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The Body in the Landscape

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abstract

The Body in the Landscape

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Western Landscape is more than a description of Nature, it is a field on which discourses of perspective, aesthetics, and political philosophy intersect to describe the subject's relationship to Nature and civil society. Defined as such by the homogenous space of linear perspective, Landscape is not a 'real', but a virtual space, which functions hegemonically to conceal the material body and to legislate subjective agency. Classical representational space imposes limits upon visible, material Nature by confining the spectator to a unique viewing position; the park or garden delimits an ideal subject of government by presenting a politically expedient vision of Nature. Landscape – both the image, and the real spaces which pattern themselves after it – demands to be read as a text, locating the subject as/at a 'point of view' which is removed from real space and time.

Perpetuated by historical and present-day discourses of landscape representation and alteration, as well as the discourse of art history, Classical or perspectival vision characterizes not only the subject's relationship to real Nature, but to knowledge and history as well. Positing subjective agency in/as corporeal choice is a possible means of critiquing perspectival vision and its role in traditional art historical practice. Deconstructing the 'point of view' implies a different way of situating oneself as a subject; as well, it suggests the collapse of the narrative history of Landscape. Finally, it raises the question that the real itself is produced out of a desire for the other.

Introduction

> How sincere a pleasure is it to behold the natural beauties of the earth!
> George Berkeley, *Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous*

As it is currently studied, Western landscape – both 'real' and represented – is subject to a history that seeks to reveal the ideological motivations concealed behind the ostensibly innocent face of Nature. John Barrell, Ann Bermingham, Stephen Daniels, John Dixon Hunt, Angela Miller, W.J.T. Mitchell, Barbara Novak, and others have brought considerable erudition to bear upon the notion of landscape as "a body of symbolic forms capable of being invoked and reshaped to express meanings and values."[1] Variously described as a vehicle for the construction of national identity, a nostrum for a fragmented social body, or a 'medium of exchange between self and other', landscape is intimately linked, both historically and symbolically, to discourses of imperialism: it serves the needs of late capitalist society by operating Nature as a means to incorporate the individual into the body politic, and as a state of precultural purity which, invoked as a goal, is used to justify humanity's actions on its environment.

It is not my aim to discredit the link between landscape and imperialism; indeed, I am convinced that the subject of landscape must be studied as a political subject, whose place in civil society is described in part by its perceived relationship to Nature. Yet it is precisely the 'Nature' of this 'perceived relationship' that remains unexamined in the above texts which, through the very act of 'reading' (the) landscape, inevitably confine the meaning of 'Nature' within limits set by their own critical frameworks. It is as if enclosing the latter term in quotation marks – admitting it as a term that must be used with some caution – draws adequate attention to the question of the role played by the discourse of Landscape in the perception of Nature, and vice-versa. It is my conjecture that

the relationship between the subject and (its) Nature is not simply announced in Western landscape representation, made manifest in the altered spaces of the park, the garden, and the nature preserve, but that it is constituted in and by these very enclosures through the force of a paradigm that structures and defines what we know as landscape: that of linear or Albertian perspective.

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In *The Origin of Perspective*, Hubert Damisch argues that *costruzione legittima* – "organizing itself as it does around the position of a "subject" taken to be the origin of the perspectival construction, the index of what is *here*, what *there*, and what *over there*"[2] – serves a function analogous to that of language in locating the subject. Unlike language, however, the 'perspective paradigm' spatializes this subjectifying relation in a way that is specifically available to vision. It is my hypothesis that Landscape[3] – the discourse and the virtual space that is its emblem – is defined as such by this same structural paradigm.

The perspective paradigm has considerable significance for the description of Nature. As Damisch points out, Fillipo Brunelleschi's demonstration, circa 1425 – in which the gaze of the subject is reflected back at it from within the virtual space of a perspective construction of the Baptistry of San Giovanni – is less of a 'discovery' than a recognition, in its mimicry of the estrangement of the subject from the real by the interposition of the screen of representation. What Brunelleschi's apparatus enacts, in a fashion similar to Jacques Lacan's familiar 'double dihedron' of representation, is a constitutive rupture – the originating gesture of the subject. Lacan's figuration describes the subject's entry into the enclosures of visuality, where the activity of seeing is always accompanied by a complementary vision – the self seen as if by an other. Significantly, this reflexivity is systematically repudiated almost from the moment of its identification; the codification

of Brunelleschi's demonstration as *costruzione legittima* – a task initiated by Alberti and perpetuated by the discourse of linear perspective – elides the presence of the subject as/at the geometral point, abstracting it from the flux of phenomena, which are then revealed to vision as 'objects of knowledge'. The presentation of Nature and its truths as fundamentally exterior to the self masks the subject as the 'origin of co-ordinates', and constitutes the screen of representation as transparent – a subjectifying relation which can be understood, in a Foucauldian sense, as 'Classical'.[4] Nonetheless, it is only by assuming this very relationship that space of Landscape can be understood as a neutral enclosure; a surface ready to receive ideological inscription; a fully legible space or 'mode of social engagement'.

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If Nature and the subject, and the relationship that is maintained between them, can be understood in some sense as constituted in and by the space of Landscape, then it is evident that these terms, and their mutual articulation in and by the discourse of Landscape, must be re-examined. The first section of this paper will provide a framework for the discussion of the subject of Landscape by examining the place of Nature in three key discourses which play into the formation of this subject: political philosophy, aesthetics, and perspective theory.

Peter De Bolla has argued that notions of subjectivity are formed around not simply what the subject *is*, but what it *is not* or *cannot be*; the subject is animated, in part, through a complex and ambivalent relationship to discursive excess: "that which cannot be appropriated or included within the present discursive network of control."[5] Nature occupies a privileged place in the provenance of the subject; it is simultaneously a condition of possibility, and an excess which must be limited. In its most general sense,

the subject of Landscape is born out of a dialectic of enigma and solution: out of an effort to reconcile the ambivalence of Nature with the desire for a unified self and a homogenous space of knowledge.

Hegemonic discourse limits subjective agency, in part, by attempting to describe subjective boundaries, to contain the meaning and the 'truth' of Nature. For Classical knowledge, the production of this truth depended upon the maintenance of a rigorous distinction between the object of knowledge and the knowing or productive subject; the latter's corporeality – its existence as an object in/of Nature – had to remain concealed, cast as excessive and therefore uninvolved in the staging of truth. Within the circuit of representation, corporeal excess is controlled by confining the body to a unique viewing position; within civil society, agency is possible only to the extent that the subject is understood to comprise an aesthetic or signifying surface and, as such, is materially non-productive.[6]

Under Foucault's argument, the transition to Modern epistemology is characterized by the recognition of the productivity of consciousness; the acknowledgment of truth as a/ the property of the subject and thereby distinct from objects in the world. Excess, in other words, is redescribed as fully discursive; Nature, as a product of the subject, is understood not as an external force but as an animating figure. The hegemonic task of representation and civil society, no longer that of controlling material Nature, now becomes one of limiting Nature's meaning; of confining the subject's discursive productivity within ideologically acceptable limits.

Examining the mutual constitution of Landscape, Nature and the subject also means examining the relationship between representation and the 'real', particularly as this relationship is conditioned by the perspective paradigm.

In Brunelleschi's demonstration, the estrangement of the subject from (its) Nature took the

form of an elision of corporeal or gestural agency in the constitution of the real. This demonstration was enabled by the coincidence of objects (a painting, a mirror, and a body) in real space. Damisch has gone to great lengths to point out the elasticity of the boundaries of this experiment; to reveal the points at which the accounting of the corporeal body into the transaction of vision, resists codification. The body, in other words, is a condition of the legibility of this circuit; although unrepresentable within the parameters of the demonstration itself, is implied in and by the protocol of the demonstration as that without which representation, and (its) truth, cannot proceed.

It is the subsequent assumption, made by Alberti and virtually unquestioned since, that a set of written instructions can adequately convey the necessary elements of this demonstration, that repudiates spatial presence as a fundamental constituent of the subjectifying relation. Understood literally as the transposition of Brunelleschi's demonstration into written form, the Albertian paradigm infuses Landscape with a rhetorical potency that partakes of both the visual and the textual; a descriptive power or capability both to position and mobilize the occupant of (its) virtual space. Within Classical representation, this is enabled through what De Bolla terms the 'metaphorics of the eye': a "collection of *figurative expressions* generated within eighteenth-century discussions of specific forms of visual experience,"[7] which demonstrate the sympathy between the path of vision through virtual space and the movement of the body through real space. Under Modernism, language functions not simply to describe, but to animate: where metaphor charts the motion of a real body through space, the *trope* functions to mobilize a subject of representation which no longer has any necessary link to the real.

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Landscape describes a space that is both material and discursive, real and represented. The

second section of this paper will examine Landscape as a 'mode of social engagement'; a means of constructing and sustaining national identity. Operated in the formation and maintenance of the body politic, Landscape functions to aestheticize hegemonic discourse. On an individual level, Landscape and Nature interact to delimit an ideal political subject, reconciling the friction between representation and the real, between the subject and (its) excess. All of these functions depend to some extent upon the suppression of corporeal agency, and the presentation of Nature as a benign, homogenous and intelligible space.

Provisionally, the discussion will focus on the shift from 'Classical' to 'Modern' epistemology – during which time the subject of landscape undergoes some of its most fascinating transformations – and on the translation of English and European notions of Landscape onto North American soil. Taking the eighteenth century as a point of departure, and examining the 'view' as a homogeneous space which assumes a distanced subject, I will be considering the work of Lorrain and Poussin as paradigmatic not only for discourses of Landscape representation but for discourses of Landscape alteration which take the view as their model. Pursuing Gina Crandell's argument that it was in the eighteenth century that a 'pictorial' vision of Nature began to be inscribed into collective consciousness,[8] I will investigate the mutual influence of landscape representation and landscape alteration in the 'framing' of Nature.

My methodology in this section will be based in a reading of the discourse of Landscape not only for what is announced, but for what is concealed. In the case of textual sources, this implies a deconstructive reading; in the case of visual sources (both real and represented), this deconstructive reading will take into account not simply *what* is seen, but *how it is intended to be seen*: the consequences of what De Bolla terms the 'activity of looking' in the location of the subject within the space of the visible. Why is it so important for the

boundaries of the viewing experience to be clearly prescribed by disourses of representation, and what are the consequences of venturing beyond these boundaries, of viewing a Landscape in the 'incorrect' way? As I will show, the need to control the 'experience of Nature' is most often undertaken with an eye to limiting its definition. In this sense the task of the metaphorics of the eye is more than aesthetic, it is a means of limiting political agency.

Classical Landscape has been, and continues to be, particularly influential for North American Landscape painting. The discussion in this section will focus on Luminist landscape – the so-called 'Hudson River' school, which included Fitz Hugh Lane, Martin Johnson Heade, Sanford Gifford, and John F. Kensett – and works of the Grand Style or 'operatic sublime' – by painters like Albert Bierstadt, Thomas Cole, and Frederic Edwin Church[9] – not because these two schools represent an exhaustive selection of North American Landscape painting of the nineteenth century, but because of the way in which they employ the perspective paradigm in constructing a relationship between the subject, the nation, and Nature. The space of nineteenth-century Landscape representation operates (on) a subject which is both materially and temporally distanced from (its) Nature; the latter is operated as an origin, and as the ideal state towards which society strives, masking the unattractive reality of the present. Perhaps more important, it is evident from current scholarship that Luminist and Grand Style Landscape describes a visual and discursive space that is paradigmatic not only for present-day discourses of landscape representation and alteration, but for the history of Landscape itself. It is my conjecture that in the present day, it is landscape photography which is largely responsible for the perpetuation of the pictorial or 'perspectival' vision of Landscape – a vision which continues to resonate in enclaves such as national parks and nature preserves on both sides of the Atlantic. The work of nineteenth-century landscape photographers differs little from its twentieth-century

counterparts either in the space that it describes, or in the truth value that it assigns to this space. In the twentieth century, it is the Landscape *image* which inscribes the notion of perspectival Nature into the popular imagination.

Perspectival Nature is given 'real' form in and by the Garden. It is here, as well, that 'real' space brushes most closely against the space of representation as the Classical metaphorics of the eye are acted out in the service of individual and social identity. The ambivalent relationship between the subject and (its) Nature is sublimated in and by an explicitly created space in which control of Nature is both enacted and made visible. As the legislation of the material becomes a less pressing issue, the Garden addresses itself more forcefully to the maintenance of an ideologically amenable subject; a subject which can be seen, acting out its relationship to Nature and civil society, in the Modern Landscape park of Frederick Law Olmsted. Here, both the individual and the body politic display their coherence in a spectacular space of the other.

The politics and aesthetics of Classical space persist today in the framing of democratized Nature as both image and amenity. As Michael Bunce observes,

> the countryside has becom a huge outdoor recreational facility; its landscapes and land uses, its economies and communities fundamentally and probably irrevocably transformed to conform to the edicts of a leisure-oriented society.[10]

Operating the space of the view as a trope for liberty, Landscape comes to stand for the basic constitutional rights of the Modern subject. Like its Classical precursor, however, the subject of this democratic Landscape is described as an aestheticized or useless body, an anaesthetized subject, bereft of 'real' agency in the present.

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In assuming a Classical spatial enclosure as its field of inquiry, the discourse of Landscape not only casts the body as excessive, suppressing the agency that is given in/as presence, it also suppresses discursive agency, producing a 'perspectival' Nature that has meaning only within the context of this space.

As Michel Foucault has demonstrated, the eighteenth century sign is "transparent," having no content apart from that which it represents. The analysis of signs is concerned only with decipherment, and the discovery of meaning, "nothing more than a reflection upon the signs that indicate it."[11] This kind of perspectival analysis, which assumes that the meaning of a representation is fully present in/as the semiotic system that comprises it, is common practice among historians of Landscape. If perspective, manifested as it is in/by Landscape, is not a tool but rather an instantiation of a subjectifying relation analogous in some respect to that proposed by Lacan, then how is it that the discourse of Landscape – and particularly that branch of art history that concerns itself with the description and analysis of landscape representation – has not set about examining the position into which it is cast by the space which it takes as its subject?

Nature, in the postmodern world, is a highly ambivalent term, and the Classical metaphorics of the eye continue to function as a means of containing it. Any discussion which hopes to address this must consider Landscape not simply as a textual or symbolic system – and amenable as such to the practice of 'reading' – but also in terms of the friction between the space of representation and the real space of the *gestural* subject.

Although the eighteenth century will be operated provisionally as the linchpin around which this argument circulates, my intent is neither to construct it as an origin, nor to situate Classicism and Modernism within a historical chronology. What I hope to show instead is

how 'Classical' and 'Modern' are best understood not as definitive of specific historical moments,[12] but as descriptive terms in a process of epistemological transformation which is historically attenuated and epistemologically equivocal. In the place of Foucault's *episteme*, I will be operating Peter De Bolla's concept of the 'discursive network', a configuration of interpenetrating discourses, changing at widely varying rates, which together serve to articulate the 'real' at any given historical juncture.

As it is conceived by Foucault, the notion of epistemological change is itself narrative or perspectival. The final section of this paper concerns itself, therefore, with the deconstruction of the perspectival history charted in the first and second sections. Inasmuch as it points up the difficulty of describing a/the subject as fully specific to a given cultural or historical moment, this project is of necessity aligned with the collapse of the *episteme* as a historical marker.

As a final gesture, I will attend to the deconstruction of the 'point of view' by examining the inherent indeterminacy of each of its key terms – Landscape, Nature, the subject, and the real – and the continued effort to fix these terms within a perspectival space of vision and of knowledge. Vision and text are superimposed – often antagonistically – to mask the constitutive force of signification, describing a 'real Nature' which is distinct from the self and the present. The assumption that a text has authority over and above the work it studies is itself a product of this space, and leads theory to the inevitable conclusion that the subject's gestural agency, its action in the real, has no bearing on its formation and no influence on its expression.

It is the very ambivalence of representation – the difficulty in fixing the relationship between Landscape, Nature, and the subject – that leads one to question the ability of signification to fully describe these terms, or whether *description* is even indicated. Pursuant to this notion, I will examine what happens when signification is 'interfered with';

where it fails, where it exposes its limits. This activity is less about the construction and maintenance of a coherent self than it is a reflection upon the *process* of constituting one's self. As such, it suggests that the real is as much a fabrication as the terms which define themselves against it.

1. Mitchell, W.J.T. 'Imperial Landscape.' in Landscape and Power. W.J.T. Mitchell, ed. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994, pp5-34, p14.

2. Damisch, Hubert. The Origin of Perspective. John Goodman, trans. Cambridge & London: MIT Press, 1995, pxxi.

3. Throughout this essay, I will be using initial capitals whenever I wish to refer to landscape, nature, or the garden not simply as 'objects' (empirical or discursive) but as hegemonic discourses. Clarifying the reasons for this is one of the 'goals' of this paper.

4. See Foucault, Michel. The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences. New York: Vintage Books, 1973.

5. De Bolla, Peter. The Discourse of the Sublime: Readings in History, Aesthetics, and the Subject. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989, p6.

6. See Marin, Louis. Portrit of the King. Martha M. Houle, trans. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988.

7. (emphasis added) "These figurative expressions have a considerable range: in the viewing of landscape, for example, the eye is 'thrown' to a particular point, or sometimes it is 'drawn' towards an object in the landscape known as an 'eye-catcher'." De Bolla, Peter. 'The Visibility of Visuality: Vauxhall Gardens and the Siting of the Viewer' in Vision and Textuality. Stephen Melville and Bill Readings, eds. London: MacMillan Press, Ltd., 1995, pp282-295, p283.

8. See Crandell, Gina. Nature Pictorialized: The "View" in Landscape History. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993.

9. See the following works on Luminist and Grand Style landscape: A.B. Durand. (exhibition catalogue) Montclair, New Jersey: Montclair Art Museum, 1971; Baigell, Matthew. Albert Bierstadt. New York: Watson-Guptill Publications, 1981; Kelly, Franklin. Frederic Edwin Church and the National Landscape. Washington D.C. & London: Smithsonian

Institution Press, 1988; Ibid., Frederic Edwin Church. (exhibition catalogue) Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1989; Merritt, Howard S. Thomas Cole. (exhibition catalogue) Rochester: Memorial Art Gallery, 1969; Wilmerding, John. American Light: The Luminist Movement 1850-1875. Washington, D.C.: The National Gallery of Art, 1980.

10. Bunce, Michael. The Countryside Ideal: Anglo-American Images of Landscape. London and New York: Routledge, 1994, p140.

11. Foucault, op. cit., p66.

12. In *The Order of Things*, Foucault suggests that this shift, although spanning the "easily assignable" interval between 1775 and 1825, is centered around the interval 1795-1800: "within the space of a few years a culture sometimes ceases to think as it had been thinking up till then and begins to think other things in a new way" (op. cit., p50). The abruptness of this shift, as well as the notion of the *episteme* as historically specifiable and self-contained, has come under criticism of late. Somer Brodribb: "Successive but discontinuous, [Foucault's] *epistemes* are telegrammatic instants flashing across empty space. They are instants in time suspended between voids. Between them falls the shadow, the abyss." see Brodribb, Somer. Nothing Mat(t)ers: A Feminist Critique of Postmodernism. Melbourne, Australia: Spinifex Press, 1992, p56. Peter De Bolla has also described Foucault's concept of epistemological rupture as 'crude.'

1.1 *The subject and (its) excess*

> [The] functions of 'nature' and 'human nature' are in opposition to one another, term by term, in the Classical *episteme*: nature through the action of a real and disordered juxtaposition, causes difference to appear in the ordered continuity of beings; human nature causes the identical to appear in the disordered chain of representations, and does so by the action of a display of images. ... For Classical thought, man does not occupy a place in nature through the intermediary of the regional, limited, specific 'nature' that is granted to him, as to all other beings, as a birthright. If human nature is interwoven with nature, it is by the mechanisms of knowledge and by their functioning ... man, as a primary reality with his own density, as the difficult object and sovereign subject of all possible knowledges, has no place in [nature].
>
> Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*

The subject as such is born of a dynamic of ambivalence, of simultaneous enunciation and elision of its own conditions of possibility, among which Nature and the body are two of the most fundamental. For Classical epistemology, the essential interchangeability of these two was masked by insisting upon the primacy of the intellect, ascribing Nature and the material body as somehow external to the subjectifying relation. Although Modern epistemology is characterized by its 'eversion' of this excess – its description as a product of the subject – the Nature it operates is no less transcendental in its situation as humanity's 'other.'

Notions of subjectivity are formed around not simply what the subject *is*, but what it *is not* or *cannot be*. Part of what animates a/the subject is its complex and ambivalent relationship to discursive excess: its constitution relative to "that which cannot be appropriated or included within the present discursive network of control."[1] The change in the treatment of excess is one of the terms around which the shift from Classical to Modern notions of subjectivity can be negotiated.

Generally speaking, Classical knowledge was authorized by its referral to some original

act of speaking or knowing; by its correspondence with a body or object in the world. The material provenance of knowledge is nonetheless systematically repudiated in Classical thought; the description of Nature as excessive – as unknowable in its essence – is operated to mask the authority of corporeal phenomena. For the Classical imagination, Nature's power was limited by ascribing the production of meaning to a system or cause external to humanunderstanding.

The transition to Modern epistemology is represented, in part, by the 'eversion' of excess. Where eighteenth-century epistemology had sought to deny the productivity of consciousness, the Modern subject is acknowledged as "both producer and product of its own discursive formation."[2] This notion is borne out within the circuit of knowledge as the fracturing of the link to phenomena; now, it is the *discourse* of Nature which authorizes signification:

> [It] is clearly not the speaker who is to speak again, but precisely the text, the message, the communication itself ... we feel no need to refer back to the original act of speech, the living word. ... A genuine text ... no longer refers back to an original, more authentic saying, nor points beyond itself to a more authentic experience of reality.[3]

The limits of the modern subject are redescribed as an *effect* of discourse itself – a discourse which does not "authenticate its statements and analyses through reference to an external authority since its analytic procedure is based upon an internalization of all analysis and description: it is self-reflexive in the first instance, making reference to itself as a discourse in its explanatory procedures rather than to adjacent or prior discourses, objects in the world or human subjectivity."[4] Modern discourse invents or creates the possibility for the experience that it describes; humanity creates and is created by the 'unfigurable'.

Broadly speaking, discourse on Nature can be thought as part of the network engaged in figuring the unfigurable. As it appeared in Classical epistemology, Descartes' description of Nature as "nothing other than God himself, or the order and disposition that God has established in created things"[5] enabled two contentious formations. As made visible in the chaotic external world, Nature describes the 'not-human'; that which humanity would govern.[6] As the source of universal ideals, however, Nature frames and structures knowledge. To *know* is thus to demonstrate, by means other than one's inevitable and indispensable corporeality, the link between humankind, the natural order, and the vast unity of the cosmos. As David Hume suggests, however, (corpo)reality is essential to the production of meaning:

> Our system concerning space and time consists of two parts, which are intimately connected together. The first depends on [the] chain of reasoning ... The other part of our system is a consequence of this. The parts, into which the ideas of space and time resolve themselves, ... being nothing in themselves, are inconceivable when not fill'd with something real and existent. The ideas of space and time are therefore not separate or distinct ideas, but merely those of the manner or order, in which objects exist: Or, in other words, 'tis impossible to conceive either a vacuum and extension without matter, or a time when there was not succession or change in any real existence.[7]

The Classical subject can only *know* by abstracting itself from the order of phenomena; describing the body – and Nature in a more general sense – as excessive. Nature is understood to speak through the 'natural tendencies' of the mind, through memory and imagination:

> [The] great, endless, continuous surface is printed with distinct characters, in more or less general features, in marks of identification. ... *[The] chain of being becomes discourse, thereby linking itself to human nature...*[8] (emphasis added)

Nature is *made to mean* through the act of *naming*, through the intellectual ordering of its terms.[9]

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In Ralph Waldo Emerson's 1836 essay *Nature*, humankind is recognized not only as producer, but as both *product* and *property* of the "manner or order in which objects exist":

> It is the uniform effect of culture on the human mind, not to shake our faith in the stability of particular phenomena,... but to lead us to regard nature as phenomenon, not a substance; to attribute necessary existence to spirit; to esteem nature as an accident and an *effect*.[10] (emphasis added)

Although Nature is 'philosophically considered' as "the NOT ME, that is, both nature and art, all other men and my own body ... essences unchanged by man; space, the air, the river, the leaf,"[11] Emerson's text is written in full consciousness of Nature's existence as a discourse. Under Modernism, Nature is dislocated as a larger category; subjective boundaries are everted; (corpo)reality becomes irrelevant as a determining condition since the chain of being is itself a product of human knowledge. Under Hume's argument, Nature proceeded from the material; for Emerson, the fabric of reality is animated by Spirit:

> [Behind] nature, throughout nature, spirit is present; one and not compound it does not act upon us from without, that is, in space and time, but spiritually, or through ourselves: therefore, that spirit, that is, the Supreme Being, does not build up nature around us, but puts it forth through us...[12]

Penetrating its vast materiality and "seizing its laws", humanity imparts spirituality to Nature, conceiving the world as "a realized will, – the double of the man."[13] Nature is no longer an excess to be legislated, but an excess to be sought out and embraced as the

founding gesture of the self; "the distinction between subject and object, or between inner and outer are blurred as the very participation of the subject within the experiential leads to an identification of the subject with the object."[14] Generated by the subject, Nature is redescribed as an animating figure; language no longer functions metaphorically, charting the visible characteristics of objects in the world, but performs a generative or *troping* function, creating and commanding the extradiscursive:

> [We] learn the difference between the absolute and the conditional or relative. We apprehend the absolute. As it were, for the first time, *we exist.* We become immortal, for we learn that time and space are relations of matter; that with a perception of truth or a virtuous will they have no affinity.[15]

Like Descartes and Hume, however, Emerson struggles with an innately ambivalent Nature, attempting to bring humanity's faith in the stability of phenomena to terms with its questioning of Nature as an absolute – or as a category which must render up its secrets to an objective and absolute knowledge. In Emerson's evocation of Nature as both abject and ideal, the local is still at odds with the transcendental; its production as an *effect* concealed, Nature, as 'other', still occupies the place of excess.

The transition from Classical to Modern epistemology can be broadly represented by two affiliated motifs, both of which will be developed in the sections which follow. The first concerns the redescription of excess; its 'relocation' from the body to the subject. Alongside and as a consequence of this movement, Classical epistemology's need to legislate a recalcitrant and menacing materiality – to limit corporeal agency – gives way, under Modernism, to the legislation of *subjective* agency. Common to both, however, is the production and invocation of Nature as a goal, an ideal state towards which humanity strives.[16] Turning to the political philosophy of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and John Stuart

Mill, I will show how these themes are manifest in the formation of the subject of government.

1. De Bolla, op. cit., p6.

2. Ibid., p6.

3. Gadamer, Hans-Georg. 'Aesthetic and Religious Experience' in The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other Essays, Robert Bernasconi, ed. Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989, pp140-153, p142.

4. De Bolla, op. cit., p34.

5. Descartes, René. 'Sixth Meditation,' in Discourse on Method and the Meditations. F.E. Sutcliffe, trans. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1971, pp150-169, p159.

6. Humankind thus knew external Nature "only through sense impressions and the self-reflection of the mind." See Hemingway, Andrew. 'The 'Sociology' of Taste in the Scottish Enlightenment.' The Oxford Art Journal 12:2, 1989, pp3-35, p7.

7. Hume, David. A Treatise of Human Nature. L.A. Selby-Bigge, ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978 c.1740, pp39-40.

8. Foucault, op. cit., p310. Much Enlightenment thought on the forging of the discursive link between human nature and Nature was informed by the ideas of John Locke. As described in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), the basic material of all knowledge was 'simple ideas,' derived either from sense experience or from the mind's reflection on its own operations; these basic materials, passively received, were, through the activity of the understanding, combined into 'complex ideas.' see Locke, John. An Essay Concerning Human Understanding. A.D. Woozley, ed. London & Glasgow: Wm. Collins & Sons & Co., Ltd., 1964.

9. The meaning of Nature was the totality of signs "arranged in their progression:" the natural order itself, as the latter was revealed to humankind through empirical knowledge. Foucault, op. cit., p66.

10. Emerson, Ralph Waldo. 'Nature' in The Portable Emerson. Carl Bode, ed. New York: Penguin Books, 1981, pp7-50, p33.

11. "Philosophically considered, the universe is composed of Nature and the Soul. Strictly speaking, therefore, all that is separate from us, all which Philosophy distinguishes as the NOT ME, that is, both nature and art, all other men and my own body, must be ranked under this name, NATURE. ... Nature in the common sense, refers to essences unchanged by man; space, the air, the river, the leaf." Ibid., p8.

12. Ibid., p42.

13. Ibid., p28.

14.. De Bolla, op. cit., p44.

15. Emerson, op. cit., pp38-9.

16. Nature, in this sense, could be described as 'residual.' As discussed by Raymond Williams, the 'residual' in culture refers to that which "has been effectively formed in the past, but ... is still active in the cultural process, not only and often not at all as an element of the past, but as an effective element of the present. Thus certain experiences, meanings, and values which cannot be expressed or substantially verified in terms of the dominant culture, are nevertheless lived and practised on the basis of the residue ... of some previous social and cultural institution or formation." from "Dominant, Residual and Emergent,' in Art in Theory 1900-1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas. Charles Harrison & Paul Wood, eds. Oxford UK and Cambridge USA: Blackwell, 1993, pp979-983; p980.

1.2 *The governed body*

The transformation of the Classical subject of government takes the form of a challenge to the authority of the corporeal body as a representation of civil society and as the target of juridical power. Nature, under Modernism, ceases to be thought of as that which must be legislated through recourse to an extradiscursively-ordained Law, and comes to be understood as that which is invoked in essence as an ideal state. In both cases, however, Nature is retained as a means of reinforcing a hegemonic social order. The following discussion will develop these notions through the concept of 'mixed figuration': a simultaneous subscription to both Classical and Modern ideals – especially evident in Rousseau's philosophy – which troubles traditional epistemological boundaries.

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Until the mid-seventeenth century, the form and function of the body politic was authorized by the metaphorical body: its various parts represented different aspects of the State in a hierarchical ascription that associated the function of the Sovereign with that of the head, and the labour of peasants with that of the feet.[1] As a metaphor, the body enumerates the discrete elements of civil society, making visible their individual purpose; the State as a functional whole is represented by and through the 'real' body of the sovereign, whose public body – the State made visible – is the locus of truth and the signifier of the Divine right of succession.[2] The subject of government exists, in a condition of natural subjection to aristocratic power, as a/the property of the state; individual (and) physical identity is subordinated, according to the rule of Nature, to membership in the greater whole of the body politic.[3]

The authority of the body-as-metaphor is based in its absolute visibility, its

correspondence with the order of objects and their manner of existence. In *A Discourse on Political Economy* and *The Social Contract*, Jean-Jacques Rousseau calls this authority – essentially, the 'authority of Nature' – into question:

> [If] the voice of nature is the best counsellor to which a father can listen in the discharge of his duty, for the Magistrate it is a false guide, which continually prevents him from performing his, and leads sooner or later to the ruin of himself and of the State... In order to act aright, the [father] has only to consult his heart; the [Magistrate] becomes a traitor the moment he listens to his. Even his own reason should be suspect to him, nor should he follow any rule other than the public reason, which is the law.[4]

Paternal duty and authority are dictated by 'natural feelings' – irruptions of Nature incommensurable with the functioning of the State, which must always prevail over the domestic economy upon which it is founded. On entering the social contract, the subject surrenders her/his identity to membership in the collective:

> '*Each of us puts his person and all his power in common under the supreme direction of the general will, and, in our corporate capacity, we receive each member as an indivisible part of the whole.*'
>
> At once, in place of the individual personality of each contracting party, this act of association creates a corporate and collective body, composed of as many members as the assembly contains voters, and receiving from this act its unity, its common identity, its life, and its will. This public person, so formed by the union of all other persons ... takes [the name] of *Republic* or *body politic*...[5]

Private interest and individual volition – which motivate the individual in a 'state of nature' – are subsumed by the will of the corporate body. The force which stabilizes this essentially arbitrary arrangement, the means by which the potential for conflict between public and private interests is legislated, is provided by the Law:

> It is to law alone that men owe justice and liberty. It is this *salutary organ of the will of all* which establishes, in civil right, the *natural equality* between men. It is this *celestial voice* which dictates to each citizen the precepts of public reason, and teaches him to act according to the rules of his own judgement, and not to behave inconsistently with himself. ... *no sooner does one man, setting aside the law, claim to subject another to his private will, than he departs from the state of civil society and confronts him face to face in the pure state of nature*, in which obedience is prescribed only by necessity.[6] (emphasis added)

Comprising the movement and will of the body politic, its vitalizing force, the Law is not a product of the rational intellect, but functions similarly to memory and imagination: as a product of the identical organization of Nature and the human mind, the ideas of justice and equality upon which the Law is based are given in and by human nature.[7] Intrinsic to Rousseau's distinction between Nature and government, in other words, is the belief that all systems of government conform to a universal model, functioning as species of 'natural law'. In this peculiar figuration, the "public man" has no dealings with Nature, except as the latter informs covertly the juridical matrix of civil society.

Rarely, then, does Rousseau's argument conform to a paradigm that could be called definitively Classical or Modern. The ambivalent status of Nature in his differentiation between civil and domestic government reappears, in his description of the body politic, as a vacillation between the metaphorical and the troped body as an authorizing figure.[8] Operated as the former, the body describes the position and function of the individual 'organs' of government. As a functional unit, however, the State is no longer incarnate(d) in and by the visible body of the sovereign; instead, the communication between the parts, the economy which animates the whole and is vital to its health, is troped in/as the movement of the blood, the invisible 'organicity' of the body politic.[9]

Under Rousseau's argument, the conflation and bringing to law of Nature, personal

interest, and the individual material body serves to sanction a hierarchical and hegemonic social order on the basis of its conformation to natural law. Divine authority, in the form of the Law as a controlling discourse, functions to ground the potential excess represented by both private interest and public opinion, and to mask or aestheticize the operations of government in writing this Law:

> [Though] the government be not master of the law, it is much to be its guarantor, and to possess a thousand means of inspiring the love of it. In this alone the talent of reigning consists. ... [The] greatest talent a ruler can possess is to disguise his power in order to render it less odious, and to conduct the State so peaceably as to make it seem to have no need of conductors.[10]

Both individual and corporate liberty are threatened by unwanted irruptions of Nature. Rather than attempting to legislate this potential excess by operating (on) Nature in the form of the corporeal body, however, Rousseau's government controls the *will* of its subjects, creating them extracorporeally, discursively, *as* subjects of government.[11] This subtle operation of power gives the state the appearance of running itself, and government the appearance of a genuine organ of the General Will. Perhaps more significantly, it constitutes a legislation of *subjective* agency – a form of control which is given a more decisive formation in/as the troping of the body-as-State, in the philosophy of John Stuart Mill.

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The ambivalence towards Nature's authority that characterizes Rousseau's thought appears to give way, in Mill, to a less equivocal understanding of the moral and ethical foundation of society. Contesting Classical Nature as the source of the vitalizing force behind existence, Mill fractures the material alliance between the subject and (its) Nature, and

between individuals and the nation:

> Nature, ... in this its simplest acceptation, is a collective name for all facts, actual and possible, or (to speak more accurately) a name for the mode, partly known to us and partly unknown, in which all things take place. For *the word suggests not so much the multitudinous detail of the phenomena as the conception which might be formed of their manner of existence as a mental whole by a mind possessing a complete knowledge of them*...[12] (emphasis added)

Government exists in this situation not to protect the body politic from unwanted irruptions of Nature, but to guard against the "tyranny of the majority"; its stated purpose is the preservation, not the sublation, of individual identity:

> Protection ... against the tyranny of the magistrate is not enough: there needs protection also against the tyranny of the prevailing opinion and feeling; against the tendency of society to impose, by other means than civil penalties, its own ideas and practices as rules of conduct on those who dissent from them... There is a limit to the legitimate interference of collective opinion with individual independence: and to find that limit, and maintain it against encroachment, is ... indispensable to a good condition of human affairs...[13]

Incorporating the subject's tendency towards independent action *as* individuality, sovereignty over one's own body, mind and personal actions is, in Mill's reasoning, critical to a viable democracy. The role of government is not to legislate excess, but to embrace and preserve it as the basis of liberty; "the capitalist description of the subject – still very much with us and under which we are represented – [is one] in which the discursive excess is identified as the mark of individuality; it brings about the field of representation in which difference determines and ratifies person; difference in and to excess becomes the defining feature of the individual and sanctions the subject."[14] The social body thus created relies not upon 'natural law' to unite it, but upon a manufactured identification between the individual and *figured* Nature in the form of the body of the nation; the subject "has access

to and is represented in the state through the *corporation of his/her own body.*"[15] The corporate body, borrowing from Classical Nature the organicity of the corporeal body, describing its own limits, takes the place of the subject's private or phenomenal body as the matrix of being. Nature, in the form of the material body, is invoked *as discourse* to imbue the figured body with semiotic resonance:

> [The] use of the body as a figure functions ... to return to the body its lost literality. In this way metaphoric expressions, such as 'body of the people' for example, are defigured in order to return to an 'older' meaning or awareness of the body as physicality. The body loses its totemic power as a site of metaphoric substitutions, of semantic complexity and impurity, and becomes once again a site of literal meaning, or semantic purity.[16]

As a trope, the Modern body politic represents subjectivity in/as the figuration of the interior functions of the state; the creation of a 'subject position' (or subject-as-potentiality) can be understood in this sense as a conditioned absencing of the (visible) body. As elements of an organic whole, State and subject are simultaneously and indivisibly a/the property of one another; Mill's subject of democracy is doubled, figured "within the corporation of the state"[17] and as a subject under its government. Difference, the sign of the modern subject, is confined within acceptable limits by granting a limited and spurious agency in the form of public opinion. Securing its vitality through the coercive force of the troped body, the *state-as-subject* functions as model citizen, the ideal subject of government.[18]

Nonetheless, Nature-as-excess is firmly – if clandestinely – installed in Mill's argument. His objection to the limitation of subjective agency is supported by an implicit appeal to a Nature that, although refused as a separate category, nonetheless gestures – by the mere fact of its existence as "partly known to us and partly unknown" – past society's self-generated limits, towards a single, universal moral sense.[19] Rousseau resolves this antinomy

by masking culture's machinations in the construction of Nature; Mill attempts the same by assimilating the one to the other:

> Nature is not opposed to culture..., but is its product; culture and history are part of our nature, forming it, while our nature in turn produces our culture.[20]

Although not *named*, Nature is still subject to complete knowledge; its idea(l) is clearly present as a goal. Mill's argument harbours a thinly-veiled "telic nature; the nature that we work to create is simultaneously waiting to be discovered."[21] In operating the organic body as a trope for the State, Mill invokes Nature as a veiled figure of/for power, a limit and a law-giver; simultaneously a "source of natural right" and "a barrier to social and political change."[22] The limitation of corporeal and subjective agency within the framework of civil society can also be understood as the limitation of the subject's productivity, of the 'real' agency of presence. This theme is made explicit in aesthetic discourse, to which the discussion will now turn.

1. This metaphoric 'mapping' of the body is enunciated quite clearly in John of Salisbury's *Policraticus* (1159): "The state is a body .... Within that state, the prince occupies the place of the head; he is subject to the unique God and to those who are his lieutenants on earth, for in the human body the head is also governed by the soul. The senate occupies the place of the heart, which gives good and bad deeds their impulses. The functions of the eyes, the ears and the tongue is assured by the judges and the provincial governors. The "officers" and "soldiers" can be compared to the hands. The prince's regular assistants are the flanks. The quaestors and the registrars ... evoke the image of the belly and the intestines which, if they have been stuffed through excessive greed and if they hold in their contents too obstinately, give rise to countless and incurable illnesses and, through their vices, can bring about the ruin of the body as a whole. The feet that always touch the soil are the peasants. Being governed by the head is especially necessary for them, because they are faced by numerous detours as they walk upon the earth in the service of the body, and because they need the firmest support in order to keep the mass of the entire body erect, to support it and to move it about." see Le Goff, Jacques. "Head or Heart? The Political Use of Body Metaphors in the Middle Ages." in Fragments for a History of the Human Body, part three. Michel Feher, ed. New York: Zone, 1989, pp12-27, p17.

2. Paul Hammond shows how the post-Restoration monarchy under Charles II, by revealing the king's body to be as thoroughly secular as that of his subjects, was unable to sustain the legitimizing rhetoric of Divine succession. Charles's highly publicized sexual adventures brought the 'private' body of the ruler into the civic realm; the subordination of the Sovereign's public, sacred and eternal body to the satisfaction of the private carnal body was seen as the prurient disregard of the king's duty to his subjects. Invalidated as the locus of truth and Divine law, the king no longer controlled the representation of his own body; as his subjects set about producing their own representations of their

licentious ruler, the discourse of Sovereignty passed into public domain. See Hammond, Paul, "The King's two bodies: representations of Charles II," in Culture, Politics, and Society in Britain, 1660-1800. Jeremy Black and Jeremy Gregory, eds. Manchester & New York: Manchester University Press, 1991, pp13-48.

3. Allegiance to the sovereign was indelible and "connatural, written by the Pen of Nature in the Heart of every Subject." John Brydall in Ibid., p38. A comprehensive reading of the location and dislocation of juridical truth in the corporeal body is offered by Michel Foucault in Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison. Alan Sheridan, trans. New York: Vintage Books, 1979.

4. Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. "A Discourse on Political Economy" in The Social Contract and Discourses. G. D. H. Cole, trans. London: J. M. Dent, 1993 c.1758, pp128-168, p130-1.

5. Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. "The Social Contract" (1762), in Cole, op. cit., pp180-309, p192. The 'incorporation' of the body politic should be understood throughout this discussion as a *verb* describing 'the creation of an artificial person by act of legislation' (OED). The figuration or corporation of the body politic comprises, in other words, the founding gesture of the subject of government.

6. Rousseau (1758) op. cit., p136.

7. "What is well and in conformity with order is so by the nature of things and independently of human conventions. All justice comes from God who is its sole source..." Rousseau (1762), op. cit., p210; "equality of rights and the idea of justice which such equality creates originate in the preference each man gives to himself, and accordingly in the very nature of man." Ibid., p205.

8. "The body politic, taken individually, may be considered as an organized, living body, resembling that of man. The sovereign power represents the head; the laws and customs are the brain, the source of the nerves and seat of the understanding, will, and senses, of which the Judges and Magistrates are the organs; commerce, industry and agriculture are the mouth and stomach which prepare the common subsistence; the public income is the blood, which a prudent *economy*, in performing the functions of the heart, causes to distribute through the whole body nutriment and life; the citizens are the body and the members, which make the machine live, move, and work; and no part of this machine can be damaged without the painful impression being at once conveyed to the brain, if the animal is in a state of health. The life of both bodies is the self common to the whole, the reciprocal sensibility and internal correspondence of all the parts. Where this communication ceases, where the formal unity disappears, and the contiguous parts belong to one another only by juxtaposition, the man is dead, or the State is dissolved." Rousseau (1758) op. cit., pp131-2.

9. See Rykwert, Joseph. "Mécanique et organique" in Composer le Paysage: Constructions et Crises d'Espace (1789-1992). Odile Marcel, ed. Seyssel: Editions Champ Vallon, 1989, pp201-218.

10. Rousseau (1758), op. cit., p137.

11. Citizens are "early accustomed to regard their individuality only in its relation to the body of the State, and to be aware ... of their own existence merely as a part of that of the State..." Ibid., p148.

12. Mill, John Stuart. "Nature" in Essential Works of John Stuart Mill. Max Lerner, ed. New York: Bantam Books, 1961 c.1874, pp367-401, p369.

13."Society can and does execute its own mandates: and if it issues wrong mandates instead of right, or any mandates at all in things with which it ought not to meddle, it practises a social tyranny more formidable than many kinds of political oppression, since, ... it leaves fewer means of escape, penetrating much more deeply into the details of life, and enslaving the soul itself." see Mill, John Stuart. "On Liberty" (1859) in Lerner, op. cit., pp255-360, p258 .

14. De Bolla, op. cit., pp14-15.

15. Ibid., p128.

16. Ibid., p112. Joseph Rykvert has shown how the term 'organic' was defigured in a similar way. Based in the Greek *organum*, which designated an instrument or tool possessing an innate purposiveness, 'organic', by the late eighteenth century, had come to signify a nonspecific, extradiscursive vitalizing force. For Schelling, the universe itself could be considered "comme une application particulière du concept général d'organism. « L'organisme, écrit-il, c'est le principe fondamental. Il ne s'agit pas ici de tel objet défini, puisque (...) il existe (...) différents modes d'appréhender l'organism universel. Cet organism universel est la condition nécessaire et préalable du fonctionnement de la machine du monde physique... » Chez Schelling, l'organism réconcilie les polarités d'essence, les conflits de nature ; il est la puissance naturel la plus élevée, au-dessous de quoi existent celles de la mécanique et de la matière." (Rykwert, op. cit., p206) Modernism signalled the secularization of the organic; the recognition that humanity itself was possessed of a generative facility: "On s'aperçut que le pouvoir d'inventer, créateur des automates-prodiges, mobile essentiel du développement de la machine, jusqu'aux productions de masse, suscitait, à force de prendre toute la place, un principe d'économie analogue à un phénomène de la nature." (Rykwert, op. cit., p215) Broadly speaking, the Modern significance of 'organic' is made possible by the dislocation of Nature.

17. De Bolla, op. cit., p134.

18. "the state must represent the best possibility and opportunities not only for the subject but also for the representation of subjectivity; the state must function as the model citizen in both its economic and ethical interests in order to convince the private individual of, and maintain his conviction in, the collective capital enterprise that is the incorporation of the nation." Ibid., p134. The form(ation) of both the body of the subject and the body politic is determined, in other words, by the veiled activities of government.

19. Mill's discussion of ethics in *Utilitarianism* appeals to a unifying force, a common – and unnamed – principle to mediate between the intuitive and the inductive school of ethics.The utilitarian school of ethics holds that moral values are given *a priori*, the inductive school that doctrines of right and wrong are given by observation and experience. Comparing the two, Mill notes that "there ought either to be some one fundamental principle or law at the root of all morality, or, if there be several, there should be a determinate order of precedence among them; and the one principle or the rule for deciding between the various principles when they conflict, ought to be self-evident." see Mill, John Stuart. "Utilitarianism" (1863) in Lerner, op. cit., pp189-248, p191.

20. Phelan, Shane. 'Intimate Distance: The Dislocation of Nature in Modernity.' Western Political Quarterly vol.45 no.2 (June 1992), pp385-402, p393.

21. Phelan has pointed this out with respect to Nietzsche's philosophy; see Ibid. p394.

22. Ibid., p386.

1.3 *The useless body*

> Men cannot all follow the same kind of life. A variety of tastes, a multiplicity of talents, choice, necessity, chance, influence each citizen to follow a particular business. Thence there results a general order, which makes it plainly appear that the different professions of men, far from prejudicing and ruining one another, support each other mutually. Though infinitely diversified, and often in appearance contrary to one another, they fail not however to form an admirable whole. They are like so many roads that lead to the same capital.
>
> M. de la Nauze, *Of the mutual relation between the Belles Lettres and the Sciences*, 1761

Ideologically aligned with discourses of government, the transformation of aesthetic discourse follows an identical theme of loss, repudiating Nature as corporeal excess, and redescribing the necessity of objects in the circuit of (self-)representation. Classical ideals of Nature maintain a distinction between the labouring body and the governing subject on the basis of the material productivity of each. Like the discourse of government, the basis of Enlightenment aesthetics in a universal natural order indicates the ideological operation of a semiotic link between Nature and human nature. Exceeding the individual body, Modern 'anaesthetics' seeks to limit the subject's discursive productivity by allowing restricted agency in the form of collective opinion.

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An early theorist of the aesthetic, Alexander Baumgarten[1] conceived such experience as a form of mediation between consciousness and the material objects which were presented to it:

> The original field of aesthetics is not art but reality – corporeal, material nature. ... It is a form of cognition, achieved through taste, touch, hearing, seeing, smell – the whole corporeal sensorium. ... [The] physical-cognitive apparatus ... is "out front" of the mind, encountering the world prelinguistically, hence prior not only to logic but to meaning as well. ... however strictly the senses are trained ... all of this is *a posteriori*. The senses maintain an uncivilized and uncivilizable trace, a core of resistance to cultural domestication.[2]

In eighteenth-century England, philosophical criticism set aside this phenomenal link in pursuit of the more abstract components of aesthetic experience. Taking its methodological cues from the empirical sciences, philosophical criticism sought to discover the general principles of aesthetic pleasure by observing its imaginative effects. Potentially limitless, these effects were legislated by habit or custom; by the mind's "innate propensity ... to relish associations connected by principles of unity and order."[3] Philosophical criticism linked Nature to human nature by grounding unruly emotion or imaginative excess in the universal ideals of wholeness and harmony:

> Beauty, truth and goodness are ultimately at one: what is beautiful is harmonious, what is harmonious is true, and what is at once true and beautiful is agreeable and good.[4]

> A symmetry of parts between themselves, and with the whole, is as necessary to the conduct of moral action, as to a piece of painting. This love of order is a virtue in the soul, which extends itself to every object that has any connection with, or relation to us; when this love of order is concerned in things of pleasure or amusement, it is called taste; when it relates to the manners, it is stiled virtue.[5]

Since Nature provided the purest form of aesthetic experience, contact with 'natural beauty' was essential to the development of sensibility. Because this contact indicated an engagement with and reflection upon *ideals*, however, it was imperative that the subject

remain detached from any personal or proprietorial interest in the object of contemplation.[6] In this way, philosophical criticism specifically repudiated material phenomena – including the body – as implicated in aesthetic experience. Although the ability to experience the emotion of taste was innate in all humankind, the ability to exercise it properly was only available to those with the economic and intellectual means to disengage themselves from the exigencies of phenomenal nature. Taken up as law by the discourse of philosophical criticism, Nature functioned as the framework for *two* radically dissimilar, mutually sustaining and ideologically sanctioned forms of subjectivity.[7]

The body of the eighteenth-century aristocrat was meticulously presented as a sign of natural law: dress, gesture, and decorum established, in the place of the corporeal body, a *signifying surface.* The persuasiveness of social fluency, like that of the artefact, was a function of an innate intellectual purposiveness; virtuous conduct, like beauty, served no practical function other than that of gratifying moral sensibility. Both artefact and aristocratic body disguise their material impotence by proliferating *meaning.* For the latter, self-(re)presentation – the ability to command signification – was the emblem and justification of the aristocratic subject's position and participation in both the natural and the social order.

Because of its direct and necessary engagement with material, rather than ideal Nature, the labouring population lacked the means to rise above the corporeal body as a determining condition. Distinguished from the signifying (aristocratic) subject by its inability to represent itself, the labouring body, *as a consequence of its very productivity,* was named and known alongside all other natural phenomena. In a paradoxical formulation, the provenance of consumer goods is denied, and the voice of their producers silenced, by the operation of these very goods as signs. As Louis Marin has noted, the labourer has

> no other consistency than that of submitting to the power-signs, themselves effects of force. ... The people's discourse is the recognition of justified force...[8]

Propagating the labouring body as both product and productivity, constituting it as a commodity, aesthetic discourse constructs subjectivity as *performance*, rather than phenomenal presence. Philosophical criticism aligned itself with this ideological (de)formation of the body by empowering the disembodied subject, via his ability to "comprehend the order of society and nature ... in which others [were] merely objects,"[9] as a governing subject. Aesthetic discourse, in other words, "justified the inequalities of the social order by asserting that they, like the differences between species in the natural order, were divinely ordained according to the 'Government' of the deity."[10] Philosophical criticism "naturalised the functions of taste as those of a class-specific social group,"[11] and aestheticized dominant ideals of government and social organization.

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If the Classical subject of aesthetics can be described as a performer in the theater of the real, its Modern counterpart is a passive, anaesthetized spectator in a technological sensorium. In his 1936 essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, Walter Benjamin discusses how the technologies of mass reproduction alter perception, releasing the work of art from its dependence on ritual and emancipating aesthetic experience from material reality. With the advent of film and photography, the unique presence of the art object in time and space – the aesthetic significance of its 'aura' – is diminished. Reproductive technology exceeds the body, capturing images and instants unavailable to the naked eye, imparting a kind of pliancy to the object of contemplation by emptying it of material relevance:

> The authenticity of a thing is the essence of all that is transmissible from its beginning, ranging from its substantive duration to its testimony to the history which it has experienced. Since the historical testimony rests on the authenticity, the former, too, is jeopardized by reproduction when substantive duration ceases to matter. And what is really jeopardized when the historical testimony is affected is the authority of the object.[12]

Released from its dependence on inert phenomena, the subject of mass aesthetic experience does not – indeed, cannot – pause to reflect on what it sees:

> The painting invites the spectator to contemplation; before it the spectator can abandon himself to his associations. Before the movie frame he cannot do so. No sooner has his eye grasped a scene than it is already changed. ... The spectator's process of association in view of these images is indeed interrupted by their constant, sudden change. This constitutes the shock effect of the film...[13]

For Benjamin, this 'anaesthetization' of the subject is evidence of the dereliction of Modern aesthetic discourse, and reflects the misuse of its enabling technologies. Against the overwhelming presence and availability of stimuli – the 'shock' of modern society – consciousness constructs a shield. The subject is inattentive, distracted by a 'phantasmagoric' reality "that tricks the senses through technical manipulation," and makes a narcotic out of reality itself.[14] Even though such experiences may seem real enough,

> their social function is in each case compensatory. The goal is manipulation of the synaesthetic system by control of environmental stimuli. It has the effect of anaesthetizing the organism, not through numbing, but through flooding the senses. These simulated sensoria alter consciousness... through sensory distraction... and... their effects are experienced collectively.... Everyone sees the same altered world, experiences the same total environment. As a result ... the phantasmagoria assumes the position of objective fact. ... *Sensory addiction to a compensatory reality becomes a means of social control.*[15] (emphasis added)

Mill's suspicion of mass opinion reappears in Benjamin's defamation of fascist aesthetics,

and their coercion of the individual into a position of spurious critical competence. Aesthetic 'choice' denies real agency, discouraging private opinion, creating a compliant subject. The Modern technological sensorium tropes the body – fragmented by corporate, technological, institutional, and political forces – in/as "a phantasmagoria of the individual as part of a crowd that itself forms an integral whole".[16]
As Susan Buck-Morss remarks, "sensory alienation lies at the source of the aestheticization of politics".[17] Products of a phantasmagoric reality, Modern myths of autogenesis veil the distinction between political agents and the undifferentiated phenomena that are the object of this agency – the 'raw material of the masses', which government must mold into a nation. Unmasking the work of aesthetics in the political, Benjamin responds to a system that operates 'choice' as a means of legislating subjective excess:

> The logical result of Fascism is the introduction of aesthetics into political life. The violation of the masses... has its counterpart in the violation of an apparatus which is pressed into the production of ritual values.[18]

As a political tool, "aesthetics changes from a cognitive mode of being 'in touch' with reality to a way of blocking out reality, [destroying] the human organism's power to respond politically".[19] The apparent innocuousness of aesthetic discourse makes it a perfect ideological vehicle.[20]

Aesthetics, it seems, has always been a hegemonic discourse, the province of the 'public man'. Whether the individual body is banished through force of rhetoric or figured in/as collective opinion, aesthetic choice is limited by or to a governing body which, in taking on the function of a 'knowing' subject vis-à-vis the 'natural material' of the masses, removes itself from the local and the corporeal. The vein of transcendental invocation penetrating both Classical and Modern aesthetic discourse consists precisely in this description of the masses as a social 'field' – a source and site of excess. The veiled appeal to extradiscursive

Nature that characterizes philosophical criticism reappears in Benjamin's argument as an invective against capitalist property relations, which impede the 'natural utilization of productive forces', channelling the latter into the 'unnatural' production of the instruments of war:

> [Society] has not been mature enough to incorporate technology as its organ, that technology has not been sufficiently developed to cope with the elemental forces of society. ... Imperialistic war is a rebellion of technology which collects, in the form of 'human material', the claims to which society has denied its natural material. ... [Humanity's] self-alienation has reached such a degree that it can experience its own destruction as an aesthetic pleasure of the first order.[21]

Benjamin operates Nature as a means of reversing the alienation of the corporeal sensorium, arguing for the *incorporation* of Nature, its redescription as organicized technology.[22] As in Mill's philosophy, troped Nature no longer lies beyond the reach of culture; it is nonetheless present, benign and homogenous, as a unifying force. The following section will link this desire for integration to the paradigm of linear perspective and the creation of a visual and ontological 'field' of the other.

1. See Eagleton, Terry. The Ideology of the Aesthetic. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Basil Blackwell, 1991, p13.

2. Buck-Morss, Susan. "Aesthetics and Anaesthetics: Walter Benjamin's Artwork Essay Reconsidered." in October 62 (Fall 1992); pp3-41, p6.

3. Hemingway, op. cit., p18.

4. Eagleton, op. cit., p35.

5. Anonymous, *On the Importance of Forming the Mind Early*, 1760

6. Archibald Alison, in his *Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste* (1790) noted that "Reason and judgement play no role in the free play of the imagination which characterises taste, and the mind must be detached from personal concerns and interests for it to be susceptible to aesthetic experience." See Hemingway op. cit., p24.

7. This is discussed in detail in my unpublished paper 'Aesthetic Discourse and the 'Nature' of Landscape in Eighteenth-Century England,' 1995.

8.Marin, op. cit., p28. "The stronger man ... is stronger only through the annihilation of the less strong man, but the stronger man is also such only by enslaving the latter, that is, by *making* him *work* for him. The slave is a producer, for the master, of goods, which in turn are signs of the mastery of the master, and he can be considered by that as the operator of the transformation of the dominating force into the sign of that force ... From then on a discourse, understood as a particular system of signs, indicates at once a dominating force put into representation, a force reserved in and through the signs and a dominated and enslaved force that is the operator or producer of those signs. ... The stronger man "speaks" only to express his triumph. ... The utterances of the discourse ... point to... the *right* of the stronger to signify." Ibid., p27.

9. Barrell, John. 'The Public Prospect and the Private View: The Politics of Taste in Eighteenth-Century Britain.' in Reading Landscape: Country – City – Capital. Pugh, Simon, ed. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1990, pp19-40, p27. Barrell has noted further that the "man of independent means ... who does not labour to increase them, is released from private interest and from the occlusions of a narrowed and partial experience of the world, and from an experience of the world as material. He is able to grasp the public interest, and so is fit to participate in government." Ibid., p20.

10.. Hemingway, op. cit., p11.

11. Ibid., p14.

12. Benjamin, Walter. 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction.' in Illuminations, Hannah Arendt, ed. Translated by Harry Zohn. New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1968, pp219-253, p223.

13. Ibid, p240.

14.. Buck-Morss, op. cit., p22. Phantasmagoric experiences include tourist attractions, shopping malls, cinema, television, advertising, and the like.

15. Ibid., p22.

16. Ibid., p35.

17. Ibid., p4.

18. Benjamin, op. cit., p243.

19. Buck-Morss, op. cit., p18.

20. Aesthetics, since the eighteenth century, has been "evermore fatally connected with the sensuous, the heteronomous, the fictitious ... "a kind of sandbox to which one consigns all those vague things ... under the heading of the irrational ...[where] they can be monitored and, in case of need, controlled (the aesthetic is in any case conceived as a kind of safety valve for irrational impulses)."" Ibid., p7.

21. Benjamin, op. cit., p244.

22. Benjamin's socialist ideal is to "undo the alienation of the corporeal sensorium, to restore the instinctual power of the human bodily senses for the sake of humanity's self-preservation, and to do this, not by avoiding the new technologies, but by passing through them." Buck-Morss, op. cit., p5

1.4 *The transgressing body*

> I inscribe a quadrangle of right angles, as large as I wish, which is considered to be an open window through which I see what I want to paint. Here I determine as it pleases me the size of the men in my picture. I divide the length of this man in three parts. These parts to me are proportional to that measurement called a *braccio*, for, in measuring the average man it is seen that he is about three *braccia*. With these *braccia* I divide the base line of the rectangle into as many parts as it will receive. ... within this quadrangle, where it seems best to me, I make a point which occupies that place where the central ray strikes. ... This point is properly placed when it is no higher from the base line of the quadrangle than the height of the man that I have to paint there. Thus both the beholder and the painted things he sees will appear to be on the same plane.
>
> Leon Battista Alberti, *della Pittura*

> The body's animation is not the assemblage or juxtaposition of its parts. Nor is it a question of a mind or spirit coming down from somewhere else into an automaton; this would still suppose that the body itself is without an inside and without a 'self'. There is a human body when, between the seeing and the seen, between touching and the touched, between one eye and the other, between hand and hand, a blending of some sort takes place...
>
> Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Eye and Mind*

The dynamic of ambivalence around which the subject is articulated is perhaps most conspicuous in the subject of linear perspective. The latter plays a prominent role in maintaining subjective boundaries; in describing the position of the subject vis-à-vis the external world. For Classical representation, *costruzione legittima* functioned as a means of legislating corporeal excess, and in locating the subject relative to its Nature – that is, in maintaining the knowing subject's distance from the material world. Inasmuch as *costruzione legittima* informed the structuration of most images, the entire discourse of pictorial representation was involved in containing the excess of Nature.

Under the Modern redescription of Nature, this task shifts from the discourse of representation broadly constituted – which is concerned, among other things, with the limitation of potentially infinite subject positions – to a particular branch of representation: that of Landscape. To a great extent, it is the virtual space of Landscape

which serves to naturalize the work of *costruzione legittima* in locating the subject in a position of 'difference' from Nature, and to maintain the fiction of Nature as that which the subject knows, but not as that which it creates. The constitution of the subject via its forcible estrangement from the real is nonetheless common to both *epistemes*: both Classical and Modern representation are concerned to a great extent with the suppression of gestural agency in the formation of aesthetic judgements, and with the inscription of the *work of the body* as incompatible with the production of truth.

***

Inscribed into Alberti's *Della Pittura* (1435) are two important and interlinked conditions of Renaissance pictorial space. The first of these is the appreciation of the painter's role – of her/his (aesthetic) choice – in bringing this space into being. The second is the understanding that the consistency of fictive space is a function of the absolute visibility – the *presence* – of objects in the circuit of representation. As Alberti begs his reader:

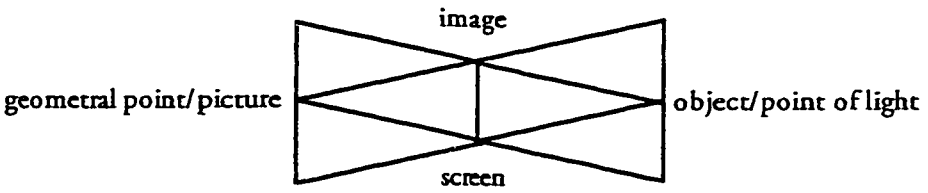
> consider me not as a mathematician but as a painter writing of these things. Mathematicians measure with their minds alone the forms of things separated from all matter. Since we wish the object to be seen, we will use a more sensate wisdom.[1]

In this and other contemporary texts, the inscription of fabricated space in/as the 'real' is underwritten by an essential link between visibility and ontological presence.[2] The truth of (the) representation, given through vision, is enabled by an object-based or metaphorical relationship – by the *exterior* relations – between viewer and painting.[3] By this means, the objects which occupy fictive space also maintain a magical structural independence from it; what John White has described as a "self-isolating solidity". As Ivins remarks concerning the "internal inconsistency" in Albrecht Dürer's perspective renderings:

> His studies of the proportions of the human body were ... based ... upon visual shapes in standardized locations (i.e. upon exterior relations). Changes in the locations of his figures within the ... perspective space of their architectural settings, that is, in their external relationships, were not accompanied by the transformation of the visual (or perspective) shapes that are logically required if their interior relations are to remain invariant through changes in location.[4]

If phenomena are understood to respond to perspectival alteration, it is as discreet entities occupying created space, but not fully subject to its system. Visual experience takes the form of an encounter in *haptic* space; the meaning or truth generated by this encounter is a product of the simultaneous pull of the real, and of a synthetic space which, although it may contain objects, does not *describe* them.[5] It is the tacit understanding that both visual and textual space proceed from the real – or better, that they are *attended* by the real – that underwrites the metaphorical structure of both Renaissance and Classical perspectival space. For Alberti, then, the textual description of an event which, as I will show, took the form of a transaction in the real, could be described as an act of substitution. The subsequent redescription of this substitution as a *loss* has important consequences for the discourse of Landscape. To understand why this is so, we must take a closer look at the event which forms the 'subject' of Alberti's text.

In 1435, Fillipo Brunelleschi introduced to the world a machine which was to have a singular and enduring resonance across a wide discursive field. It consisted of a painting of the baptistry of San Giovanni, with a small hole drilled in it at the point where the orthogonals converged. Holding this painting in one hand and a mirror in the other, the viewer looked through the aperture from the reverse side of the painting, and saw the painting reflected in the mirror. It has not escaped notice that the schematic of this experiment bears a striking similarity to a familiar twentieth-century configuration:



Lacan's 'double dihedron' of representation describes both the act of perception – the geometral point standing for the eye, the visual pyramid of which is intersected by the image, upon which one finds the represented object – and the activity of representation in which the viewer is cast as 'viewed' – as "spectacle to another's sight" – by the very world she/he seems to command.[6] Depriving the subject of its position as/at the origin of coordinates, representation could be described as a 'desubjectifying' force, inducing as it does a state of *psychasthenia* – "a disturbance of the relations between personality and space."[7] At the same time, however, it is via the screen of representation that the self derives its coherence as such, by means of its distinction from the undifferentiated totality of phenomena:

> Between the subject and the world is inserted the entire sum of discourses which make up visuality, ... and make visuality different from vision, the notion of unmediated visual experience. Between retina and world is inserted a *screen* of signs, a screen consisting of all the multiple discourses on vision built into the social arena. ... This screen *casts a shadow*... [it] *mortifies* sight. ... Into my visual field something cuts, cuts across, namely the network of signifiers.[8]

The subject, in other words, is given form as a consequence of its alienation from the real. Brunelleschi's experiment *mimes* this estrangement, simultaneously identifying and invalidating the subject-as-origin: the mirror, reflecting not only the painting but the gaze

itself, functions

> as if to endow the painting itself with vision: the painting [looking] at the viewer-painter like an eye. ... It is as if what the viewer looked at through the small hole in the panel was the painting's vision, the mirror being the operator of that "as if."[9]

What Brunelleschi's apparatus enacts, in effect, is a constitutive rupture – the originating gesture of the subject:

> Far from capturing the real directly ... this "view" corresponded to a bracketing, to a veritable phenomenological reduction: within the brackets established by the panel and the mirror the real was excluded, was outside the circuit ... As was the subject itself, which gained access only by abstracting itself out of the specular relation. Thus a system that however empirically open it may have been, was theoretically isolated, closed in on itself, save for ... this hole, this "gaze" which the eye, held up against it, obstructed, or sutured. This "light" from which it received its meaning and function, which was to render visible not reality but "truth," or its semblance.[10]

Simultaneously subject *to* (the) representation and serving as its authentication, the subject acts as the source of the picture's truth – a truth which is not, however, the property of phenomena or of reality in a more general sense, but is generated instead by a system of representation which engages the incorporeal subject as its matrix. But Brunelleschi's experiment is also conditioned, made possible, by the coincidence of body and object: a painting and a mirror, the distance between them, given by the position of the two hands,

> corresponding roughly, in small *braccia*, to the distance in regular *braccia* from the place [Brunelleschi] appears to have been when he [painted it] ... it seemed that one was seeing truth itself; and I held it in my hands and saw it several times in my own day, and so can testify to it.[11]

Truth is described – both by Brunelleschi, and above, by his biographer – as a *transaction in real space*: a gestural exchange whose legibility is conditioned by the body. That the body

is inscribed in and by this transaction as that without which representation, and (its) truth, cannot proceed, must not be taken as a simple argument for the primacy (or indeed the independent existence) of the material. My intent is not to suggest that the body should supersede the incorporeal subject as the origin of the circuit of representation; it is to point out that this circuit demands the simultaneous presence of both, and that it is only by abstracting the corporeal from this relation that the real is given form as *other*. In giving precedence to the theoretical closure of the system, Damisch elides what Alberti is so insistent upon: that agency is situated in the real, and that entry into the subjectifying relation is a matter of choice – a choice which is given in/as this coincidence, this inseparability, of body and subject.

The notion of truth as an effect of choice raised some problematic issues concerning the productivity of the subject. Within a few decades, scientific and mathematical applications of *costruzione legittima* had laid claim to a more abstract vision of the truth.[12] Nonetheless, the estrangement of scientific from representational truth veils the conviction that both disciplines perform an identical elision: both artistic and theoretical perspective discourse from Alberti onwards are concerned with the subtly insidious idea that the *work of the body* is incompatible with the production of truth – a truth which depends upon the maintenance of the real-as-other (including Nature) as that which the subject knows, but not as that which it creates.

Within Classical representation, perspective discourse controls corporeal excess through the explicit configuration of the material in the circuit of representation. Where the Renaissance subject of representation is recognized as neither producer nor product of metaphorical space, for Classical representation, the subject's control of signification is foregrounded in order to disguise its material productivity: gesture is legislated through the prescription of a single 'correct' viewing position:

> In relation to the body, the space of representation must match the space of the real: the body is pictured correctly when it is precisely controlled by the real space in which the body is experienced.[13]

Only by submitting to the *presence* of the picture, and simultaneously suppressing its authority in the circuit of representation, can the subject come to occupy the position of the painter; only then is the subject produced and reproduced through the dissolution of the canvas surface:

> What is 'seen' from [the true Point of Sight] is not a representation but the self mastering the real as the veil of representation is torn apart, and the glass which stands between the subject and the real world of objects is shattered. ...the viewer does not take to the picture his or her subjectivity, rather, the opposite case pertains in which the subject is produced in the space between the eye and the canvas in the distance of the picture. Therefore the subject in the circuit of vision becomes the subject in and of representation...[14]

Although the subject is described as a product of virtual space, it is constituted an *effect* of the object relationship between body and picture, and thus can only appear if the canvas surface is simultaneously posited and neutralized: assumed to be physically and ideologically transparent. To restrict corporeal agency – thereby positing the subject as a discontinuous entity whose identity, if the representation is viewed correctly, is that of the painter – is thus to legislate subjective excess. Both picture and viewing subject are presented as operators of the 'natural law' that underwrites *costruzione legittima* – a law which, acting through the ordered space of representation, is apprehended as truth by the subject.

The denial of the material in the aesthetic exchange extends as well to the painter, whose transformative activity in the painting must be "erased and concealed by what the painting represents, its "objective reality.""[15] The mimesis operated in and by the Classical

pictorial sign is founded, in other words, upon a *reading* subject:

> the pictorial sign ... is substituted for the thing or the idea of the signified object. This is precisely what seventeenth-century art critics and theorists called the pictorial deception: the fact that painting deceives the eye constitutes its greatest aesthetic value.[16]

What made a picture aesthetically pleasing was not only its material insubstantiality but the invisibility of its perspectival substructure – the masking of arbitrariness and contingency, of the painter's work.

Like Brunelleschi's apparatus, the Classical circuit of representation only allowed for one viewer at a time. But what happens when these spatial limits are transgressed, as they must eventually be when paintings are publicly displayed? Occupying an unsubscribed point of view invites excess, it encourages interpretations apart from the intended one:

> If we understand pictorial representation as bound within the limits of the real; as a representation of the objects for which it stands, then the possibility of its producing something in excess, an image that goes beyond the real, poses a considerable threat to the horizons which determine the order of representation. ... If the image itself were to produce multiple points of sight ... then a number of forcefully maintained relationships between the image and its maker, the image and the viewer, and the viewer and the image's maker are liable to disintegrate.[17]

To better understand what happens when ordered space begins to lose its hold upon the viewer, let us examine a picture by Thomas Gainsborough. In his 1780 *Wooded Landscape with a Peasant Family at a Cottage Door and Footbridge over a Stream* (Fig. I), the diagonals of the house, the glance of the woman and the pointing arm of the child on the bottom right direct the gaze to an indistinct vanishing point on the extreme left of the picture. The surge and overlap of the trees, however, fight against the direct(ed) gaze, mobilizing the eye, resting at or converging upon no particular point.

Inscribed in Gainsborough's painting is the difference between that which is proper to *costruzione legittima,* and that which is not: the *anamorphic* image – the distorted or 'incorrect' image that emerges when the picture is viewed from a point other than the true point of sight. Existing only in relation to this point, infinite in its possible appearances, the anamorphic image is native to the picture plane, a/ the property of (the) representation, having no counterpart in the real. Describing excess in (the) representation, the anamorphic image in effect points to a *transgressing* body – a body which has announced its necessity by exercising its prerogative to (aesthetic) choice. In other words, although anamorphosis is proper to representation, it is made visible by a corporeal body that has violated the boundaries of the system.

Anamorphosis is problematic not simply because it points to a different kind of excess – one that is not ascribable to Nature, but is a product of the discourse of representation and of the subject in a more general sense – but because it suggests that this excess is potentially unlimited and cannot be legislated through the material body. The subject it suggests – the Modern subject – cannot be described as a/ the property of the viewing event, of the real, of an extradiscursive Nature. It is both product and property of discourse, and its excessive productions – which include Nature – can only be limited discursively. The only way to contain the potential excess of Modern Nature, in other words, is to limit subjective agency.

In J. W. M. Turner's *The Lake Geneva with the Dent D'Oche, from Lausanne: Tending the Vines* (1841; Fig. II), the transferral of the qualities of mass and space to the picture plane relies upon means other than *costruzione legittima*; the 'truth' embraced by vision is not an empirical one. This work is profoundly gestural: the broad washes of colour that form the lake and sky, the weirdly anthropomorphic shape of the island and its reflection, and the sharp, rapid slashes and scribbles that comprise the foreground present the viewer not with a

figured ideal, but with an unconstructed image, an apparently unlegislated viewing experience. There is nothing in this picture – no definitive vanishing point or anamorphic imagery – by which the material body is assigned a position in real space. The space given in and by this image

> is no longer ... a network of relations between objects such as would be seen by a ... geometer looking over it and reconstructing it from outside. It is, rather, a space reckoned starting from me as the zero point or degree zero of spatiality. I do not see it according to its exterior envelope; I live in it from the inside; I am immersed in it.[18]

Corporeal excess, rather than being legislated, is invoked via the invitation to read the brush stroke as a gestural trace of the artist's body. The authority of this representation thus lies in its opacity; in the refiguration of the viewing subject as/through the troped body of the *creative* subject.[19] Turner's landscape redescribes the bounds of representation, moving from the signified to the *signifying* body; from the subject *of* the picture plane to the subject *at* the picture plane – a subject whose ontological consistency is reckoned from within, and for whom aesthetic judgement reveals not universal natural law, but the unique existence of the autonomous self.

Yet this subject is no more free to determine what it sees than was its Classical counterpart. Although at liberty to locate itself within the circuit of representation, the viewing subject exists coextensively under the government of the discourse of representation. The truth of this image, in other words, is not dependent on a body in space, but on a political ideal. *Lake Geneva* describes a truth that is both individual and collective; a truth that is nominally a/the property of the subject, but which is simultaneously understood in broader terms as a/the property of the viewing public or corporate body; a truth which is made available not as phenomenon but as *ideology*. Despite the apparent liberty to choose its own

path through visual and corporeal space, aesthetic choice is offered to the Modern subject as a means of anaesthetizing it; such agency is permissible only if its limits are clearly delineated.

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What Brunelleschi pointed out – perhaps unconsciously – was that the real is constituted as other by means of a transaction initiated by the subject. The agency implied by this transaction is masked, within Classical representation, by the figural language of the perspective paradigm, which locates a decisively disembodied subject as/at the vertex of an external and homogeneous space of Nature which it commands but does not produce. If the argument initiated on the previous pages is to be pursued, then one must ask how the excess of Nature is incorporated in/by Modern representation – a question that must take into account the fact that *costruzione legittima* no longer functions to position the subject in the real. This is not to imply that the constitutive force of the perspective paradigm is either acknowledged or usurped in/by Modern representation. The perspective paradigm still plays a singular role in masking the reflexivity of the subjectifying relation, constructing not only a universal subject, but the field of the 'real' in which it finds itself, and on which it operates; it is through the perspective paradigm that the subject is encouraged to understand the real as other. It is my hypothesis that the constitutive force of this paradigm acquires its greatest potency, and is most effectively masked, in and by the virtual space of Landscape. Broadly speaking, Landscape conflates Nature and the real, masking the work of the subject in the production of the other. It is partly through the description of Nature as a *site of excess,* and as such unrelated to the subject, that the latter acquires its numinous power.

The following section will test this hypothesis as it is born out in the context of nineteenth-

century North American Landscape. It will consider this space as a theater for the performance of a relationship to both Nature and civil society ; a phantasmagoric or virtual space where political, aesthetic, and perspectival discourse intersect to describe a subject whose relationship to its environment is, by and large, an empirical one.

1. Alberti, Leon Battista. On Painting. John R. Spencer, trans. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1966, p43.

2. Wenzel Jamnitzer's *Perspectiva corporum regularium* (1568) is a portrayal of solid bodies, particularly Platonic solids and their derivatives, which espouses geometry as (a) corporeal form. Under Jamnitzer's argument, earth was represented by the cube, water by the icosahedron, air by the octahedron, fire by the tetrahedron or pyramid, and the cosmos by the dodecahedron. More a thaumaturgical fantasia or compendium than a practical treatise, Jamnitzer's text included beautifully rendered illustrations of the relationship between geometrical solids and the five Platonic elements, but did not outline a practical technique for constructing these solids. See Kemp, Martin. The Science of Art: Optical Themes in Western Art from Brunelleschi to Seurat. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992, p62. Discussing the Renaissance relation of language to the world, Michel Foucault remarks on the necessity of objects, and of vision, in the circuit of knowledge. Objects reveal their truths by means of the visible signatures that they bear; to know the world is to decipher the signs that present themselves to the eye. In terms of their truth and their fundamental reality, "[there] is no difference between the visible marks that God has stamped upon the surface of the earth ... and the legible words that the Scriptures ... have set down in the books preserved for us by tradition." Foucault, op. cit., p33.

3. Discussing the Cartesian understanding of (the) representation, Merleau-Ponty notes that "what Descartes likes most in copper engravings is that they preserve the forms of objects, or at least give us sufficient signs of their forms. They present the object by its outside, or its envelope." Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. 'Eye and Mind' in The Essential Writings of Merleau-Ponty. Alden L. Fisher, ed. New York: Harcourt, Brace, & World Inc. 1969, pp252-286, p266.

4. Ivins, William M., Jr. On the Rationalization of Sight. New York: Da Capo Press, Inc. 1973,p42.

5. "l'assimilation de la surface picturale à une fenêtre ouverte dans le mur et à travers laquelle est donné a voir ... une portion d'espace plus ou moins étendue, implique que des lois analogues a celles qui gouvernent l'espace empirique aient cours dans l'espace figuratif et que toute dérogation à cette légalité prenne figure de miracle ou d'événement surnaturel, le <réalisme> du système étant ainsi confirmé, sinon renforcé par la contradiction qui lui est portée au niveau symbolique." Damisch, Hubert. Théorie Du Nuage. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1972, p119.
Discussing pre-Renaissance pictorial space, John White notes that "The interval, or nothingness, which separates one solid from the next, is relatively unimportant." See The Birth and Rebirth of Pictorial Space. London: Faber and Faber, 1972, p35.

6. Bryson, Norman "The Gaze in the Expanded Field" in Vision and Visuality. Hal Foster, ed. Dia Art Foundation, Discussions in Contemporary Culture, vol. 2. Seattle: Bay Press, 1988, pp87-108, p89. Stephen Melville has also forwarded an apt summation: "It is only because we have already been addressed by the world that we can respond to it by calling it into representation" See 'Basic Concepts. Of Art History' in Vision & Textuality. pp31-37, p32.

7. Caillois, Roger. "Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia," John Shepley, trans. in October: The First Decade. Annette Michelson et. at., eds. Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England: The MIT Press, 1987, pp58-74; p70.
Merleau-Ponty offers the following eloquent summation:
"The enigma is that my body simultaneously sees and is seen. That which looks at all things can also look at itself and

recognize, in what it sees, the 'other side' of its power of looking. It sees itself seeing; it touches itself touching; it is visible and sensitive for itself. It is not a self through transparence, like thought, which only thinks its object by assimilating it, by constituting it, by transforming it into thought. It is a self through confusion, narcissism, through inherence of the one who sees in that which he sees, and though inherence of sensing in the sensed – a self, therefore, that is caught up in things, that has a front and a back, a past and a future...
This initial paradox cannot but produce others. Visible and mobile, my body is a thing among things; it is caught in the fabric of the world, and its cohesion is that of a thing. But because it moves itself and sees, it holds things in a circle around itself. Things are an annex or prolongation of itself; they are incrusted into its flesh, they are part of its full definition; the world is made of the same stuff as the body. This way of turning things around, these antinomies, are different ways of saying that vision happens among, or is caught in, things – in that place where something visible undertakes to see, becomes visible for itself by virtue of the sight of things; in that place where there persists, like the mother water in crystal, the undividedness of the sensing and the sensed." Merleau-Ponty, op. cit., p256.

8. Bryson, op. cit., pp91-2.

9. Marin, Louis. "Toward a Theory of Reading in the Visual Arts: Poussin's *The Arcadian Shepherds*." in The Reader in the Text: Essays on Audience and Interpretation. Susan R. Suleiman and Inge Crosman, eds. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980, pp292-324; p308.

10. Damisch (1995), op. cit., pp139-140.

11. Manetti in Ibid., p116.

12. See Elkins, op. cit. See also my unpublished paper 'Linear Perspective and the Aesthetics of Truth' (1996).

13. De Bolla, op. cit., p189.

14. Ibid., pp196-197.

15. Marin, op. cit., p302.

16. Ibid., pp300-301.

17. De Bolla, op. cit., pp200-01.

18. Merleau-Ponty, op. cit., pp272-73.

19. The foregrounding of the artist's subjectivity is a rhetorical device often associated with Romantic art: as Paul De Man remarks, the structure of the Romantic image (visual or verbal) is "that of self-reflection. The [artist] is no longer contemplating a thing in nature, but the workings of his own mind; the outside world is used as a pretext and a mirror, and it loses all its substance." see De Man, Paul. The Rhetoric of Romanticism. New York: Columbia University Press, 1984, p154.

2.1 *The subject of Landscape (and) representation.*

> We are looking and hoping for something distinctive to the art of our country, something which shall receive a new tinge from our peculiar form of government, from our position on the globe, or something peculiar to our people, to distinguish it from the art of the other nations and to enable us to pronounce without shame the oft repeated phrase, 'American Art.'
>
> Worthington Whittredge, *Autobiography*, 1859

In part, the project of establishing and maintaining identity hinges upon the specification of a territory exterior to the self: the location and description of what, or where, one is not. The maintenance of Nature as distinct from the subject is effectively guaranteed by the transparency of Classical representation. For the Modern *episteme*, however, the opacity of representation presupposes the recognition of this distinction as a subjective effect. Distinguishing self from other is no longer a simple matter of naming; it is a complex project of obscuring the provenance of such distinctions.

From a scientific standpoint, this project concerns the homogenization of a multivalent subject: veiling the role of vision in the production of truth and locating the fragmented modern body as a nonpartisan observer of Nature:

> The body that had been a neutral or invisible term in vision was now the thickness from which knowledge of the observer was obtained. ... once vision became relocated in the subjectivity of the observer, two intertwined paths opened up. One led out toward all the multiple affirmations of the sovereignty and autonomy of vision derived form this newly empowered body ... The other path was toward the increasing standardization and regulation of the observer that issued from knowledge of visionary body, toward forms of power that depended upon the abstraction and formalization of vision.[1]

Landscape serves to reconcile the inherent ambivalence of a subject that is simultaneously normalized and quantified as an object of the empirical sciences – an 'object of Nature' –

and recognized as an autonomous producer of sensation – the author of Nature. Operating the deep space of Classical representation, Modern Landscape serves to perpetuate the fiction of Nature as extradiscursive; to inscribe a self that is distinct from its surroundings, giving 'real' form and position to the colonized, compartmentalized, and delocalized Modern body (politic). Linked to discourses of science and religion, Landscape also serves a normalizing and disciplinary function, limiting the meaning of Nature and the role of the autonomous subject in its definition. As a shared space with which humanity maintains a close and mutually beneficial alliance, Landscape also serves as the foundation of aesthetic nationalism.

Bearing these multiple connotations is a familiar structure – the perspective paradigm, manifested in/as the deep space of 'Classical' landscape, tested by the unconfined 'reality' of the North American environment, refigured by Modern vision, and retained in/as the very definition of Landscape. What follows is an examination of some spaces whose normative force still resonates in present-day performances of self and Nature: the Classical landscape of Claude Lorrain, and its North American progeny.

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As typified in the work of Claude Lorrain, Classical Landscape served as the principal structural and philosophical armature for North American landscape painting. The following discussion will touch upon some of the key characteristics of Classical or Claudean landscape[2], and suggest ways in which these two may be considered equivalent. It will also point up some important respects in which North American landscape departs from this model.

Broadly speaking, the task of Classical Landscape is not to document specific locations, but to present Nature as a stage for human actions, to evoke an idealized relationship with

Nature, or to reveal the order that exists among the elements of Nature – an order that is seen as the product of an ideal state or omnipotent being.[3] Philosophically, all of these states refer to a Nature that is both threatening and idyllic; it is the stated purpose of Classical landscape to reconcile this ambivalence in part by demonstrating – via the ordered space of the view – humanity's control of Nature. In general terms, Classical landscape describes an harmonious space, open to the gaze, awaiting the ordering presence of a disembodied spectator.

Strict mathematical perspective is ostensibly less important than colour and atmospheric effect in "indicating contours and defining the elements in the picture."[4] Despite this, rules for the proper composition of landscapes – most often discussed in the context of stage design or in perspective treatises – are largely concerned with creating a more or less systematic illusion of space:

> A characteristic both fundamental and common to all [ideal landscape] pictures is a type of pictorial space in which receding strata create an impression of depth; foreground, middle ground and background are seen as a series of layers parallel with the picture plane and linked together by gently zigzagging diagonal lines. The framing side sections are similarly composed, balancing one another in symmetry or contrast and leaving the centre free to focus on the action.[5]

Balance, symmetry, and the 'free center' are the structuring paradigms of Claude's landscape. Virtually all his views are organized around an open central axis which links the correct viewing position with a strongly implied vanishing point.[6] In his marine views – such as *Seaport with the Embarkation of St Ursula* (1641) and *Port of Ostia with the Embarkation of St Paula* (1640s) – the viewer is drawn into the depths of the image by the strong orthogonals of the architecture; the sun is centered on or very near the point where these orthogonals meet. In pastoral scenes such as *Landscape with Dancing Figures* (1648) or *Landscape with Jacob, Laban and Laban's daughters* (1654), the eye takes a more circuitous

route, describing a gentle switchback as it is drawn towards the horizon. Itinerary notwithstanding, Claude's deep pictorial space is constructed around a constant proportional formula:

> In every painting the ground planes recede towards a horizon approximately two-fifths up from the base-line; vertically the composition is divided into thirds, quarters or fifths. Trees and buildings create space in the fore- and middle-ground.[7]

The horizon is almost always clearly delineated and available; a 'contained infinity', a distant place that is present yet invisible. Traversing the interval between 'here' and 'there', the metaphorics of the eye mask the presence and agency of the body, positioning a decorporeal spectator as/at the origin of co-ordinates – both of knowledge and of space. In this sense, Claude's landscapes can be understood as a structural enunciation of the Classical relationship to Nature.

Barbara Novak has suggested that the popularity of the Claudean framework amongst nineteenth-century American landscape painters was due in part to its historical authority as the 'right' way to represent landscape. Onto its superstructure "could be loaded all the connotations of Ambition, of competition with European culture, that American artists not so secretly harbored. It offered the artists the assurance that they were "framing" the landscape artfully, thus making "art" out of nature..."[8] Nonetheless these works bespeak a subject whose consistency is derived from sources other than the Classical viewing event. This is particularly well-evidenced in Luminist landscape. Eradicating all references to gesture, the smooth, still surface and photographic detail in works such as Heade's *Sunrise on the Marshes* (1863) invites a confrontation which "abolishes the ego" of both artist and spectator:

> Absorbed in contemplation of a world without movement, the spectator is brought into a wordless dialogue with nature, which quickly becomes the monologue of transcendental unity.[9]

The deep and measured space of Luminist landscape does not address itself to a corporeal subject. Instead, these works announce a disembodied subject whose quest after excess is an entirely personal one, fulfilled by shedding the limitations of the material and transporting the self into a silent void:

> Proportional to the objects in the picture, the space ... gives an impression of *limitless amplitude*. A perfect miniaturized universe offers to the spectator an irresistible invitation in terms of empathy. *The spectator is urged to conceptualize his size* and enter the luminist arena...[10] (emphasis added)

Within these perfectly chartable, crystalline spaces, "limitless amplitude" is manifest in/as a timeless, measurable infinity which proceeds from the viewing subject in an imaginative investiture of presence:

> All our visual life, our intraorganic state of peering out at the world through the windows of our eyeballs, is localized in this moment. Thus we give ourselves to the picture, we are transported by it, we are liable to rapture ... [We] dwell in the viewing point as if it offered a "real" view, as if the picture were indeed an "actual fact" of the immediate present.[11]

Corporeality has no place in this subjectifying relation. In surrendering itself to fictive space, in allowing itself to be transported into (the) distance, the viewing subject must produce its own reality; its own Nature, constituted in/as a virtual space or *place of excess*. In this refiguration of the deep space of Classical landscape, the generative force of consciousness is contained in part by conflating distance with *scientific objectivity*, locating the absent body and investing it, as a trope, with the universality of Enlightenment vision and the corporeality of the Classical subject. Both science and religion participate in the

construction and maintenance of this evanescent body, linking its objective vision to that of civil society, and its destiny to divine ordinance.

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> It will be the duty ... of the landscape painter to descend to the lowest details with undiminished attention. ... Every herb and flower of the field has its specific, distinct, and perfect beauty; it has its peculiar habitation, expression and function. The highest art is that which seizes this specific character ...which assigns to it its proper position in the landscape. ... Every class of rock, every kind of earth, every form of cloud, must be studied with equal industry, and rendered with equal precision.
>
> John Ruskin, *Modern Painters*

The superimposition of science and religion onto the Claudean framework did much to naturalize its paradigmatic force, authorizing landscape representation as an objective means of knowing Nature. A successful work of art, according to nineteenth-century critic James Jackson Jarves, must

> exhibit a scientific correctness in every particular, and, as a unity, be expressive of the general principle at its center of being. In this manner feeling and reason are reconciled, and a complete and harmonious whole is obtained. In the degree that this union obtains in art its works become efficacious, because embodying, under the garb of beauty, the most of truth.[12]

Within the unified space of the view could be found the general principles of harmony, beauty and truth that governed knowledge.[13] Uniting science and art, Landscape promised to chart the infinite, uncovering both the truth of Nature, and the master plan of her Creator.[14] In the context of this project, the artist served the combined function of scientist, missionary, and hero. In Turner's art, the social body was figured in part through the re-presentation of a/the 'creative' body. Americans, however, valued Turner's ability as a draftsman over his evocative brushwork;[15] although clearly discernible in works of the

Grand Style, the artist's 'labour trail' was not the primary means by which the body of the artist was publicized. In North American landscape painting, the truth that bound together civil society was founded on the ability of the artist to represent an experience that was beyond the capability of the average citizen: that of the material encounter with Nature.

In large part, the success of works in the Grand Style was measured by the degree to which they seduced the viewer, "imposing on the senses of the beholder and inducing him to believe that he is gazing, not on canvas, but on scenes of actual and sensible nature."[16] In 1859, thousands came out to the public display of Church's *Heart of the Andes* (Fig. III):

> Spectators equipped with binoculars (or a paper rolled into a tube) could isolate themselves from the crowd in front of the canvas and in their imagination wander through the painting discovering the "strange," the "new," the "beautiful." The combination of "stereoscopic" illusionism and multiple perspective ... made it possible for the spectator to become a bodiless eye exploring the landscape as a free migrant spirit.[17]

The inherent paradox of the American wilderness was that it was only through its destruction that it could become habitable for the colonist. Works of the operatic sublime not only presented a Nature that could be appreciated without being destroyed, they described a body that could experience it in an untroubling way. Landscape representation propagandized the ability of the artist to penetrate Nature, to interpret her moral texts and to reproduce them for public consumption: "To penetrate Creation, even by proxy, was to assume at least some of the attributes of the Creator."[18] While the body in Turner's work is troped primarily (although by no means exclusively) through the discourse(s) of representation, the North American artistic persona is presented in/as a transcendental encounter with the Adamic self. In contrast to the undifferentiated body of the observer – increasingly the focus of the human sciences and of multifarious normalizing technologies[19] – the artist was an ideal citizen in an ideal, mobile body, at liberty to travel through the

space of Nature. Occupying this troped body, the observer could partake of a power that was inherent to its formation as an autonomous subject, and which was nonetheless denied it by hegemonic discourse.

If landscape serves to consolidate and re-animate the passive, fragmented body, it also works to contain the potential of the autonomous subject to determine her/his own Nature. Normalized as a homogenous other to be known and domesticated, Nature serves as the common ground for both individual and national identity – an identity characterized by a supreme confidence in the ability of economic and technological Modernism to rediscover – or recreate – Eden, and by a vision of an essentially democratic Nature.[20] Built on the 'neutral' foundation of science and religion, Landscape carries with it a moral and social energy which sanctions intervention – the destruction of the environment and the dispossession of its native inhabitants – on the basis of its conformity to natural law or 'national destiny'. Landscape, in other words, aestheticizes the political by presenting a compensatory reality – a theatrical or phantasmagoric Nature; a space within which the controlled invocation of anamorphosis presents the illusion of choice: the anaesthetized Nature of the panoramic view.

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> There are scarce any things which can become the objects of our senses that are really, and in their own nature infinite. But the eye not being able to perceive the bounds of many things, they seem to be infinite, and they produce the same effects as if they were really so.
> Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful.*

The North American landscape not only exceeded the frame to the point where Classical means of limiting the 'real' no longer functioned, the democratization of picture viewing

also problematized the proprietorship of the point of view by a single individual. Stretching the Claudean armature, the panoramic format – particularly as it was employed by painters working in the Grand Style – accommodated both the boundless expanse of the North American landscape, and the crowds of viewers who flocked to see it in pictures. Scattering the point of view across the horizon, the panoramic format presented an array of possible viewing positions – an apparent invitation to anamorphosis which in fact served a very specific controlling and naturalizing function. These paintings presented a visual experience that was unabashedly spectacular; a view that was

> simultaneously intimate and distant – the kind of communal intimacy that is a commonplace of the film and the theater experience. The possibility of simultaneous intimacy and distancing often occurs too with works of enormous scale when ... we are drawn closer ... to engage detail or be enveloped by atmosphere.[21]

As Novak points out, there is an obvious link between this kind of spectacular experience and the communal anaesthesia of the film.[22] The spectator willingly submitted to the phantasmagoric reality of the panoramic view: the meticulously detailed surfaces and seductive atmospheric effects, coupled with the apparent liberty to move at will through pictorial space, gave the impression of an unlegislated vision. To paraphrase Benjamin's lament, however, the distracted mass does not analyze, it absorbs the aesthetic pleasure of Nature in/as a consensual activity with clearly defined limits.

The absence of decisive anamorphic readings in the imagery itself also functions to invoke and contain the transgressing body. Unlike their Claudean precursors, most Luminist and Grand Style landscapes contain little if any architecture. One does not need to look far to bear out this hypothesis: Church's *Coast Scene, Mount Desert* (1863), Durand's *Early Morning at Cold Spring* (1850), Bierstadt's *Sunset in the Yosemite Valley* (1869) and countless other views are composed primarily of vegetation, rock, and cloud formations,

all of which are inherently anamorphic.[23] Like the subject of Gainsborough's *Wooded Landscape*, the subject of the panoramic view is caught up in a dynamic of debt and deception; its performance of emancipation and embodiedness orchestrated in advance by the theater of Nature. As the following discussion will point up, not only the physical, but the temporal parameters of this performance function in the containment of subjective agency.

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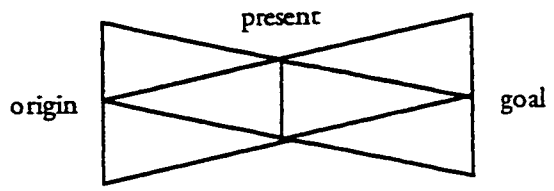
Appearing in 1830 and widely read, Sir Charles Lyell's *Principles of Geology* suggested that the earth's age as given by the Biblical timetable – around 6,000 years – was something of an underestimate. The nineteenth-century development of geology, as Novak notes,

> offered Americans a past at once more recent and more remote: the wilderness, ever new in its virginity, also stretched back into primordial time. That past was crucial in establishing an American sense of identity – sought nowhere more than in landscape painting. By augmenting science with inspiration, the artist could get closer to the elusive enigmas of Creation, and also approach solutions that might confirm America's providential destiny.[24]

The refocusing of the planetary timeline replaced human-scaled time with a "regressive infinity", a history which exceeded not only the individual body, but that of society, indeed of knowledge itself. As an origin, the primordial infinite was so far beyond the reach of human influence that it existed only numinously, *present yet invisible*. However, human intervention could destroy thousands of years of Nature's work at a single instant, effectively creating a new timeline with its origin in the present. Against the potential excess posed by this possibility – the uncontrollable proliferation of origins – it was in the

interest of national identity to inscribe a timeline from which everyone could draw an identical sense of community.

Boundaries between the self and antediluvian Nature were charted by mapping out the latter's temporal presence; linking the origin with the future brought the unimaginably distant past into a workable relationship with the present by inscribing it as a goal:



Collapsing past and future, locating Nature in/as the immobile present, this maneuver veils the participation of a productive consciousness in the process of human history. Inscribed as an origin, temporally distant Nature becomes a stable referent against which both the individual and civil society can define themselves, and against which their progress can be judged. Operated as a goal, Nature serves to justify human interference. This act of simultaneous self-reflection and self-concealment bespeaks, in either case, an identical need to inscribe a distance between self and Nature through the operation of 'virtual time'.

This elision of the 'now' veils not only the corporeal, but the *temporal* presence of the subject-as-origin. Works which invoke untouched Nature – either directly, such as the first panel of Cole's 1836 *Course of Empire*, or through its implied loss, such as Gifford's *Twilight on Hunter Mountain* (1866) – serve to maintain this temporal distance. The paradigm of here and there not only locates an absent body, it stabilizes the flux of 'real' time in/as the permanent present of the gaze: "a temporality outside *durée* : on the one hand, the moment of origin, of the founding perception; and on the other, the moment of

closure, of receptive passivity: to a transcendent temporality of the Gaze."[25]

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Just as Benjamin maintained a unwavering faith in the potential of Nature to reverse the misuse of technology, many North American landscape painters "saw the love of nature, rather than its crude subjugation, as the proving ground of an organic nationalism."[26] As a means of restoring 'lost literality' of the body and its surroundings, the trope of the organic drew on the enduring mystery of Nature, God's most perfect machine. Understood as *organum,* industrial society and the technology that sustained it acquired a rhetorical potency akin to that of Classical Nature in consolidating and animating the body politic. Emerging in the heyday of this technological optimism, photography epitomized the drawing together of human and machine in the conquest of Nature; as Elizabeth Lindquist-Cock remarks, "an invention which promised to mirror nature in all its wonders would be heralded by artists as a great and wonderful tool to aid them in depicting the truth."[27] The photograph did more than reveal the truth, however. Through its almost total naturalization of the perspective paradigm, the photograph firmly and lastingly inscribed Albertian space – and all of its subjective baggage – as the defining structure of Landscape.

In *The Influence of Photography on American Landscape Painting,* Lindquist-Cock argues that photographic technology was largely responsible for the trend towards realism in North American landscape painting of the mid-nineteenth century. As a link between artistic and scientific truth, photography "represented the culmination of a long search by artists for a scientific tool which would facilitate their highest purpose: imitating nature."[28]

Many landscape artists of this period used photographs the same way that earlier artists had used the sketch. Unlike painting, however, early landscape photography was limited in the effects it could achieve. Until late in the nineteenth century, the sensitivity of photographic emulsions to blue light meant that skies were rendered a flat uniform grey, and clouds had to be added by combination printing of a separate negative.[29] Photographers often had to wait hours for winds to die down in order that trees might be captured in perfect stillness.[30] A comparison of two views of the same subject – an 1867 photograph by Carlton Watkins and Albert Bierstadt's 1870 painting, both entitled *Up the Valley* – reveals the latter's heavy reliance on Claudean convention. The harsh planar separation in the photograph is replaced by a gentle, tonally modulated progression and further enclosed by the addition of framing trees on either side. The introduction of human figures and trodden grass in the foreground introduces a sense of scale and accessibility into the barren wilderness. In this and other examples,[31] the painting transforms the photograph on which it is based, attenuating the sense of distance, making the foreground more inviting, softening the abruptness of the transition into pictorial space.

The vision of Landscape was so heavily conditioned by the Classical metaphorics of the eye that it is difficult to attribute the weight of influence to either painting or photography. What was realized with the advent of the latter, however, was a seamless commingling of the alethic strategies of the Claudean armature and the photographic lens. The 'technological organism' born out of the union of artist and machine[32] seeks the same truths that motivated landscape painters to undertake their heroic journeys; its representations are the product of the same disinterested gaze.[33] This inscription of Classical perspectival space as *paradigmatic* invests Landscape with a privileged relationship to the external world that is its field, and with a truth that is at once scientific, universal, and utopian.

Twentieth-century landscape photography continues to draw on this spatial paradigm and

its attendant authority. At variance with assertions that the photograph's objectivity has long been revealed as spurious, the photograph's "proven ability to collect information" – set out explicitly by Mark Klett in the context of the Rephotographic Survey Project[34] – forms the basis of some of the most influential North American landscape photography of the last twenty years. I am referring specifically to a project that emerged in the nineteen-seventies with the work of the 'New Topographers' – Lewis Baltz, Robert Adams, Stephen Shore, and others – and is perpetuated in the present day by a loosely defined group whose work merits more than the passing mention afforded it here.[35] Armed with curiosity and a self-critical vision, contemporary landscape photographers proclaim the ambivalence of Nature and the illusory status of 'uninvaded' space. Most often, however, this questioning extends only to the aesthetics of landscape: the Classical spatial armature remains firmly in place as a paradigm. Much work that appears to challenge this structure does so simply by opposition, undertaken, as it is, in the context of a paradigm which nonetheless remains in place as a defining structure.[36] Although this genre sees the production of many sophisticated and arresting images, there is little short of 'subject matter' to distinguish them from the views disseminated in calendars, magazines, coffee-table books, film, and television. Independent of what they depict, it is such views that are inscribed and reinforced as Landscape in the popular imagination.

At the heart of the photograph's ambivalent objectivity, setting it apart from landscape painting, is its preternatural ability to function as a temporal bridge, to immobilize the present in a moment of "crystalline, mathematical clarity,"[37] and, significantly, to record and preserve the landscape as an icon:

> The Edenic landscape could be saved in pictures, so it was possible to avoid the countryside altogether, and still celebrate that aspect of national life. It seemed enough that someone had witnessed the scene at some time, and taken a photograph of it. These pictures then became talismans or touchstones, evidence that landscape really did exist. The viewers could stay at home, and still be incorporated in the array of feelings that would be evoked by landscape.[38]

Not only is the photograph recognized as a less destructive means of appreciating the landscape, it functions on a scientific basis as a form of empirical truth, providing concrete and unquestionable evidence of the existence of the Landscape. More importantly, the photograph also functions to incorporate the subject, invoking the corporeal body as trope – a capacity which forms the basis of photography's claims to objectivity in the present day. The Rephotographic Survey Project, for example, proclaims unequivocally the notion of the vantage point as a location in 'real' space:

> The idea that such a point in space physically exists and can be located and reoccupied even after a hundred years was one of our most important basic premises, and it is critical for scientists and others who study change throughrephotography.[39]

This pseudo-scientific application of photography is based on the location of a point which opens out into space, making available the sharply focused reality of the view. For the RSP,

> finding an existing vantage point was like searching for the *physical but invisible connections* between the photograph (the past), the world today, and the unrecorded time in between. *The vantage point became the bridge in a determined effort to see the landscape in the same way it had been seen before.*
>
> We assumed vantage points could always be reoccupied, no matter how much time had passed...[40] (emphasis added)

This description of the nature of the vantage point has the familiar ring of scientific

objectivity and truth. What is most fascinating in this quote, however, is the suggestion that photography is capable of functioning as a kind of temporal map, that it has the power to provide a 'physical' link with a past. The photograph is here explicitly endowed with the ability to *provide history with a (troped) body.*

By the end of the nineteenth century, the vogue for landscape painting had passed, and it no longer occupied a privileged place in the popular imagination. No longer the terrain of national destiny, landscape retreated into introspection, its figurative capabilities deployed in the service of less ambitious quests for identity.[41] Nonetheless, the brief union of artist and machine subjected the space of Nature to an enduring "phenomenological transformation":

> The logic of perspective can carry into our present sight of actual things whenever we opt to regard them as though they were pictures. Perspective is in this case a shaper of our discernments, a beam cast onto our looking-at-things, altering all it strikes; in short, a form of perception.[42]

Broadly speaking, the twentieth-century North American consciousness has been trained to see Nature as Landscape, and Landscape as Nature. Whether it represents a snow-capped mountain or a toxic waste site, any image that situates itself (or is situated) as Landscape is still, at heart, pictorial; it still subscribes to Classical definitions of truth, and serves the same set of expectations in distinguishing its subject from the 'real'.

As Gina Crandell notes, "[it] was a giant step in the history of seeing when people first appreciated idealized elevated views in pictures and then went in search of actual ones."[43] Historically, both landscape representation and landscape alteration function to reinforce popular definitions of Nature, both are directed towards the creation and maintenance of a malleable subject. Today, as discourses such as urban planning, wilderness preservation, landscape architecture, and visual resource management set about *creating* the 'natural'

landscape, the examination of Landscape in terms of the mutual influence that pertains between 'real' and imaged space, is particularly timely. With this in mind, the following will examine the compensatory reality of Nature as it is presented in the Classical landscape garden, and later, the urban landscape park.

1. Crary, Jonathan. Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century. Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England: MIT Press, 1990, p150.

2. The iconography of Nature in Classical landscape has been discussed at length elsewhere. See Lagerlöf, Margaretha Rossholm. Ideal Landscape: Annibale Carracci, Nicolas Poussin and Claude Lorrain. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990.

3. Ibid.,p17.

4. Ibid.., p33.

5. Ibid., p20. Lagerlöf has also noted how landscape painting had been discussed alongside perspective and stage design since at least the sixteenth century; see p32.

6. Charles Bouleau has argued that both Lorrain and Poussin based their compositions on a clearly defined mathematical armature: "Les lignes qui se croisent dans le tableau en partant des angles et des divisions simples des côtés, c'est ce que nous avons appelé l'armature de la figure géométrique formée dans et par le tableau. Le mot armature peut évoquer n'importe quel soutien, par exemple les fers des vitraux; nous avions proposé, tombant dans le goût qu'ont les peintres pour les comparaisons musicales, l'armature d'un ton, ce qui éclaire bien notre pensée et met l'accent sur la nécessité impersonnelle, objective, de ce cadre intérieur, qui sort de la forme ell-même et non du choix de l'artiste. Celui-ci peut, suivant son esthétique, régler son œuvre sur les consonances musicales ou la proportion d'or, inscrire des courbes ouvertes ou fermées : il est libre; l'armature, au contraire, lui est donnée... Avant d'esquisser sa composition, Claude Lorrain rappelait donc sur sa feuille les grandes lignes de l'armature du rectangle, qui devaient l'aider à répartir les groupes d'arbres, les collines, les fabriques, les vaisseaux." Bouleau, Charles. Charpentes: La Géométrie Secrète des Peintres. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1963, p124-5.

7. Lagerlöf, op. cit., p78.

8. Novak, op. cit., p228 "[The] topographer ... assumed the most favorable position in the vicinity for his purposes, and repeated the labors of the previous hour. In addition to this constant labor along the trail, it frequently, almost daily, became necessary to leave it and make distant side strips, ascending elevated mountain peaks and ridges to obtain correct and distant views of the country..." E. G. Beckwith in Ibid., p141-2.

9. Ibid., p29.

10. Ibid., p29.

11. Turner, Norman. 'The Semantic of Linear Perspective.' The Philosophical Forum vol. 27, no.4, Summer 1996, pp357-380; p374.

12. Jarves in Novak, op. cit., pp47-8.

13. Heade imposed scientific order on the landscape through his frequent use of the lenticular cumulus – a formation that lends itself particularly well to perspectival arrangement. As Novak notes: "the clouds are ... further steps ordering a space that aspires to the mensurational infinity of classicism – a measured rather than immeasurable eternity. Stretching along the extended canvas, formed with a deliberateness that leaves them no option but to remain palpable, they seem as much at the service of an ordering sensibility as merely proffered by the sky itself." Ibid., pp98-9.

14. "A young nation growing up was obsessed by facts, the pursuit of knowledge, the recording of its history, and the education of its people. It found its most characteristic expression in vast panoramic paintings and the minute recording of the truth in nature." Lindquist-Cock, op. cit., p161. Jarves also argued that "material objects fashioned by the artist's hand become eloquent only as the feeling which dictated them is found to be impregnated with, and expressive of, the truths of science. The mind indignantly rejects as false all that the imagination would impose upon it not consistent with the great principles by which God manifests himself in harmony with Creation." Jarves in Novak, op. cit., p47. In *Heart of the Andes*, the artist's manic attention to the details of the face of the earth was "essential ... to an intelligent perception of that face, as we behold it. ... Without that, his work cannot have the expression and significance of the actual – cannot have that organic unity – cannot have that all pervading life, energy and beauty which conspire to make it a genuine creation of art, in contradistinction to the work of the mere mechanic." Ibid., p73.

15. "[Never], with any of these Americans, does paint become what it clearly was for Turner, the primary life substance of the painting." Ibid., p249.

16. McCoubrey in Ibid., p27. However, Jarves disagreed with many contemporary critics in arguing that the spectator could "never forget his point of view, and that he is looking at a painting." Ibid., p27.

17. David C. Huntington in Lindquist-Cock, op. cit., p32.

18. Novak, op. cit., p152. Novak notes that"the artist became the hero of his own journey – which replaced the heroic themes of mythology – by vanquishing physical obstacles en route to a destination." see p137. This theme is well known for the photographer as well; see Naef, Weston J. Era of Exploration: The Rise of Landscape Photography in the American West, 1860-1885. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1975.

19. See Foucault (1973) op. cit., pp344-387.

20. See Novak's discussion of the democratization of the sublime in North American landscape aesthetics: "The older sublime was a gentleman's preserve, an aristocratic reflex of romantic thought. The Christianized sublime, more accessible to everyone, was more democratic, even bourgeois. Its social effect was thus far wider." Novak, op. cit., p38. John Taylor discusses the 'gentleman's preserve' of photographic landscape aesthetics in England, in his article 'The Alphabetic Universe: Photography and the Picturesque Landscape.' in Reading Landscape: Country - City - Capital. Manchester & New York: Manchester University Press, 1990, pp177-196.

21. Novak, op. cit., p27.

22. "Persisting late into the nineteenth century, [the Grand Style] had a clear twentieth-century heir in the film..." Ibid., p19.

23. Since its appearance in the sixteenth century, anamorphic art – created by compressing or attenuating the Albertian grid – has almost always used landscape to disguise hidden forms; see Baltrusaitis, Jurgis. Anamorphic Art. W.J. Strachan, trans. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1977. This observation – which suggests an early and implicit recognition that the forms of landscape lie beyond the limits of *costruzione legittima* – merits further investigation.

24. Novak, op. cit., p49.

25. Bryson (1983) op. cit., p93.

26. Miller, Angela. The Empire of the Eye: Landscape Representation and American Cultural Politics, 1825-1875. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993, p61.

27. Lindquist-Cock, op. cit., p159.

28. Ibid., p15.

29. Kozloff, Max. 'The Box in the Wilderness.' Artforum 14 (October 1975), pp54-9.

30. Naef, op. cit., p37.

31. see Lindquist-Cock, op. cit., plates 53A and 53B.

32. The desire to humanize technology is keenly felt in apologies for photography as art. As Henry Peach Robinson remarks, "There are still some who deny that anything artistic can be done by a photographer, but it is my experience that the best painters now call the photographer "brother" when he deserves it, and recognize that he can put thought, intention, and even a vein of poetry into his work – that mysterious something beyond the border line of hard fact which is felt perhaps more than seen in a picture." See Robinson, Henry Peach. Letters on Landscape Photography. New York: Arno Press, 1973 c.1887, p20.

33. Crary notes that the photograph precluded the stereoscope because it "recreated and perpetuated the fiction that the "free" subject of the camera obscura was still viable." Crary, op. cit., p133. Norman Turner makes the same observation in slightly different terms: "At the mildest, most diffuse extreme, perspective imagery so pervades the Zeitgeist through the mediums of still photography, movies and television (all of which are perspective pictures) that among the general population expectations of "truth," "likeness" and "realism" are vaguely determined by this near-to-universal norm." Turner, op. cit., p374.

34. The Rephotographic Survey Project, undertaken by Mark Klett, Ellen Manchester, JoAnn Verburg, Gordon Bushaw and Rick Dingus, set out to rephotograph, under conditions which mirrored those of the original event as closely as possible, images taken by nineteenth century government survey photographers in the American West. Although based on some questionable assumptions, this 'landmark' project addressed aesthetic and political issues that continue to inform the work of contemporary landscape photographers. See Klett, Mark, et. al. Second View: The Rephotographic Survey Project. Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 1984. .

35. A comprehensive analysis of contemporary landscape photography would fill a sizeable volume, and would undoubtedly reveal complexities overlooked in the present – and necessarily reductive – survey. Among the most interesting work of the past several years is that of Robert Adams, Barbara Bosworth, John Divola, Robbert Flick, Frank Gohlke, Peter Goin, Geoffrey James, Mark Klett, Richard Misrach, John Pfahl, and Mark Ruwedel. An excellent survey can be found in Between Home and Heaven: Contemporary American Landscape Photography (exhibition catalogue) Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992.

36. I am thinking in particular of images in which the lens is pointed straight at the ground, filling the frame with a horizonless accumulation of detail; work by Lewis Baltz, Mark Ruwedel, and Terry Evans comes immediately to mind. Again, however, to mitigate what must seem like an unneccarily harsh criticism of a genre which has had an enormous influence on my current practice, I should like to point out that there are photographers – such as Jan Dibbets and Jerry Pethick – whose work poses a definite challenge to traditional photographic space.

37. "The organic unfolding of intuitive experience in a temporal continuum is reduced to stasis, the frozen moment the section of the visual pyramid entails." Turner, op. cit., p372.

38. Taylor, op. cit., p181-2.

39. Klett, op. cit., p12.

40. Ibid., p13.

41. Lindquist-Cock argues that photography hastened the transition from the painting of facts to the emphasis on imagination "by revealing to the artist the distinction between the simple act of recording visible nature by a mechanical tool, and the selection and imagination necessary in the act of artistic creation." Lindquist-Cock, op. cit., p161. The resulting 'crisis' in landscape painting has been widely discussed; see Rosenblum, Robert, et. al. The Landscape in Twentieth-Century American Art: Selections from the Metropolitan Museum of Art. New York: Rizzoli, 1991.

42. Turner, op. cit., p367.

43. Crandell, op. cit., p80.

2.2 *The Garden and the Circumscription of Nature*

Historically, the garden fulfils a psychological and ideological need for the cultivation of naivete; a sublimation of humanity's ambivalent relationship to Nature. The garden is also site where the virtual space of representation brushes up against the real, 'naturalizing' Nature, keeping its distance.

If the function of the Classical Garden can be partly expressed as the limitation of physical Nature, then the potentially unsettling presence of both the medium – terrain, vegetation, architectural features, and so forth – and the material body that apprehended it was accounted for by aesthetic discourse through the prescription of a specific corporeal and discursive relationship to Nature; the garden was literally given shape through the metaphorics of the eye. The enclosure of Nature within a visually determined aesthetic matrix reinforced subjective boundaries by 'mapping' space: locating the self in relation to external Nature – both the body and its surroundings.

The Classical subject of the Garden was formed in/as a confrontation with a *superficial* reality; its identity was inscribed in 'how it looked', both in terms of self-presentation, and of its skill in negotiating a visual/virtual space which was forcefully conditioned by the perspective paradigm. The problem, as always, was how to present this figuration as 'natural'. Classical epistemology addressed the issue in characteristically chimerical fashion by evoking Nature to mask the constructedness of (its) re-presentation, presenting the deep and ordered space of Classical Landscape as a sign of Natural law; masking presence with the metaphor of 'here and there', locating the self within a theatrical space which is a product of consciousness, but not productive of it.

For Modern discourse of the Garden, the power of the subject to produce Nature is limited by inscribing the latter as both image and amenity – operations foregrounded in the nineteenth-century urban landscape park of Frederick Law Olmsted. It is not the body

which is restrained, commanded, and made to perform in these spaces, it is the fragmented and colonized subject-as-potentiality. In the Modern garden, vision is subjected to the spectacle of Extradiscursive Nature; the subject is positioned and rendered malleable by a hegemonic scopic regime which finds truth in *viewed* Nature.

***

It was in the early Renaissance that the Western garden began to take form; the Medieval *hortus conclusus* opened outward to embrace the external world as "the living scene of man's knowing and experiencing, not merely the inert material on which he operates."[1] The garden was perceived as an instantiation of cosmic harmony; a manifestation of Paradise on earth. As Terry Comito observes:

> In the Renaissance garden cosmic order is not something to be decoded by a process of abstraction. It is realized, made actual, in the stuff of the physical world in sights, sounds, odours, textures. Furthermore, means are found to direct attention to the processes through which this ideal cosmos comes into being. It is seen not as a reproduction of a timeless archetype but, in its contingency, its historicity, as the creation of human power and imagination – an instance ... of that capacity for self creation, self cultivation, that is ... man's special dignity.[2]

The Renaissance re-introduced the garden as a stage for the playing out of the dialectic between Nature and culture, reality and representation.[3] The key player in this 'theatre of the real' was a mobile, material participant whose Nature – her/his location in civil society and in the cosmos at large – was metaphorically present(ed) in/by objects in real space.[4] The world beyond the garden's borders, visually linked to the garden by its axial plan, literally 'acted as scenery'.[5] As a rendition or enactment of Nature, the garden was explicitly a product of human ingenuity, "resolving the ancient antithesis of art and nature

and, thereby, ... creating or constituting a "third nature" (*terza natura*)...".[6]

The garden at Villa d'Este (Fig IV), built by Pirro Ligorio between 1565 and 1572 for Ippolito II d'Este, governor of Tivoli and Cardinal of Ferrara, is specifically presented as a theatrical space. In this and similar gardens, a wealth of sensual detail invited the visitor to engage her/his surroundings:

> [The] Italian garden that most influenced France and England was one where the visitor was no longer a passive spectator; he was led, instead, as Sir Henry Wotton declared in a famous passage, "by several *mountings* and *valings*, to various entertainements of the *sent*, and *sight*." The expectation of a fine garden ... was that it work upon its visitor, involving him often insidiously as a participant in its dramas, which were presented to him as he explored its spaces...[7]

Like the theater, the garden enclosed a microcosm; characterized by Erwin Panofsky as "a grandiose spectacle, filled with floating images and a constantly changing scenery, rather than a structure clearly organized and intellectually penetrable."[8] As *theatrum mundi*, the garden's role was not simply to re-present Nature, but to invite its description; the subject of the garden was given form by locating the boundary between Nature and artifice, real and ideal.[9] The material body, in other words, penetrates 'real' space for the stated purpose of transforming it into virtual space; corporeal engagement is subordinated to the explicit operation of the garden as a *sign* of Nature and agency as the ability to operate that sign.

The dislocation of the material body in the production of Nature was reinforced by the pre-eminence of allegory in garden experience. Villa d'Este's garden was dedicated to Hippolytus and Hercules, two Greek heroes who held special significance for the Cardinal. Fountains, statuary and architecture demonstrating the virtues of these two figures (and by extension of the Cardinal himself) form its thematic core.[10] As a medium for the

enunciation of political or moral messages, Nature must pass through the transparent filter of erudition – hence aristocratic privilege. The ideological exclusion operated at Villa d'Este extends explicitly to the spectator's social position as a body that knows no physical toil.

***

> The foot should never travel to [the object] by the same path, which the eye has travelled over before. Lose the object, and draw nigh obliquely.
>
> William Shenstone, *Unconnected Thoughts on Gardening*, 1764

It is in the eighteenth-century English Garden that the subject attains its most explicit presentation as a decorporeal participant in the theater of Nature. Although there had been gardens in place from the 1680s onwards, the first in a series of large-scale improvements undertaken at Stowe – the Buckinghamshire seat of Viscount Cobham – were proposed by Charles Bridgeman in 1720[11] (Figure V). Bridgeman's design was essentially geometrical, but, unlike Villa d'Este, the overall plan was asymmetrical, structured around several intersecting axes which flow out over the landscape, blurring the distinction between the garden and the surrounding countryside,[12] masking the work of humankind as the work of Nature, confirming the ideological and aesthetic separation of body and subject

The garden was composed of a series of views – the viewing position often specified by the placement of a bench – linked by a network of gravelled paths. Perspectival techniques borrowed from Classical landscape painting were used to structure and delimit these views,[13] compiling a 'taxonomy' of landscape and inscribing a familiar relationship for the spectator. As Crandell has noted,

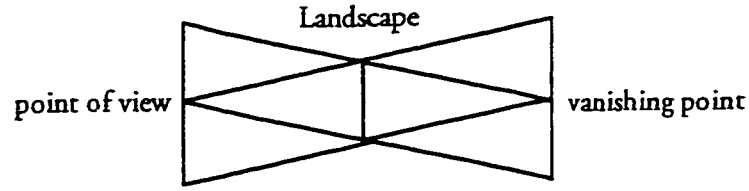
> [The] structural relations between a scenic landscape and the people who view it is the same as the relation between a spectator and a painting. Both imply a certain distance between subject and object; a separation that allows people to view landscape as a patron would view a work of art.[14]

The specification of the viewing point indicates an implicit dependence on the position(ing) of the physical body in the production of the meaning or 'truth' of the view. As a site from which Nature may be viewed in all its aspects, the viewing position empowers the universal subject; the open horizon is an invitation to penetrate perspectival space. However, Crandell omits to mention a fundamental difference between Nature as represented in a painting, and as manifested in the garden. The full significance of the allegorical garden was gained by reflecting upon the cumulative effect of multiple views – upon the spectator's physical progress through space.[15] This sequential presentation, as Norman Bryson points out, implies a viewer who is constructed as "an embodied presence in motion through a ... temporality of text and a choreographic (in the full sense) space of vision; the substance and mobility of his physique are fully involved in the work of receiving the images..."[16] Incorporating time into the view enables more than one kind of 'viewing experience'; as De Bolla puts it:

> In the gaze the eye fixes on an object, most usually a painting, and in so doing it organizes the visual field; this penetrating gaze structures both the field of vision and the spectator's position within physical space. This activity of gazing ... can be described in shorthand as a readerly or semiotic practice: the gaze penetrates and organizes the visual field in order to arrive at 'meaning'. ... In [the glance] the eye moves hurriedly across surfaces, delighting in variety, ... and as it moves around the enclosure of the scopic field it feels itself to be located, sited within the virtual spacings of visuality through which it moves. Far from imposing its regime upon the visual it is inducted into the orderings of the scopic, and as it is so induced the viewing eye is itself subjected to those orderings. Consequently, the gaze requires and imposes an orderliness in vision whereas the glance is ordered by and through the virtual spaces in which it moves.[17]

Within the virtual space of the Classical garden, the glance functions similarly to the anamorphic image in representation. It threatens to introduce the real into the space of representation by presenting a paradox: ostensibly a property of virtual space, it nonetheless signals the presence of a body that would exceed that space – a mobile or *gestural* body.[18] At Stowe, the gaze and the glance are, in effect, superimposed by the organization of the real according to the rhetoric of the view, invoked to legislate the potential excess of the glance in/and real space. Carried by the gaze and containing the body, the view brings order to (real) Nature by limiting its description. The view, as William Shenstone intimates in the above quote, is only available to vision; the body performs (in) scopic space in order to be given form as a/the subject of Landscape.

The Classical view describes the boundaries of the self in part by locating these boundaries within a measurable infinite, securing the subject of representation between 'here' and 'there':



The imposition of virtual space onto real space – the inscription of Nature as distinct from the subject – substitutes a closed circuit for an open one. As a consequence and condition of this description, real and virtual space are collapsed onto the screen of representation, masking the constitutive force of the perspective paradigm, and Nature as a product of the subject. For the Classical eye, Nature is always seen from the point of view of Landscape,

and never from the point of view of the subject as origin. Both body and Nature, in other words, are cast as *superficial*; the signifying surface is not an object, but a projection. It is this figuration that allows the real to take the form of the ideal, and permits it to be known as a materially and temporally static space: Marin's "permanent present" of representation, a metaphor for Enlightenment knowledge.

The subject entered this space as both spectator and actor; to look and to be looked at – an experience that came titillatingly close to shattering the shell of contrived corporeality that circumscribed the viewing body. Since social class and gender were described in part by the activity of looking, the subject's investment in this activity had significant implications for its individual and social identity.[19] Agency, in this situation, is a function of the subject's willingness to ignore the friction between the 'real' landscape and the Nature it represents – to invest in the signifying surface and its deceptions.[20] As remarked by an eighteenth-century commentator, in the allegorical garden, "it is the *imagination* that does all...."[21] Garden experience is constructed not only to limit gesture, but to veil the "visibility of the construction of identity,"[22] to conceal the cultural construction of the activity of viewing: its dependence upon a visibly 'useless' body, and upon a subject that determines, but is not determined by, the enclosures of visuality. Classical Landscape, in other words, masks presence in the scopic regime by limiting agency in the 'real.'

Whether Nature is a property of representation, or of the real space that underpins it, is a dangerously open question for the Classical *episteme*. As Crandell suggests, however, it is virtual Nature which comes into prominence as the contextual framework of the garden; rather than being framed exclusively by vision, the garden itself eventually serves to contextualize or 'frame' the view. Its allure as the site of the abject incorporated into its very description, Nature now functions as a figure in the construction of a subject position.

The eversion of Nature is, as I have suggested, one of the markers by which the transition from Classical to Modern epistemology can be identified. By way of pointing up the equivocality of this transition, the following discussion will consider Picturesque aesthetics and the antinomic status of Nature in the political positioning of the subject.

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> The Mind of Man naturally hates every thing that looks like a Restraint upon it, and is apt to fancy it self under a sort of confinement, when the Sight is pent up in a narrow Compass, and shortened on every side the by the Neighbourhood of Walls or Mountains. On the contrary, a spacious Horison is an Image of Liberty, where the Eye has Room to range abroad, to expatiate at large on the Immensity of its Views, and to lose it self amidst the Variety of Objects that offer themselves to its Observation. Such wide and undetermined Prospects are as pleasing to the Fancy, as the Speculations of Eternity or Infinitude are to the Understanding.
>
> Joseph Addison, *Pleasures of the Imagination*, 1712

Encouraging the observer to travel freely within a democratic space of vision, Picturesque aesthetics depoliticized the glance, operating the mobile eye as a trope for liberty. By incorporating a virtual body into a covertly delimited space, the Picturesque garden also functions to animate the 'natural law' that forms the basis of Modern government.

As early as the 1740s, the gardens at Stowe were being redesigned in conformity with a more Picturesque vision. By the end of the century, only the barest outline of the original design remained (Figure VI). As Sidney Robinson has remarked, Picturesque aesthetics are characterized by a resistance to system and control.[23] By 1797, the subject of the garden was no longer called upon to participate in a strictly orchestrated performance of Nature; instead, the garden tried to appear "not to suppress the workings of nature, but to ... take indications from them; for who would choose to settle in that place ... where the warnings, indications, and all the free efforts of nature, were forcibly counteracted and suppressed?"[24]

At the heart of Picturesque aesthetics, modern subjectivity, and capitalist society was the popular notion of individual liberty:

> A good landscape is that in which all the parts are free and unconstrained, but in which, though some are prominent, and highly illuminated, and others in shade and retirement – some rough, and others more smooth and polished, yet they are all necessary to the beauty, energy, effect, and harmony of the whole. I do not see how a good government can be more exactly defined; and as this definition suits every style of landscape, from the plainest and simplest to the most splendid and complicated, and excludes nothing but tameness and confusion, so it equally suits all free government, and only excludes anarchy and despotism.[25]

The aesthetic ideals to which gardens conformed – those of liberty and mixture – were also fundamental tenets in Whig politics.[26] Requiring "less training and education than classical canons, and less fortitude than the sublime,"[27] the Picturesque could allegedly be enjoyed by all classes of society. In extending the description of Nature to the "common observer", however, Picturesque aesthetics also aligned itself with emerging scientific and philosophical discourses, particularly those which questioned the stability of the relationship between perception and the 'real'.[28] The acknowledged subjectivity of vision is operated not to point up difference, but to produce an identical visual experience for everyone; the task of the Picturesque garden is not so much to distinguish between the subject and (its) Nature, but to anaesthetize the glance in order that Nature may be *produced*. For Picturesque aesthetics, "visual restlessness and lack of concentration, a somewhat distracted wandering of the eye, [were] legitimized as a submission to nature's seemingly infinite variety and breadth."[29] The subject of the Picturesque garden is disinterested, distractible, in need of constant variety: a subject that conforms to the requirements of economic modernity.

As I have suggested, however, the gaze and the glance cannot be understood in isolation. Although Picturesque aesthetics appeared to embrace anamorphic possibility, some of its

most outspoken proponents subscribed to the conviction that the landscape could and should be made to look like a picture. Crandell has pointed out that by the latter half of the eighteenth century, formal pictorial convention had become a standard and inseparable way of seeing Landscape; from this "pivotal moment" in the "pictorialization" of Nature, "what is designed (and owned) is composed to give the illusion of being natural, when in fact it is maintained as an enclave."[30] Although dispensing with strict geometric organization, the manipulation of light and shade and the use of perspective in Picturesque garden design were drawn directly from Classical landscape painting.[31] As Alexander Pope remarked: "All gardening is landscape-painting ... Just like landscape hung up."[32] The space of the Classical view acts to restore the 'lost literality' of the body and the 'semantic purity' of Nature; Picturesque aesthetics inscribes political identity into this virtual space by securing, as trope, the link between visual and civil liberty.

By the late eighteenth century, the industrialization of the agricultural economy and the enclosure of common land had reshaped the visible landscape and transformed the meaning of the land.[33] Physical space was mapped and colonized in conformity with economic concerns, rather than natural law:

> [The land] was no longer exclusively the source of individual metabolic survival. The direct sustenance one could derive from it was overlaid by its value to an absent landowner who interpreted it, not from direct inspection exercised by those who live on it every day, but from an indirect representation, usually in a London office. The land as a producing resource was now thought of with reference to a national and international horizon. Returns on investment ... would not be realized until a later season. Both time and place were being treated indirectly at a scale heretofore unknown.[34]

The status and meaning of both land and body as objects in the world was undergoing a fundamental change. As land is dislocated from location, and productivity from the

material, an analogous transformation takes place in the form and ideology of gardens. Broadly speaking, the Modern garden operates (on) a malleable subject, creating and maintaining a need for distance from Nature. The liberty of the Modern subject to range over the horizon is predicated upon the same spectacular Nature that characterizes the panoramic view: a Nature distanced by the veiled force of Albertian space, and a horizon delimited by the hegemonic discourse of Landscape. Thus contained, the space of Nature becomes a site for the incorporation of the segmented individual body in/as the social body – a function demonstrated with resounding clarity in the urban landscape park of Frederick Law Olmsted.

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Transforming the English aesthetic ideals on which it is based, the Modern North American landscape park draws on the allure of ownership, property, and power manifested in the private estate park; it presents bourgeois culture with an idealized vision of 'country life' as an antidote to the danger and depravity of the urban environment. No longer functioning as a sign of the power or wealth of a particular individual, however, the park celebrates the accomplishments of industrial society:

> Olmsted's parks ... represent an essential part of urban life, or of the environment which has been made 'civilized'. Their domestic landscapes create an environment in which the tensions and contradictions of an industrial society are sublimated and transformed into an aesthetic ideal.[35]

The aesthetic ideal manifested in the urban park is the product of a society which operates a complete and implicit dominance over Nature; a dominance predicated in part on an acknowledgement of vision as opaque, physiologically based, lodged in the real body of the observer and therefore "defective, inconsistent, prey to illusion, and, in a crucial

manner, susceptible to external procedures of manipulation and simulation that have the essential capacity *to produce experience for the subject.*"[36] In the park, virtual Nature acts as a means of spatializing the troped body; it provides a 'real' location where the body politic can be seen acting out the relationship between itself and Nature-as-other. Operating (on) a subject whose senses are susceptible to "calculated management and derangement", the Olmstedian landscape park limits the meaning of Nature in order to stabilize a body politic that is no longer held together by its laws.

Unlike private estates, Olmsted's parks were intended for use by all classes of society.[37] Their "pleasing rural scenery" was an influence "that, acting through the eye, shall be more than mitigative, that shall be antithetical, reversive, and antidotal [to the city]."[38] Acting as it did on an observer whose visual sensations had no necessary link to the 'real',[39] however, this scenery had the effect of inscribing into the popular imagination a normalized vision of Nature with considerable coercive potential.[40] In Olmsted's vision of the public park as a moral educator, the mingling of society under the calming influence of Nature was understood to have an especially advantageous effect upon the working classes:

> No one who has closely observed the conduct of the people who visit [Central Park], can doubt that it exercises a distinctly harmonizing and refining influence upon the most unfortunate and most lawless classes of the city, – an influence favorable to courtesy, self-control, and temperance.[41]

Olmsted's parks sought to teach the urban working classes that fresh open air and physical activity were beneficial to the body, and that a healthy body meant a healthy mind[42] – a notion with obvious ideological advantages for a government which regards the body politic primarily in terms of its economic productivity. The terrain itself is subject to this capitalistic dematerialization. Discussing the proposed Mont-Royal park, Olmsted noted

that its value:

> is to depend on the degree in which it shall be adapted to attract citizens to obtain needful exercise and cheerful mental occupation in the open air, with the result of better health and fitness in all respects for the trials and duties of life; with the result also, necessarily, of greater earning and tax-paying capacities, so that in the end the investment will be, in this respect, a commercially profitable one to the city...[43]

In an unimproved state, both the social body and the space it occupies are "inert and unproductive." By encouraging a physical engagement with Nature-as-amenity, the landscape park secures the physical and moral health of the urban population, and the productivity of 'natural' space. It also situates both the subject and (its) Nature within an anaesthetic space whose primary function is to colonize: to quantify and normalize, to inscribe the subject as a receptive surface for repetitive stimuli:

> [The] *reduction of the observer to a supposedly rudimentary state*, was ... a condition for the formation of an observer who would be competent to consume the vast new amounts of visual imagery and information increasingly circulated during [the second half of the nineteenth century]. It was the remaking of the visual field not into a tabula rasa on which orderly representations could be arrayed, but into a surface of inscription on which a promiscuous range of effects could be produced.[44] (emphasis added)

The threat posed by difference is nowhere more pronounced than in the city, where the friction of proximity is an aspect of everyday life. Providing a vision of Nature that is both intimate and remote, encouraging the subject to enact a 'purer' state of being, the urban park creates and addresses a need for distance, for space, for individuality. It also serves a need for an identical and infinitely reproducible experience of exteriority, producing Modern Nature as a platform where the coherence of the self and of the body politic are acted out and made visible.

The recognition that space was formative of the subject, and that humanity was capable of constructing and operating such space, brought about a fundamental change in the function and ideology of the garden. The visual and physical enclosure of Nature is a subsidiary consideration in the Modern garden, which exists, in its most basic sense, to mask a relationship of profound phenomenological distanciation. The very existence of the Olmstedian park – and the diverse spaces which model themselves after it – as a self-sustaining and self-perpetuating order is evidence of humanity's assumed ability to create an 'organic' system; a system which resolves the polarities of being and the conflicts of nature[45]; a system which, in its *performance*[46] of Nature as extradiscursive, allows society to maintain the fiction of Nature as a goal and an other. Understanding the park as a 'natural' rather than an ideological space relieves humanity of the responsibility to ask what is at stake in the deployment of virtual Nature: the presumed right to define and delimit 'natural' space, and the assumption that the boundaries of entire ecosystems can be as easily constructed and maintained.

The basic dialectic of the 'pictorialized landscape' has been with us since the Renaissance, with the placement of the vanishing point in the landscape; since that time,

> it is safe to say that the viewpoint of the spectator has remained, figuratively, inside the window of Renaissance perspective. ... the empowerment of the spectator is a profound legacy of the projection of the vanishing point into the distance by the technique of linear perspective.[47]

Today, this spatial paradigm still informs the definition, construction, and (re)presentation of Landscape; the figure of the Garden resonates in the tautological link between these 'natural' spaces and the images they furnish.

The following section takes the form of a series of vignettes which examine this tautology, as well as the key terms – Landscape, Nature, and the subject – around which it is

articulated. It will examine the intersection of Landscape and Nature in/as a virtual space which functions simultaneously to inscribe and fulfill lack; the (re)presentation of Nature as a distinct and distant space; a space where corporeal limits may be transcended; a space in which are inscribed the subject's most fundamental rights and freedoms.

Taking into account the fact that Landscape naturalizes a paradigm which informs its own history as well as much the space of postmodern knowledge of Nature, the final section of this paper will seek to deconstruct the paradigm around which it has been built. To this end, I will discuss where and how perspectival knowledge fails, where image and text fail to coincide, where Nature can no longer be represented by a narrative space of the real.

1.Comito, Terry. The Idea of the Garden in the Renaissance. New Brunswick and New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1978, p30.

2. Comito, Terry. "The Humanist Garden." in The History of Garden Design: The Western Tradition from the Renaissance to the Present Day. Monique Mosser and Georges Teyssot, eds. London: Thames & Hudson, 1991, pp37-45, p41.

3. Daniels and Cosgrove discuss Renaissance humanist theater as both a gathering place, "a conspectus, a place, region or text in which phenomena are presented together for public understanding," and as a metaphor for the structure of knowledge; the "theatre as a glass or mirror to the greater world was a common metaphor for revealing order in the macrocosm." See Daniels, Stephen, and Cosgrove, Denis. "Spectacle and Text: Landscape metaphors in cultural geography." in Place/ Culture/ Representation. James Duncan and David Ley, eds. London and New York: Routledge, 1993, pp57-77, p58.

4. Civic ritual in early fifteenth-century Venice was a "highly choreographed public display which demanded the widest possible participation, incorporating both citizens and visitors through a series of overlapping allegiances: social status, occupation, residence, membership of scuola ... Above all, regular procession and spectacle bound together the entire community, the 'body politic', in rehearsing the political and moral order of the city." This visibilizing of the body politic, the 'display of its parts,' was connected to a myth of place that was ratified through the presence of a real body; Venice was represented metaphorically as "a single body, a perfectly governed, harmonious polity, an ideal city blessed in its geographical location and sanctified by the actual body of the evangelist Mark..." Daniels and Cosgrove, op. cit., pp59-60.

5.See Ackerman, James S. The Villa: Form and Ideology of Country Houses. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990, p82, and Newton, Norman T. Design on the Land: The Development of Landscape Architecture. Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England: Harvard University Press, 1971, pp67-80.

6..Hunt, John Dixon. "The Garden as Cultural Object." in Denatured Visions: Landscape and Culture in the Twentieth Century. Stuart Wrede and William Howard Adams, eds. New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1991, pp19-32, p19.

7. Hunt, John Dixon. Gardens and the Picturesque: Studies in the History of Landscape Architecture. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: MIT Press, 1992, p54. David Coffin has also suggested that the continuity of experience in these gardens is provided less by sight than by sensual address: "...constant deviation from the principal axis, whether forced or only suggested, means that the observer can never fully experience the gardens in a Renaissance manner from a fixed objective viewpoint. His experience of the gardens becomes a much more subjective one of continuous exploration and surprise, unified by the constantly varying sounds of water." see Coffin, David, The Villa d'Este at Tivoli. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1960, p15.

8. Panofsky in Hunt (1992), op. cit., p55.

9. The role of automata in the 'metamorphic world' of the Italianate garden points up the notion that "one of the essential delights was the invitation to adjudicate continually the effects of art and nature." Ibid., p59.

10. Ibid., pp78-97.

11. Clarke, George. "The Gardens of Stowe." Apollo vol.97 no.136 (June 1973), pp558-565.

12. Martinet, op. cit., p12.

13.. Ibid., p10. Crandell also notes how, in the Classical landscape garden, "a certain composition of the landscape became obligatory. There had to be both topographic bands and objects to smooth the transitions between them. The spectator's viewpoint had to be on rising ground. The trees and buildings had to be disposed in such a way that the shadows they made would differentiate a particular band from those above and below it." Crandell, op. cit., p97.

14. Crandell, op. cit., p34.

15. See Clarke, George. "Grecian Taste and Gothic Virtue: Lord Cobham's gardening programme and its iconography." Apollo vol. 97, no. 136 (June 1973), pp566-571.

16. Bryson, Norman. Vision and Painting: The Logic of the Gaze. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1983, p98.

17. De Bolla (1995), op. cit., pp284-5

18. Bryson describes the glance as a "furtive or sideways look whose attention is always elsewhere, which shifts to conceal its own existence, and which is capable of carrying unofficial, *sub rosa* messages of hostility, collusion, rebellion, and lust. ... the glance addresses vision in the durational temporality of the viewing subject; it does not seek to bracket out the process of viewing, nor in its own techniques does it exclude the traces of the body of labour." Bryson (1983) op. cit., p94.

19. see De Bolla (1995), op. cit.

20. Refusal to enter the scopic regime only resulted in disappointment: "what is at stake ... is the constitution, fabrication and enfranchisement of the viewer. It is a matter of not being blind to visuality, and therefore blind to being in the here of vision, being a viewer for others, and a matter of not resisting our induction into being in the place of pleasure... We must be both spectator and actor in this drama of vision, must be spectators if we are to be fully agents within the republic of visuality."" Ibid., p290.

21. Aaron Hill in Jacques, David. Georgian Gardens: The Reign of Nature. London: B.T. Batsford, Ltd., 1983, p17.

22. De Bolla (1995), op. cit., p291.

23. Robinson, Sidney. K. Inquiry into the Picturesque. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1991, p68.

24. Uvedale Price in Robinson, op. cit., p74.

25. Ibid., p88-9.

26. "[The] neatness, simplicity and elegance of English gardening [embodies] the happy medium betwixt the wildness of nature and the stiffness of art; in the same manner as the English constitution is the happy medium between the liberty of savages and the restraint of despotic government." Humphrey Repton in Hyams, Edward. Capability Brown and Humphrey Repton. London: J.M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1971, p162. See also Robinson, op. cit., pp47-72.

27. Humphrey Repton in Robinson, op. cit., p88.

28. Crary, op. cit., pp88-94.

29. Fabricant, Carole. 'The Aesthetics and Politics of Landscape in the Eighteenth Century' in Studies in Eighteenth-Century British Art and Aesthetics. Ralph Cohen, ed. Berkeley, Los Angeles, & London: University of California Press, 1985, pp49-81, p64.

30. Crandell, op. cit., p130.

31. see Uvedale Price, *Essays on the Picturesque* (1794-98) in Martinet , op. cit., pp246-257.

32. Martinet, op. cit., p10.

33. See my unpublished paper 'Aesthetic Discourse and the 'Nature' of Landscape in Eighteenth-Century England', 1995.

34.. Robinson, op. cit., p56.

35. Ponte, Alessandra. 'Public Parks in Great Britain and the United States: From a 'Spirit of the Place' to a 'Spirit of Civilization'.' in The History of Garden Design, p386.

36. Crary, op. cit., p92.

37. see Cranz, Galen. The Politics of Park Design: A History of Urban Parks in America. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: MIT Press, 1982.

38. Olmsted, Frederick Law, in Scheper, George L. "The Reformist Vision of Frederick Law Olmsted and the Poetics of Park Design." The New England Quarterly, vol. 62 (September 1989), pp369-402, p373.

39. "The very absence of referentiality is the ground on which new instrumental techniques will construct for an observer a new "real" world. It is a question ... of a perceiver whose very empirical nature renders identities unstable and mobile... [Vision] is redefined as a capacity for being affected by sensations that have no necessary links to a referent... " Crary, op. cit., p91.

40. Commenting on the obligation of a good government to exercise persuasive rather than disciplinary power, John Stuart Mill (who was also, significantly, the founder of England's Commons Preservation Society) notes that the object of government is "not to compel but to persuade the people to impose, for the sake of their own good, some restraint on

the immediate and unlimited exercise of their own will." See Hampsher-Monk, Iain. A History of Modern Political Thought: Major Political Thinkers from Hobbes to Marx. Oxford UK & Cambridge USA: Blackwell, 1992, p347.

41. Olmsted, Frederick Law. "Public Parks and the Enlargement of Towns" in Sutton, S.B., ed. Civilizing American Cities: A Selection of Frederick Law Olmsted's Writings on City Landscape. Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England: MIT Press, 1979, p96.

42. Olmsted believed that air "is disinfected by sunlight and foliage. Foliage also acts mechanically to purify the air by screening it. Opportunity and inducement to escape at frequent intervals from the confined and vitiated air of the commercial quarter, and to supply the lungs with air screened and purified by trees, and recently acted upon by sunlight, together with opportunity and inducement to escape from conditions requiring vigilance, wariness, and activity toward other men, - if these could be supplied economically our problems would be solved." Ibid., p70.

43. Olmsted in Ibid., p199.

44. Crary, op. cit., p96. Both Cranz and Ponte remark on the permeation of the urban park by 'scientific' discourses such as physical and mental health, hygiene, education, recreation, etc. The idea of the legislation of the body through normalizing discourses is developed by Michel Foucault in both The History of Sexuality and Discipline and Punish. A more complete analysis of this means of legislation, and of concepts of 'power' and 'experience' might take Foucault's thesis under consideration.

45. See Rykwert, op. cit., p206.

46. Judith Butler claims that the very act of constituting nature as extradiscursive and thereby unknowable constitutes a 'figuration of the unfigurable'; this figuration is brought within the realm of the discursive by its constitution as an effect of the very discourse it is supposed to exceed - in effect, through its performance. see Butler, Judith. Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex. New York & London: Routledge, 1993.

47. Crandell, op. cit., p69.

3.1 *Liberty, leisure, and the mobile body*

> Having a leisure month before me, and growing impatient of the confinement of a large and populous city, I thought I had a *moment to seize*; for the improvement of health; the enjoyment of a survey of the bounties and sublimities of nature, and the diversities of character which present themselves to a traveller ... Few excursions, during the summer season, are productive of more benefit or rational amusement... Consider this place, when Penn first planted his infant colony on the shores of the Delaware: and what it now it is. Compare the beauteous scenery and deep verdure, which now line those shores, once covered by an unbroken range of wilderness, which plow nor axe had ever pierced. Then behold the encroachments of cultivation, the birth of settlements, the growth of towns, together with the unvaried increase of population, throughout our western country: and we are led in wonder to exclaim; this is a *land of enchantment*, this is my home and my country!
>
> Anonymous, *Recollections of a Visit to the Falls of Niagara, and the Lakes*, 1823

> Every day without a Ford means lost hours of healthy motoring pleasure.
> The Ford gives you unlimited chance to get away into new surroundings every day - a picnic supper or a cool spin in the evening to enjoy the countryside or a visit with friends. These advantages make for greater enjoyment of life - bring you rest and relaxation at a cost so low that it will surprise you.
> By stimulating good health and efficiency, owning a Ford increases your earning power.
> Buy your Ford now or start weekly payments on it.
>
> 1925 Ford touring car ad

Access to (the) landscape is an important constituent of North American political identity. Made widely available initially by rail, and later, by the automobile, the ability to transcend corporeal limits added a huge impetus to the (re)possession of the countryside by the working class. Such mobility promised not only an escape from hours lost in domestic inertia, it promised a form of social equality which is based in part on the popularization of the aesthetics of Nature. Patterned after that of England and Scotland[1], North American aesthetic discourse insisted on the availability of 'natural beauty' as a fundamental democratic right. As in the Olmstedian park, however, such democratization is more often than not synonymous with homogenization and anaesthesia; the Picturesque vision of 'natural beauty' locates and normalizes the subject in/as a superficial body. The increasing accessibility of the Landscape was accompanied by an increasing need to

legislate its use. In late Victorian England, the emerging 'countryside movement' reflected a growing concern for "the protection of nature, the enjoyment of fresh air, open space and scenery, and the preservation of national heritage."[2] In nineteenth-century North America, the protection of the *amenity value* of Landscape is an inevitable and incommensurable consequence of the right to mobility. The constitution of Landscape as a consumer good gives rise to two distinct ideals – the sub- or extraurban domestic enclave, and the recreational countryside – both of which manifest a need to conceal the role of the labouring body in their realization, and both of which continue to influence present-day attitudes towards the 'improvement' of the land.

The subject of the amenity landscape finds its agency in a 'doubly decorporealized' body – a body enabled by technology to shed its material limits, a body whose obsolescence is signalled by a model of Landscape appreciation which is based in the manifest democracy of visual experience. This section will discuss the extent to which the countryside movement – and its concomitant ideals of visibility, amenity, leisure, and consumption – draws upon ideals of mobility and distance as a means of constructing and normalizing both space and the subject. It will examine the conflation of political agency with propriety and the 'right to consume' the amenity Landscape, and the founding of democratic rights – and hence national identity – upon visual ideals of Nature.

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It was late in the eighteenth century before pleasure travel was possible in North America. Among the first to bring a more quixotic vision to the North American environment were the European landed classes; between 1810 and 1830, the tourist industry burgeoned, leading groups of visitors along established routes to designated beauty spots (mostly along the eastern seaboard) with the specific intent of locating familiar views:

> Picturesque taste provided not only a motive for travel in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries but also a context in which to see the American landscape and a language with which to read it. ... The picturesque tour conditioned both artists and audiences, creating the landscapes which were to be enjoyed for over a century.[3]

The Picturesque tour was a form of visual occupation of the landscape, an ideological deformation of the visible environment which served a precise social function. Situating the observer in a position of power relative to her/his surroundings, the patterning of 'real' space after a known virtual space acts as a form of proprietorship. The very activity of touring was a means of investing the landscape with a familiar set of visual and socioeconomic relationships, and of announcing oneself as possessed of the leisure and means to appreciate Nature.

In part, the Republican ideal is founded on the democratization of travel. Traditionally a perquisite of the landed classes, the 'tour' is linked, in nineteenth-century North America, to the idea of liberty:

> The land itself was the objectification of ... freedom – limitless, fertile, new – and to travel in it was to assimilate liberty into oneself. ... The very ownership of the land conditioned the experience of travel. The tourist could leave the beaten track and strike out across the country whenever he wished, for even 'improved' farmland was not private... Travel in America was a liberating act, a political expression of freedom of movement...[4]

Individual liberty is more than the ability to reinvent one's own order out of as-yet-undescribed Nature; it announces itself in the very act of reaching for the 'open horizon'. If the image of the explorer brought about a distinct identity for the American west, the Picturesque vision of upstate New York, Pennsylvania, and New England gives rise to some pervasive myths concerning not only the construction and democratization of 'natural

beauty', but of domestic and recreational space. Although distinct in their purposes, both of these spaces are nonetheless founded on the identical goals of exceeding the body, of masking its role in the production of (signifying) space.

Arguing for the release of the working classes from the intellectual disfigurement of ceaseless toil, Archibald Alison noted that

> [those] who are doomed to spend their early years in 'populous and commercial cities', where 'narrow and selfish pursuits' prevail, will have their sensibilities blunted, particularly since they will lack contact with nature.[5]

The ability to realise and maintain a level of visible idleness is a goal and a condition of the modern urban lifestyle. Access to the amenity landscape depends upon a 'travelling' body – a body made possible in large part by the growth of paid leisure time and the availability of mass transit from the 1870s onward: first by rail, and later, by automobile.[6] As a fundamental democratic right, 'contact' with Nature is conflated with the availability of the necessary technology to 'get to' Nature. To be visible as a tourist is more than simply a matter of concealing the labouring body: it is a display of one's means and *prerogative* to transcend this body. As is made abundantly clear in present-day car advertisements, the automobile announces the right to mobility as a fundamental constituent of middle-class identity.

Mobilizing the body, providing visible evidence of one's ability to appreciate Nature, goods such as automobiles and other emblems of leisure function as means of incorporating the individual into civil society. As R. I. Wolfe argues, countryside recreation is a symbolic activity:

> It is not for amusement; it is not an escape from the city, though that is what it most often seems to be... it is not even primarily for recreation... Today it symbolizes... the sense of belonging that all of us feel the need to demonstrate in one way or another.[7]

Although it may be acted out in/on the extraurban environment, travel and the amenity lifestyle has more to do with display than it does with subsistence. As consumer goods, Landscape and Nature enjoy identical status; both function to augment and multiply the individual body. Subjective agency is given in/as the inalienable right to consume, to own, to extend oneself through space, securing both the place of Nature and one's own position in civil society.

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> When smiling lawns and tasteful cottages ... begin to embellish a country we know that order and culture are established.
>
> Andrew Jackson Downing, *The Architecture of Country Houses*, 1851

As it existed in England, the celebration of rural life as a carefree idyll, and the enjoyment of the pleasures and social graces of 'country house society', served to reinforce the values and social order of the landed classes. The effort to include Nature as a part of one's domestic surroundings draws on Classical notions of property and propriety in which the former is equated to the latter; property is both a condition and an indication of social order and moral stability.[8] The transfer of these notions onto American soil was a matter of negotiating a distinct identity while simultaneously reinforcing the more expedient elements of the old one. As Graham Clarke points out, 'viewing' the east coast North American landscape required little more than acquainting oneself with a slightly different

typology. Domestic icons such as barns, fences, fields, and tidy private homes replaced the old 'vertical order' of castles and tenants' hovels; the viewed landscape was a fully legible political text extolling the virtues of the 'new' democratic order. Nonetheless the ideology of 'countryside appreciation' reflects a degree of respect for – and unwillingness to replace – an older social and moral order and its concomitant notions of the place and power of labour in the ideal landscape.[9]

One of the founding myths of American Republicanism was the "vision of America as a natural paradise which would be made bountiful by the efforts of the virtuous husbandman."[10] In the Modern Arcadia, labour, personified by the independent yeoman farmer, was viewed as "the source of moral and civic responsibility; the backbone of democracy."[11] The countryside ideal was built up around an idealized vision in which rural labour, rather than manufacturing, formed the basis of the Republican economy:

> Forged out of the edicts of pioneering and survival and developed predominantly around the largely egalitarian and individualistic society and economy of the family farm, the North American countryside evolved as a utilitarian landscape of work and commerce. ... The North American countryside ideal ... has tended to value the settled rural landscape ... as a symbol of agricultural progress and of bygone lifestyles...[12]

The notion that rural life is inherently more stable, and that the rural inhabitant displays a paradigmatic moral soundness, has long been used as a means of turning attention away from nagging issues of social inequality. Despite overwhelming evidence to suggest its obsolescence, the ideal of rural labour still enjoys currency: "Even today the United States Department of Agriculture, despite policies which support agribusiness, perpetuates the myth that the family farm is the backbone of the agricultural economy."[13] The vision of the independent farmer as the ideal political subject is still a forceful one, bearing as it does – in a similar fashion to the example of the artist as hero – ideals of independence, fierce individuality, and a constructive and profitable relationship with the land.

Nonetheless, the valorization of the honest husbandman goes hand in hand with an unsettled attitude towards progress. For the early settler – as well as present-day land developers – beauty was synonymous with visible 'improvement.'[14] For the more developed sensibility, however, efforts to civilize the North American landscape often appeared ridiculous and insignificant. At best, these enclaves tended to look unsightly and unfinished, to stand out like a wound:

> On one hand, cultivation was an essential element of contrast in a picturesque landscape; on the other, the process by which the wilderness was brought under control in America was ugly and destructive. ... What struck foreigners forcefully was the wastefully maintained farm land and the wanton destruction of trees, "the unpicturesque appearance of the angular fences, and of the stiff wooden houses. ... The stumps of the trees also, on land newly cleared, are most disagreeable objects, wherewith the eye is continually assailed."[15]

Trees were a nuisance to settlers – an attitude held in contempt by the Picturesque traveller, who did not have to face the reality of day-to-day existence in a new land. Improvement was an essential element of the Modern Arcadia, but only on the condition that the labour involved be removed to an appropriate distance. The Picturesque vision of North America held tightly to the idea that the labouring body was linked to the countryside only in the most abstract and idealistic way; the innate ambivalence of the mythos of rural labour lies in a sustained desire to maintain its invisibility.

The growth of the suburb is complexly linked to the same visual and ideological notions of property and propriety that circulate around the travelling body. In the domestic environment, however, notions of leisure and occupation are expressed in/as the visibility of an aestheticized private space as social marker. An early proponent of the exurban community, Ebenezer Howard's belief in the moral vigour of the 'garden city' was based

not only in the valorization of the agricultural economy, but in an assurance that the moral fortitude of this lifestyle could be reduplicated through the deployment of a Picturesque vision. The discourse of the garden city developed out of the notion that "social and economic reform was dependent on the quality of the living environment, and that the beauty of the country should be the guarantee of this quality." The emphasis on small scale and exurban location were drawn directly from the mythos of rural labour, and based on an optimism regarding "the spontaneous movement of the people from the crowded cities to the bosom of our kindly mother earth, at once the source of life, of happiness, of wealth and of power."[16] As Bunce synopsizes in the following passage, however, basing a lifestyle on the maintenance of an ideal past existence has a tendency to devalue and immobilize present reality:

> In the process of realising their own particular version of a country retreat, the country gentry, exurbanites, weekend cottagers, even back-to-the-landers have profoundly altered the character and the meaning of the rural landscape. They have fabricated a landscape which has transformed both natural environments and productive spaces into areas which conform to the idealisation of countryside as a place of leisure, refuge and alternative living. For the most part it is an amenity landscape, designed to provide pleasure rather than economic sustenance. It is also a predominantly private landscape controlled by the power and exclusivity of property ownership. It is therefore one in which the attraction of the countryside has taken on the form of a commodity, with land acquiring market value based upon its amenity rather than its productive value, a shift which has spilled over into the general rural economy.[17]

At the heart of the desire for Nature is a complex and pervasive link between visibility, propriety and consumption. By and large, however, it is the *illusion of space* rather than the physical occupation of terrain per se that constitutes the attraction of the countryside. Although the Claudean mode was based in a hierarchy that is inimical in many senses to the ideal democratic community that it depicts and patterns, it is the virtual distance

given in/by the Classical metaphorics of the eye that has come to be most strongly associated with the liberty and mobility embodied by the extraurban environment. This, along with a nostalgia for a outmoded rural order, perpetuates an understanding of Nature which is best described as *perspectival*. In this sense, the present-day subject of Landscape remains more or less synonymous with the subject of Classical representation.

Unlike in Classical representation, however, the body and Nature no longer enjoy identical ontological status. The troping of liberty as the antipodean horizon makes it clear that distance is no longer a source of anxiety; that corporeality, in other words, no longer conditions the experience or idealization of external Nature. Driving to a designated 'beauty spot,' parking the car, and enjoying the view remains one of the most popular countryside activities:

> The car ... remains very much the centre of recreational activity ... [Even] when [visitors] have reached their destination and parked, the majority seem to limit their appreciation of the natural scene to the area around the car park.[18]

The above passage proclaims succinctly the abstraction of the corporeal body from notions of mobility. Constituting freedom as the complete transcendence of corporeality means, in effect, that presence is recast as *performance*. As the following section will show, however, it is not just a relationship to the real which is performed in the virtual space between the self and the distant horizon, but Nature itself.

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By the early 1930s the establishment of countryside recreation as a mass activity had begun to put increased pressure on the scenic and recreational countryside.[19] From this point on,

the subject of Landscape is enmeshed in a complex and extensive rhetoric of desire and normalization. On both sides of the Atlantic, the principal goal of the countryside movement

> has been to politicise the countryside ideal; to make it part of the political agenda and therefore of the legislative framework. The result, in varying degrees, has been the growing incorporation of amenity ideology into the land use planning framework. ... The countryside ideal has ... become an institutionalised part of the landscape.[20]

Increasingly, this 'organization' of Nature has involved efforts to bring to public consciousness the reality of the limits of the environment. As the demand for natural resources continues to increase, it has become necessary to set aside parcels of land which are designated – by virtue of their 'unimproved' state – as 'wilderness.' The popularization of wilderness conservation has given rise to a paradoxical situation in which the necessity for management finds itself at odds with the ideal of Nature as both untouched, and 'elsewhere.'

1. See my unpublished paper (1995) op. cit.

2. Bunce, Michael. The Countryside Ideal: Anglo-American Images of Landscape. London and New York: Routledge, 1994, p177.

3. Robertson, Bruce. 'The Picturesque Traveller in America' in Views and Visions: American Landscape Before 1830. Edward J. Nygren, ed. Washington, D.C.: The Corcoran Gallery of Art, 1986, pp187-210, p209.

4. Ibid., p208.

5. Hemingway, op. cit., p26.

6. Bunce, op. cit., p86.

7. see Ibid., p88.

8. [It] was precisely in Jane Austen's lifetime that propriety assumed the meaning of conformity with good manners as well as the fact of owning something ... Propriety was seen to be no less important than law..." Daniels and Cosgrove, op. cit., pp68-9.
As Clarke notes, the ideal landscape of the eastern seaboard was "a social and moral landscape read through a series of

visual tokens." See Clarke, George. 'Landscape Painting and Domestic Typology' in Views of American Landscapes. Mick Gidley and Robert Lawson-Peebles, eds. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

9. Manners (or, more accurately, mannerisms) inform the countryside ideal to a large extent. Hunting, shooting, and fishing – activities enjoyed on country estates – are the most popular countryside activities in North America and Europe. "In Britain there is still a good deal of foundation to the image of hunting and shooting as the preserve of the landed classes." Bunce, op. cit., p126.

10. Ibid., p30.

11. Ibid., p30.

12. Ibid., pp35-6.

13. Ibid., p31.

14. Clarke, op. cit., p150.

15. Robertson, op. cit., p204.

16. Ebenezer Howard in Ibid., p162.

17. Ibid., p110. Bunce goes on to note that "the country place phenomenon creates its own culture which it imposes on landscape and community alike. In some instances it has become the dominant cultural force, displacing traditional rural activities with a process of gentrification that has converted whole communities into amenity-based residential settlements."

18. Ibid., p132.

19. Ibid., p122.

20. Ibid., p205.

3.2 *Wilderness and the production of Nature*

During the course of an afternoon ramble in Parc Mont-Royal not too long ago, I came upon a cluster of signs urging me to keep to the path, lest my passage through the undergrowth interfere with 'renaturalization' in progress in the immediate area. This simple instruction speaks volumes about our twentieth-century understanding of Nature. It implies that Nature can exist unsullied only in areas that remain untouched by humans. It suggests that renaturalization – here synonymous with the growth of vegetation – although initiated by humans, has effects which are in excess of the cultural. It partakes, in short, of a notable uncertainty concerning the function of humanity in the location and management of Nature. This uncertainty arises in part out of the Modern transformation of Nature's limits – those of the body, and those of the land – and the resulting ambiguity of the 'place' of Nature. Linking ideals of place with notions of representation, the discourse of Landscape serves, in part, to locate Nature as/in 'the wilderness.'

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Since the eighteenth century, the development of the idea of a 'second nature' – a Nature which is not clearly divided from history or culture and which is understood not as a material entity but as a *process* – has called into question the stability of Nature as a simple description of exteriority. Citing Paul de Man, Shane Phelan argues that Nature, for Modernity, is both a thing and a state, both process and becoming, both origin and goal. De Man does not imagine nature as a 'homogeneous mode of being' but as a 'process of deconstruction':

> Nature is the name given to "any stage of relational integration that precedes in degree the stage presently under consideration" ... [it is] "one system of relations among others", subject to history and variety as much as the present. Far from being an element in a theory of history, "nature" has embedded within it that very theory.[1]

As a constitutive or motive force, Nature does not simply frame knowledge; it provides the impetus of both knowledge and history. In the sense that its meaning "depends on an outside which both denies that identity and provides its condition of possibility at the same time,"[2] Nature, as I have already remarked, demonstrates a certain historical consistency. Jacques Derrida has noted the extent to which the idea of Nature as 'supplement' – as an excess which is simultaneously announced and concealed – appears in Rousseau's philosophy as

> a term that embodies the ambiguity of [the] understanding of nature. In the first usage, the supplement is that which is added to a full, self-sufficient unit. However, the second usage of "supplement" is that of fulfilling a lack.[3]

Nature, as both that which is always lacking, and that which fulfils lack, is never clearly divided from the subject. The spaces which we currently describe as 'natural' are in part, spaces which announce this ambivalence: they bespeak a desire for a return to the origin; a desire to situate oneself in relation to excess, and in relation to a history which is based in large part on an idealised vision of primal Nature. In light of its multivalent social and aesthetic significance, how and why do we continue to cast Nature as a *place*?

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> It is this consciousness of destruction, this arrière-pensée of quick and inevitable change that gives, we feel, so peculiar a character and such a touching beauty to the solitudes of America. One sees them with a melancholy pleasure; one is in some sort of a hurry to admire them. Thoughts of the savage, natural grandeur that is going to come to an end become mingled with splendid anticipations of the triumphant march of civilization.
>
> Alexis de Tocqueville, *Journey To America*

> The American experience has been the confrontation by old peoples and cultures of a world as new as if it had just risen from the sea. That gave us our hope and our excitement, and the hope and excitement can be passed on to newer Americans, Americans who never saw any phase of the frontier. But only so long as we keep the remainder of our wild as a reserve and a promise...
>
> We simply need that wild country available to us, even if we never do more than drive to its edge and look in. For it can be a means of reassuring ourselves of our sanity as creatures, a part of the geography of hope.
>
> Wallace Stegner, *letter to the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission*, 1960

Wilderness preservation came of age in the Rockies towards the end of the nineteenth century, with the drive to protect a wilderness frontier "which was perceived as a symbol of national greatness and identity."[4] Widely disseminated images of the America's vanishing wilderness captured the public's attention and stimulated the desire for conservation. Understood initially as the preservation of 'God's work', the suspension of the destruction of wilderness took on a real urgency as North Americans began to acknowledge that neither the land, nor the natural resources it contained, were unlimited.

The ideals behind the conservation of Nature were similar to those motivating the development of the urban landscape park. A central figure in the development of the national park, John Muir sought to bring together commerce and preservation in a sustainable relationship of mutual exchange:

> [Part] of [Muir's] motivation for creating national parks was that they contained valuable reserves of forest, minerals, and water. And it was the growing tension between the principles of resource conservation on the one and wilderness preservation on the other that kept the campaign going.[5]

The growing recognition of Nature's limits was attended by an equal pressure to legitimize its destruction; the national park helped to alleviate the tension between conservation and consumption. Perhaps more importantly, however, Muir argued – once again following a line of reasoning similar to Olmsted's – that the enjoyment of natural beauty was as legitimate a use of public land as the harvesting of its resources: "Thousands of tired, nerve-shaken, over-civilized people ... are beginning to find out that going to the mountains is going home; that wildness is a necessity; and that mountain parks and reservations are useful, not only as fountains of timber and irrigated rivers, but as fountains of life."[6] This figuration of the wilderness as 'home' inscribes the latter not only as an origin, but as a place that is not 'here'; Nature is produced as a space that is both distant and domestic, both remote and familiar. As it is produced in/by the space of the national park, Nature is a hegemonic and controlling space which not only functions as a virtual site for the colonized body, but inscribes that site with a near-universal and benign meaning. In endowing 'preserved' Nature with the same attributes as the landscape photograph, Stegner explicitly describes wilderness as a visible amenity, a view, a representation. In the same way that the consistency of the view is derived by securing a sovereign spectator, the operation of the perspective paradigm in environmental discourse enables the latter to generalize about the wilderness, to locate it in specific semiotically marked sites:

> They need to be countersites that enable the Other; at the same time, that Other must be incorrigible – it must be wild, dangerous, and fundamentally unpredictable. In short, wilderness is posited as an "other place" for use against a normal, everyday space from which one wishes to stand apart, to criticize.[7]

The hegemonic power of the wilderness utopia is a function of what De Bolla would term its 'semantic purity;' it is constructed and maintained for the specific purpose of veiling the 'open secret' in wilderness discourse: the notion that "design is anathema at a site where the Other is supposed to be present."[8] Like the eighteenth-century allegorical garden, the 'managed wilderness' is articulated around a dynamic of simultaneous announcement and elision of agency; it is born out of an unspoken societal compact to overlook the fact of its constructedness, lest "issues of origin and agency [be placed] in too visible a context,"[9] lest wilderness itself collapse as a site where self and society may go (really or figuratively) to reassure themselves of their coherence and individuality. In this sense, the 'open secret' might be described as a Picturesque attitude towards Nature: one which appears to sustain ideals of the autonomous subject, but for which the agency of presence is irreconcilable with the 'vision of Nature':

> As utopia, wilderness must *stand for* an ideal, a transcendent category only *represented* in this or that location. In other words, wilderness must be the sign of nature, the wild, the Other ... Yet, wilderness itself – in its geographic specificity – cannot very well be this ideal.[10]

This passage not only announces an innate incommensurability between representation and the 'real', it proclaims wilderness as a codification of our relationship with Nature, a term embodying "our attempt to create, out of our own will or representation, the Other we choose to encounter."[11] As Stegner makes abundantly clear, it is the paradigmatic force of Landscape – also present in contemporary literature on the environment and wilderness – which functions to *situate* Nature; to establish Nature as a *place* and thus to contain its ambivalence. This place is the wilderness; both elsewhere and origin; a territory which resonates with the constitutive force of the perspective paradigm.

***

> In looking at the misty mountain-tops that bound the horison the mind is as it were conscious of all the conceivable objects and interests that lie between; we imagine all sorts of adventures in the interim; strain our hopes and wishes to reach the air-drawn circle, or to 'descry new lands, rivers, and mountains,' stretching far beyond it ... Where the landscape fades from the dull sight, we fill the thin, viewless space with shapes of unknown good, and tinge the hazy prospect with hopes and wishes and more charming fears. ... Whatever is placed beyond the reach of sense and knowledge, whatever is imperfectly discerned, the fancy pieces out at its leisure; and all but the present moment, but the present spot, passion claims for its own, and brooding over it with wings outspread, stamps it with an image of itself. Passion is lord of infinite space, and distant objects please because they border on its confines, and are moulded by its touch.
>
> William Hazlitt, *Why Distant Objects Please*

Since the mid-1960s, saving the wilderness has become more or less synonymous with saving the planet. It seems more than a coincidence that this vision of a 'whole earth' coincided almost exactly with the first photographs of the planet from outer space – a confirmation that ecological consciousness, like the discourse of Landscape, is predicated on a 'view from elsewhere' and on an abstracted subject whose removal from the material enables a view of the global reality of Nature.

But to describe Nature in this way is to describe a utopia: a space with no 'real' place, whose uniformity is a function of its opposition to reality. The notion of utopia allows space and society to be totalized, represented in abstraction – a space which is as much rhetorical as it is visual, and which demands, in that sense, to be read as a *text*.

1. Phelan, op. cit., p391.

2. Laclau in Ibid., p385.

3. Ibid., pp397-8.

4. Bunce, op. cit., p192.

5. Ibid., p193.

6. Muir in Ibid., p195.

7. Chaloupka, William, and R. McGreggor Cawley. 'The Great Wild Hope: Nature, Environmentalism, and the Open Secret.' in In the Nature of Things: Language, Politics, and the Environment. Jane Bennet and William Chaloupka, eds. Minneapolis and London, University of Minnesota Press, 1993, p10.

8. Ibid., p11.

9. Ibid., p11.

10. Ibid., p12.

11. Ibid.,p14.

3.3 *The taxonomy of Landscape*

> After I have once written on a subject, it goes out of my mind: my feelings about it have been melted down into words, and *them* I forget. I have, as it were, discharged my memory of its old habitual reckoning, and rubbed out the score of real sentiment. In future, it exists only for the sake of others. –But I cannot say, from my own experience, that the same process takes place in transferring our ideas to canvas; they gain more than they lose in the mechanical transformation. One is never tired of painting, because you have set down not what you knew already, but what you have just discovered. In [writing], you translate feelings into words, in [painting], names into things. There is a continual creation out of nothing going on. ... Every object becomes lustrous from the light thrown back upon it by the mirror of art; and by the aid of the pencil we may be said to touch and handle the object of sight. The air-wove visions that hover on the edge of existence have a bodily presence given them on the canvas: the form of beauty is changed into substance: the dream and the glory of the universe is made 'palpable to feeling as to sight.' ... Who would think this miracle of Rubens' pencil possible to be performed? ... See how the rich fallows, the bare stubble-field, the scanty harvest-home, drag in Rembrandt's landscapes! How often have I looked at them and nature, and tried to do the same, till the very 'light thickened,' and there was an earthiness in the feeling of the air? There is no end of the refinements of art and nature in this respect. One may look at the misty glimmering horizon till the eye dazzles and the imagination is lost, in hopes to transfer the whole interminable expanse at one blow upon the canvas.
>
> William Hazlitt, *On the Pleasure of Painting*

In an 1808 treatise entitled *Eléments de Perspective Pratique à l'Usages des Artistes,* Pierre-Henri Valenciennes sets out to instruct the young painter in the accurate representation of the Landscape scene. Discussing light and atmosphere at various times of the day, Valenciennes uses the image of the *Fête de Delphes* to evoke a sense of the moment which epitomises dawn.[1] Employing richly evocative language and mythological allusions, Valenciennes creates a mood of solemn ceremony; a rhetorical tableau which is intended to aid the neophyte in infusing his image with the proper effect. For Valenciennes, there is no question that prospective painter will profit from such a description – an assumption which admits to a fundamental inaccuracy or inadequacy in vision, and to the need, in describing Nature, of something that goes beyond the visible.

Reflecting, as it does, upon the incommensurability of painting and writing, and upon the 'failure' of the former to fully describe the process of Nature, it is not surprising that Hazlitt's discussion is undertaken in the context of Landscape. Anamorphic possibility invites the failure of the perspective paradigm as a means of finding oneself in (the) representation. Although the 'birth' of the Albertian paradigm proper can be located in/as the assumption that a written description would serve as an adequate translation of a demonstration in real space, this supposition nonetheless goes hand in hand with ongoing admissions, such as Hazlitt's, that this translation also incurred a *loss*; that 'the art of perspective is hard to describe'.[2] This ambivalence persists in present-day discourses of visual project analysis, for which the photograph functions simultaneously as an ideologically neutral tool, and a representation whose meaning must always be secured through the superimposition of text. The following discussion will address the uneasy relationship between these two means of representation.

***

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Picturesque traveller who failed to bring back a visual and verbal inventory of her/his journey had missed one of the main points of the trip. Such accounts were almost obligatory, since the Picturesque tourist "was the partner of the landscape painter in America. The verbal pictures he produced were governed by the same conventions as visual ones, and had the same range of meanings."[3] As an aid to those who would describe the beauties of Nature, Picturesque theorists like William Gilpin catalogued visible attributes such as "trees – rocks – broken grounds – woods – rivers – lakes – plains – vallies – mountains – and distances,"[4] and declared that Nature's beauty could be measured according to contrasts of "light and dark, high and low, rocky and wooded, cultivated and wild."[5] It was important that these attributes be viewed as though

in a frame; as though the tourist were standing in front of a Classical landscape painting which derived its 'innate harmony' from the disposition of diverse elements: "woods opened by pastures, coulisse for achieving atmospheric distances, topographic relief, and the presence of water."[6] The quality of a landscape depended, in other words, upon a taxonomy of visual effects, which were, not insignificantly, precisely those required to give the landscape an appearance of great depth.

A similar set of evaluative criteria are presently deployed in the discipline of visual resource management. Different landscape 'types' are defined by slope, vegetative cover, light refractory capabilities, visibility, and like features. When choosing a method for describing a wild landscape, various nonsystematic and nonquantitative visual methods are employed "if the purpose is simply to convey a whole image to others," or if one is merely "attempting to describe the visual impacts of proposed development in wildlands."[7] Such nonquantitative approaches often take 'user-defined' forms, in which the landscape consumer is asked to list "elements of the landscape that they felt contributed to scenic beauty."[8] In the context of the present study, the problems of such an approach are obvious: its assumption of a neutral and unguided public opinion does not account for the ideological construction and maintenance of ideals of beauty; more importantly, in asking the participant to describe 'beauty' as the presence or absence of specific 'pictorial' attributes, it assumes and reproduces the perspectival space of Landscape. In short, the claim that the 'quality' or 'scenic beauty' of a landscape can be *itemized* in this fashion is only possible if one accepts the discourse of Landscape as providing the standard for such quality.[9]

When the purpose of description is to compare, contrast, discriminate, or assign a scenic value, however, a 'quantitative verbal approach' is indicated:

> Expert approaches have evolved such that they are increasingly quantitative in nature; numbers are usually assigned to landscape elements relative to their presence or absence, or their degree of presence. These numbers are then combined in some fashion to produce an overall evaluation of landscape quality.[10]

Although photographs are used in public approaches to wildland visual analysis, they are seldom relied upon in practice, where the degree of accuracy demands a more systematic methodology. Employed in the service of this methodology, the photograph is "easily understood and responded to... [it provides] accurate, common images;"[11] here, the discourse of visual resource management is less concerned with the subjectivity of vision than it is with the photograph's amenability to the pseudo-science of taxonomy, and with the shaping of a practice whose evaluative criteria are strictly empirical. The photograph serves as a demonstration, or at best an illustration; in itself, it is not constitutive of a particular relationship to that which it represents or the discipline that implements it. It is the unquestioned neutrality and universal legibility of the traditional landscape view, however, which serves to contain the subjectivity of vision and of Nature.

The photograph thus assumes the status of an ideologically neutral tool, and on the other hand, of a descriptive method that is too vague or subjective for hard science; as such, it is symptomatic of a broad-reaching incommensurability of aesthetic judgement and scientific method, of objectivity and subjectivity in the construction of truth. The description of Landscape is an irresolute process; the juxtaposition of text is an attempt to settle matters by redoubling the authority of the image. Captioning fixes the meaning of images, imparting to them – and their authors – the cachet of scientific objectivity and truth. As Wood notes:

> Befitting *visual* resource management programs, the manuals are invariably – as we say – *heavily illustrated*, though it would be more accurate to describe them as books of pictures that are *heavily captioned*. ... the captions perform the brunt of the work because, since every photograph freezes an *endless number of possible readings*, the caption is required to indicate the one that the photograph was *elected* to establish.[12]

A similar dynamic is evident in many painters' sketches. In the cloud studies of Frederic Edwin Church, the copious notation, and the descriptive language in which these notes are made, indicates an imagination for which the visible is an inadequate transcription of the real. The artist falls back on adjective-laden prose to invoke colour, shape, and transition; to transcribe an experience of Nature that the impressions of the senses fail to convey.

Thousands of descriptive terms are used in visual project analysis, and although opinion is divided as to which are the best, the general feeling is that text-based descriptors leave less room for subjective error than images. Both the expert and the public approaches, however, leave unchallenged the assumed objectivity of perspectival space that underwrites both the aesthetics of Nature and the science of its description.

At the heart of this objectivity is an inadequately examined link between perspective and the *description* of Nature; between the view and the reality that it constitutes.[13] Like most land management discourses, visual project analysis is founded upon the unquestioned assumption that Nature is something which, although it may have no necessary referent in reality, can nonetheless be studied as a homogeneous space or place. A similar form of blindness also pervades Landscape painting; Valenciennes' descriptive passages give the aspiring painter 'something to look for', aiding her/him in the creation of a Nature that goes beyond the real:

> Ce genre est absolument idéal; et le paysage qui lui est propre devant être habité par des hommes, non pas tels qu'ils sont, mais tels que l'imagination suppose qu'ils pouvoient être, exige qu'il soit préparé pour recevoir de pareils mortels. Il faut que le Peintre représente la belle Nature simple et majestueuse tout à la fois, telle enfin que le génie doit la créer sur la toile, puisqu'on ne la rencontre plus sur la terre.[14]

The image of the *Fête de Delphes* provides the painter with a narrative fulcrum, an extension of mere fact, which invests the painter's work with the authority of Landscape. As compositions, however, Landscapes in general

> actually constitute theories of Nature: Nature is in balance (and a harmonious landscape is a sign of this), Nature is unendingly inventive (and a landscape with variety is a sign of this – even if we have to alter the *in situ* ecosystem to demonstrate it), Nature is the great artist...[15]

Here, the multiplication of the rhetorical force of Landscape functions to constitute and contain Nature.

***

In so-called haptic space, the infinite envelops the spectatorial body. The birth of pictorial space could be described as the abstraction of the infinite from material space and its relocation in/as a theoretical point (or set of points) characterized by an inbuilt and unfailing neutrality:

> The ultimate basis of the homogeneity of geometric space is that all its elements, the 'points' which are joined in it, are mere determinants of position, possessing no independent content of their own outside of this relation, this position which they occupy in relation to each other. Their reality is exhausted in their reciprocal relation: it is a purely functional and not a substantial reality. Because fundamentally *these points are devoid of all content*, because they have become mere expressions of ideal relations, they

> can raise no question of a diversity in content. *Their homogeneity signifies nothing other than this similarity of structure, grounded in their common logical function, their common ideal purpose and meaning.* Hence homogeneous space is never given space, but space produced by construction...[16] (emphasis added)

In and of itself, perspectival space cannot 'mean', it can only provide an armature for meaning; although he acknowledges its production, Ernst Cassirer describes a neutral space formed by a logic founded on the transparency of language. In this sense, the visual/optical space of perspective is an analogue to Classical discursive space; a space which mirrors reality, but does not transform its meaning.

Cassirer's geometric space is also a metaphoric space which presupposes an ontological similarity between language and the reality it describes.[17] I would suggest, however, that the truth in/of perspectival space is less a function of what is described than it is a function of its *manner of description;* that perspectival space comprises what Damisch terms a 'path of reading' – an integrated space of language and vision which, in its narrative animation of virtual space, imbues the latter with an organicity borrowed from the 'real.' Perspectival space, in other words, performs a troping function that mobilizes the subject within the virtual space of both Landscape and history. That this function is incorporated into the very structure of Landscape is one possible explanation for the inclusion of instructions for Landscape representation within perspective treatises. Perhaps more interesting, however, is the fact that such treatises appear equally concerned with what perspective *cannot* represent.

1. Valenciennes, Pierre-Henri. Eléments de Perspective Pratique à l'Usages des Artistes. Geneva: Minkoff, 1973, c.1808, p430.

2. See Cole, Rex Vicat. Perspective for Artists. New York: Dover, 1976 c. 1921. Comprehensive bibliographies of works on perspective can be found in De Bolla (1989) op. cit. and Kemp, Martin op. cit.

3. Robertson, op. cit., p190.

4. Gilpin in Ibid., p189.

5. Ibid., p189.

6. Ibid., p189.

7. Foundations for Visual Project Analysis. Richard C. Smardon, James F. Palmer, and John P. Fellman, eds. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1986, p101.

8. Ibid., p93.

9. See Crandell, op. cit., and Wood, Denis. 'Unnatural Illusions: Some Words About Visual Resource Management' Landscape Journal, vol. 7 no. 2 (Fall 1988), pp192-205. Describing the visual resource management programs currently employed by the National Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Soil Conservation Service, and the Federal Highway Administration, he notes that, for each system, "Its code will be that of Art: *tasteful pictures*. It will be replete with an art-critical vocabulary. It will speak of *forms, lines, colours, textures*, and *harmonies*. Inevitably it will produce the implication of a "landscape" (a scene, a view: one framed by our expectations of Art) – but it will be one that does not exist, or that does not exist here. That is, it will be literally a scene (composed of scenery, of scrims, flats, backdrops, flies: it will comprise a scenography). It will *not* be the visible surface of an ecosystem. That this scene will be mistaken for the real thing ... will be the measure of its success." p193.

10. Smardon et. al., op. cit. p93.

11. Ibid., p94.

12. Wood, op. cit., p197.

13. "[Today's] environmental designers lack [a knowledge of landscape's intimate link with painting] and so have convinced themselves that what they see in the contemporary version of the landscape garden is "natural"; and today this description means almost nothing at all." Crandell, op. cit., p10. In an article entitled 'Wildland Description and Analysis', Richard E. Chenoweth and Paul H. Gobster allow that the 'relative realism' of paintings by Church, Cole, Bierstadt, and the like will serve to convey the 'image of wildland' to those who may never have experienced it directly. See Smardon et. al., op. cit., p90.

14. Valenciennes, op. cit., p483.

15. Wood, op. cit., p198.

16. Cassirer in Panofsky, Erwin. Perspective as Symbolic Form. Christopher S. Wood, trans. New York: Zone Books, 1991, p30.

17. The seventeenth-century fascination with automata could be described as a metaphoric linking of humanity and Nature; Descartes observed that "...one can very well compare the nerves of the machine [i.e., Man] ... to the pipes of the machinery of these fountains; his muscles and his tendons to the various engines and springs which serve to move them; his animal spirits to the water which sets them in motion, whose source is the heart, and the cavities of whose brain are the outlets. ... breathing and similar actions ... are like the movements of a clock... External objects which, by their very presence, act against the organs of the sense and which by this means set up movements in several diverse ways, ... are like strangers who, entering some of the caverns containing these fountains, themselves, unwittingly, cause the movements which occur in their presence..." The functions of the human body are mapped onto that of the cave automaton, linking it "with a theory of the Universe and with Nature" see Baltrusaitis, op. cit., pp63-6.

3.4 *A history in Landscape*

> Starting with its organization of point of view, vanishing point, and distance point, and the other corollary points designating *here*, *there*, and *over there* – which is sufficient to make it possible to speak, again nonmetaphorically, of a geometry of the sentence that would have its analogue in the figurative register. ... The formal apparatus put in place by the perspective paradigm is equivalent to that of the sentence, in that it assigns the subject a place within a previously established network that gives it meaning, while at the same time opening up the possibility of something like a statement... The perspective paradigm effectively posits the other, in the face of the "subject," as always already there...
>
> Hubert Damisch, *The Origin of Perspective*

Perspective is not (as history would have it) an object given to knowledge. It is a paradigmatic form which structures knowledge; a means of 'giving' objects to knowledge. Landscape gives Nature to knowledge by assuming and reproducing it as/at a spatial and temporal distance from the subject. Perspectival Landscape demands a particular narrative of description: a synchronic narrative with a distinct origin and goal, arrayed across a fully legible space of representation. As Damisch intimates, however, this legibility is not derived from a simple superposition of the visual and the verbal; as a 'textual' space, Landscape describes a 'path of reading' – a troped space, analogous but not equal to written or spoken language, which motivates the subject's progress not only through the virtual space of vision, but of history.

***

In *Modern Painters*, John Ruskin asserts that the representation of the infinite demands not simply artistic skill, but a "practical relation between scientific knowledge and poetic truth."[1] It could just as well be argued, however, that the description of the infinite or extradiscursive depends as much upon a *lapse* of scientific knowledge as it does upon a perfect acquaintance with the inexhaustible variety of Nature.[2] In this sense, the failure of

costruzione legittima to fully command the space it constructs acts to *bring into view* the limits of this space. The allure of Landscape, in other words, is partly due to its actualization of that which perspective cannot represent; its implicit acknowledgment that Nature is produced or performed as/at the limits of representation:

> Turner gathered from the previously unexplored sky alone, transcripts of Nature whose mingled beauty of form and chiaroscuro have immortalized him, for the sole reason that he has therein approached nearer to the representation of the infinity of Nature than all that have gone before him.[3]

Clouds, light and water were the fundamental elements of the North American sublime, the catalysts by which diverse phenomena were harmonized.[4] Light, in particular, was regarded as a spiritually charged homogenizing force:

> Light is ... more than any other component, the alchemistic medium by which the landscape artist turns matter into spirit. For Durand, sunlight was, among other things, a type of the divine attribute. For Cole, the sky itself was "the soul of all scenery, in it are the fountains of light, shade and color...".[5]

It is a testimony to the desire for truth in nineteenth-century Landscape painting that representational indeterminacy necessarily functions as a signpost to the infinite. The unrepresentable – the divine or extradiscursive – comes into view where form dissolves; it consists not only in all that escapes the codification of science, but in all that fails to be brought to law through the perspective paradigm. The history of linear perspective is marked by such admissions of its inadequacy:

> [Ce] sont les études particulières faites d'après nature, qui donnent les meilleures Leçons de Perspective pour tous les objets indéterminés; et l'on ne peut jamais être assez exact, ni assez juste dans un traité de cette science, pour prescrire des règles sur toutes les variétés que presente la Nature...[6]

In the representation of Nature, the painter must rely upon a 'purely sentimental'

perspective[7] which is born out of process rather then pragmatism. *Costruzione legittima* is here characterized by the same ambiguity that led Descartes to question its seemingly miraculous embodiment of the mechanics of perception.[8] As Brunelleschi demonstrated, perspective does not represent reality, it constructs it, falsifying the position and structure of objects in/as the incorporation of distance. Like the postmodern technological sensorium, perspectival Nature is the fruit of an unreliable vision.

***

If Landscape is grounded in a structure which is so innately deceptive, then why is it so often understood to reveal the truth of Nature and of humanity's relationship to it? The answer to this lies, in part, in the legibility of Landscape; in an alethic potency which can be understood as a function of the descriptive force of perspectival space:

> To describe ... is always already to narrate, insofar as all description ... refers to an action: ... describing a painting amounts to clearing a path, laying out a route through it for discourse.[9]

Again, it seems more than coincidence that this discursive route or 'path for the gaze' should direct the observer through virtual space as though she/he were viewing a Landscape: "either the description is held to advance along the lines of a promenade offering successive partial glimpses of the surrounding landscape, or it takes its place within a view from above, the pathway being inscribed into the encompassing geography."[10] Here, the visual organization of Nature is a figure for the viewer's progress through an 'ideal' narrative space:

> [The] set of discrete elements included in the description are organized as a progression commencing on the ground ... which is the foundation of the representation, thence proceeding from bottom to top and from foreground to background: the synchronic configuration of which perspective is an

> example functioning, simultaneously, as a model for the successive articulation of the components of the image in the three dimensions of projective space.[11]

As a *trope,* the perspectival space of Landscape not only locates and spatializes the reading subject, it *mobilizes* this subject, inviting it to proceed towards the horizon in diachronic fashion; to experience a space and time that could be described as 'theatrical', in the sense that they appear to originate somewhere other than the subject.

Not only the picture's 'meaning', but its position in the history of Landscape, is given in/by an act of reading which subjects space and time to an identical ordering strategy. How, then, can the analyst submit a painting to a critique without acknowledging her/his own subjective and historical formation in/by the space of the Landscape that he/she studies? Any reading which conflates spatial structure and iconography must inevitably find itself within a perspectival (diachronic, teleological) history: a unified space, proceeding in one direction from a known origin, towards a desired goal; a space for which the present can exist only as a disruption.

Viewing Landscape in terms of a perspectival history provides a spatial and temporal 'ground' that is separate from the subject. Take as an example Angela Miller's discussion of Cole's *Subsiding of the Waters,* which, as she describes,

> achieves its power by translating more traditional narrative devices into formal terms. ... *The very structures of the painting ... suggest the forces of history militating against the realization of millennial hopes.* ... His 1829 painting expressed a growing sense of history as a never-ending movement toward a goal continually redefined by time itself.[12] (emphasis added)

For Miller, the meaning of Cole's picture is fully present; its 'formal terminology' constitutes a seamless union of iconography and spatial structure. Cassirer's assertion that

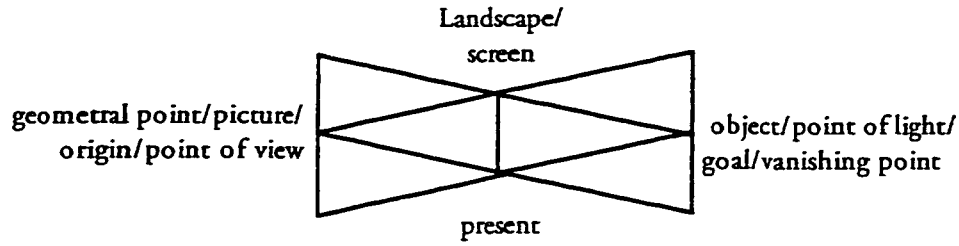
homogenous space is nothing more than a neutral armature – that perspectival space signifies its own neutrality – reappears here as the founding gesture of the history of Landscape. This history is articulated around a narrative *moment*[13] that elides its own constructedness; a figuration which, in positing the other as 'always already there', demands to be read identically by all subjects.

Seen in this light, it almost makes sense that terms such as 'Classical' and 'Modern' must needs be employed with some sort of exactitude. As if the preceding chapters have not made it clear enough that these terms are equivocal *by Nature.* Why is it that I can discuss Pierre-Henri Valenciennes and Jonathan Crary in the same paragraph, collapsing three hundred years of history in the service of an identical argument? Does it not strike the reader as a little bizarre (one might even say presumptuous) that a phenomenon such as Picturesque aesthetics can be confined to a single decade?[14] Why does art history seem so uninterested in the fact that the origin of 'Modern' pictorial space is variously ascribed to late medieval art (John White), da Vinci (Martin Kemp), and Cezanne (Meyer Schapiro)? Even more perplexing, why is it so unwilling to admit that even the most cursory examination of Brunelleschi's experiment compels the reader to allow that his 'unknowing' acknowledgement of the place of the subject in the formation of the space of representation, might be more than mere accident?[15] Moreover, how is it that Lacan's picture can be subjected to sundry transformations without a loss of legibility?

To use these terms in a more historically 'responsible' fashion is to serve a spatio-temporal paradigm among the more sinister effects of which is Western culture's obsessive retention (the archive is a case in point) of its own material past in the hope that such artifacts will point the way to a better future. To put it another way: any history which describes a more primal relationship to the real, inasmuch as it serves to link past and future as a compensatory gesture for a less than ideal present, functions as a means of eliding the 'now' – of concealing the *work* in representation.

***

To bring this discussion back to the topic at hand, let us return to the schematic that has appeared in preceding chapters, and examine more closely the Nature of the work in/of Landscape. If the space of Landscape, in its various figurations, is mapped onto Lacan's double dihedron, the following result is obtained:



A shorthand description of Classical representational space results when real, abject Nature is placed on the left, and ideal Nature on the right. If it is allowed that Nature is a subjective effect, this schematic can be applied with equal validity to the space of Modern representation. This figuration reveals that the present, the screen of representation, (the) Landscape, is cast as 'not-Nature' – that is, it situates itself where Nature is *not*. Nature, in other words, cannot be understood in terms of the present, in terms of the presence of objects in the circuit of representation, or in terms of the moment in which the subject finds itself now; virtual space is also virtual time; spatial and temporal distance coalesce in/as the figure of ***not here, not now.***

Landscape, in other words, operates (on) a subject that is literally ***out of time and not of Nature;*** its subject – the subject of *costruzione legittima* – exists independently of the real

and of history. But it is the body that provides the framework for a perspectival history by acting as its limit: it is the 'real' body that mobilizes history, and that prevents it from ever attaining the 'truth' towards which it reaches. We can never know what it means to inhabit a body other than our own, nor can history construct a surrogate. It is this awareness of the body as *that without which there can be no origin* that history must elide in order to proceed.

Spatial representation is similarly limited; the creation of a 'correct' perspectival image is an 'impossible' task, says Panofsky, because "a sphere obviously cannot be unrolled on a surface."[16] What Panofsky implies, in effect, is that the material is both a limit to, and a limiting condition of, pictorial space: the body as *that without which* costruzione legittima *cannot proceed.* Like the subjectifying relation it mimics, perspectival space is articulated around an irrecoverable loss of wholeness, of unity with that which it represents; like the Lacanian subject, the subject of Landscape is "almost entirely defined by lack."[17] Landscape names this lack – which inhabits representation (and its history) as an ambiguity, a presence and an absence – as Nature. Nature, in its turn, acts to conceal the fact that we bring this loss on ourselves.

***

In light of the unsustainability of a purely oppositional Nature, perhaps there is more to be gained by examining the mutual construction of Landscape, Nature, and the subject. Rather than confining one's investigations to the limited choice which is given in/as the view and its attendant iconography, why not follow the suggestion put forth by Damisch, and allow oneself to be 'educated' by (the) representation, an inquiry that puts the unrepresentable to work for the self by directing its attention to "the index of work which ... cannot be reduced to the order of the sign:"[18] to the work of the creative body in (the) Landscape.

1. Novak, op. cit., p89. Damisch has discussed at length the limited success of Ruskin's attempts to secure a scientific means of rendering clouds in perspective; see Théorie du Nuage.

2. For an interesting commentary on the incommensurability of 'creativity' and modern science, see Bohm, David, and F. David Peat. Science, Order, and Creativity. Toronto & New York: Bantam Books, 1987.

3. Asher B. Durand in Novak, op. cit., p85.

4. "Light and atmosphere, in the best operatic works of Church and Bierstadt, often succeeded in establishing a unity through ... 'excessive' effect, disarming judgement with a dazzle of color that masked compositional inadequacies." Ibid., p25 Water also functioned as "a compositional device marrying sky and ground by bringing the balm of light down to the earth on which the traveller stands."Ibid., p41.

5. Ibid., p41.

6. Valenciennes, op. cit., p222 .

7. "Nous appelons Perspective sentimentale celle qui ne peut avoir d'autre règle que le sentiment acquis par une longue habitude de la Perspective pratique et raisonnée. ... C'est par cette juste application que l'on connoît au premier coup-d'oeil si un Artiste sait et conçoit la Perspective..." Ibid., p227.

8. Playing on the errors of vision and the unreliability of the senses, Niceron's *Curious Perspective* (1638) "completely and brilliantly [confirms] the Cartesian reflections on palpable reality and on the divergences between the real and the apparent." Baltrusaitis, op. cit., p69

9. Damisch, op. cit., p261.

10. Ibid., pp262-3.

11. Damisch, op. cit., pp272-3.

12. Miller, op. cit., p55.

13. 'Moment' should be understood here in its mechanical sense; that is, as the measure of the power of a force in causing movement about a point.

14. see 'The Picturesque Decade' in Bermingham, Ann. Landscape and Ideology: The English Rustic Tradition, 1740-1860. Berkeley, Los Angeles, & London: University of California Press, 1987.

15. In his *Vier Bucher von menschlicher Proportion* of 1528, Dürer illustrates the literal 'circumscription' of the subject by the space of representation - space within which it is 'impossible' for the subject of the geometral plane to establish or identify a point of view; space from which this subject is excluded. His 'shorter way' literally endows the picture plane with 'vision', describing a fictive space or semiotic structure - a screen of representation - that exists prior to and in the absence of the viewer. The fictive spaces constructed in this and other contemporary works presupposes a viewer, but do not address or engage this viewer as a phenomenal reality.

16. Panofsky, op. cit., p36.

17. See Silverman, Kaja. The Subject of Semiotics. New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983, p151.

18. Damisch, op. cit., p262.

3.5 *(In)conclusion: the unrepresentable*

> *My studio practice serves as a platform for a critique of the photographic representation of landscape. It is therefore based around three interacting notions: **what** is represented as landscape, **how** it is represented, and the status of the representation as either 'image' or 'object'.*
> *The first of these addresses what Western culture perceives and accepts as a representation of (the) landscape, questioning the status of the photograph as a substantive informational structure. Working mainly with close-up images, exploring their inherent ambiguity of identity and scale, I present an alternative to culturally sanctioned notions of Landscape. As well, I work mainly with contact prints, which present an obvious practical difficulty in terms of what can be seen. Both of these tactics present a landscape in which the structural and informational strategies of the view no longer function to position the spectator.*
> *In relation to the second notion, I work with multiple images in order to foreground the infinite reproducibility of the photograph – and thus the ease with which the view finds its way into the popular imagination – and to address the single image or view as a structure whose primary function is to limit meaning. Working with multiple images presents the viewer with a wide range of possible meanings, foregrounding my understanding of Landscape as intimately linked to the question of choice.*
> *The third aspect of my work – the status of the representation – pertains to the presence of the photograph as either 'object' or 'image'. Rather than invoking the virtual space of the view, my work employs the sculptural elements of the photograph as a three-dimensional object in an effort to reconnect the idea of Landscape with the physical 'reality' of the spectator's presence. Three-dimensional presentations take on different identities depending upon the distance from which they are viewed, working the tension between image and object. Foregrounding the movement of the body as a vital factor in the experience and definition of Landscape, these presentations encourage a more open reading of Landscape.*

Imagine for a moment that I am not the author of the preceding passage. Imagine instead that it was written by someone who believed that the ideas embodied in this paper are also visible in my 'artwork'; that each serves as a sort of caption for the other and that what I *mean to say* about Landscape as a whole is made fully legible in and by these complementary 'works.' This effort to *describe* what I do, to chart a path through my practice, to situate a/the reading subject in the immobilized present of the work ... all it indicates to me is a need for closure.

The authority of the text is based in part in the assumption that complete description and closure are good and necessary things. Will ending this paper with a clear and concise

discussion of the relationship between my studio work and my theoretical practice indicate that some goal has been attained, satisfy some analytic requirement, justify their juxtaposition, as if the two could be reconciled by pure force of rhetoric? I'm not convinced. The fact is that these two practices don't map out perfectly onto one another, nor do they serve to illustrate one another, nor do I seek a seamless accord between them. Inasmuch as it comprises *process* as well as product, any attempt to *describe what my work is about* can never be more than an exercise in retrospection, and a futile exercise at that. So, if the above text is to be understood as anything more than a distraction, I would have to ask the hypothetical critic how she/he could claim such an authority. After all, I'm the one doing the work; all you are doing is 'putting it in perspective.'

In the service of inconclusion, I would prefer to examine the discontinuity between the two descriptive spaces that comprise my practice as a whole: the problematic points where image and text fail to coincide, fail to communicate; where the links between work and text break down and neither functions to describe the other.

***

The hypothetical critic will undoubtedly protest my allegation that she/he 'does no work'. I'm not about to argue that erudition is a sisyphean task. But allowing the perspective paradigm to lead one through visual and textual space in the hope of finding meaning in this activity, is to displace the work of the subject in favour of the 'work of perspective' – the abstraction of the point of view from the process of its formation. A representation can only be 'read' if it is understood as a totality, the homogeneous object of a strictly empirical investigation undertaken by a nonaligned subject:

> It is far from clear that we've escaped this circle today, or that there's any way to escape other than by rejecting the notion, in the end a strictly empirical one, of the *path (parcours)* and with it the reading metaphor: a metaphor that ... is ... misleading when the purported "text" of the painting is not construed a priori as a proxy for the person behind it...[1]

As I have gone to considerable lengths to demonstrate, constituting the point of view as the property of nobody in particular is a means of disclaiming responsibility for the contrivance of the other, a means of perpetuating the hegemonic notion of Nature as 'out there'. For the theoretician, the body is baggage. It is for precisely this reason that the twentieth-century discourse of Landscape needs to be subjected to a 'revision.'

Hinging as it does around the notion of the unrepresentable, such a critique might begin by asking what Landscape does *not* represent, or what it *chooses* not to represent – a question whose significance is immediately evident if one recalls that the legibility of Landscape is the product of a structural paradigm which, in describing the body as a functionless object at play in the 'aesthetic sandbox' of Nature,[2] prescribes a very specific relationship of self and other. This legibility is contingent upon the constitution of anamorphosis or gesture as excessive or unrepresentable, or, at best, allowable within tightly confined limits. Landscape, in other words, *chooses not to let the representing body represent itself.*
A possible means of acknowledging this work, of incorporating the subject in(to) the description of Landscape, would be to take into account all that is not amenable to the descriptive force of the perspective paradigm. As Damisch has suggested, meaning or significance might also be understood as a function not of what is represented, but of what is *transformed.*[3] Unlike reading, the notion of transformation is not perspectival, it is not animated by the aspiration to locate meaning within a homogeneous space.
Transformation, as I understand it – and as it might be understood in relation to my

practice – rests on the consideration of the subject (of Landscape) as a *creative* agent; a subject whose field of operations is submitted to constant re-evaluation; a subject which is constituted in/as the process of engaging an environment that is at once – and contradictorily – physical, visual, and ideological.

Agency, in this sense, is founded in/as the *choice* to locate the self – a choice which, as I've already intimated, has more to do with process than result. The exercise of political and corporeal agency is a continuous procedure of animating and re-animating one's landscape; not an abstraction of the self, but a reflection upon presence, a representation of the self to the self. Both creation and reception are forms of (self-)representation, elements of the same continuum of location. To put it another way (which is not as paradoxical as it might seem), the process of finding the self in the now is in some sense an admission of one's inescapable dislocation.

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> The body posited as prior to the sign, is always *posited* or *signified* as *prior*. This signification produces as a *effect* of it own procedure the very body that it nevertheless and simultaneously claims to discover as that which *precedes* its own action. If the body signified as prior to signification is an effect of signification, then the mimetic or representational status of language, which claims that signs follow bodies as their necessary mirrors, is not mimetic at all. On the contrary, it is productive, constitutive, one might even argue *performative*, inasmuch as this signifying act delimits and contours the body that it then claims to find prior to any and all signification ... To posit by way of language a materiality outside of language is still to posit that materiality, and the materiality so posited will retain that positing as its constitutive condition.
>
> Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter*

In view of the paradox that the space of Landscape excludes Nature (the body, the real, the unrepresentable) as a condition of its internal coherence, what would happen to the discourse of Landscape if the representing body were allowed to represent itself? In the

sense that both Nature and Landscape have a theory of history embedded in them, acknowledging that the subject is responsible for either would call into question the very stability of Nature, of the subject, and of (its) history.

Inasmuch as these terms are always already unstable, we nonetheless continue to use them to refer to the neutral field of subjective formation. Consider, as Gillian Rose does,

> that space is a medium through which the imaginary relation between self and other is performed ... that certain formulations of space enable the production of only certain relationships between self and other ... [and] that the master subject constitutes himself through the performance of a particular space.[4]

Brunelleschi's experiment can be rethought as an enactment of the extradiscursive; in taking this space as its model, the discourse of Landscape naturalizes Nature through its repeated performance. And if, as Butler, suggests, that which is naturalized as real should be rethought as an effect of power, then Nature can be seen as an effect of the hegemonic power of Landscape (and vice-versa): a space in which is performed a specific relationship between the subject and (its) Nature; an enactment of spatiality in the service of an ambivalent desire for unity with, and distinction from, all that is not one's perspectival self.

***

> What if this real, this claim that there is a real space, itself depends on desire, is itself an imagined fantasy? A desire for something safe, something certain, something real? A fantasy too of something all-enveloping, something everywhere, unavoidable, unfailingly supportive: space? In which all things could be charted, positions plotted, dwellings built and inhabited? ... Whose desire, whose space would this be?
>
> Gillian Rose, *As if the Mirrors Had Bled*

The separation of the subject from (its) Nature goes beyond the simple "splitting-up of ...

totality into phenomena which are natural and phenomena which are not natural..."[5] 'Real' space, as Rose has noted, is also articulated around the notion of a formless 'unreality;' an impossible, unthinkable space, mutable and terrifying, which *cannot* be performed as extradiscursive. Perhaps it is the threat of this space that cannot be naturalized as real, that drives the discourse of Landscape to enact the relatively secure exteriority of 'real' Nature, a space which always reflects the 'same' subject back to himself not as a form of self-recognition, but in the service of a desire for stability, union, placement. To paraphrase Butler, Nature is that which is naturalized as real; Landscape operates the desire for 'real' Nature as an affirmation of the solidity of the self.

This would suggest that the space occupied by the transgressing body – space defined by its unresponsiveness to the structuring force of the perspective paradigm – comes under the rubric of the not-real. In this case, my earlier description of Brunelleschi's demonstration – and, by association, the subjectifying relation as it is schematized by Lacan – as a 'transaction in the real' is somewhat in error, since it constitutes both the subject and the real by means of the same gesture, the same performance. Even though the material body has no 'real' place in this performance, its invisibility is a guarantee of its necessity: without the real the subject per se cannot exist, but without the transgressing body, neither can exist.

Inscribing the transgressing body as a necessary element of choice threatens to reveal the innate subjectivity and instability of the real; it threatens to demystify Nature by implicating human agency in its constitution. Alongside Landscape as an amenity, an object of desire, we would be faced with the 'visible reality' of *land* as nothing more than that which serves our most prosaic material needs: an unstable and unbounded space, capable of meaning too many things at once; a heterogenous circumstance, a contradiction, inhospitable to the body and to representation, a 'space' where perspectival knowledge

fails.

The desire to describe this place, and to determine, once and for all, whether the body that inhabits is 'real' or not, has less to do with what it is than with *who we are*: it is not about need and survival and continuance of species, it is about the pursuit of complete knowledge in the service of identity and differentiation. The desire to close the circuit once and for all is born out of fear, and the suspicion that the only 'real' certainty is the sustained indeterminacy and unrepresentability of certain things – Landscape, Nature, and the subject among them. Perhaps it is more expedient to learn to negotiate our way through this. The alternative is to remain at a point where power and knowledge are synonymous with accumulation, and accumulation is nothing more than a means of getting the self out of the now.

1. Damisch, op. cit., p262.

2. I am alluding here to Frederic Jameson's description of post-eighteenth-century aesthetics as a "kind of sandbox to which one consigns all those vague things ... under the heading of the irrational". see Buck-Morss, op. cit., p7.

3. see Ibid., p438±

4. Rose, op. cit., p62.

5. Leo Strauss in Phelan, op. cit., p387.

Figure I: Thomas Gainsborough, *Wooded Landscape with a Peasant Family at a Cottage Door and Footbridge over a Stream* (1781)

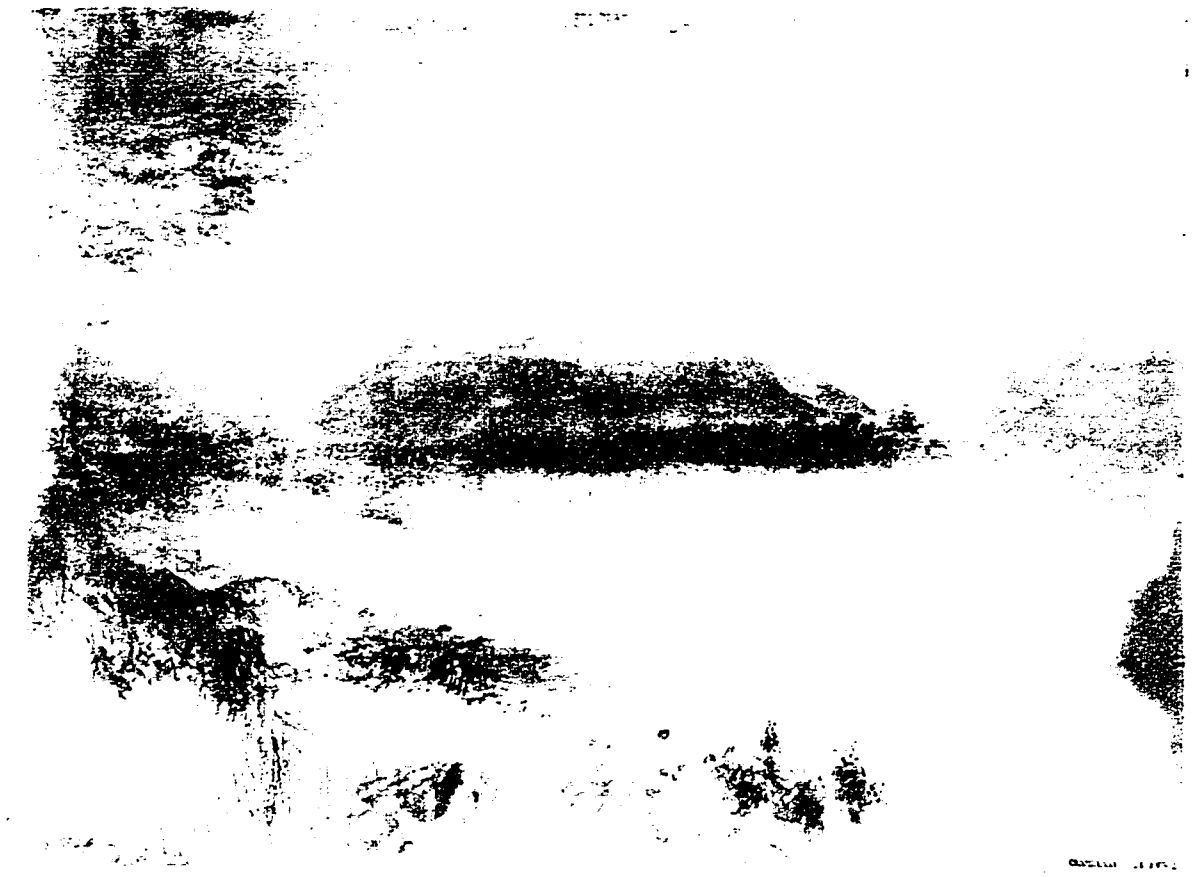

Figure II: J. W. M. Turner, *The Lake of Geneva with the Dent D'Oche, from Lausanne: Tending the Vines* (1841)

Figure III: Frederic Edwin Church, *Heart of the Andes* (1859)

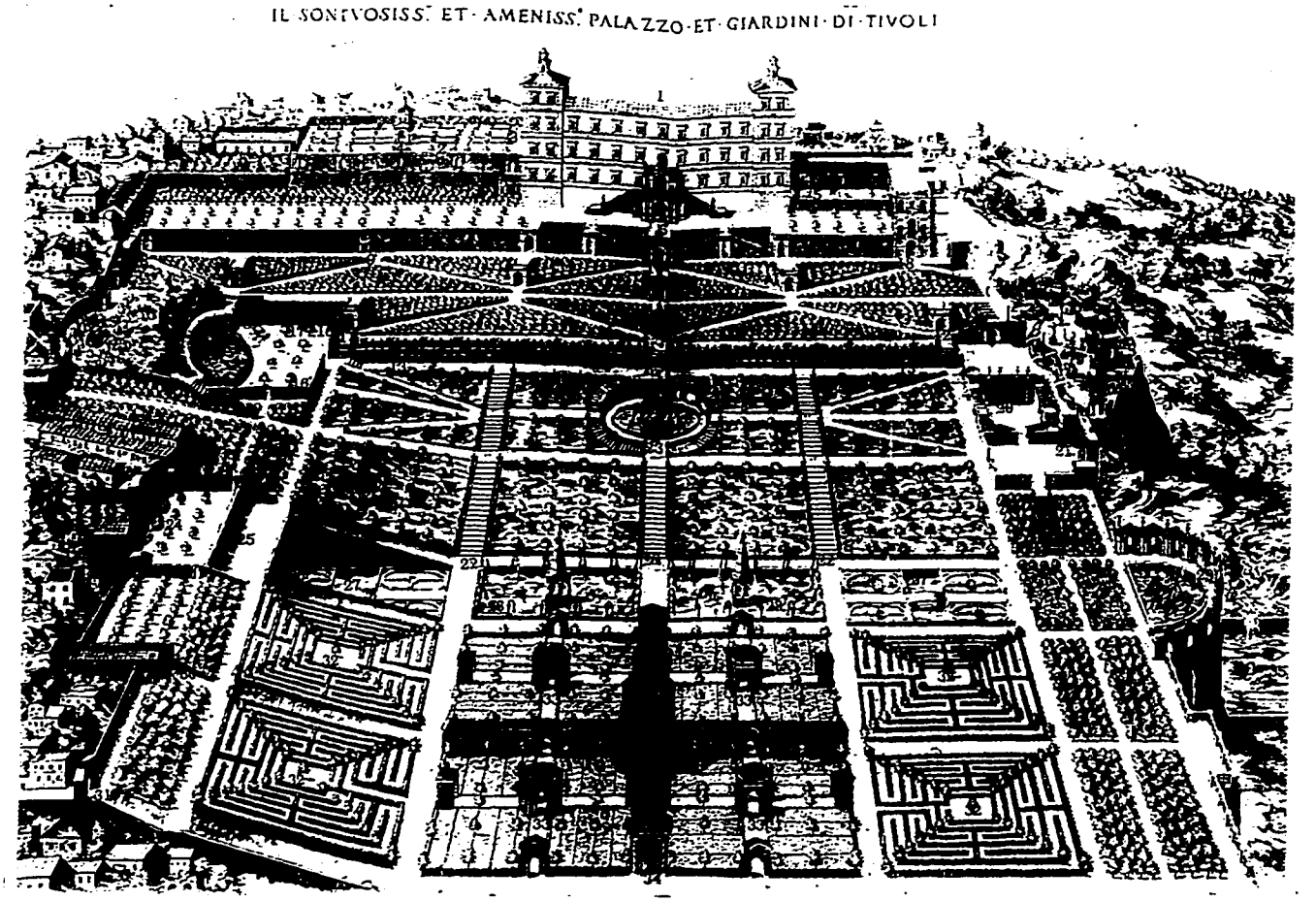

Figure IV: The Garden at Villa d'Este

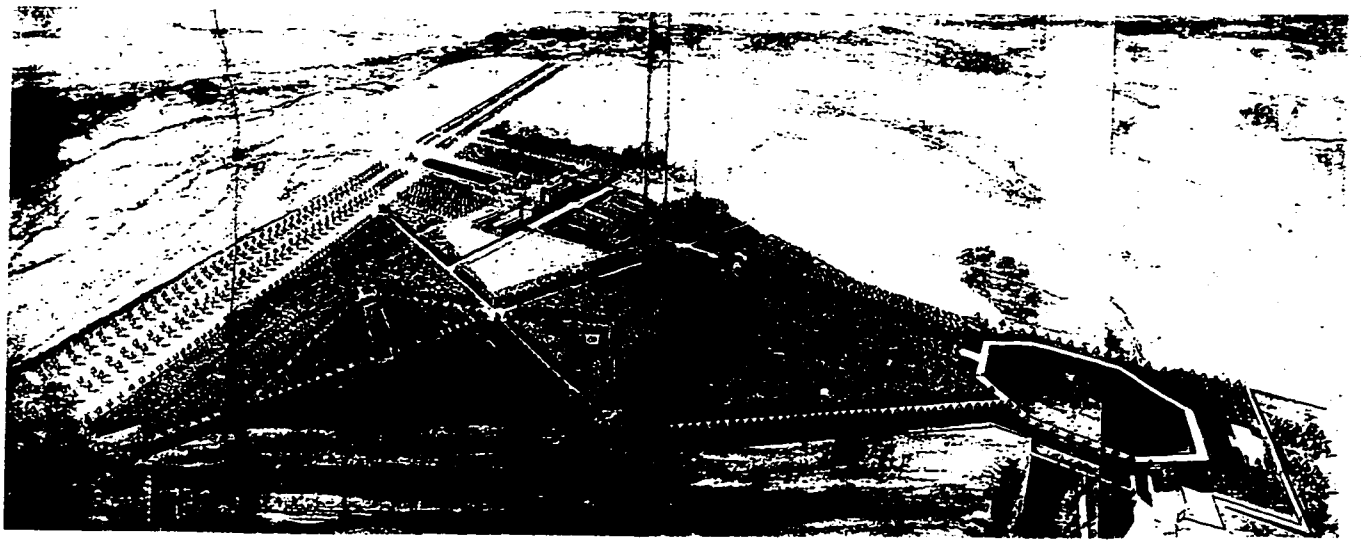

Figure V: The Garden at Stowe; Charles Bridgeman's original design, c.1720.

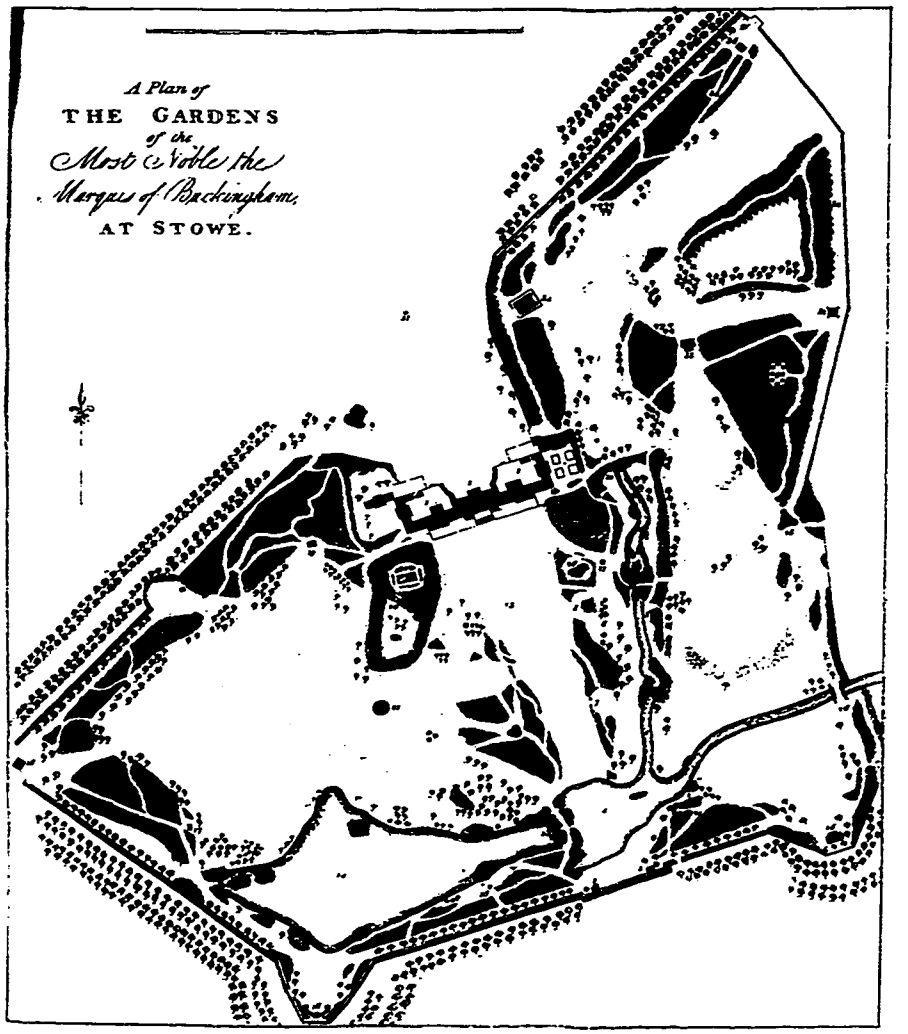

Figure VI: The Garden at Stowe, c.1797

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