

S i t e L I N E S

A Journal of Place

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Letter from the Editor

Some of the landscapes we encounter when we read are imaginary; others have real-life counterparts beyond the printed page. Whether fictive or actual, scenery and setting may be described in all their beauty or desolation or serve as springboards for analyses of cultural geography – the ways in which people have shaped their landscapes. This issue of *Site/Lines* contains six essays covering the ways in which the meaning of place has been conveyed through literature.

Aficionados of the writings of John Brinckerhoff Jackson will appreciate the new details of his biography Helen Horowitz has unearthed and shares with us in her essay “The Writer’s Path: J. B. Jackson and Cultural Geography as a Literary Genre.” The course of Jackson’s early career helps us to understand how he came to pioneer a new way of looking at landscape based

on dichotomies – rich versus poor, field versus forest, city versus country.

We stamp our mark on the landscape, as Jackson realized, but it changes us in turn. In “A String of Beads, a Pearl, a Howl, a Fear of Silence, and a Patchwork Quilt,” Kathleen John-Alder explores the way in which Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau – and later Aldo Leopold, Loren Eiseley, and Ian McHarg – identified nature’s effects on the ways we think and feel.

Fictional landscapes can work their magic on us also. Paula Deitz’s essay “In the Landscape with Henry James” describes her pleasure in walking in the footsteps of the characters created by the well-traveled novelist. In “Irony in the Pastoral: Vermont and the Literary Imagination,” Bennington alumna Anna Shapiro revisits the Vermont

landscape of her youth not only in memory but through literature as well.

As Deitz and Shapiro make clear, landscapes carry meaning. The appearance and transformation of a place may have symbolic importance, as Deirdre David explains in “The Ha-Ha and the Railway: The Country and the City in the English Nineteenth-Century Novel.” The writers she discusses fondly recall a vanishing rural world along with the disruptive changes wrought by technology. In “Paradise Lost: Narnia Revisited,” Kate Kinast describes how C. S. Lewis re-created and reenvisioned that disappearing world in his famous series of children’s books, *The Chronicles of Narnia*. According to her, Lewis’s imaginary country functions as a stand-in for England, but “an England stripped of modernity.” But since Narnia is illusory, it ultimately assumes a unique aspect in each reader’s imagination. For Kinast

the wilder parts of Mallorca where she grew up became a surrogate Narnia in the childhood reading days she fondly recalls here.

As stated in our previous issue of *Site/Lines*, we have limited the mailing of this donor-supported publication to those who have contributed to the Foundation for Landscape Studies during the past year. In order to continue receiving this journal in the printed format preferred by a majority of our readers, please make a discretionary gift via the attached solicitation envelope or on our website.

With good green wishes,



Elizabeth Barlow Rogers
President

Tenth Anniversary Issue

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the founding of the Foundation for Landscape Studies. During this period we have:

- Published twenty issues of *Site/Lines*, with coverage of cities, parks, gardens, and landscapes from Japan to the American West, and place-based themes such as food, beverages, water, and stone.
- Awarded 31 David R. Coffin Publication Grants to authors or publishers of English-language books-in-progress that advance scholarship in the field of garden history and landscape studies.
- Awarded 36 John Brinckerhoff Jackson Book Prizes to authors of distinguished books published in the English language within the prior three years.
- Published four books in association with other institutions and publishers: the Morgan Library and Museum, the New York Society Library, David R. Godine, the Museum of New Mexico, and Dumbarton Oaks/Trustees of Harvard University (forthcoming spring 2016).
- Sponsored and co-curated three major exhibitions: *Romantic Gardens: Nature, Art, and Design*, *Writing the Garden*, and *Rome: City of the Soul* (opening May 2016).
- Digitized and provided comprehensive metadata for eight thousand slides, which are now available for the purposes of teaching, education, and scholarship via a special Foundation for Landscape Studies collection within the Artstor Digital Library.
- Organized and conducted two study tours: Italian Villa Gardens and Landscapes of the Netherlands and Belgium.
- Assisted organizations in several cities in America and abroad to develop and sustain public-private park partnerships.

In congratulating ourselves on these accomplishments, we also thank those who have made our work possible: writers, editors, publishers, museum directors, foundations, and donors, among whom we count 725 individual contributors – including readers of this journal.

On the Cover:

A map of Narnia and some of the surrounding countries.

Landscapes of Place: A Literary Tour

The Writer's Path: J. B. Jackson and Cultural Geography as a Literary Genre

In one of John Brinckerhoff Jackson's most memorable essays, "The Stranger's Path" (1957), he presented the district of the city "devoted to the outsider, the transient." Eschewing the well-kept suburban neighborhoods that were habitually recommended to him as the true expression of whatever city he was visiting, he set out instead to describe the procession of streets and establishments generally unknown to lifelong residents – those given over to "receiving" the stranger and "satisfying his immediate needs."

Arriving at a train station or bus depot, the stranger is deposited in what Jackson ironically describes as a "smiling landscape of parking lots, warehouses, pot-holed and weed-grown streets, where isolated filling stations and quick-lunch counters are scattered among cinders like survivals of a bombing raid." Typically the traveler encounters a produce market as well as lighted signs that offer a range of treats: "Chiliburgers. Red Hots. . . . Checks Cashed. Snooker Parlor. The Best Shine in Town!" All kinds of "strange little establishments," which promise "good times," are wedged in between necessary services. It is inaccurate to call this area a slum, Jackson insisted; it is simply "a district for unattached men from out of town." From here the visitor's route proceeds to the financial district, with its banks and business offices, and then to the better hotels, where it loses its "loud proletarian quality." New paths branch off, leading to destinations serving a range of pocketbooks and tastes – the civic and cultural center, upscale retail neighborhoods, wealthy residential areas and their suburban offshoots.

Jackson likened the Stranger's Path to a "powerful, muddy, untidy, but immensely fertile stream" that is fed by other tributaries, "fans out to deposit its waters and their burden, and vanishes." As the city brings new life to the stranger, the stranger also revives the city, keeping it "in touch with the outside world."

In contrast to American urban planners seeking to destroy the Stranger's Path, or suburban designers wanting to substitute shopping malls for downtown, Jackson suggested we examine European alternatives. Unlike their American coun-

terparts, these vibrant thoroughfares extend "a universal welcome." To walk on the Rambla of Barcelona or the Cannebière of Marseilles is "to be part of a procession, part of a ceaseless ceremony of being initiated into the city and of rededicating the city itself."

As "The Stranger's Path" testifies, Jackson was a master of the essay, creating a magnificent body of writing from the 1950s until his death in 1996. His vehicle was *Landscape*, the magazine he created in 1951. Through 1968 he remained its editor, publisher, and one of its chief writers. During the 1960s and 70s, while teaching at Berkeley and Harvard, he wrote *American Space*, penned essays for other periodicals, and ultimately saw many of his pieces collected in volumes.

In 1994, Jackson agreed to talk with me on tape. Then in his mid-80s, he was finding it hard to write, but he remained a great conversationalist. He was also a good friend. I suggested that I might assist him by recording his insights and, perhaps, his memories. I would then provide him with transcripts he could regard as a first draft. Although I enjoyed these taping sessions immensely – five conversations in mid-January and three more in late May – the plan didn't work. Jackson found the transcripts a horror. The easy flow and delightful phrasing of his speech was not that of his pen. He needed to sit at his desk and carefully craft the words he put on paper. Nonetheless, our wide-ranging discussions helped me to understand more fully his cast of mind.

It was often said that Jackson had an "eye" – that he could see what others couldn't. I agree with this, but

as a reader I know that this gift was inexorably linked to his unique powers of expression. To what he saw, Jackson gave intellectual shape and meaning. He dramatized his many ideas through vivid contrasts and clear, unforgettable images. He had a wit that could be wicked in conversation but in writing was sly and beneath the surface. His prose seemed as artless as a poem by Robert Frost – and as carefully wrought. As in "The Stranger's Path," his essays taught us new ways of seeing and evaluating our world.

Jackson's unique sensibility was shaped by his unusual life experiences. He was born in 1909 to American parents residing temporarily in France. The family returned to live in Washington, D.C., but his father quit the household a few years later. As a boy with a trust fund from his paternal grandfather, he was raised with the blessing or curse of never having to earn a living. Bright and curious, he could read and write by the age of four, traveled frequently in Europe with his mother, and was well educated in schools both at home and abroad. Early on, he developed a fascination with the etymology of words. He believed that this interest was



Dunster House, Harvard University, 1931. All drawings by J.B. Jackson.

strengthened by his schooling in Switzerland, where he was taught “the most exquisite, beautiful, correct French.” Throughout his life he read widely and eclectically. In our conversations he was always mentioning the titles of books he had read, wanted to read again, or was planning to read for the first time.

He started writing for publication when he was at preparatory school, first at Choate, then at Deerfield Academy; later, at Harvard, he was on the board of the *Harvard Advocate* and invented comic lyrics for the Hasty Pudding show. After graduating from college in 1932, he worked for a six-month stretch as a reporter for the *New Bedford Mercury*. The following year, he went to Austria, where his eyes and ears were opened to the rise of fascism; out of this

travel came two articles published in 1934 and 1935, “Prussianism or Hitlerism” in the *American Review* and “A Führer Comes to Liechtenstein,” a fictional piece for *Harper’s Magazine*. Returning to the United States, he took a job at Harvard, assisting with the university’s 1936 tercentenary conference. During this job, which lasted roughly a year, it seems likely that he was also writing and polishing *Saints in Summertime*, a novel set in the Austria he had left behind. It appeared in 1938, published by Norton and reviewed with praise.

At the same time, however, there were strong impulses pulling Jackson away from the writing life. At Harvard he developed aesthetic interests. He detested modernism, juxtaposing what he saw as its sterility with the beauty of the Baroque style. After graduation, he briefly enrolled in an architecture course at M.I.T. In Vienna he took a commercial art course only to drop out, although he would continue to draw and paint throughout his life.



Sicily, Italy, 1944.

Jackson was also impelled by a desire for adventure and movement, fostered in him in part by his paternal uncle, a proper New York lawyer and fine horseman who owned a ranch in New Mexico. When young Jackson was in preparatory school, he spent many vacations there and developed a love of horses and riding. Later, when he left Vienna, he bought a motorcycle and traveled around Eastern Europe. In the late 1930s, after his job at Harvard, he returned to New Mexico to become a cowboy.

He got work on a large ranch in Cimarron. Unlike his uncle’s establishment, where life proceeded at a leisurely pace and elegant horsemanship was valued, this workplace was rough. Initially Jackson was shocked at the disregard for the horses, but he came to love ranch life and discovered, as he put it in one of our conversations, a “streak of sort of com-

monness in me.” He continued, “I took it and I loved it. . . . We rode and rode and rode, and I lived in the bunkhouse with the men.” During this time he took up rodeo and suffered at least one significant injury.

World War II intervened, and for Jackson it was a long war – from 1940 to 1946. It provided him with many experiences that proved critical for his ability to read the landscape. Knowing he was going to be called up, he initially joined the cavalry but then took a correspondence course to become an officer. In 1941, as a second lieutenant, he went east for training in military intelligence, studying map reading and the German army. He was sent to North Africa, to the G-2 section of the 9th Infantry Division.

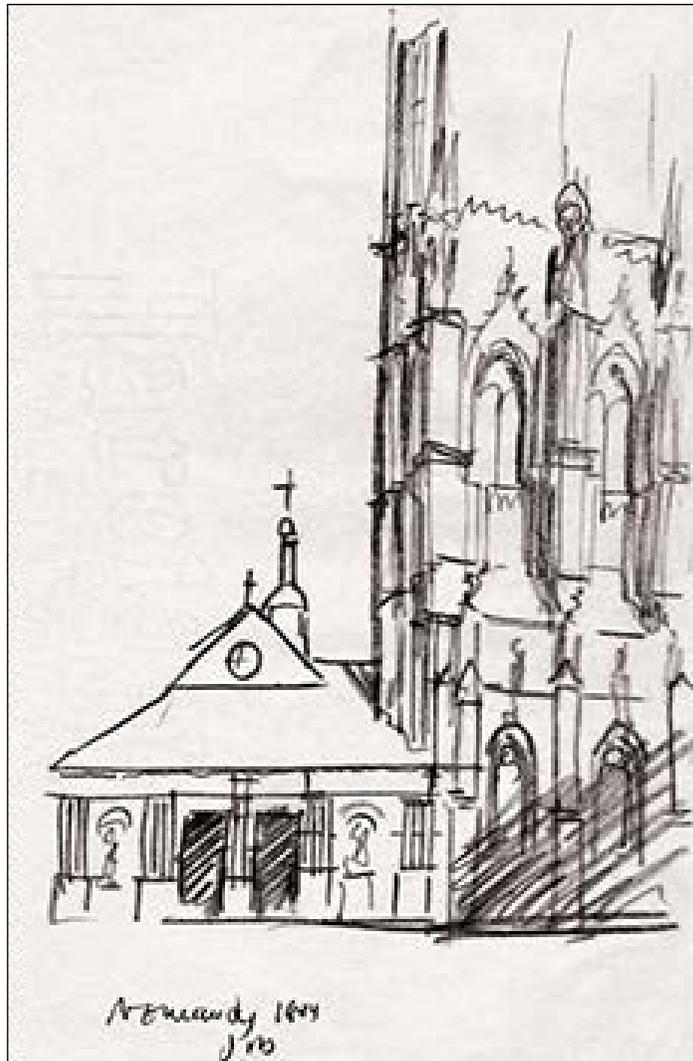
As he moved with the U.S. troops in the relatively dry landscapes of Tunisia and Sicily, maps served as reliable guides, but they were less useful in the more complex topography of western France. After Jackson landed on the beaches of Normandy on the second day of the Allied invasion in June 1944, he quickly found that more than maps were needed to navigate the terrain. He later wrote, “It was when the division headquarters was billeted in a Norman chateau that I discovered a sizeable library devoted to the bocage country – something I had never heard of before, though we were in the midst of it and having trouble getting out of it.”

Jackson spent the winter with his division in the Huertgen Forest and sought to learn about his surroundings. His immediate goal was military: to familiarize himself with the lay of the land to better fight the Germans. “If the farmers raised wheat (as some of them did), would our half-tracks bog down in the naked winter fields? Were there roads in the valleys, where there was a problem of bridges, or on the hilltops, where there was a problem of visibility? And the house types had to be identified . . . to know if the barns were large enough to accommodate trucks and whether there were orchards where guns could be concealed.” He bought guidebooks, postcards, maps, and elementary-school geography texts. As he interrogated German prisoners, he got more information about the land, and he learned to read and interpret aerial photographs. In the crisis of war, Jackson forged together disparate sorts of information – aerial, historical, oral, technical, and agricultural – into actionable intelligence. Later, when it was no longer a matter of life or death, he would return to this approach to create a new way of interpreting the physical world.

At some level Jackson was imagining the possibilities of communicating his new understandings to others as the war came to an end. Impressed by the popular and inexpensive French books on geography by Pierre Deffontaines, Paul

Vidal de La Blache, and Albert Demangeon, he contacted the editors of some of their volumes in Paris after the Armistice, and they were kind. He told them that he was interested in starting a magazine in a similar spirit, and they offered him free books: “You can have anything of ours that you want, just take it.” Although he brought home only a few, he found this response “encouraging.”

When Jackson returned to the United States, his yearning for the adventurous life reasserted itself. He bought a jeep and went west. In New Mexico, he reconnected with a former hotel owner who had aided him when he was recovering from his rodeo injury, and the two of them leased a cattle ranch. Not long afterward, however, he met with an accident that radically reshaped his life. Alone on the ranch during a snowstorm, he was thrown and dragged by his horse. His bro-



ken leg failed to heal after six months in a cast, and Jackson traveled to New York for surgery. During the long convalescence that followed, he returned to the plan he had begun to develop at the war's close: to start a magazine of geography comparable to the French publications he had admired.

In 1951, when J. B. Jackson founded *Landscape*, he dedicated it initially to the “Human Geography of the Southwest.” He chose for the cover a photograph by Laura Gilpin, a magisterial view of a New Mexico valley. On page 1, he introduced his subject, giving his opening piece the title of a poem by Robert Frost, “The Need of Being Versed in Country Things.” The essay began as a lament that a nation of country dwellers had moved to the city, but it veered quickly in an unpredictable direction that drew on his military experience: “It was commonly remarked, for instance, during the last war, that far too many officers and men were incapable of reading a topographical map in the field.” Bred in the city, American soldiers had “no understanding of the lay of any land, no intimate feeling, based on childhood or workaday contact, for the countryside.” The cost of this was “many failures in military intelligence.”

Air travel, however, now offered the opportunity for Americans to reconnect with their country in a different way. High above the ground, travelers could rediscover “the beauty and excitement of the rural landscape”:

It is from the air that the true relationship between the natural and the human landscape is first clearly revealed. . . . What catches our eye and arouses our interest is not the sandy washes and the naked rocks, but the evidences of man: the lonely windmills and tanks with trails converging upon them; the long straight lines of fences, often dividing the overgrazed range from the one properly managed; the broad pattern of contour plowing and tractor cultivating. The farmhouses appear to be surrounded by groves of trees and a complexity of gardens and corrals and yards. The roads meander to the nearest village or railroad, or to the highway and the city. The harmonious and intricate design which man makes in the course of living and working on the face of the earth slowly evolves beneath us; bright green, dark brown, white or glittering in the sun, silent and empty of movement (or so it appears) except for the small shadow of the plane rippling over fields and roofs. It is a picture we are seeing, an image which stirs us not only because of its beauty and vastness but because of its meaning.

Church Verneuil sur Avre, Normandy, France, 1944.

Navaho hogan, New Mexico, 1980.



This aerial landscape of the Southwest posed an important question about the varied patterns of settlement by its different settlers – “the compact Indian communities, perched on rocks overlooking the fields, the sprawling tree-grown checkerboard of the Anglo-American towns, the Spanish villages strung along a road or a stream.” The focus of this essay was our curiosity about what we see, and Jackson located it in what he called the eye of the human geographer. Like the naturalist, this eye sees what is common and familiar as well as unusual. “Beyond the last street light, out where the familiar asphalt ends,” Jackson wrote, “a whole country waits to be discovered: villages, farmsteads and highways, half-hidden valleys of irrigated gardens, and wide landscapes reaching to the horizon. A rich and beautiful book is always open before us. We have but to learn to read it.”

Jackson would read this landscape and write about it in his magazine. An essay in the first issue, titled “Chihuahua As We Might Have Been,” explored the great desert of the Southwest, meant to be one piece of the earth but divided by the Mexican-American War (1846–48): “An abstraction, a Euclidean line drawn across the desert, has created two distinct human landscapes where there was only one before.” The two landscapes that resulted came to express their respective societies and cultures. “South of the Rio Grande the world of man is thought of as created in the likeness of a social theory

and not, as with us, in the likeness of an economic force. The elaborate geometrical layout of every modern Mexican community – gridiron or hexagon or concentric figures – the policy of renaming streets after political abstractions . . . are merely the most obvious manifestations of a determination to impose design and political direction on an unreasoning world.”

In “Ghosts at the Door,” in the second issue of *Landscape*, Jackson began to develop what became his best-known theme, the American vernacular and its origins in the remote past of Europe. His opening evocation allows us to see the importance in his landscape writing of Jackson’s preparation as a novelist:

The house stands by itself, lost somewhere in the enormous plain. Next to it is a windmill, to the rear a scattering of barns and shelters and sheds. In every direction range and empty field reach to a horizon unbroken by a hill or the roof of another dwelling or even a tree. The wind blows incessantly; it raises a spiral of dust in the corral. The sun beats down on the house day after day. Straight as a die the road stretches out of sight between a perspective of fence and light poles. The only sound is the clangor of the windmill, the only movement the wind brushing over the grass and wheat, and the afternoon thunderheads boiling up in the western sky.

At this point the reader anticipates that the author will introduce his main character. And indeed Jackson does; only instead of a person, he introduces the American front yard. In the West especially, he writes, the lawn seems “a very artificial thing, the product of much work and thought and care.” Western lawns are not useful in any usual sense. On ranches, they are normally out-of-bounds, something like the unused front parlor of an earlier time. What explains their existence is that they testify to beauty of a particular kind. “The front yard, then, is an attempt to reproduce next to the house a certain familiar or traditional setting. In essence the front yard is a landscape in miniature. . . . It is a much reduced version, as if seen through the wrong end of a pair of field glasses, of a spacious countryside of

woods and hedgerows and meadow.” It is our homage to the landscape of northwestern Europe.

It is here that Jackson takes the literary turn that became one of his signatures; he reviews the long history of the European landscape. As with his exploration of the differences made by the Mexican-American border, he also reveals his bent of mind. In one of our conversations, he acknowledged his fondness for looking at things “in terms of dichotomies,” calling it “the way I think – the rich versus the poor, the field versus the forest, the city versus the country.” When I mentioned the vernacular, he immediately supplied “the establishment,” adding that it was the way his “nineteenth-century mind” worked. The creative tensions produced by such dichotomies make his writing dramatic and easy to understand.

As Jackson explored American lawns – his “ghosts at the door” – he envisioned them as descendants of the European meadow. While the forest was a place of danger, meadows were the safe pastures for cattle and sheep. These grazing lands became the commons of the New England village and, in time, emerged as places of leisure and play, of baseball and

other sports. “When the private dwelling took over the lawn,” it inherited aspects of the commons as the location of new games, parties, and rituals such as weddings. All were part of the civilizing process, “schools where certain standards of conduct and even certain standards of dress were formed.” Thus Jackson evokes the evolution from pasture to park to lawn, thereby transforming a patch of grass into an emblem of civilization.

Like his essay on the front yard, Jackson’s magazine began small, focusing on the Southwest and rural places. Through it, he defined “human geography” as the shaping of land through the forces of human action and introduced this new concept by example. In time, as the periodical’s coverage expanded beyond the Southwest to include other regions of the U.S. and the world, he dropped the term “human geography” and gave its meaning to the word “landscape.” He defined landscape not as wild nature or picturesque scenery, but as a concept encompassing the evolving physical forms created on the earth by human beings in specific societies. For example, the Indians of North America burned the forest floor, created trails, and built cliff dwellings. The arriving

Europeans chopped down trees, carved out farms, founded towns that became cities, dug canals, and laid down railroad tracks.

As *Landscape* attracted good writers and exciting minds, it helped shape the way its thoughtful readers saw and understood their surroundings. It also opened the way for Jackson to teach and lecture, and its contributors helped him broaden his field of inquiry. Early on he had announced his interest in the dwelling, calling it the microcosm of the landscape, the prototype of how man orders his larger world. He moved on to inquire into highways and cities, religious rituals, trailer parks, the impact of



Telephone poles, American Southwest, 1947.



Landscape, Tucumcari, New Mexico, 1982.

motion and speed. Toward the end of his life he was developing his ideas about the pull of

extreme sports. At his death, he left on his desk an uncompleted lecture on roads. Along the way, his definition of landscape evolved, shaped by what was in his line of vision.

As he looked at the economy and social structure, landscapes became to Jackson “the social order made visible.” They set out on the land the hierarchies of social status – the mill owner lives on the hill above his mill and his workers; the prosperous suburb catches the prevailing west wind. As he looked at religious rituals, Jackson began to see the landscape as imbued with symbols. Until the skyscraper, the steeple was the highest human-made form on the land. He came to envision landscapes as representing our best selves, embodying not only existing society but its strivings. Landscapes became, in Jackson’s words, “expressions of a persistent desire to make the earth over in the image of some heaven.” Situated in New Mexico with its three cultures and landscapes, he extended his curiosity, early aroused by the Spanish communities, to the pueblos and with their dwellings and kivas.

Jackson built his generous house in a largely Hispanic area outside of Santa Fe, New Mexico. There, as he got to know

his neighbors, he became increasingly interested in the workaday world. He came to recognize the ways in which economic pressures shape the lives and surroundings of ordinary people; this, he believed, was the true landscape, in contrast to the artificial one of architects and planners. He insisted on examining the houses and workplaces of the poor as well as the rich, of those on the margin as well as those at the center. In his writings on late-twentieth century America, his vernacular landscapes included not only the stranger’s path but also garages, the strip, and trailer parks.

Jackson was sometimes criticized for his all-encom-

passing perspective, but he strongly believed in accepting the reality before his eyes. In an interview he once stated, “I see things very clearly, and I rely on what I see. . . . And I see things that other people don’t see, and I call their attention to it.” It might not be beautiful, but it needed to be recognized. In our conversations near the end of his life, this commitment had religious overtones. In speaking about the landscape, he said, “I see elements in it which are baffling and which are repulsive, and yet they have to be assimilated into God’s world. . . . They are part of the picture that we have to see.”

In 1957 Jackson offered “The Stranger’s Path” as a way of recognizing something necessary and vital in our urban landscape, writing at that piece’s close, “If we seek to dam or bury this ancient river, we will live to regret it.” As he continued his writer’s path in the decades that followed, Jackson remained constant in insisting we see and understand the landscape before our eyes. – Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz



To view additional images related to this article, visit www.foundationforlandscapestudies.org/gallery.

The Ha-Ha and the Railway: The Country and the City in the English Nineteenth-Century Novel

In Thomas Hardy’s *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* (1891), Tess waits at a country railway station as “a fitful white streak of steam” in the distance denotes a coming moment of continuity between a rural world and modern life: cans of new milk will be loaded onto the advancing train. Tess’s glimpse of this “whirl of material progress” leads her to say to Angel Clare, with whom she has ridden in the wagon from Crick’s farm where she works as a dairymaid: “Londoners will drink it at their breakfasts to-morrow, won’t they . . . Strange people that we have never seen . . . Who don’t know anything of us, and where it comes from; or think how we drove two miles across the moor to-night in the rain that it might reach ‘em in time?” An early-morning link between the fertile Vale of Little Dairies in Hardy’s mythical Wessex and bustling London, where the milk cans will be loaded onto carts and placed outside front doors all over the city, imaginatively evokes a debate that had begun with the rapid industrialization of English life more than a hundred years before Hardy wrote his novel.

Put simply, this debate considered whether Hardy’s “material progress,” a modernization of English life emanating from the city, would eventually improve society for all – from dairymaids like Tess to the Londoners who would drink Dairyman Crick’s milk – or whether modernization would erode an established social order conventionally associated with the country. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the city had long denoted enlightenment and learning, but also worldliness and ambition; the country had long signaled serenity and simple virtue, but also intellectual backwardness. This contrast became a powerful theme in the English nineteenth-century novel, and “improvement,” with all its different connotations, became a key term in the debate about “material progress.”

In Jane Austen’s novels, which were mostly set in the English countryside, “improvements” often explicitly referred to questions of landscape design on a rural estate. Such changes might include staging an “approach” so that a house, initially hidden, would be gradually revealed as the visitor drew near; or erecting balustraded terraces so that the views from the house itself provided a soothing prospect across greensward. Austen asks us to consider when such innovations constitute true progress.

In *Mansfield Park* (1814), for example, Mr. Rushworth is enamored of Maria Bertram, one of the daughters of

Sir Thomas Bertram, the owner of Mansfield Park. This wealthy young suitor is also the master of Sotherton, an Elizabethan estate of some seven hundred acres. Much taken with the way his neighbor's grounds have been redesigned by an "improver," he is keen to have his own majestic avenue of oak trees "down" so that the views may be extended, and a wide stream enhanced to create a Picturesque effect. Upon learning that his neighbor has employed the famous landscape gardener Humphry Repton, Rushworth decides that he too must "have" Repton to modernize Sotherton.

Humphry Repton (1752–1818), a landscape architect famous in Austen's day, called himself a "professional improver." As Elizabeth Barlow Rogers observed in *Landscape Design: A Cultural and Architectural History*, he developed "an eclectic style that may be called the 'ornamental Picturesque'" in the process of designing well over two hundred gardens, mostly in the south and east of England. Austen is not known to have objected to the work of Repton – in fact, Repton was called in by her mother's cousin, the Reverend Thomas Leigh, to alter his property at Adlestrop in Gloucestershire in 1799, and she happily visited Adlestrop in 1806. But she did not respect change for change's sake.

In *Mansfield Park*, the country-house order is embodied in Sir Thomas's son, Edmund Bertram, who declares that he would never put himself in the hands of an improver: "I would rather have an inferior degree of beauty, of my own choice, and acquired progressively. I would rather abide by my own blunders than by his." Fanny Price, Lady Bertram's niece, also has ideas of improvement very different from those of Rushworth. Like Edmund, she favors a degree of beauty "acquired progressively," an opinion she expresses when admiring the shrubbery in a neighbor's garden: "Every time I come into this shrubbery I am more struck with its growth and beauty. Three years ago, this was nothing but a rough hedgerow along the upper side of the field, never thought of as anything, or capable of becoming anything; and now it is converted into a walk, and it would be difficult to say whether most valuable as a convenience or an ornament; and perhaps in another three years we may be forgetting – almost forgetting what it was before." Fanny's emendation is significant: almost forgetting, but not quite, because the present still contains the traces of the past. The change is organic; the new does not erase the old. "If any one faculty of our nature may be called more wonderful than the rest," Fanny continues, "I do think it is memory."

Through seasonal transformations over three years, a rough hedgerow has naturally (albeit with some assistance

from the gardener) become shrubbery, and even though in another three years the shrubbery could be transformed into something else, sensible people will remember what it was before. In contrast, the improvements Mr. Rushworth has in mind will obliterate part of Sotherton's history and identity: no sign of his avenue of oaks will remain. The violence of this approach is epitomized by Henry Crawford, a cosmopolitan intruder who is even more enthusiastic about disrupting tradition than is Rushworth – and who indeed carelessly threatens the country gentleman's hopes for a marriage to Maria Bertram.

Despite their reservations about their host's ambitions, Edmund and Fanny join a large party – including Rushworth, Maria Bertram, and Crawford – to visit Sotherton and inspect, as it were, the "before" state of things. After being shown a number of rooms (the genteel viewing of houses was a popular pastime during the last decades of the eighteenth century), the party explores the bowling green and a long terrace walk that commands a view into the tops of the trees of the wilderness immediately adjoining the house. For the modern-minded Crawford, who has lived a good deal of his jaded life in town and is interested in the exciting "capabilities" of Sotherton, this proves to be an excellent spot for faultfinding – and for imagining Humphry Repton's corrections. Although the estate is laid out with far too much "regularity," here Crawford sees "walls of great promise" – that is to say, old stone walls that should be pulled down to create a Picturesque "prospect."

Whether intentionally or not, Crawford also interferes with the romantic conventions upon which Rushworth has been building an alliance with Maria Bertram. Forgetting her allegiance to her host and attracted to this dashing stranger (so wonderfully full of "ideas and projects"), Maria persuades him to accompany her to a knoll that will give them a perfect command of the house. The only impediment is the ha-ha, which is easily breached since it is made not of iron railings or a wooden fence but only a hedge of hawthorn. Having indecorously clambered through the brambles, Maria wanders off with Henry when she should more properly remain by the side of her betrothed. Poor Mr. Rushworth spends an hour rushing around his estate looking for her.

Fanny, meanwhile, fatigued by so much talk of improvements, takes a seat on a bench overlooking the ha-ha where she remains alone and content with her own thoughts as the

others wander the grounds. To her, the ha-ha blithely penetrated by her cousin symbolically represents a moral barrier one should not cross. She wants no part of Henry Crawford's faultfinding with Sotherton, nor, by extension, does she share his desire to shape the countryside to the most modern designs – especially if those designs break with long-established traditions.

If Fanny were to admit the value of improvements, they would be similar to those implemented by Fitzwilliam Darcy on his estate, Pemberley, in Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice* (1813). In this classic masterpiece, having rejected Darcy's proposal of marriage, Elizabeth Bennet travels with her aunt and uncle into Derbyshire. Growing tired of visiting great houses (something her aunt Gardiner enjoys) and finding no pleasure in fine carpets or satin curtains, Elizabeth declares herself reluctant to visit Pemberley. But upon learning that the family is not in residence, she acquiesces and enters Pemberley's park at one of its lowest points, through beautiful woods.

After ascending for half a mile, she finds herself at the top of a considerable eminence where the wood ceases, and her eye is instantly caught by the house, situated on the opposite side of a valley: "It was a large, handsome, stone building, standing well on rising ground, and backed by a ridge of high woody hills; and in front, a stream of some natural importance was swelled into greater, but without any artificial appearance. Its banks were neither formal, nor falsely adorned. Elizabeth was delighted. She had never seen a place for which nature had done more, or where natural beauty had been so little counteracted by an awkward taste."

Here, Austen describes an ideal and morally correct form of improvement: Darcy has arranged for the stream in front of the house to be enlarged, and yet nothing seems artificial; the natural beauty of the land surrounding the house has been enhanced in such a way that there is no sense of an "awkward taste" at work – which is not to say that if Humphry Repton were to transform Sotherton, the result would be inferior to Pemberley. Rather, the fault is in Mr. Rushworth's disregard for the natural integrity of the land, in his desire to give Sotherton "a modern dress." He lacks Darcy's ability to direct his landscape gardeners to alter nature so subtly that no evidence remains of their work. Henry Crawford, the arch embodiment of "material progress" imported from the city, would not have been happy at Pemberley: one can imagine him suggesting Darcy clear a few more trees, swell a few more streams, tear down the too-regular stone walls. One can also imagine Darcy's frosty response. It is precisely Darcy's modesty and restraint – and the moral restraint it so clearly

represents – that prompts Elizabeth to consider him anew and view him more favorably.

At the chronological midpoint between the publication of Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* in 1813 and Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* in 1891, Charles Dickens issued *Dombey and Son*, serially in monthly installments and then in book form in 1848. In a few decades' time, the notion of progress represented in Jane Austen by garden design and the concept of worldliness conveyed by a fondness for Picturesque ruins had become a matter of material riches. The wealthy Mr. Dombey believes that the earth was made for him to trade in, that the sun and moon were made to give him light, and that the rivers and seas were formed to float his ships. In sum, he believes that all of nature was designed "to preserve inviolate a system of which he is the center," thereby condoning the most extreme appropriation of nature for man's "material progress." And while the novel may recount this particular individual's downfall from hubristic eminence, the rapacious nature of capitalism and its transformation of even the urban landscape are central to Dickens's critique.

Take, for example, the transformation of Camden Town, a working-class neighborhood in North London, which finds itself in the midst of a chaotic and hellish upheaval that we associate with natural disasters:

The first shock of a great earthquake had, just at that period, rent the whole neighbourhood to its centre. Traces of its course were visible on every side. Houses were knocked down; streets broken through and stopped; deep pits and trenches dug in the ground; enormous heaps of earth and clay thrown up; buildings that were undermined and shaking propped by great beams of wood. Here, a chaos of carts, overthrown and jumbled together, lay topsy-turvy at the bottom of a steep unnatural hill; there, confused treasures of iron soaked and rusted in something that had accidentally become a pond. Everywhere were bridges that led nowhere; thoroughfares that were wholly impassable.

But no; in fact, this immense upheaval that has "wholly changed the law and custom of the neighbourhood" is man-made: "In short, the yet unfinished and unopened Railroad

was in progress; and, from the very core of all this dire disorder, trailed smoothly away, upon its mighty course of civilisation and improvement."

Whatever benefits may come from the railroad, Dickens insinuates, they are unlikely to be bestowed upon the residents of Camden Town, whose way of life is being demolished as the price of "material progress." At the same time, he brilliantly evokes their insistence on retaining fragments of the country that have long survived in the midst of this roaring, improving city. There are still "frowzy fields, and cowhouses, and dunghills, and dustheaps, and ditches, and gardens, and summer-houses, and carpet-beating grounds, at the very door of the Railway." Staggs's Gardens, the street where Polly Toodles (the nurse of Mr. Dombey's sickly son, Paul) lives, regards itself as a "sacred grove not to be withered by railroads," and its inhabitants continue to train scarlet runner beans, keep fowls and rabbits, and grow cabbages, radishes, and turnips.

A mere five years later, however, the kitchen gardens and hen coops have been replaced with warehouses "crammed with rich goods and costly merchandise"; bridges that had gone nowhere now lead to churches, villas, gardens, and public walks. There are railway hotels, boardinghouses, lodginghouses, omnibuses, hackney coach stands, "wrappers, bottles, sandwich-boxes, and time-tables," railway omnibuses and hackney coach stands. Time itself has become mechanized and subdued: "There was even railway time observed in clocks, as if the sun itself had given in." The "improvement" brought by the railway has wiped out even the symbolic traces of the countryside. Staggs's Gardens is no more: it has been "cut up root and branch." Fanny Price's memory would be of no use to her here.

Dickens's elegy for a rural world symbolized in places like Staggs's Gardens is, of course, tinged with sentimentalism, unlike the cool, rational, and realistic depiction of a changing countryside that one finds in the later novels of George Eliot.

Reared as the daughter of an estate manager in rural Warwickshire and then established as a celebrated urban intellectual, George Eliot expressed a more nuanced view of "material progress" in her novels. In her evocation of a lost era in *Adam Bede* (1859), she describes a time when one could take a sunny walk through the fields after church; when a boat, "gliding sleepily along the canal, was the newest locomotive wonder." This sort of leisure, she observed, was gone: "Gone where the spinning-wheels are gone, and the pack-horses, and the slow wagons, and the pedlars, who brought bargains



Humphry Repton, *Water at Wentworth, Yorkshire, 1802.*

to the door on sunny afternoons. Ingenious philosophers tell you, perhaps, that the great work of the steam-engine is to create leisure for mankind. Do not believe them: it only creates a vacuum for eager thought to rush in."

In her later novel *Middlemarch* (1870), though, Eliot presented a different view of the technological changes that were beginning to transform the English countryside. Her morally admirable character Caleb Garth knew that the railway would soon advance through his land, yet he also believed that with this social transformation would come social improvements in the lives of his family and his laborers. When a group of farm workers encounter some railway agents in the fields and threaten them with their pitchforks, Garth hastens to diffuse the situation: "Come, you didn't mean any harm. Somebody told you the railroad was a bad thing. That was a lie. It may do a bit of harm here and there, to this and that; and so does the sun in heaven. But the railway's a good thing." And yet, when a farmhand bitterly remarks that, like the canals, "They'll on'y leave the poor mon funder behind," Garth has no convincing answer for him.

In *Tess of the Durbervilles*, Hardy speaks of the "ache of modernism" that is a symptom of a changing society. In a comic nod to that ache, and the ability of art to soothe it, Dickens gives us the extraordinary domestic setting of the Plornish family in *Little Dorrit*. Mr. Plornish is a plasterer; Mrs. Plornish has established herself in a "snug little shop" at the end of Bleeding Heart Yard, another poor corner of London, in which a noisy factory is "often heavily beating like a bleating heart of iron, with the clink of metal upon metal." To escape all this, however, Mrs. Plornish has only to step into her parlor, one wall of which has been painted to depict "a little fiction in which she unspeakably rejoiced." This "poetical heightening" displays the exterior of a thatched cottage: modest sunflowers and hollyhocks flourish around it with great luxuriance, dense smoke issues from the chimney to suggest the warm hearth within, and a faithful dog waits by the threshold. In addition, there is a circular pigeon house, enveloped in a cloud of birds, and on the door, a simulated brass plate, engraved with the name "Happy Cottage."

When she comes out of the shop and into her parlour, Mrs. Plornish is greeted by this perfect pastoral – to her, it is "the Golden Age revived." In his brilliant image of nostalgia for the lost rural society ambiguously elegized by Eliot, Dickens slyly shows us a patch of the city being "improved" by art to resemble the world of the countryside – even as the latter is being rapidly transformed by Hardy's "material progress."
– Deirdre David

In the Landscape with Henry James

Among memorable first lines of novels, I relish above all this one from *The Portrait of a Lady*: "Under certain circumstances there are few hours in life more agreeable than the hour dedicated to the ceremony known as afternoon tea." Only sentences later, Henry James describes the setting: "The implements of the little feast had been disposed upon the lawn of an old English country-house, in what I should call the perfect middle of a splendid summer afternoon. . . . The flood of summer light had begun to ebb, the air had grown mellow, the shadows were long upon the smooth, dense turf."

In my mind's eye, this became the quintessential lawn of literature – or of anywhere. Though described by James in but few words, the image holds firm throughout the first chapter and gives the reader the impression of standing at the edge of this wide expanse, meeting important characters, including the American owner: "The shadows on the perfect lawn were straight and angular; they were the shadows of an old man sitting in a deep wicker-chair near the low table on which the tea had been served." And the scene is completed with this final description: "The great still oaks and beeches flung down a shade as dense as that of velvet curtains; and the place was furnished, like a room, with cushioned seats, with rich-coloured rugs, and with the books and papers that lay upon the grass." The lawn disappears only as the ground slopes down to the Thames.

While the landscape architect Ian L. McHarg spoke of the reassuring landscape one seeks to recreate from one's youth, I like to think of the reassuring landscapes we carry with us from literature and then sometimes meet in real life, where we find them enhanced by the literary experience. Reading fiction involves living a double life: the outer one of everyday commerce and the inner one of the imagination, which has a seeming reality, no less intense, of its own. When I visit country houses in England, I continue to judge their lawns – some, no doubt, visited by James himself – against the one he described in such magisterial terms. Beautiful as they may be, with

clumps of Capability Brown trees, they will never equal that ideal vista frozen in time. And yet I try at least to recapture the quiet sensation of that chapter by serving tea on my own lawn, under pine trees on the coast of Maine.

In *The Princess Casamassima*, James captures the startling effect of another, more formal country house landscape when the hero, the bookbinder Hyacinth Robinson, visits the Princess at Medley for the first time:

Hyacinth got up early – an operation attended with very little effort, as he had scarcely closed his eyes all night. What he saw from his window made him dress as rapidly as a young man could do . . . : an old garden, with parterres in curious figures, and little intervals of lawn which appeared to our hero's cockney vision fantastically green. At one end of the garden was a parapet of mossy brick, which looked down on the other side into a canal, or moat, or quaint old pond. . . .

As one friend, another devotee of Henry James, puts it quite succinctly from experience: "Early morning in a strange garden can be pretty moving."

Hyacinth then returns to the garden later, with the Princess:

One of the gardens at Medley took the young man's heart beyond the others; it had high brick walls, on the sunny sides of which was a great training of apricots and plums, and straight walks, bordered with old-fashioned homely flowers, inclosing immense squares where other fruit-trees stood upright and mint and lavender floated in the air. . . . [O]n a summer's day, there could be no more delightful place for strolling up and down with a companion – all the more that, at either end, was a curious pavilion, in the manner of a tea-house, which completed the scene in an old-world sense and offered rest and privacy, a refuge from sun or shower.

James admits in his preface, though, that this novel mostly derives from his habit of "walking the streets" during "the first year of a long residence in London." With so much of the action in his novels taking place in drawing rooms, the outdoors frequently offers his characters a respite from being



Portrait of Henry James by John Singer Sargent, 1913.

constantly observed by others. In London, these personal encounters – such as the one James describes

between Hyacinth Robinson and Millicent Henning – frequently take place in the Royal Parks: “Our friends traversed that barely interrupted expanse of irrepressible herbage which stretches from the Birdcage Walk to Hyde Park Corner, and took their way to Kensington Gardens, beside the Serpentine.” They have deliberately chosen this walk for a difficult conversation, all the while aware of the walk’s special atmosphere: “Well, there’s nothing so pretty as nature,’ Millicent observed at a venture, surveying the smutty sheep who find pasturage in the fields that extend from Knightsbridge to the Bayswater Road.” Eventually, they pause to rest and admire the view. Just like today, the park chairs are not gratis for long, and after the man comes around to collect their pennies, they settle in to get their money’s worth:

They were sitting under the great trees of Kensington, those scattered, in the Gardens, over the slope which rises gently from the side of the water most distant from the old red palace. . . .

. . . They sat in silence, looking at the ornamental water and the landscape-gardening reflected in it.

Writing in 1885, James was already conversant with the modern term “landscape gardening,” and he recognized the solace offered by this carefully organized chain of parks. More than a hundred years later I still frequent them – especially Saint James’s, to observe the swans and other birdlife floating near the water’s edge beneath its signature weeping willows. Even at the last, when Hyacinth faces his sad destiny, he wanders into the romantic reaches of Saint James’s Park to watch the swans.

As in his travelogue writing, James’s descriptions of place – especially in European cities – drew on first-hand experience. The secretly amorous couple in *The Wings of the Dove*, Kate Croy and Merton Densher, begin their assignations in Kensington Gardens, out of view of her aunt’s house in nearby Lancaster Gate; in Venice however, on rare occasions, they find privacy in the vastness of Piazza San Marco. Celebrating the characteristics of this “great social saloon, a smooth-

Matin d’Automne (Parc Monceau), Paris, 1928. Photograph by G. Boulet, courtesy of Paula Deitz.



floored, blue-roofed chamber of amenity” by “the great mosque-like church,” James calls it “the splendid Square, which had so notoriously, in all the years, witnessed more of the joy of life than any equal area in Europe.”

As an avid reader while traveling, I once by chance selected James’s *The American* to accompany me on a trip to Paris and thereby experienced an unusual convergence of circumstances. Knowing little in advance of the story, except that it took place in the French capital, I felt as if I were following the novel around or vice versa. No sooner had I visited the Louvre than I encountered the novel’s opening scene in the museum’s Salon Carré, where the hero, Christopher Newman, approaches a young copyist. Then I learned that the “*hôtel*” (in the French sense) of the aristocratic woman he sought to

marry was on Rue de l’Université, just as was our hotel (in the tourist sense), and so for many chapters we were walking the same streets. But the climax of this convergence came one day while I was reading on a park bench in the Parc Monceau when suddenly, in Chapter 24, here comes Mr. Newman for a showdown with the young woman’s mother, Madame de Bellegarde.

“The Parc Monceau,” James writes, “is a very pretty piece of landscape-gardening, but Newman, passing into it, bestowed little attention upon its elegant vegetation, which was full of the freshness of spring.” At this prompt, I looked up and

took in the magnificent eighteenth-century park around me, with its Romantic follies originally designed between 1773 and 1789 by Louis Carrogis (called Carmontelle) for Philippe d'Orléans, duc de Chartres. At the far end was an imposing iron gate, through which Mr. Newman and I had entered the park; closer by was the simulated ruin of an ancient Roman colonnade, reflected in a pond.

Moving on to Geneva, Switzerland, the following weekend, I combed the booths as usual at the Saturday Flea Market on Plainpalais, a vast open space near the Université de Genève, where I had spent my junior year abroad. There I discovered a black-and-white, soft-focused photograph signed by a G. Boulet, titled *Matin d'Automne (Parc Monceau)* and dated "Oct. 1928" that I purchased for a few Swiss francs. Picturing the colonnade shrouded in mist and seen through a screen of trees, the photo is a treasured reminder of the trip abroad I shared with Henry James.

When I came to James's *The Ambassadors*, another Parisian novel, it was my nighttime reading over a long period of time – in this respect making me James's ideal reader. Since the novel was originally published in monthly installments, I, like his early fans, had the impression of living through the action in real time, an idea the author alludes to favorably in his famous preface. As he also explains, the words that gave him his subject – "You are young. Live!" – were reportedly spoken to a young man by William Dean Howells at a gathering held in what James calls that other "gift," an "old Paris garden, for in that token were sealed up values infinitely precious."

The description of landscape that struck me most in the novel is seen through the eyes of the protagonist, Lambert Strether, who has returned to Paris in middle age after many years of absence:

In the garden of the Tuileries he had lingered, on two or three spots, to look; it was as if the wonderful Paris spring had stayed him as he roamed. . . . The palace was gone, Strether remembered the palace; and when he gazed into the irremediable void of its site the historic sense in him might have been freely at play. . . . He filled out spaces with dim symbols of scenes; he caught the gleam of white statues at the base of which, with his letters out, he could tilt back a straw-bottomed chair.

In reading this passage, I realized that, in the years immediately after the Communards burned down the Tuileries Palace in 1871, its absence was overwhelming. Henry James must have seen the palace during earlier visits and thus gives us here his initial shock in finding it gone. I have combed other literature by and about James, including his *Paris Sketches*, begun in 1876, without discovering other references to the palace. But I can never walk again in the Tuileries without experiencing the loss of the building that gave this garden its proportion and perspective. (In his 1990s' commission to redesign the Carrousel Garden beyond the Tuileries, Jacques Wirtz quite brilliantly suggested a double canal on the former footprint of the palace as a reminder of the spatial divide between the two gardens; unfortunately, his proposal was denied.)

Although James lived for most of his life in Europe, he never lost his appreciation for his homeland. Early in his career, in the mid-1860s, he lived for a time in Northampton, Massachusetts. While the town did not provide the kind of cultural sustenance he required, he nevertheless found inspiration in the same silvery bend in the Connecticut River that Thomas Cole had memorialized thirty years earlier in the painting known as *The Oxbow*. James recaptures the scene in his first novel, *Roderick Hudson* (1875), assigning it to a day when "summer seems to balance in the scale of autumn." Rowland Mallet and Roderick Hudson walk outside Northampton "over hill and dale, through woods and fields, and at last found themselves on a grassy elevation studded with mossy rocks and red cedars. Just beneath them, in a great shining curve, flowed the goodly Connecticut. . . . A gentle breeze . . . brought the smell of the mown grass across from the elm-dotted river meadows."

One can still stand today on a granite shelf of Mount Holyoke above the woodland terrain and observe this New England panorama, unchanged in all its glory, including Cole's white village spire. James may have abandoned the landscape of New England, but one suspects that "later, in a foreign land," he too, like his eponymous hero, remembered this classic scene "lovingly and penitently." – Paula Deitz

Paradise Lost: Revisiting Narnia

Narnia is not a big place, geographically speaking. It encompasses, according to Mr. Tumnus, "all that lies between the lamp-post and the great castle of Cair Paravel on the eastern sea" – which frankly isn't much real estate. You can fly over a significant swathe of Narnia on a winged horse or a talking owl in a matter of hours; from the Stone Table in the far west, you can see Cair Paravel on the eastern seaboard with the naked eye. The Wild Lands of the North consist mainly of a moor, some marshes along the coast, the River Shribble, various unnamed mountains, and Harfang, the ruined city of the Giants. To the west of Narnia lie "wild woods." Thus, between the Wildlands of the North and Archenland in the south, most of this idyllic country consists of mountains, rivers, marshlands, and forests. It is wonderfully lacking in places where large numbers of people congregate.

This makes sense because Narnia, in good times, is inhabited mostly by Talking Animals, who naturally live in places where humans don't, but Lewis delights in advertising his loathing for all things urban – whether real or imagined. London is a "beastly Hole"; Tashbaan, the capital of Calormen, smells of "unwashed people, unwashed dogs, scent, garlic, onions, and . . . piles of refuse." Cities are hotbeds of modernity, teeming with evil or misguided people. They are places that might resemble the scheming Ape's vision of a new Narnia, with "roads and . . . schools and offices and whips and muzzles and saddles and cages and kennels and prisons." Schools in particular come in for a good deal of scorn (Lewis knew his audience). Children on their way back to school are whisked from railway platforms in the nick of time. Eustace and Jill escape the bullies of Experiment House via a magic doorway, and in *Prince Caspian* Aslan liberates two schools in as many pages.

Even the royal seat of Cair Paravel – a castle "on a little hill, shining" – is given short shrift in the Chronicles, for who would choose a city over glades, forests, beaches, and islands? The Narnian landscape is a wonderland of "grass and moss and wild flowers and rhododendrons"; of "rocky pinnacles," "pine-clad slopes, frowning cliffs, narrow gorges, and blue peaks"; of "unknown woods, wild heaths, and blue mountains." There are islands to be explored in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, deserts to be traversed in *The Horse and his Boy*, and marshes to be muddled through in *The Silver Chair*. There is "all Narnia, many-coloured with lawns and rocks and heather and different sorts of trees . . . the river winding



Illa de sa Torre seen from the beach at Cala Oli, Mallorca. Photographs by Kate Kinast.

long stretch of my childhood, I fused Narnia and my own world with a hidden fervor that oscillated between stubborn belief and wild hope. I lived on Mallorca, the largest island in the Balearic archipelago, 800-odd miles southeast of London as the winged horse flies. It might as well have been on the other side of the world, given the difference in scenery. But because Lewis is so very generous with his physical descriptions, which are as important to his novels as plot and character, Narnia was alive to me, and I secretly superimposed it onto my own landscape. The beaches of *Dawn Treader* were my rocky Mallorquin beach; the Lone Islands were the islets in front of my house; the forests of *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe* and so many of the other books were the woods of the military zone at the end of my street, which I reached by crawling very carefully under rusty barbed wire.

Like Narnia, the military zone was also devoid of people. Secure in the knowledge that no grown-up could reach me, I could transform the hills and valleys and tumbledown stone structures of those woods into whatever I wanted them to be. There was a forlorn football pitch, surrounded by tall pines, which could stand in for the desert in *The Horse and His Boy*, and there was even a narrow tunnel, hidden among some bushes, which led to a moated garrison. If you were brave enough to get down on your stomach and crawl through it, you could imagine yourself in the Underland of *The Silver Chair*. Indeed, if you weren't a brave child when you first started reading the Chronicles of Narnia, you were by way of becoming one after you'd imbibed one or two of the books, since their purpose, in part, was to endow you with a backbone – or at least a stiff upper lip.

Anyone who loved the Narnia books deep down, even if old enough to know better, passionately wanted Narnia to be real. Puddleglum puts it best, confronting the White Witch in *The Silver Chair* when he, Eustace, and Jill are trapped in Underland:

Suppose this black pit of a kingdom of yours is the only world. Well, it strikes me as a pretty poor one. And that's a funny thing, when you come to think of it. We're just babies making up a game, if you're

right. But four babies playing a game can make a play-world which licks your real world hollow. That's why I'm going to stand by the play-world. I'm on Aslan's side even if there isn't any Aslan to lead it. I'm going to live as like a Narnian as I can even if there isn't any Narnia.

Which is precisely how I felt. Even my young, agnostic self saw the value of believing in Aslan, who had created this beautiful land for us to live in and who, with his stern kindness, embodied the best English values.

I read my precious 1960s Puffin editions tucked between the boulders on the rocky beach, or leaning against a pine tree in the woods. After school and on weekends I could read uninterrupted for hours, surrounded in reality by scrubby Mediterranean thistles and agave, and in fantasy by Lewis's English oaks, elms, chestnuts, and apple trees; by primroses, crocuses, snowdrops, and bluebells. In summer, when no rain fell on Mallorca for months, and the dusty earth was cracked brown and hard as rock, the mossy glades and valleys of Narnia were always lush and grassy.

Lewis had a great deal of faith in his young readers' willingness to digest pages of landscape description at a stretch. I wonder how many children today have the patience for his old-fashioned affinity for all things bosky. I must often have been guilty of skimming, for upon rereading the septet, I find many passages, some of them very lovely, that I seem to be reading for the first time,

The island that became my Narnian landscape.

through it like a ribbon of quicksilver," and low hills, beyond which "a great moorland sloped gently up and up to the horizon." If you fly high enough, you can see "the whole valley of Narnia stretched out to where, just before the eastern horizon, there [is] a gleam of the sea . . . with jagged mountains appearing beyond the northern moors" and a desert extending across the south.

Of course, Narnia is vast despite what the map shows us, because it is really three visions. It is England, it is heaven, and it is *your* land – whatever you would like that to be. For a



even though I have pored over the books again and again. He is only occasionally poetic; his descriptions are mostly simple, as befit his audience, but they are well worth reading rather than glossing over in eagerness to get back to the plot. For Lewis takes pains to construct a visible world. It is vital to him that we see, feel, and smell the countryside – that we love it as deeply as he does. Before I'd ever set foot in England, I knew from his books that there was no land anywhere on earth as green and pleasant.

Lewis built Narnia for his own purposes, to embody something that no longer existed for him physically, politically, or philosophically: “the England within England, the real England.” Narnia is an England stripped of modernity, of people, cities, schools, and roads, of all but Good and Evil playing out their battles against the backdrop of an unspoiled landscape.

The right kind of person, by adventuring bravely, can lay claim to Narnia and reign over it. But this person can only be a girl or boy possessed of quintessential English qualities: among them honor, pluck, honesty, humility, integrity, stoicism, straightforwardness, courage, an intolerance of nonsense, perseverance, loyalty, and an unstinting willingness to own up to one's mistakes. If the children uphold these cardinal virtues, Narnia will be theirs, and the Talking Animals and Aslan will recognize their right to rule.

In this sense, Narnia is another British colony, a fictive outpost of an idealized and bygone empire, whose inhabitants must either acknowledge that its visitors' virtues have endowed them with the inherent right to rule or else simply succumb to their Aslan-given strength. (None of this registered in my ten-year-old brain, much less the Christian message or the racist portrayals of the evil, dark-skinned Calormenes.) Alas for C. S. Lewis, the British Empire is accessible only through magic or fiction these days, and the country he longed for may never have existed; luckily for us, he created seven books in its stead. But perhaps the clearest indication that Narnia is a stand-in for England comes when the Pevensies are hiding from the White Witch. While they try to figure out how to rescue poor Mr. Tumnus, Mrs. Beaver fortifies them with a “great and gloriously sticky marmalade roll.”

If hell is other people, then Narnia is surely heaven. When you are lucky enough to be transported there, you almost always enter unoccupied territory, be it snowy woods, “a woody place” next to an empty beach, or “a very lonely for-

est.” Even in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, Eustace, Jill, and Edmund must first plunge into a chilly sea before being hauled aboard ship to join Caspian and his crew. In *The Magician's Nephew*, Polly and Digory are transported to “the quietest wood you could possibly imagine,” permeated by “green daylight,” and dotted with pools. They almost immediately begin to forget London.

Lewis's concept of heaven feels like a real place, like England perfected – Albion, but not ethereal, not an abstraction. How else to explain the pull Narnia has on us? To be a place that we dearly want to visit, a strong thread of reality must wind through it. Unlike *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, for example, which is utterly fantastic, or Oz, which is beautifully bizarre, Narnia, so thoroughly English, is rooted in the real, albeit in a highly idealized fashion. What could be more solid and lifelike than trees and mountains, grass and flowers, headlands and bays?

There are intimations of heaven throughout the books – Reepicheep even paddles there in his coracle when the Dawn Treader reaches the End of the World. By the time Lewis wrote the final installment in the series, *The Last Battle*, he must have decided that even the heathen souls of his most obtuse readers were worth converting, so Aslan comes right out and tells the children that they and their parents have been killed in a train accident. They are happier than you or I might be to receive such news, for it means they don't have to go back to school. “The term is over: the holidays have begun,” Aslan tells them, which is a nice way of letting someone know they've died and gone to heaven.

Aslan destroys the old Narnia, and invites the children and all the other worthy creatures to enter a new and infinitely more colorful paradise, by passing through a doorway to “forests and green slopes and sweet orchards and flashing waterfalls, one above the other, going up forever.” Peter, the



Illa de sa Torre from Es Forti, a former military base in Illetas.

High King, says, “I’ve got a feeling we’ve got to the country where everything is allowed.”

Of course, if you’re the one writing the book, you have the right to dictate what paradise is – what Peter’s “everything” means. For Lewis, it certainly doesn’t include progressive schools or roadways or chopping down trees. This isn’t even an agrarian utopia – there are no farmers, there’s no tilling of the soil in Narnia. His is a more radical vision, a wilderness ideal – let’s live on beaches and in forests, like the Talking Animals that we are. Let’s move continuously, through the grassy meadows, the glades and valleys, up the mountains, and over the seas. If you really need shelter in a pinch, it’s all right to take refuge in a ruined castle or an old tower for a night or two; just don’t make a habit of it, because real living is done in the outdoors, on the move, always exploring and seeking. You’ll be more alive in heaven than you ever were on earth, for heaven is not a static place, it is bursting with adventure; you’re always heading “farther up and farther in.” This is “the Great Story which no one on earth has read: which goes on for ever: in which every chapter is better than the one before.”

For all the high-flown language of *The Last Battle*, though, I prefer the simpler vision from the final pages of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, the first of the Chronicles. On the morning of his resurrection, Aslan grants Susan and Lucy the high privilege of letting them ride on his back, and they race off to the Witch’s castle to liberate the animals who have been turned to stone over the years. Aslan

rushes on and on, never missing his footing, never hesitating, threading his way with perfect skill between tree-trunks, jumping over bush and briar . . . not on a road nor in a park . . . right across Narnia, in spring, down solemn avenues of beech and across sunny glades of oak, through wild orchards of snow-white cherry trees, past roaring waterfalls and mossy rocks and echoing caverns, up windy slopes alight with gorse bushes and across the shoulders of heathery mountains and along giddy ridges and down, down, down again into wild valleys and out into acres of blue flowers.

This escape, this flying through landscape, is freedom and beauty – what more could a child want? Whatever heaven may be to other people, this Narnian version did very well for me, when I was a child and believed in heaven. – Kate Kinast

Irony in the Pastoral: Vermont and the Literary Imagination

“As soon as you cross the border,” my mother used to say, every time we passed the “Welcome to Vermont” sign on our drive from Long Island when I was a girl. She didn’t have to complete the phrase, because we knew exactly what she meant: *it’s more beautiful*. It was forested mountains with open fields at their feet; it was classic towns with front porches and white steeples; it was dirt roads along tumbling streams; it was red barns and weatherworn silver ones. All my life, in one way or another, I have been trying to get back to Vermont.

The history of Vermont is manifest in all its landscape – as is true anywhere, if you pay that kind of attention. It was formed by the glaciers and ocean that successively covered the area, and, after that, molded by how the land was settled, with towns forming for mutual protection, often around commons for grazing. Farms extended into the countryside, usually as close to roads as possible to ease transportation, especially in a world often covered with snow. Settlement clustered in valleys, and roads followed streams and rivers, which also seek low ground. From the tops of the highest mountains, the rest of the state looks as if it’s still undersea – as if you’re on an island, but able to see through to the ocean floor beneath.

The ocean is present in a different way in this now-landlocked state, in its ancient sediments of limestone and marble. These are visible everywhere as white striations on the ubiquitous granite, which itself is never far from the earth’s surface and often thrusting past it – out of fields or forest floor as exposed boulder, or forming the bare slopes of the mountains.

To remain among these mountains, I had gone to The Putney School for high school. When I later enrolled at Bennington College, however, I discovered an institution that had a considerably more equivocal relationship with its surroundings. The campus had been built on the grounds of a private estate, with formal symmetries and a wide lawn, flat enough for croquet. When viewed from Commons, Bennington’s central and only brick building (which resembled Philadelphia’s Independence Hall), Vermont seemed less a landscape into which the school was integrated than a stage set: a backdrop framed by two lanes of white clapboard houses – the dormitories – on either side of the great lawn.



Bennington dormitories seen across Commons lawn, with West Hill in the background. Photograph by Cynthia Locklin.

My roommate, as it happened, had also gone to Putney, and the contrast between the two schools became a joke between us. There was a literature course perennially offered at Bennington that was called Irony in the Pastoral. As we sat in the dining hall in the midst of a blizzard, surrounded by chattering, cosmopolite students dressed with bohemian

chic or wearing sunglasses indoors, she would raise her eyebrows in her own inimitably ironic way and pronounce with a huge grin, “Irony in the Pastoral.” At Putney, we had had the pastoral in plenty, but not girls routinely wearing patent-leather high heels in the snow. At Putney, we *shoveled* the snow – it was a requirement. Otherwise one couldn’t have gotten around the mountaintop farm that made up the campus. Bennington, by contrast, had groundskeepers.

If Vermont provides the setting for Bennington, Bennington provides the setting for many novels, because so many writers have taught and studied at the college. Some say, for instance, that it is the model for Benton, the fictional college in poet Randall Jarrell’s superb and idiosyncratic 1952 novel *Pictures from an Institution*: “Half the campus was designed by Bottom the Weaver, half by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe; Benton had been endowed with one to begin with, and had smiled and sweated and spoken for the other.” If that isn’t Bennington, it should be, from the “leaded casements” he goes on to mention, visible in the school’s foundational stone mansion, to “the statues of David Smith.” In my day, those big, shiny, metal-cube sculptures adorned the drive and seemed oddly at one with the low red barn that still houses administrative and faculty offices.

The college’s setting is crucial to alumna Donna Tartt’s 1992 murder-suspense story *The Secret History*, in which the perpetrators are among the privileged and stylish, not to say stylized, students. The physical world of the college – Hampden in Tartt’s version – and of its village and nearby town, are lightly but accurately sketched in, sometimes for atmosphere but also to foster the mechanics of plot. A curtainless, ground-floor apartment in “East Hampden,” the fatal ravine, and the unheated warehouse with its external stairway to an attic apartment in the bad part of town are all recognizable to anyone who has spent time in New England.



Commons, the college’s one conventional building, with dormitories to the right. Photograph by Gregory Cherin.

have looked like dozens of other American campuses; luckily, Bottom and Mies intervened.)

Facing Commons and embraced by the two rows of white dormitories is Mount Anthony, the central feature of that postcard view. I take the peak to be the “Mount Cataract” Tartt frequently alludes to in her novel, the “omniscient mountain” that “grounded Hampden and its environs.” Mount Anthony is one of those rare “perfect” mountains, almost evenly triangular against the sky. An obelisk called the Bennington Monument, memorializing the Revolutionary War Battle of Bennington, was put up in front of it in 1889 out of sheer disgruntlement, since the mountainside where the battle was actually fought ended up

The narrator, a working-class California boy, attributes his very attendance at Hampden to “a morbid longing for the picturesque at all costs.” The cost in his case will be high indeed – nearly dying in that unheated apartment and involvement in acts from which recovery is not possible – but what sends him there in the first place are the pictures in the college catalogue, showing “radiant meadows, mountains vaporous in the trembling distance; leaves ankle-deep on a gusty autumn road . . . fog in the valleys . . . snow . . . the building they called Commons.” Here Tartt doesn’t even bother to change the building’s name. (At the college’s inception in 1935, the buildings were meant to be continued in that mode, in brick, and if that had happened Bennington would

on the New York State side of the border.

The seasons, which are so much part of the landscape in Vermont – transforming it not only four times a year but daily and hourly – are also noted throughout the novel in the elegiac, rather hurt tone that inflects almost everything Tartt writes. The realism, and that tone, are evident in the very first pages, in the evocation of an April snow: “the muddy wheel-ruts in the new grass, where the sky is dark over the shivering apple blossoms”; “the first lonely flakes that came drifting

through the pines”; and the ravine, “rising all green and black through the saplings.” For me, reading the book years after graduating, such incidental descriptions invited me back to the college’s natural surroundings in a way that in itself felt slightly ironic, given the characters’ infatuation with artifice; indeed, Tartt’s descriptions almost charted the paths of my excursions around the campus.

Though I loved my time at Bennington, when I was a student there I nevertheless left the campus every day to get out beyond the postcard view – or, perhaps, *into* it. I was lucky to have been assigned to one of the houses farthest from Commons, with Mount Anthony front and center out my window. The flat Commons lawn was closed at this end by a low stone wall, rebuilt during my tenure by one of the architecture students, and called the End of the World because it was the end of the college’s world. On the other side was an unmown field, where I could pick buttercups in May and Queen Anne’s lace later in the season, and sometimes spot a rabbit.

It is rare to encounter in fiction a landscape one knows intimately, and particularly details of it that you think of as overlooked, underappreciated, and therefore your private property. But I met one of these in *Secret History*, inconsequential to the story but startling to find shared: “a flat, straggled line of tombstones, rickety and carious, skewed at

such angles that they gave a hectic, uncanny effect of motion.” This cemetery at one edge of the field was tiny, not much more than a family plot. Its neglect and abandonment made me want to adopt and take care of it, and if I’d been as enterprising as the architecture student who mended the stone wall between the field and Commons lawn, I would have set the stones upright and pulled up the brambles. Instead, on my walks, I paused in it to relish its ruin and mellowness – sampling blackberries, sitting on sun-warmed marble, and running my fingers along the lichen that had grown in the ancient, chiseled grooves, the crickets and other insects around me a high-pitched whir.

The field eventually slopes down to a road in a fringe section of town, near the remains of a long-defunct mill, where one encounters the “grim, terrifying house trailers” with “the occasional derelict vehicle propped on cinderblocks” Tartt mentions. Tartt’s narrator has almost no feeling for Vermonters, and the other characters have none for much of anybody – the book has elements of *The Talented Mr. Ripley* and Bennington boy Brett Easton Ellis’s emotionally subzero *Less Than Zero* – but terror was not exactly what I felt passing these moored, rundown trailers. It was more like guilt, for being a college student with time for walks. Also, I wanted to comfort the chained, barking dogs. The yards might be scrubby,

but they were not without aspiration; there was often a planter, though it might be a truck tire, painted white and filled with petunias. If there was anyone around, it likely to be a woman hanging laundry or a man lugging some piece of equipment. Sometimes we waved.

The forerunners of these trailers – which *had* scared me as a child – had been tarpaper shacks. Their yards were often crazily crowded, not just with car chassis but with discarded stoves and broken washing machines, with cloudy bottles and rust-eaten enamel vessels,

with barking dogs and curious children who stared at a car that strayed into their realm just as I stared at them. Those wooden shacks were endemic to Vermont in a way the manufactured trailers never will be. These days, the immobilized “mobile homes” are likely to have decks and poured foundations and professionally lettered signs designating them “Whispering Pines” or “Oleo Farm, the Low-Priced Spread.”

That walk down past the graveyard and trailers took one, farther on, to another spot suggested by some of Tartt’s details: “My way ran parallel to a rapid, shallow river . . . spanned by covered bridges here and there.” On one occasion my boyfriend and I were gazing down at the water when he noted a stick that, instead of floating downstream, had suddenly somersaulted and reversed, caught by some erratic current. “It’s amazing how just any aberration in nature, you focus on it instantly,” he remarked, taking it for granted that I, too, had been noticing this tiny phenomenon. As I had.

The road led past farmhouses that had become part of an upper-middle-class bedroom community – including a rare brick one with moss growing on its slate roof – and other places still being farmed. I’d stand against a fence and coax the fawn-colored cows grazing in a field that knuckled up from the road to make their ponderous way down past boulders and trees toward the barbed wire, watching their mild wonderment at such persistent human attention.

As in *Remembrance of Things Past*, there were two ways for my walks, two directions but, also as in that many-volumed work, I eventually found they could lead to the same place. If, instead of turning toward the covered bridge, I continued past the trailers, I eventually came to woods, where deer sometimes showed themselves, and wound up in North Bennington, which matches the descriptions of “East Hampden” in Tartt’s novel. She uses the village as a site for student apartments, of which there were quite a few – above the village bar and café and the handful of other storefronts that used to be pictured on a black-and-white postcard for sale in the magazine store, with the caption “Central business district.” There are more apartments to be found inside houses that have been divided up and, more lately and luxuriously, in a former factory, which is built of stone and overlooks cascades. But my way took me up the hill, on a street lined by



The Rebecca B. Stickney '43 Observatory, a recent feature added to the Bennington College landscape. Photograph by Terry Gannon.

mostly nineteenth-century houses, fairly close together and lived in by families, to a mansion that was partly open to the public.

McCullough Mansion was (and is) on the hill opposite the college's own mansion, Jennings – used as the music building – whose name remains unchanged in the Tartt book. Jennings had a ruined garden out back in my day, but McCullough's garden was kept up, with formal flower beds and fresh vegetables free for the picking. In one of these beds I once came upon a snake with a kicking frog in its mouth. The snake couldn't swallow and the frog couldn't get out.

Beyond the gardens – landscaped in high-Victorian style, with a Chinese brazier, avenue of pines, perennial border, and artificial pond – a farm road wound past a bull that was perpetually alone in his muddy field. You could feel his lowering look as you walked up the slope toward his pen and then beyond it, all the way up to where woods started once again.

Unlike Tartt's narrator, I have never considered my longing for the picturesque morbid, although there is a way of almost fusing with the landscape that may now, with age, be lost to me for good. For instance, one October in Bennington, before New England's autumns became muted by global warming, I visited the famous battlefield at the peak of a particularly spectacular fall. Looking out over the farm fields below, with the hills beyond a fabulous tweed of color and a tractor droning out of sight in the still, distant valley, I thought I would never again experience a moment so sublime. This has largely been true.

What life and fiction do offer, however, is the privilege of unanticipated perspectives. When we graduated from Bennington, a friend walking with me back toward our dorms and that view of Mount Anthony said, "Kiss it goodbye, sweetie. It's going to be a long time before we can afford a view like *that* again." A fresh irony in the pastoral is that, these days, I see its exact obverse, driving from New York to the house my parents bought about an hour from Bennington. A new road circumvents the town, a superhighway zooming from New York State to Vermont. About midway along it, through some odd slant of view, there's the college – the two lanes of white houses and Commons, perfectly framed by hills and trees – like a postcard; a real one, the bird's-eye view that used to be sold in the college bookstore. I've definitively penetrated beyond the End of the World. – Anna Shapiro

A String of Beads, a Pearl, a Howl, a Fear of Silence, and a Patchwork Quilt

The transcendentalist Ralph Waldo Emerson was arguably the first American writer to fashion an environmental philosophy that was at once literary, scientific, and spiritual. Drawing upon English and German Romanticism, the providential natural history of the earth championed by Louis Agassiz, and the geologic speculations of Lyell and Chambers, Emerson devised a landscape-inspired theology that combined reason with revelation. In his schema, all of nature was a manifestation of God, and the landscape was in constant flux, ascending toward higher levels of perfection that were visible to those who learned to read its text.

Emerson believed that reason enabled the scientific understanding of nature and its patterns of organization. Real wisdom, or truth, however, required a different type of knowledge. To think deeply, to communicate ideas, and to dream, one needed the feelings – both good and bad – accumulated from a lifetime of experience. "Life is a train of moods like a string of beads," he wrote. "As we pass through them they prove to be many-colored lenses which paint the world their own hue, and each shows only what lies in its focus." This, he acknowledged, was a highly personal endeavor. "Nature and books belong to the eyes that see them. It depends upon the mood of the man whether he shall see the sunset or the fine poem."

For Emerson, revelation – an insight into the workings of nature that alters the way we think and feel – comes from experiences that take us by surprise. In his essay *Nature*, he famously recounted one such transcendent moment during a woodland walk, when he became a transparent eye humbly witnessing the infinite joy of possibility. And yet he was not outside this miracle but an integral part of it, a vital link between the material and the spiritual. "I am nothing," he wrote, "I see all; the currents of the Universal being circulate through me: I am part or particle of God."

Then, of course, there was Thoreau, who argued through his social experiment in simplicity and independence at Walden Pond that our lives "need the tonic of wilderness." While living in a cabin near the pond, he made detailed observations of the plants and animals inhabiting the remnant woodlot. Nature speaks to us directly in small facts, Thoreau wrote. All we need to do is imbibe its urgent message.

In line with the revelatory doctrine of his mentor Emerson and familiar with the empirical approach of Darwin and Humboldt, Thoreau felt that it was possible to discover fun-

damental truths that modern society ignored because they ran counter to cherished economic beliefs. Like Emerson, he advocated for a philosophy of life that unified the material and spiritual. "Heaven," he wrote, "is under our feet as well as over our heads."

At Walden Pond, Thoreau placed his feet firmly on the ground in order to experience the transcendent. He planted beans, cut wood, plumbed the depths of Walden Pond, and condensed two years of experience into a seasonal tale of life. "Time," he wrote, "is but the stream I go a-fishing in. I drink at it; but while I drink I see the sandy bottom and detect how shallow it is. Its thin current slides away, but eternity remains."

In one of *Walden's* most memorable passages, the author explains his vision of man's place in nature through observations of ice fishermen on the pond. Mimicking their behavior, he cuts a hole in the ice. As he describes this task, his writing moves effortlessly from the literal to the spiritual and his readers experience a cosmic pearl of wisdom. "I cut my way first through a foot of snow, and then a foot of ice, and open a window under my feet, where, kneeling to drink, I look down into the quiet parlor of the fishes, pervaded by a softened light as through a window of ground glass, with its bright sanded floor the same as in summer." As Thoreau gazes into this child-sized universe, he sees a small fish. The fish is common to Walden Pond and of no real economic importance, but nevertheless prized by the author. "Ah, the pickerel of Walden!" he exclaims. "They possess a quite dazzling and transcendent beauty which separates them by a wide interval from the cadaverous cod and haddock whose fame is trumpeted in our streets. They are not green like the pines, nor gray like the stones, nor blue like the sky; but they have, to my eyes, if possible, yet rarer colors, like flowers and precious stones, as if they were the pearls, the animalized nuclei or crystals of the Walden water."

One hundred years later, the ecologist Aldo Leopold followed in Thoreau's footsteps, exploring human receptivity toward nature. By then, however, the country's resources were considerably depleted. During the course of his life Leopold witnessed the extinction of the Passenger Pigeon, the near extinction of the bison and the wolf, the Dust Bowl, and the clear-cutting of the northern forests. Consequently, his writing was as much about sustainable resource management and the restoration of what had been lost as it was about the

wisdom gained from intense observation.

“Thinking Like a Mountain” tells the story of a hunting trip he took as a young man in the American Southwest. The adventure begins ominously with the howl of a wolf. “A deep chesty bawl echoes from rimrock to rimrock, rolls down the mountain, and fades into the far blackness of the night.” To the coyote, the sound promised leftovers; to the rancher, it threatened the loss of livestock; to the horse, it meant possible death. “Yet,” Leopold writes, “behind these obvious and immediate hopes and fears there lies a deeper meaning, known only to the mountain itself. Only the mountain has lived long enough to listen objectively to the howl of a wolf.”

Even those who are “unable to decipher the hidden meaning know nevertheless that it is there,” Leopold continues, for “it is implicit in a hundred small events: the midnight whinny of a pack horse, the rattle of rolling rocks, the bound of a fleeing deer, the way shadows lie under the spruces.” For the writer, however, this hidden meaning becomes clear only after he and his hunting companions happen upon a wolf playing with her grown pups. Seeing a chance to enjoy good sport and rid themselves of an environmental pest, they let off a volley of shots and kill the mother. Leopold reaches her just in time to see “a fierce green fire dying in her eyes.” This visceral, immersive experience changed everything for him:

I realized then, and have known ever since, that there was something new to me in those eyes – something known only to her and to the mountain. I was young then, and full of trigger-itch; I thought that because fewer wolves meant more deer, that no wolves would mean hunters’ paradise. But after seeing the green fire die, I sensed that neither the wolf nor the mountain agreed with such a view.

When Leopold looked with awe and compassion directly into the eyes of the dying wolf, both his mind and heart heard the message of the mountain. He grasped at once the immense majesty of the natural world and the place of man, often blind and fumbling, within it. This knowledge paved the way for a deeper integration with nature and a new sense of his responsibilities within the grand scheme.

Leopold purchased a small farm in Wisconsin’s Sauk (Sand) County and proceeded to restore the degraded landscape in an act of redemption. He studied its plants and animals, like Thoreau before him, and condensed years of observation into one. In *Sand County Almanac*, his narrative of the endeavor, Leopold concluded that the laws of nature rather than self-interest must govern human action. Thinking like a mountain required observation, self-awareness, humility, a long view, and the courage to act humanely.

Although Leopold also believed that the natural world was charged with more meaning than science alone could reveal, he was not interested in discovering the hand of God in nature. Instead, he sought to illustrate how the seemingly small decisions that we all make in daily life – the ones we make inadvertently or without thinking – have a cumulative, profound, and often devastating impact on the land. For example, he raised his rifle and shot the wolf so that the deer he hunted for sport and the sheep he raised for food might prosper. He did not anticipate the results of his decision. Not only did he experience a gnawing sense of loss, but without the predator the deer and sheep multiplied, overgrazed the land, and destroyed its natural fertility. Generous and optimistic by nature, Leopold hoped that his readers would learn from his mistakes to modify their behavior and become less thoughtless in their actions.

The anthropologist and writer Loren Eiseley, a contemporary of Leopold’s who taught at the University of Pennsylvania, sketched a more pessimistic vision of humanity’s ability to process fact and control fate. Although he, too, looked to Thoreau for inspiration as he drew on his fieldwork experience in the western landscape to explain his environmental philosophy, Eiseley was more intrigued than Leopold by the remnants of the past, and his unique combination of science and memoir probed the primal and the instinctual. His writing is also haunted by images of his mother devolving into a state of savage self-protection as a consequence of her increasing deafness. For Eiseley our search for transcendence entailed a struggle against our biological history. “The truth is,” he wrote, that we still carry “within our bodies the crudities of former existences, the marks of a world in which living creatures flow with little more consistency than clouds from age to age.”

Eiseley found affirmation for his beliefs in the sedimentary deposits of the Scotts Bluff Badlands of western Nebraska. Exploring the dark corners and deep crevices of this landscape, he sifted through layers of rock and eons of time, hunting for the evolutionary origins of humankind. He concluded that our existence, as witnessed by the fossils he found, was fleeting. Nothing in life was certain. Science, unlike religion, testified to that fact. Even more astonishing and unsettling for Eiseley, however, was how deeply embedded our lives were in the narrative stream of the earth’s his-

tory. Homo sapiens, like all other creatures, was caught in a current of events “moving through time toward an endlessly diverging series of possible futures.” The plot of this cosmic epic, constructed from millions of random events and unique circumstances, was beyond our ability to control; it defied reason and could never be repeated. And yet the story was extremely precious. At bottom the ordinary was anything but ordinary.

Eiseley’s ability to transfigure the commonplace with strangeness and wonder is on full display in “The Flow of the River,” an essay in which he recalls a summer afternoon when he waded into the North Platte River after a hot morning of fieldwork. Standing in the shallow water and feeling the sand shift under his feet, he impulsively decided, even though he could not swim, to go gently with the “insistent water” and float down the river. After his fear abated, he surrendered his body to the experience. Afloat in time and space, he meandered through the strata of his mind and slid down the “tilted face of the continent” along the ancient seabeds “where giant reptiles had once sported,” and relived the long, slow ages of geologic time. “Once in a lifetime,” he wrote, “if one is lucky, one so merges with sunlight and air and running water that whole eons, the eons that mountains and deserts know, might pass in a single afternoon without discomfort.” Transformed in the dazzling, “animalized water” described by Thoreau in *Walden*, he emerged helpless, fishlike, into the harsh air – a living fossil reluctant to break contact with the generative “mother ooze.” Conscious thought, he then realized, was a superficial deposit on the mind’s surface; we should pay heed to older, less cerebral forms of understanding.

During a walk along the same river in the depths of winter, Eiseley observed that the world was both a material reality and a latent universe deep within us: “There is no logical reason for the existence of a snowflake any more than there is for evolution. It is an apparition from that mysterious shadow world beyond nature, that final world which contains – if anything contains – the explanation of men and catfish and green leaves.” Thus Eiseley’s curiosity led from doubt and uncertainty to stability and security; then back to uncertainty; and then to mystery and wonder. Unlike Emerson, who discovered the certainty of God in nature’s flux, Eiseley, a solitary, introspective child of the twentieth-century, followed a path that ultimately led to the ambiguity of Einstein and Freud. Haunted at once by his mother’s annihilating deafness and the probable end of life on earth as we know it, he feared the day when “the waters are still, when along the frozen river nothing cries, screams, or howls.”

In 1969, the landscape architect and urban planner Ian McHarg, a colleague of Eiseley's at the University of Pennsylvania, gained critical acclaim as the author of *Design with Nature* – a fiercely passionate environmental-planning manifesto that championed close observation of air, water, plants, and animals. Starkly dramatic images of the sun and the earth on the front and back covers of the book spoke on the one hand to McHarg's belief in scientific progress and on the other to his innocent capacity for wonder. The logical intricacy of *Design with Nature's* methodology, the immaculate clarity of its environmental message, and the hint of the fantastic in its ecological vision contributed greatly to McHarg's personal mystique and the book's immense popularity.

Design with Nature begins with a series of incidents from McHarg's life: childhood adventures, harrowing war experiences, the ravages of tuberculosis, and his delighted response to the trickling fountain, rustling leaves, and dappled sunlight that animated the minimalist garden of a mid-twentieth-century urban townhouse. Each anecdote highlights the intricate web that connects us to our surroundings and the personal renewal that results when this union is harmonious rather than confrontational. Taken together, they establish his intent to reveal the world's hidden structure and thus the true laws of design. "Our eyes," he wrote in a faint echo of Emerson, "do not divide us from the world, but unite us with it."

These early life experiences prepared him for a revelatory insight that occurred many years later, in the research laboratory of an aerospace company. The laboratory had been recently established to observe the phenomena of nature, with the intent that this knowledge would then be applied to the improvement and welfare of humankind. McHarg had been hired to help "this prospective temple of science" find the ideal site for their research endeavors. Staff scientists had recently unraveled the molecular mystery of chlorophyll – the green pigment in plants that transforms water and carbon dioxide into oxygen. Their research provided insight into how the earth had evolved into a green world teaming with life.

At one point, McHarg was allowed to observe a scientist at work on a chlorophyll experiment; this moment marked a conceptual turning point in his thinking and his career: "Suddenly I had an image of a green world, half turned to the sun, leaves cupped to its light, encapsulating through their templates, into their beings, this modified and ordered sunlight." Entranced by the notion that light and material

as embodied by the plant were one and the same, he relives the natural history of the earth. Lightning strikes; volcanoes erupt; hydrogen, oxygen, and carbon combine, and DNA coils upwards into plants and animals.

As McHarg delves more deeply into technical details, his language becomes more urgent and poetic and his story more convoluted and inconsistent. In an attempt to touch the ineffable, he steps beyond the empirical and discovers a chain of being. He recognizes that the earth is part of the sun, that we are part of the earth, and that the earth is part of us. An image of infinity opens. Science joins divinity, and we grow, plantlike, from this womb. We need to understand that we are inextricably tied to everything else, he writes: "When we do these things, say these things with understanding, we will cross into another realm – leaving behind the simple innocence of ignorance." Thus the knowledge and feelings from McHarg's childhood grow and deepen in accord with insights provided by science and technology. From this, he imagined landscape designers as stewards of the earth.

McHarg knew that when he described his vision of design, he was asking his readers to choose what sort of world they wanted to live in. He also knew that to make this choice they had to understand the basic nature of the problem and the issues at stake. Like Emerson, Thoreau, Leopold, and Eiseley, his hope was that his words, combining a little reason and a lot of revelation, would not only help them understand the immense majesty of the natural world, but also find a place within it that was more cognizant of its fragility and limits. This is how McHarg described his literary endeavor at the conclusion of *Design with Nature*:

This book offers one prospect. It consists of evidence gathered from wiser men – small patches from the brilliant vestments of their minds, collected in a ragbag of memories and notes and now assembled into a single patchwork quilt . . . It was rather like a simple exercise in arithmetic when the sum of one column must be added to the next, inexorably increasing in number, power and significance. The quilt has lost much of the brilliance of its parts in this assembly. There are incongruities, the seams are imperfect, but finally, although the product is only a patchwork quilt, is it not one piece of cloth?

– Kathleen John-Alder

Book Review

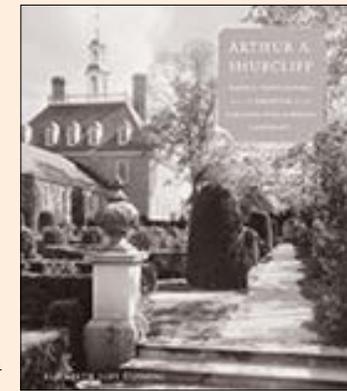
Arthur A. Shurcliff: Design, Preservation, and the Creation of the Colonial Williamsburg Landscape

Elizabeth Hope Cushing

Amherst and Boston:

University of Massachusetts Press in Association with the Library of American Landscape History, 2014

In the more than fifty years since the death of Arthur Asahel Shurcliff (1870–1957), this major landscape architect has received little attention from scholars. Now, however, with the publication of a new book by the historian Elizabeth Hope Cushing, Shurcliff has been restored to his rightful place as one of the key figures in American landscape architecture and planning of the first half of the twentieth century. Cushing is the author of numerous cultural-landscape reports, including one on the Lynn Woods, a large public reservation located in the city of the same name in northeastern Massachu-



setts. She is also a coauthor, with Keith N. Morgan and Roger G. Reed, of *Community by Design: The Olmsted Firm and the Development of Brookline, Massachusetts* (reviewed in *Site/Lines*, Fall 2014). She wrote her doctoral dissertation in the American and New England Studies program at Boston University on Shurcliff's role in the re-creation of colonial-era Williamsburg.

Shurcliff had a large,

prestigious, and highly visible practice. Why, then, has it taken so many years for scholars to focus on this landscape architect whose importance

has long been recognized – not only by his contemporaries and those who immediately followed him in the profession, but also by practitioners today? A partial answer is that Cushing's ongoing work on Arthur A. Shurcliff has been known for a considerable time to other historians, who, observing professional courtesy, left the subject to her to study as she saw fit and

at her own pace. Several of Arthur Shurcliff's children were still alive when she began her research for this book, and she was able to interview them. She was also given exclusive access to a wealth of family documents that had never before been available. Taking advantage of these opportunities, however, was inevitably very time-consuming.

Because Cushing is a historian of the visual arts, some assumed that she would concentrate on analyzing Shurcliff's design projects in depth. Instead, she chose to weight her book more heavily on Shurcliff the man, producing a biography rather than a fine-grained, art-historical study. And, as a biography, Cushing's book succeeds splendidly. In the first of her seven chapters, she provides a delightful portrait of Shurcliff as a child and young man. Born on Boston's Beacon Hill into a large, intellectually lively, and observant Unitarian family, he was the fourth of the six children of Asahel and Sarah Shurtleff (the family's original surname), all but one of whom survived the then-considerable rigors of infancy. As an adult, he continued to cherish the memory of his early environment: one of his daughters remembered his habit of honoring his parents by tipping his hat whenever he

passed 9 West Cedar Street. The high-ceilinged brick house, designed in 1833 by Asher Benjamin for his own use, was where Shurcliff had been born and passed his childhood.

As a result of Cushing's meticulous research and the rich resources that were available to her, we now know much more about Shurcliff's beginnings than those of that "most unpractical man," Frederick Law Olmsted Sr. (the characterization is Olmsted's own), who left behind only two brief accounts of his early life. Shurcliff came from a family of distinguished lineage that was comfortably off but not notably wealthy. Strict economies were practiced in his parents' household, and once Shurcliff stayed home from church on Easter because he felt that his well-worn Sunday outfit didn't measure up. His younger sister Gertrude was also embarrassed by her plain dress, which was not "tailor-made," but she decided that she was a "God-made girl" and attended services anyway.

Shurcliff was home-schooled by his mother until he was ten. After that, since there were then no schools on Beacon Hill, young Arthur trudged every

day across Boston Common and the Public Garden to Newbury Street in the newly filled Back Bay. There he studied at the Exeter Schoolhouse, a simply decorated brick building designed in 1875 by George A. Clough, Boston's first city architect. (Shortly after Shurcliff's time there it was renamed the Prince School to honor Frederick O. Prince, first elected mayor of Boston. Then it underwent a second name change when it was turned into condominiums, in the 1980s; in realtor-speak, it is now known as The Prince at 201 Newbury.) When Arthur was a student at this school, the new Boston Public Library, designed by McKim, Mead and White, was being built only a block away. The early stages of construction would have been extremely noisy – especially the pile-driving necessary in the Back Bay – but that doesn't seem to have disturbed the sensitive, violin-playing preteen.

While continuing his academic education, Shurcliff learned about the practical arts from his father, who had a well-equipped carpentry shop on the fourth floor of the West Cedar Street house. (A photograph of a teen-aged Arthur Shurcliff working in this shop is shown on page 11 of Cushing's book, one of

many images from a family collection on which she draws). As a youth, following his father's example, Shurcliff learned to make well-designed, utilitarian objects by hand with skill and care. He maintained a commitment to the manual arts throughout his life.

By now, readers will have noticed that Shurcliff's name differs slightly from that of his parents. Born Arthur Asahel Shurtleff, he changed his last name in 1930 to Shurcliff by deed poll, feeling that this spelling was the more accurate version historically. Yet "Shurtleff" was an established and honorable name – one that had been borne by such distinguished people as Nathaniel B. Shurtleff, a medical doctor, holder of numerous public offices, including Mayor of Boston, and the author of the 1871 volume *A Topographical and Historical Description of Boston*, a still useful history of the city.

In 1889, after completing his studies at the Prince School and at Boston's English High School (also designed by George Clough), Shurcliff took the entrance examinations for the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he planned to study mechanical engineer-

ing. He was accepted, and the tuition for his five-year course of study was paid by his great-aunt, Susan Tucker. However, Shurcliff realized by his second year that neither the school nor mechanical engineering were good fits for him. When he told his father that he didn't want to join him in the business of surgical appliances but instead wished to become a landscape architect, his father responded: "And what, pray tell, is that?" Eventually his father came around, although he insisted that his son finish the remaining three years of the engineering course.

In 1894, Shurcliff wrote to Frederick Law Olmsted, asking to meet with him to discuss his interest in landscape architecture. Although Olmsted was kind to Shurcliff and talked with him for two hours, he did not welcome him into the profession. Instead, he kept emphasizing how difficult the work was and how much Shurcliff still had to learn – he was in the last year of his professional life and an old hand at such counseling. Shurcliff next consulted Charles Eliot, Olmsted's first apprentice, who was by then in independent practice. Eliot recommended several courses at Harvard that could fill gaps in his M.I.T. education; Shurcliff

took classes at Harvard's Lawrence Scientific School and the Bussey Institute, its school of agriculture.

Shurcliff continued to live at home; although Aunt Susan once again cheerfully footed the bill for his studies, frugality still prevailed. Rather than having lunch with his fellow students in the sumptuous surroundings of Harvard's Memorial Hall, he frequently brought a sandwich and ate it in the Cambridge town cemetery in Harvard Square. On one side he could admire the First Unitarian Church, where Ralph Waldo Emerson had given his "American Scholar" address, and on the other Christ Episcopal Church, designed by Newport architect Peter Harrison.

After five years at M.I.T. and two at Harvard, Shurcliff earned two bachelor-of-science degrees. He then spent eight years working in the Olmsted office in Brookline. But not all of Shurcliff's time was devoted to his profession. He was increasingly preoccupied with Margaret Homer Nichols, a Beacon Hill neighbor and the niece of the wife of sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens. Their relationship developed at a pace that was glacial even by the standards of the day: for the

first three years they shared their mutual interest in carpentry, took long bicycle rides, and addressed each other as “Miss Nichols” and “Mr. Shurtleff.” Shurcliff pretended to find many aspects of the young woman’s appearance unsatisfactory – her hair, her clothing, even the way she sat while eating. Good-naturedly, Margaret corrected these so-called deficiencies. She must have loved Arthur very much to put up with this peculiar courtship. (Cushing gives us these events “straight,” but my sense is that Shurcliff was teasing his soon-to-be bride.) On April 27, 1905, they were married in Boston’s King’s Chapel with a reception at the Nichols family home at 55 Mount Vernon Street. Their honeymoon was spent at Mastlands, the Nichols summer place in Cornish, New Hampshire. Over the next decade, six children appeared, and the family settled at 66 Mount Vernon Street, Boston.

As the children arrived, Margaret continued her carpentry, while Shurcliff immersed himself in his growing practice. Increasingly, the young couple felt a need for larger quarters, but they didn’t want to purchase a ready-made house; their dream was to build one with their own hands. Their desire for a

summer home provided the opportunity. An early commission had familiarized Arthur with Ipswich, a picturesque coastal town in Massachusetts. When they were ready to build a summer residence, he and Margaret chose a site in Ipswich on Argilla Road, which ran, then as now, from the center of town to a majestic beach on the Atlantic. Unperturbed by Ipswich’s annual infestations of flies and mosquitoes, they built a board-and-batten house supported by a heavy spruce frame, which was heated at first by woodstoves alone. The surrounding land was windswept and bare, so Arthur and his contractor started a tree-planting campaign. Beyond the main house, there were outbuildings and an array of specialized vegetable gardens. The family had two full-time servants, called “helpers,” although most of the work fell on Margaret. Cushing’s chapter 4, which discusses the Ipswich house, is one of her best and is illustrated by helpful plans showing how the building was expanded over time in an organic manner. In 1999, at the Annual Meeting of the American Society of Landscape Architects – also the 100th Anniversary of the ASLA – Cushing led

an unforgettable tour of Shurcliff’s Ipswich property. Two of his daughters were still living there, and they graciously answered our questions.

In the second decade of the twentieth century, Shurcliff spent most of his working hours completing projects begun by the founder of the Olmsted firm. When Frederick Law Olmsted Sr. retired in 1895, his Boston parks were essentially complete, but there were a few missing sections. The firm still had a contract with the city, and Olmsted’s sons were particularly concerned about several unresolved matters: the north basin of the Back Bay Fens, which had been filled hastily after the Charles River Dam was constructed in 1900; Franklin Park, which was underused; and the Charles River Esplanade, which was popular but still lacked trees. They were also concerned that park management had deviated from Olmsted Sr.’s plans. In 1910, John Charles and Frederick Law Olmsted Jr., a partner in the family firm since 1895, organized a four-day tour of the Boston parks with Shurcliff and newly appointed Park Superintendent, John A. Pettigrew. Happily for posterity, they brought along a court stenographer, and transcripts of the “Perambulatory Tour through the

Park System with Pettigrew” have survived. Most of the projects recommended by the team were realized, with Shurcliff doing virtually all the design work. In another achievement dating to this period, Shurcliff was appointed as a town planner for the United States Housing Corporation in 1917. His Crane Tract in Bridgeport, Connecticut, today called Seaside Village, was much praised.

But unquestionably the apex of Shurcliff’s career was his restoration of the landscape at Colonial Williamsburg in Virginia, a massive project undertaken during the Great Depression and financed by John D. Rockefeller Jr. From the outset it was controversial: to undertake the reconstruction of a former colonial capitol that had been slumbering for more than 150 years – at a time when many people were unemployed – seemed the height of folly. Yet with his collaborator, architect William Graves Perry, Shurcliff set new standards of authenticity in historic preservation. The resulting restored town and its landscape were published in numerous periodicals, including an entire issue of *Architectural Record*. Colonial

Williamsburg has not lacked for scholarly attention over the course of its history, but most it has focused on the architecture. Especially welcome here is the author’s emphasis on the landscape of this venerable and now-much-visited town.

With this book, Elizabeth Hope Cushing has made a significant contribution to scholarship, but a few important questions remain. While some of Shurcliff’s projects are discussed fully – the restoration of Williamsburg in particular – other important projects are passed over or mentioned only briefly. Since this is not a comprehensive study of Shurcliff’s work, still less a catalogue raisonné, the project lists in the back of the book are limited to town and campus plans, and we have little way of knowing what may have been left out. As a result, it can sometimes be difficult to get a sense of the full scope of this major landscape architect’s career. For example, what about the splendid, French-Baroque-inspired grand allée at Castle Hill, the Crane estate in Ipswich, which was restored a few years ago?

Although we are told that there are Shurcliff family papers at the Massachusetts Historical Society, the whereabouts of the landscape architect’s office

archives is not directly addressed in Cushing’s book. By searching the internet, however, I found that the Loeb Library of the Harvard Graduate School of Design now holds an enormous collection of plans, correspondence, photographs, slides, and ephemera from the Shurcliff office – totaling about 100 linear feet – which dates from the practices of both Arthur A. and Sidney N. Shurcliff, who died in 1981. This was the gift of Sidney’s widow and other heirs. Although it would have taken months, if not years, for the library to catalogue this massive compilation, partially accounting for the time lapse, the online catalogue from the Loeb suggests that it has been available since 2004.

Cushing has handled the complex body of material discussed in this book exceptionally well, admirably balancing Shurcliff’s biography, a discussion of the rest of his work, and a detailed account of the creation of the landscape of Colonial Williamsburg. This is a work that scholars will rely on for decades, while continuing to mine the rich collection of archival materials now available at Harvard’s Loeb Library. – Cynthia Zaitzevsky

Calendar

Celebration of the publication of *A Natural History of English Gardening 1650–1800* by Mark Laird
September 21, 2015
4:00 pm until 6:00 pm
The New York Botanical Garden

The Humanities Institute – Mertz Library at The New York Botanical Garden and the Yale Center for British Art will cohost a celebration of this important recent publication. Author Mark Laird will give a short talk about the book, which was published by Yale University for the Paul Mellon Yale Centre for Studies in British Art. Following a public discussion, there will be a reception and book signing during which guests are invited to a viewing of the Mertz Library's collection of rare books and print works.

Mark Laird is a historic landscape consultant and garden conservator and teaches landscape history at the Graduate School of Design, Harvard University.

His previous books include *The Flowering of the Landscape Garden: English Pleasure Grounds, 1720–1800* and *Mrs. Delany and Her Circle*. The Foundation for Landscape Studies is proud that this important contribution to landscape-history scholarship was given a 2013 David R. Coffin Publication Grant by its awards committee.

PhotoPaysage/Landscape Representation
October 15–18, 2015
University of New Mexico, Albuquerque

Co-sponsored by the Ecole nationale supérieure du paysage de Versailles (ENSP) and the School of Architecture and Planning and the University Libraries, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque.

PhotoPaysage/Landscape Representation is a joint French and American conference exploring the role of photography and other forms of representation in changing conceptions of landscape since World War II. Speakers range from artist-photographers who

have focused on vernacular landscapes to landscape architects employing photography in their design practices to historians and writers examining the use of photography in the evolution of cultural landscape theory. Three complementary exhibitions, film screenings, social events and an optional field trip fill out the program.

The conference will showcase the findings of a three-year research initiative at the Ecole nationale supérieure du paysage de Versailles on the interface of landscape and photography. A number of the contributors to *Drawn to Landscape: The Pioneering Work of J. B. Jackson*, edited by Janet Mendelsohn and Chris Wilson, which is slated for publication in conjunction with the conference, will also be featured. Helen Horowitz, a contributor in the current issue of *Site/Lines* of an essay on Jackson, is among the conference speakers.

Contributors

Kathleen John-Alder is an assistant professor in the Department of Landscape Architecture at Rutgers University, where she teaches landscape history and design studios. She is the author of numerous articles on the work of the mid-twentieth-century landscape architects Lawrence Halprin and Ian McHarg. Her work has appeared in the *Landscape Journal*, the *Journal of Planning History*, and *Studies in the History of Gardens and Designed Landscapes*.

Deirdre David, a professor emerita of English at Temple University, is the author of several books dealing with Victorian literature and society and Victorian women's writing. She is also the editor of the *Cambridge Companion to the Victorian Novel* (2001; 2nd ed., 2012). Most recently, she has published *Fanny Kemble: A Performed Life* (2007) and *Olivia Manning: A Woman at War* (2014). Currently, she is completing a biography of Pamela Hansford Johnson, forthcoming from Oxford University Press in 2016.

Paula Deitz is editor of *The Hudson Review*, a magazine of literature and the arts published in New York City. She writes about art,

architecture, and landscape design for newspapers and magazines here and abroad. *Of Gardens*, a collection of her essays, was published in 2010 by the University of Pennsylvania Press.

Helen L. Horowitz is the Sydenham Clark Parsons Professor of History, emerita, at Smith College. Her *Rereading Sex: Battles over Sexual Knowledge and Suppression in Nineteenth-Century America* (2002) was one of three finalists for the Pulitzer Prize in history and the winner of the Merle Curti Prize of the Organization of American Historians. She is the author and editor of many additional books, including *Landscape in Sight: Looking at America* (1997), for which she served as editor and contributor. Her most recent writing on Jackson is "Establishment Man, Vernacular Man, Protean Man," in *Drawn to Landscape: The Pioneering Work of J. B. Jackson*, forthcoming in December 2015.

Kate Kinast is a writer and teacher in Brooklyn who grew up in Mallorca; today, she maintains gardens in both places. She estimates

that she has read the Narnia books dozens of times.

Anna Shapiro is the author of three novels and a collection of essays. Her book reviews, essays, and stories have appeared in *The New Yorker*, the *New York Times*, *Mademoiselle*, the *Nation*, the *Guardian*, and many other journals. She has been active on behalf of public green space along the New York City waterfront.

Cynthia Zaitzevsky, Ph.D., a historian of architecture and landscape architecture, formerly taught the history of American and English landscape architecture in the Radcliffe Seminars Landscape Design Program (now part of the Boston Architectural College). Her books include *The Architecture of William Ralph Emerson, 1833–1917* (1969), *Frederick Law Olmsted and the Boston Park System* (1982), and *Long Island Landscapes and the Women Who Designed Them* (2009). She is also the author of the site-history sections of several cultural-landscape reports for the National Park Service, including one for the Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site in Brookline, Massachusetts.

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