

LANDSCAPE AND LANDSCHAFT

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Denis Cosgrove

University of California, Los Angeles

Across the humanities and social sciences, the past two decades have witnessed a shift away from the structural explanations and grand narratives that dominated so much twentieth-century scholarship, with its emphasis on universal theories and systematic studies, and a move toward more culturally and geographically nuanced work, sensitive to difference and specificity, and thus to the contingencies of event and locale. Various referred to in the social sciences as the "spatial turn" and the "cultural turn," this move has reworked the relationship between the social sciences and traditionally hermeneutic fields within the humanities. Both sides increasingly privilege questions of culture, meaning, and identity over "scientific" theories borrowed from economics, biology, psychology, or political "science." Unsurprisingly, geography, which suffered a recurrent crisis of identity in the era of scientism, has emerged as a key point of reference within this disciplinary convergence. Recognition of the difference that space and geographical location make to any understanding of processes and events in the human (and also the physical) world is not of course wholly novel. Geography's long-standing, if fraught, relationship with history with which my discussion opens bears evidence of a sustained recognition of the pitfalls of seeking to understand the world solely by reference to universalizing theories and formal laws, even when these are given the spatial veneer of titles such as "area studies." The historian Edmundo O'Gorman, for example, never tired of pointing out that constructions, such as "Pan-American history," that sought a unity of narrative themes through hemispheric participation were better understood as an outgrowth of ideological and imperialist assumptions on the part of the United States.¹ They failed not merely to show sensitivity to geographical and cultural difference within the pre-defined and supposedly "natural" area, but made less sense historically than less intuitively geographic spatial frames such as the "Black Atlantic"—an area defined according to cultural rather than natural or territorial criteria.²

As the example of "Black Atlantic" reveals, the "spatial turn" in the humanities and social sciences is also closely related to a significant re-

thinking of space itself. Both in theory and practice, space in modernity remained Cartesian and absolute, its language best described in Euclid's *Elements*. Space, like time, was treated as an objective phenomenon, existing independently of its contents. In this sense space was seen as a container that had effects on the objects existing within it, but was not itself affected by them. Regarding space in this way corresponded well with the territorial imperatives of the nation-state as it had evolved within modern Europe, with the categorical administrative and organizational structures of state bureaucracies, industrial production, and social life in the modern city.³ Belief in absolute space was foundational to confidence in the pictorial claims of linear perspective to truthfully represent material spaces, trust in the scientific accuracy and objectivity of both topographic and thematic maps, and acceptance of territoriality as a normalizing way of ordering and classifying phenomena. All of these assumptions about order in the world and our capacity to grasp and represent it have been upset by a growing acceptance of alternative spatial conceptions, above all conceiving of space as relative rather than absolute. Space is increasingly regarded as lacking independent existence; it comes into being as a function of other processes and phenomena (which in the world of relativity also generate time). Thus any space is contingent upon the specific objects and processes through which it is constructed and observed. Questions of space become epistemological rather than ontological.⁴ The public space of the Italian "piazza" for example is best understood as a product of a set of social conventions, desires and memories, political practices, and specific performances whose architectural realization within urban form is treated as secondary to those processes and practices rather than as their container.⁵ The conceptual, methodological, and representational implications for geographical scholarship itself are obviously enormous, and they have opened up a formerly self-referential and defensive discipline to intellectual commerce with other natural and social sciences and the humanities.

In this discussion I examine the implications of these developments for the concept of *landscape* and its revived significance and use within geography and beyond. To do so in these pages is significant because landscape not only has long stood as the geographical concept that connects the discipline most closely to history and the humanities, but its roots in Anglophone geographic practice are to be found in the German concept of *Landschaft*. The latter is of more than purely philological interest: The migrations of meaning that *Landschaft*/landscape has experienced make it particularly suited to contemporary ways of thinking about space and reconnecting geographical study to current humanities concerns with culture, identity, and meaning.

Chorography, Chronology and Evolving Meanings of "Landscape"

Any serious attention to questions of space, absolute or relative, and its relations to natural and social processes must inevitably confront the question of scale. Absolute space gives rise to the conception of scale as a nested hierarchy of containers for processes and for their observation. Geographical study operates according to given scales, from the local, through the regional, national, and global. Mid-twentieth-century geographers devoted time and energy to debating and defining such scale concepts as "the region."⁶ In the contemporary world, matters are rather different. Both in theory and in practice, relative space more readily embraces the fact of scalar continuity and the constant blurring and interaction between scales that are always dependent on process and observation. "Local" spaces are as much a precipitate of "global" processes—for example, the investment decisions of global financial networks—as they are constitutive nodes for such processes—for example, through internet connections. Geographical "place" is today treated as an instantiation of process rather than an ontological given.⁷ This way of thinking about spatial scale immediately reintroduces matters of time and history into geography. We are thus obliged to reconsider the long-standing connection between these two fields of study, long framed in the Latin aphorism "geographia oculus historiae." Conventionally the claim that geography acts as the eye of history allocated Clio's other eye to *chronology*, the division of historical time into an event-determined narrative. Chronology, recursively, was paralleled with *chorography*, which denoted a specific scale of geographical study. A key source for early-modern scholars was the second-century Alexandrine geographer and map-maker Claudius Ptolemy, whose book *The Geography* shaped much of the discourse of modern spatial representation. Ptolemy made a vital and much debated distinction between geography and chorography, one that, under the guise of different terminology, remains significant in contemporary spatial theory.⁸ Geography, he claimed, was the description of the earth's surface as a whole and of its major features (land, seas, continents, mountain ranges, cities, nations, etc). The absolute datum of the globe itself meant that geographical representation was primarily scientific and mathematical. Accuracy demanded that geographical locations had to be related to each other and to the whole globe through common metrics (coordinates, distance measures, etc).

Chorography, on the other hand, concerned specific regions or locales understood without necessary relation to any larger spatial (geographical) frame. The role of chorography was to understand and represent the unique character of individual places. In chorography, the skills

of the artist (painter and writer) were more relevant than those of the astronomer and mathematician, which were critical in geography.⁹ The chorographic art, as it came to be practiced in early modern Europe (not least in Southern Germany among the groups of humanists gathered in such upper Danube cities as Ulm and Augsburg), incorporated both historical narrative (generally little more than a chronicling of a city or region's Classical pedigree and a hagiography of its principal aristocratic or noble families) and pictorial maps and architectural sketches. It established the place of geography within the humanities and its attachment to history at the scale of "landscape." Chorographies were popular among educated and scholarly groups in early modern Europe as celebrations of their own city or local region. In emerging nation-states such as seventeenth-century England, descriptions of individual counties were gathered together to create a picture that was "national" but remained sensitive to regional variation. It is within this, often tense and contested, historical process of fundamental change in the social spatiality of early modern Europe that the idea of landscape comes to prominence and is reshaped as a geographical descriptor. While the historical shift from a legal and territorial idea of landscape to a scenic and pictorial usage has been widely noted, the geographer Kenneth Olwig has recently re-examined it with great authority, and I draw heavily upon his argument in the following section.¹⁰

The German *Landschaft* and its cognates in the Scandinavian languages are still used as a descriptor for administrative regions in parts of northwestern Europe, specifically Frisia and Schleswig-Holstein. The physical nature of these low-lying marshlands, heaths, and offshore islands is important in understanding this usage. These have always been relatively impoverished regions, marginal to the interests of monarchs and aristocrats whose wealth and power depended upon the control, ownership, and taxation of more fertile and accessible territories. Location on the borderlands of the Danish kingdom and the German states reinforced the opportunities for greater local autonomy than in more central and tightly administered regions. Olwig points out that their designation as *Landschaften* denoted "a particular notion of polity rather than . . . a territory of a particular size. It could be extrapolated to polities of various dimensions, ranging from tiny Utholm to the whole of northern Jutland."¹¹ What mattered for the designation was that these were regions in which customary law, determined in various ways by the community living and working in an area, extended over and defined the territorial limits of the *Land*. "Custom and culture defined a *Land*, not physical geographical characteristics—it was a social entity that found physical expression in the area under its law."¹² The unity of fellowship and rights within the community and the space over which fellowship

and rights held sway constituted the *Landschaft*. In this sense its usage might be paralleled to the English “country,” which also is meaningful at different scales, and which can refer both to the national polity (calling an election can be termed “going to the country”) and to the national territory. It is logical that over time, the combination of community, custom, and territory would give rise to visible distinction of one *Landschaft* from another, but the scenic aspects that are now so closely associated with landscape were not in any sense primary to the meaning of the German concept and its cognates elsewhere in northwestern Europe. The nature of *Landschaft* as originally constituted is of much more than antiquarian significance. It points to a particular *spatiality* in which a geographical area and its material appearance are constituted through social practice. In a word, *Landschaft* is best understood in terms of relative rather than absolute space.

This stands in marked contrast to the conventional usage of *landscape* in English, whose primary meaning is closely associated with the idea of scenery. Indeed the oft-quoted Oxford English Dictionary (OED) definition of landscape refers to “a picture of natural inland scenery,” noting that the word first comes into the English language in the early seventeenth century as a designation of a type of painting. *Landschap* painting was a genre imported from the Netherlands that became popular among landowners seeking to represent newly acquired or consolidated estates, many of them witnessing a struggle between the customary rights enjoyed by a feudal peasantry and the property rights claimed for landowners in an emerging capitalist land market. Technically, the creation of landscape images was closely aligned with estate survey and mapping, and many artists were also surveyors and map makers. Mathematics, measure, and perspective provided the spatial language of landscape. Culturally, it was associated with the new literary form of “prospect poetry,” also popular in early seventeenth-century England.¹³ As these various associations suggest, and the word “prospect” makes clear, *landscape* privileges the sense of sight, and what started as a representation of space rapidly became a designation of material spaces themselves, which were referred to as landscapes and viewed with the same distanced and aesthetically discriminating eye that had been trained in the appreciation of pictures and maps. A landscape is *seen*, either framed within a sketch or painting, composed within the borders of a map, or viewed from a physical eminence through receding planes of perspective.¹⁴

While this idea of landscape played a role in the construction of capitalist property rights and the suppression of exactly the type of community and customary rights that had given rise to *Landschaft*, Olwig points out that the change in meaning was also related to a changing scale of spatial control. He traces immediate connections between landscape

discourse in seventeenth-century England and the cradle region of *Landschaft* through the link between James I of England (James VI of Scotland) and Schleswig-Holstein through the king's marriage with Anne of Denmark. He suggests that the principal political challenges to the Stuart king came from uniting the "countries/lands" of England and Scotland under his sovereignty and negotiating with the local attachments of landed nobility in England (a question faced by each of the European absolute monarchs seeking to unify the territory of the modern nation-state). Central to this project was the extension of statutory law from the court and parliament across the whole national territory, thus expunging local customs that had arisen from lived experience of a community living and working in a specific physical environment. In seventeenth-century England this was a tense and contested affair, which played its role in the eventual collapse of Stuart absolutism, Civil War, and the ascent of parliament and constitutional monarchy. Olwig notes the importance of theatre in this process, especially the masque, with its creation of imaginary spaces in closed playhouses decorated with stage scenery designed to create the illusion of space. In various ways, Stuart cultural politics used landscape images to "naturalize" its legal and territorial claims. If the masque offered the court an illusion of a harmonious national space, the chorography expressed the continued vitality of a more regional political territoriality, in which lesser nobility and gentry drew upon the very customary and community attachments that they were expunging locally in order to resist the expanding authority of the crown at the national scale.¹⁵

Thus at both the local and national level, and in their political rivalries too, landscape emerged from *Landschaft* with a totally transformed meaning, and the transformation was at once social and spatial. Socially, landscape was divested of attachment to a local community and its customary law and handed to the "distanciated gaze"¹⁶ of a property owner whose rights over the land were established and regulated by statute. Spatially, landscape was constructed as a bounded and measured area, an absolute space, represented through the scientific techniques of measured distance, geometrical survey, and linear perspective. In this respect, landscape should be understood as a direct expression of modernization.

Landscape, Romantic Nationalism, and Geography

The European state system of absolute monarchies and territorial principalities established in the mid-seventeenth century by the Treaty of Westphalia, of which Stuart England was an example, endured as a geopolitical pattern until the Napoleonic wars of the early nineteenth century. While France's revolutionaries sought to extend across the continent universal principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity, they also embraced

the geopolitical principle that the state should be the direct expression of a nation as a natural entity bound to a given territory and finding cultural expression in a common language and common customs. In the case of France, the territory was contained within “natural limits” that, providentially for rationalists, took the geometrical form of a hexagon, whose six sides corresponded to the Channel, Atlantic and Mediterranean coasts, and the Alps, Pyrenees and Ardennes. This rigorous application of Cartesian space to national territory was applied locally in the replacement of the *ancien-régime*’s provinces with the new, regularly sized and shaped administrative spaces of the *département*, whose geometry was naturalized by naming the new units according to physical geography and topography: Loire, Vosges, Charente Atlantique, Alpes Maritimes. In each European country, nineteenth-century struggles to produce the modern nation-state sought to negotiate this tension between universal political principles, expressed in the language of mathematics, geometry, and statistics, and unique national identity, forged through the “natural” media of physical geography, language, folk culture, and custom. In these struggles, landscape emerges again as a vital field of expression and contestation.

The case of Germany is exemplary. The tension between political fragmentation and linguistic and cultural unity was partially resolved through the *Zollverein* and Prussian administrative and military authority, leading to unification in 1870. But the geopolitical question of territorializing the German nation within spatial boundaries that could be “naturalized” in a coherent way was never satisfactorily resolved, and has only ceased to be a source of international tension in the closing years of the twentieth century, with the emergence of the new spatiality represented by the end of the Cold War and the project of European unification. In Germany, as elsewhere in Europe and North America, an image of “national” landscape was constructed in the early years of the nineteenth century through romantic art and literature. The scenery of *Berg und Wald* with its strong Christian markings, captured by artists such as Caspar David Friedrich, reworked a tradition of German painting that can be traced to the emergence of the new, scenic understanding of landscape discussed earlier and its close connections with chorographic art in the work of Albrecht Altdorfer and other Danubian painters in the early sixteenth century.¹⁷ This was also the archetypal landscape of German folk culture, as recovered by the Grimm brothers. However, such pictorial landscape images did not map directly onto the fragmented territory occupied by the German *Volk*. To provide a scientific cartography of German national space entailed, among other geopolitical strategies developed in the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, a reworking of *Landschaft*. This task was taken up by German geographers,

whose discipline was established earlier in the German universities than anywhere else in Europe and whose rigorous and sophisticated scientific theories gave German geography an intellectual dominance that lasted into the twentieth century, especially in the United States.

Among the scientific questions that dominated nineteenth-century German geography, especially after unification, those of the relationship between nation, state, and space (*Raum*) were central. Best known perhaps is the widely influential work of Friedrich Ratzel, whose theories of the organic nature of the state likened it to a creature in Darwinian struggle against other states through constant competition for territory. The influence of these ideas on military thinking lasted through two European wars, articulated most powerfully in the writings of the military geographer Karl Haushofer. Less familiar, but equally implicated in some of the more unsavory aspects of state policy well into the last century, was the German geographical fascination with settlement patterns and the appearance of landscape. Between the 1880s and the 1940s German geographers established a systematic study of the form and distribution of rural settlement types, generating such classifications as *Rundling* and *Strassendorf*. These were based on surveys of the layout and size of villages, hamlets, and scattered individual farmsteads, their relations with field systems, land tenure and use, modes of cultivation, pasturage, and woodland management. Landscape morphology, the study of visible forms of human occupancy, was understood to betray the organic connections between an autochthonous folk culture and its physical environment. For geographers such as August Meitzen and Siegfried Passarge, *Kulturlandschaft* revealed the abiding influence of *Naturlandschaft* on a people, expressing its ecological adjustment to geographical contingency across a region. Effectively, such study was a further stage in the evolving meaning of landscape. Here, the visual appearance of an area, developed in the modern concept of landscape, was being analyzed through selected forms to reveal a "natural" connection between a community and the land. While lacking the pictorial and aesthetic imperative of *landscape*, this scholarly definition of *Landschaft* did not depend on evidence of the customary legal and political relations that had underpinned the original German usage. The political imperative underlying this scholarship is revealed in the idea that there could be authentically *German* settlement types and landscapes, which careful morphological mapping would reveal. If the distribution of such a national landscape could be disclosed, a scientific case could be made for the true boundaries of the German *Raum*.¹⁸

The intellectual impact of this concept of landscape geography is particularly apparent in the United States, where German scholarship retained a powerful influence well into the twentieth century. The school

of environmental determinism, which dominated American geographical thought in the first two decades of the last century, attributed causal agency to the physical environment in explaining human occupancy and relations with nature. One of the strongest voices raised in criticism of this school was that of Carl O. Sauer. From a Midwestern German-speaking family, Sauer received his geographical training in Wisconsin, where he was introduced to German scholarship. His commitment to landscape study shared the German geographers' commitment to examining and explaining supposedly deep, organic connections between pre-modern cultures and the land. Sauer's commitment to the active agency of culture in shaping spaces, however, led to a firm rejection of environmental determinism, so that in his famous 1926 paper "The Morphology of Landscape," he argued for the reciprocal significance of both natural and cultural "factors" in the evolution of landscape, but stressed that "nature is the medium, culture the agent, the cultural landscape the result."¹⁹ This methodological statement and Sauer's empirical work informed geographic practice in American landscape studies well into the 1970s and still finds resonance in such contemporary scholarly fields as environmental history. Further revealing the influence of German thinking, Sauer added to his landscape essay a brief section referring to the "aesthetic" dimension of landscape, in which he claims that however analytic and comprehensive the formal study of landscape morphology might be, there will always be a dimension of landscape that lies "beyond science," and which cannot be approached through formal study but only via the avenues of poetry and art. Innocent as such a claim might be from the pen of Carl Sauer, in 1920s Germany such sentiments were far more dangerous. The geographer Ewald Banse, today remembered if at all for his geopolitical collaboration with Haushofer and his extraordinary paean to German militarism in *Germany Prepares for War*, also wrote texts on landscape aesthetics, proclaiming that the superior vital spirit of the German people was rooted in the material and aesthetic qualities of its unique landscape.²⁰ Such ideas betray a close association of German *Landschaft* study with political ideology, an association that would have disturbing practical effects with the rise of National Socialism.

The German "landscape indicators" tradition of settlement geography reached its intellectual climax in the theoretical work of Walter Christaller and others in the mid-twentieth century. In addition to mapping and analyzing traditional rural settlement forms, this group went on to apply classical economics to model hypothetical settlement distributions and generate purely theoretical landscapes. Starting with an isotropic surface—undifferentiated and uninterrupted—they asked how supply and demand curves in a world of perfect competition and utility maximization would generate an efficient distribution of "central places" to

serve the needs of retail, transportation, and administration.²¹ These spatial theories and the “economic landscapes” they generated became primary objects of geographical study internationally in the postwar world up to the late 1960s. Few geographers outside Germany who took up spatial science were aware at that time that this tradition of settlement landscape study was deeply compromised, not only by its connections with German geopolitics but through Christaller’s work for Himmler. The geographer’s theories were used in planning the resettlement of the eastern Slavic lands captured after 1939, directly connecting geographical landscape studies and the Nazi project of spatial domination and population engineering.²² The former Polish and Soviet territories were divided by German geographers into authentically German zones, where farmers from the Rhineland and other “crowded” rural regions could be relocated, and spaces under German control but occupied by lesser (Slavic) races, which were to be managed in the interests of the *Reich*. According to the plan, the former zones were to be reshaped and redesigned through the management of field patterns, farmstead architecture, and woodland planting to resemble an ideal of “German” landscape, while the latter regions, cleansed of “undesirables,” could be treated precisely as an isotropic plain, a non-place whose landscape design was merely a matter of managerial efficiency and productivity.

Lest we imagine that the German case is entirely unique, it is worth recalling that in other European countries, too, nationalist schools of landscape painting, regional literature, and folk culture emerged in the nineteenth century as part of the project of shaping nationalism through landscape. In Britain, John Constable and J.M.W. Turner founded a strongly national tradition of landscape painting; in the United States a similar role was taken by Thomas Cole and Edwin Church; in Canada the “Group of Seven” sought to develop a pictorial language that expressed a uniquely Canadian spirit in the material forms of landscape. As early as 1838, the internationally influential English cultural critic John Ruskin subtitled his *Poetry of Landscape*, “the architecture of the nations of Europe considered in association with natural scenery and national character.”²³ And belief in the importance of preserving historical patterns and forms of settlement landscape at both regional and national levels as expressions of the “authentic character” of the nation may be traced through such diverse practices as Scandinavian open-air folk museum re-creations of folk housing types, English school children’s field study classes teaching the identification of “British” wild flowers, and American parkways designed to provide citizens with sentiments of national pride in the dramatic landscape vistas opened up from their automobile windshields.²⁴

Perhaps the most powerful expression of how the relations between concepts of *Landschaft* and landscape on the one hand and the modern concept of absolute space as a container on the other have found political expression in the modern nation-state is the topographical map series. Each Western nation has an official topographic series covering the national territory and divided into map sheets at various scales. To recreational users—hikers, cyclists and other tourists—the familiar scale of the topographic map is between 1:25,000 and 1:100,000, with 1:50,000 the most widely available in most countries.²⁵ This scale has practical advantages in that a sheet of easily manageable proportions for reading “in the field” covers some 350 square kilometers, about as far as the eye may see landscape elements on a clear day, with a level of detail that permits the illustration of such features as topographic variation at the ten meter contour interval, the form of village settlements and location of individual farms, generalized land-use patterns, local place names, and so on.²⁶ In European states, the project of national topographic mapping dates to the late eighteenth century, and was closely tied to military defense of the national territory (thus in Britain the map is published by the *Ordnance Survey* whose title reflects its early use for artillery purposes; in Italy it is published by the *Istituto Geografico Militare*) and to the systematic inventory and bureaucratic regulation of the modern state. But it also illustrates the centrality of landscape in framing national identity and difference. The area covered by the modern topographic map corresponds broadly to the conventional scale of chorographic description. Indeed, it was the interests of eighteenth-century chorographers and antiquarians that ensured that archaeological sites were marked on the British topographic series with different lettering denoting prehistoric, Roman, and medieval sites. Variations in the landscape elements illustrated, signage conventions, and color on topographic maps reflect differences in both the physical environments and the cultural predilections of different nations. Thus Swiss maps are spectacular in their use of color and shading to dramatize mountainous relief, emphasizing the principal landscape object of national pride; French topographic maps mark the population of every commune, a reflection of the long shadow that population loss and stagnation cast across national pride in the nineteenth century. In both their similarities and their differences, these topographic series act as pictorial expressions of national landscapes and their role in constituting and expressing cultural identities within the boundaries of national space. Possession, use, and familiarity with the topographic map and its ways of representing landscape is regarded in many countries as a mark of citizenship and a guide to the correct way of seeing and conducting oneself in the actual landscape.

Landscape's Deceptions, New Spatialities, and Meanings

This historical survey of changing meanings and relations between *Landschaft* and landscape reveals a complex and flexible way of describing spatial relations between humans and nature that has acted to frame a variety of social and political contexts. Much of landscape's authority comes precisely from what one writer has called its "duplicity," its capacity to veil historically specific social relations behind the smooth and often aesthetic appearance of "nature."²⁷ Landscape acts to "naturalize" what is deeply cultural. For example, the serpentine lines of manicured pasture, copses and reflecting lake of the English landscape park obscure beneath their "lines of beauty"²⁸ a tense and often violent social struggle between common rights and exclusive property; the image of a tropical island world of natural abundance and fertility depicted by the French artist Paul Gauguin and countless tourist images masks behind apparent naturalness a world of colonial oppression, disease, and seedy sexuality. Much recent scholarship has sought to unmask and denaturalize landscape, paying as much attention to its pictorial and literary representations as to material spaces themselves.²⁹ In refusing to take landscape "at face value," such landscape study moves beyond *Landschaft* in its original Germanic sense, beyond the pictorial English sense of *landscape* as an aesthetically unified space, and beyond the traditional geographical sense of landscape as an expression of ecological relations between land and life. It draws upon and contributes to the revised ways of conceptualizing space with which I opened this discussion, regarding space as a function of natural and social processes, but also as an outcome that in turn has social agency, able to create and transform the material world.

Landscape's revival within contemporary geography derives from those aspects embedded in its conceptual history that allow it to transcend the modernist dualism (perhaps dialectic) of nature and culture. A consistent feature of landscape's various expressions is that it is *simultaneously* a natural and a cultural space. Thus, for example, the landscape of Southern California today is in large measure the outcome of a suite of images of the good life, many themselves embodied in landscape images—of bungalows set in orange groves, of perfect bodies stretched over golden sands, of a dark, dystopian urbanism of mechanized violence—projected onto the physical region. These landscapes have drawn upon material elements of the physical and social geography of Southern California, to be sure—they would lack material effect if they did not. They also draw upon much deeper historical landscape themes derived from the cultural resources of Western art and literature: of arcadia, of the palm-fringed isle, of the pathological city. And they work through various media: art, photography, music, and the movies. Landscape images

tap into the desires and fears of living people who respond by creating imaginative geographies that shape in large measure their embodied experience of California as landscape. To interrogate such manufactured landscape images for the “accuracy” and authenticity of their geographical descriptions is to ignore the most interesting questions about landscape today: how it gathers together nature, culture and imagination within a spatial manifold, reentering the material world as an active agent in its continuous reshaping.

Conclusion

Landscape’s current work is not of course confined to the disciplines of geography and history. Architects and environmentalists have also found in the term renewed conceptual vigor, for relating building to its circumambient world and for grasping the reciprocal relations between the natural and human worlds respectively. But my focus here has been geographical and historical, tracing landscape’s long journey from its medieval roots in *Landschaft* to its contemporary capacity to capture and materialize the idea of relative space. Throughout, landscape betrays an extraordinary flexibility in its capacity to bring together the interests of geographers and historians as these have responded to changing social contexts. While consistently focusing attention on local and regional scale, landscape is not inherently territorializing, and can readily be adapted to more relative conceptions of space. As historians reconnect with questions of space and spatiality, recognizing that *where* events occur contributes a great deal toward understanding how and why they occur, landscape, like *place*, can play a significant role in the conceptual usages of historical scholarship. Awareness of its complex history and of its capacity to bring together nature and culture as a spatial actor can only serve further to sharpen landscape’s scholarly value.

Notes

¹ Martin W. Lewis and Kären E. Wigen, *The Myth of Continents: A Critique of Metageography* (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 1997).

² The ‘Black Atlantic’ is that region comprised by the cultural, economic and geopolitical connections that have evolved during the past six hundred years between coastal Europe, western Africa, the Caribbean and the eastern seabords of North and South America, and the area in which shaping the experience of Black Africans and their descendants is central. Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (London and New York: Verso, 1993); Stuart Hall, ed., *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (London; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, in association with the Open University, 1997).

³ Richard Sennett, *Flesh and Stone: The Body and the City in Western Civilization* (London and New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1994).

⁴ Robert David Sack, *Conceptions of Space in Social Thought: A Geographic Perspective* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980); David Harvey, *Spaces of Hope* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000).

⁵ Rose Marie San Juan, *Rome: A City Out of Print* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001).

⁶ Richard Hartshorne, *The Nature of Geography: A Philosophical Enquiry* (Washington, D.C.: Association of American Geographers, 1939); Robert Eric Dickinson, *City, Region and Regionalism: A Geographical Contribution to Human Ecology* (London: Routledge and Paul, 1960).

⁷ Doreen Massey, "A Global Sense of Place," in Trevor Barnes and Derek Gregory, eds., *Reading Human Geography* (London: Arnold, 1997), 237–245.

⁸ Michael Curry, "Towards a World Without Maps: Lessons from Ptolemy and Postal Codes," *Annals, Association of American Geographers*, forthcoming 2004.

⁹ I am simplifying a complex argument here.

¹⁰ Kenneth Olwig, *Landscape, Nature and the Body Politic: From Britain's Renaissance to America's New World* (Madison, Wisc.: University of Wisconsin Press, 2002).

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹² *Ibid.*, 19.

¹³ James Turner, *The Politics of Landscape: Rural Scenery and Society in English Poetry, 1630–1660* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976); Richard Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Denis Cosgrove, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape*, 2d ed. (Madison, Wisc.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998).

¹⁴ Denis Cosgrove, "Landscape and the European Sense of Sight—Eyeing Nature," in Kay Anderson et al., eds., *Handbook of Cultural Geography* (London: Sage, 2003), 249–268.

¹⁵ Olwig, *Landscape*; Richard Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood*.

¹⁶ My use of the term "gaze" draws upon feminist theories of vision that have associated gaze with an actively appropriating and mastering form of vision. See G. Rose, *Feminism and Geography* (Cambridge: Polity, 1993). To speak of landscape as a gaze thus suggests the control and authority of a landowner. "Distanciated" gaze implies more than a physical distance between viewer and viewed, although this is critical to landscape and actualized by selecting a high point from which the area can be seen spread out before the eye. It implies a psychological and social distance, from direct physical and social engagement with the space observed. See C. Ginzburg, *Wooden Eyes: Nine Reflections on Distance* (New York, 2001).

¹⁷ Christopher S. Wood, *Albrecht Altdorfer and the Origins of Landscape* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993); Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (London: Harper Collins, 1995).

¹⁸ Friedrich Ratzel, "The territorial growth of states," in J. Agnew, et al., eds., *Human Geography: An Essential Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 525–535. Alan Mayhew, *Rural Settlement and Farming in Germany* (London: Batsford, 1973); August Meitzen, *Siedelungs- und Agrarwesen der Westgermanen und Ostgermanen, der Kelten, Finnen und Slaven*, 3 vols. (Berlin, 1895).

¹⁹ Carl Ortwin Sauer, "The Morphology of Landscape," in John Leighly, ed., *Land and Life: A Selection From the Writings of Carl Ortwin Sauer* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, [1925] 1969).

²⁰ Ewald Banse, *Germany Prepares for War* (London: L. Dickson, 1934); Ewald Banse, *Deutsche Landschaft und Seele: Neue Wege der Untersuchung und Gestaltung* (Munich, Berlin: R. Oldenbourg, 1928); Ewald Banse, *Geographie und Wehrwille: Gesammelte Studien zu den Problemen Landschaft und Mensch, Raum und Volk, Krieg und Wehr* (Breslau: W. G. Korn, 1934).

²¹ Walter Christaller, *Central Places in Southern Germany*, trans. Carlisle W. Baskin (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1966).

- ²² Gert Gröning and Joachim Woschke-Buhlmann, "Die Landespflege als Instrument nationalsozialistischer Eroberungspolitik: Ein Standort-gerechter Beitrag," *Arch Plus* 81 (1985): 46–59.
- ²³ Denis Cosgrove, "John Ruskin and the Geographical Imagination," *Geographical Review* 69, no. 1 (1979): 43–62.
- ²⁴ Thomas Zeller, "'The Landscape's Crown': Landscape, Perceptions and Modernizing Effects of the German *Autobahn* System," in David Nye, ed., *Technologies of Landscape: Reaping to Recycling* (Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999), 218–238.
- ²⁵ In the UK until the 1970s the standard scale was 1 inch to 1 mile (1:63,360), while in the US the equivalent scale remains 1:62,000, reflecting attempts in the early Republic to "rationalize" imperial measures.
- ²⁶ The sheet size of topographic maps relates historically to the scale of military engagement and artillery distances in the mid-nineteenth century.
- ²⁷ Stephen Daniels, "Marxism, Culture, and the Duplicity of Landscape," in Richard Peet and Nigel Thrift, eds., *New Models in Geography*, vol. 2 (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 196–220.
- ²⁸ The serpentine "line of beauty," initially theorized by the artist William Hogarth, was adopted by eighteenth-century English landscape gardeners as a formal design principle.
- ²⁹ W. J. T. Mitchell, ed., *Landscape and Power* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994); Don Mitchell, *The Lie of the Land: Migrant Workers and the California Landscape* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).