate slows and even my breathing becomes more relaxed."⁶⁴ The image of the fence elicits a feeling of home. In contrast to Celebration's metaphoric treatment of experience and space, the lived symbol in Gibsonton *is* home.

From the public viewpoint, the process is also reversed. In Seaside, outside of Leon Krier's own home, a sign reads "We know you're interested in architecture, but don't disturb the owner." In Gibsonton, the ambiguity of public space is embraced in the setup of town and yard as midway; and while these private yard spaces in most cases cannot be directly experienced by the general public, the town exists as a carnival event, along roadways, within easements, and in parking lots. The idea of difference, cast within its heterogeneous spatial context, serves as a threshold between the public (an ad hoc "civic") sphere and home. Writing about the relation of difference and home, bell hooks defines home as "that place which enables and promotes ever-changing perspectives, a place where one discovers new ways of seeing reality, frontiers of difference."⁶⁵ Gibsonton's lived symbols of home accommodate these multiple public and private perspectives through the confluence of kinds of spaces—midway space and yard space. Gibsonton's midway-yard spaces also allow for the idea that home is not a singular location; as hooks notes, "home is no longer just one place. It is locations."⁶⁶

Developments such as Seaside and Celebration abstract the realities of itinerancy in static and non-spatial symbols. The multiple placements, or mobility, of home (identified by hooks above) require different kinds of spaces. With New Urbanism, the idea of home is frozen in an iconography that is coded hierarchically. In Gibsonton, an organic, though tenuous, confluence of home and mobility codifies an internally defined labile grammar of performative place-making.⁶⁷ Integrated within Seaside's Urban Code, the allowance for the Airstream-style trailer in the front yard results from differences of stylistic degree and are not derived spatially or thematically. Characterized by camping practice, Gibsonton's spaces emphasize the mobility of the campsite in which hierarchies of street are dissolved (and reconfigured in the spaces of spectacle), typical edges and boundaries are transgressed, curbs are driven over and grass blends to sand and gravel becomes pavement. Seaside's codified distinction of front and back yard identifies these spaces in terms of degrees of separation from the street and thus as a progression from public to private. Without such gradations of public and private or front and back, Gibsonton

relies on the installation of two varieties of space, yard and midway, for the articulation of its overall camping environment.

This hybrid space of yard and midway initially strikes us as instantaneous, wholly provisional, and even strange.⁶⁸ The confluences of itinerant and domestic spheres also at first take seem a facile contrast with New Urbanist development and the resulting community. But New Urbanism covers a not-so-obvious foundational attribute of Gibsonton that on closer examination reveals a fundamental characteristic of how we might inhabit or “make home” on our contemporary ground(s). Equipped with itinerant symbols, residents of Gibsonton construct a multiplicity of homes linked through flexible though systemic relations between things and events. In this case, ground is possibility, not eternal but at the same time not exhaustible by our immediate actions. Because the symbols of yard and midway are itinerant and because the ground itself is labile and non-eternal, events make the ground. Invariably affected by this exceedingly contemporary event that mixes home and mobility, the domestic yard becomes problematic in its relation to the public sphere and its spaces when the yard’s “grounds” become fixed symbols of a nostalgically driven discourse. Here, New Urbanism follows the procedural model of the simulacra in which the postmodern “concept” seeks to hold or “ground” a particularly fleeting image. One lesson learned from Gibsonton is that yards cannot be formally codified, just as the itinerant symbol eschews ready-made classification, much like the carnival performer is person, personage, and chronic traveler.

The spaces made within Gibsonton’s yards are not abstractions, but instead are based on things, kinds of things, and the relation of things. Such spaces and their symbolic potential do not rely on exteriority, but occupy the middle ground, literally the “midway” itself, between the conditions of itinerancy. What Henri Bergson refers to as duration, in Gibsonton’s case, is a kind of home, which relies on direct experiences in time and space to signify its organic meaning.⁶⁹ This situation yields a condition that is “normal” in places like Gibsonton. Because of the ever-present, essentially quotidian, presence of the midway event, we do not lose the sense of the event itself and thus do not resort to substantive explanations that might fix the ground and its symbolic potential. Concurrently, the yard itself remains open to the exposition and visual experience of kinds of things such as the momentarily “grounded” carnival equipment.

In Gibsonton, social life is not fixed within what Bergson calls “a projection in homogeneous space.” Combined with heterogeneous yard spaces, the fleeting nature of the midway (closely related to what Peirce refers to as the “nature of symbols” and characterized by the idea proposed here of symbol as process) remains in the “perpetual state of becoming.” The apparatus of the midway, as a reconstructed performative space, although actually private property, is experienced as public space and serves as a medium for social interaction—a phenomenally defined contract in which the “living self” does not become a “fixed form” of linguistic production.⁷⁰ Gibsonton’s lived symbols continue to allow for “free action”—a process of making home in which speculation about an indefinite future relies as much on its flexibility as its codified rigors (seasonal work, zoning ordinances, and other

local exigencies). Bergson summarizes the qualities of the town's spaces: "This reality is mobility. There do not exist things made, but only things in the making, not states that remain fixed, but only states in the process of change."⁷¹ In Gibsonton, the symbol is "mobilized," and the "mobile home" arises from a conjectural foundation raised on the paradoxical experiences of yard and midway.⁷² And the yard, as home-site, becomes the "lived symbol," at once ambiguous, legible, and livable.

*(and it is part of my good fortune not to be a home-owner!). But if I had to ...*⁷³

Notes

1 In this context, making place includes the actual conditions of locating (the locus of the yard) and the more open-ended process of imagining (the indefinite edges of the yard). This confluence of actual and imagined places in the yard, particularly characterizes the making of Gibsonton where sitedness conforms to itinerancy and presence concedes to recent memories of other places. We will follow this paradoxical process through the sequence of camping, from which Gibsonton derives much of its place-making procedures: siting, clearing, making, and breaking. This cycle (with the assumption that a new siting follows each breaking) is tied closely to the daily working life of the carnival performers who live in Gibsonton during the winter off-season and who move from place to place during the summer carnival season.

2 While its name and nicknames both include "town," this particular place does not have the distinct boundaries or governing apparatus that denote town. And its population exceeds what might typically define a village but presumably does not constitute a city (if not for its lack of political definition, then for its decidedly suburban texture). As an unincorporated "census-designated" place, Gibsonton does have a measurable population. Based on the 2000 Census boundaries and survey, 8,752 live in the zone, with a population density of 681 people per square mile. In spite of this population growth, Gibsonton maintains its original character, described in the Federal Writers' Project's *Florida: A Guide to the Southernmost State* as "a small trailer camp and filling station on the southern bank of the Alafia River [that] was named for the pioneer Gibson family." (403)

3 Mugerauer, "Midwestern Yards," 38.

4 Jackson, "The Popular Yard," 30.

5 In contrast to a passive accumulation of views (as in what Guy Debord refers to as the "society of spectacle"), the form of spectacle found here relies on a more active construction of place to be simultaneously viewed and lived.

6 In another study of the significance of yard spaces, Frances Butler begins with the premise that residential yards form a type of memory theatre in which past and present are brought together in "spatial continuum" and speculation about the future can be undertaken. Looking at specific cases in California, Butler argues that the gardens of Portuguese immigrants "symbolize their differing values through tactics that are a mixture of traditional Portuguese spatial preferences and experimentation with the new materials and unfamiliar gardening traditions now available to them." (34) Butler finds that these front-yard gardens serve "as organizational tools" to aid their synthesis of old and new cultural traditions. The collected curiosities of the yard constructions narrate stories of immigration and domesticity. See Butler, "Mappus Mundi," 32–43.

7 The relation between and paradoxical combination of monumentality and transience is a sub-theme of this paper. In Giant's Camp, one of the cottages located behind the boot-monument

serves as Judy Tomaini's office (for her business "Rock's Monuments") and as an informal museum of celebrity, family history, travel, and the camp's history. In addition to six hundred autographed celebrity headshots, the office-museum holds a collection of dirt from around the world. Tomaini's dirt collection includes soil that she has excavated as well as samples of earth sent by friends from the places they have traveled. Tomaini's specialty is grave dirt, particularly dirt taken from plots at the Showman's Rest cemetery where her mother Jeanie Tomaini and father Al Tomaini are buried. The itinerant life of the carnival performer leads to a unique problem of choosing the burial sites for family members. In Gibsonton, the community of performers has established two cemeteries for the burial of showmen and women. The museum of dirt can be understood to memorialize the condition of absence that is a reality of this itinerant community.

8 Peirce, *Collected Papers*, I.369.

9 Their name derived from Hermes as the god of boundaries, travelers, merchants, and communication, ancient Greek *herms* were piles of stones deposited by passersby often at crossroads or points of interest. These stone cairns, typically found in the region surrounding ancient Athens, marked distance and direction, often served as votive statues (making personal connections with particular people), and included epigrammatic trite inscriptions that were often found in carvings along the base of the herm. Like Gibsonton's boot, herms can be considered "empty monuments" in that the absence of a lost but memorialized individual or event can be countered by the presence of visitors and viewers.

10 Peirce, *Collected Papers*, II.302.

11 Tomaini, interview.

12 Ibid.

13 The lease was set at \$1.00/year in the 1940s for approximately 30 feet of bay front property.

14 Tomaini, interview.

15 The setting of Gibsonton allows the performer-residents to choose the degree of public life during the winter season respite. As a de facto community center, Giant's Camp Restaurant allows for publicity within Gibsonton's self-regulated public sphere.

16 Airing March 31, 1995, the X-Files show titled "Humbug" was Episode 44 during Season 2.

17 The Alligator Man is a character loosely based on Grady Stiles, known as "Lobster Boy." Many of the carnival performers in Gibsonton including the Stiles family resonate with the archetypal characters in Dunn's *Geek Love*.

18 This nominal change is interesting though not necessarily significant in terms of the argument for an ambiguous and labile character. "Conundrum" denotes punning or wordplay, while "enigma" suggests a more deeply complex riddle and as such a more ingrained possibility of multiple readings or misreadings.

19 By 1926, Highway 41 extended to a southern terminus in Naples; and in 1949, Highway 94 was added to the route linking Naples and Miami as a part of the "Tamiami Trail" connecting Tampa with the east coast across the Everglades. While not as identifiable as Routes 1 and 66, the highway has entered the American imagination with such references as the Allman Brothers' song "Ramblin' Man" from the 1970s.

20 The distance from Miami to Valdosta is approximately 450 miles.

21 Kniffen, "American Agricultural Fair."

22 An excerpt from the Federal Writers' Project's *Florida: A Guide to the Southernmost State* also suggests that this area has been the site of buried treasure in regional folklore: "Residents have often searched for buried pirate gold in the vicinity. One group, in possession of an old chart, unearthed a skeleton sitting upright, and below it a metal disk with the points of the compass and a needle marked on its face; in the excitement one of the party snatched up the compass without noting the direction indicated by the needle. Although many days were spent excavating the premises, no treasure was found." (403)

23 It is interesting to note that the *campo* is re-integrated into the urban fabric as the open square (the country in the city).

24 In ancient Greek, uses of the term *chora* and its variants can be lexically connected to campsites. See Homer, *Iliad*, for example, Hector makes camp in a “space cleared of the dead” (8.489)—an open space (*choros* as *χωρος*) that is outside the walls and the jurisdiction of the *polis*.

25 Wallis, *Wheel Estate*, 39.

26 The transformation of the excluded middle (*mi-lieu*) into the *milieu* has implications for how we understand place and, for that matter, region. Embedded within the French language, this distinction involves a potential movement from the local to the global: “New reversal: from the half-place [*mi-lieu*], a small excluded locality, insignificant, ready to vanish, to the milieu [*mi-lieu*], like a universe around us” Serres, *Troubadour of Knowledge*, 43.

27 Corbin, “The Old/New Theme Park,” 197.

28 Gregory interview.

29 This recalibration of public and private in camps parallels confluences of houses and new media. The introduction of the television set into the modern house suggested a new reading of what in domestic life was hidden and revealed. The understanding of the house as theatre created a contested ground between private viewing and a viewing public. As Beatriz Colomina notes, the exhibitionism of the modern house reveals an interior that is already in many ways prepared for its exposure. As in Gibsonton in particular and many camps in general, the living room of the modern house mixes public and private. In more contemporary electronic media, this idea of exhibition reaches its culmination: “The modern house has been deeply affected by the fact that it is both constructed in the media and infiltrated by the media” Colomina, “Media House,” 117. The blurring of public-private characteristics of camps holds possibilities for understanding the effect of such a wholly *mediated* experience of living spaces, since camps already rely on a high degree of exposure for the *mediation* of the private through the public. For the discussion of the relation between modern house and media, see Colomina, “Media House,” 105–117.

30 While not necessarily functioning as an actual place of performance, the tacit and ad hoc social contract of symbolizing the reconfigured apparatus and the spaces of the midway is a phenomenal presence in Gibsonton.

31 Peirce, *Collected Papers*, I.558.

32 With Peirce’s belief that the symbol requires the presence of a subject, the imputed character implies the qualities of negotiation, an accounting for and a process of attribution. In sum, this dialogic relationship is an active engagement (towards a resolution) with an idea, problem, or relation. Theologically, this imputation occurs as a process of substitution; however, the sense used here and in relation to Gibsonton’s social context implies an assignment of value or a more formal association.

33 Recommendations had been made for the wheel’s permanent placement, but political forces and neighborhood concerns about the crowds and traffic caused the Ferris Wheel to remain packed on rail cars before its final two reconstructions.

34 Paul Groth has linked yard spaces, specifically those defined as “lots,” with the drawing of lots for land. Reducing the distinctions between terms (and spaces), Groth equates lot with division, yard with enclosure, and garden with contents. Historically in the mid-to-late nineteenth century, with the growth of backyard culture, contiguous front yards participated in what Groth calls “open-space semantics” in which “whole streets became a new kind of space...open, flowing, parklike spaces” now associated with suburban estates (33). In Groth, “Lot, Yard, and Garden.”

35 Peirce, *Collected Papers*, IV.448.

36 *Hillsborough County*.

37 *Hillsborough County*.

38 Rudolph also notes, “even with the modules or the trailers, I think only about twenty-eight percent of them actually get moved from a site because making the foundations and hooking them up with water is too great an expense.” “Interview with Robert Brueggmann,” 34.

39 *Hillsborough County Comprehensive Plan*, Sec. 3.01.

40 This definition is taken from the U.S. Census Glossary.

41 Segrest, “The Perimeter Projects,” 54–55.

42 As Assad notes about the Serresian parasite: “the excluded third insinuates ... [itself] into a given system only to become, in turn, the system per se” *Reading with Michel Serres*, 21.

43 Peirce, *Collective Papers*, IV.531.

44 Associated Press, “Online Bidding.”

45 “Breaking” camp in Gibsonton essentially means re-siting home along the midway. This perpetual process of lingering and awaiting departure constructs a time to which linear, cyclic, or calendric models cannot be exclusively applied. Traditionally, performers and sideshow operators depart in early May for the carnival season; but evidence of a strict adherence to calendar days is only found in a derisive term describing carnival neophytes, eager to sign on, as “First of May.” From Judy Tomaini, interview by author, Gibsonton, Florida, 1 February 2003.

46 Movement from place to place includes variations in “sitedness”: “They [nomads of the sea] do not grasp an itinerary as a whole, but in a fragmentary manner, from campsite to campsite” Empereire, *Les Nomades de la Mer*, 133.

47 “Yard” derives from the Old Saxon *gard* (enclosure, field), linked to the Dutch *gaard*, meaning “garden” and distantly related to Latin *hortus*. In contemporary usage, yard also refers to a kitchen or cottage-garden—a garden closely linked with and scaled to domestic production. From *The Oxford English Dictionary*.

48 This “signage” occurs both semiotically in the indexical function of the shell gardens photographed by Marion Post Wolcott and literally in the signs that identify performers’ homes and that celebrate their itinerancy.

49 As Wolcott’s extensive caption notes, Sarasota’s City Trailer park offered a garden club for those campers wintering there.

50 The trailer hitch garden can be compared to the blocking details in Fig. 5.5.

51 Jackson has pointed out, “Mobility and change are the key to the vernacular landscape, but of an involuntary, reluctant sort ... an unending adjustment to circumstances.” Jackson’s vernacular homesteads, like the campsites of Gibsonton, result from “hesitation,” or a temporary immobilization that typically endures. This duration however occurs within the fluctuations of time and thus allows a flexibility for adaptation and ultimately invention. *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape*, 151.

52 See “Vernacular,” *ibid.*, 85–87.

53 Morley, *Home Territories*, 4.

54 Such a particularity of place falls within what Casey has called “place-as-region,” *Fate of Place*, 246 and 305. For the performers living in Gibsonton, the seasonal network of carnivals and fairs serves as the region in which these particular reconstructions of the midway occur. The construction of the midway formulates the local operations that characterize the relation to place. Though arising from the model of the midway, the flexibility and fluidity of local operations allow for each place to be understood in its specificity and in its connotation as region.

55 Peirce, *Collective Papers*, II.301.

56 Specifications for Parking, “Urban Code,” 99.

57 Symbol is derived from the Greek σύν [sym] ‘together’ + βάλλειν ‘to throw’. With its origins in the act of divining, conjecture arises out of the Latin *conjectura*, ‘a throwing together.’ From *The Oxford English Dictionary*.

58 Note Bergson’s discussion of the “indefinite” in *Matter and Memory*.

59 What Bergson calls “zones of indetermination.”

60 These developments have been chosen for their geographic proximity to Gibsonton (Celebration is 60 miles to the north and Seaside is located in northwestern Florida) and for their utopic origins. Celebration’s lineage as a “city of tomorrow” can be traced from EPCOT, Walt Disney’s Experimental Prototype Community of Tomorrow proposed in the 1960s as a part of his “Florida Project.” Robert Davis’ early vision for Seaside began as an idealized camping community in the spirit of Chautauqua.

61 This manufactured difference in the end yields a spatial homogeneity to which critics from the discipline of geography such as Neil Smith have reacted. Noting Seaside’s “contrived difference,” Smith critiques what he sees as the town planners’ renewed attempt to solve social problems with physical design. Davidson, ed., *Seaside*, 22–24.

62 Benjamin Moore 103 and 105; Sherwin-Williams 107–8070; Glidden 2100, 3600, 3669; Pittsburgh 7245, 6–650; Richards 100, 300; Devoe 1501, 51501.

63 A review of Celebration’s much critiqued architectural, social, and cultural mandates remains beyond the scope of these concluding remarks. One objective of the contemporary application of New Urbanism is to symbolize the values of a particular (though often undefined) group of individuals. Home-buyers and home-owners are expected to associate these newly designed built environments with belief systems that according to New Urbanist philosophy are conventional and traditional and thus good places to live. In this planning process, universals, such as Celebration’s cornerstones, remain neutral; and the eutopic model (as a “good place”) works around differences of value. For reports from those who have lived in the town, see Ross, *Celebration Chronicles*. Ross includes a comprehensive literature review of critical responses to the town in the notes to Chapter Four (329–332). Also see Franz and Collins, *Celebration, U.S.A.*

64 Celebration resident Paul Cooney, quoted in Lassell, *Celebration*, 36.

65 bell hooks, *Yearning*, 148.

66 Ibid.

67 It is important to point out that this ad hoc codification is reinforced by zoning ordinances such as the Showman-zoned category.

68 Together, the symbols and the ground make the place of Gibsonton—hyperbolic in its strangeness but undeniably quotidian (while exceedingly contemporary) in its normalized combination of itinerancy and domesticity.

69 Bergson summarizes this relation to experience, “Our concept of duration was really the translation of a direct and immediate experience” *Duration and Simultaneity*, xxvii.

70 The Celebration resident’s statement about the “sense of relief” at the sight of his fence provides an interesting example of what Bergson understands to be the confusion of “feelings,” essentially solidified impressions in order to produce language, with the “permanent external object,” or even “the word that relates to, identifies, or expresses the object” Bergson, *Duration and Simultaneity*, 237–240. In Gibsonton, these associations (in the process of symbolization) are made through and within the midway-yard spaces.

71 Bergson, “Introduction to Metaphysics.” In *The Creative Mind*, 188.

72 The mobility of home becomes a tangible space that can be experienced through a particular place. If change of state is the rule, then the itinerancy of possibilities (possible worlds, yards, and homes) makes for a very subtle experience of place in a complex of minor events related to the archetypal camping procedure (siting, clearing, making, and breaking). These momentary placements then become immediate symbolizations of home. We experience the event of home as the gray area (Bergson’s “indefinite”) between fixed substantives and fleeting appearances or symbolizations.

73 Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, 147.

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Chapter 6

Crossing the Verge: Roadside Memorial —Perth, Western Australia

Dennis Wood

Editors' Note: The notion of the ritual space of the roadside memorial, articulated by the author of this chapter as lived geography, exemplifies our sense of the geography of enactment. Lived geography, as the author argues, involves both perceptual and conceptual spaces, and we maintain that these intertwine in the embodied act of imagineering, in the construction of an actual symbolic landscape and the ritualized experiences of it. The author uses the term, “performance,” emphasizing the role of embodiment in enacting the geographicity of meaning. This spatial production reintroduces a sense of community precisely because ritual involves enactment, embodied gestures that generate the symbolization—its physiognomy—in a geography where intimate meanings can be shared in comm(on) unity.

6.1 Introduction

In the introduction to this volume Backhaus queries over a problematic: “Everyday significances do not seem to ... [concern] symbolic landscape[s] Or does symbolism manifest here too, even in the everyday realm?”¹ My topic will shed light on this important line of questioning. In this chapter I look at the symbolic spaces/places of the “unofficial” roadside memorials that have started to appear in recent years, dotting urban, suburban, and rural landscapes. These memorials are often regarded as “spontaneous” being little more than a loose assembly of various items placed randomly at the site of a roadside fatality. However, I want to suggest that these sites do not just bear witness to a tragic accident but, in times when community coherence is seen as fragmenting and where the notion of the extended family is eroded via inter- and trans-national job markets, are significant spaces of ritual or *performance* not only for mourning but for a type of *confirmation* of a sense of community often absented in post-modern everyday lives.

The notion of performance is important to doctrines set forth by Backhaus in the introductions, for he argues that symbolism is generated precognitively in embodied experience. The roadside memorial is not merely thought, the interpretant’s

cognitive act, but rather experienced through embodied gestures that make of the symbol not merely an object out there, but a complex that includes the lived-body, the physiognomy of the symbol, which entails a bodily interrelation with the symbol, and the phenomenon that is symbolized. The memorial site entails the geography of enactment.

6.2 Location: The Geography of Roadside Memorial Sites

Although Perth is a capital city it is relatively small in comparison to other major centres. However, the state of Western Australia of which Perth is the capital is the largest state in Australia and takes up nearly half of the Australian continent. As this geographical relation would suggest there are many kilometres of rural road networks and these country roads are where the majority of the roadside memorials are located. In fact the majority of sites I have come across have not been situated, as might be expected, on narrow, winding and badly lit country roads, but rather are found along long stretches of seemingly endless straight sections of highways frequented by road-trains and other articulated vehicles. However, Perth is also widely suburbanized and there are to be found numerous roadside crosses within a 10 min drive of the CBD (Central Business District). In fact there are three sites within 200 m of each other located in South Perth (a well-to-do, somewhat exclusive leafy riverside suburb where traffic is mainly residential and therefore often minimal), which is less than a 5 min drive from the centre of the city.

My interest in the memorial sites began over five years ago and was stirred by a chance encounter on a quiet and winding secondary road leading to the small country town of Williams about an hour and a half drive outside of the city. Having incurred a flat tyre I was forced to pull off of the road onto the soft shoulder to change the tyre. After performing the task I noticed as I was cleaning the dirt and grime from my hands a small wooden cross painted white and surrounded by a variety of everyday items—a baseball cap, cans of unopened beer, a football team supporter's scarf. What piqued my interest was not just that this "shrine" was about 6–8 m from the road's edge nestled beneath a tree in a spot that would not be easily noticed by a passing motorist. But, that the items placed neatly around it bore the signs of weathering as if they had been subjected to the elements over a reasonably prolonged period of time. On reaching the town and over a cup of coffee in the truck stop, I inquired about the site and was informed that it was the site of a motorcycle accident in which the son of one of the locals had been killed. This accident had occurred over a year before but the memorial was still tended regularly by friends of the deceased. It was thus from this chance encounter that I became more aware of the roadside crosses and found myself becoming more and more intrigued.

The geographicity of the location is essential, that is, the location itself exhibits its own spatial inscription of meaning. Its emplacement "alongside-the-road" means

that the memorial is part of the spatial complex that makes up the road. The roadside or curbed-side is an edge, serving neither vehicular nor pedestrian traffic, but meant to buffer between the two, and it is in this geographical between that the memorial embodies and generates its symbolism. The presence of a person whose death is associated with the road emerges in a non-location for human activity, constituting a place, not an edge, but a landmark of human absence-made-present through the physiognomy of the memorial.

6.3 Excavating the Sites

As with instances in other countries, the sites, in and around Perth, follow the same pattern. All have homemade white crosses either affixed to a lamppost or placed into the ground. All are approximately 61 cm (2 feet) in height. Some of the crosses are roughly hewn and of poor quality as if hastily put together—two pieces of timber and a coat of white paint—whilst others are well crafted reflecting not only the skill of the maker but also the tenderness put into the crafting of the memorial. All have the names of the victims—importantly usually only the Christian name—inscribed on them, whether in paint, indelible ink or etched into the wood. Some have the birth-date and date of death on them but most simply bear the date of the death. All have memorabilia of the victim and other more commonplace items placed at the foot of the cross. This memorabilia comprises of (and there are variations but these seem to be the recurring items) photographs of the victim; items of clothing such as baseball caps, school windcheaters or t-shirts with pictures of popular bands or slogans printed on them; jewellery, whether cheap bangles or more expensive pendants or necklaces; or notebooks or “autograph books” often with inscriptions in them. All of these items reflect the young age of the victims. In my experience visiting sites over the years very few are dedicated to the more mature victims. The other items found at the site range from cans of beer or bottles of spirits (Jack Daniels and Southern Comfort seemingly the most popular!); flowers, whether fake or real (with, and this is important, the real flowers being seasonal and replaced at regular intervals); personal items of the victims, depending on the gender and it seems obvious that males figure more often, such as (presumably favourite) CDs or collectables such as “snow scenes;” the ubiquitous teddy bears or other stuffed toys; or small statuettes of animals or “imaginary peoples” such as fairies or trolls. These items from material culture embody the spirit of the person and help make that person present by substituting for the lived-body of the person. And, as a constructed geography of enactment, the items provide us with a sense of encounter and even interaction. What is remarkable to me is that all of the items placed at the site are rarely if ever removed (either by the shire, the road maintenance workers or the ordinary person). And, although some of the items look worse for wear after a period of time exposed to the elements, they are all still accounted for even after more than 18 months or more. A number of the crosses I have encountered are still on site along with all of

the paraphernalia after more than two years. Over that time, only one that I know of has been removed.

It should be noted here that whilst my research suggests that there is a correspondence in the formation and structure at a variety of similar sites around the world, there are possibly local influences at play and therefore variations may be noted but I would suggest that the general parallels persist across states, regions, and countries. Thus Grider's assertion of a "vocabulary" of the sites,² actually speaks of a type of Saussurian *parole* and *langue*—the performance and procedures, of and about, the sites. The items at the site come together like words offering a narrative of the deceased—they tell a life. But it also, I argue, speaks of the "rules," the procedure if you like, which makes for the *sacredness* that manifests at the site. The geographicity of sacredness entails the setting apart for the purpose of reverence and respect. In these cases the rule of the spatial inscription of meaning that brings about this sacredness is that the privateness and everydayness of the items are negated, which is the procedure that transforms them into the sacred. They are given this meaning by *once-being-owned* by the deceased person.

6.4 Historical Perspective and the Meaning of Memorials

The erection of roadside crosses or memorials has a long tradition in Europe and the Americas. Jane McGregor, a Graduate Diploma student in Applied Folklore at Curtin University (in my hometown of Perth, Western Australia), has commented upon this history in an article entitled *Roadside Memorials*.³ In this article she traces the genesis of the memorials to early Christian travellers who erected the crosses as acts of devotion and were to become places for rest and meditation for the traveller. However, she states, that in eighteenth-century New Mexico, these sites took on the meaning that is more in keeping with how the sites are experienced in our time.

McGregor makes two observations. She suggests that the roadside crosses or *Descansos* were the places where pilgrims rested on their journey or when pallbearers would rest on their way to the cemetery. Initially a pile of stones was erected which were later replaced by a simple cross. She adds that the automobile added another dimension to the site. The sudden unexpected death of a victim in an automobile related accident and its total unexpectedness can be seen as a "shattering" of the "everydayness" of life's routines. The arbitrary and abrupt nature of the event leads to the notion held by many that the "essence" of the deceased somehow still remains at the site. This might also intimate that the site of the memorial has more immediacy and relevance for the family and friends of the deceased in that it is the *actual* place where the accident victim drew his or her last breath. Although the bodily remains may be interred elsewhere or even cremated, the memorial site at the roadside becomes a symbolic space of (last) contact and this symbolic space speaks of another space, not only of grief and mourning, but also of "presence."

This notion of “presence” is interesting when thought of in relation to the sheer commonplace nature of the objects placed at the sites. I would suggest that this is symbolic of the perpetual presence of the individual—an unending present that will continuously *be there* as long as the site is cared for and remains seen. According to the tenets of Backhaus’s geography of enactment, gestural meanings, and not simply the objects, are constitutive of the symbolization. These *cared-for items* bear witness to the private personality of the deceased rather than the *publicness* of the person and this privateness is inserted into the public space, a space where individuality is oft times devalued. This is not about grief but, on the contrary, it is about celebration. By inserting this privateness into the public domain the value of the individual is validated and the notion of a community of valued individuality is also questioned and affirmed—it reclaims the axiom of “in one the many.” The image of a brick wall illustrates this point. We see the wall, but the wall makes sense—is *imagined*—when we focus on the individual bricks that are its constituency. When singularity is noted then the many can be thought, a meaning that roadside memorials concretize. This is in contrast to the graveyard, which is hidden from everyday public space. Thus, roadside memorials motivate us to think of ourselves as being both a one in the many as well as the many in the one!

It should also be noted from the description of the sites above the (often times) absence of a surname or family name. This, I suggest, also is a celebration of community through the symbolic representation of the individual. The absence of a surname places an emphasis on the heterogeneity of community and that each member is both separate but together. It also alludes to the notion of an on-going presence—a *nowness*—and that all members of the community share in that community and through their individuality make for a comm(on)unity.

Sylvia Grider, in an article, “Spontaneous Shrines,” suggests that these shrines give “people a sense of purpose, making them feel less helpless and powerless.” She goes on to state that the act of building the shrine and placing objects around it “is an act [which is] sacred and comforting.”⁴ I further concur with her point that the roadside memorials, or what she calls spontaneous shrines, “are extraordinarily dynamic,” in opposition to the permanent memorials to be seen in church graveyards and municipal cemeteries, which she sees as “passive.”⁵ The notion of the dynamic versus the passive is an interesting one in relation to “official” memorials within town and city spaces and individual graveyard memorials as well. The official sites of remembrance and mourning are largely ignored, becoming mere passive backdrops to the town or cityscapes. They only become “invigorated” at certain times of the year and calendar. However, the roadside memorials by their very visibility, both in where they are sited and their composition, dynamically react with the other spaces around them juxtaposing the *constant* with the notion of the *inconstant*. Thus the vital nature (in the sense of both relating to life and of being full of vigor) of the sites/sights disrupts the mundane and brings into question ideas of permanence and transience, absence and presence.

In keeping with the notion of permanence and transience Grider offers that the verge-side crosses are merely a temporary symbolic ‘sacred landscape’ which

remains throughout, what she sees as, the “liminal period between death and burial.”⁶ She states that “once the funerals begin, funeral services and gravesites replace the shrines as sites of pilgrimage to leave flowers and other mementoes.”⁷ But I argue that the longevity of these memorials (as previously noted) far exceeds the “liminal period” that Grider mentions, and in fact, a vast amount of these spaces are still being lovingly tended years after they are first erected. This alone acknowledges the “presence” which is absented at the more formal sites of remembrance and also suggests that the spontaneity of the initial erection of the roadside memorial carries with it into the future its own dynamic—one that is driven by this intangible presence.

The twin notions of presence and absence in relation to death, the dead, and memorials are noted by Ivan Illich in “Utopia of an Odorless City.” In this short piece Illich notes that in 1737 the custom of burying the dead inside the church (a widespread practice in regard to the deceased “clergy and benefactors”) and in the shallow graves within the church grounds for the “commoner” was “perceived as a physical danger to the living”⁸ and “henceforth the living refused to share their space with the dead.”⁹ This, Illich suggests reflected a “new unwillingness to face death.”¹⁰ He adds that “in the process of removal, the dead were also transmogrified into the ‘remains of people who have been,’” a presence which is formally absented from everyday life. He then extends this logic: “Disallowing them [the dead] shared space with the living, their ‘existence’ became a mere fiction and their relics became disposable remains.”¹¹ Accordingly, I want to suggest and as Illich might contend, there was a movement to *conceal* mourning, to remove traces of the dead and death and even sanitize death itself. In doing so, is to seek to absent the presence of the memory of the departed from the day-to-day life-world of the everyday. This is a type of “privatization” of grief by removing it from the public domain.

6.5 Ritual and Rite of Passage

The roadside memorials, I suggest, seek to reinsert the presence of memory back into the public domain via the notions of ritual and rite of passage. Catherine Sanders states that: “Rituals and rites of passage are traditionally among the most powerfully sanctioned methods available to offer symbolic guidance to the human spirit. As such, they have always been important parts of the human experience.”¹² She avers that “we are between a time in the past in which [the rituals] were passed on by a single shaman around a campfire and a modern world in which ... technology [has offered] a worldwide web of confusion and disorientation.”¹³ She goes on to quote Virginia Hine as stating: “It would not be surprising then to find ourselves at this point in time witnessing the emergence of ... new rituals meaningful in a new age.”¹⁴ Obviously the single voice and simple rituals of the campfire shaman gave way, in time, to the more congregational and complex rituals of pre-modern and modern organised religion. But, as Sanders and Hine are suggesting,

the technologies of the contemporary post-modern Western world such as the instantaneous communication and information facilities have witnessed, if not a breakdown, then at least a weakening of communal traditions and rituals. And these, I propose, are being replaced by more informal and individual ritualizing of certain events of everyday life and especially to important life-world and life-stage occurrences, whether it be a birth, a marriage or the tragic and unanticipated death of a loved one.

Furthermore, not only are these new technologies instrumental in the emergence of new forms of individualised rituals, but because of the dearth of the extended family as support system, there is a depletion of community cohesion, which has helped to usher in more particularized forms of ritual and ceremonies. Sanders attest to this and she states:

Today, in modern culture, formal rituals have diminished. Families no longer live near one another, and it is rare to meet adults who presently live in the area in which they grew up. The transitions in life must be handled alone, without guidelines [or] community backing.... As a result, new guidelines are being developed today to give expression to the transition of life. There is a small quickening of interest in self-made rituals to fit various occasions.¹⁵

One of these “various occasions” and possibly the most affecting is the loss of life in a tragic and unpredictable traffic accident.

However, in a strange twist, although the erecting of the cross at the kerb-side is an individual and possibly spontaneous act and the placing of objects at the site by others is also a personal and particular action, an *eclectic community* is being formed around, and of, the site. But this community, however loose and incoherent, extends itself further into the surrounding area travelling abroad simply by virtue of others *seeing* the site. I have witnessed, for example, people who have no knowledge of the victim memorialized, by the white roadside cross adding an object, especially if the victim is a child. Of course, there is the oft-mentioned example of Princess Diana and the outpouring of grief at her death and the spontaneous gathering of people at various places around the world. This, coupled with the memory of the “waves of flowers” outside of the Kensington and Buckingham Palaces, spoke of an individualized community one that that was drawn together *because* of the extraordinary celebrity status of the victim. However, I suggest that in the sites I have visited the white crosses speak of the *everyday* not the extraordinary. The difference concerns anonymity. The deceased person memorialized on the roadside is an anonymous individual, introduced to us at the site; the celebrity victim becomes a media event.

It can be argued, then, that the erection of the roadside cross and the placing of items around it is a *rite de passage* ritual both for the individuals who are involved with the memorial and for the formation of an extended community. Sanders suggests that there are “three steps [which] emerge over and over in these rites of passage.”¹⁶ The first two, *severance* and *transition*, are self explanatory and unproblematic. But it is the third stage, *reincorporation*, which I suggest warrants a somewhat different understanding of the definition offered by Sanders. She states that reincorporation is “the acknowledgment of a reentry into a new life; a new beginning;

a celebration of a return to the norm; a joining, or reentry into life, incorporating the change.”¹⁷ Sanders sees reincorporation as a specific response by mourners to try to gain re-entry into the life-world of the everyday and is used as a normalising process. However, I see reincorporating as the way that those who experience the site, however incomplete or fleeting, and whether they be mourners or simply passers-by, are brought back into a sense of community which in post-modern reality has become fragmented. Thus the little white crosses offer a way for those involved and those not directly involved to reassess what community means and *should mean* in the contemporary world. So what we have with the roadside memorial is a real and imagined space, a sacred space for *imagineering* a symbolic community. I borrow the word, ‘imagineering,’ which was originally used to describe those who worked on animatronic robots at Disney worlds—a combination of imagined and engineered—imagineered. Thus I see the roadside memorials as being perhaps a pointer to how community can come together. There is maybe a case to be made about how the concept of the roadside memorial can be reworked or remotivated to become the focus for comm(on)unity. The symbolic spaces for and of community need to be re-invigorated because I suggest “new rituals” are coming into being. Thus I see the verge-side memorials as not only places of departure of an individual but of a “becoming” of and for community. Here again, corroborating the geography of enactment, symbolic embodiment is thought; symbolic embodiment requires our gestural expression of its meaning, as the symbolic meaning is generated through our embodied participation.

The real and the imagined spaces work in tandem. These spaces, it can be argued, are related to what Lefebvre noted as “representations of space” and “representational spaces”¹⁸ or what Soja in his book *Thirdspace* called the first and second spaces: that of the perceived space and the conceived space. For Soja, the perceived space is, as the name implies, the actual site itself—the ‘real’ roadside verge, the cross and the artefacts. The conceived space is what is being imagined by, and through, the perceived space, the *absent* victim as a member of a bigger community, whether family or neighbourhood. Soja states that when these two spaces come together then a third space is invoked—what he alludes to as the third or *lived* space.¹⁹ Soja’s doctrine of third space is corroborative of Backhaus’ doctrine of the intertwining of perception and imagination and its expression along a field-continuum where perception and imagination are the two poles. As Backhaus maintains, a lived geography necessarily entails the geographies of perception and imagination.

In relating Soja’s concepts to the white crosses the first space is the place of the accident itself. It is usually unremarkable and commonplace, the soft shoulder of a country road perhaps, or a median strip in a town or city. It is the perceived space. An actual or real space that if damaged (a snapped telegraph pole or a smashed brick wall), it is usually replaced or repaired within a short time and quickly resembles what it was like prior to the accident—to invoke Sanders it is returned to the norm. Thus the first space carries no inherent meaning in or of itself and can even be thought of as a “denotative” space. The conceived space comes into being with the advent of the memorial. The white cross and the variety

of objects carry certain symbolic associations and these coupled with the perceived space, the roadside, offer the third or *lived* space that of the accident, the victim and the tragedy. The conceived space may be thought of as the “connotative” space. As with basic semiotics when the two spaces come together, meaning is made. Thus the lived space is a type of *experiential* space. Here the passers-by *experience*, however fleetingly, the space of grief and mourning. The concept behind this space is simple and defined. It is the place of actuality—the place where someone has died. Some people might even say that it is the place where the spirit is or where the spirit and body separated. To paraphrase Illich the body in this instance becomes “disposable remains” meanwhile the essence of the victim stays at the scene which becomes a *ritual space*.

Even though no formal or informal ceremony is offered at this site it is a site of a *rite de passage*. Through the building of the cross, the placement of the objects, which some may see as random items but which Grider suggests has a consistent basic “vocabulary,”²⁰ and the ongoing tending of the site, the space becomes a place of personal meanings for the bereaved. This as Sanders points out has therapeutic value and can mark the transitional stage of a beginning to understand grief. I would also contend that this “therapeutic value” maybe extrapolated in an effort to unite fragmented communities.

6.6 Spontaneity of the Sites

I have always been wary of the idea of the spontaneity of the sites—that they are compiled “over night” as it were. Most of the memorials I have discovered have been fully formed by the time I “stumbled” upon them, and, as has been noted, are over seemingly long periods of time, maintained. However, over recent weeks, I have been able to witness the organization and organizing of a site in progress (Fig. 6.1). This memorial is located on a footpath adjacent to a reasonably busy suburban street and I first came upon it one morning on my way to work. At that stage all that was to be seen was a single flower tied to a telegraph pole set back about a metre from the kerb. On my return journey home that night this single flower had been complemented with a large and rather ornate bouquet. For a number of days that was all the site consisted of until after a long weekend I again passed the site and noticed a few items had been placed at the foot of the pole. Over a period of two weeks more and more items were added (these all being of the type usually associated with these memorials) and judging how some items had been rearranged in relation to their previous position two things could be gleaned. Firstly, that there was at least one person “in charge” of the site, and secondly, that there is a kind of hierarchy about the items. Not having been witness, up until this point, to the actual placing and organising of the items I am at a loss to fathom what might be the reasoning behind this methodology. However, I have only begun to research this aspect.

The roadside memorials are phenomena that, although having a reasonably long history will also have an equally long future, if my experience over the last few years is any judge. The memorials may also become a useful tool to help invoke more united communities which have become disjointed in contemporary society. The question to be posed at this stage is: how do we do this? There is no easy answer but it is time we started, as individuals and communities to 'tell our stories' and the stories of our departed family and community members in more-public and concrete manners. There are some examples to build on with the indigenous peoples of Australia being one such example. They are beginning to tell their stories through their art works and other media (their little white crosses) about their history of genocide and the "stolen generations." Media are the embodiments of these stories, physiognomies that offer their own structures and process of geographicity, to which we must bodily engage in order for the symbolism to be generated. These stories, however mediated, are working to help them (re)build their communities.

Finally, we need the presence of the absent and the absent in the present for communities to 'cross the verge' to make themselves whole by *imagineering* them in to being. And thus, returning to Backhaus' problematic, cited at the beginning of the chapter, by tracing the genesis of symbolism back to human behaviour (the geography of enactment), we see how the roadside memorial, as a performance in



Fig. 6.1 Roadside Memorial Site-In-Process (James Hall)

the everyday confirms symbolically the absence of community in the everyday. Thus, at least in this case, the everyday does involve symbolization, but the symbolization of something, which has been absent to it.

Notes

- 1 Backhaus, "Introduction I: The Problematic," 6.
- 2 Grider, "Spontaneous Shrines."
- 3 McGregor, "Roadside Memorials."
- 4 Grider, "Spontaneous Shrines," 2.
- 5 Ibid., 3.
- 6 Ibid., 2.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Illich, "Utopia of an Oderless City," 250.
- 9 Ibid., 251.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Sanders, *Grief*, 249.
- 13 Ibid., 249–250.
- 14 Ibid., 250.
- 15 Ibid., 252.
- 16 Ibid., 250.
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 Lefebvre, *Production of Space*.
- 19 Soja, *Thirdspace*.
- 20 Grider, "Spontaneous Shrines," 3.

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Chapter 7

Life on “The Avenue”: An Allegory of the Street in Early Twenty-First-Century Suburban America

John Srygley

Editors’ Note: This chapter explores landscape as itself a symbol, symbolizing a cultural landscape, “Main Street USA,” that no longer exists. But by functioning as a substitute for it, the landscape is simulacrum. We distinguish then landscape-symbol from symbolic landscape. The landscape-symbol, which, in this case, is the imagineering of sham, retail architecture, is constructed well enough to partially succeed symbolically, but this is only because people have forgotten the veritable embodied experiences of a true main street. People settle for a fake city/town main street that is located in suburbia and ensconced in a sea of parking, because people know no better, and the sham landscape gives them the impression of meeting their needs for sociality and a sense of place. Cities have deteriorated and people no longer engender body schemas that would bring them to mock such phony, packaged architecture. And this lamentable ignorance allows for the ersatz main street to be “successful,” because it emulates the gestural embodiments, the enactment of meanings of the main street without being one—it’s a shame that the pedestrians are not being paid as actors and actresses. Here, in a post-modern context, where architectural simulation poses as architecture, an ideal geography of the imagination substitutes for the real, and where the symbol poses as the real in the geography of perception. These interrelating substitutions of real and ideal are efficacious because they are experienced through an enactive embodied geography.

7.1 Introduction

In the introduction to this volume, Backhaus problematizes Denis E. Cosgrove’s dialectic between symbolic landscapes and social formations by raising the question as to whether or not there can be non-symbolic landscapes.¹ Moreover, though, if social formations are themselves symbolically formed then the problematic of such a dialectical relation is intensified. Social formations themselves become symbolically formed when indeed their “materiality” can no longer be

connected to experiential memory, to a lived history of the present. Social interactions, ways of encounter, may then be practiced in a way that invokes a historical precedent, yet “a way of seeing” (to use Cosgrove’s language) that is no longer understood, no longer experienced or experienceable, and vacuously associated with a present scheme. This social formation, then, is itself a symbol and as a symbol does not constitute the reality that is capable of anchoring the symbolic aspect of the landscape. Thus, due to historical amnesia, simulacra emerge. This chapter presents a case study of this process of symbolization.

7.2 From Main Street to Lifestyle Retail Development

The decline of Main Street USA is nearly complete. The appearance of enclosed shopping malls on the outskirts of nearly every town in America shuttered family run businesses, turned movie houses into multiplexes, and turned downtowns into ghost towns. While planners and preservationists argued the merits of traditional main streets, *an entire generation* of kids grew up thinking the big social scene is in the food court between anchor stores. I took a group of young architecture students on a field trip to the Mall in Washington, DC and was stunned when I realized that several of the students thought we were going shopping. But now developers are tinkering with the mall formula, rejecting enclosed, boxy retail



Fig. 7.1 Aerial view of “The Avenue at White Marsh” (Baltimore County, Maryland 2002. With permission)

emporiums in favor of open-air streets alive with the allure of public activity. One such effort, The Avenue at White Marsh, opened in the northeast suburbs of Baltimore, Maryland in late 1998. The developer's marketing blurb describes it as an "outdoor main street reminiscent of a traditional village setting."² Adjacent to a regional mall town center, The Avenue's tenant list consists of familiar names like Old Navy, Barnes and Noble, Loews, Chili's. A little surprise is the builder's devotion to creating a pleasant, street-like scene accommodating to cars and pedestrians alike, a place designed to attract people of all ages and encourage them to gather, walk slowly, take a bench, linger, and listen by the fountain. This plethora of activity is important to note, for in Backhaus' notion of the geography of enactment, symbolization must be lived, taken up into embodiment. Symbolism is not merely cognitive; it is generated in the body schema if indeed it is to be experienced.

The Avenue looks little like the mall from which it evolved; there is sky and architecture here. The message has shifted from private commercial space to an open, generous public place. This might be a community. On the other hand, although intended to be pedestrian friendly, it is hard to describe how isolated from foot traffic and how foreign to the concept of a stroll the access to this pedestrian friendly shopping experience actually is. The Avenue is accessible only by car. Emerging from one's car only a few steps from the entrance to the Avenue, the setting sun is seen sinking below the blackened hills of asphalt rolling toward the horizon. Seen from the air, The Avenue is an island atoll adrift in an enormous surface parking lot (Fig. 7.1). It is part of an archipelago of islands (the adjacent mall, an array of big box stores, fast food, shopping centers, an IKEA, etc.) in an ocean of asphalt that is interrupted only by the great Gulf Stream of I-95. Once inside The Avenue's three-story walls, however, the traffic sounds fade and the activities, colors, and scale suggest a pleasant shopping district in some familiar little town—one that you can not quite place.

In earlier times, in the not too distant past, the area that became the site of The Avenue at White Marsh was a marsh, then a quarry, then a landfill, then a site slated for economic development on a scale befitting its location—next to a nexus of major interstate highways. White Marsh was the center of a major planning and rezoning effort that resulted in a 30-year cycle of significant public and private investments in response to the completion of I-95. Phased development cycles brought a new interstate bypass, a regional mall (1980), an IKEA (1988), several small shopping centers, an array of detached business parks, Best Buy, Dick's, etc., culminating in 1998 in the addition of The Avenue. The Avenue was built in a parking lot. There was no settlement, no mark of human aspiration or intention to inform The Avenue's designers, which would have lent their efforts the authenticity bestowed by following through on cultural precedent. The Avenue is an instant town, a transplant, a full-scale model of no particular city street that would make a place out of no-place. In this media saturated age, no one is surprised by the mass production of cultural imagery, a collage of familiar forms reductively rendered in caricature. In the nineteenth century, factory-produced architectural

detail, steeples, and even entire buildings were shipped westward to burgeoning new towns being scratched out of the wilderness.

The Avenue is only one example of a national development trend that may reshape our lives once again now that the malls and the Walmarts have done their work. At the Urban Land Institute's (ULI) 2005 annual conference, themed "Lifestyle Retail Development," a developer discussed the design formula:

Shaheen Sadeghi, president of the LAB/Camp in Costa Mesa, California, pointed out that a genuine emotional connection to a development must be created by providing something the consumer would miss if that feature disappeared. He emphasized the significance of cultural and social functions in the lifestyle center as well as the overall environment. The developers emphasized that authenticity is crucial for successful lifestyle centers. The integration of boutiques and small "Mom and Pop" businesses, as well as culturally and historically significant elements, helps in creating an atmosphere that is authentic and unique, they said.³

This latest trend in retail development emphasizes the reinvention of typical strip shopping center commercial zones as social gathering places. According to the ULI, although they are located at some distance from urban centers, lifestyle retail centers are open-air, main street-like developments with higher-quality architecture and mixed-uses typical of a traditional main street. Pedestrian-friendly public spaces provide consumers with the opportunity to linger in outdoor cafes, public fountains, comfortable benches and pleasantly scaled streets. They are encouraged to enjoy planned activities and feel part of a community.

Historically, our main streets were the commercial and public centers of our cities and towns. From 1970 on, the main street was aggressively replaced by the traditional mall, which, in simplest terms, is an enclosed street, a retail microclimate under roof. The Avenue is a mall without the roof, which makes it a street, albeit far removed from the street grid of any urban locus. Seven years after its opening, The Avenue enjoys sustained crowds of shoppers, moviegoers, and restaurant patrons who come again and again to enjoy the tangible and appealing "sense of place" that often eludes them in suburbia. Here we have a traditional village main street such as Walt Disney might have envisioned, and like Disney's constructions, the concept strangely succeeds. Within tightly drawn borders the illusion of community and public space prosper, supported by acres of parking out of sight down every side street. Especially to the city dweller on a day trip, The Avenue experience can be a bit bizarre; to some, it feels far removed, isolated, divorced, forced, fake. With all due respect to Mr. Sadeghi's plea for authenticity, the residents of America's suburbs long ago lost the right to mock "mock reproductions," to abhor the artificial, the synthetic, the false, fake, bogus, sham, phony, and counterfeit.

The Avenue's success as a pedestrian environment is worthy of analysis, both in the literal sense, as the application of a set of rules, and in the figurative, as a work of environmental imagineering. In other words, while we can admire the deft and knowledgeable design work that went into creating this actually quite pleasant environment, we resist the temptation to be convinced by its transparent simulations as we study the anomaly of an urban street in a most suburban locale. The

Avenue is really far too nice to remind anyone of their hometown. The main street narrative, such as it is posited, constructed and developed with the eerily familiar architectural vocabulary of the traditional vernacular, is almost too convincing, and far too clean. Our perception of public and private space is contingent upon our recognition of the boundaries that define them, much as a picket fence separates the sidewalk from a private yard. Inasmuch as the fence may be more a symbolic separation than a significant physical barrier, the fence as an extrusion of the property line may take many forms, which communicate the mutually exclusive concepts of with-in and with-out. The particular genius of The Avenue is the way it establishes "place" in the no-place of a parking lot. The language of this place consists of interwoven symbolic forms and spaces that together make a strong argument for the life of the street. Nothing is to be taken only literally, however; we have to understand the street itself as a symbol—the symbol of a street, since it cannot be real, the symbol of community, the symbol of bygone times.

The shape of the space that makes the street is itself symbolic; the designers have paid careful attention to traditional proportions. In order to serve their commercial clients' interests, the buildings here are made taller than necessary, which is done to more convincingly evoke the scale of a traditional main street. Like any narrative, this street has a beginning, a middle, and an end. The main axis of symmetry that defines its longitudinal center extends from the dome at one end, to the fountain plaza rotunda arch, and to its terminus in the monumental clock (Fig. 7.2). The axis is bent ten degrees at the center—a cognizant design decision which emphasizes the central plaza feature and halves the perceptible length of the walk while at the same time making the complex seem larger and more connected (Fig. 7.3). Even the car has its symbolic purpose, essential to the image of a main street. The dome, the towers, the rotunda, the arch that grace the arts and crafts store, the jeans store, the movie theater and southwest theme restaurant are the symbolic evocation of civic and ecclesiastical structures found in any small town. Symmetry abounds, generating a profusion of axes and pleasing views. The plaza, bedecked in trees, flowers and a flowing fountain, attracts large crowds to enjoy the sounds of water and each other in an environment rich in hierarchies of scale and materials.

Yes, it is real, and so much fun. But look! The dome is a plastic membrane stretched over a lightweight non-structural steel frame. Look harder! The towers are "clip-ons;" the arch is a glue-on, glued on what Venturi aptly labeled a "decorated shed" whose reality lies beneath three-quarter inch of artfully shaped foam trying to be masonry. Beneath the dome, the door is off axis and there is no grand rotunda, only a gridded ceiling acre of fluorescent light fixtures set in a low 2 × 4 lay-in ceiling. The monumental affectation of the exterior has no effect on the interior, which, in every respect, recalls a discount grade strip shopping center. The traditional looking gaslights encapsulate modern metal halide lamps. The people and the flowers are pretty, but you might want to check, they're making them look so real nowadays. It appears self-evident that however effectively one constructs a full-scale model of a street in the middle of a wasteland, authenticity is not an option. The genuine emotional connection derived from historically significant elements is not an option either, unless you consider that The

Avenue is a byproduct of the loss of the historical urban environment. This loss forces us to seek some meager satisfaction in this simulacrum of an urban environment, a loss that they can never ease, because it is no more real than SimCity.

In the above paragraphs I have maintained that the street “cannot be real” and also have maintained, “Yes, it is real.” This seems to be a blatant contradiction but as Backhaus argues there is always an intertwining of perception and imagination and both are poles along a continuum. We can employ the senses of both the real and the not real, by reference to different aspects, which locate us epistemologically along different phases of the perceived-imagined continuum. In terms of the inner-horizon of the street construction, it certainly has enough real aspects to merit being called real. But, with no supportive external-horizon, without an urban context, the street can not be real. It is the relation between the real and the not real that constitutes the symbolization as simulacrum. The main street is to symbolize the vital center of a town, but the town is a virtual place, and thus the town as a context of meanings is a symbol as well. And real towns, no longer carry those symbolic meanings. What follows from Backhaus’ pre-cognitive doctrine of the embodied genesis of symbolization is that the geographical enactment of the street, its generation as a symbol, symbolizes something that no longer can be lived, and as such the symbol itself is given a semi-real status, as indeed it is an embodied enactment, status on the basis of “amnesia.”

7.3 An Allegory of the Street

Symbols are objects or characters used to represent abstract ideas or concepts. An allegory is a story in which the characters are symbols that interact within a narrative structure, generating a second or higher level of significance that parallels the main narrative. Generally speaking the message is not subtle in an allegory; there’s no secret that the story line is merely a device to keep the reader interested while the author delivers his real message. Plato’s *Republic*, Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, Spenser’s *The Faerie Queen*, Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels*, and Orwell’s *Animal Farm* are well-known allegories in which the author’s agenda was philosophical, religious, satirical, and political, respectively. There is a difference between an architectural context and a literary one, most notably that a literary work is the product of one person, while an architectural environment is the result of a collaboration. The Avenue’s heavily laden symbolic environment creates a narrative that can be read as an allegory, an allegory of the street. While its agenda is indisputably commercial, *it functions as a critique of both the suburban lifestyle it purports to embrace and the genuine urban context it shuns or, at least, tries to make unnecessary.*

The illusion, not the reality, is what makes The Avenue interesting. The Avenue *creates and sustains the fantasy of* “an outdoor main street reminiscent of a traditional village setting.” Its walls form a kind of parentheses around this collage



Fig. 7.2 The Avenue Streetscape from the Plaza (John Srygley)



Fig. 7.3 The Avenue Streetscape, Looking West (John Srygley)

of symbolic quotations, of re-presentations, from hypothetical townscape. As lived, The Avenue forms our body schema by providing a matrix of gestures or virtual context of embodied experiences by which for a few hours perhaps experience simulates the experiences of “a towny.” Yet, real cities are palimpsests, the

messy kind of context that evolves over centuries, reflecting the conflicting intentions of successive generations. The Avenue is self-conscious but not introspective, conceived whole, an alternative to messy “reality.” Isolation from built context in effect excludes potential contradictions and provides the means of control to maintain the illusions that sustain the experience of The Avenue. The new, strictly enforced, context for this street is safety and convenience, which makes the possibility of an urban experience far from an urban environment attractive to the consumer public. In *Architecture and Utopia*, Manfred Tafuri wrote “romantic eclecticism (became) the romantic interpreter of the merciless commercialization of the human environment, by immersing itself in the particles of the completely worn out values, presented in all their contorted muteness and falsity, as if to demonstrate that no subjective effort can regain an authenticity lost forever.”⁴ The suburbanites disaffected from the city presumably crave its echoes, the shadows of the shadows on the wall of the cave in Plato’s *Republic*, the wistful, distant familiarity of a “main street” that no longer exists. A copy that is 98% accurate preserves the anxiety of its secondary status. A copy perfects the fiction by destroying the distance between itself and the original, but it has not succeeded until it destroys the memory of the distance.

7.3.1 City Monumentality and Urban Amnesia

Ironically, The Avenue’s host city, nearby Baltimore, was once known as “the Monumental City,” an indication of the beauty of its formerly great (and still pretty good) public realm. The thriving nineteenth-century seaport of Baltimore had an abundance of monumental structures that graced its streets, parks, and skyline, including the first Washington Monument (by John Stuart Mills) and the first American Basilica (by Benjamin Latrobe). Washington, DC, by comparison, was literally a cow pasture. The city maps of this period are embroidered with cameos of Baltimore’s landmark structures, whose spires, cupolas, towers and domes punctuated the urban skyline. It was by all accounts a city of beauty, power, and sophistication that drew visitors to its graces from afar before the interstate highway system made such travels into a day trip.

Now more cynically known as the City that Bleeds (a perversion of the official city hall slogan “The City that Reads”), or Harm City (i.e. “Charm City”), Baltimore has lost nearly 20% of its population since 1980 to the suburbs. The complexities of the causes of the decline of America’s cities are well documented: high taxes, poor services, racism, woeful schools, crime, and not least of all the decline of the public realm and therefore the decline of the cognitive experience of the urban environment. Baltimore’s parks, plazas, main streets and all streets suffered as its tax base withered, a victim of budget driven prioritization, misguided care, and perhaps most sadly, amnesia. The experience of the city has suffered from what can only be described as a profound failure to recognize, inventory, and



Fig. 7.4a Baltimore: Read Street, View Corridor (John Srygley)



Fig. 7.4b Baltimore: Charles Plaza, View Corridor (John Srygley)

preserve the elements of the public realm for this and future generations. As songwriter Joni Mitchell once observed, “they put up a parking lot.”

One of the most destructive effects on the public realm has been the diminution of the role of monuments and monumental buildings. The prominence that pre-twentieth-century monumental structures enjoyed in the urban landscape was eventually partially obscured from the city panorama, as taller buildings became

commonplace. But, they remained a powerful influence on the city's character due to serendipitous view corridors created by shifts in the city grid that developed as conflicting growth patterns merged imperfectly over the topographical realities of the piedmont. At the end of each view corridor is a site that occupies the vanishing point of the perspective of the street, creating a pictorial effect that, if exploited, elevates the site occupant to the status of monument. Balanced on either ends of the axis of the street, these locations were favored by churches and institutions and never ignored by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century architects, who competed with each other to design the most beautiful spires, towers, and domes (Fig. 7.4a).

Notwithstanding their increasing obscurity on the skyline, many of these monuments have had their illuminating view corridors blocked in the last 20 years by parking garages, skyways and other pragmatic concerns. This is but one example (Fig. 7.4b) of the very tangible erosion of public space in a city which has lost its tax paying citizenry and its main streets and is currently in the act of spending billions trying to regain both. "The Avenue" is opportunistic in this degraded context, hovering outside the beltway, offering an easy solution, pretending to replace important lost elements of civic life but cynically substituting commercial for civic, private for public, a commodified "lifestyle" for the complexities of life itself.

This urban amnesia is tragic. The question is not whether city life is good, or if life in the suburbs is bad; but about the discussion we should be having about creation of public and private realms. The exodus from the city to the suburbs is coincident with the desensitization of the inhabitants of both to the deterioration and devaluation of their daily environment. The downward spiral is negatively reinforced by lowered expectations of the experience of their environments' consequent to illusory, fragmentary, and discontinuous public gestures.

7.3.2 Suburban Idealization: The Paradox of Private Public Space

It is sad that suburbia idealizes and attempts to recreate architectural elements that the urban scene possesses but often undervalues; this displacement (of people, symbols, and meaning) is the essence of The Avenue's critique of the City. By law, architects are involved in the design of most of the built environment in America. Many Americans, even men and women of sensitivity, intellect, and education, however, have never experienced a work of "real" architecture. This is the plight even of the privileged that live in wealthy suburbs, shop at prosperous malls, work for thriving corporations, and holiday at exclusive locales. The ubiquitous, mass-produced substitute for architecture, the subject of this chapter, is a commercialized concoction of foam and stucco that appropriates and decontextualizes historical architectural forms for commercial purposes, mimicking the most salient characteristics of the original. This is the "style" of eclectic development that homogenizes the suburban landscape from New York to LA. At its worst, the

design process often resulting in self-satire, unintentional parody, urban and suburban cross-dressing, the dominance of the box, geometrical absurdities, poison technologies, dysfunctional systems, and the irrational acceptance of life in a built environment largely unexamined. Perhaps this is the manifest destiny of the bourgeoisie: cultural homogenization, generic place and cyberspace. If you are part of the system it is hard to point fingers, but we have everything to gain from being judgmental. In a capitalist society, the cash register is the real ballot box; we vote every time we spend a dollar. There is a booming market for this product. This is a lifestyle many people have "bought" into, and others, not so fortunate, dream about. They seem to be happy living in their little utopias, driving from point A to B in their leather lined SUVs with the windows open and the air conditioning blasting. But the consequences are undeniable. This architecture is toxic to inhabit, toxic to manufacture, rapaciously consumes land and resources, is incongruous with urban context, destructive to community, overtaxes infrastructure and reinforces dependence on the automobile.

The instant town (circa 1990) of Seaside, Florida, was satirized in the movie "The Truman Show," which depicted the promise of perpetual peace as long as the protagonist's life never deviated from the subliminal script. In the course of the movie the main character was gradually revealed to himself to be the unwitting star of a 24/7 television show about a perfect life; the subliminal script was anything but. An affluent town without litter, boom boxes or double parkers, Seaside is famous for the architecture and public realm that have resulted from strict prescriptive design codes. The mantra of the Seaside marketing machine goes like this:

There has been, and will always be, nostalgia for days gone by. For those simpler times when neighbors swapped stories over the fence, shopkeepers knew each customer by name, and families gathered on the porch to tell stories as the twilight faded into night. In our little corner of the world there is still such a place.⁵

Of course, the use of the past tense in this blurb is entirely rhetorical. Like White Marsh, Seaside is a town without a past. Seaside is instead a symbol of the past. Seaside never refers to its contemporary roots; it attracts residents who are not bothered by academic distinctions of this sort. They invest in more than real estate. They buy a way-of-life that has been conceived, researched, manufactured, packaged, marketed, and unabashedly put on the auction block. This is "nostalgia" with a ticker symbol; a "life" and a "style" in full quotations.

If private *individual* space was the historical attraction of suburbia, the elevation of the notion of private *public* space may be one of the most intriguing paradoxes of our time. The celebration of the private realm in the suburban model at first appears to contradict the concept of the public realm. But the architects of state of the art mixed-use retail development have discovered new means of attracting the affluent: the private or quasi-public public realm. This is public space controlled by private interests capable of defining appropriate use patterns and asserting control over those who would disregard its strictly described boundaries. Seaside is famous for its manufactured authenticity, all designed by architects, and

an accommodating, convincing public realm. It is also famous for its strict design code and behavioral restrictions that allow public visitation with strict limitations on activities enforced by privately funded security. An affluent town without litter, boom boxes, or double parkers, Seaside is a private place with an appealing, public persona that has served as the model for numerous new communities and a design methodology that became known in the trade as New Urbanism.

“Historical amnesia” permits us to live such a paradox in ignorance of it. If it is no longer necessary for human environments to grow organically in the postmodern world, then our symbolic landscapes are now a hypercommodity—a simulacra that invents history as a category of the hypermarket.⁶ But it is within the paradox that a contradiction is recognized: by concretizing an architectural oxymoron, The Avenue becomes an allegory that is capable of teaching us what is wrong with our cities and our suburbs, but only after we get beyond the pleasing nature of its con—if this is still possible.

Notes

1 Backhaus, “Introduction I: The Problematic,” 9–10.

2 Nottingham Properties.

3 Press Release, formerly on-line, now unavailable. ULI Conference: “Reinventing Retail: Community, Lifestyle, and Entertainment,” 12th Annual International ULI Conference, February 14–15, 2005.

4 Tafuri, *Architecture and Utopia*, 43.

5 Seaside Florida.

6 Baudrillard, “Hypermarket and Hypercommodity,” 75–78.

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Chapter 8

Metaphor, Environmental Receptivity, and Architectural Design*

Brook Muller

All values must remain vulnerable, and those that do not are dead.

—Gaston Bachelard¹

In metaphor one has ... a stratification of meaning, in which an incongruity of sense on one level produces an influx of significance on the other.

—Clifford Geertz²

Editors' Note: This chapter illustrates the fundamental potency of the geographicity of language, what Merleau-Ponty has called first language. First language concerns a fundamental connection with gesture, the bodily comportments that express meaning. Metaphor emerges through the imagination and as we have maintained imagination involves both body schema and the virtual body. Through a bodily attunement with new metaphors, an architect translates the gestural component of poetic language into built forms. This requires an embodied resonance between the poetic gestures expressive of the metaphors and the expressive gestures in the design of built space. Intellectualist theories wrongly see metaphor as inspiring cognition, but before any such intellection takes place, the metaphor must induce its poetic potency, a physiognomy that must shape the lived-body of the designer. And then the potentialities of body schema as entertained by the virtual body are given over to the imagination in the design process. It is not thought that directs the evaluation of design, but embodied resonances, the feel that corroborates the sensibilities manifest through the physiognomy of metaphor, a poetic aesthetic.

8.1 Introduction

Value-laden articulations of the fundamental “task” of the architect guide manners of working: those concerns, inspirations, and procedures given priority. Such procedures—methods, practices, and mediums of representation—determine the nature of the physical constructs that result. Architects exacerbate environmental problems and contribute to ecological degradation through designs that are functionally inefficient and psychologically and physically unhealthy. Amidst growing consternation, there is a pressing need for the development of life enhancing and eco-sustainable living spaces. However, it is insufficient for environmentally concerned architects to simply train on the idea of developing better performing, less

wasteful, and less toxic building assemblies. First, designers must engage in a more fundamental reflection as to how design problems are to be expressed, and to what extent the potential for environmental change can be molded and made receptive to new design expressions. By tracing the lineage binding utterance to practice and to making, we might come to recognize that even subtle shifts in the articulation of environmental designs can alter outcomes dramatically. Through such newfound awareness, we become open to reexamining the architect's role, new descriptions of architecture, and the possibility of deeper attunement and "rerooted," constructive engagement with our world.

This chapter examines the use of metaphor as a transformative methodology by which designers animate new body schema through imaginative projections that serve as the basis for the articulation of their projects. The architectural design process is presumed to be of great intellectual complexity. This it is, yet its source is in precognitive experience concerning which the metaphor enacts. Otherwise, the language of metaphor would not translate into design and built space. Contemporary building projects of a certain type and/or scale involve a myriad of professional specialists, with the architect in this process responsible for communicating to all expectations and intentions, coordinating work of the various disciplines, and assuring what is constructed meets predetermined standards. The architect composes "nested" configurations of material and spatial orders at a great range of scales, from a master plan for a region to the fitting of hardware and door, while anticipating a logical construction sequence so work is executed efficiently. Successful practice demands awareness of cultural standards, preferences, precedents and movements. Because metaphors help to comprehend complexity, heightening awareness of attributes of entities heretofore overlooked or undervalued—yet perhaps of critical significance given the particularities of a given project—metaphors have proven to be highly productive agents of architectural communication and innovation.

Metaphors not only draw connections between a condition we are seeking to explain and another, more familiar entity, they draw connections between the (problematic) condition and a *world* of associations—entailments—corresponding to that new entity. As such, they expand possibilities for working through the condition we may be struggling to explain, offering new trajectories of conceptualization, e.g., Geertz's "influx of significance," that may unbind us from sedimented understandings. In short we might say that metaphors have a prism-like ability to expand the scene of the problematic condition, the setting-of-a-working-through, via orientation to a new world to which it is being actively (metaphorically) related. For these reasons, the introduction of novel metaphorical insights in the world of architecture have had a profound impact in redirecting architectural thought and practice in the past, while new metaphorical domains are providing a visionary expansion of opportunities for poetic and sensitive environmental responses. A caring sensitivity towards our world (not to mention tenacity of design exploration) is assumed a precondition for the creating of deeply responsive architectural works. Novel, "green" metaphors, as I hope to demonstrate, orient such exploration towards an open (re)inaugurating receptivity to our dynamic yet

fragile worldly inhabitation, and to ways of shaping and making commensurate with this originaive condition.

8.2 Metaphor: Redesigning Design and Its Culture³

In all aspects of life ... we define our reality in terms of metaphors and then proceed to act on the basis of the metaphors. We draw inferences, set goals, make commitments, and execute plans, all on the basis of how we in part structure our experience, consciously and unconsciously, by means of metaphor.

—George Lakoff and Mark Johnson⁴

Corroborative of Backhaus' doctrine concerning the continuity and interrelation between imagination and perception, metaphors are not simply chimeras of the imagination. Metaphors are essential to the way humans interpret, experience, and produce reality—offering a “systematicity that allows us to comprehend one aspect of a concept in terms of another.”⁵ A metaphor invokes our *embodied situation*, serving “as a vehicle for understanding ... only by virtue of its experiential basis.”⁶ A metaphor's experiential basis is in its expression of a virtual embodiment, which by being adopted into the design methodology, comes to be concretized in the design. With the use of metaphor, “we typically conceptualize the non physical in terms of the physical—that is, we conceptualize the less clearly delineated in terms of the more clearly delineated.”⁷ A situated embodiment is enacted in metaphorical meaning. “Metaphor is not suspended from natural reality, but that in opening up meaning on the imaginative side it also opens up towards a dimension of reality that does not coincide with what ordinary language envisages under the name of natural reality.”⁸ And as essential to human thinking and experience, metaphor must be intrinsic to the design process and to the design itself. Metaphor is a manifestation of the continuity and interrelation of imagination and perception.

Paul Shepard speculates that metaphorical thinking originated with our hunter-gatherer ancestors who roamed the savannahs during the Pleistocene. In these inaugural attempts to articulate meaning to human and worldly existence, and to organize a way of living to support such convictions, the organisms with which these bands came in regular contact, become a (metaphorical) model of coherence:

Animals and plants are regarded as centers, metaphors, and mentors of the different traits, skills, and roles of people. Insofar as they model diversity and the polythetic cosmos, the animals provides analogs to the multiplicity of stages and forms; they are the interlocutors of change that is brought ceremonially into human consciousness.⁹

There is a pragmatic dimension to the metaphoric. Without writing, a metaphor serves to improve conditions for survival, a device to store, retrieve and share information about places and the uniqueness of their offerings: edible plants and animals, materials for shelter, the location of a stable water supply, etc. Metaphors

not only helped these hunter-gatherers make sense of the world, to sing its complexity, but to gesture attunement with that which one sings. Metaphor in this sense is accompaniment, a co-inhabitation of forces and humans and other beings, the inhabitation of the word amongst things.

Expressions in some domain of meaning can be metaphorically deployed for the formation of concepts in another circumscribed domain of meaning. Yet, not all characteristics of the expression within the source domain are transferred to the metaphorical meaning context. Rather only those characteristics within the body schema (gestural meaning) of the concept from the original domain that resonate with the virtual embodied schema of the metaphorical domain become transferable. Lakoff and Johnson describe the transferable characters as constituting a coherent network of entailments. The metaphor and network of entailments will not “speak” exhaustively (in the sense of Merleau-Ponty’s first or gestural language) towards the concept under consideration, but will rather be selective of certain aspects (a modification necessary to become compatible within the metaphorical domain) while obscuring others. The very power of the metaphor lies in this double constitutive agency of enacting, yet modifying, certain embodied meanings—bringing some to unconcealment, while concealing others that were once operative in the original domain. This transformational process results in the instauration of a new meaning context, which is significant for a design methodology. As Backhaus has explicated Merleau-Ponty’s doctrine: the imaginative body involves the interrelation of body schema from the perceptual mode and the virtual body. Specifically with metaphor, two domains of meaning are bridged through the body schema of an experiential realm interrelated with the virtual embodiment entailed by the other. Metaphor is the creative enactment of meaning bridging two domains.

David Abram maintains that, “all truly meaningful speech is inherently creative, using established words in ways they have never quite been used before, and thus altering, ever so slightly, the entire webwork of the language.”¹⁰ Architecture is a webwork (domain) of language, of meaning, and the introduction of new metaphors within its language will alter its overall parameters.

If a new metaphor enters the conceptual system that we base our actions on, it will alter that conceptual system and the perceptions and actions that the system gives rise to. Much of cultural change arises from the introduction of new metaphorical concepts and the loss of old ones.¹¹

Thus, as architecture develops new metaphors, it also modifies its own culture; the emerging identity-formation of architectural culture results in new designs. And now it becomes clearer as to why architecture must first reflect on the processes of meaning constitution: new designs that reflect our environmental concerns can only be truly established by architecture transforming its own culture, which is generated through engaging in the modification of its own conceptual system/domain/context of meanings. Creating new metaphors is essential to this process of architectural transformation.

Evaluation that occurs in preliminary design phases often concerns whether a particular conception or organizing principle makes explicit those aspects of the project deemed critically important while still accommodating a range of other concerns—technical, practical, aesthetic, economic, legal, environmental, crime prevention. As G. Z. Brown explains, “building design is a creative process based on iteration: one begins by responding to a situation with an abstract idea. Then one objectifies the idea, by proposing a trial design, evaluates it, redesigns it, develops it, reevaluates it, and so on.”¹² Striving for coherence, while accommodating a density of conditions and requirements, is central to this undertaking. Because of their potential for insight into solving problems and for creative inspiration, entertaining new metaphors function serves as an effective tool in this process. A metaphor becomes thematic during the conceptual design phase precisely because it translates into embodied forms of thinking, i.e. designs. The metaphor functions as a revealing discernment of the specific nature of the problem and also indicates the larger aspirations of architecture’s methodological goals. In subsequent design stages, additional metaphors can be added, which draws attention to various coordinated assemblages, or parts of the project, or with refining the project as a whole. In sum, metaphor provides the opportunity for a design team a team to arrive at a shared vision, an embodied resonance that guides the later steps in the design project.

Lakoff and Johnson remind us that “most of our fundamental concepts are organized in terms of one or more spatialization metaphors,” yet the design process requires the architect to perform an act-complex of “respatialization.”¹³ Louis Kahn’s spatialization metaphor for the Phillips Exeter Library in New Hampshire, “taking a book and bringing it to the light” is illustrative of the process and methodology. The metaphor of light as knowledge originates in embodied experience: light is the condition for seeing. Kahn respatializes back into the life-world this spatialization metaphor through patterns of spatio-luminous organization “embodied” in the Library’s space: one literally takes a book from a low-ceilinged and relatively dark “stack space” and brings it to a generously day-lit study carrel at the building’s periphery.

We might view Kahn’s appropriation of this metaphor as a high modernist’s deployment of an enlightenment notion of humankind’s privileged access to the light of knowledge, and what better building than a library for the encouragement of a primarily cerebral “reading” of architecture. But a more favorable, experiential interpretation presents itself, that Kahn’s respatialization enables profoundly rich, nuanced spatial engagement that does not stop or become isolated through the act of reading, where the process of finding a book and reading it is inseparable from, “threaded with,” tactility, view, footfall, passage, etc. Knowledge is a journey and light calls forward; one perceives and is attracted by progressive transformations in luminous quality as one moves from one space to the next. Further, the specific configuration of built-in furnishings from shelves to desks carefully choreographed with the natural light and registered closely with the human body become a primary source of architectural expression/celebration. The study carrels in particular, integrated as they are with “portal” windows looking onto a green

testify to Kahn's predisposition to manipulate forms in the service of full sensory engagement (Fig. 8.1).

The efficacy of certain metaphors is so potent that they establish a paradigm shift. They can spontaneously arise through the creative process and then reverberate throughout design culture. The way architects envision their work becomes forever changed (Fig. 8.2). In the contemporary world characterized by daily reminders of the degradation of our natural surroundings, such awareness of metaphors as productive agents of change would seem to encourage the seeking of notions that lead to greater environmental attunement. In the past other conditions prevailed and called for different insights. Le Corbusier's proclamation, "the house is a machine for living in," was attuned to the rationality of industrialization and the optimistic, mass consumerism of the 1920s. This metaphor served as an architectural paradigm spatially concretizing the values of industrial capitalism. We can look back sympathetically to the architect's preoccupation with cleanliness, hygiene and standardization in the aftermath of the First World War, the widespread desire to lift from the rubble an architecture of autonomy, where the masses would have greater access to light and air, at a safe distance from earthly contamination. The house-is-a-machine-for-living-in metaphor both describes and motivates the architect's increasing involvement with industrial modes of production and engineering. The machine metaphor implied the conceptualization of buildings as a self-contained assemblage of replaceable machined parts and architects fulfilled these values through designs based on this machine metaphor. Over time these values became subject to socio-historical sedimentation; it was understood implicitly, precognitively lived in the built environment, that a building is a machine.

For a new metaphor to exhibit efficacy, it must "provide coherent structure, highlighting some things and hiding others" through a coherent set of conceptual entailments.¹⁴ The entailments associated with Le Corbusier's metaphor, "*the house is a machine for living in*" that appear to have strongly influenced design thinking in the last century include the idea that a house is to be rationally organized, that it is to be appreciated for its spare elegance and utility, that it should be comprised of a coherent, interdependent set of parts and result from industrial manufacturing processes, and, perhaps most critically, that a house should be self-contained and "complete" (independent of its environment).

In Le Corbusier's early residential work these machine-like qualities are thematic, and through their respatialization in an architectural design concretize the modernist project, the dichotomization of culture and nature, which entails the

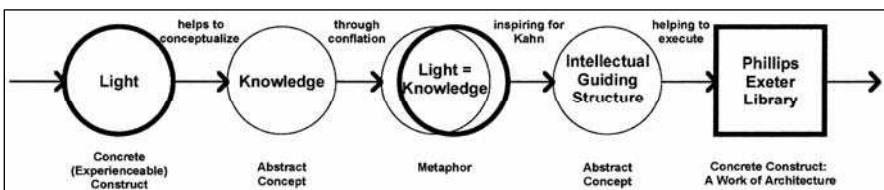


Fig. 8.1 The role of metaphor in Louis Kahn's design for the Phillips Exeter Library, 1969

denial of their functional entanglement, of what Bruno Latour terms “nature/culture” hybrids. For the moderns, the house becomes conceptualized as an atemporal product, appearing to have been generated by a set of internalized operations. However, in fact, powerfully interwoven networks of “nature/culture,” systems of appropriation of resources in the service of human needs such as water supply and return, electrical power, air conditioning, materials assemblies, etc., enable its very existence. As Latour suggests, it is the very denial of these proliferating nature-cultures that allow the modernist project to be so reserved and absolute:

They are going to be able to make nature intervene at every point in the fabrication of their societies while they go right on attributing to nature its radical transcendence; they are going to be able to become the only actors in their own political destiny while they go right on making their society hold together by mobilizing nature.¹⁵

Latour teaches us that once we make explicit the proliferation of nature/culture hybrids concealed through employing the machine metaphor and recognize the complicated linkages that we have been unable to comprehend fully, we then can become “non-modern.” We become attuned to a different embodied resonance, one that is more therapeutically sensitive to environment. This new embodied resonance is made conceptually manifest in a new constellation of metaphors informing “green” approaches to the design process.

“Constellation,” a metaphor for interconnected strands of thought, images the multiplicity of metaphorical notions operative for contemporary environmentally concerned architects. Van der Rijn Architects contributes to the constellation by employing the metaphor of “sail,” an “open-mode,” which allows for prevailing breezes to provide cooling and ventilation, illustrated in the remodeling of Draper Hall at Berea College in Kentucky.¹⁶ Client “sailors” learn how to “rig the ship” for sailing—how to configure windows shades and other operable architectural features. The passive design expert John Reynolds contributes to the constellation by advocating a “switch-rich” metaphor towards detailing, allowing inhabitants to continually adjust architectural elements that comprise a building’s façade in order to sensitively respond to ambient environmental conditions. The Australian architects Glenn Murcutt and Richard Leplastrier further the constellation by employing the metaphors of “designing encampments” and “furnishing outdoor rooms”

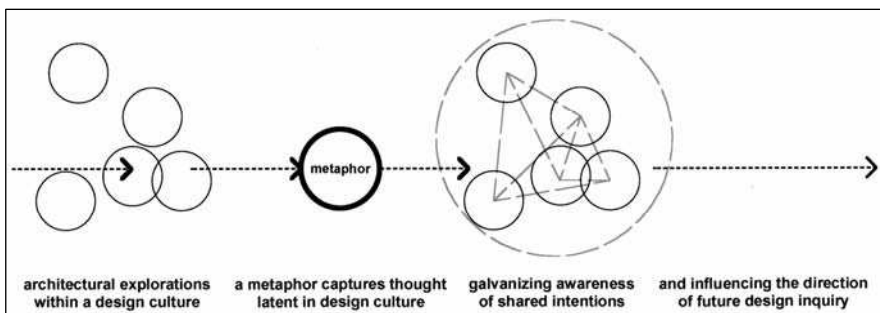


Fig. 8.2 A metaphor galvanizes awareness of shared visions within design culture

in order to encourage resourceful elegance and “lightness.” Michael Singer and Blackbird Architects envision a work of architecture as not only *in*, but also *as*, a landscape. With the IBN (Dutch) Institute for Nature Research in Wageningen, the German firm Behnisch & Partner metaphorically conceptualizes architecture as a complex organism. This constellation of operative expressions in use today (concerning which only a few have been mentioned) deserves lengthy discussion. For the purposes of this chapter, I will concentrate on two of the metaphors, pointing out the attributes that they share that inspire responsive practice (Fig. 8.3).

8.3 Organism as Bauplan for Architecture

Underneath the rhythm of every art and every work of art there lies, as a substratum in the depth of the subconscious, the basic pattern of the relations of the live creature to his environment.

—John Dewey¹⁷

In 1993, Stuttgart-based Behnisch & Partner Architects won an invited competition for their design for the IBN (Dutch) Institute for Nature Research, a European Union pilot project for “human and environmentally-friendly building.”¹⁸ During the competition phase and throughout the life of the project, the design team elaborated in narrative and graphic form architectural qualities corresponding to those of a complex organism. One operative metaphorical notion among several (“architecture as city;” “working in the office garden”), architecture as organism catalyzed design thinking with respect to the project in its entirety, to fine detail, and perhaps most critically how the whole and its parts were related to the IBN’s milieu, a mixed agricultural/suburban/woodland context within the Rhine watershed in the eastern part of the Netherlands.

The project’s primary organizational structure consists in a series of large, rectangular gardens, each representing a landscape/ecological community type prevalent in the region: a grassland garden, a marsh garden, a woodland garden, etc. Office wings are set between these and are said to “*grow* between the gardens.” As an initial and formative gesture, the network of gardens situates, stabilizes, and provides legibility and memorable identity. The building-as-organism finds “purchase,” a resultant niche of particular suitability, within this structure.

As with an Organism, the IBN’s organization results in part from ‘internal’ forces such as the expressive intentions of the designer, the needs and aspirations of users, the inherent limitations of material assemblies, etc. At the same time, the IBN anticipates ‘external’ forces and “contains a reference to its future.”¹⁹ The axial deployment of gardens prefigures the location of new office wings in the likely event that the Institute’s mission evolves and its scope grows in response to changing societal needs and opportunities. In describing Merleau-Ponty’s notion of organism, Mark Hansen suggests, “Behavior is what transforms such intrinsic potentiality into history while simultaneously preserving it as a ‘source’ for future

growth.”²⁰ This aligns with the IBN-as-organism, a project the design team and client comprehended from the beginning as “weak formed,” and capable of constant adjustment to interior and exterior conditions, and not a completed, static and fixed object.

Inexpensive greenhouse structures span gardens between office wings so as to create atria spaces, welcome in this northern European climate. Through rhythmic, breath-like adjustment of the vent openings in the greenhouse roofs (the project’s “lungs”), a constant supply of fresh air is drawn into the atria spaces and adjacent offices, primarily through natural or “passive” means. The offices, protected from the elements by the greenhouses, have very light, *skin-like* facades that selectively admit what is desired (cooling breezes in summer for example) and buffer against the unwanted (direct sun in the summer). With offices facing gardens and large portions of the office facades able to be opened, the atria become the Institute’s *heart*, where researchers gather and confer.

In the descriptions of the design of the IBN above, we may be led to regard Behnisch & Partner’s metaphorical appropriations of an organism’s attributes as a vehicle for aesthetization. Yet we may consider aesthetization favorably, not framed or isolated but implicated in all our actions and artifacts, and in agreement with Dewey’s assertion that “esthetic effect is due to art’s unique transcript of the energy of things of the world.”²¹ The very inseparability of appearance and behavior, expression and content with respect to the “energy of the things-of-the-world” distinguishes the IBN, and it has made it of one most acclaimed green projects in contemporary culture. As but one example, rainwater falling on the IBN greenhouse roofs is collected and diverted to reflecting pools in the atria gardens, where it is used for irrigation. Evapotranspiration by the plants within the atria produces a cooling effect and along with natural ventilation become the building’s “air conditioning.” Bench-like platforms built into the sides of reflecting pools provide contemplative places for IBN staff to take work breaks. In this instance and throughout the project, ambiguity exists as to where aesthetic concerns trail off and where functional, ecological, spatial or thermodynamic conditions begin. Merleau-Ponty suggests “animals acts are the manifestation of a certain style.” And, “instinct is before all else a theme, a style that meets up with that which evokes

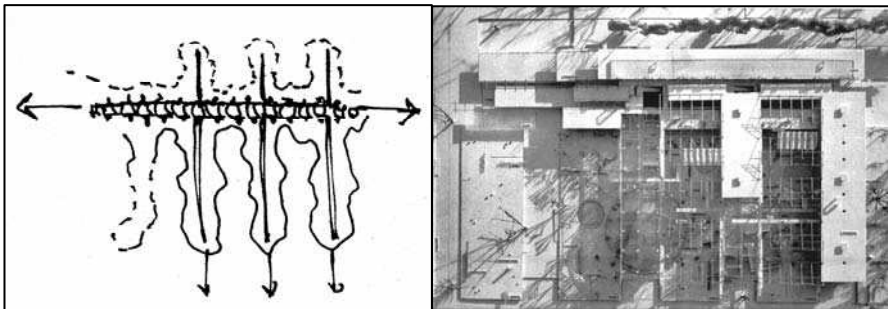


Fig. 8.3 IBN Nature Research Institute, Wageningen, The Netherlands (Behnisch & Partner, 1996): diagram “Organizational Spine/Adaptable Limbs” (L) and model plan view (R)

it in its milieu.”^{22,23} As with the animal, the IBN’s patterning of functioning behavior, its disposition, is also a style, a manner of being, a measure of grace, inseparable from action.

The metaphor, *architecture as organism*, carries with it the prospect of the reanimation of the physical world—a renewed attention to the life of things we make of this world. An “embodied” being-in-the-world characterized by weakness, dynamic fragility, and bountiful efficiency (economies of exuberance) grounds architecture. *Architecture as organism* in turn becomes a source of our own anchoring resensitization. As Deleuze declares, “it is always on the most deterritorialized element that reterritorialization takes place.”²⁴

8.4 Furnishing Our Primary Inhabitation

The less material place is, the more powerful it becomes.
—Edward Casey²⁵

In the summer of 2001, students in the inaugural Glenn Murcutt Master Class were asked to design a gallery in a bowl-shaped meadow adjacent to Murcutt’s Riversdale Educational Retreat Center in Bundannon, New South Wales, Australia. During a preliminary site visit, architect and tutor Richard Leplastrier suggested that the primary task of the architect was that of “furnishing with particular purpose this larger room we are in.”²⁶ This conceptualization had a profound impact on subsequent design explorations in the class. Students became more sensitively attuned to the room-like qualities of the meadow, such as its size, complexity, orientation, materiality, structure and quality of light. They also recognized the ability of the room to provide a measure of comfort prior to human intervention, and that through sheltering, screening, brightening or enveloping, it might profoundly shape the feel of the to-be-designed event flows that will serve as the nexus of human activity (Fig. 8.4).

As for the architecture, students began to develop lightweight, ergonomic ‘sets’ of furnishing-like elements, arranged carefully in the pre-existent room. Leplastrier’s metaphorical notion encouraged students to “pull apart” the building, to evaluate critically to what degree spaces such as hallways, restrooms, the café and storage needed to be isolated from the ambient environment. With the exception of the gallery spaces proper (that required more strict temperature and ventilation controls to protect collections housed within), minimal, and sometimes even portable, shade and shelter providing elements in Bundannon’s benign Mediterranean-like climate were deemed acceptable. Conceiving the gallery, not as an object in a field, but rather as an assemblage of activity settings in a spatial continuum including neighboring buildings and the tree-fringed meadow led to (otherwise unrealizable) opportunities for energy savings and material efficiencies, and perhaps most significantly enriched thermal experience and visual engagement of the meadow room.

Furnishing-like building components—window and bay assemblies, awnings and shade elements, and partitions and screens—can be configured to so that they exhibit the same functional possibilities as furnishings. Thoughtfully located, flexible furnishing-like building elements should result in a greater responsiveness to the surrounding room (the environs): *we position our furnishings advantageously given what is there and its dynamic character*. These furnishings serve as the interface between sheltered and preexisting space that accommodate environmental dynamics. Desirable environmental phenomena, cooling summer breezes, winter sun, etc., are admitted, while undesirable phenomena, rain and hail and direct summer sun, are prevented from entering inside, precisely because “the furnishings” allow for repositioning and modification. With Kahn, the Exeter Library project elevates the role of furnishings, integrating them with elements generally considered fixed and primary to a building’s identity primary—where for example desks and windows are configured as an integrated whole. Whereas with Leplastrier, furnishings assume a preeminent role, and fixed walls and other immobile elements become subordinated to tertiary space defining functions.

Leplastrier’s experiences working with Jorn Utzon on the Sydney Opera House in the 1960s and later living and working in Japan for two and a half years profoundly affect his thinking about the economy and “lightness” of the architectural furnishings he would propose that the designer employ, and that he introduces in his own work. Resources are not to be wasted, and yet resourcefulness and restraint are not incompatible with richness of effect and sophisticated performance. Utzon and Leplastrier share an enthusiasm for the traditional Japanese house: “the floor ... is a delicate bridge-like platform. This Japanese platform is like a tabletop. It is a piece of furniture ... here you have the feeling similar to the one you have when standing on a small wooden bridge, dimensioned just to take your weight and nothing more.”²⁷ Set nimbly on this platform are vertical space defining and conditioning elements such as *fusuma* and *shoji* partitions. Occupants replace these seasonally, in response to changing ambient conditions, with lattice-clad partitions employed in summer to promote ventilation and thick rice paper clad partitions in winter to trap heat yet admit light. These screens are moveable and removable *and* absolutely vital to the function and expression of the architecture.

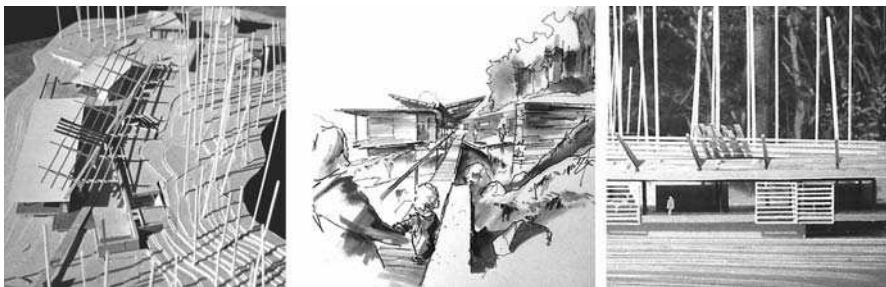


Fig. 8.4 Gallery design as part of the 2001 Glenn Murcutt Master Class (By Brook Muller, Ivelisse Otero, and Craig Tan)

Leplastrier's own pavilion-like one-room house in Lovett Bay, near Church Point and north of Sydney, reveals his passion for the tranquility and reserve of the building traditions of the orient, and his attempt to translate these qualities to a furnishing-like architecture attuned to his own setting. With the Lovett Bay house he has explored perhaps to the fullest "the concept of an adjustable house that can be attuned to climatic circumstances like a yacht adjusting to changes in the wind."²⁸ The simple shed roofs, extending beyond wall planes to shade interior space during the hot summer months, are offset by platforms of varying levels that define distinct settings yet preserve spatial continuity. The slight elevation change—a step—that is the juncture of the main pavilion and the surrounding deck is at once a seat, a frame and a demarcation. A sectional jog that promises opportunities for repose and interaction, clarifies siting intentions and frames views of the Hawkesbury River and layers of "bush" cloaked hills beyond. As with the Japanese house, vertical screens are minimal, light and flexible, providing a basic yet refined environmental control in the "friendly" climate of southeastern Australia. The kitchen and privy are outside.

Mark Johnson maintains in *The Body in the Mind* that:

We almost always superimpose a container schemata on our center-periphery orientation. Where we draw the bounding container will almost always depend on our purposes, interests, perceptual capacities, conceptual system, and values. But we tend to define both our physical and mental identities by virtue of their containment.²⁹

"Bounding" may be preferred over containment in describing ourselves and our surroundings, a boundary being richly capable of expression and orientation, as much a threshold of interaction as division (Fig. 8.5). And so we may adjust Johnson's assertion and posit that as embodied creatures we simultaneously conceive ourselves as exhibiting boundedness and perceive bounding entities in our surroundings. And it is possible for us to adjust our understanding of the breadth of this encircling. Such as with the notion of: "architecture as furnishing this larger room." A built entity is then less a primary boundary and more a (porous) mediator, an open conduit, between our selves and larger entities, rooms that are at once tremendously spatially complex and comforting in their bounding comprehensibility. The metaphor, and the work of Leplastrier informed by such an articulation, encourages radical reappraisal of our situatedness: our architectural furnishings—surfaces

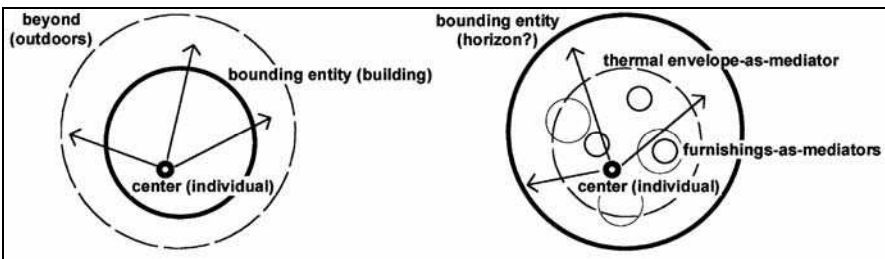


Fig. 8.5 Traditional center-periphery orientation (L) and extension of bounding entity with "architecture-as-furnishings" (R)

as bodily extensions, settings for gathering—are “outfoldings” towards our primary inhabitation, an environment, a screen of trees, a horizon, a landscape under the stars. We simultaneously experience intimacy and close familiarity *and* a “flux of awareness” of the bounding ever-changingness of our surroundings. A fluid, mobile interconnection is intimated as a basic style of human engagement with a milieu. Noting this style as basic recalls Murcutt’s notion of architecture as “encampment” and Karsten Harries’ point that “we cannot really be at home in the world as long as we fail to accept that we are wayfarers, nowhere fully at home.”³⁰

8.5 Design as Hinge: The Architectonic of the Intraworldly

The architectonic brings intraworldly events back on the plane.
—Maurice Merleau-Ponty³¹

If Van der Ryn is prophetic in proposing that “design is a hinge that inevitably connects culture and nature through exchanges of materials, flows of energy and choices of land use,” then the green conceptualizations discussed above should lead to disclosure of and engagement with interactions previously obscured. One important example is how and when sun, wind, and light come into contact with beings as conditioned by the design elements comprise an ecological niche.³² Architecture is to be envisioned as assemblages of networks and flows that concentrate at the loci of human activity, while maintaining a healthy respect for the entire range of life. This requires that not only spatial and formal conditions are acknowledged but other, dynamic qualities as well. Harrison Fraker offers the following point in regard to “passive” or natural climate control strategies:

A complete understanding of the relevance of passive concepts on architectural form goes beyond the formal analysis of visual qualities alone. It requires perception ... of thermal and luminous phenomenon that are not visible in the same sense as architectural space. *Boundaries in the thermal or luminous environment are subtle and not sharply defined.*³³

Whereas *architecture as building* emphasizes an iconic image—singularity and static fixity, the metaphors of *architecture as organism* and *architecture as furnishing a larger room* suggest a dynamic, open, less formal and more fluid style. By demanding recognition of something beyond the work itself these metaphors critically promote the architectural function as the *intertwining of making and world* producing the spatial potentiality for the intertwining of (human) organisms and environment. Architecture becomes a dynamic process rather than a fixed object, responsive to the environment, and an event to be *activated*. An architectural understanding that resonates with Ricoeur’s very notion of metaphor; “to present all things ‘as in act’—such could well be the *ontological* function of its new metaphorical discourse, in which every dormant potentiality of existence appears as blossoming forth, every latent capacity for action as actualized.”³⁴

As I have attempted to argue: (1) by employing metaphors in the design process, consciously or not, architects frame an awareness of certain conditions that influence the direction of future explorations, and (2) “green” metaphors invite greater environmental attunement and therefore are helping reshape practice for the better. The question arises, therefore, as to how such recognition of the influence of metaphors on the greenness of outcomes might have a positive bearing as architects undertake new (building) projects (?). While I offer no definitive answer, given the ecologists Jeremy Jackson’s decree, “ecosystem deterioration needs to be addressed by bold experiments,” I offer below two possible, “boldly experimental” ways the environmentally-concerned designer might proceed to invite new manners of thought and modes of practice (Fig. 8.6).³⁵

8.5.1 Extending and Compounding Green Metaphors: Watermark

Following a trajectory of thought enabling Behnisch & Partner to conflate architecture with organism, we might consider the architectural implications of metaphorical articulations of the organism itself. Merleau-Ponty’s description of the organism as “watermark,” that “global reality is delineated like a watermark” implies fragility and semi-visibility, delicate impression rather than overbearing expression.³⁶ We must remain mindful of the paper on which the watermark is impressed. Perhaps we ought to speak of architecture in a way that takes into consideration its situatedness, resonating with Merleau-Ponty’s metaphor. More than merely considering “the site,” architecture must consider its manner of presence and pressing (mark) upon the earth. What is the character and force of this pressing (the traces of depression)? Can architecture become like the watermark, as with “Merleau-Ponty’s project of foregrounding the body’s value while explaining it as silent, structuring, concealed background?”³⁷ Might we envision architectures of newfound delicacy and “lightness,” of projects that exhibiting even greater weakness and receptive connectivity than the IBN?

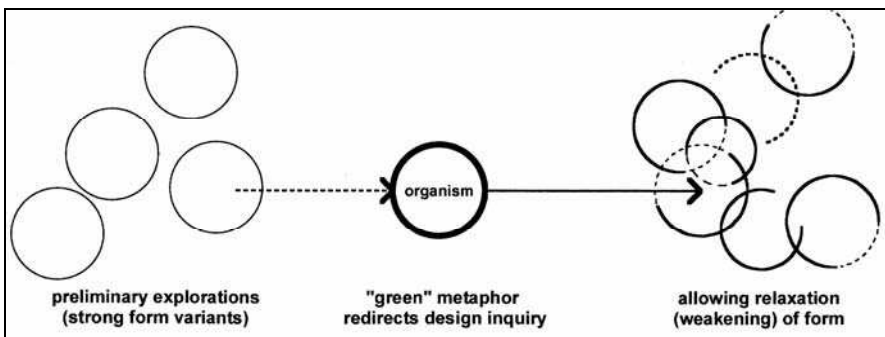


Fig. 8.6 Architecture as Organism: crystallization of intention encourages weakening of form

8.5.2 *Entertaining New Vocabularies: Edge/Corridor Effects*

Research is underway to develop alternative building materials, to advance energy performance, and to more efficiently “harvest” on site resources so as to minimize “off-site” environmental problems. But much more research still has to be accomplished in order to better address site-specific, ecological impacts of what must be recast as “architectural interventions in environments.” While wildlife biologists and landscape ecologists have been developing a greater understanding of the complex of factors that contribute to ecological health and are learning therapeutic techniques to “repair” landscapes, their efforts seldom address the building “footprint.” How will the architect’s articulation of the design task evolve taking up the vocabulary of ecology: concepts such as “peninsular interdigitation,” patch/matrix “breaks,” “edge/corridor effects,” and “core reserves and corridors”?³⁸ What “ecotones,” methodological and spatial overlap zones, might be generated by interpreting the problems on the basis of new and more appropriate vocabulary? What designs will emerge from an architectural ecology that will be beneficial to humans, non-humans, and environmental whole?

8.6 Conclusion

Just as texts are built, so buildings are written.

—Edward Casey³⁹

Works of art that are not remote from common life, that are widely enjoyed in a community, are signs of a unified collective life. But they are also marvelous aids in the creation of such a life.

—John Dewey⁴⁰

Design spatializes our prevailing values (ethos) and prevailing values translate into projects of design in a cyclical process. But at the deeper level of precognitive experience, the lived-body and its milieu, there forms an ambiguous constitutivity of meaning. Events are a circular dialectic of meaning in a spatial field of enactment. The tinkering, exploration, and sheer play within the preliminary stages of design are pervaded by meaning sedimentations of prevailing values. Nevertheless, creativity can lead to new design forms. Creativity requires the virtual body in which the gestural potential of the lived-body can entertain new enactments, whereby the imagination weds the virtual with the perceptual. The creative design in its concretization as built space spatializes new values (Fig. 8.7). These new meanings are the results of the cyclical process of the mutual influence of value and design. The meanings inherent to the newly modified environment are witnessed and enacted by members of the culture, folding within and affecting prevailing value sedimentations, altering the whole context, however slightly. Metaphors are effective agents for injecting creative meanings in this cyclical process, emerging within precipitous moments altering the course of meaning, both for works of architecture and the ethos they signify. A body of work resonates

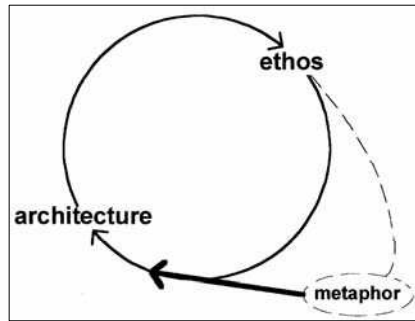


Fig. 8.7 Metaphor (re)entering the ethos/architecture atmosphere

with a body of words and their physiognomy spatializes meaning that is enacted through our situated embodiment.

Care must be taken not to give primacy to any single component in the complex enterprise of architectural design. Nevertheless, it should not be overlooked, as so often it has, that our most widely shared architectural metaphors, taken to be descriptively definitive: a “castle,” a “machine for living in,” and even the very idea of a building itself—are contingent styles of engagement. A primary purpose of metaphor is to bring to light embodied resonances that previous spatializations on the basis of that metaphor kept hidden. But through the incongruities manifest between environmental designs that are fixed, static and sluggish, and our new understanding of the world as active, dynamic, and simultaneously disclosing and concealing the very incongruity of the metaphors, a new awareness concerning the methodology of architecture emerges. Metaphors *animate* architectural discourse; they even motivate the rethinking of the identity of architecture itself.⁴¹ Language intervenes and activates, strict interior conditions and controls loosen, (minor) fluctuations become tolerable even desirable, and dynamic, expressive opportunities emerge. Forms relax (weaken), interactions intensify, clients sail. Architectural innovation begins with the physiognomy of the word by which we see—literally see—value in the making.

Notes

* This chapter is a thorough rework and augmentation of a previously published paper, “Metaphor, Ethos and Environmentally Responsive Design.” I would like to thank Gary Backhaus in particular for his many thoughtful suggestions that have influenced the trajectory of this essay.

1 Bachelard, *Poetics of Space*, 59.

2 Geertz, *Interpretation of Cultures*, 210.

3 My observations as to the impact of metaphorical insight in the architectural design process owes much to the work of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, in particular their book *Metaphors We Live By* in which they offer a systematic framework for clarifying the pervasive influence of metaphors in our thinking.

4 Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 158.

- 5 Ibid., 10.
- 6 Ibid., 18.
- 7 Ibid., 59.
- 8 Ricoeur, *Rule of Metaphor*, 211.
- 9 Shepard, *Coming Home to the Pleistocene*, 60.
- 10 Abram, *Spell of the Sensuous*, 84.
- 11 Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 145.
- 12 Brown, "Desirable Interface Characteristics," 1–2.
- 13 Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 17.
- 14 Ibid., 139.
- 15 Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, 32.
- 16 I would like to thank to Rob Pena, project architect on the Draper Hall project, for furnishing documentation on this and other works by Van der Rijn Architects.
- 17 Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 150.
- 18 Please see my paper "Archipelagoes of Weak Formed Buildings," for a more thorough consideration of the IBN. The description is a firsthand account as I worked for Behnisch & Partner from 1993–1997 and was a lead member of the IBN design team from the competition phase through construction.
- 19 Hansen. "The Embryology of the (In)visible," 239.
- 20 Ibid.
- 21 Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 185.
- 22 Merleau-Ponty, *Nature*, 192.
- 23 Ibid., 193.
- 24 Deleuze and Feliz Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 221.
- 25 Casey, *Fate of Place*, 90.
- 26 For a more comprehensive consideration of the work of Leplastrier and the context of this quote, please see my paper "Lightness of Building."
- 27 Frampton, *Studies in Tectonic Culture*, 247.
- 28 Spence, "Heightened Senses," 70.
- 29 Johnson, *Body in the Mind*, 125.
- 30 Harries, *Ethical Function of Architecture*, 166.
- 31 Merleau-Ponty, *Nature*, 250.
- 32 Ryn and Cowan, *Ecological Design*, 8.
- 33 Fraker, "Formal Speculations on Thermal Diagrams," 104.
- 34 Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 40.
- 35 Jackson, "Historical Overfishing," 636.
- 36 Merleau-Ponty, *Nature*, 207.
- 37 Shusterman, "The Silent, Limping Body of Philosophy," 162.
- 38 See Forman and Godron, *Landscape Ecology*.
- 39 Casey, *Fate of Place*, 310.
- 40 Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 181.
- 41 Ricoeur, *Rule of Metaphor*, 197.

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Introduction II

An Apology Concerning the Importance of the Geography of Imagination

Gary Backhaus

II.1 Sensibility, Geography, and the Arts

‘Sensibility’ is an attitudinal attunement arising through the lived-body’s (the experiential body) interrelational structurings. It irrupts as a primogenital moment of perception involving gestural responses (meanings) enacting a situated embodiment. These precognitive meanings are the genetic source for intellectual, moral, and aesthetic meanings of human consciousness. Through the sensuosity of a work of art, sensibilities provide for the *experience of an imaginative world*. Meanings of *sensuosity* arise through enacting “the feel of” a work of art established in the interrelation of the lived-body and the work. Sensibility is a precognitive *evaluative* moment that prestructures cognitive meanings. Cognitive meanings only meet “the given” on the basis of these embodied precognitive interrelational structurings. To say this in other ways: matter is already pregnant with form; geographicity, the spatializing/spatialized moment of all phenomena, is always meaningful. Sensibility concerns the primogenital source of valuation in embodied experience, which through an attunement of conscious awareness, comes to be expressible in symbolic levels of consciousness.

Consider the 1960s rock anthem, “I Can’t Get No Satisfaction,” written by Keith Richards and Mick Jagger. Its simple and brash riff, its tight and tense rhythm, and its tough-sounding throat-growling vocal manifest a defiant attitude as the lyrics describe situations of dissatisfaction, which the listener imagines (*spatializes*), as the music informs the lived-body’s schema with musically felt gestural attitudes of defiance. This body schema is the geographicity (the earthly character of spatial inscription) of the lived-body’s meaningful enactment of musical experience. The experiences of a whole generation, and perhaps later generations, have resonated with the sensibility of that song (rock anthem). And, as this sensibility resonates with one’s own experiences in the everyday life-world, the song’s sensibility echoes back into experience, articulating a sensibility that prior to its crystallization in a work of art, a rock anthem, was perhaps only unclearly felt. Through the efficacy of the work of art, this sensibility is objectivated into a thematic, concrete, cultural product—an experience of imagination in the world of song (a medium or carrier

of the sensibility), but then this sensibility becomes retrojected back into perceptual experiences of the actual world. The song captures, but also, develops a certain encultured meaning, an embodied spirit—it engenders spatialized/spatializing modalities that cut across simple distinctions of what is real and non-real (perceptual and imaginary in the simplistic positivistic sense). Literary theorist J. Hillis Miller corroborates these notions of the interrelation of the actual and imaginary and of calling into question *the partitioning* of real/non-real: “In order to find out the performative effect of literature in history, we must read that effect afterwards in history itself.”¹ “Art and life” and “the imaginary and the real” are not so easily distinguished in lived-experience.

I own a hand-colored Victorian engraving from 1866 of three frogs “squatting” on the ground facing one another. The sensibilities that arise motivate me to recall Georg Simmel’s discussion of triadic sociation and Erving Goffman’s presentation of the self in the everyday world, from which in association with the engraving, I derive a great degree of amusement.² But, importantly, I really cannot put into words the meaning I derive from it, for the amusement arises within “the feel of the pictured” as my embodiment interrelates with the depicted situation in the artwork. The frogs’ eyes and their postures remind me of being dressed for some vacuous social event in which they maintain a polite distance (the frogs are colored burnt orange, charcoal grey, and charcoal brown respectively), but in an embodied way. It is the felt gesture, an attitude of the lived-body—through which I experience this meaning. I do not construct this thought and project it onto the engraving; rather the felt sense engendered in a body schema has already prepared it—as long as consciousness attunes itself to the embodied meanings that autochthonously emerge. Sensibilities are to be investigated from the standpoint of precognitive embodiment, even though we become aware of them through conscious attunement to the embodied/felt experience. Aesthetic attunement allows for becoming a veritable witness to the sensibilities of a work of art. Attunement is not a passive affair; it is an active preparedness to be open to experience. Attunement allows consciousness to become aware of sensibilities that arise in the experience.

One of the basic insights of the co-editors of this volume is our concept of geographicity—all phenomena exhibit a spatial moment. The investigation of the *geographicity inherent to lived-experience itself* requires the investigation of sensibility. It is the geographicity (spatial moment) of lived-experience that is the key to understanding the *interconnection* of perception and imagination. At the level of the precognitive meanings of sensibility, experience of the imaginary in the arts, and perceptual experience of the actual, cannot be partitioned. This is why art is existentially relevant, and it can be so in such a dramatic way, because it is capable of lifting us out of the habitual world of the everyday, teaching us to experience life in a new way. Art is not to be an intellectualized experience; it involves sensibility. It also involves sensuousity, but sensibility emphasizes the evaluative moment (within the sensuous), a critical moment already prepared in the precognitive. This critical moment is why art can so insightfully teach us about life; if it were merely sensuous it would be merely vulgar entertainment (a limiting concept of pure

sensuousness without sensibility). I am not here making a moral turn; I am treating sensibility as a precognitive estimation of an experience's worth, a measure of life.

Sensibilities arise in the immediate enactment of a *spatializing/spatialized ambiguity*—the *field of perception*. It is important to investigate this ambiguity, for it also establishes the necessity of taking seriously the geography of imagination. The interpretation of the ambiguous field—the ambiguous interrelation between the imaginative world that is presented through the artwork and the encountering lived-body, which involves sensibilities—is behaviorally displayed through the dynamic posturings of body schemata. Schemata *enact* the *co-constituted* spatialized/spatializing meanings in the aesthetic acts of art experience. The co-constitutive agencies are the lived-body and its milieu. Geographicity is delimited in this volume to the context of the geographical as it is objectivated in the arts: landscape patterns (e.g., momentary situations in places) entities (rivers and city blocks), and elements (water and air), to name a few features. In fact all scapings (the geographicity of perceived environs)—smellscales, soundscales, body-scales, inscales, homescales, escapes, childscapes, deathscapes, and otherscales—geographically spatialize and are spatialized by (sensible displays in human behaviors) human existence.³ Our treatments concerning geographical sensibilities in the chapters of this volume are thematically displayed in various arts: in photography, map cartouches, landscape painting, aesthetic gardens, *belle lettres*, etc.

II.2 Geographies of the Imagination and Science

This introduction presents a philosophical argument in which the functions of the imagination are made the focus. The argument presented here is that sensation, perception, imagination are inextricably woven together such that there is a continuum and interrelation between “actual” and “imaginary” (virtual) worlds. This continuum and interrelation prepares for a further argument that an adequately conceived, human/cultural geography cannot simply treat the geography of imagination as a *separate* subdiscipline. The recognition of this actual/virtual interrelation along with the ambiguous field of perception calls into question certain still potent prejudices concerning what principles and what contents are to be counted as constitutive of a veritable *scientia*. The partitioning of a perceptual geography of the real, from an imaginative geography of the arts, is based on epistemological and ontological assumptions that must be called into question. Art, engendering the presentation of an imaginary world, is in *interrelation* with the “actual world” on the basis of lived experience. An adequate lived-geography must take into account the *interrelation* of the perceptual and imaginary in contexts of meaning. Humanistic/cultural geography as a *scientia*, must take seriously the role of the arts in geographical meanings, whether or not it takes into account geographical experience, “lived-geography,” or remains object-focused. The taking serious of the geographical in the arts resists empirical reductions to “the actual” or positivistic

reductions to “facts.” These reductions cannot adequately account for geographical meanings of the life-world. If a work of art depicts a particular sky as “red,” the “real fact” that the sky is not red may not capture the veritable geographical existential meaning, of which the painted red sky may disclose. Art discloses a meaning uncovering existential truth that may not be established through an “accurate” depiction of the sky, whether blue or grey. And how is existential truth less “actual” than the “real” physical conditions of the sky? A reduction to the natural, as “the real,” is an abstraction, and taken exclusively as the realm of the epistemic, is a distortion in the least, and can be critically argued as erroneous. In terms of humanistic geography, existential meanings must be accounted for just as the “natural” or “objectively quantifiable” so-called “facts.” But this argument advanced here holds, if indeed existential meanings are not deemed to be psychologistic/subjectivistic, which precisely is the strategy of modern philosophical thought. The moderns miss both the (subject-object) ambiguity of the perceptual field and the interrelation of perception and imagination—their epistemics took the routes of either pure reason (rationalists) or pure sense data (empiricists) and partitioned the knower “in-here” from the known “out-there” (the Cartesian paradigm).

Let us turn to J. Douglas Porteous’ now classic treatment of geographical imagination, *Landscapes of the Mind*, in order to initiate the philosophical orientation of this volume.

Although the Renaissance microcosmic view purports to be a two-way vision, it is, in fact, rather one-sided. The emphasis appears to be on the body as a model for the universe; the reverse relationship is neglected. In this chapter, in contrast, I hope to demonstrate that this body:world, microcosm:macrocosm, where body components are metaphorically matched in detail with landscape features; that the metaphor is, in fact, *an interacting system*, whereby landscape is seen as body but, also, body is regarded as landscape. [emphasis added]⁴

It is this metaphor, or more broadly this symbolization, which arises on the basis of the interaction between the lived-body and its milieu (world), that is the guiding structure for philosophical grounding the notion of geographical imagination. Porteous solicits this structure in his chapter, “Bodyscapes,” whereby for his purposes he remains at the level of language use, but this structure is of deeper importance. While Porteous specifically concentrates on metaphor for the purposes of literary description and critical axiology, my concern is to relate the body:landscape structure to an epistemological/ontological discussion. Body:landscape (taking landscape to refer to the material shape of the environs with all of its appearing qualities as well as its existential meanings) is not merely an occasion for metaphor or symbolic relations. Body:landscape is one of the fundamental structuring relations of human perceptual experience, which, in turn, prefigures higher cognition. Maurice Merleau-Ponty shows us how the interactive system of lived-body and its milieu is an ambiguous structuring, spatially manifesting as the field of perception.⁵ The ambiguity of the perceptual field allows it to be said, that not only is the landscape experienced by the lived-body, but also that the landscape experiences itself through the lived-body. Moreover, the body is experienced

as landscape, and the landscape is experienced as body. Due to this reversibility the co-constitutive agencies of the ambiguous field are themselves ambiguously polarized. The ambiguity of polarization means that each pole functions as both quasi-subject and quasi-object in the constitution of sense/meaning. What sounds absurd—that the “landscape experiences”—is not so absurd if we can come to realize that the field of perception is neither solely of our making as transcendental subjects, nor is it the result of the mechanical bumpings (causality) of things (objects). There is both agency and receptivity of human embodiment and the EarthBody (my term for the constitutive agency of the earth; it parallels the difference between lived-body and body as a physical thing) by which the meaningful worldly-context is made visible. The perceptual field is a primogenital structure and it is thoroughly ambiguous. The field is meaningfully displayed through body schemata, gestures that display, partly visible and partly invisible, this ambiguity. So that this ambiguous structuring does not seem “occult,” let me illustrate. When I go to sit down, the body schema forms the posture of sitting (*ek-stasis*), but this formative process involves in-corporating the shape of the chair in its gesture. The gesture is an ambiguous behavior that is co-constituted by the chair and the lived-body. Neither do I think the chair posture nor is my body causally bumped like a material object (reflexology) to form the posture. Because the lived-body intends the world, but at the same time is of the world (Merleau-Ponty sees it as a fold in Being), behavior makes the world visible to itself. The lived-body “in-corporates” the morphology of the chair into its body schema as it performs (intends) the sitting-gesture, which is an *ek-stasis to-the-world*—sitting-down is a spatializing/spatialized event pattern. A further development of Merleau-Ponty’s notion of the behavioral structuring of lived-body and milieu is Edward S. Casey’s translation of its ambiguity as the collusion of the lived-body and place—*implacement*—consisting of the fundamental structures of dimensionality and directionality emerging through embodied experience.⁶ The structure of, for example, “the ahead,” is formed on the basis of the ambiguity arising between the lived-body’s asymmetrical embodiment (having a front/back) and the EarthBody’s horizontality. Neither subjective nor objective, the ahead is a qualitative meaning—and a fundamental source for much symbolization.

Modern philosophy, which was unable to recognize the epistemological and ontological ambiguity of the lived-body and its milieu and the primacy of interrelationality, began with the subject/object structure of cognition, which lent itself to untenable mind-body dualisms. In the philosophy of the moderns, the subject/object structure becomes substantively partitioned, leading to nineteenth-century dichotomy of transcendental philosophical speculation versus the material causality of natural science. The hard sciences were to provide empirically demonstrable evidence of hidden causal principles and to support the naturalistic foundation for reductions that secure this evidence. The drive to operationalize evidence would develop into logical positivism, which argued that most of the history of philosophy/ideas literally is nonsense, precisely because it could not be operationalized. And this kind of sentiment found its way into the scientific disciplines, which attempted to expunge or at least partition those forms of inquiry that did

not live up to these naturalistic notions of what constitutes science. This of course was a twentieth-century movement; we live in the wake of these scientific crystallizations.

II.3 The Cartesian Paradigm: Banishing the Imagination from Scientia

The Renaissance notion of “Man writ large” degenerates into the subjective starting point for Descartes’ modernism. I say “degenerates,” because for the Renaissance thinker the mathematical ratios were a manifestation in the perceived world, which expressed rational beauty, whereas for Descartes, the ratios indicated a quantitative extension of a material universe “behind” the appearances—Descartes’ “double-world theory.” Descartes aggrandizes the purely rational thinking of the pure, thinking thing (immaterial substance) and demeans all other thinking as merely subjective (issuing from its interaction with the body-machine), non-scientific experiential distortions—of no epistemic value. It is the “perspective drawing,” as it is created in the Renaissance, which is given scientific status; it is corroborated by the Cartesian theory of vision, a theory which emblemizes the causally apprehended mechanical motions of material atoms resulting in perspectival perception—a passive recording imprinted in the brain. By way of a homunculus-functioning gland the immaterial mind interacts with the mechanical body. The two-way interactionism between opposing substances involves a bifurcation of human life into a disembodied immaterial rational consciousness and a material body-machine. If we want to understand reality, according to Descartes, we must stick to an analytic geometric science of causation in order to understand the mechanical bumpings of the non-perceivable atoms, or, we merely deal with the subjective world—the appearing, non-epistemic life-world of human qualitative experience. The perspectival drawing, discovered in the Renaissance is the one true art for it accurately captures the manner in which material reality causes the body-machine to function for vision. In other words, the representation in the mind of the recorded sense data is accurately objectivated in the mathematically molded perspectival representation.

In terms of science, imagination introduces error and thus art that does not conform to modern perspectivism is outside the realm of epistemic value, which means that in general, art has no epistemic value. In terms of scientia, art is emblematic of the errors introduced by the imagination—it misrepresents.

In his critical discussion of Descartes’ *Dioptrics*, Merleau-Ponty states, “It is the breviary of thought that wants no longer to abide in the visible and so decides to construct the visible according to a model-in-thought.”⁷ Descartes does not describe vision; he *thinks* about how it works. But “no symbolic form ever functions as a stimulus.... The perspective of the Renaissance ... is only a particular case, a date, a moment in a poetic information of the world which continues after it.”⁸

The perspectival techniques of the Renaissance are “false only in so far as they pretended to bring an end to painting’s quest and history, to found once and for all an exact and infallible art of painting.”⁹ Instead, all art involves creative expression, an existential meaning that engenders a mode of lived-body/world interpretation.

To study geographical imagination from the modern scientific paradigm is to study human qualitative life, a non-epistemic field. *Unless* indices for cause and effect can be established, which would put science in touch with the real mechanical quantitative world behind the world of appearances, explaining the “pathognomia” of the imagination (geographical or otherwise), research is not in the realm of science. Descartes states: “I consider this power of imagining which is in me, differing as it does from the power of understanding, is not a necessary constituent of my essence.”¹⁰ To what substance, according to Descartes, does imagination belong? “When the mind understands, it in some way turns towards itself and inspects one of the ideas which are within it; but when it imagines, it turns toward the body.”¹¹ Inherited Christian negative sentiments concerning body agency are taken up into Cartesian science. Although modern philosophers after Descartes have written much on the excellences of imagination, Cartesianism remained the unchallenged paradigm in terms of the parameters and goals of scientia. The proper employment of the imagination has been relegated to the arts and to speculation, but it is to be constrained in discovering “what is.” How humans imagine the world and concretize those imaginings into art just has nothing to do with apprehending reality, the realm of science. So, spatial imagination, imaginative geography as *presented* in the arts, is “other” in terms of the focus of scientific geography. This sentiment still prevails in our institutional practices, although sediment in hegemonic paradigms, uncritically presupposed. The geography of the imagination is a kind of soft science, something to do with cultural studies, treated as if such studies are just not as important as the so-called “hard sciences.”

It would seem that a discussion of Cartesianism is limited to historical relevance. But the paradigm pervades the history of modern Western scientia in a way that even now does not allow for a proper framing of the research field of humanistic/cultural geography, even by those who find it important. Some geographical practitioners certainly have accomplished much in the research of the arts, still, the geography mainstream has yet to integrate the “real” and the “imaginary”—*a new vision must be advanced*. But from this lingering Cartesianism, the metaphors concerning body-landscape (as studied by Porteous) and all landscape symbolizations as concretized in the arts only receive scientific status when indeed the science of physiological psychology, reflexology, can *explain* their causes in the human psyche. Geographical imagination as displayed in the arts is not a central concern for a scientific geography, because the causal mission of science requires physiological psychology to study imagination, including the geographical. According to such a scientific paradigm, the geography of the imagination cannot reach the status of science. It is the business of the humanities and the arts, or a geographer who works in an esoteric subfield. A geography that studies cultural objects produced through imagination, is a geography of “stories,” which gains

some status as science if it proceeds positivistically, gathering facts. A geographer who does not limit his own imagination is one who produces nothing worthy of science, perhaps ideologies, but not veritable knowledge. As I describe this “ideal type,” it is probably the case that few geographers would totally subscribe to it, but most are influenced in various degrees by it, whether consciously or not, in current sophisticated polemics concerning methodology.

II.4 The Relevance of the Geographies of the Imagination

In this introduction I explicate the central importance of geographical imagination for humanistic/cultural geography and all disciplines as they relate to geographicity. Geographicity, the spatial moment of every phenomenon, is a spatiality that is not a geometric quantitative index, but always a qualitative manifestation—an inherently meaningful, spatial event of the life-world. The life-world can be said to be the so-called “real” world and there is no world behind the appearances that is more real. Quantitative, explanatory science deals with life-world abstractions, and not some supra-reality. Likewise the philosophical speculation of the nineteenth century, the metaphysics of subjectivity, attempts to find some foundational ultimate meaning, but looks for an agency “behind” the world. “Modernism’s attempt to excavate to Nature, or History, or the Mode of Production, or some other great substratum underlying the ephemera of superficial experience is to be left behind: It is art (language, discourse, text) that constitutes the billowing ‘reality’ of human experience, and there is no substratum.”¹² So, as a transdisciplinary who focuses on geographicity and makes the geographical turn, that is, deals with spatialized/spatializing *meanings*, my research exhibits a phenomenon’s contextual efficacy, a scientific legitimacy that can be trained on the arts. But more than a legitimate study, no study of the geographical real is complete in itself—it must necessarily include the imaginative, which is objectivated in the arts. Thus, a geography of the arts is not only necessary, but I will argue is also interrelated with, e.g. historical geography, a moment of all human/cultural geography.

But first, imagination, as a modality of human experience, has to be understood as a central component of perception. The conscious act of imagining is a mode of experience along a continuum of which perception is also a necessary moment within an act-complex. When I perceive, functions of imagination are operative, when I imagine, functions of perception are operative. By understanding this, products of the imagination, then, cannot be treated as an expendable context of research, merely an enrichment or subtopic to humanistic geography, but rather must be integrated in a more extensive research that envisions its necessary importance toward a deeper, more rigorously contextual, multivalenced, and thorough approach.

Through the interacting system of the lived-body and landscape arises the perceptual field, which immediately, autochthonously irrupts as an ambiguous gestalt. The ambiguity of the precognitive realm means that it is neither reducible to the

constitutive agency of transcendental consciousness nor to the causal agency of a thing. If we want to use the concept of causality, it is one of circular causality, and if we want to use the concept of constitutive agency, it is one of interrelated co-constitutivity between the lived-body and the EarthBody. The EarthBody is not a Cartesian machine, but rather a morphological context of constitutive agency, contributing to the organizational meaning of human life. All spatializing/spatialized events are meaningful only on the basis of the relation between these qualitative morphologies—embodied active/passive agencies of meaning. The lived-body and EarthBody are an interrelated system, through which human meaning arises, generating the development of human life in society, culture, etc. To the non-philosopher, this claim might not sound like much, whether “on or off track.” But for several hundreds of years, philosophers dealt with the epistemological pseudo-problem of how the *in-here* of consciousness gets *out-there* in the external world—presuppositions that molded western *scientia*. And, the notion of a closed-universe based on the principle of linear causality led to many erroneous reductive scientific theories. But embodied consciousness is interrelated to an earthly-context (open horizon) such that the meaning that arises cannot be attributed to one or the other, but to the *intertwining* of both.

It is perception itself that denies the efficacy of Descartes’ dualism, calling into question both the natural science of material causality and the philosophical science of pure transcendental meaning. If the perceptual field is ambiguous, neither purely subjective nor purely objective, then Cartesianism dualism is foiled, dissolving the partitioned metaphysical realms of material and immaterial substance. But what about imagination, is not this always in the realm of the “subjective”—the merely fanciful? If this is the case, then the study of geographical imagination is of marginal value. But “mere fancy” is only one modality of the imagination, a minor function. Showing not only how imagination is operative in perception, but also how perception is important to the operation of the imagination, links imagination to the same fundamental ambiguities. By doing this, I hope to show the importance of the study of geographical imagination, and further the geographical imagination in the arts. For the arts are not merely fanciful displays of subjectivity, but rather constitute an important moment of existence, constituted by and constitutive of, the body:landscape intertwining. Without understanding geographical imagination in the arts, one’s idea of a geography of the “real world” is highly compromised, for an important irruption of meaning is objectivated through human creativity in the arts. And, these meanings are contextualized in the life-world as a geographical efficacious production. I first turn to the philosophy of Merleau-Ponty, which for the purposes at hand is informed by the commentator, James B. Steeves, who specifically writes about Merleau-Ponty’s doctrine of imagination.¹³

II.5 Merleau-Ponty's Doctrine of the Imagination

The behavior of the lived-body is not the result of a causal chain of events and it is not the result of conscious thought directing it—both incongruous sides of Cartesian dualism. Behavior is an interpretation, but an immediate one, by which the world is manifest to the lived-body in terms of open possibilities. The body schema functions as a global organization of the lived-body that is formed through the ambiguous interrelation of the qualitative morphology of the world (Earth-Body) as given to the senses and the morphological structure of the lived-body. This awareness is anonymous, prior to personal and cognitive reflection. The body schema is the gestural response, an interpretation of the existential situation. As already illustrated, for the body to sit down, it must form in its schema the shape of the chair, such that the schema ambiguously “in-corporates” the meaning of the chair in its “ek-static” gesture to-the-world. The lived-body involves sedimentations or habits, the *customary body*, by which it expressively negotiates its situation.

The imagining moment of the lived-body involves the *virtual body*. “The virtual body is an imaginative ability to consider alternative uses of the body and to assume different perspectives from which to observe a situation.”¹⁴ The virtual body allows for the enrichment of the body schemata such that the customary body can change and develop. The virtual body also allows for entertaining alternative positions/perspectives in a situation/scene. The virtual body allows for us to image “what it would be like” if we changed places, postures, or if objects were different than their actual presentation. The “what it would be like” is brought to various levels of conscious attention, manifest in ghost gestures informing the body schema.

“The body schema and the virtual body as two poles of a dialectic constitute what might be called the *imagining body*.” [emphasis mine]¹⁵ “This imaginative capacity of the body is ... responsible for an individual’s ability to express and communicate.”¹⁶ The imaginative body allows for the openness, the freedom for expression. It negotiates between the nearly “mechanical customary body of habituation and the virtual body of possibility such that an expression can be brought into being.” This is what Merleau-Ponty is asserting when he replaces Descartes’ “I think” with the anonymous lived-body’s intentionality of “one can.” The perceptual phenomenon intertwined with the imagining body allows for possible operations in the world; one is provided with possible directions through the virtuality entertained through imaginative projections. The gestural meanings of the body, far more communicative than we recognize in Westernized “dis-embodiment,” are the source for speech—language is the sedimentation of gestural sound expression. Descartes believed that language issued from pure mind—dogs have the apparatus, but do not talk, for they are merely machines. But, they do “talk,” an embodied expressive language, and embodied auditory gestures are the meaningful source for the generation of conventional language in the human organism—it is our “first” language.

Fancy can be considered one end of the imagination-perception continuum and the habituated, customary perception is at the other end. But even at the ends of the continuum, imagination and perception remain interrelational.

Fancy and perception involve different ways of the body's making space, along a continuum of possibilities of embodiment. The difference between the spaces of imagination and perception concern the focus of the subject, and not a difference between the objects of experience. While not being bound to actual experience, fanciful thinking is still bound to the virtual body and its relation to reality, providing the imager with the basic orientation and groundedness that are necessary for experiencing an alternative world.... The connection to the real world remains.... While fancy focuses on an alternative world, directing itself away from the habitual body and everyday activities ... perception remains focused on the world at hand with virtual possibilities persisting on the margins of experience.¹⁷

In habitual expression, virtualities are very much in the margins. Nevertheless, "qualities offer virtual modes of embodiment that we slip on by virtually extending our body in imaginative ways."¹⁸ And thus, the imagining body is necessary for human expression: it is exactly why the body is not a machine. There is a communion between the imagining body and the perceptual phenomenon, allowing for an existential response. An existential response is based on an interpretation of the situation, a framework by which we gear into the world on the basis of a not yet present, a virtuality to which we aim, or project a possible future experience.

On the other hand, in fanciful imagining, certain structures from perceptual experience remain presupposed; it is impossible to imagine, even in fanciful imagining, without them. Two fundamental structures are spatial level and a basic directionality. Spatial level manifests through the lived-body's relation to the horizon whereby equilibrium is established. Spatial level allows for basic directionality, the fundamental orientation of the lived-body within its milieu, establishing the meaning of its postures and gestures. These structures are operative in, for example, a dream as well. Symbolic meanings are attached to "falling through the air" or "climbing a mountain" on the basis of the spatiality of the lived-body that maintains a general form of existence. In fanciful imagining, the everyday is marginalized allowing for the fictional world to be enacted. The virtual body manages the transition, for it assumes the fictional body of the fancy while ready to serve the perceptual body that remains in the everyday.¹⁹ I can fancy an alien world while drying the dishes, for ghost gestures can wave through my body as I do something else, e.g. feeling the ghost gesture of making a fist while typing.

II.6 The Artwork

"What is common in every artwork is the way that it uses the imagining body to extend the experience of perception to a heightened sense of beauty and creativity."²⁰ The "real" and "imaginary" realms are distinguished on the basis of

whether or not the imagining body frees virtuality or constrains it for possible gearing in the world. By freeing the virtual body an imaginary world can be entertained, but it is a world that can only arise by conforming to spatiality as a general mode of existence that is shared by perception and imagination. In all aesthetic experience, the lived-body plays its role as the context of the experience. Embodiment allows for a general mode of being that allows for the artistic style to manifest. The work presents the creator's style of embodiment; it serves to present a way of seeing. It is not so much the presentation of an imaginary world as it is a new way of engendering experience, which lights up a non-habitualized interrelation, an enactment of gestures promoting new meanings.

II.6.1 Literature

It would seem that literature, requiring the activity of reading has not much to do with embodiment. But the reader, indeed, due to absorption in the fictional world, inhabits it through the characters' experiences. So, there still remains an embodied contact with a world, the reader is not merely in thought, but rather within the virtual body as it explores the meanings of a world. These meanings are experienced "by the reader's imaginative positioning of the virtual body in the modes of embodiment suggested by the fictional characters."²¹

That perception and imagination are activities along a continuum, founding of the idea that "the text of the novel and the real landscape may be thought as elements in a series."²² There are many forms of mediated presentations—*re-presentations*. "The landscape of a particular region is really there, with its hills, towns, roads, rivers, paths, its particular forms of cultivation and building, its special local customs. That culture is rooted in the earth. Its landscape may be visited, photographed, mapped. A novel may be the transposition of such real country into ... a country of literature ... a literary space."²³

The so-called real world is a fiction of stasis, for what is now is in process, constituted by the intermingling of imaginary and perceptual moments. "Novels do not simply ground themselves on landscapes that are already there, made by prior activities of building, dwelling, and thinking. The writing of a novel, and the reading of it, participate in those activities. Novels aid in making the landscapes that they apparently presuppose as already made and finished. Mississippi is partly what it is because of Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha novels. Dorset has been made what it is in part by way of Hardy's Wessex, Salisbury by way of Trollope's Barset novels, London by Dickens, Paris by Balzac and Proust, and so on."²⁴

Landscape always presupposes human meaning, and as such, requires an imaginative moment. "The landscape is not a pre-existing thing in itself. It is made into a landscape, that is, into a humanly meaningful space, by the living that takes place within it. This transforms it both materially, as by names, or spiritually, as by the ascription of some collective value to this or that spot."²⁵ The artistic work takes up landscape meaning for its own sake.

The landscape exists as landscape only when it has been made human in an activity of inhabitation that the writing of the novel repeats or prolongs. Causer and caused, first and second, change places in a perpetually reversing metalepsis. If the landscape is not prior to the novel and outside it, then it cannot be an extratextual ground giving the novel referential reality.... If the landscape is inside the novel, then it is determined by it and so cannot constitute its ground. The same thing may be said of the relation of any two members of the series: novel and map; real map and imaginary map; landscape and map. Each is both prior to the other and later than it, causer and caused, inside it and outside it at once.²⁶

Porteous states:

Landscapes are of varying value to the novelist. He may create wholly imaginary landscapes whose terrain, climate, and life forms are essential for the working out of the plot. ... Landscapes may be expressly used for symbolic purposes, where specific places may be identified with the stages of life's journey or where archetypal symbols such as sea and forest are used to convey meaning.... Or landscapes may be used more generally, to reflect the novelist's perception of the human condition, so that the reader remains unsure whether environments create or condition the characters, whether the congruence between character and landscape is symbiotic, causal or coincidental. Most writers use all these modes.²⁷

Porteous' ultimate goal "is the re-enchantment of the world and the redemption of mankind from an ultimately self- and world-effacing way of life."²⁸ Reenchantment involves the healthy advance of the imagination. Perhaps it is art and not science that will help us find a therapeutic relation with the earth and bring us back from our uprootedness, alienation, and debasements that so characterize the prior and the present centuries.

Thus, we have been led to the notion that the arts provide a beneficial function; they reveal to us the human condition and as such open up existential options to us. Re-enchantment means the vindication of the geography of the imagination as a necessary aspect of scientia. If indeed, we engage in scientia in order to improve the world.

II.6.2 Painting

In the experience of a painting, the virtual body inhabits its space, providing embodiment with the gestural attitudes through which it was created. The painter's style as manifest in the painting reverberates through the body schema, providing the observer with the painter's own embodied experiences. For to create the painting, the virtual body takes up the attitudes that interrelate it with the "subject," and this virtual body is precognitive, anonymous and capable of resonating through another. It is interesting how in ordinary language, subject is now used as the thematic content of the painting, for epistemologically it does engender agency. The painter's painting is the product of the field of his perception, which arises through the lived-body's interrelation with the subject of the work, according to his skill and attitudinal projection. The attitudinal projection (lived-body intentionality) is a

combination of the virtual body taking an interpretive stance and the artist's skill. However, "the actions most proper to him—those gestures, those paths which he alone can trace and which will be revelations to others ...—to him they seem to emanate from the things themselves, like patterns of the constellations."²⁹ But the result is the intermingling ambiguity. "Essence and existence, imaginary and real, visible and invisible—a painting mixes up all categories in laying out its oneiric universe of carnal essences, of effective likenesses, of mute meanings."³⁰

Kenneth Clark, in his classic book, *Landscape Into Art*, organizes the history of landscape painting into genres reflected in the titles of his chapters. Medieval art, which is the outcome of Christian philosophy, presents *landscapes of symbols*. "It was the power of immediately substituting an idea for an object, or an object for an idea, which allowed mediaeval man to accept without question ... unconvincing equivalents."³¹ Another context is the *landscape of fact*, of which Clark writes, "Facts become art through love, which unifies them and lifts them to a higher plane of reality; ... this all embracing love is expressed by light."³² Quoting John Ruskin, Clark distinguishes three classes of perception. "The man who perceives rightly, because he does not feel, and to whom the primrose is very accurately the primrose, because he does not love it. Then, secondly, the man who perceives wrongly, because he feels, and to whom the primrose is anything else than a primrose.... And then, lastly, there is the man who perceives rightly in spite of his feelings, and to whom the primrose is for ever nothing else than itself."³³ The first type degenerates from art to picture-making, confined to topography. With the *landscape of fantasy*, expressionistic intentions come to the fore. Whereby "everything . . . is designed to have the most violent and immediate effect upon the emotions."³⁴ In the context of ideal landscape, the concept was that "both in content and design landscape must aspire to those higher kinds of painting which illustrate a theme, religious, historical, or poetic."³⁵ The *natural landscape* context comes from the ability of an artist to base his art on a single dominating idea, and "his ability to carry this idea through, to enrich it, to expand it, but never to lose sight of it."³⁶

II.7 Spacings and Human Creativity

The best source in phenomenological literature for establishing an apology for the geography of the imagination is Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka's doctrines of ontopoiesis and the phenomenology of the human condition. With the doctrine of ontopoiesis Tymieniecka establishes *life itself* as carrying constitutive agency. Husserl grants constitutive agency to transcendental consciousness and then in later works to the world horizon, and Merleau-Ponty grants constitutive agency to the ambiguous field of perception, which involves the lived-body and its milieu. But, Tymieniecka's ontopoiesis contextualizes these moments in a broader system of constitutivity that includes much more. Her phenomenology corroborates the new scientific paradigms of open dynamic systems and self-organizing systems. The

difference is that she remains true to the phenomenological language of meanings while these sciences develop the language of systems.

According to the tenets of ontopoiesis, life progressively develops and expands through establishing levels or stations of beingness, which are nodes of inter-connecting principles that allow for life to exfoliate on the basis of the gestalt organization of those principles. Exfoliation is an individuating process whereby individuated forms of life carry and sustain the principles that are the ontopoietic agency for their existence. Dynamic modifications (chaos) in these levels of beingness lead to further levels of organization, from which new stations (genera and species) emerge that are maintained through the exfoliation of newly evolved individuated beings constituted through particular ontopoietic principles of life. In other words, individuated beings, self-organizing systems, are to be understood phenomenologically (in Tymieniecka's sense) through the constitutive agency of life, concerning which they are to be understood as "occasions" for life to carry out its evolutionary progressions of organization.

However, at the human station of life principles emerge that are radically new. Life, which is the creative agency of its own development, bestows to the self-organizing system called human being, a creative function. In ontopoietic evolutionary terms, this means that *human life is bequeathed creative constitutive agency*, the consequences of which is that humanity through its creative agency establishes the levels of life that we call society and culture. All other levels of ontopoiesis are maintained by the exfoliated individuated beings that are merely the occasion for life's constitutive activities. But at the human level, society and culture are levels created by the human being, not merely as the occasion of life's constitutive agencies, but rather as a potent agency that "pilots" life.

This is an extremely brief sketch of a philosophy as sophisticated and difficult as e.g., Whitehead's process metaphysics, but this description is sufficient to begin to relate it to our project at hand.

As mentioned, principles of life form a node in the dynamic progression of life whereby individuated forms are exfoliated. These individuated forms are self-organizing systems (Tymieniecka calls them "centers"). But let us not mistake this individuation with the "atomic" notion of the moderns. Tymieniecka writes, "How intriguing it sounds, when we think of it: 'inhabiting' the earth, 'dwelling' upon the earth—as if the living being, the human being too, and earth were two separate spheres, the one of individual life, the other of an indifferent 'entity,' a planet."³⁷ "The human being is a center [self-organizing system] from which his/her individual and personal concerns spread, establishing it within the unity-of-everything-there-is-alive."³⁸ There is a fundamental dynamis of energy exchange with the "unity" that is directed in part by individuated self-organizing organisms (the redistribution of forces on the basis of sustaining the individual's life). Using my terminology, the "geographicity" of this exchange is what Tymieniecka calls, spacing.

Spacing is the "inner/outer" exchange of energy between the organism and its milieu (the self-organizing individuated entity and the unity-of-everything-there-is-alive). Tymieniecka prefers the process term 'spacing' over the term 'space'

because ontopoietic meanings concretely manifest in a dynamic process whereby lifeforms establish their life—"spacing" and "placing" as such constitute one of the primogenital modalities of life."³⁹ It is possible now to see Merleau-Ponty's doctrine of the body schema as the spacing of the lived-body. But spacing involves the need for a richer discussion. The "boundary" of the individuated being is not its own skin, but rather its spacing in the depths of its "soul" as well as its spacings-in-the-world. Spacing involves redistributing the flux of energy forces, or, in phenomenological language, constituting its existential life through spatializing/spatialized events. The boundary of energy exchange remains fluid; it is an ever enacting process. It is through these spatializing/spatialized events that humans establish homes, gardens, etc.

Tymieniecka's doctrine of creativity does not place creativity at the pinnacle of intellection; creativity emerges in the hidden depths of the human soul. The creative imagination (the *imaginatio creatrix*) is the primogenital node of the human soul that transforms nonhuman meanings into human meanings. The creative imagination is the catalyst for establishing the new station of life—the human station. The human station is thoroughly interrelated with other stations, which means that it takes up what is given at "prior" levels of organization and reorganizes them. Tymieniecka maintains that three interrelated human senses emerge at this station of ontopoiesis: the aesthetic, moral, and intellective sense. These ontopoietic functions allow for the social and cultural organizations of life to manifest (concretely through spacings). But once meanings are established, they become sediment into a constituted system—meanings "already there," such that human life need not be creative at every moment. In fact, most acts of human life do not return to the depths of the human soul, the *imaginatio creatrix*. Human life must establish the habitual and customary establishing a sedimentation or context of already constituted meanings. Creative acts entail, and creative people must, engage in an existential risk, for the de-structuring of accepted meanings in order to reach those depths is similar to the de-structuring of the psyche experienced by psychotics. The significances produced by creative people, however, emerge with a new organization, which is objectivated through some modality—a form of art.

It is in this sense that we can frame the importance of the geography of the imagination. The creative acts of human beings involve spacings, and it is these spacings that further the creative development of humankind. These creative spacings issue forth from the *imaginatio creatrix*, the focal point in which life grants humanity the constitutive agency to bring about new organizations of life. In this sense, then, it is the imagination that is vital to the creative evolution of humanity. The arts must be seen as a most important aspect of human/cultural geography, for they promote the existential fulfillment of the vital depths of the human soul. There could not be a human society without the arts—it is unfathomable, for even when life is reduced to the most degrading mechanisms, the arts can reveal the meaning of such in ways that liberate us. Specifically addressing literature, Tymieniecka writes, "The role of literature, that to which its means are geared, is not to explain the world and life as we discover it by positive, universally valid, intellectual means. It is to *re-create* the world and life after we have already lived

it and come to know it in the positive sense, to transform what trivial and bare positivism yields through the *creative vision*.⁴⁰

Moreover, the creative vision, inspired by the subliminal passions of the soul seeks satisfaction and does so through the fundamental structure of self-organization—spacing. There is a passion that:

surges at the fringes of our rational life-network and puts in question its finality, exposing the loose and odd ends of matters whose interconnections remain hidden.

This passion seems to be a bastard offspring of the essential and innermost striving of the human being in its quest to know the reasons for what surrounds the human being, the affairs in which it is involved, the striving to understand.

This passion, which I can an ‘esoteric passion,’ finds its projection and crystallization in space, in an imaginary extraordinary dream place. This is *the esoteric passion for place*.⁴¹

Human strivings seek fulfillment and places of fulfillment are imaginatively fashioned. So, we imaginatively create Arcadias, heavens, El Dorado, and utopias—places where the expectancies of our strivings are met. Now, this seems to take us into reaches that have nothing to do with reality—or the reality of human psychology. But this is not at all correct. The esoteric passion for place

seems to carry the human mind through the entire network of our concrete life entanglements with the passional force of emotions, feelings, anxieties, fears, but, most of all, of curiosity to find the reasons of concrete things that remain unknown, to find answers to the perplexities they cause, to conjure away their threat or to foresee the pending doom. This is prompted by the human mind’s striving to understand, but it is not absorbed by the sober inquiries of the intellect.⁴²

And so we see from this analysis, that which might be considered the highest flights of fancy remain moments of the primogenital function of spacing. Our strivings concretized through the esoteric passion for place in the creation of imaginary places reveals to us ourselves in the “fullness” of life and our world, the one that does not meet the requirement of these strivings. Now, this does not mean we only create esoteric places that are utopias. No, we create dystopias as well, for the purpose of exploring meanings, to gain a deeper understanding of life.

In *Spaces of Hope*, Marxist geographer David Harvey argues for the importance of geographies of the imagination in the need to construct utopias for the purpose of providing alternative directions. “The range of proposals—and of spatialities—testifies to the capacity of the human imagination to explore socio-spatial alternatives.”⁴³ “Critical reflection on our imaginaries entails, however, both confronting the hidden utopianism and resurrecting it in order to act as conscious architects of our fates rather than as ‘helpless puppets’ of the institutional and imaginative worlds we inhabit. If ... we accept that ‘society is made and imagined,’ then we can also believe that it can be ‘remade and re-imagined.’”⁴⁴ These points echo what has been said heretofore in this introduction, although we stand by the doctrine of the perceptual/imaginative continuum, whereby both are always at work to varying degrees. Mikel Dufrenne states, “Whatever form imagination may take, it is always linked to perception.... Imagination continually enlarges the field of the real. To imagine is first of all to open up the possible.... If

imaging produces anything, it is the possibility of the given....When imagination functions normally—and especially when it functions aesthetically—the possible constitutes a prereal. It is for the reason that imagination is constantly in touch with the real, surpassing the given toward its sense.”⁴⁵ In the surpassing of creative imagination, we are capable of making leaps that provide us with alternatives to which we can concretely aspire.

II.8 Overview of Part Two

Christine Petto’s, “Semblance of Sovereignty: Cartographic Possession in Map Cartouches and Atlas Frontispieces of Early Modern Europe,” has been selected to be first precisely because of the alleged “representational” character of maps. Maps are supposed to provide information concerning actual reality, for the shapes and relations are to “accurately” represent those of the actual world. It is the artistic qualities of frontispieces and cartouches that convey symbolic meanings in *interrelation* to the “representational status of maps” that makes this an interesting study. As powerful geopolitical tools, maps intertwine the real and the imaginary in a way that is efficacious for appropriating the meaning of reality. It is through its particular mode of interrelating imagination and perception that maps provide symbolic meaning serving ideological and utopian projects.

In “Symbolism and the Interaction of the Real and the Ideal: Scenery in Early-Modern Netherlandish Graphic Art,” Anat Gilboa discusses the problematics of separating the real from the ideal. As shown in this introduction, perception and imagination function as a continuum in which they both to varying degrees are operative. The problematization of the real and the ideal in landscape art testifies to this, as one not only can recognize ideal and real elements in what is interpreted as a realistic landscape work, but also that upon deeper inquiry the very distinction of ideality and reality of the elements is called into question. It is through this problematization that we see the necessity for recognizing a geography of imagination as well as a geography of perception, for there is an intertwining by which art and the empirical world shape one another.

In “Traversing One’s Space: Photography and the *f  minine*,” Panizza Allmark explores the gendered embodiment of the photographer, both in theory and through her own photography. She characterizes the feminine sense of place versus the masculine and describes how the medium of photography presents gendered ways of geographical enactment. Photography allows for the presentation of the feminine experience, the engagement with the milieu in an artistic selection—“framing” that experience in an imaginary space where it can enjoy presentation without being dominated by the masculine. This chapter offers grist for reflection on the manner in which imagination and perception are intertwining. Here a world of art/imagination, photography, provides a venue for feminine perceptions. The imagination capturing the perceptual and the perceptual as imbued with the imagination of the photographer.

In “The Philadelphia Flower Show and Its Dangerous Sensibilities,” Gary Backhaus discusses how aesthetic satisfaction can interlink with the satisfaction of psycho-biological needs in a way that leads to an anthropomorphic conflation of aesthetics with environmental valuations. Environmental therapeutics then becomes a function of beautification and satisfaction through aesthesis, a kind of environmental cosmetics that masks a veritable evaluation of environmental health. Fundamental to the dangers accompanying this process is structural reversal by which the landscapes are constructed to symbolize idealizations, imaginary worlds of aesthetic satisfaction. The aesthetic ideal determines the ecology of the environment and is reinforced by the fact that human psychobiological needs can be enhanced on its basis. Without recognition of the danger of substituting this ideal informed anthropomorphic symbolic ecology with a veritable therapeutic that recognizes the principle that healthy ecologies are not necessarily beautiful or satisfying, we may indeed be destroying the possibility for beauty and the satisfaction of needs.

John Murungi, in “Gardening at a Japanese Garden,” uses gardening as a metaphor in order to figuratively work through various philosophical orientations that are in the way to understanding the notion of embodied symbol. Murungi promotes a precognitive, participatory meaning-process, prior to subject-object bifurcations: gardening is a process of cultivation. Murungi’s chapter culminates in a discussion of Japaneseness as a spatial event, as inextricably interrelated to enactment, to a meaningful co-constitutive process. Murungi eschews essentialist and social constructionist interpretations of identity for a sense of embodied symbolism that requires non-cognitive participation through encounter. It is not possible *to be* Japanese or *not to be* Japanese, but it is possible to participate in its enactment.

Arndt Niebisch, in “Symbolic Space: Memory, Narrative, Writing,” discusses spatial production in terms of the interrelation between the spatiality of the milieu and the spatial reality of oral and written language. In one sense this chapter overcomes an emphasis on the lived-body in the genesis of symbol, by examining the structuring agency of various heuristic cultural forms/structures/systems. In the ancient art of rhetoric, a speechwriter relied heavily on spatial imagination for remembering the speech. Not only did the writer image a house with rooms, but the size of the rooms was also prescribed in order to best help memory. Niebisch’s point is that such a form of spatial imagination (the house) is a constitutive agent of the speech, determining its form; its content is formed on the basis of this spatial device for memory. This certainly presents an interesting intertwining of imagination and perception. From the perception of dwellings, to an imagined dwelling for the purpose of symbolizations as mnemonic devices for a speech. This structuring then carries efficacy in the perceptual world. Niebisch cites the plot of a novella in which the destruction of a city is connected to the loss of the space of cultural sedimentations. However, a crack in a wall serves as a metonym, a symbol, which allows cultural sensibilities to be imaginatively re-awakened reproducing the cultural meanings of the former space of the city. The constitutive agency of the symbol reinstitutes cultural reality. And finally, Niebisch takes up the spatial production that occurs in mediated written forms of speech in

such devices as computers. This external objectification of memory is productive of space as well and it becomes a determinant of the imagination and perception. For example, the spatiality of the newspaper column determines/shapes our interpretation of a world event.

Linda Ardito, in “Vienna’s Musical Deathscape,” describes Vienna as a deathscape by looking at the lives and works of some of its famous composers. In a style reminiscent of J. Douglas Porteous, Ardito explores the relationship between cultural landscapes, personality, and the production of art. The reason that Ardito explores Vienna as a deathscape is because of its curiously high suicide rate while at the same time functioning as a Mecca for the musical arts. What emerges is a *genius loci* that intensifies the interrelation between creation and destruction. Ardito discusses death and associated sensibilities of melancholy, as well as their opposites in uplifting settings of encountering the natural world outside of the city. It is from an embodied situatedness in a milieu, socially, politically, culturally geographically spatializing/spatialized that music produces and reproduces this *genius loci* of Vienna—an intertwining of perception and imagination. This geography is at once both real and ideal—no separation is possible; abstraction of one from the other is hopelessly problematic.

In “Crusoe’s Island and the Human Estate: Defoe’s Existential Geography,” Dennis E. Skocz interprets Defoe’s novel from the standpoint of an existential geography. Various components of Crusoe’s situation symbolize Heideggerian notions of *Existenz*, e.g., thrownness, anxiety, the spatiality of *Dasein*, and worldhood. According to Skocz the plot of this novel serves well as an exemplar of existential life, a situated framing that exhibits the reality of human condition. Yet Yet Skocz proceeds cautiously, for the socio-historical dimension of the novel serves as a Heideggerian clearing, which entails both presences and absences. Thus, the existential dimension and the ontic dimension must be carefully addressed. What is fresh about Skocz’s approach involves sensitivity toward the geographicity of the existentialia. One might be misled into thinking that concrete spatiality involves only the ontic dimension, but Skocz here illustrates the case for the geographicity of the ontological (existential structures).

Notes

1 Miller, *Topographies*, 104.

2 See Simmel, “The Triad.” See also Goffman, *Presentation of the Self*.

3 See Porteous, *Landscapes of the Mind*.

4 Ibid., 69–70.

5 Merleau-Ponty, *Structure of Behavior*. Also see, Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*.

6 Casey, *Getting Back into Place*.

7 Merleau-Ponty, “Eye and Mind,” 169.

8 Ibid., 175.

- 9 Ibid., 174.
- 10 Descartes, *Philosophical Writings*, 51.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 King, *Emancipating Space*, 120.
- 13 Steeves, *Imagining Bodies*.
- 14 Ibid., 22.
- 15 Ibid., 27–27.
- 16 Ibid., 28.
- 17 Ibid., 84–85.
- 18 Ibid., 47.
- 19 Ibid., 86.
- 20 Ibid., 52.
- 21 Ibid., 66.
- 22 Miller, *Topographies*, 19.
- 23 Ibid.
- 24 Ibid., 16.
- 25 Ibid., 21.
- 26 Ibid.
- 27 Porteous, *Landscapes of the Mind*, 12.
- 28 Ibid., xiv.
- 29 Steeves, *Imagining Bodies*, 167.
- 30 Ibid., 169.
- 31 Clark, *Landscape Into Art*, 5–6.
- 32 Ibid., 33.
- 33 Ibid., 51, 53.
- 34 Ibid., 74.
- 35 Ibid., 109.
- 36 Ibid., 150.
- 37 Tymieniecka, “*De Patria Mea*,” 3.
- 38 Ibid., 5.
- 39 Ibid., 3.
- 40 Tymieniecka, *Logos and Life* Book 3, 17–18.
- 41 Tymieniecka, “Esoteric Passion for Place,” ix.
- 42 Ibid.,” xiii.
- 43 Harvey, *Spaces of Utopia*, 161
- 44 Ibid., 159.
- 45 Dufrenne, *Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, 357.

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Chapter 9

Semblance of Sovereignty: Cartographic Possession in Map Cartouches and Atlas Frontispieces of Early Modern Europe

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Editors' Note: Maps always present an interpretation of reality and always carry distortions, some of which are consciously or unconsciously ideological. The geographicity of mapping, which involves an intertwining of both science and art, is a vehicle for spatialized/spatializing interpretations of an actual spatiality, and as such is a catalyst for enacting further spatial productions on the basis of the capacity of maps to project themselves “into the landscape.” The scientific pretensions of mapping serve to veil the character of their projective enactment. Maps always entail virtual embodiment, that is, maps realize one possibility out of many, even in the most mathematically “accurate” of spatial relations. Thus, if the imaginative involves both embodied schema and virtual embodiments, we cannot dismiss the role of the geography of imagination in a dialectical relation with the geography of perception, of the actual. The symbolic function of cartouches and frontispieces provides an imagineering context of constructing reality on the basis of the symbolization.

9.1 Introduction

When confronted with Guido Reni's famous painting, *Beatrice Cenci the Day Before Her Execution*, Mark Twain, ever the plain-spoken wit, said, “It shows what a label can do. If they did not know the picture, they would inspect it unmoved, and say, ‘Young Girl with Hay Fever; Young Girl with Her Head in a Bag.’”¹ Today, when we look at map cartouches and atlas frontispieces, there are often no labels and no dedicatory phrases providing some insight for the design elements confronting the map viewer, and we may underestimate the power of the iconography before us. W. J. T. Mitchell writes that “images are not just a particular kind of sign, but something like an actor on the historical stage, a presence or character endowed with legendary status, a history that parallels and participates in the stories we tell ourselves.”² An engagement, then, with images of the past—that often carry a past with them—provides researcher and viewer alike with a richer

historical journey. Erwin Panofsky suggests that when we express ourselves “our identifications and interpretations will depend on our subjective equipment, and for this very reason will have to be corrected and controlled by an insight into historical processes.”³ For example, while we might identify an image on a map as an old man emptying a jug of water and further understand that he is symbolic of the Rhine River, his presence in a map cartouche from later seventeenth-century France evokes the Bourbon pursuit of Reunions and the glorious military exploits of the Sun King in crossing the Rhine and leaving a terror-stricken old man in his wake. And that is just one small portion of a map cartouche.

Whether through a solemn act of grasping a handful of soil or carving a mark in a tree, European voyagers proclaimed the possession of land in the name of their respective monarchs. Similarly, closer to home, in such martial activities as the taking of a fortress or the raising of the royal standard over a victorious battlefield, military commanders declared the possession of disputed territory. And royal officials and surveyors alike announced jurisdictional control over territory, disputed or not. Manuscript and printed maps served well the pronouncement of colonial, military, and civil possessions. Maps addressed space and allowed leaders to make a two-fold claim of possession of tangible knowledge such as “here lies a river” and of possession of dominance or sovereignty over the land depicted such that “here lies my river.” In addressing and ordering space, maps were used to impose such abstractions as sovereignty on territorial regions. This presentation focuses on the use of printed maps and their design elements as powerful symbols of land possession, domination, as well as confirmation of the acquisition of geographical knowledge—knowledge was power and to know was to possess. These symbols come in the form of noble coats of arms, national or royal representational signs, and symbols of scientific certainty. Furthermore, through their appearance on the map, these symbols made physical claims of knowledge and of possession by individuals, monarchies, and institutions. These maps and their design elements reflect the way in which these cultures imposed themselves on the land.

In an effort to frame this work in the larger collection, I would like to suggest that the historical richness of maps as well as their design elements, both examples of symbolic landscapes, add to a cultural understanding of the societies in which these *value-laden images* were created. As Backhaus writes:

If we refer to landscapes as, “an earthly expanse,” some geographers make the distinction between the ordinary sense of landscape as manifest in our everyday encounters and then symbolic landscapes that are culturally encoded with meanings that represent something more than the meanings of everyday pragmatic engagement. Some see this something as *cultural values*, indeterminately conveyed, which allows for a broad range of interpretations and evaluations.⁴

These interpretations and evaluations force historians to view maps as more than merely “mirrors of nature.” J. B. Harley encouraged historians to investigate the social forces operating in the sphere of cartography.⁵ According to Harley and others, historians need to view maps not just as historical documents, but as texts, and, as texts, maps “are seen as socially produced, as discursive tools by which to persuade others.”⁶ Maps should be investigated in order both to expose the

socio-political contexts for the map-texts and to “read between the lines” of the rhetorical or persuasive map-texts. Such a methodology—an examination of the social and political forces that direct cartography—would bring to light the hidden agendas of maps and help to contextualize them more fully.⁷ An approach that embraces the discursive nature of maps and the social constructiveness of science provides the historian with fertile grounds of research in the relationship between power and geography. Symbolizations presented on maps interrelate and conflate actual and imaginary elements with the effect of influencing the course of history. Both the geography of the imagination and the geography of the actual are efficacious, but more than that, they are intertwined such that historical research, unable to separate them, must recognize historical facts as imbued with as much imagination as with the perceptual. Historical research cannot fail to include the imaginative dimension manifest most directly in the arts, yet pervading all cultural enactments, if its wants to understand the significance of historical events.

9.2 The Meaning of Maps

In his article, “Taking Possession: the cartouche as cultural text in eighteenth-century American maps,” Clarke suggests that to look at maps as a record of the human struggle to understand the surrounding world, was to maintain the myth that maps were objective images of the land. He offers a powerful, but subtle readjustment to see maps “as a series of texts which do not so much ‘understand’ as *image* a culture’s relationship with the land.... In this view maps emerge as essentially symbolic structures: collective images of the way in which cultures seek to ‘impose’ themselves ‘upon space’.”⁸ Map cartouches and atlas frontispieces “are an integral part of the political rhetoric of the map [or atlas] as a whole.”⁹ Maps themselves are texts of possession and whether we view a map or an atlas as a whole or through specific design elements, we need to consider the political frame of dominance and possession, and even the apprehension of geographical knowledge that furthered strengthened the political motives for the maps and atlases.

It is important to remember that decorative elements were not superfluous items on the map as mapmakers and map publishers had to consciously seek out specialized engravers to produce the elaborate cartouches and frontispieces for their maps and atlases at an increased cost of production. Map producers, then, did not merely add elaborate cartouches and frontispieces without some thought to theme, the message, or the agenda of the map or atlas. Even if their goal was driven by market concerns, i.e., attractive images drew an audience, political motives were strongly influential. Although the three topics I address often intertwine, I begin with the theme of colonial possession in which royal symbols held dominant place over the land. Personifications of the land offered their wealth to the crown, and commercial activity reminded that the abundance of nature was at hand and the power that controlled the land would control its wealth. Second, I

take up the martial activities in Europe that imposed dominance of one European power over a disputed territory. Third, I address the imposition or celebration of jurisdictional control through the “stamp” of heraldic symbols for crown, minister, and bishop alike. And finally, a common element in some cartouches was the apprehension or acquisition of geographical knowledge, which was most readily presented as scientific instrumentation—the ever-present globe, compass, or armillary sphere—or as the intrepid surveyor, gazing astronomer, or scholarly geographer all of which might grace the contours of a cartouche, or the borders of a frontispiece. These images of royal arms, conquered enemies, prized economic commodities, ministerial jurisdiction, and geographical knowledge all speak to the social and political forces that conspired to create the map or atlas they adorned.

9.3 Colonial Possessions

For Clarke and other historians of cartography, “the American map ... was from the first used by the competing European colonial powers as a text of ownership and control.”¹⁰ For example, the dedicatory cartouche on Nicolas de Fer’s large mural map of America from 1698 presented Glory holding the coat of arms of the royal heir as natives offered up the plenty of the land such as beaver pelts, fish, and sugarcane to the future of the French crown.¹¹ All the abundance of the land was freely offered to the sovereignty of France. De Fer, an engraver by training and geographer of the Dauphin included several vignettes of economic interests such as the processing of sugarcane, the mining of silver at Potosi, and the plentiful Brazilian forests.¹² Textual passages focused on curiosities (but imparted knowledge of these new lands) such as the Illinois Calumets who smoked a pipe as a sign of great friendship, the fate of the Spaniards who froze to death when caught in the Andes Mountains unprepared, or the barbarous Brazilians who had little or no religion and practiced cannibalism. This map of America, the “original beaver map,” included the two most famous insets of industrious beavers laboring before the majestic Niagara Falls and of the cod fishing industry of Newfoundland. Depictions of such successful and coveted industries, both shared and fought over by France and England, served a commercial audience not only interested in such curious places, but successful economic ventures. In addition to the economic interest depicted in the map imagery, the absence of natives, in particular in the beaver scene, rendered legitimate the holding of land for colonial powers.¹³ In other words, the wealth of the land was there for the taking and nothing and no one was standing in the way of exploiting this wealth.

Across the channel, Herman Moll (c.1654–1732), a near contemporary of de Fer, produced the English version of the “beaver map” copying this famous vignette, as well as that of the cod fishing industry, for his own maps on America. Moll, an engraver, map seller, and consummate self promoter, peppered his maps and atlases with remarks, theories, industry concerns, scientific authority and national support as well as, in particular, on his America maps, strong promotion of

British interests and stern warnings against French encroachment.¹⁴ For example, in his map of North America a response to a French map of 1718, Moll depicted the boundaries claimed by France as well as those “they allow ye English.” “The French Divisions are inserted on purpose, that those Noblemen, Gentlemen, Merchants &c. who are interested in our Plantations in those Parts, may observe whether they agree with their Properties, or do not justly deserve ye Name of Incroachments; and this is ye more to be observed, because they do thereby Comprehend within their Limits ye Charakeys and Iroquois, by much ye most powerfull of all ye Neighbouring Indian Nations, the old Friends and Allies of the English, who ever esteemed them to be the Bulwark and Security of all their Plantations in North America.”¹⁵

A veteran of the South Sea Bubble affair, by 1720 Moll was certainly not a newcomer to colonial promotion. At the famous Tory coffeehouse, Jonathan’s, he entertained, with his friends—the scientist, Robert Hooke, the writer, Daniel Defoe, and the pilot and English buccaneer, William Dampier—a common vision of British expansion.¹⁶ Visually as well as in text, Moll produced his 1720 map of French encroachments and dedicated it to Thomas Bromsall, Esquire, to express the British territorial rights to the lucrative fishing grounds and fur trade along the Niagara River, Newfoundland, Canada, and Hudson’s Bay, and even provided a short “history lesson” of British presence for the disputed area in the Carolinas. Although this work was an over correction of British claims in the Carolinas, Moll authoritatively credited the “Original Draughts of ... the Ingenious Mr. Berisford,” who as a representative of the South Carolina Assembly vehemently attacked (in words) French pretensions in the area. A considerable fear was that the French would stir up trouble with the Cherokee and Iroquois.

In the upper left corner of the map was a view of Fort Susquehanna, which if taken as a European stronghold can easily be recognized as a symbol of land possession. This fort, however, was by the late seventeenth century under Iroquois control as it had been taken from the Susquehanna. From the English standpoint, as the Iroquois were under English protection, influential allies, and a powerful weapon against the French and French trade in northern America, Iroquois land was English land. For Moll, this very Fort was at the center of encroachment fears and in image, line, and text he warned “noblemen, gentlemen, and merchants” just how much and where they might encroach.

These fears were prompted by a map of North America, in particular, the area of Louisiana produced in 1718 by Guillaume Delisle, the soon to be first geographer to the French crown.¹⁷ Delisle published his map of Louisiana with territorial limits that led to a volatile cartographic dispute with England (and Spain). Delisle’s work, *Carte de la Louisiane et du cours du Mississipi*, became the mother map (or source map) for all succeeding maps of the Mississippi because of its accurate depiction of the lower Mississippi River and the surrounding areas. In a country, however, whose boundaries were yet to be clarified, maps became powerful political tools in the international arena and influential in producing internal commercial propaganda.

Domestically, Delisle's map joined the publicity campaign launched by John Law and his new Company of the West, which took over the Louisiana monopoly from Antoine Crozat in 1717, to bolster French interest in the area.¹⁸ Internationally, Delisle's map of Louisiana generated a boundary dispute that lasted for at least 15 years. In the map, Delisle extended the areas under French control in direct opposition to the English claims by pushing the British colonial border further east than the Appalachian frontier and then further aggravated the British by claiming that Carolina was named for the French king Charles IX, hence Moll's brief "history lesson" in 1720. The map itself was the symbol of land possession, and the governor of New York wrote to the Commissioners of the Board of Trades decrying the impertinence of the French. "I observe in the last mapps published at Paris with Privilege du Roy par M de Lisle in 1718 of Louisiana and part of Canada that they are making new encroachments on the king's territories from what they pretend to in a former Mapp publish[e]d by the same author in 1703 particularly all Carolina is on this New Mapp taken into the French Country and in words there said to belong to them and about 50 leagues all along the edge of Pensilvania and this Province."¹⁹ This printed map had "lent an air of legitimacy and officiality to boundaries which manuscript maps were incapable of doing."²⁰ Delisle's European reputation made this map a forceful political tool in creating a supposed reality giving precedence to French claims.

The English response was to "cry foul" as they noted the shocking movement of boundaries on the 1718 map compared to Delisle's 1703 map of Canada, a map that did include a decorative cartouche. Enthroned at the head of the cartouche was the royal coat of arms as Canada or New France was, arguably, under French sovereignty.²¹ To the left and right of the royal symbol were the depictions of European influence in bringing Christianity to the natives as a clergyman is seen baptizing a native while a missionary instructed natives on Christian civilization. Below these scenes another scene plays out as perhaps an indication of the perilous state of the land in the absence of such benevolent French presence as a "savage" Iroquois warrior proudly lifts a French scalp much to the horror of a Huron women carrying a child in her papoose, and at the base of the cartouche was the ever-present beaver and a large water bird (perhaps a Canadian goose) flanking the waterfalls of the Niagara. Such a depiction reflected not only the commercial interests of the land, but also the importance of winning the "bodies and souls" of the natives to be good subjects for their king.

About 70 years later, natives bowed in deference to arriving English settlers on Thomas Jefferys' map of New England (1774).²² Jefferys, an engraver and map seller, presented the personification of America who, holding a staff with the liberty cap upon it, welcomed them as did the native man behind her bowing to this impressive group. In the foreground at the feet of these figures was a beaver pelt and nearby a net with a bounty of fishes. While in the distance English goods were off-loaded evidenced by the bundle, chest, and pewter implements near the group of settlers, Clarke suggests that these goods were "being laid out on the land as image of the new community."²³ Moreover, the rock in the right foreground with the name Plymouth and the date 1620 inscribed upon it—"an image of written

ownership and arrival,” was a means of connecting historical presence, new settlement, and dominion—British dominion, that is.²⁴ Clarke proposes that this imagery connected the historical contract with the possession of the land. In looking at the gestures of the native and America, colonizers and entrepreneurs alike were welcomed to the land as possession was made upon the request of the *land* itself. Such an invitation by land and native alike made the presence of English place-names all the more natural.²⁵ This was not an invasion or a competing force grabbing land from other European powers, but a British contingent accepting the invitation of America as she offered the liberty of the land to them. Finally, given the military and political atmosphere—which many London atlas makers took advantage of in rushing to publish works on the colonies²⁶—America’s liberty cap took on an ironic symbolism as the place-names, historical rocks and British goods upon the shore would not be strong enough reminders for the colonists in the coming years.

9.4 Martial Activities in Europe

Similarly, cartouches and frontispieces were used as reminders in military and political conflicts “on the continent.” Imagery of possession, dominance, and control appeared in maps and atlases depicting disputed areas on the European home front and were more likely to include royal arms as a stamp of undisputed sovereignty. For example, in 1673, following Louis XIV’s victorious first year in the Dutch War, Alexis-Hubert Jaillot, a map publisher, dedicated to the Dauphin a map on the United Provinces, which visually announced French triumphs²⁷ (Fig. 9.1). The delphinial crown and coat of arms surmounted the cartouche, and on either side of the heraldic symbol, Glory blew a trumpet adorned with a banner displaying the royal dolphin, the symbol for the Dauphin. In contrast to the banners of the Dauphin, crumpled at the feet of the glories lay the defeated flags of the Dutch forces whose symbol, the lion with seven arrows also lay prostrate at the base of the cartouche. And to the left and right of the cartouche were representations of two of the important rivers of this war, the Meuse and the Rhine, depicted as old river-gods emptying jugs of water. Even the cartouche surrounding the scale of measures participated in the visual rhetoric (Fig. 9.2). Sitting atop the cartouche was the cockerel or rooster, a symbol of the sun or here, the symbol of the Sun King, Louis XIV or France. This symbolism is not so engaging, until one notices on closer examination that the cartouche upon which the cock proudly stands is formed by the skin of a lion, yet again a symbol of French military dominance. But if per chance the iconographic message of these cartouches was not clear enough, off the coast of the Netherlands, in the North Sea, a sea battle between the Dutch and the French announced the superiority of the French forces as Dutch ships went down in flames. Upon land and sea, France reigned dominant.

In the final decades of his reign (1643–1715), Louis’s image was tarnished and reflected more the image of the god Phaeton, who lost control of the sun chariot,



Fig. 9.1 Title Cartouche from Jaillot's *Provinces-Unies des Pays Bas*. 1983 Folio 49 (Courtesy of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University)

than the image of the powerful sun god, Apollo.²⁸ However, in the frontispiece of the *Atlas Français*, Jaillot presented a Herculean vision of Louis XIV with the royal *fleur de lis* engraved on the globe as Victory crowned it with a laurel wreath and Glory announced French triumph²⁹ (Fig. 9.3). In adoration the personifications of Asia, Africa, and America joined their voices to praise the royal accomplishments, and in recognition of this ruler of the civilized world, Jaillot placed his atlas, representing the world, at the feet of Louis XIV. Despite the hyperbole, the image was clear; the world was a reflection of the theater of the glory of France, still.³⁰ Louis, by the magnificence of his reign, his great conquests, and his wisdom, filled the world with admiration, terror, and veneration. Perhaps a bit overstated, but France ruled the world.

Within this atlas several maps equally reflected the dominance of France although reality proved otherwise. By the publication of the *Atlas Français* in 1695, France was approaching the exhausting end of the War of the League of Augsburg (1688–1697). The destruction of the Palatinate at the opening of the war was followed by victories against the duke of Savoy and the seizure of the town and castle of Namur. In 1692, the “taking” of the town and castle of Namur by Louis personally, generated a series of medals, paintings, odes, and engravings, all of which recalled the early glory days of the reign of the Sun King.³¹ Jaillot, in the same



Fig. 9.2 Scale Cartouche from Jaillot's *Provinces-Unies des Pays Bas*. 1783 Folio 49 (Courtesy of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University)

year, published four maps devoted to the subject of the siege of Namur. One work, engraved by order of the king, described the layout of the siege.³² The title cartouche design, superimposed on the side of a large boulder, also recalled the rhetoric of glory. From the boulder's height, an undaunted and fierce cockerel—France—challenged three stalking lions—the League of England, Holland, and Austria—circling below. Another Namur map, presented to the king for the service of his troops, carried a familiar motif—the royal coat of arms flanked by Victory and Glory (one holding a laurel wreath and the other blowing a trumpet)³³ (Fig. 9.4). Implements of war adorn the sides of the cartouche and at the base of the cartouche, directly beneath the coat of the arms, in a defeated position, was the three-bodied Geryon representing the triple alliance against Louis XIV. Also included in this atlas was a remake of Jaillot's 1673 map of the United Provinces³⁴ (Fig. 9.5). And true to the times or rather the propaganda, the *fleur de lis* smote the lion. From the mid-1690s, this map now dedicated to the king continued to champion the dominance of the state of Louis XIV. The lion was still cowered and the falling sheath scattered its seven arrows (or seven provinces) in defeat.



Fig. 9.3 Frontispiece from Jaillot's *Atlas Français*. 1733 Folio 17, vol. 1 (Courtesy of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University)



Fig. 9.4 Title Cartouche from Jaillot's *Comté de Namur*. 1984 Folio 3, vol. 1 (Courtesy of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University)

Jean Baptiste Nolin, an engraver, mapmaker, and contemporary of Jaillot, similarly capitalized on the military successes of the war, and in 1694, he published a map focusing on the Italian theater and French victories over the duplicitous Victor Amadeus II, the duke of Savoy³⁵ (Fig. 9.6). Nolin presented his map of the States of Savoy and Piedmont to the king for the service of his troops. The cartouche design included two triumphant Glories seated upon an architectural pediment below which sat chained prisoners and war paraphernalia. Beneath the feet of one prisoner lay the conquered flag of the duke of Savoy while the other prisoner sat astride a silent and defeated canon. Behind them, among the instruments of war, were symbols of Louis's defeated enemies including the Dutch lion, Imperial eagle, and the python of rebellion, reminiscent of the Protestant forces allied against him and the traitorous Vaudois. Between the Glories and above the royal coat of arms was the city view of Chambéry, a city now bathed in royal sunshine by the sun symbol and, in effect, surrounded by French power and renown. Four city fortification plans, reminiscent of the plans drawn up by Marshal Vauban, also adorned the cartouche, each of which was subjugated by Louis in his Italian campaigns. Truly, much of the Italian affairs were carried out by Marshal Catinat

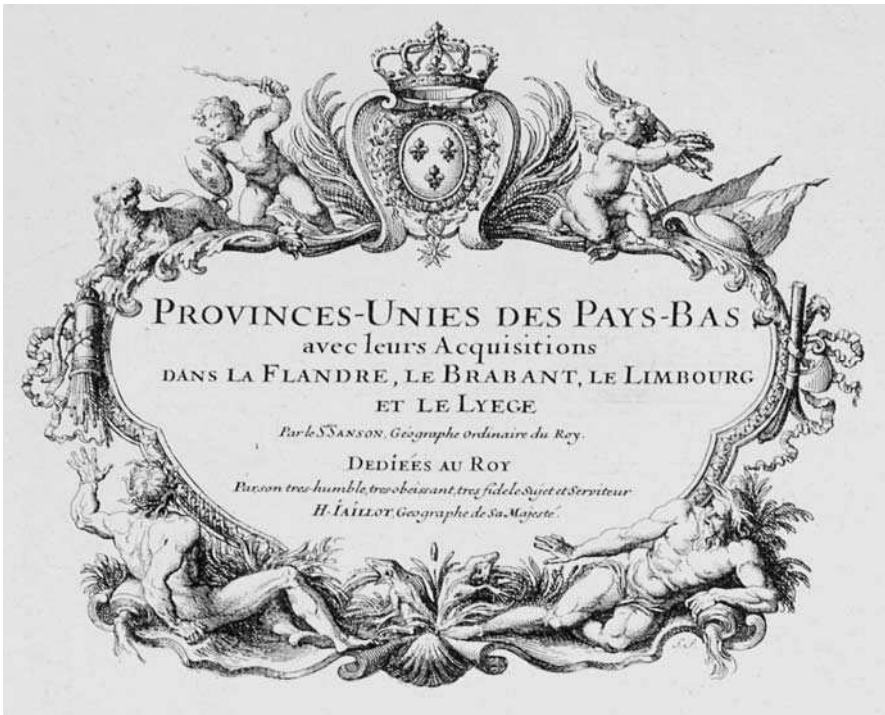


Fig. 9.5 Title Cartouche from Jaillot's *Provinces-Unies des Pays Bas* (1695). 1973 Folio 17, vol. 2 (Courtesy of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University)

with troops far outnumbered by those of the duke making Catinat's efforts all the more impressive, but here as in much of the rhetoric surrounding the image of the Sun King the victories of Louis's generals were French victories and thus the triumphs of the Bourbon king.

Despite these triumphant images, by 1694 France was in the clutches of a famine, the war was becoming wearisome, and victories were followed by defeats—Namur was lost in 1695 and negotiations with the United Provinces were unsuccessful. Moreover, after nearly a decade of upheaval, the war took a toll on France's finances and produced only limited territorial gains. These maps, however, remained as visual testament to French dominance ... despite the reality of the times.

9.5 Jurisdictional Control

In addition to maps of colonial and martial possession, there were maps that indicated jurisdictional control. In the place of battling royal symbols over disputed territories or royal coats of arms claiming colonial possessions were royal,



Fig. 9.6 Title Cartouche from Nolin's *Les Etats de Savoye et de Piemont*. 1984 Folio 3, vol. 1 (Courtesy of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University)

ecclesiastical, or ministerial symbols of sovereignty, office ownership, or land jurisdiction. Among the earliest and most famous is the frontispiece from Christopher Saxton's *Atlas of England and Wales*.³⁶ By 1573, Thomas Seckford, Master of the Queen's Requests and Surveyor of the Court of Wards, with the firm support of the Secretary of State, William Cecil, Lord Burghley, had undertaken the expense for a survey and accompanying maps both by Christopher Saxton and to cover the English and Welsh counties.³⁷ Two years after completing the maps, Saxton published, with a ten-year privilege, his county atlas of 35 maps all of which carried the royal arms, Seckford's arms, and the identification of Saxton as the author. The frontispiece of this work, among the early emblematic English title pages, visually reads as a declaration of authority, since between the covers of this atlas lay the depiction of Elizabeth's dominion.³⁸ Elizabeth knew well the portrait that would make up the frontispiece, as she instructed Saxton to alter the image so that the queen's skirts would fall "more flatteringly."³⁹

At the center of this architectural title page was the enthroned Elizabeth with scepter and orb (and flattering skirt) guarded by miniature statues of Pallas Athena with spear and shield while figures of the royal lion with shield graced the arms of the throne. Framing Elizabeth were Corinthian columns with a miniature frieze below their bases of Pallas Athena and Aphrodite both classical images associating Elizabeth with the might of a warrior and the beauty of a goddess. Surmounting the structure was the royal coat of arms flanked by the crowned lion and the dragon while two Victories with laurel wreaths fill out the horizontal space above the frieze where just below the royal arms was an oval image of embracing

Righteousness (with sword) and Peace (with olive branch) with Justice looking on from the background. Most dominant after the central image of the queen were the dual figures of Geography with compass and globe and Astronomy with an armillary sphere just beside the columns at Elizabeth's side in active service to her majesty as the interior maps would show. Beneath the feet of Elizabeth were two cartouches with inscriptions praising her reign while to the left a figure drew a map and to the right another gazed upon the heavens, but visually upon the grandeur of the enthroned queen, who had by 1579 ruled for over two decades and had begun to challenge the Spanish hegemony. "As the maps of the atlas indicate, Saxton's recording of musters, lords lieutenant and places of fortification were matters of extreme importance to the Privy Council, concerned as it was with the coming war with Spain."⁴⁰

This county atlas, a substantial undertaking at the national level, though small in the global scale heralded England's capabilities to challenge on the world stage. "Elizabeth reigned over all that could be measured and such mathematical control would enable England to triumph over its enemies.... The image of empire created by this title page, and by the atlas it introduced, was that of a self-sufficient and omni-competent state, ruled over by the dominion of a wise monarch."⁴¹ Influential scholars such as John Dee, Richard Hakluyt, John Wolfe and voyagers such as Francis Drake, John Hawkins, and Walter Raleigh called for England to take its "rightful place" at the helm as a seafaring nation and to participate in creating England's imperial identity. After all, Gloriana had already brought righteousness, peace, and justice to England.

Over a century later, during which peace, as well as righteousness and justice, were at times absent or sorely tested, John Ogilby, dance master turned publisher and royal cosmographer, produced an atlas of all the principal roads for England and Wales under the name, *Britannia* and dedicated it to Charles II. Charles was a new king who had come to establish order to a fractured kingdom. Ogilby, who had come to the publication of geographical material late in life, succeeded, though likewise sorely tested, in acquiring both royal patronage and a relatively successful career.⁴² His initial career as a dancing master in the Earl of Strafford's household (Ireland) came to an abrupt end with the earl's execution for high treason during the troubled civil wars, but he flourished in his new career and found new patronage with his translation and publication of the works of Virgil and Homer. Sadly, this taste of success soon went up in smoke as the Great Fire of London destroyed his new publishing business. After being chosen as one of the "sworn viewers" by the royal court with the power to arbitrate the expected property and boundary disputes that arose after the Great Fire, Ogilby found himself making connections not only to key members in the rebuilding effort such as Robert Hooke, a member of the Royal Society, but also skilled surveyors.⁴³ In 1668, he announced a book lottery to raise advanced finances for a rather ambitious geographic project, a five-volume work of the world, an atlas for each of the four parts and a grand atlas devoted to the "Business of Great Britain."⁴⁴ He offered advanced subscriptions for 20 shillings up front and 20 shillings per atlas. With the suggestion of royal patronage, Ogilby garnered more support for his

work with his prospectus in 1672 in which he wrote that the crown “granted the Undertaker Authority for a General and Actual Survey of the Kingdom of England ... and was farther graciously pleas’d to be the first Royal Example, by Subscribing 500l for his Royal Self.”⁴⁵

While the grand project was never fully realized, Ogilby capitalized on his new connections and offered an atlas of all the principal roads for England and Wales which appeared in 1675 under the name, *Britannia* (a significantly curtailed version of the intended six-volume work devoted to England and Wales.) The promised royal patronage of £500 from the king and £500 “for his Royal Consort” never materialized but became fairly substantial when the crown did waive the customs duty on the imported paper that Ogilby needed to produce his atlas. Other support appeared in the form of noble patronage by the Archbishop of Canterbury who paid for the survey of Kent and Sheldon and a Sir Thomas Wolstenholme who bore the expense for the survey of Middlesex. Such patronage had to be subsidized by subscribers and in 1672, his prospectus explained his intentions, “to lay a Foundation worthy so Eminent a Structure, even such an one as may stand a perfect Model to succeeding Ages; not doubting but by an Encouragement suitable to the worthiness of the Undertaking, to compleat within the space of two Years, a Work whereof if may modestly said; That considering the Actual Survey ... nothing of this Nature ... was ever yet attempted either at Home or Abroad.”⁴⁶ While his coverage of the world outside of Britain was rather derivative, his intended county atlas and published road atlas reflected an attention to a more scientific methodology.

Wenceslas Hollar, a famous seventeenth-century engraver, was called upon to produce the visual introduction. The scene was the gate of London topped with the royal flag, the River Thames in the distance, and the roadway sprawling out to the countryside as travelers, horsemen, carriages, and wagons made their way to and from the city. Just outside the gate two horsemen studied a strip map before setting off and three other men gathered around a table scattered with measuring and surveying devices and contemplated the globe while in the distance a group of men used the perambulator reflecting the method adopted by Ogilby to create the road maps. Above the scene little cherubs hover holding a banner with the atlas title and three strips maps much like the ones found in the atlas. The scene was one of tranquil activity and social order as travelers went about their business well-aided by road maps. In his dedication, Ogilby offered “May the same influences tend to be the culminating of all the other arts and sciences, and the king of king’s crown your sacred head with peace and plenty, raising up the splendor of Great Britain’s Monarchy, and rendering it the grand exemplar of industry and ingenuity.”⁴⁷ Ogilby connected the royal support of the science of geography with divine approbation and national achievement.

In Nolin’s 1698 map of Paris, he associated Louis’s military achievements along the boundaries of France with the approbation and gratitude of his Parisian subjects. In his extravagant dedication, Nolin declared that just as the lands that the sun shines upon the most are the happiest and most abundant, the subjects of Paris, so close to the magnificence of Louis (the Sun king), were the happiest of

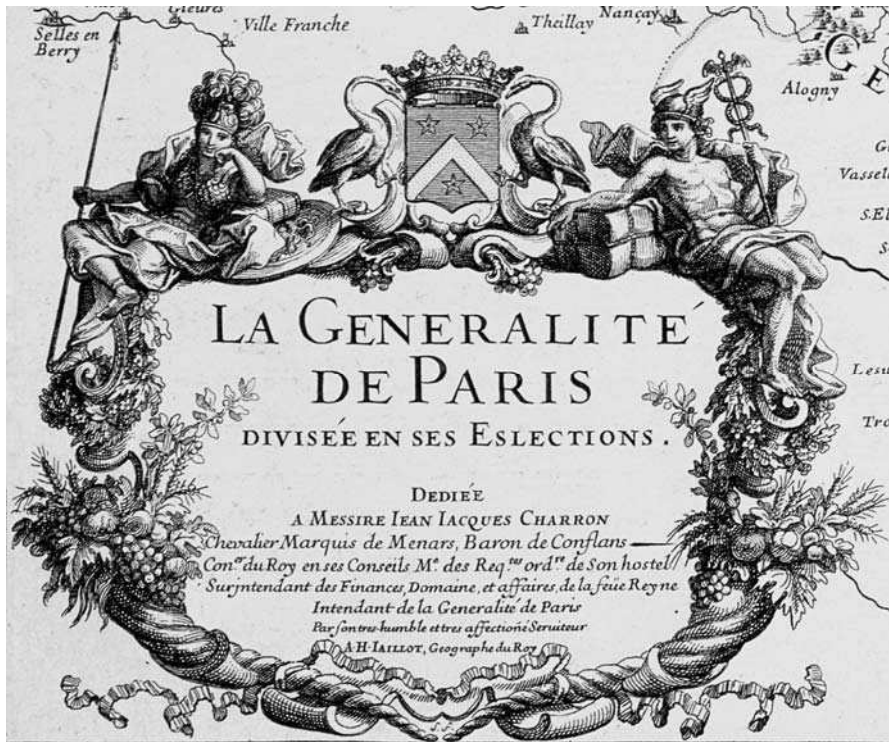


Fig. 9.7 Title Cartouche from Jaillot's *La Généralité de Paris*. 1733 Folio 17, vol. 1 (Courtesy of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University)

his kingdom, and Paris as the seat of his justice and power reflected his glory just as his conquests around the border regions reflected his might.⁴⁸ The cartouche design was a roof-like structure with signs of the zodiac encircling it and the sun symbol, the monarch of the sky, at the center front emblazoned with Louis's motto, *Nec Pluribus Impar*. Beneath the structure and therefore under the protecting rays of the sun were the personifications of Government, Prudence, Fortitude, and Wisdom.

Similarly for Paris, Jaillot dedicated a map of the *généralité* of Paris to its intendant, Jean Jacques Charron, and adorned it with his coat of arms⁴⁹ (Fig. 9.7). The by now familiar motif of Pallas Athena with the Gorgon shield adorned the cartouche along with the god Mercury and horns of plenty. By 1695, however, the date of Jaillot's dedicated map, images of cornucopia were rare occurrences given the famines of the previous few years, and Charron had an administrative challenge to maintain order as intendant of Paris as well as one of the superintendents of finances. Charron's map was not merely a visual image of his power but a handy visual representation of his geographical responsibility.

Louis's image may have been tarnishing in the last decades of his reign, but the operation of the state continued, and for this new state bureaucracy there were new avenues for maps, new audiences, and new patrons in the form of these governmental

ministers and intendants such as Charron. Politically, the new form of government created by Louis XIV and put into action by the likes of Colbert and Louvois was reaching maturity in the second half of Louis's reign under the ministries of Pontchartrain and Desmarets.⁵⁰ At the heart of the bureaucracy the families of Colbert and Phélypeaux continued to dominate. During the War of the League of Augsburg, Jaillot dedicated to the marquis de Seignelay, Colbert's son, a map that reflected the rise of the ministries and, in particular (though briefly) the rise of France's naval power. France's interest in maintaining a military presence in both the Atlantic and the Mediterranean theatre generated attention (though not always sufficient finances) to Louis's bi-coastal navy.

By Colbert's death in 1683, the French navy had proved itself as a potential threat in several Mediterranean campaigns during the Dutch War, and under the direction of Jean Baptiste Antoine Colbert, the marquis de Seignelay, Colbert's eldest son who had succeeded him in the post of secretary of the navy, the French naval force would become as powerful as the English and Dutch navies.⁵¹ By 1690, the year of Seignelay's death the French navy was at its height of power marked by its victory over the Dutch and the English at Beachy Head.

Although the French fleet would soon turn its attentions to the Atlantic theater, in the first half of the 1680s, the Mediterranean fleet was committed to a show of force against Algiers and Tunis, whose Barbary corsairs interrupted French shipping in the Mediterranean and against the Genoese, for their support of Spanish aggression aimed at France.⁵² By 1685, the bombardment of the coast of Algiers and Tunis led to their submission to peace, but now attention turned to fellow Christians in the Republic of Genoa who had been supporting the Spanish. Following the same attack plan, the fleet left Toulon in May 1684 with Seignelay on board to witness the event.

Seignelay, the "sailor minister," was a supporter of the weapon of bombardment against French enemies, and he devoted a great effort to building the Mediterranean fleet whose main port, Toulon, was in Provence, the geographical area depicted by the map Jaillot dedicated and presented to him.⁵³ The map displayed images of the trappings of nobility, a marquis's crenellated coronet and Colbert's coat of arms—the undulating snake—flanked by maritime implements. To the left, a unicorn representing integrity or honor pierced the threatening dragon of chaos, and to the right, a dog, representing faithfulness, stood guard over the dragon below. Along the base of the cartouche were cornucopias representing abundance. The submission of Genoa was celebrated not only in medal, painting, and tapestry, but also the Doge's visit was much reported in newspapers and journals.⁵⁴ In imagery, Jaillot's map represented the actions of Seignelay's Mediterranean fleet to pierce the would-be dragons of disorder and to return to mercantile shipping the freedom to bring abundance to France.

At home, ecclesiastical elites, some of them members of the Colbert family, were ordering maps of their own domains. In 1683, ten years before the *Académie* published its "correct" map of France, Philippe de la Hire, one of the academicians of the project to map France, presented the project's findings to the *Académie des Sciences*. In response to the new information produced by this project,

various bishops participated in a pursuit, politically parallel to and often intertwined with the crown's, for better maps of their dioceses. The power of maps both printed and manuscript, known well by the monarchs of France, was certainly not lost on the ecclesiastical nobility. For these bishops and their ecclesiastical administrations, however, the desire for maps was more complex. Like the crown, ecclesiastical administrators were affected by the seventeenth-century concern for quantification—measuring and observing—or for rational inquiry, but in the second half of the seventeenth century, the various conflicts between the church, the crown, the pope, and the Huguenots likely generated a greater interest for ecclesiastical maps by both the bishops and the crown. In light of the work of the academicians, the conflict with Rome over appointments to vacant sees,⁵⁵ the loss of control of land by Protestants, and the increase in jurisdiction over the lower clergy (1695), church leaders were in need of maps to correct “old” ones and to respond to issues of ecclesiastical control for (or against) the crown, the pope, surrounding bishops, and their own lower clergy.

One of Jaillot's first ecclesiastical maps appearing in the 1690s was of the diocese of Toulouse, and it was dedicated to Jean Baptiste Michel Colbert de St Pouanges, the archbishop of Toulouse and a member of the renowned Colbert family.⁵⁶ Although he had been nominated to the see of Toulouse in 1687, the papal bulls of investiture were delayed six years, until 1693, the year of the reconciliation between the pope, the king, and the French bishops. The decoration and the title on the map of Toulouse, not surprisingly in light of the origin of the impulse to create the map, announced the ecclesiastical control over the entire diocese. The cartouche, carrying the title and dedication inside, was surmounted by the coat of arms of the Colbert family, the undulating snake, the marks of Colbert's noble station and his high ecclesiastical office—the crown of nobility, the cross, and the cardinal's hat. In addition, flanking the cherubs that hold the heraldic symbol was once again the unicorn representing here for the bishop the integrity of his ecclesiastical station, and surrounding the cartouche were the coats of arms representing the various parishes over which Colbert had jurisdiction. The ornamentation of the map, which artistically expressed Colbert's power or ecclesiastical domination, becomes all the more prescient when we find that throughout his reign, Colbert and his reform efforts came into conflict with the lower clergy. Moreover, Colbert struggled against the crown's exorbitant taxes in the province of Toulouse.⁵⁷ Although the map, which was a tool for administration, could not in itself lower Louis's taxes or smooth the way for reform of the lower clergy, the rhetoric of the map asserted ecclesiastical domination and Colbert's power and jurisdiction in Toulouse.

In 1683, Jaillot had published a map with the customary heraldry and trappings of office for Charles Le Goux de LaBerchère, the bishop of Lavaur in Languedoc,⁵⁸ but by the first years of the eighteenth century, Le Goux, now archbishop, sought Delisle's reputation as a scientific cartographer for his new ecclesiastical map. In 1704, Delisle published his ecclesiastical map of the diocese of Narbonne, whose archbishop presided over the secular governing body of the provincial Estates of Languedoc for which Delisle would later begin an atlas project.⁵⁹ The

cartouche carried, in ascending order, the armorial bearing of Charles Le Goux de LaBerchère, the coronet of the nobility, the pastoral cross, and the cardinal's hat. In addition, three playful cherubs adorned each side of the cartouche and carried more trappings of the archbishop's office: the miter, the incense burner, archiepiscopal cross (i.e. the double cross staff), the pastoral staff, the cardinal's hat, and the chalice. The artistic representation of the cartouche clarified not only the status of the dedicatee—a nobleman—but also the ecclesiastical domination of the area. With Delisle's map, the archbishop of the area had a visual document not only to distinguish church lands, but also with which he could base his contribution to the ecclesiastical exemption of the *capitation* tax.⁶⁰ Delisle's ecclesiastical maps were no less political tools than those he made for the French crown. The map became a visual document that legitimized his power.

In 1714, Moll published a map for his new king that was no less a political tool for the English crown, but this was a map of an area in Germany. Moll's map of the Electorate of Brunswick-Lunenbourg stamped the authority of its elector and arch-treasurer of the empire on a wealthy piece of German territory and included George's heraldic arms as Arch-Treasurer of the Empire as well as a dominant display of his new royal arms adorned with the implements of a military leader. An inset map of the "route to London" recalled the recently produced medal by Georg Wilhelm Vestner commemorating the auspicious event with George I on the obverse "and the Hanoverian stallion triumphantly leaping across the map of Europe from Hanover to England on the reverse."⁶¹ With a description of profitable silver mines, abundant forests, and a new coat of arms, this document presented the German landholdings of the new Hanoverian king, George I, to the English patrimony. The English were not quite pleased to have another "foreign" king, but such a depiction of profitable lands might allay fears about this pomp-loving king who took two months to celebrate his way across Europe to take the English throne. Ever the self-promoter, Moll was sure to report in print on the map that his majesty was so pleased with the work that he awarded Moll a gold medal. This "*value-laden image*" like those maps presented above carried within or on it messages of power. And similarly, its existence as a symbolic landscape, a geographical image, or a visual text of domination beckons the reader or map viewer to investigate further and even look beyond the graphical construction to the social and political forces of production.

9.6 Conclusion

Understanding that maps are social constructions has led to a great deal of research in the history of geography and cartography. Looking for the political and social forces that helped to create and sometimes to silence geographical works has given a greater depth to the study of maps and atlases. Historians recognize that reading a map like a cultural document fully contextualizes the source in its time and place. Within this field one finds that the most delightful and most easily

accessible elements are the visual adornments. The artistic elements, however, often elicit a “pretty picture” response which might lead to, if one has the sarcastic wit of a Mark Twain, the visual understanding of “old man with urn of water.” Contextualizing the images from map cartouches and atlas frontispieces reveals the powerful persuasive nature of these designs. The mapmakers, map sellers, map publishers in this presentation, produced works for the crown, ministers, and ecclesiastics that through their design elements imposed power over the land and confirmed or legitimized their jurisdictional, martial, and even divinely ordained control over territory.

Notes

1 Mitchell, *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology*, 40.

2 Ibid., 9.

3 Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology*, 16.

4 Backhaus, “Introduction I: The Problematic,” 9.

5 Harley, “Deconstructing the Map,” 2.

6 Pickles, “Texts, Hermeneutics and Propaganda Maps,” 194.

7 Harley, “Deconstructing,” 2. See also Edney, “Cartography without ‘Progress,’” 4–68; Dahl, ed., “Commentary,” 89–121; Belyea, “Images of Power,” 1–9; Turnbull, “Cartography and Science,” 5–24; and David Turnbull, “Theoretical Aspects of the History of Cartography,” 185–205; Edney, “Reconsidering Enlightenment Geography,” 165–198.

8 Clarke, “Taking Possession,” 455.

9 Harley, “Power and Legitimation,” 137.

10 Clarke, “Taking Possession,” 456.

11 De Fer, *L’Amerique*. See also the zoomable map image in the online collection at the Bibliothèque Nationale, <http://opaline.bnf.fr/>, Cartes et Plans, GE DD 2987(8511)B.

12 Petto, *Map Promotion in Early Modern Europe*, 11.

13 Harley, “Power and Legitimation,” 138. Harley, “New England Cartography,” 187–191. See also Zukas, “Terra Incognita/Terra Nullius,” 49–76.

14 Petto, *Map Promotion in Early Modern Europe*, 12–14. French encroachment was an ongoing concern for the English. See British Library, Ms. 849 and Ms. Eg. 1753 manuscript sources addressing the concerns of French encroachment in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

15 Moll, “A New Map of the North Parts of America.” See also the zoomable map image in the online collection at the Bibliothèque Nationale, <http://opaline.bnf.fr/>, Cartes et Plans, GE DD 2987(8538)B.

16 Reinhartz, *The Cartographer and the Literati*, 71–89, 114–117. In an effort to compete with the French and the Spanish in the South Pacific, England formed the joint stock company, the British South Sea Company in 1711. Fraudulent activity had artificially increased the value of the stock, but in late 1720 when the “bubble” burst and stock prices fell drastically, a credit collapse and financial crisis ensued.

17 Delisle, *Carte de la Louisiane*. Just months after the appearance of Delisle’s map of Louisiana, Louis XV awarded Guillaume the unique title of premier géographe du roi, with a pension of 1,200 livres. His reputation as a cartographer now had a title to go with it. He received this

title from Louis XV, under the court of the Regency of the duc d'Orléans, the longtime patron of the Delisles. For Guillaume's service to the crown and his cartographical skill, he received "a mark more particular." See Archives Nationale, O¹ 62, Maison du roi, f. 183, 24 August 1718. See also the zoomable map image in the online collection at the Bibliothèque Nationale, [http://opaline.bnf.fr/Cartes et Plans, GE DD 2987\(8788\)B](http://opaline.bnf.fr/Cartes%20et%20Plans,GE%20DD%202987(8788)B).

18 Archives Nationale, Colonies, A 22, #2393, f. 69, 23 August 1718. Crozat discharged from his exclusive commerce in Louisiana; Archives Nationale, Colonies, A22, #2357, 12 September 1717. Law named among the seven directors of the Company of the West. See also Giraud, *Histoire*, 3–60; 129–153.

19 As quoted in Cumming, *The Southeast in Early Maps*, 40.

20 Suárez, *Shedding the Veil*, 151.

21 Delisle, *Carte du Canada*. See Dawson, *L'Atelier Delisle*, 170. See also the zoomable map image in the online collection at the Bibliothèque Nationale, [http://opaline.bnf.fr/Cartes et Plans, GE DD 2987\(8549\)B](http://opaline.bnf.fr/Cartes%20et%20Plans,GE%20DD%202987(8549)B).

22 Jefferys, "A Map of the most Inhabited part of New England." See also zoomable map image online at Library of Congress American Memory, Map Collection, 1500–2004, http://memory.loc.gov/cgibin/query/D?gmd:2:/temp/~ammem_RqpR:::@@/@@mdb.

23 Clarke, "Taking Possession," 460.

24 Ibid., 459.

25 Harley, "Power and Legitimation," 144.

26 Ibid., 135.

27 Jaillot, "Provinces-Unies des Pays Bas." See also Petto, "From l'Etat," 53–78.

28 Burke, *Fabrication of Louis XIV*, 135.

29 Jaillot, *Atlas Français*, frontispiece.

30 Jaillot, *Atlas Français*, dedicatory page. *J'apporte aux pieds de Vostre Majesté le Monde entier comme le Theatre de sa gloire, en luy presentant un nouvel Atlas; où les quatre Parties du Monde, les Empires, leurs Royaumes & leurs Provinces représentées dans toute leur étenduë, ne font rien voir de si grand, que le Nom & la Personne Sacrée de Vostre Majesté, qui ont remply toute la terre d'admiration de terreur & de veneration, par la magnificence de son Regne, par ses grandes Conquestes & par la sagesse de sa conduite.* Also as quoted in Roland, *Alexis-Hubert Jaillot*, 25, n.1.

31 Burke, *Fabrication of Louis XIV*, 110.

32 Jaillot, "Carte particuliere de Namur."

33 Jaillot, *Comté de Namur*.

34 Jaillot, "Provinces-Unies des Pays Bas."

35 Nolin, *Les Etats de Savoye et de Piemont*.

36 For the frontispiece image online, see Elizabeth's England from Elizabeth I: Ruler and Legend, A Newberry Library Exhibit, September 30, 2003–January 17, 2004 at <http://www3.new-berry.org/elizabeth/exhibit/elizabethsengland/4.02.html>.

37 See Delano-Smith and Kain, *English Maps*, 66–71; Cormack, "Britannia Rules the Waves?," 45–68; and Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood*, 107–114.

38 See Corbett and Lightbown, *The Comely Frontispiece*, 34; Cormack, "Britannia Rules the Waves?," 55; and Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood*, 111.

39 Delano-Smith and Kain, *English Maps*, 260, n. 70.

40 Cormack, "Britannia Rules the Waves?," 55.

41 Ibid., 55, 57.

42 See Petto, *Map Promotion in Early Modern Europe*, 7–9. See also image one from the online version at <http://www.newberry.org/smith/slidesets/ss32.html>.

43 Ogilby, *Britannia*, facsimile edition, vii.

44 Tyacke, *London Map-sellers*, 3.

45 Ogilby, *Britannia*, facsimile edition, vii.

46 Ogilby, *Britannia*, dedicatory page.

47 Ibid.

48 Nolin, *Les Environs de Paris*, dedicatory cartouche: “Au Roy, Sire, Si les Terres que le Soleil regarde de plus pres sont les plus heureuses et les plus abondantes en toutes sortes de biens, je presente AU MAJESTÉ la Carte des peuples les plus heureux de Vôte Royaume, puis quilz ont le bonheur de la voir de plus pres et de la posseder plus longtemps, ... Si les Frontieres du Royaume ont été jusqu'a present le Theatre de vos conquests, Paris est constamment celui de Votre Gloire.” See also zoomable map image in the online collection at the BN, <http://opaline.bnf.fr/>, Cartes et Plans, GE DD 2987(682, I–IV).

49 Jaillot, “La Généralité de Paris.”

50 Collins, *State in Early Modern France*, 144–146.

51 Symcox, *Crisis of French Sea Power*, 1–2.

52 Ibid., 72–75.

53 Symcox, *Crisis of French Sea Power*, 2; Jaillot, “La Provence.” See also zoomable map image in the online collection at the BN, <http://opaline.bnf.fr/>, Cartes et Plans, GE DD 2987(642).

54 Burke, *Fabrication of Louis XIV*, 97–101.

55 In 1673 and 1675, royal edicts extended the rights of the *régale*, which now gave Louis the right to collect revenues from vacant sees and the right of nomination to all non-parochial benefices. By 1680, the Assembly of the Clergy stood firmly with their king, and two years later, all but four bishops signed the “Four Articles” denying papal authority over temporal power. This royal versus Roman ecclesiastical domination surrounding the *régale* led to a seemingly hopeless deadlock that even Louis’s Revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685) could not unlock. Only the death of the intransigent Pope Innocent XI and the growing international pressures on the king from the War of the League of Augsburg led Louis to seek reconciliation in the hopes of obtaining Rome’s neutrality. In 1693, both the king and the bishops made official but rather unrepentant statements to Rome, and the affair of the *régale* disappeared into the historical mist. See Bluche, *Louis XIV*, 303–306, 399–400; Goubert, *Louis XIV and Twenty Million Frenchmen*, 147–162; Grever, “The Religious History of the Reign,” 159–178; and Judge, “Louis XIV and the Church,” 240–264.

56 Jaillot, “Le Diocese de Toulouse.” See also the zoomable map image in the online collection at the BN, <http://opaline.bnf.fr/>, Cartes et Plans, GE DD 2987(357)B.

57 *Dictionnaire de Biographie Française*, s.v. “Colbert, Jean-Baptiste-Michel,” 203, #32.

58 Jaillot, “Le Diocese de Lavaur.”

59 Delisle, *Carte du diocese de Narbonne*. See also the zoomable map image in the online collection at the Bibliothèque Nationale, <http://opaline.bnf.fr/>, Cartes et Plans, GE DD 2987(349).

60 Collins, *State in Early Modern France*, 167.

61 Reinhartz, *The Cartographer and the Literati*, 16.

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Chapter 10

Symbolism and the Interaction of the Real and the Ideal: Scenery in Early-Modern Netherlandish Graphic Art

Anat Gilboa

Editors' Note: The author of this chapter questions the orthodox thesis that emphasizes the predominance of realism in the early-modern landscape art of the Netherlands by articulating the symbolic/ideal aspects of various works of the period. This counter-thesis of interaction provides an opportunity to make the deeper case, on the basis of our epistemological position, that perception and imagination are interrelated poles along a continuum, that all works of art must be examined on the basis of the interrelation of actual/perceptual and imaginative elements, for the very selection of actual elements requires virtual embodiment, the choosing of alternatives, involving the imagination. And so the actual or "real" is already imbued with the imagination. Symbolic meanings cling to artistic realism as there can be no reduction to bare actuality. On the other hand, imagination depends on the perceptual/actual from which it draws. This discussion testifies to the inter-related geographies of imagination and perception—realist landscape art as an objectivation of what is seen, is hopelessly "tainted" with the imagination, as is the "actual" landscape.

10.1 The Prevailing View in the Art-Historical Research: The Exploration of Realism in Early-Modern Art

We can detect in seventeenth-century Netherlandish landscape drawings, sketches, engravings, etchings and woodcuts a noticeable development towards realism. When applied to the art of the early-modern period, realism is a multifaceted term: it generally refers to an artistic genre illustrating human behavior and the environment, enveloping many elements such as views of cities and villages, sea-scapes and panoramic vistas as well as figures, still-life objects, flora and fauna. Most of these depictions place the emphasis on non-idealized scenes. Until the Renaissance, pictorial depictions of nature were used as background for history pictures (often called 'histories'), a genre in which factual as well as fictional accounts were depicted. Periods such as the classical or the Byzantine era were

used as backdrops. History pieces, however, chiefly took religious, mythological or other literary themes, and were only partly based on actual historical events. Imaginary elements were used to convey concepts such as heroism and to create dramatic context. Since the sixteenth century there had been a growing tendency by the old masters in Flanders to paint and draw landscape scenes as an independent artistic category. This trend first became apparent in the Northern Netherlands in seventeenth-century landscape drawings.

The fascination and alleged dependence of Netherlandish artists upon nature was already mentioned by Michelangelo Buonarroti as early as the sixteenth century. In the 1540s Francesco de (da) Hollanda, Portuguese artist, humanist and a friend of Michelangelo, quoted his Italian fellow artist's criticism that:

In Flanders, they paint with a view to external exactness ... ; the green grass of the fields, the shadow of trees, and rivers and bridges, which they call landscapes with many figures on this side and many figures on that. And all this, though it pleases some people, is done without reason or art, without symmetry or proportion, without skilful choice or boldness, and, finally, without substance or vigour.¹

At the beginning of the seventeenth century the Dutch painter, writer and theoretician, Karel van Mander recommended that his fellow artists should take walks in the countryside with their sketchbooks to learn about nature and make sketches outdoors.² Following Van Mander's advice, during the seventeenth century the conventional development of landscape scenes in graphic works would start from drawings made in situ. After studying the subjects out of doors in sketches, those intended as designs for prints were developed into engravings, etchings or woodcuts as well as paintings in the studio.³ This interest in the forms and structure of nature increasingly gained importance in the northern graphic arts.

Realist art, particularly associated with the Northern Netherlands, has been described by many scholars as a form of art that disregarded symbols and metaphors. In quest of faithful representation, northern European artists inclined to depict figures and their surroundings without literary allusion, to achieve objective representation of their theme. Commentators have mainly focused on Netherlandish landscape drawings and prints, regarding these works as a manifestation of a newly-awakened interest in nature on the part of Netherlandish artists, as well as the reflection of an urban taste for excursions into the countryside.⁴ In his study of Netherlandish landscape pictures, Christopher Brown characterizes the scenery drawings mainly as a representation of the everyday world.⁵ Walter Gibson describes this new realism as a "Mirror of the Earth."⁶ According to Gibson, northern artists were able to emulate nature with all the articulateness of a disciplined imitator. In their recent book on the Renaissance print, David Landau and Peter Parshall reiterate the prevalent view on early-modern northern art:

To a greater extent than was true in Italy, northern painters and printmakers seem to have concentrated their attention on rendering the world, especially the natural world, in all its particularity and variableness. In a way, the entire enterprise of northern art could be described as being directed toward the modest if challenging notion that the true purpose of making art was simply to portray.⁷

During the early-modern period the majority of prints and drawings were used by artists for their private enjoyment. Most of these works were not intended to be sold to the public.⁸ Because they were not exposed to a large public, works of graphic art were less subject to alteration and adaptation due to market whims and demands. In this paper I shall consider the significance and relevance of realism in northern graphic works of art. I intend to examine the relevance of realism in early-modern Netherlandish graphic work together with the interaction with traditional iconography. In research to date, the effect of traditional iconography on this new artistic topic has not received comprehensive analysis. The aim of the present study is to look at artistic modes in which realism and traditional iconography were combined, either obscurely or more obviously. In other words: I shall examine the approach of northern artists to nature and show how these artists treated their topics, which they did using a range of conventional and conservative methods. I would maintain that the search for realism in Netherlandish scenery demonstrates an interest in artistic innovation. Furthermore, I would argue that northern artists formulated an allegorical view in their depictions of geographical places, in relation to a particular point of view or a preplanned point of observation. This study will show how both artistic imitation and invention were embedded within the early-modern culture of both the Southern and Northern Netherlands.

The main argument of this study reverberates with the theme of this volume. In the introduction to this part of the book, Gary Backhaus sets out the epistemological doctrines of the perception/imagination continuum and the interrelation of perception and imagination. These doctrines problematize for the art historian the notions of the real and the ideal in scenery images, in a way that leads to greater discernment and clarity. There can be no such thing as the purely real or the purely ideal. The purely real might be pure sense data, which cannot be perceived because of the fundamental, *gestalt* structure of perception. An act of perception is already selective and can only be formed through the workings of the imagination. An artist works through a medium and must project ideal elements of selection in order to present the “realistic” rendering of a scene. And any idealized landscape must entail real elements, no matter how abstract such a reference might be. The point of this brief discussion is to confront the alleged realism of early-modern Netherlandish scenery pictures with interrelated elements of imaginative idealization and symbolization. By making the case that there is neither pure realism nor pure idealism, we are able to construct a study that explores the ideal moments within the real. Such a study supports a larger appreciation, concerning the interrelation and mutual influence of the geography of perception and the geography of imagination.

10.2 Imitation and Invention of Nature in Early-Modern Art

The aesthetic foundations of scenery pictures and their cultural roots were based on post-medieval thought, literature and philosophy. The notion of undertaking a

meticulous study of nature had a considerable influence on humanist circles in Europe. During the fifteenth century, artists on both sides of the Alps believed it was their task to revive the classical idea of imitation of nature, or *mimesis*. During the sixteenth century the idea of *mimesis* was replaced with a new theory on the power of artistic invention, or *fantasia*. In a recent article, Andrea Bolland discusses the concept of imitation and innovation in early Renaissance Italy. The author examines the way Italian artists drew copies after a certain master in order to learn the particularities of the latter's craft. The assumption was that by choosing a certain master whose work should be copied, artists would be able to develop their own personal judgment and style, in other words their own artistic signature:

Cennini's advice on copying models is found in the important and extensive discussion of *disegno* that occupies chapters 5–34 of the *Libro*. These chapters form the hinge between Cennini's claims for painting's kinship to poetry as an art requiring fantasy and science (chapter 1–4) and the more technical instructions on painting, gilding, casting, etc. that occupy the book's remaining 155 chapters. Cennini makes *disegno* a bridge between mind and hand by stating in chapter two that drawing by itself delights the *intelletto* of those who are drawn to the art of painting by an *animo gentile*.⁹

In an analysis of the landscape paintings by Peter Bruegel the Elder (1525–1569) Jane ten Brink Goldsmith reviews the influence of Italian thought on the Flemish artist. Ten Brink Goldsmith considers sixteenth-century pictorial arts in northern Europe, in which the realistic depiction of nature was perceived as “beauty;” in contrast, in Italian art “beauty” was associated with the concept of truth. The author concludes that Peter Bruegel the Elder combines both aspects in his work:

While fifteenth-century Italian art was at one level committed to the notion of *mimesis*, which is to say “perfect” imitation, during the sixteenth century this concern was replaced by the notion of *fantasia*, where a premium was put on the way in which artistic creativity surpassed nature. Oddly enough, landscape, which throughout the Renaissance stood as living evidence of the power of art as imitation, was now used as an instance in which artists could be like God the creator in re-fabricating the world according to their own conditions.... Whereas *mimesis* was the primary foundation on which Italian art theory was founded, in the sixteenth century *mimesis* came to be replaced by *fantasia*. While *mimesis* was closely associated in the fifteenth century with history painting and didactic concerns in painting (i.e., moral elevation), *fantasia* was associated with sensory experience and with the acquisition and manipulation of knowledge-based or sensory experience. And while *mimesis*, as defined in Italian art theory, was fully realized in painting, *fantasia* was never fully realized in Italian art.... [Bruegel's] insistence on truth to nature constituted in effect a rebellion against such artifice.¹⁰

As Ten Brink Goldsmith suggested, beside keenness to represent nature in an authentic way Peter Bruegel the Elder complemented his depictions with a personal approach. An example is Bruegel's etching *Rabbit Hunters* from 1560.¹¹ On the rocky hillside of a wide river valley two sportsmen are shown chasing rabbits. Beyond the mountainous hillside is depicted a wide meandering river with sailing boats. Viewed from a high point, the hunters' faces cannot be discerned, but their actions are apparent. One of them is trying to catch two rabbits, aiming his arrow at both of the animals at once. From behind a tree trunk the other hunter appears to

be ambushing his fellow sportsman. Bruegel has chosen a high viewpoint to provide a broad view of the countryside, thereby emphasizing strength: the commanding hills, the large river and the wide valley stretching towards the horizon. The contrast between the small figures of the hunters, the anonymity of their faces and the magnitude of the surroundings with its panoramic view suggests the insignificance of human activity in the face of nature. The obscurity of the hunters' faces and actions, the bareness of the hills, the lifeless tree trunks and the great distance between the spectator and the countryside arouse feelings of somberness and chilled sobriety. What one could term "unevenness" or "imbalance," the striking contrast between the power of nature and the hunters' actions, brings into sharp focus the transience and brevity of human life. Bruegel's work is not simply an imitation of nature. It is a representation of human activity bearing a moralizing message.

Bruegel is one of the earliest artists in post-medieval northern art to include a didactic note in his work, bringing together the natural world and the viewer's moral awareness. His artistic process is imbued with the perceptual and imaginative force which already suggests how he would sense the picture. The artistic vision that evokes emotion is present in the artist's sensibility: this is what he wishes to make apparent. It is not a dualistic state and cannot be perceived as real or ideal. Rather, it is an ambiguous area, neither objective nor subjective.

10.3 The Real and the Transitory in Early-Modern Landscape Views

This section of my paper focuses on the shift from Peter Bruegel's work, which alluded to a debate on human nature, to that of his followers, which emphasized the interaction between real landscapes and the human scenario. The dialectic between the natural and the cultural is demonstrated in the work of the northern followers of Bruegel. These artists depicted landscapes, known in Dutch as *fantasielandschappen* (fantasy landscapes). Wolfgang Stechow has titled their artworks 'Imaginary Scenes.' According to Stechow, the real settings in these works were altered by the artists and the final work was the result of a creative process.¹² Though various Netherlandish landscape scenes were presented as if based on actual locations,¹³ those who followed Bruegel had been gradually adding certain artistic allusions to evoke particular emotions in the viewer.

An example is Jacob Isaackszoon van Ruisdael's painting of the *Castle of Bentheim*.¹⁴ The Castle of Bentheim is an actual building in a real location in Westphalia, in Germany. In spite of the fact that Ruisdael's journeys to this part of Germany are well documented,¹⁵ as far as historical accuracy is concerned the representation fails: the castle was not situated on a mountain but on a low hill. Ruisdael changed the existing vista by enlarging the hill into a wooded mountain. With the dark tonality of the painting's palette, the high mountain and the position of the castle the Dutch artist created an atmospheric impression; he did not represent the actual scene. In Ruisdael's picture the German castle and the mountain are

presented as a unit of power, a secluded but potent source of strength. Bentheim was clearly an important locus for Ruisdael and until late in his career he continued to include the castle, seen from different viewpoints, in a variety of his landscape paintings. Rather than illustrating geographical places as references to human behavior and morality as did Bruegel, Ruisdael introduced such devices as idealization, associating emotional states, which by definition are transitory, with actual geographical settings.

Imaginative landscapes were an important subject matter in Netherlandish paintings as well as in graphic art during the seventeenth century. Graphic works seemed initially to refer directly to observed nature, especially because of their immediacy. Yet, as in northern scenery paintings, seventeenth-century Dutch and Flemish graphic artists explored a more individual approach in their works. An example is an etching from about 1616 by Willem Pieterszoon Buytewech (c.1592–1624), who illustrated the remains of the building *Huis Te Kleef* near *Haarlem* (Fig. 10.1). This medieval castle, located near the city of Haarlem, was well-known in Buytewech's time. The castle, headquarters of the Spanish Habsburg army in the sixteenth century, was destroyed by the Spaniards during the Siege of Haarlem in 1572.¹⁶ The work is one of a series of ten etchings, titled *Verscheijden Landchapjes* (Various Small Landscapes).

While three prints from that series illustrate specific architectural monuments with historical associations, such as the ruins of the *Huis ter Kleef*, the remains of *Brederode Castle*, or the remains of the *Chapel at Eyckenduynen*, the other prints depict general landscape scenes of unidentified Dutch countryside. Motifs of archaic, Romanesque or Gothic fragments of architecture appear consistently in various art works by northern European artists. Dutch landscapists added motifs of ancient classical ruins, associating their culture with Italianate characteristics of a noble past. The aim of adding imagined ancient fragments to Holland's domestic country scene was to enhance the grandeur of the local scenery, as well as to achieve the heroic pose found in Italian art.¹⁷ In various Dutch works, ruins are not added to glorify a lost culture but used as props, creating a theatrical ambience in order to evoke certain emotions. In her book *Journey through Landscape in Seventeenth-Century Holland: the Haarlem Print Series and Dutch Identity*, Catherine Levesque argues that Buytewech's series *Various Small Landscapes* symbolizes a strong historical bond between the ancient Batavians, the Romans and seventeenth-century Dutch citizens.¹⁸ In his *Ruins of the Huis te Kleef near Haarlem*, Buytewech has achieved a dark tonality, creating a sequence of elegant lines with a special tool. The dots were made with the help of roulette, a multi-spiked wheel that produces a series of *intaglio* marks with burr. In his *Landscape Painting*, the renowned art historian, Kenneth Clark writes: "Facts become art through love."¹⁹ In the introduction to this volume Gary Backhaus cites Clark's words, explaining that depictions of landscape should not be perceived as an outcome of a creative projection *versus* an observation of an object. Backhaus explains that during the creative process the artist illuminates what is "within him" as well as what he observes in a circular dialectical causality: a coherent unity of interrelated fields. Regarding Clark and Backhaus's suggestion, I would like to argue that

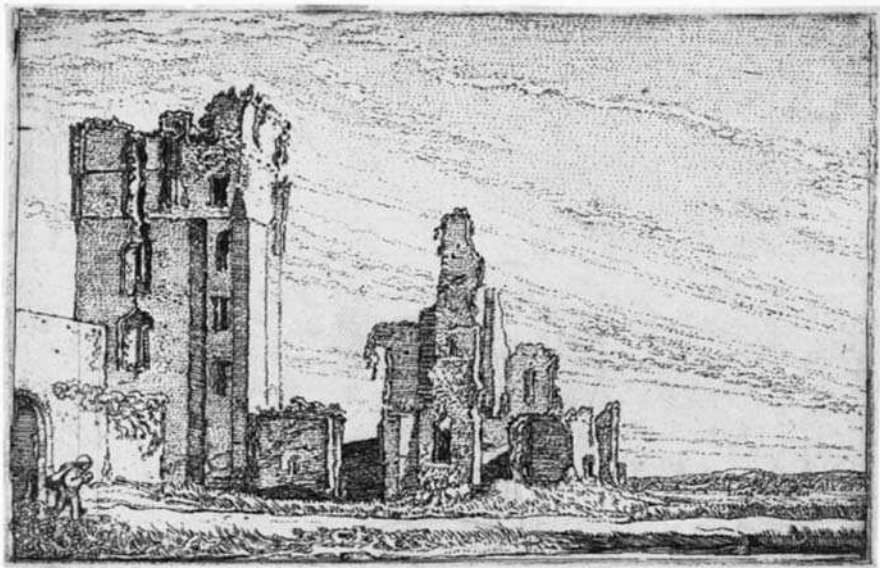


Fig. 10.1 Willem Pieterszoon Buytewech, *Ruins of the Huis te Kleef near Haarlem*, 1621, etching, paper, 87 × 125 mm, Amsterdam, Het Rijksprentenkabinet (RP-P-1883-A-6805) (Hollstein 4, p. 75, nr. 37–1)

while Buytewech's print commemorates a major socio-political event that led to the formation of the Dutch Republic, the *intaglio*, adding an impression of shifting cloud, underlines the transitory quality of a certain atmosphere or mood. The specific geographical place and its enduring historical significance are associated with an emotional impression of the landmark.

Various prints and drawings from the period under discussion frequently contain fictional elements based on prose and poetry. In his groundbreaking book from 1980, *Dutch Landscape: Prints of the Seventeenth Century*, David Freedberg indicates that in etchings, engravings and woodcuts illustrating the recently-liberated land of the Dutch Republic, scenery was often based on idyllic poems expressing the pride of the Dutch people in their new identity.²⁰ Recently, Huigen Leeftang from the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam demonstrated that during the Dutch Golden Age, earlier and contemporary literary sources were used as a thematic foundation and inspiration for landscapists; one such being the emblem book titled *Cupido's Lusthof* (Cupid's Love Garden), published in Amsterdam in 1613 by Gerrit Hendrickszoon van Breughel.²¹

10.4 Local and Foreign Settings

I should now like to examine some other themes such as pictures of imaginary, the foreign, or exotic settings that were highly esteemed during the seventeenth

century and merit further discussion and appreciation. Numerous works are reminiscent of, or refer to, previous pictorial depictions of local as well as exotic places. One of the northern artists who painted local and foreign settings was Rembrandt van Rijn (1606–1669). While Rembrandt may not primarily be known as a landscapist, the Dutch master is one of the eminent artists who drew and etched landscapes. Starting in around 1640 Rembrandt probably made frequent walks through Amsterdam and its surroundings, jotting down his impressions in a sketchbook.²² Rembrandt found picturesque vistas in his nearby surroundings and would sometimes make several etchings or pictures of the same place. An example is the master's drawing of cottages on the Diemerdijk which was later rendered in a similar way by the Flemish painter and designer Jan van Kessel (1626–1679).²³ In his copy after Rembrandt's work, Van Kessel portrays the exact topography of the Dutch site. By depicting a well-documented location with a reference to an earlier art work, the Flemish artist created a new interpretation of a recognizable locus; more a reflection based on artistic observation than on direct viewing.

However, most of Rembrandt's landscapes from that period show fantasy scenes, inspired by earlier art works, such as the graphic art of Hercules Seghers. During the 1640s Rembrandt and his school sketched several views of places in England such as London, Windsor Castle and St. Albans Cathedral. Rembrandt himself had never traveled outside of Holland. His drawing *View of Windsor Castle* is a detailed picture of the well-known castle.²⁴ This reflects both Rembrandt's interest in depicting architecture, while also being an example of the popular studio practice in which art works were frequently copied, reinforcing the idealized nature of faraway, and—in Rembrandt's case—inaccessible places. Foreign places stood for universal notions and ideal worlds in which qualities such as beauty, immortality, morality or heroism prevailed. The drawings of the English countryside by the Dutch master and his school can be understood as geographical documentation, while at the same time they interpret freely, presenting an idyllic setting with poetic evocations of pastoral life.

As mentioned, many works depicting scenery, especially sketches, were made by Netherlandish artists in situ in order to document their surroundings. An example is a drawing by Roelaent Savery (1576–1639). Savery's drawing, made during the first decade of the seventeenth century, is a study of a tree growing at the top of a hill.²⁵ The sketch, done in black chalk with some brush strokes, expresses a subtle balance between the tree's heavy weight, the twisting form of its trunk, and its texture. It is not clear if Savery—known for his dramatic landscape scenes—intended in this sketch to represent a visually fascinating natural phenomenon, or whether the drawing was meant as an artistic interpretation of the environment.

A drawing known as the *Valley with Wooden Frame* by Hercules Pieterszoon Seghers (c.1589–1590–c.1633–1638) also exemplifies this approach. Seghers, born into an immigrant Flemish family living in Holland, mainly depicted fantastic and rocky landscapes, unfamiliar to the topography of the Northern Netherlands. In this particular drawing, the artist illustrates a panoramic view of a plain, seen from a height with a tree growing out of a rock and hanging down in the foreground (Fig. 10.2). The winding road and the curves of the rocks are in stark

contrast to the geometrical design, instanced in the far-left corner. The landscape illustrated does not exist in the flat countryside of the Northern Netherlands. Yet Seghers, who repeatedly depicted mountainous landscapes analogous to the one seen here, may have been drawing recollections of his native land. There is no way of knowing whether Seghers's inclusion of this hilly location with its valley is intended as a reference to a specific place or not. Furthermore, the artist has added dark tones, representing an illusory panorama and combining the realism of landscape sketches with symbolic references. Seghers's scene suggests a yearning for a distant and idealized world. This sketch, either of an actual or an imaginary setting (but seemingly of a specific place) portrays a romantic vision of an impressive and remote location. Hercules Seghers's drawing *Valley with Wooden Frame* exemplifies a feature found in several Netherlandish works: the portrayal of what appears to be real, which is used as the basis for a vision of the ideal.

10.5 Cartographic Ambiguities

Since the mid-sixteenth century cartography had been evolving in Flanders and the Northern Netherlands as one outcome of the growing number of sea and land explorations, coupled with the desire to visualize the surroundings accurately.²⁶ As



Fig. 10.2 Hercules Pieterszoon Seghers, *Valley with Wooden Frame*, c.1620–1630, ink on paper treated with brown paint, 132 × 188 mm, Amsterdam, Het Rijksprentenkabinet (RP-P-H-OB-808)

J. B. Harley's study emphasizes, cartographic imagery was an expression of economic and political power, directed by the ruling political parties.²⁷ Additionally, sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Netherlandish cartography represents patriotic pride and self-representation. In the famous print *Leo Belgicus*, a map in the shape of a large lion made by Frans Hogenberg and Michael von Aitzing, the symbolic figure of the lion accentuates the might and the sovereignty of the Low Countries. Dutch colonialists used maps and marine scenes as emblematic codes for their expansion in North America and the East Indies, and their supremacy on the ocean.²⁸ These charts were perceived as references to real locations, with allegorical implications to emphasize their political voice.

Topographical prints of individual cities were also popular in seventeenth-century Northern and Southern Netherlands. The print *Profile of Amsterdam from the River IJ* was made by Claes Janszoon Visscher (1587–1652), known Dutch cartographer, and Pieter Bast (c.1570–1605), a Flemish cartographer living in Leiden.²⁹ Visscher actually started out with two copperplates that were engraved approximately 12 years earlier by Pieter Bast. Later on, Visscher reprocessed the plates, using the old vista and adding newer Amsterdam buildings. Furthermore, Visscher added detailed annotation to the illustrations.³⁰ In Visscher's and Bast's print, which is an amalgam of various techniques, Claes Visscher portrayed his home town (Fig. 10.3).

The panoramic view of the Dutch metropolis, bustling center of world trade, is taken from across the river IJ. In the foreground we see the mercantile activities which Amsterdam was famous for in the seventeenth century. The central female figure in the foreground is an allegorical representation of the city in the form of a maiden, seated on a throne of wooden piles. She receives products from around the world, as exemplified by such figures as the Moorish traders, the camel and a monkey, on the far left. Visscher has presumably added these and other imaginary figures to allude to distant and exotic places.³¹ Some of the people could well have been Dutch locals, such as the woman carrying water. This work became one of the famous maps of the city of Amsterdam. Visscher, who is generally seen as an early Netherlandish artist who drew directly from nature,³² chose in this print to blend the real and the imaginary. *Profile of Amsterdam from the River IJ* is a

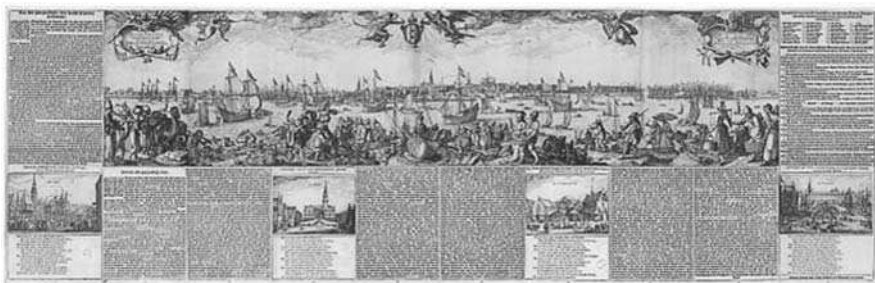


Fig. 10.3 Claes Janszoon Visscher and Pieter Bast, *Profile of Amsterdam from the River IJ*, 1599 and 1611, engraving and etching, 445 × 1,432 mm, second state of two, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (RP-P-AO-20-22/3) (RP-P-AO-20-22/2, RP-35584)

combination of a panoramic view of Amsterdam, a topographically realistic rendering with a cartographic purpose, and an allegory symbolizing the prosperous economic climate and cosmopolitan outreach of the city.

10.6 Conclusion

The interaction between the real and the ideal can be found in all works of art. Each artistic work has an identity that presents to us, the viewers, an interaction between the symbolic, the real, and the ideal. Until the fifteenth century, landscape depictions had served as settings for history, and especially religious scenes. From the sixteenth century on, particularly because of the novel landscapes of Pieter Bruegel the Elder, northern scenery came to be perceived as matter for a new artistic genre. These portrayals indicate an apparent departure from the previous pictorial types. Early-modern depictions of geographical *loci* are usually perceived as a new artistic category. These scenes should be understood as a special genre in its own right, with “nature” as the new subject. In practice, however, most of the northern artists depicting nature continued to use traditional elements such as iconography, imagination, or poetry to achieve a mix, realistic rendering as well as artistic innovation.

During the sixteenth and seventeenth century the fashionable genre of Netherlandish scenery prints and drawings—either showing a picture of a place that had not been visited or a recognizable geographical site—reveals a major development in early-modern northern European art. In the Netherlands and Flanders the links between the real and imagined surroundings (with observed or symbolic elements) represented a new combination and transformation of the pictorial tradition. During the sixteenth and seventeenth century, graphic depictions of landscapes held many meanings and were intended to do more than merely represent reality. The scenery in northern graphic art also has a locus of idealization, and with its symbolic interaction of the real and the ideal presents yet another facet of human creation.

Notes

* This article has been developed from a paper, “Realism, Idealization and Allegory in Landscapes in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Graphic Art,” read at the Inaugural Annual International Conference: Meanings of Spaces and Places at Towson University, Baltimore, MD, 2005.

1 Hollanda, *Dialogos em Roma* (1538), *Dialogue* no. I, 69–83, especially 77. De Hollanda’s dialogues were written in Portuguese between 1547–1548 and published in Lisbon in 1548, cf. Clements, “Authenticity of de Hollanda’s *Dialogos em Roma*,” 1018–1028; Sohm, “Gendered Style in Italian Art Criticism,” 759–807.

2 Van Mander, “Over het landschap,” 202–205.

- 3 Brown, *Dutch Landscape*, 45–62.
- 4 Epco, “The New Landscape 1600–1630,” 10–27, especially 11–12.
- 5 Brown, *Dutch Landscape*, 45–62.
- 6 Gibson, “*Mirror of the Earth*,” xix–xxiii.
- 7 Landau and Parshall, *Renaissance Print*, 366.
- 8 For the limited exposure of early-modern prints, cf. *ibid.*, 356.
- 9 Bolland, “Art and Humanism,” 469–470.
- 10 Brink Goldsmith, “Pieter Bruegel the Elder,” 205–234, especially 233–234.
- 11 Peter Bruegel the Elder, *Rabbit Hunters*, 1560, etching, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
- 12 Stechow, *Dutch Landscape Painting*, 131–141.
- 13 Gibson, “*Mirror of the Earth*,” xix–xxiii.
- 14 Jacob Isaackszoon van Ruisdael, *Castle of Bentheim*, 1653, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin.
- 15 For Ruisdael’s trips to the Dutch-German border, cf. Sutton, “Ruisdael Retrospective,” 148.
- 16 Brown, *Dutch Landscape*, 136 (Cat. Nos. 38a–g): Brown studies another etching by Buytewech in which the same monument is shown.
- 17 In a recent article, Alexander Nagel and Christopher S. Wood examine the perception of the antique in early-modern Italian art, cf. Nagel and Wood, “Interventions,” 1–11, esp. 2: “Not just a few but a vast range of works can be understood as virtual spolia or fabricated antiquities, whether they closely resemble real antiquities, to our eyes, or not. The rare examples that succeed in simulating the look of antiquity serve as signposts that help us map out the full reach of the model.” The authors continue explaining how the past was perceived in an anachronistic manner: “To perceive an artifact in substitutional terms was to understand it as belonging to more than one historical moment simultaneously,” 3.
- 18 Levesque, *Journey through Landscape*, 73–88, 141–146.
- 19 Clark, *Landscape Painting*, 16.
- 20 Freedberg, *Dutch Landscape*, 9–20.
- 21 Leeftang, “Het landschap in boek en print,” 18, note 2.
- 22 There is a strong probability that Rembrandt sketched the city of Amsterdam and its surroundings in situ. Cf. Bakker and Leeftang, *Nederland naar ‘t leven*, 92–93. For the use of sketchbooks by early-modern Netherlandish artists, cf. Wetering, “Verdwenen,” 210–227.
- 23 Rembrandt van Rijn, *Cottages on the Diemerdijk, looking East*, drawing, London, British Museum (Benesch 836); Jan van Kessel (after Rembrandt), *Farmstead on the Diemerdijk, looking East*, drawing, Boijmans Van Beuningen Museum, Rotterdam.
- 24 Rembrandt van Rijn, *View of Windsor Castle*, dated: ‘1640’, drawing, Albertina Museum, Vienna (Benesch 786).
- 25 Roelaent Savery, *Study of a Tree*, ca. 1616–1608, drawing, Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin.
- 26 For Netherlandish mapmakers in the early-modern period, cf. Cross, “Dutch Cartographers,” 66–70; Fockema and Hoff, “Opkmost en Bloei der Nederlandsche Kartografie,” 18–50. For the connection between cartography and art during that period, cf. Rees, “Historical Links,” 60–78.
- 27 Harley, “Maps, Knowledge, and Power,” 277–312. I would like to thank Gary Backhaus for recommending this book to me.
- 28 Cross, “Dutch Cartographers,” 66–67; Levesque, “Landscape, Politics, and the Prosperous Peace,” 223–257.
- 29 Members of the Visscher family were important art dealers and map publishers in Amsterdam for almost a century. Claes J. Visscher was probably a student or a follower of Jodocus Hondius,

- renowned Flemish cartographer (1563–1612). For Hondius's biography and career, cf. Janssen, "Jodocus Hondius: Kartograaf, 1563–1963," 7–22.
- 30 Epco, "The New Landscape 1600–1630," 10–27, especially 18–19.
- 31 Walsh, "Exhibition Reviews: Dutch Marine Art," 645–646.
- 32 Duparc, *Landscape in Perspective*, 221.

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Chapter 11

Traversing One's Space: Photography and the *féminine*

Panizza Allmark

Editors' Note: This chapter explores differences in masculine and feminine comportments and how these styles of enactment become encultured and objectivated in the art of photography. The project of constructing/apprehending reality through photographic art has as much to do with imagined spatiality as with the perceptual. Imagining involves the virtual body—the ability to consider alternatives. In order to break away from the masculine hegemony in the photographic art, the feminist photographer, sensitive to the differences in masculine and feminine body schema, attunes herself to the felt experiences of feminine embodiment, eschewing the body schema that traditionally binds photographic art to the masculine. The body schema and the virtual body involve a tensional dialectic that constitutes the imagining body. So the feminist photographer attunes herself to feminine embodied resonances and through the virtual body considers alternatives resulting in the imagined enactment of spatiality that become the photograph. Masculine alternatives are not resonant with the feminine body schema and so are not selected. The photograph provides a fine example of the intertwining of the perceptual and the imagined and the author provocatively articulates what we might label as “the gendered landscape.” *Photographie féminine* allows for the exploration of the spatiality (geographicity) of feminine symbolizations.

11.1 Introduction

Photography is a primary medium through which people relate to visual images and make them their own. In other words, once a picture is seen and filtered through the human symbolic system, it is externalized once again in the production of other pictures and in the act of selecting what to see. This active selection involves both sensuosity and sensibility.¹ Selection is a mode of bodily comportment; it is not merely a mental act. It is an aesthetic engagement expressible in, for example, landscape photography. This issue is particularly significant in stressing the notion that a landscape is a selected re-presentation as well as the point that it is often the

aesthetics of the beautiful, the sublime or the picturesque that is conveyed. The simplistic notion of photography capturing “reality” is therefore contested; “a slice of reality” presented in the landscape photograph is determined through aesthetic choices that follow art traditions that have been historically marked through a masculine comportment and discourse. Bright surmises, “the art of landscape photography remains so singularly identified with a masculine eye.”² The beautiful, the sublime, and the picturesque are masculine aesthetics that are focused on the *mastering gaze* (the disembodied seer capable of establishing an all-encompassing view of the seen/scenic). In contrast, in my photographic work there has been a resistance to the masculine aesthetic structures of landscape photography. The masculine photographer, the transcendental observer, creates a division between self and other. Moreover, the aesthetics utilized in landscape photography, as Bohls suggests “argues without arguing. Its vocabulary of visible surfaces represents power relations as natural and unchallengeable precisely by casting them as irrelevant to the compelling business of the quest for beauty through the senses and imagination.”³ Unlike the categories of the beautiful and the sublime, which follow a masculine comportment (the disembodied gaze still involves comportment, a masculine style of comportment), discourse of containment, and thus an aestheticization of disengagement, the uncanny provides an alternative form of expression as it aims to disrupt masculine boundaries and divisions. If feminine symbolization is different from the masculine, the source for the differences is in comportment—feminine embodiment negotiating space within the milieu. Let us begin to characterize this comportment.

The uncanny, as a counter-aesthetic category, has been associated by Freud⁴ and later by Cixous⁵ and Giblett⁶ with the *feminine* because it shares the same characteristics of indeterminacy, ambiguity, and is in contrast to the masculine modalities of authority and of closure. It acknowledges the sensory experience and engagement of the lived-body situated in the environment, which conveys an ambiguous gestalt, incapable of subject-object partitioning. Significantly, the uncanny can be closely aligned with personal interactions negotiating spatial inscriptions of meaning, rather than the notion of encompassing a spatiality, i.e., dictating its meaning (as *landscape*—shaping the land), which has become recognized as a masculine construct.

This article brings together the notion of photography of the urban built environment as a medium to explore space, and as a woman, my feminine encounters with it. It is concerned with the geographicity (spatial inscription) of the lived experience, which I argue is influenced by gendered interactions. Following de Certeau in his discussion of practices of space, the photographic work examined involves tactics that “play upon ‘opportunities,’ catch occurrences, and the opacities of history.”⁷ Moreover, these (feminist and subversive) tactics are characterized by the uncanny in evoking uncertainty and indeterminacy in its re-presentations of the built environment. An example of feminist tactics would be use of the photographic blur to capture transience, or the incorporation of shadows and abstract forms in the photographic frame. It is not about re-presenting clearly the knowable or the certain, but more about recording the imaginative perception of the embodied experience.

As Backhaus suggests the "experience of the imaginary in the arts, and perceptual experience of the actual, cannot be partitioned."⁸

The tactics that I utilize operate to represent a sense of space that conveys a counter-aesthetic to the traditions of the beautiful, sublime, and picturesque. Rather than the masculine grandeur and clarity in the traditional landscape photograph the work discussed presents the indeterminacy of the uncanny. I suggest that my photography, incorporating notions of the uncanny as a counter-aesthetic, is not about repressing disorder, it is about highlighting it. My photography is a way of negotiating and representing a place in terms of a space that is open to possibilities. It is very much about taking into account gendered comportment and the influence of the perceptual as well as the imaginary in the contexts of meaning. The taking into account of gender is not an intellectual exercise. As Backhaus has argued symbolization genetically arises through embodiment. I account for gender by becoming sensitively attuned to my feminine comportment and allowing my own lived experiences to resonate through my acts of selection. If I were to remain within the tradition, the masculine hegemony would mean that I allow it to form my acts of selection, rather than my own sensuousity and sensibility. Instead, by attuning my aesthetic to my feminine comportment, I become aware of how my body schema does not resonate with the masculine aesthetic. The result is a feminine aesthetic of photography that resonates with feminine embodied experiences, representing feminine comportments negotiating situations in built environments.

11.2 Theoretics and Approaches to Photography

The way in which aspects of the land are photographed varies for each and every photographer. I suggest that the traces of the photographer's body, of his/her subjectivities, are present in the work produced. The physical activity, together with the body drives, influences the use of expression. Moreover, the photographic approach, whether it is masculine and/or feminine, is inextricably associated with desire and the interactions of the body and space. On a technical level, the differences in a photographer's approach relate to choices of composition, camera angle, depth of field, and other physical factors. But also the differences in approach between photographers involve spatial relations that reflect their personal history as well as their age, ethnicity, class, and particularly, gender and sex. The photographer's relationship with the landscape and his/her travel encounters also leaves an imprint in the images produced. For example, whether the photographer feels isolation and distance or intimacy and acquiescence with the landscape is often conveyed through photographic techniques of composition and the content she/he chooses to include in the image frame. The photographic selection is often the result of a replication or, in some cases a reaction against, western masculine aesthetic traditions of the beautiful, the sublime, and the picturesque, which seeks grandeur, involving the spectator in a position of power, and as such concerning the male gaze. My photographic work may be described as a reaction to the popular aesthetic traditions. As

a counter-discourse, my travel work and my encounters as a woman and journey photographer, attempt to traverse divisions. It is not about containment; instead it's about movement. My journey is bound up with the feminist project of understanding identity and positionality. It is a poetics of displacement in which I engage. This is in opposition to the masculine linear narratives of the unified self and the essentialist conceptions of place with its clear set boundaries.

My approach, which I describe as *photographie féminine*, draws upon the French feminist theories of Hélène Cixous and Lucy Irigaray on *écriture féminine*. Their work on the politics of the body has been influential on my photographic approach. As such my photographs do not construct a romantic place of escape from the western urban landscape, but celebrate a space of feminist confrontation and encounter with modernity. Rather than a focus on romantic themes relating to masculine triumphal passages of sexual freedom, discovery, and adventure, my work addresses some of the issues relating to *feminine* modalities that may have resulted in differences in my photographic approach in comparison with male photographers. In my *écriture/photographie féminine*, I am writing my *feminine* body, drawing on the much-cited feminist phrase that "the personal is political."

Although I stress that there is not a clear-cut stylistic division between work produced by males or females, there are degrees of difference in approaches that are related to corporeality, to comportment. For example, geographer Doreen Massey asserts that there is a distinct phenomenology of western feminine bodily comportment, mobility, and spatiality in which choices in deportment that are made are influenced by the scrutiny of the general male spectatorial gaze.⁹ Rose elaborates on this argument asserting that there is a confinement by space and into spaces with which women have to negotiate.¹⁰ As previously discussed Lippard claims that female photographers generally approach the landscape from a more intimate perspective in comparison to their male counterparts.¹¹

Art historian Griselda Pollock also argues that in the histories of art there are different gendered visions. She asserts, "we cannot ignore the fact that the terrains of artistic practice and of history are structured in, and structuring of, gender power relations."¹² As previously discussed, it is the masculine gaze that has shaped aesthetic discourse.

Moreover, evocative of many a feminist's position, Veijola and Jokinen outline the problem they have encountered in tourism studies (which so closely is associated with the act of photography) is the absence of the body. They assert:

(T)he tourist has lacked a body because the analyses have tended to concentrate on the gaze. Furthermore ... the analyst himself has, likewise, lacked a body. Only the pure mind, free from bodily and social subjectivity, is presented as having been at work when analyzing field experiences.¹³

The tourist/photographer as a spectator is the product of the European cultural history of aesthetics in which the gaze is associated with predominantly the white middle class male, who remains an onlooker to see "how things are." The "tourist is a pair of eyes on legs; an ocular perambulator."¹⁴ In terms of gender difference,

Rose highlights the notion of the embodied perspective, and asserts that women have tended to be represented as the space of the bodily, whereas male observers of nature do not do so from a bodily space but from a seeing space. Rose further discusses that this is a space of power/knowledge, and this seeing position is more important in terms of the type of subject position that it maps out than it is for what is described.

Masculine-oriented theories of tourism assume a subject-object relationship to the destination, its people, and places that does not describe my feminist approach. My *photographie féminine* represents a conceptual shift from the tourist destination as a place to see to a more interactive space relating to a *feminine* experience engaging the senses beyond sight. My urban photographs present an ambiguity. There is an abstract spatial expression with attention to the geometric form, shapes, movement, and at times, ironic juxtapositions placed within the built environment. The photography, rather than strategically depicting a specific, classifiable tourist site and reproducing standard holiday tourist imagery, conveys a sense of space which at times reflects the isolation, solitude, and indeterminacy of my journey. This seems to confirm Grosz's assertion that we do not grasp space directly, but through our bodily situation.¹⁵ It also acknowledges the geography of the imagination. In the photographs there is a focus on design elements, such as shadows and lines, which convey a sense of tentative awareness of my spatial relations. Admittedly, there are also traces of the style of expression of the outsider, or the Romantic artist who uses the social deficits of being a stranger to stimulate his/her creative processes. Also the stylistic strategy that I utilize is very similar to the subjective work of a "pioneer of photography," Andre Kertesz.¹⁶ Kertesz relished the play between pattern and deep space as well as the overlooked but expressive details. Interestingly, like me, Kertesz has acknowledged the legacy of the street photography of Atget and also asserts that his work is inspired by his own life. He states "I express myself through my photographs. Everything that surrounds me provokes my feelings."¹⁷ I would also add that his work and the work of other documentary photographers are the filters over my camera lens. Their styles and strategies are the legacy that I have usurped, which I consider to be feminine because of the foregrounding of the subjective approach.

Whelan asserts that photographers are drawn to strikingly similar subject matter.¹⁸ This is either the result of direct influence or pure coincidence or intertextuality with other photographs. However, Lacks, whose research has involved an analysis of how American documentary photographers respond to their work, suggests that the types of images produced can be related to the Jungian theory of the collective unconscious which all humans share. She asserts that the photographers' "responses are emotional and their motives involve self awareness and self searching more often than conscious aesthetics."¹⁹ Photographic critics, such as Max Kozloff, also support this romantic idea. Kozloff refers to Josef Koudelka's *Exiles*, stating that "the outer environment exists for this photographer only to confirm the dejectedness and estrangement he himself feels, and the gauche, anomic or desolated scenes he discovers derive their power from being already, as it were, within him."²⁰

Koudelka's photographs are in monochrome. The absence of color draws attention to the formal considerations in the photograph, such as textures, light and shadow. His simple compositions document aspects of life that may go unnoticed. His photographs include empty spaces and rural settings, which reinforce a sense of anomie. According to Kozloff, Koudelka is a "silent" witness, an outsider, and an observer of the scenes before him.²¹ When positioned in the romantic rhetoric of an "outsider" and as an "observer," the photographer is considered passive. It does not acknowledge the active constructedness of photography.

Both Kozloff and Koudelka, a former Czechoslovakian national, confirm the modernist, critical tradition of conceptualizing exile as aesthetic gain. In other words, physical displacement or exile is conducive to insights and experimentation. For example, in Bradbury's classic study of literary modernism he asserts that "it is emigration or exile that makes for membership of the modern country of the arts, which has been heavily traveled by many great writers—Joyce, Lawrence, Mann, Brecht, Auden, Nabokov."²² Kaplan draws attention to the point that "the modernist trope of exile works to remove itself from any political or historically specific instances in order to generate aesthetic categories and ahistorical values."²³ For example, in photography the "subject" becomes divorced from the larger political conditions that "produced" it. The abandonment of any contextual references may lead the reader to view the images purely as spectacle. This in turn draws attention to the "creative genius" of the photographer and the romantic trope of the solitary male figure.

The romantic notion of the lone male out in the world, as an outsider and an observer, is a persistent theme in art discourse. For example, the melancholy and nostalgia about loss and separation characterizes the framing of Koudelka's persona. Kozloff states that Koudelka "insists on the freedom to be without direction, to be derelict, to be attracted to the unlovely ... where there is no refuge from the feeling of loss."²⁴ Interestingly, in the foreword to Koudelka's republished book *Exiles* Delpire claims "Josef has nothing, or practically nothing in common with the stereotype depicted by writers too hasty to glorify the man."²⁵ Nevertheless, Koudelka's work seems to affirm the notion that when modern peoples seek reality in other periods and cultures, they reaffirm the alienation from their own. Koudelka's work, for example, represents a romantic valorization and documentation of cultures that seem to be outside modernity. Aspects of the modern twentieth century rarely appear in his photographs. He has documented aspects of the minority cultures of Europe, which appear at odds with the fast paced lifestyles, and commodity culture of much of contemporary western experience. This suggests a romantic nostalgia for the loss of something past, or something, which is a symbol or affective marker of the past.

Themes of alienation and exile are also evident in the discourse surrounding one of the "pioneers of photography," Andre Kertesz.²⁶ Kertesz was born in Hungary in 1894. He lived in Paris then moved to New York in 1936 to work for an American photographic agency which, according to Adam was "the beginning of many years of unhappiness."²⁷ Interestingly, Kertesz may be positioned as a modernist exile, in which to be "separated from the person or location that one

loves best or knows most intimately is an unbearable condition."²⁸ For Kertesz this unbearable separation was from Paris and his country of birth. Kertesz states that "my youth in Hungary is full of sweet and warm memories. I have kept the memory alive in my photographs."²⁹ Furthermore, he states that "Paris accepted me as an artist just as it accepted any artist, painter, or sculptor. I was understood there."³⁰ He asserts that in America "I was out of place."³¹ Moreover, his sense of alienation, of being out of place, within America was also due to his photographic style. The modern American photography of the time, particularly the 'f/64' group founded in 1929, aimed at technical perfection. The name 'f/64' refers to the aperture which achieves the widest depth of field with the sharpest possible focus. Clarity was the imperative and certainly this is evident in the genre of traditional landscape photography. However, Kertesz's work is subjective and conveys degrees of opacity. Kertesz argues that "you need expression to create a picture, not simply technique."³²

Unlike the contemporary photographer Koudelka who frames his work in a nostalgia for cultures outside of modernity, Kertesz's work consisted of conveying aspects of the urban milieu. His images of the city reflect an attention to form and to spatial relations between the physical environment and its inhabitants. He states that "the only one I knew to make pictures like mine was a kind of calendar photographer. He arranged his scenes."³³ Kertesz's style of photography at the time was not acclaimed within American art/journalism discourse. *Life* magazine told him, "you are talking too much with your pictures. We only need documents."³⁴ Similarly, producing pictures that 'speak' and trying to find a voice in which to articulate my personal concerns is an imperative in my photography.

Similar to Kertesz and Koudelka, Sylvia Plachy, in her *Unguided Tour*, documents aspects of her observations of the landscape as an outsider.³⁵ Plachy, who fled Hungary in the wake of the Hungarian Revolution in 1956, may also be considered to be an exile. She states, "I tried to connect with an alien world through my eyes."³⁶ However, Plachy's photographs bear little similarity to Koudelka's romantic outlook. Although her photographs are in monochrome which often suggests a nostalgic scene, her work does not idealize the past but conveys a sense of documentary realism. Her work follows the path of Kertesz who she has described as a friend and a mentor. This is exemplified with the closing shot of her book which is a photograph taken of her by Kertesz.

Plachy's photographs represent aspects of contemporary western society towards the end of the twentieth century. Her photographs are taken in various places and are also diverse in content, ranging from close-up portraits to street documentary scenes. Plachy's photographs convey interesting juxtapositions, such as the image of "Pope John Paul II, in the Bronx, 1979." The photograph frames a poster of the pontiff in a shop window. Above the poster is a neon light sign with the word "BUD." Other examples of her range of vision include the landscape photograph taken at night, "Under the Williamsburg Bridge, 1987." The photograph consists of a "photogenic" street scene with a building with the word "AIDS" spray painted on one of the walls. Another photograph is a panoramic view of Sicily with two males in the foreground. One male youth is facing the "scenic" view and another

youth is smoking and tentatively posing for the camera. These photographs do not present the landscape as a picturesque sight. Rather, the photographs convey aspects of the human presence that unsettles the conventional aesthetic viewing positions. For example, the latter image presents two viewing positions: the photographer is looking, as well as being looked at. It presents traces of her embodied presence as a woman in the gaze of the man. Also the framing of the landscape incorporates different subject positions and conveys a *feminine* version of landscape in which her relations to other humans are seen to be an integral part of the apprehension of the landscape. In Plachy's *oeuvre* there is also an attention to form and subject movement in her photographs which conveys the photographer's focus on space and temporality.

In considering that journey (and as such landscape) photography has been positioned as a primarily masculine endeavour, the autobiographical photographs of Gisela Weimann subverts the dominant forms of re-presentation. Her visual diary may be integrated into broader social and historical references in regards to the differences in the style of female production. Like Sylvia Plachy, Weimann's work expresses the variety of women's experiences and subjectivities. Moreover, the body of work produced by these photographers highlights *feminine* social interactions. Their work represents "voices" that have been silenced by patriarchal art discourse.

In Weimann's *Frames of Memory* there is an attempt to break down both the division between high and low culture, and the modernist distinction between exile/traveller and tourist.³⁷ Her work asserts the position that travel is over-exposed to photography and presents what may be considered personal tourist photographs in an art gallery context. Each series of images placed around a frame represents her journey to various geographic locations such as Mexico, Dublin, and Istanbul, but also includes different themes relating to her personal life, such as family celebrations and to the photographing of public festivals and tourist sites. The exhibition dissolves the division between public and the private by presenting photographic details of a personal life journey.

Weimann's concern is with presenting multiple images, rather than with providing a single narrative of a place. This involves presenting sequences that draw attention to the photographic construct of journey photography. The photographs have the appearance of the general tourist snapshot in which photography appears as an unreflexive action. In the photographs there is little regard for technical perfection. Her repetitive sequencing of the photographs suggests the behavior of the tourist (and I might also add the behavior of the professional photographer) of taking multiple shots of the same scene from slightly different angles. The work displays the excessive and sometimes obsessive activity of photography. It involves what Curtis and Pajackowska assert is "a rigorous campaign of isolating and shooting segments of the 'view,' of using the mechanisms of re-presentation to secure identity and point of view, which is one way of restoring subjectivity through a process of objectification."³⁸ The photographs also stress the desire to secure an ephemeral experience through the taking of photographs. By highlighting these perspectives in her work Weimann acknowledges the masculinity of tourist travel

photographs, but importantly subverts this by presenting multiple points of view, a feminine heterogeneity rather than a singular omniscient valorized image. The series of landscape images suggest that as there can never be a unitary view or single meaning, experiences are multiple and fragmented.

Weimann's exhibition consisted of a series of nine images placed in the edges of picture frames. The centre of the frame, in which a photograph is normally placed, is left void. This absence unsettles the conventional viewing position of a photographic exhibition. It suggests the difficulty in presenting or selecting just one view of a landscape. It also deconstructs the notion of getting or identifying the "perfect" image, and this is highlighted by the empty space in the centre of the frame. In other words, the space in the middle does not privilege the "magnificent" photograph but instead the viewer's attention is drawn to the boundaries in which many "ordinary" photographs are placed. Weimann's work presents elements of *  criture f  minine* in the sense that it is not limited to the strict conventions of framing or display and it does not privilege one mastering view. The work seems to conform to Rose's argument that the domineering view of the single point of the omniscient observer of landscape is one which is conventionally taken up by males and that women tend to experience the landscape in more relational ways. Like Plachy and Weimann's photographs do not seek to subdue the landscape, but rather they represent the landscape in relation to their "domestic" spaces and their networks of interaction. The point is that their re-presentations bear the traces of their gendered experiences.

11.3 Examples of my Photographic Project

My photography draws upon spatial experience. Wilson describes the city and in particular the built environment as both "masculine" in its triumphal scale and "feminine" is its indeterminacy and unsettledness.³⁹ My photographs draw upon these themes through the composition of using steps, stairwells, and walkways as the background for my photographs. These motifs do not reflect the bounded use of place but an exploration of a *feminine* sense of space, which attempts to disrupt the masculine schema of containment.

In Hong Kong, which is one of the most densely populated cities, my photographic emphasis is on personal solitude. The photograph (Fig. 11.1) on a walkway (22 July 1999) consists of the geometric designs of the tiled pavement in which softly defined triangular shadow formations fall across the path. The architectural space is linear and repetitive. However, at the top right hand corner of the photographic frame is the presence of a number of human legs. The people are in motion. The image demonstrates the temporal aspect of being in space. This is suggested by the shadow falling across the path and the slightly blurred human figures in the background.

Similarly in my black and white photograph (Fig. 11.2) on a walkway in the lobby of the Marriot hotel in Cairo (18 July 1999) shadows fall across the path, which



Fig. 11.1 Hong Kong, 22 July 1999

represents space as an inhabited dimension rather than as a static place. But it also suggests a sense of apprehension in my portrayal of a lone male headless figure looming towards me. These photographs, particularly the image in Cairo, can be read as presenting the uncanny. The uncanny concerns what is dark and difficult to see.⁴⁰ This is particularly appropriate to the image and in generally Tallack's positioning of the hotel lobby as a "space of ambiguous identity" in its blurring of the public and the private.⁴¹ Furthermore, he asserts that the hotel lobby is a place to meet others but also to avoid the look of others; a place of seeing and being seen—but also of reserve which qualifies as a paradigmatic urban experience as has been defined by Simmel, Benjamin, and Kracauer. It is, according to Tallack, an "uncanny modern space" which could produce "visual agoraphobia." Furthermore, it is a precarious space for unescorted women as my previously discussed 'self-portrait' illustrates.

According to Freud the uncanny arouses dread and horror, "a hidden, familiar thing that has undergone repression and then emerged."⁴² On an unconscious level this image conveys the repressed phobias and the (hidden) anxiety of my gendered spatiality, which is not particular to the geographic location, but is associated with my general positioning within space.

Many of my attitudes towards space have been shaped by the media. Particularly, it is the knowledge that young women are often the targets of unwanted attention and victims of crime, which has shaped my perceptions. For example,



Fig. 11.2 Cairo, 18 July 1999

various magazine articles directed at young women and crime survival convey information such as:

In 1998, more than 65 000 Australian women were physically or sexually assaulted. Their attackers ranged from guys they know to total strangers. The assaults happened in city streets, at railway stations, in taxis, at pubs, in car parks ... everywhere. Personal assault is the most common offence recorded by Australian police and, according to the statistics, if you're aged between 20 and 24, you're a prime target.⁴³

Furthermore, my experiences of insecurity may be a form of vicarious trauma related to the constant media coverage on attacks on young women. This has resulted in a shift in my sense of safety about the world. My experiences of insecurity are expressed through my bodily comportment. The photograph represents my bodily attitude through which such feelings are expressed. Perhaps the personal 'distance' and apprehension evoked in these particular photographs also bear out Young's assertion that "the threat of being seen is, however, not the only threat of

objectification that the woman lives. She also lives the threat of invasion of her body space.”⁴⁴ Furthermore, in my journey I do not wish to follow what Marcus refers to as the “script” associated with feminine fear “which inspires the familiar sensations of ‘freezing’—involuntary immobility and silence.”⁴⁵ As a photographer, I can try to break the silence and try to control this ‘threat’ by having the control of the camera. Moreover, “new cultural productions and re-inscriptions of our bodies and geographies can help us begin to revise the grammar of violence and to represent ourselves in militant new ways.”⁴⁶

A tactic I have used evokes the feminist counter-aesthetic of the uncanny, which is an unsettling indeterminate space, rather than a place of confinement and closure. It is also a bricolage of visual elements. In the role of the photographic *bricoleuse*, I piece together different signs to produce new meanings and convey symbolic relationships, in an attempt to emphasize the contradictions and ambiguities that exist in the urban built environment. In particular in my work there is an emphasis on female re-presentations and a reworking of cultural themes. An example of this is depicted in my photograph containing the painting of a classically painted woman at the top of a stairwell. The low angle of the photograph emphasizes her “elevated” status. Moreover, the photographic composition not only comments upon the status of the woman but also is evocative of the uncanny surrealism of Marcel Duchamp’s painting of *Nude Descending a Staircase* (1912) in which space was dominated by the abstract figure of a woman in movement. However, in my photograph the image of a painted woman has ‘ascended’ the staircase. The diagonal planes of the staircase lead the eye upward thus placing the painting and the woman in a venerated space (Fig. 11.3).

My motif of stairs also prevails in the photograph, Arles 9 July 1999, of a young girl walking across the length of the flight of steps. The photograph is a wide-angle view in which the girl is framed between two large pillars. She suggests a tentative motion with her head facing downwards and her arms limply by her side as she walks. What these photographs have in common is the use of space in which the feminized figure is a focal point and serves as a reminder of my “space” as a female within the built environment (Fig. 11.4).

11.4 Conclusion

My photography involves a quiescent, intimate embodied approach offered by many women artists, in contrast to the dramatic spectacle produced by males. Interestingly, Battersby and Lippard assert that many women’s work remains on the margins of high art culture. The feminist photographer is a marginalised authorial category.⁴⁷ The exclusion suggests that the theme of “exile” seems to be applicable to the position of women and the *feminine*. Significantly, the theme of exile is also prevalent in the photographers, previously discussed, whose work does not follow masculine aesthetics and as *émigré*’s their embodied experience has resulted in work that provides examples of the imaginative perception that challenge traditional



Fig. 11.3 Athens, 27 June, 1999

aesthetic discourse. Furthermore, Julia Kristeva claims that “a woman is trapped within the frontiers of her body and even of her species, and consequently always feels exiled” in patriarchy.⁴⁸

This statement relates to the lack of mobility in a male economy of movement, which may relate to safety in walking the streets as well as the repression of a feminist counter-aesthetic. Kristeva, who is an involuntary exile, also suggests that this may offer potentiality for generating new perceptions. She contends that creative work is impossible without some kind of exile. The concept of exile, of being positioned on the margins, may also draw on the previously described modernist trope of exile as aesthetic gain, but in Kristeva’s sense exile is not positioned as solely a male modality. It is in this regard that my photographs suggest a feminine space, an uncanny indeterminate sense of exile amidst the masculine scale of the built environment. I am not trying to “create” a feminine photographic utopia. Rather, I am attempting to highlight the feminine aspects in my photographs, in



Fig. 11.4 Arles, 9 July, 1999

particular its relationship to how, as a western middle-class woman, ‘I’ see the world. The geographicity of the lived experience, therefore, can be evoked in photography as a device to make “real” an encounter of an embodied gendered perspective. It is a traversing of space which may open us to new sensibilities providing us with new insights into “the female Other.”

Notes

- 1 Backhaus, “Introduction II: An Apology,” 205.
- 2 Bright, “Of Mother Nature and Marlboro Men,” 335.
- 3 Bohls, *Women Travel Writers*, 65.
- 4 Freud, “The Uncanny,” 122–161.
- 5 Cixous, “Fiction and its Phantoms,” 535–548.
- 6 Giblett, *Postmodern Wetlands*.
- 7 de Certeau, “Practice of Space,” 127.

- 8 Backhaus, "Introduction II: An Apology," 206.
- 9 Massey, *Space, Place and Gender*.
- 10 Rose, *Feminism and Geography*, 144.
- 11 Lippard, "Undertones," 380.
- 12 Pollock, *Vision and Difference*, 55.
- 13 Veijola and Jerkinen, "The Body in Tourism," 149.
- 14 Giblett, *Living with the Earth*.
- 15 Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, 90.
- 16 Adam, introduction to *Kertesz on Kertesz*, 7.
- 17 Kertesz, *Kertesz on Kertesz*, 29.
- 18 Whelan, *Double Take*.
- 19 Lacks, *Documentary Photography*, 47.
- 20 Koudelka, *Exiles*, 148.
- 21 Kozloff, *Lone Visions*.
- 22 Kaplan, *Questions of Travel*, 26.
- 23 *Ibid.*, 28.
- 24 Kozloff, *Lone Visions*, 155.
- 25 Delpire, foreword to *Exiles*, ii.
- 26 Adam, introduction to *Kertesz on Kertesz*, 7.
- 27 *Ibid.*, 9.
- 28 Kaplan, *Questions of Travel*, 141.
- 29 Kertesz, *Kertesz on Kertesz*, 38.
- 30 *Ibid.*, 64.
- 31 *Ibid.*, 90.
- 32 *Ibid.*
- 33 *Ibid.*, 38.
- 34 *Ibid.*, 90.
- 35 Plachy, *Unguided Tour*.
- 36 *Ibid.*, 4.
- 37 PhotoEspana, 1999.
- 38 Curtis and Pajaczkowska, "Getting There Travel," 210.
- 39 Wilson, *The Sphinx in the City*, 7.
- 40 Freud, "The Uncanny."
- 41 Tallack, "Waiting, Waiting."
- 42 Freud, "The Uncanny," 153.
- 43 Marinos, "The Long Walk Home."
- 44 Young, *Throwing Like a Girl*, 155.
- 45 Marcus, "Fighting Bodies, Fighting Words," 394.
- 46 *Ibid.*, 400.
- 47 Battersby *Gender and Genius*. Also see Lippard, "Undertones."
- 48 Kristeva, *Kristeva Reader*, 298.

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Chapter 12

The Philadelphia Flower Show and Its Dangerous Sensibilities

Gary Backhaus

Editors' Note: This chapter puts forth the notion of biophilia as a holistic dimension with physiological, biological, psychological, and existential components. It involves the drive to satisfy embodied needs concerning attunement to natural ecological rhythms and elements and bonding/caring/interrelations with other forms of life. Biophilia is shown to be interrelated with embodied aesthetic needs that entail the geography of the imagination. The goal of the author is to expose the danger of substituting aesthetic symbolizations for healthy ecological practices, practices that may not necessarily serve our aesthetic needs, but are necessary therapeutics for the environment. But since both biophilic and aesthetic needs can also be met through aesthetico-commodity appropriations, we can become insensitive to the potential destruction to the environment. In terms of the overall thesis of the book we see here how motivations within geographies of the imagination in the mode of anthropomorphic aesthetics may not be attuned to the demands of geographies of the actual. Even though we cannot separate imagination and perception, it is possible on the basis of examining the perceptual/imaginative continuum to nevertheless recognize tensional friction between anthropocentric and non-anthropocentric ecological matrices.

12.1 Experiential Therapeutics

The single day each year that my spouse and I spend at the Philadelphia Flower Show is marked as a very special day for us. We attended on March 6, 2005, the opening day of the 2005 show, which ended a week later on March 13. We begin to look forward to going to the show by mid-January when the frigid winter air has begun to become tedious and more severe and we experience an anticipatory joy by the end of February. For us, it marks the near end of winter and the coming of spring, of getting outside, beginning the work on our grounds and preparing our gardens, and it symbolizes the experience of the spring season. This symbolization is grounded in embodiment, arising from existential, psychological, and physiological/biological needs concerning which, the Flower Show satisfies in an intense

way. The darkest days of winter are experienced around the holidays, which tend to keep me busy in ways that distract me from recognizing the psychological and physiological changes affecting lived-embodiment. Sunlight is one very important aspect of our psychophysical biorhythmic processes; it affects our wellbeing on both physiological and psychological levels on the basis of the amount, intensity, and duration of sunlight that we experience in our daily lives. Indigenous peoples knew how to vary their activities in accordance to the seasons: modern humanity superimposes work in oblivion to its relation to natural processes and we suffer for this. Early January, the days are dark and cold, the world is quiet, and the winter colors of browns and grays predominate, unless snow blankets the ground. I enjoy these “silent” days when I can involve myself in a writing project, gaze out the window at the muted world, and take a brisk winter walk, especially on sunny days with the low winter sun casting its long shadows. By the middle of January, I begin to notice the days getting longer, but I still become impatient with the slow, but steady, gain in the duration of daylight. By February, I have grown tired of the winter, especially if there is a continual onslaught of bad weather, e.g. freezing rain or too much snow, but also the darkness and cold, the dry air of late fall and early winter, which stretches on for some time. I become restless for spring, when the weather is milder, beckoning me outdoors: there is the evening light, the appearance of bright colors, and one can wake up to the sounds of birds—the burst of new life! I do enjoy the late fall and winter beauty, but it is the length of winter that makes me long for the warmer, sunny, and life-renewing days of spring.

For me, and I believe to be due to an *a priori* structure of human life’s comportment that has become highly veiled given our uprooted form of culture, there is a need to be attuned to living beings and life processes. *Biophilia* is a fundamental existential therapeutic that connects us to other forms of biota and the ecological relations that support life. Having time to care for, to cultivate, and just to experience in an attuned way, other living forms, keeps us connected to the whole of life and to the earth as the giver of life. Biophilia renews the life-spirit. The two senses of cultivation, as the careful tending to growing-things and as cultural refinement, are fundamentally linked in the *existentiality of care* and the *affection of love*.¹ Starting in early spring, I take up activities of cultivation, readying the gardens that will attract the butterflies, moths, bees, hummingbirds, and other creatures of the summer. I experience the soil in my hands, the planting of seeds, and the new growth that sprouts. Nevertheless, before we wax in romanticized ways or in nostalgia, it must be noted that there is a lot of destruction in the making of gardens, as unwanted growth is destroyed. This “underside” of gardening is important to keep in mind, for life entails death.

And so attending the Philadelphia Flower Show resonates with the human condition through a fundamental existentiality of embodied life—*biophilia*—the care and love for living beings in their earthbound context, Being-of-the-Earth. The Flower Show serves my seasonal psychobiological needs, in a timely but brief and intense way, through a celebrated experience of living-things. These needs arise through the situatedness of embodiment in its relation to seasonal and climatic characteristics. But in addition, the 2-h trek from Baltimore to the convention

center in Philadelphia is a kind of spiritual visitation, a commemoration of the renewal of life. Likewise, for those many like me with sensibilities toward the beauty of flora and the recognition of the need to be spiritually nourished through it. Thus, there are layers of interconnected contexts of meanings: existential, psycho-physiological, spiritual.

These biologically generated meanings (e.g., the effect of sunlight on the human organism), which are bound to a bio-therapeutic context, arise at the level of the psychobiological organism but emerge inextricably *interrelated* with the symbolic meanings of human experience. Sensibilities manage this dialectic and thus the encultured meanings, objectivated through the artistry of the Flower Show, mix with those more closely related to human bio-physical processes; symbols are integrally bound with the organismic, generating a field of meanings. It is important to recognize sensibility as the nexus that links the interrelation of psychobiological needs and the life-environs with the aesthesis of artistic symbolizations. Aesthesis, which is self-enjoyment, is to be distinguished from sensibility, which is felt experience. Felt experience involves not merely sensuousity, but an evaluative enactment of embodied meaning. Aesthesis is objectivated in the process of creative/artistic productions. Thus, the bio-therapeutic function can also be fulfilled on the basis of human artifice, the artistic construction of symbolic contexts that contain flora and fauna. Artifice may or may not be joined with nature to fulfill aesthetic needs. But this raises an important concern: *the relationship formed between aesthetics and ecology*.

The Flower Show involves a complexity of symbolizations, especially aesthetic and commercial, that interfuses with sensibilities, which can be investigated through engaging in the experience from within the phenomenological attitude. The show is an uplifting experience for me through the intervolvement of psychobiologically-induced expressions intermixing with human symbolism at the level of culture. Yet some of these symbolizations may indeed entail aspects of culture about which one can become critical through a reflective investigation. The Philadelphia Flower Show, then, must be questioned as to its therapeutic function—perhaps instead of offering a therapeutic it could very well consist of a dangerous “narcotic,” or involve me in a degenerative narcissism, to which I have been ignorantly indulging. And, “to add injury to insult,” I may be being duped into becoming a consumer of biophilia—an upscale version of the same old crude commodification of the landscape.

12.2 Symbolizing Experiences of Springtime

The Flower Show provides an intense contrast to winter: the thousands of flowers and plants, with their scents and colors, the beauty of their foliage-shapes, and the landscaping artistry that even includes trees and sentient creatures, e.g., turtles, frogs, brightly-colored fish. What a shock to the senses that have been muted by the drab background of brown and grey colors and the barrenness of late winter!

My whole body feels rejuvenated with life, my senses abruptly awaken and are stimulated, and I am spiritually energized. The whole time I am at the show my attention is heightened as sensory delights keep it in a state of supra-absorbed activity and focus. I inspect many, many plants, each exhibiting its own uniqueness, but I also attend to the ambiance of being surrounded by growing things. Aesthesis is highly intensified, for I live absorbed in the sensuousness of the moment.

Flowers, plants, bushes, and trees from nurseries and greenhouses, grown throughout the previous seasons are expressly prepared to be assembled in exhibition for just one week as indoor displays, which include rocks, water, creatures, fences, paths, shacks and even some rather bizarre props, e.g., motor cycles and animated mechanisms. The non-living props are elements constitutive of the theme of the work. These exhibits include flora that are not brought forth from the natural rhythm of the seasons; for the most part, the artificially constructed "landscapes" cannot be found *anywhere* outdoors. Moreover, the Flower Show experience is *not the manner in which spring* or the coming of spring *can be experienced* in terms of its natural cycle in natural time.

But the Flower Show anticipates spring, and it is such a success due to its scheduling in relation to the winter/spring seasons. But, my point concerning this artificial construction and its associated symbolization, then, is not that the Flower Show marks the coming of spring or springtime, which is indeed mundanely true. But rather that for me it symbolizes the *experiences of spring*, which in the real intersection of subjective-experiential time and world time, the experiences of spring must be lived through in the flow of the natural cycles of the season. In social time, the one week of the Philadelphia Flower Show, the natural cycle of world time has been artificially reconstructed in a way that compresses the time/space experience of spring. It is like a film or a novel whereby a lifetime takes place over a couple of hours. In subjective time, the several hours in which my wife and I experience the show, this compression of natural temporality seems to capture the scope of experiences that might occur over the whole of spring, yet symbolically is experienced over a few hours visit to this exhibition. Over the course of the spring, I experience the blooming of wild flowers in the woods, the pear and dogwood trees, the forsythia and azalea bushes, and the new bright green leaves on the trees, all growing on their own schedules. And in social time I experience buying new plants and seeds, which one can do at the show, and preparing and planting, which are shown in its educational exhibits. The Philadelphia Flower Show symbolizes my experiences of spring, the occasions whereby biophilia is most present. No matter the specific theme of the show which entails its own symbolic meaning that may have nothing to do with the season of spring, the experience of the Flower Show symbolizes my experiences of the springtime. It does this through felt experience, sensibilities that are the embodied attitudes that emerge during the "glorious time of spring." I emphasize that it does not symbolize spring, for the theme of the show functions to articulate the symbolic content of the exhibits. But the Flower Show does symbolize the experience of spring due to the intensely felt satisfaction of the need for the colors, smells, and forms of growing flora for which I eagerly await and enjoy in the coming spring months.

The Flower Show puts me in touch with living things in a way that incites the sensibilities in my felt experience that occur during springtime—yet, in an other-worldly symbolic way (in the Schutzian sense of a finite province of meaning different from the everyday).

12.3 Experiential Structure of the Symbolizing Experience

Alfred Schutz follows in the tradition of William James whereby the accent of reality opens up into different forms of experience, each is “real” as long as we remain in it—we live in a multiverse.² In Schutz’s elaboration, it is the world of the everyday that is the umbrella for these many modes of experience. It is worth describing the Flower Show as a finite province of meaning (experiential context) on the basis of Schutz’s notion of styles of lived experience. The accent of reality immediately and naively opens to the flower-show-experience and without awareness that the basic structure of experience is modified in the process of accommodating its meaning-context, a finite province of reality that forms an experiential style for the attendee as long as one lives in its structure. The tension of consciousness is high through an absorbed attention in the objects of perceptual acts, but is functionally directed and dominated by a form of spontaneity (the running-off of nows) trained on sensual enjoyment. I am neither solving problems, nor contemplating life, nor passively daydreaming; I am focused on living within the sensuous contents of the present experiences. The motivational interest is to sensually experience the flora as fully as possible: colors, shapes, textures, smells. I suspend the pragmatic attitude of forming and carrying-out projects that govern everyday life—experiencing the flora neither serves a purpose nor does it accomplish an everyday project; the concerns of doing are suspended. If someone were to ask, what are you doing? I might say, “looking at flowers.” But being conscious of looking attenuates the full presence. If there were a project to it I would be constantly evaluating my progress, but here there is to be no projection, just presence. The specific form of sociality involves a reciprocal recognition of enjoyment, from interaction to observation—my wife and I express our approbation to one another. However, for the most part, one’s attention is absorbed in sensual delights, which as said are mostly on the basis of the perceptual, but also in contemplating the symbolic themes of the exhibits. The “other” of one’s concern is vegetative life and it is with flora that one forms almost a symbiotic relation. Self-experience is far more intensely aesthetic than in the aesthesis of everyday experience (which can be filled with endless annoyances), but it is a symbiotic self, which is the key to the spiritual nature of the experience. In our alienated everyday habitudes we don’t usually pay much attention, or only fleetingly, to the sensuality of our experience. But here a supra-sensuality is occasioned by our symbiosis with plant-life—biophilia. Time experience, as mentioned, is one of intense compression; there is a concentration of experiences that usually take place over a course of the spring that I have described above.

This cognitive style described above arises during springtime in intermittent durations whereby I am drawn away from the everyday into this intense aesthesis that is perhaps a version of what is called, “springfever.” This form of supra-attentional absorption in the sensuosity of living-forms seems to be unique to spring; my experience at the Flower Show symbolizes this experience. However, it is important to realize that biophilia is not symbolized; the physiological needs that are met at the Flower Show are themselves manifest. Moreover, these moments of experience are fulfilled on the basis of the symbolizing experience—deep needs as a living creature are met on the basis of a symbolically constructed experience! This should raise concern. An artificially constructed symbolic experience that compresses and intensifies a real experience of the natural world is precisely efficacious through an appropriation of the natural needs of human embodiment. Artifice substitutes for natural ecology, not by replacing it but by appropriating it. But if the symbolic level of human life can be constructed in a way that replaces natural ecological relations for the satisfaction of bio-therapeutic needs, then ecological parameters become disvalued. This is a dangerous state of affairs, because ecological therapeutics is not necessarily correlative to artificial therapeutics anthropocentrically realized.

12.3.1 The Dangerous Sensibility

Let us articulate what has just been uncovered. It is not merely that human aesthetic needs appropriate ecological processes, leading to human aesthetics veiling ecological destruction on the basis of what appeals to human ideas of beauty. And it is not merely that psychobiological needs are met by artificial inducements, which induces a disvaluation of natural ecology. But it is their confluence—the meeting of both aesthetic and psychobiological needs—that can result in a dangerous anthropocentric satisfaction at the expense of an ecological therapy that considers biospheric health, the healthy functioning of the whole, which may neither be aesthetically pleasing nor cater specifically to human psychobiological needs. Recognizing and articulating this is crucial because it allows for the Philadelphia Flower Show to be framed in its proper ethical function. The Philadelphia Flower Show serves aesthetic, biophilic, and biophysical human needs in a most excellent way. But if we do not recognize the limits of this function, it then fosters a dangerous anthropocentrism that if appropriated as a general form of life can result in much ecological destruction in the satisfaction of human needs. This can even be operative in seemingly ecologically friendly artifice, for as a function of humanly guided therapeutics, the environment is shaped on the basis of what pleases us, what satisfies our needs. The world looks pretty and our biological needs are met while our practices continue to lead to ecological disaster.

But too, the Philadelphia Flower Show advocates environmental education and addresses ecological concerns. There are displays in the central section behind the Competitive Classes that discuss water management, pollution reduction, and

problems with non-native plant species. These components lead to a complexity and many confluences that obfuscate these relations between aesthetics, human bio-therapeutic needs, and ecology. These multi-facets make it all the more important to phenomenologically clarify this experience.

12.4 The Physical Layout

Since I am writing experientially, it will be best if my reader can picture the geography of the Flower Show. The large exhibition area is a long rectangle emphasizing the horizontal axis where three sets of doorway sections span across one of its long sides inside the building. Ticket holders gain access from an inside hallway that is contiguous to the exhibition area. Although there are three entrances, the one furthest to the right is the most appropriate, for it takes you into the Major Exhibitors area and orients you in front of this year's special exhibit. Created by the Burke Brothers Landscape Contractors the 2005 display includes former entrance gates to the White House grounds along the northeast entrance of Pennsylvania Avenue. These gates were installed *c.*1820 by James Monroe and removed in 1934. They had been restored specifically for the Flower Show, and used as an entrance to a beautiful garden landscape, the gates make for an impressive entrance into the show (see Fig. 12.1). The center entrance to the exhibition opens into the area where the Competitive Classes are arranged. The entrance that is furthest to the left opens into the area called the Marketplace. These are the three essential areas, Major Exhibitors (at the right), Competitive Classes (in the center), and the Marketplace (at the left). Along the back wall (the long horizontal axis) are some concession stands, restrooms, and First Aid. There were, according to my count, 56 major exhibitions, 134 businesses set up in the Marketplace, and the Competitive classes counted approximately 31 exhibit areas. There are walking spaces in between the exhibits and due to the various sizes of the exhibits a maze of curvy T-junctions comprises the walking area. But in the marketplace area there are avenue-like aisles along the shorter axis from the front to the back of the hall. One does not walk through Major Exhibitors and Competitive Classes in linear fashion, but rather one perambulates around the exhibits, retracing a portion of one's steps in order to get to another exhibit. For most of the exhibits you can only walk around the perimeter, but with some exhibits, you also can walk into them in a designated manner, on a path or a bridge. I estimate that the exhibits are at least 144 square feet (12×12), but most are much larger (Fig. 12.2). The experience is rich, but for the purpose of this chapter's theme I concentrate on the Major Exhibitor's section. It is important to understand that the Competitive Classes include educational displays concerning the environment and the Marketplace has everything from art-prints to garden gnomes to seeds to tools. These contextualize the symbolism in the Major Exhibitor's section, associating it with these other meanings—meticulous care of specimens, raising your own garden, and other forms of arts and crafts on garden themes.



Fig. 12.1 Gateway to America. First exhibit observed when entering on the right

There are interrelated layers of symbol, which are accorded to the types of displays and the specific displays themselves. There are rich symbolic contexts throughout the exhibition and these must be given over to phenomenological reflection. In other words, not only is it possible to investigate the symbolism of the experience of springtime in the participation of this event, it is also possible (and very important) to investigate the symbolic structures constitutive of the objects experienced. So while I have symbolizing experiences (Flower Show) that symbolize springtime experiences, I also recognize that I am the “dative” through which other symbolic structures presented by the artistic productions are constituted.

12.5 The Major Exhibitors: Symbolizing Ideal Landscapes

The Major Exhibitors section consists of landscape displays that each year must follow a theme, which are judged and various awards are given. This year’s (2005) theme had been, “America the Beautiful.” I was expecting (with trepidation) red, white, and blue flower displays of patriotism, which luckily was not the case. Rather, woodland-type landscapes dominated, which were much less fantastic than the displays of the three previous years in which bright flowers dazzled the eye. Each display symbolizes a *sector of land-spacing* (an icon in the Peircean sense), unified in a thematic way and symbolically constituting a *place* (the intersection or knot of meanings in the spatial enactment of an event). Through thematic

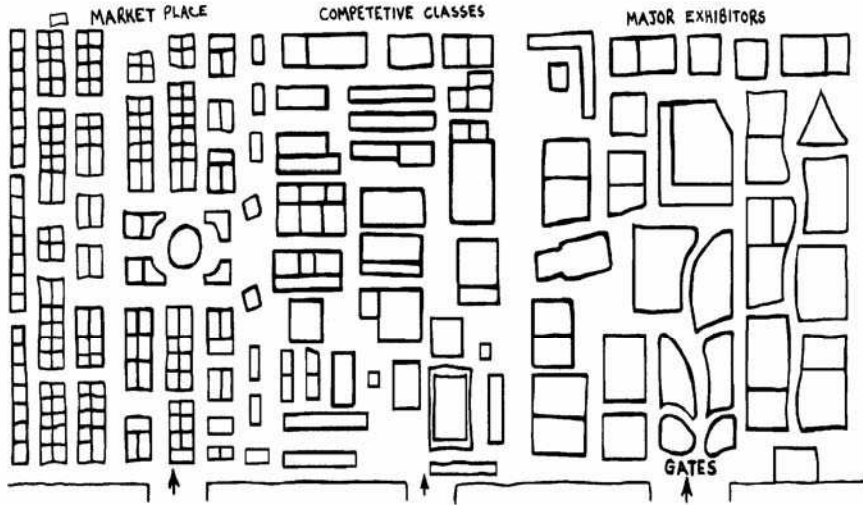


Fig. 12.2 Philadelphia Flower Show, 2005: Floor Plan. Right Entrance: Major Exhibitors. Middle Entrance: Competitive Classes. Left Entrance: Market Place

modalities place-worlds were symbolized such as a wooded landscape of an estate, a cultivated garden, a water garden, a formalized garden setting, and also a fantastic dream-like garden (see Fig. 12.3). These exhibits are *place-worlds*, which is a concept that should be understood, outside of a work of art, as an oxymoron. But in the case of a work of art, ‘world,’ signifies its “internal” unity of meaning, which presents to “the witness” (the art perceiver) a possible world. And in works of art ‘world’ also indicates the work’s finite-horizon. Specifically, in these exhibits, the finite-horizon is materially indicated by the display boundary. In real life, place is not a world but involves an intensification of meaning that occurs through a gathering (spatializing/spatialized contextualization), in relation to the worldly-horizon that extends infinitely beyond it. For example, a baseball diamond, is a place in which a sports event “takes place” on the basis of a transcending meaning-context, the world of baseball, or the world of sports. It also takes place through a spatial horizon of home or away city in a complex, interconnected geography. An artwork per se does not present an external horizon for it is bound and fixed as what it is, complete in its own being. Place, in real life, only lights up as place on the basis of an infinite horizon that transcends it; place cannot be world. But in these artificial landscapes, the finite worldly horizon allows for place-worlds to manifest, fixing them as fictions about which we must suspend everyday principles of reality in order to experience them as art—otherwise they are merely elaborate plant displays. These place-worlds are to symbolize the overall theme of the show so that each display offers a *double layer of symbolization*: a place-world that symbolizes the experience of place that symbolizes a thematic principle. This double layer of symbolization seemed to me, in the variety of instances, to be either loose, or generic so that it could have been elsewhere than



Fig. 12.3 An example of a fantastic landscape. The pond is in the shape of an artist's palette. Notice the paintbrush!

America, or particularly American, or moreover, too imaginative to be anything but fancy. Yet the fanciful, could also be a peculiarly American conceit, such as the display in which two Harley Davidson motorcycles were “getting married,” equipped with a “runway/aisle” and alter, as well as banquet tables for the reception. One of the first exhibits I observed was constructed as the ruins of an old chapel in which bushes, plants, flowers, and trees grew throughout it and around it. The purposeful construction of artificial ruins perhaps best fits the English style, or the Italian classical landscape as “discovered in ruin” in the Renaissance, but such still might be found in the American landscape, as old buildings are abandoned in the name of progress.

If we say that a person is in another world, we don't mean that s/he is literally in another spatial sector. What we mean is that the horizon of meanings, or the context, from which s/he operates is other than the one functioning as reality. If you are caught in a daydream at a football game while the home team is scoring a touchdown you are “out of it,”—in another world. What is relevant and appropriate to one world is irrelevant inappropriate to another. We live in a multiverse and we learn to quite easily leap from one “subworld” to another and also contrapuntally, e.g., telling a joke while serving coffee, even though the cognitive styles can be quite disparate. The artifice involved in constructing these flower show place-world displays, involve contexts of relevance and appropriateness. And thus limit what is to be included and what is to be excluded on the basis of the aesthetic theme of each individual display. But to the contrary, an environment does not only consist of a multiverse or subworlds of human constructions; it consists of

the *umwelten* (worlds-as-lived) of the various types of beings that comprise it.³ The nexus of meanings that comprise an ecological niche are constituted on the basis of incommensurative, experiential and self-organizing *umwelten* that are interrelated as an environmental whole. An ecological niche is a dynamic tensionality comprised of a plethora of self-organizing systems. A question then is raised through the art/biotic displays of the Philadelphia Flower Show as to the relationship between landscape as artwork, i.e., as place-world with the intertensional *umwelten* of the many life-forms. For example, as light industry has moved to the suburbs and ruburbs much attention has been given to landscaping the “plush grounds.” I have a friend that refers to the plantings of “corporate trees”—that through the orderly organization and image of neatness the landscaping symbolizes the bureaucratic style of the corporate world. As landscaping converges with artwork and thus constructs an aesthetic place-world as a layer of its meaning, questions arise on the basis of this environmental appropriation. The landscape is appropriated into landscape-art while at the same time functioning as a place of employment (the workplace)—the lamination of subworlds in the multiverse of human life. So, what is the relation between these kinds of instantiations of the human multiverse to the *umwelten* of the life-forms of an anthropocentrically appropriated ecological niche and to what extent has the ecological niche been affected?

The experience of the Major Exhibitors section at the flower show contrasts in profound ways with the experience of real landscapes contextualized in environmental regions, yet, it fosters an experience to which such experiences are evoked. Experience is the conscious (from “unawareness” to highly aware) process of lived-embodiment contextualized in-the-world; it manifests in sensibilities, felt meanings. In this case of attending the Flower Show sensibility beckons forth as a spatial event that symbolizes experiences of real placescapes—‘scapes’ emphasizing the physical form of place. It is necessary to understand how the exhibits foster an *experiential symbolization*, for I want to investigate a deeper turn, not merely are landscapes symbolized, which is a trite level of symbolization, but that our *experiences of landscapes are being symbolized*. The character of this structure of the *symbolization of experience* may be in between that of the structure of symbolic referents, by which a symbol stands for something that is not itself a symbol, and the structure of simulacra, by which only other symbols are referents and non-symbolic referents are not traceable. I note this because in symbolizing experience, it is not a thing but the *experience of something*, and that experience of something could be another symbol, which puts us it seems on the trail of symbols that may or may not end with an originary referent. This structure was at first gleamed from a bit of suspicion on my part as well as a psychological feeling of uneasiness concerning my experiences at the show. Thus, my investigation is motivated on the basis of these intuitions, which manifested while experiencing the displays. Stated in another way, the symbol bridges between subworlds in the human multiverse, but in bridging to another subworld its referent is yet also a symbol (of an experience), and so on.

12.6 Characterizing the Artificiality of Place-Worlds

Each display invokes a place—a nexus or knot of meanings—because its contrivance is thematically unified to represent some perspective of the main theme. Moreover, the compression of the spatio-temporal dimensions and the intensification of meanings in a finite-horizon (here as artificially constructed landscapes) bring about their appearances as worlds. The finite-horizon as a function of the thematic principle constitutes a *completed perfect place-world*. In terms of the external horizon, each quite different “landscape-sector” (display) is merely juxtaposed alongside the others as disconnected contexts, which would be hardly possible to view by walking a distance of a few yards (the space of the aisles). Nor perhaps in a few hours, as the displays together present disparate geographies that are not juxtaposed in such partitioned adumbrations in real landscapes. Besides, each constructed landscape sector is bounded in a way analogous to a framed painting, and placed alongside one another in a museum-like fashion. In no real sense do we experience the contiguities of natural places (interconnected through ecological relations) as place-worlds (juxtaposed finite world-horizons), and especially as a collection of different sub-unities exhibiting the same overall theme. On the other hand, no matter how incoherent the post-modern human-centered landscapes may be, *world horizons* are not partitioned and juxtaposed on the basis of artificial borders, while revealing the same ideal principle. As an illustration, the state of Maryland, as an “artificial political border,” consists of various geographical unities, e.g., coastal plain, piedmont plateau, and mountain, etc. The Eastern Shore of Maryland shares a biospheric unity with Delaware and Eastern Virginia (“Delmarva”), which cuts across human artificialities of political borders. If world horizons could be constructed through artifice the various *umwelten* of different forms of life that share an environment could be organized and would function on the basis of the artistic or artificial (i.e. political) theme. This is nonsensical, as if a carcass of a dead animal would present the same meaning for the buzzard, the dead animal’s young, and a human being’s aesthetic principle. *Umwelten* are incommensurate with artificial thematic meaning. The hummingbird and butterfly garden is an anthropocentric appropriation that only grasps the significance of an ecological niche in a shallow way. However, different placescapes can yet function on the basis of an enveloping “scape”—a cityscape or mountainscape. In the case of place-worlds, artistic thematics function to be the enveloping symbol. Artistic symbolizations constitute places as place-worlds, reducing them to anthropocentric thematics.

Furthermore, the Flower Show involves a temporal compression of biological time. Even in a large outdoor landscape garden, it would be impossible to see the various plants in bloom at the same time as they do in the displays, as the plants are artificially nurtured to be ready expressly for the Flower Show. This style of presentation can be likened to beauty pageantry in which individual contestants display perfection of beauty and talents over the course of a few hours. But

nowhere in everyday life and nowhere in the natural world would such a situation occur; it is not impossible, but of ever extreme remoteness.

Sectors of natural landscapes show forth a style, but they do not do so *in a contrived way* as presented by these displays, for nature does not do art. And human constructed exterior landscapes do not necessarily manifest as “a world,” for they are not usually unified on the basis of an artistic theme, even though they may exhibit style. I look at my rock garden in my front yard, or the azalea bushes in front of the house, or the flower garden on the side of the property, and I don’t apprehend place-worlds or a place-world comprising them. In a fundamental sense, their growth in spring symbolizes neither spring nor my experience of spring; they manifest as spring growth and they comprise some of my experiences of spring. But my yard is a constructed place and perhaps I don’t see its symbolization because it is just bad art. Maybe my yard symbolizes the pathetic attempts at constructing a place-world by a suburbanite—someone who is too trite and unimaginative to recognize his own degenerate aesthetic appropriation. This notion suggests a range of symbolic appropriation of landscapes into the anthropocentric human multiverse and also a range between unconscious and highly conscious artificial appropriations.

12.6.1 *Genius Loci*

The character of the Flower Show displays as symbolic place-worlds symbolizes experiences of real landscapes in *certain modalities*, which is accomplished by evoking the *worldhood spirit* of a place through the thematic horizon of these artistically contrived place-worlds. In one sense the display, due to its thematics, symbolizes the experience of genius loci.⁴ The spirit of place (genius loci) constitutes the gestalt meaning of a place. Placiality, which involves the *organizational* moment of the nexus of spatialized meanings (place),⁵ participates in an overall character—a particular genius loci. By experiencing these art-informed displays I am drawn into the meaning of their symbolic world-horizons, which symbolizes for me the experience of genius loci. ‘Worldhood,’ I understand to mean the horizontal background from which the character of the organizational moment of place (placiality) is brought forth. Another name for this character is genius loci. The artwork not only symbolizes my experiences of a place, but it symbolizes my experiences of its genius loci, without symbolizing genius loci. Because it presents this symbolization through the unifying thematic principle of the show, “America the Beautiful,” which I take up into my embodied experience, it symbolizes the experiential sense/feel of the overall character to which a place belongs. A natural place does not announce its genius loci, the genius loci pervades place and I become aware of it as I become attuned to it. Attunement only occurs if sensibility is open, receptive. But in artistic construction, the theme announces to its witness, through “its naming,” of a thematic principle, which is then preformed in imagination such that it oversees the construction of experience on the basis of its overall

character. This announced overall meaning constructs ahead of time a preformed character of the artwork that we imaginatively entertain in a sensibility that is channeled. This imaginative entertaining symbolizes the experiences of genius loci. What happens if these kind of theme-world experiences replace our experiences of genius loci?

At this point I can better elaborate what I mean by the fact that this symbolization seems to be halfway between the symbol-referent structure and the structure of simulacra. A state flag does not symbolize experiences of the state but rather symbolizes a state, although there is an associated context that includes experience. The diagonal bands of red and blue on a cylinder do not symbolize my experiences of a barbershop they indicate to me that a barbershop is in close proximity to this symbol. I may associate experience with the symbol, but the symbol does not symbolize experiences. The symbol does not symbolize experience because what is going on concerning my own embodiment is not a component within the symbolization itself. My role as dative (to me: the conscious being registering the symbolic relationship) is to recognize the symbol as a symbol of some entity. But what I have described above is of a different structure. The Flower Show may remind me of the coming spring, but it is not a symbol for the coming of spring. One may merely associate the Flower Show with the coming of spring on the basis of temporal proximity. But the Flower Show does symbolize the *experience* of spring. It does this not through the objects, but rather the *felt experience* that it calls forth is symbolic of the felt experience of spring. This is accomplished through the artificial constructions creating a unique, other-worldly experience that is capable of symbolizing embodied sensibilities. What is concerning about this structure is that at levels of physiological and existential needs, the symbol itself provides a potent fulfillment. This leads to questions such as, if the symbolizing experience is as therapeutic as the symbolized experience, is it all that necessary, in this case, to experience spring? Would it not be possible to artificially construct an *environment* that would satisfy me—do we really need the earth's pre-artificiality at all to fulfill us?

The artistic theme of each landscape-work does not symbolize genius loci because it submits to the character of the overall theme of the show, in the case of 2005, the beauty of America. But rather the overall theme as experienced symbolizes the experience of genius loci. It does this through the construction of a pseudo-place and through giving it a theme that prestructures the imagination. The exhibition hall is a place, not a pseudo-place and the Flower Show constitutes a place as long as it "takes place." But the exhibits are not places, but rather artistic renderings of place. Never is a genius loci prescribed in the way that the artistic theme prescribes the spirit of pseudo-place. But when I experience these place-worlds with their prescribed theme they symbolize the experience of genius loci through the experiential feel of the landscape artwork being guided by the preformed imagination. My heightened attention creates a pseudo-attunement that apprehends the artistic theme in a way that symbolizes the attunement to genius loci. But most importantly, this fulfillment of the attunement of felt experience to genius loci is *symbiotic*, not symbolic. In the natural setting once the overall

character is felt, one can choose to engage the environment in a way attuned to its character or one can attempt to change it, dominate it, or destroy it. But what happens when artistic themes replace genius loci and I become attuned to them? If it is a display at the Philadelphia Flower Show then I truly am experiencing the works of landscape art—I am getting something out of the art experience. The crucial question then: what if environments are given over to artistic themes and substitute for genius loci? A pseudo-attunement and place-(dis)orientation, based on artificial manipulation, substitutes for the veritable that can only issue forth through a respectful opening to the constitutive features of the bioscape. What is concerning here is that it seems to make irrelevant the need to value genius loci, if indeed it is as satisfying or more satisfying, to construct artificial landscapes on the basis of themes.

I must again clarify my use of place-world versus place for the purpose of distinguishing world from worldhood. The meaning of place-world is captured by the sense of finished perfection, this sense of a unifying theme artistically constructed to be an ideal presentation. World is meant as the horizon from which meanings are brought forth. These place-worlds offer an artistically delimited world horizon exhausted by the “artificial” placiality manifesting “there” before the observer. The displays are an art-form, not real places, so they do not themselves exhibit genius loci (worldhood); I experience them straightforwardly as manifesting an artistic theme. Art is capable of presenting a world, a world that we enter by suspending belief in the everyday. As a contrived “completed perfect world,” these place-worlds can evoke a symbolic sense of the experience of genius loci, a kind of genius loci schema, due to the simplistic thematicization of a world that is devoid of process and artificially decontextualized. It is the very transcendence of worldhood that allows for genius loci to manifest—the overall feel of an environment. In art, its world does not transcend its boundaries (finite-horizon) and thus in place of genius loci is an artistic theme unifying the sense of the place-world.

12.6.2 The Commerciality of Place-Worlds

From the standpoint of the everyday, it is a winter day in March and I am indoors looking at vegetation arranged for a designed and constructed exhibit. But from the standpoint of the world of art that I have entered, my experiences of the spirits of places (genius loci) are being symbolized. Yet, the displays also symbolize another kind of experience, the commercially constructed environment in which a marketing strategy prevails. And here the human multiverse becomes clear: this is not only an artwork, it is an advertisement!

Each display in the Major Exhibitors section is a work of landscape art and so it offers picturesque beauty. Highly trained professionals have created the landscape exhibits, and most gardening that one sees in neighborhoods hardly comes close. The display is “picture perfect,” which only happens in the natural world by chance, and in non-professional landscaping by luck. The word, *picturesque*, is

highly apropos in all of its senses: suggestive of a painted scene, charming, quaint, and evoking graphic mental images. The landscape exhibitions are an *idealization*, for each is assembled like a “custom, hand-made, one-of-a-kind craft-object,” in that plants, prepared in controlled climates, are carefully selected and juxtaposed in intentional ways that do not occur in the natural environs. And, even in highly formal, highly cultivated gardens, not all of the elements are readied “just right,” for plants grow at their own rates and own cycles. But all the entities are prepared and placed in the most perfect way for a one week cycle, which *arrests* the growth cycle of a real garden as a living process and fosters the idealization of “picture perfect.” These place-worlds capture the teleology of seasonal growth, which is to bring vegetation to its seasonal maturity, but hypostatize this teleology in arrested perfection.

The sense of the word ‘display’ meant here is that of an eye-catching arrangement by which something is exhibited, and in many cases, ostentatiously, which is one of the meanings of “display.” But also the sense of ‘exhibit’ is obvious: which is to show something publicly for competition, demonstration, or inspection. The exhibitor usually has pamphlets or advertising that one can pick up near the display and many have a representative there to talk with the attendees. For example, Stoney Bank Nurseries presented a landscape exhibit called, “An American Woodland Garden.” Their brochure states, “Our award winning designers are transforming landscapes ... creating contemporary and romantic gardens where dreams are realized through horticultural craftsmanship and innovative design.” Another panel of the brochure reads, “A leading professional design-build company specializing in imaginative and functional design from concept to construction.”⁶ Key concepts here involve transformation and the realization of dreams. There is no discussion of the amount of work to maintain a landscape or garden, and there is no aesthetic associated with maintenance. There is a sense, that once constructed as the work of art, landscape perfection has been achieved by award-winners. There is no discussion of the owner’s on-going involvement with the garden; the garden is to be provided by experts (gods) and present-at-hand to be enjoyed—as if one’s life is to be spatially engulfed in a permanent fantasyland.

Thus, it is important to understand that what is to be “real-ized” when employing a landscaping firm is the *imagined world*, which is to be *symbolized by the real landscape—dreams are realized, not the reality of a landscape*. Thus, there is this *reversal* in the structure of symbolization: the real landscape, the professionally landscaped estate, symbolizes the imagined landscape existing in the minds of the owners, which has been constructed through the agency of marketing psychology to motivate the imaginative fancy of the customers. With this structure of reversal I am now beginning to unpack my original suspicion and uneasiness concerning the experiential symbolization. Aesthesis veils the reversal due to the peculiar efficacy of this aesthetic object, yet it now is appropriated as stimulation for self-imagery.

I have come to realize that it is this reversal of symbolization that is operable in the displays at the Flower Show as well (not merely the brochures), but because it is subtle, the structure is less obvious. Real vegetation is employed in the creation

of a place-world, but the real as a function of art symbolizes an imaginary ideal, which is impossible to achieve in the real. So, the real elements comprising the displays symbolize the imaginary ideal unified by the theme. The imagination is stimulated to enter into the art-world's presentation of an idealized theme, which is the meaning of the whole that transforms, through symbolic reversal, the real vegetation into imaginary vegetation, the symbolized worldhood spirit transforming the real into an imaginary, ideal realm of art. This is really no different than what happens to real tables and chairs in a play, for example, where these objects are taken up into an imaginary situation. In this fashion, experiences of the genius loci of real places can be symbolized by the thematic character of the artistically contrived place-world. For example, this artistic construction of a flowerbed (real soil and vegetation) surrounding a veranda (real wooden materials) now becomes, through artistic transformation, an imagined idealization of a theme that symbolizes the experience of the spirit of a real place.

The structure of the experience of the displays at the Flower Show is important to understand. You do not in any manner enter into the display; you do not become contextualized in it as environs. You are always outside of it, even in those displays where you might pass through it on a footbridge, with its wooden railings defining a space that de-contextualizes your participation in the place-world. To enter the display space would lead to altering it, destroying the artistic intentions of the creators, but it also would concretize an experience that is best left to the imagination. The point of the display is to have you imagine what it would be like, which means that it stimulates landscape-imagination. If one entered into the display its reality as an artifactual prop would issue forth, destroying this effect. This is because the display is not a place contextualized in the landscape, but rather it is an artifice contextualized in an exhibition hall, which would become apparent if one entered into the display. But by walking around and standing outside the display one is drawn into it by imagining what it would be like, entering its art-world quality. The imaginative component brings about a sense of enchantment. The sorcerer, the intentional agency of the enchantment, is the exhibitor-designer who happens to have a representative (an employee) in the same space that you occupy outside of the enchanted world. But you are a grownup; you have already unmasked the wizard of Oz and are quite aware that it is a constructed world. But, the difference here is that one can purchase one's own Oz, and thus live in the imagination. If you like this "dream-world" you can buy one of your own.

12.6.3 The Instant Environment Machine

I am suspicious of this complex structure of symbolization, for it is a component of the workings for what Edward Relph has called *the instant environment machine*.⁷ The instant environment machine is the complex of economic and material power that replaces the organic growth of real places with a Disney-like commodification, as if place can be a product of "corporate orchestrated designs" for the

purpose of real-estate and landscaping markets. Land speculation, as we know it, has been around at least as long as the bourgeois revolutions of the eighteenth century. The commodification of the landscape by the instant environment machine is a twentieth-century development, for it is then that capitalists could manipulate industries, technologies, and institutions of capital such as banks, in way to manufacture instant worlds. In other words, the real relations to the landscape, which develop organically overtime by which an economy is developed through human relations rooted to the landscape, a way of life, is replaced by landscape commodification in which "worlds" are constructed "overnight" as material props for capitalist corporate investment interests. Instant worlds are created by corporate organizations whose constituency does not live in that world. Corporations act as the wizards of Oz whose economic power lies elsewhere and the instant world is to be activated like a machine that generates a product, in this case an economy that is extrinsic to the packaged world. They finance a commodity and people exist in the commodified landscapes as if they live in a real place, but instead they live in a commodity-pretending-to-be-a-place. This characterizes the uprooted nature of the post-industrial landscapes of capitalism whereby landscape itself is a function of advanced marketing manipulations.

However, genius loci can not be constructed; it is to be apprehended through a sensitive attunement to places. Relph claims that the Stoic geographers, with whom he agrees, recognized that human forms of life must take into account the genius loci of a place and build human dwellings with a foresight that respects genius loci. The instant environment machine, on the contrary, builds according to marketing strategies that disregard the genius loci, unless they pay heed to it fortuitously, if it happens to be advantageous to their utilitarian capital interests. The instant environment machine levels places to set up instant worlds and these instant worlds are provided with themes, even if just in the sense of a name. These themes substitute for genius loci; the destruction of place is made possible without the already uprooted culture realizing it, for an ersatz genius loci is provided. This is easily seen in the example of housing developments: Fox Ridge is an idealized theme that replaces the real place with a real genius loci, a ridge where fox use to live, that had been destroyed, bulldozed and graded, in the creation of an instant world. It is this commercially dominating thematic symbolization that is operable at the Flower Show in which the experience of genius loci is evoked, and this I find to be a dangerous. For it veils the loss of genius loci through a misguided artifice.

These more commercially oriented gardening and landscape company displays are mixed in with educational displays that are experienced in somewhat the same manner, except that the educational displays usually have more reading material, sometimes in the display itself, providing explication like those science projects from school. There then occurs a conflation of aesthetics with the idea of sound environmental measures, which may or may not lead to good consequences for the real environment of the inter-tensionality of *umwelten*. But in the long run, such conflation tends to trivialize the environmental crises, as if solutions are to found in aesthetic taste, sound practices may or may not stand alongside.

An aspect of the aestheticization of placescapes is the notion of the landscape as scenery. But as a commercially entity sold as an aesthetic dream-world, as something that functions as a kind of lifestyle prop—aestheticization marketed as a form of identity/prestige symbolization. It is not merely an element of décor, but establishes décor-cum-fantasy. The most bizarre display centered on two Harley Davidson motorcycles in a scene that symbolized a wedding. One motorcycle was “wearing” a tuxedo and the other a wedding dress, which were the obvious cues. The aisle was made to look like a two-lane road and along the side of the aisle were motorcycle wheels symbolizing the pews. Flower arrangements on long poles signify street lamps. Where the pews would be are flower displays. Beyond those displays, brightly decorated tables and chairs symbolize the wedding reception. The theme, *America the Beautiful*, is celebrated on the basis of the American-made motorcycle. The most abstract portion of the display consists of brightly colored vertical pieces of board behind the mock altar. These boards evoke the sense of a city skyline. Another display is sponsored by Subaru. The display is of a lovely suburban house surrounded by beautiful flowerbeds with a brand new Subaru parked in front of the house. This display evokes the experience of the suburban homestead by artfully constructing a worldhood spirit.

12.7 Concluding Remarks

But now I can further articulate my uneasiness. I have said that the *genius loci* of a place is not something that can be constructed. Veritable sensible embodied apprehension of *genius loci* motivates respectful attunement. In our uprooted culture, which is for the most part devoid of place sensitivities, respectful attunement is replaced with manipulation on the basis of the market. There is a danger that is recognized in the experience of these displays to conflate respectful attunement with an artifice equivalent to beauty pageantry and plastic surgery. This artifice takes on a satisfying aesthetic quality in landscape design. The destructive mistake is to allow artificial thematics to stand in for *genius loci*. Aesthetic artificiality substitutes for the existential relation to place that is engendered in biophilia. Instead, unwittingly, we substitute for authentic biophilia a commodity fetishism, whereby the world is slicked up as an extension of our cultural narcissism in which everything is to become the extension of human egos, life-style choices. The instant world machine constructs place-worlds, selling to us an artificiality that dangerously supplants while satisfies.

And thus the biophilia that I have felt in experiencing the Flower Show must be brought to critical understanding. A genuine love for biota can be appropriated to serve the commercial interests that commodify landscapes, whose practices destroy the genuine, real *genius loci*, in favor of constructing the instant worlds of (or even cottage industry) profit. The aestheticization at the Flower Show, which artistically creates “worldhood spirits” that symbolize the experience of *genius loci*, obfuscates the actual destruction of place. It hides the veritable loss of place

that is occurring at a critical rate in our culture by giving us a dope, dangerously appropriating biophilic needs, which veils the insidiousness of our landscape fantasies.

In its properly understood context, the Philadelphia Flower Show is a wondrous event! With awareness of the dangerous sensibilities that can be fostered, we can allow the flower exhibition to shine forth in all its experiential symbolism and allow it to “rev us up” for the coming of spring. We can live for a few hours in the beauty of plants and flowers, soaking into our embodied sensibility, colors, shapes textures, and scents. Human cultivation is a way that we commune with nature, but if we can learn to do it in an attuned way and with environmental awareness, we are doing the good. And, the Philadelphia Flower Show promotes this, but we only find wisdom in it, if indeed we are critically on guard.

Notes

- 1 See Heidegger, “Care as the Being of Dasein,” in *Being and Time*, 225–273. Also see, Scheler, “Ordo Amoris.”
- 2 Schutz, “Many Realities and Their Constitution.”
- 3 For a discussion concerning *Umwelten* and the problematics of accounting for them in GIS mapping, see Skocz, “Ecology, Technology, and Wilderness Management.”
- 4 Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci*.
- 5 Backhaus and Murungi, “Introduction: Landings,” 1.
- 6 Stoney Bank Nurseries, *An American Woodland*.
- 7 Relph, “Modernity and the Reclamation of Place.”

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Chapter 13

Gardening at a Japanese Garden

John Murungi

*Go to the pine if you want to learn about the pine,
or go to the bamboo if you want to learn about the bamboo.
And in doing so, you must leave your subjective preoccupation with yourself.
Otherwise you impose your self on the object and do not learn.¹*

—Matsuo Basho

Editors' Note: The notion of gardening at a Japanese garden functions as a metaphor for our enactive geography. This chapter illustrates the geographical turn in epistemology and ontology in which a non-substantive geographicity is developed. It captures metaphorically our notion of a non-dualistic, ambiguous field of being, but in a way that deconstructs our residual ways of thinking, which is apropos of the Zen thematic. What is Japanese of a Japanese garden is neither an essence/substance nor a social construction, but rather is a spatialized/spatializing enactment, a participatory process of cultivation—a cultivation of neither self nor garden, but the “spatiating” (the genesis of space) event.

13.1 Introduction

How does one go about writing about gardening at a Japanese garden? Is one not better off observing gardening at a Japanese garden, rather than reading about it? Doesn't writing or reading about it testify to our being removed from what we are writing or reading about? Doesn't observing what we write or read about provide us with a direct access to itself without mediation by writing and reading? Conventional wisdom tells us that a picture is worth a thousand words, and we can even go further in our conventional wisdom and say that that which the picture is the picture of is worth a thousand pictures. Why embark on an indirect route when a direct route is available to us? If our objective is to learn about gardening at a Japanese garden, are we not better off putting aside talking about it, writing about it, reading about it, or looking at a picture of it, instead of observing it directly? But if we observe it directly does not observation still hold us aloof? Is to observe not to stand at a distance from what we observe? And what is this distancing other than the distancing that estranges us from the truth of what we are observing? And ultimately, why should we believe that we are better off observing what we are writing about than writing about it? The answers to these questions, if indeed there are answers, are likely to come from the experience of observing what we observe or what we write about. In the light of what is at stake in this writing, it is

gardening at a Japanese garden that is likely to be the source of the answers we are looking for.

13.2 The Subjective Path

In the light of the above directive from Basho, the difficulty of the task ahead of us becomes evident. To set out to learn about gardening at a Japanese garden we are called upon to leave our subjective preoccupation with ourselves. But how do we set our subjective preoccupation aside when subjective preoccupation with ourselves keeps on intruding on our desire to learn? In regard to the matter at hand, how do we learn about gardening at a Japanese garden without the preoccupation with ourselves standing in the way? This difficulty is not encountered only when learning about gardening at a Japanese garden. It is to be encountered in learning in general. Moreover, the difficulty may be complicated by the ever present possibility that we may be unaware of the extent to which we are subjectively preoccupied with ourselves. If this difficulty is to be overcome, an emancipatory self-critical reflection on the extent of our subjective preoccupation is necessary. Such a reflection demands that we project ourselves ahead of ourselves; that is, we set ourselves apart from ourselves, and this is problematic in that we have to set ourselves apart while at the same time not setting ourselves apart. After all, in every instance of learning our own being is at issue. Socrates encountered a similar difficulty in his quest for wisdom. He tells us,

I have been wondering at my own wisdom. I cannot trust myself. And I think that I ought to stop and ask myself, what am I saying? For there is nothing worse than self-deception—when the deceiver is always at home and always with you—it is quite terrible, and therefore, I ought often to retrace my steps and endeavor to “look for and aft.”²

In the quest for wisdom, for understanding, and for knowledge, we are among our worst enemies. We are among our worst enemies when we cease dwelling in wondering at our own wisdom, when we are absolutely certain about our understanding, when we are absolutely certain about our knowledge, when we absolutely trust ourselves, when we forget that the deceiver is not only at home in our being, but also when we forget that this deceiver could be none other than we ourselves. Again, as Socrates reminds us, many modern philosophers:

in their search of the nature of things, are always getting dizzy from constantly going round and round and moving in all directions. And this appearance, which arises out of their own internal condition, they suppose to be a reality in nature; they think that there is nothing stable, or permanent, but only flux and motion and that the world is always full of every sort of motion and change.³

We hear the same words in the following passage from Zen Buddhist literature:

The Wind was flapping a temple flag. Two monks were arguing about it. One said the flag was moving; the other said the wind was moving. Arguing back and forth they could come to no agreement. The Sixth Patriarch said, “It is neither the wind nor the flag that is moving. It your mind that is moving.”⁴

Perhaps, what the Patriarch left unsaid is that the mind itself is not moving; for there is only moving, which itself may be an illusion. In the course of learning, the unsaid is as significant as what is said. That is, what is said remains rooted in the unsaid, and this rootedness is essential to the meaning of what is said.

What we learn from Socrates and from the above passage in Zen Buddhist literature appears to be what Basho calls to our attention. We need to be aware of our subjective preoccupation with ourselves, and we need to leave it behind if an obstacle is not to stand on the path to learning. It is also important to bear in mind that it is necessary to leave behind our subjective preoccupation with ourselves so that we can learn about our subjective preoccupation with ourselves. Learning about our subjective preoccupation with ourselves must meet the same criterion we set for learning about anything else. In learning, we are not privileged, and we should not seek to privilege ourselves. We must go to ourselves without subjective preoccupation with ourselves. Such a going (though paradoxical because we are already where we want to go) is necessary. It facilitates the going to anything else we seek to learn about.

13.3 The Objective Path

Basho may be construed as entertaining the possibility of genuine learning if we adopt an objective approach to learning. Other than falling prey to logical niceties, there may not be a good reason to believe that Basho embraces this construction, or to believe that he advocates an objective learning rather than a subjective one. I will take a bold step and suggest that what may be reasonable is to assume that Basho is calling for abandoning our anthropocentric approach if we are to truly learn, and this includes learning about ourselves. We cannot learn about ourselves if we are preoccupied with ourselves. To learn about ourselves, we have to set aside an anthropocentric approach. If we want to learn about a pine, or about a bamboo, or about ourselves, and do so from an anthropocentric approach, we render ourselves centers of gravity. If we set aside the anthropocentric approach to learning, the pine or the bamboo becomes the center of gravity. The pull is either from the pine, or from the bamboo. Similarly, we will unsuccessfully learn about ourselves if we do not set ourselves apart from ourselves. To be at the center of our gravity, or more precisely, to be this center, we need to leave our subjective preoccupation with ourselves. To set ourselves apart from ourselves is to abandon an anthropocentric approach to ourselves, and thereby, open a way for being what we are. Along the same line of thinking, learning about gardening at a Japanese garden requires that we set aside an anthropocentric approach. Setting aside anthropocentric approach in these instances does not imply that the pine, the bamboo, the self, or gardening at a Japanese garden is transformed into an object of our learning. Basho does not ask us to transform what we want to learn into an object, so that we can learn from it what it truly is. Objectiveness is a subjective construction that ends up being nothing more than a subjective preoccupation with ourselves

if we allow ourselves to be held hostage by it. Objectiveness is subject-dependent, and thus, when Basho asks us to leave our subjective preoccupation, he is asking us to set aside this dependence, so that what we set out to learn about can reveal itself in the very manner in which it is. If what we want to learn about were to be transformed into an object, we would be alienated from it, and it would be alienated from us. The alternative is not to assimilate what we want to learn into the self, for this would lead not only to the death of the learner, but would lead also to the death of what is to be learned. In either case, there would be no learning. Besides, the self has no space within itself where anything could be assimilated. The self is not the sort of being that could be said to have a within. Learning takes place only when the learner is on the same side with what is to be learned, and when what is to be learned is on the side of the learner. As one goes to learn what is to be learned, one does not leave oneself behind, and neither is what to be learned away from the learner. Learning does not entail a “leaving behind” or a “going to.” If it is a “leaving behind,” it is a “leaving behind” which is not a “leaving behind,” and if it is a “going to,” it is a “going to” which is not a “going to.” Genuine learning transcends the subject-object dichotomy. It transcends here and there, there and here. It is not a process of extracting information from an object and storing it in the self. Learning, especially in a philosophical sense, the kind of learning that is to guide us in learning about gardening at a Japanese garden is not an extractive technology. Moreover, the self that is implicated in this learning is not a warehouse or a store where information can be warehoused or stored. It has no inside where information could be warehoused or stored. Its being is towards what it seeks to learn. This towardsness exhausts its being. It is its constitutive and constituting spatiality. Similarly, what it seeks to learn about is not a warehouse or storage of information that awaits an information extracting or information collecting self. It has no inwardness that would act as a container of information, and it is not an aggregate of collectible information. Its being is towards what learns. This towardsness exhausts what it is. It is its constitutive and constituting spatiality. Thus, both what learns and what learning is about lack substantiality whether spiritual/intellectual or material. The spatialities of the learner and of what learning is about are so blended that one cannot say where one begins and ends, or where the other begins and ends. Any attempt to set them apart leads to the extinction of both, and hence, nothing is learned. In everything that one learns about, one learns about oneself. Thus, as one learns about gardening at a Japanese garden one learns about oneself, and in learning about a Japanese garden, one learns about oneself.

13.4 The Right Path

The task of learning about gardening at a Japanese garden becomes less formidable if one is set on the right path. The previous observations are intended to clear a way to such a path. In addition to the difficulties already noted, the task calls for

a pre-self-understanding of what I am attempting to convey on the part of the listener. The listener has to leave behind his or her preoccupation with himself or herself. The difficulties that beset the listener, in this leaving behind, are just as intractable as those that I face. In addition to leaving behind his or her subjective preoccupation with himself or herself, he or she has to set aside the objectiveness of what the author is trying to get across. In his or her case, what is heard is not information that is absolved or stored in some inner chamber of my self, since, as previously said, self is not a storage or a warehouse for information. I am not a conduit of information on gardening at a Japanese garden. What I say about gardening at a Japanese garden is not in me. It is about gardening at a Japanese garden. For gardening at a Japanese garden to come into relief, I must get out of the way. Thus, let what I am saying be taken as an attempt on my part to get out of the way. Properly understood, what I am saying amounts to decentering myself so that gardening at a Japanese garden can reveal itself. Moreover, this gardening is not to be understood as an object from which information can be extracted. It is not a container of information about what it is. It exhausts itself in spatiality. The Japanese garden itself is not an object that gardening constructs or tends, which, in turn, is itself an object for us. It is not an object that is subject to gardening, and to the gardener. It is not a subject for or of gardening. Its being is exhausted in the spatiality that it is.

13.5 The Double Pre-understanding

It should be clear now that the understanding of gardening at a Japanese garden, as is the case with the understanding of a Japanese garden, calls for a pre-understanding of ourselves. As we pave a way to an understanding of gardening at a Japanese garden, we are at the same time paving a way for an understanding of ourselves. It is this double pre-understanding that clears the way for the setting of the learner on a path to Japanese garden. This double pre-understanding is not only a prerequisite for my success; it is also a prerequisite for success in drawing the listener onto this path. If the listener does not possess this double pre-understanding, he or she will not know whether he or she is being set on the right path to gardening at a Japanese garden. Ultimately, it is gardening at a Japanese garden that is to guide the reader and I onto its path. That is, the success in setting us on the path to gardening at a Japanese garden depends on the guidance of gardening at a Japanese garden. My setting of the reader on a path to this gardening is derivative, for I too am guided by this gardening. Where learning takes place, humility is present. Humility is not to be confused with passivity. One is not acted upon by that which is outside of oneself, for there is no inside, and there is no outside. Humility entails setting aside subjective preoccupation with oneself and also a creative submission of oneself to what one seeks to learn. It is a constitutive expiration of oneself in the presence of what one seeks to learn, while at the same time, what one seeks to learn undergoes a similar fate of constitutive expiration.

The path to gardening at a Japanese garden directs us to an activity, for gardening is an activity. Here, there is a great temptation to think of this activity as an anthropocentric activity. We take for granted that gardening is a human activity. To succumb to this temptation is to prejudge what this activity is. It is to suffer from subjective preoccupation with ourselves. Gardening directs us to a place where gardening takes place. In the case of gardening at a Japanese garden it takes us to a Japanese garden. This second directing qualifies gardening by directing us to a particular garden—to a Japanese garden. Ostensively, not all gardening is directed to a Japanese garden, but in so far as it is a garden, what it is, is inseparable from all other gardens. Our topic seeks to bring us face to face with gardening at a Japanese garden understood as such. This bringing face to face is possible only if we are willing to entertain the possibility that gardening at a Japanese garden has a face. As we inquire into what is at stake in gardening at a Japanese garden, it is important that we do not lose sight of the Japanese garden, for this garden is the site where the gardening we are immediately concerned with takes place. To come face to face with gardening at a Japanese garden is to come face to face with a Japanese garden. It is important that we guard ourselves from the assumption that the meaning of “coming face to face” is self-evident, and from the assumption that the meaning of what comes face to face with us is self-evident.

13.6 Face to Face

We heedlessly speak about the face of a human being, the face of a mountain, or about the face of a house. Some thing faces us. When something is seen it offers us a face, in his offering, we are also offered to ourselves. What faces us summons us. It is the way that visible phenomena offer themselves to us. This everyday offering, this everyday way of facing phenomena may conceal not only what phenomena are, but also it may conceal what transpires in facing. Apparently, when a human being comes face to face with another human being, this coming to face may be said to differ from the coming face to face of human beings and non-human beings.

When a human face summons us we are put in a situation that is remarkably different from the situation in which non-human phenomena summons us. When a human being comes face to face with another human being, there is mutuality of recognition. To look at a human being is to be aware that this other human being can also reciprocate the look. The looker is either aware that he or she is being looked at, or is aware that she or he can be looked at. The looker is on both sides, just as the looked is on both sides. He or she is here, and she or he is there. Mutual recognition is an essential aspect of self-recognition. However, what the self in self-recognition is—is not self-evident, if only because, self is not absolutely subject to cognition. Self is neither an object nor a subject. A comprehensive cognitive mapping of self, or with what a self concerns itself is not possible. It is an attempt to objectify what cannot be objectified. The recognition that takes place

when a human being comes face to face with another human being does not exhaust our understanding of what takes place. Recognition as is the case with the cognition on which it is founded presupposes a non-cognitive mode of being from which cognition is derived. In other words, in its cognitive life self remains rooted in this non-cognitive mode of being.

Normally, as they face us, non-human phenomena are understood to be unable to recognize us, or to recognize that we recognize them. We assume that when they are looked at, they do not, and are not in a position to reciprocate the look. We understand them not only to be incapable of looking, but also to be incapable of being aware that they are being looked at. To be sure, this may not entirely hold when one is dealing with sentient animals, for some of these animals can be said not only to have the ability to look, but also the ability to be aware that they are being looked at. For example, it is said that dogs are not only able to recognize their owners, but that they are also able to know that their owners recognize them. This state of affairs, however, remains inadequately understood until what we are and what other sentient beings are is adequately understood. Coming face to face with gardening at a Japanese garden, or with a Japanese garden would tend to fall under the category in which mutual recognition is absent. How then do we traverse the abyss that sets us apart from not only gardening at a Japanese garden, but also from what is other than what we are? Failure to reflect on this question may result not only in a misunderstanding of this question but also may put us on a wrong path, a path that will lead us way from the answer that is appropriate. A reflection on this question may unconceal the extent to which our own being is in question, and also the extent to which the being of what is other than what we are is in question. Properly understood, the question concerns the being of what we are, and also concerns the being of what is other than what we are. Indeed, having the being of these two in question raises the question of the being of the otherness that we are presupposing. To understand what is at stake here is to be placed where the very being of coming face to face is in question. And to the extent that coming face to face is in question, it becomes clear that what is at stake in coming face to face is our very being as well as the very being that we assume is other than what we are.

Elemental facing “precedes” the distinction of human beings from other sentient beings, and also the distinction of sentient beings from the non-sentient beings. By preceding, what is referred to is that from which all beings arise and take repose. It is what allows for reciprocity among human beings, and also what renders possible the overcoming of the abyss that sets what is human apart from what is not human. Here too lies what is essential about gardening at a Japanese garden. Gardening at a Japanese garden is an overcoming. It is a traversing of the divide, a crossing over of the abyss. The creation of Zen rock gardens is this traversing. As Berthier points out:

Zen monks stripped nature bare, retaining only rocks and sand, and a little vegetation. In this way the gardens they created provided an image of the universe in its most condensed form, in which they were able to discern their own faces.⁵

What is essential in coming face to face is not what faces or what is faced. Strictly speaking, neither do we nor does anything else have a face. What is essential about the face is facing. Nothing faces us, and we do not face anything. When we talk about our coming face to face with each other as human beings, or when we talk about being faced, or about facing other than what is human, we engage in a talk that takes us way from what is essential about the face. The essence of face lies in facing. Facing is a spatial mode of being that exhausts the being that faces as well as the being that is faced. We are only to the extent that we are faced out, and anything else is in so far as it is faced out. Facing out is not a unique way of being human. It is a way of being of whatever is. Being faces out. Being ex-sists. It is only as such that it is facing. We, and all that which can be said to be, participate in this ex-sistence, in this facing. To understand being as facing out is to free it from an anthropocentricity, from anthropocentric interrogation. Facing becomes an elemental aspect of all phenomena. In this way of understanding phenomena, facing out is implicated in what is essential about gardening. Thus, gardening at a Japanese gardening is a facing out, and it is only in the course of facing out that a Japanese garden comes into being as a Japanese garden. This takes place in such a way that a Japanese garden itself comes into relief as a facing out.

13.7 Handwork—Bodywork

As previously stated, gardening is an activity. From an anthropocentric perspective, it is an activity of our hands. It is handwork. Gardening at a Japanese garden is handwork. The Japanese garden is also handwork. It is correct to point out that “the workings of the human hand are found in all Japanese gardens.”⁶ Let us then think of gardening as the site for the disclosure of the truth of our hands, and of handwork as the site for the disclosure of the truth of our hands. As handwork, Japanese garden is itself the site for the disclosure of the truth of the hands. What then, is this truth?

In and by themselves, hands are not hands. In their essence, hands are hands of the body. Even when they are severed, or even if they are severable, they remain hands of the body. It is because of the body that they are, and that they become intelligible. Let us then say, the work of the hand, that is, handwork, is the work of the body. Thus, as handwork, gardening is bodywork. Gardening is bodying. To understand gardening is to understand bodying. Moreover, as handwork, Japanese garden is itself body work. It is embodiment. If, as said above, hands have their being and intelligibility in the body, they are not to be understood as tools that the body uses in bodying. They are not implements that the body uses. As it bodies, the body has no tools in itself that it could use. It is not a mechanical body consisting of mechanical tools we call the hands—tools that engage in handwork. And there is nothing like a mind or a soul that directs it, as if it were, from without. Thus, gardening as handwork, and as bodywork, is not a mechanical activity. The body that gardens is a living body. Gardening is an embodied living process. This

is not to be taken to imply that one has to turn to biology to grasp what is essential about gardening. Ultimately, one has to appeal to that living process that does not stand in opposition to the non-living. It is to this process that embodies gardening, and that has to be experienced as the handwork of the body. Gardening at a Japanese garden is this very process. Gardening as a hand process, and hence, as a body process, opens to us what remains unthought and inexperienced about the body process.

Just as the hand is the hand of the body, every other so-called organ of the body has no being in itself and it is not intelligible in itself. For example, we think of the garden as subject to sight. A garden lies within the domain of the eye. It is seen. When we think of a Japanese tea garden, a Japanese stroll garden, a Japanese rock garden, a Japanese Zen garden, or about any other type of garden, we think about what is subject to sight. Thinking is embedded in the itinerary of the eye. However, the eye that sees is the eye of the body, as hands are hands of the body. Seeing is bodywork, and as such, it cannot be separated from the body as handwork. The eye and the hand are not foreign to each other. They are of each other and they are each other. To see a garden is to see handwork. Seeing or looking is eyework, and as eyework, it is handwork, a bodywork. Just as handwork is body drama, seeing or looking is, accordingly, bodywork—the work of our being. Casalis takes us along this path in his description of the Roan-ji, the celebrated rock garden in Kyoto. He asserts,

Approaching the painting of Ryoan-ji involves not just an itinerary of the eye, but the entire body as well. It is only through a continuous shift of the vantage points and perspectives that the various forces of attraction and repulsion at work will unveil themselves.⁷

Casalis, however, does not take us far enough. The itinerary of the eye involves the body not simply because the body moves about the garden and adopts various vantage points and perspectives. The itinerary of the eye involves the body because it is an itinerary of the body. The body does not use the eye to see. The eye is not the body's telescope. It is not a tool that the body uses to see. Strictly speaking, seeing is not seeing of the eye. It is seeing of the body. The body sees. It is this body that sees that comes into relief in gardening. The truth of the body is brought into relief in gardening.

As an activity, gardening is more than clearing a piece of land for planting. It is more than planting, seeding, weeding, rock arrangement, or raking gravel. What is "more"? What is "more" is not simply another addition to the collection of the activities just mentioned. As said previously, in gardening there lies the truth of our hands, the truth of our body, the truth of our being—the truth of our being because the body defines who and what we are. I garden, therefore I am. We garden, therefore we are. This claim is likely to generate tremors in those who are wed to Cartesianism. For Descartes, it appears self-evident that when it is said that I think therefore I am, or when it said that we think therefore we are, what I am, as is the case with what we are, has absolutely nothing to do with the body. In his way of thinking, how the body could garden remains as mysterious as how the mind

would interact with the body, and the garden itself, as a thing that is *res extensa* remains absolutely cut off from the thing that thinks—*res cogitans*. However, in the context of what has been said so far, *res cogitans*, *res extensa* and the dualist problem of how the two interact are subjective preoccupations with ourselves that are to be set aside. How gardening claims our being is not self-evident. Gardening is not a process that sets human beings apart from other beings. It does not call attention to a decisive break with nature, whereby the irruption or the upsurge of human reality reveals itself as unique. It is not a domesticating activity, or a civilizing activity in which what is human distinguished itself from the rest of reality. It is a naturalization of human reality, a testament of the belonging of human reality to all reality.

13.8 Spatial Activity as Identity

As has been pointed out previously, spatiality defines us exhaustively. We are not opaque objects called bodies—objects that are located in space, and we are not invisible mysterious subjects located in bodies that mysteriously navigate the bodies in an objective space. Spatiality is what we are. It is precisely for this reason that we find ourselves involved with gardening, and indeed, for this reason that we are gardening itself. Gardening does not take place in us, if only because there is no inwardness where it could take place. It is not in our body, if only because our body has no inwardness. Moreover, it is not activity of the body, if by activity we have before our consciousness an external activity in which the body engages. We are this activity. Gardening is a spatial activity. It is “spatiating.” It is not an activity that takes place in space, as if space were a container in which it takes place. It is constituted in space and it constitutes space. It is a non-contouring contouring of space, which is a non-contouring contouring of our being. It is what generates a garden. The garden carries with it the “genes” of its generator. If the generator is spatial, it follows that a garden is inevitably spatial. It is a testament of what we are, and also a testament of what gardening is. It is the truth of our being, and it is the truth of gardening. What we normally associate with a garden—soil, rocks, stones, mulching, moss, gravel, sand, grass, plants, flowers, water, paths, et cetera, blend into each other, each exhausting itself in the others, and we blend into them exhausting ourselves in them, thereby, giving rise to spatiality that the garden is. This exhausting is what constitutes the truth of gardening. In gardening there is expiration of not only our being but also the expiration of all beings. What is noteworthy here is that garden is not a sum of these phenomena that we associate with it, and it is not the manner in which they are put together. It is not what contains and circumscribes these phenomena. Moreover, it is not solely a spectacle of technical skill that is to be mastered by a gardener in the production of a garden. It is *poiesis*: generating power. In so far as it gardens and defines itself as such, the body is *poietic*. It is what it is by taking in, and by being taken in by all bodies, thereby, rendering itself what it is. To this extent it is artwork, if by

artwork we understand a creative work—a work of being human that is a work of nature. The work of the work of art is not a technical product. It is a paradoxical product that erases itself as a product so that it can be a clearing, an opening up. It exhausts itself in so being. As a work of the body, it transforms the body in so doing so that the body itself becomes one with the clearing and the opening up. The body exhausts itself in the clearing, this opening up.

In speaking about the body, the body that we are, Merleau-Ponty, the French philosopher of the body, tells us, “Things are an annex or prolongation of itself; they are incrustated into its flesh, they are part of its full definition: the world is made up of the same stuff as the body.” To fully grasp what Merleau-Ponty says is to recognize that when it is said, “I garden therefore I am,” or that “We garden therefore we are,” what is said, as pointed out previously, should not be understood anthropocentrically. For us, to be is not to be centered on ourselves. Our center is the center of everything else. It is a center for which there are no margins—a center that decenters itself. That is, everything is centered where we are centered, and it is only in this context that the bodies that define what we are can be prolongations of everything else in the world that it can be said that we are made up of the same stuff as the world. Thus, our human bodies, the bodies that we are, do not set us a part from what is not human. What is not human is human and what is human is what is not human.

Normally, when we look at the elements that we associate with the garden, we do not look at ourselves. We look at what is other than what we are. We do not see our bodies in them, and because we do not see our bodies in them, we do not see them in our bodies. But this “normal we of looking,” as is the case with what looks and what is looked at, is abnormal, but it is abnormal in a normal way. If this is confusing, it may not be so accidentally; the confusion belongs to the very nature of being, to the nature of our being, and to the nature of all beings.

13.9 Japaneseness

To find ourselves situated in gardening at a Japanese garden, and being of this gardening, is to find ourselves situated where what is Japanese about Japanese garden is rendered explicit. In gardening at a Japanese garden, the truth of gardening, the truth of a Japanese garden, and the truth of our being come into relief. These truths come into relief in a way that brings into relief the truth of what is Japanese. What are we then to make of this truth? What is Japanese about a Japanese garden? Provided that what has been said so far makes sense, we are already on our way to answering this question. We learn about Japaneseness the same way we learn about any other phenomena. As previously stated, we need to leave behind our subjective preoccupation with ourselves. We also need to set aside the view that being Japanese is an objective mode of being. Japaneseness is not a mode of being that faces us as an object. On the face of Japaneseness, we do not stand out as subjects. The duality between subject and object vanishes. As we

learn about Japaneseness, we also learn about ourselves. Thus, if we do not know how to learn about ourselves, we cannot know how to learn about Japaneseness.

The word Japaneseness may convey a sense of denseness, thickness, heaviness, or it may convey a sense of some opaque impenetrable phenomenon. In what has already been said, it should be evident that none of these senses takes us closer to the truth about Japaneseness, just as none of them takes us any closer to what we are. It is in gardening at a Japanese garden, and at a Japanese garden that this truth discloses itself. We are to look at gardening at a Japanese garden, which implies that we have a look at a Japanese garden for a clue to what constitutes the Japaneseness of the Japanese. Gardening is an overt activity and the garden is overt. Neither conceals. Accordingly, in so far either is the site for the exhibition of the Japaneseness, either can only reveal Japaneseness as overtness. The site generates what is akin to itself. What gardening at a Japanese garden is, as is the case with what a Japanese garden is, is inseparable from the truth of Japaneseness. If Japaneseness is to reveal itself in gardening at a Japanese garden or at a Japanese garden, it is to reveal itself overtly and as overt. Impenetrability is the antithesis of Japaneseness. It has been, and it is absurd to look for Japaneseness inside a Japanese or inside anything. The idea of an inner Japanese self that is inaccessible to outsiders, or that is accessible with tremendous difficulty, or that is accessible only to the Japanese is a fictitious idea, and it should not have come as a surprise that it is nowhere to be found. It does not exist except as an idea without content, as a fictitious idea. It is an idea whose reality is chimeric. That which is fictitious should not be confused with what is real, and what is real should not be confused with what is fictitious. However, this confusion is not a rare phenomenon in the world in which we live. It is a part of the logic of the world in which we live—a logic that is to be set aside if the truth of the world in which we live is to become explicit.

Today, the Japaneseness of the Japanese is a contested mode of being. On one hand you have the Japaneseness that is largely a construction of Western European modernity, and on the other hand you have the Japaneseness that lies outside of this modernity. As a construction of Western European modernity, Japaneseness is largely one of the major products of modern Western European imagination. Western European modernity represents the triumph of Western European subjective preoccupation with Western European self. It is a triumph of Western European anthropocentrism—an anthropocentrism that the Europeans and their descendants have attempted to impose on everyone else in the world. It is the first major attempt to establish globalism. What is globalized in this undertaking is a view of human being that is a product of Western imagination. When European travelers encountered the Japanese, it was their view that what Japaneseness is, is indefinable, except *via negativa*. Europeans could not fathom the Japaneseness of the Japanese. A European missionary is quoted as saying:

Among the Japanese, it is considered a matter of honor and wisdom not to disclose the inner self to prevent anyone's reading therein.... They are trained to this from childhood they are educated to be inscrutable and false. They have rites and ceremonies so different from those of all other nations that it seems they deliberately try to be unlike any other people. The things which they do in this respect are beyond the imagination and it may

truly be said that Japan is a world reverse of Europe, everything is so different and opposite that they are like us in practically nothing.⁸

Rudyard Kipling, the reputed nineteenth-century British imperialist writer is quoted as saying “East is East and West is West, and never the two shall meet.”⁹ What appears evident from these quotes is that Europeans absolutized the otherness of the Japaneseness of the Japanese. In the imagination of the Western Europeans, Japan became the embodiment of the Far East—that beyond which there was nothing, not even *terra incognita*. Japan was a country furthest removed from the West, and her people—the Japanese, furthest removed from Westerners. The absolute otherization of the Japanese by Europeans was attended by absolute self-otherization of Europeans. In other words, to the extent that Europeans absolutely otherized the Japanese, at the same time, they absolutely otherized themselves. They killed two birds with one stone. In so doing, they created an unbridgeable gap of mutual understanding, a gap that was replicated “within” the self and resulted in the construction of inwardness. They correctly recognized that to be is to be spatial, but the spatiality they accorded to themselves and the spatiality they attributed to the Japanese were absurd. These spatialities were products of ignorance. Europeans and Japanese proved to be deadly to each other. Perhaps, this accounts for vicious atrocities of the Second World War—a war in which the two peoples fought each other with absolute contempt for each other. This war resulted or exemplified not only physical death but also death of meaning. It was largely a product of Western European modernity.

Differently put, modern European history is a history of fiction-making. Europeans fictionalized themselves, and at the same time fictionalized non-Europeans. They tragically got carried away by their own imagination and imagined non-Europeans among whom were the Japanese. In this way they got out of touch with themselves and compelled non-Europeans to get ought of touch with themselves. Having substantialized themselves, they thought that Japanese too were substantialized. Unfortunately, they could not grasp the Japanese substance. They assumed that other than what they saw of the Japanese, there was an underlying Japanese principle of Japaneseness that they could not grasp—hence, the claims about the inscrutability of the Japanese, and the deceptiveness of the Japanese. They were looking for Japaneseness where it was not, and hence, it ought not to have come as a surprise that they could not grasp what constitutes the Japaneseness of the Japanese. Most likely, they were looking for a European in a Japanese, and when they could not find him or her, they concluded that the Japanese was nowhere to be found or that he or she was hiding himself or herself. This substantialization inevitably led to the failure of understanding Japanese gardening as well as to the failure of understanding a Japanese garden. The failure was evidenced by exoticization of the Japanese garden. As having been observed by a student of Japanese gardens,

Japanese gardens have fascinated the West since the mid-nineteenth century. The majority of books published however, either gravitate toward the classification of type of gardens in terms of their development in historic periods or their formal attributes, or else they tend toward the popular, photographic album approach that relies heavily on colorful and often

exotic images with limited textual material. Such accounts offer little insight into the hidden dimensions or the underlying aesthetic and philosophical principles and perceptual qualities guiding the creation of the classical Japanese gardens.¹⁰

The hiddenness of the so-called “hidden dimensions or underlying aesthetic and philosophical principles and the perceptual qualities guiding the creation of the classical Japanese gardens” is another fiction that has nourished Western imagination and that has shrouded the Japaneseness of the Japanese gardens. Some Japanese are of no help in this matter. Nichihiro Matsunami, a Japanese Constitution scholar informs us, “Japan and Japanese, as they really were and are, can be only explained by us Japanese.”¹¹ He also claims that:

Just as a river flowing continuously throws up bubbles from its bed to the surface, while its real self is hidden beneath, so the spirit of Japan has its latent reality beneath its historical bubbles.¹²

The impression here is that, in a sense, it is only the Japanese who can truly understand what it is to be Japanese. It would also imply that only a Japanese is in a position to understand gardening at a Japanese garden, and also it is only a Japanese who can understand the Japaneseness of the Japanese garden. This view could be construed as a reaction to the Western attempt to impose a Western view of what Japaneseness is. As a reaction, it does not address what is authentic about the Japaneseness of the Japanese. What then is authentic Japaneseness?

We have already embarked on the task of clearing a path to the truth of the Japaneseness of the Japanese. Japaneseness is not a mode of being that is hidden by gardening at a Japanese garden, or hidden in a Japanese garden, and it is not hidden in the interiority of a Japanese. Japanese interiority is a fictitious phenomenon. As has previously stated, gardening at a Japanese garden is a spatial activity that is in the open. Gardening does not take place inside anything, for nothing has an inside. There is nothing hidden or secret about this activity. Similarly, a Japanese garden does not harbor a secret or a mystery of what Japaneseness is. What is there is what is there—there in the open, and as openness. Gardening at a Japanese garden is not an activity that conceals the Japaneseness of the Japanese. If there is a secret it is that it is not secret.¹³ There is no internal mode of being of a Japanese or of anything Japanese. A Japanese observer, who’s own Japaneseness is in question, tells us,

Should your Japanese spirit stranger seek to scan?
Say -the cherry wild and fair scenting the morn’s sun-lit air!¹⁴

What is said here orients us away from what we normally expect. We are oriented to the cherry wild and to the fair scenting the morn’s sun-lit air. We could as well be oriented to a mountain, a rock, or to the clouds. In short, we are oriented away from anthropocentrism, that is, from the Japanese persona. We are oriented to the phenomena of nature. To be so oriented is not to be oriented away from what a Japanese is. Away and not-away are one and the same. Away is away by not being away. Now, we are in a position to see how a Japanese garden is a legitimate site for the disclosure of the Japaneseness of the Japanese. Such disclosure is what

constitutes gardening at a Japanese garden. That is, for such gardening to lead us to a Japanese garden, it has to be Japanese. What is Japanese about gardening is what makes a Japanese garden a Japanese garden.

It is tempting to say that what makes Japanese gardening Japanese is that it is the handwork of a Japanese, and that what determines the Japaneseness of the Japanese garden is that it is the handwork of a Japanese. This temptation is to be resisted, for this view takes us no closer to what is Japanese. Again we are faced with the same problem of figuring out the Japaneseness of the Japanese. If “the cherry wild and the fair scenting the morn’s sun-lit air” is the site for the disclosure of the truth of being Japanese, “the cherry wild and the fair scenting the morn’s sun-lit air” take us to nature as the elemental site for the disclosure of the truth of being Japanese. Even if it were to be conceded that a Japanese garden is the handwork of a Japanese, in the light of what has been said previously, it would be the handwork of a Japanese body, and this body would be the body of nature. The truth of being Japanese is not only inseparable from the truth of nature; it is also the truth of nature. Gardening at a Japanese garden is the naturing of nature. It is nature naturing. It is a natural activity; that is, an activity of nature in which the truth of nature is made manifest. A Japanese garden is a garden of Japaneseness. Gardening at this garden is the gardening of the Japaneseness. That is gardening at this site is the Japanization of the Japanese. And to the extent that we understand gardening as nature naturing gardening at a Japanese garden is to be understood as the naturing of the Japanese. That gardening at a Japanese garden is nature naturing, and that a Japanese garden is a garden of nature has been recognized by a student of Japanese gardens. He observes,

The changing of seasons is only a process, and the garden partakes of blessedness and eternity because it is always incomplete. People who gently observe this mutability and realize that they too are a changing part of the changing nature find peace of mind. Embracing this view, it has never occurred to the Japanese to create gardens that oppose or contrast with nature. Indeed, they have always preferred to feel as if they lived entirely in the natural world, to which they have to a large extent opened their residential spaces.¹⁵

It is very tempting to think of gardening at a Japanese garden as domestication of nature, and to think of a Japanese garden as a part of domesticated nature. We readily succumb to his temptation for it appears self-evident that gardening is a work of human beings and the garden human handwork, a work that also appears to be destined for human appreciation or for human use. It is necessary to resist this temptation. It is driven by an anthropocentric concern. It nourishes an anthropocentric way of thinking, a way that obscures what happens when gardening is taking place, and that also obscures what a Japanese garden is. Furthermore, it obscures Japaneseness, and thereby, obscures nature. The thinking that avoids the obscuring is that thinking that is the work of nature—a thinking that is nature driven, a naturing thinking. Gardening at a Japanese garden is truly a human activity when it is understood as an activity of nature, for a human being is a natural being. As Ito indicates, “What separates a Japanese garden from the other parts of nature is not a separation it is a connection between the outside and the inside.”¹⁶ Gardening is naturalizing. What separates gardening at a Japanese garden from

gardening at non-Japanese gardening is a connection between outside and inside. Similarly, what separates Japanese naturing from non-Japanese naturing is a connection between outside and inside. Naturing cannot be foreign to itself.

It has been noted that “To create a garden is a way of practicing Zen”¹⁷ and, Muso Soseki, one of the master architects of Japanese gardens, has observed that “He who distinguishes between the garden and the practice cannot be said to have found the true way.”¹⁸ Zen practice is a human practice, which is a nature practice—nature naturing. It is a way of nature. In this way, none of us and no thing is a stranger. We, too, whether we are or are not Japanese, garden ourselves and we are gardened in the gardening of a Japanese garden. It is the way that we see in the gardening at a Japanese Garden. The Japanese garden is a school, and gardening is a schooling. The there is everywhere and nowhere. Everywhere and nowhere have no boundaries. This is how we are.

13.10 Concluding Remarks

Provided that one has been and is in tune with what has been said, concluding remarks should not be experienced as conclusive. This is the way of elemental concluding remarks. Such remarks are introductory and bear what is introductory. The conventional view that the introduction is separate and distinct from the conclusion obscures what is elemental about introduction as well as what is elemental about conclusion. The clearing of this obscurity reveals what is elemental about introduction as the site for the exposition of what is elemental about the conclusion, and vice versa. The implication here is that the movement from the introduction to the conclusion is a paradoxical movement—a movement that is not a movement. It is a symbolic movement—a movement in which what is present and what is absent are brought together. Every opening is an ending, and every ending is an opening. This is the work of gardening at a Japanese garden. It is also, and at the same time, the work of gardening elsewhere and every where. We are thereby gardened, and thereby, nature gardens itself.

Several philosophical notions have been brought into question and dismissed, for the very purpose of uncovering the basis for embodied symbolism. In this chapter we have been critical of modernist doctrines: inner experience versus outer world (subjectivity and objectivity), the intellectualism that holds that cognitive experience forms the meaning of the precognitive, selfhood as centered, and both essentialism and social constructionism in light of the Japaneseness of Japanese gardens. Instead, there is a precognitive field of spatial activity that decenters us in our face to face encounters. Face to face encounters involve neither substantive essences, nor social constructions, but rather embodied symbolic events. Meanings are symbolic behaviors, activities of experience within a milieu. Human identities and worlds are at once enacted, neither can “be” what they “are” (purely non-symbolic) nor can they “be” socially constructed as to what they “are” (purely symbolic): they require a symbolic enactment that intertwines them in a

participatory a spatial event. This, we learn in and through gardening at a Japanese garden provided that we let ourselves learn. Gardening at a Japanese garden lets us learn and keep on learning. It removes obstacles on the way to learning, and keeps us secure on this path.

Notes

- 1 Quoted in Slawson, *Secret Teachings*.
- 2 Plato: *Collected Dialogues*, 462d.
- 3 *Ibid.*, 411d.
- 4 Levering, *Zen*, 114.
- 5 Berthier, *Reading Zen in Rocks*, 6.
- 6 Ito, *Gardens of Japan*, 35.
- 7 Casalis, "Semiotics of Japanese Rock Gardens," 358.
- 8 Powers, *War Without Mercy*, 95.
- 9 *Ibid.*, 95.
- 10 Bognar, review (*Secret Teachings*), 627.
- 11 Matsunami, *Japanese Constitution and Politics*, 364. The statement by Matsunami is problematic since a good part of what he wrote was intended for European ears.
- 12 *Ibid.*, 366.
- 13 See Slawson, *Secret Teachings*. The title of this book suggests that there are secret teachings that underlie the creation of Japanese Gardens. This is a prejudice.
- 14 Matsunami, *Japanese Constitution and Politics*, 6.
- 15 Ito, *Gardens of Japan*, 38.
- 16 *Ibid.*, 35.
- 17 Berthier, *Reading Zen in the Rocks*, 3.
- 18 *Ibid.*

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Chapter 14

Symbolic Space: Memory, Narrative, Writing

Arndt Niebisch

Editors' Note: The important principle to draw from this chapter is that spatial enactment is the necessary source for cognitive understanding. Spatiality anchors cognitive meaning through the production of the virtual space of memory. The virtual space of memory is intertwined with actual space; without virtual memorial space we would not have experience. Rhetoric and the art of writing are spatially organized/organizing, which means that both the expression and the medium itself are co-constitutive and ambiguously both function as agencies/patients in a circular dialectic. The geographicity of remembering, forgetting, storing, misfiling, retrieving, and losing is intimately connected to, interrelated to, and mutually influential of, the geographicity of actual situations. The virtual space of memory is still an embodied space and this is a crucial point of our thesis. Both the body schema and the virtual body together form the imaginative body. The virtual space of memory requires participation of the body schema. The orator, for example, must ghost gesture walking through the rooms of his virtual house in order to enact his speech. Thus, the geography of the imagination provides an enactive geography of walking through rooms, which is then translated into the oration of a speech. Once again, we recognize the fundamental importance of geographies of the imagination to cultural/humanistic geography.

14.1 Introduction

It is an everyday experience: Spatiality controls and structures our daily routines and interaction with the world. To realize this, one does not have to go back to Immanuel Kant, who recognized space as an a priori form of intuition and thus a basic condition of experience¹; one simply has to think about the organization (or lack of it) on our desktops, in our apartments, our workshops—where everything has, or should have its own place. As Stephen Kern emphasizes in his book, *The Culture of Time and Space*, from the late nineteenth century on modern architecture, mathematics, and art conceived space no longer as an empty entity between constructive elements, but rather as productive, which also means that it can be constructed and designed with different properties so that it serves distinctive purposes.

The curved surfaces of Riemann's geometry, the construction of commercial sites in the Parisian Arcades, and the broken perspectives in Georges Braque's paintings are examples for such uniquely constructed spaces.² The production of space does not, however, only depend on advanced conceptualizations of space as in non-Euclidean geometry, modern architecture, or cubist artworks, but also determines our everyday ways for organizing files, books, and all kinds of objects and information. For example, on the right side of my computer, I place a stack with materials that I need for a current project, namely writing this essay, on the left side of my computer, far away in the upper corner of my desk, I place materials that I will need soon, such as the documents for my annual tax return. Such a system of spatial coordination of data becomes even more complex when I turn to my bookshelf, in which the differentiated matrix of left and right and of several boards helps me to organize my books and files in complex ways.

In this text, I discuss different instances in which the production of space and the manipulation of objects in such a constructed matrix are central. I unfold how symbolic operations in space, or rather the manipulation of symbols in a virtual space, coincide with remembrance and forgetting. Geographicity, the spatializing moment of all phenomena, as Gary Backhaus remarks in the introduction to this volume, is intrinsically connected to the ways in which we structure, perceive, and imagine our life world. One prominent example for this connection of space and imagination is ancient mnemonics, which constructed virtual rooms to support the memory of the orator. A second example, for the purpose of discussing the narrative function of space, is the novella, "The Earthquake in Chili,"³ by the German author Heinrich von Kleist. In this text, spatial locations coincide with moments of forgetting and remembering, not only concerning an individual but also a social group. In conclusion, I discuss how the storage of information in writing is intrinsically connected to the geographicity of the writing ground and this example emphasizes the intricate connection between spatiality and the way in which we remember events and store and reproduce information. These three case studies cannot exemplify a complete theory of how space structures memory, but intend to point out that geographicity plays a crucial role for organizing knowledge, memory, and information.

14.2 Space in Ancient Mnemonics

The augmentation and control of memory belong to the central cultural techniques of western civilization, and the ancient models of remembering were most prominently developed in rhetoric. The rhetorical treatises of Cicero,⁴ Quintilian,⁵ and of the anonymous author of the treatise, *Rhetorica ad Herennium*,⁶ convey to us the art of ancient mnemonics. These authors point out that memory is not simply a natural, human capacity, but an art that can be learned and trained, similar to other cultural techniques such as reading and writing.

Some regard memory as being no more than one of nature's gifts; and this view is no doubt true to a great extent; but, like everything else, memory may be improved by cultivation.⁷

For the ancient orators, memory is not only a natural talent for storing and retrieving data, but they constitute a multi-dimensional, essentially spatial, virtual structure that is able to manipulate and control information in sophisticated ways. As the author of *Rhetorica ad Herennium* points out, the "artificial memory includes backgrounds and images. By backgrounds I mean such scenes as are naturally or artificially set off on a small scale, complete and conspicuous, so that we can grasp and embrace them easily by the natural memory—for example, a house, an intercolumnar space, a recess, an arch, or the like."⁸ It is crucial that these rhetorical treatises do not simply focus on a one-dimensional stream of memories that would map onto the flow of sounds in speech, but transform the sequence of information to be delivered by the orator into a spatial array. The art of memory is essentially connected to a virtual (re-)production of space to which the tale of Simonides of Kreon testifies. The tale goes as follows:

At a festive event, the orator Simonides delivered a speech in praise of the host Scopas. Due to custom, the first part of the speech addressed the virtues of the host, whereas the second part was dedicated to the praise of the gods Castor and Pollux. Afterwards, the host Scopas paid Simonides only half of the promised honorarium, since one half of the speech was only directed to the gods and not devoted to the victories of Scopas. Now, when the banquet was about to start, two young men were asking for Simonides at the door. Simonides went to the exit and in the moment when he crossed the threshold of the building, the roof collapsed and buried all guests and the host. Falling stones mutilated the corpses in such a way that friends and relatives could no longer recognize the bodies. Simonides, the only survivor of this incident, however, was able to identify the bodies, because he could remember the places where everybody was sitting, while he delivered his speech. Only by producing a virtual space in his mind in which he—after the fact—correlates the occupied places in his memory with the spatial matrix of the hall, was he able to name the corpses.⁹

The collapsing building erases all meaning from the persons and leaves them as mere nameless markers that point as meaningless indices towards the places. Renate Lachmann acknowledges in her text, "Die Unlösbarkeit der Zeichen,"¹⁰ that the physical moment of mutilation and destruction initiates the potential danger of forgetting and therefore makes it necessary to remember. The destruction of the physical bodies disrupts their integration into a semiotic system that gives names and identities to the victims. One can no longer identify the carcasses, only the persons can be remembered.¹¹ The bodies themselves do not carry meaning, only space functions as a virtual matrix for relating every anonymous marker to its name.¹²

Space remains the only structural element in the Simonides episode that enables identification; only space gives meaning to the mutilated corpses and restores the possibility for acknowledging every individual death. This production of space brings the dead back into the memory of the living. As Elisabeth v. Samsonow

points out in her book, *Fenster im Papier*,¹³ the art of memory is intrinsically connected to a commemoration of the dead.¹⁴ Death as the ultimate form of deleting signs makes it necessary to remember past events and buried objects. In the Simonides episode, space emerges as a virtual structure that is able to reproduce data from past events and dead bodies.¹⁵ It enables the production of a virtual matrix that maps a historical event. In the art of memory as it is exercised by the orators, space emerges as a virtual field that maps an actual edifice. From its very beginning, the technique of mnemonics is not temporal, but primarily spatial.

The ancient texts draw from the Simonides episode as the origin of mnemotechnics, and as Cicero points out, the art of memory emerges in the moment when mental images are coordinated within a virtual space.

He [Simonides] inferred that persons desiring to train this faculty [of memory] must select localities and form mental images of the facts they wish to remember and store those images in the localities, with the result that the arrangement of the localities will preserve the order of facts, and the images of the facts will designate the facts themselves.¹⁶

Memory, the most fundamental faculty for a good orator, can be improved by a system that transforms the parts of a speech into images (*imagines*), these images stand in a metaphorical or metonymical relationship to the memorized content (for example a lion for a king or a sword for a war)¹⁷ and the orator situates these images in a specific spot (*loci/sedes*) within a certain virtual space.¹⁸ This virtual space can be for example a house with several rooms,¹⁹ in which the orator puts the memory images. The orator memorizes these images, the content they refer to, and the places where he puts the images. In the course of his speech, he goes through the individual rooms of his imaginative space, thereby reproducing his memories.

The *Rhetorica ad Herennium* highlights several points that are central for the production of such a virtual memory space. At first, the space—for example a house—has to be so big that it can contain several places for depositing memory items. (“We should therefore, if we desire to memorize a large number of items, equip ourselves with a large number of backgrounds, so that in these we may set a large number of images.”²⁰) The places have to be in a strict and ordered sequence. (“I likewise think it obligatory to have these backgrounds in a series, so that we may never by confusion in their order be prevented from following the images.”²¹) It has to be possible to distinguish the single places from another, so that one does not mix them up and gets lost in its own memory space. (“Further, backgrounds differing in form and nature must be secured, so that, thus distinguished, they may be clearly visible.”²²) The place should have an appropriate size, not too small and not too large. Between each location should be a space of about 30 feet. (“I believe that the intervals between backgrounds should be of moderate extent, approximately thirty feet.”²³) The place should have appropriate lighting, so that the orator has no problems recognizing the object he had placed there. (“Then the backgrounds ought to be neither too bright nor too dim, so that the shadows may not obscure the images nor the luster make the glitter.”²⁴) Finally, the space should not be crowded. (“Again, it will be more advantageous to obtain backgrounds in a deserted rather

than in a populous region, because the crowding and passing to and fro of people confuse and weaken the impress of the images, while solitude keeps their outlines sharp.”²⁵ A marketplace, for example, would not qualify for a memory space, because it would distract the orator through its lively crowd.²⁶

Frances Yates remarks that the most striking feature of the ancient art of memory is the astonishing visual precision, which it implies.²⁷ Light, distance, and the structure of the building should be carefully chosen, so that one does not get lost in one’s own memory space and is able to recognize the elements used for symbolizing parts of a speech. This devotedness to precision and a realistic geographic design is remarkable for two reasons: at first, it is strange to assume that an orator would use a room in his own memory in which it is too dark to see anything and therefore difficult to remember the content he placed there. Secondly, and this is more important to this paper, it indicates that the ancient orators understand their memory space not only as a virtual abstract matrix, but also as an actual landscape that obeys the laws of geographic extension. This means that the orator while moving through imagined space has to obey the same physical rules as in an actual space. Ancient rhetoric excludes the possibilities to jump through or alter the structure of space, even though it is a merely virtual landscape, produced solely by the imagination of the orator.

The ancient authors comprehend the relationship between the cognitive content and the spatial map as analogous to one another. The space of the memory chambers has to follow a strict interior design that also applies to actual living space—not too large, not too small, not too light, not too dark etc. The laws of the virtual space are the same as for an actual space. The structure of space, for example, determines the timing and structure of the speech. The time the orator needs to walk through his memory chambers corresponds to the time he needs to deliver his speech.

The realism of the ancient art of memory has the primary function of avoiding distraction and therefore of enabling a smooth uninterrupted reproduction of the speech, but it also indicates the rigidity of distance as a structuring element that can hardly be altered or distorted. The memory cells are no mere abstractions, but they constitute a replica of the *Lebenswelt*. Thus, ancient mnemonics produces a virtual space that owns structural properties of actual spaces. All places mentioned by the ancient rhetoricians stay within the limits of everyday experience, and allow the imagination of actual persons or objects in a real place.²⁸ Remembering in mnemonics is a spatial operation closely connected to the physical moment of return. Quintilian says:

This achievement of Simonides appears to have given rise to the observation that it is an assistance to the memory if localities are sharply impressed upon the mind, a view the truth of which everyone may realize by practical experiment. For when we return to a place after a considerable absence, we not merely recognise the place itself, but remember things that we did there, and recall the persons whom we met even the unuttered thoughts which passed through our minds when we were there before.²⁹

As Yates asserts, this passage in Quintilian points directly towards the importance of space for our experiences of remembering. Places serve as indices for past events.³⁰ The actual process of returning and remembering that Quintilian saw as a universal experience is appropriated by rhetoric. The remembering of the parts of the speech invokes an actual return to actual places.

14.3 Narrative (Kleist: “Das Erdbeben von Chili”)

The configuration of memory and space is prominent in ancient rhetoric. The spatial unity of poetical practices, however, was already codified by Aristotle in his *Poetics*.³¹ Also in narrative literature, topographic constellations emerge that realize a narrated plot not simply as a linear process but as a multi-dimensional arrangement. Such complex structures are especially apparent in collections of novellas such as Boccaccio’s *Decamerone*,³² which embed the narrated content in a framing story. In Boccaccio’s collection of novellas, the narrative that frames the collected stories also indicates a concrete spatial distance, a geographic framing: A group of young men and women gathers in the countryside outside of Florence. They are fleeing the plague, which is devastating the city. The plan, however, is to return to the town after a certain time. For entertainment they tell stories.³³ The geographic dislocation marks the occasion for story telling and therefore establishes the frame that joins the novellas.

A novella that lacks an explicit framing device but nonetheless intertwines narrative and spatial structures is Heinrich von Kleist’s text “The Earthquake in Chile.” Kleist, one of the most important dramatists and literary authors in the age of Goethe, was also highly engaged in discussions about space in his time. He intensely studied the work of the mathematician Euler³⁴ who invented a topological calculus, he was a careful reader of Kant’s philosophy,³⁵ and in the short but famous text “Bombenpost,”³⁶ he discussed already in 1810 the logistic capacities and limitations of newly invented telegraph technology.

Kleist’s texts in general play in different and very skilful ways with structures of space, as Frank L. Borchardt correctly points out the semantic quality of space in Kleist’s work in his text “Kleist’s Space”³⁷:

From wicked city to idyllic countryside, from garden to battlefield to prison to grave, from cave to castle, Kleist makes it ostentatiously clear that his use of place is not simply necessary, natural, and arbitrary. Rather, he uses space to convey meaning.³⁸

The “Earthquake”-novella is the text in Kleist’s oeuvre that constructs the most dense network of spatial relationships.³⁹ Kleist narrates in this text an endless series of accidental events and contingent incidents, which are bound together by a spatial framework that establishes a cohesive structure for the plot. The novella starts out from a collapsing space. The central event of the story is an earthquake that occurred in the capital of a Spanish colony in South America. This setting can be read as literary dislocation of an incident that shocked the European continent

in 1755. The famous earthquake of Lisbon and its disastrous effects posed the question of theodicy and Kleist's story is frequently read as part of this discussion about divine (in-)justice.⁴⁰ However, I do not want to concentrate in my interpretation on this ethical-theological problem, but on the spatial framework that constitutes the scene.

Let me give a brief summary of the novella. A young couple, Josefa and Jeronimo, are deeply in love, but her family does not approve of the relationship. Josefa is sent into a cloister, but no walls are too high for young Jeronimo and both have a secret romantic encounter in the cloister's garden. This meeting results in Josefa's pregnancy. After Josefa breaks down in labour in front of the cathedral, Jeronimo is thrown into prison and Josefa should be beheaded. Just in the moment when Jeronimo tries to commit suicide in his prison cell and Josefa approaches the scaffold, an earthquake causes chaos and death. The buildings of the city collapse, nobody is concerned with Josefa's destiny, and Jeronimo can escape from the damaged prison. All survivors leave the city and gather in the countryside, where Jeronimo meets Josefa with their young child. The scene outside of the city is reminiscent of paradise. All people help each other. No anger or fear exists in this community. No authorities or urban infrastructures control social communication.

The former plan of the couple, to travel to Jeronimo's relatives in Spain is soon forgotten, and they decide to move back to the city with the rest of the crowd. Upon returning into the city, a service is held in a cathedral, one of the few buildings, which endured the earthquake. In the sermon, the priest speaks about the natural disaster and interprets it as a warning of God. The community should reflect on their sinful life, they have lived in until now. The priest points to a crack in a wall of the cathedral for reminding the community of their sins and speaks about Jeronimo and Josefa's case as an example. Now, the crowd can identify the couple amongst themselves. Finally, the novella culminates in a bloody riot in which Josefa and Jeronimo are killed.

The novella takes place in two main locations: the urban space of the city and in the countryside, where the old order does no longer exist. These two distinguished realms correlate to the cognitive capacities of forgetting and remembering. In the beginning there is a collapse of space and meaning that initiates the forgetting of the urban order. The city and its inhabitants are devastated by the natural disaster. Signs and individuals are destroyed. The lively town becomes a nameless graveyard. The administrative and infrastructural elements of the city are erased in the same way as the authorities of the city. The episode in which Josefa saves her baby clearly indicates this annihilation of significations in space.

Josefa, undeterred by the smoke billowing towards her, dashed into the convent, which was already collapsing all round her and, as if protected by all angels in heaven, emerged again uninjured at its gate, carrying her child. She was just about to embrace the Abbess when the latter, who had clasped her hands in blessing over her, was ignominiously struck dead by a falling gable, together with nearly all her nuns.⁴¹

At the moment in which Josefa crosses the threshold, the building collapses and erases all traces of her past in the cloister. When Josefa walks around to escape the deserted city, remainders of the city authorities and also signs of her own past appear as highly mutilated and Josefa can identify these places only by remembering the spatial coordinates and not by recognizing the form or shape of the buildings or persons.

She had taken only a few steps when she found before her the mangled body of the Archbishop, which had just been dragged from under the wreckage of the cathedral. The Viceroy's palace had collapsed, the law court in which sentence had been passed on her was in flames, and in the place where her father's house had stood there was now a seething lake from which reddish vapours were rising.⁴²

This desamentization of the urban space initiates a collective forgetfulness that does not only erase the sense for hierarchies but also the memory of past events from the collective soul. The elimination of signifiers in space most literally leads to collective amnesia of hierarchical structures, the former social structures do not apply to the newly formed rural community. Here, everybody helps another. The world outside of the city is marked by forgetfulness and peace. Only later, when the crowd returns into the city, remembrance and violence emerge. The peace in the countryside functions as a social narcotic that makes Jeromino forget more and more the hostilities in Santiago. Already in the moment when he leaves the city, he can no longer correlate the fleeing crowd to the earthquake. Only when he turns back to the city, is he able to remember the horrible incident:

He felt his forehead and his chest, not knowing what to make of his condition, and an unspeakable feeling of bliss came over him as a westerly breeze from the sea fanned his returning life and his eyes wandered in all directions over the fertile surroundings of Santiago. Only the sight of crowds of distraught people everywhere troubled him; he did not understand what could have brought them and him to this place, and only when he turned and saw the city leveled to the ground behind him did he remember the terrifying moments he had just experienced.⁴³

This process of forgetting goes on: When Jeronimo and Josefa luckily meet another again, they speak about the incidents in the city and decide to emigrate to Spain, but in the moment when both get involved in and accepted by the peaceful community outside of the city, Jeronimo decides to return to Santiago:

He told her that, the public mood being now as it was and the old order of things having undergone such an upheaval, he was abandoning his intention of embarking for Europe; ... and that he thus hoped to be able—and he kissed her as he said so—to remain with her in Chile.⁴⁴

This forgetfulness has disastrous consequences for the couple. Numbed by the peace outside of the city, they cannot recognize that the urban place conserved images that come back into the collective memory, when the crowd returns to these places. Consistent with ancient mnemonics, returning in this novella becomes a process of remembering. In a way similar to the orator who reactivates his memory cells by going back through virtual places, the return into the cathedral causes a collective act of remembrance.

Most significantly, remembering in this novella is intrinsically linked to rhetorical speech. The memory of the past events is not reinstated by the mere return to the city; it emerges in the moment when the priest delivers his speech, which has the function of reminding the community of the history that is buried under the ruins of Santiago. The collective riot starts only in the moment when the priest correlates in his sermon place and history. In this sense the rhetorical strategy the priest uses to remind his community of the past sins correlates with the operations of ancient mnemonics. The priest marks a space, the church; in this space he refers to a certain place (the wall) that bears a metonymic image of the earthquake (the crack). This reference enables the returning community to remember the former power structure that the earthquake erased. Their immediate reaction is to slaughter Jeronimo and Josefa, thereby reinstating the old order and acknowledging God's will as represented by the priest.

The ordering system of ancient mnemonics that counted on the structuring nature of space finds here also another form of expression. Similarly as in the Simonides episode, the infrastructure of a place is destroyed and markers of the former presence are destabilized/desemantized, i.e. destroyed or hidden under buildings, rocks or sulphur lakes. This destruction of place, however, does not suspend the spatial virtual matrix of space. Upon their return, the crowd is able to remember the incidents. They only need some mnemonic help from the priest who resemantized the symbols of the municipal authorities.

Independent of the question whether Kleist's story can be recognized as a reception of ancient mnemonics or not,⁴⁵ it builds upon similar assumption of how space, memory and culture correlate. As Cicero already pointed out, space provokes the memories of past events—certain places reflect certain histories. Ancient mnemonics and Kleist's story understand the mental process of remembering as analogous to the physical return in space. In both instances, mental and geographic processes initiate a dynamic interplay.

14.4 Writing Space

In ancient mnemonics as well as in Kleist's novella, space is produced as a system that enables the retrieval and preservation of memory. In both cases, history, and speech are inscribed into a spatial matrix to which a community or an orator returns. Space functions here as a system that preserves cultural codes and practices. The French theorist Maurice Halbwachs recognizes this social function of space, and points out in his book, *The Collective Memory*, that space is a stable and permanent construct, and therefore able to store the history and laws of a community:

Thus, every collective memory unfolds within a spatial framework. Now space is a reality that endures: since our impressions rush by, one after another, and leave nothing behind in the mind, we can understand how we recapture the past only by understanding how it is, in effect, preserved by our physical surroundings. It is to space—the space we occupy,

traverse, have continual access to, or can at any time reconstruct in thought and imagination—that we must turn our attention. Our thought must focus on it if this or that category of remembrances is to reappear.⁴⁶

Kleist's story recapitulates such a reality. The individuals lose their memory of the social practices in Chili. The natural disaster makes them forget authoritarian hierarchies, and the community enters into a kind of pre-literate society that does not have any records and therefore no history. After the earthquake, the processing of information and regulations of social interaction can no longer be done by a bureaucracy based on files and writing, but is reinstated through the physical surroundings, the places of memory. Space replaces codified practices, archives, and laws as a medium for controlling, storing, and reproducing regulations and limitations. The return to a site substitutes for the reading of juridical files.

While Kleist's story tells us about a community that was thrown back into a kind of illiterate state of communication, ancient rhetoric indicates an increasingly literate society. The ancient texts on memory understand the spatial transformation of memory as analogous to writing. Cicero reports from orators who used "places like wax tablets and symbols in lieu of letters." The *Rhetorica ad Herennium* elaborates most eminently on the correlation between mnemonics and writing. "For the backgrounds are very much like wax tablets papyrus, the images like the letters, the arrangement and disposition of the images like the script, and the delivery is like the reading."⁴⁷ The virtual space is always already a writing and a reading ground. In fact, Elisabeth von Samsonow sees a medial clash of writing and ancient mnemonic techniques in the Renaissance:

The reception of ancient mnemonics occurs in a time in which, depended on the crises of medieval ontology and on the fact that antiquity triggered the interest of the humanists primarily as a textual phenomena, a new metaobject becomes of prominent importance: the *verbum*, especially the written word, writing.

In my opinion it is possible to observe in a very detailed way how a collision occurred. The implied old temples suddenly stand in stark competition to the pre-eminence of something already known, but monstrously augmented, extended, and universalized: writing. This process, which deforms, opens up and transforms theoretical constellations, creates for the thinkers of renaissance-*memoria* a stupendous logical and imaginative chimera. In a certain sense, the temples "disappear" in writing. [My Translation]⁴⁸

From the Renaissance on, as Samsonow argues, writing pushes mnemonics aside and causes a collective memory loss, so that we can only admire the memory feats of ancient orators. As Yates points out, "We moderns have no memories."⁴⁹ This is not completely correct. We still have a highly functional memory; we just extended our storing capacities to parchment, paper, and hard disks. This externalization of memory indicates a central media shift in modern civilization. It shows our dependence on all kinds of symbolic and analog data processing devices from writing to electromagnetic recording. As Samsonow lines out, writing constitutes the central technology for an externalization of memory. This extension, however, does not minimize but rather emphasizes the importance of space as structural system for coordinating, storing and retrieving data.

Writing is also such an art of memory that enables us to store and retrieve information based on a spatial system, and the German philosopher Sybille Krämer lines out in her recent essay, “Writing, Notational Iconicity, Calculus,”⁵⁰ how we could understand the architecture of writing:

The crux of the matter is that the belief in the one-dimensional nature of the written image as a linear series of letters disregards the fact that every written text uses the *two-dimensionality of surfaces*.

Texts, like images, depict a two-dimensional, visible order in space.⁵¹

In her text, Krämer criticizes a general understanding of writing that focuses on the “phonocentric doctrine,” i.e. the assumption that writing is simply a transliteration of the flow of spoken words.⁵² Sybille Krämer acknowledges this doctrine as too simple and argues that writing processes information in a complex multi-dimensional matrix.⁵³ Her work focuses on the history of formalization of information from early numerical systems to the Turing machine.⁵⁴ In her essay she especially points out the operational quality of space in writing. Krämer does not differentiate between natural and formal languages. She asserts that the formal calculus of logic, the structure of mathematic notation and the algebra of computer languages share a common feature with “natural” writing, namely a spatial syntax.⁵⁵ For example, our numerical decimal system is a very elegant device for a mechanical manipulation of values.

$$\begin{array}{r} 234 \\ + 456 \\ \hline 690 \end{array}$$

The spatial matrix on the page assigns to the ciphers their numerical value by lining them up in columns. The addition follows accordingly to an established set of rules. As Krämer argues, texts also obey to such a two-dimensional spatial matrix.⁵⁶ Texts are not only structured in a horizontal manner, which mimics the phonetic flow of spoken words, but also consists of a spatial matrix that enables the reader to scan the lines to reread and skip passages.⁵⁷ Writing as well as mnemonics constitutes “a data architecture” for organizing information in a multi-dimensional field.

The transformation of information in ancient rhetoric corresponds to the manipulation of the sequence of speech into a spatial order through writing. This perspective on writing only surfaces when we are confronted by texts written in a foreign alphabet that adopts a different reading direction than the one we are used to. Such a reminder of the semiotic qualities of reading points to a more general phenomenon on a semiotics of space. Space provides a symbolic order that assigns meaning to places and to the objects contained in them. The sequence of *loci* represents the rhetorical structure of a speech, the configuration of places in Kleist’s story constructs a narrative frame, and the orientation of writing provides a central condition of readability. The space of memory, the space of stories, the space of writing, and the space of our everyday experience contain signifiers, which depend in their meaning not only on a specific referent, but also on their place among other elements. Space, as Kern points out for modernity, is no mere emptiness, but a

product that conserves as a multi-dimensional matrix, knowledge, codes, and practices. The myth of Simonides, Kleist's novella, and the space of writing testify to this operability of space.

Notes

1 With his concept that space is an a priori condition of experience, Kant mediated between the contemporaneous discussion of Newtonians who believed in space as a stable entity and a Leibnizian position that understood space as a result derived from the relationship of objects to another. (see for a detailed discussion the "Transcendental Aesthetics" in Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*. An important document for this dispute is Leibniz and Clarke, *Correspondence*.)

2 Kern, *Culture of Time and Space*, 152–153.

3 Kleist, "Earthquake in Chili," 51–67.

4 Cicero, *De Oratore*: The treatise about mnemonics can be found in Book II.

5 Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*: Quintilian discusses the art of memory in Book XI.

6 Cicero, *Rhetorica ad Herennium*: Book III contains the discussion of mnemonics.

7 Quintilian, *Instituto Oratoria*, XI, ii, 1.

8 Cicero, *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, III, xvi, 29.

9 Allusion to this story can be found in most treatises on the ancient art of memory. (Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, XI, ii, 11–17; Cicero, *De Oratore*, II, lxxxvi). In the research literature, Yates, *The Art of Memory*, gives a concise discussion of the Simonides episode. See also Goldmann, "Totenklage," who retraces the sources of the Simonides episode.

10 Lachmann, "Unlösbarkeit," 111–141.

11 Ibid., 114.

12 See also Kittler's remark on this relational structure between names of the bodies: "Diskuroi," 10, 111–127.

13 Samsonow, *Fenster im Papier*.

14 Ibid., 24.

15 This scene of mutilated bodies in the Simonides episode resembles the situation of a cemetery with unreadable epitaphs, because the dead cannot be identified, similar to graves without inscriptions. In fact, the mnemonic space, invented by ancient orators, correlates to the solitude of a graveyard, because it should ideally be hardly populated. This addresses the efficiency of data retrieval (at an under populated site, there is no irritation that confuses the orator while he is remembering his speech), but also links back to Simonides' field of the dead. The Latin authors do not mention the ideal place for such a mnemonic cosmos, which is underpopulated and has a great number of individual and distinguishable memory cells, a cemetery. Nonetheless, Simonides' matrix of death already implies the graveyard as the space of memory. Goldmann also points out that the "sedes," the fixed places in the mnemonic architecture evoke the notion of graves; one might also recognize in the "imagines" placed on the "loci," gravestones. Goldmann even implies that the positioning of pictures (imagines) in the imaginary houses alludes to the galleries of ancestral portraits in the Roman Empire: Goldmann, *Totenklage*, 62. Ancient mnemonics connects a form of communication—rhetoric—with the world of the dead through the construction of a mental space. Space functions not only as a handy device for organizing data, but also relates to fundamental cultural and phenomenological experiences.

16 Cicero, *De Oratore* II, lxxxvi, 354.

17 Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, XI, ii, 19.

18 Yates, *Memory*, 6.

19 See here especially Quintilian's description of the memory space: *Institutio Oratoria*, XI, ii, 19–22.

20 Cicero, *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, III, xvii. 30.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid., III, xix, 31.

23 Ibid., III, xx, 32.

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid., III, xix, 31.

26 Blum gives an especially detailed discussion of the configuration of the mnemonic places: *Die Antike Mnemotechnik*, 4–5. See also: Yates, *Memory*, 8.

27 Yates, *Memory*, 8.

28 Blum, *Mnemotechnik*, 7.

29 Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, XI, ii, 17.

30 Yates, *Memory*, 23.

31 Aristotle calls in his *Poetics* for the unity of space, time, and action to grant a consistent plot that the spectators can follow. "So just as with our bodies and with animals beauty requires magnitude, but magnitude that allows coherent perception, likewise plots require length, but length that can be coherently remembered." Aristotle, *Poetics*, §8. Such unity focuses certainly on the temporal extension, but also includes the limitation to a specific set of locations in which the action takes place.

32 Boccaccio, *Decameron*.

33 Ibid., 1–23.

34 In the text "Über die allmähliche Verfertigung der Gedanken beim Reden," Kleist refers to his mathematical work and acknowledges that he intensely studied the mathematicians Kästner and Euler. Kleist, *Werke*, 319–324.

35 Kleist understood Kant's transcendental philosophy as a radical criticism of any form of objective knowledge, which caused a severe depression in him. See Kleist's letter to Wilhelmine Zenge from March, 22, 1801: Kleist, *Werke*, 630–636.

36 Kleist, *Werke*, 385–386.

37 Borchardt, "Kleist's Space," 1–14.

38 Ibid., 3.

39 Borchardt even acknowledged that the importance of space is so apparent that one could neglect such an analysis. "The endowment of space with value is as clear a purport of this story as any other. We need not belabor it, but only recall it in those instances where the valuation of space is far less close to the surface of the work." Ibid., 4. I do not agree with this observation. It is correct that the importance of space is eminent, but it is not apparent why space and place play such an important role, how they operate.

40 For a detailed discussion of the Theodicy problematic in Kleist, see: Ledanff, "Kleist und die 'beste aller Welten,'" 125–155.

41 Kleist, *Earthquake*, 55–56.

42 Ibid., 56.

43 Ibid., 54.

44 Ibid., 60–61.

45 In Kleist's time, there were attempts to revive the ancient tradition of mnemonics. The mnemotechnical treatise by Kästner is such an example. See Blum, *Mnemotechnik*, 2.

46 Halbwachs, *Collective Memory*, 140.

47 Cicero, *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, III. xvii, 30.

48 “Die Rezeption der antiken Mnemotechnik fällt nämlich in eine Zeit, in der, zugleich bedingt durch die Krise der mittelalterlichen Ontologie wie durch den Umstand, daß die Antike gerade und vor allem als *Textkorporus* das Interesse der Humanisten erregt, ein neues Objekt aller Objekte Hochkonjunktur hat: das *Verbum*, und insbesondere das geschriebene Wort, die Schrift.

Meiner Auffassung nach läßt sich minutiös beobachten, wie es zur Kollision kommt. Die implizierten alten Tempel geraten in eine scharfe Konkurrenz um den Vorrang mit einem schon Bekannten, aber bis ins Monströse vergrößerten, erweitern und universalisierten: der Schrift. Dieser Prozeß, der die theoretischen Blöcke deformiert, sie aufricht und transformiert, bringt bei den Denkern der Renaissance-*memoria* stupende logische und imaginationstechnische Chimären hervor. Die Tempel ‘verschwinden’ gewissermaßen in der Schrift, [...]” Samsonow, *Fenster*, 26.

49 Yates, *Memory*, 4.

50 Krämer, “Iconicity,” 518–537.

51 Ibid., 520.

52 Ibid., 519–522.

53 “Writing’s ‘notational iconicity’ (‘Schriftbildlichkeit’), with its traits of being disjunctive and differentiated, is thus a medium that embodies the principle of differentiation and that can implement this process visually. The identity of a sign no longer depends on its concrete physiognomy, but rather exclusively on the *position*.” Ibid., 525.

54 See for example Krämer, *Symbolische Maschinen*.

55 “As long as writing is defined as a ‘transcription of spoken language,’ as graphically-fixed, spoken language, a further realm of writing-use is overlooked that includes the written signs in mathematics and logic, but also programming languages. In other words, this definition excludes so-called ‘formal languages’ that construct graphical systems *sui generis* [...]” (Krämer, *Iconicity*, 522).

56 Ibid., 520.

57 Krämer also highlights other organizational elements such as headings, table of contents, or footnotes that transgress a simple linearity of writing. Ibid., 521.

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Chapter 15

Vienna's Musical Deathscape

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Editors' Note: This chapter allows us to explore the relationship between the milieu of Vienna, and the music of famous composers whose lived experiences of the city seem to have been profoundly informed by its *genius loci*. Vienna is notorious for a high suicide rate. The author of this chapter looks for insight into this phenomenon by examining letters/correspondences, historical observations, and the musical compositions of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. What role does the milieu play in the characters of the composers, especially in their musical imaginations, either by direct inspirational source, or indirectly, as that which constitutes their experiences, providing the lived-horizon for their compositions? We cannot expect a definitive answer here, but we can become aware that a definitive answer is not possible on the basis of the intertwining of the perceptual and the imagined as a spatial enactment of meaning. Suicide and death, it is noted, seem to pervade the Viennese comportment, both in actuality and symbolically; there is seemingly a Viennese style of enactment that fixates on these finalities while at the same time obsessively motivating the artistic passion expressive of an intense dialectic between life (and its negation) and creativity, especially in the art of music.

Apropos to the theme of this study is Martin Heidegger's existential explication of death; the Viennese deathscape can be deeply framed by reflecting on Heidegger's existential phenomenology. Heidegger describes the temporal nature of *Dasein* as a projective being-ahead of oneself. The horizon of this temporal structure is *Dasein*'s finitude. This means that being-towards-death (not meant in a morbid sense) structures *Dasein*'s possibilities; finitude is the horizon by which qualitative meaning is temporally measured. Heidegger would say that the being for which its own Being is an issue, exhibits historicity, a temporalizing structure. One's death is the one project that can not be taken away, and its possibility is the absolute negation of possibilities. As such death is a call to authenticity—the choosing for oneself, instead of living the inauthentic life of “the they,” *das Man*. Heidegger's descriptions allow us to interpret the preoccupation of death in the Viennese deathscape as a call to an authentic life, and the preoccupation of suicide as a call for a meaningful life, the opportunity to exercise authentic choices. Death discloses to *Dasein* its ownmost potentiality-for-Being, which is understood temporally as being-towards-death. Yet this temporalizing relation to death can be tranquilized in the inauthenticity of “the they.” What is interesting about Vienna is that its *genius loci*

seems to provide a freedom from the illusion of “the they,” releasing both a genuine concern for authentic potentiality-for-Being and the existential anxiety so important to the creative urge, but which can also bring about psychological dispositions toward negation of the potentiality-for-Being through suicide.

These existential structures are spatially realized in the worldhood of being-in-the-world. Dasein’s temporal structure as care is spatially realized as being-in-the-world through Dasein’s circumspectful dealings, the spatial horizons of Dasein’s worldhood through its projects. In this study we can glimpse the genius loci of Vienna as we examine how these particular composers attempted to wrest an authentic life from Vienna’s demands upon their existential comportment.

15.1 Introduction

The artistic and intellectual élite of eighteenth-century Vienna drew inspiration from an increasingly prevalent culture of death. In so doing, they had contributed to the formation of what I should like to call a “deathscape,” an abstract societal backdrop against which dimensionalities of death attracted, repelled, and, in many cases, devoured its subjects. The introductory paragraph to Paul Hofmann’s *The Viennese* alludes to an especially alarming fact associated with the last of these outcomes:

The city that inspired Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert, the capital of *Gemütlichkeit*, of hand-kissing and the waltz, of coffeehouses and wine taverns in the green, of whipped cream and the annual opera ball, has long had one of the highest suicide rates in the world.¹

Seemingly inconsistent with the general characteristics of a city paramount in cultural sophistication, suicide would become increasingly prevalent in Vienna, as it would throughout Europe. Johann Pezzl, a proponent of Enlightenment (*Aufklärung*) ideals, phrased it thus in his “Sketch of Vienna” (1786):

One evil which the Viennese used to be regarded as hardly capable of committing, and which was actually very rare was suicide, but now it has become rather frequent not only here but throughout Europe. It is now to be encountered among all classes, although with good reason the police keep such cases secret as far as they can.²

Death in its many facets—literal, symbolic, philosophical, psychological, sociological, and emotional—is well known to have informed the artistic and literary movements of the later romantic and expressionist periods. Yet its influence upon such movements in the eighteenth and earlier nineteenth centuries is less understood. Ample evidence nevertheless exists to support death’s profound sway over Viennese life and culture during this earlier period.

Rather than a static and looming profile, the deathscape of eighteenth-century Vienna may be described as a largely dynamic phenomenon, perhaps the greatest artistic expression of which was to be found in music. “In the eighteenth century,” says one scholar, “everything is turned into music: the architecture of the Dresden

Zwinger, the paintings of Watteau—and politics, too, since in this period even monarchs are musical.”³ Music’s abstract and temporal nature uniquely appeals to both emotion and intellect, often conveying best the more esoteric dimensions of life’s deeper truths. Music, particularly of the eighteenth century, has thus aptly been called, “the language of the heart.”⁴ Nietzsche, in a preface to Richard Wagner, refers more broadly to art as “the truly *metaphysical* activity of man,” adding that: “the existence of the world is *justified* only as an aesthetic phenomenon.”⁵ Kant’s definition of music, as the most “intrusive”⁶ of all the arts, is framed more favorably by Schopenhauer, who defines it as a manifestation of the will.

In the context of eighteenth-century Vienna, Schopenhauer’s definition of music may be broadened to refer to the *collective will* of a society whose culture, some have asserted,⁷ would itself be challenged to the brink of extinction, or, put perhaps another way, to the point of a near-attempt at suicide. Inspiring this challenge was the new politics of repression which had come about in response to socio-political, revolutionary influences. The new politics had emerged toward the end of Joseph II’s reign and had gained momentum upon the death of Leopold II and the coronation of Franz II. The more liberal and greatest phase of Joseph II’s regime had ended, and, upon France’s declaration of war, the Habsburg territories were destabilized, further amplifying conservative trends.⁸ The consequential expulsion of Enlightenment ideals is said to have had “a profound effect on Vienna’s cultural life, replacing the Josephist elite with a new conservative hegemony dominated by the church.”⁹ Though eighteenth-century Viennese culture would avert extinction, it had undergone a transition that ultimately closed the chapter on a distinctively dichotomous period of contradictions and extremes, of artistic splendor amidst a unique variety of deathscape phenomena, leaving space enough for redefinition.

As is true of Vienna’s history in general, its music history is incomplete until the more modern period.¹⁰ By 1740, most palaces of the aristocracy had been built and its total population was about 50,000 within its fortifications and 100,000 in its suburbs. Moreover, it had become the largest German-speaking city in the world¹¹ and an important musical center with a rich and varied musical *gestalt* informed most notably by the so-called “Viennese School of Composers”: Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. This chapter is an exploration of the relationship between each of the three composers of the Viennese School and the Viennese society and culture that inspired their works. More particularly, it is an investigation into the nature of Vienna’s musical deathscape, the contour and substance of which informed and was informed by these three composers, all of whom recognized and expressed through word and tone in objectified terms the interrelatedness and invariability of the life-death connection. A related focus of this chapter will be upon the prevalent and compelling notion of redemptive death *via* the hopeful promise of eternal life, a notion also examined here for its relevance to the musical world of eighteenth-century Vienna.

15.2 Joseph Haydn

We begin with composer (Franz)¹² Joseph Haydn (1732–1809), whose early childhood was spent in the village of Rohrau,¹³ his birthplace. There he lived amidst a diverse ethnic population which prepared him well for his move to the not-too-distant city of Vienna. The latter's ethnic diversity was comparatively greater than that of the former, accounting in part for a rather unique sort of introversion and circumspection amongst its citizens:

The cliché of the melting-pot is as true of Vienna as of London or New York, but for Vienna it has been true over many more centuries. The ingredients of the mixture have been constant. It has turned the city into a unit radically distinct from the surrounding country with its blocks of homogeneous population. This may well be the principal cause of the Viennese brand of insularity: the people of the town defended, as it were, their island of cosmopolitan civilization against the tides from the peasant country-side.¹⁴

Haydn's life intersected the sphere of Vienna for many years, though his actual stay there occupied two distinct periods of his life. The first was from about 1740 to 1761; the second was from 1795 until his death in 1809. Initially, Haydn found Vienna difficult to navigate. In about 1740, he became a choirboy at St. Stephen's, a gothic cathedral whose "gargoyles in the form of dragons,"¹⁵ and catacombs filled with thousands of buried dead doubtless fueled such descriptions of it as "dark, somber, ... austere,"¹⁶ and "at times ... oppressive."¹⁷ Its occupants, moreover, are said to have "often instinctively escape[d] out of the Gothic dimness toward one of the side altars with their gay, triumphant baroque."¹⁸ For Haydn, the darkness of St. Stephen's was more likely attributable to court Kapellmeister, Georg Reutter, a rather "stern"¹⁹ principal who recruited the young boy in 1737 or 1738 from a Hainburg church choir.²⁰ According to Geiringer:

While the surroundings in which Haydn dwelt in Vienna were all that he could have expected, and even more, closer acquaintance with [Reutter], the man in whose hands his fate lay, proved sadly disappointing.²¹

One might have imagined Vienna to be a more welcoming place for Haydn, particularly since it was well-established and was not without its share of wealth. Historically, it had been the original outpost of the Roman Empire, had served the Habsburg court for nearly five centuries, and had successfully battled the Turks, though not without considerable changes to its topography after the final siege in 1683.²² As capital and main center of the vast and powerful Holy Roman Empire, one might indeed have imagined a more accommodating Vienna for Haydn. Instead, he and five vocalists occupied a cramped attic. Moreover, according to Dies:

'Joseph's stomach had to get accustomed to continuous fasting. He tried to make up for it with the musical academies [concerts that the choir gave in the houses of the Viennese nobility], where refreshments were offered to the choristers. As soon as Joseph made this discovery, so important for his stomach, he was seized with an incredible love for academies. He endeavored to sing as beautifully as possible so as to be known and invited as a skilled performer, and thus to find occasions to appease his ravenous hunger.' But the

insufficient food was not the worst, for 'it seemed as if they wanted to starve the mind as well as the body.' To Reutter the boys were merely choristers. He saw that they became expert singers and sight readers; he also made them learn to play the clavier, the violin, and the organ, but he was not interested in their general education, and they received no instruction in musical theory.²³

Ten years later, in 1750, Haydn's circumstances remained essentially unchanged. Though he lived on one of Vienna's notable streets, the Kohlmarkt (Coal Market), his place is described as a "miserable little garret without a stove"²⁴ in the so-called "*Michaelerhaus*,"²⁵ attached to the "*Michaelerkirche*." This was the best Haydn could hope for, particularly as financial support from his "struggling" father was not an option. The majority of his income was thus generated by giving music lessons, an activity for which he had no special fondness:

When my voice finally broke, for eight whole years I was forced to eke out a wretched existence by teaching young people. Many geniuses are ruined by this miserable [need to earn their] daily bread, because they lack time to study. This could well have happened to me; I would never have achieved what little I have done, had I not carried on with my zeal for composition during the night.²⁶

15.3 Overtones of the Deathscape in Documents

Letters of the period offer invaluable insight into the nature of Vienna's deathscape, and, in the examples which follow, one finds a common thread indicative of the objectivity and even optimism with which death was then understood. The first example will require some preliminary explanation. Despite Haydn's musical successes (from 1761–1790 at the Esterházy court; 1791–1795 in London; and 1795–1809 in Vienna), he had endured a difficult marriage. Moreover, it appears, as one scholar put it, that he "despised"²⁷ his wife, whom, incidentally, he had married in St. Stephen's. His marital difficulties perhaps offer explanation for a certain curious passage from a letter he wrote to his mistress, Italian opera singer Luigia Polzelli, while in London (1791). After a word on the death of Luigia's husband, he recalls their frequent excursions into fantasy over the demise of their respective spouses. Furthermore, he declares nearly outright the hopeful prospect that his spouse, too, might soon depart from this world:

As far as your husband is concerned, I tell you that Providence has done well to liberate you from this heavy yoke, and for him, too, it is better to be in another world than to remain useless in this one. The poor man has suffered enough. Dear Polzelli, perhaps, perhaps the time will come, that we both so often dreamt of, when four eyes shall be closed. Two are already closed, but the other two—enough of this, it shall be as God wills.²⁸

The above passage, however ill-conceived, reveals Haydn's ability to objectify death to an ultimately unmentionable extent, even by his own standards. This form of detachment brings to the fore a primary deathscape theme: death's objectification.

We find this theme again in the more publicized and some might say equally ill-conceived letter Mozart writes to his dying father on April 4, 1787:

Death, if we think about it soberly, is the true and ultimate purpose of our life, I have over the last several years formed such a knowing relationship with this true and best friend of humankind that his image holds nothing terrifying for me anymore; instead it holds much that is soothing and consoling! And I thank my god that he has blessed me with the insight, you know what I mean,²⁹ which makes possible for me to perceive death as the *key* to our ultimate happiness.—I never lie down at night without thinking that perhaps, as young as I am, I will not live to see another day—and yet no one who knows me can say that I am morose or dejected in company—and for this blessing I thank my Creator every day and sincerely wish the same blessing for All my fellow human beings.³⁰

The stoic tone of Mozart's letter was doubtless inspired by his affiliation with Freemasonry, whose rituals reflect, as Braunbehrens puts it, "the journey from darkness into light, which does not omit the terrors of death but strives to overcome them."³¹ Leopold himself had "converted" to Freemasonry (1785) owing to his son. Even so, one wonders whether he found the letter consoling, particularly since it is doubtful that he practiced Freemasonry in Salzburg, where he had gone just three days after his initiation into the order.

Beethoven, confronting not only the permanence of his hearing condition but also his very mortality, writes to Wegeler (1801) that Plutarch has shown him the "path to resignation." With this variety of stoicism, Beethoven had secured for himself the continuance of his productivity as a composer even after the sounds of the outer world had all but faded entirely.

An objectified view of death is also expressed in a letter by Viennese composer Franz Schubert to his father, written 38 years after Mozart's letter to Leopold:

If only he [his brother Ferdinand] could once see these heavenly mountains and lakes, the sight of which threatens to crush or engulf us, he would not be so attached to puny human life or regard as other than good fortune that of being confided to earth's indescribable power of creating new life.³²

15.4 The Church and Redemptive Death

Whether Schubert was himself a Freemason remains an open question. Thus we cannot know to what extent, if any, his letter had been inspired by Masonic principles. It nevertheless shares with that of Mozart's the deathscape characteristics of death's objectification and hopeful message. Yet what accounts for these thematic features? From the standpoint of Enlightenment philosophy, Kant's notion of *the kingdom of Grace* finds resonance here:

To view ourselves ... as in the kingdom of grace, in which all happiness awaits us, except in so far as we ourselves limit our participation in it by actions which render us unworthy of happiness, is a practically necessary idea of reason.³³

From a religious and sociological standpoint, however, the singular answer that would account for the above-mentioned thematic features of death is a prevalent and firm belief in redemptive death primarily inspired by Church dogma as well as Freemasonry and other esoteric societies. Musically, the Masonic interpretation of redemptive death is nowhere more apparent than in Mozart's *singspiel*, *Die Zauberflöte*. Perhaps this explains why the work is said to have entered Mozart's mind at the hour of his own death when, glancing at his watch, he is said to have softly declared: "At this moment the Queen of the Night³⁴ is coming onto the stage."³⁵ Notwithstanding the difficulty of separating fact from fiction in the various deathbed accounts, in this quote Mozart is yet a "man of the theater," this time starring on the city stage of Vienna's deathscape. Among other realities of the human condition, death found artful expression in the genre of the *singspiel*. Chailley would say: "Not content with arousing emotion, [the *singspiel*] wanted to make its audience think, and *Die Zauberflöte* was to be the strongest expression of that ambition."³⁶

Redemptive death *via* the promise of eternal life constitutes the central dogma of the Church and found expression in sacred music. However, much of this music was curtailed in the face of certain Enlightenment reforms:

Haydn ceased composing Masses from the *Mariazeller Mass* of 1782 until the *Mass in time of War* of 1796. Similarly, Mozart's Mass compositions concluded in 1783 with the incomplete C-minor Mass (K. 427 [417a]), followed only by the Requiem of 1791, which, as is well known, was the result of a commission.³⁷

To standardize church services across the country and to reduce costs of services generally, Joseph II initiated (1783) certain church reforms aiming at liturgical "simplicity and comprehensibility."³⁸ Such reforms are said to have corresponded to the emergence of national churches and to initiatives in which funds previously used for grandiose display were reallocated to satisfy "educational and social purposes."³⁹ Their implementation caused church musicians significant economic hardship. Many lost their jobs and others had their pay greatly reduced. Though the position of music director offered little in the way of salary, it was generally considered the best employment prospect. Even so, a new hire in such a position was usually contingent upon the demise of the then current director. Leopold Hofman, Kapellmeister at St. Stephen's Cathedral, was paid comparatively more money, explaining Mozart's interest in eventually securing the post for himself. Unfortunately for Mozart, Hofmann outlived him.

The cathedral was administered by the city magistracy and was independent of the court and its decrees, including the one laying down the church reforms. In the spring of 1791, St. Stephen's aged Kapellmeister Leopold Hofmann became gravely ill. Although he recovered, Mozart took the opportunity to petition the city for the post of unpaid assistant to Hofmann. According to the practice of the day, he was thereby placing himself first in line for the latter's position upon his death. Mozart's petition was granted. Hofmann died in 1793. [two years after Mozart's death].⁴⁰

15.5 Nature's Role in the Deathscape Phenomenon

Kierkegaard's argument on music in relation to the church offers a less obvious reason for musical reform:

Music is the medium for what Christianity excludes from itself, the demonic, the erotic-sensuous.⁴¹ Christianity is a vision of human life as spirit. Everything that falls outside spirit or beneath it is a scandal. Music is the expressive form of scandal because it has its absolute object in the erotic-sensuous genius. It can express other things, but it exists to express the sensuous immediacy that falls outside spirit.⁴²

In certain contexts nature has earned a similar distinction of falling "outside spirit." In fact, like music, it has been regarded as suggestive of sin. As M. H. Abrams explains in his discussion on Dorigen's question of God's dichotomous nature in Chaucer's *Franklin's Tale*,

The "clerkes" proposed a variety of answers to this question, but a standard one was that a perfect, wise God had originally created a perfectly smooth, orderly, useful, and beautiful world. Mountains and other wild, waste places were the product not of divine benevolence but of human depravity, for they had been wreaked by the wrath of a just God at the original fall of man in Eden, or alternatively (in some commentators, additionally), they had been effected by the devastating flood with which He punished the all-but-universal corruption of mankind at the time of Noah.⁴³

Viennese writer Karl Kraus, on the other hand, remarks that "Vienna has beautiful surroundings into which Beethoven frequently fled."⁴⁴ These natural vistas were deeply inspiring to Beethoven, as explained by Martin Geck in his book on Beethoven:

Beethoven told the harp player Johann Andreas Stumpff, as they sat on a grassy bank during an excursion to the Helenenthal together in 1824: 'Here, surrounded by these natural beauties, I often sit for hours on end with my senses reveling in the sight of the responsive and fertile children of nature. Here the majestic sun is not hidden from me by any mean ceiling made by human hands, for the blue heavens are the sublime roof over me. When I consider the sky in the evening, marveling, and the army of bright heavenly bodies, suns or worlds eternally soaring within its confines, then my own spirit soars above them, millions of miles away as they are, to the original source from which all that is created flows and from which new creations will ever proceed. Sometimes, when I try to give form to my excited feelings in notes—ah, then I am dreadfully disappointed: I cast my soiled sheet of paper to the ground and am firmly convinced that no earthborn man can ever set down those heavenly images that hovered in happy hour before his excited imagination in music, words, paint or sculpture.'⁴⁵

For Beethoven, nature was as much an inspiration for his musical compositions as it was a refuge from city life. It was in his view an awesome realm whose origins derive from the ultimate source of all creation. From this perspective, his musical compositions may be said to echo the Aristotelian notion of art as an "imitation" of nature. Schindler puts it that:

in Beethoven we have a man in whom nature was fully personified. It was not so much the laws of nature that fascinated him as its elemental power, while the only aspect of his total pleasure in nature that preoccupied him was his own emotional response. In this way

he became totally sensitive to the power of nature, and thus able to compose a work that has no peer in the whole of musical literature, a tone-painting in which the listener is made to see both scenes from life in society with his fellows and scenes from nature: the *Pastoral* symphony.⁴⁶

Haydn, too, took pleasure from the wooded environs outside Vienna. This was likely attributable to the fact that, during the reign of Joseph II (1780–1790), the city was crowded, “with an average of almost 50 persons in each house.” Moreover, streets were narrow and dusty, and the traffic included “more than 4,000 carriages, coaches, and wagons of all kinds.”

Even less imaginable ... are the smells of this city, the street noise, the jolting of wagon wheels on cobblestones, the monotonous clatter of horses' hooves. These background disturbances were already a burden to the eighteenth-century Viennese. The most expensive lodgings were always on the third floor, where a tenant could imagine himself somewhat removed from the noise and stench of the city but did not have to carry all the necessities of life, including firewood, up too many flights of stairs.⁴⁷

Environmental factors impacting the Viennese street⁴⁸ included “plagues of dust”⁴⁹ from the surrounding plains mixed with a quite literal dimension of the deathscape: noxious fumes arising from the city's buried dead. Pezzl refers to the practice of burial in churches and cemeteries within and around populated cities as “old” and “misconceived.” Such a practice, with its quite literal juxtaposition of life and death, proved rather ill-conceived for Vienna the city. Pezzl put it that the buried dead of urban cemeteries must exude fumes that “could only be extremely unhealthy for the mourners, especially for large crowds in the warm season.” Hence his declaration, “They kill the living to honour the dead.”⁵⁰ Finally, he says that, despite the establishment of cemeteries beyond the city,

ten thousand corpses each year still continued to create a disgusting amount of putrefaction among several hundred thousand of the living, and in 1784 something took place which should have happened long before. Several cemeteries were established beyond the *Linie*, in open fields, so that the bodies of all who died in Vienna could be brought there, except for deceased members of the Imperial family, whose bodies are placed in the crypt of the Capuchin Monastery in the Neumarkt, and of wealthy vassals, who generally have their dead removed to family vaults on their estates in Austria, Bohemia, Moravia, Hungary, and so on.⁵¹

15.6 Vienna and the Question of Suicide

Vienna retained its allure despite the appalling condition of its death-tinged air. Mozart, for example, had come wholly under its spell during the last decade of his life. As Hofmann explains,

The very fact that Vienna at the time was one of the world's important capitals, fickle though its public might be, must have appealed to Mozart after the stifling years in Salzburg when he was no longer the traveling boy wonder. Surely, the environs of the Austrian capital did not attract the young musician; the even lovelier countryside around Salzburg had not either. Unlike Haydn and Beethoven, Mozart did not need inspiration

from nature, for he was a city person and got his musical ideas out of himself. He was, above all, a man of the theater, and Vienna had plenty of that.⁵²

Vienna's energetic pulse encouraged most of its élite to thrive, but perhaps it had a hand in destroying others. Such attractive energies, it could be argued, carried with them a siren-like dimension, a dimension that had perhaps created too wide a gulf between the city and Nature's restorative environs. Goethe believed that a potential precursor to suicide was the lack of active participation in the cycles of nature:

All satisfaction in life is based on the regular return of outward things. The alternation of day and night, of the seasons, of flowers and fruits, and whatever else meets us from epoch to epoch, that we can and should enjoy; these are the proper impelling forces of earthly life. The more open we are to these pleasures, the happier do we feel ourselves; but if the variety of these things pass up and down before us without our participating in them, if we are unreceptive to such genial offers, then there comes the greatest evil, the heaviest disease, we regard life as a loathsome burden. It is related of an Englishman that he hanged himself so as not to have to dress and undress himself every day. I knew a worthy gardener, the overseer in the laying-out of a large park, who once exclaimed with vexation: 'Must I always see these rain clouds moving from west to east?' It is told of one of our most admirable men that he saw with annoyance the returning green of spring, and wished for a change that it might for once appear red. These are properly the symptoms of that weariness of life which not infrequently ends in suicide, and which, with thinking men absorbed in themselves, was more common than can be believed.⁵³

One might imagine that Mozart's untimely death was of his own doing. Certainly his compositional preoccupation—if not obsession—had transmuted his life energies into exhaustion. Peter Gay notes that “more than once Mozart's father commented on his son's fierce intensity in writing music so many hours a day.”⁵⁴ Of his last years, he is said to have been “practically left alone to be consumed in his genius ... [to] die.”⁵⁵ Tireless obsession ultimately followed him to his very death-bed as friends gathered around to sing parts of what would be his most celebrated sacred work, the *Requiem* (1791), a mass for the dead left unfinished owing to his own death.⁵⁶ Perhaps an alternative thought on Mozart's untimely death is that Vienna had somehow inspired it. Yet is it reasonable to imagine that Mozart was under the sway of the city's deathscape, gradually traversing a suicidal path unto death? Abbot Anselm Desing, who in 1741 remarked that “Inside the city, Viennese don't feel well ...,”⁵⁷ might have thought so. Yet, Humphreys, in his essay on the *Requiem*, makes the point that,

Although Mozart had financial problems and was not in the best of health, his letters of the period give no reason to believe that he was haunted by thoughts of mortality. Furthermore, it has been pointed out that the handwriting of the autograph is fluent and robust, not at all suggesting the work of a sick man (Hildesheimer, 1977).⁵⁸

Humphreys' view is perhaps supported by a recent study⁵⁹ whereby a skull purported to be that of Mozart's underwent major scrutiny at Ohio State University with the finding that his death was likely due to bloodletting treatments he was undergoing while he was also apparently experiencing “a slow leakage of venous blood into the space between the skull and the brain,” known in medical terms as a

"chronic subdural hematoma." This condition is thought to have come about from injury to the skull, perhaps due to a fall.

The official cause of Mozart's death was "*hitziges Friesel Fieber*" (severe miliary fever, where "miliary" refers to "a rash resembling millet seeds")⁶⁰; a later diagnosis indicated "rheumatische Entzündungsfieber" (rheumatic inflammatory fever).⁶¹ In retrospect, one might argue that Mozart's death resulted from a sublimated suicidal tendency or, based upon more recent studies, an injury coupled with what in hindsight would constitute medical malpractice. Whatever the ultimate cause, demands from an exceedingly prolific compositional output could only have been deleterious to his already sensitive health, and Vienna would in any case serve as backdrop for his untimely demise.

Haydn was likewise prolific in his compositional output, a fact that, according to a passage in the memoirs (1799) of violinist and composer Johan Fredrik, is attributable to his "rather unhappy and childless marriage."⁶² Whether or not this was indeed true, while composing *Die Schöpfung* [The Creation], Haydn had also composed, as enumerated by Geiringer, two Masses, a vocal arrangement of *The Seven Last Words*, a concerto for keyed trumpet, string quartets, three trios with piano, and the national hymn *Gott erhalte Franz den Kaiser*. Could such a workload have caused or contributed to his death, however? In the spring of 1800, Haydn's health is known to have deteriorated after a relatively short run of performances of *Die Schöpfung* (1798), a number of which he himself had conducted. Just prior to this, in 1799, Haydn writes the following to publisher C. G. Breitkopf:

My business unhappily expands with my advancing years. The world daily pays me many compliments, even on the fervor of my latest works; but no one can believe the strain and effort it costs me to produce them, inasmuch as time after time my enfeebled memory and the unstrung state of my nerves so completely crush me to earth that I fall into the most melancholy condition. For days afterward I am incapable of formulating one single idea, till at length my heart is revived by Providence, and I seat myself at the piano and begin once more to scratch away. Enough of it!⁶³

Beethoven, on the other hand, while in Heiligenstadt in 1802, came to terms with the permanence of his hearing condition and wrote a kind of last will and testament in which he stated that it was solely his *art* that *saved* him from suicide. Maynard Solomon contends that the writing of the testament itself had "apparently exorcized his suicidal impulses."⁶⁴ Whether it was owing to his art, the writing of the testament, or a combination of the two, conquering his despair would add its own unique statement to the deathscape, a statement showing courage and a kind of transmuted hope even in the face of a soundless outer world. Even so, years later, in 1826, Beethoven's suicidal impulses would find their way into the psyche of his nephew Karl, for whom he was guardian. Indeed, the imposing figure of Ludwig van Beethoven had become the powerful inspiration behind Karl's attempted suicide:

Karl, after all, had lost his father, was then immediately cut off from his mother's nurturing through the willful actions of his uncle, and was further deprived of a warm environment and the personal freedom in which to find his way to maturity—all of this through the

manipulative, overpowering, and suffocating embrace of that same uncle who longed to shape Karl in the image of an ideal male family member that neither Ludwig nor either of his brothers had ever been able to realize. That his erratic uncle Ludwig also happened to be one of the greatest and most famous of living artists and thus a perpetual but unreachable model for an insecure young man only made matters worse.⁶⁵

Exploring the deeper sentiments of a great musician, artist, or poet of the day, particularly on such a matter as suicide, is inevitably fraught with inconsistencies and unscientific and speculative approaches of every kind. Yet from such an endeavor one can learn a good deal about society, culture, human nature, and the human condition. In the case of Beethoven, whether or not he seriously contended with suicidal impulses remains in dispute. What is nevertheless clear is that he alluded to suicide in his "testament" and that this fact would become a fixed dimension of Vienna's deathscape for both its contemporary relevance and for posterity. Added to the deathscape is the interesting fact that painter Richard Gerstl, who committed suicide in November 1908, had earlier visited Beethoven's house in the Schwarzschanerstrasse, where Otto Weininger had also committed suicide.⁶⁶

The source of Goethe's inspiration for writing *Die Leiden des jungen Werther* (1774) was his supposed deep desire to "liberate" himself from suicidal thoughts:

Amongst a considerable collection of weapons I had a costly and well-polished dagger. I always put this by my bed, and before I extinguished the light I tried if I could succeed in forcing the sharp point a couple of inches into my heart. But since I could never succeed in this, I at last laughed myself out of it, flung away all hypochondriacal silliness and decided to live. But to be able to do this with cheerfulness I had to bring to execution a poetic task, in which all that I had felt, thought, and fancied on this weighty point should be put into words. I gathered together for this purpose the elements which had been moving about around me for a couple of years; I brought to mind the things which had most oppressed and vexed me, but nothing would take shape; I wanted an incident, a story, in which all could be embodied.

All at once I hear the news of the death of Jerusalem,⁶⁷ and immediately after the general report, the most minute and circumstantial description of the event. At this moment the plan of "Werther" was found, the whole shot together from all sides and became a solid mass, like water in a vessel which is on the point of freezing is transformed into solid ice by the slightest agitation.⁶⁸

Of Goethe's "modern critics" one scholar argues that

They refuse to believe that any great seriousness is to be attached to the suicidal thoughts by which [Goethe] portrays himself as having been plagued at that time. They insist that he never really thought of sending the well-polished dagger, which he kept suspended at his bedside during those days, through his heart. What are we to understand here by "seriousness"? If the term connotes only and entirely the dwelling on such ideas of suicide as eventually lead to death, then he was not "serious." But Goethe wrote very explicitly to Zelter in 1812 (he was then sixty-three years old): 'I am fully conscious of the decisions, resolutions and exertions that it cost me to escape from the waters of death.' He told the whole truth when he said he wrote the novel in order to liberate himself from these feelings.⁶⁹

Notwithstanding the controversy over the veracity of Goethe's suicidal tendencies, the theme of suicide in *Werther*, like its mention in Beethoven's Heiligenstadt Testament, is neither arbitrary nor inconsequential. It would become not only a

vehicle for greater self knowledge and transcendence but also a predominant feature of the deathscape. Here we may find of interest the novel's deep connection to music. As one scholar puts it:

What is interesting about the *Werther* novel is the role that music plays in its development and the reverberations that it caused in the music world. An epistolary novel, *Werther* explores, like so much music of the eighteenth century, the language of the heart.⁷⁰

Though Goethe and Beethoven met only once, it is believed likely that the former had a profound influence upon the latter's music compositions:

That Beethoven was strongly under the influence of the early romantic works of Goethe is probable, and there is much to be said for Kögel's observation that it is "*Werther*" that one must look for the counterpart of that particular turn of thought and manner of expression which colours the piano-forte sonatas, Op. 13, 27 (2) and 57, and the C minor and D minor symphonies. There is no doubt that the young Beethoven, like the young Mendelssohn of later years, was attracted to Goethe by "*Werther*." The passionate unreason of the book seems to have impressed itself as strongly upon his imagination as it did upon that of all the other young people of that day. So far Beethoven could go with Goethe, finding in the early writings an echo of his own youthful turbulence, seeking for a solution of his insistent difficulties.⁷¹

15.7 Redemptive Versus Nihilistic Death

Beethoven's declaration in the testament that art saved him from suicide is not unlike Goethe's avowed aim in writing *Werther*. However, a darker moment would seize hold of Beethoven during the spring of 1809, when Vienna was under Napoleonic attack. After the French occupation, he wrote to Breitkopf:

We are enjoying a little peace after violent destruction, after suffering every hardship that one could conceivably endure—I worked for few weeks in succession, but it seemed to me more for death than for immortality.⁷²

Beethoven makes an important distinction between death and immortality in the above quoted passage, a distinction revealing a momentary loss of hope, the central factor of redemptive death and thus of Vienna's deathscape as we have been discussing it here. In this instance, Beethoven had stepped out of the familiar deathscape and onto the dreaded path of a nihilistic death. It is as if Beethoven's words were to portend Vienna's future history and musical, artistic, and literary movements. Art historian and scholar of German literature and philosophy, Beat Wyss, speaking of Spengler in the context of twentieth-century aesthetics, says, "Vienna and Dresden play host to 'the rapidly disappearing world of wonders' whose beauty is already marked by melancholy."⁷³ Moreover, he speaks of a transition from culture to civilization, saying that it is "irrevocable" and that it occurs around 1800, "at a moment when the arts have achieved their greatest distance from the raw material."⁷⁴ Finally, he says that this moment achieves "tragic greatness" in Beethoven's deafness. This is because, as he explains, "Fate modeled the figure of Beethoven into a living parable: the Faustian human being must lose the

use of his senses and learn to use his intellect.”⁷⁵ One wonders to what extent, if any, Beethoven might have developed an objectified understanding of such a concept, and his purported role in it. Civilization has been said to blunt the sensual. In this view, art itself, which is dependent upon the senses, would become, as put forth in Wyss’ account, “redundant.” In reality, if Beethoven had been able to foresee such a possibility, he had ultimately lost interest in neither composing, nor in posterity, and, of course, his works have maintained their interest to the present day. Perhaps such a trend as Wyss describes is in some way arguable from certain perspectives, and yet, it appears that art remains relevant.

15.8 Death’s Inspiration

Notwithstanding virtuoso violinist Louis Spohr’s account of Beethoven’s “continual melancholy”⁷⁶ in later years, death often inspired the latter’s creative work, as it had for Goethe. If Schindler is to be believed, for example, death, or “Fate knock[ing] at the door,”⁷⁷ inspired the opening theme of the first movement of Beethoven’s fifth symphony. Hopeful optimism in the face of death, though still characteristic for the age, would not hold for too much longer. Of the visual arts in nineteenth-century Europe, one scholar writes:

Perhaps the residue of all revolutions is disappointment. Certainly the dawn in which Wadsworth claimed it was bliss to be alive lightened into a prosaic and reactionary day—adjectives which also suit the poet himself in old age. Though the Bastille had fallen, nineteenth-century Europe seemed largely concerned with propping it up again, and adding its own yet grimmer buildings, more subtle prisons of factories and slums whose environment gradually sapped the energy not only to revel but even to live; and there was no hopeful *deus ex machine* to arrive like Don Fernando at the end of *Fidelio* with his startling egalitarian message and authoritarian humanism: ‘*Es sucht der Brüder seine Brüder, und kann er helfen, hilft er gern.*’⁷⁸

Two posthumously-found documents appear to suggest that Beethoven had metaphorically transcended death. The first is his letter to the “Immortal Beloved,” in which the object inspiring transcendence is *romantic love*. The second is his Heiligenstadt Testament, in which, he writes that *art* saved him from suicide; it was the object inspiring his continuation and, in a sense, his transcendence.

Death’s inspiration also introduced dualistic life symbols as represented in music, literature, and art. The Vienna Woods (*Wienerwald*), located north-west of the city, became just such a symbol, and here it would take the form of liberation:

For thousands of years forests had inspired awe; they were viewed as the abode of ghosts, monsters, wild animals, and sorcerers, and as a refuge for shady people, outlaws, and rebels. Folktales echoed such fears: Hänsel and Gretel barely escape a horrible fate at the witch’s house in the woods.

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, however, forests came to mean freedom. Life in the greenwoods was idealized under the influence of Rousseau, Schiller’s drama *The Robbers*, the immensely popular translations of Sir Walter Scott’s *Ivanhoe* and James Fenimore Cooper’s *The Last of the Mohicans*, Carlo Maria von Weber’s opera *Der*

Freischütz, and other romantic books, plays, and music. To the Viennese the nearby wooded hills offered an emotional outlet during the upheavals of the Napoleonic era and the repression under Metternich.⁷⁹

Had the Vienna Woods, so long associated with sin, fear, and death, indeed become a refuge from the city, a new and welcoming domain? For some it seems so, but in Schubert's setting of Goethe's *Erkönig* (1815) one finds parallels to its earlier, darker association. To briefly review the poem, during the night, in a wooded setting, the life of a father's young boy is snatched away by the *Erkönig*, a fictional character whose death-call is to be understood in real terms owing in large measure to the exceedingly high infant/child mortality rate. Such a work serves to illustrate how music was utilized to express the inexpressible, to make sense of that which might appear beyond our grasp. In this sense, such works demonstrate music's important role in traversing and shaping Vienna's musical deathscape.

The problem of high infant/child mortality would not subside any time soon and thus neither would its artful expression. Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder* (1901–1904), for voice and orchestra on poems by Friedrich Rückert treats the subject, for example. Perhaps music offered a safer medium within which one might begin to cope with this all-too-common and tragic state of affairs. Of Mozart's six children, only two survived. As H.C. Robbins Landon explains: "Children were brought up in rooms overlooking stinking courtyards, and altogether hygiene was not a strong point with the middle and lower orders."⁸⁰

Of the majority of Viennese, Peter Gay says that they:

lived at the lower edges of subsistence, innocent of luxuries and barely scratching out a meager existence. In its vast gap between the dwellings of the rich and the poor, Vienna was much like other cities, but foreign visitors noted that in this capital the contrasts were particularly egregious. Aristocrats and parvenus built themselves Italianate baroque palaces while the impecunious found shelter in run-down dwellings in dark, crowded, and stinking lanes, and the bourgeoisie, though growing in numbers and affluence, was still relatively small and ranged widely between these extremes.⁸¹

The Vienna Woods may be said to have offered temporary relief from city life. Yet city life was familiar in a way that the Vienna Woods could never be, explaining in part the latter's association with fear and death. This association would be recalled in the later nineteenth and earlier twentieth centuries—if indeed it had been forgotten in the first place. Two representative and monumental musical examples of the twentieth century are Schoenberg's monodrama *Erwartung* (1909) and Berg's opera *Wozzeck*. These works clearly demonstrate how the terrain of Vienna's deathscape had transformed over time. Unlike eighteenth and nineteenth-century works in which death is understood to be redemptive, these and other expressionist works render death nihilistic. The biblical question "*Tod wo ist dein Stachel?*" ("Death, where is thy sting?"; Job 4.11), from movement six of Brahms' *Ein Deutsches Requiem*, Op. 45 (1868), loses its intended meaning in the twentieth century. Indeed, as with Schubert's *Erkönig*, the forests of *Erwartung* and *Wozzeck* are nihilistic regions of no return and no purpose.

Death in the earlier works of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, on the other hand, is generally to be understood in the context of a greater, purposeful life cycle that

culminates in redemptive death. The second “sonata” of Haydn’s *Seven Last Words* (1786), for example, is based on the following words of Christ on the cross: “Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise.” Geiringer’s description of the development of this “sonata” from a single musical idea further illustrates this interpretation of death:

It appears timidly at first in the key of C minor, as if the poor malefactor did not dare to believe in his own good fortune. Gradually, however, the knowledge of God’s mercy enters the heart of the tormented man; the main idea is now transposed to E-flat major as a noble cantilena full of sweet happiness. In the development section the shadows of death seem to obscure the mind of the dying man, but the return of the cantilena, this time in C major, again conjures up all the wonders of paradise.⁸²

The famous “Representation” or “Idea of Chaos” from Haydn’s *Creation* is described by James Webster as “not literally chaotic but paradoxical: beginning in C minor mystery, it initiates a larger process which points beyond itself, and acquires meaning only with the choral climax on ‘And there was light!’ in C major.”⁸³

Redemptive death is the central theme of Mozart’s *Die Zauberflöte*. Sarastro, in his doctrine of survival from the “initiatory trial” passage, says that “Should Tamino encounter a premature death during his trials, ... ‘it will be given him to be received by Osiris and Isis before us, and to experience the divine joys.’”⁸⁴

Beethoven’s *Sechs Gellert-Lieder*, op. 48 (1802) are said to contain “intriguing clues to [his] conception of the sublime.”⁸⁵ The first and last songs in particular are described as suggestive of “the overall ‘plot,’ a quest for forgiveness and salvation.”⁸⁶

15.9 The Deaths of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven

In a city preoccupied as much by death as by life, it should not surprise us that the very deaths of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven would evoke curiosity, interest, and even obsession to the present day. In the case of Haydn, his skull had been stolen. By order of Prince Esterházy, Haydn’s remains were exhumed from the burial site at the Hundsturm churchyard, not far from his suburban dwelling, and re-interred in the upper parish church at Eisenstadt on November 7, 1820. According to Pohl,

It is a well-known fact that when the coffin was opened for identification before the removal, the skull was missing; it had been stolen two days after the funeral. The one that was afterwards sent to the Prince anonymously as Haydn’s, was buried with the other remains; but the real one was retained, and is at present in the possession of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde at Vienna.⁸⁷

Theories on the cause of Mozart’s death include severe miliary fever, rheumatic inflammatory fever, poisoning by his supposed rival Antonio Salieri, assassination at the hands of Freemasons, medical malpractice coupled with a skull injury, kidney disease, tuberculosis, and streptococcal infection.⁸⁸ Whatever the cause, Mozart’s

life had been cut short, and, moreover, there was to be oddly little funerary ritual attached. Though Mozart was buried in a common grave,⁸⁹ as was customary in Vienna at the time, a skull reputed to be his was:

unearthed ten years after his death by the gravedigger who had interred him. The skull thereupon had a succession of owners, including a phrenologist. Around the turn of the century it ended up in Salzburg's Mozarteum, with its authenticity still in dispute.⁹⁰

According to a recent claim, a photo of the above-referenced skull, when superimposed onto portraits featuring Mozart's head, reveals correspondences, "notably the high cheekbones and the egg-shaped forehead," which match "perfectly."⁹¹

Two decades later, there would be "macabre" concern over Beethoven's remains, including, in particular, his skull.⁹² In a letter to Mocheles, Schindler writes:

Finally, I have to communicate to you a very extraordinary occurrence. Yesterday, the grave-digger of Währing came to announce to us, that an offer of a thousand florins, C.M., had been made to him, in a note, which he produced, if he would deposit the skull of Beethoven in a certain place. The police is on the alert, and actively engaged in the investigation of this singular affair.⁹³

Years later, on a summer day in 1888, Beethoven's skull would again take center stage. Anton Bruckner, who paid a rather odd personal visit to the exhumed body of Beethoven at the chapel of the Währing Cemetery (just outside Vienna), took particular interest in the skull:

Against the protest of a policeman [Bruckner] had barged into a chapel where scientists were bent over an opened casket. Beethoven had just been exhumed for skeletal measurements prior to removal to a belated Grave of Honor in the Central Cemetery. Bruckner brushed past specialists at work, clamped on his pince-nez, grasped the skull with both hands. A doctor tried to interfere, but Bruckner at sixty-four still had the single-minded enthusiasm of a boy.

'Now ain't it true?' he said to the skull in his Upper Austrian dialect, 'ain't it true, dear Beethoven, that if you were alive today you'd allow me to touch you? And now them strange gentlemen here want to forbid me that!'⁹⁴

Prior to Beethoven's death, a story was circulating about the rendering of his life mask in 1812:

The commission to capture Beethoven's three-dimensional physiognomy for posterity came about at the request of his friend the piano maker Johann Andreas Streicher, who wanted to add his bust to those of other famous musicians already adorning the walls of his private concert hall. The task went to the Viennese anatomical sculptor Franz Klein, provider of plaster casts for the medical cabinet of the quirky Franz Joseph Gall, founder of Vienna's new science of the skull, craniotomy, later known as phrenology. Klein's insistence on taking life masks from his sitters before modeling their busts had earned him the monitory nickname "Head Chopper" ("Kopfab schnieder").⁹⁵

Then there are the flurries of attention surrounding pieces of bone and hair attributed to Beethoven. Fragments of his skull had been studied in Vienna in the 1980s. Furthermore, as reported in a recent book by Russell Martin titled, *Beethoven's Hair*, the customary act of procuring a keepsake in the form of a lock of hair left Beethoven's head "nearly shorn," and, in 1998, one of the famous hair strands

procured by the young musician Ferdinand Hiller was matched through DNA testing to the Beethoven skull fragments, leaving no question as to its attribution. Moreover, according to Martin,

the average amount of lead in the Beethoven hair had been *forty-two times* the lead average contained in the controls.... Beethoven, ... the evidence now strongly suggested, had been massively toxic with lead at the time of his death and may have been for dozens of years before.⁹⁶

15.10 Conclusion

Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, though not native to Vienna, had each settled there for relatively substantial periods of time despite sporadic difficulties in their careers there. In so doing, each drew inspiration from the city's nameless deathscape, and each was compelled to capture it in word and in musical tone. Moreover, each confronted and interpreted the notion of death with the sort of objectivity that itself defines Vienna's deathscape. In their works as in reality, life and death are intertwined, with each defining dimensions of the other. What made the deathscape phenomenon uniquely Viennese were the particular individuals who added to its momentum. Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven each recognized the importance of their contributions to Vienna and to posterity, as well as of Vienna's impact upon their lives and those of its citizenry in general. That Vienna made possible their respective climbs to success stands as testimony to its significance. Given this, it is perhaps not surprising that among Haydn's numerous honors and awards, he found most meaningful his gold medal from Vienna and his honorary citizenship of the City of Vienna.⁹⁷

The rare genius of all three composers was well recognized even in their day. To cite the often-quoted line from Count Waldstein's letter (1792) to Beethoven, who was then preparing to depart for Vienna: "With the help of unceasing diligence you will receive the spirit of Mozart from the hands of Haydn."⁹⁸ In any society, such a complex and intense concentration of creative and cerebral energies could never be assured, but, as it would happen, Vienna was to be the recipient of precisely such a rare combination. Against this unique and vital backdrop of artistic and intellectual energies, death would appear both utterly absent and exuberantly ever-present. From this well-spring of extremes there resided a profound source of inspiration that would influence the very fabric of Viennese society and culture.

Notes

1 Hofmann, *The Viennese*, 1.

2 Pezzl, "Sketch of Vienna," 77.

3 Wyss, *Hegel's Art History*, 200.

4 Whitton, *Goethe and Schubert*, 47.

5 Nietzsche, *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, 22.

6 Cited in Wyss, *Hegel's Art History*, 200.

7 See Wyss, *Hegel's Art History*, 200. In the context of discussion on Spengler, Wyss raises the distinction between *culture* and *civilization*, stating that the transition from the former to the latter is "irrevocable."

8 For more information see Buch's interesting and informative book, *Beethoven's Ninth*, 53.

9 Ibid.

10 The earliest, reliable documentation in Viennese music history dates from the court of the last four Babenberg dukes (1177–1246), which was a center of Minnesang. See Antonicek, "Vienna," 546.

11 Ibid., 554.

12 Webster makes the point that "neither [Haydn] nor his contemporaries used the name Franz, and there is no reason to do so today." See "Joseph Haydn," 171.

13 Rohrau, near Bruck an der Leitha, was a possession of Count Karlo Anton Harrach (1692–1758), whose grandson Karl Leonhard (1765–1831) erected in the garden of the castle in 1793 a monument in honor of Haydn. See Webster, "Franz Joseph Haydn," 171.

14 Barea, *Vienna*, 37. As Barea explains, "Medieval Vienna developed on the site of a Roman camp, at the point where the transcontinental route from north to south, the ancient Amber Road, crossed the Danube. There, German, Slav and Magyar cultures touched, with an older Celtic stratum deeply embedded underneath. From all these separate worlds, and from Italy, Vienna drew not only people but [also] customs, ideas, musical rhythms and mental associations. The main Viennese stock was of German-Austrian origin, coming from the hereditary Habsburg dominions (Lower and Upper Austria and Styria in the first line), but there was also immigration from Bavaria and Franconia. From the sixteenth century on, the typical Viennese surnames speak of peasant or at least country connections. To the group of German surnames there were added, over the centuries, others: Italian, Czech, Polish, Croatian, Hungarian, and (from about 1775) Jewish; together with a sprinkling of French, Belgian, Dutch and Greek surnames."

15 Karl Geiringer, in collaboration with Irene Geiringer, *Haydn: A Creative Life*, 18.

16 Wechsberg, *Vienna, My Vienna*, 97.

17 Geiringer, *Haydn: A Creative Life*, 22.

18 Wechsberg, *Vienna, My Vienna*, 98.

19 Geiringer, *Haydn: A Creative Life*, 19.

20 The city of Hainburg is at the Danube, not far from Rohrau.

21 Geiringer, *Haydn: A Creative Life*, 19.

22 Music historian Volkmar Braunbehrens explains that though the foundations of medieval buildings within the city were preserved for subsequent reconstruction, suburban housing, outside the fortifications, was completely destroyed, the fortifications themselves eliminated in the nineteenth century for construction of the Ring. See Braunbehrens, *Mozart in Vienna*, 41.

23 Geiringer, *Haydn: A Creative Life*, 19.

24 Webster cites Griesinger. See Webster, "Franz Joseph Haydn," 173.

25 The one change to this house, which still exists today, is the addition in 1848 of a full storey to replace the attic. Haydn's Viennese publisher of choice, Artaria & Co., has been in existence since 1789 and is located next to the house, at Kohlmarkt 9.

26 Webster, "Haydn," *The New Grove Dictionary*, 11:173.

27 Wyn Jones, "Franz Joseph Haydn," 148.

28 Ibid., 148.

29 This is said to be a reference to Mozart's "Freemasonic thinking about death." It is believed that Mozart assumes his father is familiar with such views as he had joined Mozart's lodge in Vienna. See Spaethling, *Mozart's Letters*, 389.

30 Ibid.

31 Braunbehrens, *Mozart in Vienna*, 227.

32 Chailley, *The Magic Flute*, 69.

33 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 455.

34 Recall that, in Act II, Scene 2, the Queen of the Night hands her daughter a dagger with which to kill the evil Sarastro, who holds her prisoner.

35 Chailley, *The Magic Flute*, 4.

36 Ibid., 51.

37 Fellerer, "Liturgical Basis of Haydn's Masses," 164.

38 Ibid., 166.

39 Ibid.

40 Link, "Mozart in Vienna," 27–28.

41 Kierkegaard, *Either/Or*, 63.

42 Donoghue, "Approaching Mozart," 16.

43 Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism*, 99.

44 Hofmann, *Spell of the Vienna Woods*, 51.

45 Geck, *Beethoven*, 91–92; cited from Leitzmann (ed.) "Ludwig van Beethoven," 278 f.

46 Schindler, *Beethoven As I Knew Him*, 144.

47 Braunbehrens, *Mozart in Vienna*, 44.

48 For more information on Mozart's Vienna, see Braunbehrens, *Mozart in Vienna*.

49 Wyn Jones, "Vienna," 427.

50 Robbins Landon, *Mozart and Vienna*, 122.

51 Ibid., 123.

52 Hofmann, *The Viennese*, 84.

53 Goethe, *Goethe's Autobiography*, 509–510.

54 Gay, *Mozart*, 34.

55 Turner, *Mozart: The Man and His Works*, 278.

56 For commentary on the controversy over the extent to which Mozart's pupil Xaver Süssmayr contributed to the completion of the *Requiem* score, see Humphreys, "The Music/*Requiem*," 314–316.

57 Cited in Geiringer, "Haydn and His Viennese Background," 5.

58 See Humphreys, "The Music/*Requiem*," 314.

59 See Glausiusz, "The Banal Death of a Genius."

60 Cliff Eisen, Stanley Sadie, "Mozart: (3) Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, 6: The final Years," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 17: 294.

61 Ibid.

62 Landon, *Haydn*, 456.

63 Cited in Geiringer, *Haydn: A Creative Life*, 161.

64 Solomon, *Beethoven*, x.

65 Lockwood, *Beethoven*, 357–358.

66 See Werkner, *Austrian Expressionism*, 32.

67 Goethe notes that this occurred on October 30, 1772.

68 Goethe, *Goethe's Autobiography*, 514–516.

- 69 Brandes, *Goethe*, 1: 193–194.
- 70 Whitton, *Goethe and Schubert.*, 47.
- 71 Goddard, “Beethoven and Goethe,” 168–169.
- 72 Cited in Lockwood, *Beethoven*, 300. Lockwood’s note: Letter assigned by Anderson (No. 228) to November 2, 1809; *Briefwechsel*, No. 408, dates it to November 22 instead.
- 73 Wyss, *Hegel’s Art History*, 200.
- 74 Ibid.
- 75 Ibid.
- 76 Comini, “The Visual Beethoven,” 288.
- 77 Schindler, *Beethoven As I Knew Him*, 147.
- 78 Levey, *Rococo to Revolution*, 235.
- 79 Hofmann, *Spell of the Vienna Woods*, 36–37.
- 80 Robbins Landon, *1791: Mozart’s Last Year*, 27.
- 81 Gay, *Mozart*, 64.
- 82 Geiringer, *Haydn: A Creative Life in Music*, 303.
- 83 Webster, “Joseph Haydn,” 196.
- 84 Chailley, *The Magic Flute*, 128.
- 85 Rumph, *Beethoven after Napoleon*, 36.
- 86 Ibid., 38.
- 87 Pohl, “Franz Joseph Haydn,” 2: 363.
- 88 Glausiusz, “The Banal Death of a Genius.”
- 89 Joseph II had issued a decree discouraging extravagant burials and encouraging simple burials which also included common grave burials. As Peter Gay explains, “The new simplicity...was in tune with the anticlerical convictions and the contempt for “superstitious” ceremonials fostered by the thinkers of the Enlightenment and largely endorsed by rulers like the Hapsburg emperors. Leopold II—the brother of Joseph II, who had died in 1790—in whose reign Mozart was buried, kept a number of his brother’s edicts intact, at least for a while.” See Gay, *Mozart*, 160.
- 90 Glausiusz, “The Banal Death of a Genius.”
- 91 Ibid.
- 92 See Gibbs, “Performances of Grief,” 261.
- 93 Ibid. Gibbs quotes Schindler’s letter to Moscheles, cited in *Harmonicon* 5 (May 1827): 86.
- 94 Morton, *Nervous Splendor*, 18–19.
- 95 Comini, “The Visual Beethoven,” 289.
- 96 Martin, *Beethoven’s Hair*, 234–235.
- 97 Webster, “Joseph Haydn,” 189.
- 98 Lockwood, *Beethoveen*, 50.

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Chapter 16

Crusoe's Island and the Human Estate: Defoe's Existential Geography

Dennis E. Skocz

Editors' Note: This chapter explores the geographicity of the human condition, of the existential structures of being-in-the-world. The geographical turn is exemplified in the author's interpretation of Defoe's famous novel. Existential structures such as thrownness and anxiety are given spatial illustration. But, these illustrations, in turn, further provide us with spatial existential structurings such as the "tame" and the "wild," which involves establishing modes of comportment that consider qualitative differences in the range of circumspection. What is insightful is that a work of art providing a geography of the imagination can provide profound insight into the spatial existentialities of the human condition and geographies of the actual.

16.1 Introduction

Symbol, according to its ancient Greek roots, means to be thrown or cast with. Defoe's Crusoe is the quintessential castaway, thrown upon a [mostly] deserted island alone [initially] to fend for himself and to reflect on his predicament. Robinson and his world become a symbol of the human condition and the symbol as such is transfigured in its meaning when a place—a very factually described fictional place—comes to stand for human being-in-the-world. One could read *Robinson Crusoe* as an adventure story or as a commentary on survival. One could also read it as testimony to the *autarke* and autonomy of "the" human being. The paper will endeavor to show how the narrative serves to illuminate the human condition as a whole, to include not only aspects of being-for-self and making-one's-world but also being-with-others.

16.2 *Robinson Crusoe*: Map and Allegory

The title of this chapter describes this reflection as an "existential geography." The preceding reference to the "human estate" is meant to capture what is existential

and geographical in this interpretation of Defoe. One meaning of "estate," is a "large, landed property"; this meaning of "estate" as a place invites us to think geographically, from what we literally understand by "estate" to what it suggests as a metaphor. "Estate" also means the state of something, in the case of humans, one's situation or circumstances. When the existentialist Jean-Paul Sartre seeks an expression for the way in which the human being has its existence, an expression without the essentialist connotations of "human nature," he speaks of the "human condition," an expression often used synonymously with "human estate." The ambition of this interpretation is to think Crusoe's island as a metaphor for how the human being finds itself in a world not entirely of its own making, a world it finds itself "thrown into." German philosopher Martin Heidegger speaks of "thrownness" as a condition that pertains to all human beings who, in a "moment of decision," must confront an ensemble of circumstances in which they "already always" find themselves, circumstances which impel and limit what they will decide, i.e., what they will project or throw themselves into.¹ This interpretation is existential in proposing to characterize Crusoe's situation as a description of human existence as a whole in terminology borrowed from existential phenomenology. What is peculiar to this reflection on human existence is the stress it lays on the geographicity of the human existence: its defining spatiality and the ways in which that spatiality brings the human being into relationships with the very ground on which he or she stands. Defoe's story of Crusoe, then, invites and, I argue, underpins the existential/geographical reflections that follow. Throughout the narrative, from the time Crusoe is cast ashore upon the island until he confronts the Other as foe, stranger, and friend, Defoe, I would suggest, invites his reader to listen in an existential-geographical register.

This reading of Defoe will also lead the reader to see a rather different notion of the symbol, one that emerges in the "placality" of the island. In Plato's *Republic* and Moore's *Utopia*, fictional places serve to illuminate other-worldly, non-existent places, i.e., places that serve as paradigms for the good. In *1984* and *Brave New World*, neg-utopias are described, again with ethical import. Arguably, Defoe describes a non-existent place to throw us readers back upon the very real place in which we find ourselves, the place that is the human estate or the human condition. Symbol here functions not to transcend the sensible toward the intelligible, this world for a world beyond, the "is" for an "ought"; rather, it works existentially through the fictional narrative to dis-place us from our concerned dealing with things in our own personal worlds to reflect back upon our situation as human beings in-the-world.

A note on method. The story of Robinson Crusoe works so well as an adventure tale that it could well appear an imposition to reshape it as an existential/geographical allegory. The test of whether the interpretation succeeds as existential/geographical will come as story elements are addressed one by one. The impetus to go beyond the plain-tale journalistic style of Defoe, in the first place, and read more out of the narrative than one seventeenth-century Englishman's story, is an impetus set in motion by Defoe himself, who called it a "fable" both "Allegorical" and "Historical."² Succeeding generations of readers have taken this story as a

literary rendition of a state of nature philosophy,³ a recounting *a la Marx* of primitive accumulation,⁴ a "treatise on natural education" (Rousseau),⁵ and the story of a "prototype of the British colonist" and "true symbol of the British conquest" (Joyce).⁶ Writer Virginia Wolfe put the matter succinctly when she wrote what must count as a quintessential understatement, "there are many ways of approaching this classic volume; but which shall we choose?"⁷ The point of these selected highlights from a long history of interpretation is not to make the case for one more reading, one that is existential/geographical. This interpretation will stand or fall on its merits as it unfolds step by step in what follows. (And, I should add, this reading does not mean to challenge others; there is no *a priori* reason to think that two or more differing interpretations must be seen as mutually exclusive.) Here the point is only that *Robinson Crusoe* is a story that not only invites but begs interpretation. At one level, my approach is quite straightforward. I will quote selected passages and offer an existential/geographical reading. I will attend in particular to themes and idioms which suggest that Defoe is saying something about the human condition in the person of Robinson Crusoe and about the human estate in his characterizations of Crusoe's island home. In so doing, I will borrow from the idioms of existential phenomenology with the caveat that the intention is not to use the text to uphold a pre-existing philosophical position. Rather, the hope is that existential and phenomenological concepts addressing the human condition and specifically its spatiality will illuminate Defoe's text, and that the text and interpretation together will throw light on the human estate. Toward the end of the chapter, I will consider the way in which symbol and allegory work in Defoe to reform the notion of symbol itself. Here the approach is broadly hermeneutical and the text itself becomes the immediate object of reflection. Once again, however, the merit of the approach and its success in enabling the reader to gain insight into the work and what the work addresses, i.e., the human condition, will only become evident—if it does at all—in its application.

16.3 Are We All Castaways?

Crusoe is a castaway. A terrible storm causes a shipwreck. In the swirling waters of the storm, Crusoe's life is in peril, the prospect of death is imminent. Again and again waves overwhelm him. The penultimate wave seems "well near fatal" to him and "dashe[s] [him] against a piece of rock ... with such a force" as to leave him "senseless, and indeed helpless, as to [his] own deliverance."⁸ This description is a plain but vivid account of being thrown into the world which will become his world and a metaphor for our world as well. He survives the wreck of the ship and the raging waters of the storm to find himself on land and alive, removed from the immediate perils that had beset him.⁹ After a brief sense of relief and thankfulness that he was not among those who perished, he contemplates his situation and experiences a feeling of great anxiety—"dreadful deliverance" is his description of his situation. He looks ahead to the "prospect ... of perishing with hunger or being

devoured by wild beasts.” With no weapons to hunt for food or defend himself against attack, Crusoe is seized with such “terrible agonies of mind” that for a while he “run[s] around like a madman.”¹⁰ Later in the story, when Crusoe has “settled [his] household stuff and habitation,” he begins a diary and makes this entry for September 30, 1659 (the date of his “arrival”):

I, poor miserable Robinson Crusoe, being shipwrecked during a dreadful storm in the offing, came on shore on this *dismal unfortunate island*, which I called ‘*the island of Despair*,’ all the rest of the ship’s company being drowned and myself almost dead.

All the rest of the day I spend in afflicting myself at the *dismal circumstances* I was brought to, viz., I had neither food, house, clothes, weapon, or place to fly to, and in despair of any relief, *saw nothing but death before me*.¹¹ [Emphasis added.]

And so we have Crusoe literally *thrown* upon the island, sunk in *despair*, running ahead in anxiety to the *prospect of death*. If we do right to compare the human condition to Crusoe’s and if thrownness describes both, then being thrown would describe fundamentally how we are in the world: thrown into a world, a history, and a situation not of our own making, free to make of that situation what we will, but not free not to choose, i.e., condemned to freedom, as Sartre would say.¹² The sense of thrownness comes with the feeling of anxiety or dread, an anxiety associated with a grasp of death which looms as precisely that possibility which renders impossible all possibilities-of-being.¹³ Running ahead to this possibility throws one back upon oneself so that the whole of one’s existence opens up and presents itself for resolute decision.¹⁴ Crusoe’s thrownness involves an encounter with the possibility of death, not only in the maelstrom but as an ever-present, looming possibility on the island. Thrownness, death, and dread go together, describing the ontological place in which Crusoe finds himself.

I have alluded to Defoe’s intent to say something about the human estate in the story of Crusoe. Perhaps, more interesting is the character Crusoe’s reflections on his own situation *within the story itself*. That he sees himself as representative of humans generally is indicated in his comments on his “dreadful deliverance,” i.e., his having escaped death in being thrown up on the island. His individual change of mood from dread at the prospect of death to elation in being spared is generalized when he translates his own feelings into “*the ecstasies and transports of the soul ... when it is so saved*.” Most of the account is written in the first-person singular; now, the grammatical third-person is used and the “I” that feels is displaced by the “it” or “the soul” that has its “ecstasies and transports.” Crusoe continues his reflection on the human condition writ large by comparing his situation to that of a criminal receiving a reprieve just before being hung at the gallows. Another indication that Crusoe sees his condition as representative of the human condition generally—and that Defoe, who speaks, through his character, wants us to view Crusoe as “everyman”—is a reference to Crusoe’s pre-island existence. In Brazil, where he establishes himself as a prosperous estate-owner, a lonely and disconsolate Crusoe muses, “I lived just like a man cast away upon some desolate island that had nobody there but himself.”¹⁵ In drawing the analogy between his pre-island existence and his island-existence, Crusoe (Defoe) is inviting the reader to make Robinson’s island experience a metaphor for human being-in-the-world

as cast or thrown wherever we humans find ourselves, on or off an actual island and even when we are thought to be doing well for ourselves materially. Crusoe, the estate-owner in Brazil, is to Crusoe, the island castaway, as the human being in its estate is to the human being cast or thrown into its world.

The interpretation given above is deliberately existentialistic. The fundamentals of Crusoe's situation lend themselves too well to such an interpretation to evade the temptation to invoke Heidegger and Sartre. Arguably, the interpretation of the Crusoe myth is enriched with such anachronistic language. We would be unfaithful to the text, however, to insist on an exclusively existentialistic reading. Honesty requires that we take into account that Crusoe's dread has a lot to do with simple fear. Heidegger is careful to distinguish existential anxiety from its prosaic counterpart, everyday fear—a feeling motivated by concrete perils and not expressive of a malaise over the “nothing itself,” the proper “[non]object” of existential *Angst*.¹⁶ As for Crusoe's resolve, it is more English and middle-class, a stiff upper lip to the world, not the heroic gesture that belongs to a certified twentieth-century existentialist.

Do we undermine the interpretive project with these second thoughts?

Not really. Three points may be made. First, if our reading is metaphorical, we may allow concrete fears to stand for the anxiety that existentialism describes, just as we allow the island to stand for the human condition. The pervasive quality of Robinson's fear—at times in the story, it seems to suffuse the landscape itself—suggests that it is a rather suitable analogue for existential *Angst*. Secondly, allowing for discrepancies, existentialistic notions do, in large measure, illuminate Crusoe's predicament, even if his predicament is not a textbook instance of applied existentialism. The object here is to use concepts from existential philosophy and literature to shed light on Crusoe's situation—and thereby, the human condition, rather than the reverse, i.e., to use the story to illustrate the meaning of existential terms. Thirdly, we should distinguish an existential from an existentialistic reading. The interpretation here aims at an *existential* reading of Crusoe's situation, i.e., one that characterizes his life situation (with its imposed solitude, its various dangers, and its possibilities for decision) as descriptive of human existence. The focus here then is not existentialism *per se* but rather human existence as experienced and understood in the light of extreme or limit situations like death, abandonment, and despair. Experiences invoked by existentialism have been used and will be used to serve the broader purpose of an existential interpretation. It would be mistaken to press the comparison too hard, to try to fit *Robinson Crusoe* in a suit of philosophical fabric cut to twentieth-century existentialistic specifications.

As a literal, albeit fictive, account of one man's experience, Defoe's story of Crusoe is certainly geo-spatial. Robinson is thrown from one place, the ship, into another place, the maelstrom, and then from the maelstrom onto the island—still another place. But, is there geo-existential or an existential-spatial implication to the account? Does thrownness have a spatial dimension and does Defoe mean for us to understand the human estate as spatial in a defining way? Superficially understood, one might conclude from Crusoe's reflections on Brazil and the island that it does not matter where one is: wherever one is, one can find oneself a

“cast away.” More deeply understood, however, the comparison points in just the opposite direction. We are always cast into a place, wherever it may be; we are abruptly given over to the “there” where we find ourselves. To be sure, this being given over is not a relationship of attachment or rootedness, quite the opposite. We are precisely there, in the world, as abject, alienated, cast in to cast about, at least at the outset, before we get some bearings and cast off in some direction of our choosing. The Heideggerian sense of thrownness says as much as the preceding. To be thrown and to find oneself thrown in the anxiety that goes with the condition is to be cast into the “there” in a way that leaves us disoriented and anxious.¹⁷ Nevertheless, our own being-in-the-world becomes evident to us as well as the sense of the world in its worldliness, i.e., as the “wherein” of our involvements with things ready-to-hand, i.e., things within the world that can come to matter for us and assume significance in relationship to our undertakings. To attend to the Heideggerian language of thrownness is to hear its spatial implications: the “there,” being-in-the-world, the “where-in,” the word “world” itself is spatial through and through and for Heidegger its meaning is rooted in the spatiality of the existing being, the being that is ever defining itself in its lived proximity or distance from the things about it.¹⁸

So far, we have followed Crusoe to his arrival on the island as a castaway. His situation puts him on the threshold of resolution and action. The largest part of the narrative is to follow. The next day, he takes the measure of his situation, realizes that he is on an island, alone, and compelled to fend for himself with the most meager of resources.¹⁹ Crusoe had evaded a death that seemed proximate in the maelstrom of the storm but a “lower-grade” sense of threat accompanies the understanding of his situation as thrown upon the island. Like Heidegger’s *Dasein*, [human] being-there, Crusoe lives his days with danger and death lurking at the margins of his world.²⁰ The intense despair over his situation, however, is not sustained. He takes stock, reflecting on its positive and negative aspects, and resolving to take his situation in hand and make the best of it.²¹ Crusoe applies himself to his situation with a legacy of artifacts he salvages from the shipwreck off shore. Options for decision and action are thus prescribed by what one inherits from the past. Crusoe’s haul includes a diverse mix of things: tools, food, drink, guns and ammunition, paper, ink, and a Bible.²² Things made by others will be used by Crusoe to make a world for himself on the island. If Crusoe’s situation is a type of the human condition, then we are makers of our world—but we are made as well by what is given over to us. He will have time, albeit limited, to select what he needs from the ship and float it to the island before the ship goes under. Life for Crusoe is not an empiricist’s blank slate.

Some early interpretations have suggested that *Robinson Crusoe* makes a statement about the State of Nature, a notion of great currency in the political philosophy of Defoe’s time. A very persuasive interpretation can be made with this concept in mind. In fact, the essayist Pufendorf, writing on this very concept in Defoe’s day, suggests to us an “overlap” of the State of Nature and thrownness. “We must fancy a Man *thrown at a venture into the World*,” he writes [Emphasis added].²³ Humans, by his account, are cast into a hostile environment and compelled

to make do with nothing that civilization provides. The State of Nature interpretation, attractive in many ways, has its problems, ones that Heidegger's "existentialism" addresses. Crusoe's fate is not quite that of the brutish human who starts entirely from scratch in the State of Nature. For Crusoe as for Heidegger's *Dasein*, being thrown into a situation means being confronted with a range of possibilities-of-being presented by what is handed-over, i.e., all of the implements and supplies that Robinson is able to salvage from the wrecked ship before it is washed away. Crusoe's freedom is a situated freedom. He is able to take over what is handed over from the past.

Robinson Crusoe is, of course, a narrative and, as such, it gives us to think about time. A narrative unfolds in time and may tell us about time. We have seen already how a perilous moment in time serves to fix fundamental features of the human condition: our thrownness, the need to face the future and to decide within the options and limits imposed by the past on our life story—the one which we make up and live out over time. Narratives, however, take *place*. They are staged in a place and may be about a place, in fact, about place as such. So it is with *Robinson Crusoe*. Now, the turn from a discussion of Crusoe's thrownness to a discussion of place as place of habitation may seem abrupt and arbitrary. It is not. In fact, both discussions address place. The preceding shows how spatiality is implied in the phenomenon of thrownness itself or, in story terms, in being cast upon an island. In terms of the story, we will now go from the alien place into which Robinson is thrown to what Robinson makes of that place. In existential terms, there is the world into which I am thrown or cast and then the world that I make or re-cast from the world into which I am cast. Heidegger calls the human being a "thrown projection"; the human being is thrown or cast into the world and then casts or projects itself upon the world, i.e., into those projects that will come to shape its world. Heidegger's original German terms express the mirroring of being thrown or cast into the world (*geworfen*) with a projecting or casting or throwing oneself (*entwerfen*) into or upon the world. "*Werfen*" is to throw; "*geworfen*" is to be thrown. The predicament of being thrown into the world (or cast up on the island) makes it necessary to take up one's place in the world (or island), in one way or another.

16.4 Remaking the Land

In *Robinson Crusoe*, the geographicity of the human condition, being *in* the world and, we might add, upon the earth, is exposed and articulated. Crusoe, as *homo faber*, not only fashions things which enter into an inventory of possessions, he makes a habitation, a domain, a home on the earth, a sphere of ownness, one that is outside the mind, in space and time, and vulnerable to the threat of the other. It may well be that Defoe's "reflections" on geographicity are among his most thought provoking contributions to an account of the human estate. What does it mean to be a human being who lives upon the earth? What is the relationship between the

human being and the land on which the human being makes his or her world? How do labor and habitation inscribe and reconfigure the earth? How, in the first place, does the earth pre-scribe the possibilities and limits of human habitation?

Invoking geographicity puts Crusoe's island in focus. It cannot be thought as an indifferent backdrop for the action of the narrative. It is not just scenery or stage. Defoe writes about Crusoe, and Crusoe inscribes his life-story-being on the island. If the story of Crusoe is an allegory of the human condition, then the island itself can be said to be a symbol of the human estate. This island "place" is a fiction but as such it serves to "think out" the place of human being-in-the-world.

The initial effort made here to think geographically or placially will make use of the phenomenon of labor. Contemporaries of Defoe and commentators, including Marx and others after him, have pointed to the central position of labor in *Robinson Crusoe*. There is much to be said for interpretations of Crusoe's labors which relate to the foundation of property *a la* Locke or to the labor theory of value in the classical economists and Marx. There is a place as well for Weber and Tawney, the Protestant ethic and its Puritan expression. We need not eschew the preceding to take on board what follows.

The point made here is that in *Robinson Crusoe*, labor is an agency for spatial reconfiguration. To be sure, labor makes things. The artifact acquires utility and at some point, it could enter into exchange and commerce, and acquire monetary value. If we miss the spatial and placial in labor, however, we miss much of what Defoe has to tell us. Crusoe, the *homo faber par excellence*, inscribes a home-stead, fortress,²⁴ a "country" and a "seaside house,"²⁵ several plantations²⁶—altogether a domain—upon the land. The island becomes his land, a kingdom.

I was lord of the whole manor; or if I pleased, I might call myself king, or emperor over the whole country which I had possession of. There were no rivals. I had no competitor, none to dispute sovereignty or command with me.²⁷

Robinson becomes the master of all he surveys, i.e., of all that he has first put his labor to, inscribed with forms and designs which transform a strange and seemingly hostile space into Crusoe's realm.²⁸ His labor is an inscription of the land, which makes it over and into a signature landscape.²⁹

The labor which Crusoe describes—a "great undertaking for one pair of hands"—is not just one of fabricating objects or producing artifacts, but rather one of shaping the land to his purposes. The recurrent term is "enclosure." Enclosure is what separates the "tame [animals] from the wild" and allows Robinson to keep flocks he can call his own and use to satisfy his needs. There is in this division of the wild and the tame a hint of the ontological in relation to the spatial, as understood by Crusoe. Different kinds of beings have different kinds of spaces. With enclosure a variegated human-made geography reorganizes the landscape. There is now the enclosed place of the tamed versus the open space of the wild.

But then it presently occurred to me that I must *keep the tame from the wild*, or else they would always run wild when they grew up, and the only way for this was to have some enclosed piece of ground, well fenced either with hedge or pale, to keep them in so effectually that those within might not break out, or those without break in.³⁰

So the *look of the land*, its configuration changes. There is more to be said, however. Not only does the look of the landscape change but the land itself is taken and exploited as a *resource*: "My first piece of work was to find a proper piece of ground, viz., where there was likely to be herbage for them [the flocks] to eat, water for them to drink, and cover to them from the sun."³¹ Moreover, enclosure, which changes the form of the landscape and function of the land, also reconfigures the *relationship of the inhabitant to the land*; Crusoe who now becomes proprietor of the land and what he has put upon it. His relationship to the earth and its living occupants is one of ownership and control.

This [enclosure] *answered to my end*, and in about a year and half I *had* a flock of about twelve goats, kids and all; and in two years more I had three and forty, besides several that I *took and killed* for my food. And after that I *enclosed* five several pieces of *ground to feed them* in, with little pens to drive them into, to *take them as I wanted*, and gates out of one piece of ground into another.³²

We need not force the text: configuration of the landscape, use of the land, control of the earth and its creatures, and sovereignty over all one has made and remade—all of these elements are readily apparent. Crusoe describes what it is like to sit down to dinner on his estate and in the company of his animals, including his pet parrot Polly.

I had the lives of all my subjects at my absolute command. I could hand, draw, give liberty, and take it away, and no rebels among my subjects.

Then to see how like a king I dined, too, all alone, attended by my servants; Poll, as if he had been my favorite, was the only person permitted to talk to me. My dog, who was now grown very old and crazy and had found no species to multiply his kind upon, sat always at my right hand, and two cats, one on one side of the table and one on the other, expecting now and then a bit from my hand, as a mark of special favor.³³

Those familiar with English social and economic history may see in Defoe's allusions to enclosure reference to the enclosure movement at the beginning of modern times. Enclosure converted the commons—land available for use and enjoyment by landlords, tenants, and the landless—into property with exclusive rights to the owner, who could and did exclude others from the land and exploited it to maximize output of crops and livestock for exchange on the market. With such a socio-economic-historical interpretation so persuasively suggesting itself, why should one pursue an existential-spatial approach? What concepts from the realm of existential phenomenology might serve to support such an interpretation?

16.5 Ready-to-Hand and One's Own

Initially, Heidegger's discussion of the ready-to-hand and Husserl's description of the ego's sphere of ownness will afford interpretive clues for this geo-existential project. Here, a brief detour in order to explain some terms. Heidegger helps us to understand the being of what is ready-to-hand by contrasting it with the being of the present-at-hand. In parallel, he contrasts the spatiality of the ready-to-hand

with that of the present-at-hand. With Descartes, according to Heidegger, we Westerners came to think of space as an unbounded realm of extended things whose places were determined, as the space itself, by mathematical coordinates. The description of space went hand in hand with the description of its contents. Space was a homogenous, mathematically determined totality. Things within space were defined by extension and existed side-by-side as merely present-at-hand.³⁴ Heidegger invites us to understand the space we inhabit very differently, as one in which things ready-to-hand with "inconspicuous familiarity" offer themselves to our use and purposes, fitting together in an ensemble or instrumental configuration determined by their employment together in various human undertakings. It is not mathematics which describes the place or the being of these things ready-to-hand but rather our concerned dealing with things in the surrounding world of everyday life. Ready-to-hand things, then, are near or distant to the degree that they occupy our immediate or remote concerns. The world and the space of things ready-to-hand is the surrounding world, familiar and pragmatically regarded, i.e., the world of everyday being-in-the-world.³⁵

If Heidegger's phenomenology has descriptive application to Crusoe's island, it is its notion of the ready-to-hand that comes readily to mind as pertinent. The reader will already recognize in the phenomenon of the ready-to-hand the place of Crusoe's day-to-day life on the island. Crusoe fabricates around himself a domain of things close and ready-to-hand. He creates and inhabits a space that forms an instrumental totality, with Crusoe at the center. Heidegger is famous for giving the example of the hammer as something ready-to-hand. But, the ready-to-hand includes more than tools. All things that make themselves available to us in a usability that suits our purposes can be said to be ready-to-hand. Robinson's old dog and his two cats, all of the three, close at hand, are ready-to-hand, in Heidegger's sense, not only because the ready-to-hand is characterized by proximity but because these animals are available to Robinson to serve as his companions and "subjects." The animals that Crusoe has tamed and the crops he raises all enter into the zone of the ready-to-hand as food. The "instrumental totality" in which the goats-as-food are a part also includes the crops that he feeds to the goats and the land which Robinson encloses to raise the crops that feed the goats. The space of the ready-to-hand, as Heidegger points out, is one that relates one thing to another in the order of the "in order to." Robinson's things and the space he inhabits, his domain, mutually define each other. His things are ready-to-hand within a world he draws around himself through his labors. And, that environing world has its essential character in being a gathering of things available for his use. "What is ready-to-hand in our everyday dealings has the character of closeness," Heidegger writes.³⁶ With Robinson comfortably ensconced in one of his several plantations or perhaps in his fortress one might recall Heidegger's characterization of the room as example of the ready-to-hand: "the room that we encounter is not something 'between four walls' in a geometrical spatial sense, but as equipment for residing."³⁷ This is perhaps a characterization of residing that is too equipmental for even the quintessential utilitarian who Robinson Crusoe seems to be; it does however make the added point that not only things may array themselves about one in a

space of things ready-to-hand, but that a particular space may itself count as ready-to-hand, as making itself available to us, qua space or place, as for our use.

As apropos as the phenomenon of the ready-to-hand may be for describing the ontology of Robinson's world, it fails to give a descriptive account for the sense of possession and ownership that Crusoe expresses so often. Here is where Heidegger's teacher and mentor, the father of phenomenology itself, Edmund Husserl, helps out. Husserl speaks of a sphere of "ownness" in which the ego, reflectively removed from its surrounding world, finds its sense of self; indeed, Husserl writes, "the ego, taken concretely, has a universe of what is peculiarly its own ... an '*original sphere*.'" Shifting into the grammatical first person, Husserl calls it the "domain of my peculiarly own essentiality, of what I am in myself, in my full concreteness."³⁸ Husserl comes to the knowledge of this ego by way of a "reduction." He suspends the ego's active involvement in its world to consider the ego that lives in and constitutes that very world. In so doing, he arrives at "the ego ... I myself constituted within my primordial ownness ... governing immediately in my animate organism [my body] and producing effects mediately in the primordial surround world."³⁹ The idiom is far removed from Defoe's. Nevertheless, with some translation it can be shown to be an apt description of Crusoe's sense of ownness and ownership. Husserl is quite explicit in identifying this ego as the result of a special "move" in thought, one that removes the ego from its engagement with the things of its surrounding world. For that reason, it may seem to have still less relevance to Crusoe, who is so engaged in his island world. And yet, when Crusoe characterizes his own world, is he not reflectively reposing at its center? At the moment of his first-person statements, Robinson is not engaged in the pursuits which brought him to his happy estate but rather reflecting on his labors and the product of his labors—labors which made him the lord and proprietor of his domain, the island. In the quotation from Husserl is a definition of the sphere of ownness, of that universe which is mine, that speaks of an ego that *governs* through its body, producing the world about it.⁴⁰ For Husserl, the constitutive work of the ego in its world is only evident to the ego when it "reduces" that world to an object of its reflection. Having done that, the ego can not only claim possession of itself but also assert its governance of its body and, through its body, its production of "effects" in the world it normally inhabits unreflectively. Husserl knows that the ego he is describing is "peculiar"; the reduction that gives the ego itself is the result of abstracting from its normal relationship to things and to other egos: "I alone remain," Husserl says.⁴¹ It is not so clear that Robinson realizes his solitary and exceptional condition when he boasts of sovereignty.

16.6 Of Empire and Technology

It is this boasting of sovereignty and repeated theme of domination that this interpretation must now wrestle with. To this point, Heidegger and Husserl both illumine the situation of Robinson Crusoe. In their phenomenological descriptions of

the ready-to-hand and the ego's sphere of ownness, we can see Crusoe as a kind of existential Everyman, a stand-in for the human being whose being-in-world would be lived out in an embodied self that constitutes its surrounding world as a world of things ready-to-hand. At the "end of the day," the human being can reflect on its engagement in the world and claim it as its own, as the product of its labor and a zone of familiarity, its home.

Robinson's claims to an imperial and even tyrannical domination within his domain, however, challenge the adequacy of this interpretation. Defoe seems to want to make a statement about humankind collectively, perhaps a political statement. Interpretations which straightaway posit Robinson as the prototypical English imperialist may seem closer to the mark than this more individual and existential account of being in the world. There is another problem too. Readers of Heidegger recognize in his later writings a strong critique of the "planetary domination of the essence of technique." In Crusoe's will to dominate the island one may easily see the will to dominate the earth expressed in the essence of technology, so that Robinson's island sojourn would not be an idyll of pre-industrial life in proximity to the earth but rather would become a prefiguring of the collective position of humankind with respect to nature as a whole as technology advances toward its domineering culmination. Without prejudice to a socio-economic-historical reading of Robinson Crusoe and supplementing the individually-focused interpretation of human dealing with the ready-to-hand, I would appropriate what the later Heidegger says and suggest that Crusoe reveals the existential situation of the human being collectively in light of a technological revealing of reality. In the technological way of revealing, "Everything everywhere is ordered to stand by, to be immediately at hand, indeed to stand there just so that it may be on call for a further ordering."⁴² What Heidegger calls the essence of technology is a way in which the being of beings comes to disclose itself. In the essay just quoted, "The Question of Technology," Heidegger says that beings as a whole come to be understood as a standing reserve, or a stock of things available to human ordering; things have their being as beings serviceable to humans. Here the reader recalls reference to Robinson's enclosures and the livestock they contain as available to him for food as needed. In his writings on Nietzsche from 1939–1940, which predate the technology essay, Heidegger traces the origin of this technological revealing of things to the modern age and its metaphysics. "Absolute dominion over the entire earth is the secret goad that prods modern man again and again," Heidegger writes.⁴³ He says that the "relationship to beings is a domineering proceeding into the conquest and domination of the world."⁴⁴ Across three centuries, Heidegger's language, "absolute dominion over the entire earth," resonates with Defoe's: "emperor of the whole country which I had possession of."

Other interpreters have seen Crusoe as the prototypical British imperialist, and that he may well be. This interpretation offers a reading which would point to the ontological bases of human domination of the earth, i.e. a reading that describes the way in which beings and the human being in particular reveal themselves in a domination founded on the essential nature of technology. This interpretation does not rule out an historical one. Indeed, it suggests, on the one hand, that

technological mastery of the earth may be especially significant in accounting for British imperial rule. On the other hand, it enlarges the scope of reference beyond British imperialists to human beings as such insofar as they stand in a certain relationship to beings as a whole and to the earth.

It may be useful at this point to enter a caveat. If Robinson represents the human being in a historical-existential condition defined by the modern age and its technology, this is not to say that he is thereby an exemplar in any ethical or moral sense. Nor does this interpretation mean to say that the condition he embodies is one to which the human being is fated. It goes well beyond the scope of this chapter to explore the question of human freedom in relation to a technology which not only allows for the domination of the earth by humans but also the domination of humans by technology. It suffices for the interpretation ventured here to make the case for reading Defoe as representing the human estate—broadly but *historically* characterized.

One more caveat. Crusoe's self-satisfied domesticity as reflected in passages quoted above may seem to argue against the scope of this interpretation. Nevertheless, Defoe's insistent language of domination and the political idiom he employs—*sovereignty, lord, subjects, liberty, absolute command, rebel*—impel one to go beyond the realm of the individual and the domestic and address the human situation collectively. The reading in terms of technology arguably adds depth and scope to the arguably more evident reference to British imperialism.

The geographicity of this now collective-historical existential account is already intimated in the reference to the "entire earth." At this point, however, I would like to elaborate on how the geo-spatial and existential-phenomenological converge in Defoe's account of Crusoe's relationship to the island.

16.7 Deciphering Crusoe's Geo-Scripting

I will make use of a notion of writing that derives from that of Jacques Derrida, the recently deceased French philosopher associated with deconstruction. A reference to writing may seem adventitious in the extreme until one reads what Derrida has to say about writing and spacing. For Derrida writing is not just a second-order or derivative phenomena, i.e., not just a system of notations on paper that represents an activity beyond the writing itself. By writing, Derrida means, inscription in general, an activity that "distributes in space" and includes political and military activities, including the techniques which govern those domains—indeed, the "essence and content of those activities themselves."⁴⁵ If I understand Derrida correctly, political writing would not just include an after-the-fact transcription of agreements made by nations regarding, for example, the borders of a disputed territory and perhaps a map which represented the new, agreed-upon boundaries, but rather writing would refer to the original distribution or distributing in space of the disputed territory so that the agreement would not simply record and represent what had been agreed upon (verbally/orally) but would itself

be an effectual and original inscription in space, i.e., one establishing a new spatial and political distribution, a new geo-political configuration. Likewise, the map “representing” the new configuration would as much—in fact, would in the first instance—establish a new geo-political configuration. Inscription and its scripto-variants provide a vocabulary for describing an originary way in which the human-being-writer enters into and reconfigures (transcribes?) the space it finds itself in.

Crusoe is arguably a geographer in an originary sense of the term. He is a cartographer who maps his space right onto the things themselves. Cartography and geography, as we usually think of them, are second-order phenomena. If Crusoe is the proto-typical human, then humankind first maps and inscribes its space on the surface of the earth well before the design is ever put to paper in a map. Crusoe’s very first construction project, a shelter or tent to secure himself against “savages and wild beasts” as well as to protect him from the elements, begins when he literally inscribes a space around himself, marking off what will be his place and creating a boundary between himself and the other—at this stage, an unidentified, un-encountered other, but an other felt as threatening.

Before I set up my tent, *I drew a half circle* before the hollow place, which took in about ten yards in its semi-diameter from the rock and twenty yards in its diameter, from its beginning and ending.

In this half circle I pitched two rows of strong stakes, driving them into the ground till they stood firm like piles ...

Then I took the pieces of cable which I had cut in the ship, and them them in rows one upon another, within the circle, between these two rows of stakes.⁴⁶

When his demarcation and construction is finished he writes: “I was completely fenced in, and fortified, as I thought, from all the world.”⁴⁷ Robinson’s first work project already suggests that inscribing a place for oneself is both a foundational labor and an originary geography.

But even this originary “cartography/geography” works from a “mapping” that gives itself to us: a topography, a lay of the land pre-scribes, offers possibilities, poses limits, suggests responses for our human labor. Here the reader of Derrida might object. Derrida sees writing as *imposing* a form. Writing *gives* intelligibility to space. To think of an intelligibility that is already there would suggest that writing is somehow derivative and not original but that it merely represents an order that it finds. Close attention to what Derrida writes about writing shows, however, that the space that is written [upon] is not a *tabula erasa* or a uniform, Cartesian geometric space. Derrida makes clear that this geometric space is itself the product of writing and that the various spaces constituted in the spacing that is writing inscribe themselves in an “always already” instituted space of inscription with its distinctive economy. There is a “pre-cultural” and a “pre-historical” ground of spatio-temporal experience which provides a “universal ground of subjectivity.” Before the inscription of a geometric space, “space orders itself” for the habitation of a body “proper.” Derrida writes: “There still are factors of heterogeneity inside a space to which one and the same ‘proper’ body relates, and therefore there are different, indeed incompatible, economic imperatives, among which one must

choose and among which sacrifices and an organization of hierarchies become necessary ... an original economy is prescribed each time."⁴⁸

The first order of business for Crusoe, a task that precedes his first construction project, is to search out the immediate environs to locate a place that will offer secure shelter.⁴⁹ Later in his sojourn on the island, he will go about the island in order to take in the lay of the land, to orient himself vis-à-vis the landscape. This survey will precede rather ambitious projects, but at first its intent seems to be a disinterested, theoretical survey of the landscape: "I had a great desire to make a more perfect *discovery* of the island and to see what other productions I might *find*."⁵⁰ And so, he speaks of *finding* things and *being surprised* by what he comes across; he also describes in straightforward terms much of what he finds. Crusoe is ready to note whatever features of the landscape simply present "themselves" to him. He inventories the vegetation he discovers, notes changes in topography, and categorizes the landscapes he views in physical terms. A closer reading, however, reveals that his inspection is ever-informed by circumspection. He is not just *looking at* the things about him but *looking about for* what might be of use to him, e.g., wild sugar cane or clusters of grapes. From the outset, he is alert to what will favor his life on the island, including arguably the fertility of the land itself. Crusoe's journey of geographic exploration is antecedent to and preparatory for his eventual inscription of the land and his self-emplacement in the landscape. Exploration anticipates colonization. Before imposing a human design upon the land, there is an attentiveness to the lay of the land itself, as given before, i.e., in a pristine and undeveloped state. His attentiveness to the land is not intent on respecting its pristine character. Attentiveness is not solicitude for the land, rather it is a preamble to a reconfiguration of the land to Crusoe's design and to meet Crusoe's requirements. Robinson respects the land as something which will challenge his wits in imposing his will on it. As he understands it, the land as it is "before" is a "material a priori" to the labor of reconfiguring the earth-space. Thus, even in his first project, Crusoe must take into account from the beginning the pre-given lay of the land before laying out his fortified dwelling. He can only begin demarcating and building his place when he has found the right place. He first looks for and then locates a site. "In search of a place proper for this [secure dwelling] I found a little plain on the side of a rising hill."⁵¹ After finding a site, he can mark it and build upon it. Inspection is guided by a circumspective concern for just those topographies that will suit one or more life purposes. In this Crusoe's (Defoe's) view, then, the earth, is not a blank slate on which one might write whatever one pleases. One must be attentive to its lay—even if our only concern is imposing our designs and our attentiveness to the earth is informed by prior human concerns and purposes. In more explicitly Derridian terms, there is an "original economy" which Crusoe surveys. His circumspection looks ahead to inscribing a habitation for the body proper. That circumscription ranges over a heterogeneous landscape that suggests differing and incompatible ways in which the "body proper" may relate itself to the space it will inscribe. "Body proper" in quotation marks is not defined in the passages which address these geo-spatial/geo-scriptive matters, but the quotation marks suggest that Derrida is using already understood terms, "body"

and “proper”—in a way that keeps its distance from the usual meaning and yet borrows something of that customary meaning. With this in mind, body proper would mean the body itself or the body in its being as body—here, the customary sense of the proper—but, this body proper is not the body all by itself. The body, in other words, has its being in its relationships to its surroundings, surroundings that are heterogeneous and relationships freely, but attentively, inscripted.

In Crusoe, the Heideggerian expression, “being-in-world,” acquires a supplement: being-in-the-world *and* upon-the-earth. Crusoe is grounded, literally. But his relationship to the earth is not at all poetic. The poet Holderlin’s dictum that the human dwells poetically upon the earth, a line upon which Heidegger ponders recurrently, would seem to have no application to Crusoe, whose business-like proprietorship based an investment of long and hard labor upon the land leaves little room or time for poetic musings and sentiments. It is Heidegger’s image of everyday *Dasein* which finds a referent in Crusoe. Crusoe is remarkable for his un-remarkability. His attitude is persistently pragmatic. His values are, by and large, utilitarian. His domain is a political-economy, initially more economic than political. The place he makes for himself on the land of the island is a productive-produced place. Its spatiality is that described by Heidegger in the ready-to-hand: an instrumental totality produced by instrumental action. Distance, the relation of one thing to another, and the meaning of the whole in relation to its fabricator—all of these dimensions of spatiality—are functions of utility.

The result of all his pragmatic spatializing is to produce a realm of things ready-to-hand, things that serve his purposes. But there is more to it: Crusoe’s space is his own: The space he constitutes in his inscriptions upon the earth becomes a “sphere of ownness,” a place of his own of which he is the sovereign. So, Crusoe not only produces an inventory of things of utility or even just an ensemble of same in a certain spatial configuration. Rather, in constituting a world about him, Crusoe constitutes himself as well, as he who holds sway over that space, his place. He announces his accomplishment in one of the quintessential moments of the story, viz., in the passage quoted above wherein he imagines himself a king or emperor as he sits down to eat amid his animal “subjects.” With this image of Crusoe reigning happily amid his subjects, Defoe manages, at one and same time, to describe the human condition in intimate and individual terms as well as in collective and historical terms. This picture of the human estate attains a geographic grounding with Derrida’s notion of writing; all of Robinson’s activities on the island can be understood as geographical in a root sense of the word, i.e., as a writing of the earth that is a writing upon the earth.

16.8 Enter the Nameless Other

It is not long after Robinson Crusoe celebrates his *autarke* that his world is disturbed by the other. Crusoe-in-his-place learns that he is no monad sealed off against alterity. Husserl’s sphere of ownness—itsself the product of a reflective

reduction of everyday experience and a phenomenon analyzed along the way to a full account of subjectivity as intersubjectivity—no longer suffices to describe Crusoe's dwelling on the island nor, by extension, human being-in-the-world. His moment of self-satisfied/self-awareness, of sovereignty triumphant is soon troubled by the trace of the other. The notion of trace provides segue from Derrida to Sartre as a philosophical guide in interpreting the story. A footprint in the sand, a trace of the other, shatters the tranquility of Robinson's sovereign enjoyment of the place he has made for himself. "I was exceedingly surprised with the print of a man's naked foot on the shore ... I stood like one thunderstruck."⁵² The other had from the start been a troubling possibility on the margins of his island existence. On the horizon at no specified or precise distance and at some unpredictable time, there *could be* savages who *could threaten* his life. With the appearance of the footprint the vague possibility of threatening-others at an indeterminate distance from oneself becomes signified in the trace of another. Possibility moves closer to actuality in the physico-spatial inscription. A present signifier points to an absent signified, but the absence is only "for now." Earlier the signified *was present*; later, he/she *may be present* again. A mere possibility acquires a kind of virtual reality: a human foot left its imprint in the sand at a particular time (even if Crusoe may not be able to pinpoint the event); more than this, precise spatial coordinates can be given to the point of the other's incursion in Robinson's domain. That point of incursion becomes the font of an expansive fear that pervades the whole of Crusoe's world-space and provokes a different kind of circumspection than that which preceded the labors which left his mark upon the landscape.

I came home [after seeing the print] to my fortification, not feeling, as we say, the ground I went on but terrified to the last degree, looking behind me at every two or three steps, mistaking every bush and tree, and fancying every stump at a distance to be a man; nor is it possible to describe how many various shapes affrighted imagination represented things to me in, how many wild ideas were found every moment in my fancy, and what strange, unaccountable whimsies came into my thoughts by the way.⁵³

Derrida speaks of the other as a being signified by the trace. The relationship of an entity/other with its other is "marked by the trace." The entity/other is first given in a trace. "The trace must be thought before the entity [other]." The trace, Derrida writes, articulates itself in the entire field of the entity [the other]. With the notion of field we have the suggestion of a spatiality that pertains to the entity, i.e., a spatiality whose sense belongs to the notion of writing which Derrida puts forward. This field of the trace is no space of simple appearance and presence, however. The trace gives the other but not as fully present. The trace gives itself and the other in the "self-occulted movement of the trace." Even as the trace refers to the other, it hides the other so that the other withdraws from view. The notion of trace captures much of what Defoe writes of the other: there but not there, making itself present only to keep to itself. The spatiality or geographicity of the present/absent other is also adumbrated in the Derrida's allusion to the field of the trace, one that is "structured according to the diverse possibilities ... of the trace."⁵⁴ When Defoe writes of an island [space] transfused by fear so that any object in Crusoe's surrounding can be imagined as a threatening presence, it is

possible to read in that text the field of the trace with its possibilities, possible threats and threatening possibilities.

Sartre gives existential-phenomenological amplitude to the way in which the other makes itself known. For Sartre, it is the fixating and paralyzing look of the other that gives the other to me. Lest one think that the look itself is the visible presence of the other to me, Sartre explains that the look is not an object in the world at which I can look. To perceive the look is to feel looked at. Sartre seems to be describing Crusoe when he writes of the look in the following: "What I apprehend immediately when I hear the branches crackling behind me is not that there is someone there; it is that I am vulnerable, that I have a body which can be hurt, that I occupy a place and that I can not in any case escape from the space in which I am without defense—in short, that I am seen."⁵⁵ Sartre understands the look, and therewith the other, as an invisible presence in my surroundings. The look of the other can be felt in the rustling of branches, the movement of a curtain, the sound of a footstep, a white farmhouse at the top of the hill—a farmhouse that bodes danger for soldiers crawling through the brush to attack it.⁵⁶ Not only does the look "inhabit" the landscape but it also serves to situate me in my place, a place that leaves me vulnerable and defenseless. Sartre's very idiom is geo-existential as I have used that expression here. Sartre's look also replicates Derrida's trace in occluding as it gives the other. With Sartre, however, the other looms ominously, threateningly. In virtue of the presence/absence of the other, I become vulnerable, fixated with fear. "With the Other's look the 'situation' escapes me.... I am no longer the master of the situation."⁵⁷ Sartre continues: "Through the Other's look I *live* myself as fixed in the midst of the world, as in danger, as irremediable."⁵⁸

With the trace of a foot in the sand, Robinson seeks to reduce his profile to a minimum, to keep out of view.⁵⁹ As he scans the horizon it is not with a sovereign satisfaction in having untroubled enjoyment of the landscape and its things but with a sense of threat and peril. Robinson comes to inhabit a tensional landscape, one in which the self defines itself in fear and hostility vis-à-vis the other rather than by virtue of its dominion over things. Before, the calm arc of a sovereign gaze claimed its space in a radius that described a sphere of ownness from its zero point of origin. Now, the space is polarized by fear and marked by boundaries setting one from another. The once and would-be sovereign is dis-placed from his untroubled position of centrality and the locus of the footprint becomes a new zero-point of origin, outside of Crusoe, constituting the space of an island saturated with fear and harboring the threat of the other (or the other as threat). Eventually, Crusoe does battle with "the other," inhabitants of another land who come from time to time to the island to sacrifice and devour one of their numbers. In several engagements at different times, Crusoe survives and triumphs over enemies and apparently over his fear. The landscape never returns to the status of a tranquil domain under his untroubled dominion, but neither is it suffused with fear. The claim to possession is secured by force of arms. The tale of Crusoe's engagement with the enemy/other reads like an adventure yarn and suggests the story of British imperial conquest. Doubtless one could make more of this portion of

the narrative from a philosophical viewpoint and possibly from a geo-existential standpoint like that taken in this chapter. What I will retain from the post-footprint narrative is a sense of other that emerges in it. To that sense of other, I will add one more.

16.9 Enter Friday

Before the story ends yet another [kind of] other will come into the scene. This is one embodied in the man who Crusoe will call Friday. On first seeing him at a distance, Robinson feels fear.⁶⁰ But Robinson realizes that Friday is being chased by cannibals and decides to rescue him and acquire a servant in the bargain. Robinson receives Friday, but only on unequal terms. With benign intentions, Crusoe converts and subordinates Friday, who becomes Robinson's servant. There is a brief moment when Crusoe affirms Friday's humanity, the essential equality of the "poor savage" Friday and his kind with Robinson and his. It is worth quoting the passage even though the view of the other it expresses is exceptional and appears to be contradicted by other characterizations.

He [God] has bestowed upon them [Friday and others like him] the same powers, the same reason, the same affections, the same sentiments of kindness and obligation, the same passions and resentments of wrongs, the same sense of gratitude, sincerity, fidelity, and all the capacities of doing good and receiving good that He has given to us [Englishmen, Europeans].⁶¹

While Robinson confesses that his reflections on the essential equality of all human beings makes him "melancholy" at times, he does not seem troubled about the status he accords to Friday in his day-to-day dealings with him. For the most part, Crusoe sees Friday as a "faithful, loving, sincere servant" who relates to Crusoe as "a child to a father."⁶² Friday becomes the object of Crusoe's project "to make him useful, handy, and helpful."⁶³

Neither the character Crusoe nor the author Defoe reconciles the reflective and practical understandings of the other/subaltern, Friday. Both views co-exist side by side. Robinson's initial suspicion of Friday's cannibal "tastes" does not entirely disappear, but neither is Crusoe's respect for Friday ever discredited by events even as Crusoe happily patronizes his subaltern. Before the end of Crusoe's long sojourn on the island, Friday, Robinson, and later Friday's father and a Spanish-speaking castaway who both join Robinson and Friday, make a society among themselves. In this society, however, Robinson is sovereign once again.

My island was now peopled, and I thought myself very rich in subjects; and it was a merry reflection, which I frequently made, how like a king I looked. First of all, the whole country was my own mere property, so that I had an undoubted right of dominion. Secondly, my people were perfectly subjected. I was absolute lord and lawgiver; they all owed their lives to me, and were ready to lay down their lives, if they had been occasion of it, for me.⁶⁴

Who can read this passage and not be reminded of the earlier one so much like it in which Crusoe holds court over his animal subjects—none of them human? This almost-mirror image, however, includes among Crusoe's subjects, "his people." His people are obviously meant to be understood as subjects, i.e., as subjugated. The metaphor of imperialism is, of course, unmistakable, whichever way Defoe may have wanted his readers to regard it, positively or negatively. Phenomenologically and existentially, it illustrates the bind into which Sartre's notion of the other leads:

We have learned that the Other's existence was experienced with evidence in and through the fact of my objectivity [my being made into an object by the Other's look]. We have seen also that my reaction to my own alienation for the Other was expressed in my grasping the Other as an object. In short, the Other can exist for us in two forms: if I experience him with evidence [in/as the look], I fail to know him; if I know him, if I act upon him, I only reach his being-as-object and his probable existence in the midst of the world. No syntheses of the two forms is possible.⁶⁵

If we take Crusoe as Sartre would have us, then he either sees the Other as a threat to his selfhood or as an object in the midst of the world, i.e. his own world. The other, in the "political space" that has now opened up, is like other things on Crusoe's island, subject to his rule. The island as a proper political space has a sovereign Subject and his subjects. Here now is a topography with elevation: highs and lows defined by subjecting and subjectedness. One is above, all others are below. A combination of benign-command, solicitude, and education-to-civilization make up the regime that sets things and keep things in order.

16.10 Defoe's Symbolism: What It Says and How It Works

If Crusoe is a symbol for humankind and the island for the human estate, then what do these symbols say? What do they leave out of account? What do they falsify? It is the argument here that Defoe gives us, his readers, a symbol of the human condition in his story of Robinson Crusoe; he purports to tell us how it is for human beings. It is not the argument here that his account is complete. Indeed, in many cases it may be quite wrong and reflect a view of the condition of humankind that tells us more about the worldview of Defoe and his contemporaries than about the lot of humankind. Nonetheless, if the view is limited, as it assuredly is, it is a limited view *of the whole* of human being in the world and it surely tempts us to assume its ambition to reflect upon our common human geography. If we are inclined to think that Defoe's account reflects the prevailing historical view of his age, then perhaps we should ask whether that history continues to prevail. The intent here is to interpret Robinson Crusoe as presenting a view of the human condition, a view that lends itself readily to expression in geo-existential terms. It goes beyond the scope of this effort to reflect on whether Defoe's geo-existential view is right about the human estate. That view may seem quite wrong in many ways. If this interpretation has merit, however, Defoe "makes his case" in existential terms

and, presumably, if one wanted to challenge his view one could and should have recourse to a geo-existential phenomenology.

Aside from particular aspects of Defoe's view, if the island is a symbol of the human condition, then it suggests that place and earth have something to do with what it means to be human and that we should look outside ourselves to the earth we inhabit and the world we make of it to better understand who we are. "The truth is out there": we make ourselves on the landscape of that peculiar place in which we find ourselves. Our [human] place is strange and solitary, by Defoe's account. Thrownness seems to define its geography. We must find our bearings within it, set our mark upon it, and co-exist with others who cross the space we might claim for ourselves. Are we really alone and abandoned and at war or on guard with others? When, in the story, Robinson is most alone, his want of society—simple conversation, the other on a par with self—seems the strongest. And yet, when actual others enter into his life on the island, they are enemies, subalterns, or instruments of deliverance from the island. Is Robinson a hero and is his behavior a model of humanity? Or is he everyman, a mirror of the good, the bad, and the ugly that "are us"?

The basis of this existential-geographical interpretation might become clearer if we think about how the metaphor or symbolization works in Defoe's narrative. The history of the metaphor disposes us to look from the sensible to the intelligible, from the here-and-now of the signifier to the always-and-everywhere of a signified. The metaphor or symbol is a verbal and vertical pointer to a conceptual truth and, to an ideal, an "ought." Metaphor extended into narrative becomes allegory and with that we are admonished and instructed, addressed for edification.

Defoe's story is a matter-of-fact account of a fictional place. If we are right, the seemingly factual fiction symbolizes the "facticity" of our human condition. "Facticity" signifies the essential givenness of our human condition, our fate, what is unavoidable in our being human beings. Fictional places have served as metaphor and symbol in the past: the republic of Plato, Moore's utopia. The challenge of the writer/philosopher was to use imagination and language to fashion an attractive alternative reality. The alternative might also serve, or serve primarily, to put existing human social relations into a critical light. So, the creation of an imagined reality very different from the lived reality of the time did not entail a detachment from that historical reality. Any such relationship, however, would be that of an "ought" to an "is."

With Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, fictional characters and events are made to seem factual and the fact that the writing is fiction is obscured by a style of writing that is so matter-of-fact that its fictionality hides itself. In the preface Defoe writes, "The editor believes the thing to be a just history of fact; neither is there any appearance of fiction in it."⁶⁶ The title page of the first edition reads:

The Life and Strange Surprizing Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, of York, Mariner: Who lived Eight and Twenty Years, all alone in an un-inhabited Island on the Coast of America, near the Mouth of the Great River of Oroonoke; Having been cast on Shore by Shipwreck, wherein all the Men perished but himself. WITH an Account how he was at last as strangely delivered by PYRATES. Written by Himself.⁶⁷

The title page and the “editor’s” preface both give the impression that the story is fact and not fiction. Absent these ruses, however, it is likely that the very style of writing alone would have given the impression that Robinson Crusoe was “just a history of fact.” A late eighteenth century commentator said:

His imagination was fertile, strong, and lively, as may be collected from his many works of fancy, particularly his Robinson Crusoe, which was written in so natural a manner, and with so many probable incidents, that, for some time after its publication, it was judged by most people to be a true story.⁶⁸

The simulation of the factual goes with a dissimulation of the very fictionalizing which creates a seemingly actual history. Why all this [dialectical] authorial labor? The argument here is that the writing strategy described here makes the most sense if we accept a novel notion of metaphor or symbol. If the narrative and its place-symbol, Crusoe’s island, are not meant to transport us “vertically” to another, higher reality but rather to throw us readers “horizontally” back upon ourselves, to abruptly set us down into the place where we are already, albeit unthinkingly, so that we may take account of our situation, then the matter-of-fact style is best suited to that intent. Recognition of Crusoe as a human being like ourselves and his world as a plausible likeness of ours, i.e., as a human world, albeit one of exceptional challenges, works to bring about the horizontal “transport” which symbolism and metaphor, as suggested here, is meant to effect. The style of the narrative and its “true to life” quality lend credibility to the notion that the narrative and the island-symbol are meant to tell us something about how it is for us human beings, how we stand in relation to the world and to each other. To recap: the matter-of-fact style supports a manner of symbolizing (horizontal) which warrants an interpretation of the island as a metaphor of the human estate.

None of this is to say that Defoe did not mean to editorialize. Even a casual reader senses that the fictional events are carefully selected to make points, i.e., to hold up some behaviors for admiration and others for disapprobation. Contemporaries of Defoe derive varying moral lessons from the account. Up to the present, various critics and theorists have used the text to affirm points of ideology and philosophy. This fact of the novel’s reception, that it was taken to have lessons and a significance beyond that of the narrative content, is important to note. It suggests that a symbolic reading of the text is justified.

To be sure, many have read Robinson Crusoe as an entertaining adventure yarn. And, so it is. But, it is more than that and it is this author’s hope that the interpretation made here is not only plausible and illuminating, but also one that justifies taking the story symbolically in the first place.

What is distinctive about the use of symbol here is that operates, “horizontally.” Among the many readings of Robinson Crusoe put forward over three centuries, there are those which hold up its principal character as a hero, and from these readings we might conclude the story operates as allegory, taking us from the “is” to the “ought”—moving “vertically,” per the distinction made here. Robinson would be a modern-era Everyman, exhibiting modern-era virtues, as Everyman exhibits medieval virtues for emulation. There is room for allegorical/vertical

readings, but the detailed and factually plausible narrative does not restrict our reading and point us to a "right" conclusion in the way that a simple allegory does. On the contrary, it opens itself up to many interpretations on the premise that Defoe is telling us how it is with us humans. Defoe undoubtedly reflects his worldview in the work. In giving an account of the human condition, however, any intentional or inadvertent "bias" does not discount the sense of the narrative with respect to its purport, i.e., a would-be description of how-it-is for us humans. Moreover, it would seem to be possible and worthwhile for a reader to critique any bias vis-à-vis the text itself or in relation to the reader's own reflective understanding of the human condition. That there are many ways of reading the text and understanding the working of its symbolism (if one accepts that it symbolizes in the first place!) attests to the power of a matter-of-fact narrative to invite and support a plurality of readings. The breadth of interpretations suggests a scope of reference in the narrative, a scope which, in its literary ambitions and intent, is as broad as life. Thus, if Defoe, in the *persona* of Crusoe, provides a rich and detailed account of life over a lifetime and describes it in its limit-situations and in its everydayness, can we help but conclude that he wants us to consider what life as lived is about?

The interpretation here suggests an existential-geographical take on the text. The case for such a reading has been made. And, in this last part of the paper the effort is made to see how symbolization, operating horizontally, supports such an interpretation. There is yet one more point to be made. Before concluding, this is worth noting and reflecting upon: the horizontal *operation of symbolization* is itself both existential and geographical, as we have used these terms. The factual-like circumstances of the fictional character enable us to see the facticity of the human condition. Facticity is the name for finding ourselves in a world not of our making (but which we must make something of). It is the symbolizing that operates in Defoe's matter-of-fact-like narrative that delivers us over to the facticity of the human condition. In this sense, then, the symbolizing, and not just the symbolic content, can be said to be existential: it throws us readers into a world not of our making, or rather, reminds us that that is where we find ourselves.

Likewise, the horizontal character of the symbolizing can be characterized as geographic. The symbolic movement traces a path from one place to another in a way that ultimately offers an account of what it means to make one's place in the world and on the earth. As fiction, the narrative dis-places us readers from our factual condition, our everyday concerns and involvements; we enter into Robinson's world, we land with him upon the island. The narrative does not remove us from the world we inhabit as humans but allows us to see the human world as a whole through the eyes of the castaway Crusoe. The unifying symbol, the island, is geographical and many of the key narrative events are geographical, as we have seen. But there is more. The very operation of symbolizing is geographical as well, transporting us readers into a territory so that we may survey and map its principal features, even as we retrace the work of Crusoe in making his place on the island.

No map is equivalent to its territory. An existential cartography, as any other, will leave out more than it includes in its "maps." If the territory in question has

already been mapped by Defoe, then the interpretation undertaken in this paper would be a map of a map and we would be two steps removed from the truth of the matter. But any map, including a second-hand map, is for orientation. If this interpretation has merit, then Crusoe, for all his faults, offers himself as a guide to the human estate, or perhaps his story is a cautionary tale and his map offers warning signs.

Notes

- 1 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, Para 74: 434–439.
- 2 Defoe, “Preface to Volume III, Robinson Crusoe,” 240.
- 3 Novak, *Defoe and the Nature of Man*, 309–310.
- 4 Marx, *Capital*, 274–275.
- 5 Rousseau, *Emilius and Sophia*, 262.
- 6 Joyce, “Daniel Defoe,” 323.
- 7 Wolfe, “Robinson Crusoe,” 282.
- 8 Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, 43–44.
- 9 Ibid., 44.
- 10 Ibid., 45.
- 11 Ibid., 68.
- 12 Sartre, Jean Paul, *Being and Nothingness*, 484–485.
- 13 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, Para 50: 293–296.
- 14 Ibid., Para 65, 370–380.
- 15 Defoe, *Crusoe*, 34.
- 16 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, Para 30 and 40: 179–182, 228–235.
- 17 Ibid., Para. 29: 172–179.
- 18 Ibid.
- 19 Defoe, *Crusoe*, 45.
- 20 Ibid., 74.
- 21 Ibid., 64–65.
- 22 Ibid., 47–49.
- 23 Pufendorf, *Law of Nature*, 313.
- 24 Defoe, *Crusoe*, 58.
- 25 Ibid., 98.
- 26 Ibid., 101, 142–144.
- 27 Ibid., 125.
- 28 Ibid., 148.
- 29 Ibid., 142–144.
- 30 Ibid., 142.
- 31 Ibid., 142–143.
- 32 Ibid., 143–144.
- 33 Ibid., 144.
- 34 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, Para 18B–19: 122–125.

- 35 Ibid., Para 15–16: 95–107.
- 36 Ibid., Para 21C–22: 135.
- 37 Ibid., Para 15: 98.
- 38 Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, 104–105.
- 39 Ibid., 110.
- 40 Ibid.
- 41 Ibid., 93.
- 42 Heidegger, *Question Concerning Technology*, 17.
- 43 Heidegger, *Nietzsche, Nihilism*, 99.
- 44 Ibid., 120.
- 45 Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 9.
- 46 Defoe, *Crusoe*, 57–58.
- 47 Ibid., 58.
- 48 Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 288.
- 49 Defoe, *Crusoe*, 57.
- 50 Ibid., 95–96.
- 51 Ibid., 57.
- 52 Ibid., 149–150.
- 53 Ibid., 150.
- 54 Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 47.
- 55 Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 259.
- 56 Ibid., 257–258.
- 57 Ibid., 265.
- 58 Ibid., 268.
- 59 Defoe, *Crusoe*, 170–171.
- 60 Ibid., 194.
- 61 Ibid., 202–203.
- 62 Ibid., 202.
- 63 Ibid., 203.
- 64 Ibid., 232.
- 65 Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 302.
- 66 Defoe, *Crusoe*, 2.
- 67 Defoe, *Daniel Defoe*, 2.
- 68 Cibber, “The Success of Robinson Crusoe,” 261–262.

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Index

- 'awa, 104–06
- Abraham, 67–70, 72, 75
- Abram, David, 188, 202–03
- Abrams, M. H., 346
- Académie des Sciences, 243
- Academy of Argonauts, 115
- actual, 11, 22, 27, 36, 45, 111–12, 114, 121, 123, 139, 161, 164, 168–69, 206–07, 214–15, 222, 227, 229, 251–52, 255, 259, 267, 283, 301, 323, 326–28, 342, 363, 367, 383–84
- Aegean Sea, 115, 119, 121, 123, 125
- aesthesis of everyday experience, 287
- aestheticization, 266, 301
- aesthetics, 223, 265, 268–69, 276, 283, 285, 288–89, 300, 351
- Agamemnon, 110
- Agua Caliente Band, 47, 51, 56
- Alberti, Leon Battista, 24, 117
- Alexander the Great, 110, 114, 117, 120–21, 125, 127
- Alexander VII Chigi, Pope, 117–18, 126
- Alexandria, 110
 - Pharos of, 110, 119
- allegory of the street, 178
- alterity, 378
- ambiguity, 11–12, 71, 139–40, 152, 193, 207–09, 212, 218, 266, 269
- American Basilica, 180
- Americanization, 99, 102
- Andreas Canyon, 51, 53, 57
- anthropocentric
 - approach, 307
 - appropriation, 283, 288, 293–94
- anthropocentrism, 288, 316, 318
- anxiety, 180, 224, 274, 340, 363, 365–68
- Apology Bill, 100, 102, 106
- Appalachian Trail, 26, 65, 75–76, 79–80
- Appollonius Rhodius, 110
- aquifer, 39–40, 43, 47–48, 52, 54
- Argonauts, 115
- arid, 38, 40, 42, 47–49, 54, 67, 77
- Aristotle, 328
- Arnaz, Desi, 42
- Atget, 269
- atria, 193
- attunement, 15–17, 28, 33, 101, 185–86, 188, 190, 198, 205–06, 283, 296, 300–01
- Auden, W. H., 270
- Australia, 27, 161–62, 164, 170, 194, 196
- autarke*, 363, 378
- Avenue at White Marsh, The, 174–75
- axis mundi*, 26, 68–70, 72–75, 86
- Bachelard, Gaston, 185, 202–03
- Backhaus, Gary, 3, 34–35, 93–94, 101–02, 106, 126, 161, 165, 168, 170, 173, 175, 178, 187–88, 202, 205, 223, 228, 253, 256, 267, 283, 324
- Baltimore, 175, 180–81, 284
- Basho, 305–07
- Bast, Peter, 260
- Battersby, Christine, 276
- Bean, Lowell, 35, 50–51, 55
- Beethoven, Ludwig von, 339–41, 344, 346–47, 349–56
- behavior, 11, 16–20, 25, 93, 103, 133, 194, 209, 214, 251, 256, 272, 383
 - amovable forms, 17
 - symbolic forms, 17, 177
 - syncretic forms, 17
- Behnisch & Partner Architects, 192
- being-ahead of oneself, 339
- being-in-the-world, 18, 194, 340, 363, 366, 368, 370, 372, 378–79
- being-of-the-earth, 284
- being-towards-death, 339
- being-with, 363
- Belon, Pierre, 122
- Berea College, 191
- Berg, Anton, 353
- Bergson, Henri, 153
- Berthier, Louis Alexandre, 311
- Bierstadt, Albert, 73
- bilaterality, 21
- biophilia, 283–88, 301
- biospheric unity, 294
- Blackbird Architects, 192
- Boccaccio, Giovanni, 328
- bodily comportment, 185, 265, 268, 275
- body schema, 15–16, 18, 20, 22–23, 25–26, 33, 65, 91, 101–02, 105, 173, 175, 179, 185–86, 188, 205–07, 209, 214, 217, 220, 265, 267, 323
- body schemata, 207, 209, 214

- Body:Landscape, 208
 bodywork, 312–13
 Bogert, Frank, 41
 Bolland, Andrea, 254
 Borchardt, Frank L., 328
 bounding, 196–97
 Bradford, William, 73
 Brahms, Johannes, 353
 Braque, Georges, 324
 Brecht, Bertolt, 270
 Bretkopf, C. G., 349, 351
 Breughel, Gerrit Hendrickszoon van, 257
 Breughel, Peter, The Elder, 257
 bricoleuse, 276
 Brink Goldsmith, Jane ten, 254
 British Imperialism, 375
 Brown, G. Z., 189, 202–03, 252
 Bruckner, Anton, 355
 building, 7, 41, 45–46, 92, 96–97, 101,
 117, 133, 148, 151, 165, 169, 186,
 189–200, 216, 243, 255–56, 271,
 289, 325, 327, 330, 377
 Buondelmonti, Cristoforo, 114–16
 Burke, Edmund, 74, 289
 Buytewech, William Pieterszoon, 256–57
 Byron, Lord, 121

 cabotage, 110
 Cahuilla, 26, 35, 47–57
 camp, 77, 103, 134, 138–41, 144, 147–50
 Canaan, 68–70, 75
 Canadian–Hudsonian Zone, 48
 capitalism, 45–46, 49, 94, 96, 98, 106, 190,
 300
 Carmichael, Hoagy, 41
 carnival, 27, 119, 133–43, 145–46, 148,
 150–53
 Cartesian paradigm, 208
 cartography, 114, 228, 230, 245, 259–60,
 376, 385
 cartouche, 228–30, 232–33, 235, 237,
 242–45
 Casalis, 313
 Casey, Edward S., 22, 111, 199, 202–03,
 209
 casino economy, 56
 Caspian Sea, 114
 Cassirer, Ernst, 13–14
 castaway, 363, 365, 367–68, 381, 385
 Castor and Pollux, 325
 Cathedral City, 38
 Catinat, Marshal, 237–38
 Caucasus, 114
 Cavanagh, Bert, 42
 Cecil, William, 39, 239

 Celebration, Florida, 151–52
 Census Designated Place, 147
 ceremony, 26, 91–92, 94, 102–07, 169
 Certeau, Michel de, 266
 Chailley, Jacques, 345
 Chalcidic peninsula, 126
 Charron, Jean Jacques, 242–43
 Chersonese, 113
 Chili, 175, 324, 328, 332
 Choiseul–Gouffier, Compté, 123–25
chora, 69, 86, 141
 Christianity, 98, 106, 110, 232, 346
 Church, Frederick, 73, 196, 344–45
 Cicero, 324, 326, 331–32
 circulating reference, 125
 circumspection, 342, 363, 377, 379
 Cixous, Hélène, 266, 268
 Clark, Kenneth, 218, 256
 Clarke, G. N. G., 229–30, 232
 Classics, 111, 121
 co–constitutive
 agencies, 26, 107, 207, 209
 field, 19
 Coachella Valley, 26, 33, 35–38, 40,
 43–48, 52–55
 Colbert, Jean Baptiste Antoine, 243–44
 Cole, Thomas, 73
 collective memory, 330–32
 colonization, 99, 101, 377
 Colorado Desert, 38
 Colorado River, 38, 40–41
 Colossus of Rhodes, 119
 commodification of the landscape, 285,
 300
 commodity, 36, 46, 49, 98, 182, 270, 283,
 300–01
communitas, 26, 81–82, 84, 86
 community, 27, 41–42, 66, 80–81, 85, 101,
 104, 106, 110, 135, 138, 141–42,
 145–49, 151–53, 161, 165, 167–68,
 170–71, 175–77, 183, 192, 199, 232,
 329–32
 comportment, 21, 102–03, 266–68, 284,
 339–40, 363
 concept–formation, 3
 conjecture, 151
 consecration, 68, 96–97, 105
 Cooper, James Fenimore, 73, 352
 Coronelli, Vincenzo, 115
 Cortona, Pietra da, 117–18
 Cosgrove, Denis E., 7, 9, 13, 26, 34,
 36–37, 45–46, 49, 52–53, 55–56,
 173
 cosmographies, 114
 counter–aesthetic, 266–67, 276–77

- Crang, Mike, 127
 creative possibilities, 17
 Cropsey, Jasper Francis, 73
 Crosby, Bing, 41
 Crusoe, Robinson, 224, 363–86
 cultivation, 216, 223
 cultivation, 284, 302, 305, 325
 cultural values, 8, 11, 93, 228
 Curtin University, 164
 Curtis, Barry, 272
- Dampier, William, 231
 Daniels, Stephen, 9–10, 46, 163
 das Man, 339
 Dasein, 224, 339–40, 368–69, 378
 data architecture, 333
 Davies, Douglas, 10
 death, 22, 57, 68, 71, 96–97, 99, 139,
 163–64, 166–67, 224, 230, 243, 284,
 308, 317, 325, 329, 339–45, 347–56,
 365–68
 prospect of, 365–66
 deathscape, 224, 339–41, 343–45, 347–51,
 353, 356
 Dee, John, 240
 Defoe, Daniel, 224, 231, 363–64, 366–71,
 373–75, 377–79, 381–86
 Deleuze, Gilles, 194, 202–03
 Delisle, Guillaume, 231–32, 244
 Derrida, Jacques, 375–80
 Descartes, René, 13, 210–11, 213–14, 313,
 372
 design culture, 190–91
 despair, 349, 366–68
 Dewey, John, 193, 199, 202–03
 dimensionality, 22, 94, 209, 333
 Dinocrates, 110–11, 114, 116–17, 121, 127
 Dinocratic colossus, 119–20, 122, 126
 directionality, 22, 209, 215
 Dodwell, Edward, 121
 domesticity, 133, 375
 domination, 228, 244–45, 373–75
 double pre-understanding, 309
 Drake, Francis, 240
 Drexler, Dorä, 9–10
 Duchamp, Marcel, 276
 Dufrenne, Mikel, 221
 Durand, Aher B., 73
 duration, 146, 151, 153, 284
 Dutch Institute for Nature Research, 192
- earth–sky relationship, 23, 35
 EarthBody, 13, 19–20, 23, 25–26, 33, 65,
 69, 79, 83–85, 107, 209, 213
 Eco, Umberto, 4–5
- ecology, 26, 46, 199, 223, 285, 288–89
 écriture féminine, 268, 273
 Eden, 41, 115, 346
 Egypt, 39, 68, 70–72, 75
 Eisengerg, Evan, 69
 ek–stasis, 15, 26, 91, 107, 209
 El Mirador, 41
 Elaeus, 113
 elemental facing, 51, 311
 Eliade, Micea, 68–69, 73
 embodied, 13–14, 16, 18, 20–21, 25–28,
 33, 35–37, 49, 54, 65, 67, 69, 83, 86,
 91–94, 102, 109, 112, 126, 142,
 161, 168, 173, 178–79, 185, 187–89,
 191, 194, 196, 200, 205–06, 209,
 213–14, 216–17, 223–24, 227, 265,
 267, 269, 272, 276, 278, 283–86,
 295–96, 301–02, 312, 320, 323, 350,
 374, 381
 embodiment, 8, 13–14, 16, 18, 28, 33, 69,
 101–05, 109, 111, 114, 133, 161,
 168, 175, 187–88, 200, 205–06, 209,
 214–17, 222, 227, 251, 267, 283–84,
 288, 293, 296, 312, 317
 Emodian range, 114
 enactive geography, 305, 323
 enactment, 13, 20, 35, 75, 91, 93, 105, 109,
 126, 142, 151, 161–63, 165, 168,
 170, 173, 175, 178, 188, 199, 205,
 207, 216, 222–23, 227, 265, 285,
 290, 305, 320, 323, 339
 encampment, 197
 Enlightenment, 25, 122, 340–41, 344–45
 entailments, 28, 186, 188, 190
 environment, 11, 22, 26, 33–35, 37–39, 41,
 43, 45, 47–48, 50, 52–55, 66, 70, 79,
 94, 113, 135, 148, 150–51, 153,
 176–78, 180, 182, 190–92, 194, 197,
 199, 223, 251, 258, 266, 269, 271,
 273, 276–77, 283, 288–89, 292, 294,
 296–97, 299–300, 349, 352, 368
 environmental, 9, 25, 28, 41, 54, 97, 100,
 176, 185–86, 188–91, 195–96,
 198–200, 223, 288, 293, 300, 302
 era, 74, 98–99, 251, 353, 384
 essentialism, 36, 320
 Esterházy Court, 343
 ethos, 199–200
 Europe, 34, 36, 42, 54, 81, 112, 114–15,
 119, 121–22, 164, 222, 227, 230,
 233, 245, 254, 270, 317, 330, 340,
 352
 European Union, 192
 event, 13, 18, 25, 35, 72, 91–92, 102–07,
 136–37, 142, 152–53, 164, 167, 192,

- 194, 197, 206, 209, 212, 223–24,
 243, 245, 257, 290–91, 293, 302,
 305, 321, 325–26, 328, 350, 379
 everydayness, 164, 385
 existential geography, 224, 363
 existential phenomenology, 339, 364–65,
 371, 383
 existentialism, 367, 369
 existentialistic, 367
 existentiality of care, 284

f/64, 271
 face to face, 310–12, 320
 facticity, 383, 385
 fantasia, 254
 felt experience, 33, 206, 265, 285–86, 296
 female Other, 278
 feminine embodiment, 265–66
 feminine sense of space, 273
 feminist photographer, 265, 276
 Fer, Nicolas de, 230
 Ferris wheel, 134, 141–45
 Fertile Crescent, 67
 fictitious capital, 46, 56
 field of perception, 207–08, 218
 Fischer, von Erlach, Johann Bernard,
 119–20
 Flanders, 252, 259, 261
 Fontainebleau, 119
 Fraker, Harrison, 197, 202–03
 France, 42–43, 111, 203, 228, 230–35,
 238, 241, 243, 252, 341
 Fredrik, Johan, 349
 Freedberg, David, 257
 Freemasonry, 344–45
 frontispiece, 230, 234, 239
 Fuller, Peter, 9
 furnishings, 189, 195–96
 fusuma, 195

 Gay, Peter, 348, 353
 gaze, 122–23, 126, 266–68, 272, 284, 380
 Geck, Martin, 346
 Geertz, Clifford, 185–86, 202–03
 Geiringer, Karl, 342, 349, 354
 gendered landscape, 265
 gendered spatiality, 274
 genetic phenomenology, 12
 genius loci, 33, 35, 37, 39, 48–49, 54, 65,
 224, 295–97, 299–01, 339–40
 geographical turn, 6, 12, 25, 212, 305, 363
 geographicity, 6–7, 12–16, 18, 22, 25, 35,
 93–94, 161–62, 164, 170, 185,
 205–07, 212, 219, 224, 227

 of mapping, 227, 265–66, 305,
 323–24, 363–64, 369–70, 375,
 379
 geography of the imagination, 109, 173,
 211, 217–18, 220, 229, 269, 283,
 323, 363
 geography of perception, 126, 173, 222,
 227, 253
 Geophilia, 3, 6, 12–13
 Gerstl, Richard, 350
 gestural meaning, 15, 165, 188, 214
 gestural theory of language, 14, 102
 gesture, 15, 17, 19–20, 25, 52, 65, 185,
 188, 192, 206, 209, 214–15, 367
 gesture, embodied, 16, 33, 161–62
 Ghilberti, Buonaccorso, 117
 ghost gesture, 20, 22, 214–15, 323
 Giant's Camp, 134–36, 138–141, 145
 Giblett, Rod, 266
 Gibson, Walter, 252
 Gibsonton, Florida, 27, 133–42, 144–54
 Gizah, pyramid of, 122
 Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von, 328, 348,
 350–53
 Goffman, Erving, 206
 Grand Tourists, 119
 graveyard memorial, 165
 Greece, 110–11, 115, 119, 121–23
 Greek War of Independence, 121
 greenness, 198
 Grider, Sylvia, 164–65, 169
 Grosz, Elizabeth, 269
 grounding, 3, 7, 26, 45, 208, 378
 Gurwitsch, Aron, 8

 Hägerstrand, Torsten, 93
 Hakluyt, Richard, 240
 Halbwachs, Maurice, 331
 handwork, 312–13, 319
 Hansen, Mark, 192, 202–04
 Harley, J. B., 8, 228, 260, 292, 301
 Harpers Ferry, 77, 84
 Harries, Karsten, 197, 202–03
 Harris, Phil, 41
 Harvey, David, 34, 45–46, 221
 Hau'ofa, Epeli, 93
 Hawaiian Islands, 92, 94, 98
 Hawaiian renaissance, 102
 Hawkins, John, 240
 Haydn, Joseph, 339, 341–43, 345, 347,
 349, 353–54
heiau, 91–92, 94, 97, 101–02, 104–05
 Heidegger, Martin, 339, 364, 367–69,
 371–74, 378

- Heiligenstadt, 349–50, 352
 Hellenic ideal, 121
 Hellespont, 113
 hermeneutical form, 79
herms, 137
 Herodotus, 110, 113–14, 122–23, 125
 hiddenness, 318
 Hiller, Ferdinand, 356
 Hine, Virginia, 166
 historical amnesia, 174
 Hofman, Leopold, 345
 Hofmann, Paul, 340, 345, 347
 Hogenberg, Franz, 260
 Hollanda, Francesco de, 252
 Hollar, Wenceslas, 241
 Holy Mountain, 110, 121–22
 home, 20, 22, 27, 34, 52, 68, 70, 133–34, 136–39, 142, 145–46, 148–54, 169, 197, 228, 233, 243, 260, 291–92, 306, 365, 369, 374, 379
 Homer, 110, 122, 240
 homesite, 140
 homo faber, 369–70
 Hooke, Robert, 231, 240
 Hope, Bob, 41, 221
 hubris, 27, 111, 113
 human condition, 217–18, 224, 284, 345, 350, 363–70, 378, 382–83, 385
 human estate, 363–67, 369–70, 375, 378, 382, 384, 386
 humanistic geography, 208, 212, 323
 Humphreys, David, 348
 Husserl, Edmund, 218, 371, 373, 378

 icon, 5, 8, 113, 120, 137, 290
 Ida, 122
Iliad, 110
 Illich, Ivan, 166–69
 image, 5, 7–9, 16, 49, 68, 104, 113–14, 145, 150, 152–53, 165, 177, 197, 214, 223, 228–29, 231–34, 238–40, 242, 245, 267, 271, 273–274, 276, 293, 311, 331, 333, 344, 350, 378, 382
 imaginatio creatrix, 220
 imagination, 10, 20, 27, 45, 66, 69, 72–73, 109–11, 114, 117, 119, 122–23, 125–26, 168, 178, 185, 187, 199, 205, 207–08, 210–13, 215–17, 220–24, 227, 229, 251, 253, 261, 266, 283, 295–96, 299, 316–18, 323–24, 327, 332, 346, 351, 379, 383–84
 imagineering, 161, 168, 170, 173, 176, 227
 imagining body, 214–15
 imagining body, 265
 implacement, 22, 209
 in–corporation, 15, 18, 20, 26, 91
 inauthenticity, 339
 indexical, 5
 Indian Portero, 52
 Indian Wells, 26, 33–35, 37–42 44–47, 49, 51–52, 54
 Indian Wells Country Club, 42
 Indian Wells Racquet Club, 47
 Inness, George, 73
 Innis, Robert E., 5
 innovation, 186, 200, 253–54, 261
 insecurity, 275
 instant environment machine, 299–300
 instrumental totality, 372, 378
 intellectualism, 14, 25, 320
 interconnection of perception and imagination, 206
 interrelation, actual/virtual, 14–15, 109, 162, 187–88, 205–07, 214, 216–17, 222–24, 251, 253, 285
 intertwining, 15–16, 67, 70, 82–83, 91, 110, 126, 168, 178, 197, 213, 222–24, 227, 265, 339
 Ionian Sea, 121
 Irigaray, Lucy, 268
 islands, 93, 96–102, 175
 Isocrates, 113
isolari, 114
 Italy, 42, 111, 118, 252, 254
 itinerancy, 133, 135, 151–53

 Jackson, Jeremy, 198
 Jackson, John Brinkerhoff, 11, 26, 55–56, 133, 135, 140, 149
 Jacob, 67–70, 255
 Jaillot, Alexis–Hubert, 233–38, 242–44
 James, William, 73, 170, 213, 287, 289, 352, 354
 Japan, 195, 317–18
 Japanese garden, 305–12, 315–21
 Japaneseness, 223, 315–20
 Jefferys, Thomas, 232
 Jesus, 67, 72, 75
 Johnson, Mark, 76, 187–89, 196, 202–03
 Jokinen, 268
 Josefa and Jeronimo, 329
 Joseph II, 341, 345, 347

 Kahn, Louis, 189–90, 195
 Kalahiki, Melvin, 101, 103
 Kamehameha, 92, 96–98, 101–02, 105–06
 Kant, Immanuel, 4, 14, 323, 328, 341, 344
 Kaplan, 270

- Kapu*, 91–92
kausiktum lineage, 48
 Kawaihae, Hawai'i, 91, 95–97, 99–101
 Kensett, John, 73
 Kensington and Buckingham Palaces, 167
 Kerdyllion, Mt., 127
 Kern Stephen, 323, 333
 Kertesz, Andre, 269–71
 Kessel, Jan van, 258
 Kierkegaard, Søren, 346
 Kipling, Rudyard, 317
 Kleist, Heinrich von, 324, 328, 331–34
 knowledge, 4, 7, 10, 51, 65, 119, 167, 189,
 212, 228–30, 254, 269, 274, 306,
 324, 334, 351, 354, 373
 Kozloff, Max, 269–70
 Krämer, Sybille, 333
 Kraus, Karl, 346
 Kristeva, Julia, 277
 Kyoto, 313

 Labyrinth of Crete, 119
 Lachmann, Renate, 325
 Lacks, 269
 Lakoff, George, 187–89, 202–03
 Lalande, 4
 Landau, David, 252
 landscape, 3, 6–12, 16, 22–23, 26–28,
 33–39, 41, 44–51, 53–57, 66–68,
 70–75, 77, 79–80, 86, 91–94,
 100–01, 109, 111–12, 117–18,
 120–22, 125–26, 133–34, 141, 165,
 173–74, 181–82, 192, 197, 199,
 207–08, 211–13, 216–18, 222,
 227–28, 251–52, 254–56, 258–59,
 261, 265–68, 271–73, 289–94,
 296–302, 327, 367, 370–71, 377,
 379–80, 383
 classical, 23, 292
 idealized, 253
 of myth, 27, 111–12, 118, 120–21,
 125–26
 material, 25, 37, 125
 mythological, 111, 125
 non-symbolic, 3, 10–12, 66, 173
 political, 98, 100, 121
 representations, 112, 125
 scenes, 252, 255–56, 258
 symbolic, 3, 6–13, 16, 18–20, 23,
 26, 33–36, 41, 45, 49, 51, 55,
 67, 72, 93, 107, 111, 121, 126,
 161, 173, 184, 228, 245
 Lane, Belden C., 69–71
 language, 6, 14–16, 21, 34, 45, 57, 65, 67,
 98–99, 102, 104, 125, 174, 177,
 185–88, 208, 212, 214, 217, 219–20,
 223, 341, 351, 367–68, 374–75, 383
 Latour, Bruno, 125, 191, 202–03
 Le Corbusier, 190
 Le Goux de LaBerchère, Charles, 244
 Leake, William Martin, 123
 Lemnos, 110, 115
 Leplastrier, Richard, 191, 194–96, 202
 Levant, the, 119
 Levesque, Catherine, 256
 lifestyle, 70, 176, 178, 182–83, 301
 light, 23–24, 37, 40, 46–47, 70, 80, 86,
 112, 161, 177, 189–90, 193–97, 200,
 218, 229, 244, 270–71, 284, 293,
 305–06, 319–20, 327, 344, 350, 354,
 365, 367, 374, 383
 liminal, 71, 81–83, 140, 166
 liminality, 71, 82, 86
 Lippard, Lucy, 268, 276
 lived geography, 6, 13, 35, 161, 168
 lived symbol, 137, 150, 152–53
 lived-body, 12–16, 18–23, 25–26, 33, 35,
 67–68, 71–72, 74–75, 82–83, 85,
 162–63, 185, 199, 205–09, 211–12,
 214–18, 220, 223, 266
 London, 123, 204, 216, 233, 240–41, 245,
 258, 342–43
 lone male, 270, 274
 Lot Man, 141
 Louis XIV, 233–35, 243
 Lovett Bay, 196
 Lower Sonoran Zone, 48
lua, 103, 105
 Lucian of Samosata, 111, 113
 Lysias, 113

 Macedonia, 119, 122, 125
 Macedonian question, 127
 machine, 28, 183, 190–91, 200, 210, 213,
 215, 299–301, 333, 352
 Mackaye, Benton, 76
 Mahele, 98
 main street, 28, 173–78, 180, 182
 Mall in Washington, D.C., 174
 Mander, Karel van, 252
 Mann, Thomas, 270
 maps, 8, 111–12, 114–15, 123, 125–26,
 180, 222, 227–35, 238–45, 260, 269,
 326, 376, 385
 Martellus, Henricus, 115
 Marx, Karl, 49, 57, 365, 370
 Marxist, 9, 45, 221
 Massey, Doreen, 268
 mastering gaze, 266
 Matsunami, Nichihiro, 318

- McGregor, Jane, 164
 mechanical bumpings, 209–10
 Mediterranean, 42, 114, 119, 121, 125, 194, 243
 Meinig, D. W., 11, 26
 Meinig, D. W., 93
 Mela, Pomponius, 110
 memory, 112, 115, 121, 125, 127, 155, 166–67, 174, 180, 223, 271, 323–28, 330–33, 335, 349
 art of, 325–27, 333
 externalization of, 332
 Merleau-Ponty, Maurice, 12–20, 22, 25, 185, 188, 192–93, 197–98, 202–04, 208, 210, 213–14, 218, 220, 315
 metaphor, 22, 28, 93, 185–91, 194, 196–98, 200, 208, 223, 305, 364–66, 382–84
 Michaelerkirche, 343
 Michelangelo, 252
 Midway Plaisance, 140
 milieu, 13–15, 18–23, 26, 33, 35, 65, 67–70, 72, 74, 79–80, 82, 85, 93, 141, 192, 194, 197, 199, 207–09, 215, 218–19, 222–24, 266, 271, 320, 339
 Miller, J. Hillis, 206
 mimesis, 254
 Mineral Springs Spa Resort and Casino, 56
 missionaries, 94, 98, 106
 Mitchell, Joni, 181
 Mitchell, W. J. T., 34, 36, 44, 227
 mnemonics, 324, 326–27, 330–34
 mobile home, 134, 141–43, 145–46, 148–49, 151, 154
 mobility, 48, 133–34, 137, 139, 149–50, 152–54, 268, 277
 Mocheles, Ignaz, 355
 modern, 6, 27–28, 33–36, 43, 45–46, 52, 54–55, 74, 80–81, 86, 94, 99, 102, 104, 106, 111, 114, 117, 161, 166–68, 173, 177, 208, 210–11, 251–53, 261, 270–71, 274, 284, 294, 306, 316–17, 323, 332, 341, 350, 371, 374–75, 384
 Moll, Herman, 230–32, 245–46
 Mont Blanc, 122
 monument, 120, 182
 Moore, Thomas, 115, 364, 383
 Moran, Thomas, 73
 morphological context, 213–14
morteros, 51, 53
 Moses, 68, 70
 Mount Athos, 110–12, 114–16, 119–21, 123, 125, 127
 pre-Christian, 27, 109–10, 112
 mountains, 23, 44, 69–71, 77, 111, 121–22, 344
 Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus, 339–41, 344–45, 347–49, 353–56
 Mt. San Jacinto, 48
 Mugerauer, Robert, 133, 135
 Muir, John, 74
 Mukat, 35, 47, 55
 multiverse, 287, 292–93, 295, 297
 Murcutt, Glenn, 191, 194–95, 197
 Murray Canyon, 48, 56
 myth, 27, 53, 72, 82, 109–12, 115–17, 119–23, 125–26, 229, 334, 367

 Nabokov, Vladimir, 270
 Naples, 119
 Nash, Roderick, 66, 71
 naturalism, 9
 nature, 5, 10–11, 17, 22–23, 34, 36, 44, 46–47, 49–52, 54–55, 67, 73–74, 77, 80, 82, 110–11, 113, 116, 120–21
 signs of, 121, 125, 133, 136, 138, 146, 148–49, 153, 164–65, 184–85, 189–91, 197, 228–29, 246, 251–56, 258, 260–61, 269, 285, 287, 295, 300, 302, 306, 311, 314–15, 318–20, 325–26, 331, 333, 339, 341, 343, 346, 348, 350, 364, 374
 nature/culture hybrid, 191
 naturing, 319–20
 Netherlands, The, 192–93, 233, 251–53, 258–61
 New Mexico, 164
 New Urbanism, 27, 133, 151–53, 184
 Nietzsche, Friedrich, 341, 374
 no-place, 82, 175, 177
 Nolin, Jean Baptiste, 237, 239, 241
 nomad, 71, 73, 81
 non-modern, 191
 Norberg-Schulz, Christian, 7, 23–24, 35

 objectivation, 133, 251
 objectiveness, 309
 observation, 5, 112, 123, 142, 253, 256, 258, 287, 305, 327, 351
 Oelschlaeger, Max, 67
 Ogilby, John, 240–41
 Olympus, 110, 122
 ontoipoiesis, 218–20
 organism, 28, 125, 192–94, 197–98, 214, 219, 285, 373
 Otto, Rudolph, 70, 350
 Ottoman Empire, 122

- painiktem* lineage, 51
 Pajackowska, Claire, 272
 Palm Canyon, 41, 52–53
 Palm Desert, 38
 Palm Springs, 38, 41, 47, 52, 56
 Panofsky, Erwin, 228
 Parshall, Peter, 252
 partitioning of real/non–real, 206
 passion for place, 221
 Peirce, Charles Sanders, 5–8, 14, 18, 35,
 136–37, 142, 148, 151, 153
 Peninsular Ranges, 37
 perception, 8, 10, 18, 20, 86, 109, 126, 168
 177–78, 187, 197, 205, 207, 209–10,
 212–13, 215–18, 221–24, 251, 253,
 266, 276, 283
 perceptual, 18, 20–21, 126, 161, 188, 196,
 199, 206–08, 212–16, 221–23, 229,
 251, 255, 265, 267, 283, 287, 318,
 339
 performance, 19, 134–35, 137, 142, 151,
 161, 164, 170, 195, 199
 permanence, 145–46, 148, 150–51, 165,
 344, 349
 Persians, 113
 Perth, 27, 161–64
 Peterson, E. M., 42
 petroglyph, 51
 Pezzl, Johann, 340, 347
 Philadelphia Flower Show, 223, 283–86,
 288, 291, 293, 297, 302
 Phillips Exeter Library, 189–90
 phonocentric doctrine, 333
 photographie féminine, 268–69
 pictograph, 49
 picturesque, 258, 265, 267, 272, 297
 pilgrim, 75, 80–82, 84–86, 164
 place–making, 27, 133, 144, 152
 place–worlds, 291, 294–98, 301
 Plachy, Sylvia, 271–73
 placiality, 295, 297, 364
 Pleistocene, 187, 202, 204
 Pliny the Elder, 110
 Plutarch, 114, 344
 Pockocke, Richard, 122–23
 Pollock, Griselda, 268
 Polzelli, Luiga, 343
 Porteous, J. Douglas, 208, 211, 217, 224
 Poseidon, 110
 postmodernism, 45, 47
 practice, 28, 34, 36–37, 41, 79, 134, 138,
 146, 148, 152, 166, 174, 186, 192,
 198, 230, 258, 261, 268, 320,
 344–45, 347
 precognitive meaning, 205–06
 presence, 13, 15, 23–24, 33, 47–48, 52,
 75, 77, 91, 102, 105, 111–12, 115,
 122–23, 125–26, 137, 153–54,
 163–66, 170, 198, 227, 231–33,
 243, 272–73, 287, 309, 331, 379–80
 present–at–hand, 298, 371
 Prince, Hugh, 9, 354
 Princess Diana, 167
 private, 27–28, 44, 76, 98, 100, 103,
 133–35, 141, 143–45, 147–49,
 151–53, 165, 175, 177, 182–83,
 253, 272, 274, 355
 Prom, Paul, 42
 protocol, 104
 pseudo–place, 296
 psychophysical biorhythmic processes, 284
 Ptolemy, 114
 Pu‘u Kohola, 91–94, 96–97, 99–107
 public realm, 27–28, 135, 180–81, 183
 publicness, 165
 Pufendorf, Samuel von, 368
 Puritan, 73, 370

qawi’siktem lineage, 52
 Quintilian, 324, 327–28

 Raleigh, Walter, 240
 Rancho Mirage, 38
 ready–to–hand, 368, 371–74, 378
 real and (the) ideal, 11–12, 27, 222, 224
 realism, 251–53, 259, 271, 327
 receptivity, 186, 209
 reconciliation, 105–06, 244
 recreational vehicle, 148
 reincorporation, 167
 Reisner, Marc, 35, 41, 44, 52
 Rembrandt van Rijn, 258
 Renaissance, 23–24, 36, 40, 42–43,
 111–12, 114–15, 117, 119, 126,
 208, 210, 251–52, 254, 292
 Renaissance Esmeralda Resort, 40, 42–43
 Reni, Guido, 227
 res cogitans, 314
 res extensa, 314
 Residential Show Business, 145
 respatialization, 189–90
 retroject, 206
 Reutter, Georg, 342–43
 Reynolds, John, 191
 rhetoric, 73, 75, 123, 223, 229, 233, 235,
 238, 244, 270, 324, 327–28, 332–33,
 235
 of truth, 123
 cartographic, 123
 rhetorical power, 115, 123

- Ricoeur, Paul, 197, 202–04
 Rijksmuseum, 257, 260
rite de passage, 167, 169
 ritual, 26, 69, 82, 161, 166–67, 169, 355
 Riversdale Educational Retreat Center, 194
 roadside memorials, 161–62, 165–66, 168, 170
 Roan–ji, 313
 Robbins Landon, H. C., 353
 Rohrau, 342
 Roman Empire, 342
 Rome, 117, 119, 141, 244
 room, 28, 44, 101, 138, 148, 194–97, 327, 372, 378, 384
 rootedness, 307, 368
 Rose, Gillian, 268–69, 273
 Royal Navy, 123, 126
 Rückert, Friedrich, 353
 Rudolph, Paul, 70, 146
 Ruisdael, Jacob Isaackzoon van, 255
 Ruskin, John, 218
- sacred, landscape, 165
 sacred, place, 51, 66–70, 82, 86
 sacred, space, 69, 73, 92, 102, 104, 168
 Sadeghi, Shaheen, 176
 Saint Athanasius, 110
 Salieri, Antonio, 354
 Samsonow, Elisabeth V., 326, 332
 San Jacinto Mountains, 37–39
 Sanders, Catherine M., 166–69
 Sane, 113
 Santa Rosa Mountains, 38, 44, 48
 Santiago, 330–31
 Sarasota, Florida, 138, 145, 149–50
 Sartre, Jean–Paul, 364, 366–67, 379–80, 382
 Saubel, Katherine, 49, 51
 Savery, Roelaent, 258
 Saxton, Christopher, 239–40
 scapings, 207
 Schama, Simon, 34, 37, 45, 51–54, 111
 schemata, 196
 Schindler, Anton Felix, 346, 352, 355
 Schoenberg, Arnold, 353
 Schopenhauer, Arthur, 341
 Schubert, Franz, 340, 344, 353
 Schutz, Alfred, 287
 science, 9, 18, 123, 125, 209–13, 217, 227, 229, 241, 254, 300, 355
 Seaside, Florida, 151–52, 183–84
 Seckford, Thomas, 239
 Seghers, Hercules Pieterszoon, 258–59
 Seignelay, Marquis de, 243
 semiotics, 36, 136–37, 169, 333
- sensation, 14–15, 22, 207
 sensation, intentionality of, 22
 sensibility, 12, 205–06, 255, 265, 267, 285, 293, 295, 302
 sensuosity, 205–06, 265, 267, 285–88
 Serres, Michel, 141
 severance, 167
 Shaffer, Earl, 76
 shaman, 47, 49, 55, 166
 Shelter Rock, 51
 Shepard, Paul, 187, 202, 204
 shepherd, 67–70, 72, 75, 80
 shoji, 195
 sight, 123, 127, 176, 218, 269, 272, 310, 313, 330, 343–44, 346
 sign, 5, 14–15, 20, 77, 123, 127, 152, 227, 230, 271
 SimCity, 178
 Simmel, Georg, 206, 274
 Simonides, 325–27, 331, 334
 simulacra, 41, 153, 174, 184, 293, 296
 Sinai, 71–72, 75
 Singer, Michael, 192
 Sleeping Chief, 57
 Smith, Jedediah, 41
 social construction, 10, 66–67, 223, 245, 305, 320
 Socrates, 306–07
 Soja, Edward W., 168
 sojourn, 374, 377, 381
 Solomon, Maynard, 349
 Soseki, Muso, 320
 Southern Pacific Railroad, 56
 space, 19–21, 24, 27–28, 34, 36, 45, 56–57, 68–69, 73, 79–80, 92–94, 102, 104, 107, 111, 115, 117, 125, 127, 134–35, 137–43, 145, 151–53, 164–66, 168–69, 175–77, 182–83, 185–86, 189, 195–97, 199, 215–17, 219, 221–23, 228–29, 239, 241, 266–69, 272–74, 276–78, 286, 294, 299, 305, 308, 314, 323–34, 341, 348, 369–70, 372, 375–80, 382–83
 connotative, 169
 constructed, 324
 denotative, 168
 of memory, 323, 333–34
 lived, 168–69
 operationality of, 334
 private individual, 183
 private public, 28, 183
 production of, 324–25
 ritual, 161, 169
 third, 168
 spacings, 220

- spatial
 - enactment of meaning, 65, 339
 - genealogy, 92, 94
 - orientation, 21, 75, 82
- spatializing/spatialized, 13, 15, 18, 25, 35, 93, 126, 205, 207, 209, 213, 220, 224, 291
- spatiating, 305, 314
- sphere of ownness, 369, 371, 373–74, 378, 380
- Spohr, Louis, 352
- Spratt, Thomas, 123, 125
- Springer Mountain, 76–77
- St. Stephen's, 342–43, 345
- standing reserve, 374
- state of nature, 365
- Stechow, Wolfgang, 255
- Steeves, James B., 213
- Stesicrates, 122
- Strabo, 110
- Stuttgart, 192
- style, 8, 12, 25, 80, 92, 152, 182–83, 193–94, 197, 216–17, 224, 254, 266, 269, 271–72, 287–88, 292–95, 301, 339, 364, 383–84
- subjective preoccupation, 305–07, 309–10, 314–16
- subliminal passions, 221
- sublime, 74, 79, 122, 265, 267, 346, 354
- suicide, 224, 329, 339–41, 348–52
- Sumer, 68
- survey, 123, 126, 239, 241, 377, 385
- Sydney Opera House, 195
- symbol, 3–14, 16, 18, 20, 24, 35, 46, 57, 66, 75, 77, 80, 82, 86, 93–94, 105, 109, 119, 126, 135–37, 142, 144, 151–53, 162, 173–74, 177–78, 183, 223, 231–33, 237, 242, 244, 270, 290, 293–94, 296, 352, 363–65, 370, 382–85
- symbolic
 - landscape, 3, 6–13, 16, 18–20, 23, 26, 33–36, 41, 45, 49, 51, 55, 67, 72, 93, 107, 111, 121, 126, 161, 173, 184, 228, 245
 - meaning, 6, 8, 10, 13, 19, 21–22, 26–27, 33, 67, 133, 151, 168, 178, 222, 285, 286
- symbolization, 6–9, 12–13, 16, 18, 25–26, 33, 35, 65, 91, 93, 102, 106, 135, 142, 151, 161, 165, 171, 175, 178, 208, 227, 253, 266–67, 283, 286, 291, 293, 295–96, 298–301, 383, 385
 - double layer of, 291
 - experiential, 293, 298
 - process of, 174
 - reversal of, 298
- Tafari, Manfred, 180
- Tahquitz, 47–51, 55–56
- Tahquitz Canyon, 47–48, 56
- Tahquitz Waterfall, 49–50
- tame, 363, 370
- Tapais, 114
- Tawney, R.H., 370
- temporary, 139, 141, 146–49, 165, 353
- Temporary Mobile Home, 146
- territory, 36, 48, 52, 69, 73, 112, 117, 121, 123, 125–27, 149, 228, 230, 245–46, 375, 385
- therapeutic
 - function, 285
 - value, 169
- thing, 3, 6, 12, 14, 16–18, 24–25, 33, 35, 44, 117, 151, 209–10, 213, 216–17, 253, 274, 293, 310, 314, 320, 372, 378, 383
- thing-in-itself, 3
- Thoreau, Henry David, 73
- thrownness, 224, 363–64, 366–69
- Tiber, 117
- Time–Geography, 26, 93
- Tomaini, Al and Jeanie, 136, 138–41
- topos*, 69–70, 72, 86, 113
- traditional mall, 176
- trailer, 138, 145, 148–49, 151–52
- Transcendent Other, 74
- Transcendentalist, 73
- transformative, 27, 94, 107, 186
- transition, 69, 81, 98, 167, 215, 341, 351
- travelers, 71, 81, 83, 86, 91, 121–23, 138, 241, 316
- Travlou, Penny, 127
- Troy, 110
- Tuan, Yi-Fu, 114
- Turner, Victor, 71, 81–82, 84
- Twain, Mark, 227, 246
- two-way interactionism, 13, 210
- Tymieniecka, Anna-Teresa, 218–20
- umwelten*, 293–94, 300
- Upper Sonoran Zone, 38
- urban amnesia, 182
- Urban Enterprise Zone, 147
- Urban Land Institute, 176
- Urquhart, David, 121–23, 126
- utopia, 82, 115, 126, 277, 383
- Utzon, Jorn, 195

- Valenciennes, Pierre–Henri de, 120–21, 123, 126
 value–laden images, 8, 228
 Van der Rijn Architects, 191, 202
 Vauban, Marshal, 237
 Veijola, Soike, 268
 Venice, 115
 Vestner, Georg Wilhelm, 245
 Vesuvius, 122
 Vienna, 111, 224, 339–43 345–56
 Vienna Woods, 352–53
 Virgil, 240
 virtual
 body, 185, 188, 199, 214–17, 265, 323
 space, 19, 26, 323–27, 332
 virtualities, 17, 20, 109
 vision, 36, 39, 111–12, 117, 121–23, 127, 189, 208, 210–11, 221, 231, 234, 255, 259, 271, 346
 Visscher, Claes Janzoon, 260
 Vitruvius, 110, 117
 vocabulary, 164, 169, 177, 199, 266, 376

 Wageningen, 192–93
 Wagner, Richard, 341
 Washington Monument, 180
 water, 8–9, 23, 35, 38–49, 52, 54, 69, 84, 92, 104, 121, 123, 125, 141, 177, 187, 191, 207, 228, 232–33, 246, 260, 286, 288, 291, 314, 350, 371
 watermark, 198
 Watteau, Antoine, 341
 Watts, May Theilgaard, 12
 weakening, 167, 198

 Weber, Max, 352, 370
 Wegeler, Franz, 344
 Weimann, Gisela, 272–73
 Weininger, Otto, 350
 wild, 8, 66, 68–74, 79, 110, 286, 318–19, 346, 352, 363, 366, 370, 376–77, 379
 wilderness, 26, 65–75, 77, 79–80, 82, 85–86, 110, 176
 Wilderness Act of 1964, 66, 73
 Williams, 162
 Wolcott, Mariot Post, 149–50
 Wolfe, John, 240, 365
 Wolstenholme, Sir Thomas, 241
 world horizons, 294
 World's Columbian Exposition, 140, 142–43
 worldhood, 224, 295, 297, 299, 301, 340
 spirit, 295, 299, 301
 writing, art of, 3, 13, 35–36, 50, 66, 69, 125, 187, 216–17, 268, 284, 289, 305, 323–24, 332–33, 348–51, 368, 375–76, 378–79, 383–84
 Wyss, Beat, 351

 Xerxes, 27, 110–15, 117, 122–26
 Xerxes' canal, 27, 110, 112, 115, 122–126

 yard, 12, 27, 133–35, 137, 139, 141–46, 148–54, 177, 295
 Yates, Frances, 327–28, 332
 Yellowstone, 65
 Yosemite, 55, 65

 Zen, 305–07, 311, 313, 320