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# Reading Landscape: Mid-Century Modernism and the Landscape Idea

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**READING *LANDSCAPE*: MID-CENTURY MODERNISM  
AND THE LANDSCAPE IDEA**

A Dissertation Presented

by

JEFFREY D. BLANKENSHIP

Submitted to the Graduate School of the  
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

February 2011

Geosciences

Geography

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## **DEDICATION**

To Kirin

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Sitting in the stacks on the 18<sup>th</sup> floor of the W.E.B. Dubois library near the beginning of my Ph.D. program at UMass, I first discovered the dusty volumes of *Landscape* magazine. I was researching some of the prominent academic journals in geography for an assignment in Richard Wilkie's geographic theory course, but found myself lingering over a magazine that was distinct from the other selections. With my previous degrees in landscape architecture and planning I was instantly drawn to this deceptively unassuming magazine and how it represented a bridge between my earlier work and my new discipline. After all, I was seeking a Ph.D. in geography not as a total change of academic course, but as a theoretical enrichment to what had been over ten years of thinking about and designing landscapes. In *Landscape* I found a magazine that was open to the contributions of multiple academic and intellectual perspectives and I believed a dissertation on this topic should be equally encompassing. In order to pursue such a topic I would need the help of many supportive and intellectually adventurous mentors.

My advisor, Richard Wilkie, always encouraged me to pursue this multidisciplinary interest. His inclusive teaching and broad perspective provided a model of unfettered academic (and personal) inquiry that I aspire to in this dissertation and in my own teaching. Discussions with Ethan Carr in his course on cultural landscapes were instrumental in focusing the direction of my dissertation and since then he has provided invaluable feedback and encouragement. Max Page's "maverick interests" in combining architectural and social history have set a rigorous example of scholarship that bridges academic terrains and the dissertation is better for his

thoughtful comments. Julie Graham was there through my comprehensive exam, dissertation proposal and early chapter drafts. Tragically she passed away before I could benefit from her insights on the final document. She will be missed. Thank you to George Roberson for the close reading of the document and agreeing to join my committee at such a late date.

Any dissertation seeking to expand the discourse on the work of J.B. Jackson must elicit feedback from some of the scholars who knew him best. Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, Chris Wilson, Michael Conzen, Wilber Zelinsky and David Lowenthal each spent hours talking with me about Jackson, *Landscape* and the early direction of my dissertation and Pierce Lewis, Paul Groth and Donlyn Lyndon corresponded with me via email. Their feedback gave me the confidence to pursue this topic.

While it is not ideal to teach full time while writing a doctoral dissertation, I have been fortunate in the resources made available through my time at both Smith College and at SUNY-ESF. I am grateful to Ann Leone, head of the Landscape Studies program at Smith for the first opportunities to teach and lecture in my area of research, as well as for help in translating some especially tricky French geographic texts. Richard Hawks provided the most valuable gift over the last three years at SUNY-ESF: time to work.

Finally, to my parents Barbara and Arden for the palatable pride they take in each of my accomplishments and to my wife, Kirin Makker, for the unwavering love and support.

**ABSTRACT**

**READING *LANDSCAPE*: MID-CENTURY MODERNISM  
AND THE LANDSCAPE IDEA**

FEBRUARY 2011

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This dissertation traces the recovery of the *landscape idea* during the middle decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by a group of public intellectuals, scholars and designers responding to the everyday realities of the modern American built environment. That recovery served as a corrective to modernism's construction of landscape as either abstract utopian space or retrogressive historical tableau. The primary catalyst for this renewed interest in landscape as a representation of human cultures and their complex relationship with the natural world was the essayist and critic John Brinckerhoff Jackson and his magazine *Landscape*. During the years of Jackson's editorship (1951-1968), the magazine became a locus for intellectual exchange, a gathering place for a community of scholars from different disciplines who were drawn to Jackson's unique voice. Jackson's essays in the magazine used the term landscape in a way that was not common outside of the field of human geography. Here landscape did not describe a picturesque or painterly scene, nor did it describe a process of beautification. Jackson wrote of landscapes that seemed somewhat prosaic: the everyday, ordinary



environments of city streets, rural farms, individual dwellings, highways and the commercial strip. He insisted that understanding how to read these places for their social, cultural and ecological content was a necessary—though too rarely employed—prelude to imagining new prototypes for the design and management of human environments. The mid-century intellectual milieu fostered by J.B. Jackson ultimately nurtured a contemporary (and still evolving) understanding of landscape as a conceptual medium composed of a diversity of cultures, layers of visible history and hidden narratives and an interdependent human ecology that continues to shape landscape theory and practice today.

Keywords: landscape, *Landscape* magazine, landscape idea, modernism, modernity, 20<sup>th</sup> century, mid-century, J.B. Jackson, nature, everyday, America, human geography, built environment, architecture, landscape architecture.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

A landscape is...a space deliberately created to speed up or slow down the process of nature. As Eliade expressed it, it represents man taking upon himself the role of time.

J.B. Jackson, *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape*

We are all victims, whether we know it or not, of a way of thinking that sets the city apart from any other kind of environment. At the root of this confusion is one single error: the error which proclaims that nature is something outside of us, something green which we can perhaps enjoy as a spectacle or examine for future exploitation, but which is only distantly related to us.

J.B. Jackson, *Landscape*

In 2005, The Museum of Modern Art presented the exhibition *Groundswell: Constructing the Contemporary Landscape* that featured 23 design projects from around the world, built over the previous two decades.<sup>1</sup> The *New York Times* architecture critic, Nicolai Ouroussoff, wrote that the show signaled “the refreshing debate that is emerging over how best to deal with the legacy of Modernism”:

If the show has a subtext, in fact, it is a forthright desire to come to terms with the postindustrial landscape, in particular with its legacy of violence and decay. Many of the projects seem to have been plucked from a list of man-made horrors: the site of a terrorist bombing, a war-torn city center, poisonous dumping grounds and industrial wastelands. The show’s underlying optimism is rooted in the power of landscape design to act as a healing agent.<sup>2</sup>

The *Groundswell* exhibition marked an evolution in thinking about the potential of landscape to be a potent and compelling medium for addressing the complex environmental and social issues of the new millennium. However, in order for landscape to assume such an ambitious role it first had to renew its agency as a relevant cultural medium and overcome almost a century of obscurity on the margins of artistic and social debates. Landscape needed to become relevant again.

Humans are part of nature, not separate entities occupying opposing conceptual and literal territory. Once this axiom is accepted—a proposition that is not without controversy, even at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century—the discussion can turn to landscape. Throughout its first three hundred years as a concept in the English language, landscape was a cultural practice that explicitly worked to represent human cultures in an integral relationship with the natural world, first as a genre of painting that placed the traditional themes and human subjects of art into a larger environmental context, and then as a practice of shaping “unimproved” nature into picturesque scenery. However, as Cosgrove has argued, by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century landscape’s representational and artistic power began to diminish as modernism and modernization constructed a dichotomous worldview that isolated cultural production as a rarified and abstract domain, disconnected from a natural world increasingly categorized and classified through the lens of science.<sup>3</sup> In many ways, the original poetics of landscape ceased to exist under the rationalizing weight of late 19<sup>th</sup> century thinking. At the same time, a persistent oppositional romanticism that willfully challenged the progressive agendas of modernization and urbanization, claimed landscape as a retrogressive historical tableau, thereby destroying its progressive associations, its potential for originality.

By the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, Americans saw the results of a conceptual separation of culture and nature physically manifest in a post-war landscape characterized by either uncontrolled growth or the often ill-conceived urban transformations of planners, architects and landscape architects. The socio-political, economic and cultural forces that accepted and acted on this false dichotomy helped to make an American landscape

that embodied unresolved conflicting values: ecological communities or human communities; history or progress; vernacular heritage or avant-garde expression. Operating within this context, designers and planners spent much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century theorizing ideal spatial relationships, envisioning a succession of abstract prototypes of humans living *in proximity* to nature rather than as part of nature. At the same time, environmentalists and historic preservationists worked against the dominant forces of landscape change while accepting the intrinsic dualism: segregating valued places, be it an “untouched” wilderness or an historic property, in a desperate homage to a fleeting past.

But over the last thirty years many of these dichotomies have been challenged by philosophies that embrace multiple perspectives over the stark either/or of mid-century dogma. For example, Columbia University’s journal of historic preservation, *Future Anterior*, suggests, “preservation has expanded to include the management (through protection, intervention, or interpretation) of entire urban environments, landscapes, highways, cultural traditions, artistic practices and even specific “experiences” such as historic view sheds.”<sup>4</sup> Such a statement indicates that preservation has moved beyond the isolated building and into a landscape context that demands the accommodation of multiple narratives, managed through methods that anticipate a living and changing human environment.

From the perspective of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century the landscape idea has regained and expanded on much of its original meaning: it is a given that places are shaped by the diversity of people who inhabit them, that a city is a site of social identity, that landscapes reflect human cultures expressing their place in nature over time.<sup>5</sup> Out of

the ashes of a dead ideology something has been recovered and something has been renewed. While the presence of landscape as a productive field of inquiry and cultural production over the last thirty years can be found in the literature of a dozen disciplines, little has been written about the common historical conditions under which that recovery took place.<sup>6</sup>

In this dissertation I argue that the historic meaning of landscape as a material artifact of cultural values and practices that was subsumed by the 20th century meta-narratives of placeless universalism, hyper-rational functionalism and abstract spatial utopianism, was recovered during mid-century by a group of public intellectuals, scholars and designers responding to these excesses of high modernism. An important but overlooked forum for this dialogue was the cultural critic J. B. Jackson's small magazine called *Landscape*.

John Brinckerhoff Jackson (1909-1996) was born abroad, in Dinard, France in 1909. This is an auspicious beginning for someone who would initially be inspired by ideas from French human geography to think critically about the development of the modern American landscape. His cosmopolitan American parents would see that he was educated in all of the best schools, including an international boarding school in Switzerland where he learned both French and German. Returning to the United States, he would spend his school years in a succession of New England prep schools and his summers riding horses on his uncle's New Mexico ranch.<sup>7</sup>

After a year in an experimental program at the University of Wisconsin, he transferred to Harvard where he received his BA in history in 1932. He spent one year in architecture school at MIT before departing for Vienna to study commercial drawing

(a program from which he also withdrew) followed by a two-year motorcycle tour of central Europe, during which he observed the rise of fascism. His earliest writings were based on this journalistic expedition and appeared in both *American Review* and *Harper's* magazines in 1934 and 1935. In 1938 he published his first book, *Saints in Summertime*, about the political climate of pre-war Europe.<sup>8</sup> His next book would not be for thirty-four years, but in the intervening period he would have much to say in the small magazine he founded after World War II.

### **Landscape magazine**

Once born, an idea does not easily die. It is discovered by others, taken over by them, amplified, given form and direction, and finally it is shared by many. And in the last analysis, a magazine is what the contributors make it. *Landscape*, whatever its shortcomings and merits, is as much theirs as it is ours.

J.B. Jackson, *Landscape*

*Landscape*, which began in 1951 as a small regional magazine with twenty subscribers, became in its first decade of publication an increasingly influential forum for scholars from across academic disciplines and the design professions. During the 1950s and 60s, the magazine served as a platform for writers who questioned the impact a post-war modernist paradigm was having on the quality of the American built and natural environment. The contributing scholars, designers and public intellectuals were united in their resistance to the figurative (and literal) flattening of mid-century landscapes through a common interest in *cultural* landscapes.

The seeds of landscape's reemergence in the 20<sup>th</sup> century can be traced to the introduction of this cultural landscape idea. With foundations in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century scholarship of Germany, France and Great Britain, the idea of a cultural landscape was



introduced into American intellectual history in 1925 by human geographers attempting to reassert the agency of culture within debates over the influence of environment in shaping human societies. Historically, the landscape idea had always been inherently cultural, however the term cultural landscape emerged at a time when landscape had been drained of many of its cultural associations. Culture needed to be re-centered within debates about the meaning of landscape. The Berkeley geographer Carl Sauer in his 1925 essay, "The Morphology of Landscape", first introduced the term in the United States. Defining the concept, he wrote, "The cultural landscape is fashioned from the natural landscape by a cultural group. Culture is the agent, the natural area is the medium, the cultural landscape the result."<sup>9</sup> While the term had considerable currency in human geography during the 1920s and 1930s, by the 1940s it was languishing in the obscurity of disciplinary squabbles over its meaning and proper role as a subject of inquiry. With a diminished role in geography, it took decades for the cultural landscape idea to diffuse to a larger academic and public discourse; however, it was in the pages of *Landscape* that the concept was transformed from its roots in geography into a multidisciplinary concern that was crucial to the late twentieth century reinvigoration of landscape as a culturally inscribed medium.

Though small in circulation, the earliest issues of *Landscape* made their way into the hands of a select few influential individuals who were eager for just such a dialogue. Many were initially drawn to the unique voice of the magazine's founder and editor, John Brinckerhoff Jackson. Jackson's earliest essays in the magazine used the term landscape in a way that was not common outside of the field of human geography. Here landscape didn't describe a picturesque or painterly scene, nor did it describe a

process of beautification. Jackson wrote of landscapes that seemed somewhat prosaic: the everyday, ordinary environments of city streets, rural farms, individual dwellings, highways and the commercial strip. During a period when much of the academy was under pressure to quantify the results of their research, this humanistic approach to studying the everyday environment struck a nerve with some scholars. At the same time, many design professionals and critics of the built environment were drawn to the sometimes-explicit critique of post-war planning and design, a critique waged at the apogee of modernism's influence.

In this context, *Landscape* became a locus for intellectual exchange, a gathering place for a community of scholars from different disciplines. The list of contributors represented a who's who of landscape theorists, critics of the built environment and design and planning practitioners. Authors not only included geographers such as Carl Sauer, David Lowenthal and Yi-Fu Tuan, but also the sociologist Herbert Ganz, anthropologist Edward T. Hall, architecture historian Siegfried Giedion, planning critic Christopher Tunnard, social philosopher Lewis Mumford, journalist Grady Clay and environmental planner Kevin Lynch. In addition to these scholars, designers such as the landscape architects Garrett Eckbo and Lawrence Halprin and the architects Charles Moore, Donlyn Lyndon and Denise Scott Brown were prominently featured. This platform for cross-disciplinary voices encouraged overlapping and contradictory ideas about the built environment to coexist in the pages of *Landscape* simultaneously, a capacity that makes it an exemplary locale in which to examine shifts in the debates surrounding post-war American environments.

By the late 1960s and early 1970s recognizing the cultural aspects of landscape was becoming part of a larger resistance across disciplines to the negative environmental impacts of 20<sup>th</sup> century modernity. While contributors to Jackson's magazine were reinvigorating an essential belief in landscape's capacity to reflect human cultures and their relationship to the natural world, the intellectual context of mid-century social, political and environmental movements helped augment the definition beyond its 17th and 18th century picturesque origins, resulting in the expansive descriptive power currently embodied in the landscape idea. In addition to this renewed interest in "reading" landscapes for their cultural and ecological content, the mid-century rediscovery of landscape by environmental artists highlighted its potential as an innovative and expressive medium. Emerging from these debates in the last 25 years, the contemporary (and still evolving) definition of landscape as a complex conceptual medium composed of a diversity of cultures, a layering of visible history and hidden narratives and an interdependent human ecology is a marked departure from the abstract "man" in nature dichotomy of mid 20<sup>th</sup> century American rhetoric. Out of this mid-century intellectual and artistic milieu emerged the current "expanded field" of landscape theories and practices.<sup>10</sup>

### **Description of the Study**

This dissertation traces the development and transformation of the cultural landscape idea through a close study of the magazine *Landscape* in order to provide critical historical perspective on an influential concept that has become pervasive since the 1970s in discussions of design, planning, historic preservation and environmental

protection. The period of J.B. Jackson's editorship of the magazine, between 1951 and 1968, was a particularly contentious period of change in the American landscape—a period that bridged modernism and postmodernism, urban decline and urban renewal, suburbanization, and the parallel rise of the environmental and historic preservation movements. Through the vehicle of a closely focused analysis of the magazine's content I reconstruct many of the shared assumptions and peculiarities of a small but important American sub-culture—the people who read, contributed to and edited the magazine—and how they laid the foundation for a renewed interest in landscape as the physical embodiment of contemporary ideas and meanings.

In order to reflect on the content of the magazine (articles, book reviews, notes and comments, letters to the editor and the magazine's use of images), I place *Landscape* within the larger intellectual context of post-war public debates about the quality of the American built environment. The content and editorial stance of other design and planning publications during this period are compared with that of *Landscape*, and major newspapers and the popular press provide perspective on public opinions outside of the professional magazines. Specifically my research traces a historical narrative of how the cultural landscape idea that emerged from human geography during the interwar period in the United States, was transformed at mid-century into a new, more complex definition of landscape in general, and became a catalyst for actionable change in design and planning by the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## Precedents in Recent Literature

This study fits within an impressive—and some might say exhaustive—literature on landscape. As noted above, it has been at the center of concern for numerous disciplines, all of which have struggled with the meaning of landscape. Yet, there are voids in the research. Over 25 years ago, Denis Cosgrove suggested that landscape could be placed within a broader history of ideas. Rather than another theoretical discussion isolated within the disciplinary boundaries of geography, he proposed a larger historical framework that allowed for a broader study of society and ideology.

Cosgrove's influential book from 1984, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape*, provides the theoretical inspiration for this dissertation. In that work Cosgrove makes a strong argument for landscape as a “way of seeing that has its own history.”<sup>11</sup> Tracing that history back to the *bel paesaggio* of 15<sup>th</sup> century Italy and the dawn of the Renaissance, Cosgrove uses the social transformations associated with the transition from Feudalism to Capitalism as a theoretical backdrop for historicizing the emergence of a landscape idea. Looking back on the occasion of a 1998 reissue of the book in which he wrote a new introductory essay, Cosgrove stated the original intention of the work as an effort “to locate landscape interpretation within a critical historiography, to theorize the *idea* of landscape within a broadly Marxian understanding of culture and society, and thus to extend the treatment of landscape beyond what seemed to [be] a prevailing narrow focus on design and taste.”<sup>12</sup>

In Cosgrove's theoretical construction, landscape is a cultural concept that emerged with the advent of modern society in Europe and is inextricably linked to land

as a commodity in the Capitalist marketplace. Aspects of the transition from Feudal to Capitalist modes of production created the “need” for a landscape idea. As economies in Western Europe began to diversify and cities became the locus of exchange, an intimate connection to the land was no longer part of everyday life for some social groups. As land diminished as a source of everyday sustenance for these groups and an emerging bourgeoisie were leading increasingly urban lives, land transformed into something to own, enclose, write poetry about, paint, view, theorize and improve—it became landscape. Landscape here is a product of the emerging modern world in the 500 years between 1400 and 1900: the physical manifestation of humanism and a way of seeing land as an outsider rather than a participant. Cosgrove emphasized,

Landscape...is an ideological concept. It represents a way in which certain classes of people have 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.<sup>13</sup>

An idea is inherently abstract. In this case, the landscape idea was a representation of reality, a scene to be consumed. However, by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the landscape idea was challenged by the ultimate abstractions of non-representational art and scientific rationalism. Cosgrove uses these changes in ways of seeing the world as an appropriate end to his study:

At the historical moment when realism was challenged in painting and analogical thinking was challenged in science, the landscape idea atrophied as a moral commentary on social relations with land and with nature, to be adopted as a cold scientific concept in academic geography and public policy.<sup>14</sup>

Looking back on this assertion in 1998, Cosgrove admitted that the demise of the landscape idea was overstated and that it had been a more enduring concept than was portrayed in the original text.

For the landscape idea has not disappeared, rather it has again been transformed, while still sustaining enduring elements of its traditional ideological significance.<sup>15</sup>

Thus, the 20<sup>th</sup> century should not be considered a postscript for the landscape idea. In fact, if one accepts the value of Cosgrove's work covering the period up to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there is a vastly understudied 20<sup>th</sup> century in which to further trace the landscape idea.

The narrative is familiar to human geographers. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, human geography was searching for its proper subject matter—its particular science. In 1908, the German geographer Otto Schluter proposed that *landschaftskunde*, or landscape science, was the exclusive purview of geography.<sup>16</sup> It was this concept that Carl Sauer introduced into American human geography in 1925 as cultural landscape. By 1939, Richard Hartshorne in *The Nature of Geography* had famously challenged the concept, effectively paving the way for spatial science to overtake cultural landscape studies as the accepted mode of research.<sup>17</sup> Over the last eighty years, there have been numerous theoretical updates and occasional historical summaries of the cultural landscape idea in the discipline of human geography. Lester Rowntree's article "The Cultural Landscape Concept in American Human Geography" points to the various schools of thought, debates, and disagreements that have framed the field.<sup>18</sup> Rowntree summarizes the perennial conflict the cultural landscape idea elicits in human geography: "to some, the notion of cultural landscape is an appropriate bridge between space and society, culture

and environment, while to others this definitional fluidity weakens the concept and disqualifies it from serious analytic usage.”<sup>19</sup> This struggle between scholars who embrace the inherent complexity and uncertainty of cultural landscapes and those seeking to establish or perpetuate a positivist, scientific approach to human geography, closely parallels the broader theoretical conflicts surrounding modernism.

As part of the common historical narrative within the discipline, the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century is characterized as a period when spatial science was ascendant and cultural landscape studies was diminished. But some sources point to how this was an incubation period for what would be called “humanistic” geography by the early 1970s. Rowntree notes “we can decipher two main ways in which landscape was used by this emerging humanistic geography during the period 1950 to 1970. The first emphasized the visible and material details of landscape, while the second stressed the cultural perception and visual preferences of our surroundings.”<sup>20</sup> While acknowledging the importance of the period between 1950 and 1970 and mentioning the role of J.B. Jackson and *Landscape*, Rowntree is concerned primarily with the cultural landscape idea in human geography. However, thanks mostly to *Landscape* magazine, the term cultural landscape spread far afield of geography to a dozen other disciplines since 1925 and within those disciplines the concept was transformed to satisfy disparate agendas. What is at the root of this disciplinary fluidity? There has yet to be an intellectual history that treats the concept as a trans-disciplinary intellectual and philosophical belief system that emerged and was transformed in a larger historical context.



Much has been written about the late John Brinkerhoff Jackson as an influential voice for the importance of studying ordinary, vernacular landscapes. These assessments have often taken the form of biographical and scholarly reviews that inevitably remark on the founding of *Landscape* magazine as the watershed moment in what has become known as landscape studies. However, the emphasis of these article length reviews has always centered on the influential yet enigmatic nature of Jackson's writings. In fact, the quality of Jackson's writings as stand-alone literary essays, in the manner of an H.L. Mencken or a Bernard DeVoto, has distracted attention from their place in a larger sphere of ideas.

Some excellent review articles and collections of essays have looked at Jackson's legacy, beginning in 1977 with D.W. Meinig's "Reading the Landscape: An Appreciation of W.G. Hoskins and J.B. Jackson" from his edited volume of geographical essays *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes*. At the outset of that article Meinig states, "It should be emphasized that despite the unusually close relationship between the man and the magazine, it is not an assessment of *Landscape* but of J.B. Jackson as revealed in *Landscape*."<sup>21</sup> This has been the model for the other major retrospectives of Jackson's influence: the magazine as a source for better understanding the man rather than the magazine *and* the man as representative of larger intellectual trends.

Pierce Lewis' 1983 article published in *American Quarterly* "Learning from Looking: Geographic and Other Writings about the American Cultural Landscape" was an acknowledgment of the contribution of scholars outside of geography to the literature on cultural landscapes. In this article, Lewis observes that "Jackson's contribution has

taken two forms: what he said himself about cultural landscape, and what he encouraged others to say.” In that vein he noted “*Landscape* had become a continuing forum for some of the best minds in America.”<sup>22</sup>

Coincident with Jackson’s death in 1996 were a flurry of conferences and publications concerned with Jackson’s legacy and future directions for cultural landscape studies. In 1997, Helen Horowitz’s final collection of Jackson’s essays, *Landscape in Sight: Looking at America* was prefaced with the most thorough biographical statement to date on Jackson’s life.<sup>23</sup> In that same year, Paul Groth and Todd Bressi published a multidisciplinary collection of contemporary essays in cultural landscape studies, *Understanding Ordinary Landscapes* to emphasize that the field Jackson founded was still vibrant.<sup>24</sup> In 1998, the University of New Mexico School of Architecture and Planning hosted the conference *J.B. Jackson and American Landscape*. Out of that conference a collection of essays was published in 2003, Chris Wilson and Paul Groth’s *Everyday America: Cultural Landscape Studies after J.B. Jackson*.<sup>25</sup> Both *Understanding Ordinary Landscapes* and *Everyday America* begin with excellent summary essays, “Frameworks for Cultural Landscape Study” and “The Polyphony of Cultural Landscape Study” respectively. However, this dissertation will depart from the above models in two important ways. First, this work focuses on the diffusion of an *idea* by examining Jackson and his magazine’s influence in the context of a wider intellectual history that has extended beyond Jackson, beyond geography and ultimately beyond the academy. Second, all of the resources that reference both Jackson and *Landscape* are article length treatments, making this dissertation the first work to examine this multidisciplinary dialogue in a significantly longer format.

*Landscape* has yet to benefit from a focused scholarly analysis of the magazine as an intellectual forum. This dissertation will begin to address this gap.

### **Structure of the Dissertation**

My intention in this dissertation is to reveal a narrative of how the landscape idea was theorized, debated, diffused and transformed. I argue that the cultural landscape idea was a refuge for the diminished landscape idea (as theorized by Cosgrove) and at the height of 20<sup>th</sup> century modernism began to transform once again into a new landscape idea that is currently informing contemporary theory and practice in a number of fields. This revitalized landscape idea is a hybrid concept that shares some ideological aspects with the old landscape idea but is also rooted in what Jameson calls the “cultural logic of late capitalism.”<sup>26</sup> This intellectual history of *Landscape* magazine is meant to provide a more informed understanding of contemporary debates about the meaning of landscape at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In Chapter 2, “Recovering *Landscape*: J.B. Jackson and the Magazine of Human Geography,” I place the study in an historical context through an introduction to J.B. Jackson’s influences in the field of human geography prior to founding the magazine, with particular emphasis on cultural landscape theory as it developed in the German, French and American academies. The founding of *Landscape* magazine in 1951 is then discussed in the context of the mid-century evolution of the field of human geography toward increasing specialization and a focus on spatial scientific methods. Through Jackson’s essays and the magazine’s publication of the early writings of key geographers who would lead the humanistic counter-revolution of the 1970s, *Landscape*

is established as a refuge and incubator for the renewal of an influential form of cultural landscape studies in geography that would spread beyond the borders of the discipline.

In Chapter 3, “Everyday Landscape and the Critique of Modern America,” “everydayness” is shown to represent a form of resistance to the dominant modernist orthodoxy by limning a discourse that favored cultural pluralism, human ecology and evolving historical narratives. In the magazine the landscape idea was grounded in a fundamental belief that culture and nature could not be conceptually isolated as dichotomous phenomena. During this mid-century period a pluralist view of culture and a process-oriented nature were embraced by a diverse group of public intellectuals and artists who were interested in the physical manifestations of everyday cultures and natures embodied in complex landscapes and expressed over time. By the end of the 1960s, many public intellectuals and an ascendant counterculture were actively questioning modernist orthodoxy in discussions of mass culture, historic preservation, and environmental management. The contribution of Jackson’s landscape perspective to each of these discussions remains an important part of contemporary debate.

In Chapter 4, “Toward Making Places,” the rhetoric of the magazine is contrasted with the utopian visions of mid-century modern architecture and city planning which constructed nature as an abstract good, a scene for minimalist constructions or simply a view from the plate glass window. Modernist designers and planners insisted on bringing humans closer to nature: *rus in urbe*. The problem was proximity and new spatial configurations of structures, neighborhoods and cities were required. The themes surrounding everyday landscapes outlined in Chapter 3 are employed in Chapter 4’s discussion of how, by the mid to late 1960s, an agenda

grounded in a renewed landscape idea began to provide a framework for new ways of thinking about design and planning. This “everydayness” was set in opposition to the “universal” rhetoric of functionalism that insisted human problems could be solved by finding the ideal spatial configuration for the built environment, regardless of cultural, historical or ecological diversity.

Chapter 5, “Landscape Dialectics: Challenging Mid-Century Landscape Architecture,” compares the often-divergent rhetoric of *Landscape* magazine with the profession most tangibly associated with its content: landscape architecture. Architecture’s fascination with space, form and functionalism trickled down to landscape architecture, and by the early 1960s the profession had become a science of spatial planning that, while rigorously cataloging landscape features and assessing environmental problems, nevertheless deemphasized landscape’s cultural, artistic and poetic dimensions. J.B. Jackson, through *Landscape* magazine, his teaching at both Harvard and Berkeley and through the influential collections of his essays, provided an example of a critical approach to landscape interpretation that eschewed quantification. Landscape architecture’s reengagement with issues of complexity, process and meaning can be traced back to Jackson’s challenge to the profession to better understand the everyday landscapes in which they design and plan.

The dissertation concludes by considering how contemporary landscape theories and practices have been shaped by J.B. Jackson and the transdisciplinary example of *Landscape* magazine. J.B. Jackson’s decades long description and critique of the modern American landscape made it possible to imagine a landscape *after* modernism. The “Groundswell” exhibition at the MOMA in 2005 could trace the origin of many of

its themes and theoretical perspectives to a recovery of the landscape idea that began over fifty years earlier in a small “magazine of human geography.”

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Peter Reed, *Groundswell: Constructing the Contemporary Landscape* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2005).

<sup>2</sup> Nicolai Ouroussoff, “Confronting Blight with Hope,” *The New York Times*, 24 February 2005.

<sup>3</sup> Denis Cosgrove, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1998 (1984)). Cosgrove’s influential book provides the theoretical and historical context for the dissertation’s focus on the *landscape idea*. In that work Cosgrove makes a strong argument for landscape as a “way of seeing that has its own history.”

<sup>4</sup> “Future Anterior,” Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation Online, accessed November 21, 2010, <http://www.arch.columbia.edu/publications/futureanterior>.

<sup>5</sup> Scholars in geography and other disciplines that have explored theories of place and identity over the last forty years have illustrated the late 20<sup>th</sup> century landscape idea’s potential for fostering new critical modes for understanding human environments. cf. Paul Adams, Steven Hoelscher and Karen Till, eds., *Textures of Place: Exploring Humanist Geographies* (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 2001).

<sup>6</sup> James Corner proposed a narrative of “recovery” for late 20<sup>th</sup> century landscape architecture in *Recovering Landscape: Essays in Contemporary Landscape Architecture* (1999). Borrowing this terminology, my dissertation historicizes a broader multidisciplinary recovery of landscape over a longer timeframe beginning in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>7</sup> Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, “J.B. Jackson and the Discovery of the American Landscape,” in *Landscape in Sight: Looking at America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).

<sup>8</sup> Brinckerhoff Jackson, “Prussianism or Hitlerism,” *American Review* 3 (April-October 1934), 454-71; “A Fuhrer Comes to Liechtenstein,” *Harper’s Magazine* 170 (February 1935), 298-310; *Saints in Summertime* (New York, 1938).

<sup>9</sup> Carl Sauer, “The Morphology of Landscape,” in *Land and life: a selection from the writings of Carl Ortwin Sauer*, ed. J. Leighly (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1963). Originally published in *University of California Publications in Geography* 2:2, 1925.

<sup>10</sup> Borrowed from linguistics, the term “expanded field” entered the language of contemporary art criticism chiefly through an essay by Rosalind Krauss, “Sculpture in the Expanded Field,” originally published in *October* in 1978 and reprinted in her book *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985), 276-290; the term was subsequently used by Elizabeth Meyer in “The

Expanded Field of Landscape Architecture,” in G. Thompson and F. Steiner, eds., *Ecological Design and Planning* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1997), 45-79.

<sup>11</sup> Denis, Cosgrove, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1998 (1984)), 1.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, xiii.

<sup>13</sup>

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 262.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 254.

<sup>16</sup> Geoffrey J. Martin and Preston E. James, *All Possible Worlds: A History of Geographic Ideas* (New York: Wiley, 1993), 177

<sup>17</sup> Richard Hartshorne, *The Nature of Geography: A Critical Survey of Current Thought in the Light of the Past* (Lancaster, Pa.: Association of American Geographers, 1939)

<sup>18</sup> Lester B. Rowntree, “The Cultural Landscape Concept in American Human Geography,” in *Concepts in Human Geography*, eds. Carville Earle, Kent Mathewson and Martin S. Kenzer (London: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1996).

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 127.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 134.

<sup>21</sup> D.W. Meinig, “Reading the Landscape: An Appreciation of W.G. Hoskins and J.B. Jackson,” in *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes: Geographical Essays*, ed. D.W. Meinig (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 214

<sup>22</sup> Peirce Lewis, “Learning from Looking: Geographic and Other Writing About the American Cultural Landscape,” *American Quarterly*, Vol. 35, No. 3 (1983): 242-261.

<sup>23</sup> John Brinckerhoff Jackson, *Landscape in Sight: Looking at American*, ed. Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).

<sup>24</sup> Paul Groth and Todd W. Bressi, eds., *Understanding Ordinary Landscapes* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).

<sup>25</sup> Chris Wilson and Paul Groth, eds., *Everyday America: Cultural Landscape Studies After J.B. Jackson* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

<sup>26</sup> Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Duke University Press, 1991).

## CHAPTER 2

### RECOVERING *LANDSCAPE*: J.B. JACKSON AND THE MAGAZINE OF HUMAN GEOGRAPHY

Human geography does not oppose itself to a geography from which the human element is excluded; such a one has not existed except in the minds of a few exclusive specialists. It is a forcible abstraction, by every good geographic tradition a tour de force, to consider a landscape as though it were devoid of life.

Carl Sauer

In the spring of 1951 John Brinkerhoff Jackson self-published the first issue of his new magazine *Landscape: Human Geography of the Southwest*. The original issues featured primarily Jackson's writings, both under his own name and various pseudonyms.<sup>1</sup> On the inside cover of the first issue Jackson placed a call to contributors:

*Landscape* is interested in original articles of not more than 4000 words dealing with aspects of the human geography of the Southwest, particularly those suited to illustration by aerial photographs. Articles should be designed to appeal to the intelligent layman rather than the specialist.<sup>2</sup>

In case the intelligent layman didn't know what human geography was, Jackson published a translation from the French geographer Maurice le Lannou's *Le Geographie Humaine* describing it as a "straightforward study, one as little systematized as possible, of the settlements of human groups on the face of the earth."<sup>3</sup> Continuing, Lannou effectively sets the stage for the magazine's embrace of landscape as the complex embodiment of culture and nature changing over time:

We have before us a picture, constantly being retouched, that is vigorously composed of spots of light and zones of shadow, of remarkable convergences of lines of forces at certain points, of road networks sometimes loose, sometimes extremely closely knit, and testifying all of them to the heterogeneous and complex organization of the world.<sup>4</sup>



For Jackson to choose this passage as representative of human geography was characteristically eccentric. By the early 1950s, Anglophone human geography was anything but a “straightforward study”, “little systematized”. However, the early issues of *Landscape* reflected Jackson’s interest in the writings of human geographers and a desire to examine his adopted region of the American Southwest through a geographic lens. After the first year, Jackson realized that the magazine could speak to a larger, more diverse audience, many of whom had interests beyond the Southwest. Accordingly, he changed the name to *Landscape: The Magazine of Human Geography*. For the next ten years the magazine served as a vehicle for ideas from human geography while maintaining a decidedly unaffiliated relationship with the mainstream academic discipline. Jackson set in motion a format and voice for *Landscape* that discouraged academic-style writing, rejecting footnotes and jargon-laced language. Because of this scholarly yet non-dogmatic approach, contributors came from a wide variety of disciplines outside of geography as well as outside of the academy.

Over its first decade *Landscape* became a locus for intellectual exchange—a gathering place for a community of scholars from different disciplines, all interested in landscape as topic and idea. It is a central argument of this dissertation that the magazine itself was a metaphorical landscape—a hybrid territory where different forces came together to create something new. The relationship between the magazine and the mainstream discipline of geography was mutually ambivalent. By the ten-year anniversary, Jackson would fully disassociate the magazine from geography by changing the name simply to *Landscape*. Notably, cultural geographers who were

marginalize in the 1960s by mainstream geography's emphasis on spatial science continued to find refuge in the pages of *Landscape*.

However, it is important to recognize the initial significance of ideas from human geography in shaping the mission and content of the magazine. Geography provided a starting point, a conceptual framework from which Jackson modeled the original magazine. Early contributors, many from other disciplines, found something enticing about this way of thinking. Before exploring the content of the magazine and what it has to say about the landscape idea in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this chapter will address the influence of human geography on J.B. Jackson's vision for *Landscape*.

### **Anthropogeography and its Critics**

The academic discipline of human geography developed primarily in late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century Germany and France, and then quickly spread to other countries, including Great Britain and the United States. The historiography of the development of geography during this period has been obsessively documented by a discipline that has consistently engaged in self-reflection.<sup>5</sup> While scholarly works deriving from geographic curiosity can be traced to the earliest writings of every civilization, it was the birth of the modern university in Germany and the subsequent specialization of knowledge and creation of logical systems for the division of disciplines that provided the context for academic geography to develop.

The year 1859 was a milestone in German geography with the death of both Alexander von Humboldt and Carl Ritter, and the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species*. Humboldt and Ritter were instrumental in the development of modern

geographic thought; however, they represented the last generation of scholars in a pre-specialized era who could reasonably argue to possess a “universal” grasp of human knowledge. Future scholars would find it necessary to narrow the scope of the field, subdividing geography into smaller and more manageable pieces. As with all exercises in division, it began by splitting something that was whole into two: one approach focusing on the study of the physical aspects of the earth’s surface, and the other more concerned with human groups and how they relate to their environmental context.

The development of a distinctly *human* geography (as opposed to a *physical* geography concerned with topics like geomorphology) in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century coincided with the increasing influence of Darwin’s *Origin of Species*. The theory of evolutionary change became a useful analogy beyond its original application in biology. In geography, the concept suggested to scholars such as Friedrich Ratzel a systematic approach to studying how human groups are influenced by their physical environment—what Ratzel termed *Anthropogeographie* in his two volume major work of the same name (1882, 1891).

As early as 1864, the English philosopher Herbert Spencer’s translation of Darwin’s theories of biological survival into a belief that human groups also advanced according to the rule of “survival of the fittest,”<sup>6</sup> influenced many, including Ratzel. Accordingly, “environmental influence” became a focus for much of Ratzel’s work, and was employed even more emphatically by his students. For those who believed Ratzel and his students were placing too much emphasis on the causative power of the environment in the development of human cultures, this approach became known disparagingly as environmental determinism, or simply environmentalism.

The role of environmental influence versus human agency in “man-environment” studies became an intellectual battleground that persisted into the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. On one side were those who argued that environmental influences such as climate, soil, topography and access to natural resources were determining factors in the development of cultural and racial traits. A common observation of the determinists, for example, was that people of the “torrid zone” (the tropics) display a distinct lack of ambition due to the hot climate and those in cold northern climates were brave but intellectually dull. So the logic goes, without the deficiencies of the cold north and hot south, temperate regions were free to develop more creative, ambitious and advanced civilizations. Early 20<sup>th</sup> century geographers such as Ellen Churchill Semple warned of the dangers to mind and body of colonial adventures in hot climates:

The general effect is intense enervation; this starts a craving for stimulants and induces habits of alcoholism which are accountable for many bodily ills usually attributed to direct climatic influences. Transfer to the Tropics tends to relax the mental and moral fiber, induces indolence, self-indulgences and various excesses which lower the physical tone. The social control of public opinion in the new environment is weak, while temptation, due to both climatic and social causes, is peculiarly strong. The presence of an inferior, more or less servile native population, relaxes both conscience and physical energy just when both need a tonic. The result is general enervation, deterioration both as economic and political agents.<sup>7</sup>

In reaction to these simplistic statements were the moderating voices of those who believed that humans were just as influential, or even dominant, in changing the environment to fit their needs—a perspective in geography known as *possiblism* and most famously outlined by the French historian Febvre when he stated “There are no necessities, but everywhere possibilities; and man, as master of the possibilities, is the judge of their use.”<sup>8</sup>

Partly in response to the over-emphasis on environmental explanations, the German geographer Otto Schlüter made an important proposal for the appropriate subject matter of geography. Shortly after Ratzel's death in 1904, Schlüter gave an influential address in Munich where he asserted that human geography should be concerned with the overall appearance of landscapes (*landschaft*). In fact, he insisted that geography should be conceived of as a science of landscape (*Landschaftskunde*). According to Schlüter, geography's "material" was landscape and its method of study should be to trace the historical development of the visible features of landscapes. Beginning with the *Urlandschaft*—the natural landscape (*Naturlandschaft*) before human influence—geographers should trace the development of human cultures as expressed in the visible cultural landscape (*Kulturlandschaft*).<sup>9</sup>

Due to the varied etymology of the word, the meaning of *landschaft* was a subject of considerable debate. For example, was a landscape an identifiable area of a somewhat homogenous character, or was it the totality of what can be seen from a particular perspective? One definition implies uniformity, while the other suggests great variety. The ambiguity of the word *landschaft* and its English cognate landscape has been, and continues to be, a consistent source of confusion and debate.

Despite this ambiguity, Schlüter had not only established the major direction of German geography for the next half-century, but he effectively founded the sub-field of cultural geography and was the first to articulate a theory and method for cultural landscape studies. Schlüter's concept of the cultural landscape would spread from Germany to France and the United States and become part of three rich geographic traditions.

### *Le Géographie Humaine*

Captain John B. Jackson searched through the library of the Norman château serving as temporary division headquarters for the slowly advancing 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry. In the days following the Normandy invasion he was looking for any information that might aid in the division's strategic movement through the *bocage* country of northern France. As a U.S. Army intelligence officer fluent in French and speaking passable German, he was a valuable asset in this particular time and place. When he wasn't interrogating captured German officers it was Jackson's job to help division command plan troop movements through the unfamiliar French landscape. During the North African Campaign, he had studied the available maps and found them to be useful in understanding the relatively flat and featureless desert. The landscape of France, however, was more varied in its topography, vegetation and human settlements, and maps alone were insufficient.<sup>10</sup>

What Jackson found in the personal libraries of the French landowners whose chateaux his division occupied were collections of small descriptive books dealing with aspects of the various landscapes through which they were traveling and fighting. These were not guidebooks written for tourists (although tourist guides and postcards provided useful information as well), but scholarly topical essays and regional studies written throughout the 1930s by French human geographers.

The common themes of these French texts were grounded in an academic fascination with the *genre de vie*—or way of life—of everyday people, and it was not the exclusive province of human geography. French scholarship of the era was emphatically interdisciplinary. In particular, the academic disciplines of sociology,

history and geography that had developed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century were all struggling with a similar set of ideas founded in the romantic humanism of 18<sup>th</sup> century French philosophers like Rousseau. At the center of the philosophical reorientation led by Rousseau was a concern for the masses of society rather than the ruling classes. This orientation to the everyday was set in opposition to the entrenched determinism of social Darwinism and became an enduring feature of French scholarship across academic disciplines.<sup>11</sup>

Emerging from the peasantry as an influential early advocate for a *social* science, Frédéric le Play (1806-1882) combined a focus on everyday people with the popular French fascination with regional differences. He outlined a particularly descriptive monographic approach to studying communities that, while analytical, was not the strict positivism of many of his contemporaries. From Le Play's work (and other scholars coming from the peasant classes) there emerged an influential vision of the French landscape as representative of the relationship between regions and local cultures.<sup>12</sup>

One scholar influenced by Le Play was the father of French *géographie humaine*, Paul Vidal de la Blache. Trained as a historian, Vidal was a holistic thinker and dynamic teacher whose influence dominated French geography for the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In response to Ratzel's *Anthropogeographie*, Vidal believed that geography should be a "scientific study of places," not an exercise in descriptive cataloguing or a deterministic set of generalizations regarding man and his relationship with nature.<sup>13</sup> Instead, Vidal viewed humans as responsive to the environment (*milieu*), while also modifying the environment to meet their needs. Vidal believed that in order

to arrive at general principles about humans and their relationship to the environment, geographers needed to systematically study regions through fieldwork. Primarily focusing on the rural communities of France, Vidal and his students studied the *genres de vie*, or lifestyles, of cultural groups in their natural *milieu*.

With a surprising degree of accord, two generations of scholars pursued this Vidalian tradition, often in the pages of the journal started by Vidal in 1891, *Annales de Géographie*. This is not to say that nuanced disagreements over the scope and purpose of human geography were absent; the interwar period saw a great variety of scholarship. However, looking for the particularities of people and place as defined by everyday life, and the interrelationship between culture (*genre de vie*), landscape (*paysage*), region (*pays*) and environment (*milieu*) formed the backbone of French human geography.

It was Jean Brunhes, one of Vidal's first disciples, whose interests most closely mirrored those of the German *Landschaftskunde* School. Brunhes contended that "human geography, properly so called, must be first and foremost the geography of material human works."<sup>14</sup> His views were outlined in his influential book of 1910, *Géographie Humaine*, and in 1920 an English version was published that drew much interest in the United States.<sup>15</sup> Undoubtedly influenced by Schlüter's concept of *Kulturlandschaft*, Brunhes preferred a topical orientation to human geography rather than the regional approach of Vidal. Focusing on the material artifacts of culture found in the landscape he conducted individual studies on house types, roads, industries, crops and cities.

A student of Brunhes, Pierre Deffontaines, edited a series of thematic monographs published by Gallimard in the mid-1930s that covered such topics as "man



and the forest”, “man and mountains”, “man and the coast” and “man and islands”. It was these small, systematic studies that Jackson found so useful and engrossing sitting in the Huertgen Forest during the winter of 1944-45. Jackson read other French geographers and students of Vidal such as Albert Demangeon and Maximilien Sorre who likely also influenced his emerging view of landscape. Demangeon was the father of French economic geography but he also helped develop the idea of a systematic approach to regions based on a study of settlements that he called rural habitat studies.<sup>16</sup> Sorre had a cross-disciplinary and humanistic approach to human geography, insisting “one can get more understanding...by sitting in a village square than by the most refined calculation of the percentage distribution of socio-professional classes.”<sup>17</sup>

Through his readings of these French human geography texts, Jackson began to “see how many of his interests in history, geography, architecture, and ideas seemed to converge and find expression in a kind of descriptive and interpretive literature which had no general American counterpart.”<sup>18</sup>

### **Cultural Landscape in American Geography**

Although the writings of these French scholars would aid in J.B. Jackson’s evolving appreciation of landscape, it was not his first exposure to academic geography. In the early 1930s as an undergraduate at Harvard, Jackson took Derwent Whittlesey’s course “Principles of Geography”. In 1929, Whittlesey had published what Michael Conzen notes “must rank as the most effective four pages ever printed in the *Annals [of the Association of American Geographers]*.”<sup>19</sup> His article “Sequent Occupance” provided the terminology for a method in geography that went beyond simple descriptive approaches to the study of regions by theorizing how “cultural

landscapes”—a term introduced into American geography by Carl Sauer just four years earlier—change over time. In the article, Whittlesey asserted that the “succession of stages of human occupance establishes the genetics of each stage in terms of its predecessor.”<sup>20</sup> Conceptually similar to Frederick Jackson Turner’s frontier thesis in terms of the implied historical inevitability of human occupation and transformation of the landscape, the concept initially drew many adherents. Eventually the method proved too conceptually limited to endure, but J.B. Jackson’s early exposure to Whittlesey’s entertaining lectures and recognition of the historical processes that help create cultural landscapes set the stage for his later introduction to the French geographers and his general interest in the ways human geographers see the world.

Whittlesey’s work was building on the Berkeley geographer Carl Sauer’s cultural landscape concept—a direct translation from Schlüter’s *Kulturlandschaft*. As described in the “Introduction”, the landscape idea has always been inherently cultural; however, the term *cultural landscape* emerged in a time when the meaning of landscape was expanding to accommodate a more liberal and inclusive definition of culture. The geographer Carl Sauer’s conscious prefacing of landscape with the modifier “cultural” in his 1925 article “The Morphology of Landscape”<sup>21</sup> was embraced by many American human geographers in the interwar years to describe a broader definition of what culture meant and what landscape constituted. Sauer effectively translated to the American geography academy the anti-determinist thinking that was becoming prevalent in European geography, as well as in the disciplines of anthropology, sociology and history—all of which were challenging social Darwinist models for “scientifically” understanding human societies. A new definition of culture developed as an alternative

to deterministic models of human societies climbing a ladder toward civilization. At the same time that Vidal, Schlüter and Febvre were establishing possibilism in geography and history and the sociologist Émile Durkheim (1858-1917) was founding the journal *L'Année Sociologique* (1898), Franz Boas was presiding over a new science of *cultural* anthropology that broke with a mainstream academic anthropology that equated culture with civilization. Boas insisted all human groups could be studied ethnographically through the lens of cultural relativism and outside of the hierarchical dictates of “civilization.”<sup>22</sup>

Notably, one of Boas’ most influential students, the anthropologist Alfred L. Kroeber, was at Berkeley when Carl Sauer arrived in 1923. Kroeber was known for his definition of culture as being “superorganic” or above the explanatory dictates of mere biology.<sup>23</sup> Sauer, having received his doctorate from the University of Chicago’s firmly determinist geography program in 1915, assimilated Kroeber’s anthropological definitions of culture and “cultural area” into his thinking, writing and teaching about cultural landscapes and two years later published his “epoch-making essay.”<sup>24</sup>

If we consider landscape to be a concept that has always been inherently cultural in its representation of human relationships with (and within) environmental contexts, then one factor that has been constantly in flux is the *definition* of culture. At any historical moment one can examine the landscape idea as a discourse on the perceived meaning of culture. The development of the American cultural landscape idea in human geography in the 1920s and 30s is no exception and, in another study, would provide a fascinating lens on certain interwar preoccupations and debates. However, for

this dissertation it is necessary to draw this era as prelude to the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Sauer's statement on the central importance of studying landscapes as the subject of geographic inquiry was well received by American geographers, and was widely applied, especially by generations of Sauer's students at Berkeley. Beginning in 1927 with John Leighly's dissertation, "A Study in Urban Morphology: The Towns of Marardalen in Sweden," and in 1930 with Fred Kniffen's "The Delta Country of the Colorado, Mexico," a succession of geographers would develop under Sauer's tutorage and go on to significantly shape the subdiscipline of cultural geography. Berkeley graduates such as Andrew Clark (1944), James Parsons (1948), Edward Price and David Lowenthal<sup>25</sup> (1950), Erhard Rostlund (1951), Philp Wagner and Wilbur Zelinsky (1953), Harold Aschmann and David Sopher (1954), Yi-Fu Tuan (1957) and Marvin Mikesell (1959) would become leaders in their particular subareas of cultural geography. For example, Fred Kniffen would explore for the better part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the diffusion of a variety of cultural traits and artifacts—most famously folk housing—and should be considered the grandfather of material culture studies as a discipline in the United States.<sup>26</sup> As outlined later in this chapter, many of these geographers would populate the pages of J.B. Jackson's magazine *Landscape*.

However dominant, there were many who did not accept the disciplinary foundations of the Berkeley School. In a densely argued 25 page treatment in Richard Hartshorne's influential 1939 work *The Nature of Geography: A Critical Survey of Current Thought in the Light of the Past*, the author systematically deconstructs the problem of treating landscape as a scientific object of study in geography.<sup>27</sup>

Complaining of the vague and multitudinous definitions of the term that were uncritically inherited from German geography and wielded without proper clarification, Hartshorne proceeds to enumerate the many ways landscape is confusing. Is landscape a concrete, unified impression an area gives us via its material reality? Is it a restricted, bounded piece of land synonymous with area? Is it a selection of the earth's surface and corresponding sky that can be seen from a certain point in perspective? Does it include unseen aspects such as sound, smell, touch and the emotional reactions of the viewer? Is it only aspects of land shaped by humans or does it include climate, landform and vegetation? Hartshorne quotes Sauer as saying "the geographic area [evidently, from the context, the landscape] is a corporeal thing, which is approached by the characterization of its forms, recognized as to structure, and understood as to origin, growth, function." Hartshorne concludes that for Sauer and his students, landscape might mean the same thing as area:

In sum, the word "landscape," introduced to American geography in these highly stimulating and impressive essays, has been accepted by many students as the basic term in their geographic thought, in spite of the fact that no precise statement of its meaning was provided.<sup>28</sup>

In a subsection entitled 'A Solution for Landscape,' Hartshorne essentially makes the case for abandoning the term all together. In the years to follow, *The Nature of Geography* would become a perennial text for the discipline and, as an alternative to landscape, emphasized the concepts of areal differentiation and regional science as the proper subject of an empirical geography.

In many ways, the landscape idea in geography would never fully address the critique of those who challenged it on the basis of being imprecise. After World War II, with an ascendant scientific rationalism permeating all disciplines, it became

increasingly difficult to characterize studying landscapes as a scientific pursuit.

Members of the Berkeley School would be persistent throughout this period as the discipline of geography changed around them; however, a broader, more fluid definition of landscape—one which did not require quantifiable precision—would have to emerge to allow the concept to acquire renewed relevance. J.B. Jackson's magazine *Landscape* would provide just such an open forum for the landscape idea to flourish and evolve. It begins with Jackson's first essay in the magazine:

Each element in the human landscape has perhaps been determined by natural conditions: climate and topography and soil; or perhaps each element is actually the expression of an economy: the availability of markets and labor and transportation; or finally the landscape may be what it is because a different race or a different period in history created it. No one of these explanations can ever be final; we choose the one which suits our way of thinking. And in any case the asking of such questions is more important than the finding of an answer.<sup>29</sup>

### **“The Need of Being Versed in Country Things”**

When the war was over Jackson returned to a pre-war dream of ranching in New Mexico, but was thrown from a horse and spent 18 months immobilized. During that long recovery time he began to make plans for an American magazine of human geography similar to the French publications he had read. In 1948, Pierre Deffontaines—the editor of the Gallimard Series of monographs which were among the descriptive regional texts Jackson found so useful during the war—began a publication called the *Revue de géographie humaine et d'ethnologie*. J.B. Jackson knew he wanted to start just such a magazine.<sup>30</sup>

In Deffontaines' introduction to the first issue of his new journal he stated:

The *Revue de géographie humaine et d'ethnologie* brings together in the field of geography diverse branches of the human sciences, with the hope of grouping here all those who are interested in the visible and tangible manifestations of

human activity on the surface of the earth, all those who observe the techniques and varied resources that men have discovered and adapted to affirm their control and use of the Earth. . . . The Review will take on the study of man and his environment under its diverse aspects: technology, economy, sociology, law, religion, demography, habitat, urbanism, anthropology, pre-history, linguistics, etc.<sup>31</sup>

In this introduction Deffontaines frames his publication as something novel in its multidisciplinary and diversity of subjects—a framework Jackson would emphasize to create a unique American magazine. In addition, Deffontaines (following his mentor Bruhnes) suggested that the landscape viewed from above was an ideal way to understand human imprints on the land—a method Jackson suggested in his initial call for submissions to *Landscape* and would employ liberally in early issues.

Jackson's introductory essay in the first issue of *Landscape*, "The Need of Being Versed in Country Things," immediately worked to establish the usefulness of seeing the landscape from above by including an aerial photograph of the Rio Grande Valley near Alcalde, New Mexico taken by the Soil Conservation Service. The photograph clearly illustrates the imprint of forms created by human intervention in an otherwise dry, unforgiving landscape. Especially prominent are the agricultural field patterns and village buildings tied to the river's edge. Jackson suggests, "It is from the air that the true relationship between the natural and the human landscape is first clearly revealed."<sup>32</sup>

On one level "The Need of Being Versed in Country Things" was a literal call for Americans to become reacquainted with aspects of rural life that were fast disappearing as the population became more urbanized after the war. At first glance, one might get the impression that this magazine would present a decidedly romantic rural bias and dwell on the past glories of country life. If this were the case, choosing

an aerial perspective from which to look down on this rural tableau would seem ironic in its detachment from the ground and reliance on technological modernity. But Jackson's argument is firmly grounded in an acceptance of the realities of modern America:

It is not so much the bright city lights which draw people as it is the city jobs; and those who abandon farming are not necessarily deficient in the pioneer virtues. Often they are escaping rural slums worse than the city slums which await them. It is in the city, after all, and not in the cross-roads village that the celebrated material benefits of the American way of life are to be found.<sup>33</sup>

In the second paragraph Jackson presciently observes that “cities continue to grow, devouring land and people, and no real resistance to the process is likely to develop for many years to come.”<sup>34</sup> A landscape-centric “resistance” to mid-century urbanization had arguably begun two years earlier with Aldo Leopold's *A Sand Country Almanac*.<sup>35</sup> But where Leopold details a complex ecological world to be found in the rural countryside, Jackson paints an equally complex reality of small human communities struggling to survive as the connection between cities and their rural hinterlands are severed by the free flow of resources made possible by emerging national and global economies. That changing relationship, as characterized by Jackson, results in a disconnection between urban and rural livelihoods, and consequently urban and rural peoples—“a division of interests and a mutual ignorance between city and country dwellers that from the national point of view is far from healthy.”<sup>36</sup>

So for Jackson the problem is not a romantic longing for a past way of life, but a more serious lack of understanding of where resources come from, what it means to be directly dependant on the immediate environment, and how landscapes work. With



such a disconnection, landscapes are just abstractions requiring little formal knowledge. The countryside suffers from indifference and the city suffers in isolation from a supporting connection to the land. It is this unromantic recognition that a return to a balance between city and country livelihoods need not be predicated on a naive anti-modernism.

Notably, Jackson chose as the title of this important first essay a poem by the 20<sup>th</sup> century modernist Robert Frost. In the poem Frost describes the ruins of a burned out homestead: “Now the chimney was all of the house that stood, like a pistil after the petals go.” The middle stanzas are evocative of a romantic attachment to a place lost in time, where birds “...murmur more like a sigh we sigh from too much dwelling on what has been.” This apparent personification of the birds’ mourning the loss of a once fine dwelling is quickly challenged in the final stanza:

For them there was nothing sad.  
But though they rejoiced in the nest they kept,  
One had to be versed in country things  
Not to believe the Phoebes wept.<sup>37</sup>

The use of Frost’s title is more than a convenient literary quotation. Frost is suggesting in the poem certain relationships between humans and the natural world that Jackson would embrace throughout his writings. The modernism of the poem can be found in its essential rejection of romantic tropes that would have the natural world either weeping in sympathy for a lost world, or conversely celebrating the departure of all humanity from the scene. Instead, if one is “versed in country things,” the reality of the situation would be revealed—the natural world, as represented by the birds, is indifferent to the loss, however benefits from what remains. More to the point, ruined places—be it a burned out farm or an abandoned rural countryside—are still alive with

potential, but require a level of understanding of both natural and human processes not immediately apparent to those who would too desperately mourn their demise.

Jackson achieves a similar realist detachment as Frost by emphasizing an aerial view that flattens the romantic associations of landscape in favor of a cultural landscape perspective that is in stark contrast with Aldo Leopold's narrative of a non-human ecology:

What catches our eye and arouses our interest is not the sandy washes and the naked rocks, but the evidences of man: the lonely windmills and tanks with trails converging upon them; the long straight lines of fences, often dividing the overgrazed range from the one properly managed; the broad pattern of contour plowing and tractor cultivating...It is a picture we are seeing, an image which stirs us not only because of its beauty and vastness but because of its meaning.<sup>38</sup>

What Jackson describes here is profound in its implication for the landscape idea. First, landscapes are human inscribed places. Second, landscapes are places that are constantly being transformed, either through neglect or through more deliberate management. Finally, landscapes have meaning. While the first two points were routinely supported in the literature of human geography at the beginning of the 1950s, the association of landscapes with embodied meaning was rare. In an oft-quoted passage Jackson sets the stage for his new magazine:

Wherever we go, whatever the nature of our work, we adorn the face of the earth with a living design which changes and is eventually replaced by that of a future generation [note the similarity to Whittlesey's sequent occupance]. How can one tire of looking at this variety, or of marveling at the forces within man and nature that brought it about?<sup>39</sup>

And so, with this first essay J.B. Jackson begins the dissemination of these concepts to an audience beyond geography, effectively commencing the transdisciplinary practice of cultural landscape studies: "A rich and beautiful book is always open before us. We have but to learn to read it."<sup>40</sup>

### **“Human, All Too Human, Geography”**

Beginning with the Autumn 1952 issue, *Landscape* no longer limited its scope to the American Southwest and became simply *The Magazine of Human Geography*. Explaining that the magazine had successfully appealed to those with an interest in the Southwest, Jackson notes it had also drawn the attention of a broader general readership that found human geography stimulating. Using this as an opportunity to sketch his perspective on the subject, Jackson’s essay “Human, All Too Human Geography” is a manifesto that argues for a speculative, non-scientific philosophy of humans inquiring into their place in the “Divine order.” This inquiry, he argues, is something that all humans do, not just those trained as geographers:

When we lay out a garden, discuss the route to take on a trip, ponder the best location for a house or a factory or a new highway, we are acting for the moment as human geographers, taking into consideration as many factors as we can of that relation between ourselves and the world around us—climate and relief and soil.<sup>41</sup>

In Jackson’s view, the specialized discipline of human geography was concerned primarily with complex problems that required expert training and involved methodical studies; however, human geography was not (and should not be considered) the sole province of academics. Professionals like planners, landscape architects and architects act as human geographers when they plan for new human environments, and an observant general public should be able to develop their own interpretations leading to informed decisions about how to understand and shape their world.

Again Jackson makes a literary connection with the essay’s title—a reference to Friedrich Nietzsche’s book of aphorisms *Human, All Too Human* published in 1878.<sup>42</sup>

In this case, Jackson's essay shares with Nietzsche's work a desire to discover unvarnished human experiences, unencumbered by romanticism. Ironically, where Nietzsche's work systematically dismantles religion and its hold over societies and individuals, Jackson reveals his own belief that the landscape can be read as the all too human desire to create a "perfect prototype": the "re-creation of Heaven on earth."<sup>43</sup>

Throughout Jackson's writing there are religious undertones and signs of a profound libertarianism that are difficult to define. To focus on landscape as primarily a quasi-religious expression of the individual's desire to recreate the Garden of Eden might philosophically place Jackson in the company of a politically conservative lot. While Jackson was undoubtedly suspicious of most collectivist actions (especially those associated with the efforts of planners, environmentalists and historic preservationists), he was too much of an iconoclast to be easily categorized into a particular slot in the political spectrum. As will become evident in this dissertation, Jackson could genuinely appreciate the motives of a broad cross-section of humanity. In fact, his method of interpretation depended on this ability to challenge dogmatic assertion. Even though Jackson often resisted calls to collectivist action, never was this paired with an antisocial, antigovernment or otherwise pro-conservative political ideology. While Jackson may have been personally devout, his literary religion fell firmly in the camp of anti-positivism and pluralism. Landscape, for Jackson, was the expression of all too human desires and motivations to be easily explained as a tautology.

In the essay, Jackson makes reference to a collection of essays published in 1951, *Geography in the Twentieth Century* edited by Griffith Taylor, which provided an assessment of the discipline of Anglophone geography at mid-century.<sup>44</sup> The collection

illustrates a discipline that is still struggling to settle old arguments over environmental determinism versus possibilism—a debate that other disciplines had long settled or forgotten. Taylor attempts in his introduction to the volume to portray environmental determinism as having an unfortunate association with an earlier, poorly reasoned research agenda, but he argues the perspective is still valid in a form he called “stop and go determinism” or “mild environmentalism.” The editor’s own contribution in a chapter on “Racial Geography” is illustrative of the resilience of pseudo-scientific generalizations among a dwindling older generation of geographers. The fact that this debate had continued into the post World War II era had become a deep embarrassment to many in the field and had significantly diminished the reputation of geography among other disciplines.

To be fair, most American geographers after the war had lost interest in these debates and instead were focused on carrying out the type of regional studies encouraged by Hartshorne. World War II had been both a highpoint for geography and a wake-up call. Like J.B. Jackson, many geographers during the war were placed in intelligence positions and put to work interpreting and mapping geographic data—an important validation for the field. However, the type of highly specific and readily applied knowledge required by war planners was different from the sometimes-thin generalizations produced by regional geographers. After the war, in an effort to match the trend toward a more scientific rigor in the sciences, geographers began to add topical specialties to their regional focuses, aligning themselves more closely with cognate disciplines such as economics and sociology.

However, by the early 1950s when Jackson began his “magazine of human geography”, the academic discipline of human geography was still reeling from the harsh and unceremonial dismissal of geography from Harvard in 1948—an event punctuated by the President of the College suggesting geography was not a sufficiently scholarly subject for university study. The unsuccessful appeals process was losing momentum at the time of *Landscape*’s first issues. Derwent Whittlesey, Jackson’s professor of geography from his days at Harvard in the early 1930s, was at the center of the controversy. The story of the end of geography at Harvard is a fascinating one, replete with veiled accusations of Whittlesey’s alleged homosexuality, irreconcilable departmental differences with the dominant physical geologists who saw an ascendant geography as a threat, and Cold War era concerns over “human geography” aligning with the suspiciously liberal social sciences. Faced with postwar budget shortfalls, Harvard’s administration found a controversial target and easy solution in cutting geography from the College.<sup>45</sup> Most importantly, human geography could put up only a weak defense against accusations of disciplinary indeterminacy. Pleas of geography’s role as the most “synthetic” of the sciences fell on incredulous ears among the administration.

In “Human, All Too Human, Geography,” Jackson suggests geography to be a humanist and generalist pursuit that should be understood and practiced broadly. Ironically, the discipline of human geography was becoming increasingly insecure about its role as an academic subject worthy of its position in the firmament of university sciences and began a long progression toward more specificity, quantification and theory building in the mode of the hard sciences.

### **1956: Man's Role in Changing the Face of the Earth**

In 1956, Carl Sauer invited J.B. Jackson to a party where he was formally introduced to a group of Berkeley geographers whose shared interests in cultural landscapes aligned well with his own and the direction of his now five-year-old magazine. Considering Jackson's own personal trajectory in relationship to the development of American cultural geography beginning with the course he took with Whittlesey, this meeting of maverick landscape populist with the "Berkeley School" geographers was a significant moment in the 20<sup>th</sup> century development of the landscape idea. Soon after this gathering Jackson would begin to sit in on classes at Berkeley while soliciting the work of the department's faculty for publication in *Landscape*.<sup>46</sup> It was the felicitous meeting of a particular breed of academic geographer—devoted to cultural-historical studies, and resistant to the pressure to justify its scientific status by focusing on narrower specializations—and a magazine with a mission to ferment a broad appeal for landscape as a topic of interest.

Beginning with the Spring 1956 issue, Berkeley geographers (and eventually other cultural geographers from programs such as the Universities of Chicago and Minnesota) would significantly contribute to the content of the magazine. One of the first pieces was by a young Clarence Glacken and was a review of the international symposium "Man's Role in Changing the Face of the Earth," held at Princeton between June 16-22, 1955. Hosted by the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research and chaired by Carl Sauer, the conference brought together a vast cross section of the sciences and humanities, with geographers the largest participating group.

Sauer, realizing the unwieldy scope of the topic, decided it was too much for one organizer and split the conference into three parts. Sauer would organize the first part, “Retrospect,” which would seek to present histories of how humans had changed the face of the earth from the earliest human civilizations until the beginnings of urbanization. The second part would be chaired by the eminent zoologist Marston Bates and would focus on “Process,” or the current influences of human actions on the environment; and the third part on “Prospect” would be chaired by Lewis Mumford and would summarize the environmental challenges facing the world in the future.

The symposium’s timing in the middle of the 1950s was illustrative of the many contradictions and challenges facing geography at mid-century. “Environment” was a confusing term for geographers at the end of the debates over determinism when “environmentalism” was associated with the questionable methods of the past. At a time when other disciplines were recognizing the need to look synthetically at global issues and were beginning to question the environmental impact of humans on the earth, geographers were moving in the opposite direction toward minute specializations and regionally isolated problems. Ironically, with the exception of geographers like those contributing to this symposium, the larger discipline of geography would come late to this new way of understanding environment as a fragile, interconnected, living ecology. Sauer’s role as chairman was indicative of this paradox. In the community of scholars, he was a logical choice as someone who could bring together so many disciplines under a broadly defined heading with the ultimate goal of reaching some synthetic conclusions. However, for many geographers Sauer was associated with a pre-positivist style of historical and cultural geography, his relevance 30 years in the past.



The symposium resulted in a voluminous 1100-page tome of proceedings that mirrored the three-part structure of the conference.<sup>47</sup> In journals of the period, the volume was given notable reviews across disciplines as a significant work of scholarship; however, its importance as an early indicator of an emerging environmentalism was not generally recognized.<sup>48</sup> What *was* recognized at the time was the importance of understanding the role of cultural difference in shaping environments over the generalizing tendencies embodied in the symposium's title. In Clarence Glacken's review in *Landscape* he notes:

Landscapes which have been changed by human cultures bear the marks of values held by the different cultures that have lived on them, and the study of human culture becomes, at least in part a description of the effects of social organization on the physical environment.<sup>49</sup>

However, this transdisciplinary understanding of what would become known as "cultural ecology" was not a harbinger of geography's new direction as a discipline. In many ways, *Man's Role in Changing the Face of the Earth* was the last widely respected contribution to the discipline by cultural geographers prior to the full bloom of the quantitative revolution beginning in the late 1950s. Ironically, *Man's Role* was only the beginning of a larger concern over environmental quality in both the human made and natural environments. At this point, *Landscape* magazine became a conduit for cultural geographers to find a broader audience outside of the discipline and served as a refuge for geography's cultural landscape idea.

### **Humanistic Threads**

In the early issues of *Landscape*, J.B. Jackson would often take it upon himself to comment on the various disciplines he considered relevant to his conception of

landscape studies. He would present a somewhat idiosyncratic outsiders perspective on each field, challenging the assumptions in which the discipline practiced.<sup>50</sup> Geography was no different. In the earliest issues, Jackson was primarily connected to the French human geographers whom had inspired the founding of *Landscape* and he occasionally publishing translations of their work.<sup>51</sup> He believed many of these European geographers were still writing semi-popular books that helped educate the general public about their landscapes, while many American geographers had abdicated that responsibility for the perception of scholarly erudition. Noting this lack of an American counterpart to these popular texts he suggested "...we seem to see the existence of such a magazine as this as amply justified. If we cannot flatter ourselves that we are exploring a totally new region of knowledge we can at least feel we are venturing into a deserted one."<sup>52</sup>

However, when Jackson found a group of scholars sympathetic to his perspective, he would usually hand over the commentary on that discipline to its members, gradually freeing him to develop a voice around topics not being covered by contributors to the magazine. With the inflow of articles and book reviews by the Berkeley School and other geographers with similar ambitions, Jackson's commentary on academic geography waned in favor of his own brand of geographic writing that would combine traditional cultural geographic topics with scholarly detail from the many other fields in which he read.

Carl Sauer contributed occasionally, with articles and letters to the editor; however, he was now in his seventies and had a cadre of former students who were

entering their most productive scholarly years. In the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary issue of the magazine in 1960, Sauer gave his blessing to *Landscape*'s project:

The spirit of *Landscape* is quiet, sensitively observant and often subtle. I find it hard to define beyond its search for humanity living in some sort of state of grace. What the magazine gives to me and others is appreciation of people (communities) living contentedly and with enlightenment (ecologically in balance) in their own fashion (culture) anywhere, now or in the past, or looking ahead to a desired future. You have thus provided a place for those planners who consider what the old Romans called the *genius loci*, the harmonious joining of people and place.<sup>53</sup>

But by the Spring 1961 issue, *Landscape* no longer included reference to being the “magazine of human geography” in its masthead. This change was given no editorial explanation. It may have been that by its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary the magazine was truly becoming multidisciplinary, with contributions from at least a dozen fields, and to single out geography was no longer accurate. It may also have been a quiet rejection of the dominance of quantitative geography—recognition that to call the journal a “magazine of human geography” in such an academic climate would be oddly dissonant.

Even with this omission, several cultural geographers would consistently populate the magazine throughout the 1960s. Of particular prominence were David Lowenthal and Yi-Fu Tuan who represented the emerging critical theoretical areas of environmental perception and phenomenology. They were students of Sauer, and like other Berkeley school geographers, they were skeptical of the positivist direction of human geography. Throughout their careers both scholars would fluidly move between multiple disciplines, expanding the disciplinary boundaries of geography and setting the stage for what would be called “humanistic” geography by the early 1970s.

Both Tuan and Lowenthal shared with Jackson an interest in how the current American landscape was being transformed or protected, which meant they were often concerned with the direction of the design and planning professions and the preservation and conservation movements. This willingness to comment on the complexities of contemporary environmental issues was rare in geography, but became commonplace in *Landscape*.

Thirteen years prior to his major work *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values*<sup>54</sup>, Yi-Fu Tuan contributed an article to *Landscape* with the title “Topophilia or, sudden encounter with the landscape,” which was based heavily in the writings of the French philosopher Gaston Bachelard.<sup>55</sup> Works like Bachelard’s *The Poetics of Space* grounded Tuan in an approach to scholarship that was primarily concerned with the history of ideas and an exploration of existentialism.<sup>56</sup> In a later article from the Autumn 1963 issue, “Architecture and Human Nature: Can There be an Existential Architecture?” Tuan argues that humans have such diverse and contradictory feelings about what constitutes a deeply satisfying environment that it should:

...shake our faith in the feasibility of creating the ideal rural community or the beautiful city in which all and sundry would be happy. [It] may even undermine our faith in the existence of a human nature with definable essence and needs. And a *belief in the existence of a clear-cut human nature is fundamental to the endeavor of the planner and the missionary*. [Original emphasis]<sup>57</sup>

In this piece, Tuan is setting up a long-term argument for what will be called humanistic geography, by first deconstructing humanism’s tendency toward universalizing human nature. This existentialist critique instead calls for a new poetics

of space, architecture and landscape to replace the deadening sameness of the built environment with the potential to create places with meaning.

What many architects, planners, and landscape architects shared with mainstream geography in the 1960s was a belief that landscape had become a problem in spatial analysis and organization. As the 1960s progressed, geographers like Tuan were increasingly writing pieces that challenged the design professions *and* geography to be more thoughtful about their practices and to consider a much broader intellectual context for their work. *Landscape* had become a forum for that challenge, but J.B. Jackson soon found new ways to encourage a dialogue outside of the magazine when his occasional university lectures grew into a more consistent teaching agenda.

Jackson began teaching a thoroughly geographic survey of the American cultural landscape at both Berkeley and Harvard in 1962-63 (which he would continue to teach through the late 1970s); notably, in both cases his courses were in the departments of landscape architecture. As he would confess to Paul Groth years later, “only geography presented respectable intellectual ferment” as a foundation for design education.<sup>58</sup> The design professions needed cultural landscape studies to provide an historical and cultural basis for better addressing the needs of a rapidly changing landscape. Throughout the 1960s and into the 1980s, geography would provide landscape architecture with a theoretical touchstone that would push the field to reevaluate its own understanding of the meaning of landscape as space and place.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Both Paul Groth and Helen Horowitz have documented the various pseudonyms that Jackson used in the early years of the magazine, noting that Jackson exclusively authored the first two issues. These pseudonyms, such as Ajax, A.W. Conway, G.A. Feather, H.G. West, provided the cover for Jackson to try out different literary voices. See Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, "J.B. Jackson and the Discovery of the American Landscape," in *Landscape in Sight: Looking at America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), xxiv.

<sup>2</sup> Inside cover of first issue, *Landscape: Human Geography of the Southwest* 1, no. 1. (Spring 1951).

<sup>3</sup> Maurice le Lannou, "The Vocation of Human Geography, *Landscape: Human Geography of the Southwest* 1, no. 1. (Spring 1951), 41. For the original source, see Maurice le Lannou, "La Vocation actuelle de la géographie humaine," *Etudes Rhodaniennes* 4 (1948): 272-80.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> For example, see Preston E. James, *All Possible Worlds: A History of Geographical Ideas* (London: Oxford University Press, 2004)

<sup>6</sup> See Herbert Spencer, *Principles of Biology*, Vol. II (London: Williams and Norgate, 1864).

<sup>7</sup> See Ellen Churchill Semple, "Chapter XVII: The Influence of Climate," *Influences of Geographic Environment on the Basis of Ratzel's System of Anthropogeographie* (New York: Henry Holt, 1911).

<sup>8</sup> L. Febvre, *A Geographical Introduction to History* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1932), 237. For a more in depth discussion of these perspectives and their theoretical nuances (e.g. mild environmentalism, probabalism, etc.), see Harold and Margaret Sprout, *Man-Milieu Relationship Hypotheses in the Context of International Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1956).

<sup>9</sup> Preston E. James, *All Possible Worlds: A History of Geographical Ideas* (London: Oxford University Press, 2004), 229-232.

<sup>10</sup> Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, "J.B. Jackson and the Discovery of the American Landscape," in *Landscape in Sight: Looking at America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), xvii-xix.

<sup>11</sup> Anne Buttimer, *Society and Milieu in the French Geographic Tradition* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1971), 14-15.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 21-24.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 44.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 62.

<sup>15</sup> Jean Brunhes, Isaiah Bowman, and Richard Elwood Dodge, *Human Geography: An Attempt at a Positive Classification: Principles and Examples* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1912).

- <sup>16</sup> Anne Buttimer, *Society and Milieu in the French Geographic Tradition* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1971), 99.
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 124.
- <sup>18</sup> D.W. Meinig, "Reading the Landscape: An Appreciation of W.G. Hoskins and J.B. Jackson," in *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes: Geographical Essays*, ed. D.W. Meinig (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 212.
- <sup>19</sup> Michael P. Conzen, Thomas, A. Rumney and Graeme Wynn, eds. *A Scholar's Guide to Geographical Writing on the American and Canadian Past* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993).
- <sup>20</sup> Derwent Whittlesey, "Sequent Occupance," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 19, No. 3(September, 1929), 162.
- <sup>21</sup> Carl Sauer, "The Morphology of Landscape," in *Land and life: a selection from the writings of Carl Ortwin Sauer*, ed. J. Leighly (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1963). Originally published in *University of California Publications in Geography* 2:2, 1925.
- <sup>22</sup> See Franz Boas, "The Study of Geography," *Science* 9, 137-41, 1887.
- <sup>23</sup> A.L. Kroeber, "The Superorganic," *American Anthropologist* 19, No. 2 (April-June, 1917), 163-213.
- <sup>24</sup> Richard Hartshorne, "The Nature of Geography: A Critical Survey of Current Thought in the Light of the Past," in *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 29, no.3. (September, 1939), 331.
- <sup>25</sup> David Lowenthal received his MA in geography at Berkeley before attending Wisconsin for his Ph.D. in History.
- <sup>26</sup> Henry Glassie, one of Kniffen's students, is often referenced as the "father" of the discipline of American Material Culture Studies beginning with his book *Folk Housing in Middle Virginia: A Structural Analysis of Historic Artifacts* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1975).
- <sup>27</sup> Richard Hartshorne, "The Nature of Geography: A Critical Survey of Current Thought in the Light of the Past," in *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 29, no.3. (September, 1939), 325-350.
- <sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 332. Hartshorne's bracketed comment.
- <sup>29</sup> J.B. Jackson, "The Need of Being Versed in Country Things," *Landscape: Human Geography of the Southwest* 1, no. 1. (Spring 1951), 4.
- <sup>30</sup> Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, "J.B. Jackson and the Discovery of the American Landscape," in *Landscape in Sight: Looking at America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), xx.
- <sup>31</sup> Published in 1948-1949. Ann Leone, Professor of French and Landscape Studies, Smith College generously translated this section.
- <sup>32</sup> J.B. Jackson, "The Need of Being Versed in Country Things," *Landscape: Human Geography of the Southwest* 1, no. 1. (Spring 1951), 4.
- <sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.
- <sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

- <sup>35</sup> Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac* (Oxford University Press, 1949).
- <sup>36</sup> J.B. Jackson, "The Need of Being Versed in Country Things," *Landscape: Human Geography of the Southwest* 1, no. 1. (Spring 1951), 1.
- <sup>37</sup> Robert Frost, "The Need of Being Versed in Country Things," *Harpers* (December, 1920), 70.
- <sup>38</sup> J.B. Jackson, "The Need of Being Versed in Country Things," *Landscape: Human Geography of the Southwest* 1, no. 1. (Spring 1951), 4.
- <sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.
- <sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>41</sup> J.B. Jackson, "Human, All Too Human, Geography," *Landscape: Magazine of Human Geography* 2, no. 2. (Autumn 1952), 3.
- <sup>42</sup> Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human: A Book for Free Spirits* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984).
- <sup>43</sup> J.B. Jackson, "Human, All Too Human, Geography," *Landscape: Magazine of Human Geography* 2, no. 2. (Autumn 1952), 5.
- <sup>44</sup> Griffith Taylor (ed.), *Geography in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: A Study of Growth, Fields, Techniques, Aims and Trends* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1951).
- <sup>45</sup> For an excellent archival reconstruction of these events see Neil Smith, "Academic War Over the Field of Geography at Harvard, 1947-1951," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 77, No. 2 (June 1987), 155-172.
- <sup>46</sup> Paul Groth, "J.B. Jackson and Geography," *Geographical Review* 88, No. 4 (October, 1998), iii-vi.
- <sup>47</sup> William L. Thomas, Jr. (ed.), *Man's Role in Changing the Face of the Earth* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956).
- <sup>48</sup> Michael Williams, "Sauer and 'Man's Role in Changing the Face of the Earth,'" *Geographical Review* 77, No. 2 (April 1987), 229-231.
- <sup>49</sup> Clarence J. Glacken, "Man and the Earth," *Landscape: Magazine of Human Geography* 5, No. 3 (Spring 1956), 28.
- <sup>50</sup> As will be shown in chapters 4 and 5, his early provocative essays on architecture, planning and landscape architecture—the professions most charged with shaping the built environment—were not mainstream criticism and were not meant to endear him to the professional establishment.
- <sup>51</sup> For example, in an early number he republished a translation of Pierre Defontaines' "The Place of Believing" from his model journal *Revue de Géographie Humaine et d'Ethnographie* in which the geographer describes the religious role of common houses—a topic which Jackson would also return to throughout his career.
- <sup>52</sup> J.B. Jackson, "Notes and Comments: The Unknown Country," *Landscape: Magazine of Human Geography* 3, no. 1. (Summer 1953), 2.
- <sup>53</sup> Carl O. Sauer, "10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Letters," *Landscape: Magazine of Human Geography* 10, no. 1. (Fall 1960), 6.



<sup>54</sup> Yi-Fu Tuan, *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974).

<sup>55</sup> Yi-Fu Tuan, "Topophilia or, sudden encounter with the landscape," *Landscape* 11, No. 1 (Fall 1961), 29-32.

<sup>56</sup> Bachelard's *La poetique de l'espace* (Presses Universitaires de France, 1958) was not translated into English until 1964.

<sup>57</sup> Yi-Fu Tuan, "Architecture and Human Nature: Can There be an Existential Architecture?," *Landscape* 13, No. 1 (Autumn 1963), 16-19.

<sup>58</sup> Paul Groth, "J.B. Jackson and Geography," *Geographical Review* 88, No. 4 (October, 1998), v.

## CHAPTER 3

### EVERYDAY LANDSCAPE AND THE CRITIQUE OF MODERN AMERICA

All this means simply one thing: a new human landscape is beginning to emerge in America. It is even now being created by the same combination of forces that created the old one: economic necessity, technological evolution, change in social outlook and our outlook on nature. Like the landscape of the present, this new one will in time produce its own symbols, and its own beauty. The six lane highway, the aerial perspective, the clean and spacious countryside of great distances and no detail will in a matter of centuries be invested with magic and myth.

J.B. Jackson, "Ghosts at the Door"

Modernity and modernism: terms whose multiple historical and theoretical meanings have been continuously reinterpreted by all disciplines concerned with the social and artistic problems of the modern era. While Cosgrove's (and many others') definition of the modern era as beginning with the Italian Renaissance, Cartesian rationalism and the emergence of market capitalism is useful in establishing the long history of the landscape idea in the western world, it is the particular experiences of late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century modernity that initiated a conscious, reflective and critical *modernism*. The oft-cited "shock of the new" resulting from the rapid technological, social, and environmental changes brought on by industrial modernity beginning in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, had by the 20<sup>th</sup> century become a permanent state of existence with daily reminders of the unfettered march toward progress. However, by the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, the shock of the new had begun to wear off and was being replaced by the shock of loss and an existential dread in the face of rapid change.

Modernism in this context describes the intellectual and artistic production of texts and artifacts that both reflected and reacted to the conditions of modernity. To that end, this territory has been well tread by countless scholars of intellectual and art

history. What this dissertation (and this chapter in depth) attempts to do is broaden the limits of the discourse on modernism by reflecting on landscape's cultural constructedness and by extension its representational content with reference to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century modernity. Specifically I argue that landscape was not just a passive reflection of modernity playing out in the material reality of human-dominated environments, but was also an active agent in the critique of those environments. In particular, by the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century everyday landscapes—those that seemed to have escaped the utopian and rationalist visions that were responsible for the transformation of urban and suburban America—had come to represent an untold reality of American experience for both good and ill.

Representations of everyday American landscape emerged at mid-century in art, literature and critical writing as a challenge to the idealized abstractions of high modernism. The capacity of landscape to be critical in these different media was in how “everydayness” was represented in relation to this ideal. Depending on the author or artist, representations of everyday landscapes could be wielded to support multiple agendas in relationship to modernity: from vehement anti-modernism (e.g. the paintings of Norman Rockwell) to an enthusiastic celebration of consumer culture (e.g. American Pop Art). J.B. Jackson's editorial positions in *Landscape* magazine would avoid these extremes. He was not so naive to believe that the clock of modernity could be set back, nor was he resigned to mourn for too long what had been lost; and while Jackson could celebrate the American landscape as a fascinating text that should be better understood, he did not go so far as to aestheticize the everyday. Because he avoided the retrogressive or fashionable extremes in representing everyday landscapes, J.B.

Jackson's writings continue to have currency at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century as a vivid chronicle of the physical realities of modernity that continue to evolve. But more than that, his writings were responsible for creating a new way of seeing and understanding landscape that anticipated the critical perspectives of those who would later be called postmodernist and/or poststructuralist scholars. For Jackson these labels would be irrelevant, however he articulated for a diverse readership a newly critical (if not overtly political) perspective on landscape.

While chapters 4 and 5 will look at the critical response to the enthusiastic reshaping of the American landscape by architects, planners and landscape architects, this chapter is concerned with the post-war everyday landscapes that resulted from what J.B. Jackson (in the above quotation from the second issue of *Landscape*) described as "economic necessity, technological evolution, change in social outlook and...outlook on nature."<sup>1</sup> This chapter will trace these themes in the pages of *Landscape* as well as through other contemporaneous media, not to establish a discernible web of influences that connect back to Jackson, but in order to understand how this "new human landscape" was coming to be understood and represented through the lens of everyday landscape.

### **The Abstract and the Everyday**

The new landscape, seen at a rapid, sometimes even terrifying pace, is composed of rushing air, shifting lights, clouds, waves, a constantly moving, changing horizon...The view is no longer static; it is a revolving, uninterrupted panorama of 360 degrees. In short, the traditional perspective, the traditional way of seeing and experiencing the world is abandoned; in its stead we become active participants, the shifting focus of a moving, abstract world; our nerves and muscles are all of them brought into play. To the perceptive individual, there can be an almost mystical quality to the experience; his identity seems for the moment to be transmuted.

J.B. Jackson, "The Abstract World of the Hot-Rodder."

The Italian Futurists of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century were part of a generation of artists, designers, filmmakers and writers who sought to articulate and represent the increasing motion and speed of modernity. With the 19<sup>th</sup> century in living memory for many of them, these artists embraced—even celebrated—the temporal and existential experience of 20<sup>th</sup> century modernity’s accelerating pace. Their philosophy was embodied in Marinetti’s “Manifesto of Futurism” when he stated, “We declare that the splendor of the world has been enriched by a new beauty: the beauty of speed.”<sup>2</sup> Almost 40 years later J.B. Jackson—in one of his most iconic essays, “The Abstract World of the Hot Rodder”—brought his critical eye to how mobility and speed were transforming the way Americans viewed the landscape.<sup>3</sup> Again eschewing either a celebratory or a scorning tone, Jackson painted a picture of how everyday Americans were finding little satisfaction in the quiet contemplation of picturesque and natural scenery and were instead seeking out dynamic new forms of adventure and recreational activities that propelled them through the landscape, often at great speed. The popularization of recreational devices that encouraged “individual means of locomotion,” prior to the wider affordability of automobile and plane travel—skis, sailboats, canoes (*faltboats*), bicycles, motorcycles—marked “the dawn of a new era” and a move away from passive forms of nature appreciation. Dating this new era as beginning “about 30 years ago” (approximately the late 1920s), Jackson described ambivalence to the passing of the old relationship to nature:

The layman’s former relationship to nature... was largely determined by a kind of classic perspective and by awe. A genuine sense of worship precluded any desecration but it also precluded any desire for participation, any intuition that man also belonged. The experience was genuine enough, but it was filtered and humanized; it was rarely immediate.<sup>4</sup>

The desire for an immediate, active engagement with the environment broke with romantic scenic notions of nature appreciation: landscape was now something to be appreciated kinesthetically. It is often repeated by historians that American's love affair with their automobiles was at least partially responsible for the spread of the interstate highway system and the suburbs, but what of their affair with mobility in general? After World War II Jackson observed the increasing growth of new sports like "skin-diving, parachute-jumping, surf-riding, outboard moterboating, hot-rod racing, spelunking" as well as water skiing.<sup>5</sup> There were even sports like drag racing in desert salt flats, that simplified the experience of movement to its most essential and stripped down abstraction; a destination no longer required. The participants in this form of "abstract travel," Jackson argued, have much in common with the modern artist and architect seeking to simplify their use of materials and streamline their rendering of space.

This trend, which only intensified throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, could be directly implicated in how poorly Americans treated their environment. Indeed, how can someone learn to care for a landscape that they pass by at 60 miles per hour? But Jackson suggested an underlying motivation to participate in the landscape, not just observe or stroll through a beautiful scene ("Certainly no more pretty parks or carefully preserved rural landscapes or classical perspectives").<sup>6</sup> In many of these outdoor activities participants were swept away by a full sensory and physical experience that engaged them more directly with their own natures. Ironically, while the single-minded fascination with abstract space became a common denominator across the arts, design professions and the sciences—it however suggested for landscape a renewed and

invigorated relationship to the environment for everyday Americans. Abstract, yes; but it also suggested a new poetics of movement. For Jackson, these new adventurers would

...eventually enrich our understanding of ourselves with a new poetry and a new nature mysticism. I would not go so far as to say that the Wordsworth of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century must be a graduate of the drag-strip, or that a motorcycle is a necessary adjunct to a modern "Excursion"; but I earnestly believe that whoever he is and whenever he appears he will have to express some of the uncommunicated but intensely felt joys of that part of American culture if he is to interpret completely our relationship to the world around us.<sup>7</sup>

In early September 1957, only a few months before Jackson's essay appeared in the Winter 1957-1958 issue of *Landscape*, Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* was published to enthusiast reviews, most importantly in the *New York Times*.<sup>8</sup> *On the Road* may not have been what Jackson had in mind (although, it seems unlikely that he would have been unaware of its publication at the time), but it certainly captured the sense of the search for a deeply felt connection to the American landscape through the romantically aimless travel of its protagonists: "We were all delighted, we all realized we were leaving confusion and nonsense behind and performing our one noble function of the time, *move*. And we moved!"<sup>9</sup>

*On the Road* began to poetically capture the cultural phenomena Jackson was documenting. Both Jackson and Kerouac wove descriptive scenes of everyday America, but while Jackson's purpose was purely documentary, he could still turn out poetic passages that rivaled the prose of an American road novel. In his essay "The Stranger's Path," published in the Autumn 1957 issue of *Landscape*—almost simultaneously with *On the Road*—Jackson wrote of the liminal spaces of small cities where strangers (like Kerouac) arrived by train or bus:

Exchange is taking place everywhere you look: exchange of goods for cash, exchange of labor for cash (or the promise of cash) in the employment agencies with their opportunities scrawled in chalk on blackboards; exchange of talk and drink and opinion in a dozen bars and beer parlors and lunch counters; exchange of mandolins and foreign pistols and diamond rings against cash—to be exchanged in turn for an hour or so with a girl...the Path, for all its stench of beer and burning grease, its bleary eyes and uncertain clutching of doorjams, its bedlam of jukeboxes and radios and barkers, is still dedicated to good times.<sup>10</sup>

There is a quality of rambling, stream-of-consciousness that Jackson employs to convey an imagery of everyday life that is similar to Kerouac and mid-century authors like Norman Mailer, Tom Wolfe and other practitioners of the “New Journalism.” The visual corollary of these documentary and literary portrayals of everyday America was in the photography of Robert Frank and his younger contemporary Edward Ruscha. Jack Kerouac was a friend of Frank’s and wrote the introduction to his collection of photographs *The Americans* from 1958:

The humor, the sadness, the EVERYTHING-ness and American-ness of these pictures!...As American a picture—the faces don’t editorialize or criticize or say anything but “This is the way we are in real life and if you don’t like it I don’t know anything about it ‘cause I’m living my own life my way and may God bless us al, mebbe”...”if we deserve it”...<sup>11</sup>

The photographs are of everyday people, places, things and situations: cowboys and waitresses, gas stations and diners, funerals and parades, all seeming to take place on abandoned roads that disappear over an infinite horizon or in back alley urban scenes. These literary and visual representations were revolutionary in their desire to first recognize, and then describe America’s vast otherness. For Robert Frank this otherness could be found on the open road or in small towns—in parts of America that received little media attention unless it was to illustrate their backward ways—but also in the back alleys and barber shops of a much grittier urban America. What all of these critics, poets, and artists shared was a belief that the real America could be found out on



the road, traveling in pursuit of what might be called an anthropology of the everyday. There was no need to go to exotic locations half a world away when there was so much to be found out on the highway strip.

During the late 1950s and early 1960s in America, imagery of the material culture of everyday life became pervasive in the media. Post-war affluence had trickled down to the masses and popular culture began to draw attention away from elite tastemakers. Modernity for many had come to mean the conveniences of consumer culture: television, processed foods, timesaving appliances. Madison Avenue worked to spin these new products into the very fabric of American life. Modernism had lost its radical edge and was increasingly associated with sterile conformity. Ironically, the sheer pervasiveness of the material conveniences of modernity had transformed modern places (office buildings, suburban homes) and products (cereal, TVs) into the banal context of everyday life. As a result, the line between the modern and the everyday broke down revealing a more complex narrative.

This need for a dual perspective was echoed in Raymond Williams's 1958 definition of culture as both the best of human achievement and the common experiences of daily life.<sup>12</sup> Williams's insistence in breaking down the binary of "high and low" culture coincided in Great Britain with the advent of Pop Art as a commentary on the arid high modernism of mid-century art and the pervasiveness of American mass media and advertising in Europe. The Independent Group (IG), a collection of British critics, painters, sculptors and architects, in the early 1950s, first formulated and theorized Pop Art as a critical direction for art, recognizing how the hegemony of American culture necessitated new representational strategies.<sup>13</sup> Abstract

expressionism and minimalism were the ultimate representations of a high modernism that attempted to capture the interior life of the artist. To engage these works, one needed to be part of an intellectual cognoscente whose quest for enlightenment required an elite cultural framework. In contrast, Pop artists boldly placed the recognizable imagery of everyday life at the center of their works.

The titles of the artist Ed Ruscha's books, *Twentysix Gasoline Stations* (1963) and *Every Building on the Sunset Strip* (1966), precisely described their content. As Lucy Lippard has observed about works like Ruscha's, they "created a curious genre that reflects a totally neutralized stance toward place, balancing fondness and scorn, ideology and ignorance...vernacular naïveté becomes stylelessness becomes an artworld style. Local sites are catalogued in an antisentimental, antinostalgic manner."<sup>14</sup> In effect, the sleek abstractions of high modernism were giving way to an almost radical everydayness. Ruscha's images would be highly influential on Venturi and Scott Brown's approach to documenting the city in 1972's *Learning from Las Vegas* (which will be discussed in Chapter 4), however it is fascinating to compare them to the very similar cover imagery of *Landscape* magazine throughout the 50s and 60s. Many of *Landscape*'s covers—as well as the photography accompanying feature articles and various other illustrated marginalia—featured such "antisentimental, antinostalgic" images of grain silos, intensively managed agricultural fields, cemeteries, and Main Streets. The sources for many of the early images in *Landscape* were often from the collections of the Soil Conservation Service, the Farm Security Administration or the Standard Oil Company, which all undertook photo documentary projects during the depression. However, these images were not wielded in the mannerist style of the

artist; rather, Jackson's editorial point always seemed to be that these various American places were *also* landscape.

### **“Culture is Ordinary”**

Culture is ordinary: that is the first fact. Every human society has its own shape, its own purposes, its own meanings. Every human society expresses these, in institutions, and in arts and learning. The making of a society is the finding of common meanings and directions, and its growth is an active debate and amendment under the pressures of experience, contact, and discovery, writing themselves into the land...These are the ordinary processes of human societies and human minds, and we see through them the nature of a culture: that it is always both traditional and creative; that it is both the most ordinary common meanings and the finest individual meanings. We use the word culture in these two senses: to mean a whole way of life—the common meanings; to mean the arts and learning—the special processes of discovery and creative effort. Some writers reserve the word for one or other of these senses; I insist on both, and on the significance of their conjunction. The questions I ask about our culture are questions about deep personal meanings. Culture is ordinary, in every society and in every mind.

Raymond Williams, “Culture is Ordinary”

In 1952, Alfred Kroeber—the eminent anthropologist so influential to Sauer and the Berkeley School of geographers—published his book *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions* in which he found 164 definitions of the term grouped in seven categories.<sup>15</sup> The book marks the evolution of the idea of culture up to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. As discussed in Chapter 1, human geographers had been studying and describing landscapes as cultural artifacts for decades, but their scholarship had stagnated around Kroeber's earlier, limited “superorganic” definition of culture that treated human groups as monolithic entities and scientific subjects. In order for the landscape idea to transform again into a meaningful concept by the end of the century it would require a less abstract and more critical view of culture that acknowledged the complex social processes playing out in the physical environment. Instead of the usual

geographic descriptions of common landscapes as indicative of larger metanarratives of national identity and cultural (often racial) cohesion, Jackson would proffer landscape as a site of everyday lived experience.

J.B. Jackson's perspective on culture more closely paralleled the ideas of Raymond Williams, the Welsh critic, novelist and progenitor of the field of cultural studies. Although Williams's scholarship explored Marxist themes and became influential to the emerging New Left—decidedly not within Jackson's oeuvre—his important mid-century definition of culture as “ordinary” complimented Jackson's interest in vernacular landscapes. Written in 1958, Williams's essay “Culture is Ordinary” came along when ideas about culture—for all of the variety Kroeber found in the term's use—had solidified into two mutually ambivalent perspectives: the elite culture of artists and academics and the *ways-of-life* culture described by anthropologists since Franz Boas. Williams insistence that both definitions of culture were important and that they were interrelated opened up many new fields of inquiry. In effect his conceptual re-orientation suggested scholars study the ordinary social processes that influence the creation of art while also considering the art of practicing everyday life. It meant that culture must not be treated as the rarified domain of “angry young men.”<sup>16</sup> If culture is ordinary it is something that is practiced by every human and it is always responding to the stimuli of everyday life. Culture was understood as happening both on the scale of the larger society or nation and in the minds of individuals, both “writing themselves into the land.”<sup>17</sup>

What was being written into the land in the 1950s and 1960s was easy enough for all to see—nobody in America could avoid noticing the changes to the physical

environment happening all around them—but to critically engage with those changes required one to see how social and cultural forces were manifest in the visible landscape. Although the phrase “social construction” would not come into vogue in critical theory until the 1980s and 1990s (and would never be adopted by Jackson), its theoretical argument—that many of the things people consider in a normative or essentialist light are in reality artifacts of human social processes—had its precedent in the writing of mid-century cultural critics like Jackson and Williams, if not to the degree of later theorists.

Jackson’s intellectual independence from any one discipline allowed him to read and interpret the many works of sophisticated cultural criticism that appeared during the period. Much of the popular press in the 1950s was ripe for further discussion due to an ambitious agenda similar to *Landscape’s* desire to appeal to the “intelligent layman.” After World War II, intelligent books and articles that documented the American experience found an eager audience, first as confirmation of American exceptionalism,<sup>18</sup> then as an anxious reflection of concern for the fragility or illusion of that exceptionalism. As more Americans found themselves moving up a ladder whose rungs demarcated social class, many became obsessed with acquiring the requisite level of taste, manners and possessions to indicate their position. Russell Lynes’ tongue-in-cheek “*Highbrow, Lowbrow, Middlebrow*” (*Harpers*, 1949) and *The Tastemakers* (1954), provided Americans with a parlor game of sorts, placing themselves within such categorizations.<sup>19</sup> Of course, certain intellectuals would meet anxieties over social position among the middle class with concern over homogenous mass conformity. For these intellectuals, the physical manifestation of that conformity could be found in the

American suburbs and the stretches of undifferentiated highway strip. J.B. Jackson would enter this conversation as another way to talk about an emerging American landscape that he believed should be understood before being dismissed.

For example, in Jackson's essay "Other-Directed Houses" from the Winter 1956-57 issue of *Landscape* he employs yet another literary reference, this time co-opting David Riesman's pivotal sociological deconstruction of the American character from 1950, *The Lonely Crowd*. Riesman and his co-authors based their observations on "our experiences of living in America—the people we have met, the jobs we have held, the books we have read, the movies we have seen, and the landscape."<sup>20</sup> Central to Riesman's argument was his historical construction of three phases of American character that he termed the tradition-directed, the inner-directed and the other-directed. "Tradition-directed" described a pre-modern, community-based American character before the forces of rapid progress required the cultivation of an "inner-directed," somewhat isolated, American individual working toward advancement. "Other-directedness" was described by Riesman as the result of "reaching a point at which resources become plentiful enough or are utilized effectively enough to permit a rapid accumulation of capital,"<sup>21</sup> at which point Americans became more concerned with outward expressions of self and conforming to the cues broadcast by peer groups and the media. Perhaps assuming that Riesman's work was well known by any educated reader, Jackson extends his concept of the transition from inner-directedness to other-directedness to describe a new American landscape struggling for attention:

I am inclined to believe, however, that we have become entirely too fastidious, too conformist, in architectural matters. In our recently acquired awareness of architectural values we have somehow lost sight of the fact that there is still such a thing as a popular taste in art quite distinct from the educated taste, and that

popular taste often evolves in its own way...In all those streamlined facades, in all those flamboyant entrances and deliberately bizarre decorative effects, those cheerfully self-assertive masses of color and light and movement that clash so roughly with the old and traditional there are, I believe, certain underlying characteristics which suggest that we are confronted not by a debased and cheapened art, but by a kind of folk art in mid-XX Century garb...Here every business has to woo the public—a public, moreover, which passes by at forty miles or more an hour—if it is to survive. The result is an *other-directed architecture*...<sup>22</sup>

It is interesting to note that Jackson's reading of Riesman's argument did not adhere to the prevalent critical response to the book that saw it as an unequivocal indictment of consumer culture and conformity. In Riesman's Preface to the 1969 edition, he goes to great pains to defend against this over-simplification and instead emphasizes how other-directedness was really about a society that had become inextricably interconnected, in many ways for the better:

*The Lonely Crowd* advocates the morally and practically difficult enterprise of living at once on two-levels: that of ideals and even utopian visions and that of day-to-day existence. Our daily life and our idealism must nourish and speak to each other...the best hope for change in the direction of our ideals does not lie in efforts at total improvement in oneself and in society but in patient work toward incremental changes in the light of a tentative sense of many possible futures.<sup>23</sup>

It is easy to see a shared pragmatism between Riesman's view of American society and Jackson's view of the American landscape. In fact, "Other-Directed Houses" was not the first time Jackson employed Riesman's tripartite historical narrative of the American character. In 1953's "The Westward-Moving House: Three American Houses and the People Who Lived in Them," Jackson describes (again without directly acknowledging Riesman's book) a similar transformation of the American family's relationship to the land in the 1650s, 1850s and 1950s.<sup>24</sup>

Corresponding with Riesman's description of the traditional-directed American character, Jackson describes how the colonists of the 1650s created the "domestic

village with its established hierarchy and its working together on common tasks”<sup>25</sup> as a shelter from “an unredeemed wilderness inhabited by savages.”<sup>26</sup> By the 1850s, the village-dwellers of earlier generations had moved west and created a dispersed landscape that expressed an independence and ambition for personal and economic (inner-directed) improvement. Jackson illustrates the latest stage of family life and its relationship to the land by relating the story of Ray, the descendant of the first two families. “Ray’s identity like the identity of the land, has become alarmingly mobile and subject to rapid change.”<sup>27</sup> Both identities could be described by Riesman as outer-directed, where the family’s relationship to the farm is abstracted by technology and the connection to global markets. As Ray sees it, the farm “is to be an instrument for the prompt and efficient conversion of natural energy in the form of chemical fertilizers or water or tractor fuel or man hours or whatever into energy in the form of cash or further credit—into economic energy, in a word.”<sup>28</sup>

Perhaps Jackson’s importance in shaping the way we understood the changing landscape of the middle part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (and understand it today) was in his ability to translate the zeitgeist of cultural criticism found in works like Riesman’s *The Lonely Crowd* into an equally critical perspective on the American landscape.

### **Everyday Nature**

The more the city expands and absorbs us, the firmer the belief in a rural paradise becomes...and the result is a popular image of rural America which bears a decreasing resemblance to reality. We see it as a pleasant, drowsy region where old fashioned people are engaged in a kind of work less essential and less profitable with every passing year, but where life has an elemental simplicity and truth. On a more sophisticated (though no better informed) level the countryside is seen as a vast wildlife preserve resounding with birdsong, threaded by sparkling streams—ideal for recreation and something



environmental designers like to label “open space.” However we look at it, this hinterland is held to be the great antidote, spiritual as well as physical, to the evils of the city. As long as it survives unchanged we ourselves can hope to survive; urban existence is a kind of purgatory.

J.B. Jackson, “An Engineered Environment”

While most Americans at mid-century—regardless of their familiarity with the forces shaping their environment—could easily identify the city as modern, few urban dwellers contemplated the countryside in such terms. The dualisms of the modern era required equal and opposite forces to play out against each other. According to this logic the opposite of the city was the countryside, and the countryside was for many the same as landscape. If the city was a representation of the progressive future, landscape represented a romantic past; if the city was an intensively constructed man-made environment, landscape was a (mostly) natural green oasis. The long history of the landscape idea as the embodiment of humans interacting with their natural environment had been maintained in its representational opposition to modernization. The landscape idea did not die at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; it froze in time and ceased to develop. The early 20<sup>th</sup> century saw both the Arts and Crafts movement and interwar regionalism hold up a primarily rural landscape imagery as part of their utopian ideas for a reemergence of folkways.<sup>29</sup> Both of those movements had passed by mid-century, but the romantic association of landscape with rural charm and a simpler way of life maintained an indelible hold on the American consciousness.

The stunted development of the landscape idea is implicated in the environmental confusion of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. If landscape was no longer an evolving critical commentary on the relationship between humans and their natural environment, then it could not provide credible alternatives to the dominance of human environments

other than those devised prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. For many Americans at mid-century landscape was still a painted or created scene; one that had stagnated as a form of picturesqueness stripped of its earlier theoretical complexities. As a result, landscape could only be understood as a palliative to the realities of the modern environment, a green softening of the hard edges of rationalism. The only solution provided by landscape was to be the antithesis of everything that people found disagreeable about their environment. Landscape was not allowed to be modern and therefore had little rhetorical weight when faced with the social and economic engines of modernity. For those few who did see landscape as a modern medium—primarily landscape architects, architects and planners—the concept had been so abstracted and transformed into discussions of space that it no longer carried much critical weight.

One of the themes J.B. Jackson returned to repeatedly was how modern the *entire* American landscape had become. Modernity had not confined itself to the obvious locations of urban centers and industrial zones. In fact, Jackson argued in numerous commentaries that some of the most remote and least populated landscapes in the United States were sites of rampant modernization:

It so happens that the American rural landscape is composed not only of forests and lakes and mountains, but of farms and feedlots and irrigation ditches and orchards and tractor agencies and rangeland. It is a place of work, and because it is a place of work, hard and not always rewarding, it is at present undergoing a revolution in its way as radical as the revolution in the urban environment. Moreover this revolution is taking place entirely without help from environmental designers.<sup>30</sup>

The reality of America's rural locations—rather than representing stability and unchanging values—was one of declining population, technological innovation and radical environmental transformation, without the benefit of much in the way of

planning. In other words, the countryside was not the antithesis of the city, it was responding to many of the same forces of modernization, only at a different density and scale. Jackson goes on to suggest that signs of the passing of the 19<sup>th</sup> century working landscape (especially in the northeast) such as the abandoned and dilapidated small family farm, one room school house or general store, helped reinforce a picturesque image of rural quietude; but he provokes by asking “how will we take the abandoned, more or less modern, high school with monster gymnasium? The abandoned drive-in movie with rows of empty stanchions emerging from the weeds, the abandoned shopping center?”<sup>31</sup> This image of a faster and less romantic form of decay would prove prophetic.

The reasons for this transformation were based in the same capitalist logic guiding the rapid change of urban environments. Specifically, technological innovation was encouraging a profitable corporate form of agricultural to overtake older models. The result was (and is) a landscape every bit as modern as the metropolis. “Does all of this sound like an up-to-date version of the factory in the fields?” Jackson asks.<sup>32</sup> While the rural landscape was not being covered with skyscrapers and expressways, it was being literally reshaped into new topographies to allow the latest farm machinery to more efficiently cultivate large tracts of land with fewer laborers. The flatter and more topographically consistent the land, the better it was for maneuvering large tractors or organizing intricate irrigation systems:

The kind of modification which the modern farmer undertakes is...to create an entirely new and artificial setting for his work. The ultimate aim is a man-made topography, a man-made soil, a man-made crop, all part of a new production process.<sup>33</sup>

West of the Mississippi the irony of this new landscape was more pronounced: radical changes to the physical environment paralleled by rapid declines in population. This lack of visible populations and creation of even more “open space,” continued to encourage a belief that the countryside (and the West in general) remained an antidote to urban existence. No matter how modern, the rural landscape still seemed a simpler, more homogenous, less crowded place for a certain class of urban dweller who had not previously escaped rural environments of back-breaking labor, poverty and/or racial intolerance.

Romantic ideas about a timeless rural scene or untouched wilderness encouraged the myths of the American landscape, especially in the West. Frederick Jackson Turner’s themes of American exceptionalism and the frontier were constantly being reinforced by popular media representations in movies, television, novels and advertisements at mid-century. However, when Jackson’s *Landscape* magazine with its early focus on the American Southwest was first published in 1951, Turner’s frontier thesis had been under attack by historians for over a quarter century.<sup>34</sup> Although the critiques were diverse, they were generally limited to arguments over to what extent the frontier had *in fact* shaped American character. While this focus on an over-arching American identity was still part of the scholarly debate in American history, Jackson’s view of the West was significantly more circumspect and oriented around fluid notions of individual identity. Rugged individuals testing themselves against unforgiving environments may have once populated the West, but the new West of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century had put many of them out of work.

In many of his essays and comments, Jackson warned of the consequences to the environment if Americans continued to maintain uncritical, yet highly value-laden and moralistically infused notions of nature, still informed by 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century Romanticism. Nature for most Americans was related to specific visual cues that spanned from the imagery of apparently untouched wilderness to the rural countryside. As opposed to the early Colonial fear of a chaotic and threatening environment, nature had come to represent a universal good. However, at the same time the framework for understanding culture began to focus on the social processes that create culture, romantic notions of nature as immutable and constant were challenged by a process-oriented science of ecology.

Ecology had emerged in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century as a controversial biological concept that suggested the interrelationship between organisms forming “communities” and evolving toward increasingly more complex systems. For ecologists, as well as for those seeking a more scientific geography, the concept of nature was too imprecise to be of any use. Also, Nazi Germany’s wielding of nature and the concept of “native” landscapes as an ideological weapon during the War discouraged many scientists from using such highly charged terms. As a result, ecological science—like the spatial science of geography—was couched in highly abstract, apparently value-free language where *nature* was replaced by the neutral *environment*.<sup>35</sup>

The controversy over ecology as a proper science was due mostly to the fact that it required an interdisciplinary cooperative effort at a time when scientific disciplines were becoming more specialized. A biologist specializing in a particular type of flora rarely wanted to consider that plant as a member of a dependent ecology. One

exception to this narrowly focused approach was the plant geneticist Edgar Anderson who was the most frequent contributor to *Landscape* during Jackson's tenure. After his popular book *Plants, Man, and Life* was positively reviewed in the Spring 1953 issue of *Landscape*, he contacted J.B. Jackson who, "with a piquant combination of sharp criticism and flattering appreciation," proceeded to convince Anderson to begin submitting essays and book reviews that were written in a similarly accessible manner.<sup>36</sup>

Anderson's career was built on researching hybridization techniques for Iris species, but he was the rare scientist who sought to weave his highly specific work into fascinating narratives of the relationship between plants and humans. He became *Landscape's* primary connection to, and translator of, the botanical world. He was also second only to Jackson in championing the notion that humans are part of the natural world and that nature belongs in cities. In his essay "The City is a Garden," from the Winter 1957-58 issue, he blames the dying core of urban America on "the amateur Thoreau's and professional naturalists."

They have in the United States raised the appreciation of nature to a mass phenomena, almost to a mass religion; yet at the same time they have refused to accept man as part of nature... They are one of the chief ultimate sources of our unwritten axiom, that cities are something to flee from, that the harmonious interaction of man and other organisms can only be achieved out in the country, that the average man is too noisy, too ugly, and too vile to be accepted as a close neighbor.<sup>37</sup>

J.B. Jackson and Edgar Anderson—along with the ecologist Paul Shepard<sup>38</sup> whose voluminous contributions to the magazine paralleled Anderson's—were talking about nature at mid-century when it was either anathema to scientific inquiry or uncritically accepted as an ill-defined idea perpetually in conflict with the human-

occupied world. *Landscape* magazine was one of the few places where the concept of nature was recognized for its complex ecological associations *and* for its cultural meaning, both historically and as a still-evolving contemporary idea. The landscape idea, as interpreted through the magazine, would begin to reference both a process-driven ecology and a culturally constructed “everyday” nature, avoiding the dilemma posed by Jean Baudrillard: “To speak of ecology is to attest to the death and total abstraction of nature...”<sup>39</sup> For Jackson and his like-minded contributors, there need be no such contradiction; however, problems emerged when environment or nature were denied their place as cultural constructs.

David Lowenthal, the influential 20<sup>th</sup> century historical geographer and student of Sauer, wrote his first piece for *Landscape*, “Nature and the American Creed of Virtue,” and amplified themes in Anderson’s “The City is a Garden” when he wrote: “In emphasizing wilderness preservation...some conservationists perpetuate a false dichotomy between man and nature.”<sup>40</sup> With Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* two years away, the mid-century proponents of conservation would become the late 20<sup>th</sup> century environmentalists. Both Jackson and Lowenthal would spend much of the 1960s challenging the automatic virtue of conservation as a means to turn back the clock on modernity. For Lowenthal, “The way to do it is not to retire into the wilderness, or pretend that we can give the country back to the animals.”<sup>41</sup> As the landscape idea in America suffered from an uncritical association with wilderness or pastoralism, Leo Marx would argue in *The Machine in the Garden* (1964) that:

...this impulse gives rise to a symbolic motion away from centers of civilization toward their opposite, nature, away from sophistication toward simplicity, or to introduce the cardinal metaphor of the literary mode, away from the city toward

the country. When this impulse is unchecked, the result is a simpleminded wishfulness, a romantic perversion of thought and feeling.<sup>42</sup>

### **Evolving Landscapes**

The existential landscape, without absolutes, without prototypes, devoted to change and mobility and the free confrontation of men, is already taking form around us. It has vitality but it is neither physically beautiful nor socially just. Our own American past has an invaluable lesson to teach us: a coherent, workable landscape evolves when there is a coherent definition not of man but of man's relation to the world and to his fellow men.

J.B. Jackson, "Jefferson, Thoreau and After"

By challenging the ubiquitous abstractions of landscape described in this chapter, the representation of everyday landscapes provided an important counterpoint to the mythic idealizations of modernism. If nature was an everyday world that humans were part of, and culture was ordinary it made both concepts accessible to everyone. Everyday landscape had meaning. But that meaning was always a representation of cultural or natural processes that took place in the recent or distant past. Even looking at the most recent addition to an urban skyline, true understanding only happened through recognition of the historical forces shaping the contemporary environment.

J.B. Jackson's concern that conservation ideology often perpetuated a static conception of isolated nature where humans only belonged as visitors also extended to historic preservation. For Jackson, history was important because it helped explain the present and perhaps indicate future directions; therefore, he would consistently take issue with preservationists who sought to take certain landscapes out of the flow of time, by freezing them at a particular period of significance.

For many Americans looking for respite from the ugliness and disorder of the contemporary environment, landscapes of the past held a nostalgic allure. After World



War II the euphoria of victory and the afterglow of economic prosperity propelled the United States into a period of unparalleled optimism. The present and future of America seemed promising; however, the country's relationship with its past became progressively more complicated as the 1950s unfolded into the 1960s and 1970s. Numerous historians have documented the increased interest by Americans in issues of history, heritage and genealogy during and after World War II that only grew more intense as the nation approached its bicentennial.<sup>43</sup> Many cultural historians have suggested a direct connection between post-war anxieties (the bomb, communism, a culture of conformity) and an increased desire to reconnect with the past. One anxiety in particular—the increasing concern for the rapidly changing physical environment of the United States—was implicated in an American fascination with past landscapes that ultimately led to passage of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

When J.B. Jackson wrote “The Necessity for Ruins” in 1980 he was summarizing a train of thought that he had followed in numerous essays since the 1960s when his concern over conservation policies developed into a parallel concern over historic preservation policies. For Jackson, landscapes had meaning, especially as a visible artifact of human history. But one needs to understand his perspectives on culture and nature and history to comprehend his lack of sympathy with most preservation efforts.

The thrust of his argument in “The Necessity for Ruins” was that the narratives of history no longer required monuments and official remembrances of heroes and political figures in order to connect with the American public. Jackson believed that, starting with the dedication of the Gettysburg battlefield, American history had become

progressively more associated with the lives and times of everyday people. Preserving Gettysburg battlefield as a monument was the first time an everyday landscape became the touchstone for national memory. The landscape as a site with particular visible artifacts of the past or with monuments built later to indicate the spot where some notable event occurred was being replaced by landscape as historical milieu. Jackson argued that Lincoln's Gettysburg Address was meant to instruct the American people on what should be learned from such an event; however, the site itself was meant purely to evoke a *feeling* of history. Jackson points to this as a transitional event that would translate in the 20<sup>th</sup> century into a fascination with historical environments—whether “authentic” or recreated—that spoke of times long enough in the past that they had developed into an American mythology:

The best explanation I can find for the nation-wide popularity of these environments is that they appeal to a radically new concept of history and of the meaning of history, and that they represent a radically new concept of the monument...I think this kind of monument is celebrating a different past, not the past which history books describe, but a vernacular past, a golden age where there are no dates or names, simply a sense of the way it *used to be*, history as the chronicle of everyday existence.<sup>44</sup>

But if there was a shift in the American historical consciousness toward an appreciation of the history of everyday Americans—and by extension everyday landscapes—this new historical awareness was still a modern abstraction of the past. Nostalgic longings for a mythical past translated into the desire to visually consume *representations* of historic landscapes. The same dichotomies resulting in Americans idealizing wilderness and countryside as a perfected natural order that could only exist outside of everyday human experience, and that also constructed culture as either exotically foreign or unattainably highbrow, could also explain an idealized American

past. As a result, the expectations for visible history expressed as landscape were similar to the purely scenic notions attached to nature appreciation. Landscape as a stage set for a morality play about how much better the past was from the present.

David Lowenthal's academic agenda from when he received his doctorate from Wisconsin in 1950 had progressed from a biographical concern with George Perkins Marsh, to becoming an early theorist of environmental perception studies, to his above-mentioned challenge to the dogma of the 1960s conservationists. By the late 1960s he began to change his focus to questions of heritage and memory that would occupy him for over thirty years.<sup>45</sup> Like Jackson, he saw the danger of an uncritical fascination with past environments that resulted in unproductive or deeply problematic oversimplifications of history. However, following Jackson and Lowenthal's lead, what for many Americans was a fascination with artificial historical tableaux had become for many historians a new area of research into everyday environments and their relationship to memory. In the 1970s and 1980s, fields such as public history, material culture studies and vernacular architecture and landscape studies would help redefine how the landscape was understood as an artifact and repository of memory.

As Ben Highmore stated in reference to the study of everyday life, "If it is to do its job it will need to find those moments in disciplinary fields and outside them, when the everyday casts any disciplinary enterprise into doubt."<sup>46</sup> This, in essence, is what the remainder of this dissertation is about. Specifically, it will argue the role of *Landscape* magazine in challenging the disciplinary authority of modernism in the design and planning professions. This dissertation specifically covers the period from 1951 to 1968 but, as this chapter has shown, the most potent moment of critical doubt

represented in the magazine was in the last years of the 1950s and the first few of the 1960s. During that roughly five-year period, *Landscape* had established enough visibility to be influential before a much larger chorus of voices joined the critical reflection on the condition of modern lives and landscapes. The reflection on, and representation of, everyday landscapes would indeed cast these disciplinary enterprises into doubt.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> J.B. Jackson, "Ghosts at the Door," *Landscape: Human Geography of the Southwest* 1, No. 2 (Autumn 1951), 9.

<sup>2</sup> Translation of Marinetti's "The Futurist Manifesto" in James Joll, *Three Intellectuals in Politics* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1961).

<sup>3</sup> J.B. Jackson, "The Abstract World of the Hot-Rodder," *Landscape: Magazine of Human Geography* 7, No. 2 (Winter 1957-1958), 22-27.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Jack Kerouac, *On the Road* (New York: Signet, 1957); Gillbert Millstien, "Books of the Times," *The New York Times Book Review*, September 5th, 1957.

<sup>9</sup> Jack Kerouac, *On the Road* (New York: Signet, 1957), 111.

<sup>10</sup> J.B. Jackson, "The Stranger's Path," *Landscape: Magazine of Human Geography* 7, No. 1 (Autumn 1957), 13.

<sup>11</sup> Jack Kerouac, "Introduction by Jack Kerouac," in Robert Frank, *The Americans* (New York: Grove Press, 1959), 6.

<sup>12</sup> Raymond Williams, "Culture is Ordinary," (1958) in Ben Highmore, *The Everyday Life Reader* (London: Routledge, 2002), 91-100.

<sup>13</sup> Notably, some of the members of the Independent Group would also form the core of Team X: a group of young architects who would challenge the orthodoxy of the first generation of modernist architects as described in Chapter 4.

<sup>14</sup> Lucy Lippard, *The Lure of the Local: Senses of Place in a Multicentered Society* (New York: The new Press, 1997), 54.

<sup>15</sup> A.L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn, *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions* (New York: Vintage Books, 1952).

<sup>16</sup> Raymond Williams, "Culture is Ordinary," (1958) in Ben Highmore, *The Everyday Life Reader* (London: Routledge, 2002), 93.

- <sup>17</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>18</sup> cf. Henry Steele Commager, *The American Mind: An Interpretation of American Thought and Character Since the 1880s* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950).
- <sup>19</sup> Russell Lynes, "Highbrow, Lowbrow, Middlebrow," *Harpers* (February 1949), 19-28; *The Tastemakers* (New York: Harper, 1954).
- <sup>20</sup> David Riesman, Nathan Glazer, Reuel Denney, *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), xxi.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid., 19.
- <sup>22</sup> J.B. Jackson, "Other-Directed Houses," *Landscape: Magazine of Human Geography* 6, No. 2 (Winter 1956-1957), 31.
- <sup>23</sup> David Riesman, Nathan Glazer, Reuel Denney, *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), xx.
- <sup>24</sup> J.B. Jackson, "The Westward-Moving House," *Landscape: Magazine of Human Geography* 2, No. 3 (Spring 1953), 8-21.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid., 9.
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid., 11.
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid., 21.
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid., 20.
- <sup>29</sup> cf. Robert L. Dorman, *The Revolt of the Provinces: The Regionalist Movement in America, 1920-1945* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993), especially Chapter 3, "The Re-Discovery of America: The Regionalist Movement and the Search for the American Folk," 81-104.
- <sup>30</sup> J.B. Jackson, "An Engineered Environment," *Landscape* 16, No. 1 (Autumn 1966), 16.
- <sup>31</sup> Ibid., 17.
- <sup>32</sup> Ibid., 19.
- <sup>33</sup> Ibid., 18.
- <sup>34</sup> J.A. Burkhardt, "The Turner Thesis: A Historian's Controversy," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 31, No. 1 (September 1947), 70-83.
- <sup>35</sup> Kenneth Olwig, "Nature—Mapping the Ghostly Traces of a Concept," in *Concepts in Human Geography*, eds. Carville Earle, Kent Mathewson and Martin S. Kenzer (London: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1996), 89.
- <sup>36</sup> Edgar Anderson, "Epilogue," *Plants, Man, and Life*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 233.
- <sup>37</sup> Edgar Anderson, "The City is a Garden," *Landscape: Magazine of Human Geography* 7, No. 2 (Winter 1957-58), 3.
- <sup>38</sup> cf., Paul Shepard, *Man in the Landscape: A Historic View of the Esthetics of Nature* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1967) which collected many of his essays previously published in *Landscape*.

<sup>39</sup> Quoted in Kenneth Olwig, “Nature—Mapping the Ghostly Traces of a Concept,” in *Concepts in Human Geography*, eds. Carville Earle, Kent Mathewson and Martin S. Kenzer (London: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1996), 89.

<sup>40</sup> David Lowenthal, “Nature and the American Creed of Virtue,” *Landscape: Magazine of Human Geography* 9, No. 2 (Winter 1959-1960), 24.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 9-10.

<sup>43</sup> cf. Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Knopf, 1991).

<sup>44</sup> J.B. Jackson, “The Necessity for Ruins,” *The Necessity for Ruins and Other Topics* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1980), 91, 94.

<sup>45</sup> cf. David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

<sup>46</sup> Ben Highmore, “Questioning Everyday Life,” in *The Everyday Life Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 4.

## CHAPTER 4

### “TOWARD MAKING PLACES”: *LANDSCAPE* AND THE MID-20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY BUILT ENVIRONMENT

At the beginning of the 1950s, a new generation of architects, landscape architects and planners schooled in the principles of International Style modernism were joining a campaign to transform the postwar American landscape. They were buoyed by a convergence of economic, social and cultural factors after World War II that led many Americans to embrace, or at least tolerate, new and sometimes radical ideas about the design of their built environments. Many of these professionals were trained by the first generation of European modernists who had taken up residence in American Universities in the 1930s and quickly dispensed with the Beaux Arts traditions of design and planning education. Beginning at Harvard under the leadership of Walter Gropius and at the Illinois Institute of Technology with Mies van der Rohe, American institutions offering professional degrees gradually followed the trend away from the academic study and replication of historical styles and building methods and toward modernist functionalism. By the 1950s a steady stream of young designers and planners were emerging from American colleges and universities no longer trained in the classical forms and convinced that modernism represented the end of eclectic style, ostensible historical reference and aesthetic decadence; in their place grew an abiding belief in functionalism and the quest for clearly articulated forms and spatial design.

*Landscape* magazine was an important early arbiter of the coming critique of mid-century modernist architecture and planning. In much the way that the social and cultural revolutions of the 1960s can be traced to the underground rumblings of

discontent in the 1950s, the earliest reactions against corporate International Style modernism emerged over a longer timeline than is commonly acknowledged by architectural history texts. In the 1950s, J.B. Jackson had a small, but influential readership of design and planning academics and professionals—many of whom would contribute to the magazine and eventually lead the critical dialogue against the moral certitude of modernism.

The early readers of *Landscape* discovered an unusual magazine that presented an intriguing lens through which to look at the built environment. The human geographer's contention that landscape was the artifact and milieu of human cultures shaping their natural environment was extended by Jackson to include the products of designers and planners; however, everyday landscapes were his concern, even if they had little in the way of artistic or social merit. Jackson's appreciation for all that was chaotic and unplanned translated into a thin patience for the rational utopias of architects, landscape architects and planners. In Jackson's earliest essays, book reviews and editorials he paints modernist design and planning as disconnected in its abstraction. Form, function, space, technology, society, health and nature—all of these vaguely defined terms were at the center of architectural theories that J.B. Jackson would challenge throughout the 1950s and 1960s.

In the years to follow, the declining influence of International Style modernism in the design and planning professions that began in the 1950s was hastened by the cultural upheavals of the 1960s. Regardless of the particular critique aimed at modernist design and planning at the time, there was a common rejection among critics of abstract utopian functionalism as a simplistic and naively determinist approach to addressing



complex human problems through the manipulation of form and space. On many postwar drafting boards real people and real places were overlooked in pursuit of an increasingly corporate brand of rational efficiency, clean lines and cool technology. Out of the critique emerged a renewed concern for everyday landscapes and everyday life. Landscape as an idea resisted the absolutism of abstract space. Landscape was not abstract space: it was tangible ground, everyday people; it was complex and difficult to categorize; it was place. In fact, by the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the tangibility of everyday landscapes had become the antithesis of modern planning and design's sterile idealism—in effect, “reading” landscapes for their inherent contradictions and deeper meanings became a profoundly post-modern act.

When the challenges of how to plan and design the human built environment met the intractable problems and world-changing events of the 1960s, the strident determinism of International Style modernism was found wanting. For the design and planning professions, the sixties saw the publication of major anti-modernist texts, wildly expressionist visions for radical new environments, a renewed concern for cultural difference, human perception and historic preservation, and the first warnings of looming ecological disaster. A cacophonous assortment of movements emerged to fill the vacuum, and by the 1970s and into the 1980s a post-modern era was retrospectively identified as having emerged from the tumult of the period.

*Landscape* is an important artifact of this history as the only scholarly magazine or journal of the period concerned with the built environment that operated outside of the insular professional design establishment and presented a spectrum of alternative visions, opinions and theories from both professionals and non-professionals. The

magazine's solicitation of opinions from critics and academics outside of the design professions foreshadowed the later self-conscious search, within these professions, for outside theories in which to ground design and planning practice. This chapter (as well as Chapter 5) traces *Landscape's* "voice" through this contentious period. At the beginning of the 1950s, architecture and landscape architecture were deeply embedded in the abstract theories of modernism; by the end of the 1960s there emerged a collective questioning of previously entrenched ideas about how to design and plan the built environment. J.B. Jackson founded *Landscape* magazine at the height of the International Style and for the next 18 years fostered a sustained critique of the design and planning professions as many of their core principles unraveled in the face of a rapidly changing society and environment that clearly operated outside of the dictates of rationalism and efficiency.

### **Space, Time and the Landscapes of Modern Architecture**

The ultimate definition of landscape will probably be: the distant objects which are seen through a picture window. For it is distance, a remote and autonomous nature, that the picture window is intended to frame.

J.B. Jackson, "The Art of the Landscape"

From the first issues of the magazine in 1951, Jackson began his life-long campaign for the importance of understanding the vernacular environment. He would constantly express his apprehension at how disconnected the architecture profession had become from the landscape as exemplified by "...architects who can design thousand-bed hospitals and international airports but who cannot draw up the specifications for a barn." From his cultural landscape perspective, J.B. Jackson would have real problems

with modern architecture, and his reasons were complex and myriad. His objections were not the one-dimensional aesthetic critiques of architectural traditionalists. He did not take issue with the idea of an architecture that used new materials and methods; nor did he argue against the prevailing orthodoxy that buildings should be reflective of the times. He was not the least bit romantic or nostalgic for a return to old ways of building. He would even grant that modern buildings were often beautiful as formal objects. However, Jackson believed architects had lost sight of the individual and the hopelessly undisciplined desires of everyday people. For Jackson, architecture should respond to the internal lives of individuals and their external ways of living. He appreciated local and regional building practices, not because the resulting structures had some vaguely defined charm or character, but because they were expressions of individuals, families and small cultural groups living everyday, imperfect lives.

At the center of the cultural landscape idea, and Jackson's critique, was a belief that architecture is part of the larger context—a tile in a grander mosaic. Modernist architecture, especially examples of the early International Style, was notorious for treating architecture as an object in a neutral field, to be appreciated in perfectly cropped images or idealized magazine renderings that either excluded the surrounding context or used it as a green frame. In contrast, Jackson's cultural landscape perspective was not oriented to the isolated object, but to how interior relates to exterior, and how a building relates to adjacent buildings and the resulting in-between spaces, and how that neighborhood relates to larger regional traditions, and how that region relates to national ideas. For Jackson, architecture was part of a complex, multidimensional landscape, not an object set in a landscape scene.

Jackson's affinity for the complexities of everyday life in real places meant that he found the abstract language of modernism worthy of criticism. The hyper-rationalism proposed by modernist architects was expressed in a vocabulary of vaguely defined terms. The language had become as abstract as the formal geometries and unadorned masses of modern buildings. *Space* had replaced rooms, *form* had replaced ornament and symbol, *function* had replaced common sense, *efficiency* had replaced beauty, *health* had replaced religion, *man* had replaced the individual, *society* had replaced culture and *nature* had replaced the truly specific local environment.

### **A Decade of New Architecture**

The primary antagonist and focus of Jackson's editorial backlash against modern architecture in the early years of *Landscape* magazine was the organization C.I.A.M.—the French acronym for the International Congress of Modern Architecture. The organization's first Secretary-General, and perennial apologist, was Sigfried Giedion (1888-1968). As an historian and critic Giedion championed the causes of modern architecture from the first wave of the 1920s up until his death in 1968. His influential book *Space, Time and Architecture*, first published in 1941, became the official insider's history of the modern movement in architecture.<sup>1</sup> The titular reference to “space” and “time” reflects the early 20<sup>th</sup> century origins of modernist architecture as a self-conscious outgrowth of emerging theories in physics and abstract art.

Einstein's space-time conflation, along with cubist representations that departed from the single view perspective of earlier modes of painting influenced how architecture defined itself as modern. Classical architecture presented its surfaces as a

series of façades to be viewed from a point in space as elevation or in perspective. The concept of simultaneity emerging from physics and abstract art suggested a subject could be understood from many points of view at the same time. Architects responded to this intellectual framework by celebrating minimalist forms and designing free-flowing spaces that provided the user a kinetic experience of multiple overlapping views. Space in the modern idiom was no longer defined as the rooms that resulted from the definition of walls and openings; instead, the design of space as a positive phenomenon to be experienced became the primary concern. While modern physics could only be understood through highly abstract diagrams and equations, and modern art's sophisticated interpretations could only be rendered outside of the boundaries of realistic representation, modernist architecture in the 20<sup>th</sup> century broke with a static conception of ornamented surfaces to become an art of simple planes defining abstract spaces intended as kinetic experience.

C.I.A.M. held its first meeting in La Sarraz, Switzerland in 1928 and four other meetings by 1937 on topics ranging from the “minimum dwelling” to the “functional city.” The 1933 meeting resulted in the modernist manifesto known as the “Charter of Athens” that set out the goals of architectural urbanism based in four functions of the city: to provide a place to live, a place to work, a place for recreation and a place for circulation. European socialist overtones defined the rhetoric of this first wave of 20<sup>th</sup> century modernist architecture. Functionalism was not banal pragmatism; rather, it was an ambitious, collectivist, social agenda for solving the problems associated with urbanization during the interwar period.

Between 1937 and 1947 the war prevented such international gatherings and effectively limited communication between the now isolated groups of modernist architects. However, avant-garde architecture continued to develop during this period and at C.I.A.M. 6 held at Bridgewater, England in 1947—a meeting that focused on “Reconstruction of the Cities”—it was agreed that a retrospective of the period was necessary. The resulting volume, *A Decade of New Architecture* edited by Sigfried Giedion, provided the opportunity to not only show the broad development and expanding impact of modern architecture during this period, but also the continued relevance of C.I.A.M.’s original goals. The published reaffirmation of “The Aims of C.I.A.M.” were the guiding philosophy behind modernist architecture at the beginning of the 1950s:

To work for the creation of a physical environment that will satisfy man’s emotional and material needs and stimulate his spiritual growth. To achieve an environment of this quality, we must combine social idealism, scientific planning and the fullest use of available building techniques. In so doing we must enlarge and enrich the aesthetic language of architecture in order to provide a contemporary means whereby people’s emotional needs can find expression in the design of their environment. We believe that thus a more balanced life can be produced for the individual and for the community.<sup>2</sup>

In the first major book review published in *Landscape* dealing with architecture, Jackson, writing under the pseudonym H.G. West, questioned the altruistic goals of modern architecture as illustrated by the book’s collected photographs and descriptions of projects from around the world:

Here are the familiar handsome photographs of prosperous one family dwellings in the suburbs of Zurich and Paris and New York and London; elegantly self-conscious, designed (as Giedion says of Neutra's California houses) "for free and easy clients without prejudices" but presumably with bank-accounts and servants. Here we see space and air and light treated as the luxuries they still are to most of the earth's inhabitant's; here is an art displaying its choicest wares

almost exclusively for the rich, and offering to the poorer classes little more than rows of small identical dwellings and apartment houses like florid chicken coops, as Mencken once accurately described them. Here are the dazzling factories, the antiseptic community settlements, the intellectualized churches and schools and monuments that constitute the last wave of modernism. Through them all runs one overriding obsession; not a desire to improve the lot of Man but a desire to create pure geometrical forms, an autonomous art of cubes and cylinders and two dimensional planes; independent of the past, independent of the earth and of life, but extraordinarily beautiful nevertheless.<sup>3</sup>

Notably, in the autumn of 1952 Jackson was already proposing that modernist architecture was in a late period of development as evidenced by the need to restate the guiding principals of the faith—most importantly that rational functionalism was the key to solving the urgent problems of the age. While some Americans were just becoming familiar with the “new” forms of post war architecture, Jackson had been following its development in Europe since his college days in the 1920s. Despite the laudable goals of the modern movement, Jackson suggested the reality was quite different. By the early 1950s the brand of architectural modernism that was developing in the United States was increasingly driven by the postwar building boom and consumer culture. A Fordist model of assembly line construction and a conservative social climate in the U.S. meant architectural modernism was largely divorced from its professed (though rarely realized) social agenda. Jackson believed the abstract social and aesthetic doctrines of modernism would always be frustrated by the chaotic realities of everyday life: “...and all the while there enters through the back door of the modern dwelling a troop of interior decorators, landscape architects, home consultants, psychologists, appliance and television salesmen, each of them bent on making the modern home as complex and irrational and individual as possible.”<sup>4</sup>

The following year, writing again as H.G. West in a review of *Built in the U.S.A.*, a retrospective produced by the Museum of Modern Art and edited by Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Arthur Drexler, Jackson sees a certain "fanatic rationalism" carried to its "logical conclusion", a late period of modernism indicative of the end of the style. He points to a loss of interest in the interior plan and an obsession with abstract uninterrupted space: "Just as certain very advanced developments in music produce compositions which cannot be played, this rationalistic Modernism will doubtless eventually produce designs too ethereal, too space conscious, to leave the drafting board."<sup>5</sup>

Throughout his critique, Jackson frames the argument from his cultural landscape perspective—that context matters, that the specificity of place is important: "By far the greatest number of these buildings have not been obliged to adapt themselves to their immediate surroundings...they are not concerned with street alignment, traffic flow or the existing character of a neighborhood."<sup>6</sup>

In a book that is intended to illustrate the current building traditions of the period, Jackson argues that it is more concerned with the "Modern" than it is with the truly contemporary landscape that is developing in the U.S.: "the mass produced community of one family residences, the monotype windowless factory, the whole series of drive-in and highway enterprises...*Built in the U.S.A.* contains not one specimen of these new vernacular forms."<sup>7</sup>

Later that year in an editorial written on the occasion of Walter Gropius' 70th birthday titled "Hail and Farewell", Jackson evaluates Gropius' work and contributions to architecture while continuing his assessment of the larger project of modernism.



Gropius, he suggests, has been “important” and a “healthy influence” in American architecture; however, Jackson proposes that the influence of the Bauhaus is reaching its end. Jackson’s “hailing” of Gropius’ achievements quickly devolves into a thinly veiled rant as he proceeds to suggest that the demise of the modern ideal would be due to a blind rejection of both meaning and context—two forces that have historically shaped the built environment:

The virtues of that philosophy of architecture usually identified with the Bauhaus, so novel and so unwelcome a generation ago, are by now almost universally accepted. We have learned to discard meaningless ornament and academic design, we have learned to use new techniques and materials. Our eyes have been opened to a new (or at least a neglected) kind of beauty, and a new kind of architecture as well as a new kind of architect has evolved, both well suited to the problems of our times.<sup>8</sup>

Jackson contrasts this “new kind of architect” with the “average American architect,” responsible for the preponderance of building projects in the United States, who still sees his art as representative of some message or emotion, however commercial:

They are required [through their buildings] to sell goods, to establish social position, to inspire confidence, to impress or elevate or excite. The result is a carnival of extravagant taste, an architectural idiom partaking more of advertising or theater or landscaping than of “pure space arrangement and the balance of tense contrary forces.”<sup>9</sup>

In an observation that anticipates Venturi and Scott-Brown, Jackson here calls attention to how the symbolic, representational language of architecture has been rejected by modernist architects while continuing to inform the commercial vernacular architecture present in the majority of building projects.

Continuing, he notes the propensity of modernist design to reject the immediate environment:

Not only does the style see little virtue in using local materials and forms, it sees little virtue in trying to 'blend' with its surroundings. We have ceased to be shocked by the spectacle of an elegant Gropius or Mies van der Rohe house of gleaming plate glass and smooth white wall rising in the midst of a New England woodlot or among XIX Century city residences; we have learned that the success of a Bauhaus design is to be judged independent of its setting.<sup>10</sup>

Bemoaning this independence from setting—from the landscape—was the heart of Jackson's critique and he would return to this theme repeatedly. In "The Almost Perfect Town," Jackson's sarcastic look at how the forces of modernization are changing rural America and small towns, he highlights the prevailing view of the day that argues for forgetting the past and following any trend that points to the future. Downtowns, he facetiously remarks, with their elaborately ornamented buildings are old fashioned and devoid of the "modern commercial graces of chromium and black glass."<sup>11</sup> Speaking in the voice of a concerned businessman in the town he quips, "if we want to get ahead, the best thing to do is break with our own past, become as independent as possible of our immediate environment and at the same time become almost completely dependent for our well-being on some remote outside resource."<sup>12</sup>

Jackson's opinion pieces on architectural modernism were mostly written in the early years of the magazine, up to the mid-1950s. His criticism was unique, not because he was the only individual questioning the direction of modern architecture (although notably rare at that time), but because his critical perspective was informed by a broader social and historical context.

When a scathing editorial against the International Style was published in *House Beautiful* in April of 1953, Jackson applauded the "courage" of the popular magazine to take on mainstream modernism, but did not join the ultimate gist of the argument that European modernism did not meet the convenience of the American housewife.<sup>13</sup>

Ironically, Jackson did not believe that architectural criticism from the general public that was not “on a serious esthetic plane” should guide architectural debate: “We deplore the tendency to turn over complex fields of endeavor to the mercies of the down-to-earth layman who knows how to think only in terms of short-range efficiency.”<sup>14</sup> For Jackson, an appreciation for the everyday environment did not translate into accepting the pronouncements of a new set of tastemakers speaking on behalf of an “American Way of Life” based in consumerism. Although he would often criticize designers and planners, he still believed that their efforts to improve the environment were valid and well meaning, if insufficiently grounded in contextual understanding.

In the Winter 1954-55 issue, Jackson published an article by Henry Hope Reed, a strident anti-modernist and proponent for a return to the discipline of classical architecture.<sup>15</sup> However, Jackson followed Reed’s diatribe against modernist architecture with a rebuttal that argued against the over-emphasis Reed placed on issues of style over contextual understanding.<sup>16</sup> In the article Reed reexamines a major work of architectural criticism from 1914 by Geoffrey Scott, *The Architecture of Humanism: A Study in the History of Taste*, and finds it to be a reliable guide to the problems of modern architecture:

Taste for an architecture which has roots in the past, which welcomes back painting, sculpture, and the decorative arts, and which would serve as a heroic reminder that our civilization is gloriously anthropomorphic, would do more to preserve our American landscape than would any other present campaign, for it would know *what* to preserve.<sup>17</sup>

Jackson, on the other hand, argues against Reed’s (and Scott’s) simplistic lumping together of classical architectural styles and his assertion that they represent a

lost coherence of form that developed through a gradual refinement of taste. Rather than focusing on taste, Jackson's reading of architectural styles was more attuned to the historical and sociological context of their genesis. For Jackson, styles did not develop in a vacuum of architectural purity and universal taste; rather, architecture was always reflective of the time and place, in spite of aesthetic intentions. While Jackson rarely defended modernist architecture, he would not support a critique that suffered from a similar simplistic over-emphasis on formal issues over social context.

### ***The Heart of the City***

The 1950s saw the field of planning becoming increasingly independent as an entity outside of the influences of architecture and landscape architecture from which the profession was born during the City Beautiful formalism of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The original dictates of the C.I.A.M. "Charter of Athens" and its basis in the "four functions of the city" were too simplistic and concerned with a machine aesthetic to stand up to the critical scrutiny of social commentators in the years to come. However, at the beginning of the 1950s many architects unapologetically considered themselves urban designers and planners, and believed the city could still be a canvas for a totalizing vision of the future.

Again, through the venue of the Book Review section of *Landscape*, Jackson used a collection of essays by C.I.A.M. members entitled *The Heart of the City*<sup>18</sup> to extend his critique of the architectural profession and modernist urban design:

The contributions to the symposium thus vary considerably in their point of view—once the desirability of planning new centers for free-standing slabs of Bauhaus architecture has been agreed upon....Le Corbusier's effusions are almost embarrassingly silly, and Giedion's attempt to provide a historical

resume of the function of the civic center through the ages is tendentious and ill-informed. In general, the C.I.A.M. appears to be somewhat out of its element when it tackles city planning. What in essence this book attempts to do is justify large and imposing settings for monolithic constructions, and at the moment urbanism is a convenient and popular way of doing that.<sup>19</sup>

But it was not the elite architectural establishment that was actually shaping the American landscape and Jackson did not withhold his disdain for local planning authorities that, steeped in technocratic professionalism, just as enthusiastically approached the city as a place to be totally rationalized and ordered. One of his earliest statements on the landscape resulting from “expert planning” was in his introductory “Notes and Comments” to the Spring 1954 issue. In a section called “Two Street Scenes” he compares two approaches to Main Street. The first street has been transformed by a central planning authority according to the best expert advice, removing rows of trees and reducing sidewalks to accommodate additional lanes of traffic. While the property owners and the public are skeptical, “traffic experts and safety engineers and trucking executives and city officials come from far and wide to see how Main Street has been improved.”<sup>20</sup> In a section that anticipates Jane Jacobs, Jackson mourns what has been lost:

The trees are gone, the benches where there were street car stops are gone. City ordinances, widely approved at the time, have forbidden any beggars or musicians or vendors or shoeshine boys or pushcarts from appearing in the downtown area....Main Street, within the memory of man, was once the center of the city. Transformed and streamlined to satisfy special interests, it has now destroyed most of the city’s communal outdoor life, and frightened away the remainder.<sup>21</sup>

In comparison, the older Main Street is “hopelessly congested” and an embarrassment to some citizens. Over the next five paragraphs Jackson describes the vibrant communal order that results from such congestion and that occurs in and around

this unimproved Main Street—an irrational street life that somehow seems antithetical to good planning. In the end, Jackson suggests that planning and street life need not be in conflict:

Yet some of this color and vitality could be introduced to many other American cities; it is merely a matter of establishing (or reestablishing) the principle that streets are not intended solely for motor traffic but were made for any and every kind of outdoor group activity, from children's games to funeral processions and endless loitering in the sun.<sup>22</sup>

For Jackson the street is for everyday life. When other critics and professionals began to recognize the dull sameness and serious social deficiencies of cities designed to accommodate the automobile and the new god of efficiency, they would not see the problem as such a simple matter. Many of these mid-century critics had not lost faith in the concept of planning. Instead they believed that the hubris was in ignoring human needs and responses to the environment. Anthropology and sociology in the 1950s were producing detailed research into human behavior. In order for planning to address its gaps of judgment, many planners suggested it needed to be more scientific.

In October 1958, a group of designers, planners and critics of the American built environment gathered at the University of Pennsylvania for a conference that would set the stage for debates over the future of the city in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The conference on “Urban Design Criticism” drew a notable list of attendees including Lewis Mumford, Ian McHarg, Louis Kahn, Catherine Bauer, Jane Jacobs, Kevin Lynch, Grady Clay and I.M. Pei, and Penn faculty, which included Herbert Gans who had recently been awarded the school's first doctorate in city planning. Also in attendance was J.B. Jackson who had been writing critically on the modern city in *Landscape* throughout the 50s and now found himself among sympathetic colleagues.

The Rockefeller Foundation, whose larger mission since the early fifties had been to expand the intellectual and practical basis of urban design, sponsored the conference. Spurred on by the failures of the nascent field of urban design to meet the needs of a rapidly changing urban landscape, the Foundation sponsored numerous research and publishing projects that would become classics texts of the era: Lynch's *The Image of the City* (1960), Jacobs' *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961), Christopher Tunnard and Boris Pushkarev's *Man-Made America: Chaos or Control?* (1963), E.A. Gutkind's *International History of City Development* (1964), Ian Nairn's *The American Landscape: A Critical View* (1965) and Edmund Bacon's *The Design of Cities* (1967), as well as funding Grady Clay, Ian McHarg, Gordon Cullen, and Christopher Alexander for various projects and travel.

Grady Clay has said "The conference incited all of us into publications of every sort; and was a career turning-point for many."<sup>23</sup> One of those publications was J.B. Jackson's *Landscape*. Christopher Tunnard introduced Clay (who was the Real Estate Editor for the Louisville Courier Journal before becoming the editor of *Landscape Architecture* in 1960) to Jackson's magazine where he found "a unique voice for ideas and ideals which find too little expression elsewhere."<sup>24</sup> Clay developed a collegial relationship with Jackson and his journal and began to submit articles for publication in the late 50s around the time of the conference. Five of the conference participants had, or would publish in *Landscape* and most of the others—as evidenced by the letters submitted on the occasion of *Landscape*'s 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary issue—professed to be impressed and influenced by its content.<sup>25</sup>

In the Spring 1959 issue of *Landscape*, just months after the conference, Jackson printed “A Walk Around the Block,” by Kevin Lynch based on his environmental perception research conducted at MIT and funded by the Rockefeller Foundation.<sup>26</sup> A year later, Lynch’s *The Image of City* would implicitly critique the over-confident assertions of modernist planning by demonstrating how little was actually known about how people perceive their environments.<sup>27</sup> The following year, in what is often credited as the clarion call of post-modernism, Jane Jacobs’ *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* would explicitly critique modernist planning in ways that would seem familiar to anyone who had been reading J.B. Jackson’s editorials and book reviews in *Landscape* over the previous ten years.<sup>28</sup> While Jackson never proclaimed a call to action like Jacobs, or provided prescriptive alternatives like her and many who followed her, he had been arguing since 1951 that a more profound understanding of how humans relate to their environment must inform design and planning practice.

Jackson’s work would now take place in the context of a larger questioning of priorities and methods. In “Essential Architecture,” an essay from the Spring 1961 issue, Jackson describes architecture’s late 19<sup>th</sup> century fascination with primitive dwellings and proposes the value of a similar return to origins for mid-20<sup>th</sup> century architecture: “And when an art form is threatened by materialism from without and over-intellectualism from within, it can do no better than to set out to rediscover the timeless human elements which are basic to it.”<sup>29</sup> The common theme of Jackson’s reflections on ancient shelters, peasant villages and native dwellings was their fitness with the environment, as well as the distinct social functions of interior space. Jackson here argues for mid-century architecture to expand its frame of reference beyond its



limited professional discourse on form and space and “the limits of western metropolitan capitalism”. Jackson’s pragmatism is coupled with a belief that understanding vernacular traditions can be a source of meaning and new, inspiring ideas:

It is, however, when we compare the recent history of architecture with that of other arts that its shortcomings are most apparent. Painting and sculpture have been repeatedly inspired by the art of primitive peoples; serious music has incorporated elements from folk music and jazz and has explored the use of prehistoric instruments. Drama and poetry have not hesitated to draw on myth and legend from every quarter of the globe, and, despite the obstacles of language, have adopted many exotic forms; and in the last half century all art has been immensely stimulated and enriched by explorations of the subconscious.<sup>30</sup>

Jackson suggests the true meaning of *dwelling* can be better understood through explorations of how different human cultures have used, and especially experienced their most essential shelters. Jackson repeats his contention from his earliest essays that the family dwelling is the basic unit for understanding the landscape: “what we require of the natural or social environment depends first of all on what the dwelling provides.”<sup>31</sup>

As illustrated by the abundance of critical texts coming out in the early 1960s, Jackson was no longer the singular critical voice for an architecture and urbanism grounded in realism and he increasingly relied on sympathetic professionals to police their own professional discourse. It begins in “Essential Architecture” with a recognition that some architects were on the right track. He makes a point of singling out Louis Kahn as pioneering “in the direction of a new architecture.”<sup>32</sup>

## Complexities and Contradictions

I like elements which are hybrid rather than ‘pure’, compromised rather than ‘clean’, distorted rather than ‘straight-forward’, ambiguous rather than ‘articulated’, perverse as well as impersonal, boring as well as ‘interesting’, conventional rather than ‘designed’, accommodating rather than excluding, redundant rather than simple, vestigial as well as innovating, inconsistent and equivocal rather than direct and clear. I am for messy vitality over obvious unity.

Robert Venturi, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*

“Architecture is in a bad way.” This was not an unusual perspective in the pages of *Landscape* by the autumn of 1962; however, in this case the messengers were quite different. Rather than yet another cleverly worded dressing down of the theoretical wing of the architecture profession by J.B. Jackson, or the sometimes less convincing complaints of more pedestrian writers, this challenge was coming from a young group of architects concerned with the direction of their profession. Donlyn Lyndon, Charles Moore, Patrick Quinn and Sim van Der Ryn were Berkeley faculty and colleagues invited by Jackson to write a piece expressing their shared frustrations with the profession. Reflecting back on his career in the spring of 2008, Donlyn Lyndon (the founder and editor of *Places* Journal since 1983) acknowledged the importance of Jackson, *Landscape* magazine and this early opportunity to make an argument for the importance of places:

But the story tonight goes back still farther to the library in McCormick Hall at Princeton University, in the late nineteen fifties, where Charles Moore, Bill Turnbull and I first discovered and reveled in J.B. Jackson’s great journal *Landscape*. With its cogent writing, encompassing view and unexpected subjects it struck out into new territory; an inquiry that resonated with our own eagerness for making sense of the everyday and available, as well as the momentous and remote. Later, on one of his early visits to Berkeley, Jackson suggested to a group of us that we write a manifesto of sorts. “Toward Making Places”, published in the autumn of 1962 was our response. Charles Moore, Patrick Quinn, Sim Van der Ryn and I each wrote a short piece, based on our discussions, then brought them together under the title, with an injunction that:

“The architect’s task is more than the manipulation of materials and the molding of space; it is the definition and possession of place”.<sup>33</sup>

With that opening salvo they proceeded to advance four proposals that made an argument for a more nuanced, place-specific understanding of physical context and human needs:

ONE EQUALS TWO PLUS. When we make one building we are remaking others and permanently modifying the urban and natural landscape.

A BUILDING SELECTS: It should admit those portions of the specific environment which contribute to the user’s ordered image of the universe.

THE SPECIFIC COMES FIRST: A building is in a specific place to which it must specifically respond. Generalized forms must grow out of a thorough understanding of the particular place, activities, techniques of building and systems of service. We must start not with the geometry but with the user. Therefore.....

THE END IS NOT IN SIGHT: Until we learn to understand the user’s needs and desires, we cannot know what shape our world should take.<sup>34</sup>

The authors of this manifesto had connections to one another that went further back than Berkeley. They had all been in some way a part of the great 20<sup>th</sup> century architect Louis Kahn’s circle of influence. The year before these young architects wrote their manifesto, Kahn submitted a short, somewhat cryptic, note of encouragement to *Landscape* magazine on the occasion of its tenth anniversary issue:

*Landscape* makes us conscious of relatives even in the awkwardness of new beginnings in our way of life. It does not demand beauty but new natural laws from which beauty may emerge. *Landscape*, through its thoughtful selection of subjects, stimulates dedication in the professions concerned about environment.<sup>35</sup>

Kahn was decidedly a modernist; however, his brand of modernism was distinct from the austerity of the International Style. Kahn was a philosopher-architect, not a strict functionalist. He did not shun history’s lessons and constantly strove for a timeless way

of building. Most importantly, Kahn believed that architecture should embrace meaning (all but ignored in an era of rational functionalism) and that each building, or room, or detail should be queried for what he called its “existence will”. Famously, he insisted his students ask a brick *what it wanted to be*, a form of inquiry he would extend from the smallest detail to the largest city. A school, for example, is not just a collection of rooms off a corridor. Kahn would begin by asking what is the meaning of “school” and allowing the form to develop as a circumstance of that inquiry. His projects were conceptually grounded in their place. For Kahn and his followers, the clarity of the idea was paramount: form followed concept.

The short note Kahn wrote to *Landscape* suggested an appreciation for Jackson’s ability to find beauty and meaning in unexpected places—places many people might describe as ugly or backward or dilapidated or prosaic or irrelevant, both Jackson and Kahn found inspiring and worthy of further understanding. We cannot know what specifically Kahn found interesting in the pages of *Landscape* over its first ten years; however, the magazine was decidedly a departure from the professional architectural journals that were deeply insular in their critical outlook. What other journal or magazine of the time would juxtapose in the same issue so many seemingly disparate subjects as *Landscape*? While the readership of the magazine was as varied as the subject matter, those who subscribed all must have appreciated the medley of topics covered outside of the normal disciplinary apparatus of professional journals.

A few years earlier in 1959, Louis Kahn gave an address in Otterlo, the Netherlands, to what was to be the last meeting of C.I.A.M.<sup>36</sup> Since 1953, a group of young dissenters who called themselves Team X had been agitating for change and a

loosening of the functionalist strictures of first wave modernism. Kahn was not a member of that primarily European group, but his address did support their mission to expand the debate in architecture. In some respects he was a spiritual father to Team X's quest for "a hierarchy of human associations which should replace the functional hierarchy of the Charte d'Athenes"<sup>37</sup> in much the same way he was a mentor to Moore, Lyndon, van Der Ryn and Quinn.

"Toward Making Places" argued for what might be described as a neo-realist position: "...we have to ask, all over again, questions of what constitutes meaning and what is capable of being abstracted from that (what is real?) and what constitutes somewhere."<sup>38</sup> Here the neo-realist trends of the 50s and 60s in art and literature find a voice in architecture: "...our troubles start from too much that is general and too little that is specific, too much that is expression and too little that is response, too much that is invention and too little that is discovery."<sup>39</sup>

In a section that is remarkable for its prescient discussion of landscape processes (both ecological and cultural) that should shape architecture, Donlyn Lyndon argues:

The existing structure of the land is a result of unseen natural process operating over a long period of time. We must respect that structure and work to have our constructions be a continuation of that process, letting the present landscape play an evident role in the determination of suitable form for each place, respecting the impact any structures have on the land. Similarly, the existing structure of a community is a result of many, often conflicting, processes, and is analogous to organic growth. Again, what we do should be a part of an interacting process which includes and respects what has been done, what there is to do, and what there could be to do.<sup>40</sup>

"Toward Making Places" is an enigmatic statement of fealty to a landscape perspective from which to practice architecture. It calls for an objective new rationalism that begins with the particular qualities of place and people. It is also

symptomatic of a broadly unsettled architectural community struggling with its modernist past in the context of 1960s social and academic debates. Mapping the variety of architectural theories and visionary ideas advanced throughout the 1960s is a challenging intellectual exercise and “Toward Making Places” shares only tangential connections to many of these movements. However, the article is a harbinger of an increasingly common belief in the need for more inputs into the design process. This belief would be manifest as a structuralist discourse in architecture that focused on typologies, symbologies, social scientific methods and technological utopianism—all of which worked toward amending the universalizing, formalist and functionalist excesses of the previous regime. Notably, many of these alternatives found inspiration, or information, in the landscape context.

While these new movements worked against an earlier, orthodox architectural modernism, they were perspectives grounded in an essential positivism that was still essentially modern. The belief was that complexity could be understood through methodical analysis as the basis for a more effective construction of order. The residual guilt over the International Style led many architects down paths of scientific inquiry in the quest for better understanding human needs or environmental factors. Others returned to the lessons of history, not as a study in stylistic rules but in a search for essential principles. At one extreme a primitivist strain developed that celebrated the conspicuous absence of architects and the lessons of folk vernacular building traditions. Bernard Rudofsky's MOMA exhibition and book from 1964 *Architecture Without Architects* emphasizes the adaptability of unpedigreed architecture to the local and regional landscape.<sup>41</sup>

The critical discourse of architecture came to a head in 1966 with the publication of Robert Venturi's *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*.<sup>42</sup> Where Jane Jacob's *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* was a sociological critique of "Radiant Garden City Beautiful" theories of urban planning and design,<sup>43</sup> *Complexity and Contradiction* was primarily an aesthetic attack on "orthodox modernism" delivered with Venturi's now famous adage "less is a bore".<sup>44</sup> Both texts were grounded in concepts of complexity that were developing in the sciences and that provided a lens through which to find order out of misperceived chaos. Venturi, another important player in the critique of modernism who was mentored by Louis Kahn in the 1950s, was more interested in the complexities discussed in Gestalt psychology, New Criticism and Pop Art as a rationale for questioning utopian modernism.<sup>45</sup>

In *Complexity and Contradiction*, Venturi questioned the establishment view that Main Street and the highway strip were becoming visual blights on the American landscape, instead arguing that Main Street was "almost alright." Commenting on Peter Blake's collection of comparative photographs in the book *God's Own Junkyard: The Planned Deterioration of America's Landscape*, Venturi found many of the so-called negative views to be quite good and that "the seemingly chaotic juxtaposition of honky-tonk elements express an intriguing kind of vitality and validity."<sup>46</sup> For Venturi, the visual complexity found in the new American landscape must be studied and understood as the basis for architecture's continued evolution: "It is perhaps from the everyday landscape, vulgar and disdained, that we can draw the complex and contradictory order that is valid and vital for our architecture as an urbanistic whole."<sup>47</sup>

While Venturi never submitted to *Landscape*, his partner and collaborator, the architect Denise Scott Brown, became friends with J.B. Jackson in the 1960s and occasionally contributed to the magazine. In 1967, when she married Robert Venturi, Scott Brown introduced him to J.B. Jackson and the three of them became friends with a common interest in everyday landscapes.<sup>48</sup>

*Complexity and Contradiction* began a line of reasoning that was supplemented by Venturi and Scott Brown's collaborations and teaching over the course of the late 1960s, eventually finding its full realization in 1972's *Learning from Las Vegas*. In that book, co-authored by the couple along with Steven Izenour, the authors suggest:

Learning from the existing landscape is a way of being revolutionary for an architect. Not the obvious way, which is to tear down Paris and begin again, as Le Corbusier suggested in the 1920s, but another, more tolerant way; that is, to question how we look at things.<sup>49</sup>

Denise Scott Brown has suggested that J.B. Jackson was influential to both her and Venturi, but not in the direct way one might assume considering their similar focus on landscape. For example, one of Jackson's most important essays, "Other Directed Houses" pre-dated *Learning From Las Vegas* by sixteen years and presented a similar argument in its call for understanding America's new road-oriented landscapes that were developing in response to the dominance of, and movement of, automobile culture. But the authors discovered the article after their book was published and wrote Jackson a letter in which they confessed: "Years before we wrote, you wrote, and you wrote better."<sup>50</sup>

However, Jackson did not share their quest to discover the hidden order inherent in complexity or the pop art semiotics of "decorated sheds." He was not motivated by the professional requirement to shape new environments, so he could remain always the



critic who observed and challenged. Jackson had the luxury to appreciate the jumbled visual discord of the changing American landscape, only defending it as worthy of scholarly reflection. For most professional architects, the highway strip and the suburbs were to be excoriated or completely ignored. For Venturi and Scott Brown, they were source material for a new direction in architecture. For Jackson these aberrations were first to be understood as vernacular expression—a culture placing its values on display.

### **Hybrid Architectures**

While a more pervasive interest in the rich cultural context of vernacular architecture among scholars of the built environment gained momentum throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s, other architects were challenged by a new ecological awareness that expanded the working definition of landscape well beyond its early 20<sup>th</sup> century purpose as green background. As landscape became associated with complex natural systems and the concept of ecological balance, some architects explored new metaphors for architecture. In conjunction with a mid-century technological utopianism that was putting its faith in the potential of computers to solve complex problems, an experimental hybridity infused proposals for a new architecture that was responsive, adaptive, evolutionary. If vernacular landscapes could be source material for tapping into something true about regional or national cultures and their artifacts, then ecological landscapes might point toward a future where architecture operated more like nature.

Some of these designs were visionary and displayed a playful eccentricity that fit in well with the free flow of ideas of the late 1960s; but many proposals quickly

seemed as dated as the era's fashions, even though their influence would continue to resurface in the decades to come. Exemplars of a popular fascination with cybernetics were evident in the "Plug-in City" proposals of Peter Cook and Archigram, and the Japanese "Metabolist" movement's futurist belief that architecture and the city could become flexible and adaptive environments. The implied belief in the potential to design complex, self-regulating systems that would evolve into intelligent environments was illustrated with a science fiction/pop art graphic sensibility that reinforced its un-built future-orientation and its counter-cultural credibility.

In the last issues of *Landscape* magazine edited by J.B. Jackson in 1967 and 1968, two opposing points of view were featured that illustrated the tension between the hyper-rational techno-utopianism that was reaching an apex with the space program's ultimate goal of a moon landing only months away, and the desire for a renewed humanism that accepted complexity as inspiring, but ultimately unknowable.

"Soft Architecture" is what the physician, family therapist and pioneer of interactive "man-machine" systems Warren M. Brodey termed the "design of intelligent environments" in the Autumn 1967 issue of *Landscape*.<sup>51</sup> Building on the emerging field of cybernetics and the increasing sophistication of computer technologies being used by the government, the military, NASA and academic institutions like MIT, Brodey proposed that architecture could be designed as "a complex self-organizing evolutionary environment," which would include a "complex network of interconnected feedback loops."<sup>52</sup> Most of Brodey's proposals for testing the potential of such systems were in the design of intelligent building systems. As a pediatrician, he gave the example of a school environment that might physically change in response to the

behavioral cues of children: walls that selectively filtered sound, changes in color, light, air temperature or movement.

In response to Brodey's article, Sybil Moholy-Nagy, the architectural historian and widow of the Bauhaus artist László Moholy-Nagy, wrote a rebuttal entitled "On the Environmental Brink" for the Spring 1968 issue of *Landscape*—Jackson's last as editor.<sup>53</sup> Not only was her contribution a rejection of the points made in Brodey's piece, but also an attack on the "fascist" overtones and "destructive" potential of allowing computers to control our lives and architecture to become an algorithmic exercise in inputs and outputs where all factors can be anticipated:

With the battle cry of militant altruism: A New World for the Year Two Thousand! the various system and sub-system makers of a post-architectural perfect environment are united in the belief that those unborn grandchildren of theirs will gratefully accept what granddaddy dreamt up back in the 1960s.<sup>54</sup>

Despite the tremendous variety of radical proposals in the 1960s for how to address the unrealized promise of mid-century architecture and urbanism—proposals that spanned the spectrum from anti-modernist historicism, to the structuralist search for culturally relevant signifiers, to computer-controlled futurist utopias—they were all essentially grounded in the progressive and rational agendas of the modern era that had begun with the Renaissance. In these scenarios and given enough information, environmental problems could be solved. However, as the progressive and technological positivism behind these various movements faced serious challenges from the postmodern malaise of the 1970s and 1980s, many of these early visionary attempts to consider architecture from the perspective of natural metaphors of change and evolution waned and became the peripheral concern of a handful of enthusiasts. For those designers, architecture could still become a totally controlled environment, but

this was the antithesis of the landscape idea. The search for natural or ecological metaphors for architecture was as problematic as the leaps of logic made by the social Darwinists who attempted to apply evolutionary principles to human groups. Metaphors were the problem. Landscape had become a significant part of architectural discourse by the 1970s; however its real complexities remained elusive, only to be developed in the decades to follow.

### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Sigfried Giedion, *Space, Time and Architecture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1941).
- <sup>2</sup> Sigfried Giedion, ed., *A Decade of New Architecture* (Zurich: Editions Girsberger, 1951), 17.
- <sup>3</sup> H.G. West [J.B. Jackson], review of *A Decade of New Architecture*, edited by Sigfried Giedion, *Landscape: Magazine of Human Geography* 2, No. 2 (Autumn 1952), 38.
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.
- <sup>5</sup> H.G. West [J.B. Jackson], review of *Built in U.S.A.*, edited by Henry Russell Hitchcock and Arthur Drexler, *Landscape: Magazine of Human Geography* 3, No. 1 (Summer 1953), 30.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>8</sup> J.B. Jackson, "Notes and Comments: Hail and Farewell," *Landscape: Magazine of Human Geography* 3, No.2 (Winter 1953-54), 5.
- <sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 5-6.
- <sup>11</sup> J.B. Jackson, "The Almost Perfect Town," *Landscape: Human Geography of the Southwest* 2, No.1 (Spring 1952), 4.
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 7. It is important to remember that this was the 1950s and small towns were beginning their long decline as many tried and failed to compete with larger cities and especially the gleaming new suburbs. It was common practice to clad 19th century Main Street commercial architecture in plane, unadorned sheet metal in an effort to modernize and compete with the allure of shopping malls and the highway strip.
- <sup>13</sup> Elizabeth Gordon, the editor-in-chief of the popular magazine *House Beautiful*, authored the controversial editorial "The Threat to the Next America" (April 1953), which attacked the International Style as an un-American, outside influence that should be rejected in favor of a home grown, "organic" modern architecture. Jackson quickly acknowledged this editorial stance in J.B. Jackson, "Notes and Comments: Comes the Revolution?," *Landscape: Magazine of Human Geography* 3, no. 1. (Summer 1953). For a detailed discussion of *House Beautiful's* editorial policy towards modernism,

especially with regard to modern landscape architecture, see Dianne Harris, “Making Your Private World: Modern Landscape Architecture and *House Beautiful*, 1945-1965,” in *The Architecture of Landscape, 1940-1960*, edited by Marc Treib, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002.

<sup>14</sup> J.B. Jackson, “Notes and Comments: Comes the Revolution?,” *Landscape: Magazine of Human Geography* 3, no. 1. (Summer 1953), 5.

<sup>15</sup> Henry Hope Reed, Jr., “The Architecture of Humanism,” *Landscape: Magazine of Human Geography* 4, No. 2 (Winter 1954-1955), 16-21.

<sup>16</sup> H.G. West [J.B. Jackson], “And Another Point of View...,” *Landscape: Magazine of Human Geography* 4, No. 2 (Winter 1954-1955), 20-24.

<sup>17</sup> Henry Hope Reed, Jr., “The Architecture of Humanism,” *Landscape: Magazine of Human Geography* 4, No. 2 (Winter 1954-1955), 21.

<sup>18</sup> J. Tyrwhitt, J.L. Sert, E.N. Rogers, eds. *The Heart of the City* (New York: Pellegrini and Cudahy for C.I.A.M., 1952).

<sup>19</sup> P.A. Anson [J.B. Jackson], review of *The Heart of the City*, edited by J. Tyrwhitt, J.L. Sert, E.N. Rogers, *Landscape* 3, No.1 (Summer 1953), 31.

<sup>20</sup> J.B. Jackson, “Notes and Comments: Two Street Scenes,” *Landscape: Magazine of Human Geography* 3, No. 3 (Spring 1954), 4.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> As quoted in Peter L. Laurence, “The Death and Life of Urban Design: Jane Jacobs, The Rockefeller Foundation and the New Research in Urbanism, 1955-1965”, *Journal of Urban Design*, 11, no. 3.

<sup>24</sup> Grady Clay, “10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Letters,” *Landscape: Magazine of Human Geography* 10, no. 1. (Fall 1960), 3. Tunnard was the first major contributor from the design professions to submit to *Landscape* in the Spring 1952 and Spring 1954 issues.

<sup>25</sup> “10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Letters,” *Landscape: Magazine of Human Geography* 10, no. 1. (Fall 1960), 3-10.

<sup>26</sup> Kevin Lynch and Malcolm Rivkin, “A Walk Around the Block,” *Landscape: Magazine of Human Geography* 8, No. 3 (Spring 1959), 24-34. This is another example of *Landscape* publishing important early research years prior to the culminating book.

<sup>27</sup> Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Cambridge: Technology Press, 1960).

<sup>28</sup> Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961).

<sup>29</sup> J.B. Jackson, “Essential Architecture,” *Landscape* 10, No. 3 (Spring 1961), 30.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> Donlyn Lyndon, Unpublished remarks on the occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of *Places*, delivered May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2008 at Berkeley’s College of Environmental Design. Text provided by Donlyn Lyndon via email correspondence, June 4, 2008.

- <sup>34</sup> Donlyn Lyndon, Charles Moore, Patrick Quinn and Sim van Der Ryn, "Toward Making Places," *Landscape* 12, No. 1 (Autumn 1962), 31.
- <sup>35</sup> Louis Kahn, "10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Letters," *Landscape: Magazine of Human Geography* 10, no. 1. (Fall 1960), 4.
- <sup>36</sup> Louis Kahn, "Talk at the Conclusion of the Otterlo Congress," in Group for the Research of Social and Visual Inter-relationships and Oscar Newman, *New Frontiers in Architecture: CIAM '59 in Otterlo*, Documents of modern architecture, 1 (New York: Universe Books, 1961).
- <sup>37</sup> CIAM 9, Aix-en-Provence, 24 July 1953, quoted in Smithson, *Team 10 Primer*, 78.
- <sup>38</sup> Donlyn Lyndon, Charles Moore, Patrick Quinn and Sim van Der Ryn, "Toward Making Places," *Landscape* 12, No. 1 (Autumn 1962), 32.
- <sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.
- <sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.
- <sup>41</sup> Bernard Rudofsky, *Architecture Without Architects: A Short Introduction to Non-Pedigreed Architecture* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987).
- <sup>42</sup> Robert Venturi, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1966).
- <sup>43</sup> Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961).
- <sup>44</sup> Robert Venturi, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1966), 17.
- <sup>45</sup> Peter L. Laurence, "Contradictions and Complexities: Jane Jacobs's and Robert Venturi's Complexity Theories," *Journal of Architectural Education* 59, no.3 (2006): 49-60.
- <sup>46</sup> Robert Venturi, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1966), 104.
- <sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>48</sup> Denise Scott Brown, "Learning from Brinck," *Everyday America: Cultural Landscape Studies After J.B. Jackson* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).
- <sup>49</sup> Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown and Steven Izenour, *Learning from Las Vegas* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1972), 1.
- <sup>50</sup> Denise Scott Brown, "Learning from Brinck," *Everyday America: Cultural Landscape Studies After J.B. Jackson* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 55.
- <sup>51</sup> Warren M. Brodey, "Soft Architecture: The Design of Intelligent Environments," *Landscape*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (Autumn 1967): 8-12.
- <sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.
- <sup>53</sup> Sybil Moholy-Nagy, "On the Environmental Brink," *Landscape*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (Spring 1968): 3-6.
- <sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

## CHAPTER 5

### LANDSCAPE DIALECTICS: CHALLENGING MID-CENTURY LANDSCAPE

#### ARCHITECTURE

The tensions between the cultural landscape idea and the modernist pursuit of “total design” are most clearly apparent when examining the divergent rhetoric of *Landscape* magazine compared to the modernist transformation of the landscape architecture profession in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Of the professions closely associated with planning and designing the physical environment, landscape architecture is where modernist ideas were most literally translated in the garden, the park and the urban public space. Architecture’s modernist agenda was predicated on a view of landscape as an abstract nature in which to set “machines for living.” However, while accepting and being inspired by the fundamental tenets of modernist planning and design, landscape architects naturally believed that landscape was not just something to be preserved as a view from the picture window. Where the original modernist architects such as Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe, saw their architecture as ideally sited in a Virgilian pastoral landscape that represented the idea of nature, the first modernist landscape architects believed that landscape should be a humanized extension of architectural space—a “landscape for living.”

#### **Landscapes for Living**

Gardens, like houses, are built of space. Gardens are fragments of space set aside by the planes of terraces and walls and disciplined foliage. Until now we have defined too nicely the differences between that space which is roofed and within the house and that which is left outside and round the house. We did not see, until the architect threw down his walls, that the space of house and that of

garden are parts of a single organism: that the secret of unity lies in a unity of spatial sequences. The new vision has dissolved the ancient boundary between architecture and landscape architecture. The garden flows into and over the house: through loggias and courts and wide areas of clear glass, and over roofs and sun-rooms and canopied terraces. The house reaches out into the garden with walls and terrace enclosures that continue its rhythms and share its grace. The concordant factor is the new quality given to space.

Joseph Hudnut

In 1938, Christopher Tunnard's slim volume *Gardens in the Modern Landscape* was nothing short of a manifesto.<sup>1</sup> The profession of landscape architecture, Tunnard argued, had grown stale working in the modes of "formal" axial Beaux Arts garden design or "informal" picturesque park design. While experiments in avant-garde garden design had developed alongside an emerging modernist architecture in 1920s France and some of the Scandinavian countries, landscape architecture in Great Britain and the United States was largely an exercise in historical "academic eclecticism." Tunnard (1910-1979), a Canadian living in England, proposed that landscape architects in Great Britain and the United States recognize that the static traditionalism they were practicing was out of step with the times. In language borrowed heavily from architectural modernists, he called for a new design paradigm that embraced the 20<sup>th</sup> century realities of modern technology, modern art and the need for landscapes that functioned to meet social needs. However, if there was one phrase to summarize Tunnard's proposed reorientation of the profession, it was "outdoor space."

In contrast to architecture, landscape architecture has produced few book-length expositions of design philosophy throughout the history of the profession. Granted there have been numerous volumes dedicated to outlining a rational design process; however, there is a dearth of truly polemical narratives meant to fundamentally reorder the foundation of landscape architecture—the "why" of design. *Gardens in the Modern*



*Landscape* is conspicuous for its emphatic point of view. By the 1930s, landscape architecture had settled into a comfortably stable definition of professional goals and responsibilities; however, Tunnard in his book was ready to take a cursory look back to the history of garden design and then proceed to leave it all behind for an exploration of the new and modern.

Landscape architecture developed as a profession in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century out of an elite tradition of landscape gardening reaching back to antiquity. Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. was the instrumental figure in conceptualizing a profession that went beyond the boundaries of the garden and the private estate to encompass multiple scales of concern including planning for the future landscape development of regions.

Olmsted's practice operated at all of these scales, but his focus was mostly on the landscape scale of public parks and campuses. This American landscape tradition had its roots in 18<sup>th</sup> century English landscape parks for wealthy private landowners, but Olmsted proselytized for public parks for the masses that would provide healthful respite from the industrial city. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century a group of professional designers and planners began organizing and in 1899 they founded the American Society of Landscape Architects.

In the period between the end of the Civil War and the depression of the 1930s, the industrial revolution was placing great wealth in the hands of a few individuals. These families of the Gilded Age looked to traditional European models for how to establish their great estates. The park landscapes of the period could easily be mistaken as products of natural chance and while picturesque design was an appropriate context for their larger estate grounds, the style did not embody the brand of conspicuous

consumption often desired in the immediate vicinity of the house. As a result, by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century many professional landscape architects were employed in the design of estate gardens that took their inspiration from the neoclassical influences of 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century Italian and French Villas. This “Country Place Era” was characterized by an emphasis on formal bi-axial symmetry, horticultural complexity and historically/symbolically-derived ornamentation, all thoroughly grounded in a romantic sensibility. The first professional schools of landscape architecture developed during this period beginning with Harvard’s program in 1901. Faced with creating an institutionalized pedagogy for teaching what had previously been a master-apprentice vocation, the profession looked to the École des Beaux-Arts model of architectural education. With some obvious differences from architectural education in scope and technical content, the professional schools of landscape architecture focused on teaching the historic styles of garden design and park-making as training for the reproduction of these styles for park commissioners and wealthy estate owners. During the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the U.S., this traditionally grounded educational and professional establishment held sway; however, by the late 1930s a few voices began to emerge and question why landscape architecture was not responding to the modern forces that were transforming architecture and the arts.

Although Christopher Tunnard’s argument in 1938 was derivative of the contemporary vogue in art and architecture, he was one of the first to fully articulate a modernist agenda for landscape architecture. In *Gardens in the Modern Landscape*, he presents three characteristics of a new landscape architecture: it is to be functional, empathic and artistic. Of the three, functionalism was to be dominant and Tunnard’s

inspirational sources were the modern architects of the day—especially Le Corbusier and Adolf Loos. Functionalism in this sense was possible through design where the garden represents “a spirit of rationalism and through an aesthetic and practical ordering of its units provides a friendly and hospitable milieu for rest and recreation. It is in effect, the social conception of the garden.”<sup>2</sup> In this respect, Tunnard takes issue with how little modern architects consider the potential of landscape space and he finds it necessary to chide Le Corbusier for an essay in *Precisions* in which the great rationalist—describing his vision of a new town set in a meadow where twenty blocks of housing tower above grazing cattle—encourages what Tunnard regards as a dangerously romantic form of nature worship:

Grass will border the roads; nothing will be disturbed - neither the trees, the flowers, nor the flocks and herds. The dwellers in these houses, drawn hence through love of the life of the countryside will be able to see it maintained intact from their hanging gardens or from their ample windows. Their domestic lives will be set within a Virgilian dream.<sup>3</sup>

Tunnard however would prefer to see the meadows and woodlands transformed into useable outdoor spaces, often leveled and turned into recreation grounds. For Tunnard, the *total* landscape must be planned in accordance with human needs.<sup>4</sup>

In the second issue of *Landscape*, J.B. Jackson uses a review of Tunnard’s 1948 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of *Gardens in the Modern Landscape* as an opportunity to reflect on the landscape architect’s role in the modern built environment: “To him [Tunnard], and most socially minded architects and urbanists, the landscape is essentially a place for recreation and a source of energy. The contribution of the individual to its formation is reduced to almost nothing.” Jackson continues, “Only the most determined opponent of architectural modernism will find these socialized landscapes anything but spacious and

refreshing and eminently practical.”<sup>5</sup> Here Jackson makes a couple of points that will continue to inform his larger critique of the design and planning professions. First, he argues the landscape is increasingly seen through a functionalist lens that primarily attributes therapeutic, socially uplifting value to open space. Second, the centralized planning authority required to shape the larger landscape into a “garden” leaves little room for individual expression.

Christopher Tunnard’s shot across the bow of the firmly traditionalist British landscape architectural establishment was not well received and this may have influenced his decision to accept an invitation the following year to teach at Harvard’s Graduate School of Design (GSD). In particular, there were three graduate students that were making a strong case to bring Tunnard to Harvard: Garrett Eckbo, James Rose and Dan Kiley. They saw Tunnard as a kindred spirit in the effort to bring modernism into the still traditional landscape architecture program at the GSD.

In fact, in 1937 when Tunnard was writing the series of articles for *Architectural Review* that would become *Gardens in the Modern Landscape*, Eckbo and Rose were starting to publish an important series of essays in *Pencil Points* (later renamed *Progressive Architecture*) that would fundamentally change landscape architecture in the United States. Beginning with Eckbo’s “Small Gardens in the City: A Study in Their Design Possibilities” from September 1937, a modern emphasis was put on the volumetric experience of outdoor space:

Design shall be three-dimensional. People live in volumes, not planes. Things must be around us and over us, as well as under us. A pattern is only valuable if seen in elevation, or from above. A living area fails if it does not make one conscious of being within something, rather than on top of something. It must have scale, it must have enclosure, it must have a third dimension. Design shall be areal, not axial.<sup>6</sup>

Eckbo's piece is followed in subsequent issues by articles by James Rose: "Freedom in the Garden" (1938), "Plants Dictate Garden Forms" (1938), "Integration" (1938), "Articulate Form in Landscape Design" (1939), and "Why Not Try Science" (1939). Echoing Tunnard's critique of architectural modernism's romantic view of landscape, Rose asks:

Isn't it a little inconsistent, and perhaps unfair, to expect a Twentieth Century individual to step out of a stream-lined automobile, and then flounder through a Rousseauian wilderness until he reaches a "machine for living"? We cannot confine living, which is a process, to little segregated compartments that end at the edge of the nearest terrace where we are again asked to adjust ourselves to what, in its highest form, becomes an Eighteenth Century landscape painting.<sup>7</sup>

Soon afterward, in 1939 and 1940 Eckbo, Rose and Kiley co-authored three successive articles in *Architectural Record* that described the role of landscape design in the urban, rural and what they call the "primeval" (meaning wilderness) environment. In combination with Tunnard's book, this collection of essays articulated a surprisingly coherent philosophy for a new, modern landscape architecture.<sup>8</sup>

The years following these early polemics was a time of experimentation in landscape design, especially with the emergence of a particularly regional form of landscape modernism in California where the idea of living outdoors next to the pool and the barbeque was enthusiastically embraced by those who could afford such a lifestyle. However, the profession at large and most of the schools were still firmly in the grip of the traditional styles of garden and park design. It would take a decade until another, more comprehensive, more articulate and more widely read book began to convince the larger postwar generation of landscape architects that modernism was the way forward.

Garrett Eckbo's *Landscape for Living* was published in 1950 and effectively established modernist approaches to both pedagogy and practice over the traditional styles in landscape architecture.<sup>9</sup> The time was right. The slow diffusion of modernist ideas had finally begun to challenge long held traditions that had changed little since the beginning of the profession. Perhaps more significantly, fewer landscape architects were asked to design country estates—priorities were in other places. The post-war economy demanded pragmatic solutions to landscape scale problems: the suburban housing boom, expanding road systems, parks and recreation systems. *Landscape for Living* was the first new comprehensive book-length guide to landscape architectural design method since Hubbard and Kimbell's *Introduction to the Study of Landscape Design* of 1917 and the tone was a stark departure from the past.<sup>10</sup>

Gone were the discussions of horticultural complexity and biaxial symmetry. In their place the rhetoric of space, technology and social responsibility were presented as an extension of ideas well established in architecture. In *Landscape for Living* Eckbo outlines an agenda for landscape architecture similar to that suggested by the Aims of C.I.A.M. that calls for the profession to be primarily concerned with creating functional spaces for work and play based in the latest scientific research.

In Jackson's review of the book in the spring 1953 issue of *Landscape*, he quotes Eckbo: "We live continuously subjected to spatial sensation...the experience of space is a common and vital human experience, comparable to those of food, sleep, clothing or sex." Jackson observes, "It is worth quoting from *Landscape for Living* if only to suggest how abstract the basis of much modern planning has become, how

‘contemporary’ by comparison with Old School landscape gardening. Mr. Eckbo is more at home in the principles of planning than in the landscape itself.”<sup>11</sup>

On the whole though, Jackson is sympathetic with the landscape architects inherent ability to think contextually: “The basic concern of Le Corbusier and his followers was always to preserve the autonomy of the house. Mr. Eckbo conceives of the house as part of the landscape, and the autonomy of the house is destroyed by the intrusion of outdoor space.”<sup>12</sup>

Outdoor space was a concept inextricably linked with the modern American landscape at mid-century. Congestion or crowding of any kind was the enemy of rational planning. The desire for space (including the desire for distance from an increasingly diverse urban population) was driving the great exodus from urban centers toward the suburban fringe. The commodification of leisure as an active pursuit of recreational experiences caused a need for more space for organized recreation venues. The new Interstate Highway System (beginning in 1956) spurred the imagination of Americans and connected urban and suburban populations to the wide-open spaces of less developed parts of the nation, including the State and National Parks. For those remaining in the cities, the visionary ideas of architects such as Le Corbusier—who thought that traditional neighborhoods should be torn down and replaced with towers that freed the ground plane for meadows and other open spaces—were increasingly being realized in the form of urban renewal and public housing projects. Space was not only the raw material of architectural design expression, it was also increasingly the structure of the urban environment. In this historical moment, decentralization and de-densification were laudable goals.

Of course, there was a great chasm between the rhetoric of designers and planners and the realities of the mid-century American urban transformation. As space was introduced into the city and urban density decreased through attrition, its boundaries began to blur and sprawl out into the countryside. The American landscape was changing according to the laissez-faire rules of capitalism, not the overarching total visions of architects, landscape architects and planners. As noted in Chapter 4, the socialist roots of European architectural modernism had largely atrophied in the United States by the early 1950s. Modernism as an aesthetic resulting from the embrace of machine efficiency in the service of idealistic social goals never caught on with the American public, but modern ways of building were in immediate demand after the War. In essence, modernism in America thrived not because Americans bought into the philosophy of architectural modernism, but because its imagery was friendly to an expanding commercial rhetoric and coincided with the practical needs of a growing nation. However, this trend did not discourage planners and landscape architects from proposing bold collectivist plans.

In Jackson's review of *Landscape for Living* he acknowledges the social agenda that had slowly fallen away from architectural discourse, but was a central concern of modern landscape architecture:

Planners [in this case, landscape architects] think in terms of people, and not in terms of money; that is their virtue. But they also appear to think of people instead of persons, and the communities they design are often as intolerant of the individual's undisciplined aspirations as of the undisciplined forces of nature... The greatest shortcoming of Mr. Eckbo's philosophy is his contemptuous dismissal of the imponderable qualities which develop not only in every man but in every society. Those handsome empty public squares which he wisely plans in the center of every community, how long will it be before they sprout monuments?<sup>13</sup>



*Landscape for Living* provides a clear picture of what the profession of landscape architecture would become in the 1950s—it social conscience, its aesthetic preoccupations, its missionary zeal for a totally ordered environment. The actual designs by Eckbo represented in the illustrations from *Landscape for Living*, although primarily focusing on residential and small public site designs, may be the purest expressions of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century abstraction of landscape. Where modern architects saw an idealized nature, modern landscape architects saw the potential for an idealized human spatial environment that was meticulously calibrated to meet the needs of human use.

Jackson's critique of Eckbo's limited recognition of "the imponderable qualities" to be found in everyday landscapes is well founded, but curious with respect to the overall text of the book. Eckbo includes a wide-ranging collection of quotations and bibliographic references that suggest a well-read author with a broadly contextual understanding of landscape. Eckbo had read many of the authors and academics that had influenced Jackson. For example, Lewis Mumford is quoted on regionalism: "...regional differences become more marked, as each new occupation, each new social interest, brings out a hitherto undiscovered color that modifies the common pattern."<sup>14</sup> From the text of *Landscape for Living* it would seem that landscape architecture would depart from the internationalism of modern architecture by embracing a cultural landscape idea that recognized regional and cultural difference. While, it is true that landscape architecture would find much more to respond to in the local context—primarily as a consequence of working outside the climate-controlled world in which modern architects designed—regionalism in modern landscape architecture did not veer far from the dictates of climatic difference and the needs for human comfort. For

Eckbo, “culture has become increasingly and persistently international, in spite of curtains both iron and silken”; therefore, it no longer makes sense to be limited by local building materials and practices:

But to race back to the other extreme, at which only “native” building materials, plants, rocks, forms, and arrangements may be used in the given region is equally ludicrous in the middle of the twentieth century. We cannot turn the clock back—the world of atomic power, instantaneous communication, and supersonic transportation is here to stay. Commercialism and rusticity are merely blind alleys off the broad highway of civilized progress.<sup>15</sup>

*Landscape for Living* represents the clearest evocation of a modern landscape architecture grounded in a theoretical seriousness that rivals the numerous architectural treatises of the day. It is the ultimate expression of the modernist rebellion that began in the late 1930s. As the 1950s progressed, the role of the landscape architect expanded beyond the purity of the garden and park and landscape scale problems became more complex.

### ***The New Landscape in Art and Science***

In 1951, as J.B. Jackson was writing the first essays for his new magazine and proclaiming that the landscape was “a rich and beautiful book” that “we have but to learn to read”, the artist and theorist Gyorgy Kepes was curating an exhibition at M.I.T. with the title *The New Landscape in Art and Science*. Fascinated by the inherent beauty and abstraction of natural forms newly visible through advances in the technology of magnification, Kepes juxtaposed the microscopic patterns found in the plant, rock and insect imagery produced by scientists with the modern works of artists and architects. Kepes’ thesis was that the boundaries separating art and science were finally dissolving and this “new landscape” spoke to a profound convergence of concepts too long

conceived in opposition. In 1956, Kepes published a collection of essays inspired by the exhibition, including pieces by Jean Arp, Sigfried Giedion, Walter Gropius, and Richard Neutra.<sup>16</sup> The short pieces by architects, designers, artists, poets and scientists explicitly made connections between works of abstract art, modernist architecture and the patterns of nature.

In many ways the assertion of an inherent connection between art and science had been motivating modern artists and architects throughout the modern era with developing technologies and industrial processes providing inspiration for new creative modes of expression reflective of the times. Notably, scientists did not require the same cross-disciplinary validation in an era of ascendant rationalism. Ironically, this optimistic moment of high modernism when the potential for a true synthesis of art and science seemed tangible was short lived as the two worlds continued to be torn apart.

By the beginning of the 1960s the American landscape was increasingly seen as a problem—an ecological problem, an aesthetic problem, a social problem. Landscape was no longer a passive background or a pleasant green context; the general public began to see their surroundings as out of balance or completely out of control. Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962), Peter Blake's *God's Own Junkyard* (1963), Christopher Tunnard and Boris Pushkarev's *Man-Made America: Chaos or Control?* (1963)—all of them pointed to a future where, as President Kennedy stated in reference to the proliferation of nuclear weapons, “every inhabitant of this planet must contemplate the day when this planet may no longer be habitable.”<sup>17</sup> During this period many landscape architects began to see their profession's purpose in the context of national and global problems. Increasingly landscape architects focused on landscape planning and the

profession's rhetoric took on a moral tenor aligned with the nascent environmental movement.

Contemporary with the M.I.T. exhibition, Garret Eckbo's *Landscape for Living* concluded with a chapter entitled "From Art to Planning" that looked to a future with an expanding role for landscape architects as members of multidisciplinary teams along with architects, planners, engineers, and artists. The concept was one of "total design" where all aspects of the environment would be coordinated as a seamless whole and where the art of design was to be married with the rationalism of science. By the early 1960s landscape architects were indeed aligning themselves with a multidisciplinary cadre of professionals and specialists; however, during the 1960s, the utopian dream of a totally ordered environment gave way to the reality of seriously intractable problems requiring a level of expertise beyond the generalist educational backgrounds of most built environment professionals.

Writing in the "Notes and Comments" of the Spring 1960 issue of *Landscape*, J.B. Jackson turned his attention again to the expanding field of landscape architecture, noting that the "magazine (as its name would indicate) feels a special affiliation and sympathy with landscape architects."<sup>18</sup> Jackson saw landscape architecture as a profession with a long history of working for the good of the general public and he welcomed their return to the public realm after a long hiatus designing private gardens for the wealthy. However, he goes on to warn that the profession might lose its identity in the public realm by trying to too closely align itself with developers, architects, planners and engineers:

The ambitious landscape architect can if he chooses forget his previous commitments and design money-making landscapes for real estate operators,

“fun” landscapes for recreationists, vacant green landscapes to serve as backgrounds for architecture, smart little landscapes in the currently fashionable idiom for downtown merchants—and no landscapes at all in the real meaning of the word.<sup>19</sup>

In other words, Jackson believed that the danger for landscape architects was the potential to be corrupted by forces wishing to turn the landscape into a commodity or tourist destination or simply a pleasantly green *tabula rasa* in which to site the bold proposals of architects and planners. By Jackson’s definition, landscape architects would be making the antithesis of landscape by pursuing these ungrounded agendas. Rather, Jackson suggests “the humane tradition in landscape architecture has support in many quarters; among geographers, conservationists and natural scientists.”<sup>20</sup>

Whom landscape architects chose to associate with became a mark of identity as the 20<sup>th</sup> century progressed. Initially, modernism in landscape architecture was about a reorientation of priorities toward architecture and the arts. The profession had always argued for a synthesis of the arts and architecture with the natural sciences, but how closely and to what degree the profession associated with these other disciplines defined practice at any point in time.

The odd outlier in Jackson’s above suggestion is geography. If *Landscape* magazine had never been published, landscape architects would have still found easy allies among the quantitative geographers of the 1960s, both sharing a concern with the spatial qualities of social, economic and environmental problems. However, would geography’s humanistic strain have found such a receptive audience among landscape architects without Jackson’s forum? This is an important question, because the theories and methods of cultural geography continue to inform contemporary landscape architectural practice. Cultural geography helped landscape architects reengage with a

richer definition of landscape, but has also become an important source of continued theoretical growth. By the 1970s landscape architects and cultural geographers would cross paths at conferences, publish in common journals and, in some cases, work on projects together. Some credit for this productive alliance—possibly a substantial share of the credit—must be given to J.B. Jackson’s eclectic mission for *Landscape* magazine.

J.B. Jackson’s early inclusion of articles and book reviews about landscape architecture in a “magazine of human geography” was an explicit endorsement that these topics should coexist in the same intellectual space. But more than that, it challenged disciplinary boundaries by considering a landscape spectrum that extended from the concrete and constructed to the purely theoretical and speculative. In effect, *Landscape* implicitly said to geographers that landscape architecture was an applied extension of their theoretical territory, and to landscape architects that human geography was a valuable source for better understanding how humans interacted with the natural world.

By the magazine’s 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, *Landscape*’s very existence represented a challenge to the insular discourses of the built environment professions. The critical tone and diversity of perspectives featured in the magazine served as a foil to the narrower concerns of professional practice. This was especially true for the discipline of landscape architecture, whose only real outlet for critical debate was the professional trade magazine *Landscape Architecture Quarterly*. That magazine’s coverage during the 1950s adhered strictly to the practical concerns of designers struggling to keep pace with an expanding definition of professional competence; however, beginning in 1960

the magazine's tone changed with a new editor, Grady Clay (editor from 1960-1985). Clay was not a landscape architect; coming from a background in journalism and an interest in urban affairs, he recognized the disturbing trajectory of the mid-century American landscape. His editorials reflected concerns fermenting since before he attended the Urban Design Criticism conference at Penn in 1958. Shortly after that conference, Clay submitted a long editorial that was printed in the July 1959 issue of *Horizon Magazine* with the title "Metropolis Regained."<sup>21</sup> Notably, in the article Clay coins the term "New Urbanist" to describe those people who are concerned with the particular failures of the modern city—what he calls the "Fallacy of Unilateral Dedensification." He goes on to describe what New Urbanists believe:

"We believe in the city, they would say, not in tearing it down. We like open space, but hold that too much of it is just as bad as too little. We want that multiplicity of choice which the city has always offered, but is now in danger of losing... We like the intimacy of the crowd, but we also like to escape from it—we like the busy downtown plaza, but also the pleasant walkways of a residential district. We are appalled at your civic centers, your housing projects, and your expressways. They seem to be designed to be self-contained mechanisms for performance, procreation, and propulsion. We come to the city seeking community, pleasure, jobs, and other people; you seem to be destroying the first, demoralizing the second, decentralizing the third, and displacing the last. *We like it here*—only give us a break!"<sup>22</sup>

Clay shared a number of interests with J.B. Jackson including a belief that understanding everyday landscapes was a worthwhile endeavor, one especially important for designers. As a colleague of Jackson, Clay sought to feature some of the voices from *Landscape* in the pages of his professional journal and encouraged a symbiotic relationship between the two forums. *Landscape*—although not an academic publication—effectively served as the scholarly journal of landscape architecture by engaging topics from other disciplines that were outside of the immediate concerns of

professional practice. While relatively few landscape architects contributed to the magazine, its content began to encourage a reengagement with theories of landscape, lost since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and displaced by the aestheticism of the Country Place Era and the architectonic functionalism of modernism. Although the profession was not devoid of intellectual content, its embrace of the didactic rules of classical garden-making followed by the abstract universality of modernism had reduced a concern with the true specificity of place to the simplistic instrumentality of climatic regionalism.

Even with Jackson's long editorializing against the inflexible proposals of the design and planning professions, Garrett Eckbo—who was an occasional contributor to the magazine despite Jackson's original challenge to his "contemptuous dismissal of the imponderable qualities" found in any community—continued to argue for a totally designed environment. As late as the Autumn 1966 issue of *Landscape*, Eckbo contributed a short piece on "Defining the Cultural Environment" that sought to clarify the contemporary relationship between science and art as a synthetic practice of searching for knowledge (science) and deciding how to use that knowledge for the betterment of society (art). For Eckbo this was the definition of an "extraordinarily complex" design process:

...but we are beginning to see the way. The path has led from building codes through subdivision and zoning ordinances, master plans for land use and circulation, urban renewal and redevelopment to currently developing concepts of environmental and urban design. Professional guidance, skills and concepts are coming from planning, with its overall view of community and regional patterns; architecture, with its focus on buildings and relations between them; landscape architecture, with its sense of the continuity of open space experience throughout community and region; and engineering, with its knowledge of technological problems and potentials. Basically we are learning to design complete areas or sections of the physical environment in complete detail, including all elements within them. This means that buildings, streets, ground forms, trees, signs, utilities, street furniture of all sorts, movement and storage



patterns for all vehicles, and motion and rest patterns for all people, must be incorporated in total concepts.<sup>23</sup>

Such an optimistic statement and devotion to a vision of a totally designed environment is a clear illustration of how the radicals of the late 1930s had, over the course of twenty-five years, become the corporate modernist establishment. The rhetoric of master plans, zoning ordinances and urban renewal was by definition the status quo.

Over the course of the 1960s, many landscape architects focused on different notions of space and “total design” from that championed by Eckbo: one that paralleled the spatial science and quantitative focus of human geographers. During this period the profession began to split into numerous ideological camps espousing different aspects of mid-century modernist dogma. Modern design as expressed in the work of landscape architects like Kiley, Rose and Eckbo matured into an increasingly professionalized, corporate and urban practice. Eckbo joined forces with colleagues from Southern California to start EDAW, providing a model of the large corporate firm shaping the expanding modern American urban and suburban landscape. However, many landscape architects began to associate with efforts in the sciences to find answers to environmental and social problems through a particularly deterministic brand of logical positivism. This translated into a belief in the potential of design—and more specifically, planning—to solve the serious contemporary problems resulting from the misuse of land, air and water resources.

Ian McHarg, after participating in the Urban Design Criticism conference at Penn in 1958, began to teach a course on “Man and Environment” that would serve as a laboratory for his developing ideas on ecological planning. During the 1960s, McHarg

would use this course and his studios to work out a method of landscape analysis that would seek to understand the complex layered ecological systems that make up landscapes, and thereby provide a basis on which to propose landscape change. His major contribution came in 1969 with *Design With Nature*,<sup>24</sup> a book that profoundly influenced the development of the profession moving into the 1970s.<sup>25</sup>

Such multiple schisms developing in landscape architecture during the 1960s and 1970s were emblematic of modernist dichotomous views of art and science, while also forecasting the larger cultural trends toward postmodern fragmentation. While several large and medium sized firms built around the first generation of modernist landscape architects were shaping the corporate and suburban landscape according to the spatial paradigms of the previous generation, a group of ecologically concerned academics and professionals, inspired by McHarg and the environmental movement, began to call themselves landscape planners (disassociating themselves from the formalist concerns of architectural praxis). Yet another group were finding inspiration in the pure expressions of land artists like Robert Smithson and Michael Heizer who—for some landscape architects—were implicitly challenging the artlessness of a “scientific” landscape architecture. While the lines between these opposing forces cannot be too neatly delineated—many firms, or even individual designers, embodied these contradictions in their varied practices—a period of late modernist eclecticism would shape professional discourse into the 1970s.

However, it is important to recognize trends that emerged during this same period that in many ways are the foundations of current practice at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Contemporary landscape architecture has begun to reweave these

dispersed threads into a practice that requires an ability to artfully wed the complexity of ecological processes with the culturally constructed “nature” of all landscapes. This paradigm shift in the way we think about, plan and design the built environment began to emerge in the 1980s, but was borne out of the varied critical responses to mid-century modernism, many of which can be found in *Landscape* magazine.

The figure that best embodied the early potential for a hybrid—even postmodern—practice that considered both art and science from a synthetic perspective was Lawrence Halprin. In the same year that McHarg’s *Design with Nature* was published, Halprin’s *The RSVP Cycles: Creative Processes in the Human Environment* presented a distinctly different vision for the design process.<sup>26</sup> Both books are of their time. Where *Design with Nature* is the result of postwar rationalism taken to its logical extreme in planning large landscapes, *The RSVP Cycles* is a statement of a countercultural search to reengage human creativity as a “process-oriented” activity. Indeed, process is at the center of both books; but, where McHarg’s process is drawn from the quantitative methods of the sciences, Halprin’s process evolves more from the arts and a phenomenological relationship with the natural world—specifically from a close collaboration with his spouse, the dancer Anna Halprin.

Twice Lawrence Halprin published in *Landscape*. His pieces were distinct: where most landscape architects who published in the magazine during Jackson’s tenure wrote about the profession, its problems, how to educate its students or why one approach to design and planning was superior to others, Halprin chose to articulate a philosophical approach to landscape. The first article, “Israel: The Man Made Landscape” from the Winter 1959-1960 issue, was a detailed descriptive piece, not

unlike the observations of a cultural geographer of the period.<sup>27</sup> Using Israel as an example of a landscape with limited space and resources that had been totally and radically changed over the course of its history, Halprin suggested certain “lessons of importance” to be taken from the study. First, he suggests Israel is an exemplar of how quickly a landscape can be destroyed by humans, but it also shows how quickly it can be transformed again into a productive living landscape. His second point is that out of necessity few people live apart from communal planned landscapes, but they still maintain a connection to nature through careful planning and preservation. Halprin uses Israel as an example of a distinctly cultural landscape where there is little to hint at an untouched nature. Because it is clearly a man-made landscape, the interactions of humans and the natural world can be planned for without the baggage of imagined wilderness.

In the second article, “The Gardens of the High Sierra” from the Winter 1961-1962 issue, he examines the landscapes of the mountains of California that are in many ways the opposite of the Israeli landscape.<sup>28</sup> Here he finds the celebrated wilderness of the American imagination, where rock, water and plants come together in natural harmony. But in the wilderness Halprin finds design. The compositional beauty of natural landscapes, untouched by human hands, is in fact the result of natural processes that are always in motion: “Here art is evolved, not only by accident but also by inevitability. The forces of natural phenomena have their own internal logic. As artists we need to find our own as well.”<sup>29</sup> How contemporary his description of the common denominator between nature’s designs and the artful manipulation of human designers—they both (should) evolve through processes that obey an internal logic. In

effect the combined message of both articles is that nature must be found in design and design must be found in nature. Halprin challenges the dichotomous treatment of nature and design and instead suggests a process that embraces their similarities and searches for synthesis.

It is an interesting coincidence that Halprin published in *Landscape* around the same time that he began to keep detailed notebooks that document his evolving exploration of landscape and design process.<sup>30</sup> After having started his career working for Thomas Church in 1945 and quickly going out on his own, Halprin had established himself as a true modernist in the mode of Eckbo, Kiley and Rose. But the Halprin that emerged in the 1960s was searching for new sources of inspiration for his designs. Shortly after the second article in *Landscape*, Halprin was the landscape architect on the mater plan for Sea Ranch, California along with the architects Charles Moore, Donlyn Lyndon, William Turnbull (see Chapter 4) and their firm MLTW. Halprin sited the modern “vernacular” structures designed by MLTW after long study and with minimal intervention along a windswept coast.

What has made Halprin somewhat of a transitional figure and an intellectual progenitor of contemporary practice is not necessarily his works (which are recognizably mid-century in their forms and today often feel dated, although many are still well used); rather, Halprin’s writing on the natural, human and creative processes that should guide design still has currency. Like many of the important figures who wrote in *Landscape* and have been discussed in this and previous chapters, Halprin is suspicious of the overconfident dogma of design and planning rhetoric and instead finds beauty in complexity. By the end of the 1960s, Halprin’s book *The RSVP Cycles*:

*Creative Processes in the Human Environment* begins to clearly outline an interdisciplinary process of studying landscapes he called “scoring”: “Scores are symbolizations of processes which extend over time.”<sup>31</sup> As stated throughout this dissertation, understanding landscapes as sites of multiple, overlapping human and natural processes that are in a constant state of transformation is key to understanding their renewed relevance. While Halprin became known for his extensive environmental assessments of project sites and larger landscapes, he was reluctant to claim a unilateral certainty about how those places would evolve. Halprin’s model was antithetical to the quantitative practices of the environmental planners emerging during the 1960s:

One of the gravest dangers that we experience is the danger of becoming *goal-oriented*. . . Having set ourselves this goal we can then proceed posthaste to achieve it by the *most direct method possible*. Everyone can put his shoulder to the wheel, and systems engineering, technology, and our leader (or whatever) will get us to the agreed goal. It doesn’t work! The results of this oversimplified approach, now coming into general vogue, are all around us in the chaos of our cities and the confusion of our politics.

There are evidences of this kind of thinking in the attempt to make a science out of community design, as if by assigning it the term “science” then the goal of perfection can be reached. Human community planning cannot ever be a science anymore than politics can rightly be called political science. Science implies codification of knowledge and a drive toward perfectibility none of which are possible or even desirable in human affairs.<sup>32</sup>

### **Topographical Interventions**

J.B. Jackson was one of the first outside intellectuals to challenge landscape architecture to rediscover its roots as a discipline with its own intellectual history of “humanistic urbanism”:

[The landscape architect] has a mandate of sorts to protect whatever is old and small and beautiful in the landscape, to preserve the homogeneous community and to insure the right of the individual to have his own experience of nature—whether in a backyard or in the woods. He can and should fight the current

unbalanced enthusiasm for rural areas of mass recreation by making the city and the neighborhood agreeable places for leisure. He can draw on his own stock of experience to prove that there is a vigorous American tradition of urban landscape design, rivaling in beauty and effectiveness anything to be seen in the Old World, and the product not of a single designer but of active communal participation.<sup>33</sup>

Notably, it would require intellectuals outside the profession of landscape architecture to rediscover the landscape idea's theoretically distinct origins in the debates of the picturesque controversy and the landscape urbanism of Frederick Law Olmsted. In 1931, Lewis Mumford was one of the first 20<sup>th</sup> century scholars to "rediscover" Olmsted's contributions to 19<sup>th</sup> century urbanism in his book *The Brown Decades: A Study of the Arts in America, 1865-1895*.<sup>34</sup> However, over the ensuing decades Olmsted's legacy was either oversimplified, as part of the profession's origin narrative, or it was a victim of declining interest in what was seen as an anachronistic, romantic past. To the general public, many of Olmsted's landscapes had grown into convincing replicas of an untouched natural world and had therefore ceased to be associated with the hand of a designer. What was lost from this historical amnesia was a sense of the purposeful artistry, the morally fervent social agenda and the engineering acumen of Olmsted's works. As a result, Olmsted's landscapes were drained of their importance as culturally and physically constructed places.

In 1950, Laura Wood Roper began to pen a series of scholarly treatments on the life and work of Olmsted beginning with a piece written for *The American Historical Review*, "Frederick Law Olmsted and the Western Texas Free- Soil Movement."<sup>35</sup> This began a line of inquiry that resulted in other historical and literary articles and culminated in her major book-length treatment from 1973, *FLO: A Biography of Frederick Law Olmsted*.<sup>36</sup> At the same time Roper began to research her

first articles on Olmsted, J.B. Jackson and *Landscape* magazine were regularly making connections between the 19<sup>th</sup> century urban landscape and the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century city.

The first contributor to *Landscape* magazine, other than J.B. Jackson, was his brother W.G. Jackson. For the third issue of the magazine, W.G. Jackson wrote a long piece on the “First Interpreter of American Beauty: A.J. Downing and the Planned Landscape.”<sup>37</sup>

Jackson calls attention to an historical figure that had all but been forgotten by the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century and acknowledges the important role Downing played in establishing American tastes especially through his books on gardening and architecture, as well as his editorship and monthly essays for *The Horticulturalist*. Possibly drawing parallels between J.B. Jackson’s mission for *Landscape* and the 19<sup>th</sup> century content of

Downing’s *Horticulturalist*, he notes:

[His] editorials, ranging through the fields of landscape gardening, rural architecture, the laying out and beautification of towns, and the ignorance of country matters betrayed by city dwellers, dealt also with the practical details of building, farming and gardening.<sup>38</sup>

The coincident nature of this observation with the tone and content of the first three issues of *Landscape* would seem to be making the subtle suggestion that Jackson’s magazine had similar goals to those taken on by Downing.

But the true purpose of this article, and others that were to deal with the 19<sup>th</sup> century landscape, was to draw parallels to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Here Downing’s work, and by extension those of his disciples (i.e. Vaux and Olmsted), is recovered from it’s modernist detractors as being simply a copy of untouched nature. The “picturesque” designers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century are shown to be advocates for an artistic engagement with the natural world and an idealistic belief in the social benefits of design. Herein lies the usefulness of 19<sup>th</sup> century ideas about landscape: as a contrasting foil to the modernist



fascination with the creation of “hygienic dwelling machines, surrounding them with recreation areas, solariums, and other situations of sociological strength.”<sup>39</sup>

Beginning in the late 1960s some landscape architects and planners would look back longingly and recognize the thoroughly modern nature of Olmsted’s work and his unparalleled successes. Ironically, that recognition helped define a post-modern landscape architecture defined by a renewed belief in landscape as “constructed” in every sense of the word. But first, Olmsted had to be rescued from caricature and be seen as an important resource for questioning how mid-20<sup>th</sup> planning had gone so wrong. Immediately preceding Roper’s book *FLO*, were two books by landscape architects: Julius Fabos’ *Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr.: Founder of Landscape Architecture in America* (1968)<sup>40</sup> and Albert Fine’s *Frederick Law Olmsted and the American Environmental Tradition* (1972).<sup>41</sup> After this, a myriad of books and articles about 19<sup>th</sup> century pastoral urbanism began to crop up at a time when there was widespread dissatisfaction with urban America and a Bicentennial reengagement with the past. Some of this fascination with the city of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century might be explained as nostalgia for a more romantic, picturesque urbanism; however, many of the scholars who were rediscovering Olmsted were suggesting quite the opposite.

For example, the most telling sign of a post-modern renewal of the landscape idea with its inspiration in the 19<sup>th</sup> century picturesque was the rise of earthwork artists like Robert Smithson. In 1973, Smithson responded to a timely exhibit on Central Park held at the Whitney Museum with his essay “Frederick Law Olmsted and the Dialectical Landscape.”<sup>42</sup> In that essay, Smithson sought to establish Olmsted as a progenitor of the earthwork artists such as himself, Michael Heizer, Walter De Maria

and Nancy Holt. By placing Olmsted's work in the context of the 18<sup>th</sup> century theorists of the picturesque Uvedale Price and William Gilpin, Smithson establishes the synthetic "dialectic" of landscape between the beautiful and the sublime:

The contradictions of the "picturesque" depart from a static formalistic view of nature. The picturesque, far from being an inner movement of the mind, is based on real land; it precedes the mind in its material existence. We cannot take a one-sided view of the landscape within this dialectic. A park can no longer be seen as "a thing-in-itself," but rather as a process of ongoing relationships existing in a physical region—the park becomes a "thing-for-us." As a result we are not hurled into the spiritualism of Thoreauian transcendentalism, or its present day offspring of "modernist formalism" rooted in Kant, Hegel, and Fichte. Price, Gilpin, and Olmsted are forerunners of a dialectical materialism applied to the physical landscape. Dialectics of this type are a way of seeing things in a manifold of relations, not as isolated objects. Nature for the dialectician is *indifferent* to any formal ideal.<sup>43</sup>

In his essay, Smithson quotes liberally from the ecologist Paul Shepard's "excellent" book from 1967, *Man in the Landscape* to support some of his argument.<sup>44</sup>

Acknowledging Shepard—a perennial contributor to *Landscape* over the years who integrated many of his essays from the magazine into the book—suggests a shared philosophical understanding of the landscape idea.

For the earthwork artists, art had become so abstract and bound to the rituals of the "siteless" museum that it needed to break free and reengage with the real. The materiality and contradictions of real places became their inspiration. Their works were not composed of picturesque imagery in the "traditional" sense but were the embodiment of a philosophical understanding of landscape as the reality that is found in between modernism's false dichotomies: in between nature and culture, wilderness and urbanity, process and product, anti-aesthetics and art.

Over the last 40 years, the work of the earthwork artists has inspired many in the profession of landscape architecture to find the source of their art in the land itself

rather than the abstract distractions of formalism and rationalism. That inspiration has taken many forms over the years, including a boldly minimalist and formalist late modernism with little connection to the philosophical orientation mentioned above. However, as landscape architects have become fixated on a view of landscape processes that do not exclude the artistic and the cultural, the earthwork artists seem especially prescient in retrospect. Their influence is now widely recognized and seen as precedent for many contemporary projects, such as New York City's Highline project where a once abandoned elevated industrial train track has been reclaimed as public space.<sup>45</sup> In particular, the Highline is part of the same contemporary approach to urban design that was represented in the Groundswell exhibition discussed in Chapter 1. It has taken an industrial relic of late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century modernity and, rather than tearing it down and removing all traces of its existence, turned it into a thriving public landscape. It represents a cultural, artistic and ecological synthesis that may be the best example of landscape's potential so far in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In 1968 J.B. Jackson made the decision to turn over the editorial reins of the magazine and pursue the next phase of his career writing books and essays while teaching and lecturing on both coasts. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Jackson brought together in his magazine the voices of cultural geographers with those of the design professions, especially landscape architects. So it is perhaps not a surprise that his teaching at Harvard and Berkeley (without any formal credentials above a Bachelors degree) would be in both geography and landscape architecture programs. By the late 60s many landscape architects were familiar with Jackson and his magazine, but his real

influence came with his exposure to the future leaders of the profession at Harvard and Berkeley and the publication of his books throughout the rest of his life.

With this wider exposure, many of the ideas Jackson pursued and encouraged in the pages of *Landscape* became a codified part of every landscape architect's education. The result of this exposure to Jackson's thickly descriptive rendering of the landscape idea and a cultural geographic perspective in general is hard to quantify in terms of altering the outcome of built works. But what is undeniable is the continued respect landscape architects have had for Jackson and the geographers he brought to the attention of the profession. Now, more than ever, landscape architecture has "recovered" the landscape idea; however, it is a testament to J.B. Jackson that even in the midst of an increasingly prolific amount of new landscape theory, Jackson's work still seems fresh and relevant.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Christopher Tunnard, *Gardens in the Modern Landscape* (London: The Architectural Press, 1938).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

<sup>3</sup> Le Corbusier, *Precisions: On the Present State of Architecture and City Planning* (Cambridge: MIT, 1991), 139. Originally published in French in 1930.

<sup>4</sup> Christopher Tunnard, *Gardens in the Modern Landscape* (London: The Architectural Press, 1938), 78.

<sup>5</sup> P.K. [J.B. Jackson], review of *Gardens in the Modern Landscape*, by Christopher Tunnard, *Landscape: Human Geography of the Southwest* 1, No. 2 (Autumn 1951), 31.

<sup>6</sup> Garrett Eckbo, "Small Gardens in the City: A Study in their Design Possibilities," *Pencil Points*, September 1937, 573. It is interesting to note the coincident focus on "areal" space with that of the geographer Richard Hartshorne's discussion of "areal differentiation" in his work *The Nature of Geography* from 1939. Both are challenging older concepts of landscape by instead privileging the more abstract concept of areal space.

<sup>7</sup> James Rose, "Integration: Design Expresses the Continuity of Living," *Pencil Points*, December 1938, 759.

<sup>8</sup> Garrett Eckbo, Daniel U. Kiley and James C. Rose, "Landscape Design in the Urban Environment," *Architectural Record*, May 1939, 70-77; Garret Eckbo, Daniel U. Kiley

and James C. Rose, "Landscape Design in the Rural Environment," *Architectural Record*, August 1939, 68-74; Garret Eckbo, Daniel U. Kiley and James C. Rose, "Landscape Design in the Primeval Environment," *Architectural Record*, February 1940, 74-79.

<sup>9</sup> Garrett Eckbo, *Landscape for Living*, (New York: Architectural Record with Duell, Sloan, & Pearce, 1950).

<sup>10</sup> Henry Vincent Hubbard and Theodora Kimball Hubbard, *An Introduction to the Study of Landscape Design* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1917).

<sup>11</sup> J.B. Jackson, review of *Landscape for Living*, by Garrett Eckbo, *Landscape: Magazine of Human Geography* 2, No. 3 (Spring 1953), 34.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Lewis Mumford quoted in Garrett Eckbo, *Landscape for Living*, (New York: Architectural Record with Duell, Sloan, & Pearce, 1950), 33.

<sup>15</sup> Garrett Eckbo, *Landscape for Living*, (New York: Architectural Record with Duell, Sloan, & Pearce, 1950), 33.

<sup>16</sup> Gyorgy Kepes, *The New Landscape in Art and Science* (Chicago: Paul Theobald and Co., 1956). In that same year, Kepes began working with Kevin Lynch at M.I.T. on a research project funded by the Rockefeller Foundation on human perception that would form the foundation of Lynch's *The Image of the City*.

<sup>17</sup> John F. Kennedy, Address to the United Nations General Assembly, September 25, 1961.

<sup>18</sup> J.B. Jackson, "Notes and Comments: ASLA," *Landscape* 9, no. 3 (Spring 1960), 1.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Gray Clay, "Metropolis Regained," *Horizon* (July 1959), 5-15. The Congress for the New Urbanism recognized Clay in 2009 for his contribution to the early definition of New Urbanism and subsequent writings, including his books *Close-Up: How to Read the American City* (1973) and *Real Places: An Unconventional Guide to America's Generic Landscape* (1994).

<sup>22</sup> Gray Clay, "Metropolis Regained," *Horizon* (July 1959), 13.

<sup>23</sup> Garrett Eckbo, "Defining the Cultural Environment," *Landscape* 16, no. 1 (Autumn 1966), 22-23.

<sup>24</sup> Ian L. McHarg, *Design with Nature*, (Garden City, N.Y.: Published for the American Museum of Natural History [by] the Natural History Press, 1969).

<sup>25</sup> Anne Whiston Spirn, "Ian McHarg, Landscape Architecture and Environmentalism: Ideas and Methods in Context," *Environmentalism in Landscape Architecture*, ed. By Michel Conan (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2000).

<sup>26</sup> Lawrence Halprin, *The RSVP Cycles: Creative Processes in the Human Environment* (New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1969).

- <sup>27</sup> Lawrence Halprin, "Israel: The Man Made Landscape," *Landscape* 9, No. 2 (Winter 1959-1960), 19-23.
- <sup>28</sup> Lawrence Halprin, "The Gardens of the High Sierra," *Landscape* 11, No. 2 (Winter 1961-1962), 26-28.
- <sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.
- <sup>30</sup> "The Chronology," *Lawrence Halprin: Changing Places* (San Francisco: The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1986), 123.
- <sup>31</sup> Lawrence Halprin, *The RSVP Cycles: Creative Processes in the Human Environment* (New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1969), 1.
- <sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.
- <sup>33</sup> J.B. Jackson, "Notes and Comments: ASLA," *Landscape* 9, no. 3 (Spring 1960), 1-2.
- <sup>34</sup> Lewis Mumford, *The Brown Decades: A Study of the Arts in America, 1865-1895* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1931).
- <sup>35</sup> Laura Wood Roper, "Frederick Law Olmsted and the Western Texas Free-Soil Movement," *The American Historical Review* 56, No. 1 (October 1950), 58-64. Also see "'Mr. Law' and Putnam's Monthly Magazine: A Note on a Phase in the Career of Frederick Law Olmsted," *American Literature* 26, No. 1 (March 1954), 88-93 and "Frederick Law Olmsted and the Port Royal Experiment," *The Journal of Southern History* 31, No 3. (August 1965), 272-284.
- <sup>36</sup> Laura Wood Roper, *FLO: A Biography of Frederick Law Olmsted* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973).
- <sup>37</sup> W.G. Jackson, "First Interpreter of American Beauty: A.J. Downing and the Planned Landscape," *Landscape* 1, No.3 (Winter 1952), 11-18.
- <sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.
- <sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.
- <sup>40</sup> Julius Gy Fabos, Gordon T. Milde and V. Michael Weinmayr, *Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr.; Founder of Landscape Architecture in America*. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1968).
- <sup>41</sup> Albert Fein, *Frederick Law Olmsted and the American Environmental Tradition* (New York: Braziller, 1972).
- <sup>42</sup> Robert Smithson, "Frederick Law Olmsted and the Dialectical Landscape," (1973) in Nancy Holt (ed.), *The Writings of Robert Smithson, Essays with Illustrations* (New York: New York University Press, 1979).
- <sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 119.
- <sup>44</sup> Paul Shepard, *Man in the Landscape: A Historic View of the Esthetics of Nature* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967).
- <sup>45</sup> *cf.*, John Beardsley, *Earthworks and Beyond* (New York: Abbeville Press, 2006).

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION: LANDSCAPE RECOVERED?

In the spring of 1968, after 17 years of editing *Landscape*, J.B. Jackson decided to move on to other projects.<sup>1</sup> Writing a postscript in the following issue, he used his editorial voice for the last time to describe how his years publishing *Landscape* corresponded with a growing awareness and changing attitudes toward America's environment: "I should like to think that *Landscape* played a part in this general enlightenment."<sup>2</sup> The question of what part *Landscape* magazine—and by extension, J.B. Jackson—played in changing the way we see and understand landscape will conclude this dissertation. However, in 1969 it was unclear to Jackson if the way Americans had come to understand their landscape was productive:

But I would be deceiving myself if I believed that the exploratory and speculative point of view which has hitherto been the magazine's characteristic was still widely acceptable. For better or worse, America has chosen to see the environment and our modification of it almost exclusively in terms of problems—very urgent problems in need of investigation by ecologists, sociologists, psychologists, economists and planners... The landscape as an object of contemplation in both senses of the word—seeing and pondering—has yielded to the landscape as a set of problems to be solved.<sup>3</sup>

His final editorial suggested that this almost exclusive orientation toward landscape as a problem requiring study, mediation, conservation or preservation had resulted in piles of studies (and an editorial chore). While more Americans than ever were aware of their environment, there was little room for a less didactic form of contemplation of landscape as having meanings that "could be judged in other than ecological or esthetic terms."<sup>4</sup>

Jackson's despair at the end of the 1960s corresponded to modernism's last great apex of positivism with regard to the American environment. Much of this hyper-rationalism was born of an anxious reaction to the physical environments of modernism, resulting in an equally modern belief that with more planning would come better decisions and better places. During this period the discourse of utopia was technocratic, positivist, pragmatic and programmatic. Everything was problematized. The landscape idea was abstracted, flattened, de-natured. While Jackson was sympathetic to the goals of planners and reformers he also believed that they were operating in a landscape that—despite the preponderance of voluminous studies—they did not fully understand.

Cracks in this positivist optimism would emerge throughout the 1960s, but would be significantly challenged by the events of the late 1960s, especially urban rioting and demonstrations. Jackson offered a unique interpretation of these events in an Autumn 1967 commentary on the summer disturbances in American cities.<sup>5</sup>

Characteristically, Jackson takes a long view of the history of urban revolts in Europe and Latin America and determines that the relationship of protestors to the city has fundamentally changed in America:

It was the French Revolution which first established the classical form of mass public protest by a deeply rooted urban population, and we still expect to witness the classical gestures: the overturning of statues, the barricades, the gathering of crowds at certain squares and open places, and above all the reaction to certain public buildings—churches, prison, palace—as universally recognized symbols of oppression or hope. But in the recent American riots none of these gestures was evident; the urban setting, for all its guilt, seems to have aroused no desire for vengeance.<sup>6</sup>

Jackson's speculation suggested a disconnection between Americans, especially young American, and the city as an identifiable symbolic place. Modern American cities like Newark and Detroit and Los Angeles had become so homogenous and



decentralized that the rage of angry citizens became equally dispersed and unfocused: turning over cars, looting corner stores, burning anonymous buildings. Rather than directing their animus toward City Hall, disenfranchised or disaffected youth hated the urban environment in general. Abstract American space had translated into an abstract form of American hatred toward the city.

Perhaps as a mental break from the problems of the late 1960s, or possibly as a tool for reflecting on 20<sup>th</sup> century environmental change and its perception, Jackson previewed his next project in that same Winter 1969 issue of *Landscape* that contained his “Postscript” with the article “A New Kind of Space.” Extending the geographic definition of landscape as an “organization of space,” Jackson suggests “a landscape can be seen as a living map, a composition of lines and spaces not entirely unlike the composition which the architect or planner produces, though on a much vaster scale.” These vast compositions were constantly in a process of being re-organized, and occasionally change would happen at an unusually rapid pace. The mid-20<sup>th</sup> century was obviously one of these periods, but Jackson’s next project would focus on the period between the Civil War and the first centennial when he argued an equally dramatic change in American environments and attitudes occurred.

*American Space: The Centennial Years, 1865-1876*, published in 1972, was J.B. Jackson’s first book-length offering on landscape issues (and first book since 1938).<sup>7</sup> The American landscape that Jackson described as emerging after the Civil War was characterized by a new conception of space. It is in this period that Jackson found the origin of the abstract spatial obsessions of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. After the Civil War, the concept of space as something to be enclosed and delimited by boundaries was

challenged by new open forms that allowed for the organized and systemic flow and movement of raw materials, natural resources and people. The modern sensibilities of the engineer, the scientist and the industrialist combined to transform the way Americans saw their landscape. Land that was formerly isolated, self-sufficient and meant to serve the needs of individuals, families or small communities, was transformed by necessity and a change in perception. By the nations centennial celebrations in Philadelphia in 1876, the spirit of America's relationship to its land in the next century had been established. The Worlds Fair held in Fairmont Park served as an exemplar of the future landscape:

Here in Fairmont Park, within topographically defined limits, was a characteristically American organization of space: the interaction between landscape and architecture, the areas with specialized functions, the emphasis on the linear process; here also was displayed the principal of regulated flow—of energy, of materials, of people. The whole world could see and wonder at the qualities of Americans: their indifference to history, their delight in organizing space and time and labor, their eagerness to acquire new ideas, their abundant creativity. It is from this event, all but forgotten by most of us, that we can well date the birth of a new relationship between the American people and their landscape.<sup>8</sup>

This new American space revealed a more complex relationship with the land; at the same time, its abstractions helped disconnect people from place. Landscapes created after the Civil War were influenced by a process-oriented logic that operated at regional or national scales; fast disappearing were landscapes created by individuals and communities. The identification of specific landscape forms with particular locales was obscured by the technological ability to reshape any environment to meet human needs. As the unique qualities of places were in many cases literally bulldozed, there were fewer examples of identifiable landscape forms that emerged from existing contexts. As a result, places of natural, cultural or historical significance became rarities that

increased their value while also diminishing expectations for those qualities to be present in everyday landscapes. Large-scale specialized and segregated spaces were carved out of formerly heterogeneous landscapes. Expressions of this logic would create the American systems of railroads, highways, suburbs, office parks, and commercial strips as well as inform the ideologies of the planning and design professions in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Reviewing *American Space* in 1974, Helen and Daniel Horowitz evaluated its contribution to an historical understanding of the period after the Civil War: “What Jackson develops in *American Space* is a thesis of considerable importance and suggestive power...It is a stimulating book and an excellent point of departure for those wishing to examine the material culture of modern America.<sup>9</sup> In fact this is an apt description for the body of Jackson’s work between 1951 and 1972. Looking at Jackson’s writings between the beginning of *Landscape* magazine and the publication of *American Space*, there is a coherent presentation of the development of the modern landscape that had not been adequately described by other scholars who either focused on modern planning and design or pre-modern landscapes.

*Landscape* magazine’s influence has been established throughout this dissertation as a forum for a variety of critical voices during the 1950s and 1960s that were reacting to the modern American landscape; but looking back on some of the contributions it is clear that they are artifacts of their time without much relevance to current issues. So why does Jackson’s work continue to be referenced as being of such contemporary concern? The first answer to that question can be found in the wider distribution and continued availability of his work. *American Space* was the first of a

series of books Jackson would publish over the rest of his life that would include *The Necessity for Ruins and Other Topics* (1980), *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape* (1984) and *A Sense of Place, a Sense of Time* (1994).<sup>10</sup> J.B. Jackson's essays from the magazine—many of them republished in the above collections and the collections of other editors<sup>11</sup>—were given new relevance and increased visibility. The generations of interested readers who would not be inclined to dust off the archived bound volumes of *Landscape* would still be exposed to Jackson's writings.

At the same time, he would spend the fifteen years after stepping down from *Landscape* lecturing full time, splitting the academic year between Harvard's Department of Visual and Environmental Studies (ironically located in Le Corbusier's only building in North America, the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts) and Berkeley's College of Environmental Design. Who he was lecturing to in these programs were the future academics and leaders in numerous fields, but especially aspiring landscape architects, architects and planners.

Geography during this period was in the midst of a "humanistic" reaction against the positivism of the previous decades. Notably, the humanistic revolution was being led by many of the contributors to *Landscape* during the 1960s: Yi Fu Tuan, David Lowenthal and others. Jackson had provided a space for ideas in geography that were out of fashion; when they returned to prominence others would lead the way. But Jackson's example and ideas would also inform the next generation of geographers. Denis Cosgrove, looking back on the occasion of the 1998 re-publication of his influential *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape* (1984), admitted:

...it is obvious to me how far it draws upon J.B. Jackson's unique capacity to interpret landscapes iconographically and intelligently while remaining true to

the everyday experience of landscape as a setting for life and work...More evident perhaps is the influence of his consistent demonstration that landscape emerges from specific geographical, social and cultural circumstances; that landscape is embedded in the practical uses of the physical world as nature and territory, while its intellectual shaping in America has drawn upon deep resources of myth and memory...<sup>12</sup>

At a conference held in October 2010 at Syracuse University's School of Architecture on the topic of the "formerly urban" condition of many depopulating American cities, Charles Waldheim, the current chair of the Department of Landscape Architecture at Harvard and lead proponent of the relatively new field of "landscape urbanism," evoked both Jackson and Cosgrove in a session on "The Potential of Landscape" as key scholars who considered landscape from a postmodern perspective. In fact, it is this notion of Jackson's work as being in the vanguard of contemporary ideas about landscape that is the most important indicator of his continued relevance.

### **The Potential of Landscape**

By documenting the realities of the changing modern American landscape rather than perpetuating its retrogressive and romantic associations with social and environmental stability, John Brinckerhoff Jackson and his magazine *Landscape* created the context for better understanding landscape's potential for the future. The 20<sup>th</sup> century disciplines that could clearly see themselves as modern—who were in effect, self-consciously modern—were agile in their ability to challenge previous intellectual regimes. In literature, philosophy and art, modernism was both a celebration of, and a critical response to, the modern world. In contrast, during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, landscape was either viewed simplistically as a pre-modern or anti-modern milieu or it was functionally invisible and held no dialectic potential at all. Landscape's stagnant 20<sup>th</sup>

century was caused by an inability to see landscape as a product of societal values, cultural difference, technological innovation, economic power (or lack of power) and ecological complexity—in short, as a creative and created medium.

J.B. Jackson is often referred to as a pioneer of “landscape studies.” This multidisciplinary concern is difficult to define, however its lack of rigid disciplinary associations suggests why Jackson’s influence can still be felt in a dozen disciplines today. Yet, this dissertation makes an argument for Jackson’s importance beyond his contributions to individual disciplines and his general encouragement to be more aware of the landscape around us. If his import as a scholar can be simply described as an inspirational tour guide to the American landscape, he will be fondly remembered and revisited through occasional readings of his essays by college students. But, as I hope this dissertation has made clear, Jackson and his magazine recovered landscape as a potent cultural medium that can only be understood through a radical questioning of long held assumptions about the environments we inhabit. While Jackson would make no such claim of his work, it is clear that his descriptions of the realities of the modern American landscape made it possible to conceive of a landscape after modernism. Depending on how one defines these terms this landscape after modernism might be described as the postmodern, the late modern or the post-industrial landscape.

If one of postmodernism’s tropes is to foreground the “other”—those entities that have been oppressed by dominant universalizing narratives, then considering landscape may be a radically postmodern act. Since the Renaissance, landscape has played the role of “other” with respect to the modernizing western world: at once representing resistance to the progress of urbanity while maintaining an inextricably

dichotomous relationship to the built city. J.B. Jackson's recognition of "other" landscapes fundamentally challenged the veil of modernist orthodoxy that relegated landscape to the abstraction of "open space."

In the wake of Jackson's example, landscape reemerged as an implicit attack on utopian rationalism. Instead it privileged the individual rather than the collective, the everyday rather than the formalistic, the experiential rather than the definitive, complexity rather than the neatly ordered and planned. This was expressed in both academic and artistic spheres—landscape as an idea returned at the same time that art rediscovered landscape through the work of the land artists discussed in the previous chapter.

This reemergence of a more robust conception of landscape as a form of resistance to the dominance of rational utopianism was radical and became the way we understand landscape in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Most importantly, landscape became a place for dichotomies to break down: nature and cultural, no longer opposing concepts for most academics and practitioners can now be considered in the same rhetorical breath. While the imagery of the sublime, beautiful and picturesque are still with us, landscape is much more than symbolic imagery. As the landscape architect James Corner stated in his book *Recovering Landscape* (1999):

It is in this deeper sense that landscape as place and milieu may provide a more substantial image than that of the distanced veil, for the structures of place help a community to establish collective identity and meaning. This is the constructive aspect of landscape, its capacity to enrich the cultural imagination and provide a basis for rootedness and connection, for home and belonging.<sup>13</sup>

Landscape is now a less static, more fluid concept. Its contested nature makes it more vital. As Henri Lefebvre developed in his 1968 book *The Urban Revolution*, the

distinction between the city and country was obliterated by the infiltration of urban processes across national territories<sup>14</sup>—a theme Jackson had repeatedly suggested in describing how modern the rural environment had become. Since the 1960s these processes have not slowed down or reversed. What this means is that all landscapes are, in essence, urban landscapes. It is through this recognition of the reality of the urban condition—that city and country are one—which landscape’s potential provides a host of creative alternatives for the 21<sup>st</sup> century city.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> J.B. Jackson, “Notes and Comments,” *Landscape* 17, No. 3 (Spring 1968), 1. A brief, characteristically unassuming note appeared at the top of the “Notes and Comments” section: “As of the Autumn 1968 issue (Volume 18, No. 1) the editor and publisher of *Landscape* will be Blair Boyd, of Berkeley, California.” The magazine would successfully continue under Boyd until it finally folded in 1996, the year Jackson died. Blair Boyd’s role as editor was quite different from Jackson’s; in fact his personal perspective was essentially invisible. His editorship, which would last 10 years longer than Jackson’s, relied on the voice of its contributors to provide the content and direction for the magazine, however, its tone did not significantly change. Jackson would maintain a connection through his occasional contributing essays.

<sup>2</sup> J.B. Jackson, “1951-1968: Postscript,” *Landscape* 18, No. 1 (Winter 1969), 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> J.B. Jackson, “Notes and Comments: The Non-Environment,” *Landscape* 17, No. 1 (Autumn 1967), 1.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> John Brinckerhoff Jackson, *American Space: The Centennial Years, 1865-1876* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1972).

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 239-240.

<sup>9</sup> Helen L. Horowitz and Daniel Horowitz, review of “American Space,” by J.B. Jackson, *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 5, No. 2 (Autumn 1974), 337, 340.

<sup>10</sup> J.B. Jackson, *The Necessity for Ruins and Other Topics* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1980); *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984); *A Sense of Place, A Sense of Time* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).

<sup>11</sup> Most notable by Ervin H. Zube, *Landscapes: selected writings of J.B. Jackson* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1970); Ervin H. Zube and Margaret



J. Zube, *Changing Rural Landscapes* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1977); and D.W. Meinig, *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes: Geographical Essays* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979); and most recently, Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Landscape in Sight: Looking at America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).

<sup>12</sup> Denis E. Cosgrove, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1998 (1984)), xi.

<sup>13</sup> James Corner, "Introduction: Recovering Landscape as a Critical Cultural Practice," *Recovering Landscape: Essays in Contemporary Landscape Architecture* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999), 12.

<sup>14</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution* (The University of Minnesota Press, 2003 (1968)).

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