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Space, place, site and locality: The study of landscape in cultural anthropology

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Chapter 10

Space, place, site and locality

The study of landscape in cultural anthropology

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Introduction

The discipline of cultural anthropology deals directly with questions about the groups of people landscape architects serve. Cultural anthropology's methodological base in ethnography provides deep or 'thick' descriptions of the everyday lives of people, providing a rich source of information about patterns of behaviour, common meanings and associations people attach to places, and their values and aspirations for the future that can inform and guide the landscape architect. Anthropological studies often produce unexpected findings. They may reveal order where disorder is anticipated, power where marginality is assumed, negative practical outcomes from contradictions embedded in design ideologies, and unintended consequences resulting from the best laid plans. Cultural anthropology not only provides cultural information but, at its best, a critique of landscape design. It serves to enlighten those who seek to impose a particular vision on the landscape of the hazards involved in such actions. Anthropology has come to its own self-critique as the postcolonial discipline *par excellence*. For this reason, it lays the foundation for a truly reflexive and ethical regime for assessing how better to respond to functional and aesthetic needs through the transformation of the landscape.

All design involves two simultaneous goals: effective function and evocative aesthetics. These are held in tension and must be balanced during the design process. For landscape architects, functional concerns include site limitations such as topography, drainage, climate and sustainability issues related to soil, water and habitats, in the context of human behaviour activities. Aesthetic concerns include the plant materials, such as palette, size and scale, and composition, and hardscape features that accommodate human uses. Both goals entail people as agents of activities or as perpetrators of uses that must be accommodated. This is where the cultural anthropologist has a contribution to make to the landscape architect.

233

Robert Rotenberg

Anthropology is a discipline that has a rich and important history. The discipline was born in the heady, confusing, nineteenth century as Europeans tried to make sense of the human experiences they encountered while incorporating distant lands into market and empire. The demarcation of 'race' categories defined the nineteenth-century science's boundaries. In the twentieth century, anthropologists incorporated other kinds of difference, including categories of experience that were already studied by other disciplines: class, nation, region, occupation, gender, religion and ability. This mixing of foci in research has lead to a confusion of the boundaries between anthropology, sociology and geography by scholars outside the disciplines. For practitioners, however, the differences between these disciplines are very clear, both in theory and in practice.

The nineteenth-century academic enterprise spawned several academic traditions. In most of Europe, anthropology most often refers to human biology and even more specifically to human palaeontology. One also finds the related disciplines of ethnology, national ethnography and social anthropology in European universities. The academic traditions in North America, Latin America, Africa, China, Japan and India only complicate the matter even further. It would seem that the anthropological enterprise is a canvas onto which intellectuals project their concern for the role of some basic human 'nature' in the origins or outcomes of contemporary issues. This often has resonance with political concerns, such as immigration, multiculturalism, national identity, dialect preservation or official folklore.

I write from the tradition of North American cultural anthropology. This tradition dates from the late nineteenth century and can be traced to the work of a single scholar, Franz Boas. Trained as physicist and geographer, he became interested in the lives of Arctic peoples living in Greenland and in British Columbia. His great insight was that race, language and culture were the products of separate human experiences and developed according to different influences and processes. Compared to the racial thinking of the nineteenth century, this was a radical idea. It took some years before Boas could find an academic post. Eventually he taught anthropology at Columbia University (1896). He trained many anthropologists who then established the first anthropology departments in the other universities of the United States, Canada and Mexico.

The work of Boas and his students is known as the Boasian School. This academic tradition insists that an anthropologist should be equally knowledgeable in human biology, human palaeontology, descriptive, historical and comparative linguistics, pre-historic and historic archaeology, and ethnology, also known as cultural anthropology. This last field, ethnology, is not the same as the one with the same name in Europe. For Boas, ethnology is about the distribution of traits, artefacts and practices in space, regardless of the political, linguistic or environmental features of the people who possess them. Cultural anthropology incorporates both ethnography and ethnology to understanding how culture shapes the human experience. This integration of several different disciplinary traditions within one academic department sets North American anthropology apart from the European tendency to separate these disciplines. Contemporary anthropologists have these multiple fields as the core of their academic training, but specialise in one of them. Two of these fields,

archaeology and cultural anthropology, have a bearing on landscape architecture. Here I discuss landscape design in the context of cultural anthropology.

Cultural anthropology deepens our understanding of how culture shapes the human experience. For anthropologists culture is something that must be explained. One can never assume it exists as an independent feature of human experience. 'How can this be?' you ask, 'Do not all humans possess culture, just as all humans possess a biology?' Of course, but if we were to stop at such a statement there would be very little need for further inquiry. The real questions are what are the traits, artefacts and practices every human possesses and how did these come to be in the possession of a specific person. There are many ways of going about answering these questions. Each way constitutes a distinct theory of culture. I wish to focus on three of them that I believe have the greatest relevance for landscape architects. These theories are *mediation*, *interpretation* and *distribution*. These refer to specific sets of ideas to understand culture. The words do not mean what you might commonly assume that they mean. They are a short-hand way for anthropologists to talk to each other.

I will begin with mediation (and with apologies to Viollet-le-Duc; the similarity between what follows and his work *Discourses on Architecture* (1875) are purely coincidental). We can assume that everything that is beyond the immediate control of human beings can be lumped together under the term 'nature'. Because we lack control over it, nature is continually surprising us with its variability; weather, famine, drought, plague, predators and pollution increase and decrease threats in our lives seemingly without pattern. Humans are cultural beings because we can protect ourselves from these variations in nature. It rains. We can stand naked in the rain and get wet, then wait for it to stop raining, and wait again for the wind and sun to dry our bodies. Or, we can walk to a tree and seek shelter under its leaves. We could take an animal hide, dried in the sun, and hold it over our heads to ward off the rain, while we stay in place. Finally, we could fashion a frame and tie the hide to it, holding the frame with a single hand while we go about our business in the rain with the other hand. In the first case, we are facing nature directly and we get wet. In the second case, we alter our behaviour, seeking shelter under the tree and we stay dry. In the third case, we have created a dry barrier between nature and ourselves. That barrier, however, requires us to maintain it (hold it up; repair any holes) using our energy and distracting our attention. In the final case, we have created a barrier that requires less effort and attention. The first two cases are examples of unmediated behaviours, much as you would find among animals. The third and fourth cases are mediated behaviours found among primates and humans.

In that fourth case, if you stitch several hides together and cover a frame that is well anchored in the ground, you have a nice, dry hut, one of the first buildings. Landscape design mediates between the variability of nature and human action. Through design humans extend control to a world that was previously natural. In this way, landscape architecture produces and maintains the boundary between culture and nature. The elements that construct a landscape design are inorganic and organic features of nature. The rearrangement simulates a version of nature in which variability has been brought under control. Sometimes it uses elements that are nearby

Robert Rotenberg

and native. At other times it uses elements from distant places, creating a more fanciful design, or even one that never existed in nature. Yet all designed landscapes mediate between people and nature. Mediation theories of culture are limited because they see design as a rational solution to the problem of insulating humans from harm. This leads to a 'form follows function' view of design that is restrictive at best.

Let's turn now to interpretative approaches to culture. If you have a 'bag of culture' in your hand, the contents of the bag will consist of various ideas, behaviours and practices through which you create your everyday experience. Is the bag of culture what we mean when we say that someone 'possesses' a culture? No, not really. That bag may contain all sorts of things that you would never use because the practice is old fashioned or because there are several options to solve the same problem and you habitually choose some behaviours over others. In other words, you know more about the possibilities for acting, thinking or believing than you actually use. If we were to assume that everything in the bag is relevant to the way culture affects people's lives, we would have to accept all sorts of archaic and extraneous information. This error led previous generations of anthropologists to make inappropriate generalisations about what a group of people 'believed' about the world. The interpretation perspective helps us avoid the fallacy that humans are constrained to act out pre-determined 'cultural' performances in all situations, even when their better judgement warns them against it. The interpretation perspective instead reminds us that all individuals are masters of their 'bags of culture,' picking and choosing the ideas, behaviours and practices that make the most sense for the situations they find themselves in. People can even invent new practices that are not in the bag. We are more or less conscious of these choices. We can usually explain them if someone, like a visiting anthropologist, were to ask us why we did what we did.

Landscape designers also make decisions about what to include or exclude in the production of landscapes. In so doing the designer selects from the bag of cultural possibilities. The landscape architect produces material possibilities for others through these choices. Many of the possibilities for finding meaning in space, interacting with the material qualities of space and developing habits of visiting or use of specific spaces exist for people because of the work of landscape designers. The profession is a significant generator of culture.

We live in routines. The situations we find ourselves in vary less and less over time. We have made the same choices so often we hardly think about the alternatives anymore. Visiting a new place can stimulate new choices. In fact, the creative side of landscape architecture asks people to break from their routines, encounter new possibilities and invent adaptations that can then be added to their bag of culture. Designed landscapes are particularly conducive to exploration and invention by the people who visit them. Take two city parks, for example. One of them is an early eighteenth-century garden attached to a palace and restored to a form of historical accuracy. The requirements of maintaining the park confine visitors to stroll only on the walks. The second park is a late nineteenth-century functional design with large grass beds, curving walkways lined with benches, tree groups that create 'walls'

236

around the several 'rooms' for the citizens to occupy. People cluster around water elements, buildings and playgrounds. Every square meter of the park is open and available for use. Now, let's imagine two business people intent upon having a serious conversation outside the office. The office is equally distant from both parks. They decide to hold their conversation while walking in a park, but which one? They must decide which space is the appropriate one for this conversation. There is no single right answer here. Different people would make different choices, taking into consideration the topic of conversation, the relationship between the two people, the time of day, the weather, and the amount of time they wanted to spend in the park. In other words, every social act requires interpretation. A choice is potentially a novel behaviour that could become part of a routine over time. Or, it may remain a singular event, never to be repeated. Culture has determined nothing. People have chosen how they want to act and think in that situation. They continue to do so once they get to the park and interact with the space the landscape architect has designed for them.

Culture is not merely complicated because intellectuals like to complicate ideas. Rather, it is complicated because people are complicated. Investigating culture forces us to embrace people in all their complexity. Nowhere is this better illustrated than in the final perspective I want to discuss, the distributive quality of culture. So far, our discussion has tended to focus on the individual and the locations for mean-ingful activity. Now I want to focus on the traits, artefacts and practices that could be shared by a group.

If you and I were to empty our respective bags of culture for each other to see, what are the odds that the contents will be exactly the same? Given the way those bags came to be filled in the first place, the following sequence of events would have had to occur: we were raised in the same home by the same parents in the same neighbourhood. We went to the same schools from early childhood through university. We participated in the same kinds of activities, clubs, religious organisations and sports teams. We worked in the same organisations under the same managers with the same co-workers during approximately the same time in the organisations' development. We shared the same intimate relationships with the same people during the same period in their lives. The same state policies, market influences and social movements influenced us. In other words, it is practically impossible for two people to have identical cultural possibilities to draw from when living their lives. Instead, a few elements of culture are distributed widely across a great number of people while the overwhelming number of elements is more narrowly distributed or unique to the individual.

An important insight of Franz Boas was that any sense of unity that the concept of culture implicitly predicts for a group is really a subjective unity, one that is constituted only in the mind of the observer, such as a politician, a market strategist, an urban planner, an artist or a social scientist. Boas did not mean to undervalue the observations of these actors. They are responsible for creating any sense of community we possess. For ordinary people, however, the unity inherent in the cultural possibilities is an abstraction, an imagined unity. Edward Sapir, a student of Boas, elaborated this further (1924), saying that ordinary people perceive

Robert Rotenberg

a commonality of culture through relations of mutual comprehension rather than an actual sameness or identity. People need to predict each other's actions and reaction, if only partially and imperfectly. The commonness of culture reduces those moments that we are surprised or shocked by people. Given these insights, it is better to describe what people have in common as cultural proximity rather than a cultural unity.

Boas argued that culture can never be fully integrated. Integration is at best an ongoing process that cannot be completed. It was best found in styles of art and architecture, in patterns of symbols and motivation, in selective perception and valuation, and in efforts to distil distinctive character qualities from a group's historical experience. In this way, the designed landscape can be understood not only as a mediation with nature and as a interpretative canvas upon which people can invent practices, but also as an opportunity to realise an integration of cultural elements, common sense meanings and shared historical experience. An artefact as large and as important in people's lives as a green belt embodies a pattern of symbols, motivations, perceptions, valuations and distinctions that contrast with the qualities of other green belts.

Culture is not an integrated system, a text, or an aggregation of traits or behaviours. It is a population of meanings. These meanings have material forms, such as landscapes. The meanings may be expressed in speech and other forms of action, or transmitted in writing and other artefacts, but they are always things in the world, rather than abstractions (Schwartz 1978 p. 423; Sperber 1996 pp. 77–78).

There are two contradictory trends in the development of culture. On the one hand, people have unique experiences that endow them with knowledge they alone possess. On the other, states, markets and social movements impose ideas, behaviours and practices on vast numbers of people. For example, states attempt to produce a uniform understanding of the 'state-person' through residence registration, licenses, military and civil service, the census and taxation. Through advertising and displays, the market distributes images of alternative lives that products or services can make possible. Designed landscapes are part of market displays. Social movements of various kinds revolutionise the way people see the world and to reset their behaviours and practices. Social movements affect everyone, regardless of the acceptability of the ideas. Because of states, markets and movements, individuals never quite succeed in constructing separate worlds for themselves. So, too, the totally conformist state is the stuff of dystopian fiction. Most people can readily resist the demands of states, markets and social movements when those demands clash with their experiences.

The outcome of these contradictory processes is an unequal distribution of knowledge. Some people know a great deal about their world, anticipating changes and acting proactively, while others always seem to be surprised by changes. In specific areas of knowledge, we can speak of differences between experts, novices and the uninformed. These are not merely indications of differences in education. They are also differences in social power. Those who know more about a situation can command the actions of those who know less. The phrase 'knowledge is power' may be a cliché, but it is also a social reality. The social distribution of knowledge,

therefore, is not merely an artefact of a process of balancing the contradictory processes of individuation and integration. It is a product of the ability of socially powerful people to hold on to their privileges. If access to the knowledge is restricted and controlled, their privilege of that knowledge is protected. This feature of culture is found throughout the world. An unequal distribution of the powerful is directly related to the uneven distribution of knowledge. In societies where the distribution of knowledge is relatively equal across all categories of persons, so, too, is the distribution of power. In contrast, where the distribution of knowledge across all categories of persons is unequal, as in our own society, the distribution of power is also unequal.

The designed environment can embody these differences in knowledge and power in society. The most obvious power feature in landscape design is accessibility. If some people can move through the space more easily than others, the design sends the message that it regards those people as more desirable patrons. Differential access is often hidden within the design under other, seemingly more desirable design outcomes. The feature of sustainability, for example, may restrict public access to some sections of a landscape during certain times of the year, but this restriction does not apply to the caretaker, the caretaker's supervisor or the visiting landscape designer from another city. Historical reconstructions restrict access in the name of preserving the details of the design. In addition to restricted accessibility, landscapes can embody expert knowledge in the form of hybrid botanicals, historical references in the land and bed forms, or simulations of specific ecologies. Without signage or human guides to instruct the visitor what to look for, the expert's efforts are often hidden from the public. If the designer's work is not transparent to all, then for whom is the work intended? Finally, differences in knowledge can lead to contests between different people in defining the role of a landscape in their lives. Such contests are particularly acute in situations where different sets of life experiences share the same landscape, as in the ethnic diversity of large cities.

I focused this discussion on mediation, interpretation and distribution because I have found these to be the most relevant perspectives for my own work in understanding the role of landscape in the cultural lives of people. I have tried to find examples that would speak to landscape designers. These ideas prepare you to understand the areas of basic knowledge in the cultural anthropology of landscape that I will now discuss.

Areas of basic knowledge in cultural anthropology

> What anthropology can contribute to the study of landscape is first and foremost the unpacking of the Western landscape concept, but also a theorising of landscape as a cultural process that is dynamic, multi-sensual and constantly oscillating between a 'foreground' of everyday experience and a 'background' of social potential.
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> (Hirsch and O'Hanlon 1995 p. 3).

The basic building blocks of the cultural analysis of landscape are bound up in four concepts: space, place, site and locality. In a classic article about how

proofs not for distribution

Robert Rotenberg

residents of New York City describe their apartments, Linde and Labov (1975) discovered that all the descriptions fell into only two types, The first type is some variation of the following: 'The bedroom is next to the kitchen'; the second type sounds like this: 'You turn right and come into the living room.' These are labelled, respectively, the 'map' and the 'tour.' In this particular study, only three per cent of the people interviewed chose to describe their apartment using the 'map' style. All the rest chose the 'tour' style. This study inspires anthropologists to consider all the ways that people experience landscape through language. When the experience of a landscape is put into words, people reveal the meaningful elements with clarity and precision. To hear this, however, one has to know what to listen for. The areas of basic knowledge of cultural anthropologists with respect to landscape consist of a series of general statements about what to listen for.

These two types of descriptions, the map and tour, illustrate a long-standing and critical difference in how people in the Western tradition understand our environment: seeing vs. going, presenting a tableau vs. organising someone's movements. These ways of describing an environment coincide with the distinction between the opposed terms 'place' (*lieu*, *Ort*,) and 'space' (*espace*, *Raum*). The terms are opposed to each other because they do not co-exist in experience. One is either attentive to place or one is moving through space. Place is static, the being-there of something dead and unchanging. Space is dynamic, the process of eventually arriving at a destination (a place) by a living person. Space cannot be separated from move-ment and place never moves. There are as many spaces as there are distinct paths people can take to attain a place. Places, however, are finite. They become defined by memory and imbued with meanings, both mundane and symbolic.

When spaces and places bear a coherent relationship with each other, such that spaces lead to places and a series of places define a space, we can speak of a 'site' (*site*, *Anlage*) of human action. A landscape is a site. Sites have several features that are worth noting. Descriptions of sites, like the description of an apart-ment, assume a relationship between the spaces and places much like the 'map' type of description. While this map may remain un-spoken when the site is described, the resulting itinerary could not exist without it. The description of the site includes effects ('you will see . . .'), limits ('there is a wall'), possibilities ('there is a door'), and directives ('look to your left'). This chain of spatial descriptions produces a represen-tation of the spaces and places that people can narrate to each other, bringing the site into social existence.

When a site comes into focus in people's lives it simultaneously creates a 'locality' (*endroit*, *Ortschaft*). The manner in which people narrate the features of a landscape to each other is the landscape's locality. The term describes the marking out of elements that separate this site from other, especially contiguous sites. Locality is a social distinction, a way of evaluating one site as distinct from others. It is not dependent on the un-spoken map, although people often describe localities as the sum of their constituting places. This 'story' of the locality is a narrative that integrates the stories of the separate places and established them as a single spatial entity. In the example of the apartment description, the apartment becomes a locality of our private life because it is comprised of the bedroom where

we sleep, the bathroom where we wash, the kitchen where we prepare and eat our food, and the living room where we bring guests into our private lives. Localities can scale down to the very small, like the apartment or the café, or up to the very large, like the metropolis or the nation. Localities can serve as both a container for human actions and as a license for action, permitting or requiring some behaviour while forbidding or sanctioning others.

When anthropologists use categories such as place, space, site and locality to frame their analysis of landscape, it enables us to focus on the creative forces that integrate them into a single social experience. This is only the first frame of what a cultural analysis of landscape makes possible, the phenomenological. With this arrangement of basic parts before us, we can now explore three additional frames of analysis: spatial discourse, social production of space and spatial practices.

Spatial discourse

Place is a location of elements that we find meaningful. It might be an address, a park, a battlefield, an office building where we work, or a beach we go to in our minds when we want a little peace and quiet. Place does not have to be real. The most satisfying places combine elements of real locations with imaginary ones. Place is difficult to produce. It lies at the intersection of discourses and productive processes. It is the stuff of history, memory and mythology. One experiences place through memory, narrative and monument. One becomes attached to places emotionally or intellectually through associations that one builds in the mind between memories, narrative and monuments.

Place enters all mutual understandings of meaning. Like time, identity and event, it becomes a dominating site of symbolic production (Sahlins 1978 p. 211). That is, the qualities of a site can generate new meanings in addition to serving as a repository for established meanings. To the extent that a person is paying attention to the environment, the 'I' that is moving from place to place reinterprets that awareness through categories of memory, history, civility, spirituality, practicality, and so forth. These categories are not unique to the individual, but commonly known among local residents. By participating in this act of reinterpreting place within a commonly known category of meaning, the person is adding to the category. It is almost as if there were a silent conversation between people where each contributes a bit of meaning to the topic, and in turn receives the interpretations of others. We name the ongoing conversation between people that elaborates upon this mutual understanding of the social experience of place a discourse.

The discourse on place applies to both the most modest and domestic of sites and the most grandiose and ambitious. The homeowner considers how others will judge the condition of the property. As the social standing of the family changes, so does the thinking and investment in the condition of the property, always with a view to how the changes will be perceived by others. Politicians produce elaborate and complete representations of their vision of the metropolis, believing that they are responding to the values of the people who elected them. As politicians succeed each other in power, they appropriate a specific set of public landscape design possibilities to represent their vision. The previous group's forms continue to

Robert Rotenberg

exist along with the new models. The newer forms borrow design ideas from the old, sometimes in polite emulation of them, sometime to invert and transform them. To accomplish this, homeowners, designers, nurserymen and politicians must develop a common language of design. They do so by borrowing from the existing, ongoing discourse on social space: what is the boundary between the private and public in metropolitan life? How does family, community, the municipal agencies, health and safety, or the market understand this boundary differently? What is the best way for actors to mark their boundaries? This conversation connects the spatial forms with the vision of metropolitan life the ensuing landscape will represent. There are as many voices of design as there are visions of what urban life can be.

Among the writers on historic preservation practice, there is a saying that every centimetre of pavement has a history, but not every history is worth preserving. This is a good example of the general principle that places can be created through the spatial discourse, but also through non-discursive actions. To understand this distinction, consider that in the course of an ordinary day there are moments when you are aware of your thoughts, actions and habits in relation to others. There are other moments when your thoughts are within yourself, private moments when you are alone or even in public when you are lost in your own thoughts. These moments are not part of the ongoing discourses that connect you to others through a system of mutual comprehension. You are living in a non-discursive moment. You don't care if others comprehend what you are thinking or not. It is enough that you comprehend it. Place-making also has its non-discursive modes. Place-making is about seeing. The discursive and non-discursive modes of seeing refer to our understandings of place as part of some common narrative or as a personal, unshared memory or insight. Thus, I have my favourite table at the coffee shop, or a preferred parking place at work. In the course of a day, our encounter with places varies between these two modes.

There are several areas in which uneven distributions of knowledge influence the direction of spatial discourses. Among experts, design regimes can form. These are a set of rules through which experts over a particular period of time impose and enforce design standards. This can occur in all areas of design and planning, including scientific research, election campaigns, zoning, or landscape design. The effect is to shape the discourse around such design and planning. It becomes increasingly difficult to legitimately introduce topics or support ideas that run counter to the design regime. With diminished diversity of ideas, the regime becomes increasingly dominant in people's minds. Patronage and legislation follow the common sense. Everyone wants their place to conform to rules. Eventually, place becomes unthinkable unless it is couched in terms of the regime's design rules.

Access is another way in which uneven distributions of knowledge shape discourse. Keith Thomas has documented a movement in England in the eighteenth century to collect and catalogue the plant knowledge of English villagers (Thomas 1996). This effort followed in the wake of the publication of Linnaeus' *Systema Naturae*. These plants often bore local, colourful names, alluding to local stories or events, or to side effects if eaten. The same plant could have different names in villages a few kilometres apart. The naturalists quickly renamed the species without

bothering to inform the people who had gladly assisted in the collection and iden-
tification of the plants. Within a short time, the local names for the plants were
competing with the official names. This would not have mattered to the isolated
farmers, but their world was quickly changing and their contacts with outsiders
increased. Cosmopolitans educated outside the district, such as clergy, doctors and
other professionals who commanded respect, would call the plant by its official
name, often to utter confusion of the locals. The experience of locality itself was
undermined. The community could no longer identify its members through the
names on local plant varieties. Finally, the knowledge of proper names was locked
up in universities and research centres where rural folk were unwelcome, preventing
them accessing the very knowledge that they had helped to create.

Lastly, uneven distributions of knowledge can result in contestation, open
conflict and resistance within a discourse. More than mere disagreement about the
meaning of a place, knowledge distribution issues can lead to counter discourses
that can unseat design regimes and restricted access. They can even result in a
complete re-evaluation of the meaning of a place. A memorial square dedicated to
the victims of fascism, a nudist beach, the re-zoning of a derelict cemetery for a
housing project, the banning of skate boarding from a public park are all examples
of discourses on place that have led to contests between members of the com-
munity who support the action and those who are opposed to any form of the action.
Differing sets of experience leading to different knowledge sets creates the imbal-
ance. This can split the community, leading to destructive actions. Such conflicts are
thorny issues for designers because they never occur at convenient times in the
project cycle. Yet, time is the critical variable in the effort of the community to
rebalance the discourse.

The spatial discourse produces places through an interpretation of
sensory impressions within existing categories of interpretation, design regimes,
systems of access and conflicting understanding. The products of this conversation
are a set of conventional understandings that describe the commonalities and
differences between sites. These are meaningful to analyse because they contrast
with those actions that actually move earth in the production of new space. In every-
day experience, we do not distinguish between constructing places in earth and sky,
and constructing them in our imaginations. Teasing apart this difference is one of
the contributions of cultural anthropology to the study of landscape. The next section,
however, will focus on constructing places in actual landscapes.

Social production of space
Societies with professional landscape architects have one thing in common, as
societies: differences in social power between individuals enter in all human relation-
ships. This is commonly understood as the social structuring features of race, class,
gender, expertise and physical ability. The social production of space is a research
focus that concerns itself with the production of spatial objects that privilege and rein-
force society's distinctions. Landscape architects are among the producers of social
space. You are implicated in the question of how do we as a society acquire locations
that are identified with specific classes, races, genders, expertise or abilities?

243

Robert Rotenberg

The French philosopher Henri Lefebvre is most closely associated with this question. He, in turn, influenced two contemporary researchers, Edward Soja (1989; 1996) and David Harvey (1989a; 1989b; 2001). Lefebvre's great insight is that 'space is a social product – the space produced in a certain manner serves as a tool of thought and action. It is not only a means of production but also a means of control, and hence of domination/power' (Lefebvre 1992 p. 26). Take, for example, a baroque palace garden. Lefebvre would argue that the look of this garden style is neither accidental nor separate from the model of society in the mind of the patron who paid to build it. Instead, everything about this style is consistent with that model of society: the regulation of social orders in the geometrical layout, the control of nature in the topiary, the grandeur of the nobility in the scale of the garden and the aristocracy's rule through surveillance of the lower orders revealed through the vistas of palace and garden. A specific designer produced this palace and garden.

Lefebvre argued that every society, which he understood through the Marxist concept of mode of production, produces space that mirrors the view of the dominant class, race and gender. He gives the example of the city in the ancient world. It was not a mere agglomeration of people and things in space. Its arrangements of parts in space required a specific way of moving about the city, the congregating and dispersing of groupings of *paterfamilii*, slaves, women, religious workers, soldiers, citizens and strangers. The social space produced through the filter of power simultaneously produces behavioural practices and intellectual outcomes that reinforce the existing social order. The intellectual climate of the city in the ancient world arose in spaces designed to cultivate abstract conversation. Those who congregated together could converse, while others would be left out of the conversation. Civic space was privileged space.

Furthermore, Lefebvre argued that a social movement aspiring to power, but not producing its own space, would remain an abstraction that will never escape its ideological paralysis. He criticized the Soviet urban planners of his day for failing to replace the modernist model of urban design with a space wholly defined by socialist arrangements and practices.

Lefebvre's vision of the social production of space operates below our consciousness because, before his analysis, there was no conversation about the ways that the differences in power in society were made concrete in the planted and built environment. Lefebvre's work is an example of how hegemony can be exposed through analysis. Hegemony is the common sense, everyday practices and shared beliefs that provide the foundation for domination by the powerful (Gramsci 1992 pp. 233–38). Hegemony operates below people's consciousness. The thousands of little decisions we make every day, such as what shoes to buy, what means of transportation to use, what events to pay attention to, comprise the hegemony of contemporary life. We believe we have freedom of choice, when, in fact, our choices have been circumscribed for us and we actually choose from a predetermined set of options that represent the most desirable outcomes for the system as a whole. It is this system that maintains the differences in power. In this way, the dominant class, race and gender shape spaces by limiting the range of choices in which designers can work. Lefebvre demonstrates that reducing the complexity of

space limits choices, directing designers to focus on some aspect of spaces, but not others. In its full complexity, we can see three distinct aspects of space.

The first to be produced is the registry (*cadastre, Kataster*) of surveyed parcels, which Lefebvre calls the *absolute aspect of space*. This is the ground plan on which all further acts of production will unfold. The parcels can be zoned for different uses, filled with roads and services, owned or transferred by and between private or public interests, or bounded in ways that inhibit or expedite further production. Absolute space is the landscape architect's drawing of the ground plan, the space of design and planning, and the space of governmental registration, and surveillance.

The second aspect of space is the everyday experience of the space and the behaviours of the people who inhabit it, which Lefebvre calls *lived space*. This includes the places that the spatial discourses produce out of memory, history, civility, spirituality, practicality, and so forth. It is the habitual paths we take between routine destinations as we move through our days. It is the street where we live, our favourite pub, the park our children play in and the cemetery where our loved ones are buried.

The third aspect of space is comprised of structures that channel design and planning, on the one hand, and lived experience, on the other, toward specific socially defined ends, which Lefebvre calls *representational space*. He sees these structures as distortions from some hypothesized ideal that sets out to grant privileges of access, use and disposal of specific spaces to some people, while simultaneously denying this privilege to others. Every space, he observes, includes a set of rules for containing a limited set of activities and a set of rules for permitting those activities. When challenged, the authorities who help to enforce these structures deflect criticism by alluding to the requirements of absolute space ('It's not zoned for that'), or the custom of the anonymous, local people ('That sort of thing is not tolerated here'). As a result, the insistence of a dominant group to maintain its privileges is made invisible, and thereby, hegemonic.

This political analysis of space is pertinent to the study of landscape by cultural anthropologists because it begins to answer the question 'For whom is the landscape being built?' The question is double-edged because it can refer to both the owner of the space and the user of the space. Landscape architects ask this question with every project. Much of the programme the designer follows is concerned with user needs. The idea that there is a category of person that we can call a 'user' or an 'owner,' and a set of behaviours that we can label 'needs' is an example of the hidden forces that shape design. The political analysis of space is pertinent to the landscape designer, if only to make visible the forces shaping the design.

The social production of space directs our attention to the ways that differences in power in society distort our actions in spaces, both public and private. An example of this distortion in private spaces came to my attention while doing research on domestic gardens in a suburb. The sustainable gardening movement was in its early stages. One enthusiast had decided to tear out the early twentieth-century house garden beside his house along with its fruit trees and well-kept grass lawn lined with flower beds. All of the neighbouring houses kept up gardens of this

style. As representational space, house gardens privileged private property owner-ship. The landscape consistently reproduces planted property markers that enclose an outdoor living space. In place of these features, our sustainable garden enthusiast installed a small pond with no natural water source and plants from the neighbouring hills. Then, instead of tending to the growth of these features, he let the garden develop in whatever way 'it chose.' As representational space, his garden privileged the subordination of property to the processes of nature and the trans-species ethical community in which dandelion, nettle and mosquito had their place in the balanced order of the world. The resulting conflict of representational spaces was swift, dramatic and catastrophic. The government happily sided with the property-oriented neighbours and a park department backhoe made short work of this experiment in sustainability.

An even more extreme example of producing spaces is found in the construction of emptiness. Empty lots may be devoid of certain recognizable con-structions, but are often filled with images and practices. As described by Gary McDonogh (1993), there is a particular anonymity available for people in spaces labelled as empty. The emptiness can be nostalgic, a place where a personal land-mark once stood. It can be a deviant place 'used only by dogs, drug addicts and malingerers'. It can be a boundary zone between the acceptable and unacceptable behaviours, a 'no man's land' where upright citizens do not go. It can be intentionally fallow, promising, 'a future of speculation and development', a street of 'burned out or boarded up houses in a slum neighbourhood'. The phrases in quotes are refer-ences to discourses on urban life that are widely experienced (Ford 2003). The same social forces that produced other spaces produce empty places.

The construction of landscapes is never politically neutral. Each move-ment of earth, placement of beds and walks, and even the choice of vegetation result in some people maintaining privilege while restricting the actions of others. It is against this background of produced spaces that we turn to our final area of basic knowledge: the practices that help us differentiate between the ordinary and the extraordinary in our understanding of place.

Spatial practices

Practice, practical sense and practical consciousness all refer to going about our everyday business. The focus on practices reveals how our bodies are transformed by our contact with different kinds of places. Places are one of the channels through which this transformation occurs. This might be as ordinary as holding an umbrella as we walk down a street, or as singular as wearing a wet suit and breathing apparatus to explore a sea bottom. Spatial practices are what we do when we are in a particular place. For the cultural anthropologist, the focus on landscape practices answers the question 'What meanings do people and designers give to a specific site?'

Practices are about doing what is expected and avoiding what is unex-pected. Of course, 'what is expected' varies as we move from place to place and through time. Walking down a street holding an umbrella while the sun is shining will attract more attention that doing so when it is raining. It is often easier to grasp

a practice by referring to actions that shift from the ordinary (sunshine) to the extraordinary (rain), or vice versa. The cultural anthropologist's interest in spatial practices lies in understanding how place affects our activities and, hence, our way of being ourselves in places. The landscape architect should be interested in spatial practices. They represent our best guess of how the design will evolve over time.

For example, in my city, Chicago, there is a 22-kilometre long strip of park along the shore of Lake Michigan, known as Lincoln Park. My fellow citizens use the park very often throughout the year, but each uses it a different way: strolling alone, in pairs or in groups, jogging, cycling, roller-blading, walking dogs, skate-boarding, scootering, sitting on benches, lying on the grass, picnicking, playing Frisbee with other people or dogs, playing volleyball, badminton, swimming, playing on the beach, fishing off a pier, kayaking, sculling, canoeing and, in the case of the grounds crew and police, driving vehicles and working. Which activities people choose to do in the park are, first, particular to the possibilities the place contains; second, particular to skills and inclinations of the people involved; and third, restricted to those possibilities that are appropriate to the park and the people who are around the activity at any given point in time. To illustrate this point, consider the following: drinking alcoholic beverages is officially prohibited in the park. Yet, anyone enjoying a day at the beach or a picnic under the trees is likely to be drinking beer or wine. It is understood by the visitors and the police alike, that drinking is tolerated as long as no one complains and no one is too conspicuous.

When the activities chosen are particular to skills and inclinations of the people involved, the implication is that such skills and inclinations are not even distributed across a population. Different groupings of people are more likely to be interested in, say, jogging, while others finding jogging a senseless pursuit and are more involved in dog-walking. The French sociologist Bourdieu has written extensively on the class basis of everyday practices. He would argue that there is really less choice in these activities than anyone suspects. Instead, the activities we enact in places are narrowed by the qualities of age, gender, class and education. While exceptions are certainly possible, he demonstrated in several studies that these qualities predict our actions (1998 pp. 1–13).

Practices are also limited by convention. The place's designer seeks a mutual understanding of possibilities for action with users, but cannot anticipate all the understandings users may bring. Cultural anthropologists use the Greek word *topos*, place, to describe various combinations of real and imaginary places that represent fundamental differences in these mutual understandings. Utopia, literally 'no place', is a literary genre for imagining a society whose practices strike the writer as more satisfying. Dystopia, on the other hand, is a 'sick place' where people behave in a far less satisfying way. An ordinary place can be described by the term orthotopia, while a place that has something truly extraordinary about it is a heterotopia. Places that have no inherent meaning at all are atopia, or non-places. Finally, it is possible for us to create our own places, autotopia, where governmental regulation is ignored. Each of these places engenders different possibilities for action.

Robert Rotenberg

Orthotopos

Ordinary places develop when people relate to others in public with as little friction as possible (Gehl 2001; Whyte 1980). In ordinary places, we read the possibilities for action by observing the people who are already in the space. Examples might include a street, a café, a bank lobby, or a classroom. Even strangers passing by, whether they indicate each other's presence or not, read each other and form a silent, momentary relationship. Ordinary places make the practices of the locality visible.

Ordinary places tend toward the invisible, but never really disappear, such as the street we walk down to get from a bus stop to our office. That street has all the qualities of a place. At another time and circumstance, it could be a destination, perhaps the ideal place to participate in a public demonstration, or the meeting place for an intimate rendezvous. Short of such circumstance, it remains partially invisible to us as a place.

Ordinary places contain the things of everyday experience. They gather these things. Using the example of the street between the parking place and the office again, we can see that the following things are contained there: pavements, cars, debris, dog faeces, beggars, signs and pedestrians walking towards us, with us and entering from doorways and from between parked cars. We are paying attention to all of these things. We must do so to avoid collisions. They bring about actions on our part that make the movement in the place carefree: turning our bodies to pass by three people in group who are talking to each other and taking up more than the usual space on the pavement, shifting direction to avoid someone entering from a doorway on the right, or slowing down to avoid stepping on the heel of the person walking in front of us. The actions are perfectly suited to this place, as indeed all orthotopia engender the most appropriate action responses from us. These actions are conventional. We learn them as children and practise them without thinking all our lives. These actions reduce conflict by making everyone's trajectory predictable to everyone else. Imagine the chaos that ensues when, say, a drunken man stumbles out of pub onto a busy pavement and is too slow to make the kinds of quick adjust-ments that allow sober people to walk down a pavement. The hallmark of an ordinary place is that it constantly reminds us that we are embedded in a social fabric in which who we are matters less that how we enact the conventions that reduce conflict. This is the primary characteristic of orthotopic spatial practice.

Orthotopia, like all unmarked features of our experience are most useful for what they tell us about non-ordinary places. Our flats and houses, offices, class-rooms, dining halls, parking facilities, neighbourhood food shops and the paths we take to get back and forth between them are all ordinary places, while highways, shopping centres, parks, football stadia, theatres and airports are not.

Heterotopos

What exactly makes a place extraordinary? De Sousa Santos has proposed that something becomes extraordinary when it results in a radical displacement within the same place, such as the movement (actual or imagined) from the centre to the margin, that allows us to view the centre from afar, and thus begin to under-stand what the centre cannot or will not contain (1995 p. 481). The extraordinary is

bound up with the place where we experience it. Something happens to us when we are in such a place that makes us see things differently and thereby, act differently. Heterotopia are extraordinary places. They concentrate the practices of the locality intensely, permitting us to become conscious of these practices for the first time.

Extraordinary places must be contiguous with ordinary ones. They are separated from the ordinary, marked in significant ways, as if the perceptions they permit would be slightly dangerous, or at least provocative, if allowed to leak out into ordinary spaces. Heterotopic sites reflect everyday experience, but do so in a way that is highly selective. This selection marks these sites. Ordinary sites have minimal specification and demarcation. We know where we are, but it is not particularly noteworthy. Ordinary places may not even have a name. Even though they may gather important personal and social meanings, such places retain their ordinariness. Heterotopic sites are the 'other' places that exist within the landscapes of our daily lives. We enter them or not, freely or under duress, and exit them again to go about our business. But when we are in them, the shift in focus is palpable and transformative. The possibilities for action are singular and potentially subversive of social order. As you might imagine, cultural anthropologists have a particular keenness for exploring heterotopias whenever we encounter them.

Foucault defines heterotopias as 'real places – places that do exist and that are formed at the very founding of society – which are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within cultures, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted' (1986 p. 22). He identifies six features that separate an extraordinary place from an ordinary one. He describes these features in a lecture given in 1967 called 'Of other spaces' (1986). These include (1) how the people project their understanding of nature in these places, (2) how they express the fulfilment of some utopian ideal in these places, (3) how people refer to unresolved social issues in these places, (4) how they transform time in these places, (5) how people create boundaries to separate the place from ordinary places, and (6) how they close off, camouflage or mystify everyday experience so that the experience of the place can exist apart. These sites must be seen as absolutely different from all the sites that they reflect and speak about. This contradiction between the need to be different but linked to the ordinary gives the experience of heterotopias their appeal, their teaching quality. They are neither utopic nor abstract. They are fully formed, real places that are designed to illustrate an ideal. That ideal is the key to the extraordinary meaning of the site and the spatial practices of people when they occupy heterotopia.

All such sites have a quality of social universality. The ideal they are trying to illustrate is one that is believed by the people who built the site to be a common experience of all people. The site should be a common place, in spite of its special qualities. Unique or temporary sites do not qualify, unless their uniqueness or temporariness is intended to project a universal ideal. There are two ways that this universality can be realized. They can be 'places of crisis', such as funeral homes or hospitals, or 'places of deviation,' such as asylums and homeless shelters. These are Foucault's name for the universal qualities. The ideals they project are those of

249

Robert Rotenberg

shared life-cycle crises and the containment of deviance. There are probably as many such 'places' as there are ideals that communities have identified as worthy of projecting.

An urban park, for example, is heterotopic because it attempts to illustrate an ideal of nature in the city. Nature is a universal experience, a commonsense category that describes all of the aspects of reality that humans feel are beyond their control. Thus, the most exquisite of human artifices, the built form of the city, is contrasted with the world of plants, animals and climatic forces. The power of humans to build is contrasted with the nature's power to grow.

Such sites have identifiable functions. Foucault suggests that the cemetery best illustrates this heterotopic practice. In periods of stronger religious belief this site was centrally located. Concern for the integrity of the physical remains was absent. Cemeteries could be small and internally undifferentiated. Under conditions of weaker religious belief, the growing concern for the integrity of the remains requires larger areas, systems of streets and hierarchies of neighbourhoods. The identifiable function is seen in the way the design decisions reflect the concerns and practices of the community.

An urban park could reflect this second feature in a variety of ways. An old palace garden could be converted to a historically accurate public park to reflect the community's need to connect to its history, perhaps as a reflection of its sense of grandeur as its prominence is waning. Or, the park could be designed to emphasize its accessibility, thus embodying ideals of pluralism, diversity and democracy, even as prejudice and disenfranchisement increase.

Such sites resist being reduced to a single meaning. They are multi-vocal landscapes that convey different things to different people at different times in the same community. Foucault offers the example of the Persian garden reduced to a design on a carpet that can be carried to the Mosque for prayer, but still exemplifies the geography of heaven. The carpet is simultaneously a carpet, a model of a garden, the garden itself, a model of heaven and heaven itself.

An urban park is simultaneously a place to walk in peace and quiet in the middle of the busy city, a playground for children, a rendezvous for lovers, a private place to hold a business meeting, a gallery for flower enthusiasts, a laboratory for urban landscape practices, a model of gardening for home gardeners, a place to experience nature and nature itself.

Such sites are heterochronic. Just as space can be orthotopic or heterotopic, so time can be ordinary or extraordinary. Heterotopias break the continuity of ordinary time, as well as that of space. This is achieved through the accumulation of meanings over time. The contemporary meaning of the place and the aggregate of its past meanings are indistinguishable. The museum and memorial square become heterotopias through their ability to suspend the passage of time. The temporal break also can be achieved through the creation of the fleeting, the transitory or the precarious. An example of this is the circus that appears overnight in an open field and disappears again a few days later. In domestic gardens this heterochrony is served by the contrast between the annual life cycle of botanicals and the social conventions of metropolitan time schedules.

Parks gather memories of communal events, celebrations and crises that are remembered differently by different groupings within the community. Some remember an event as the community's greatest triumph, and others remember the event as its greatest shame. While this event could just as easily have transformed any ordinary streetscape, it may have been specifically sited in the park because of its heterotopic character. Parks tend to gather extraordinary events over time, preserving threads of different experiences, both personal and communal. Like museums, they freeze time as all memories are remembered as equally contemporary.

Such sites are neither completely inaccessible, nor are they completely open. Instead, entry is either compulsory, as with the army barracks or the prison, or it is available only through permission from some kind of authority. Foucault identifies 'places of purification' as heterotopias that achieve their extraordinariness primarily through the manner of their control of access, such as the Moslem hammam, the Jewish mikva, or the Finnish sauna, along with places of sexual intimacy, rooms marked 'Authorized Personnel Only' and drug houses. Most domestic gardens have a fence and a gate. Opening can refer to sight as well as site. Some landscapes can only be seen from the inside outward, while others are open to viewing by passersby.

The urban park has its own system of opening and closing, beginning with the signage at its gates stipulating whether the visiting hours are limited. Such parks have gates, even if these are merely cuts in a hedge wall. Streets, pavements and sometimes fences bound them. More importantly, we see them from either all vantage points or from only specific vantage points.

Finally, such sites link to the ordinary places in society. The nature of the link can be as complex and multi-vocal as the sites themselves. The link creates an illusion that the site is not what it appears to be. The same aspects of everyday experience that seem to be closed off, shut out, mystified or camouflaged by the site are precisely the ones a person is most aware of. They are conspicuous in their absence. To be effective fantasies of a society reduced to its universal qualities, these sites must encourage visitors to suspend disbelief, as in a theatrical performance. They do so by excluding those social realities that contradict the idealized view enshrined in their design. A theme park on the scale of Disneyland is a prime example of exclusionary linking. Visitors to such sites can choose to accept the camouflage, agreeing to suspend disbelief that an ideal world coexists with the real one they occupied before entering the park. They exchange these worlds for a satisfying, momentarily ordered meditation on the contrast between the ideal with the real community. Such linkages are immediate and self-evident to the visitor. They are an integral part of the experience of the site.

An urban park closes off access to the people that are deemed upsetting to the decorum of a public place: the rowdy, the homeless, the derelict and the deviant. To the greatest extent possible, it shuts out the sound and sights of the surrounding city, as if to preserve the illusion of an all-embracing nature. In doing so, it mystifies the relationship between the rural and the urban, the condition of nature in the city and nature in nature, and the construction of nature by people and the unintended growth and distribution of plants. Finally, the urban park camouflages its

teaching function by never directly referencing the ideals it was designed to project. These can only be glimpsed indirectly, strengthening the power of the design to communicate these ideals without contradiction or contradistinction.

The difference between the ordinary and extraordinary is not one that community members themselves will easily make. They, too, have to be shown the features that distinguish one site from another (Rotenberg 1995). A single site need not emphasize all of these features in order to qualify as a heterotopia. The task belongs to the analyst to demonstrate that a site qualifies through the practices of the people who visit it. This is most often the case when the analyst wants to reinforce the teaching quality of the landscape for the community.

Atopos

Webber (1964) first described what he called a non-place in the mid-1960s as 'a sprawling, polycentric landscape characterized by the steady erasure of locality by the generic forms of a diversified yet ultimately homogenizing market culture' (Rutheiser 1997). Sorkin (1992) and Zukin (1991) have also described several efforts at creating these non-places. More recently, Marc Augé has described these atopia as two complementary but distinct realities: spaces formed in relation to certain specific urban activities, usually transport, transit, commerce, and leisure, and the relations that individuals have with these spaces (Augé 1995 p. 94).

A public bus is not an ordinary place, but neither is it extraordinary. One bus is very much like another. Something meaningful can happen to a person on a bus that might be the basis for place-making, but that particular bus, its number, its peculiarities among other buses, will not be part of the memory. Rather, the event took place on 'a' bus. As for the other people on the bus, their relationship to each other is the same as their relationship to the activity they are engaged in: solitary and anonymous. The bus is an atopos, a non-place.

A bus has the characteristics of a space. One moves on a bus, even as the bus moves through the streets from bus stop to bus stop. In his analysis of this movement, Augé notes that the stops of the Paris metro inevitably reference monuments and historic districts of one sort or another, in other words, places. This is one of the features of atopias that make them interesting to think about. They are in the same position as ordinary places even though they are devoid of the memory of relations to the people and things. We do not become emotionally attached to a bus. They are non-places because the only relationship possible is a contractual one, represented by the ticket and the authority of the driver. Unlike the conventionality of the street, the contract of a bus ride is negotiable. A range of behaviour is possible, as determined by the driver and the other passengers. We all have stories of improbable behaviour that was tolerated on a bus, and that would never have been tolerated on a street.

The bus ticket is a contract between the transit authority and a single rider, not a group or community. You are truly alone on a bus. Can one undertake a more solitary activity in public? Even though someone may be sitting next to you, no interaction is expected. You can have as much space to yourself as the design of the seat and the girth of the passenger next you will allow.

Augé sees the spatial practices atopia increasing in our cities. Non-places are closely associated with what scholars call the global neoliberal regime (Brenner and Theodore 2002; Hackworth 2007; Swyngedouw *et al*. 2002). Investors, planners and regional governments enact this regime by transforming large, and from their perspective, under-utilized sections of urban centres to spaces suitable for investment and profit-taking. What follows is an onslaught of commoditisation, hyper-gentrification, cultural deracination, corporate takeover of municipal services and spiralling costs. The specific targets are transport sites (airports, train stations, inter-city bus terminals), transit sites (taxis, cars, buses, subways, escalators), commercial sites (of the chain store, franchise restaurant, mall outlet variety) and leisure sites (the theme park, urban attraction, 'must see' vista, or staged festival). These have their parallels in ordinary spaces: the shared ride using the personal cars of each rider in rotation, the corner 'mom and pop' grocery where names and greetings are exchanged with each transaction, and the regular Saturday morning chess game in the park with the same three people for the last five years, weather permitting. Not only is the former list contractual and solitary, while the latter are consensual and social, the scales of the non-places are large enough to accommodate many more people.

The creation of large, open spaces in city contexts generates a marked contrast with the local tolerance of crowding. Such spaces are produced according to formulas, such as the faux nostalgia of neo-urban landscape design, or the adaptive reuse of historically preserved/conserved landscapes. They are meant to generate income. The people who move through them eventually become numb to such places, responding increasingly like programmed robots; they act only according to expectations. Atopias represents the intrusive presence of regimentation and aesthetic domination (Herzfeld 2006).

The quintessential atopos is the shopping centre. From the moment one enters the parking lot to the moment one leaves again, almost all of the relations are solitary and contractual. There are ordinary places mixed in, such as the walkways between shops and the dining sites. These are all the more invisible because of the overwhelming difference with the atopic parking lot and commercial sites. Selecting a parking space involves a set of spatial practices almost too complex to describe here. Each space seems to have a particular value attached to it, the spaces closer to an entrance having a higher value than spaces farther away. Spaces where the adjacent spaces are empty have a higher value that those where the adjacent ones are occupied. The value that one achieves by parking the car gives one a moment of self-knowledge: ordinarily it is something on the order of 'achievement of one's goals often involves compromise'. What is important about the games we play with ourselves over parking spaces is the solitary, exclusionary, anti-social moment that parking engenders. There is a parking contract: one cannot park in two spaces at once; one must park fully within the space and not permit the car to stick out into the driving lane; and one must open the doors so as not to dent the car in the adjacent space. More could be said about parking and the negotiation of actions with drivers in other cars, all of which is different from, but analogous to the process that takes place on streets. However, it is time to enter the centre and do some shopping. Here,

253

too, the solitude that began in the parking lot continues. We are preoccupied with our own person, our body, how our body looks, how our body is reflected in the bodies of others, and how the bodies of others reflects on the value of shopping at this particular centre for our body.

There is a contract to shopping in these stores. It varies slightly in different communities, but the clerk and especially the manager is in the position of the bus driver, interpreting the relationship of the store to the customer to permit a flexibility of actions than exists in the street. This is true of all stores, but shopping in such centres is unique because they represented a concentration and variety of stores that would rarely be found on a single street. Their design is closer to that of an entire town or neighbourhood. The flexibility concerns practices that reduce the risk to the shopper, like trying out or trying on a product, comparing prices between stores, negotiating alterations and negotiating price. One leaves the shopping centre with one's purchases having confirmed one's sense of self. This over-arching valuing of the experience of place as an experience of self is the primary characteristic of atopic spatial practices.

Autotopos

The most recent development in understanding spatial practices emphasizes the role of non-expert, ordinary residents in the construction of places. This is slightly different from the architectural historian's category of vernacular design. Autotopic places are most often constructed in opposition to some sort of governmental regime, such as zoning, district covenants, lease agreements, building codes, and official 'taste.' The most concentrated form of the autotopia is the squatter settlement. Using whatever materials are at hand and the technical ingenuity born of necessity, the autotopic place is slightly dangerous, exciting and democratic. Autotopia are not confined to impoverished populations. In any community where there is an extension of voting rights with restricted access to property rights, rights of residence and/or limited economic mobility, there is the potential for people to take places into their own hands and appropriate them to their own ends. Holston calls this insurgent citizenship (Holston 2008). This is an involving area of research as anthropologists attribute places to these autonomous spatial practices.

Research approaches in cultural anthropology

Cultural anthropologists have two different styles of research: ethnography and ethnology. Ethnography is the set of research practices that culminate in a description of the lives of people. The description can be targeted to a specific condition, problem, region or period. It can involve a single site or multiple sites. Ethnology is the analysis of the distributions and patterns that emerge when the lives of people are compared in different conditions, through different problems, or across different periods or regions. It always involves multiple sites.

Ethnography

The primary research practice in ethnography is long-term fieldwork. This involves living with the group of people, learning their language and adjusting one's behaviour

so that it is predictable to the community you are living in. All of this is accomplished with a high degree of self-consciousness, note taking and question asking. By long term, most anthropologists would agree that multiple years of commitment to a community are necessary, though this is often interrupted with trips home. Fieldwork has a strong linguistic focus. It tends to give priority to forms of local knowledge and to localised forms of expressing that knowledge. Other tools include the formal interview with a consistent set of questions asked to community members, photographic documentation of the sites and archival research in specialised libraries and collections to recover past experiences with sites and published expert commentary.

Unlike survey research, in which an ideal sample size can be known ahead of time, the lack of consistent and evenly distributed knowledge in a community requires the ethnographer to ask similar questions of a variety of people. The questioning continues until the researcher understands why most answers are the same and why some answers are different. This can take quite a long time, but it will happen eventually. Underlying the uneven distribution of knowledge is a process of mutual comprehension that makes community life possible. That is, even though two people may have differing knowledge of a phenomenon in their locality, they understand when such differences are crucial to predicting how someone will act and when the differences are inconsequential. The ethnographic sample is complete when the researcher is sufficiently familiar with this underlying process of mutual understanding that questioning is no longer necessary.

The fieldwork describes the ways people encounter places, perceive them and invest them with significance. Your disciplinary training in the culture theory, previous research experience and conversations with others engaged in similar research combine to produce a competent and convincing description. Having community members read and criticise it validates this narrative.

The ethnography of landscape describes specific ways in which places naturalise different ways of making sense of the world (Feld and Basso 1996 p. 8). That is, we see the reasonableness of an arrangement of a specific community life represented in the landscape. To this end, ethnographers collect verbal descriptions of sites and localities and detailed spoken narratives of places. However, the advantage of being present in the community is that we can put our own bodies in these communities and these landscapes, observing the actions of the people around us, but also reacting to the spaces as a 'community member in training', learning the hard way which behaviours are permitted and which are not. It is from this direct involvement in the sites we seek to analyse that cultural anthropologists make their greatest contribution to the study of landscape.

Ethnology
Beyond the landscapes of particular communities lies the theoretical problem of whether aspects of the experience of landscape are common to all people. The weighing of evidence from different ethnographies in an effort to answer this question is known to cultural anthropologists in the Boasian tradition as the science of ethnology. I realise that the term has a different meaning in many European

Robert Rotenberg

universities where it refers to research that describes the cultural coherence of a region of the world. In the United States, the European usage of the term was transformed at the turn of the century to put less emphasis on cultural coherence and more emphasis on the historical processes through which common understandings come in being across localities.

For example, in European ethnology it would be appropriate to describe the persistence of a French vernacular landscape style as distinct from, say, a Dutch vernacular. In American ethnology it would be appropriate to ask how the form of garden colonies spread through Europe following the publication of Ebenezer Howard's 'To-Morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform' (1898) interacting with the already established pedagogical gardens of D. G. M. Schreber and E. I. Hauschild (1864) to create the allotment garden movement. The former ethnology is an analysis of static qualities. The latter focuses on flow and movement.

This form of ethnology is only as good as the ethnography on which it is based. That is, we have to first know that the allotment garden movement was indeed a movement. That it had the potential to reshape the form of European cities. That it was a durable and persistent force throughout the twentieth century. That people knowledgeable of urban land use policies can reasonably disagree on the ultimate value of the movement. Allotment gardens are a particular form of land use with specific, constantly changing legal, political and social features. The ethnology that emerges from these ethnographic observations is critical. It is not merely history in the service of ethnography. It documents the changes in landscape meanings through time, in much the same way that archaeology documents the changes in material culture through time.

Concluding thoughts

I have tried in these few pages to summarize fifty years of research on a complex facet of the human experience: the meaning we derive from our experience with specific spaces and places. A landscape architect may rightly ask, 'When I am designing a site, how much of my design is the product of my local and my professional communities, and how much of it is my creative innovation?' Culture is not a straightjacket. It is like a set of grooves in our lives. We can easily move within the grooves, or we can choose to step out of the grooves and walk beside them. The greater our awareness of where the grooves lie, the broader our range of choice. In other words, the landscape designer decides how much of the design responds to the issues and concerns in the professional community or the community of users, and how much derives from creativity.

It is helpful to have someone around who can describe those grooves and explain why they have come to exist. Collaboration is possible between the landscape architect and cultural anthropologist. When landscape architects take the time to engage in ethnographic research themselves, their designs become more deeply rooted to the locality. It is a tool for discovering how a community will interact with a design. It is a process for evaluating a design after it is built. It is a path to self-knowledge for the designer who is open to discovering the spatial discourses and practices that have shaped the work.

Designers have effectively teamed with social scientists in the past. In North America, a professional association known as the Environmental Design Research Association (EDRA) and in Europe as the International Association for People-Environment Studies (IAPS) has brought together landscape architects, architects, regional planners, preservationists, environmental psychologists, geographers and cultural anthropologists to share research ideas and techniques since 1969. I have taken part in four EDRA conferences and found the conversations with designers, planners and fellow researchers highly stimulating. Several scientific journals are also devoted to this collaboration including *Environment and Behavior*, *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research*, *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*, *Journal of Planning Literature*, *Landscape Journal*, *Places* and *Research Design Connections*. I urge all landscape architects to take advantage of the potential for such collaboration. Our communities can only benefit.

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