THE LANGUAGE OF LANDSCAPE

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Landscape materials, phenomena, and forms are emphatic, paradoxical, analogical: wind is an exaggerated breeze, water is yielding yet erosive, roses bloom and wither, so do humans. A rose is rarely just a rose; it is encrusted with meaning accrued through centuries of poetry, painting, gardens, and rituals of everyday life. And still roses are mined for fresh meanings by reformation, surprising and provocative juxtapositions and combinations.

In Western cultures, where words have primacy over images and other symbols, figures of speech and rhetorical devices such as emphasis, metaphor, paradox, irony, address have been codified elaborately, even excessively, in literature but are rarely applied to landscape.¹ The failure to recognize the potential figurative power of landscape in its own right, not simply as a backdrop or a frame for a building, is common. Yet all but a few figures and tropes, some of which turn specifically on wordplay (onomatopoeia), are present in landscape literature.

Thomas Jefferson employed the figurative qualities of landscape masterfully; later architects have modified and weakened his remarkable vision. His design for the University of Virginia at Charlottesville used two parallel rows of pavilions and colonnades to define a central lawn and frame a view to the Blue Mountains. One end was left open, the other closed by a large building, the library, facing the mountains. Thus Jefferson linked two sources of knowledge: books and nature. When, in the 1890s, the university’s board of visitors elected to close the open end of the space with a new building by the architect Stanford White, the view to the mountains was blotted out, and the Lawn became an enclosed space, internally oriented, losing the reference to nature Jefferson had intended and provided.² Some architects have lobbyed to remove the trees from the Lawn so that the buildings can be seen more clearly, but it is the trees that intensify the experience of the buildings.³ The contrast of the trees’ branching, fractal form to the crisply Euclidean geometry of the architecture initiates a dialogue: in early morning, in late afternoon, low light casts shadows of branches against the smooth round white columns—a dialogue between organic and inorganic, romantic and classical, metaphor and source.

**Figures of Speech and Rhetoric**

Landscapes designed by Martha Schwartz are laden with overlapping figures and rhetorical devices, provocative and disturbing in their effect. The courtyard of the Rio Shopping Center in Atlanta employs various figures of speech: hundreds of gilded frogs, larger than life, sit, equally spaced, facing a forty-foot-high geodesic globe and a central fountain that would otherwise be insignificant. Here there is anachorism (a form of anomaly), interrogation (a form of address), and, for emphasis, placement, exaggeration, and parallelism. The effect is surreal. Why frogs? Why facing the fountain? Schwartz calls the choice of frogs serendipitous; they were one of the least expensive garden ornaments available in Atlanta.⁴ But a frog is not just a frog; it is a potent symbol, a sign of fertility in certain cultures, linked to water in most. It has a dark meaning, to some Christians, of avarice, a grasping at worldly pleasures.⁵ Was this an ironic message in a place devoted to shopping? Some years after construction of the Rio Shopping Center, the New York Times published a story entitled “Silence of the Frogs.”⁶ It reported that, all over the world, frogs are disappearing, for reasons unknown, though some speculate that loss of habitat, environmental poisons, and the thinning ozone layer are causes. When I think about the Rio courtyard, I am haunted by the silence of the frogs. Landscape as language, richly figurative, attracts meaning beyond that originally intended and foreseen.

**Emphasis**

Placing emphasis on one thing requires downplaying the importance of something else, and this raises questions. Why emphasize one thing over another? And to
what end? Emphasis without meaning is boring; repetition without variation may become monotonous. Overuse of emphasis creates confusion: when one building and landscape after another strives to be bigger, brighter, more ornate, or more distorted than the ones that preceded or that surround it, the result is cacophony.

Placement. To set something first or last, as a manor house at the end of a long avenue of trees, establishes a hierarchy. Planting a grove of trees atop a hill makes the hill seem higher. Siting a monument or building on a mountaintop or hilltop stresses the structure's importance (the statue of Christ, the Corcovado, at Rio de Janeiro, Greek temples, Christian churches on older sacred sites); so does putting a fountain at the center of a garden or a piazza at the center of a town. Placing the Statue of Liberty at the entrance to New York Harbor at a time when most immigrants arrived there by ship gave it far more significance than if it had been erected in the middle of Central Park. The position of Louis XIV's bedroom and the statue of Apollo along the same central axis at Versailles implies a commonality between the two. So does the placement of Philadelphia's City Hall and Art Museum at either end of a broad tree-lined parkway, the significant connection between civics and culture.

Framing. Framing brackets; it separates from context, focuses attention by screening undesired or irrelevant views, by directing the gaze. Gates, walls, hedges, and groves of trees may frame objects, scenes, or distant prospects by enclosing with distinctive color, texture, sound, or scent. Low, protruding roofs of Japanese teahouses direct the gaze downward, evoking humility; windows in buildings and arcades at the Alhambra frame expansive views to distant hills and sky, conveying a sense of power. Richard Long and James Turrell play upon and within, and twist this tradition of framing: in "England 1967," Long placed a freestanding frame of dark wood in rolling parkland; in his "skyspaces" and at Roden Crater, Turrell frames the sky, isolating shifting light and clouds to focus contemplation. Contrast. An oasis in the desert, an island in the sea, a grove on the prairie, a clearing in the forest—all contrast with context. The more homogeneous and extensive the context, the more powerful the potential contrast: hot and cool, wet and dry, light and dark, colored and monotone, open and enclosed, large and small, loud and soft, rough and smooth, pungent and sweet. Freestanding elements on a plain become landmarks, even icons: the windmills and hedgerows of Holland, grain elevators on the High Plains, stone pillars at Stonehenge on Salisbury Plain, Uluru in Australia's Red Center. Bright, reflective surfaces in landscapes with dark, overcast, or misty climates are mirrors, signs, beacons. Well-watered urban landscapes in the arid American Southwest lose impact when too prevalent, when the line between irrigated and dry is haphazard. In an oasis, less can be more.

Exaggeration. Mountain is an exaggeration of hill, wind of breeze. The wind's force is increased when funneled through a small opening—the Venturi effect. Plants bred to exaggerate a desired form, color, scent heighten effect, so do "weeping" beeches in arboreta and neon-bright azaleas in suburban yards. Which attributes are selected for exaggeration is significant. Steps or paving stones far wider than human gait make one feel smaller; if the contrast is of superhuman or extrahuman scale a person may feel insignificant. A person feels more comfortable, important, or powerful when a landscape feature is a smaller than normal scale: the bridge over the pond in Boston's Public Garden; Denmark's Legoland, a combination of miniaturization and exaggeration with diminutive buildings, landscapes, and towns constructed from little Lego blocks. Exaggeration can also deceive: steepening a slope creates a sensation of height, forced perspective an illusion of distance, magnifying size in contrast to surroundings, a surreal effect. "Homage to the Magnolia," a walk in the garden at Sutton Place, an estate near Guildford, England, is a surreal landscape inspired by the painter Magritte. There, five "monster Roman vases" frame and "herald" the view to a magnolia tree "too small and tender . . . to terminate such a lengthy vista." In the words of the walk's designer Geoffrey Jellicoe, "The purpose is to disorganise the mind by a deliberate incongruity in the juxtaposition of disparate objects, preparing it for the tranquility of the Nicholson wall," an abstract sculpture in a garden room beyond the walk (see Allegory below). Toward the end of his career, Jellicoe was fascinated
with the unconscious and explored landscape design “the unreasoned fantasia of the subconscious, released in all their fun, oddity, and awesomeness.”

Exaggeration in religious and political landscapes diminishes the individual and heightens a god, ruler, hero, country or state. The vast scale of the gardens at Versailles—the time it takes to walk from one end to another, the broad avenues, the long staircases, the canal that stretches into the distance—underscores the power of their builder, Louis XIV. The Mall in Washington, D.C., with long, flat sheets of water and stretches of lawn, has a breadth, length, and openness that make gauging distance difficult; it takes much longer to walk from place to place than one anticipates. At the Lincoln Memorial, one feels dwarfed by the many steps, the superhuman statue, and the high pedestal. Gigantic representations of human features emerging from ground or water herald the heroic or monstrous: the huge head and arm of Titan emerging from the middle of a pool in a fountain at Versailles; a gateway at the entrance of Oral Roberts University in Oklahoma formed by a cast of the founder’s hands, clasped in prayer. The attribute chosen for exaggeration is significant. In Baghdad, two enormous swords cross over an avenue to form a Victory Arch more than 150 feet high, the entry to a military parade ground; the hands that hold the swords, modeled on a cast of Saddam Hussein’s forearms with a sword in each fist, seem to explode out of the earth.

The roots of landscape hyperbole may lie in phenomena like the awesome height of the Alps and dangerous force of storms. Frequent use diminishes its effect. In the seventeenth century, the jet of water on the Titan fountain at Versailles was unusual and dramatic, but higher jets of water now surge up, hundreds of feet, from lakes all over the world, so commonplace they fail to impress. A desert town, Fountain Hills, Arizona, boasts “the world’s tallest fountain.”

**Distortion.** A twisted or misshapen condition has been more fashionable in some eras than others, chic in sixteenth-century Mannerism and in twentieth-century postmodernism, with twisted axes common in buildings and streets. Distortion seems more disturbing in living things than in buildings, plazas, or streets, perhaps because of the association with genetic birth defects or mutations caused by radiation or toxic chemicals. In southern Sweden, there is a forest of naturally deformed beech trees (*Fagus sylvatica tortuosa*), their trunks and branches twisted and misshapen like the forest trees of Disneyland’s Snow White ride. Some of the beeches, with their sharply bent branches, resemble Japanese calligraphy; others have curved, drooping branches that spring from the trunk at odd angles. Huge stones mark the boundary, frame the place in monumental scale. On a summer evening the low light, filtered through leaves, is reddish-brown. This is a profoundly disturbing place. Sven-Ingvar Andersson, who took me there, reports that the trees’ deformed condition is genetically determined. Because it is so rare, the forest is protected by law. Once, he says, few other trees grew here, and there was little to distract from the trees and their bizarre forms. Now, ironically, with the forest protected by law, other trees have appeared, eliminating the uniformity of species that made the variety of distorted forms even more apparent. Andersson first visited this place at the age of twenty, and it depressed him greatly for he could not imagine being able to design a place as powerful as this; but why not plant a grove of them?

**Alliteration, Echoism, Assonance.** Arching fountains at Generalife in the Alhambra that repeat both sound and shape are alliterative. The wind in the poplars at Áhenrâ in Denmark echoes and alludes to the sound of rushing water; this is echoism, as is the sound of the artificial sea at North Point Preserve in San Diego’s Sea World, ironic since the real sea is just beyond, though invisible and inaudible. Repeating shapes of trees or landforms, as in roofs that echo treetops in Murcutt’s Ball House or mountains at Taliesin West and Denver’s Harlequin Plaza, is also echoism. Rattling leaves of bamboo and dry leaves of beech hedges is assonance, “a resemblance or correspondence of sound or shape,” providing a kind of rhyme between sounds or shapes that echo, but do not allude to each other.

On a walk through Parc de La Villette in Paris a few years ago, I heard birds in song, but saw only one bird. As I moved forward, the sounds grew louder, and, at a turn in the path, I saw a row of speakers, spaced evenly, set among the plants in a garden border, and sat down to listen, entranced, to the wonderful music, a mix of instrumental music and sounds of the world, composed in what seemed a random blend and sequence. The music incorporated surrounding sounds as if they were an intentional part of the whole—birdsong, rustling leaves, the rushing traffic of the *boulevard périphérique*, the sound of feet walking on the bridge overhead, faraway voices and clapping. I continued to hear the music as I moved on (or did I?), more aware of the tone, rhythm, and orchestration of sounds around me, no longer certain whether I was hearing music or just perceiving ambient sounds in a new way. I was tuned into the sounds of the city and heard an order, the underlying base tones of traffic, then repetitive and random sounds in combination, a passing train, construction hammers. That was the first time I had experienced what R. Murray Schafer calls a “soundscape,” the characteristic sound, frequency, and rhythms of a place, alliteration, echoism, assonance. Since that day, I am more aware how sound shapes context, and sounds became less ephemeral, more easily recalled.

**Rhythm.** Rhythm is a succession of accented beats or pulses, a pattern of sounds, sights, or sensations, a periodic recurrence or regular alternation with interval, meter, cadence: parallelism, epanaphora, epanalepsis. Rhythms emerge out of a contextual background; they go with or against, in counterpoint. In landscape, the rhythm of movement is most visible when documented on film or video, then viewed at a faster speed than normal. In Disneyland, the stroll is the rhythm, in basketball the dribble, the run, and the jump.

**Parallelism.** Parallelism repeats a formula or structural pattern to create order, establish a rhythm, emphasize a feature that departs from the pattern (an anom-
aly). Trees in an allée or avenue direct attention to a monument at the end, as the trees along the Franklin Parkway in Philadelphia direct attention to City Hall and the Art Museum at either end; when the trees were replaced recently, there was a controversy over whether species should be varied, for the sake of ecological diversity, or whether all the trees should be the same species, for the sake of visual effect, a conflict between the pragmatic and the rhetorical. In the end, a mixture of species was planted. Alexander Pope satirized gardens in which such repetition is taken to an extreme: "Grove nods at Grove, each Alley has a Brother, / And half the Platform just reflects the Other." The pattern need not be, literally, parallel: at Na'rum Garden Colony, the many freestanding elliptical hedges of hawthorn and beech reveal the rolling topography, rescuing the scheme from monotony. The repetition of bright red follies at Parc de La Villette, all about the same size and set on a grid, heightens the differences among the follies. The uniformity of parallel colonnades linking the pavilions that flank the Lawn at the University of Virginia highlights the variations among the pavilions. In the square-shaped Villa Rotonda in Vicenza, the repetitive symmetry of identical facades emphasizes each of the varied landscapes that confronts each loggia: formal garden on one side, then woodland; orchard and vineyard; distant fields and floodplain. Though the plan of the building is frequently reproduced, its landscape context is rarely shown. Yet Andrea Palladio, the villa's designer, cites its landscape context as the reason for this unusual four-part symmetry. The building is a foil for the landscape:

The site is as pleasant and as delightful as can be found; because it is upon a small hill, of very easy access, and is watered on one side by the Bacchiaglione, a navigable river; and on the other it is encompassed with most pleasant risings, which look like a very great theater, and are all cultivated, and abound with most excellent fruits, and most exquisite vines; and therefore, as it enjoys from every part most beautiful views, some of which are limited, some more extended, and others that terminate with the horizon; there are loggias made in all the four fronts.

Epanaphora and Epalepsis. Disney's gates to each land in the Magic Kingdom repeat to signal a beginning; equidistant road markers announce the beginning of a new segment. Bands of stone headers at intervals across a brick sidewalk that mark the beginning of each segment of pavement provide variety that sets up a visual and audible rhythm. Progressive passage through a ritual landscape is often signaled by a series of walls, gates, shrines, or signs. At Ise, a succession of gates into nested enclosures marks the entry to increasingly more sacred domains; pilgrims may not proceed beyond to the innermost. A million pilgrims a year journey to Juazeiro, Brazil, home of a Roman Catholic "holy man" who died in 1934, climbing two miles up a steep hill on the Rua do Hortoia to a huge statue of Padre Cicero. Concrete statues along the route mark each Station of the Cross and prompt a prayer or action; pilgrims tie ribbons and drape flowers around the statues of Christ, slap or spit at the figures of Judas and Herod's soldiers. All of these landscapes are epanaphora, repeating an element to mark the beginning of a series of segments or motifs.

In epalepsis an element or combination of elements is stressed through repetition, such as notes in birdsong, words in a refrain, or the diverse fountains at the Alhambra and Generalife, each similar in sight and sound—the low bubbler, the arc, the wall gusher. Many of the low bubblers are in small courtyards and under porticos in shade, where their soft sound is amplified, their shifting shape expanding in ripples. Arcs in larger, open courts are transformed by sun into curving lines of light, their splashing sound bright; gushers spout from terrace walls and rush into basins. The visitor moves through the gardens to these water refrains, variations on a theme.

Climax and Anticlimax

Climax. In climax, the "highest or most intense point in an experience or series of events," intensity and significance increase step by step. When a canoeist runs a river, toward a waterfall, water flows faster, the rushing roar grows louder, then comes the climactic drop into crashing water. So, too, a view or monument at the top of an ascending path (the church at Mont-Saint-Michel, the grove on the Hill of Remembrance in Forest Cemetery). Ecologists once saw a succession in plants' growing mounting to a "climax" in a sequence of stages: from a cut forest a meadow grows, then woody seedlings of shrubs and trees emerge, sun-loving trees...
grow into shady woodland, which die off, in turn, as forest trees grow higher. The perception of climax as the ideal of progression was in part a human idea projected onto landscape.

**Anticlimax.** In anticlimax, there is a failure to live up to expectations: when the end of a journey disappoints, when no water is discovered in a desert waterhole, when no view and nothing else of significance appears at the end of a long, ascending path. The eye-catching ruins atop a distant hill, seen from Sanssoucci (the palace that lends its name to a grand estate in Potsdam outside Berlin), draw the eye; up close, after a long ascent, the climber finds no ruins at all, simply columns placed artfully akimbo, to hide the reservoir that feeds the fountains of the park. Jellicoe prevented such a letdown in his design for the long walk at Sutton Place, whose terminus in an insignificant magnolia is not anticlimactic but provocatively surreal. After nineteenth-century tourists to Niagara Falls complained that “the Falls fail to astonish,” Frederick Law Olmsted was hired, in 1886, to prepare a plan to redress the disappointment. He changed the rhythm and varied the sequence of visitors’ experience.17

**Anomaly**

Landscape that is incongruous is anomalous; taking something out of time or place provokes notice and promotes discovery. To take something out of context on purpose can be crucial to invention and humor.

**Anachronism.** In anachronism, the antique is placed out of time, in a modern setting, or vice versa. Replicas of gas lamps, benches, railings, and fences from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, common in American parks of the late twentieth century prompt questions. Why reproduce the old? Why not simply adapt it? Or invent anew, as in Paris and Barcelona, where lamps, benches, and fences in new parks are frankly contemporary, as the celebrated Paris Métro entrances once were? Battery Park City, a new residential and commercial neighborhood at the tip of Lower Manhattan, combines sleek modern buildings with a landscape that reflects nineteenth- and early twentieth-century style, but is surrounded by the city’s crumbling infrastructure: potholes, decaying parks, aging subways. Perhaps the ubiquitous reproductions in the United States are expressions of nostalgia for a period when more substantial investments were made in the urban public realm.

The use of modern materials like plastic, steel, and concrete or of frankly contemporary styles to reconstruct or interpret historic landscapes is also anachronistic. Andersson advocates such an approach when the purpose is renovation or renewal, but not when it is reconstruction (which must, by definition, employ historically accurate materials and construction techniques). Renovation, he sees as guided by an understanding of the original conception and the elements that contributed to its artistic quality, not a copy, but an artful translation. Free renewal, as defined by Andersson, preserves not the form itself, nor even the spirit, but rather the original’s artistic quality, an approach he supports when documentation or funding are inadequate to make reconstruction possible and when too little of the original is left to support renovation. Better a new form with a strong artistic concept than an imitation devoid of the aesthetic qualities that made the original memorable.18 His design for Urienborg, Tycho Brahe’s observatory and garden on the island of Ven, between Sweden and Denmark, is a fusion of all three, reconstruction, renovation, and free renewal.19

**Prochronism.** World’s fairs and expositions typically display a representation of something in the future as if it exists already. Disney’s Epcot (Experimental Prototype Community of Tomorrow), intended to “entertain, inform, and inspire,” was envisioned as a showcase for American industry and research. In “Future World,” each exhibit is sponsored by a big corporation: “Wonders of Life” by Metropolitan Life Insurance, “The Living Seas” by United Technologies, “Universe of Energy” by Exxon, “Horizons” by General Electric, “Journey into Imagination” by Kodak, “CommuniCore” by Unisys, “World of Motion” by General Motors. All demonstrate the conviction that environmental and social problems can be resolved by technology. In Kraft Foods’ “The Land,” a film titled Symbiosis praises “working in harmony with nature and listening to the land,” implying that pollution has been overcome. The film ends with a lone farmer, hands in back pockets, staring across a field of grain, as if the family farmer is still alive and well, but then the camera pulls up to show development nearby. Since the category “farmer” has now been dropped from the U.S. census, this scene is deeply ironic. The landscape and buildings at Epcot recall those of the 1939 New York World’s Fair. This is yesterday’s tomorrow, an anachronism whose landscape, with its swirling bands of brilliant blooms, is meant to reassure the visitor that the future will be a happy place.

**Anachronism.** An anachronism is a foreign element, something out of place rather than out of time. Exotic plants transported in the late nineteenth century from the outposts of the British Empire to the Royal Botanical Garden at Kew are anachronisms, so are the pastoral parks and gardens with green lawns and groves exported from Britain to Australia, India, Africa, and, today, to the American Southwest.

**Anastrophe.** Anastrophe is an inversion of the normal or expected order for emphasis, or humor, or priority. Thus, casts of human legs, upside down, stick up out of the pavement in site’s plaza outside the railroad station in Yokohama, Japan. The sponsor, the Isuzu Corporation, wanted the plaza to feature their cars and allude to their work in high technology for outer space. Inspired by photographs of astronauts floating upside down in space capsules, site designed an inverted plaza with upside-down cars and legs cast from citizens of Yokohama. A field of Texas bluebonnets, the state flower, hangs upside down from the ceiling of Austin’s airport, waving in the breezes of the ventilation system. “The Hanging Texas Blue-
Metaphor and simile: Harlequin Plaza, Colorado.

bonnet Field” is part of a larger commission of hedgerows, windbreaks, and allees designed by Martha Schwartz to lead travelers from the airport’s parking lots and roads to the entry.

**Metaphor**

Metaphor involves a transfer of meaning from one thing or phenomenon to another, an “imaginative, often unexpected, comparison between basically dissimilar things.” Seen broadly, “all figures of speech that achieve their effect through association, comparison, and resemblance”; seen more narrowly, “a figure of speech that concisely compares two things by saying that one is the other.” Is the distinction between simile and metaphor relevant in landscape? What would landscape examples be of *simile*, a direct comparison, and *metaphor*, a condensed simile? Is it a matter of how literal the comparison? Is the gravel at Ryoanji, raked in wavy lines to look like water, a simile? Is Astroturf a simile for grass? Are ruins as memento mori, a reminder of human mortality, or Patio de la Reja, as the hydrologic cycle, metaphors? And is a metaphor the same as representation? Ryoanji and Harlequin Plaza, in an office park outside Denver, represent landscape, are they similes or metaphors? Mirror-clad pyramids at Harlequin Plaza echo the form of Rocky Mountain peaks, the checkerboard paving echoes the midwestern grid. What transfer of meaning is here, a “fanciful or unrealistic comparison”? Harlequin Plaza was once highly controversial, regarded by many as a polemical landscape that asserted the authority of art, flaunted concerns for function, and failed to respond appropriately to its context. But the designer George Hargreaves took elements of the office park’s “anyplace” character and used them inventively, calling attention to the distant mountains and highlighting the unsettling character of the new development. The plaza is a metaphor that can be read on several levels.

Tree of life, tree of knowledge, tree as man or woman— are all metaphor or are they simile? At the heart of the campus at Århus University in Denmark, oaks, long-lived trees of strong wood and native to Denmark, are a symbol of the nation. Here are multiple metaphorical dimensions. The landscape architect C. Th. Sorensen proposed planting acorns instead of larger trees at the university, symbolic, in economic terms, of construction beginning just after the Depression and during the German Occupation. Sorensen said, “When my newborn daughter Sonja is eighteen, she will walk under the oak trees”; and she did. The oak tree has become the symbol of the university; a large ceramic relief of an oak, *The Tree of Knowledge*, hangs at the main entrance, the only explicit reference to the landscape’s metaphorical meaning.

**Synechdoche.** A part that stands for the whole, a synecdoche, is often a landmark, a clue that points to an entire landscape, city, or nation: Half Dome for Yosemite, Eiffel Tower for Paris, Empire State Building for New York, the Mall in Washington, D.C., for the nation. The fountains built by American cities at the end of the nineteenth century, like Bethesda Fountain in New York’s Central Park, symbolized and celebrated new public water systems. The name Bethesda alludes to the pool in Jerusalem where an infirm person “was made whole of whatsoever disease he had,” making explicit an implicit link between water and health. Today’s windmill fields and powerlines, parts of the networks of power on which modern culture depends so heavily, render that network visible.

**Metonymy.** When an attribute of a person or thing stands for the thing itself, it is a metonymy. As a child, I thought the Iron Curtain was an actual metal drape drawn across the landscape of Europe, casting a long, dark shadow. For many people the Berlin Wall came to represent just such an idea. Buckingham Palace and Westminster stand for the British monarchy and parliament, much as the White House stands for the presidency and Lafayette Park and the Ellipse are now known as President’s Park, or as the Hill represents Congress. A New England village green stands for the town; Disneyland’s fairy castle for Fantasyland, Main Street for the midwestern small town. Landscapes have often been seen as representing the people who occupy them. In the early twentieth century, the Prairie Style of landscape and architectural design celebrated “the prairie spirit” where prairie plants and landscape stood for “native beauty,” and the “independence and progressiveness of the pioneer” who settled the prairie.

Houses and gardens built to represent their owners are employed by art and literature, as well. In Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth Bennet dates her
love for Mr. Darcy from her first view of his estate: "Pemberley House was a large, handsome stone building, standing well on rising ground, and backed by a ridge of high woody hills; and in front, a stream of some natural importance was swelled into greater, but without any artificial appearance. Its banks were neither formal nor falsely adorned. She had never seen a place for which nature had done more, or where natural beauty had been so little counteracted by an awkward taste." A man's home is his castle was a sixteenth-century English reference to Roman law. Such nineteenth-century landscape designers and authors as J. C. Loudon in England and Andrew Jackson Downing in the United States advised how a middle-class villa garden could be landscaped in the style of an eighteenth-century English estate. There is a direct link between the design of such English estates, with house and garden standing for owner and rustic cottage for rural ideal, and the design of American suburban grounds as pastoral miniatures. Is the separation of the workplace and the home that is dictated by modern zoning an extension of the idea of Everyman's home as his/her "castle"?

**Personification.** Personification, identifying the nonhuman with the human (a tree is like a man, but not the reverse), abounds in popular culture: the Old Man of the Mountain in a rocky cliff, the willows that weep in cemeteries, the ravages of fires, floods, and earthquakes as Mother Nature's revenge. In gardens, allusions to classical literature are personified in sculpture: at Vaux-le-Vicomte, two statues overlook the central canal, the god of the Anqueil, the local river, and the god of the Tiber. Are we, thereby, invited to compare Vaux with the great Italian gardens or France under Louis XIV with the Roman Empire? It was the god of the Tiber who foretold the founding of Rome and reassured Aeneas of his future victory. At Stourhead, the statue of the god of the Tiber is an explicit reference to this passage from the Aeneid.28

**Euphemism.** A landscape euphemism dresses up nasty things or things people prefer not to confront, the dress or screen standing for the thing screened, for example, garbage bins and service areas around large office buildings behind a green screen of shrubs or trees. A planted island in an intersection in River Oaks, a wealthy Houston suburb, a "designer" pump station that pumps sewage to a treatment plant rather than dumping it into Houston's Buffalo Bayou, a pudgy putto holding a basin on his head, drapery concealing his groin. Resort landscapes are euphemisms designed for play, with no signs of work save by those who wait on those who play. What a society chooses to screen in euphemism is a clue to its values and its anxieties.

**Conceit.** Schwartz's Splice Garden, on the roof of the Whitehead Institute in Cambridge, Massachusetts, relating the act of gene-splicing to the juxtaposition of French and Japanese garden styles, is a conceit: the relating of two quite dissimilar things—the plants representing living things, the inorganic plastic material standing for artificiality. The Splice Garden can be read as an allegory, as well, for the

plastic cannot reproduce itself; after ten years it is faded and brittle, essentially dead. **Allegory.** An allegory is an extended metaphor, a story that can be read on more than one level, whose purpose is to enlighten and instruct. Mazes have been built as allegorical objects of amusement and means of religious experience. The maze at the Shaker settlement in New Harmony, Indiana, was described in 1822 as "a most elegant flower garden with various hedgerows disposed in such a manner as to puzzle people to get into the little temple, emblematical of Harmony, in the middle. The Labyrinth represents the difficulty of arriving at Harmony." Parallels have been drawn between the maze and life's hazards: "The world's a lab'rinth, whose enfractious ways are all compos'd of ruts and crooked meanders."31

The landscape of Sutton Place, designed by Jellicoe, is an elaborate allegory of "Creation (the lake landscape), Life (the gardens), and Aspiration (the Nicholson Wall) . . . and like all allegories, is intended to lift the spirit for a brief period, out of the present."32 The lake, in a shape suggestive of a fish, was conceived as the beginning of the allegory, with three hills representing father, mother, and child. Around the house are a kitchen garden, a swimming pool garden, a wild garden, a surrealistic garden, a paradise garden. To reach the paradise garden from the house, one must cross a moat with lily pads on stepping-stones, for, says Jellicoe, "the allegory is that you must have a hazardous journey if you are to reach" paradise.33 The secret garden, "the heart of the allegory," was inspired by Midsummer Night, a painting in the client's collection by Atkinson Grimshaw (1876), of a fairy and woodland. The Nicholson Wall, thirty-two feet long, sixteen feet high, is a carved abstract relief sculpture of white marble by Ben Nicholson that stands at the end of a dark reflecting pool in a garden room framed by hedges.

**Cliche.** As twisted axes and fragmented spaces became fashionable in postmodern landscapes and buildings they lost their original bite and became cliches. As symbols of rebellion against modernism and as commentary on the fragmentation and chaos of contemporary life, they were metaphors whose power was eroded through overuse. A concrete path rolled up at the end like a carpet is a pun; seen more than once, it is a cliche, the standard fate of obvious puns, which lose impact and become annoying with repetition. However, when Peter Walker and Martha Schwartz used Astroturf to clad sloping planes of plywood, alluding to Le Nôtre's inclined planes of clipped grass, and in the context of other, similar allusions, in their roof garden in Boston, they reclaimed the lost meaning through reformulation and novel use.

**Paradox and Irony.**

Paradox and irony, the one contradictory yet true, the other an incongruity between what is and what seems to be—expected and actual, expressed and intended—are closely related and often combined. Both are dualisms, but irony contrasts surface meaning and underlying reality. Denver's Rocky Mountain
Arsenal is both: a toxic dump, contaminated by nerve gas and abandoned, yet a wildlife refuge rich with a diversity of plants and animals.  

Denmark in June: blue sky, no clouds, clear air, bright sun, white light, cool breeze, cool air, hot skin; Konza Prairie, Kansas, in October: how soft the hills look to lie in, light yellow grass stems softly curving; close up, sharp limestone chips on the ground, grass stiff and prickly. Both are paradox. So is water, both solid and gas, visible and invisible; so, too, are built landscapes, like parks or planted prairies, that are commonly seen to be naturally occurring, while natural meadows on vacant urban lots, unplanted and untended, are perceived as artificial. Both, in fact, are natural and both are constructed. The false idea of natural as excluding the human causes this error. Every landscape is inherently paradoxical, a fusion of the managed and the wild.

Japan is a landscape of paradox. Violence and repose, discord and harmony, excess and economy, complex and simple, hidden and revealed, large and small, extraordinary and everyday, enduring and ephemeral, traditional and new. Juxtaposed, each contrast prompts contradiction and confusion; fused, they have rare depth and resonance, the simultaneous presence of contradictory qualities that enhance the experience of each. Japanese gardens are especially renowned for this phenomenon, but it is present, too, in villages and shrines of traditional character. Today, the fusion is disappearing, while juxtaposition remains, the consequence of a growing sense of unresolved contradiction and cultural confusion.

**Antithesis and Oxymoron.** Antithesis opposes antithetical elements by placing them in a balanced, parallel structure; oxymoron fuses contradictory elements in a single expression. It is easier for opposed elements to make each more striking and more significant, the juxtaposition of clipped and uninhibited growing like the three parallel rows of lindens framing an interior ring of freely growing horse chestnuts in the Place des Vosges in Paris, or the branches of elms at the center of Kongens Nytorv in Copenhagen encircled by rigid, stubby twigs of clipped elms. A view of a city skyline seen against a leafy foreground is also antithesis: Boston from Mount Auburn Cemetery; Philadelphia from Belmont Plateau in Fairmount Park; Houston from Buffalo Bayou.

Stone seems the antithesis of decay, but fossiliferous limestone, composed of plant and animal remains, is an oxymoron. Vizcaya, an estate near Miami, Florida, is surrounded by dense, subtropical forest. Its house, terraces, steps, railings, and paths are built of limestone that teems with fossils, animal and vegetable, including large corals, resembling slices of brain. The garden air is full of the dank smell of rotted organic matter. Schwartz’s Splice Garden employs both antithesis and oxymoron: Japanese and French garden motifs are juxtaposed; all the plants are plastic. A plastic flower is an oxymoron, a condensed paradox that owes its effectiveness to synthesis, not juxtaposition, of contrasts; so is a roof garden, for gardens embody a sense of groundedness and a garden absorbs water while the pur-

**Paradox, oxymoron, conceit:** Splice Garden. Cambridge, Massachusetts. (Alan Ward)
Antiphrasis. In antiphrasis, a material or form is used in a manner contrary to the expected, the expression contrasting sharply with what is meant. Schwartz employed this form of irony in her proposal for a New York City roof garden. It looks like any other garden until its 897 daffodils bloom in spring, their bold yellow spelling ignorance before they fade, leaving green, then brown leaves. In summer, purple Greek anemones spell evil, in early fall, Peruvian lilies emerge as orange money, followed by bliss in blazing red amaryllis. Flowers are used incongruously to challenge their common association with purity, beauty, and love.

Litotes. A litotes is an affirmation of something through understatement, through the negative of its opposite (e.g., she is no fool). The opposite of hyperbole, it is an ironic understatement of the negative of its opposite: “Less is more,” said Mies van der Rohe; “less is a bore,” declared Robert Venturi. His firm’s design for Franklin Court, on the site of Benjamin Franklin’s house and print shop in Philadelphia’s Independence Park, is not a mere replica; a white steel frame outlines the house that was once there, another the print shop. Franklin Court is a litotes, the understatement in the “ghost” structure, the white steel frame that outlines the house that was once there, the irony in incongruity within a historic district, the mocking of more literal historic reconstruction.

Meiosis. Meiosis is an understatement that belittles by using materials or forms “that make something seem less significant than it really is or ought to be.” Schwartz’s experiments with materials normally not associated with gardens, not only plastic flowers and AstroTurf, but Plexiglass, wire glass, colored aquarium gravel, chicken wire, fish netting, and bagels, have been read by some as meiosis, as attempts to belittle, to undermine the meanings of gardens. The cover of Landscape Architecture magazine for January 1980, which featured a photograph of Schwartz’s Bagel Garden, provoked an immediate, and virulent, reaction; letters to the editor filled pages of the magazine for many months with protests. Some landscape architects suspected she was poking fun at them, not at the garden itself. The Bagel Garden had low boxwood hedges in two squares, one inside the other, with purple flowers in the center, and ninety-six weatherproofed bagels sitting on a square strip of purple gravel. Schwartz said she was taken aback by the reaction: “Why are you all taking this so seriously? I was just having fun.” The Bagel Garden (and much of her other work) employs rhetorical devices familiar to twentieth-century art—collage, Dada, Pop Art—long since no surprise to the art world, but an outrage to some lovers of gardens.

Dramatic Irony. In dramatic irony’s double vision of the future observers see what’s coming, actors are blind to it. Overviews of a maze where viewers watch others wandering and can anticipate the dead end the wanderers will reach or their successful emergence, these are a form of dramatic irony. So are tricks in gardens where water shoots out unexpectedly, drenching the passersby, while others watch knowingly.

Irony can also be in the eye of the beholder, unremarkable to some, ironical to others. To me southern California is steeped in irony and paradox: a paradise with perfect climate, iridescent sky, ocean beaches, snow-capped mountains, freedom of movement across a region laced with freeways, but an apparently idyllic landscape subject to violent ruptures of earthquake, wildfire, mudslide, riot. The outsider there sees the future as predictable and inevitable, homes destroyed on unstable hillside or fault lines; the insider ignores the danger or assumes it won’t happen to them. The population of Orange County has generally opposed governmental interference and control, yet neighborhood codes in Irvine limit what color owners can paint their houses. The triumphal arches on either side of a public roadway to gated communities are an irony, so is Fort Pendleton, a de facto nature preserve where soldiers learn means of destruction.

Address
At Disneyland, a visitor is addressed by a statue of Disney, himself, hand in hand with Mickey Mouse: "I think most of all what I want Disneyland to be is a happy place...where parents and children can have fun, together." Address announces, appeals, or prays to someone or something not present or unable to answer: a place, an idea, a supernatural being, a dead person. Laying flowers on a grave addresses the dead, while the dead address the living through gravestones.

Apostrophe. Sharp turns in paths of Japanese and Chinese gardens, an interruption for effect, focus attention on a view, increase awareness of the process of
walking, are apostrophes, whose original meaning from the Greek is "turning away." At the Vale of the White Horse in southwestern England the horse's outline, scraped into the chalky bedrock, faces the sky above not the valley below (most photographs of this monument are taken from the air, a view unattainable by those who first traced its outline thousands of years ago). Shrines with lit candles and offerings in churches and at roadside shrines address Mary. At Ise, coin box and rope are a shrine to the winds; throw coin into box, pull gong, bow twice, clap twice, bow, and back away. Trees within Japanese temple precincts covered with twisted paper and wooden plaques tied to branches are pleas for help in passing university exams or for the health of a child.

Aposiopesis. In aposiopesis a statement or address is broken off, to be completed in the imagination; an eroded cliff whose former outline can be visualized; a path or line with continuation implied; a path to the edge of a cliff or to a prospect whose continuation is the view, an incomplete circle to be completed by viewer. House and churches were moved and graves disinterred before the Quabbin Valley in central Massachusetts was flooded in 1928 to create the Quabbin reservoir; the roads remain, leading hikers through the woods of the Quabbin Reservation past old stone walls overgrown to the lake's edge, where one continues in imagination on a road leading under water, past former farms and homes, to old towns. The frame outlining the former silhouette of Benjamin Franklin's house at Franklin Court in Philadelphia, not a reconstruction, is an aposiopesis, in this case, less is more, and in no way a bore. Andersson's design for Urienborg, Tycho Brahe's garden on an island between Sweden and Denmark, is also aposiopesis. The original formal garden had a four-part symmetry, and Andersson chose to reconstruct one quarter only. It is deliberately incomplete, suggestive rather than exhaustive. An invitation to imagine.

Exclamation and Interrogation. On New Year's Eve of 1903, when Isabella Stewart Gardner welcomed her first guests to Fenway Court, a version of a Venetian palazzo (built with architectural details transported from Italy to Boston), they were enchanted by the garden within the house. There is no sign of it from the entrance or through the dark, narrow vestibule; the visitor emerges into a covered courtyard garden, three stairs high, filled with light and the brilliant color and scent of flowers year round. This is exclamation, a strong statement standing out from its context. When designers say a building or garden makes a statement, they usually mean it embodies an exclamation. Interrogation resembles it, something unexpected but one prompting a question (!), an anomaly, a path that ends in a wall, an unexpected juxtaposition like the golden frogs at the Rio Shopping Center or the huge vases in Sutton Place.

Expressive Context: Euphony, Cacophony, Mood, Mystery

If personification attributes feelings, thoughts, intentions to the nonhuman world, expressive context attributes the ability to evoke or amplify human feeling to landscape features and phenomena. Life-threatening events, such as wildfire, flood, hurricanes, and tornadoes seem to elicit similar feelings from people of different times and cultures. Sunlight and darkness, heat and cold, evoke common responses that vary from culture to culture and within a culture. But do landscapes embody gloom, mystery, confusion, calm? Or do they merely receive projected humans' feelings? Authors and artists use landscape to signify or reinforce mood: many stories, written and painted, portray a dark pine forest, a sunny meadow, or a "looming" mountain to establish an atmosphere of gloom, cheer, fear. Poussin, Claude, and many other painters depict Aeneas meeting Dido in the cave as a thunderstorm pours rain and hail; "booming sea" and "howling" treetops are a stormy setting for the turning point in Yukio Mishima's Sound of the Waves.

A sense of melancholy or pathos, influenced by English poet-philosophers and their landscape gardens, fashionable in early nineteenth-century United States, was cultivated in that century in new "rural" cemeteries like Mount Auburn near Boston. Mount Auburn's designers sought to evoke sadness and promote reflection through "winding paths leading from sunny lawns through areas of cool dark woods, ... dark and reflective water bodies, flowing streams, material evidence of the ravages of nature such as blasted tree trunks or of deciduous plants displaying nature's cycle of symbolic seasons, and vistas of great distance, height, or depths." Many nineteenth-century cemeteries seem maudlin today.
In euphony landscape patterns are perceived as harmonious, in cacophony as discordant. At Paley Park, a narrow park on East 53rd Street in New York, a waterfall masks the cacophonous traffic noise on the street. The Villa d’Este in Tivoli and the Villa Lante in Bagnaia, both in Italy, employ water for euphonious effect. Jellicoe describes how, inspired by the Villas d’Este and Lante, he designed four cascades for the garden at Shute House in England meant to create a harmonic water chord as the water moves downstream through successive cascades striking trebles, altos, tenors, and bass.

How one arrives at or enters a place, the transition between outside and inside, the nature of boundaries and gates, is critical to mood. So is sequence: the order of experience, the rhythm of movement, anticipation and the element of surprise.

**Magic Kingdoms: Disney’s Worlds**

Walt Disney told designers what he wanted visitors to feel: “I want them, when they leave, to have smiles on their faces. Just remember that; it’s all I ask of you as a designer.”

Arrival at Disneyland outside Orlando, Florida, is designed to put “guests” in a carefree mood, to create the sense of entering a world apart. Off the highway at the Disney World Exit, one drives for miles through Disney-owned territory, manicured parkland with signs in brilliant red, green, purple, and yellow that are unlike real highway signs. Park the car, then ride a tram to the ticket booth, buy tickets, and board a steamboat bound for the Magic Kingdom. There, a journey begins, across water, to an apparent island. Landmarks stimulate anticipation; the spires of Cinderella’s Castle suggest a royal domain, synecdoche for the Magic Kingdom. At the dock one walks up a red path, under a sign that says, “Here you leave today and enter the world of yesterday, tomorrow, and fantasy,” through a short, dark tunnel to the Town Square, full of bright shades and sounds, and roaming actors in costume. Munchkinland. It is as though, like Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*, having gone to sleep in real black and white, one wakes up to Technicolor and fantasy! In both Disneyland in Anaheim, California, and Disney World in Florida, red, yellow, and orange flowers, red paths, nostalgic music in major key create an upbeat setting; diminutive buildings suggest that one is a giant, ruler of the kingdom. California and Florida as their sites are no accidental choice; both are warm, sunny vacationlands.

Main Street, in both places, is a straight axis with a Victorian train station at one end and Cinderella’s castle at the other, framing views to both. Seen from Town Square, the castle is a lure, an eye-catcher in garden terms, or “wienie,” as Disney called it. Cars, buildings, lampposts, even trees are smaller than normal. One feels larger than life. On Main Street the buildings decrease in scale with height: the ground floor is 90 percent of normal height, the second floor 80 percent, and the third floor 60 percent. Anachronisms are deliberate, so are the prochronisms of Tomorrowland, presenting the future as the present. Victorian materials and motifs like the exaggerated ornament on Main Street stores and the soundtrack of old tunes like “School Days” evoke nostalgia. Tomorrowland, with its sleek chrome rockets, its moving sidewalks (the “WED-way People Mover”), and a landscape swirling patterns of colored flowers reminiscent of Roberto Burle Marx’s gardens of the 1940s in Brazil, is a dated fantasy, neither then nor tomorrow. A bronze plaque at the entrance to Disneyland underscores the intention: “To all who come to this happy place: welcome. Disneyland is your land. Here, age relives fond memories of the past . . . and here youth may savor the challenge and promise of the future.”

Just as Disney’s cartoons use exaggeration and distortion to evoke response in the audience, so the Magic Kingdom’s landscape functions as expressive context. In Mickey Mouse’s Birthdayland (Disney World), enlarged lawnmaower, garden hose, windowboxes, shutters, picket fence, clothesline, watering can, rake, paths are neither awesome nor threatening, but comforting, familiar icons of American suburbia of the 1950s. In comparison to the miniature scale of house and yard, these huge objects make one feel simultaneously small and big, a child again yet an adult. Mickey and Minnie’s car is parked in front of a garage with a huge lock. Why a lock? What’s inside? The simulated landscape of the rides (trees with twisted trunks and branches in Snow White) titillate fearful delight in young children, the only kind of intended paradox in the park. The rides are allusions to cartoons and movies; as Disney said, “We’re trying to tell a story in those rides.”

Artists drew storyboards of the rides, and Disney “described the entire Snow White ride as if it were a movie cartoon, visualizing all the park’s attractions for the designers just as he had brought cartoons to life for his animators.”

“If you can keep a place clean,” said Disney, “people will respect it; if you let it get dirty, they’ll make it worse.” A staff of six hundred copies with Disneyland’s dirt during the day, white-clad sweepers eliminate spills and litter; every night after closing, crews hose down the entire park, pluck faded blooms, replace trampled plants. “Just make [the park] beautiful and you’ll appeal to the best side of people. They all have it; all you have to do is bring it out.” Perhaps Disney was right, at least about Americans; as funds for maintenance of urban parks shrank in the 1980s and parks became littered, vandalism seemed to increase. Boston’s Public Garden — fenced, well maintained, with swan boats and miniature bridge, and formal flower beds changing by season — seemed to inspire decorum and discourage mischief, while Boston Common — tattered and littered, its frog pond often dry — seemed to attract litter and graffiti.

Still, obsessive cleanliness accompanied by much euphemism can seem cloying and oppressive, like the white painters’ cart and the white cleaners’ carts at Disney World with their tools, paint, soap, and disinfectants and, no doubt also, deodorizers for tidying up after the (real) horses that defecate and urinate on Main Street. Those who maintain and clean the park are themselves dressed up in
sparkling white costumes. Other maintenance is hidden or tucked away on the perimeters, unacknowledged. There is an underground city that supports the domains above, reached through doorways with signs that say, "Members of the Cast Only." On the perimeter of Walt Disney World in Florida, a sign says, "You are now leaving wWw." But you aren't really. The warehouses and fire station that service Walt Disney World, all color-coded, are just outside next to the road, though there is no sign of any connection to WDW.

Disney regretted that he had not controlled the land surrounding the original Disneyland in California; the hotels, restaurants, and bars that grew up around his theme park created a "honky-tonk" context at odds with the park's family atmosphere. He also realized that there was more profit to be made in food and lodging than in the park itself. The purchase of 27,500 acres in Florida, more than 150 times the size of his California Disneyland, provided greater scope to shape the visitors' context and extend it through hotels and campgrounds, each with its own fantasy theme.

For James Rouse, developer of Columbia, Maryland, Baltimore's Harborplace, and Boston's Quincy Market, as for many other developers, Disneyland is a model. In 1963, he told the graduating class at Harvard's Graduate School of Design, I hold a view that may be shocking to an audience as sophisticated as this, and that is, that the greatest piece of design in the United States today is Disneyland. If you think about Disneyland and think of its performance in relation to its purpose — its meaning to people more than its meaning to the process of development — you will find it the outstanding piece of urban design in the United States. It took an area of activity — the amusement park — and lifted it to a standard so high in its performance, in its respect for people, in its functioning for people, that it really became a brand-new thing. It fulfills the functions that it set out to accomplish unself-consciously, usefully, and profitably. I find more to learn in the standards that have been achieved in the development of Disneyland than in any other single piece of development in the country.50

Disney's Magic Kingdoms are expressive landscapes with the power to move people. Designers and developers of new residential communities and shopping centers have learned much from Disney, and many parts of southern California, and of America, now resemble this world: themed communities and shopping malls with vivid flowers, turn-of-the-century lamps and benches, outdoor soundtracks of upbeat music. Bounded domains with guarded gates, kingdoms unto themselves managed by central authorities, invite prospective residents to live out their fantasies and leave crime and the poor outside. There is danger in longing to inhabit fantasies, to forget real life, the mistakes of the past and the problems of the present, the genuine promises and risks of the future.

In fall 1993, I took part in a one-day workshop to advise the National Park Service on the future "Site Character" of the White House landscape, newly dubbed President's Park. Traffic and trees, monuments and barriers, sights and sounds were all discussed in the context of the presidency, the state of the nation, and Walt Disney. Advisors were asked to prepare statements beforehand about goals for the "desired future" of President's Park twenty years from now, and these were compiled in a document circulated to all participants. Disney's influence was pervasive. "The appearance of the White House grounds at President's Park are at least at the standard maintained by Disney at its theme parks," was one participant's stated goal. Another was, "There are no visually intrusive landscape elements, permanent or temporary. . . . Eliminate, wherever possible, above-ground utilities, mismatched sidewalks (no asphalt), the homeless, cars parked around the Ellipse."51

Reportedly, Walt Disney's body lies frozen in a cryogenic institute in Irvine, California, as Snow White's did in the enchanted forest, waiting. If he awoke tomorrow and stepped outside, he might think he was in Disney World.

It is easy to praise Disneyland and Disney World, and easy to condemn them, but no matter whether one is an admirer or a critic, both are models of rhetorical expression. To know landscape poetics is to understand how such settings are fashioned and how they achieve their effects. To use figurative language well is to create landscape literature that is imaginative, affecting, and eloquent.