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## 10

**Inhabiting: Landscapes and Natures**

Steve Hinchliffe

This chapter opens up a number of questions regarding human and non-human relations. The focus is on landscape practices, which shape and are shaped by those relations. In the first half, I review some of the main ways in which geographers have dealt with the relationships between landscapes and nature. Simplifying, I divide these approaches into landscape tectonics and landscape semiotics. Finding resources in both 'traditions', I argue in the second half that there are ways of engaging with landscapes and natures that refuse to see either as pure culture (the nature of no nature) or as raw matter (the nature of nature). The intention is to avoid any understanding of nature that reduces 'it' to primary (or for that matter secondary) properties (a tactic I will refer to pejoratively as a first nature politics) and yet, at the same time, to refuse to obliterate spaces of nature by reading all instances of human/non-human relations as somehow culturally determined. In some ways following Castree (Chapter 8, this volume), I argue that avoiding the classic pitfalls of natural and/or cultural determinism requires something more than an analytical imagination. Therefore, in the latter parts of the chapter, I review a number of approaches which attempt to inhabit landscapes as living relations, with all their differences, continuities, discontinuities and entangled formations. I look for various possibilities in cultural geography and its surroundings, including science studies, feminist theory and poststructuralism, for developing a sensitized geography of landscapes and natures. Rather than fixing the terms, the goal becomes one of finding ways of understanding landscape, nature and inhabitation that are experimental and potentially creative.

By way of background, it is useful to dwell upon the importance of arguing for change in

the ways in which landscapes and natures are understood. To caricature a conventional argument, as things currently stand, people, landscapes and natures are 'out of joint'. And in conventional environmental politics, this tends to mean that somewhere and at some point in the dark past of urban-industrial society, the joins between people and their environments have been ruptured. The implicit and sometimes explicit aim is to rejoin the worlds of culture, economy and humans with the already constituted worlds of nature, ecology and non-humans. Such views can be found in certain versions of bioregionalism (although see McGinnis, 1999, for a range of bioregional writing) and in a variety of environmentalisms (see Dobson, 1990). I want to avoid such a judgement in this chapter, and steer clear of a politics and an ethics which found themselves on a universal first nature (or even imagine a universalized second nature upon which to build an unchanging ethical system). Yet, at the same time, there is something about being out of joint which can present the possibility for new forms of environmental politics.

Indeed, the sense of being out of joint that I want to pursue in this chapter is one which invites attempts to make new articulations, to experiment with connections. That these attempts cannot be made solely on the basis of human volition starts to open up what a politics of inhabitation might involve. Inhabiting is a more than human affair. Equally, inhabitation is not simply a matter of adding in non-humans. Indeed, this is not about 'social interactions between already constituted objects' (Rajchman, 2000: 12), be they human, non-human or any other segmented identity. As such this is not simply about representing landscaping elements or speaking of and for others. A politics of representation can only be, if anything, the imperfect start to a

politics of inhabitation. More schematically, the argument pursued here relies on two forms of politics.

First, there is a *politics of representation*: there is a politics of recovery with which to be engaged. There are cultural geographies of landscaping to be written which engage in a different politics of representation – a politics that takes the presences and performances of humans and non-humans of all kinds, shapes and sizes as matters of potential importance. Second, there is a *politics of inhabitation*: more than an attempt to restock the pages of cultural geography with the missing masses, there is another, less obviously liberal democratic, motive at work. This is not simply a matter of a liberation of the oppressed (or even return of the repressed), although such a politics is far from redundant. It is also a matter of experimenting with styles of inhabiting, styles that manage to re-cover and re-cognize without covering over everything (inventing itself as a final vocabulary), or imagining that cognition is a matter only for human minds and human minds alone.

The politics of representation and of inhabitation that inform this chapter are, then, neither mutually exclusive nor in competition. Nevertheless, one of the main aims is to open up a landscape and nature geography that is aware of the limits to representation, and is thereby sensitized to the orders and indeterminacies that are involved in inhabiting. I start with the practices and meanings of ‘landscape’ as they have worked themselves through in cultural geography, relating these specifically to the representation of, and styles of inhabitation with, non-human natures.

### GEOGRAPHIES OF LANDSCAPE AND NATURE: TECTONICS AND SEMIOTICS

*Tectonics: the study of the building of landscape form*

Landscape tectonics, in the sense I use it here, is crudely summarized as the material building of landscape. One particularly influential strand to this approach has been Carl Sauer’s (1925; 1966) writing on the cultural and material shaping of landform and landscape. At its best, this work foregrounds the ways in which landscaping is always a coproduction – involving humans (cultures) and non-humans (natures). Whilst Sauer’s earlier work tended to presuppose a

pre-human landscape which was processed by various waves of human occupants, his later work on cultural landscapes managed to successfully dispel those representations of American wilderness as devoid of cultural production (the narrative basis for various forms of colonization, including, more lately, colonization performed through the exclusionary practices of natural landscape conservation: see Escobar, 1995; Wilson, 1992). Indeed, Sauer and his followers have been particularly successful in providing a counterpoint to those understandings of landscape that seek to derive normative value from a myth of pre-human natural purity. Nevertheless, a strong nostalgia for the ‘natural’, maintained for example through the Sauer-influenced volume *Man’s Role in Changing the Face of the Earth* (Thomas, 1956), seemed to underscore a fairly robust sense of a division between cultures and nature, or, at the very least, between naturalized (pure and unified) versions of culture and those problematic modern versions of industrialized, urbanized society. The tendency has been, therefore, to treat the process of landscape formation as the result of *interactions* between natural and cultural processes – both of which tended to be portrayed as somehow definable in, and through, the absence of the other (Figure 10.1).

As Demeritt (1994a) demonstrates, the inheritors of this ‘interactive’ version of landscape tectonics include the wave of landscape and environmental historians writing in the 1980s and 1990s. These writers, partly provoked by a growing environmentalist critique of modern society, sought to recover ‘the earth itself’ (Worster, 1988: 289) as a vital and autonomous component of landscape evolution. For Worster, all landscapes are the result of interactions between nature and culture (1990: 1144), and any account that denies one or the other will fail to represent the full tectonics of landscape. In one sense, Worster is surely right to unsettle assumptions of humans as sole agents in the making of landscape and environmental histories. The main danger is, however, that the physical world he evokes resembles a universal, timeless and spaceless nature whose primary properties can be revealed or derived (Demeritt, 1994a; see also Demeritt, 1994b; and the reply from Cronon, 1994).

The result is politically fragile. The combination of a concern for non-human nature which at one and the same time is included in landscape accounts but also is ‘naturalized’ (that is, extracted from the histories and geographies of worldly affairs) is a strategy that buys political time but at a cost which is more than a matter for academic pedantry alone. For example, the



**Figure 10.1** Alan Sonfist, *'Time Landscape'*

prehistorical first nature that inhabits Cronon's (1991) writing of Chicago (if not his later collective work, see Cronon, 1996, or even his introduction to *Nature's Metropolis*) is informed by bio-energetics and a trophic-dynamic model of ecosystems – which are themselves wrapped up in a broad political nexus (see Demeritt, 1994a). So much so that Demeritt quite rightly questions the degree to which this first nature exists as ontologically prior to human history:

Ecosystem ecology got its start as radiation ecology, but the insistent press of the outside world upon the modern science of ecology hardly stops there. Integral to the metaphor of ecosystem are cybernetics, the

mathematics of command and control, first developed to control automatic anti-aircraft guns and now used to guide the US Navy's Cruise missiles and the automatic trading program of institutional commodities bankers. (1994a: 177)

This is, it is important to add, not to say that this science is necessarily flawed, nor is it to say that another acultural position or god-like viewing platform is possible (see Haraway, 1991). Rather, it is to say that the natures that we (possibly rightly) want to include in landscape histories and geographies are unlikely to be innocent. Nor are they likely to be accessible as a set of unmediated (or even mediated) primary properties (a matter to which I will return). To be sure,

Cronon is well aware of the need to avoid this universal nature at the same time as wanting to hold onto the political project of environmental history. For example, Cronon is well aware of the limitations of Clementsian climax ecology, with its projection of balance and harmony onto the external, natural world (see Cronon, 1996, and the chapter by Barbour, 1996, in the same volume). Nevertheless, and despite some exemplary writings in this field, there remains a nagging doubt that environmental and landscape historians have not yet provided a means of engaging with the natures of landscape which avoids either smothering them in cultural processes or allocating to them first-order, timeless and spaceless properties. For the most part, and despite the best of intentions, their accounts tend only to delay the moment when a naturalized universal nature reenters the story.

The practical and political reasons for rejecting any recourse to first nature are amply demonstrated in some of the more recent work on environmental and landscape histories that is emerging from studies in political ecology and new biogeographies (see Fairhead and Leach, 1998; Moore, 1996; Zimmerer, 2000). For example, through a wonderfully detailed and thorough study of forestry practices in several West African nation-states, Fairhead and Leach argue that:

Not only did the development of scientific ideas about West African forests have its own complex intellectual history and sociology, in which certain theories or debates were able to rise to the exclusion of others. But also, and crucially, these views dovetailed with the administrative and political concerns of the institutions with which they co-evolved in a process of mutual shaping. Ideas about forest-climate equilibria, or the functioning of relatively stable forest ecosystems, for instance, fed directly into a conceptual framework and set of scientific practices for conservation, which was about external control. (1998: 189)

The result of this 'ecology of understanding' produced what Fairhead and Leach identify as a simplification and homogenization of forestry knowledge. It led to the valorization of a first nature (an ecological bottom line) which itself contributed to an oversimplified account of deforestation. Critically, and as a result, 'the complex, unexpected social and ecological dynamic' (1998: 190) of living forests remained outside authorized understandings. A rather purified, natural systems model of forest dynamics formed the yardstick against which social systems of forestry practice were, normally unfavourably, measured. This exclusion of human/non-human relations from ecological understanding of deforestation and afforestation practices resulted in a

tendency to treat people living in forest zones as strangers (see also Hecht and Cockburn, 1989). Not only that, they were also to become unwelcome strangers in a land where "nature" and its national and international guardians have come to claim a right' (Fairhead and Leach, 1998: 192). It should be noted that denouncing this external authority of modern environmental conservation discourse and instead celebrating flux and dynamism is a risky venture. Whilst Fairhead and Leach point towards a form of participatory pluralism which recognizes the importance of power relations in the making of landscapes, others adopt a language that seems to echo the hyperbole of laissez-faire market capitalists (see Stott, 1998).

Even the growing level of awareness regarding the political and ecological importance of participatory forms of landscape management has, by and large, failed to dislodge the basic foundations and authority of this first nature politics. Participation becomes, in many cases, a means of meeting what are preset expert goals and objectives (for a parallel example in UK nature conservation practice, see Goodwin, 1998). Or else, it becomes a means to order people and practices in terms of their naturalness, their conservation compatibility (Zimmerer, 2000: 357), or their suitability as timeless guardians of a timeless first or second nature (see Ingold and Kurttila, 2000, for a more developed argument concerning the dynamics of knowledge and practice, focusing in their case on Finnish landscapes).

Fairhead and Leach start to develop an unsettling of the natures and cultures that make up forest and savanna zone landscapes in West Africa. Following earlier work by Hawthorne (1996), forest landscapes are understood no longer as intricately balanced and likely to fall apart at the slightest disruption, but as 'an *ad hoc* assemblage of species thriving after millennia of disturbance' (Fairhead and Leach, 1998: 185). What starts to emerge is a sense of living landscapes which cannot be reduced to either a pre-existing culture or a pre-existing nature. These landscapes are not solely about interactions of an already constituted nature and a culture which somehow can be defined in the absence of its human/non-human relations. Rather, Fairhead and Leach start to point to a coproduction of landscapes, cultures and natures. To be sure, the theoretical delicacies of this achievement are of little concern to Fairhead and Leach. But, in order for them to be able to imagine alternative accounts, the authors reach beyond Sauerian landscape history (a tradition to which they nevertheless explicitly see themselves as belonging) to

a second set of general responses to the landscape question. As the title of their book, *Reframing Deforestation*, suggests, landscape is not only a tectonic affair, it is also a way of seeing and a matter for semiotics. It is to these approaches that I will now turn.

*Semiotics: the study of the building of landscape meanings*

If 'nature', and for that matter 'culture', tended to be treated as unproblematic matters in landscape history and cultural ecology, then no such comfort was available to geographers in this second tradition. Landscape, as object or form, was turned into one, among many, 'ways of seeing' (see Berger, 1972) and, in other cases, as one among a number of possible textual inscriptions and descriptions of meaning. In what is now a familiar and well-worn critique of the Sauerian approach to landscape form, geographers who have sought to denaturalize landscape as a way of seeing have highlighted a tendency to uncritically adopt what was a historically and geographically specific approach to the study of landscape.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, those geographers who have explored landscape-as-text metaphors have similarly highlighted the historical, political and cultural means through which landscapes are written and read (see Duncan, 1995). In the following I treat both traditions as examples of attempts to *interpret* landscapes, their production and their reproduction. The focus, again, is on the spaces of nature that these analyses allow for or produce.

Mitchell's identification of what he terms an 'encounter' way of seeing in the landscape and environmental narratives of the 'new western history' is a recent example of an approach to landscape interpretation which reflects upon the role of visual subjects:

[R]epresentations of landscape are bound with a particular 'way of seeing' the landscape that understands it to be something always already there, something simply to be *encountered* (rather than actively constructed). (1998: 9, emphasis added)

Given the conflicts that mark North American colonial history and geography, it is possibly even more surprising that here a tradition of treating landscape as 'matter of fact', a pre-existing object, is retained. For, as Mitchell attests, 'the "West" is an image of landscape so freighted with political meaning (not to mention more than 150 years of popular iconography) that the real places upon which those images have been built scarcely seem to matter' (1998: 12). I will return

in some detail to Mitchell's 'real places' later in this section. For the moment I will dwell on this 'encountering' of landscape as an unproblematic field of vision in order to draw out some of its implications for human and non-human living.

It was largely in terms of a negative response to the treatment of landscape as a 'timeless unity of form' (Cosgrove, 1984: 16), and through a positive reading of a wide body of writing in cultural studies, film theory and art criticism, that cultural geographers turned to 'interpret landscape not as a material consequence of interactions between a society and an environment, observable in the field by the more or less objective gaze of the geographer, but rather as a gaze which itself helps to make sense of a particular relationship between society and land' (Rose, 1993: 87). More than simply material relationships of society and land, landscaping set up particular modes of observation, worldliness and representation. Drawing on Law and Benschop's (1997) summary of the kinds of relationships that were in part constituted through the Renaissance humanism of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Italy, these modes can be characterized in the following ways direct quotes and paraphrasing from Law and Benschop, 1997: 160–1; see also Cosgrove, 1985):

1 The *observer*

- is a *point* (constituted by the rules of perspective) at which matters are drawn together (a coherent point and a point of coherence)
- is a point that is *not included in the world* it observes
- is a point which is to some extent *in a relationship of control* with the world (depictions can be rearranged to re-present other worlds).

2 Meanwhile, the *world*

- is *separate* from the observer
- is a *volume containing objects* and is three-dimensional and Euclidean in character
- exists prior to its depiction, *awaiting discovery*
- *contains discrete objects* which pass through time with significant stability or differences, the latter of which are explicable in terms of determinable object interactions, collisions etc.
- *has a need for narrative*, for stories that illuminate the character and displacement of objects in the world.

### 3 Finally, *representation*

- is *illustrative*: the world and its narratives are already in existence, they simply require depiction.

Whilst there are subtle and not so subtle differences in landscape traditions (between, for example, southern and northern European practices: see Alpers, 1989; Law and Benschop, 1997), it is possible to suggest that this way of seeing was intimately associated with two major suppositions. First, the possibility existed for a neat, centred 'subject'. Second, an equally neat, though separate and possibly subordinate, solid 'object' could exist. The implications for human/non-human orders are legion. Cosgrove provides a useful summary:

Landscape distances us from the world in critical ways, defining a particular relationship with nature and those who appear in nature, and offers us the illusion of a world in which we may participate subjectively by entering the picture frame along the perspectival axis. But this is an aesthetic entrance not an active engagement with a nature or space that has its own life. (1985: 55)

In other words, a settlement or division is performed through the act of framing landscape (setting up, it could be added, the conditions necessary for an 'encounter' way of seeing). The human subject, or a certain kind of human subject, is ideally distinguishable from a natural object. Whilst, as I will take time to demonstrate later on, this labour of division is always far from a complete exercise, it nevertheless contributes to the stabilization of certain relations of power both between humans and between the human and non-human worlds (for the former, see Cosgrove, 1985; Daniels, 1989; Mitchell, 1996; Rose, 1993; for the latter, see Fitzsimmons, 1988; Hinchliffe, 2000a; Latour, 1993; Whatmore, 1999). The constitution and enfranchizing of human *subjects* (and the political meaning of the term is also relevant), and their estrangement from human and non-human objects, provide a setting for a recursive series of purification acts (see Latour, 1993). To be a good subject (politically, aesthetically and scientifically) is to be as distant as possible from the objects upon which 'he' gazed. The masculinization of observation and the feminization (and racialization) of nature (or the observed) contributed to a way of seeing, or a modern epistemology, which dovetailed neatly with a politics of representation (in terms both of illustration and of suffrage).

To believe that this estrangement occurred, at some point somewhere, is to accept a form of modernism – with its sorry (masculine) tale of

inevitable fragmentation and romantic failure. But narratives of loss should be beside the point. What *is* important is the political work that the practices of seeing can produce (sometimes aided by the myths of a modern sensibility or subject). So, for example, certain forms of the scientific gaze are epistemological practices which continue to labour aspects of this division (see Haraway, 1989; Latour, 1993; Stafford, 1993).

A point, of course, of this way of seeing approach to landscape production is to develop a form of ideology critique. It is to denaturalize this encounter, to demonstrate its exclusions and its artifice. It is to highlight the political distributions that are performed through the labours of division between subjects and objects, pure humans and others, cultures and natures, observers and observed, scientists and their experiments (see Law and Benschop, 1997). One particularly productive means of politicizing these landscapes has been to focus upon and historicize the practices of signification that have contributed to their production. Commenting for example upon the composition of landscape in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century England, and in particular its systematic placing of agricultural labour on the background of picturesque rural countryside, Williams suggests that landscape is concerned with providing a relationship of control between the owners and the workers of land. He goes on to suggest that to landscape is to distinguish between outside and inside – those who can project and prospect (the outsiders) and those who live in the scene (who are therefore less likely to envision place and space in anything like the same manner). For Williams, 'a working country is hardly ever a landscape. The very idea of landscape implies separation and observation' (1973: 120). Williams is undoubtedly overstating matters here, and I will shortly return to this problematic division between labouring and viewing, but the point that landscaping is embroiled within social relations of ownership, control, property and a host of temporal and spatial relations, some of which are neatly evoked by the multiple meanings of the word 'prospect', is well made (Cosgrove, 1985; Hirsch, 1995).

In addition to denaturalizing landscape by demonstrating its construction as one of a number of ways of seeing, semiotic approaches really come into their own when landscape meanings are understood to be constituted through the subject's reading of an arrangement of signs (and the coincident re-enactment of those meanings through the actions that they invite and condition). In this sense, landscape starts to be understood as a textual arrangement of signs (Barnes

and Duncan, 1992). And the power of the analytic of the textuality of landscape *potentially* resides in its foregrounding of the mutual construction of subjectivities and objectivities (for a clear treatment, see Curt, 1994). Cues are taken from a common reading of Foucault which enables a genealogy of forms to be reconstructed. Landscapes, like other matters, become the effects of a myriad of disciplines and delegations. Meanwhile, in case this sounds too much like a reworking of some form of structural determinism, subjects are portrayed as *involved* in the formulation of landscapes in ways that allow for a prospective and normative politics of resistance, play and subversion (Barnes and Duncan, 1992). Involvement is highlighted for a reason. The analytical import of textuality is first and foremost a means to disrupt a world of neat subjects and objects (without, it should be added, destroying the possibility of engaging with subjectivities). It is a means to move away from an analytical style which talks of encounters with landscape, or which speaks of humans and non-humans *interacting* with one another. Rather, textuality promotes a sense of *interpenetrating* subjectivities and objectivities. The collective subject 'Beryl Curt' puts it this way:

The ways in which we 'experience' the world are wrapped up with our concerned engagement with 'the world'. The interpenetration is textuality.

Textuality ... is an analytic which serves to draw attention to the impossibility and futility of attempting to define something (some argument, life or whatever) as if it were fully self-present and self-sufficient – as if the world consisted of facts which, as the cliché has it, 'speak for themselves'. Textuality thus serves to trouble any arguments founded in the distinction between 'fact' and 'fictions', the 'discursive' and the 'real'. (1994: 36)

The textuality trick is easier said than done. Indeed, its utilization in cultural geography has on occasion managed to unsettle subject/object divisions, only to draw up a similarly firm distinction between 'texts' and their (intellectual) readers. Rose was quick to point out what she defines as an enduring, masculine desire for a solid looking object of analysis:

The textual metaphor aims to stabilize disruptions and demonstrate learning and sensitivity: landscape textualized renders geographers' knowledge exhaustive. It performs as another example of aesthetic insecurity in geography. (1993: 101)

So, even if a large number of subject positions have been decentred through textuality – which broadly suggests that they no longer have the privilege of being the origin or source of meaning – paradoxically, there remained in

cultural geography a platform on which to stand and view textual and intertextual landscapes (see also Burgess, 1990, for an early example of a geographer's objection to this form of elitism). So as Curt, again, insightfully comments (see also Hinchliffe, 1996, on this analytical ambivalence in technology-as-text metaphors):

The interesting thing is that the words have changed (no longer is it subject/object, but reader/text) but the properties and powers attributed along the 'fault-line' of the dichotomy have remained the same. (1994: 42)

In short, there has been something of a tendency to reproduce an 'us and them' approach to landscape and textuality. This continuing labour of division (see Cooper, 1997) has been the subject of various critical interventions from feminist and Marxist strands of cultural geography. The former has drawn on psychoanalytical approaches and visual theory to emphasize the ambivalence between, and interpenetration of, observer and observed. So, for example, the 'pleasure and emotive force which landscapes may provide' (Nash, 1996: 149; see also Rose, 1993) disrupts any sense that a pre-formed subject (whether it is the country landowners of Williams' ideology critique, or the landscape geographer) can truly stand, distanced, from the scene. Landscapes are, then, emotional and passionate matters, made up of practices that are just as embodied for the observer as they are for Williams' romanticized workers. Rather than Williams' insiders and outsiders, we are all landscapers now (although the power to landscape and the powers of landscape remain uneven).

The feminist-inspired critique of the tendency to objectify the texts themselves starts to rematerialize the scene. And much of the remainder of this chapter draws on this project. But before I continue in this vein, I need to say something of the second productive critique of the landscape-as-text tradition derived from a Marxist-inspired engagement. If landscape geographers have been partially successful in decentring the subject (that point where meaning is reputedly gathered together), and feminist critiques have focused upon the tendency to recentre certain kinds of subjects, then the Marxist critiques have tended to express a fear of a decentring of the object. The landscape-as-text metaphor is rightly in some cases, and wrongly, I would argue, in others, suspected of dematerializing the world. The anxiety is generated by an aetherial space of textuality, 'a kind of pure cultura' (Curt, 1994: 25), which requires supplementing with some form of material production. As an example, Willems-Braun's (1997) study engages with the literary theory of postcolonialism to unpack the landscaping of the British Columbian forests.

The extratextual matter of this production of landscape is made clear in Willems-Braun's account of the nineteenth-century geologist George Dawson's travel texts (including surveys, diaries, photographs and so on). The latter are neatly regarded as engaging in a material framing of the world, one where nature and native land occupation are disaggregated (a common trope in the building of colonial and neo-colonial environmentalisms). But before this starts to sound as though Dawson was a mind-in-a-vat (see Latour, 1999b), or that 'his' texts were merely the outcome of a solely linguistic world of other texts, Willems-Braun rightly draws the attention to the distributed materiality of landscape production:

Dawson's surveys and journals did not invent objects and landscapes in flights of fancy. These were material practices that engaged material worlds. Rather, in rendering the landscapes visible, the surveys constructed from what was *encountered* an ordered scene that could be read. Such practices ... were not simply textual, but highly material; they did not leave the land untouched. Instead they actively displaced and resituated landscapes within new orders of vision and visibility, and within regimes of power and knowledge that at once authorized particular activities and facilitated new forms of governmentality. (1997: 16, emphasis added)

Willems-Braun neatly argues for a material approach to cultural production, and advocates an understanding of the performance of texts in the material reproduction of landscapes (right up to the conservationists' approaches to British Columbia the following century). However, in its focus on *cultural* production, the materiality that the author evokes never seems to measure up to much more than a substrate, upon which meanings could be inscribed. If there is agency in these accounts then it fails to wander very far from Dawson's and his successors' admittedly material cultures. Nature tends to appear as a remainder, as something that is *encountered*, enrolled into human affairs, and is *given*, through the material practices of inscription and description, meaning. Nature and materiality figure in this account, and yet despite the will to render the scene as more than a human affair (and so rescue nature and the object from a pure cultura), a suspicion remains that they are not up to much.

A similar problem exists with a popular device used in cultural geography entitled the 'circuit of culture' (see Burgess, 1990; Johnson, 1986; Squire, 1994). The circuit, which focuses analytic attention on the production and consumption of landscape meanings, and sees particular cultural productions (like the landscapes and texts which Willems-Braun examines) as moments in a broad

process, encourages researchers to engage with what Johnson (1986) calls 'acts' – matters undetermined by existing textual inscriptions. The extratextual purity of acts, rather like the extratextual qualities of the materials in British Columbia, is, however, treated as something of a remainder that is left unexplored in this model of cultural production and consumption.

This remaindering of extratextual material and action is, seemingly, less of a problem for those Marxis-inspired analyses which fill the void with an account of the social production of landscape. Drawing on Marxist theories of labour value, landscape is produced through signifiatory practices as well as relations of labour which are 'embodied in any landscape' (Mitchell, 1998: 18). Mitchell, for example, seeks to combine theories of representation with theories of production in order to not only peel back layers of accreted meaning but also 'excavate the processes, including the processes of labour, that went into producing the actual form of the landscape' (1998: 21). This, it seems to me, is an eminently worthwhile project, particularly if the understanding of textuality continues to obscure materialities (although as I have hinted and as I will argue below, this need not be the case). And, perhaps more importantly, if it allows for the recovery of forms of agency that are normally obscured from landscaping practices. Indeed, Mitchell's (1996) writing on migrant workers and landscape production contributes to a series of political projects that relate to struggles over representation. However, Mitchell's project does tend to reproduce a subject/object distinction under another guise. In short, and despite some protestations to the contrary, Mitchell's project ends up, like the historians he criticizes, reproducing a strong division between human and non-human labour, and ultimately between cultures and natures. So, for example, when Mitchell approvingly cites Richard White's writing on the production of nature through embodied labour he tends to emphasize the human labours. In doing so, he misses White's (1996) potentially interesting sense of the creativity of human/non-human relations. What *is* recovered from the obfuscation of landscape is a strictly human sense of agency.

The landscape, whether an English parkland, the view from an Italian villa, a California farm labour camp, the plains that constitute Chicago's hinterland or a Columbia River fish ladder, is a place structured *for* someone, *by* someone. (Mitchell, 1998: 22, emphasis in original)

There are two problems here. First, an assumption remains that landscapes can be read once and for all. Whilst the subject/object dichotomy

re-emerges in admittedly politically useful ways – as I have accepted, such readings are strategically useful in terms of re-presenting a silenced majority – the ideology critique itself is expressed as a matter beyond worldly practices. As Whatmore has put it, ‘such accounts share an inclination to exempt themselves from the representational moment, by variously claiming a privileged correspondence between concept and object, logic and process’ (1999: 24). Second, in positing landscapes and power as functions of the intentionality of historically situated human subjects, there is a tendency to evacuate landscapes-as-lived. In other words, we are paradoxically left with an anaemic sense of landscape and agency. Mitchell, of course, should not be accused of writing bloodless histories and geographies, but in laying bare the *real* landscape, produced through various relations of labour, we are back to a pre-given order of things in which it is difficult to reimagine a place for different human/non-human orders. Despite their eye-opening quality, Mitchell’s landscapes can be read as enclosed affairs, whose histories and geographies seem to follow set trajectories<sup>2</sup> (see Massey, 1999a, for a careful expansion of this argument with respect to dominant forms of progressive politics).

To be clear, this is not to deny the importance of power, fetishization, labour or even ideology in the production of landscape. Nor is it to empty the field of political commitment. Rather, it is to say that current formulations seem to rely upon a particular politics of representation and a particular form of inhabitation. In short, there is a tendency to treat the diversity and coexistence of non-human worlds as at best a matter of only passive interest and then in terms which strike out multiplicity with a universal natural body (in the form of transformations from first nature to second nature, or even to third nature: see Luke, 1996; and see Whatmore, 1999, for a critique). In the second half of this chapter I want to work towards another sense of landscape, one that can be more open to human and non-human difference and coexistence.

## **INHABITING LANDSCAPES GEOGRAPHICALLY**

So how do we avoid the natural or cultural determinism that seems to follow on from some of the work that I have reviewed so far? How can non-human spaces be imagined and engaged without making them timeless and spaceless abstractions? How can we avoid centring landscape

meaning and value on certain humans and/or on humans alone? In this section I attempt to find some partial answers to such questions by pushing at what might be involved in inhabiting landscapes successfully. To be clear, the inhabitation that I want to push is not as cosy as it might at first sound. As I stated at the outset, there is no clear blueprint with which we can fall in line, no harmony to which we can adjust. Things are more dynamic than this adjustment model suggests (see Botkin, 1990; Zimmerer, 1994). For one thing, inhabiting human and non-human landscapes will produce changes to all parties (albeit to varying levels and to different degrees). And, as I stated at the outset, all landscape assemblages will remain somewhat out of joint. This is not a sense of inhabitation that can hope to cover all bases and produce a blanketed landscape which is reducible to one logic or schema. In this sense, landscape inhabitation will involve interrelations, but not necessarily interdependency.

In order to develop this sense of a connected though differentiated landscape, I want to explore the degree to which understanding landscaping as textual practice can reinvigorate a politics of inhabitation. The focus on textuality may seem counter-intuitive, especially given the tendency in recent cultural geography to talk of materialities, bodies, non-humans and so on as non- or extratextual matters. But, as I have argued, such a boundary drawing exercise is too quick and risks too much, especially if we are left more or less where we started, with an albeit deferred split between nature and culture (something that seems to me to be endemic in the tectonic and semiotic approaches that I have so far reviewed). The point of the argument here is to suggest that whilst there may be good reasons for being suspicious of textual models, it is nevertheless politically and intellectually important to avoid old pitfalls. So, before engaging with some of the main approaches that I have identified for developing a politics of landscape inhabitation, I want to make two points. First, rather than arguing for less text, textualities can actually be pursued for the work they do in producing an inhabitable and affective world. Second, there is a need to specify a little further what kinds of activities or practices are understood as textual.

Let me start with this reversal of the normal objection to cultural geography’s treatment of landscapes and natures. We need more rather than less text. The normal objection, particularly from some forms of Marxist analyses and from environmentalists, is that we need less about texts and more about worlds. So, for example, in using the circuit of culture, analysts come across moments, or desire to find moments, when some-

thing or some process is outside the inscribing and de-scribing of text – moments that are ‘underdetermined’ by the current intertextual setup. I have hinted above that I am sympathetic to such an approach, and am similarly suspicious of anything that imagines the world is constructed, and interpreted, by humans, for humans and through linguistic constructions alone (what Whatmore rightly criticizes as the all too prevalent ‘lexical cast of the cultural turn’, 1999: 29). However, as Latour (2001) has noted, as soon as the phrase ‘underdetermined’ is used, there is a tendency to revert to a task of allocating between what humans say and what the rest of the world does. The aim therefore in the second half of this chapter is to refuse such an analytical process. So rather than looking for things that exist outside texts, the aim becomes one of gaining understanding of how texts (perhaps amongst other means) can enable what Latour calls a ‘learning to be affected’. For Latour, the inscribing and describing activities of laboratory science and field science are not only productive of knowledgeable scientists. Learning to be affected is also a matter of engaging with a world that becomes *more highly differentiated as understanding proceeds*. This is not, it should be clear, a matter of simply becoming attuned to a pre-existing world (an explanation that simply reassembles the old binaries) but is a means through which humans and non-humans can add to the world. So, when Latour describes the textualization of smell through odour kits in the perfume industry, and the progressive refinement of testers’ ability to differentiate fragrances, he notes how ‘body parts are progressively acquired at the same time that world counter-parts are being registered in a new way’ (2001: 2). Further, he argues that this is not simply a means by which testers find words to refer to the world. This would be the zero-sum game that many associate with the textual representation, or more accurately the linguistic capture, of the world. Rather, in learning to be affected – in articulating propositions – bodies, things and words all have the potential to become more than they were before the articulations began. So, for the sociologists of science,

the pair human–nonhuman does not involve a tug-of-war between two opposite forces. On the contrary, the more activity there is from one, the more activity there is from the other. (Latour, 1999b: 147)

In other words, this kind of account moves away from texts as representatives and towards a sense of texts as habits, and as means to make connections. In doing this we unsettle the common

belief that human subjects are knowledgeable and (non-human) objects constitute simply what is known (or waiting to be known). The relationship is less one-sided. So, for example, when Hayles argues that a species extinction ‘reduces the sum total knowledge about the world’ (1995: 58), this is not because the living organisms that belong to that species are no longer available for study, but because ‘it removes from the chorus of experience some of the voices articulating its [the world’s] richness and variety’ 1995: 58; see also Abram, 1996, for an attempt to convert this phenomenology of the senses to an environmental ethics, and my reservations of this project in the conclusion to the chapter).

This brings me to the second point. The model of text that I am starting to evoke here is perhaps a useful qualification to the one that Curt refers to (that of interpenetration), but it is certainly different to the one that cultural geography has, in the main, inherited from cultural and literary studies. It is a version of textuality that engages and enlivens the world rather than swamps it. The feminist theorist Elizabeth Grosz marks a significant distinction between a closed and overcoded textual model that she associates with a Derridean understanding of textuality, and one that is more characteristic, she argues, of Deleuze’s open sense of textual activity. It is the latter, I will argue, that offers resources for inhabiting landscapes (see also Davies, 1999).

Instead of a Derridean model of the text as textile, as interweaving – which produces a closed, striated space of intense overcodings, a fully semiotized model of textuality – a model that is gaining considerable force in architectural and urbanist discourses, texts could, more in keeping with Deleuze, be read, used, as modes of effectivity and action which, at their best, scatter thoughts and images into different linkages or new alignments without necessarily destroying their materiality. Ideally, they produce unexpected intensities, peculiar sites of indifference, new connections with other objects and thus generate affective and conceptual transformations that problematize, challenge, and move beyond existing intellectual and pragmatic frameworks. (Grosz, 1995: 126–7)

As I will hope to show, taking this latter sense of textuality along with Latour’s affective bodies provides possibilities for extending some of Latour’s interest in largely human schemata and world-making activities (albeit ones that rely on activities of non-humans), and takes us some way to developing transhuman geographies. As I will also suggest, it will be necessary to draw out what Latour’s affected world and Grosz’ linkages and alignments involve in order to situate this textual model in the landscape politics that I

want to pursue here. For now, the idea that we need more rather than fewer texts (or articulations of propositions) in order to become affected, and that we should understand texts as actions that can but do not of necessity produce connections, together form the basis for thinking some more about landscapes, nature and inhabitation.

In the following subsections I use the suggestive framework provided by Grosz and Latour to introduce and then to qualify what might be involved in a material semiotic approach to inhabiting landscapes. The focus here will be on the limitations to an overly analytical approach to semiotics and so in the final subsection I draw out what an experimental or connective semiotics, more in line with Grosz' textual model, might involve.

### *Material semiotics*

'Material semiotics' is employed to great effect in the writings of Latour, Haraway and others (see Akrich and Latour, 1992, for a useful introduction and Haraway, 1992, for an exposition). The term is used to emphasize that, far from being limited to the feared, pure cultura, meaning is just as much about material arrangements as it is about words on a page. For Whatmore, for example, material semiotics is a means to extend 'the register of semiotics beyond its traditional concern with signification as linguistic ordering, to all kinds of unspeakable "message bearers" and material processes, such as technical devices, instruments and graphics, and bodily capacities, habits and skills' (1999: 29). Material semiotics concentrates attention on the ways that stable meanings are built out of a wide range of actions and actants. The attraction to those in technoscience studies who have until recently been interested in the ways in which stable orders (like scientific truths and technological efficiencies) are produced is clear. Worlds are built through the more or less successful linking together of other worlds, and the longer and more robust the linkages, the more stable the construction (although see Munro, 1997, and Hinchliffe, 2000a, for criticisms of this equation of length and strength).

In terms of understanding landscapes, we start to open out a geography of *networked* relations. In these terms, landscapes are no longer simply human affairs (a reading based upon a fundamental division between subject and object). Material semiotics most significantly enables a recognition of human *and* non-human times and spaces and their roles in the co-constitution of worlds. This approach:

recognizes chains of translation of varying kinds and lengths which weave sound, vision, gesture and scent through all manner of bodies, elements, instruments and artefacts – so that the distinction between being present and being represented no longer exhausts, or makes sense of, the compass and possibility of social conduct. (Whatmore, 1999: 30)

Material semiotics, networks and weaving practices are all important to the politics of inhabitation. They start to enliven understandings of the importance of non-human and human acts in the making of worlds (and the spatialities that are implied in those activities). Likewise, they start to unsettle divisions between presence and absence and start to suggest a degree of openness to practice. Nevertheless, this openness is not always apparent in the growing body of work that calls itself actor network theory (ANT). Indeed, there is a danger (by no means inherent, but, given the way a good deal of actor network theory, in particular, has been operationalized – see the criticisms of Lee and Brown, 1994, and Law, 1999a – a real danger) that some of the more structural and totalizing elements of a semiotic approach can re-emerge in analysis (in Grosz' terms, this is in part the risk of a fully semiotized model of textuality).

Part of the problem may well be the route through which material semiotics has come to this area of geography. Haraway, Latour and Akrich all adopted the approach and terminology of A.J. Greimas (including his deployment of the term 'actant'). As Lenoir points out, Greimas' semiotics is 'an abstracting, ahistorical, structuralist semiotics aimed at looking for a logic of culture, proposing a structural explanation in terms of systems' (1994: 122), and even reducing textuality to deep biological structures. To be sure, Haraway's 'coyote grammar of the world' is very different to Greimas' ontology. But Lenoir worries that her adoption of numerous elements of his work, including 'actors, actants, narratives and the semiotic square' (1994: 132), requires a more stringent demonstration of how we can avoid his structural determinism.

Like Lenoir, I take it that the aim of engaging with semiotics is to avoid 'grids of actantial roles and thematic functions ... [and] arid formalism' (1994: 136). Rather, it is to foreground the accidents and contingencies, the embodied and situated activities, as well as the consistencies and regularities, that make landscapes. To this end, the resident network topology of material semiotics is either being treated in more self-evidently open ways, emphasizing its active, practical (and therefore far from complete) usage in the verb 'to network' (see Whatmore, 1999),

or being supplemented with other topologies. The point is to open analyses to those aspects of landscaping and other forms of ordering that are not so managerial and totalizing and which demonstrate awareness of the non-presences as well as the presences in landscapes. Examples include Mol and Law's (1994) use of fluid metaphors; Law's (1999b) interest in fire; Latour's (1999a) actant rhizomes; Haraway's (1994; 1997) game of cat's cradle; and Hetherington and Lee's (2000) blank spaces. All can be considered as attempts to abandon that tendency of actor network theory to be the final word (see Lee and Brown, 1994, for one of the first statements to this effect).

There are, in other words, various means to imagine ways of allowing a space for alterity in landscaping practices. Such spaces are necessary if we are to avoid some of the overinscription and overconfidence of, say, landscape semiotics or Marxist analyses. Meanwhile, even though some of this excitement has been generated through ANT's own, belated, preoccupations and troubles (compared say to feminist and poststructuralist engagements with alterity), Hetherington and Lee (2000) suggest that the totalizing tendency of social theory is more widespread. They suggest that the current 'relational turn' in geographical writing is in danger of inhabiting a similar political space to earlier versions of ANT. For example, relational theory tends to assume 'that all elements, regardless of their apparent ontological status, are open to being related one with another' (2000: 173). Hetherington and Lee argue that although relational theory manages to move away from human-centred versions of social theory, and thereby provides a basis for countering an 'ontology of division' (2000: 174) (between, say, human subjects and non-human objects), it does so only by constructing another, similarly constraining, ontology. For, in asserting that all elements may potentially be related, a commonality is supposed, 'in which all actants share a susceptibility to *force*, a susceptibility which provides the grounds on which they can become related to one another' (2000: 173–4). For Hetherington and Lee, then, a residual sameness remains in relational geographies. Despite its talk of openness, difference and the possibility for change (change which is not part of some predestined future: see Allen, 1999), the initial commonality, an ontology of force, makes 'it hard to see why there should be change at all' (2000: 174). In sum, we need to move away from 'a readiness to be ordered by virtue of shared human qualities [an ontology of division] or readiness to be related through human/nonhuman susceptibilities [an ontology of force]' (2000: 174). Instead,

the question of social order has changed from a question of shared properties or susceptibility to relation into a question of how relation may be forged at all. (2000: 175)

The answer to such a question lies, for Hetherington and Lee and for the philosopher Michel Serres, in a different semiotics where it is not only present elements which contribute to the building of landscapes of order. There is something other to the ensuing order which escapes characterization as a necessary element of that order, but which nevertheless does not necessarily exist outside the order (and therefore does not need to be brought 'in' through a conventional representational politics). These others, which are constitutionally indifferent to their placement in an order, and which can perform stabilization as well as change within an order (the authors use jokers in a game of cards, the figure zero in maths and angels as exemplars of this facility), are termed blank figures. Rather than representing the absence of presence in a landscape or order, blank figures do just the opposite. They are figures that are present absences. They are, the authors argue, absolutely vital to the process of ordering, but they are not easily dragged into an economy of representational signs. Meanwhile, their unearthliness is perhaps one way (although as I will suggest in the final subsection, not the only way) of rescuing landscape studies from a metaphysics of presence, and in particular, of earthly (land-locked) and territorial presences (a trait that Irigaray, 1997, associates with a peculiarly masculinist and romanticist approach to space, place and landscape; see also Thrift, 1999).

Now, despite their claims, Hetherington and Lee's notion bears a strong resemblance to the politics of difference that is at the heart of some versions of relational geography. It seems to me that, for example, Massey's power geometries do not boil down to an ontology of force. Indeed, without using the same language, Massey does insist on supplementing relationality with an openness to just the kind of surprise and uncertainty that intrigue Hetherington and Lee:

The relationality of space *together with its openness* means that space also always contains a degree of the unexpected, the unpredictable. As well as the loose ends then, space also always contains an element of 'chaos' (of the not already prescribed by the system). It is a 'chaos' which results from those happenstance juxtapositions, those accidental separations, the often paradoxical character of geographical configurations in which, precisely, a number of distinct trajectories interweave and, sometimes, interact. Space, in other words, is inherently 'disrupted'. (1999b: 37, emphasis added)



**Figure 10.2** *Gunnar Theel, Nature's Laugh*

Together, Massey, Hetherington and Lee provide important reminders of the limits to representational politics. Landscape politics cannot simply be concerned with finding and drawing in the missing masses, for there will always be an unexpected component to the practical conduct of ordering or making space. The difference is that Massey draws us into this political realization without recourse to a set of what *might* be read as unworldly and politically indifferent figures. As I argue in the final subsection, this sense of practical contingency (even within the most successful of ordering regimes) helps to flesh out what might be involved in a politics of landscape inhabitation.

#### *Experiments and connections*

I have now sketched examples of attempts to maintain a sense of alterity in accounts of the ordering of worlds. For a politics of inhabitation and nature, this seems attractive. It is just that sense of surprise and strangeness, even, as Haraway has suggested, that 'independent sense of humour' (1991: 199), which is required for a positive inhabitation of landscape (see Figure 10.2). And yet, to a certain extent, these reimaginings

of textualities remain in many cases concerned with a particular style of inhabitation. They are concerned with building. Indeed, from tectonics (the study of how form is built), to semiotics (the study of how meaning is built) – and then to textualities of various kinds – the concern has ostensibly been to *account* for the construction of worlds. And even with the attempt to allow room for alterity, and thereby to avoid a crude representational politics, the building metaphor remains.

The problem is that holding onto a building metaphor runs the risk of returning to an admittedly more elaborate, knowing, academic gaze. Or to put this another way, whilst the figurations and elements of landscape may be changing, the form of knowing can seem to stay remarkably constant (see Hinchliffe, 2000b). Perhaps this is nothing more than a risk in Hetherington and Lee's work. Certainly they frequently remind readers that the project is not one of representing the formerly underrepresented. And there can be little doubt that these geographies start to open up possibilities for new connections and creativity. However, there seems to be a difference between building alterity into an account of the world, and accepting alterity as part of ongoing practice and changing our knowing practices to

adopt what Deleuze characterized as a 'looser kind of sense' (Rajchman, 2000: 8). The most important lesson here is that, despite talk of indeterminacy and contingency, more work needs to be done if we are to stem the tendency to re-inscribe the division between intellectual and other forms of practice (what Napier has called the 'disconnected intellectual excitement', 1992: 65, that can be produced as we give life to mysterious objects).<sup>3</sup> One means of doing so is to take seriously a Deleuzian model of textuality which is, from the outset, oriented to active experimentation, and labours under no illusion of passive accounting.

Indeed, Deleuze's empiricism involves a rejection of any philosophical moves that require the mystical, the invisible or the absent as a means to critique conventional knowledge or thinking (Rajchman, 2000: 18). Following Whitehead, Deleuze sought the conditions under which something new is produced by 'putting one's trust not in some transcendence or *Urdoxa*, but rather in the world from which thinking derives and in which it becomes effective' (2000: 45). This is not to say that in dispensing with blankness, angels or other mystical figures, we are left with a straightforwardly knowable world (see Massey's point above). Indeed, the aim is not to know a world in which, in any case, 'virtual elements move too quickly for conscious inspection or close third person explanation' (Connolly, 1999: 24; see also Thrift, 2000b). What is crucial, and what angels and blanks can fail to underline, is the requirement to surrender some of the analytical baggage and experiment: to produce, in other words, 'a semiotics that would be diagrammatic or cartographic rather than symbolic or iconic, and diagnostic of other possibilities rather than predictive or explanatory' (Rajchman, 2000: 67).

In short, a shift in ways of knowing is being advocated, from a 'knowing what' to a 'know-how' (or, in Latour's terms, a 'learning to be affected'). As Thrift's (1996; 1999; 2000a) characterization of what he has termed a non-representational turn in intellectual labour has suggested, Deleuze, Latour and Grosz are not alone in urging for a shift away from attempts to match worlds and words. Likewise, there is a whole raft of work in feminist studies (see Grosz, 1995; Probyn, 1996), psychology (Bateson, 1973; Newman and Holzman, 1997; Shotter, 1993) and philosophy and neurobiology (Connolly, 1999; Varela, 1999) which urges us to do something other than provide accounts of the ways in which worlds are ordered or built. Nevertheless, and at the risk of closing too much down at this stage, let me mark out some of the

experimentalism that interested Deleuze from some of the other ways in which the building metaphor of social theory has been disclaimed.

Drawing on Heidegger's essay, 'Building, dwelling, thinking' (1971: 145–61), the anthropologist Ingold counterposes dwelling to 'building', as a means to highlight the notion that far from confronting the world (head on), humans live in amongst the world:

the forms that people build, whether in the imagination or on the ground, arise within the current of their involved activity, in the specific relational contexts of their practical engagement with their surroundings ... In short, people do not import their ideas, plans or mental representations into the world, since that very world, to borrow a phrase from Merleau-Ponty (1962: 24), is the homeland of their thoughts. Only because they already dwell therein can they think the thoughts they do. (1995: 76)

Ingold manages to unsettle any crude, cognitively based, distinction between human and non-human living forms by bringing to the fore the ongoing, practical engagements (and disengagements), contingencies and know-how that make living possible (see also Ingold, 2000). Humans, like many others, 'act to think' rather than think in order to act (see Thrift, 1999: 297). And yet, despite what is certainly an attractive means of reimagining landscape practices, there is a sense in which Ingold risks a rather 'earthly' romanticism by emphasizing the territorial qualities of 'dwelling' (not to mention 'homeland': see Thrift, 1999). In some ways, we are back to humans living and dwelling 'in' a landscape, which itself risks becoming ahistorical and, more importantly, ageographical. Indeed, it is the localism of these dwelt landscapes that remains problematic in this work. It is important, therefore, that dwelling does not become a means of returning to locality-based and 'presentist' senses of landscape and place. (See also Mitchell, 2001, on the dangers of mistaking landscapes as solely local achievements.)

Perhaps even more significantly, it is the combination of Heideggerian dwelling with Merleau-Ponty's notion of lifeworld that tends, despite claiming that Cartesian ontological priorities are being reversed (Ingold, 2000: 169), to reinstall human transcendence and so open up the old fault lines between humans and the rest. For Deleuze and Guattari, there is a piety in Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology which runs just this kind of risk (1994: 178). As Rajchman summarizes Deleuze's suspicions:

Merleau-Ponty's notion of the flesh still harbours a strange opacity, tied with a dream of an originary experience or *Urdoxa* ... On the other hand the 'being of

sensation' that one extracts from common perceptions and personalized affects, or from the space of representation and the re-identification of objects, leads not to an intersubjective orientation in the world, but rather to a mad zone of indetermination and experimentation from which new connections may emerge. (2000: 8–9)

Another way of expressing this distinction is to highlight the quality of becoming in Deleuze's philosophy, as opposed to an orientation to being that is present in much phenomenological work (and which certainly comes to the fore in environmentalist attempts to articulate phenomenological work: see Abram, 1996).

In sum, the active textualities that are involved in making landscapes, in this Deleuzian sense, are experimental rather than analytical. Likewise, they are about ongoing and active engagement and connections/separations rather than cold and distant visions. And, furthermore, in being actively engaged, they are careful not to filter these engagements through phenomenological (pre)conditions: nothing, it is argued, need remain unchanged. This means that we need to learn to put our trust in the world which not only makes thought, but also makes thought effective. I want to finish by drawing out some of the implications of these arguments for landscape inhabitation.

## CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The first implication bears upon the ways in which human bodies and embodiments are thought and practised. There is a good deal here that is shared with the literature that speaks of embodied vision and which attempts to resensitize seeing by recasting it as bodily, sensuous experience. Seeing is never untouched by the sights and sites of vision. It is haptic and, in that sense, moving (see Taussig, 1993). But, it is important to add, embodying vision is not a simple matter of adding a ready-made human body to the eye or to the I of the subject. As Thrift has endeavoured to make clear, this is an embodiment which is certainly not fixed (and nor is it in any sense a reference to an essential body), but it is a process that incorporates a range of *specific* competences:

This is, then, an embodiment which is folded into the world by virtue of the passions of the five senses and constant, concrete attunements to particular practices, which always involve highly attuned bodily stances as bodies move in relation to each other; ways of walking,

standing, sitting, pushing, pulling, throwing, catching, each with its own cultural resources. (1999: 314)

The specifics (and the species) are important. It is right to say that being incorporated in a different body would be to live a different world (Hayles, 1995: 56). This is exactly what Latour's (2001) 'learning to be affected' attempts to evoke. As bodies (and presumably not just human bodies) engage with the world, so body parts and worldly counterparts are gained. It is important to clarify, therefore, that body specifics are far from being closed matters. Rather in the manner of Deleuze's suspicions surrounding phenomenology, there is a risk of returning to an ontology of division, based this time not on superior cognition or linguistic abilities but on embodied competence (see Callon and Law, 1995, for a review of the means through which speciesism is justified). Such a risk is, however, a problem only when the purpose of social science and of cultural geography remains exclusively analytical (continuing to ask, for example, what a body is, rather than working out what a body can do: see Probyn, 1996: 41). When embodiment is regarded as a practical and ongoing achievement, or even a political/ethical positioning, then we can return to *interaction* – but without a preordained notion of the boundaries that mark the interactants. This is, then, a different sense of interaction than the one that I attributed to landscape tectonics. This is a sense of natural and cultural difference without walls, a way of abandoning the foundational cartographies of autonomous political subjectivities without reducing the world to indifference (see also Whatmore, 1997). This is a possible opening for the deferral of natures which aren't universal, preordained, but which do maintain the capability to be different.

The second implication follows on from this argument. Non-human spaces are unlikely to be circumscribed by human actions (let alone thoughts). Nor do they exist 'out there', waiting to be re-presented in here. A more practical orientation would be to acknowledge that attempts to engage non-human spaces will always be marked by imperfect articulations, and will be matters out of joint. As Latour (2001) has skillfully demonstrated, non-human spaces can become entangled one moment only to develop, through their dynamic sociability, other kinds of spaces in the next. This has been particularly evident in modern industrial-agricultural food landscapes (see Whatmore, 1997) and in the risk landscapes marked by superconductive events (Clark, 1997). In everyday landscape practices, non-humans often object to the stories and roles

that have been set for them (with disastrous results: see Hincliffe, 2001, on the BSE crisis). The challenge for intellectual and political practice has been and will be to learn how to allow non-humans (along with those humans who are more used to being silent objects) to object more frequently in those settings that are not accustomed to other-than-human ingenuity. This, it should be stressed, is not a matter of representation, but is more akin to dialogical engagement (although without the sense that such engagement need necessarily lead to a consensus or agreement: see Mouffe, 2000). Achieving this sensibility requires the looser kind of sensing that was mentioned earlier, a building up of know-how and a learning to be affected.

The final issue is ethics. In landscape movements that have been largely informed by a politics of representation, the aim has often been to bring in the missing masses (the nature, the human labourers) or to reveal the artifice of social power. Environmentalists in particular have been keen in recent years to represent various absentees from landscape contests (including non-humans and the yet to be born). Once represented, the new political subjects can take part (even if remotely and through their spokespeople) in the deliberation over means and ends. Whilst it hasn't been the aim of this chapter to undermine such representational strategies, the argument has started to suggest that a politics of inhabitation may need to realize the limits to (and even what Deleuze called<sup>4</sup> the indignity of) speaking for and of others. This is in part because the complexities of living make such neat spatial encoding of self and other problematic (see Whatmore, 1997). It is also because, as Varela (1999) has made clear, representational politics tends to forget that most of our lived lives are characterized by skilled behaviours and practical ethical expertise rather than abstract ethical deliberations. A similar point is made by Abrams in his careful construction of environmentalist ethics, although a certain piety and sense of primordial nature is retained in this phenomenological excursion. Likewise, as the segmentations of the natural and the social become ever more difficult to sustain, so the idea of drawing up a 'natural contract' becomes more and more difficult to imagine (a problem that Serres' 1995 argument only partially resolves). Taking these points together starts to underline the Deleuzian injunction which is to 'go beyond our social identities and see society as experiment rather than contract' (Rajchman, 2000: 20).

The danger here is that a reasoning, abstract Cartesian subject can disappear only to be replaced by an equally abstract desiring, experimental,

individual (human) ethical agent (see Whatmore, 1997: 40). Such an imagination obscures 'the conditionality of dialogic engagement in terms of the mundane business of living' (1997: 40). It is these landscapes of the living that provide something like the distributed sense of agency, the sense of interrelatedness and partial dependencies, and the more experimental and diagnostic 'arts of connection' which break free from the entrenched cartographies of conventional, bounded, landscapes (territories, neighbourhoods, bodies, regions: see Whatmore, 1997). In this sense, inhabiting landscape requires an experimental geography, which works from landscapes as lived, and seeks to develop progressive forms of inhabitation through practical engagements. In terms of ethics, extension of concern derives from landscape practices and engagements – which, it should be stressed, proceed from the practical skills of landscaping and not from deliberation or the production of universal rules. Thus, 'the very relation of intellectuals to such "movements" or "processes of subjectivizations" must change, passing from a "representational" to an "experimental" role, freeing the "social imagination" from the representation of anything given, prior, original' (Rajchman, 2000: 101).

The trajectory I have taken through tectonics and semiotics to connections has enabled me, on the face of it, to remove a hyphen from the language of nature politics. In actual fact the hyphen is very probably irrelevant. What is important is the shift from a deferral to first nature (or for that matter to second nature), to a deferring and differing of natures. The latter takes us beyond a liberal democratic project of representation. To where is less easy to communicate, although the ordinariness of living with natures suggests that there are more resources for inhabiting the landscapes of nature than we are perhaps prone to recognize. I take it that it is a task for cultural geography to engage with the everyday practices of animal, plant and geophysical natures, with all their geographical complexity, in order to recover what those resources are and how they might be instructive of other possibilities. Without, of course, seeking to have the final word.

## NOTES

Thanks to Sarah Whatmore and my Open University colleagues for providing a number of challenging interventions in the writing of this.

- 1 By geographically and historically specific I don't mean to suggest that the spatiality and temporality of this way of seeing is easily located somewhere or periodized as some time (e.g. the modern period in

- Europe). Indeed, geographies of seeing are rarely so bounded or neat: for an interesting cross- and transcultural approach to seeing landscapes, see Hirsch and O'Hanlon (1995).
- 2 Olwig's 'more substantive understanding of landscape' (1996: 631) is similarly an attractive and rich account of landscape semiotics which provides resources for avoiding a narrow focus on lexical issues, but he doesn't, it seems to me, escape the charges that I have made here. See also Olwig (1993).
  - 3 Rose's warning, cited earlier, that the 'textual metaphor aims to stabilize disruptions and demonstrate learning and sensitivity' (1993: 101) could, it seems to me, just as easily be levelled at the more recent attempts to 'allow for' alterity.
  - 4 Quoted from a conversation with Foucault. Cited in Rajchman (2000: 97).

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