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Glen

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Landscapes Issue on “Landscape: Heritage”

Volume 8, Issue 1, 2018

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ICLL Director's Prefatory Note

Hon. Professor Glen Phillips, Edith Cowan University

Volume 8, Issue 1 (2017) of *Landscapes*, "Landscape: Heritage," has been a wonderful work of scholarship by editor Dr Drew Hubbell, with support from new member of the Editorial Board, Dr David Gray of Dalarna University in Sweden. Congratulations to all the manifold contributors of articles, images poetry and fiction for this issue, and thanks to the many esteemed scholars who have refereed the chosen submissions.

This issue is one of the largest we have so far published and reflects very clearly the growing eminence of our journal on the Internet since its pioneering creation as a fully refereed journal so many years ago. Our many past editors are due thanks for working so zealously to extend its readership all around the globe from its modest origins at Edith Cowan University in the School of Arts and Humanities. Already we have received submissions for Volume 9, to be commenced November 2018.

I trust the current issue will provide absorbing and rewarding reading for all our regular subscribers to *Landscapes*.

Becoming Human in the Land: An Introduction to the Special Issue of *Landscapes*, “Heritage-Landscape”

J. Andrew “Drew” Hubbell (*Edith Cowan University, Susquehanna University, University of Western Australia*)

“Architecture is what you finally console yourself with once you’ve brought the landscape to its knees.” Tim Winton, “Strange Passion: A Landscape Memoir.”¹

“In Wildness is the preservation of the world.” Henry David Thoreau, “Walking.”

“A natural beauty should be preserved like a monument.” Neil Young, “Harvest Moon”

“The past is never over.” Richard Flanagan, *Death of a River Guide*”

In August, 2017, as we developed the theme for this issue of *Landscapes*, coincidental events focused our attention on the way competing human interest groups use landscapes to reflect competing ideas of “The Human.” At the same time Confederate monuments across southern states in the US are the backdrop to violent debates over the legacies of African enslavement, Donald Trump rolled back Obama-era preservation for iconic landscapes from Maine to California. Such rollbacks would change not just how these landscapes are used by humans, but more fundamentally, what these landscapes mean for humans. Will these public lands be frozen in time to memorialize the fantasy of primal American wildness, a testimony to the rugged individualism and indomitable spirit that brought forth American civilization and asserts its manifest destiny? Or will the landscape drama of man v nature give way to human replacement of nature as public lands are turned into industrial parks? Ironically, Trump’s subsequent rejection of the Paris Accord rededicates America to the nostalgic fantasy of man conquering nature. Instead of a Yellowstone or Yosemite, the entire climate will be asked to sustain the fiction that humans are superior to nature—industrial carbon emissions either do not affect climate systems or benefit climate systems. Of course, by continuing to narrate the

¹ Richard Woldendorp and Tim Winton, *Down to Earth: Australian Landscape*, Fremantle, WA: Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1999, xi.

frontier myth, we will leave our legacy imprinted on all earthen landscapes for geological time: pyramids to denial more permanent than any pyramid on the Nile.

The case of Confederate statues has been particularly contentious and provides a powerful reminder for why the question of Landscape-Heritage is essential for our inquiry. Many argue that the statues in question, generally of Confederate political or military elites erected in central parks or squares in the 1920-30s, elevate slave-holding white warriors to hero status while erasing the actual, multiracial heritage of southern culture. Others argue that the statues remind later generations of one of the conflicts defining US culture “lest we forget,” and our continued ties to that past, which, as Faulkner reminds us, is not even past. Germany engages in a similar debate about whether and how to monumentalize its Nazi heritage. Other countries, like Turkey, China, Indonesia and Myanmar, ban discussion of their genocidal heritage. Australia is riven by debate about whether and how to mark the advent of British colonization in January, 1788.

At this moment, across nations, sensible discussion about how people make landscapes meaningful is shouted down in the contentious, occasionally violent struggle to ensure that the landscape is imprinted with the “right” history. White supremacists marched at the University of Virginia in 2017 to protest local government’s decision to remove Confederate statues from public squares, and one of their members murdered a counter protester in an act that looked identical to terrorist attacks in Nice and elsewhere.

Civil War heritage dominates Eastern US landscapes. Landscapes tell many stories of human and non-human activity—why should this one chapter be preserved as if it were the master theme of the entire national story? White military and political elites are given pride of place in public space, erasing multiple, shared heritage narratives in these important landscapes. This need not be true. As Jade Robison argues in her essay in this issue, a very long history of human-nature relations is inscribed in the Natchitoches Trail, which was used most famously for Cherokee Indian removal in the 19th century. “The Trail of Tears” is one of many layered heritages memorialized in that landscape. Clive Barstow’s

image, “War,” in this issue calls attention to the complex dynamics of colonization, appropriation, nostalgia, aggression, and reinscription that play through the American cultural imaginary in historically significant landscapes of the west, generally seen in Arcadian terms. His cross-cultural images excavate these dynamics in Australian and Chinese imaginaries, but “War” speaks strongly to me of the way our knowledge of the past “jigsaws” violently with competing desires to paint genocidal, racist pasts in the golden glow of Technicolor reconstructions, whether those be Disney-fying folklore, rewriting history textbooks to frame the war against slavery as a war of states’ rights against federalism, or erecting monuments of slaveholders in the central squares of towns and cities as a way of turning the civil war into a continuation of the American fight for freedom and independence. The meaning of the American civil war 1861-65 is crucial to the meaning of America, and key landscapes are employed in the task of channeling the polyphony into a single master narrative. The inadequacies of this master narrative and the anxieties caused by the instability of its symbolic markers feed into the demagoguery of Trumpism and the New Right.

Bill Nichols sheds some light on the question of why Civil War heritage dominates Eastern US landscapes. He cites research on rural areas as particularly important “signifiers of national identity, or as the counterpoint to modernity” (“Shifting Rurality”). From this perspective, a rural, bucolic place like Gettysburg, Pennsylvania is vitally important as a signifier of the highwater mark, not just of Confederate power, but of the entire aristocratic, Southern Agrarian, “pre-modern” way of life which rapidly gave way to the industrial, urban, modern way of life. As one of the most important signifiers holding this version of the national story of the US together, Gettysburg’s narratives must be carefully regulated under the master signifier of “The Civil War,” or, as I knew it during my adolescence, “The War Between the States.” The renaming, which started in the 1920s with the re-emergence of white supremacy, was significant because it began the long process of rewriting the war as a contest over states’ rights, rather than a battle over whether the United States would continue the institutions of slavery.

My first awareness of the illogic fracturing the carefully curated meaning of Gettysburg's heritage occurred when I was an undergraduate at Gettysburg College. The town of Gettysburg is surrounded by land on which the great civil war battle was fought on 1-3 July, 1863. More blood was spilled on those landscapes in those three days than any other in the US—between 46,000 and 51,000 people were killed with tens of thousands more wounded. Abraham Lincoln gave one of the greatest speeches ever penned to pay tribute to the sacrifice of these lives and propel this place into human memory. It is hallowed, sacred ground.

However, with more than 1300 markers commemorating the battle, and thousands more references on every street, building, restaurant menu, storefront, hotel brochure, campground, playground and billboard, the place is saturated with this one idea. The small town is hemmed in by the 4998 acre park, forced to curate its region for the ogling eyes of one and a half million tourists a year. Stand anywhere within its boundaries, and you will see and hear the legacy of those three days inscribed across the landscape in every direction. It often felt that nothing else existed.

When I was at Uni, I loved to walk, run, and cycle through the battlefields. They are beautiful, open expanses of field and meadow, rocky outcroppings, wooded hills, pasture, orchard—all of which would have been built up with industry, casinos, resort hotels, golf courses, and tract housing were it not for the Civil War and the hardcore preservationists who have successfully frozen the place in an image of 1863. I remember taking Wordsworth's "Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey" (another symbolic heritage landscape, sacred to the preservation of Englishness) to Little Round Top, climbing down to my favorite stack of boulders, elegantly piled by glaciation tens of thousands of years earlier, and reciting the poem across the rugged slope that Southern troops had charged up in the face of Northern artillery. Narrowing my gaze to screen out the car park at Devil's Den and the statuary that now pays tribute to the dead soldiers, I could see Wordsworth's "little lines of sportive wood run wild," and the "groves and copses clad in one green hue." I could hear the mountain springs rolling with a soft inland murmur and experience how the steep and lofty cliffs in this wild secluded scene

connected the landscape to the quiet of the sky. They impressed on me thoughts of their more deep seclusion. This sublime and blessed mood lasted until the next tour bus roared through the scene.

Returning to my apartment in a huff, I posed the question to my roommates—“Why do we have to have all of these concrete statues cluttering up this beautiful Pennsylvania landscape?” They looked at me in horror: “Dude, people died there! It’s sacred.” “But,” I replied, “why does it have to be sacred to people? Why aren’t trees, rocks, birds, and flowers sacred? The statues destroy the landscape. Besides, it would be a more fitting tribute to the soldiers if it was preserved exactly as it was when they died—just nature and farms, no statues. What could be more profound than the emptiness of landscape?”

My roommates and I saw the landscape too differently to sort through the contradictions that cut through our different positions and achieve a more complex understanding of landscape and heritage. To them, the Gettysburg landscape meant three days of heroic contest between the old order of agrarian aristocracy and a new order of industrial capitalism, a tragic but inevitable story of Progress epitomized in Pickett’s Charge. To me, it meant a lost Wordsworthian-Thoreauvian pastoralism for human contemplation and recreation, another tragic story, this one of civilization’s corruption of idealized primitivism. Neither of us acknowledged the rich, long history of Delaware tribes who had, through fire, hunting, and trade, reshaped the land prior to European colonization and were exterminated shortly thereafter—even though we had seen our landlord’s massive collection of Native American axes and arrowheads, which he had found while walking freshly tilled cornfields. Nor did we think about the centuries of European homesteaders and farmers who sculpted the land into bucolic beauty with axe, plow, sheep, and cow. Nor, truth be told, did we white, middle-class, rural Northern boys really understand this battle as a contest over the institution of slavery, thinking of it instead as a Federalist-States’ Rights “War Between the States,” as we had been taught in our bleached history. All of these other heritages are part of this landscape, along with other records of natural history.

My roommates and I, and the million plus tourists who pass through every year, were unaware that Gettysburg, PA is rich, diverse, complex, traumatic, and beautiful heritage landscape. If some of these invisible heritages could share the spotlight with three days in July, 1863, not only would the meaning of the place expand in people's consciousness, it would enhance the value and hence the way people interact with the place. Polyphony requires greater attentiveness and openness to the immanence of meaning. A landscape that has been reduced to repeat a single melody over and over loses its capacity *to become with* its human itinerants, an idea Verena Hofig's essay, included in this issue, problematizes in relation to Viking sagas of Icelandic settlement.

Civil War monuments crystalize a paradox in modern, Western culture between preservation and progress, land utility and public interest. Do we preserve landscapes that tell stories of the past or use those landscapes for present and future needs? Whose story is preserved? How will development affect the landscape's ability to tell multiple stories and support other uses? Neither position respects nonhuman interests in landscapes, nor the basic need for ecosystem integrity and evolution. Nor do they acknowledge how humans become human in and with landscapes, not apart from them or by replacing them with built environments. Certain landscapes, like Gettysburg, we like to freeze into static symbols of our collectively preferred cultural meanings. Other narratives, other meanings are sacrilegious. We require other landscapes—Yosemite, the Kimberley, the Serengeti—to perform primeval wilderness, a mirror of our own cordoned-off, "Abstract Wild," as Jack Turner once argued. Current inhabitants are forcibly removed. On other landscapes, we build techno-cocoons of concrete regularity that proclaim our superiority to natural cycles.

Tim Winton's blistering critique of the latter approach is specifically related to Perth, Australia, my current home. At 600 square kilometres, it is one of the worst cases of urban sprawl in the world and has a built environment that encourages a lifestyle only slightly less environmentally destructive than Saudi Arabia and Singapore, the most unsustainable countries on earth. The CBD offers the solace of architecture as a distinctively modern, western form of becoming human, finding its apotheosis in the

towering triumphalism that is neoliberalism's iconic hubris: vertical glass-and-steel tributes to mining and fossil fuel wealth rising from paved and poisoned wetlands, concrete uniformity spreading to the horizon, beyond which, endless Deepwater Horizons drill to fuel humanity's final solution to landscape's disobedient nonconformity, geoengineering. This is a landscape that John Gordon describes in biblically-inflected terms: "the human ego-- / That now knows better! / Yet still without fore thought / Let alone second / Inserts electronic towers on top of sand dunes / Ravaging melaleuca & fragile tuart, / And polluting in total / The deeper life of place" (see "Sprung" in this issue). In this situation, Thoreau offers a rallying cry for a revolution in values: to preserve the wildness out there so that human wildness has someplace to call home. An ability to see "the deeper life of place," which his writings teach, is absolutely necessary in the midst of modernity's relentless constriction of places to the absolute surface.

I have become with this Western Australian place by reading its stories and witnessing the landscapes they emerged from. Tim Winton, Robert Drewe, David Whish-Wilson, Glen Philips, Kim Scott, John Ryan, and half a dozen other Western Australian writers have opened my awareness to the deeper life of Western Australian landscapes and its diverse heritages. Without a dialectic of the literary and physical place, I could not have grown with and into this strange, beautiful, uncanny, intimidating, exhilarating place. Now, after two years of hearing the names in books and regular trips to Kings Park Botanical Gardens, I can cycle down Perth's suburban streets and recite the litany of "peppermint, lemon gum, balga, laurel, jarrah, marri, jacaranda, bougainvillea, fig, mango, Norfolk pine, banksia." Inspired by these authors and my own curiosity, I study the map of WA posted above my desk, now criss-crossed with orange highlighter to mark my travels. I've through-hiked the Cape to Cape and done sections of the Bibbleman. I've swum with whale sharks off Ningaloo, climbed down canyons in Karajini, camped on lake Goongarie north of Kalgoorlie, celebrated two birthday dawns at the Pinnacles, and spent 4 days entirely alone in the desert—not bad for a middle-aged whitefella from New Hampshire. When I go back to the states and talk about New York's state capital, people correct my pronunciation. I'm more likely to ask someone "how ya' goin" than "how ya

doin,” or call a fellow “mate” instead of “man.” None of this has made me Western Australian, but it has required an expansion of being, sensibility, and awareness. Because everything was so unfamiliar, from trees and birds, to landscape forms and language, being here required retraining certain pathways in my brain—“AL-bany” not “ALL-bany,” “Gi’day mate! Got your sunnies and thongs?” Painful, awkward, difficult; exciting, euphoric, fun. My experience of seeking belonging in the landscape is different from the one Clive Barstow describes, and different again from many other immigrants to this land, but we all had to find some way to translate landscape into a heritage where we could belong.

The experience of growth has triggered my interest in conducting the same kind of systematic engagement with my home region in Pennsylvania—I’ve realized that I know a lot more about Perth than I do about Selinsgrove, but sadly, that’s because, like many natives, I simply assumed Selinsgrove wasn’t worth knowing. If I learn more of Selinsgrove’s land-marks, I’ll hear it’s polyphonic heritage and be able to become with the place.

Like Western Australia, Central Pennsylvania’s spoken language is a rich vernacular of landscape-origin words, a riot of “green-speak” that Robert MacFarlane celebrates in his recent book, *Land-Marks*, reviewed by Patrick Armstrong in this issue. Greg Garrard and Susanna Lidstrom talk about the ability of “ecophenomenological poetry...to heighten individual readers’ awareness of their natural surroundings” (Lidstrom and Garrard 37). Winton’s ferocious defense of Western Australian landscapes, particularly coastal ones, and Robert Drewe’s lyric evocation of 1895 Perth, Swan River, and the Goldfields in *The Drowner* exemplify the ecophenomenological effect of literature on landscapes. At the same time, it is also true, as Ron Broglio argues, that their inscriptions on the landscape “change the things of nature into objects of culture” (Broglio 15-16). Unless those inscriptions are combined with the reader’s phenomenological, bodily experience of place, they will serve to enclose the natural within what he calls “the stasis of Cartesian picturesque technology” (Broglio 18-20). Only by creating a contact zone between our sensing bodies and perceiving minds, inscribed

landscapes, and material landscapes is it possible to sustain the openness of place to the immanence of polyphonic meanings. But this requires a vulnerability of self and body that few seem willing to entertain. Far easier to rest in the certainty of a single master narrative, inscribing it over and over, ad nauseum.

Such a resistance to the stasis of the Cartesian picturesque in service to the master narrative of a colonizer is Clive Barstow's main work in "Imagined Geographies," the opening work in this issue. In his theoretical essay and artworks, Barstow calls attention to the interactions of space, place, and time as dynamic assemblages, often awkwardly jigsawed together, a visual method he employs in his complex, multi-referential designs. He purposely unsettles the idea that places—landscapes—are static backdrops to the linear drama of historical time. His work shows how landscapes are turned into monuments by ideologically charged heritage industries, but are also agents in curating a much more dense, polyphonic local heritage that disrupts the calm, assured histories overwritten on places like Australia and America by Europeans. His complex and unsettling work provides an important set of lenses for examining "Landscape: Heritage," making an excellent starting point for this issue.

Lest it be misunderstood that I am suggesting that there is a "Real" that we can sense that exists below linguistic inscription, Tom Cohen and Claire Colebrook remind us that we live as much within language as landscape, and that "inscription goes all the way down": "if there is no nature, no climate, no humanity and no truth that would exist outside inscription, then what remains is the *reading* of inscriptions" (Cohen, Colebrook and Miller 12). Hence the importance of an issue on "Landscape-Heritage" in a journal titled *Landscapes* that comes out of an International Centre for Landscape and Language. To experience landscape is also, at a very deep level, to experience language, whether that is because our senses are directed by the stories we've read, or because we orient ourselves to places by naming: "peppermint, lemon gum, balga, laurel, jarrah, marri, jacaranda, bougainvillea, fig, mango, Norfolk pine." We still "sing the land into being," but we do it differently, perhaps with less sensitivity or awareness of what we are doing, or with greater desire for mastery. Singing the land into being is never neutral; it is always

an illumination that at the same time occludes (Cohen, Colebrook and Miller 8). This contact between language and landscape creates heritage, because language is not a transparent “medium through which thought communicates, but a multiplicity of relations and traces that enables what comes to experience itself as thought” (Cohen, Colebrook and Miller 13).

Becoming readers of the language-landscape is a primary act for becoming with the landscape, for in becoming aware of the multiplicity of relations and traces of others, human and nonhuman, an inevitable braiding of self into the polyphonic heritage of place takes place. As Cohen and Colebrook note, this is how Michel Serres conceives of history “as a strata of inscription, where certain lines, marks, events and orders initiate relations among traces that will proceed until one reads and imagines not a time of progress but a sublime becoming” (Cohen, Colebrook and Miller 18). If the beginning of landscape was a random collision of geology and climate, the subsequent history has been a layering of marks by later events and inhabitants, and “the task of reading is one of retracing towards contingency, each step back giving nothing more than marks and reversals” (Cohen, Colebrook and Miller 18). As astute readers trying to figure out the meaning of a place, we go back through all the other inscriptions to their contingency, discovering there our own contingency. That discovery is simultaneously our freedom and responsibility, freedom to inscribe a different future and responsibility to acknowledge the freedom of every other being in that place to manifest its own future. Tracing our inscriptions will lead most of us to confront the legacies of racist, genocidal, colonialist violence that we benefit from. Do we respond with guilt and seek to purify ourselves? Or do we deny our connection to the actions of our ancestors? Barstow suggests a third way, that we work forward to “reinscribe” a new narrative of respectful engagement. The fundamental mistake of Modernity is that, having put an end to History, it thinks it can simply erase what came before to remake the world in its own image. But we exist in unending relationships with countless others who demand reciprocity.

The contributions to this journal issue cohere around this acknowledgement of our relationship with others and the demands of reciprocity. In general terms, they are all

engaged with fundamental questions: What is our heritage in landscapes and where do we find it and practice it? What landscape heritage do we want to entail on future generations? How will that affect their ability to claim belonging in the land? As readers will perceive, the contradictions that we live with at the everyday level relate to the clash instantiated in the material landscape between modernity, with its focus on the instantaneous flash of an absolute present, versus the deep time at which ecosystems operate. Modernity, the ethos which structures our collective lives at the level of everyday choices, is driven by its anxiety over time—both its artificially imposed sense of “lack of time” and its determined effort to eliminate thought of a past or future that does not include human modernity. For the project of modernity to continue, we must, at all costs, deny the reality of deep time with all of its inconvenient truths—like the carbon and nitrogen cycles, climate-change induced extinction events, the evolution of symbiotic interdependencies. But like all repressed truths, the evidence of deep time keeps bubbling up—like brackish water in the Wheatbelt. Modernity’s insistence that landscapes are a static resource serving human purposes is a story that is conserved in landscapes across the globe through modernity’s heritage factories. These heritage factories determine which landscapes are frozen in time and which are developed to serve modern time, both contradictory approaches reifying modernity’s central myth that there is no time but now.

I’ve started this issue with Barstow’s essay because, in theoretical reflection and creative performance, it offers a dialogic approach to the complex of “Landscape: Heritage” themes explored throughout the rest of the issue. I’ve grouped other works into three different sections, led by the scholarly essays and followed by reviews, poems, photographs, and creative nonfiction, so that a critical-creative dialogue pervades the entire issue. Thus the general idea of modernity’s treatment of landscape as a heritage story of modern time(s), plays into several different focal points.

The first section relates to human travel across landscapes to trade, communicate, migrate, impressing the multiple stories of human-nature interaction upon the pathways created to serve those purposes. It starts with Jade Robeson’s geographical inquiry into the Natchitoches Trace, a pre-Columbian trading and migration route from modern-day

St. Louis to Natchitoches, a branch of a much more elaborate network of routes connecting North America to Mexico. Unlike Gettysburg, which is controlled by a single, State-sponsored master narrative, Natchitoches Trace heritages are locally controlled by descendent populations. Not only does Robeson's description of multiple, shared narratives co-existing in place counterpoint the curation of heritage landscape described in the other two scholarly essays, it complements Joyce Parks' poetry of traveling from the Darling Scarp across the Swan Coastal Plain and Joel Weishaus' multimedia meditation on the Anasazi's vanishing from their landscape. It coincides with the practice of naming places and endemic flora as a process of integrating human heritage with specific landscapes, as explored in both Patrick Armstrong's review of Robert Macfarlane's *Landmarks* and Nicole Hodgson's memoir-essay of following in the footsteps of Sarah Brooks, one of the great botanists of Western Australia. Jamie Holcombe's photograph of the road to Coffin Bay provides a visual denouement to this section.

In the second section, Patrick Armstrong's essay on "Darwin's Landscapes (and Seascapes)" shows how cultural heritage can be a useful epistemological frame for unlocking the plot of deep time in landscape morphology. As the master integrator, Darwin drew frameworks from Charles Lyell, Alexander von Humboldt and the picturesque landscape tradition in British literature to hypothesize the coherence of coral islands, atolls and reefs—these are not separate landforms as was believed at the time, but the same landform at different times. Our notions of evolving ecosystems are the legacy of Darwin's internalization of his English cultural heritage, no less than his syncretic understanding of the *Principles of Geology* and Humboldt's geographical science.

Such a revelation fits with John Ryan's review of *Thinking Continental*, a new, cross-disciplinary collection of creative and critical work from what's come to be known as "the Environmental Humanities." As Ryan, ventriloquizing contributor Harmon Maher, writes, "through layered thinking, it is possible to render deep time accessible to perception and consciousness." Layered thinking allowed Darwin to see different forms of landscape as the same identity at different times; this layered thinking is also essential to

Rita Tognini's excavations of the ancient, Nyoongar history of Boodjamooling, now scripted into Perth's "Hyde Park," or Shaun Salmon's poem "Slater Woodlice," and Terry Trowbridge's "Escarpment Spores." Layered thinking operates as a defense of place in Nandi Chinna's lyric renditions of the Roe 8 protests, an idiotic highway project proposed by the late Liberal government whose only successful outcome would have been the annihilation of one of Perth's last remaining wetlands. Chinna's poems illustrate the theory running through *Thinking Continental* and "Darwin's Landscapes": that the multimodal forms of art and literature are perhaps the only way humans can approach the biotic and cultural value of a place like the Bibra Wetlands.

It may seem ironic that our most powerful tools for containing the dynamic excess of landscapes—for creating "plots" of ground, anthropomorphizing rocks, trees, and creatures, and generating master signifiers of human value—can also be our best way of liberating our vision into the polyvocality of landscape. However, this is what is revealed in the two final pieces of this section, Sarah Lumba's story of flooding in the modern city of Marikina, Philippines following the Typhoon Ketsana, and James Kelly's shape poem, "The Journey of Water" which imagines, in the tradition of Aldo Leopold's story of the water cycle in *Sand County Almanack*, the flow of water from Andean glaciers through the Peruvian plain to the Pacific. Jamie Holcombe's "Two Tides" again seems a fitting visual coda to the methodology of "layered thinking" which has been explored in this section.

In the third section, William Nichols examines the way powerful, vested interests encode landscapes with specific heritage in order to control what is thought and done in those landscapes. Nichols examines Iowa through a variety of lenses, starting with Grant Wood's famous 1930 painting, *American Gothic*. The hegemonic meaning of "rural America" emerges in places like Iowa and is performed in its iconic landscapes and heritage rituals, despite the fact that these master meanings of "authentic" American are riven with contradiction that do not sit neatly with the actual inhabitants of rural Iowa. The American farmer is a myth in *American Gothic*, literally, since the original man who sat for the painting was a dentist, and figuratively, in the way biotechnology and globalized trade, not the values of self-reliance and make-do, shape American farming.

This modern American example pairs with Verena Höfig's essay, which also deconstructs the singular narrative dominating landscape in the medieval prose Sagas of Icelanders. According to Höfig, the sagas are a familial record, which valorize one genealogy, "whose descendants were integral to the creation of the country's political structure" (2). Icelandic place-names interpolate the political narrative into the landscape and concurrently ascribe the Icelanders origin of settlement to the 9th century Norwegian Viking Ingólfr Arnarson. Although at the time of settlement, Iceland is seemingly a unpeopled landscape (much as Australia was declared "Terra Nullus"), Höfig challenges a landscape heritage that is chiefly monophonic.

These contradictions between the surface image and the underlying power dynamics play out in *Taboo*, Kim Scott's new novel, reviewed by Rashida Murphy. As Murphy writes, "this is a story of dispossession, abuse, colonialism, addiction and racism," where landscape acts as a character and "proper Nyoongar" language is both antidote and a continuation of the lies that afflict First Nations struggling to reclaim their heritage after total dispossession. What is "proper heritage" in this context? Reconnection with the polyvocality and deep time of landscape appears to be the route to both truth and reconciliation, but it is not clear whether this route is a "recovery" or a new charting, an idea that suggests James Clifford's contrast between "routes" and "roots" to heritage.

A similar indeterminacy structures both John Gordon's "Sprung" and Allan Lake's "The Beholder": in both cases, there is too much self-consciousness in the speaker to blithely enjoy landscape aesthetic. Jamie Holcombe's "Mandurama Storm" photograph captures exactly these clashing intentionalities. His photograph, "Emily" seems a proper conclusion to the story of "Shifting Rurality." Though in an Australian context, the image gives rural solistalgia, sneeringly ballyhooed in the media-constructed "angry white man" of the Trump election, a more compassionate expression in the pathos of mourning a not-quite-understood, but deeply felt loss.

Community has been lost to the neoliberal modernist triumph of belief over place, but when we start reading the traces and layers of meaning occluded by our dominant

heritage industries, we may find a way of becoming human, once again, with landscapes, and relearn how to sing the land into being in co-constitutive ways.

I wish to acknowledge that I have written this essay and conducted the work for this issue on the traditional lands of the Whadjuk Nyoongar people, who are its traditional custodians, and pay my respects to the elders, past and present.

Imaginative Geographies: Visualising the Poetics of History and Space

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As a migrant of twenty-five years, I still have no connection or affection for the Australian landscape. It is difficult to erase one's past: memories of Yorkshire's rolling hills, moist peat grass enveloped by a low, wet mist that seemed to osmotically shape one's psyche to a point where memory becomes an unconscious architecture on which we view all others. By comparison, the Australian bush appears featureless and barren, belonging to someone else, a place of emptiness and a space yet to be defined by histories that have yet to be told.

To add to this feeling of alienation, I inherit a legacy of colonisation and privilege that is negative, through which my actions as an artist and commentator have been heavily influenced. Jacqueline Lo borrows from Tessa Morris Suzuki's theory of 'implication' as a means of understanding and accepting inherited responsibilities as individuals:

'Implication' means the existence of a conscious connection to the past, but also the reality of being (in a legal sense) 'an accessory after the fact'. We who live in the present did not create the violence and hatred of the past. But the violence and hatred of the past, to some degree, created *us*. It formed the material world and the ideas with which we live, and will continue to do so unless we take active steps to unmake their consequences. (2012, 22)

To Lo's idea, I would add Zygmunt Bauman's thesis on liquid individuals, which describes how "reality should be emancipated from the dead hand of its own history...dissolving whatever persists over time and is negligent of its passage or immune to its flow" (2000, 3). Comparisons, of course, are onerous, but what my personal diaspora offers is an opportunity to *unmake these consequences* and to re-examine my sense of reality and place through a visual study of our socio-political landscape.

Within this idea of a limited historical reality, the European Arcadian landscape as a transferable concept in our formation of a social order has played a major role in

the European colonisation of Australia, a cornerstone within postcolonial theory that is most evident in the construction of our parks and gardens. It is the idea of a simulated and nostalgic landscape that I expose through my visual artworks.

Central to these simulated spaces is the thread of emotive nostalgia, particularly 'restorative' nostalgia, which Deleuze and Guattari define as a nostalgia that focuses on *nostos*¹ and aims to reconstruct the lost home, often in association with religious or nationalist revivals (quoted in Legg 2004). Arcadia is an imaginary and socially constructed space in which pastoral harmony is played out in various creative guises. The classic Eurocentric interpretation of Arcadia is relatively static, and was formed on a mythological and monocultural vision that reflected a particular time and place, a golden age formed through nostalgia as a "longing for a home that no longer exists—or never existed" (Legg 2004, 100). *A home that never existed* suggests that our personal and national identity forming may well have its roots in an imaginary place, an ideal landscape that only has lasting currency within the socio-politics of colonisation.

In my case, nostalgia serves an important function in reflecting on the origins of European colonisation within the development of Australian art, particularly in relation to historic references to the noble savage.² The debates around globalisation (Said 1985; McLean 2004) and hybridisation (Bhabha 1994; Papastergiadis 2003a; Ang 1997) centre on the transition of culture through diaspora and its production of hegemonic systems. It is within these systems that the maintenance of the construct of the noble savage becomes crucial to upholding both the dominant political structures within the governing systems in Australia and the construct of spiritualism that feeds the international art market in respect to the *value* of Aboriginal art.

Since the publication of Homi K. Bhabha's influential text *The Location of Culture* (1994), much postcolonial theory has focused on a broadening transnational approach that interprets today's world as a place of "multiple modernities" (Eisenstadt 2000, 1). Contemporary critical literature and theory (Papastergiadis 2003a; Ika 2009; Dervin 2014) may have succeeded in developing a unified position in its attempts to

¹ The English word *nostalgia* derives from *nostos* and *algea* (pains) and is used in this instance as a longing for home, and one that is constructed often as an ideal or romantic image

² The concept of the noble savage is not a singular representation of Indigenous people nor is it particular to Australian postcolonial history. It does, however, carry the most currency in terms of the underlying perception of Australian Indigenous art within the international market. Refer to authors such as Jean Jacques Rousseau's *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* (1755) or Sandy Greer on ethnic stereotypes/and social histories (quoted in Burayidi, 1997, 270–71).

decentralise modernity within a more fluid and globalised dialogue. For instance, while many Asian Australians have maintained their transplanted collective traditions (Grishin 2013), many Asian Australian visual artists have focused on more individualised responses to their location (for example, John Young, Ah Xian, William Yang), perhaps in an attempt to visualise their newfound personal and hybrid identities in reaction to their feelings of being dislocated from home. Often, these individual identities are firmly situated within the binary polarities of cultural exchange in which Bhabha's (1994) thirdspace theory operates.

In response to this, I propose a dialogic space based on my ongoing experiences of working with Aboriginal artists in Western Australia and, more recently, with Chinese artists in Mainland China. Besides that felt by migrant groups, the feeling of displacement brought about through cultural transformation is often manifested in the arts by contemporary urban Aboriginal people who do not fit Western ideals of Aboriginal art and who often find themselves alienated within their own country and culture (Bell 2003; Langton 2003). Within this Sino-Australian relationship, the issues surrounding displacement and cultural identity are examined through a more fluid interpretation of space, a triangular relationship that aligns with Henry Lefebvre's theories of cumulative trialectics, which Eduard Soja describes as:

Another way of understanding and acting to change the spatiality of human life, a distinct mode of critical spatial awareness that is appropriate to the new scope and significance being brought about in the rebalanced trialectics of spatiality–historicality–sociality (1996, 57)

While this model presents a spatial shift from a focus on *place* to one of *space*, the British-Australian-Chinese model I adopt disrupts the dominant study of others through traditional ethnological writing by extending the binaries of third space theory into a more three dimensional model of cultural interaction that includes the artists as auto ethnographer. This allows the artist to involve creative practice as a critical part of the self-rewriting of history, rather than offering a mere illustration of its findings. It also answers Papastergiadis's (2003) key question about the writing of history and its assumptions. In his critique of Rasheed Araeen's summary of exile and the formation of identity, Papastergiadis asks, "How can we re-write history if the language of history,

with all its Hegelian hierarchies and Eurocentric biases, is itself not challenged?" (2003, 163).

To challenge our own writing of history, we must first question our construction of time. Time as a linear construct has served us well, but is limiting in our interpretation of the complexities of cultural histories. H. Porter Abbott's (2002) description of the narrative as "giving us this understanding [of what we see not just in space but in time], gives us what could be called the *"shape of time"* (2002, 11).³ This open model of time contests the traditions of linear chronological histories by aligning more closely with Keith Moxey's argument in *Visual Time* (2013) for a "heterochronic"⁴ model of art history. Heterochronic history returns us to the power of aesthetics over semiotics: as Moxey asserts, "The work of art is... something that has the power to break time by addressing us directly and by demanding an aesthetic response" (2013, 31).

Cumulative trialectics interpreted through a British-Sino-Australian experience offers a new reading of identity forming across time and cultural divides. Aboriginal and Chinese cultures, although very different, share important markers of identity and one could argue that their identity, to a greater or lesser extent, has been formed *in* and *by* the West (Kus 2008) and in response *to* the West (Roberts 1999). Within the Occidentalism-versus-Orientalism discourse, an oppositional geographical binary is constructed, or what Said terms "imaginative geography" (1985, 2), where the colonising force justifies its actions as beneficial to the "other" through the perceived (imagined) validation that elevates one national culture over another. In his refused designation of the terms "Occident" and "Orient", Said (1985) makes the point that once a simplified oppositional model is constructed in this way, the Orient naturally inherits aspects of the primitive, giving rise to the maintenance of the noble savage, particularly in indigenous cultures of the East. The labelling of "primitive" extends well beyond Eastern culture, but in terms of the East–West divide, the proliferation of primitivism still has potency within dominant political and cultural hegemonic construction.

³ Abbott's mention of "the shape of time" is a direct reference to George Kubler's (1962) classic text *The Shape of Time* in which the relationship between time and space is discussed.

⁴ Heterochrony means 'different timing' and derives from allometry and the relationships between organs and organisms.

Imaginary communities in flux

Unlike nineteenth-century art and literature, the imaginary community I am proposing is not the result of a romantic attempt to contribute to the formation of a collective national identity, or particularly one based on Arcadian principles. What I propose is the opposite: an imaginary community where the yet-to-be connected component parts are exposed and recognised as a true representation of complexity, incommensurability and non-fixity. This presents an unresolved space, as Moxey suggests in his thesis on heterochronic storytelling where he states “these essays ally themselves with persistent questions, never pretending that they can be settled for good” (2013, 8).

Within this spatial framework, both Aboriginal and Chinese cultures are constantly referred to in generalised terms as synchronic cultures that are static rather than in flux. While the classification of synchronic culture is useful as a representation of a deeper and embedded spiritualism generally associated with Orientalism, this classification only has meaning as a comparative binary opposite to the dynamic characteristics of diachronic cultures, and, in this case, a classification constructed, again, in the West. In actuality, both Aboriginal and Chinese cultures are in constant flux (Kus 2008; Frink and Perkins 2005), regularly responding to shifting dimensions of migration and urbanisation while simultaneously retaining visual traditions that are timeless and unique. The dynamic Aboriginal–Chinese nexus presents a complex and deeply spiritual⁵ space that goes well beyond a visual critique of multicultural societies and the hybridisation of culture.

As a visual artist, I have developed a working method that shares themes and ideas with multiple crossovers between the mediums and techniques at play, and that is driven by an underpinning theoretical discourse that questions time and place. For example, my use of found jigsaws involves the construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction of images that contain many uncontrolled elements, parts that both add and subtract from the key themes and narratives. This use and manipulation of found objects and the new meanings brought about through their reconstruction acknowledges such artists as Joseph Cornell, Robert Rauschenberg and Marcel

⁵ I use the word ‘spiritual’ as a common term of reference for both Aboriginal and Chinese visual culture, which highlight the human spirit and a profound sense of belonging to place.

Duchamp, who were pioneers of assemblage. Robert Hughes describes Cornell's approach to referencing the past through found objects as follows: "To others, these deposits might be refuse, but to Cornell they were the strata of repressed memory, a jumble of elements waiting to be grafted and mated to one another" (1997, 499). I take a similar approach in making objects that refer to past memories while at the same time suggest new narratives.

To achieve this, I have returned to a narrative approach in my jigsaw artworks in order to articulate the complex issues surrounding the hybridisation of culture. Habermas, in discussing narration in his definition of the everyday concept of the lifeworld⁶, asserts:

Narration is a specialized form of constative speech that serves to describe socio-cultural events and object...This everyday concept carves out of the objective world the region of narratable events or historical facts. Narrative practice not only serves trivial needs for mutual understanding among members trying to co-ordinate their common tasks: it also has a function in the self-understanding of persons. (1989, 136)

While this statement refers directly to narrative speech, it can be applied to narrative images. Indeed, because of the contestation that arises through the formation of hybrid cultures and its association with miscommunication and misrepresentation between spoken languages (Ang 1997, 59), the narrative image has the potential to carry more agency than textual language as a legitimate carrier of meaning, and perhaps more importantly as a stimulator for the imagination.

The artworks

While James Clifford (1986) suggests that culture exists "between subjects" (15), Julia Lossau (2009) describes thirdspace as being beyond its singular spatial meaning by asserting that "thirdspace tends to be transformed into a bounded space which is located next to or, more precisely, in between other bounded spaces, *like a piece of a jigsaw*" (Ikas and Wagner 2009, 70). Utilising the jigsaw as a metaphor for social reconstruction offers a play between form and function that is open to new meaning,

⁶ Lifeworld is a collective term for all the immediate experiences, activities, and contacts that make up the world of an individual or corporate life.

particularly where the intersections between reconstructed jigsaws are awkward and ill fitting.

The underlying comic mimicry in my narrative work therefore acts to emphasise hybrid and misinterpreted language rather than to explain it; therefore, I assume the role of the trickster. As an example of this hybrid mimicry being used to examine and articulate the British-Australian-Chinese trialectic model, my work entitled *Uncool Britannia* (Figure 3) attempts a triangulation through its overt references to colonisation and culturally specific folklore, with its reference to Vivien Westwood's *God Save the Queen* series of graphic posters in the 1980s (figures 1 & 2).



Figures 1&2 Vivien Westwood *God Save the Queen* (left & middle)

Figure 3 Clive Barstow *Uncool Britannia* (right)

UK art critic and writer Jean Fisher used the traditional figure of the trickster as a way to contest globalisation, which Papastergiadis highlights in his book *Cultural Identity and Its Boredom: Transculturalism and Its Ecstasy* (2003).⁷ McLean cites Fisher who derives her idea of the trickster, in part, from Bakhtin's notion of the carnivalesque. However, as Bakhtin made clear, “the carnival’s inversions affirm rather than threaten the dominant power. The trickster is a survivor not a revolutionary” (quoted in McLean 2004, 301).

⁷ The other trickster that Papastergiadis invokes is the early-nineteenth-century Aborigine, Bungaree. Today we may see his jokes as ironic parodies of colonial power, but in his day, he was merely laughed at by the colonists: he was considered a sign of the desperate impotence of Aborigines in early colonial Sydney (McLean 2004, 301). Bungaree was Mathew Flinders's Aboriginal guide and advisor. He often dressed as a British naval officer with astute comic mimicry, and welcomed new arrivals to the land. In this respect, Bungaree too was a survivor, not a revolutionary.

The visualising of power has generated a bi-product culture⁸ in Australia and, perhaps more importantly, attitudes toward appropriation that have had damaging consequences for Aboriginal artists in particular. This was highlighted in the heated debate surrounding *The Nine Shots* (1985) by Imants Tillers⁹ in which Gordon Bennett took particular exception to the notion of pre- and post-Aboriginal art in which appropriation and hegemony sat at its core (Morphy 2005). While Grishin (1997) mentions only briefly Tillers' "collaboration largely within a theoretical framework of post-modernist appropriation" (1997, 497), the lengthy debate that surrounded this work served as a catalyst for how Aboriginal art has been used "as a reference point" (North 2001, 36). In Bennett's case, as with a number of contemporary Aboriginal artists, this conflicted debate resulted in a "bounce" (McLean 2001, 38), where a two-way interplay occurs between cultural groups, exemplified in Bennett's postmodern response *Nine Ricochets* in 1990.

In my artworks *War* and *Piece* (Figures 4 and 5), a wordplay on Tolstoy's classic novel *War and Peace* (1869), I pitch the conflicts of war and hegemony against those of the idealised and illusionary aspects of our developing hybrid communities, particularly those of a colonised Australia. These artworks attempt a critique by utilising ironic humour and political satire while avoiding appropriation or any direct reference to individual situations in the form of protest. In this respect, they contain multiple readings that refer to European classicism, while revealing sub-themes as lost or selective histories within the construction of the colony.

War (Figure 4) presents a number of meta-narratives connected to civil war, such as the contribution of early Disney characterisation in which racism and propaganda played its part in a nation's systematic erasure of its Native American culture. The appearance of Minnie Mouse offers an element of seduction and manipulation to this deconstruction of black Indigenous culture in which reality and illusion converge as oppositional forces. Ironically, in the jigsaw fragment I have used, a white dove of peace lands on Minnie's hat, a moment made more poignant by recent sentiment following the tragic events in Charleston in 2015. Similar parallels between Indigenous histories have been highlighted by Gordon Bennett in his 2002 post-9/11 series of works *Notes to*

⁸ By 'bi-product culture', I mean a culture based on the translation of another culture but in a limited and diluted form.

⁹For further reading on this, see Bourne (2013).

Basquiat (*Death of Irony*), “which explicitly draws Australian and American colonial history and contemporary New York into the same narrative” (McLean 2003, 38).



Figure 4 Clive Barstow *War*

The construction of Australia’s narratives surrounding national identity are paralleled in *Piece* (Figure 5), in which the construction of an Arcadian landscape with its nostalgic references to European classicism plays a similar role in de-identifying Aboriginal existence through the phrase *terra nullius*¹⁰. Adopting another early European-style settler painting as a backdrop, that of *The Buffalo Ranges* by Nicholas Chevalier of 1864, *Piece* attempts to piece together the whitewash of black culture in which artists appear to paint an Arcadian mythological scene ignorant to the realities of place and time. *The Buffalo Ranges* was the first painting of an ‘Australian’ subject added to the National Gallery of Victoria’s art collection and illustrates a transplanted

¹⁰ *Terra nullius* (/ˈtɛrə.nəlˈlɪʊs/, plural *terrae nullius*) is a Latin expression meaning “nobody’s land”, and is a principle sometimes used in international law to describe territory that may be acquired by a state’s occupation of it.

European Arcadia, borrowing the horse and cart of Constable's *Hay Wain*, along with the chocolate-box rendering of the landscape in the English watercolour tradition. The romanticising of whiteness enters in the form of nymphs from Greek mythology, in this case from the 1890 romantic painting *L'Amour et Psyche Enfants* by William Adolphe Bouguereau, emphasising the basis of mythological constructs and the resulting realisation of shared belief systems through colonisation and indoctrination.



Figure 5 Clive Barstow *Piece*

War and *Piece* draw parallels between the political and cultural constructs that have contributed to white dominance in America and Australia, and exposes the role played by visual culture in maintaining and promoting mythological narratives, reflecting Bhabha's theoretical position of incommensurability within thirdspace. The dual work also suggests that while the misrepresentation of indigenous culture is highlighted in times of conflict, it is equally virulent and enduring in times of peace.

A work that more overtly deals with racial classification, *Flora, Fauna and the*

Ranger (Figure 6), depicts a park ranger recording what he sees in nature, a reference to the early British and Dutch anthropologists in Australia. Racism through scientific documentation and classification can be traced back to Carolus Linnaeus (Swedish) and Johann Blumenbach (German) in the early eighteenth century, and is evidenced as recently as 1958 with a study of the Fijians by Norman Gabel (an American). Here the connection is formed between racism and the gaze of the ethnographer through literature and illustrated scientific texts, forming the basis for our lasting attitudes to the ‘other’. This jigsaw also makes direct reference to the cover of Disney’s children’s storybook *The Wonderful Tar Baby* (Harris 1946) (Figure 7), where the animalised gaze toward the black other is set in the “jungle of a far-flung British colony, [where] *Little Black Sambo* was immediately recognizable to Americans as an allegory of race and consumption” (Dingwall 2014, para 4).

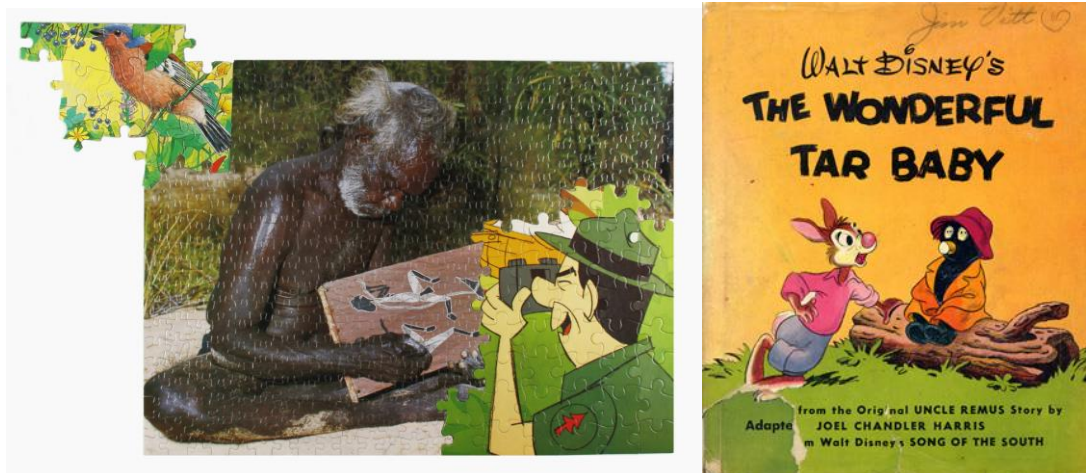


Figure 6 Clive Barstow *Flora Fauna and the Ranger* (left)

Figure 7 Joel Harris *The Wonderful Tar Baby* (right)

Flora, Fauna and the Ranger acknowledges in part what Hal Foster terms “ideological patronage”, where the artist unsuspectingly assumes the role of “native informant” (1996, 303). The placing of the park ranger as photographer replaces the artist with an authoritative figure who records the gaze, a tactical substitution of sorts that diminishes the presence of the artist.

As an extension of the theme of native transformant across visual and written languages, *Every Road Has Two Paths* (Figure 8) translates a poem by contemporary poet Glen Philips. The image reflects a text that suggests the literal translation of Daoism as “The Way” or “The Road” as an explanation of change and transition as a process of reality itself. The image combines two interpretations of nature: one is a photographic construct of a British rural landscape; the other is a classic Chinese brush painting of birds, a symbol that reoccurs throughout my work as a meta-symbol of peace, life, death and deception. The tree transitions between East and West and between reality and illusion as a signifier of transference, while the path refers to Gillian Darley’s “narrative thread” (1997, 73), a connection between spaces and events that connects the road of Daoist philosophy to that of Arcadian idealism.



Figure 8 Clive Barstow & Glen Philips *Every Road Has Two Paths*

Certain elements of psychoanalysis can offer a useful perspective in the area of narrative meaning and particularly in the understanding of the transference and interpretation of symbolic meaning between artist and audience. In his book *Psychoanalysis and Storytelling*, Peter Brooks approaches the criticism and analysis of poetry and creative literature as a conduit to unravelling Freud's dream theories through the connections between the conscious and unconscious state. He proposes that:

Psychoanalysis matters to us as literary critics because it stands as a constant reminder that the attention to form, properly conceived, is not a sterile formalism, but rather one more attempt to draw the symbolic and fictional map of our place in existence. (1994, 44)

There are two elements within psychoanalytical theory that I find most productive in contextualising my perception of space, place, and time in my current jigsaw works, moving into Lefebvre's trialectics of spatiality: (1) those of the chronological transference of meaning; and (2) and the culturally specific interpretation of missing information (or erasure). While assembling these jigsaws, I was acutely aware of the cultural implications of the missing pieces, particularly within the context of the Stolen Generation of Aboriginal people in Australia and the erasure of Aboriginal culture in the early settler paintings I regularly use in my jigsaw assemblages. As Langton (2003) points out:

The very idea of an 'Australian' landscape is based on erasure. This erasure is not simply that of nature subsumed and recast by culture, but that of the distinctly Aboriginal, autochthonous spiritual landscapes obliterated by the recreant settler visions which literally followed the frontier in the canvas bags of artists who came to paint the new land. (52)

Assuming there are cultural differences at play within the transferential models of meaning within psychoanalytical theory, I make assumptions about storytelling that might be pertinent for the British, Australian, and Chinese triangular relationship with which I am currently working. Involving the British-Chinese-Australian nexus (such as *Entering An-arcadia*, Figure 9 and *Otherview* Figure 10), the notion of transference through absence (represented through missing jigsaw pieces) is conveyed within Daoist (and Buddhist) philosophy as emptiness, having "existed from the beginning of Chinese

thought” (Cheng 1994, 94). Daoism explains this emptiness as being the connecting space between the physical and the spiritual world, a common element that has consistency of meaning across all aspects of this trialectic cultural model.

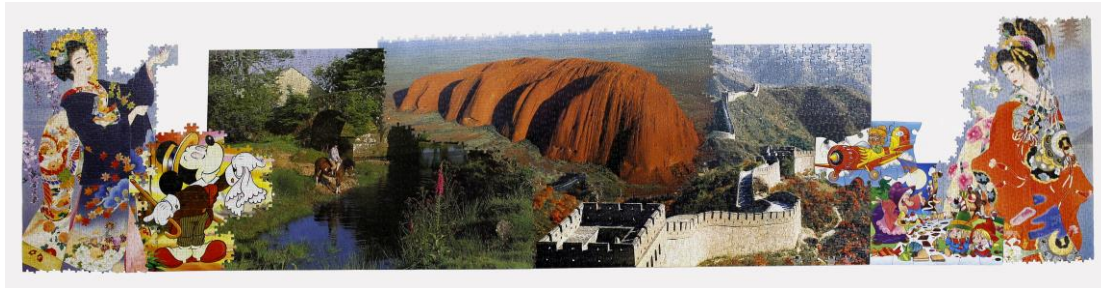


Figure 9 Clive Barstow *Entering Anarcadia*

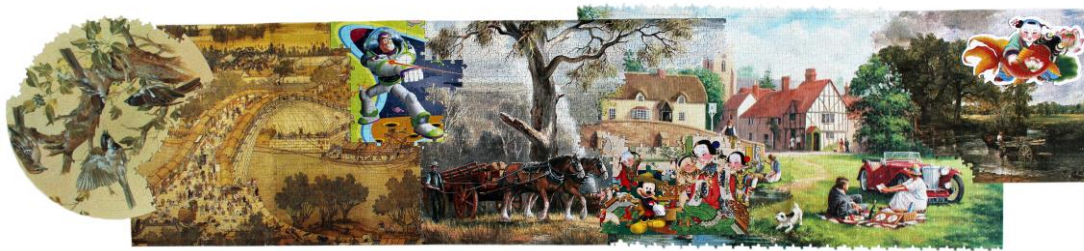


Figure 10 Clive Barstow *Otherview*

The Psychological observations of what is missing in Freud’s silent absence, as a metaphysical and ultimately disorienting construct of space, has connections to what Frank White (1987) termed the ‘overview effect’, where astronauts experience a cognitive shift in their sense of space while viewing earth from a distance. From this removed position, according to his interviews with returned astronauts, national boundaries disappear and the conflicts that divide people and nations become less significant. As White observes, “Although feelings of awe and self-transcendence associated with the overview effect are episodic... these changes seem primarily to entail greater affiliation with humanity as a whole, as well as an abiding concern and passion for the wellbeing of earth” (1987, 39).

White's observations from space make connections with Bakhtin's (1992) dialogic theories on infinite time and space where meanings are never closed; rather, they interact and inform each other. In his description of the chronotope, neither time nor space are privileged over each other but are interdependent elements that work with and for each other. In a discussion about Bakhtin's notions regarding "the time/space continuum that gives shape to a novel", Shumway observes "As the novel shifts from one chronotope to another, the gaps and silences that are a necessary part of the representation of an ideology will become increasingly noticeable to the perceptive reader" (1994, 182). The connections between the complex narrative chronotopes in Bakhtin's dialogics and Freud's observations on silence and erasure in psychoanalysis are brought together to form a disorienting narrative through an emphasis on what is *missing* in these works (Figures 9 & 10).

Structurally, and within the confines of using the jigsaw as a found object, *Entering An-Arcadia* and *Otherview* also attempt to emulate Shan-Shui-Hua¹¹ landscape brush painting and its underpinning characteristics of multi-point and multidirectional perspective as a culturally specific reference to Daoist truth. The link to Daoism materialises in the three main elements of Shan-Shui-Hua art: the path, the threshold, and the heart. Painters who work in the style of Shan-Shui-Hua do not present an image from what they see; rather, they attempt to paint what they *think* about nature, reflecting not the viewer's eye but the mind. In this respect the connections between social and cumulative trialectics and Shan-Shui-Hua painting offer opportunities to incorporate the future into a past and present dialogue as a past, present and future trialectic.

Visual images in the form of reconstructed jigsaws therefore present a mindset, or what Lefebvre refers to as mind space, or "the quasi-logical presupposition of an identity between mental space (the space of the philosophers and epistemologists) and real space... [which is an] abyss between the mental sphere on one side and the physical and social spheres on the other" (1991, 6). It is within and between the mental sphere and the physical and social spheres that these artworks operate.

¹¹ Shan-Shui-Hua Chinese brush painting is a form of visualisation based on Daoist philosophy in which elements of history and place come together to form a unified vision of reality. Like European Arcadia, Shan-Shui-Hua is an illusionary and imagined place constructed to maintain cultural histories based on nostalgia (*nostos*).

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The Multi-Vocal Trailscape of the Natchitoches Trace: A Trail of Tears, Trade and Transformation

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Abstract

This paper demonstrates how individuals have inscribed the Natchitoches Trace trailscape with meaningful narratives via oral traditions, historical accounts and material evidence, and considers how descendent populations curate their heritage in such a landscape. Beginning at the mouth of the Missouri River near St. Louis, the Natchitoches Trace stretches southwest through the Ozark region in Missouri and Arkansas, and onto Natchitoches, Louisiana. Created by pre-Columbian groups for trading purposes, the trail was later utilised by early European pioneer families for westward expansion. The 1830 Indian Removal Act forced the repurposing of the trail as a route of exile for displaced Cherokee, an event commemorated as the Trail of Tears. An examination of the historical context of these shared memories reveals how the cultural landscape of the Natchitoches Trace was constructed and repeatedly built upon. In this way, descendent populations are able to curate their cultural heritage in the trailscape, which serves as a repository for these narratives. With a focus on the Ozark region of Missouri, I demonstrate the multi-vocality of the Natchitoches Trace trailscape as it was continually shaped and remade by groups of people with different cultural identities and motivations.

Introduction

Through their use, trails become inscribed on the landscape and in the memories of their users, in turn inviting continued use. Such a *trailscape* transcends both space and time as multiple groups of people use it for different purposes throughout diverse points in time, or over continuous periods. The Natchitoches Trace is one such trailscape with a life history of both continuity in utilisation and change in purpose. Its path was worn by pre-Columbian groups trading goods between St. Louis, Missouri and Natchitoches, Louisiana (mid-continental USA), until its use by early European settlers colonising the frontier (see

figure 1). Later it became part of one route taken by the Cherokee during their forced removal, an event commemorated as the Trail of Tears (in Cherokee the *nunna daul tsuny*, “The Trail Where They Cried”). In this paper, I synthesise literature on the Natchitoches Trace to develop a fuller understanding of this trailscape, its evolution through time and how its inscription reinforces social memory.

The Natchitoches Trace begins at the mouth of the Missouri River near the present-day major city of St. Louis, Missouri, continuing south through the Ozark region of Missouri, through Arkansas, diverting to Natchitoches, Louisiana, and the Red River Valley of Texas. Thus, the Trace runs a north-south course almost parallel to and just west of the Mississippi River, the major river draining the North American continent. In Texas, the Trace meets another trail, El Camino Real de los Tejas, which terminates at the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan, now modern-day Mexico City. As a result of the long-term usage of the trail by multiple groups, it has also been referred to as the Southwest Trail and the Old Military Road. Here, I focus specifically on the portion of the trail in the eastern Ozark escarpment of Missouri. Following a theoretical discussion of trail as landscape, I further define the geographic scope of the present study and discuss three major uses of the trail. Finally, I synthesise this information to argue for a larger, emergent understanding of the Natchitoches Trace trailscape as a repository for cultural narratives, enabling descendent communities to curate memories of past lived experience.

Trailscape

I introduce the term *trailscape* here to highlight the notion that a trail inscribed on a landscape becomes itself a special kind of landscape, with a physicality that attracts subsequent use, inviting it to become a place of social inscription and memory. While a landscape is an area confined by spatial boundaries, it can also be conceptualised more abstractly. Kantner’s definition of region is interchangeable with landscape, such that they are “spaces for which meaningful relationships can be defined between past human behaviour, the material signatures people left behind, and/or the varied and dynamic physical and social contexts in which human activity occurred” (41). A landscape also has



Figure 1. Map of the Natchitoches Trace showing its extent from St. Louis, Missouri to Natchitoches, Louisiana, and a possible alternative route into Texas.

intangible boundaries, ones that are not defined by space but by meaning. Meinig distinguishes between ten kinds of landscapes, including landscape as nature, habitat, artefact, system, problem, wealth, ideology, history, place and aesthetic (1-9). These landscapes have tangible values, such as eroded hills and flooding rivers, and values that are the product of the human mind, like social or economic systems and ‘scenery.’ As agents operating within a particular landscape, humans carefully construct that landscape and make decisions to utilise it in a purposeful way.

Landscapes of movement, as described by Snead, Erickson and Darling (1), are materialised in a number of ways, taking the form of a trace, path, trail, road, track, causeway or other similar phenomena. All of these terms describe a route, or a specific way taken for travel, and provide physical indication of passage. Although similar in form and function, it is useful to consider how they differ. A road, unlike a trail, is characterised by a more formalised construction and planning (Hyslop 29). Roads are created by the

deliberate addition of pavements, retention walls and the like. Trails, on the other hand, are created through the visible wearing of the surface due to high volume of animal and/or human traffic. Therefore, a road is purely a human feature of the landscape, whereas a trail can have a non-human creator. The concept of intentionality is important here as well. A road is constructed only by intention; its construction requires careful planning and an organised workforce (Earle 257-258). A trail may or may not be intentionally created and the intentional construction and maintenance of a trail can change through time. A large animal might clear a path to a stream, happening to trample on forest floor vegetation as it weaves between trees. This initial treading makes the passageway clear and easily traversed, permitting other animals or humans to intentionally utilise the path to access the stream. Therefore, trails follow “informal, expedient and irregular routes” (Manson 385). Trace as a synonym of trail implies evidence of some former passing across a landscape, a physical wearing on the surface that provides a direct connection to the past. It is a certain kind of trail, intended to invoke the historic character of a specific route. The Natchez Trace, spanning a portion of the southeast United States, is similar to the Natchitoches Trace in its Pre-Columbian origin and subsequent reuse by early European settlers. The modern label of ‘trace’ in both cases may be intended to reflect the ancient character of the trail.

Manson identifies factors favourable to trail continuity, all of which relate to landscape condition (386). Routes of paths will avoid obstacles when possible, preferring alternatives to traversing rough terrain, rapid streams, dense underbrush and swampy areas. A route might also be preferred that offers optimal plant and animal resources to provide sustenance for a long journey. Streams can be followed because they make for a reliable water source and offer a directional reference. In the more arid regions of the American Southwest and Great Plains, streams tend to be followed more closely, especially in drier seasons (Manson 386). A trail connecting many communities will likely maintain a higher degree of continuity than one that is more isolated. New settlements are supported by the presence of a trail, as it facilitates trade and communication with other groups. As demonstrated by Earle, communication is one main purpose of a trail system, although

routes may also exist to support seasonal movements or ceremonial functions, dependent upon the needs of the trail users (256). Although paths, trails and roads can be arbitrarily classified, this system is never fixed, but is always in the process of becoming. Change occurs in a trail's route, end points and purpose throughout its landscape history, lending a trailscape a great deal of fluidity.

A trail is inscribed on the landscape through its continued use and becomes embedded within the cultural memory of those who have utilised it for whatever purpose. A label such as "persistent place," defined by Schlanger as "a place that is used repeatedly during the long-term occupation of a region," is useful in this regard (92). The trailscape becomes a place that draws continued use and is refashioned to suit the needs of those who encounter it. People in the past leave evidence of their usage of a trail in material, historical or oral records, resulting either in a deliberate or unintended inscription of a particular memory or collection of memories on the trailscape. Descendant populations, who act as observers of these memories, may choose to reify the trailscape as referent for heritage. As defined by Lydon, heritage "produces meanings from objects and locales by constituting them as a focus of social memory and shared narratives" (655). This is relevant to an understanding of trailscape, since meaning is acquired through the continued use of the trail over time and by various groups of people for different purposes, a process that is enabled through a shared social memory. Thus, a trail is a mnemonic device for descendent populations to curate various social memories about a lived experience that become part of that group's cultural heritage.

Finally, trails integrate the histories of their users by becoming a repository of conflated and contested social memories. A trailscape acts as a repository for the curation of memory and reveals itself to observers as an entanglement of shared narratives. Since a trail in an archaeological sense exists as a feature on the landscape, it is a place where shared narratives coexist. Thus, a trailscape is inherently contested as a result of its jointly owned past. People perceive and experience it in different ways, just as with any landscape that is inscribed with value and memory. In a phenomenological sense, the meaning of a trailscape as a place is dependent on the social, political and individual circumstances of

the human experience, reuse and recharacterisation of a trail. A trail can at once be remembered as a conduit for local travel, path of migration to new territories or a woeful path of exile. As a result, it is essential to acknowledge differences of perspectives and cultural values in any study of a trailscape.

Investigating a Trailscape: Natchitoches Trace as a Place

The present examination of the Natchitoches Trace trailscape flows from a Braudelian paradigm augmented by other important approaches to the landscape of meaning and memory. A landscape's "social, sacred or ceremonial *longue duree*" drives the reinscription of past meaning onto the present, permitting its continued use in somewhat similar ways (Knapp and Ashmore 14). To a large extent this study relies on the landscape as one embedded with social and cultural memory. Memory promotes the continuity of a trail, permitting its reuse and recharacterisation. Van Dyke and Alcock categorise the materiality of memory into five themes: narratives, representations, objects, ritual behaviours and places (4-5). These aspects of memory are evident in the Natchitoches Trace trailscape in varying forms, permitting an understanding of the trail's landscape history. The trail itself transformed space to place, with this trailscape now manifesting shared narratives of activities and experiences in the form of archaeologically identifiable artefacts or features. As memory is constructed in a particular landscape, material traces are left behind, permitting its interpretation. Places, and in this case, trails, "may be repeatedly inhabited, modified and imbued with changing meanings" (Van Dyke 279).

If tangible heritage includes something that possesses aesthetic or archaeological value, the memory of a particular trailscape may also be preserved intangibly through oral histories, knowledge, skills and performance (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 52-53). Intangible forms of heritage are inseparable from the material and social worlds of a culture, and as described by Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, are living entities that accord value to the transmitters and actors involved in the passing of this heritage (53). As a form of intangible heritage, oral history draws upon a native understanding of place and expresses the value of particular landscapes through language. In his ethnographic work with the Western

Apache of east-central Arizona, Keith Basso evaluates the ways in which memory is employed to reconstruct, or reimagine, the past. This is accomplished through place-making, imagining place-worlds where the past is reproduced through memories. As Rowlands and de Jong importantly point out in their conversation of memory in postcolonial Africa, the origin of heritage and memory are often found within conflict and loss (13). In this regard, Western Apache draw upon language in the referencing of particular tragic or humbling events with place-names. Through descriptive place-names such as “Widows Pause for Breath,” “They Are Grateful For Water” and “They Piled On Top Of Each Other,” past events that once occurred on the landscape are commemorated and occupy an important part of Apache heritage (Basso 28-29). The value found in place-naming becomes important in considering how people experience a trailscape, since the events that take place along a trail determine what is remembered about it.

Ashmore suggests a way to interpret the use of a particular landscape through the concept of *life history of place*. She defines this as “examining evidence for human recognition, use and modification of a particular position, locality or area over the full time span of its existence” (1178). In what follows, I draw out meanings of the Natchitoches Trace through the thick recitation of the life history of one segment of the Trace, that portion found in the southeast Ozark region of Missouri. I examine trail use by multiple populations at different periods of time, which is possible through the coexistence of shared narratives on the trailscape. As demonstrated in the remaining discussion and analysis of common themes in trail use, the Natchitoches Trace is best characterised as a multi-vocal trailscape with an entangled social memory and history owing to its continual recharacterisation and changing meanings.

The Natchitoches Trace

Geographic Scope

The Natchitoches Trace is a route that extends from the St. Louis area of Missouri southwest to Louisiana and Texas (Price and Price 8). During pre-Columbian times, it may have served as a trade route linking Cahokia, a major population centre that organised the

North American mid-continent from A.D. 900-1450, with the Caddoan peoples, who populated areas in Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana and Arkansas (Manson 392, Rafferty 109). Along its route, the Trace connected with other trails, including El Camino Real de los Tejas, also known as the Old San Antonio Road (Manson 396). By the late 18th century, the Natchitoches Trace was known as the Southwest Trail and, in this capacity, it carried early European settlers westward (392). The portion of the trail between St. Louis, Missouri and Little Rock, Arkansas was known as the Old Military Road due to improvements made to the trail to permit the transport of military supplies.

Passing through Missouri required a trek through the hilly Ozark region (see figure 2). The entire Ozark Plateau encompasses portions of Missouri, Arkansas, Oklahoma and Kansas, and rises to approximately 150-760 m (500-2,500 ft) above the plains. On the eastern escarpment of the Ozark Plateau in Missouri are the St. Francois Mountains and the Ozark National Scenic Riverways, an area protecting the Current and Jacks Fork Rivers. The most rugged and isolated region in southeast Missouri are the Courtois Hills, which are home to a network of caves and springs. The area is characterised by abundant resources such as chert, edible plants, fauna and valleys offering arable land, creating a landscape with the ability to support human populations (Zedeño and Basaldú 13, Stevens 27). Thus, the Natchitoches Trace trailscape here is that of rugged and hilly terrain with access to plentiful shelter and water resources. These attributes likely contributed to continuity in trail usage.

The remainder of this paper is dedicated to an investigation of Natchitoches Trace usage by three populations in Missouri spanning different time periods: 1. Pre-Columbian Native groups, 2. early 19th century European settlers, and 3. Removal Period displaced Native groups. I examine the extant literature on the socio-cultural and historical context of the relevant time periods and identify archaeological features of the trail and its surrounding landscape. I will conclude with a discussion of overarching themes in long-term trail use and reuse in the Ozark region of Missouri.

Pre-Columbian Trade and Settlement: the Origin of the Trace

The inhabitants of the central Mississippi River valley, bounded on the east by the Mississippi River and on the west by the Ozark escarpment, occupied the area since the Paleoindian period (ca. 10,000 B.C.). The population consisted of hunter-gatherer groups who camped seasonally between the eastern Ozark escarpment and the lowlands

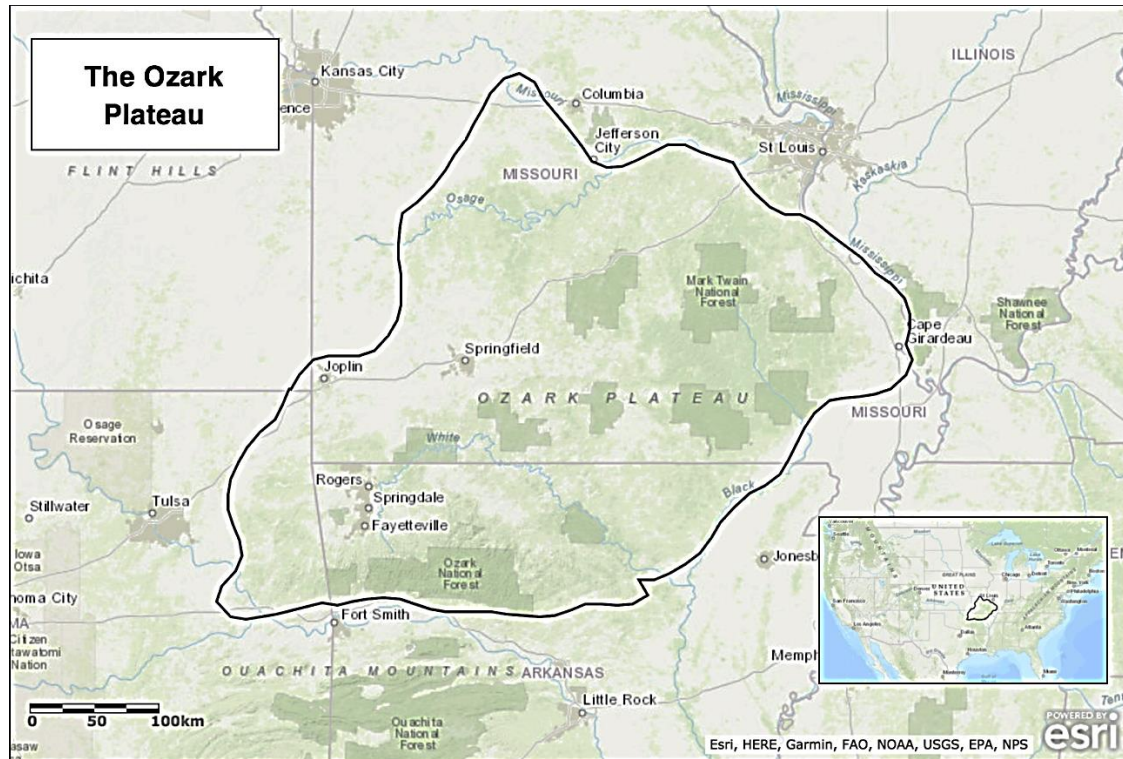


Figure 2. Map showing the approximate location of the Ozark Plateau in southern Missouri and northern Arkansas.

in southeast Missouri. The presence of distantly sourced chipped stone material indicates these early occupants commanded knowledge of and were adept at obtaining resources over considerable distances (see Morse and Morse 2009; Zedeño and Basaldú 2003). During the Middle Archaic period (7,000-4,000 B.C.), archaeologists report an increased emphasis on lower valley habitation with seasonal exploitation of upland resources.

The Late Archaic (4,000-600 B.C.), known as the Poverty Point period, is characterised by the first massive modifications to the landscape, with the construction of

burial mounds. The occurrence of intricately made bannerstones, effigy objects and tubular pipes announce significant technological advances and the wider use of natural resources in the manufacture of tools and ornaments. The presence of lithic material from exotic or extra-valley sources serves as evidence of early interregional exchange and communication, as seen in the Little Black River and Current River drainage areas (Zedeño and Basaldú 22). This exchange was likely confined to the central Mississippi River valley within the Ozark region in the southeast. Participation in long-distance exchange did not occur until the Woodland period (600 B.C.-A.D. 700).

At this time, diagnostic sand-tempered pottery, termed 'Tchula,' replaces a coarse grit-tempered variety, suggesting technological similarities to assemblages from the Tchefuncte culture in Louisiana (see Price 1986; Zedeño and Basaldú 2003). Exotic artefacts indicating participation in the Hopewell interaction sphere—with obsidian and grizzly bear teeth, crocodile teeth from the Gulf of Mexico, copper from the northern Great Lakes region, and mica from the Appalachian Mountains all being exchanged throughout North America (see Hill et al. 2017; Stoltman 2015; Wright 2014)—appear albeit sparsely in the Ozarks in the form of Hopewellian ceramics and projectile points (O'Brien and Wood 198). These patterns suggest a general movement of people and goods along a line of exchange stretching towards the northeast and the southwest, the same general route the Natchitoches Trace follows.

The wider regional shifts experienced at the onset and development of the Mississippian Emergent period (A.D. 700-1000) include a dependence on corn production, participation in extensive trade networks and the development of large civic-ceremonial centres (Zedeño and Basaldú 25). Archaeological assemblages of the larger regional Ozark population centres during this time indicate the presence of diverse cultural traditions. That is, the western Ozarks of southwest Missouri include materials related to the Caddoan tradition from further west, while the eastern region suggests a close relation with Western Lowland Mississippian groups further to the east. It appears Cahokia actively controlled the northern extent of the Ozarks. This distinction is complemented by an analysis of ceramic wares by Lynott et al. (2000) that suggests a trading relationship between the

northern upland and southern lowland Ozark groups with the movement of ceramic vessels to the uplands.

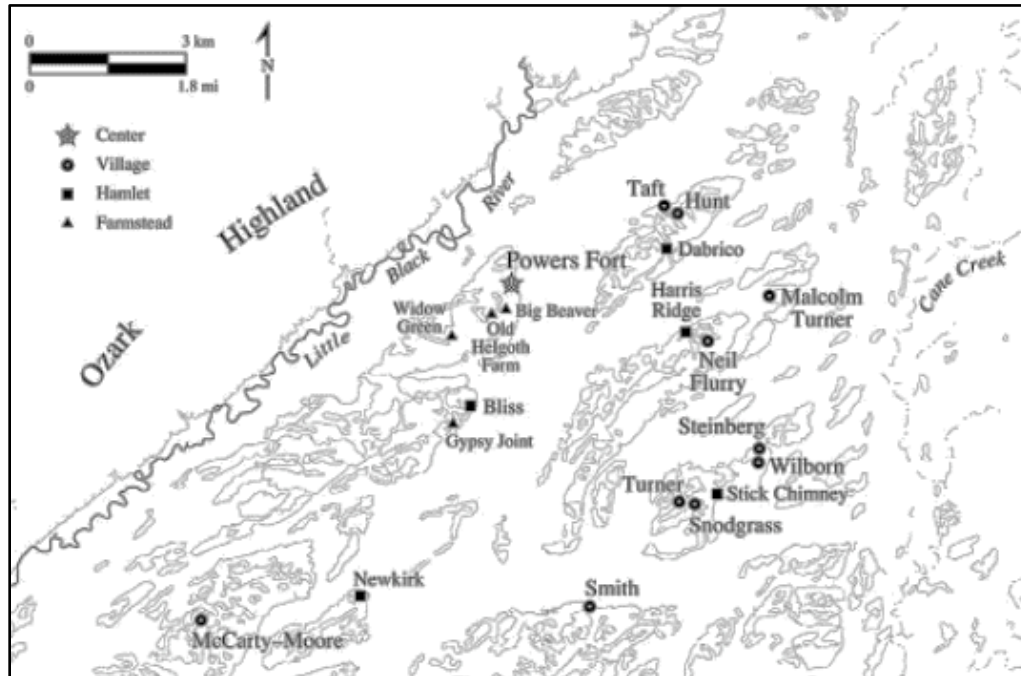


Figure 3. A portion of the Little Black River watershed showing Powers Phase villages, hamlets, and farmsteads (from O'Brien, Michael. *Mississippian Community Organization*, 2008, p. 158)

A significant amount of archaeological evidence exists for the Mississippian time period known as the Powers Phase, lasting from A.D. 1250-1400. During this time, large ceremonial centres and smaller villages occur within the Little Black River watershed lowland region of southeast Missouri (see figure 3). The Natchitoches Trace passes in the vicinity of the Little Black River watershed. This region is dominated by larger settlements, such as Powers Fort, and smaller surrounding villages, which are located 3-9 km (1.8-5.5 mi) from Powers Fort (Price 48). Powers Fort features a large temple mound as well as three smaller mounds, a central courtyard and houses, all enclosed by fortifications (Lynott 40). The smaller villages surrounding Powers Fort also contained houses, plazas and

fortifications, although they appear to have served as cemeteries for the larger population at Powers Fort and other villages.

Given the nearby location of the Natchitoches Trace with its connection to Cahokia, one might expect to find a collection of exotic goods at Powers Phase sites. Archaeological surface collections from multiple Powers Phase sites, including Powers Fort, Snodgrass and Turner, show evidence for trade of lithics, especially Mill Creek chert (Price 224). This chert variety is sourced to southern Illinois (near Cahokia) and was used primarily in hoe and knife manufacture at Powers Phase sites (Price and Griffin 18-19). In Structure 8 at Turner (23BU21A), one of the largest house structures at the site, 24 Mill Creek chert hoe flakes were found (Price 13). Of 1085 flakes at both Turner and Snodgrass, 973 are of Mill Creek chert material (O'Brien 256). Cahokia is known to be one of the dominant consumers and exporters of Mill Creek chert, where it is also found in large quantities. Large bifaces made of the lithic material are frequently found unused in mound contexts in the Mississippi valley region (Koldehoff and Brennan 149). This concentration of Mill Creek material suggests control by elites in its use and dispersal, a pattern that could potentially be expected across Powers Phase sites.

Moreover, a larger quantity and diversity of ceramic forms and surface treatments occurs at Powers Fort than at any other villages of the Powers Phase, indicating certain traded ceramics never reached the other lower-order settlements (Price 222). An elite presence at Powers Phase settlements likely had some control on the exchange of goods and their diffusion. Price and Griffin (1979) examined the distribution of different categories of artefacts at both Turner and Snodgrass. They found arrow points, pottery trowels, pottery discs, arrow-shaft abraders and decorative vessels occurred most frequently in the larger house structures that were separated from smaller structures outside of a white-clay wall (O'Brien 172). This indicates an elite presence at these villages had considerable control over artefact distribution. Galena and ochre at Gypsy Joint, a smaller Powers Phase site, attest to participation in foreign trade, indicating exotic material and trade goods sometimes reached lower-order settlements in the Little Black River watershed region (Morse and Morse 262).

Nearly all Powers Phase sites appear to have been abandoned and burned c. A.D. 1320-1350 (Lynott 41; Price et al. 57). The interpretation of this pattern has been vigorously debated: some insist the region was completely abandoned, and others suggest a small population remained, creating simply a “vacant quarter” (O’Brien and Wood 331). Nevertheless, there appears to be some sort of shift or reorganisation of Mississippian communities in the southeast region of Missouri that resulted in its vacancy by the majority of the population.

Early European Settlers on the Trail

Upon the arrival of Europeans to North America, the Mississippi Valley remained under French control for most of the late 18th century, when it was plied by trappers and traders. The American government acquired the region that is now Missouri via the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. In 1812, the Territory of Missouri was formed, and in 1821 it was admitted to the Union as a state. It was during these changes in ownership that European settlers frequented the region more intensively. For a brief period, the region of Missouri was under Spanish control, during which time large tracts of land were being sold for a very small fee, attracting settlers to the area. Besides cheap lead, multiple other attributes attracted European settlers to the area, including ease of communication and facilitation of trade, suitable geographic features and lack of former settlement by Europeans (Price 25).

The existence of a pre-worn path greatly aided early European settlers in their spread westward. Some of the earliest references to the trail appear in an 1845 map of Missouri and Featherstonhaugh’s 1844 account of his travels across the country. Early settlements (1815-1850) in the Ozark region of Missouri sprang up along the Natchitoches Trace, consisting mostly of Americans with Scottish-Irish ancestry (Rafferty 1980). As Houck wrote in 1908, “the Natchitoches path became the military and wagon road of the immigrants moving into Arkansas” (227). Along the trail “huge covered wagons, pulled by teams of oxen” travelled over “the rutted, rocky road carrying families and all of their household possessions” (Hahn and Reilly 40). Men had to carry axes to clear the trail of any fallen trees, and sheep and cattle herds trailed behind.



Figure 4. Section of the Natchitoches Trace with the wagon ruts still visible (from Price, James E. "The Widow Harris Site: A Place in the Ozarks," 1988, p. 7)

The use of the Natchitoches Trace for migration by settlers permitted their participation in a pre-existing trade network. Houck provides an impression of the trade, likely one that occurred between Native groups and European settlers:

In 1816 Shawnees and Delawares lived on Castor river and near Bloomfield, in what is now Stoddard county. They travelled this trail twice a year, in the spring and fall. In the spring, they sold their furs and bear and winter deer skins, and in the fall, their summer skins, honey and bear's oil, which they cased in deer hides tied together with rawhide tugs. They carried these products of their country on ponies and always travelled in single file. (231)

This passage indicates reliance by some Native groups on seasonal trade of specific goods. Trade and travel on the trail become so frequent that, by 1820, the path "had been sufficiently opened...to admit the passing of wagons" (Wood 73, qtd. in Manson 392; see figure 4).

Abundance of resources and participation in trade networks encouraged some families to build and settle in cabins along the trail or to establish larger communities nearby. The earliest towns were strategically located along the Natchitoches Trace, and sometimes at crossings of the trail and a stream, in order to increase the accessibility to river and overland trade (Price and Price 21). The Widow Harris cabin (named for the homestead's first occupants; official designation 23RI-H19), located in the Harris Creek Valley in south-central Missouri, provides a glimpse of frontier life along the trail. The

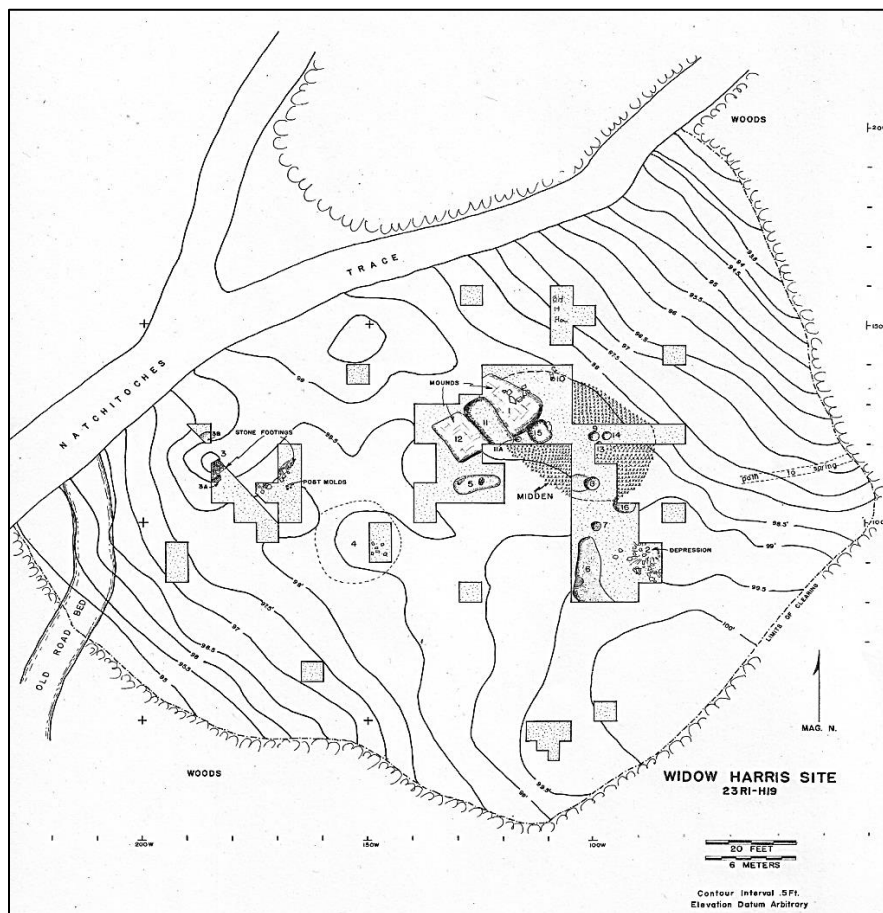


Figure 5. Map of Widow Harris site showing areas excavated (drafted by Price, James, 4 Oct., 1978)

cabin was built a mere 23 m (75 ft) from the Natchitoches Trace by Micajah and Sally Harris, one family amongst others who were fleeing the disastrous New Madrid earthquakes of

1811-12 (Price 6). The earliest account of the cabin comes from tax records dated to 1815 (Morse and Morse 329). In the 1970s, James and Cynthia Price carried out extensive survey and excavations of the cabin and the surrounding area, which involved an 8.9 km (5.5 mi) section of the Harris Creek Valley and a 12.9 km (8.0 mi) transect of the Natchitoches Trace. Excavations revealed a two-room cabin as well as a second, later cabin (Morse and Morse 329; see figure 5). Survey and excavation recovered assemblages of both faunal and floral remains as well as uncovering a large amount of ceramics, cast iron cooking vessels, buttons, beads, utensils, clocks, tools and glassware, all of which significantly add to our understanding of subsistence and trade in the Ozarks in the early 19th century (Price and Price 20). These materials include kaolin pipes, British and French gunflints and a pepperbox pistol barrel. The ceramics assemblage recovered from the cabin includes primarily decorated wares, especially blue transfer-print pearlware (Morse and Morse 329). The presence of these latter artefacts indicates even this frontier location was well integrated into the market economy of the American Southeast.

Price and Price (1978) identify three settlement-subsistence strategies that operated in the early 19th century Missouri frontier. The first is the semi-egalitarian mobile hunter-squatter type, operating on minimal agricultural production and a focus on trading, trapping and hunting. The establishment of nuclear family farmsteads issues in the subsistence farmer type, which involved a mixed farming-herding strategy and some reliance on trade and agriculture. The third category is the planter, who participated heavily in the market economy through cash crop production. The subsistence practices of the Harris family and other settlers in the Missouri Ozarks in the early 19th century relied heavily on the subsistence farmer strategy. Subsistence at the cabin was largely centred on wild and domestic resources, including corn, beans, watermelon, peaches and nuts, among others, as well as on pig and with minimal consumption of wild animals (16-17).

The Widow Harris cabin served as a place of refuge for travellers along the trail, particularly George Featherstonhaugh, who recounts in 1844 his time spent there while travelling across the country. He describes the cabin as “a double one” with two rooms and notes “they were an amiable and good family of people, and not without the means of living

comfortably if they only knew how to set about it” (85). The artefact assemblage recovered from the cabin indicates the Harris family was particularly well-off—although Featherstonhaugh’s account attests to the contrary—likely aided by the frequency of travellers with goods to trade. Nevertheless, not all occupants along the trail were living comfortably or could be called good-natured settlers. According to Featherstonhaugh some settlers “under the pretence of entertaining travellers, they got them into their cabins, and often murdered them if they had anything to be plundered of” (87). People did not just happen to settle along the trail, but rather intentionally built cabins alongside it to obtain items through trade or by plundering the belongings of weary travellers.

Trade was an important economic resource for those living and travelling along the trail. Isaac Kelley, one of the first settlers to arrive in the southeast Missouri region between 1798 and 1803, operated a trading post on the Current River along the Natchitoches Trace (Price 27). His decision to settle in the area appears to reflect strategic considerations regarding trade and indicates an increased frequency of trail use. Hume mentions Kelley’s establishment and notes men carried pelts along the trail on horseback (612). Ferry crossings were important establishments as well, used to transport settlers and their belongings across rivers. In the early part of the 19th century, shortly after the Kelley and Harris families settled in the area, people settled southeast Missouri more frequently. This is reflected in the establishment of railroads, churches, schools, cemeteries, villages and lumber industries, occurring largely in the 1850s. People were increasingly drawn to the area due to the availability of land and resources.

The Indian Removal and the Trail of Tears

An additional reason for the movement of settlers to the west was the increase in population of the American Southeast by Europeans. A lack of land for European settlement drove the U.S. government to forcefully remove Native groups from their traditional lands in the Southeast. The “Five Civilised Tribes” of the southeast region of the U.S., including the Choctaw, Creek, Chickasaw, Cherokee and Seminole groups, were forced to migrate from their native lands to a designated Indian Territory in Oklahoma.

Following the passage of the Indian Removal Act in 1830, Natives were forcefully led in numerous detachments along trails to their new designated land. This tragic event is known in popular culture as the Trail of Tears, although to the Cherokee it is the *nunna daul tsuny*, “The Trail Where They Cried.”



Figure 6. Map showing the three Trail of Tears routes taken through Missouri. The Benge Route travels along a large portion of the Natchitoches Trace. (National Park Service)

Thirteen detachments of the Cherokee were led through Missouri along three separate routes between the years of 1837 and 1839 (Patterson E1; see figure 6). These routes include the Northern Route, the Hildebrand Route and the Benge Route. The Natchitoches Trace served as the principle trail taken by John Benge, who led nearly 1100 Cherokee and 144 of their enslaved Africans from the Wills Valley in Alabama to Indian Territory. Departing in October 1838, they reached southeast Missouri by December 1838. Scattered settlements of Shawnee, Delaware and Cherokee groups existed in southeast Missouri prior to the 1838 forced removal. These groups were seeking new territory in the mid-18th century as a result of increased appropriation of their more easterly lands by European settlers. A treaty in 1817 granted these groups rights to the land in the southeast Missouri region, although this treaty was shortly thereafter rescinded once the Indian Removal Act

was established and the Natchitoches Trace was designated an official removal route by President Andrew Jackson.

Oral histories, correspondence, road surveys, historic maps and later historic accounts attest to the trail's extensive use by the Benge Trail of Tears detachment as a route taken by displaced Cherokee. The route from Cape Girardeau to Greenville and south through the Little Black River watershed into Arkansas was given official state recognition by the General Assembly of Missouri in 1835 and was subsequently surveyed in 1838 by Aaron Snider. The trail had been used primarily as a postal route since c. 1820 despite the lack of towns other than groups of farmsteads and essential businesses centred on ferry crossings, trading posts and mills (Patterson E9).

Although considered an official state road, the Trace was much less a road and more a rough trail. Even upon state recognition as a primary transportation route, money was not granted for the trail's clearing or maintenance. These duties were expected from volunteer citizens (Patterson E12). Considering the lack of large settlements in much of southeast Missouri, besides dispersed groups of cabins and farmsteads, the Natchitoches Trace must have been especially difficult to traverse in areas where few people were residing. Additionally, since the trail was used by John Benge and the Cherokee during the month of December, weather must have also been a factor determining trail visibility and accessibility. Historical documents note ice on the rivers caused delays and despite blazes present on the trees, the path was still not well marked (E13).

There is a general lack of information regarding camp sites along the trail, although historical accounts have identified one location for certain, the Widow Harris cabin mentioned above. In the 1880s, Mrs. Washington Harris, the daughter-in-law of the widow Sally Harris, told Dr. John Hume her account of the passing of the Cherokee on the Trail of Tears. She notes they camped in an area just across the road from the cabin and "filled the field plumb full" (qtd. in Patterson E5). Additionally, she recalls a Cherokee woman and baby had died and were buried in the Harris family's cemetery. In a publication discussing settlement-subsistence practices of settlers in the Ozark frontier, the Prices note the existence of a cemetery a few miles southeast of the Harris cabin on a map, likely the one

referenced by Sally Harris (27). At this point in the journey, the Benge detachment was about 9.5 km (6 mi) north of the Missouri-Arkansas border, where they would cross the Current River and continue the journey to Oklahoma. In total, the Benge detachment travelled nearly 1287 km (800 mi), with 257 of them in Missouri, crossing through 6 states and territories (E5).

Reconstructing the Trail of Tears trailscape through written accounts of European travellers and the archaeological record alone insufficiently conveys the true experience of the journey, and it offers a perspective limited only to outside observers. Oral history can reinforce a group's identity and shared belief system, and brings a more personalised and immediate sense of place to a reconstruction of a lived experience. An early attempt to document the oral history of Cherokee migration to Indian Territory in Oklahoma began in 1936 when the Works Progress Administration (WPA) provided a grant to the University of Oklahoma and the Oklahoma Historical Society to conduct interviews of Native and "white" settlers. This collection consists of 80,000 entries and has been made digitally accessible by the Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma. In an interview recorded by Nannie Lee Burns in 1937, Kate Rackleff, a Cherokee woman born in Oklahoma, recalls the memories told to her by her mother who migrated on the Trail of Tears:

In those days there were no roads and few trails and very few bridges. Progress of travellers was slow and often times they would have to wait many days for the streams to run down before they could cross. Each family did its own cooking on the road. People then had no matches, and they started a fire by rubbing two flint rocks together and catching the spark on a piece of dry spunk held directly underneath the rocks. Sometimes, they would have to rake away the snow and clear a place to build the fire. Travellers carried dry wood in the wagons to build their fires. The wagons were so heavily loaded and had traveled so many days that, when they came to a hill, the persons in the wagons would have to get out and walk up the hill. They did not ride much of the time but walked a good deal, not only to rest themselves but to save their teams...

Many died from exposure on the trip and mother said that she thought that a third of those who started died on the way, although all of her family lived to reach the new country. Those who came over the Trail of Tears would not stop for sickness and would stop only long enough to dig a rude grave when anyone died and then the bereaved family was forced to move right along. (*Western History Collections*, interview no. 7382)

The experience of the migration as narrated above conveys a deep sense of physical and emotional suffering that resonates within the narratives of the subsequent generation. In another account, Josephine Pennington, born in 1888, 50 years following the forced removal, describes the collective suffering of the migrants at a particularly treacherous moment:

In due time parties were started west, under the charge of soldiers. These parties were driven through like cattle. The sick and weak walked until they fell exhausted and then were loaded in wagons or left behind to die. When streams were to be crossed, if not too deep, all were compelled to wade. The water often times was to the chins of the men and women, and the little children were carried high over their heads. If the water was over their heads they would build rafts and cross on them. (L. W. Wilson, *Western History Collections*, interview no. 7783)

Jake Simmons, a Cherokee descendent, discusses a similar experience, although highlights how expectant mothers endured a heightened struggle due to their weakened and more fragile physical state:

My grandparents have told me that children were born on this move but that did not halt the move in the least, as the woman was placed in the wagon without delay, possibly only a day before the birth of the child, while prior to then she walked and marched the best she could, often wading streams up to

her neck, and when the streams were deeper than this, the women, together with the rest of them, were put across the rivers in little boats, made sometimes of hollow logs if all of the Army boats and little skiffs were in use. (L.W. Wilson, *Western History Collections*, interview no. 5142)

These descendants of Trail of Tears survivors, all of whom were born following initial settlement in Indian Territory, convey a very immediate and emotional experience of the migration in their narratives. The forced removal was thus not an individual experience, but rather a collective suffering that resonates within these narratives.

Accounts such as these offer a valuable perspective of the experience of forced migration. Such memories bare the fluidity of the trailscape, as daily experience is shaped by certain factors including the condition of the environment, the health of the individual and the material items that accompany an individual. As portrayed in these specific narratives of Trail of Tears migration, the trail is not described in such a way as to designate particular places *on* the trail, but rather the trail is a single place. In this way, oral tradition preserves the memory of a particular place, the Natchitoches Trace trailscape. Remembrance of the trailscape is a result of the value we find in preserving heritage, whether it be our own or someone else's. The physical route of the Trail of Tears is commemorated today as a National Historic Trail by the National Park Service, a United States federal agency devoted to preserving national heritage. Stories of collective suffering and accounts of racial injustice referenced in trauma literature offer a contemporary literary perspective of the Native experience. Works of Native literary criticism such as Daniel Heath Justice's *Our Fire Survives the Storm* portrays Cherokee literature as its own entity worthy of reflection and discussion, and as a step in the process of cultural regeneration, continuity and recovery (150). Justice notes the importance of words, stories and language to tribal communities, as they are "vital to the processes of peoplehood" and "give shape to the social, political, intellectual and spiritual dimensions of tribal life" (207). Through trauma literature, song, poetry, dance, material culture and oral history, descendants of Trail of Tears survivors actively remember the experience of the trailscape and curate their heritage within it.

Interwoven Trailscapes

The coexistence and interweaving of shared narratives lends insight into how people contrive meaning from their use of the trail, permitting its continual reuse and recharacterisation. Through the act of remembering, the trailscape becomes a place curated as a form of heritage. A number of common themes emerge from the discussion of the landscape history of the Natchitoches Trace, although here I highlight only three: the Natchitoches Trace trailscape as a homeland and a hinterland, a landscape of refuge, and one of social memory.

1. A Homeland and a Hinterland

The Natchitoches Trace as it exists in the southeast Missouri Ozarks is simultaneously a homeland to those who settled in the region and a marginal hinterland when compared to the wider settlement patterns in the respective time periods. Each population that inhabited the area consisted of groups of migrants not native to the region. The pre-Columbian Powers Phase of the Mississippian period is marked by a sudden appearance of settlements just south of the Ozark escarpment and the Natchitoches Trace. These villages were occupied from approximately A.D. 1250-1400 and were suddenly abandoned and burned. Although arising as a conglomeration of civic-ceremonial centres, the Powers Phase villages were one of many settlement groups operating to support trade for the major core at Cahokia, whether consciously or indirectly. It ultimately arose and declined as a Mississippian hinterland.

Similarly, the region was once a territory in the frontier, having been “discovered” by early European explorers and settlers. The Natchitoches Trace served to transport people and all of their belongings in the search for inhabitable land in the 19th century. Early southeast Missouri settlers, such as the Harris family, did not intend to find permanent residence in the Little Black River watershed upon setting out onto the trail. Rather, they found a new home within the American hinterland that appeared to enable

participation in trade and communication, and ensure both access to an appropriate amount of agricultural potential and suitable resource acquisition.

2. *Landscape of Refuge*

In the conception of the Natchitoches Trace trailscape as both a homeland and a hinterland, the region also became a landscape of refuge. The Harris family, being amongst the earliest settlers to inhabit the area, sought a land of new opportunities within the solitude of the Ozarks, fleeing from the disastrous effects of the New Madrid earthquakes of 1811-12. Despite their considerable distance from the longer established settlements in the eastern U.S., they still were part of an extended system of exchange and communication, as evidenced by the material assemblage found at the remains of the cabin and references to the family homestead in numerous historic travel accounts. The land they occupied was therefore a retreat from the crowded colonised regions in the east, as well as a refuge for weary travellers who were invited to rest at the cabin before continuing their journey.

The Cherokee, too, sought refuge from the ongoing appropriation of their traditional lands. Prior to the Indian Removal Act, groups of displaced Cherokee, as well as Shawnee and Delaware, had voluntarily migrated to the southeast Missouri Ozarks. It was not until John Benge's route on the Natchitoches Trace that these groups as well as those coming from Alabama were forced to seek a new place of refuge in Oklahoma's Indian Territory. Despite the tears shed and the sorrow felt in leaving behind their sacred lands, the Native people on the trail perhaps felt some sense of hope that Indian Territory would remove them from further government interference, if only for the immediate future. The Widow Harris cabin served as one specific place of refuge along the trail as they rested to draw up strength for the remaining portion of the journey. Documenting oral histories passed on through the descendants of those who made this forced migration provides memories and meanings of the trailscape that written accounts by European travellers simply cannot convey. Additionally, it designates the trailscape as a single place that is experienced by people in the past and remembered in the present.

3. *Trailscape of Memory*

The memory of a landscape can involve the direct remembrance of an ancestral past or it can consist of links to a vague history of landscape use. The Natchitoches Trace relates to both of these forms of social memory through its landscape history. The pre-Columbian populations who formed the trail and continued to frequent it maintained a more intense connection to the trailscape as a relic of their ancestral past. This is seen archaeologically in Powers Phase sites such as Turner and Snodgrass, where a concentration of Mill Creek chert occurs in specific structures, limited in its distribution. This suggests objects made from this material were controlled by an elite group that was obtaining it through trade, since this chert variety is sourced from southern Illinois. The importance of Mill Creek chert at Cahokia and other Mississippian settlements make it possible Powers Phase populations were obtaining the material via the Natchitoches Trace, although it is possible too that it came from across the Mississippi. The difficulty of access to certain raw material invokes the power of a particular place and demonstrates the value of such items as symbolically charged (Spielmann 199). In this case, elites are referencing a powerful place, Cahokia, via material that was likely obtained through interaction within the trailscape. The role these objects play in elite contexts suggests a deliberate memorialisation and citation to the importance of this system of exchange as aided through the presence of the trail. Monuments and assemblages are therefore conscious statements about what should be remembered.

For reasons unknown, Powers Phase groups abandoned the area, which was to be claimed by European explorers and settlers. While these foreigners were unaware of the origins and importance of the Natchitoches Trace to pre-Columbian Native groups, they nevertheless recognised the existence of the trail as one that was part of the landscape for quite some time. Portions of the Trace along with other trail segments have been federally memorialised as the Trail of Tears, referencing trailscape, memory and sorrow. The Cherokee commemorate the tragedy as the *nunna daul tsuny*, “The Trail Where They Cried,” much in the same way the place-names of the Western Apache reference tragic

events. Memory of the experience of the trailscape is thus preserved in the name itself, and the trailscape becomes an important place-world in the heritage of descendant populations. Since “memory is made through repeated, engaged social practices,” the trail’s existence continued despite its changing functions and meanings (Van Dyke 279). As stated by Knapp and Ashmore, a landscape might have been thought of in similar ways despite its shifting meanings and uses (14). The Natchitoches Trace, throughout its life history, was ultimately used to convey people, ideas and material goods.

Conclusion

A trail often conforms to the physical landscape and its idiosyncrasies; its route is determined by something as small as the avoidance of a hornet’s nest to the preference of avoiding a region entirely due to potential for conflict between neighbouring populations. Nevertheless, a trail plays a tremendous role in shaping the landscape. Through use, it becomes inscribed, thereby physically transforming the environment. As a physical remnant of human interaction, it serves to link communities together and finds importance as an “artefact of the way people organise space to accommodate social, political, economic and ceremonial needs and values” (Manson 397). Pre-Columbian populations may have established the trail in order to facilitate trade and maintain strong connections with larger settlements in local or distant regions. European travellers sought access to agriculturally viable land via the trail, whether or not they were aware of the trail’s Pre-Columbian origins. Displaced Cherokee suffered along the trail in moments when the journey was nearly too much to bear. Descendants of Trail of Tears survivors commemorate the trail as an important part of their heritage, retelling the collective suffering in various ways as an act of remembering. Thus, the actors on the trail are differentially aware of each other’s passing; and we, the interested observers, find it valuable to use the trailscape as a place of heritage to curate these disparate memories.

Until recently, the Natchitoches Trace was not physically maintained through deliberation. Yet, through its physicality, it was maintained by a form of social memory that permitted its continual reuse. In recognising the trailscape as a specific place where

memories are curated, we can actively maintain it as a form of heritage in vastly different ways, whether through oral history accounts, commemorative plaques, public outreach, trail preservation or federal recognition. Social memory has permitted the continuance of the trail despite its reinterpretation and recharacterisation by different groups of people. The relationship between people and the Natchitoches Trace trailscape fosters a collective memory of its life history of place and becomes one that differentially remembers. Thus, a trailscape is a very special kind of landscape that reinforces cultural memory and acts as a place for heritage to be curated. In discussing buildings and architectural features, Ashmore notes they “acquire histories as they are built, occupied, maintained, modified, partly or wholly dismantled or allowed to fall to ruin” (1178). This is directly relevant to the Natchitoches Trace and permits its investigation as a trailscape that experienced both continuity and change simultaneously.

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In the State of Karri and Jarrah
Joyce Parkes (Ballajura, Western Australia)

Where you stand is what you see,
Kathy Kelly (thrice nominated

for the Nobel Peace Prize) said
on ABC Radio National's Life

Matters. In Ballajura, Brodie
stood to move alongside banksias,

melaleucas, succulents, palm and
plane trees on her way to a city

appreciative of the Causeway
and the Narrows Bridge, built

in the State of karri and jarrah
trees in the country of

the golden wattle on the soil of
what was Gondwanaland.

From the Darling Ranges to the Swan Coastal Plain
(For B.H.G., B.M.G., I.M.P., and J.M.G.P.)
Joyce Parkes (Ballajura, Western Australia)

After thirty-eight years in Darlington, a place
of roads as steep as learning, scarps as dense
as love, paths meandering like amity, dwellings
as manifold as interpretation, Alas moved to
Ballajura. Surveying her losses and gains, she

stretched to see what could be gleaned from this
territory of sand, lakes, plains. Of the frost or
fire brood, nurture saw her mood grow from sad
to glad – interested, rather than authoritarian.
This house with a garden, a verandah, a garage

and gates, smiles at her and at visitors who
will note the difference between argument and
discontent, find rigour in dissent and go for
a spell in the garden where shallots, chillies,
parsley, lemons, lettuce and kale provide

vitamin A and C — where daisies, a daffodil,
a plane tree, a banksia, a melaleuca, geraniums,
and a hibiscus offer vitamin be and see. Re-
turning inside, looking at her book shelves
carrying volumes speaking of pleas for

understanding, has her write, when solitary
again, that without a dweller there could not
be a sojourner, without a sojourner no
country to traverse, without country no
writers to cast an eye on eaves and leaves.

Ballajura¹ Walks

Joyce Parkes (Ballajura, Western Australia)

Walking north along Bellefin Drive is seeing
plane trees planted on the east side, eucalyptus
marginata and xanthorrhoeas² replanted on
the west side of this road leading to Hepburn

Avenue, winding just south of a biologically
intact stretch of homeland called Cullacabardee³
where, at Baal Street, a small Nyungar community
(Nyungah, the Last of the River People) dwells

apart from yet is a part of other storytellers,
walkers, painters, poets living close to the coast,
the city, the foothills. Made to transport country
and coastal-plain dwellers west towards

the Indian Ocean, east towards the Darling Ranges,
Hepburn Avenue seems to ask if scarps, plains,
trees – texts, tenets, themes – are colleagues
and kin and kindreds of land and sea.

¹ Ballajura is the name of a place on the Isle of Man and the name Ernest Kerruish gave to the land he purchased for a farm near Perth, Western Australia, on arriving from the Isle of Man in 1905 – in what is now known as the suburb of Ballajura. Thanks to my former neighbour, Vanya Chatley, for supplying the history.

² Xanthorrhoea, any plant of the genus xanthorrhoea, also known as the grass tree, and native to Western Australia.

³ Meeting Place.

Saturn/Cronus-11

Joel Weishaus (*Pacifica Graduate Institute*)

Entering a clearing, I saw a river that
disappeared over nine centuries ago.
On its opposite shore were the ruins
of an Anasazi cliff dwelling.

Seeing no road, I approached an intentional
unfolding back into the earth, perhaps the true burial of
the soul rather than the resurrection of an absolute god
a different direction...

following a forking path of pebbly earth,
with the river to my right the road down
was straight ahead.



Entering a clearing: “You too meet with a like imagination, doubtless, somewhere, wherever your ruling stars will have it, Saturn driving you to the woods, or the Moon, it may be, to the edges of the sea.” William Butler Yeats, *The Celtic Twilight*. Mineola, New York: Dover, 2004.

Anasazi: In the late 1200s the Anasazi People left their home on the Colorado Plateau to other pueblos. Why they left is still in contention among anthropologists; but one reason, among many, was drought. The mystery, too, is that even while some rivers still flowed, the Anasazi migrated to drier landscapes. And even when, according to tree rings, the years 1300 to 1340 were wet years, the Anasazi didn't return to their native lands.

an intentional: Cochran, Matthew, “Geologic Soul: An Ethic of Underworld Force.” In, Douglas A. Vakoch and

Fernando Castrillon, Editors, *Ecopsychology, Phenomenology, and the Environment*. New York, Springer, 2014.

forking paths: "In the work of Ts'ui Pen, all possible outcomes occur; each one is the point of departure for other forkings. Sometimes, the paths of this labyrinth converge: for example, you arrive at this house, but in one of the possible pasts you are my enemy, in another, my friend." Jorge Luis. Borges, "The Garden of Forking Paths."

Written in 1942, this short story envisions both the Internet's hyperlinks, and physics' Many Worlds Theory.

Review of *Landmarks* (Hamish Hamilton: London, 2015), by Robert Macfarlane

Patrick Armstrong (Edith Cowan University)

T. Robert Macfarlane, a Cambridge academic who achieved success with a series of books ‘about landscape and the human heart’, also recognizes the vital connection between language and landscape. With a quirky, affectionate understanding of the relationship, he commences his most recent book as follows:

This is a book about the power of language – strong style, single words – to shape our sense of place. It is a field guide to literature I love, and it is a word-hoard of the astonishing lexis of landscape in the comparison of islands, rivers, strands, fells, lochs, cities, towns, corries, hedgerows, fields and edgeland uneasily known as Britain and Ireland.

The author points out that words, when properly used, are not just tools for describing landscapes, but also a way to know and love them. If the rich vernacular vocabulary that has developed over centuries is lost, there is a risk that our relationship with nature and with place is impoverished.

In his first chapter, Macfarlane explains the nature of the subtle language-landscape link in an essay entitled, ‘The Word-hoard’, extending the themes in the next chapter, ‘A Counter-Desecration Phrasebook’. In nine subsequent chapters, he takes different landscape types and discusses them in the context the landscape-language link; for example: Flatlands, Uplands, Waterlands, Coastlands, Edgelands and Woodlands. Macfarlane introduces each chapter with a glossary giving landscape words from different parts of the British Isles. Thus, we learn that *feadan* is a small stream running from a moorland loch in Scotland; *wham* is swamp in Cumbria; *yarf* a swamp in the Shetland Islands; *towan* is a word sometimes used for a dune, or a coastal sandhill, in Cornwall; *bagginblock* is a Northern Ireland word for an area of woodland.

Following each glossary is an expansion relating the vocabulary to the specific landscape. Here are personal recollections, and, also, sometimes quite extensive literary digressions. There are references to T H White (*The Book of Merlyn*), Henry Williamson (*Tarka the Otter*), the writings of John Constable - landscape artist - the

Goon Show, Gilbert White (*Selborne*), Aristotle, and several mediaeval authors. Chapter 11, entitled 'Childish', discusses the perception of landscapes by children. Charmingly, pages 329-332 are 'Left blank for future place-words and the reader's own terms'.

In the slightly quirkily 'Postscript', and occasionally elsewhere in the book, the author looks outside the British Isles. John Muir was Scottish in origin, although most of his 'landscape writing' was about North America: Robert Macfarlane seems rather fond of him.

Although an emotional book, and one filled with love – almost devotion – the text is supported by a very full scholarly apparatus. A 'Guide to the Glossaries' gives the sources for much of his 'word hoard'. Over twenty pages of endnotes, a 'Select Bibliography', a detailed list of 'Acknowledgements', and a satisfactory 'Index' complete this work.

This is a most unusual book, occasionally a little difficult, but endearingly rewarding.

On the Trail of a Ghost

Nicole Hodgson (Murdoch University)

I am on the trail of a ghost, the ghost of Miss Sarah Brooks, who died almost one hundred years ago. I first heard the bare bones of her story a decade ago from a friend, Marcus, who flew me and my husband in a light plane from Esperance, on the south-east coast of Western Australia, out to Israelite Bay. This evocative biblical name is embedded in the memories of most of us west of the Nullarbor after a lifetime of weather reports on crackly ABC local radio. *A gale force warning is in place for Albany to Israelite Bay.*

Marcus flew his plane low for the 150km out of Esperance, skirting the quietly dramatic coastline, where low-slung, grey-green folds of land meet rounded and weathered granite monoliths, which, in turn, meet startlingly white beaches that blend into the shimmering turquoise water. The granite islands of the Recherche Archipelago are scattered across the deep ocean of the most resonant blue. I remember a perfectly clear day in an immense arc of sky and the rare vulnerability of flying in a light plane. The colours were luminous and the visible signs of humans imperceptible. Marcus told us stories of the earliest settlers, including Sarah Brooks, who came out into this country in the 1870s. Even from a vantage point one thousand feet above, this looked like the 'strange and difficult country' described by 1840s cross-continental explorer, Edward John Eyre.

We landed next to the ruins of the Israelite Bay Telegraph Station, a repeater station on the East-West telegraph line that linked Western Australia to the rest of the country. The thick limestone walls and tall chimneys are the substantial remains of what was once a grand Victorian building. It now stands forlorn and incongruous on a flat windswept salt pan at least one hundred kilometres from any human settlements. Sarah Brooks spent the majority of her life either in the tiny settlement that developed around the Telegraph Station at Israelite Bay, or on a pastoral station, Balbinia, in the dry eucalypt woodland fifty kilometres to the north.

Sarah was an educated, accomplished woman of twenty-four when, in 1874, she left Albany with her mother, Emily, and brother, John. They walked those hundreds of

miles with just one horse and cart carrying their possessions. Their intention was to establish a pastoral station and restore their family fortunes. The government of the time was offering generous leases to encourage the settlement of the country out east that had until then been largely ignored. For good reason, as it turned out.

Sarah never married. She worked for a time as a telegraphist, relaying the Morse code messages that linked Western Australia to the rest of the country, and Australia to the world. More famously, she became a prolific botanical collector for Baron von Mueller from the distant Victorian Botanic Garden. Sarah Brooks is part of a lineage of women botanical collectors and illustrators in Western Australia that began with Georgiana Molloy's collecting from Augusta and the Capes region in the 1830s, and continues through the botanical illustrators Georgiana Leake, Emily Pelloe, and the celebrated contemporary botanical artist, Philippa Nikulinsky (Ryan 2012).

There is so much that intrigues me about the life of Sarah Brooks, but at the heart of my fascination is my attempt to understand how an intelligent single woman managed to live for fifty years in close to abject poverty, in the most remote part of South Western Australia, with her sanity apparently intact. From the limited evidence available - a single newspaper interview in *The Sunday Times* (Canberra 1928), a letter to the *Western Mail* on 'Aboriginal Customs' (Pioneer 1906), an article published in a German geographical magazine detailing the exploration she and John made to Mt. Ragged (Brooks 1888), and the physical evidence of her significant botanical collecting in the collection of the Victorian Botanic Garden (Maroske and Vaughan 2014) - I imagine that she found a connection to place, to the flora, and to the Noongar and Ngadju people that was unusual for her time. I feel it was the depth of this connection that allowed her to make a life there, in what seems an inhospitable and difficult place.

I call Sarah Brooks a ghost, but, really, I am the one haunting her. To follow her trail, I need to leave my home in the small town of Denmark in Western Australia. On the south coast, the wilds loom close. The southerly wind that follows a storm is a crisp, cold reminder that there is nothing but the deep blue of the tumultuous Southern Ocean between here and Antarctica. On land, Denmark is at the boundary of two bioregions. We look west to the small pocket of tall, wet, eucalypt forest comprising mostly karri trees and two species of tingle trees, all of which are endemic to South West

Australia. To the east, the rainfall gradually decreases and the size of the trees with it. The jarrah forest and banksia woodland shrinks to the heathland and salt lakes around Israelite Bay and the Cape Arid National Park. From here the Nullarbor Plain is not far to the east.

The landscape in which Sarah Brooks lived out her life is ancient and desiccated, sparsely populated and remote even now. It was not named Cap Arride by the French for nothing. This big stretch of flat, ground-down country can feel eerily empty and preternaturally still. It must have felt particularly so for the Brooks family in 1874, as some of the first Europeans to attempt to make a life there. But, of course, the land was already inhabited by the Noongar and Ngadju, who had created a successful, sustainable culture amongst these harsh conditions for at least 40,000 years.

Ecologically, Israelite Bay is an inflection point; where the kwongan¹, the low, sandy heathland of the Southwest Australian Floristic Region, gives way to the arid and treeless limestone plains of the Nullarbor bioregion, and the extraordinarily diverse eucalypt woodlands of the Great Western Woodlands to the north.

Superimposing a map of bioregions onto a map of Aboriginal tribal boundaries demonstrates just how intimately cultural practice was tied to the ecological. And so it is here at Israelite Bay, the south-eastern limit of the Southwest Australian Floristic Region. It is also the eastern border of the Noongar nation of south-west Australia. To the east, along the Eucla coast of the Nullarbor plain is Mirning country, and to the north in the Great Western Woodlands is Ngadju country. The name Israelite Bay is said to have come from early explorers, possibly the Dempster brothers, who noticed that the Aboriginal men they met there were circumcised, unlike the Noongars to the west, and they linked the practice to an ancient form of Judaism.

The European settlers in the vast area between Esperance and the Eucla district on the Nullarbor were never numerous. Before beginning the research, I had naively hoped that the disputes between the Traditional Owners and the Europeans over land and resources might therefore have been less violent here than in the more settled areas. The documentary record shows otherwise. A pair of settlers at Eucla, out on the

¹ Sarah's brother, John Brooke (sic), recorded the name 'quoweken' as the Aboriginal word for sand plain, or 'open plain without timber,' in a letter to Baron von Mueller in 1896, which was subsequently presented to the Australian Association for the Advancement of Science (Brooke 1896).

Nullarbor - Kennedy and McGill - were particularly brutal, with stories of them distributing poisoned flour, poisoning waterholes and shooting into sleeping camps of Mirning people. I was reassured to read, in an account by Arthur Dimer, a Ngadju man of the area, that Sarah's brother, John Brooks, was 'known by his contemporaries among the Ngadju as a humane man who distributed rations fairly and who did not resort to the gun during the early years of settlement to try to prevent the theft of stock by Aboriginal people' (Gifford 2002).

Sarah Brooks' apparently nuanced understanding of Aboriginal people, at least for her time, is one of the most intriguing aspects of her character. In a letter to the *Western Mail* (Pioneer 1906) detailing Aboriginal customs of the area and written in response to a column by Daisy Bates, she writes:

With regard to such theories as that the Australian aborigines are the direct descendants of Palaeolithic man, we ought to remember the dictum of Professor Rhys, about the ineradicable tendency of mankind to do the same things under the same circumstances. The most civilised man wrecked on this coast, before white settlement, if he were to get a living at all would have to revert to the stone age ...

Twenty years later, in a newspaper interview with the *Sunday Times* (Canberra 1928) towards the end of her life, Sarah began with the explanation of how they came to be at Balbinia and Israelite Bay, and included what I interpret as an acknowledgement of the sovereignty of the Traditional Owners:

Towards the close of the year 1873, a series of articles appeared in the 'Argus' setting out particulars of very liberal land acts in Western Australia, then a Crown Colony. It was stated that settlers would receive a free lease of 100,000 acres for five years, with one year free of charges to travel to any blocks they may select, from which it would appear that such blocks were far from the 'busy haunts of men,' as indeed they proved to be.

Nay more, we soon found the Government had been very liberal with something which did not belong to it. Old Noah, Old Friday and other leaders of the more ancient race were the real owners whose race had lived in undisputed possession and were not inclined to waive their rights to anyone. We were warned too, that the country was poor, and patchy, but we thought

no matter how poor, 100,000 acres would surely carry 5,000 sheep and that would give us a start.

It was surprising to find that her extensive botanical collecting was not mentioned in this article. However, she does demonstrate her ongoing fascination with everything botanical.

Coming back to civilisation after 50 years, I was frequently asked what struck me most and always I replied, the beauty of the flowers. We first met them along the railway as we approached Perth, the lovely blue lace flowers and the gorgeous orange plumes of the Christmas trees. The tiny red-roofed cottages had magnificent gladioli of three or four colours adorning gardens often only a few yards in area, also carnations, roses and delphinium. Evidently the women cared for them. As I have been trying to grow these flowers under unfavourable circumstances, I know what their difficulties must have been.

Originally, I haunted the ghost of Sarah Brooks with the intention of writing a non-fiction account of her life, but the lack of any other original source material in Sarah's own voice led me to fictionalise her story in a work-in-progress. The unexpected revelation and gift of attempting to inhabit the experience of a twenty-four-year-old woman walking across this country in 1874 has been a far deeper and intimate understanding of this land. In trying to recreate in my imagination the landscape she walked through, I am gleaning fresh insight into the dramatic changes we have wrought.

I've been an environmentalist since I was a teenager, but I realise now that my early interest was social and political, and somewhat disconnected from the physical realities of the natural world. I'd spent time as a child living outside cities because our family loved to camp, and I had always felt an affinity with the bush. I was certain I would eventually live outside the city. But still, my young passion for the natural world was more of an all-encompassing embrace of the wonder and beauty, and a sadness and anger at the ongoing destruction. Meeting my scientifically-inclined husband helped me to see and truly appreciate the detail. He is the kind of person who remembers all the Latin botanical names for plants and who has scientific understandings I lack. Even with his help, I am a slow burner as a naturalist, but my appreciation for the intricacies of the natural world is ever expanding.

In spring of 2016, or Djilba in the Noongar calendar, we hit the road, me and my scientific husband, with our camper trailer, and followed the trail of the Brooks family towards Israelite Bay. This route took us firstly through the southern edge of the Wheatbelt, the broadacre agricultural region that sweeps in a wide arc around Perth, an area the size of Britain. Like agricultural areas everywhere, it has been all but denuded of the original vegetation. At this time of year the paddocks are an unearthly vibrant green not found naturally in the Western Australian landscape, where the vegetation is muted and greyed. These vivid colours are only possible because of the widespread application of superphosphate, and a reminder that agriculture in Western Australia did not flourish until phosphate was commercially available on a large scale. These ancient weathered soils have such very low levels of nutrients.

Thin lines of paddock trees stand in silhouette against the sky, remnants of the eucalypt woodlands that once covered this land. Most melancholy of all are the solo orphaned trees; stark and skeletal in the middle of a paddock, standing guard over a monoculture. Trees, like most living things, weren't designed to be isolated and unconnected from their kin and their community. In the *Hidden Life of Trees*, Peter Wohlleben (2016) describes trees as very social beings that share food with their own species, and sometimes even nourish their competitors. But out in the Wheatbelt even tragic lone paddock trees are now at risk. The newest massively oversized farm machinery that runs remotely can't navigate around paddock trees so down they must come. The mantra for farmers in most of the Western Australian wheatbelt is *get big or get out*.

This dramatic change in our landscape, the loss of vegetation on such a grand scale, is so visually arresting and obviously recognisable. In imagining the journey Sarah Brooks and her family took, I've been attempting, with some difficulty, to mentally patch the vegetation back onto the landscape in front of me.

The more subtle changes we have wrought here take longer to emerge. We stopped at a tiny reserve, a small rectangular island surrounded by the flat expanse of paddocks. We walk through a patch of eucalypt woodland, the likes of which would have covered the entire landscape in 1874. Head high thin limbed trees with sparse canopies are interspersed throughout the scratchy thorny undergrowth. Many of the trunks and stems of shrubs and small trees are grey when alive, then continue to

weather and harden to a light brittle grey after they fall on the ground. This wood is so hard, presumably after a lifetime of moisture deprivation, that it does not break down easily. Branches rot from the inside, leaving behind a delicately patterned exoskeleton of grey woody whorls.

We wander through the woodland in search of the discreet wildflowers and delicate orchids that transform what can initially appear to be a drab landscape. Even after a wet winter, the ground crunches with a cracking crispness; leaves, twigs, branches. In trying to imagine myself there 140 years ago, I think about my steps crunching and cracking across the ground. Then I remember the research on the ecological impact of the loss of small marsupials from Australian landscapes (Platt 2013). The many small digging mammals were constantly turning over soil and leaf litter into the soil, both increasing soil fertility and reducing the leaf and branch litter. Meaning presumably that for a woman walking through it in 1874, the ground didn't crunch and crackle in quite the same way.

It strikes me that this is just one of the dramatic changes to the landscape with which I am slightly familiar. What I don't know enough about are the changes to the invertebrate populations. Or different species of birds. Or soil microbes and fungi. The impacts of fertiliser run off, pesticide and herbicide drift. The introduced species and rapid spread of weeds. Ongoing impacts of climate change, changing rainfall patterns and changing fire regimes. I certainly do not know enough about what might be the unforeseen outcomes of the interactions of all of these forces in a complex ecological system.

The European settlement of Australia is a tragic marvel in terms of the scale of impact in such a dramatically short space of time, especially in Western Australia. There is something about this side of the country that feels especially ancient and, at times, unapproachable.

Back on the road we continue to follow the trail of the Brooks family. They were originally bound for Esperance Bay, but all the good grazing land was already claimed by the Dempster brothers. Further and further east they pushed, until settling for a few years at Point Malcolm, just to the west of Israelite Bay. We camped at Point Malcolm

for a week. A negligible distance on the map equated to a slow journey on a treacherous track pockmarked with wide puddles and occasional quagmires.

Point Malcolm is another ecological inflection point. It is a low weathered granite promontory where the ocean swamps the rock in high tides and big swells, leaving behind perfectly clear rock pools full of crustaceans and insect larvae and fine algae. To the west the ocean is deep and rugged, and waves crash relentlessly onto the white sandy beach. The roar of the ocean is the underlying soundtrack to our stay. East of Point Malcolm is the start of the flat, shallow waters of the Great Australian Bight. On this side, enormous drifts of seagrass lie on the beach, piled over half a metre high, drawing shorebirds and gulls to pick over the insects and rotting weed.

Inland, back from the coastal dunes, back where the vastness of geological time and the many millennia of storms, wind and rain have flattened the land to a broad sandy plain that barely undulates as far as the eye can see. Out there, away from the dynamic energy of the ocean, in the most unprepossessing of circumstances, are the immense botanical riches of kwongan vegetation in the Southeast Coastal Province of Southwest Australia's Floristic Region, the most species rich area of this global biodiversity hotspot (Hopper and Gioia 2004).

This landscape is difficult for me to grasp. I've never been able to take even a half decent photo of it, as though it resists my attempts to capture it. Sarah Brooks was a painter, and I imagine the landscape also resisted her attempts to render it in a conventional painterly view. I imagine her turning her artist's eye to the ground, to the delicate details in the vegetation as a way of coming to grips with it. While she wasn't necessarily known as a botanical artist, I imagine that amongst her lost personal effects were many botanical drawings and paintings. Ryan (2012) describes the works of botanical illustrators Leake, Pelloe and Nikulinsky as 'art in dialogue with science', and Sarah Brooks demonstrates this same inter-relationship. On her grave in Norseman cemetery, a small plaque commemorates her as a painter and botanist.

When we drive back out from our coastal campsite at Point Malcolm a week later, many more plants are in flower. Every time we stop and step out of the car into the ankle-high, thorny, scratchy, kwongan vegetation, there are at least half a dozen different flowering plants compared to the previous stop. I see one plant that defies logic. No higher than two centimetres; a tiny, grey stick with perhaps a dozen hard,

needle-like leaves. But it supports a drooping, bell-shaped flower three quarters of the size of the whole plant and a strident, fiery red. I have to get down on the ground, as close as I can, to make sure the flower hasn't fallen onto the miniature plant by mistake.

I stand up and say to my husband, 'Surrounded by all of this, how could Sarah Brooks not become a botanist?'

There are at least 930 specimens known to have been collected by Sarah Brooks (Maroske and Vaughan 2014). Baron von Mueller acknowledged her contribution by naming two species after her; *Scaevola brookeana* and *Hakea brookeana*. She also collected seaweeds and algae, and had a species of red algae, *Rhodophylla*, named after her. Such a prolific collector must have been extremely valuable to von Mueller. In the latter stage of his life, he was determined to compile a census of Australian plants, and like all botanists, he recognised the incredible diversity and high levels of endemism in Western Australian flora. Even such a prolific collector as Sarah Brooks would have barely begun to uncover the full diversity of species in this district.

In human, let alone geological timescales, this land has only just been discovered by Europeans, and the scientific understanding of it is equally as young. New species are still regularly discovered here, and the levels of endemism and concentrations of species richness that exist here delight and confound biologists. Professor Stephen Hopper, who spent six years as the Director of the Kew Gardens in London, has come back to southwestern Australia to live in Albany, and says 'To a biologist like me, this place is the nearest thing to heaven on earth' (Green Skills 2014). I imagine the ghost of Sarah Brooks nodding in approval.

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Landscapes: the Journal of the International Centre for Landscape and Language

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Coffin Bay

Jamie Holcombe 986459

This Photography is posted at Research Online.

Coffin Bay
Digital Photograph by Jamie Holcombe



Coffin Bay, 2016, Jamie Holcombe, Digital Photographic Print, 100x150cms.

Thematic interpretation addressed:

Dwelling, Belonging, Nostalgia, Solastalgia, Sense of Place

This landscape, photographed at Coffin Bay, contributes towards a solution to Glenn Albrecht's *solastalgia*, which he terms *soliphilia*.¹ It expresses my concern that we live too much in the shadow of fear and helplessness, needing to reclaim our relinquished responsibility for our own condition. To do this, we must first realise that we are heading towards a demise of our own making. This image metaphorically depicts exactly that, by suggesting that the highway of denial of our ancient rhythms, which carves its way through nature's own warnings, careers relentlessly towards the inevitable edge.

In the end, Albrecht's neologisms are only words, but they are intended to inspire action, appealing us to work together to protect and maintain our home environments, providing "a universal motivation to achieve sustainability".² Sometimes it takes a moment of melancholy to bring this to the fore, which my photograph endeavours to elicit. If this image inspires reflection on the benefits of a human societal way of life in harmony with a sustainable environment, then ultimately that melancholy is a positive experience, which can help bring balance to a disharmonious world.

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¹ Glenn Albrecht to Healthearth, 2009, <http://healthearth.blogspot.com.au/search/label/soliphilia>. (Accessed 18/11/2014)

Solastalgia refers to the condition of feeling displaced in our own environment. *Soliphilia* gives a name to the solution to this problem, which Albrecht defines as "the love of and responsibility for a place, bioregion, planet and the unity of interrelated interests within it".

² Ibid.

Darwin's Landscapes (and Seascapes)

Patrick Armstrong (Edith Cowan University)

Charles Darwin (1809-1882) was a great integrator. His success was due to the fact that he was able to bring together evidence from many different sources to build his theory. Thus, in developing his notion of evolution through natural selection, he combined evidence from the study of the breeds of domestic animals (he was particularly interested in pigeons), from geology, from the study of variation, from the study of the behaviour of animals, and from the distributions of animals and plants. The original insight can probably be dated to March 1837, 180 years ago, while he was discussing his specimens and observations with naturalists in Cambridge and London, after his return from the *Beagle* voyage. It does not seem that there was any Eureka moment while he was in the Galapagos Islands, the Pacific archipelago with which his name is so often associated.

He linked different strands of thought and observations from an early stage in his voyage as a supernumerary aboard HMS *Beagle* (1831-1836). In South America and the Falklands, he showed how the appearance of organisms, their habitat, environment, and behaviour were interrelated. Amongst his notes on the Falklands is a description of a kelp bed as a 'whole environment'. While the terminology of *ecosystem*, *food-chain*, *food-web*, or *ecological niche* lay far in the future in 1835, Darwin clearly understood the importance of considering the bed of kelp that lay at his feet as he looked out over Berkeley Sound, East Falkland, as a tightly integrated system (DAR31.1/242-243). Here follows a small extract:

On shaking the great entangled roots [of a strand of kelp, the prolific type of seaweed that grows in cool temperate seas] it is curious to see the heap of fish, shells, crabs, sea-eggs, cuttlefish, star fish, Planaria, Nereidae which fall out. ... One single plant forms an immense and most interesting menagerie. If this *Fucus* was to cease living: with it would go many of the Seals, the Cormorants & certainly small fish...

The idea of the whole kelp-bed as an ecosystem regime is clearly conveyed.

Another oft-quoted example is the 'entangled bank' with which he concludes the *Origin*:

It is interesting to contemplate an entangled bank, clothed with many plants of many kinds, with birds singing on the bushes, with various insects flitting about, and with worms crawling through the damp earth, and to reflect that these elaborately constructed forms, so different from each other, and dependent on each other in so complex a manner, have all been produced by laws acting around us.

The idea of an English hedgerow as an integrated system, with numerous links between the components, is well conveyed.

Nowhere are his integrative powers more clearly seen than in his development of his 'Theory of Coral Reefs and Atolls'. In South America, he was collecting evidence of the uplift of land relative to the sea - and indeed, he found fragmentary evidence for local uplift in the Galapagos. As his ship was blown across the Pacific before the Trade Winds, he glimpsed, probably from the masthead, several atolls, noting their internal lagoon and surrounding low circular or horse-shoe-shaped land area. At Tahiti, he waded out to inspect growing corals in the adjoining reef, and also, from a high point, viewed the barrier reef and enclosed circular lagoon of the nearby island of Eimeo, now called Moorea:

From this point, there was a good view of the distant island of Eimeo. ... On the lofty & broken pinnacles, white massive clouds were piled, which formed an island in the blue sky, as Eimeo itself in the blue ocean. The island is completely circled by a reef, with the exception of one small gateway. At this distance, a narrow but well defined line of brilliant white, where the waves first encountered the coral, was alone visible. Within this line was included the smooth glassy water of the lagoon, out of which the mountains rose abruptly. The effect was very pleasing & might aptly be compared to a framed engraving, where the frame represents the breakers, the marginal paper the lagoon, & the drawing the Island itself (*Diary*, 17 November 1835).

Darwin conveys the impression of the landscape, and seascape, extremely well, using metaphor and simile to depict, very vividly, exactly what he observed.

Amongst Darwin's geological notes from the *Beagle* period in Cambridge University Library is a hastily written manuscript, running to about two dozen pages. It was probably written between 3 and 21 December 1835 while sailing between Tahiti and the Bay of Islands, New Zealand. In this document, which is titled 'Coral islands', can be seen the first coherent statement of his theory that fringing reefs (where coral growth is attached to the shore), barrier reefs (where there is a moat-like encircling lagoon) and true atolls (Darwin sometimes used the term 'lagoon islands' to describe these circular or horse-shoe-shaped groups of islets around a central lagoon) are members of a single series, one form developing into the next as the result of submergence. This represents Darwin's earliest adoption of the idea of *gradualism* – the notion that one form of something could be transformed into another as the result of long-continued, gradual change. In this, he had been influenced by Charles Lyell's *Principles of Geology* (1830-1833), which he brought with him on the *Beagle*. The central argument in *Principles* is *uniformitarianism*, the idea that, because 'the present is the key to the past', the geological state of the remote past should be interpreted by reference to the long-continued action of gradual processes observable today.

In the 'Coral Islands' manuscript, Darwin very briefly summarises his description of Eimeo:

The mountains rise out of a glassy lake, which is separated by a narrow, defined line of breakers from the open sea. Remove the central group of mountains, & there remains a Lagoon Isd. I ground this opinion from the following facts. There is a general similarity in the two cases in the form & size of their reefs; their structure appears identical, we have scarcely fathomable water in each case, at a very short distance on the outer margin; within is a shallow basin more or less filled by knolls of growing coral or converted into dry land. In the Lagoon Isds there are some which do not deserve this title, for they consist of a circular reef of which scarcely a point projects above water; while others have a more or less complete, but narrow ring of land (DAR40/2, and Stoddart 1962).

Darwin links a careful description of landscape and seascape with observation of smaller scale features, as well as offshore soundings and shrewd deduction: he was able to 'see the big picture' and to analyse it accurately.

The story was not quite complete: after his transect of the Pacific, the visit to Tahiti, and the writing of the 'Coral Islands' manuscript, he needed to have his feet on an atoll. Here he is in the Cocos (Keeling) Islands in the Indian Ocean, where he was able to test his theory against an actual atoll, which he describes perceptively:

[T]here is to my mind much grandeur in the view of the outer shores of these lagoon islands. There is a simplicity in the barrier-like beach, the margin of green bushes and tall Cocoa nuts, the solid flat of Coral rock, strewn with occasional great fragments, & the line of furious breakers, all rounding away towards either hand. (*Diary*, 6th April 1836)

He has the knack of conveying the essential feel of a landscape and seascape, linking the landforms, marine features and vegetation: always the integrator, but with a strong aesthetic sense, and an understanding of the importance of the light on a scene. And in the interior of the lagoon:

The general appearance of the land at a distance is precisely similar to what I have mentioned at the Low Isds of the Pacific. On entering the Lagoon, the scene is very curious and rather pretty; its beauty is, however, solely derived from the brilliancy of the surrounding colors [sic]. The shoal [ie shallow], clear and still water of the lagoon, resting in its greater part on white sand, is, when illuminated by a vertical sun, of a most vivid green. This brilliant expanse, which is several miles wide, is on all sides divided by a line of breakers, or from the blue vault of Heaven by the strips of land, crowned at an equal height by the tops of the Cocoa nut trees. As in the sky here & there a white cloud affords a pleasing contrast, so in the lagoon dark bands of living Coral are seen through the emerald green water ... [I]t is impossible not to admire the elegant manner in which the young & full grown Cocoa-nut trees, without destroying each other's symmetry, mingle together into one wood: the beach of Calcareous sand forms a border to these fairy spots (*Diary*, 10-17 April 1836).

Darwin liked islands, and he particularly liked Cocos. This was no doubt partly because of the intrinsic beauty of the place, but was probably also due to the fact that it was here that he received confirmation that his 'Theory of Coral Reefs and Atolls' – the idea that fringing reefs, barrier reefs and atolls were members of a sequence – was correct. An

account of the Cocos archipelago formed a key case study in his *Structure and Distribution of Coral Reefs* (1842).

Charles Darwin's appreciation of landscapes, and his understanding of the role of the light and the nature of the atmosphere in determining the subtlety of the perceived colours in a view, was in no small measure due to his reading of Alexander von Humboldt's 1822 *Voyage in the Americas*. He had been reading Humboldt in the summer before he left Cambridge, and had a copy with him. Five months into the voyage, at Rio de Janeiro, after dinner on 26 May 1832, Darwin

walked to the Bay & had a good view of the Organ mountains. I was much struck by the justness of one of Humboldt's observations, that hills in a tropical country seen from a distance are of a uniform blue tint, but that, contrary to what is generally the case, the outline is defined with the clearest edge (*Diary*).

Here are Darwin's field notes of observations on the landscape near Waionio, North Island, New Zealand, which he visited around Christmas, 1835. He indicates what he regarded as an attractive view, emphasising the spectacular and the 'exotic' (this was perhaps typical of travelers of his day), and shows how he appreciates both the gross form of the landscape and its micro-features, such as the petrology (rock-structure) and the tiny fluted surface forms of what is now referred to as the Whangarei crystalline limestone, which is of Tertiary age.

A few miles inland [from the Bay of Islands, where HMS *Beagle* lay at anchor], at a spot called Waionio, we meet with a formation of a compact, pale flesh-coloured Limestone, ... this contains many crystals of a similar kind, as almost to give the whole rock a crystalline structure. In many places Minute ... rounded pebbles are embedded in the lime, & in such quantity as to render the Limestone impure.- The rock is stratified in nearly horizontal planes. - bare masses stand out [like, *deleted*] in the form of Castles or fortified towns, & amidst the green undulating country have [a rather *del*] singular appearance.- Besides the singularity in form on the large scale, the surface of the compact rock has been acted on by the rains in a rather extraordinary manner.- We may see in miniature an exact model of ... Alpine country; the ... sharpness of the crests of the ridges & the steepness of the lateral ravines are perhaps rather characictured [*sic*] (DAR37.2/802-803).

The comparative approach, the eye for detail and the integrative manner are all typical of Darwin's *Beagle* period writings. Anyone who has walked across the grassy country towards Roku's Cave, near Waioomio, looked upwards to the steep limestone escarpment, and run their hand over the rocks, will feel that Darwin often had the knack of succinctly conveying the essential character of an environment.

Towards the end of his book *The Voyage of the Beagle* (1845), the book that represented a reworking of his *Diary*, Charles Darwin attempts to summarise his views on the appreciation of landscapes - he prefers the word 'scenery':

The pleasure derived from beholding the scenery and general aspect of the various countries we have visited, has decidedly been the most constant and highest source of enjoyment. ... [T]here is a growing pleasure in comparing the character of the scenery in different countries, which to a certain degree is distinct from merely admiring its beauty. It depends chiefly on an acquaintance with the individual parts of each view: I am strongly induced to believe that, as in music, the person who understands every note, will, if he also possesses a proper taste, more thoroughly enjoy the whole; so he who examines each part of a fine view, may also thoroughly comprehend the full and combined effect. Hence a traveler should be a botanist, for in all views, plants form the chief embellishment. Group masses of naked rock, even in the wildest forms, and they may for a time afford a sublime spectacle, but they will soon grow monotonous. Paint them with bright and varied colours, as in Northern Chile, they will become fantastic; clothe them with vegetation, they must form a decent, if not beautiful picture (*Voyage*, chapter 21).

Darwin clearly appreciated an attractive view, and he could describe it well, utilising the power of simile and metaphor to convey impressions. Possibly the picturesque and varied landscapes of his youth, in the Welsh Borderland near his native Shrewsbury and North Wales, developed his taste in landscape. Later he experienced the more austere and jagged views in the hills around Edinburgh and the seascapes along the Firth of Forth. But he was profoundly influenced by his reading, before, during and after the voyage of HMS *Beagle*, by the great work of Alexander von Humboldt (1769–1859), *Personal Narrative of a Voyage to a New Continent*, 1822. Darwin appreciated, more than many, that a landscape was made up of a variety of components – rocks (geology),

landforms (geomorphology), vegetation (botany), as well as the human components of a landscape. He was particularly attracted by the effects of the dialogue that exists between land and sea – well expressed in his Theory of Coral Reefs.

Darwin's descriptions of landscapes and seascapes are the product of his remarkable capacity for integration, for seeing a whole environment, and for relating a number of different themes, or strands of thought. It is almost as though he used the idea of landscape as an organizing or integrating concept. This is the same ability that led to his development of his evolutionary hypothesis, the coral atoll theory, his ideas on the transformation of igneous rocks, and of child development. And throughout the voyage, and indeed much later, Darwin was seeing the world through the lens provided by Humboldt's *Personal Narrative*.

There is perhaps one further point that might be made. Darwin is not often described as having a strong aesthetic sense. But the use of language such as 'The pleasure derived from beholding ... scenery ... has decidedly been the most constant and highest source of enjoyment', and the evocative description of the lagoon at Cocos as a 'fairy spot', show a real aesthetic feeling. In his *Autobiography*, he states that in his early life he had much enjoyed poetry – Shakespeare, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Byron and Scott, for example – as well as pictures and music. A particularly telling sentence in the section on his aesthetic sense is:

In connection with pleasure from poetry, I may add that, in 1822 [ie when he was 13 years old], a vivid delight in scenery was first awakened in my mind during a riding tour on the borders of Wales, and which has lasted longer than any other aesthetic pleasure (*Autobiography*, p 44).

In later life, he asserted in his *Autobiography* that his mind had become a machine for grinding out general laws from observations and facts, and this was the cause for the decline in his aesthetic sense (*Autobiography*, p 139, see also Graham, 2008). During the *Beagle* period, and immediately after, on his own evidence, Darwin's aesthetic feeling for landscape, or 'scenery', was at a high level, and this, plus his perception of the integrative nature of the landscape may explain the fine descriptions that enrich his writings from that stage of his life.

Darwinian evolutionary theory can be credited with ushering in a whole gradualist paradigm, an amalgamation of many theories, including Lyell's. W M Davis

contributed the idea of the *cycle of erosion*, the idea that a land surface after uplift passed through of series of stages as the result of denudation (1899). Frederic Clements advanced the idea of *ecological succession*, suggesting that plant communities passed from an initial stage (a bare land surface, such as a lava flow, or young sand dune) through a number of serial stages to an ecological climax: each stage prepared the way for its successor (1916). And then, in 1929, Derwent Whittlesey, suggested that cultural (ie humanized) landscapes themselves ‘evolved’ over time in his paper entitled ‘Sequent Occupance’:

Human occupance of an area, like other biotic phenomena, carries within itself the seed of its own transformation. ... The American farmer, inaugurating a stage of occupance by plowing and planting virgin soil, sets in motion agents which at once begin subtly or grossly to alter the suitability of his land for crops; in extreme cases the ground deteriorates to a point where it must be converted into pasture or forest or even abandoned: when either of these occurs, human occupance of that area has entered upon a new stage.

Whittlesey went on to stress the ‘dynamic character’ of landscapes, referring to the ‘succession of stages in the human occupance of an area establishes the genetics of each stage in terms of its predecessor’. The allusion to the notion of plant succession, and ultimately to Darwinian evolutionary theory, is very clear.

Darwin has been credited with changing the manner in which humanity viewed the world. A key component of the conceptual framework he erected in order to do this had, as its core, the notion of gradualism. And one of the routes that took him to this lay through his appreciation and careful analysis of environments, landscapes and seascapes as integrated systems. In turn, the study of cultural landscapes owes something to his gradualist, evolutionary view – the notion that humanized landscapes change over time just as do living organisms, plant communities, coral atolls, or river valleys. Perhaps Darwin’s ultimate expression of the gradualist paradigm was in his final book *The Formation of Vegetable Mould through the Action of Worms, with Observations on their Habits* (1881), in which he examines the role of denudation in the formation of landscapes and in particular the action of earthworms in breaking down strata through allowing air and water to reach the subsoil, and in comminuting particles, allowing them to be removed by rain and wind. He conceded that the processes must have been

exceedingly slow, but ‘Worms have played a more important part in the history of the world than most persons would suppose’. Thinking perhaps of the chalk downland close to his home at Downe in Kent, he links the gradualist notion to his appreciation of attractive landscapes:

When we behold a wide, turf-covered expanse, we should remember that its smoothness, on which so much of its beauty depends, is mainly due to all the inequalities having been slowly levelled by worms (*Vegetable Mould and Earthworms*, 1881, chapter 7).

He also, perhaps unconsciously, in the final paragraph of this, his last book, links the notion of gradualism, as it applies to the work of earthworms on the sculpting of the landscapes of the English downland, to that of the landscapes and seascapes of the coral atolls of the Indo-Pacific that he once described some 45 years previously:

Some other animals, however, still lowly organized, namely corals, have done far more conspicuous work in having constructed innumerable reefs and islands in the great oceans: but these are almost confined to the tropical zones.

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Review of *Thinking Continental: Writing the Planet One Place at a Time* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2017)

Edited by Tom Lynch, Susan Naramore Maher, Drucilla Wall and O.

Alan Weltzien

John Charles Ryan (University of New England)

Through the interplay of the creative and the critical—in which both modes of ecological writing exist side by side, in exchange with one another—*Thinking Continental* presents a timely and distinct contribution to the blossoming of the environmental humanities. The volume consists of three parts, Ground Truths, Watershed Ways and Planetary Currents, each of which ends with a lyrical coda of poems from leading writers on environment, ecology, place, region and the nonhuman. Cross-disciplinary and, moreover, cross-genre, *Thinking Continental* enlarges the spectrum of recent theoretical work in the environmental humanities, notably Robert Emmett and David Nye's *The Environmental Humanities: A Critical Introduction* and Ursula Heise, Jon Christensen and Michelle Niemann's *The Routledge Companion to the Environmental Humanities*, both works published in 2017.

This dynamic volume hinges on the contrapuntal movement between the more academic-in-voice and research-intensive chapters; reflective, personal, experientially-based essays; and, of course, poetry encompassing a far-reaching range of themes and styles. The collection's polyvocality coalesces around the possibility of *thinking continental*. In their Introduction, Lynch, Maher, Wall and Weltzien define this organising concept as "the capacity to think between scales, to connect the local with the planetary" (xv), signifying "the chronic interpenetration of the planetary with the local" (xxi). As the editors contend, *thinking continental* represents a riposte to the misleading yet entrenched dichotomies of "local-global, cosmopolitan-provincial, place-planet" (xiii) inherent to many theorisations of topographical situatedness and de-situatedness—place coupling and

decoupling—including, for instance, Heise’s *eco-cosmopolitanism* and Mitch Thomashow’s *cosmopolitan bioregionalism*.

When I first read the title, I linked the volume to Aldo Leopold’s phrase “thinking like a mountain” (129–33). In *A Sand County Almanac, and Sketches Here and There* (1949), Leopold asserts that “every living thing (and perhaps many a dead one as well) pays heed to that call” of the mountain (129). In this brief section of the book, Leopold proposed a kind of Heideggerian listening to the world as a medium for *thinking-with* and *thinking-into* in contrast to a thinking *about* or thinking *of* that would promulgate a split between perceiving subject (the human) and perceived object (the other-than-human). The Leopoldian premise of *thinking like a mountain* centres on the possibility of thought becoming thought when the object of thought becomes a thinking subject. In this manner, *Thinking Continental* challenges the rift, within contemporary environmental scholarship, between the “staying put ethos” and more “global, cosmopolitan, or planetary perspectives” (xi). Rather than shying away from an ever more globalized planet, the practice of *thinking continental* draws attention to—and engages with—the multiple scales of affect and effect between all beings existing in a place.

In its reference to the scales, contexts and manifestations of place in non-binary terms, *thinking continental* aligns with John Kinsella’s recent call for “polysituatedness,” but without rejecting seminal thought in place-thinking, particularly bioregionalism (Berg). As I interpret the premise, *thinking continental* involves the projection of oneself—an expression of profound identification—into the polyscalar textures of the other-than-human domain. At the same time, the term implies a sentient, cognizant, cogitating world or, put differently, the thinking that is performed by “the continental,” irrespective of our thinking *about* it. It is the expression of a radical form of empathy—neither restricted to the local, nor rendered abstract by the global—that is central to this volume and particularised in each of the essays and poems.

Drucilla Wall’s chapter, “Life on the Western Edge of It All: Conceptions of Place in Tess Gallagher’s Lough Arrow Poems,” is exemplary of a reflective scholarly approach to *thinking continental* (274–88). Wall begins by narrating her initial encounter with

American poet Tess Gallagher's poetry through a locus she shared with the poet: Lough Arrow, County Sligo, Ireland. Wall summons the concept of "multiple Wests" (277) in elaborating the "larger system of discourse, beyond the national imaginary, pointing in many directions at once" (278) out of which Gallagher's writing emerges. Wall's nuanced exploration reinforces how a critical-creative nexus within the environmental humanities makes it possible for signifiers from non-Anglophonic languages and traditions to enter English discourse in order to communicate facets of ecological being-in-the-world that might otherwise be difficult or impossible to articulate. This is evident in her invocation of the Irish language term *dinnseanchas* to denote "the lore of place [embracing] a totality of topography, history, geology, animal life, nonhuman spirit beings, and human impact on a place" (278).

Similarly, in his chapter "Pathways of the Yellowstone," Bernard Quetchenbach borrows the term *Zugunruhe* from German biologists for "the characteristic urge that spurs migration" (180) in, for instance, lark buntings, longspurs, phalaropes and other avian peripatetics. For Quetchenbach, birds *think continental* through their advanced sensitivities to magnetic impulses and celestial patterns. At the conclusion of the chapter, the "irresistible impulse to move on" (180) provokes a crucial question: "Why wouldn't those titanic creative forces that shape the planet sometimes put bird or bear in motion? Or erupt into a people's story of itself, taking shape as a mythic purpose or triggering a poet's imagination" (191). Understanding Yellowstone through the prism of *Zugunruhe*, thus, offers a basis for conceptualising the immense forces of the continental as inhering within the nuances of the local. Also with a view towards semiotic expansiveness, Andrea Benassi, in "Imagining the Memory of the Earth: Geo-Site and the Aesthetic of the Anthropocene," invokes *réseau* networks of "human and nonhuman actors" (76).

One of the key debates in the environmental humanities is the extent to which a rapprochement between the arts, humanities and sciences is possible, given their markedly divergent epistemologies, methodologies, languages and traditions. After all, as the editors explain, current ecological challenges require "the keen insights not only of scientists but of poets, humanists and social scientists as well" (xv). As illustrations of productive

convergence between disciplines, two chapters stand out. The first, O. Alan Weltzien's "Three Stations Along the Ring of Fire," is written by a poet and humanist, whereas the second, Harmon Maher's "The Deepest Layer," comes from the geological tradition. Weltzien furnishes an engrossing account of the Ring of Fire, Ring of Subduction Zones or Circum-Pacific Belt, a 40,000-kilometre zone of the Pacific Ocean characterised by frequent earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. The author formulates a narrative approach to the macroregion, "Earth's largest place" (17), vis-à-vis three sites—Mount Rainier, Mount Fuji and Chimborazo—and concludes that the "primal unity" of the Gondwanan continent is also a unity of consciousness, cognition and corpus (28). For Weltzien, to be sure, "this macroregion returns us to our own region, above all our own body" (28).

Companionably, Maher posits "layered thinking" as "fundamental to the earth, part of its essential fabric" and comprising the sedimentary and metamorphic, the "concordant and discordant, tilted and overturned" (33). Through layered thinking, it is possible to render deep time accessible to perception and consciousness. In making a case for the significance of layering, Maher's chapter incorporates striking panoramic images of layered geological formations. To be certain, the geological, geographical and cartographical emphasis of many chapters in the book appears prominently in Nessa Cronin's "Deep Mapping Communities in the West of Ireland." Cronin understands community mapping as "an act of expressing and making tangible that which is tacit and often remains intangible, inaudible, and invisible to people 'outside' of the immediate community or local" (47). In her view, deep mapping facilitates ground truthing as the scientific verification of data sets (48, 53). Cronin's analysis of the X-PO Mapping Group, dedicated to the "tracing, naming and mapping of every house and ruin in the parish of Kilnaboy" (50) in County Clare, Ireland, exemplifies the heterogeneous texts, artefacts and objects of study made available through an environmental humanities framework, while intersecting with recent developments in the digital environmental humanities (see, for example, Travis and von Lünen) and geocriticism (Tally and Battista).

In addition to its creative-critical trajectory, *Thinking Continental* includes a collection of thirty-nine poems, each of which contributes lyrically to the theoretical focus

of the volume through elegiac and celebratory modes of address. Twyla Hansen's "Communion," for instance, contributes a sense of the natural world as sacred—though tinged with loss and mourning—to the formulation of *thinking continental*:

Could any place be more sacred?
Once-treeless plain where the first
people sipped from that cool spring
down in the field, where the graves
of Native children dotted those hills. (116, lines 16–20)

[...]

Those fields now a factory of corn
and soybean, no trace of livestock
or silo... (117, lines 26–28)

In narrativising the effects of industrial agriculture, Hansen's poem can be regarded as an antipastoral work. Yet, other poems construe the natural world as an assemblage of thinking subjects. Kimberly Blaeser's "Sutra, in Umber" relates that "Each burr, each blade of copper grass / remembers. And soon every black bark knot becomes eyes" (120, lines 24–25). From my perspective, one of the potentialities of poetry—as distinct from other genres and forms of art—is its capacity to mediate *thinking-with* grass, trees and other nonhuman Others.

The poetry contained in the volume crystallises the various dimensions of *thinking continental*. In Alice Azure's "Portage" (254), the ultimate inclination of the mind, imagination and spirit, is to return to ancestral places, whereas Linda Hogan reminds us that "When the body wishes to speak, she will / reach into the night" (320, lines 1–2). Still, another highpoint of the volume's poetry is Walter Barga's "Ornithological Perspectives,"

reinforcing the figure of the avian as an embodiment of thinking, being *and* doing continental (313–14).

Despite its many praiseworthy strengths, one of the limitations of the volume is its overarching focus on European (Italian, Irish) and North American (Canadian, US-American) landscapes and writers. What might it mean to extend *thinking continental* to African, Asian, South American and other global contexts? Notwithstanding these continental absences, international scholars in the environmental humanities, ecocriticism and place-based creative studies will find the volume of relevance to their own environments, ecologies, places, regions and nonhumans. As the diverse contributions make clear, “the chronic interpenetration of the planetary with the local” (xxi) can be illuminated through a parallel “chronic interpenetration” of the creative and the critical.

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Hyde Park, Perth

Rita Tognini (Independent Writer, Perth, WA)

(i)

Now a zoo of trees
each plot of ground a cage.
Here jacaranda, palm and oak,
there conifer and lime,
willow, plane and flame.
And with horizontal boles
anchored by python roots
an avenue of fig.

Before the wetland was smoothed to lawns
and ornamented with flower beds,
this was 'Third Swamp'.

After the river changed course
this place became Boodjamooling,
waterhole and meeting ground.
Here Nyoongar camped,
wove reed huts, fished
for gilgie and tortoise,
listened to the wind
in the melaleucas,
sang the children their history.

(ii)

A babushka and her brood
are here most mornings.
She leads,

they follow her calls
rich in accents
of Smolensk or Minsk.
Her youngest lopes
beside her. Infant
in the body of a man,
he speaks a language
only she– and birds–
understand.

Two women pace here,
arm in arm
beneath the branches.
One is tall and spare,
the other half her height.
*'E non prende u straccio per pulire,*¹
I hear the tall one say.
*'Lo credo,*² her friend replies.
Then counsels,
*'Se Dio lo vuole, lasciala.'*³

Here man and child
circle a flowerbed.
Giddy with bloom, the boy
breaks from father's orbit
chases ducks to water.
The father watches
sees his Nyoongar seed

¹ And she doesn't pick up a rag to clean.

² I believe it.

³ If it's God's will, let her be.

hard and dry in the boy,
waiting for fire
to scorch it to growth.

(iii)

A corps de ballet of boughs
poised over water,
a greenhouse of birds.

Ducks stretch grey-tipped wings,
mallards nod emerald heads,
lard-white geese make greasy calls,
coots and moorhens
scuttle to undergrowth,
pelicans feed with gravitas
and black swans preen the air
with scarlet bills.

Here– landscape and memory
experience and tradition
text and translation.

Boodjamooling was this place.

Slater Woodlice

Shaun Salmon (Edith Cowan University)

Slater woodlice.

Not lawyers,

Creatures

A name from each hemisphere

Contours bent

By time and money

I hang in my irascible toilet

Bug shuffling over a ceramic grid.

My shit blackish

But in a good way

After illness.

Days of sleep

Speechless, infant-connections

Ancient now.

Repelled

By aeroplanes and opportunity –

Stretched out skeins

Trails of not gone back.

Forget the trees,

A playground of roofs,

Snowdrifts of litter,

Woven dome of blackberry –

A second home, those dens.

Phosphorescence smears

The misted street.

That place hooks me still.
They will bury me in the past.
I will fall back
Into fire, a box, the sea
Thinking of these.

How many homes can you have?
None. Splinters.

The shallow rise drops.
A hill of houses,
Curve of town,
Open land, some silence.

We don't choose our ground
Or its contrast –
This gentle corner moment,
The shape slash atmosphere
The not-death we call a winter's afternoon.

Escarpment spores

Terry Trowbridge (York University)

Lichen spores land as lint
gently on the cuffs of my jeans

like fingerprints land
on escalator rails

that way my ankles carry ongoing conversations
between two tiers of the Bruce Trail

this way my walk serves
an evolutionary purpose, symbiotic, unselfish,

the denim telegraph and DNA Morse code
cotton-borne between limestones

cuff to cuff to sock receivers
brushing escarpment trails

Poetry of Roe 8

Nandi Chinna

Nannas'

Because silver hair shines in the moonlight
we dress in black and cover our heads
when we stalk at night in the banksia woods.

The dumped couch is a handy screen;
fallen branches make crooked spoons
to stir our diversionary recipe.

Buckets of cement in each hand we stagger
towards the fence line, becoming statues
in the headlights of passing cars;

becoming tuart, balga, marri.

When I tell the policeman that I'm old enough to be his Nanna
he snarls *Why don't you act like one*,
which is what I am doing; mixing and stirring,

pouring wet cement into the fence post holes,
holding the future from the inside of the compound,
railing against extinction from the muted

grey space of the paddy wagon.

Watch, 8th January 2017

I'm not a detective. So how is it that I'm waiting
in the Bibra Lake car park, recording the license plates
of white utes, while the animal trappers sit in the shade
at the edge of the lake laughing and eating from their orange eskys?

Then its on. They start their engines, leave the car park, I'm right behind
my no Roe 8 stickers a dead giveaway. They accelerate-slow down-
damn they lose me at the traffic lights. Ha! They must think,
but here I am again waiting at the gate until they emerge again.

To the east I can see Bibra Lake a mass of green
billowing typha grass, water dotted with birds.
At the top of the Norfolk Island Pine tree
a white eagle is also watching, and waiting.

16 January 2017

The tawny frogmouth owls have flown
out from the falling tree.

The woody pear flowers tumble
through the steel teeth of the mulcher.

Our houses are full of dust.

Tawny Frogmouths

Owls have become trees and the trees
are owls that fly up like flames
escaping a fire, disguised as smoke
simmering from the soil.

How quietly they sat for years;
like trees, like owls, moon coloured
eyes closed into knots of bark.

After the bulldozer became silent;
locked in its razor wire pen for the night,
protected by guard dogs and searchlights,
we found the bundle of silvery grey;
disguised as a fallen tree limb,
an empty casing of feather and bone.

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On the Wire

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On the Wire

Sarah F. Lumba (University of the Philippines)

There was a fridge—a fridge on a wire.

It looked like an oversized, ageing acrobat, tottering almost four metres from the ground—all 254 litres of it—in all its white enamel glory. Such a spectacular, death-defying feat, one would think. But no one was even applauding. It had only been a few hours since tropical storm Ondoy¹ had left, and there were only a few spectators out on the street—a pile of scrunched-up clothes, two cars pinned down by a fallen molave tree, an old shaggy loveseat that had lost a leg, a drowned dog. And they were all there, half-buried in sludge.

I saw this scene on the news a few days after the storm had exited the Philippines. The fridge had been spotted in Marikina, my hometown, which was only fourteen kilometres away from the capital and was most affected by Ondoy. There the floodwaters had risen to 23 metres above sea level, inundating 14 of the city's 16 barangays. Other cities had been flooded, too, and there were certainly images that were more jarring than the fridge, for Ondoy had become the most devastating typhoon in the country's history, with 800 people dead, 400,000 displaced, and 17 billion pesos worth of agriculture and infrastructure damaged. But there was nothing quite as surreal for me as the image of that hefty appliance on the wire.

How did it get there in the first place?

Vanity, of course, had something to do with it.

My grandfather used to tell us old stories about Marikina. One of them was about a young maiden who had no name, but whom everyone knew, for her beauty was unsurpassed in her small town. Because this maiden spent all her waking hours studying her own reflection in the nearby waters, he said, the townsfolk kept reproaching her, “But you’re already pretty! *Marikit ka na!*” She ignored them. Instead, she searched for flaws on her face, and finding none, searched even more. Then one day, as she sat by the river that flowed through the rice fields that lay across her town, the sky suddenly turned dark, and heavy rains began to fall. The river quickly swelled, and wise folks warned her to seek higher ground. But she heard

¹ International codename: Typhoon Ketsana

nothing and saw only what she wanted to see. By the time she noticed the floods, it was already too late.

Or so the story goes.

I remembered this myth in the immediate aftermath of Ondoy. Even before the typhoon hit Marikina in the early hours of September 26, 2009, the weatherman had already been warning Marikeños, “Brace for rain. Move to higher grounds.” It was the same warning the maiden had supposedly received almost 400 years ago. But it was a weekend; most people were still sound asleep. And no one was really bothered about the few streets already under ankle-deep waters in just a matter of hours. They were used to it. Marikina is a valley, after all, between the Sierra Madre mountain range to the east and the hills of Quezon City to the west: waters from both always settle in the area, sometimes causing its river to overflow, especially during the rainy season. So when Marikeños heard the weatherman’s warning, they simply took their TVs and toasters upstairs and went straight back to bed.

Then as now, nobody really listens to those who could read the signs of the times.

And so it goes.

After Ondoy, there were rumours that the waters that eventually flooded Marikina came from a nearby dam that overflowed. But the only dam around, Wawa Dam, has been out of commission since the 1950s. It was also much simpler for Marikeños to blame the municipality of Rodriguez, the largest town in the province of Rizal. Rodriguez sits on the slopes of the Sierra Madre where a once vast, fertile forest lay, but that, due to human greed, has been stripped of its thick green foliage and its minerals, limestone, and marbles. Now, every typhoon season, rainwater that the now-barren mountains cannot contain pummels the valley, together with all the highland’s collective debris from its many subdivisions, piggeries, poultry farms, and sanitary landfills. The September, 2009 flood was quite different, though. It was not mainly caused by water from the mountains. It was caused by the city itself.

There is a street near my grandfather’s house in Calumpang, one of Marikina’s barangays, which always has small pools of water forming here and there, even during the summer. To try to solve this problem, the local government has dredged the area, and then either asphalted or cemented the whole street several times over ever since I was a kid. No long-term success has been seen as yet. There are many streets like this in Marikina. When my grandfather was still alive, he told me that there used to be a brook

somewhere in that Calumpang street, and that, no matter what man does, water will always find a way back to its ancient paths. Water, unlike people, has a long memory, and it remembers that Marikina used to be all marshland.

It used to be that the lives of Marikina's early inhabitants revolved around water. They first built their huts around a spring on a hill in what is now known as Barangka, another one of Marikina's barangays, from which they drew drinking water, and which, owing to its healing powers, was treated as sacred ground. Their communal lives also followed the river's flow. It was the river that told them when it was best to plant or when it was best to move to higher ground; that kept their land moist for rice, sugarcane, and vegetables to grow abundantly; that gifted them with fish to eat; and that made their travels to the market in Manila, where they could sell the fruits of their labour, swifter. But Spanish colonisers arrived in the 16th century. They came to sniff out sin and win more souls for their king. They also quickly staked their claim on land that was not theirs, then tortured and killed those who raised so much as a whimper against their God or their unholy rule. It took the Filipinos more than three centuries to band together and fight back to reclaim their land. Like many of those Filipinos, Marikeños could only arm themselves with bolos. But despite their inferior weaponry, they came close to victory in 1898. Unfortunately, other invaders came—the Americans, then the Japanese. When, after another 50 years of colonial rule, Filipinos finally gained their sovereignty, it was perhaps already too late. There were just too many battles and too many deaths to deal with. Four centuries of subjugation wore out their spirit and erased their memory of how their ancient collective soul was tied to land and river and sky.

What they did remember was a painful lesson learned from their colonisers: a lesson in ownership and personal greed. When thousands of hectares of wetland in Marikina that used to be owned by the Tuazon Estate² began to be parceled off in the 1930s, Marikeños, now walking wounded, besieged by so much self-doubt and fear of losing everything again in the end, immediately put up fences and walls, as if to say, "Mine! I can now hold on to something that I can call mine." Thus, Marikina's forebears turned

² On April 16, 1630, the Spanish crown, through Fray Pedro de Arce, apostolic ruler of the Archbishopric of Manila, gave ecclesiastical control of Marikina to the Jesuits. During this period of control, the crown also decided to reward a certain Chinese named Son Tua with thousands of hectares of land for the help he extended to Spanish soldiers who were trying to thwart a British invasion of Manila. The Tuazon Estate ("Tuazon" was the Hispanised version of "Son Tua") demanded taxes from the natives of Marikina for the use of the land and forced them to turn over more than half of their harvest. It was only after a series of back and forth between prominent Marikeños and highly placed government officials, as well as with the lawyers of the Tuazons, that the natives got to own the land they tilled.

from nature's caretakers to land owners. What they owned, they quickly covered with cement, and what was not theirs, they felt no affinity for. Then, beginning in the 1940s, people from other parts of the country started migrating to Marikina, attracted by its balmy weather. More and more of the marshland was filled up with soil and covered in concrete in order to build more homes, businesses, and roads for these newcomers. Open spaces soon became scarce; the paths of springs and brooks were blocked or changed in the name of progress. In the 1950s, this marshland covered an area of 11.23 square kilometres. Only eight percent was left in 1997.

I took my eleven-year-old son to visit my hometown last week, and we sat on a green bench by the banks of Marikina River. It was a warm day. Everyone seemed to have chosen to stay indoors and have lunch, save two old men finishing a game of chess and a few stray dogs sleeping in the shade. I remembered this place when it was filled with vegetable patches, and when lilies and spinach still blanketed the waters. Now, there was only a park, and the paths had all been paved. My eyes moved across the river. The old stone chapel built by the Jesuits in the 1630s would have been right across from where we sat, and I tried to imagine a young priest, still with some holy chip on his shoulder, zealously yanking on a *campanilla* to call the faithful in for the Angelus.

Behind me was the city proper. What used to be a small town filled with rice fields and mangroves, a place whose livelihood was dictated by a 27-kilometre river traversing all the barangays, was now full of hip restaurants, suburban homes, and air-conditioned malls. I turned to my son who was just getting ready to play a game on his smartphone. "This was where we flew kites when I was young," I began, "and where women used to come to wash clothes." He nodded politely, but seemed distracted. I persisted: "This was where we chased the wind and where our neighbours bathed, wearing only their birthday suits." And he asked, "What about you, *nanay*? Did you swim here, too?" "No," I replied, "because this was where my grandfather's twin drowned, too."

"Oh" was all he could manage before he started fiddling with his phone again. I kept hoping that his first close encounter with the river would stir something deep within his gut—a desire to learn more about his roots. I looked at the waters, dark and still, wishing that a mudfish or catfish would suddenly show up to amuse him. But only janitor fish could survive now in these forsaken waters. I turned to him again and thought of jolting him with "This was where hundreds of people drowned during a typhoon

when you were only three,” but he was already off to check out the large bas-relief of a lizard near the bougainvillea archway.

And so it goes.

I am almost certain that the fridge did not know what hit it until it was too late. Perhaps it sat, snug and smug, by the corner of a green-and-blue kitchen, knowing it was the chunkiest appliance in the house. And perhaps it even threw its weight around, sticking its crisper out at the sink, and with handles akimbo, giving the new oven an occasional icy stare. Then Ondoy happened, dumping 341 millimetres of rainfall on the morning of the first day alone—an amount that surpassed the average rainfall of the city for the whole month of September. Tragedy then became a great leveler, even for kitchenware.

It is mesmerizing to watch how the earth goes through its own cleansing ritual. That fateful September morning, when huge droplets from the sky hustled toward the ground, the earth tried to gather all the water in its bosom. It tried to absorb as much as it could. But it was simply too much rain in too short a time. Underneath Marikina’s concrete roads and manicured lawns, underneath its cemented roads and even the underground parking lots of its malls, the marshland that had long been forgotten, that many Marikeños did not even know existed, reawakened. Not long after, it heaved. It began to spew water out through the city’s pores, its gutters, displacing the rats and regurgitating decades-old urban waste, a mix of feces, urine, laundry suds, and small chunks of sanitary napkins. Then spaces between the tiles in household kitchens and living rooms and the cracks on the driveways began to bleed dirty water. And the fridge that was sitting comfortably in the green-and-blue kitchen slowly felt its lower torso getting soaked. The toilets were up next. No one could flush. Instead, out of these bowls popped the last things that had passed through the traps. And whatever those were, they streamed out, cascading like driftwood down miniature Niagara Falls before hitting the bathroom floors.

At first, Marikeños scratched their heads at the sight of puddles slowly forming in the middle of their living rooms. They made jokes about indoor fishing and tried to make light of the situation in typical Filipino fashion. But when the water reached their knees in just minutes, it also reached deep into the fears they thought had long been buried when their ancestors had divided the land. They rushed to bring their kids and their new ovens and sofas upstairs. But they had to let go of the cutlery. For the water rose too

fast, and some of them realised too late that their windows were all barred or that none of their children knew how to swim.

The ground floors of my cousin, my aunt, and my mother's homes became cesspools in just a matter of hours. My brother had to tie his car to a lamppost, lest he find it at the end of the street stacked up with the rest of the neighbourhood's vehicles. My best friend had to leave her four-wheel drive on the nearby highway, never mind if it floated around, to swim through two kilometres of sludge to get to her kids whom she had left alone at home that day. A shanty built by the riverbank collapsed, its thin plywood walls unable to push back the rains, and the family that was inside—a couple, their two young kids, a grandmother, a few cousins—was seen on top of the debris, riding the currents for a few seconds, then was seen no more. The wetland retched and covered my hometown in ten feet of muddy water, and the raging currents in the river carried off buckets, trees, cars, pianos, a fridge, and a whole city's sense of security. Afterwards, bodies of children were seen dangling like neglected laundry on fences and electric wires. In Provident Village, which was considered the most posh village in Marikina in the 1980s, many of the dead were fished out. Old Marikeños were not surprised, for they remembered that this village used to be the river's old path.

I rose from the bench and saw my son sitting on the steps of the nearby grotto. He seemed to be flicking ants off his long pants. Oh, little god, and everything around mere playthings, I thought. He looked up then, and I managed a smile before telling him it was time for us to get going. As we walked back to the car, I gave the river a final nod and thought again about her, the maiden in the tale. She had no name. But the river, for sure, knew her well. She was full of conceit, and the river—how terrible its wrath was. I knew she suffered. I saw her head bobbing on the waters, arms stretched out toward the heavens, begging to be rescued. I saw her clawing on boulders, on threads of water, struggling to surface again and again, gasping for air, but always being pulled back under, the undercurrent thrashing her about, whirling her this way and that, together with branches, loose limbs and mismatched boots, the way a washing machine's spin cycle would. I saw her long hair already gone around her twice like a noose, until finally I could see her no more. They found her days later by the mouth of the nearby Pasig River, turnip leaves clinging to her clothes, a half-dead janitor fish in her mouth. Her face was bloated and blue, her eyes a frozen stare, half in disbelief, half in unbelief. They warned her, yes they did—the people, the skies, the

earth, the river . . . all the signs were there. But she refused to heed them. I knew her story quite well. I was there when she lived. I saw her die. Because water has a long memory. And three- fourths of me is water.

That day, by the riverbank with my son, the water was peaceful, and the city seemed to be in a good place. After all, it has already survived many upheavals—four major earthquakes, two cholera epidemics, an attack of locusts that ruined farms and caused famine, numerous fires and floods—and has become one of the most competitive and greenest cities in the country. But such kinds of accolades could make a place and its people deeply engrossed with their own reflection, and they could forget to look up at the darkening skies.

I wanted to tell my son that I have been saving up for a small piece of land in Marikina, for this was where I would wish to retire. I could imagine him all grown up, with a family of his own, visiting me on the weekends, and we would share a bowl of *goto*, that steaming hot yellow rice porridge my hometown has always been known for. But I could not completely dismiss the things that I knew: that the quarrying and dredging in Rodriguez continues unabated; that Marikina has not ceased building new subdivisions and new malls; and that, though the city has long been warned not to build near its river and to be cognizant of its natural flow, nobody really pays much attention to warnings such as this, except during a storm.

And so, as my son and I drove away from my hometown, a certain kind of unease began to settle in my bones. I could hear the bell toll from across the river. It was calling all the faithful again, but this time, to warn them: The river giveth, the river taketh away. And as the pealing persisted, I could not help but picture that fridge, still there, dangling from the wire.

Everything, on the wire.

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The Journey of the Water **Tracing the Flow of Chile's Mapocho River**

James Kelly

It all starts with a glacier, at daybreak, as the light sun spills over mountain ridges and begins to warm the air. The ice crunches as it starts to awake, slowly at first, melting and expanding, reborn of the long night's cold. At its feet, the river's source stands motionless, frozen in time, while further downstream its flow has contracted to a trickle during the night. Yet in just a few hours, with the sun's slow ascent into the sky, all this will begin to change: the mountain's hydrography reactivated, the jirbil of melted ice growing to form a trickle, then a steady flow, as the stream starts to fill out its bed, its waters washing gently over volcanic stone. Up here in the altiplano, four thousand metres

above the sea, where the valleys level out and rise to fill the spaces between lofty peaks, where the air is keen and fresh, where the mountains climb to touch the sky, glaciers abound; millennial stores of frozen water, each giving birth to its own tributary, like the farthest twigs of a tree, combining to form branches, thin streams of fast-foaming waters, laden with cargoes of minerals, carving white-lightning zigzags into black-rock river beds, running inexhaustibly across rubble-strewn plains and Andean haughs of spindly lemon-yellow grass, descending in successive levels, surely yet imperceptibly, tumbling and gushing through muckle-great boulders strong enough to resist the water's hiemal flows, down to where the first signs of human permanence can be found, remote farms and ranches, their ramshackle wooden structures scattered across prairies where herds of goats graze under the beating sun, as gradually the river's branches grow thicker and the houses bunch together in clusters to form villages, the water's roar steadily rising, now a rearing torrent, passing by these first signs of civilisation that have built up around it, snaking on through the broad expanse of the valley until it reaches its final confluence; passing under a rough concrete bridge, it is robbed of its pure turquoise hue, merging with another course twice its size, swallowed whole by

the opaque, chocolate waters. The two continue on, their bodies now one, irreversibly intertwined as the villages become towns and the water's flow leads us on towards the city, on to the clamour of a metropolis that has grown tall from the water's primordial vitality, where it is penned in and channelled through concrete canals, their sides built high to guard against the autumn rains, taming the river's force, enervated as it runs through the seedy heart of downtown, washing away the filth, passing unnoticed under bridges where, in the colder months, when the waters rise, fathers and children in woolly hats gather to listen out for the dull clatter of boulders swept down from above, mesmerised by the energy of the swelling flow, passing on as the skyscrapers fade and the buildings thin into ghettos of poor parched yellow grass, where kids play football on gravel pitches, where families subsist on thin broths of bones, where many have nothing left to lose except their dignity and some not even that, the river abandoning them in a fug of sterile dreams, impotence and finally resignation, until eventually the urban sprawl is but a distant memory, until the land levels and the river spreads out in shallow avulsions and broad floodplains, basking in the fecundity of the country's agricultural heartland, where fruit proliferates in shady groves of bountiful trees, peaches, apricots and cherries, ripening under the sun, a land furrowed with channels and ditches, vine yards, a couple sitting down with a picnic basket under a canopy of trees in the late afternoon sun as the waters' pace begins to slow, rippling and burbling under a low bridge, a herd of cattle grazing contentedly on its banks, on across vast open spaces as afternoon turns to evening and the light starts to mellow, luxuriant, rich, the egg-yolk sun bathing the land, on towards the sands, towards its

terminal destination, the final affluent where it is returned to the body from whence it came, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, its mineral-rich cargo discharged into the salty brines, dispersing into the ocean deep, as the seagulls crawl and the sun sets over the Pacific, while up above, as the mountain rock glows red in the afterburn of the dying throes of the day, the crunch of contracting ice can be heard as the light begins to fade, leaving the cordillera at peace, submerged in silence, returned slowly to its midnight solitude to await the beginning of another day.

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Manuscript 1308

Two Tides

Jamie Holcombe

This Photography is posted at Research Online.

Two Tides

Digital Photograph by Jamie Holcombe



Two Tides, 2016, Jamie Holcombe, Digital Photographic Print, 100x150cms.

Thematic interpretation addressed:

Landscapes of/in Memory: Frontiers, Promised Lands, Lost Edens

This interior landscape finds its only cheer in the idyllic brackish waters depicted in a picturesque painting reproduction. The ideal coastal estuary adorning this space serves to highlight that our interior-orientated habitats often rest uncomfortably at odds with the natural landscape. There was a time when people who lived by the sea measured their lives by the tides, not clocks. Now ruled by the clock however, our working lives are often tied to a different tide, occasionally only punctuated by melancholic reminders, in this case provided by a painting on the gritty wall of a cheap motel room that is home to a mine shift worker in central Western Australia.

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Shifting Rurality: American Gothic, Iowa Nice, Biotech and Political Expectations in Rural America

William D. Nichols (Bath Spa University)

Introduction

This paper explores the tensions and frictions inherent in the cultural and material factors that make up heritage as it relates to landscape in rural America. I centre on the state of Iowa, which, I argue, has a unique and heavily weighted heritage value: as valorised by “officials” or state actors, as well as imagined by urban outsiders or by its inhabitants. By tracing the history of these geographical images, I highlight spaces of awkward entanglement where people’s actions and voices collide, contradict, and disempower one another.

I do this by examining the aesthetic history of the state; as imagined and *imaged* by different actors with varying agencies. A critical character in this paper is the Iowan painter, Grant Wood, whose famous painting, *American Gothic*, holds a unique place in the minds of Americans; both as material for lampooning, and as a visual testament to the values of America’s *heartland*. Wood’s aesthetic approach and his philosophy of Regionalism (a cause taken up by other American painters in the post-depression era) attempts to take the powers of cultural production and ambiguous national heritage away from urban centres, which, Wood has argued, have become increasingly European and therefore, in Wood’s mind, colonised or taken over by the “colonial spirit.” (Wood, 230)

Wood’s Regionalism shares common characteristics with the ambiguous Nationalism sold by Donald Trump in the most recent election. Trump’s idea of a “great America” invokes an image of the past as a means of moving forward. Trump locates this new nation in the forgotten “belt” sections of the country; by placing his plan for greatness, he enlisted a mass of placeless people who were willing to behave in contradictory ways in order to get what they’ve been promised. Contradictory claims like; “draining the swamp” whilst electing a corporate celebrity, being working class

whilst supporting a system which values only executives, and being a globalised farmer while supporting someone who has actively agreed to destroy international trade agreements that keep your business alive. All of these contradictions and more arise at this axis of images and interactions.

Throughout this paper, I argue that evolving forms of rurality, or modes of rural living, have shifted the unique cultural and political weights of Iowa on to largely its rural citizens, creating a friction between heritage and hegemony. As a theoretical impetus for this, I draw on work which examines how heritage is produced by modernity, therefore reproducing the end goals of its project and erasing narratives which run counter to its ethos. (Harrison) I also draw on Anna Tsing's "awkward entanglements," as well as her analysis of friction and how friction can resist hegemony but also (re)produce it. (Tsing, 47) I argue that, in rural Iowa, these tensions have arisen from heritage-narratives which stand in contrast to official heritages, or, heritages which are produced by "academic and expert cultures," as well as reified at the level of policy. (Harvey, 155) The authoritative and authorised bodies who produce official ideas of heritage clash with the communities who have sentimental ties to objects, places, and practices, who Rodney Harrison classifies as practicing "unofficial heritage."

I place these practices of unofficial heritage within the landscape of Iowa; a landscape whose heritage-importance is often produced in direct relation to its fertile soil, its agricultural products, and the people who "work with the land." The ever-evolving project of agriculture means that these ideas of heritage are not solid, but constantly shifting and therefore ripe with contradictory claims which, I argue, are illustrative of various actors and their ability to leverage power over Iowa, Iowans, and rural America at large. David Harvey's analysis of the landscape-heritage dynamic notes Wylie's concept that "landscape is tension". (Harvey, 153) This tension, both friction and entanglement, is where the landscape reveals itself as an increasingly complex "space," which is affected by genetic modification, exponential growth of production, and market globalisation.

I argue that these material shifts have caused a great internal friction in social life. Marx says, "the forces of material production have an ideological existence;" and so the unofficial heritage and sympathetic attachment to the landscape, which has been imagined both by the farmer and the urbanite to different ends, is called into question

through these complex, juridic-material processes. Further, I argue that something is *off* in the pacing of evolving factors, and that the aforementioned political contradictions arise from *uneven development*— in the Marxist sense of the rural-urban divide, but also in a uniquely rural, heritage-against-landscape way.

Friction, Entanglement, and the Rural Image

In *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*, Anna Tsing coins the term “awkward entanglement’ to describe “spaces of friction in which the relationship between local actors and global processes are revealed.” Rodney Harrison uses the concept “to explore these shifts in heritage and their social and material consequences.” (Harrison, 31). Awkward entanglements produce frictions in the sense that contradictory forces emerge and butt heads, enacting a bruxism of powers where certain ideological structures and social values vie for dominance.

We can *feel* awkward entanglements when we think about insulated communities and their “weariness” of strangers. Jo Little theorises this weariness as something like a survival instinct:

At a very simplistic level, distance can insulate rural communities, the sheer remoteness seeming to isolate them from harm. Such an idea clearly relies on the idea that danger comes from outside the rural community – so rural areas are not simply remote, but rather remote from a particular danger. This notion of the dangerous ‘other’ has permeated accounts of cultural constructions of rurality in which social exclusion or marginalisation (and the fear of and resulting from it) has been seen as rooted in a fear or dislike of difference and a wish to protect rural people and communities from those who do not belong.” (Little, 90)

While Little categorises weariness as a basic fear of the other, rural communities often have negative interactions with outsiders for obvious reason. On one hand, bourgeois urbanites escape the city to vacation in the pastoral idyll; on the other, rural spaces are more likely to be rich in natural resources, which are ripe to exploit. In both cases, it seems understandable why rural people would be weary of outsiders. Historically, outsiders have *taken away* from rural environments. A casual example, past material exploitation and vacation spots, is the artist who enters into rural space for

subject material. While artists will often take up long term (or sometimes permanent) residence in the areas they wish to depict, they still, for the most part, meet the category of outsider, not simply as someone from elsewhere, but as an individual who has come to partake in the environment; hence, they have come to take something away. In this case, they take away an image entirely informed by their own romantic or septic idea of a place. which might not be so serious if a painting wasn't an object to be observed by others; therefore, communicating (mis)information about rural spaces.

Richard Yarwood states that, in rural communities, “images are important because they both reflect and affect the ways in which the country side is used by society.” (Yarwood, 19) The artist who produces an image of a rural community from outside that community is bringing in a multitude of possibilities of understanding and use for that place— which already has meaning ascribed to it by those who live there. Images become markers of power which delimit and define identities for the subjects they depict as well as those who view the images.

This was a main point of contention when Grant Wood's *American Gothic* was initially exhibited in Chicago, 1930. As many historians and scholar's like to remind us, *American Gothic* is a work whose infamy arises not simply from its own standing as a defining work of American Regionalism, but is also infamous due to reproductions which both elaborate and obscure the original subject matter and intention of the work. These reproductions parody the image in ways which are telling of the current political issues or social attitudes; often times replacing the subjects and objects of the painting with ridiculous imagery; e.g, the Farmer and his female companion for the first family, the pitchfork for a martini, and so on. (Corn, 253)

But, as Wanda Corn points out in her essay on the painting, these lampoons often have nothing to do with Wood's original intentions in creating the work. Instead they have more to do with an interpretation of the work which, instead of coming from within the culture and geography of Iowa, was imposed upon the painting from an audience and critics who were externally involved. Throughout history, critics have misunderstood the painting in the same way that urbanites— or Americans at large— have misinterpreted rural environments and people. Corn quotes critics of the day as saying, “the couple [are] ‘caricatured so slightly that it is doubly cruel, and though we

know nothing of the artist and his history, we cannot help believing that as a youth he suffered tortures from these people” (Corn, 255).

This quote from Walter Prichard Eaton of the *Boston Herald* showcases the prevailing attitudes that define the divide between city and country. A set of assumptions are made about the subjects of the painting; the first of which being that the artist, as a producer of culture, must somehow be *other-to* and outside of the work he is producing; secondly, that the subjects of the painting are caricatured in a way which is meant to produce them as funny looking; and third, that Wood is on his side as a fellow maker of culture and, like the critic, finds these people to be abhorrent, narrow minded and of another era. Corn quotes two other, more contemporary critics, who reaffirm this view.

Matthew Baigell considered the couple savage, exuding ‘a generalised, barely repressed animosity that borders on venom.’ The painting, Baigell argued, satirised ‘people who would live in a pretentious house with medieval ornamentation, as well as the narrow prejudices associated with life in the Bible Belt.’ In his recent book-length study of the artist, James Dennis characterised Grant Wood as a “cosmopolitan satirist” and *American Gothic* as a ‘satiric interpretation of complacent narrow-mindedness.’ (Corn, 255).

Often, the painting is read as a critique of the absurd religiosity of the people in it. Wood’s compositions were informed by religious paintings from the Gothic era, and the title of the painting reinforces this idea (Cheles). Corn, however, follows a more historical-materialist path in her essay and characterises Wood as someone who is interested in the past. Corn states that Wood’s characters are not representations of the past as present but an homage to those he thought should have lived in the house in the background. Corn states,

In placing the man and woman squarely in front of their house, he borrowed another popular late nineteenth-century convention drawn from the itinerant photographers who posed couples and families in front of their homes. This practice, common in the rural Midwest through World War I, produced untold numbers of photographs, all recording the pride of home as much as a likeness of the inhabitants (Corn, 256).

In Corn's analysis pride plays a major role. Wood's reliance on photographs of a bygone era reflect the nationwide tendency of the 1910's and 20's to collect pieces of *Americana*, or cultural artefacts of recent American history. Where once Americans were ashamed of their poverty and provincialism, after emerging as a major world power post-WWI, rural heritage became a mark of pride for many. The photographs Wood collected were also documents of pride— the pride that American's have in their homes. Another source of pride is the reference to horticulture in the painting— the houseplants behind the woman— as keeping plants alive was very difficult during harsh Midwestern winters (Corn, 256).

Corn's read of Wood as looking back and actively engaging in an aesthetic practice of historical-material referentiality exemplifies unofficial heritage as a practice in America. Harrison defines heritage as "objects, places and practices" (Harrison, 6); "unofficial heritage," as Harvey calls it, would be heritage that is relevant at a commonplace or everyday level. Wood finds significance in everyday life in a way that anticipates Lefebvre, who stated, "the 'essence' of man... is made real through action and in practice, i.e. in *everyday life*." (Lefebvre, 179) Wood's idea of heritage is highly tied to the working-class reality of rural people: their day in and day out existence. This is why he places such importance on the farmer and his wife in *American Gothic*. To Wood, it made sense to feature the everyday in a traditionally grandiose object (a painting); to the critics it made no sense unless it was a joke.

Heritage as Revolt

In his essay, *Revolt Against the City*, Wood states that, "Sweeping changes have come over American culture in the last few years. The Great Depression has taught us many things, and not the least of them is self-reliance. It has thrown down the Tower of Babel erected in the years of a false prosperity; it has sent men and women back to the land; it has caused us to rediscover some of the old frontier virtues. In cutting us off from traditional but more artificial values, it has thrown us back upon certain true and fundamental things which are distinctively ours to use and to exploit" (Wood, 231).

Wood evokes an image of American heritage in order to describe his aesthetic and ideological perspective, which he titles Regionalism. Regionalism values independence

and autonomy and emphasises those areas of the country which are less-than-urban as fundamentally American— and therefore more authentic. Wood renounces prosperity as something false in favour of the “true” and “fundamental” things which only “working” people would know. Wood says that these things are exploitable and the focus of his work, the rural landscape of farmed land, shows that he places land-use and use-value in high regard in relation to the working and rural people he admires. It also highlights Wood’s view of the rural as one of dominion over the natural world.

While Wood is highly loyal to his idea of the farmer, fetishising the role of farmer as authentic— ‘wholly preoccupied with his struggle against the elements, with the fundamental things of life’— his farmer is also “not articulate” and “has no time for Wertherism or for the subtleties of interpretation.” However, Wood’s farmer marks this as a preferable distinction between himself and city folk; and in Wood’s mind, the farmer is proud of that lack of superfluous knowledge and taste. Wood’s conception of the farmer has endured “ridicule by city folks with European ideas of the farmer as a peasant, or, as our American slang has it, a ‘hick’...” This criticism leveraged by urbanites has, according to Wood, “caused a further withdrawal— a proud and disdainful answer to misunderstanding criticism” (Wood, 233).

Wood’s emphasis on misunderstanding, both on the part of the rural citizen and the urban outsider, isn’t a stagnant concept. Rather it’s something that has, in the time since Wood’s *American Gothic* and *Revolt Against the City*, had to shift along with the material, economic and political capacities of the landscape. Here, I take “landscape” to mean a collision of the personal, romantic, and fetishised relationships that people have with their environment; as well as the banal, everyday and commonplace activities which also hold significance to its inhabitants. Wood’s painted images pushed these categories into collision, producing a distinctly modern friction where heritage was posed together with progress. These conflicting categories define the imagined rural and its capacity to interact with the outsider world. As Michael Woods states,

As such, rural areas are frequently endowed with symbolic importance as signifiers of national identity, or as the counterpoint to modernity. Rural areas are celebrated variously both as wilderness and as a bucolic idyll. Yet, they can also be portrayed as remote, backward, under-developed places, in need of modernisation” (Woods, 1).

However, in Wood's most famous work, *American Gothic*, the *subjects*, their old-time dress, and their little farmhouse are gathered from images of past time; none of the agricultural fields that populated his later work made an appearance. In this way *American Gothic* distinctly turns away from anything modern. This technique is often used with images of rurality; the subjects are aged, the environments lack cars or "modern" buildings, and the complete lack of modern technology in general, generate images of a more simplified sense of rural place. Shirley states, "that editing out signs of modernity can lead to an aesthetic of rural plurality as a form of nationalist identity" (Shirley, 8). Wood's painting isn't Iowa Gothic but *American Gothic*, and hence was an attempt to communicate a national narrative in direct contrast to the coastal models of modernity; it therefore, becomes an image widely used for different purposes which communicate different ideas of America.

The Contemporary Politics of Regionalism

The rhetoric of Donald Trump similarly edits signs and signifiers which relate to modernity, heritage and invokes a "Great America"— an imagined national-cultural heritage of working people. This invocation calls on the "forgotten" white working class of America to restore themselves to a moment of— if not prosperity, then— autonomy and self-reliance, or, as Wood might put it, more "true" and "fundamental" things. The heritage invoked by Trump is a heritage which is constructed through a lens of dissent-amnesia. The struggles of labour unions and activist organisers never happened in Trump's great America. It's an America where Marx never existed and Ayn Rand is pro-worker's rights.

Despite all contradictions, Trump's rhetoric appealed to areas of the country that were largely working class; but more importantly, to areas seemingly forgotten or left behind. In this way, it is a heavily spatialised or "placed" idea— taking advantage of geographical concepts which, as some have theorised, Democrats have failed to do for some time. (Conn) With national trade agreements allowing American companies to open up manufacturing plants overseas and competition from natural gas reducing the need for coal, many portions of the country populated by the white working class have been in dire straits. In order to combat this crisis, Trump focused on the "victims of globalisation" narrative, and, in the first chapter of his presidency, backed out of

international trade agreements like NAFTA— which elicits varying attitudes from these different (all be it similarly non-coastal) parts of the country.

These sections of America are known as the “Belts”; e.g, The Rust Belt, The Coal Belt, The Bible Belt (known not for its industrial character, but for its religious fervour), and the Corn Belt. These Belts have been focus grounds for building national identity at different historical moments. Within the national imaginary, they’re filled with “good, hard working Americans” and are not portrayed as major producers of culture or knowledge. They are also often less diverse than urbanized regions, or portrayed as less diverse. Each Belt conjures up quintessential images of Americana. The Coal Belt conjures up images of coal miners and Appalachian rebelliousness; the Rust Belt conjures images of steel workers and car manufacturers who helped produce some of the defining objects of the modern era; and the Corn Belt, home to farmers and, most importantly, one of the quintessential works of American Regionalism (and, arguably, the most recognisable portrait of America) *American Gothic*. The imaginary of these places exists both within and outside as produced images of heritage. These imagined spaces aren’t simply important to those who live there; but are also important sites to the American identity as a whole, both as a heart (as in “heartland”) and as the anti-modern counterpart, aforementioned by Woods.

The Belts are seen as places where the American Frontier is still happening— where hard and dangerous work is done for the good of American ingenuity and divine provenance. With the closing of the *real* Frontier by the Census Bureau (due to the amount of human inhabitants per square mile) (Dant, 84) at the World Fair in Chicago, Americans were asked to reconsider the Frontier as not the wild west itself, but a critical act of culture-making and nation building. At the closing gates of the old frontier and the opening of the new Frontier lies modernity. As Catherine Gouge puts it,

In celebration of this technological ‘progress,’ the Colombian Exposition in Chicago had more lighting at the time than any city in the country, hence the nickname the ‘White City.’ The concurrent celebrations of the ‘natural’ promise of the American frontier and of the technological drama of electrical lighting were, furthermore, accompanied by a celebration of the ‘horizontal city’ with cityscapes like those in late-nineteenth century London and Paris where most of the buildings were five stories or fewer and all were accessible on foot. Such

a quilting of commemorations is interesting because it appears to map contradictory celebrations: distinctly ‘American’ ecology, distinctly ‘American’ technology, and distinctly un-American, ‘old world’ city planning” (Gouge, n.p).

For Gouge, the New Frontier is tied up in concepts of heritage and concepts of futurity which create radical dissonances. Rodney Harrison, in his Book *Heritage: Critical Approaches* places heritage firmly within the project of modernity (using Lyotard’s terminology) stating that,

This cluster of ideas and their underlying social, political and economic movements both facilitated and underpinned the development of a particular set of relationships with the past, which were necessary prerequisites to the development of contemporary notions of heritage, including an increased emphasis on empiricism and reason as the primary source of knowledge and authority (Smith 2004, 2006), and a way of defining the present in opposition to the past (Lucas 2004, 2005, 2010; Harrison 2011) and rooting the ‘invented traditions’ of new nation-states by creating a history for them (Hobsbawm 1983a, 1983b and Kosselleck 1985) (Harrison, 24).

It is no coincidence that the World Fair, a quintessential moment for American modernity, becomes, also, a quintessential moment of framing for heritage. Through the repurposing of the Frontier landscape, the barely occupied West comes to symbolise much more for the American people; as Dant states,

by the beginning of the twentieth century, [Turner’s] “frontier thesis” had become the dominant explanation for American exceptionalism – the nation’s professed historical uniqueness and qualitative superiority – and it would influence writing and thinking about the American West well into the twenty-first century” (Dant, 84).

Spaces which were rural, wild, or simply not a part of an urban ecosystem, became significant spaces for national identity. The Frontier becomes an ambiguous signifier for any place perceived as elsewhere, nowhere, or out there. In this way, Wood’s invocation of the “frontier values” (Wood, 130) is also about truth and authenticity. America is being made at its edges and its boundaries are always growing; the transferable idea of what “traversing a frontier” might mean leads to the “Frontierization” of all new things, including new advances in science, such as genetically modified organisms.

Biotechnology and the Globe

While contemporary claims of regionalism have promised to disintegrate globalisation—the destructive force which has taken jobs overseas and contributed to the socio-economic stagnation of the white working class—recent trends in American agriculture were entirely shaped by globalisation policies. The GMO revolution, which has shaped the lives of farmers and subsequently kept them fed, arose from increasing the strength of ties between big government and big business. McKay Jenkins, in his book *Food Fight* discusses ideologies which both deregulatory eras of Regan and Bush Sr. espoused, namely that “the burgeoning biotech industry was a perfect merging of business and science that— if left alone— would generate colossal corporate profits for American agricultural conglomerates” (McKay, 64).

Neoliberal markets became the *modus operandi* for American farmers— who differ from agricultural workers in the sense that they’re more akin to small business owners. Narratives of progress were bundled with the GMO crop, which guaranteed higher yield rates, disease resistance, and an air of futurity or evolution. American farmers would have been no stranger to these narratives of promised progress. As previously alluded to, the modernisation of America also called for the modernisation of American agriculture. Dunlap states that, “the modern state became emblematic of progress, which legitimised its power, bureaucratic rationality, and use of “‘objectivity’ to manage subjects.” He posits this as an invisible power which functions through “constructing mechanisation and industrialisation as the emblem and standard definition of progress to mimic and emulate in all facets of social order—from individual to governmental conduct.” (Dunlap, 93-94) American agriculture had already been industrialised to a certain extent; it seemed modern with its arsenal of harmful chemical pesticides— long before the advent of the Roundup Ready crop.

Lewontin and Levins, in their book, *Biology Under the Influence*, state that, “on the one hand, science is the generic development of human knowledge over the millennia, but

on the other, it is the increasingly commodified specific product of a capitalist knowledge industry.” They go on to state that, “the result is a peculiarly uneven development, with increasing sophistication at the level of the laboratory and research project, along with a growing irrationality of the scientific enterprise as a whole” (Lewontin and Levin, 9). Biotechnology from the very beginning was enmeshed in ethically questionable foundations due to its business-to-government open door policy. Jenkins points to George H.W. Bush’s appointment of Clarence Thomas to the supreme court, pointing to the fact that Thomas was “a former lawyer for Monsanto... [who] later wrote the majority opinion in a landmark case granting companies the right to patent GMO seeds” (McKay, 30).

Biotechnology has had to do a lot of legal and ideological footwork in order to find itself enmeshed within the cultural heritage landscape. Myles W. Jackson covers some of this history in his “Genealogy of a Gene,” stating that “the Founding Fathers of the United States were deeply committed to the notions of the commons and commonwealth” (Jackson, 44). He goes on to say that, “they were dedicated to a cultural commons and were tacitly committed to a natural commons that allowed community access to nature.” (Jackson, 44) This idea of a common access to nature and the commonwealth as a means of combatting monopoly, something the Founding Fathers equated with “the tyranny from which they sought to extricate themselves,” (Jackson, 44) was fundamentally restructured by juridical challenges to the Product-of-Nature Doctrine.

While Wood’s idea of rural life was seen as close to nature, or only adhering to fundamental, less “artificial” ways of living, the ideological structure of the farm is changing, not only at a genetic level, but within a juridical, discursive and legislative framework as well. This friction between the perceived “naturalness” of agriculture and the perceived inauthenticity of GMOs would drive much of the debate about food in America for generations. While business was good for farmers, Monsanto (the big bad boogiemaster of GMO) garnered a fair amount of negative attention; this rocketed the farmer into a conversation where their ethics and the ethics of Americans in general were called into question—not through typical ethical forums (news outlets, public conversation, commonplace interactions), but through the galvanising of corporate entities with scientific discourse.

The Supreme Court dealt with many challenges to the Product-of-Nature Doctrine which stated that products which were found within the natural world could not be patented as *inventions*. Jackson's book explores the history behind a plethora of cases which eventually lead to the total restructuring of the Product-of-Nature doctrine: the patenting of the human genome and genetic material. Biological material at a microscopic level had to be reduced and de-centred order to become a private and owned entity. Part of the juridical work which lead to the patenting of DNA came from reading the human body like computer code. As codes and algorithms were increasingly patented and the human body was increasingly treated as a genetic code, genetic discoveries were able to be patented and owned. Another part of the juridical work was viewing genes as chemical compounds. As Jackson states "the analogy between genes and chemicals seemed a perfect one for the USPTO because... [the] patenting of isolated and purified natural products was well established" (Jackson, 58). Thus, the juridical intimately implemented biotechnology into American life and affected the way that citizens would interact with biological entities.

Juridico-Discursive Agriculture

Bowman v. Monsanto Company in 2013 is one of a handful of court cases where something akin to "traditional environmental knowledges" have come into conflict with the complex nature of patent-oriented GMO agriculture. Bowman, an Indiana farmer, purposefully propagated and saved Monsanto GM soybeans and replanted them for eight seasons. Whether Bowman knew it or not, he was participating in a practice which violated a previous ruling on patent exhaustion—that the natural reproductions of the patented product are still under patent. The Harvard Law Review, while exploring this case, states that "under the doctrine of patent exhaustion, 'the initial authorised sale of a patented item terminates all patent rights to that item' and confers on the purchaser 'the right to use [or] sell' the item as he pleases, but not to make identical new items" (*Harvard Law Review*, 378). They also state that this ruling isn't precedent setting, citing a previous case, *Monsanto v. Scruggs*; the only real difference between the two cases is that Bowman bought seeds from a grain elevator instead of an authorised dealer.

Bowman's and Scruggs's ingenuity, which could be regarded as the sort of "self-reliance" praised by Wood, violates Monsanto's patent rights over the seed, and

therefore the contract that the farmers are under. The practice that the rogue farmers are engaging in is a “traditional” way of labouring *with* the land. As Jenkins states, “since time immemorial, farmers developed, saved, and traded seeds from one year to the next, bartering their way to better, more fruitful crops” (Jenkins, 6). This is an idiosyncratic twist, namely, that the deregulation of big business leads to small agricultural operations working under a more strict set of rules. The “big guy vs. the little guy” is a classic American narrative— Americans root for the underdog, but in the courtroom, big agriculture has had the resources to win cases which set precedent in favour of the “big guy.” It would be easy to see the relationship between companies like Monsanto and farmers as one of antagonism; however, this isn’t necessarily the case. While often times anti-GMO literature will cite farmers as one group they fight for, farmers themselves claim to have a good relationship with Monsanto. Iowa farmer Dave Walton states, “sometimes I think the critics mistake Monsanto for the Illuminati, a darkly secret society that has influence over every aspect of our lives and has plans for world domination by killing everyone but the chosen few” (Walton, n.p). Walton provides a perspective often neglected in inflammatory anti-Monsanto sources— a perspective which is also historically neglected or *misunderstood*. Monsanto has filed 145 lawsuits in the last 16 years; given that there are something like 2.2 million farms in America and many use seeds produced by Monsanto, the lawsuits filed are actually few and far between.

This is not to say that Monsanto or these farmers are benevolent forces operating in a globalised world. Farmers who plant GM seeds are operating under a small business model; although, what constitutes a small family farm is changing with incentives to grow more and more commodity crops. Biofuels have played an increasing role in coercing farmers to grow for their causes without analysing any of the risks, be they environmental or economic. This happens, as do other forms of influence in agriculture, through “indirect forms of power” (McCright and Dunlap in Kulcsar *et al*, 351). Kulcsar *et al* further note that there has been little (if any) public debate in Iowa or Kansas over the efficacy of claims made about biofuel— namely, that it is environmentally safe and economically beneficial.

And yet it’s hard to discover a wealth of anti-GMO/anti-Big ag literature that sources the voices of farmers who deal directly with Monsanto. The farmer is at once

and expert and a non-expert; a working class individual being taken advantage of and a scientifically literate petit bourgeois companion of Monsanto. Instead of viewing this contradiction as Wood's original Regionalist claim that "misunderstandings" are just an inherent part of rural identity, I claim that the misunderstandings run both ways— and "indirect forms of power" play a large role in that. When farmers refute anti-GMO claims, they only have to respond to reactionary fears of the outsider, who may not have a well informed understanding of the situation. This leaves farmers to clear the air and behave as experts. While at first this may seem contradictory to the image of the farmer, constructed as the anti-modern, anti-superfluous, anti-hero, I argue that the efficacy of scientific discourse to hold sway on opinion means that a farmer's ability to cite scientific (or at least well informed) information is one of the "fundamental" or authentic things that Grant Wood aligns with "the farmer."

This pressure to be informed, open, and transparent as a producer of agriculture, arises amidst the spread of global paranoia about GMO's and large agricultural corporations. Jenkins states that some of this paranoia arises from the trauma of Mad Cow Disease, which caused people to be "skittish" about the power and hubris of modern agriculture. Theatrical demonstrations popped up all over Europe and quickly focused on agricultural technologies of all kinds. Protesters dumped GM soybeans at the doorstep of the British prime minister. Food activists pressured supermarkets to pull GMOs off their shelves. Prince Charles said GM foods took mankind into "realms that belong to God" (Jenkins, 37).

While anti-GMO sentiment in Europe won over the power and will of industrial agriculture there, Americans anxieties didn't have the same impact at the level of policy. While three-quarters of Americans worry about GMOs in their food, no national policy has gone into effect, despite the efforts and petitions of citizens as well as larger bodies of organic-positive businesses.

The Integrated Farmer

This ecological awareness pits liberal urbanite against the perceived evil of "Big ag" and their dominion over rural people. For example, a law suit was recently lost in Des Moines, where a city municipality sued the outlying rural communities for polluting local water sources; the city attempted to actively engage their rural neighbours in preventing water pollution, albeit in a very aggressive way. Farmers are no longer just

farmers, but are implicated in a series of relationships to land, neighbours, communities and the globe—all of which are heavily politicised. In order to make sense of this shifting landscape and the shifting concept of rurality, the Iowa Corn Growers Association (ICGA) and the Iowa Corn Promotion Board (ICPB) have joined forces to create an advertisement agency called Iowa Corn.

Iowa Corn has taken to creating images of rurality that are distinctly modern. In these videos, farmers demonstrate values such as environmental awareness and a dedication to being informed as rooted in tradition and enmeshed in global trade. These images mostly take the form of Youtube videos that show farmers in the field, farmers at home with their families, and farmers speaking about their concerns and what they're doing to make the world a better place.

In one video, a farmer discusses GMOs, stating that his use of biotechnology allows him to grow a “better, more quality product.” He makes the claim that he doesn't spray any pesticides the consumer should be worried about. He also cites the consumer as being someone who lives in the city and reinforces the dichotomy between country and city. Furthermore, he makes heritage claims that relate to suspected pollution, claiming to keep “groundwater safer,” so it's not “ending up down the river.” On its own this statement isn't a heritage claim, but due to its being paired with an image of children drinking from the hose (a popular American meme cites how old people love to talk about drinking from the hose as a way to signify simpler times), it ties into classic heritage images of Americana and carefree simplicity.

Another video from Iowa Corn shows how farmers are enmeshed in international commodity exchange markets as well as their local and national markets. This video has multiple farmers talking about the work that Iowa Corn does to advertise for farmers, stating that, if it wasn't for the grains council, there would be a “massive oversupply.” Another farmer states, “we have the ability to produce more than we can consume in this country, and we need to export.” Exports and international trade agreements are very important to Iowa farmers because incentives to grow more and more corn have to led to major oversupply, and international trade agreements like NAFTA have been very profitable.

Iowa Corn produces an image of the modern farmer— an individual who is informed and involved in a complex, outside world. This is a farmer who is by necessity

open to outsiders, entirely opposed to a stereotype of insularity, and friendly to businesses and the people who conduct business. One farmer states, “the opportunities that come out of those relationships, where growers get to talk one on one with international buyers, to be in that same marketplace, is so valuable in order to build long-standing relationships with these countries and with these foreign buyers, so that they can see the value and that we do care about them as customers.”

The disconnect between traditional ways of doing business and the international globalist model is that a lot of what could be thought of as “farmerly ways” should be lost. Often, when farmer’s speak of a consumer, they invoke an image of a unified body, a singular subject who can sit down and somehow enjoy their corn; however, the corn grown by Iowa farmers is used to produce feed for animals, corn syrup and ethanol. Iowa’s produced corn is only ever consumed in abstraction after going through processing. The “consumer” mentioned is not a consumer in a traditional sense, but another business that purchases corn to make other products. As their celebrity spokesperson, the Iowa Nice Guy, informs us in one video: less than 1% of Iowa’s corn is edible sweet corn. Whilst doing a novelty video for Iowa Corn where he attempts to eat field corn, this spokesperson makes claims about the radical potentiality of field corn-- saying it’s the plant that “does more.” He goes on to say that “Field corn is far more productive than sweet corn — it goes to feed livestock, make ethanol, plastics medicine or one of thousands of other daily uses... [it is] one of the most useful plants in existence.”

The aforementioned Iowa Nice Guy became an unlikely sensation when he posted a viral rebuttal to an inflammatory article from the *Atlantic*, which stated that Iowa was “a schizophrenic, economically-depressed, and...culturally-challenged” place (Bloom). The Iowa Nice Guy’s rebuttal was a succinct video where he took ambiguous criticisms and negative stereotypes (none of which were mentioned in Bloom’s article) and replied charismatically with faux-anger directed at those who might be scrutinising Iowa during the presidential caucuses.

He presents his presumed audience with perceived negative stereotypes. “You think we’re hillbillies?” “You think farmers are hillbillies?” “You think we’re all just a bunch of knee-jerk reactionaries?” In order to answer these phantom questions, he turns to statistical data about Iowa that paints it in a more urban or suburban light. In

a way he is trying to communicate to the viewer that Iowans are just like *Atlantic* readers; well educated, white, and liberal.

The Iowa Nice Guy closes his argument by stating, “stop worrying about what we know and start worrying about what you don’t know,” attempting to tie up loose ends that have existed between rural and urban since the two categories came into being. The Iowa Nice Guy is engaging in a breed of Regionalism which seeks to be integrated whilst still autonomous.

His Iowa is heavily urban (although what that means for Iowa is something far different from what it means for a New Yorker) and yet is still, spatially, largely rural. He positions himself as a cultural expert who can bridge the gaps between Iowa and the rest of the country, uniting everyone under the banner of social acceptance and economic progress. In one of his later videos for Iowa Corn, he states, “everything in moderation, except for knowledge.”

Rednecks, Queers, Town and Country Music

Nadine Hubbs, in her *Rednecks, Queers, and Country Music*, cites the rise of a knowledge-based upper- or middle-class as one of the main factors of contemporary urban-rural misunderstanding. Citing the work of sociologist Michèle Lamont, she states that the American middle-class of the knowledge industry are particularly isolated in their understanding of the world, due to class segregation. Her question is “how does the distinctive... insular, perspective of middle-class news and entertainment media... affect white working-class people...?” While her question relates to an American perception of Country music, citing the attitudes of music critics who particularly despise country music, it is a pervasive dimension of the rural-urban relationship.

The culture wars—which Hubbs states peaked in 2004, but one could argue are even more intense right now—were filled with archetypal characters of the modern world: “NASCAR Dads” and “Latte Liberals.” These two characters defined the divide between the knowledge-producing class and the working-class. For Hubbs, the “anything but country” attitude of the knowledge-producing class was telling of the extreme disdain that Americans had of working-class Americans. Country music, largely perceived as rural and/or Southern, is listened to by mainly Rednecks. This ambiguous term has denoted many things in its history; be it the red necks of sunburnt labourers,

or the red handkerchiefs worn by union strikers. The contemporary redneck is perceived to be a bigot and a homophobe. They live in places like Iowa and Kansas and “vote against their best interest,” as Hubbs cites Thomas Frank’s, *What’s the Matter With Kansas?* as saying (Hubbs, 32). This perception of the reactionary vote—literally a vote which is a pure reaction—is the prevailing narrative in media coverage of rural Americans’ voting habits.

Commentators and critics draw connections between the music these people listen to and their politics—stating that both are disingenuous and inauthentic. Hubbs would like to assure that this is not the case in either sense. Country music, at its corniest and most pandering, is “authentic” and true to the spirit of the genre. She cites the work of Andrew Gelman, who states that voters are doing the same things they’ve always done: the rich vote Republican and the poor vote Democrat. But, “for various reasons, rich virus poor voter patterning breaks down at the state level, and indeed is already fuzzy at the county level...” (Hubbs, 35) Hubbs’s main point is that perception of homophobia and bigotry weren’t always associated with Country music or the Redneck. They are symptom of more recent developments, reflective, not of Country or Rednecks, but of a neoliberal production of misunderstanding. While it is fair to say that the middle class liberal is equally stereotyped and maligned, this misunderstanding affects rural people more severely due to their exclusion from producing the narrative of Redneck.

Conclusion: Where is Heritage Produced?

In *Revolt Against the City*, we see Wood as an autonomous and independent mind producing a fervently pro-rural or anti-urban manifesto. However, Wood—like farmers, country musicians, agricultural products, or middle-class producers of knowledge— is not an insular individual; he is inextricably linked to the world around him. He is connected to people, places, things, and practices which don’t singularly affect him, his neighbours, or the New York City curators and critics who endorsed him while representing that which he opposed.

One year before Wood would move to Iowa City (a community often referred to as “the People’s Republic of Johnson County” due to its insular liberalism) and start teaching at the University of Iowa, he was included in an exhibition in Kansas City organised by Maynard Walker. Evans cites Walker, a New York City art dealer, as having

a major influence on Wood's later criticisms and ideological musings. Evans, on the exhibition and its published statement in *Art Digest* in 1933, says,

Walker explained the inspiration for his exhibition. "One of the most significant things in the art world today," he declared, "is the increasing importance of real American art ... art which really springs from an American soil and seeks to interpret American life." This new movement hailed from a surprising location—"our long backward Middle West"—and found its greatest expression, Walker maintained, in the work of Wood, Curry, and Benton. Insisting these men promoted "sincere" subject matter in their work, rather than "the bizarre and sensational," the dealer was quick to note that the three artists had severed all ties to Europe. The indigenous expression of these "real Americans," he explained, was poised to eclipse "the shiploads of rubbish ... imported from the School of Paris" (Evans, 3258-3265).

The long backward Middle-West still looms as an ancillary fantasy to the outsider, and yet, this support for the arts comes exactly from the kind of person and place that Wood would later denigrate in his manifesto.

Here we see again how a concept of unofficial heritage operates as a romanticised notion of things that once were. Nadine Hubbs's examination of Country music reveals that there is no such thing as *authentic* Country; this addresses contemporary criticisms of Country music that accuse it of pandering to its audience: the bigoted, homophobic, Red-State, Rednecks. What Hubbs shows is that these values, which become later associated with Country music and the working-class, are not actually long-held attitudes. Hubbs asserts that queer was associated with "working-class"ness, and our current codified conception of queerness and country as antithetical to each other is due to a process of "middle-classing" the queer identity (Hubbs, 2, 148).

Heritage and its linkage to a sense of identity is therefore malleable and unstable—constantly being produced elsewhere and just out of reach. This becomes significant when we consider how images of rurality play a role in defining how precarious or isolated individuals are produced as a problem in the dominant national narrative of liberal media. In this way, we also see how coercive "indirect forces of power" (McCright and Dunlap in Kulcsar *et al*, 351) shape material existence at an uneven rate for rural and working class people. We can begin to understand

(erroneously, as Thomas Frank does in Hubbs) how one can begin to feel that their individual power to enact dominion over their own life can lead to a reactionary stance: clinging to *true* and *fundamental* things. Even Lefbvre, the Marxist champion of everyday life, takes a similar stance on “weird” European art, by claiming that it demotes the authentic realm of the mystical “with the marvellous acting as a halfway stage” to the *everyday*, or, “the realm of the public” (Lefebvre, 138-139).

For Lefebvre the significance of the mysterious cannot be paired with the significance of everyday life which is where his analysis lies. For outsiders looking in on “backwards places,” the everyday is a mysterious endeavour of “Bible Thumping.” Part of what is backwards about them is their perceived religiosity. These spaces are perceived as being “still real” and “still mysterious.” This underlies the critical bed of misunderstanding; where actions and intentions are misrepresented and reproduced by those who are acting and intending elsewhere. And yet, when attempting to generate an “indigenous” movement, Regionalism is still being produced as a fetish of rurality produced externally, and therefore, another misunderstanding.

In an attempt to disentangle himself from a site of critical power relations and loss of autonomy, Grant Wood further becomes both “awkward” and entangled. In an attempt to define what his own heritage might be, Wood further falls into the trap of producing landscapes produced by modernity. His act of resistance modifies and modernises the landscape while relegating the people who live with (as well as on and off of) it to the past. This position of past-people and future-commodities becomes further integrated into the idea of the American countryside when a second wave of agricultural boom emerges. Iowa Corn’s mission to produce the expert-image of farmers— teamed up with the Iowa Nice Guy’s liberal expert-culture persona— integrates rural America almost perfectly into a neoliberal market scheme. And yet, rural America is still Country music; inauthentic, pandering, formulaic.

The heritage landscape is produced elsewhere— even when expressly produced *en plain air* or “on-site” by an internal actor. To put this into perspective with *American Gothic*, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick coins the term *paranoid gothic*. Evans cites Sedgwick’s concept as relating to “the male hero [who] believes his inner thoughts may be read by an opposing figure whose dominance he alternately fears and desires” (Evans, 1491-1492). Grant’s inclusion of the Gothic summons images not only of “gothic windows” or

a “romantic nineteenth century context,” but of “gloom, terror, haunting, possession, decay, seduction, incest, and hidden perversions” (Biel in Evans, 1486-1487). One can also not forget the Goths, a Germanic barbarian people who were often at conflict with Rome, or, the civilised world at large. Evans goes on, after quoting Sedgwick, to state, “the public dimension of his imagery, then, always exists in tension with its opposing private character. Any notion that these works display a superficial folksiness—or indeed, that the artist does so himself—must be abandoned altogether” (Evans, 1494-1496). Whereas Evans almost likens an after-the-fact diagnosis of paranoia to establishing dialectical autonomy, I argue, as Sedgwick does elsewhere, that a “hermeneutics of suspicion” is overly historicised (Sedgwick, 125), and hence, a position which fails to take into account a spatial dialectic or a world outside of social construction, which, as Cresswell states, allows us to feel “that it is within human power to change it” (Cresswell, 30).

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The Legendary Topography of the Viking Settlement of Iceland

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Nations connect with their pasts as a means of confirming and legitimizing their present. As a country devoid of many visible remains of the past, such as intact buildings predating the eighteenth century or ruins comparable to monumental markers found elsewhere in Europe, such as castles, fortresses and cathedrals, Icelanders have chosen instead to focus on literature and literary descriptions of their landscape when attempting to relate their present to the past.

The description of landscape is omnipresent in the medieval Sagas of Icelanders, and with that, the mapping of nature and landscape into culture.¹ This is done by negotiating and utilizing space through descriptions of landownership, or the origins of place-names, and by attaching story telling traditions to certain natural and man-made markers such as mountains, rivers or grave-mounds. Using landscape in this manner, filling it with significance, and endowing it with signs, is what Jürg Glauser has called the semioticization of landscape in an article dedicated to the Sagas of Icelanders and the *þættir*, shorter pieces of narrative, arguing that they are literary representations of a new social space (Glauser 209).

The aim of this article will be to provide a case study of such a semioticization of landscape and creation of social space, using the origin myth of Icelanders, the story of the Norwegian Viking Ingólfr Arnarson, said to have settled on the island around the year 874, as an example. Focusing on Ingólfr's settlement in Icelanders' *Landnámabók*, or "Book of Settlement," the article will analyze the processes through which this text inscribes landscape with memory and uses external markers of authenticity in the context of such a semioticization, while simultaneously following more general storytelling traditions about

¹ The Sagas of Icelanders are medieval prose narratives based on oral traditions, most of them preserved in vellum manuscripts from the late thirteenth to the fifteenth century. Of the around 40 preserved works, a majority centers on the lives of a small group of Icelandic families during the time period of ca. 930-1030. Cf. Vésteinn Ólason 102.

A quick note on spelling and endnotes: Icelanders are listed by their full names following the Icelandic patronymic naming system; listings in the bibliography are alphabetized by first name, not the patronymic.

the foundation of new communities. By bringing in selected modern and early modern examples which respond to and perpetuate medieval literary traditions about Ingólfr Arnarson in the second half, the article reveals how medieval texts can assert ownership and control over territory, and ultimately contribute to the creation of a legendary, even sacred topography. This legendary topography preserves the cultural memory of the settlement and first formative years of Icelanders' community, and serves as a mnemonic tool to establish a cult of ancestry for selected figures from the sagas and their descendants. In commemorating these chosen people and their deeds, a poetic landscape is created - an *ethnoscape* to follow the terminology of nationalism scholar Anthony Smith, which he defines as an area "in which landscape and people are merged subjectively over time, and in which each belongs to the other" (Smith 136). As Smith emphasizes, such landscapes naturalize memories, so they become extensions of a community's terrain and its natural features - an outsider seeing and perceiving the landscape may be told that it is impossible to understand "the people" or their culture without understanding their landscape and vice versa (136). In the course of this process, landscape is endowed with poetic meaning, ultimately conveying a community's values and beliefs about the past. In the case of Icelanders' myth of origin, this includes an emphasis of the peaceful creation of a new culture from the bottom up, ruling out violence or assimilation with a former population as a means of land-taking, while celebrating a founding father whose divinely sanctioned settlement was to become the later capital of Icelanders, and whose descendants were integral to the creation of the country's political structure.

Along with New Zealand and other islands in the North Atlantic, Iceland belongs to one of the last substantial land masses on the planet to be colonized around the end of the first millennium (Adolf Friðriksson and Orri Vésteinsson 139). While New Zealand was settled by Eastern Polynesian seafarers, Greenland, Iceland, and the Faroe Islands were colonized by Norse and Gaelic settlers and their slaves (Agnar Helgason et al. 735; Gísli Sigurðsson 31). The *landnám*, Icelanders' "land-taking" and settlement, is elaborated in great detail in the "Book of Settlement" or *Landnámabók*, a text presumably first authored in the twelfth century which covers the colonization of the island with a clockwise

description of how and by whom Iceland was settled in the late ninth and tenth centuries. *Landnámabók* mentions more than 430 individual settlers who are said to have arrived in the time span between 874 and 930, provides the location of their farms, and adds personal names of later descendants of these first settlers. *Landnámabók* is an unstable text in that it has changed continually during its transmission as a result of numerous re-workings. While the first written versions may go back to plain lists of settlers and their properties, dating to the twelfth century and the earliest period of writing in Iceland, extant today are five redactions, three of which - *Melabók*, *Sturlubók* and *Hauksbók* - are medieval and preserved either in whole or in part, while the other two are copies from now lost texts made in the seventeenth century. It would exceed the scope of this article to discuss alternating models of *Landnámabók*'s transmission history or speculate on the interrelatedness of the five redactions here.² What is essential for a study of Iceland's earliest settlers is that *Melabók*, of which only two leaves are preserved, shows a different ordering than the two other medieval redactions, *Sturlubók* and *Hauksbók*, and is therefore thought to preserve an older version.³ *Melabók* covers the settlement of Iceland following a strict geographical order, starting in the southern quarter and then moving clockwise around the island. The two best preserved medieval versions, *Sturlubók* and *Hauksbók* in its lead, break up this structure of *Melabók*'s brief settlement accounts and interpolate long narrative portions about some of the settlers, demarcating large areas as their *landnám*, in some cases so large that they were probably vastly exaggerated (Adolf Friðriksson and Orri Vésteinsson 148). As Sveinbjörn Rafnsson has pointed out, this may have occurred because of the interests of thirteenth century families who wanted to secure their present land-holding rights by resorting to historical precedent, but there must have also been other

² The chronology of and relationship between the various redactions of *Landnámabók* has been extensively studied by Jón Jóhannesson in *Gerðir Landnámabókar* (Reykjavík: Félagsprentsmiðjan, 1941), and by Sveinbjörn Rafnsson in *Studier i Landnámabók. Kritiska bidrag till den isländska fristatstidens historia*, Bibliotheca Historica Lundensis 31 (Lund: Carl Bloms Boktryckeri, 1974).

³ The epilogue of Haukr Erlendsson's *Hauksbók* mentions three (now lost) predecessors or sources, and clarifies that Haukr used a now lost version of *Landnámabók* by Styrmir Káason, and Sturla Þórðarson's *Sturlubók* as sources. This paper will focus on *Sturlubók* as the oldest surviving complete version, written before 1280. *Melabók* is extant only on two vellum leaves from the fifteenth century, and was originally composed no later than 1310 and with that after *Sturlubók*, yet it is most likely closer to Styrmir's now lost text from around 1220 (see Jón Jóhannesson 221-226; for an altogether different transmission model cf. Sveinbjörn Rafnsson 81).

factors at play, since not everyone mentioned in the text was the ancestor of a later powerful family (166-181). That *Landnámabók* in many ways is “a piece of historical fiction rather than history proper” as Anders Gade Jensen puts it in his study of the construction of space in *Landnámabók*, is also signaled by the text's invention or reconstruction of some of the names of settlers which have been shown to be based on false place-name etymologies (232).

Sturlubók establishes the Viking and chieftain-son Ingólfr Arnarson and his blood- or foster brother⁴ Hjörleifr as the first to permanently inhabit the island in the summer of 874. Both are said to have left Norway because they were accused of murder and had their property confiscated. According to chapters 6-9 in *Sturlubók* and *Hauksbók*, Ingólfr and Hjörleifr leave Norway after killing the sons of an earl, and decide to search for an island they have heard about from a previous explorer, Hrafna-Flóki. They spend one winter there and return to Norway in the spring to prepare for a permanent relocation the following year, which is to include families, farm animals, and slaves. Before departure, Ingólfr holds a great sacrifice, asking the gods for advice, with the outcome that he is advised to go to Iceland; Hjörleifr in turn does not sacrifice, and the text informs its readers that he never did so (*Landnámabók* 42). The two travel in separate ships, and upon catching sight of the land, Ingólfr throws his high-seat pillars overboard:⁵

Þá er Ingólfr sá Ísland, skaut hann fyrir borð ǫndugissúlum sínum til heilla; hann mælti svá fyrir, at hann skyldi þar byggja, er súlurnar kœmi á land. Ingólfr tók þar land, er nú heitir Ingólfshöfði, en Hjörleif rak vestr fyrir land. (*Landnámabók* 42)

⁴ The term *fóstbróðir* can refer both to a relationship between blood- or oath-brothers, or actual foster-brothers, who acquired this connection by having been raised together. This is common practice in the sagas, and circumstantial evidence from *Gísli saga* suggests that men who were already related to each other at times undertook an additional ceremony to become blood-brothers. The result of such a fictive kinship included the duty to avenge the other, and with that established the closest possible bond existing between two men in the Old Norse world (see Miller 173-174).

⁵ The casting out of their “high-seat pillars” while approaching the coast of Iceland is a custom reported for several of the early settlers. Most likely, the pillars were part of the high-seats upon which the male heads of a household sat, and may have structurally supported the roofs of their halls. The pillars could have been therefore understood as part of a microcosmic analogy of the Old Norse universe, the hall representing the cosmos and the high-seat representing the world tree, world pillar, or *axis mundi* therein. See Bödl 171-174, and Wellendorf 1-21. Allowing numinous objects such as the pillars to guide and direct settlers to their final place of habitation ensured that settlers could claim that their *landnám* was legitimated by a divine, supernatural authority.

(As soon as Ingólfr saw Iceland, he threw his high-seat pillars overboard for good fortune, and he announced he would settle where the pillars washed ashore. Ingólfr took land where it is now called Ingólfshöfði, but Hjörleifr drifted westwards along the coast).⁶

While Ingólfr lands at the place later called *Ingólfshöfði*, “Ingólfr’s Headland,” Hjörleifr’s ship drifts off and lands at a place named in a likewise fashion *Hjörleifshöfði*, “Hjörleifr’s Headland” where he is soon ambushed and killed by his accompanying slaves. Ingólfr later moves further west and spends the winter at *Ingólfsfell*, “Ingólfr’s Mountain” near Ölfus River, until his slaves locate his high-seat pillars at *Arnarhóll*, “Eagle Hill,” a hillock in the center of present day Reykjavík:

Hann tók sér bústað þar sem öndvegissúlur hans höfðu á land komit; hann bjó í Reykjavík; þar eru enn öndugissúlur þær í eldhúsi. En Ingólfr nam land milli Ölfusár ok Hvalfjarðar fyrir útan Brynjudalsá, milli Öxarár, ok öll nes út. (*Landnámabók* 45)

(He took his residence where his high-seat pillars had been washed ashore; he lived at Reykjavík; there the high-seat pillars can still be seen in the hall. But Ingólfr claimed possession of the entire area between the Ölfus River and Hvalfjord, south of the Brynjudals and Öxar Rivers, with all the Nesses.)

Both the place of his first arrival, and the temporary location before establishing his final place of settlement are named after the first settler. The text inscribes the past event of the settlement into the landscape, which is first presented as an empty area but then converted into a social space. Readers of the text are also assured that at the time of writing, most likely the thirteenth century when *Sturlubók* was composed by Sturla Þórðarson, the pillars of Ingólfr’s high-seat were still visible in the building. The presence of these artifacts, as signaled by the text, serve to verify the authenticity of the story, and that the farm building in Reykjavík at the time indeed was the one inhabited by the first settler. At the same time, the pillars indicate that the Icelandic landscape of the thirteenth century was comprised of markers of the past that inspired passers-by to connect them to local storytelling traditions,

⁶ All translations into English, unless otherwise noted, were made by the author.

creating the cornerstones of a first, cognitive map and imprinting the landscape with meaning.⁷ A comparable argument can be made about Hjörleifr's settlement, which is specified in location and size in chapter 8 of *Sturlubók*:

Hjörleifr tók land við Hjörleifshöfða, ok var þar þá fjörðr, ok horfði botninn inn at höfðanum. Hjörleifr lét þar gera skála tvá, ok er önnur tóptin átján faðma, en önnur nítján. (Landnámabók 43)

(Hjörleifr took land at Hjörleifshöfði, where back then was a fjord, and it reached all the way up to the headland. Hjörleifr had two halls built there, and one of the lots measures eighteen fathoms across, and the other nineteen.)

Because of Hjörleifr's violent death and much in contrast to the area settled by Ingólfr which is understood to have formed the *nucleus* of the later capital of the country, Reykjavík, *Hjörleifshöfði* becomes an area off limits for human habitation, an area where, according to *Sturlubók* “þar hafði engi maðr þorat at nema fyrir landvættum, síðan Hjörleifr var drepinn” (no one had dared to settle there, because of the land-spirits, since Hjörleifr was killed) (*Landnámabók* 333). In light of this clear contrast between the two first settlers and their fates, Preben Meulengracht Sørensen has analyzed the tale of Ingólfr and Hjörleifr as an *exemplum* of the foundation of a new society. In so doing, it juxtaposes the pious heathen Ingólfr, who sacrificed and used divine guidance to find his place of settlement, to his blood-brother who refused to sacrifice, was a man of ill fortune killed by his slaves, and whose land claim became uninhabitable (25). Ingólfr's descendants prosper and are actively involved in establishing the first cornerstones of the fledgling society: his son Þorsteinn establishes the first Þing assembly at Kjalarnes near Reykjavík, and his grandson, Þorkell máni serves as law speaker at the newly founded Alþingi, the national assembly; his great-grandson Þormóðr Þorkelsson finally becomes *allsherjargoði*, the chieftain in charge of hallowing the assembly site at the Alþingi, an office passed on among several of Ingólfr's descendants after him (Helgi Þorláksson 52). Ingólfr's and Hjörleifr's settlement account in

⁷ Carol Hoggart lists and discusses several such instances of “physical traces of tenth-century saga action” that could “still be seen” in the landscape of thirteenth century Iceland. Cf. Hoggart. See also Barraclough 92.

Sturlubók is furthermore reminiscent of foundational narratives from Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages featuring mythical or divine brother pairs associated with migration and settlement, for instance the founders of Denmark, Dan and Angel, or Hengist and Horsa, the Saxon leaders who settled in Kent (Helgi Þorláksson 54). As a myth of origin featuring the early death of one of the (blood-)brothers (Hjörleifr), the company of a sister and spouse (Ingólfr's sister Helga is married to Hjörleifr), and hints of a semi-divine origin of one of the two brothers, the tale of the two founders echoes several elements of dioscuric traditions connected to the foundation of new societies (Hoefig 78). Unlike Ingólfr, who is briefly introduced in chapter 1, Hjörleifr is not mentioned in Icelanders' earliest extant historical work, Ari fróði Þorgilsson's "Book of Icelanders" or *Íslendingabók*, and is also absent in most of the sagas of Icelanders that mention Ingólfr Arnarson, which suggests that he could have been a fictional character needed as a foil or accompanying (blood)brother for Ingólfr.

Before the arrival of Ingólfr, Hjörleifr and their families, Iceland was, according to *Íslendingabók*, *Sturlubók* and *Hauksbók*, not an entirely empty space:

En áðr Ísland byggðisk af Nóregi váru þar þeir menn, er Norðmenn kalla *papa*; þeir váru menn kristnir, ok hyggja menn, at þeir hafi verit vestan um haf, því at fundusk eptir þeim bœkr írskar, bjöllur ok baglar ok enn fleiri hlutir, þeir er þat mátti skilja, at þeir váru Vestmenn. (*Landnámabók* 31-32)

(But before Iceland was settled from Norway other men were there, which the Norwegians call *papar*. They were Christian men and were thought to have moved westwards across the ocean, because they left behind Irish books, bells and croziers and additional objects that indicated that they were Irish.)

As John Lindow and Margaret Clunies Ross have suggested, the presence of the Irish monks can be read to indicate that the new land is a *terra Christiana*, and with that already consecrated ground, thanks to the religious objects that the *papar* have left behind:

These religious objects were probably thought of as imbued with spiritual force, so that, although Iceland did not become Christian again for over one hundred years,

the land remained subject to their powers, and there was a sense in which the territory of Iceland itself remained Christian, even though its human inhabitants for the most part did not. (Clunies Ross 21)

As such, it serves as a precondition for the prospering of the pagan settlers, following a general trajectory of Christian and salvational history which culminates in Icelanders' conversion some 130 years later (Lindow 21; Wamhoff 88).

On a much more basic level however, the text's assurance that the Irish did leave, based on the proof of artifacts found in the landscape, can be understood as support or even confirmation for the fact that the new land could be regarded as unpopulated, and that the foundation of Iceland happened thus as the creation of a new social space, and new culture from the bottom up. This creation of a new space is defined by who and what was no longer there. It is affirmed by the act of inscribing new memories via place-names into the environment, and functions according to a paradigm that rules out violence or assimilation with a former population as a means of land-taking. This stands in an interesting parallel to the manner in which the discovery and subsequent settlement of Greenland is described in *Íslendingabók*:

Land þat, es kallat es Grœnland, fannsk ok byggðisk af Íslandi. Eiríkr enn rauði hét maðr breiðfirzkr, es fór út heðan þangat ok nam þar land, es síðan es kallaðr Eiríksfjörðr. Hann gaf nafn landinu ok kallaði Grœnland ok kvað menn þat myndu fýsa þangat farar, at landit ætti nafn gótt. Þeir fundu þar manna vistir bæði austr ok vestr á landi ok keiplabrot ok steinsmíði þat es af því má skilja, at þar hafði þess konar þjóð farit, es Vínland hefir byggt ok Grœnlendingar kalla Skrælinga. (*Íslendingabók* 13-14)

(The country which is called Greenland was discovered and settled from Iceland. Eiríkr the Red was the name of a man from Breiðafjörðr who went from here over there, and took land there where it has since been called Eiríksfjörðr. He gave a name to the land and called it Greenland, and said that men would desire to go there if the land had a good name. They found there signs of human habitation,

both in the east and west of the land, along with fragments of skin-boats and stoneworks, that indicate that this kind of people had passed through there that had also settled Vínland, and whom the Greenlanders call *Skrælingar*.)

Here, the description of the naming of the land - a first step in its incorporation into the habitable world (which in this case even involves a deliberate marketing strategy) - is immediately followed by the assurance that the land is uninhabited, yet bears signs of prior human habitation. Violent encounters or forceful displacements are thus ruled out, as the newly founded community is defined as being located on evidentially inhabitable *and* available land. The reference to the *skrælingar*, a derogatory term ascribed to the inhabitants of the eastern Canadian Arctic in the two *Vínland sagas*, signals that the Norse in Greenland and Iceland conceived of the diverse indigenous people in both areas as one coherent group.

While archaeological research into the relationship between Norse and Thule and Dorset people in Greenland indicates some trading activity (Sutherland 613-617), the presence of *papar* in Iceland has been a long contested issue. There are archaeological finds which, some argue, can confirm the presence of Irish Christians in Iceland: small bells, bronze pins possibly used as writing utensils, and several man made caves decorated with cross engravings that have parallel features with early Christian crosses in western Scotland have been discovered, but there is no univocal agreement that these indeed stem from the *papar* and not from later settlers of Gaelic origin (Kristján Ahronson 129 and Adolf Friðriksson “Sagas” 27-29). It has recently been suggested that the *papar* may have even lived as missionaries alongside the settlers for long periods of time - an interesting claim that is nearly impossible to verify (Morris 181-184). While archaeologists have thus far neither proven nor refuted the existence of *papar* on the island, interestingly, attempts to locate any of the farmsteads of a first generation settler mentioned in *Landnámabók* have not been successful, either. An excavated Viking longhouse or *skáli* in downtown Reykjavík, discovered in 2001 and at first dubbed “Ingólfr's Farm” by the Icelandic media, was later dated to the mid tenth century and declared an unsuitable location for the first farm (Helgi Þorláksson and Orri Vésteinsson 81). Nonetheless, the find sparked an intense interest in

Reykjavík's earliest history and was later converted into a museum dedicated to the settlement, which displays the foundations of the exhumed early-tenth-century house *in situ* - a prestigious and expensive project, since the conservation of turf structures indoors was a complete novelty (82-83). Additional excavations in the wider neighborhood of the find suggest that the main farmhouse structure of the area has still not been located, and that the area in question was much more densely inhabited than expected of a single household farmstead. This is indicated by a wooden pathway, tools, oven and slag from the ninth century which were found near the present-day parliament building (Vala Björg Garðarsdóttir 43). In immediate proximity to the hall found in 2001, archaeologists also located a fragment of a wall predating the settlement period, dateable by its situation under the so-called *landnám* tephra or volcanic ash layer which resulted from an eruption dated to 871±2 (Grønvold et al). Several scholars have recently tried to challenge the dating of the *landnám* based on pre-871±2 finds from elsewhere in the country, for instance on the southwestern peninsula of Reykjanes, where archaeologist Bjarni Einarsson has excavated an eighth-century turf building and argued emphatically for a much earlier settlement of Iceland; his and other attempts have not been widely accepted as proof for an earlier systematic settlement, but the debate here is ongoing.⁸

Given the much more diffuse and complicated picture about the settlement of Iceland as suggested by the archaeological record, the place-names and artifacts mentioned in *Sturlubók* which are ascribed to the first two settlers can be read as attempts to inscribe a specific version and memory of the *landnám* into the landscape, which must have at first competed with other versions. It establishes a dominant version of Icelanders' ancestry, celebrating a Norwegian who fathered a long line of notables, as the first to start the Icelandic community. Focusing once more on the description of the location of Ingólfr's settlement in chapter 8 of *Sturlubók* and paying close attention to onomastics and the precise wording, the text emphasizes that "Ingólfr tók þar land, er nú heitir Ingólfshöfði"

⁸ See also the following debate in the 2009, 2010 and 2011 issues of the journal *Skírnir*: Páll Theodórsson, "Upphaf landnáms á Íslandi 670 AD," *Skírnir*, 183 (2009): 261-280 and "Hvað hét fyrsti landnámsmaðurinn?" *Skírnir* 184 (2010): 511-522; Þorsteinn Vilhjálmsson, "Hvenær varð landnám manna á Íslandi?" *Skírnir* 184 (2010): 5-22, and Gunnar Karlsson, "Upphaf mannaferða á Íslandi," *Skírnir* 185 (2011): 5-33.

(Nowadays the place where he landed is called Ingólfshöfði) (*Landnámabók* 42). The adverb *nú* (now, nowadays) may indicate an awareness of this place name as a later addition, ascribed to a location after the tradition about Ingólfr and Hjørleifr had overwritten different (and potentially older) versions and established itself as Icelanders' dominant founding myth.⁹ It is interesting to note that Ingólfr's temporary residence on his way to finding his final place of settlement, *Ingólfsfell*, also bears his name, while his final home, Reykjavík (spelled "Reykjarvík" in *Sturlubók*, *Hauksbók* and *Þórðarbók*) is not named after its supposedly first inhabitant. In fact, all the place-names in Reykjavík connected to the first settler are attested for the modern period only. In 1772, poet and explorer Eggert Ólafsson visited the area and noted that the first settler's name was commemorated in a local well, *Ingolvs Brønd* ("Ingólfr's well") and the ruins of a boatshed, *Ingólfsnaust* ("Ingólfr's boathouse") (*Ferðabók* vol. I 42, vol. II 154-156 and 258-259). Another tradition connected a large rock on Reykjavík's shoreline, demolished before 1820, with Ingólfr, and it was assumed by some that it was used by him as a dock for his ship (Þorkell Grímsson 62). Present day visitors to Iceland's capital will find a pier adjacent to the Harpa concert hall (opened in 2011) and a busy square downtown named after the first settler, along with a street in the same neighborhood that runs along Arnarhóll hill, in *Sturlubók* the location of his final settlement. Einar Jónsson's impressive Ingólfr statue from 1924 now towers over Arnarhóll. Originally conceived by Sigurður Guðmundsson, the first curator of Iceland's Antiquarian Collection and creator of the modern Icelandic national costume *skautbúningur*, the statue was meant to be unveiled on Arnarhóll in 1874 - at the celebration of the millennium of Ingólfr's settlement. However, the project could only be realized fifty years later, as the commissioning of an appropriate artist, the designing of an agreeable "Ingólfr" effigy, and, most importantly, crowd-funding a bronze cast of a more-than life-sized statue proved quite challenging for members of Reykjavík's small middle class (Júlíana Gottskálksdóttir 215).

While his commemoration in form of a (national) monument and his representation in modern place names seems appropriate for his overall significance as the supposed

⁹ For a more detailed discussion of this term, see Barraclough 92.

founder of the later capital, it is nonetheless surprising that Reykjavík itself is not named after Ingólfr. While *Sturlubók* does not comment on or explain the origins of the toponyms Reykjavík and Arnarhóll, the text uses the mentioned place-names in Southern Iceland (*Ingólfshöfði*, *Ingólfsfell*) along with the artifacts visible in the farmhouse in Reykjavík, to create an authoritative version of the first land-taking, highlighting the deeds of one specific settler, and establishing a cult of ancestry around him and his descendants. These place-names overwrite possible older or deviating versions of the settlement, which could have involved first settlers of different name and origin, and in the case of the *papar*, they even serve to indicate what or who is no longer there, and what or who can now be forgotten. With this, the story of Ingólfr and Hjörleifr fits well into Margret Clunies Ross's general evaluation of medieval Icelandic literature as "a complex way of asserting ownership and control over territory through texts," ultimately establishing a sense of identity through the literary form by enunciating Icelanders' myth of origin and legitimizing the *landnám* and the land "taken" in it (13). It is startling that Icelanders' rich medieval literary heritage has not preserved any text that provides a different version or deviating account of the *landnám* and earliest history of the country, or mentions a different first settler. Archaeologists Orri Vésteinsson and Adolf Friðriksson point out that aside from one Icelandic saga, *Svarfdæla saga*, which contains genealogical information on one settler that is significantly different from *Landnámabók*, all other preserved texts follow the information given by this text, and therefore do not contain any facts about the settlement that can be considered independent (144). This indicates that medieval authors and compilers either used a redaction of *Landnámabók* as a source, or were familiar with the same oral traditions which underlay its compilation, and which early on became part of a cognitive map of Icelanders' landscape. This cognitive map and *ethnoscape* was carried over to modern times by means of place names and external markers that served as mnemonic tools to represent the country's history. As the case of Ingólfr Arnarson's *landnám* and the following selected examples from the modern period demonstrate, such toponyms and mnemonic markers have both inspired folk traditions, and given rise to

tensions when local lore spun about them was recognized as deviating too far from the canonized medieval textual record.

In 1641, encouraged by an ongoing correspondence with Danish scholar and antiquary Ole Worm, Brynjólfur Sveinsson, then bishop of Skálholt, set out to lead an excursion to *Ingólfsfell* (alternatively spelled *Ingólfsfjall*) in search of Ingólfr Arnarson's grave. Tradition at the time had not only preserved the name *Ingólfsfjall* for a prominent mountain near today's Selfoss – specified in chapter 8 of *Sturlubók* and *Hauksbók* as the location where Ingólfr spent one winter – but also ascribed the name *Ing[ólfs]hóll*, “Ing[ólfrs]’ mound,” to a smaller mound on top of the mountain, where local tradition held that the body of the famous forefather was buried (Adolf Friðriksson “*Fornleifafræði*” 37n100). Excavating the mound in 1641, Brynjólfur could not find traces of human remains or artifacts, only stones and rubble. Watching his workers filling back these materials and erecting a cairn (“heath-marker”) on top of the mound, Brynjólfur urged his assistant, the poet and later priest Stefán Ólafsson, to compose a poem about the event. The resulting poem captures the uncanny experience of digging into an (empty) grave mound, and is called

“Á Ingólfshaugi” (On Ingólfr’s Mound):

Stóð af steindu smíði
staður fornmanns hlaðinn,
hlóðu að herrans boði
heiðiteikn yfir leiði.

Haugur var hár og fagur
hrundinn saman á grundu,
en draugur dimmur og magur
drundi björgum undir.
(Stefán Ólafsson 73)

(Monument of stone stood piled
a place of a man from the old time,
they filled again, on the master's order
with a heath-marker over the grave.

The mound was tall and fair
now it has collapsed on the ground,
but a dark and thin ghost
rumbled under the rocks.)

Despite Brynjólfur Sveinsson's failed excavation attempt, but maybe owed to by the poem that resulted from it, the idea that the first settler's grave was located on *Ingólfsfjall* inspired popular folk belief, evidenced by Jón Árnason and Magnús Grímsson, who were the first to record and collect folktales in Iceland in the second half of the nineteenth century. Volume 2 of *Íslenzkar Þjóðsögur og Æfintýri* (Icelandic Folktales and Legends) preserves tales about ancient Icelanders in a chapter entitled *Frá Fornmönnum* (Of the Forefathers), where two shorter stories specifically revolve around Ingólfr's grave on the mountain, explaining an important missing detail in *Landnámabók*: the location of the final resting place of the first settler. Both include the detail that a large treasure chest was located in his grave (possibly contained in his coffin), which in the first tale is discovered by locals from the area. In the story, no matter how hard the men tried, the chest could not be lifted up to ground level, and in the end, it fell back into the hole, taking the soil and earth that had been dug out along with it (Jón Árnason vol. II 75).

A second folk tale connects the pregnancy of an unmarried woman from the area along the Ölfusá River to several dreams in which Ingólfr approached her and asked her to share her bed. The woman agreed, and Ingólfr told her that the child resulting from the encounter was to be called Ingólfr, and when reaching the age of twelve, he should be sent up *Ingólfsfjall* to his grave mound to retrieve a treasure. When the boy turned twelve and went up the hill, he found a large chest, yet he was unable to open it. When he went back later to try again, the chest had disappeared (75-76).

That the historical memory about Ingólfr's settlement as preserved in *Landnámabók* was considered superior to oral folk traditions connected to the *landnám*, and had established itself as authoritative for Iceland's earliest modern writers (and effectively been canonized) is best illustrated in collector Árne Magnússon's report in his *Chorographica Islandica* from 1712. According to his observations made while traveling around Iceland on commission of the Danish king between 1702-1712, the inhabitants of Seltjarnarnes (the peninsula bordering Reykjavík) believed the name *Reykjavík* (Smoke-Bay) stemmed from Ingólfr's high-seat pillars. Their tradition held that the pillars had not landed on the peninsula itself but on the outlying island Örfirisey, which seemed unfit for settlement. The pillars were then burnt by the first settler, and when the smoke drifted towards the mainland, he understood that this would be his final settlement place, so he named the area "Smoke Bay":

Reykjavík segja Seltjarnarnesingar heiti þar af, að þá Ingólfur skaut öndvegissúlum sínum fyrir borð, hafi þær rekið í Effersey. Það hafi Ingólfi þótt ólíklegt, að þær vísuðu sér að svo litlu landnámi, hafi því súlurnar þar brennt, er nú heitir Reykjanes á Effersey, og viljað láta sér vera landnáms tilvísan þar reykinn lagði á. Reykinn hafi lagt á Víkur stæði og síðan heiti það Reykjavík. Nugæ, qvæ non conveniunt cum Landnámu. (Árne Magnússon 60)

(The people of Seltjarnarnes believe that Reykjavík was named from when Ingólfr cast his high-seat pillars, and they landed on Effersey. It seemed unlikely to Ingólfr that they would indicate such a small area for his *landnám*, and he had the pillars burnt at what is now Reykjanes on Effersey, and resolved to accept the area the smoke drifted to as his *landnám*. The smoke drifted to a bay which since is called Reykjavík [smoke bay]. Nonsense, which does not agree with *Landnámabók*.)

To Árne Magnússon, who as collector and conservator was familiar with *Landnámabók* as a text, anything in contrast to this established version of the event of the settlement constituted *nugæ*, nonsense, even if it remains curious that he deemed this alternative tradition worth recording. The passage demonstrates how effectively the textual record

preserved in *Landnámabók*, authenticated by the artifacts described in the text and the place-names/toponyms generated by them, instantly overwrite differing oral traditions present at the actual location. Resorting not to the landscape as found on the spot, but the landscape as found in the text, this episode confirms that the true land-taking of Icelanders happened in writing and on vellum, and not on the ground.

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Review of *Taboo* (Sydney: Picador, 2017) by Kim Scott

Rashida Murphy (Edith Cowan University)

Taboo starts with two humans and a skeleton in an out-of-control semi-trailer freewheeling down a street, spilling wheat, before cresting to a stop in ‘massacre place.’ It is a powerful beginning tempered with a warning from its author – ‘this is no fairy tale, it is drawn from real life.’ In his Afterword, Scott concedes that his fiction touches on ‘real events, people and landscape.’ As a work of fiction, it is incomparable; as a work of fiction based loosely on real life, it is devastating. Storytelling, particularly in the hands of someone as accomplished as Kim Scott, will always be a political act, and this story is no exception.

West Australian writers often feature landscape as a character in their fiction: Tim Winton, Craig Silvey and Scott himself in earlier works. The landscape in *Taboo* is more than a ‘character’ though; it is particular, intense and deeply intuitive, holding and excluding its inhabitants alternately. Whether he’s describing the old woman concealed within bougainvillea, or the way people become fragments in ‘scattered shards of sunlight,’ Scott’s landscape moves, speaks and encourages the reader to see differently. Trees conceal scars, bristle when a bus approaches and toss their noisy leaves when a thunderstorm threatens. Wind, rain and evening shadows exhale, shred and roar. And yet this is not an alien landscape, not deliberately positioned as either malign or benign. This is landscape as part of the universe, just as we are, in all our flawed, occasionally heroic and mostly despairing lives.

And it is on those flawed lives that Scott’s eye lingers. The young woman who emerges from the runaway truck, Tilly, brave and resilient, perhaps, or filled with secret harm, is the pivot around whom the stories turn. Is she the wrong girl, the girl who must not be touched or given, or is she the product of her environment and displacement? Her white mother and Aboriginal father are both dead and she has returned to that place, the massacre place where her ancestors, her foster father and his son, would claim her. She must resist these claims. The rag tag band of hopefuls who journey towards reconciliation at the opening of a Peace Park, hold her in their midst, sensing the disquiet, but unable to heal. That disquiet is also part of the landscape itself, frizzing

with discontent; weeds, stones, gullies, rocks erupting, punching and lunging about in 'an enormous space. The big old sky above.' (P13).

Landscape becomes language in Scott's unerring hands. In what appears to be a deliberate and enticing device, the people in this story speak the 'old language,' which is mostly referred to as such: 'Gerald spoke its name in the old language.' (P 50). Parrots, eagles and cockatoos all speak, as do earth and sky and bolts of lightning. The old people, and the young who watch them, speak in circular ways, familiar to those who come from oral storytelling traditions. And they speak 'now and in the future, the drunks and addicts, the old people and their carers and all those otherwise lost but wanting to help ...' (P 94). Scott's people describe generational despair and sit within their losses. Their tears rise and meet the sea. They understand what it means to be Noongar, 'proper Noongar things, not museum made-up stuff.' (P 95). Their grief manifests itself in language that recognises they could have done things differently. Breath and feeling and fire sing them to language.

The novel ends as it begins, reminding the reader of the circularity of stories, how beginnings and endings are shaped by intent and weighed by landscape. It is a story of dispossession, abuse, colonialism, addiction and racism. Scott's prose is lyrical as well as melancholy. He reminds us of the importance of bearing witness with unflinching precision. The men and women who walk through these pages are startlingly aware of their failings and equally forgiving of those failings in others. There are no quick fixes and the story vacillates between despair and hope. Yet this is not a grim story. The lucidity of its prose lifts it beyond the despair in its pages and reminds us that there are no perfect words and no easy resolutions to the trials of our First Nations people. Matilda-Tilly, girl-woman, both descendant and ancestress, haunted me in the way that fully realised figures in fiction and memoir often do; reminding me of Amanda Curtin's Meggie in *Elemental* and the young Sally Morgan in *My Place*.

This book needs to be read, reviewed, discussed and recommended widely. My life is richer for it.

Sprung

John W. Gordon (Edith Cowan University)

At war, pretty vacant
Pinned down at my station
I am transfixed by the wood grain
The veneer
Betwixt mouse & knuckle.

Then notice the time
And then the date -
Time on the screen,
Yet date on the cascading desk calendar -
Its daily quote etched below the numericals:
“Flowers are restful to look at. They have
Neither emotions nor conflicts.”
Sigmund Freud.

This makes me think of D.H. Lawrence’s
Bavarian Gentians
& almost simultaneously of a blue plastic shopping bag
I saw on my break
Caught in a ghost gum
In the New World car park.
It is Spring! And I am infected at root
With ennui.

Unlike Freud & his Bavarian Gentians...
Hang on, wasn’t that D.H. Lawrence?
Whomever
Unlike those last century types

I don't

- a) have a special relationship with flowers
- b) feel the subcutaneous sap rising in interconnectedness

I have no strange communion it seems

With flower, tree, beast, nature.

They yield no essence to me

& yet...what do I see?

Only the new material century consumptive way –

The fatal mark of the human ego –

That now knows better!

Yet still without fourth thought

Let alone second

Inserts electronic towers on top of sand dunes

Ravaging melaleuca & fragile tuart,

And polluting in total

The deeper life of place??

Ostensibly, insanely

So we can enjoy better connection!?

And my complacent part in this –

The complicit ego –

That thinks & perceives &

only writes

Of this very serious loss

Perhaps the greatest loss possible??

Yes, *writes* of this real disconnect

& of a blue plastic shopping bag

Stuck in a friggin' tree!?

I feel nothing...really.

I do nothing.

I am alone but I fear

Not in this regard.

“Hello! Wakey, wakey!”

Sprung!

Perceptions blocked

It's back to the date, the clock

And time to knock off -

Another day, another dollar!

Tomorrow's quote (again from last century):

“There is no such thing as society”

Hi fucking ho!

The Beholder

Allan Lake

Along the beach a fine rain
that softly dampens my hair.
I walk towards sunset,
feel pastel within till
sun descends
into sea.

Turning back –
 a dusk rainbow!
I would gesture to a passer-by,
utter an appreciative syllable,
perhaps accrue reflected credit
but with nobody nearby
I feel a bit marooned
while Nature simply absorbs
my self-conscious little burst
of enthusiasm.

Landscapes: the Journal of the International Centre for Landscape and Language

Manuscript 1311

Mandurama Storm

Jamie Holcombe 986459

This Photography is posted at Research Online.

Mandurama Storm
Digital Photograph by Jamie Holcombe



Mandurama Storm, 2016, Jamie Holcombe, Digital Photographic Print, 100x150cms.

Landscapes: the Journal of the International Centre for Landscape and Language

Manuscript 1309

Emily

Jamie Holcombe 986459

This Photography is posted at Research Online.

Emily
Digital Photograph by Jamie Holcombe



Emily, 2016, Jamie Holcombe, Digital Photographic Print, 100x150cms.

Thematic interpretations addressed:

Landscape and Trauma; Public Memorials and Conflict Histories
Dwelling, Belonging, Nostalgia, Solastalgia, Sense of Place

This image depicts an elaborate and clearly heartfelt roadside memorial to “Emily”, which is an extraverted display of sadness and loss that is an increasingly familiar contemporary lament. We know not who Emily was, nor what happened to her. The story is unclear if the tragedy unfolded on the road outside the house, or inside the house itself, thus the house could have been either witness or host to her demise. The composition directs, but most certainly does not invite us via the gate to the front door, on which the cross is strangely, but unintentionally replicated. Were we to have known Emily, we could be profoundly moved by this image, reminded of a very personal loss, and the catastrophe that may surround it.

My own motivation here is one of compassion and regret for the loss of community that generates such an isolated and lonely tribute. The scene arrested me because of its overt anonymity, which seemed frozen between catharsis and repression. It weeps publicly before a locked-down house, a sign that perhaps someone wants to talk about it, but is unable.

Jamie Holcombe is currently Senior Lecturer in Photography & Digital Imaging at Charles Sturt University. He has a practice-led PhD in Fine Art Photography, and is an established regional artist with an extensive exhibition record, both as an exhibitor and a curator. He has been a finalist in numerous Australian national awards, most recently including the MAMA National Photography Prize, The Josephine Ulrick and Win Schubert Photography Awards. Jamie’s recent work investigates the concept of melancholy in the photograph, explored through urban landscapes taken across regional Australia.

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