

OUT OF THE WOODS
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Landschaft and Linearity Two Archetypes of Landscape

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Older Americans dislike the man-made environment. They call it monotonous, homogenized, commercial, or chaotic. Their adjectives presume a standard of judgment with which contemporary "built space" is compared and found vexingly inferior. The standard is a remembered spatial order so complete and so perfectly reflective of the good life that it survives as an unqualified archetype in the national memory.¹ It is the primary essence of landscape.

Landscape is a slippery word. In the sixteenth century *landschaft* defined a compact territory extensively modified by permanent inhabitants. A *landschaft* was not a town exactly, nor a manor or a village, but a self-sufficient, fully realized construct of fields, paths, and clustered structures encircled by unimproved forest or marsh.² The modern word is transformed, abused in phrases like "the landscape of injustice," which deny its ancient relations to land and to shape.³ Vestiges of the archetypal *landschaft* endured well into the nineteenth century across Europe and the United States, and while the form no longer orders space or language, its memory controls men's imaginations.

Landschaft (or *landskap* or *landschap*) made perfect sense to Germans, Danes, and Dutchmen accustomed to compact, discrete space, but seventeenth-century English merchants and sea captains smitten with Dutch scenery painting took home only its sound. Thus, *landschap* entered the English language as *landskip*,

and referred at first only to the pictures imported from Holland. Very quickly, though, it was used in new ways. Soon it defined any natural or rural view that approximated those painted by the Dutch, but by mid-eighteenth century signified the ornamental gardens of great country estates. Gardeners, reshaping fields and woods according to picturesque standards, made it a verb, and artists made it a synonym for *depict*.⁴ Implicit in every definition is the old-country awareness of knowable space, however, and the contemporary critic reviewing "the moral and intellectual landscape" vaguely apprehends it.⁵

Landscape endures and thrives because the English language is particularly unsuited to topographical discussion. In the early years of the seventeenth century, the English countryside changed so dramatically that men abandoned their traditional spatial vocabulary. *Vill*, for example, once defined something like a *landschaft*, a collection of dwellings and other structures crowded together within a circle of pastures, meadows, planting fields, and woodlots. Like the Anglo-Saxon *tithing*, and like *landschaft*, it connoted the inhabitants of the place and their obligations to one another and to their land. By 1650, however, *village* had supplanted *vill*; the encircling ring of improved land and its involved maintenance were far less important to men moving freely from one cluster of dwellings to the next. Like *hamlet* and *town*, *village* soon defined only the built-up nucleus, not the surrounding fields or the intricate web of interpersonal association implicit in earlier arrangements of space.⁶ Traders and other travelers thought in spaces larger than *vills*, and seized on *landscape* to define their vague perceptions of places now dependent on roads and long-distance commerce. In their eyes, a landscape was an extensive, cultivated expanse dotted with villages, towns, and cities; it was best seen from a mountain top, and best depicted in a painting or on a map, not in prose.

Travelers found it difficult to describe landscapes because their view was either too broad or too narrow. From a distance many structures and land forms seemed insignificant; up close they were extremely complex. Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century spatial description falls into two categories: the sweeping catalogs of large regions written by observers confined to well-traveled roads, and the intimate depictions of compact places penned by residents or long-time visitors.⁷ Until late in the nineteenth century, the built environment easily accommodated the two schools of observers and descriptions multiplied. But suddenly, at the close of the century in the United States and a few years later in Britain, the rate of spatial change accelerated and observers learned that old perceptions no longer applied to space transformed beyond comprehension.

Henry James made the discovery for himself, when he returned to the United States in 1904, after an absence of twenty-four years. Twelve months later he left for England, defeated among other things by space he no longer recognized. Despite his misgivings, he published *The American Scene* in 1906.⁸ It is a cryptic travelogue, filled with misadventure, disappointment, and disgust. Unwittingly, he had arrived in the United States near the end of a forty-year transformation. The nation was changing from a pedestrian to a vehicular orientation.

The American Scene is crucial because it identifies the transformation. James did not understand the changes he described, but his book enumerates the most significant of the time, and orders them against a backdrop of traditional space. James oscillated between backward areas and the most up-to-date cities, between Berkshire farmhouses and Manhattan hotels. He landed in New York, was astonished by its skyline, and fled after several days to the quiet of New Hampshire, Cape Cod, and Cambridge. From there, his wits collected, he returned to New York and plunged into the Bowery, Lower East Side, and Manhattan, striving to experience a city wholly reshaped. After several exhausting weeks he retreated to the unchanged stillness of Newport, and after a second rest set out for Boston. His last exploratory thrust into the booming resort areas of Florida forced him home to England for a final recuperation. American space overtaxed James's powers of observation and ability to control composition. In the end, description and analysis proved impossible.

James was secure in compact places—the abandoned farms of New Hampshire or the fishing villages of Cape Cod or the small towns of the Berkshires, each with its elm-lined street, white-painted houses, and quiet. In such places, he remarked, “the scene is everywhere the same; whereby tribute is always ready and easy, and you are spared all shocks of surprise and saved any extravagance of discrimination.” Harvard College drowsing in the early September sunlight, Newport deserted in off-season, George Washington’s monumental Mount Vernon, and “the old Spanish Fort, the empty, sunny, grassy shell by the low pale shore” of Saint Augustine are all pedestrian places. James walked about them, around their perimeters as was his custom with European towns, then strolled through them, pausing to compare present with past, or to marvel at details missed on earlier, less leisurely visits.⁹ Such places, for good or bad, were “finished,” and acquiring a thin patina to time.

No such patina concealed the new roughness of urban and suburban form; most of *The American Scene* documents James’s excursions in understanding it. New York was like a pin cushion, he noted after his return from New England,

studded with skyscrapers “grossly tall and grossly ugly” that overpowered churches and funneled winter gales along streets jammed with electric cars. The trolleys, “cars of juggernaut in their power to squash,” terrified him, and in a moment of desperation he determined that they were “all there measurably *is* of the American scene.”¹⁰ They prevented his crossing streets, surrounded monuments, destroyed any hope of quiet, and at times kept him from entering his hotel. New Yorkers skirted death at their fenders and fought for life at their doors as frantically as they did at elevators. Wherever he stopped, James was jostled and shoved or warned by gongs and by shouts to get out of the way. In New York he took refuge in Central Park, in Boston he rediscovered the twisting, peaceful residential streets of Beacon Hill, and in Baltimore he explored the hall and court of Johns Hopkins University, searching constantly for pedestrian islands in vehicular space. Bridges, especially New York’s bridges, “the horizontal sheaths of pistons working at high pressure day and night, and subject, one apprehends with perhaps inconsistent gloom, to certain, to fantastic, to merciless multiplication,” are his symbol of urban form and existence.¹¹ He could not walk in the way of pistons and view space at his leisure.

So James began touring on wheels. Much of New York he saw from inside trolleys, and elsewhere he traveled by train and by automobile, at first fascinated by “the great loops thrown out by the lasso of observation from the wonder-working motor car.” But soon he tired of his moving vantage point, and delighted in discovering a small village while his automobile underwent repair. Most of the time, however, he traveled by train, “the heavy, dominant American train” which he said made the countryside exist for it and whose great terminals made the cities’ only portals. Railroad schedules determined his itinerary; one told him when he must desert Salem, and another allowed him only fifteen minutes in which to glimpse Savannah. In the small hours of the morning, during a two-hour layover in a deserted Charleston station, James set out to examine the workings and meaning of the great junction. He turned back, convinced in the gloom lit only by signal lamps and flaring fireboxes that the wisest course was “to stand huddled just where one was.”¹² Later, as he raced south in a well-upholstered Pullman, he was suddenly aware that he could not recall when Florida began, so uniform was his high-speed view. Caught between two kinds of space, and between two ways of seeing, James determined to go home.

Unlike earlier observers of the United States, James was forced to travel at high speed, and to interpret space ordered about lines of transportation. As true as they are, the commentaries of his predecessors were of little use. Timothy

Dwight's four-volume *Travels in New England and New York*, for example, is superb-topographical analysis. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, however, its author moved almost as slowly as seventeenth-century English travelers, walking his horse while he scrutinized his environs, and discovering local history each evening at an inn. Dwight paused to inquire into crops and wildflowers, to examine soils and industries and ferries, and to question fellow travelers about the road ahead. He gazed from hilltops on towns below, criticizing their dwellings and street arrangements, and enjoying countless moments of "profound contemplation and playfulness of mind."¹³ Fifty years later, Frederick Law Olmsted explored the slave states; like Dwight, he rode horseback, following back roads and trails into the center of the South, talking with storekeepers, teamsters, and children, and puzzling over structures and fields.¹⁴ For Dwight and Olmsted, travel was a succession of minor discoveries and observations for deciphering vague maps, and of stopping again and again to examine clusters of dwellings or a new mill or a rundown farm. Olmsted's volumes, like Dwight's, chronicle self-paced travel in knowable space, the essence of the Central Park experience Olmsted devised for New York City. Travel according to his own terms, in space immediately intelligible, was denied to James; later writers such as Post, Dreiser, and Stewart adopted automobile speed and perspective as unthinkingly as Dwight and Olmsted had adopted theirs.¹⁵ *The American Scene*, then, perceives pedestrian and vehicular space through a paradigm congruent with neither.

Pedestrian Space

Smallness was both absolute and subjective in the typical medieval *landschaft*. The twelve- to fifteen-square-mile area was home to perhaps three hundred people satisfying almost all of their own wants. Every rod of ground was fully recognized as vitally important. Meadows, arable fields, and pastures were precisely divided and bounded by paths and balks, and everyone spoke a vocabulary of landmarks.¹⁶ Space was symbol. A family's dwelling bespoke economic and social status as clearly as its fields expressed skill at husbandry; every spot was invested with memory or some other significance—the copse where someone saw the Devil, the corner where the cart collapsed, the hill struck twice by lightning long ago. To move about the *landschaft* was to move within symbol, to be always certain of past and present circumstance. The laborer, woodcutter, baker, and husbandman understood each other's responsibilities and associated each responsibility with a specific place. By place, men understood social position and spatial location: the woodcutter's place was hewing timber in the woodlots, not directing

apprentices at the bakeshop. Cycles of birth, marriage, and death, of sowing and reaping, of building and rebuilding all found expression in space.

Individuals were subordinate to the group. Nowhere was the subordination more clearly objectified than in the common fields. Here fields of wheat, rye, or barley were plowed at the same time, planted to the same crop, harvested at the same moment, and opened at the same time to all livestock. Each householder owned one or more "strips" in the fields and was entitled to their produce, but he accepted the will of the majority concerning their care.¹⁷ Common-field farming was never innovative. Most husbandmen distrusted new seeds and plowing techniques, and forbade would-be innovators from experiments that might destroy the harvest of all. The most respected husbandman was he who best kept the corporate tradition, not he who hoped to fence off his strip from his neighbors' and selfishly experiment.

Inside the ring of fields stood a cluster of houses and perhaps a church, all focused about a roland, that aged tree, hewn shaft, or market cross that objectified the idea of *axis mundi*, the armature about which *landschaft* life revolved. But each dwelling was of extraordinary importance too, for it alone confirmed status and rights. No one might reside in the *landschaft* unless he was a householder or under a householder's oversight, and no one might possess strips in the common fields unless he also owned all or part of a dwelling.¹⁸ House-building and admission to the *landschaft* were strictly controlled. If the fields could be expanded and greater harvests obtained from them, new houses might be authorized for the younger sons who would not inherit their parents' dwellings and strips. Forests and swamps made any expansion difficult while slow illnesses kept populations almost static. New houses and new householders were few, every *landschaft* grew slowly. Like the gypsies, discharged soldiers, and other suspect vagrants of European folktales, drifters were rarely invited to settle, but instead urged onward, away from the place of settled men.

Houses were hardly private. In fact, privacy was scarcely understood as a concept, let alone a right. Dwellings were crowded with extended families, and rooms served many purposes. Gossip made much indoor activity known outside as well, and priests and elders were empowered and expected to enter dwellings unannounced if they suspected wrongdoing. Almost every resident of a *landschaft* accepted community values and standards as his own, however, and while domestic mischief and sin were common, major offenses were few. For such misdeeds the *landschaft* had a terrible punishment. It banished the offender and broke down his dwelling, erasing all memory of him and his crime.¹⁹ Broken men were

few in medieval Europe, but they testified to the power of group values. Position in society and in space was the essence of individual identity, and banishment and house-breaking destroyed identity completely.

Chaos surrounded every *landschaft*, whether or not the forest actually enclosed the fields and dwellings. Away from the *landschaft* individual identity diminished, and men were thought to succumb to the lure of the wild. Woodcutters, huntsmen, and others who moved between ordered space and pathless wilderness were slightly distrusted by their stay-at-home neighbors. Many folktales begin at a woodcutter's hut, already removed from strict community control on the edge of a forest. Children and young women enter the forest and discover good or evil according to their character.²⁰ Helpful, obedient, self-sacrificing children, those who have internalized group values, discover piles of silver, magic herbs, or other treasure after triumphing over witches and robbers, and return to the *landschaft* wiser and richer. Selfish, misbehaved children and beautiful but self-centered maidens, find ashes, dragons, and sex fiends, and are punished or destroyed, or else join the evildoers of the wild. In the folk imagination, the *landschaft* is more than the objective correlative of order and safety. It is a continuous reinforcement of character, and its inhabitants desert it with trepidation.

Sometimes, of course, chaos intruded upon order. Any field left untilled grew up at once in weeds and brush, and wolves and wild boars sometimes foraged among sheepfolds and fields, occasionally slaying a husbandman trudging home after dusk. But it was the human evil of the forest that people feared most, the eldritch robbers and traders and wanderers who practiced goety, rape, and theft, and who infected children with new ideas. Out of the forest came every evil, from sorcerers to plague, against all of which the *landschaft* was almost powerless. The order of the *landschaft* was never secure, no matter how strictly enforced from within. External disruption was always imminent.

The *landschaft* was, therefore, the spatial expression of identity, order, and value, a kind of collective self-portrait of small-group life, and a great instrument of social control. Like an island, the *landschaft* was a defined place, across which a privileged traveler walked without hesitation and without danger.

Roadsides

The integrity of the *landschaft* was broken by princes and kings intent on consolidating their rule. From the fifteenth century onward, at first hesitantly and then decisively, they made forests and other wastes safe for travel. Pacification was far more advanced in some realms than in others by the end of the sixteenth

century, but everywhere alert men sensed new possibilities for adventure and profit.²¹ The new concern for roads, and for exploration, developed as slowly as political unity and long-distance overland commerce, but eventually it entered the popular imagination as *strassenromantik*. The romance of the road found expression in ballads and tales and, most importantly, in wandering. The newly safe roads which passed from *landschaft* into forest promised excitement and fortune. Folktale after folktale begins with a ploughman or tradesman accosted from the highway by a traveler and enticed into adventure. The highway clearly expressed an authority beyond that of *landschaft* elders. It announced the rule of kings and promised royal protection from danger. Highway robbery was infinitely more than theft by violence—it was an affront to royal power and a disruption of the new order of the road. By any name, *camino real*, *richtstrasse*, or king's highway, the long-distance road was a new sort of space.

Unlike the path between fields or woodlots or dwellings, which belonged to its abutters and was limited in use, the road belonged to the wayfarer and to the king. Each *landschaft* along the highway was commanded to maintain its share of roadbed in order that armies and couriers—and merchants—might not be delayed.²² Self-sufficiency vanished as capitals and large towns drained surrounding regions of talent and produced and flooded local markets with fashionable goods. Roads became ever more important to the places they linked, for along them flowed wealth and ideas greater than those of any one *landschaft*. Local values contested with those of the road; the husbandman prized honesty, but the peddler prized sharpness. As roads grew safer and more passable, carts and wagons and finally coaches replaced pack horses, and the flow of wealth and information increased further still. No longer was the traveler an oddity to be welcomed or turned away; he became an expected figure in—but not of—every *landschaft*.

Professional travelers—merchants, peddlers, carters—had only the road as home, although they often claimed residence in some place along it. They had a new view of the countryside, for they saw only what was visible from the road and they used only what was immediately accessible from it. Increasingly, the roadside was adapted to their needs. First came inns and stables for pack animals, then corrals for driven herds, and then bridges and toll houses and eventually directional signs and mileposts. It was at this time that *village* replaced *will* because fields and woodlots and responsibility for them interested travelers far less than a good inn and perhaps a blacksmith shop. Eventually, the *landschaft* surrendered its identity to the highway, and was known not as a unique place but as one of many settlements along a well-known road.

For the sedentary inhabitants of the *landschaft*, the wayfarer was personified *other*, against which they evaluated themselves. In the days when roads were so few that traveling was almost unknown—and German folktales collected at mid-nineteenth century mention such times—adolescents had only their parents and adult neighbors as models. The absence of different values and exotic behavior made internalization of *landschaft* mores simple. Only when travelers provided new standards to any youth astute enough to linger about the inn or stable yard after nightfall did socialization break down. Travelers were anonymous, and their larger experience was approached with a mixture of distrust and deference by adults and adolescents alike. The road introduced the kind of marked change in interpersonal relationships which one usually associated only with city life.²³ Strangers met knowing they might not meet again, judged each other as types according to dress and occupation, and talked of matters of importance only among themselves. It was a rare carter who was deeply interested in the state of the crops, and a rarer husbandman who cared about the weak bridge thirty miles to the east. But traveler and native alike were interested in conversation, the traveler to pass his evening and the native to learn something of the larger world. While at first no one noticed, the web of corporate ties connoted by *landschaft* and *vill* was torn.

Until the nineteenth century, *landschaft* and road coexisted, but ever more fitfully. It was not that travelers were murdered in inns or daughters ran off with teamsters, but that the life of the highway was becoming removed from the life of the *landschaft*. Road signs made asking directions unnecessary, and the improved maps, road surfaces, and police ordered by stronger governments permitted travel even after nightfall.²⁴ The turnpike avoided some settlements in its quest for directness, and mailcoach passengers scarcely glimpsed villages far from the route.²⁵ Railroads only sharpened the dichotomy between traveler and inhabitant already implicit in turnpike design. Trains followed their rights-of-way too quickly for casual communication between passengers and spectators, and forced riders to look sideways at a silent blur. Soon space was ordered about the track; towns focused on stations, water towers, and grain elevators which blocked passengers' views of the towns. As factories and warehouses moved next to the rails, trains ran for miles through a tunnel of structure. The railroad traveler was denied a long-distance view and the opportunity of stopping to analyze nearby space. The inhabitants of trackside areas could in turn only gape at the faces staring behind the glass.

Increasingly, travelers suffered from a curious *anomie* described as early as 1798 in Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner":

Like one, that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread
And having once turned round walks on,
And turns no more his head;
Because he knows, a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread.²⁶

The fiend snuffing at the heels of every traveler is the fiend of homelessness, of lack of place in the world of men. Most travelers fix their heart and eye on a refuge somewhere ahead—and ignore the roadside world in their haste to arrive. What they see from the road is landscape, the not-quite-understood complex of dwellings, fields, factories, and other artifacts of human work placed among natural landforms and vegetation or in totally modified space. If the view is chiefly natural or rural it qualifies as scenery, and the traveler choosing a "scenic route" knows he should appreciate it, if only as a relief from man-made complexity. But all too often, man-made, not natural shapes and spaces dominate his route, and the hurrying observer is stunned by elaborate man-made forms having no immediately apparent use or arrangement or uniqueness. He looks away and thinks on that place which he does understand but which no word, not *community*, not *neighborhood*, and certainly not *landschaft* accurately identifies. There is only his personal being congruent with man-made form.

James defined the power of high-speed, long-distance travel in the title of his book; *The American Scene* is concerned not with scenery but with scenes, places transformed by man. James could not avoid such places because the highway and railroad constantly directed him to them. While he was honest enough to look at them, to describe them, and to try to appreciate them, he judged them by older, far different places, the backward vestiges of America's *landschaft* past. He longed for discrete, knowable territories where social order and man-made space coincided, where the disruption of highway was unknown.

Utopias

James was not alone in his search for knowable space. Dozens of other observers rejected America's late-nineteenth-century spatial order and retreated into historical, local-color, or nature writing.²⁷ The reorganization of space about railroads and motor highways sparked a flurry of futurist thought in utopian novels and polemics. Earlier Americans knew little of the genre, perhaps because experimental communities had once flourished in fact, on cheap, back-country land away from censorious eyes. By the 1870s, however, most of the communities had

disbanded in the face of mechanized agriculture and manufacturing, and the dream of social harmony in ordered space reappeared in the writings of utopians.

Most of the fictional utopias are characterized by social and economic systems derived from the theories of Herbert Spencer, Henry George, or the Bible, and are served by mechanical devices—electric motors, air-conditioning units, and even automatic bed-makers—predicted in scores of magazine articles. No master plan or consensus of opinion inspired the shaping of utopian space, however, and the American visionaries were left to their own imaginations. It is startling, then, that the same spatial features, curious as they are, occur repeatedly. The striking uniformity of utopian built environments is not a matter of vagueness; most writers were lavish with detail and many delighted in engravings of city plans and building elevations. It was a shared conviction that space was no longer knowable, and a shared dislike of several especially pernicious features in particular, that prompted nineteenth-century writers, like Thomas More four centuries earlier, to envision perfection.

A geometry of well-being informs almost all utopian space. Wildernesses, mountains, and dangerous seats usually surround the perfect place and protect it from the profane world; chaotic nature rarely intrudes. The Martian utopia described in Henry Olerich's *A Cityless and Countryless World* (1893) is seemingly without hills or valleys, its topographical monotony broken only by buildings.²⁸ The future United States of Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* (1888), Bradford Peck's *The World a Department Store* (1900), and Edgar Chambers's *Roadtown* (1910) likewise lacks great forests or swamps.²⁹ Most of the territories are completely gardened. There is little construction or other modification because social perfection has engendered perfection of space. Every problem confronted by industrializing America is neatly solved.

In nearly every vision the marriage of country and city is consummated without the trauma of suburbia. Olerich's Martian visitor tells his American hosts that noisy, dirty cities are "detrimental to an orderly, well-regulated society," though he is quick to add that farm life is a social and economic waste too. The orderly solution to urban congestion and rural isolation, he explains, is the "community," an arrangement of apartment houses carefully sited along the perimeter of a great agricultural enclosure. Peck and Bellamy bring rural joy to everyone by filling their airy cities with shade trees and promenades. Peck by throwing together back yards and demolishing offensive structures, Bellamy by judicious planting

of open squares. Chambers's Roadtown extends indefinitely across farm land, a sinuous chain of two-story row houses, each with a flower garden in front and a vegetable patch behind, and public buildings linked by a basement railroad and rooftop walks. In each utopia, farmers share in the charms of reformed city life, and all residents enjoy gardened nature—but not wilderness.

Single-family housing, except in Roadtown, is gone, along with home cooking, parlor entertainment, and housework. Communal restaurant facilities provide choice food and conversation, and the theater is the focus of recreation, though amusement parks, athletic fields, and gymnasias are scattered everywhere. A new—or very old—sense of community finds expression in malls, shopping spaces, and public parks. Even the telephone and music phone, while providing solitary entertainment of highest quality, are poor substitutes for social visits and the theater. Free time in Cooperative City and Roadtown is never private time, but time devoted to public affairs. The loner and the hermit are unknown, and indeed have no place in the *landschaft*-like utopian world.

Work is stimulating and deeply satisfying. Everyone takes turns at the boring jobs—serving in the communal restaurants or driving sight-seeing carriages—though most arduous tasks are lightened by such machines as Olerich's electric-powered farm tractor. The drudgery of housework in particular is vanquished, partly by mechanical invention and partly by communal laundries, kitchens, and furnaces. Women are free to garden, read, visit, sew, or cook, though many choose to attend the theater with friends. Factory work is meaningful too, even if it is given over to an army of young citizens, by its association with community advancement. Repeatedly, the importance of small workshops—Chambers locates a workroom in the lower level of every Roadtown house—is emphasized as the spatial manifestation of pleasant, soul-satisfying work. There is little or no separation of work space and home in the utopias. The smokeless, noiseless electric machinery is unimportant in the utopian vision of work as creative play. It is the small-group companionship, healthful work space, and beautifully finished products that satisfy the workers, not gadgets.

The companionship of the theater and shop extends beyond each citizen's immediate acquaintance to the larger community, finding expression in monumental building. Theaters are, after all, recreational, and most writers, terrified of offending sectarian readers, substituted the lecture hall and government building for the cathedrals which might otherwise order utopian space. Citizens gather for education and decision making in the grandest structures of utopia, almost in-

variably sited in exquisitely planted public squares. Education is rational and politics are straightforward and honest; children enter school buildings happily and adults administrative halls without hesitation. Peck's Cooperative City, for all its squares, avenues, and diagonal streets, focuses on a great administration complex, "situated in the center of several acres of land laid out by leading landscape gardeners in the most artistic manner, setting off the magnificence of the enormous building which accommodated the numerous offices and legislative halls of the executive boards."³⁰ At the center of almost every utopian place, rationality and right government take physical form.

Roads, and sometimes railroads, monorails, and trolley lines, touch every part of every utopia, making the monumental center immediately accessible. Nearly every writer resolves communication difficulties first with telephones, and then with highways, boulevards, and service streets. Roadtown, of course, is a road, the epitome of Chambless's determination to order linear settlement. Beneath its gently curving superstructure run several railroads for long-distance and local transportation of freight passengers. Its continuous roof is devoted to a steam-heated, glass-enclosed promenade paralleled on each side by bicycle and roller-skating paths, benches and jogging tracks. It is on this recreational street, Chambless predicts, "that Easter hats will be shown and neighbors' crops discussed and new acquaintances made and local pride developed."³¹ The less ambitious plans of other writers also stress roads both as recreational and social places, and as boundary lines. Bellamy's futuristic Boston succeeds as an artistic device because of its broad streets and grand vistas, and Peck's utopia is crisscrossed with extravagant avenues. But the roads and railroads, and even Roadtown itself, lead nowhere in particular. They are not strands in larger networks, and are rarely used for long-distance travel. Indeed travel, except for an afternoon's diversion, is uncommon, for there is no place better worth seeing. Strangers, except for the nineteenth-century narrator-visitors, are unknown, for the broad avenues terminate in dimly known regions inside the wall of mountains or seashores that ring the utopian places. For all their width and beauty, utopian roads are really paths.

Thomas More would have found himself at home, for the utopian spaces are little different from his own. In 1516 More abandoned the utopian vision which had satisfied Europeans for fifteen centuries. Unlike Heaven, his Utopia was just over the horizon, somewhere beyond the New World discoveries. Like his American counterparts four centuries later, More was troubled by social and spatial changes. Feudalism was giving way to capitalism, and the old rhythms of rural life deteriorated. Intellectual authority weakened before the onslaught of empirical

science, and the unity of the church was threatened. Order lay beyond imagined equatorial regions filled with wild beasts, serpents, and savage men, in an ideal commonwealth where good sense, sound learning, and mercy find expression in space. His fifty-four city-states, "all spacious and magnificent, identical in language, traditions, customs and laws," are "similar also in layout, and everywhere, as far as the nature of the ground permits, similar even in appearance."³² Each is intimately associated with the life of its agricultural land, for every inhabitant shares in the farm work. Utopia's capital, the walled town of Amaurotum, rivals Peck's Cooperative City as a paradigm of order. Each of its three-story row houses fronts on a broad avenue and opens in the rear on a great common garden. A market building for the storage and sale of family handicrafts and the distribution of farm produce orders each quarter of the town, and common dining and recreation halls order every block. There are no hermits or idlers; everyone finds his community life and work satisfactory. The off-island world of Abraxa, the Indies, and all of Europe is only so much chaos in comparison.³³

More's book had several successors, but by mid-seventeenth century the genre was moribund. For two hundred years, utopian writing was displaced by travel narrative. Europeans and Americans, distracted by exotic customs and topography and lulled by faith in progress, paid little attention to the continuing disruption of small-scale community existence and space. Not until the impact of railroad was fully felt, and the meaning of trolley cars and automobiles surmised, did intellectuals discover that imageable space was fiction. Distraught and baffled by the seeming chaos of society and the built environment, most shut out the confusion by concentrating on bits and pieces of personal significance—the family or circle of friends, the isolated village or farm. Others turned to utopia and city planning, reinvoking the memory of *landschaft*.

The *landschaft* is the controlling spatial metaphor in most sixteenth- and nineteenth-century utopian writing, and in city planning literature of all ages, including our own.³⁴ Like the *landschaft*, the utopian place is ringed by wilderness. It is also fully realized by its inhabitants, characterized by home-based farm work and handicrafts, focused about a symbolic center, and interlaced with short-distance paths. Nineteenth-century city and regional planners, like their utopian contemporaries, fastened on the *landschaft* archetype too, finding utopia in long-lost New England villages or in Main Street towns. Their successors see it in green belt suburbs or in circular condominium complexes.³⁵ It is always the circular, clustered archetype that reigns as standard, be it a remembered and often romanticized *landschaft* or a perfectly contrived utopia.

Archetypes

In comparison with the archetypal standard, the man-made environment of the United States seems almost chaotic. The vehicular traveler is overwhelmed, then stupefied; views change too quickly, too dramatically for sustained high-speed study. Passengers close their eyes and doze, while drivers focus on the pavement ahead and grimly ignore the roadside scene. Meaning escapes the pedestrian an too. There is so much detail and so much variation that the walking seer edits his surroundings at once; he knows his house clearly enough, and his hotel and the museum, but he does not realize the buildings between.³⁶ Passenger and pedestrian alike have a snapshot vision of the built environment. They see bits and pieces of greater or less importance, but continuously significant space, because they see through the prism of *landschaft*.

This is the power of the ancient archetype of *landschaft*. It controls visions of what the built environment is, and shapes dreams of what it ought to be. It prevents men from realizing—and from loving—the space they inhabit.

But its power is weakening. The present post-industrial, post-modern age is also post-*landschaft*. The old significance of defined, imageable space is lost on today's children. They can hardly conceive of a medieval *landschaft* isolated from a wider world by feared wilderness, fully realized by every inhabitant, when space is defined by the road, and linearity shapes their vision of what space ought to be. In their *strassenromantik* of exploring and wandering, and in the fantasy and science fiction they so frequently read, the road and the quest are dominant metaphors. Thoreau and Henry Beston are suspect; they stay too much at home. Hobbits, apprentice magicians, and neophyte priests, on the other hand, are respected for searching in space, for following roads however dangerous and indistinct, and for confronting Coleridge's frightful fiends.³⁷ It is no accident that America's young people are not disturbed by interstate highways, shopping strips, and vast suburban sprawl. They are children of landscape, and see in the built environment a symmetry, order, and beauty scarcely visible to Henry James and to their parents.

The old archetypes of *landschaft*, then, no longer wholly shape images of home, neighborhood, and utopia.³⁸ Its resiliency, however, should not be underestimated. Archetypes are not created by the conscious, and they cannot be destroyed by it. They can only be submerged, ignored for a limited time. To ignore the archetype of *landschaft* and unthinkingly accept the landscape of linearity is as dangerous as to see all man-made space through the prism of *landschaft*. Implicit in the concept of landscape are two archetypes, the ancient one of *landschaft* and the venerable but younger one of the road.

Environmental Change in Colonial New Mexico

ROBERT MACCAMERON

In recent years scholars of North American history have paid increasing attention to the interrelationship between human societies and their physical and natural worlds. Their studies analyze the various ways in which people interact with their surrounding environment and how their choices affect not only the human community but the larger ecosystem as well. Just as nature shapes human society, humans, in significant and far-reaching ways, shape nature.

Exemplary works by William Cronon and Richard White have focused, from an ecological perspective, upon the English frontier experience in North America. Cronon, in his seminal book, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists and the Ecology of New England* (1982), demonstrates that the English colonization of New England produced a number of "fundamental reorganizations . . . in the region's plant and animal communities";¹ a result, fundamentally, of the "colonists' more exclusive sense of property and their involvement in a capitalist economy."² Similarly, White, in his study entitled *Land Use, Environment and Social Change: The Shaping of Island County, Washington* (1980), describes how the introduction of European technologies along with the Columbian Exchange of plants, animals, and diseases dramatically altered the operation of natural systems, producing in turn what one botanist has described as the "most cataclysmic series of events in the natural history of the area since the Ice Age."³

This chapter focuses upon environmental change in another area of North