

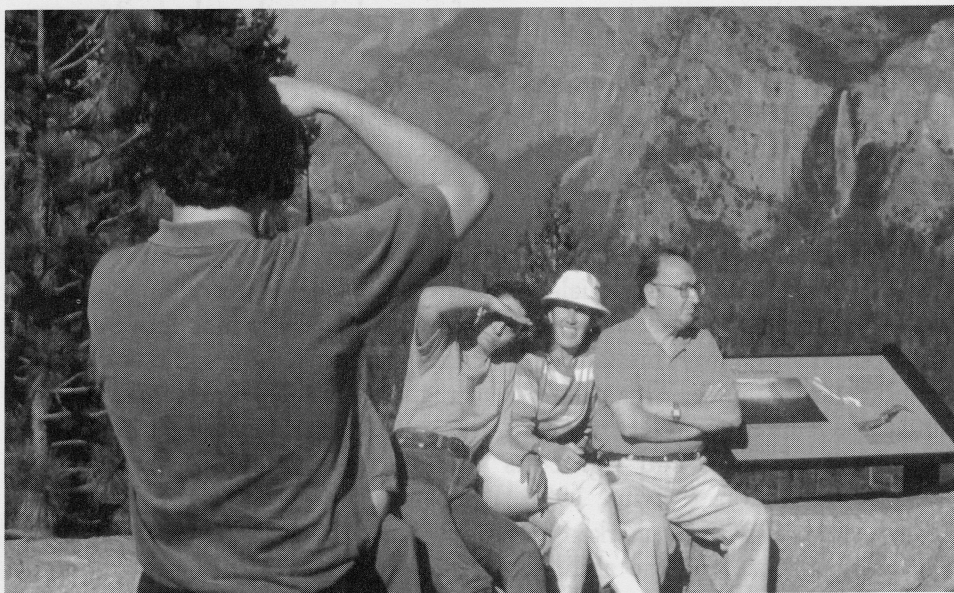
# Moving Towards the Middle in a World of Extremes:

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## Nature and Culture in Historic Landscapes

### Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Our understanding of the relationship between people and the landscape is complex and intricate, often blurred, and at times contradictory. There are many ways to view this relationship, from an anthropological perspective stressing human culture, to an ecological analysis of the pre-eminence of natural systems. As this relationship is considered there is the potential to recognize the ways through which our descriptive and analytical language forms one basis for our understanding of the landscape. In historic landscapes, the issues of nature and culture can be especially burdensome, loading any discussion of analysis and management with questions of authenticity, originality, appropriateness and innovation. The discussion, however, may also address understandings of landscape and language.



Visitors at Yosemite, September 1993. (*Robert Z. Melnick photo*)

Any consideration of issues of nature and culture may well take into account a broad range of analytical constructs, from eco-feminism to landscape ecology. In this paper, a narrow range of ideas are addressed, focusing on three linguistic and landscape frames: semantic ecotones, landscape differentials, and landscape as teacher. The reasons for addressing these three ideas are based upon a desire to recognize the commonalities between language and landscape, not only in the ways we describe places, but in the modes of language which we elect to employ in that description. The idea that landscape is a concept as well as a place is not new. (Appleton, 1975; Rolvaag, 1927.) I would like to suggest that there are additional tools from language which we may consider as we address some challenges of landscape protection and management.

### Frame

Notions of nature and culture are often situated in our language and thought at ends of a spectrum (Blouet and Lawson, 1975; Appleton, 1975; Sauer, 1925), much like the proverbial characterizations of "black and white." At one end of this dialectic lies wilderness and nature; that which is supposedly free from human intervention and influence. This primeval landscape is often viewed as the embodiment of good and righteous thought and action. (Nevius, 1976.) This position is at times marked by a clarity of purpose and the ability to make right that which has been de-

spoiled by civilization. (Thayer, 1994) In its most simplistic terms, nature is the unattainable goal, the home from which we have been cast, the Eden of fallen humanity. In language, "nature" (as will be discussed later) is a difficult word, with multiple meanings. (Williams, 1985)

At the other end of this spectrum lies the power and creativity of culture, that which is created purposefully and decidedly by people. It may be material or non-material culture, but it represents the numerous and often uncatalogued actions of individual people. Culture is often and commonly identified as "high culture," such as fine art, symphony orchestras, and the wisdom of the poet laureate. It might also be considered simply as that which is created by the human hand or mind. Culture, in this construct, is the result of the deliberate act of the rational human, set apart from and above the naked wilderness. (Wilson, 1991) Culture is much like the valued opposing thumb: without it we would not be human, we would merely be animal.

For the purposes of this discussion, it is instructive to consider a point between these two posited extremes. While we have long familiarity with a dualistic model, we are less comfortable in the middle, with what might be termed the "semantic ecotone." Much like its counterpart in ecological systems, the semantic ecotone represents a most fruitful opportunity for diverse and rich consideration of a variety of landscapes. It provides a model for recognizing that

thought, ideas, and actions, much like landscapes, are complex constructions of overlapping layers. These defining world views of nature and culture are most limited when the vision is too narrowly framed. All too often land managing agencies, and those charged with natural and cultural landscape preservation, are invested in a construct which emphasizes the landscape differentials at the expense of commonalties and potentials, and thereby entrenches and polarizes opinion.

The concept of the "semantic ecotone" is purposefully borrowed from the ecological concept of ecotone: the transition zone between two different plant or ecological communities. An ecotone is also a zone characterized by a vagueness of borders and boundaries, and by the potential for both mutual dependence and competition. The purpose of the semantic ecotone concept is to understand that our "zones of thinking," all too often separated by various barriers, may both thrive and seek their strength through competition within another framework.

### **Semantic Ecotones and Oceanic Tidepools**

A metaphor for examining these ideas might be taken from coastal waters: the oceanic tidepool. The tidepool contains organisms which not only thrive both in and out of water, but rely upon the cyclical regularity of the varying tides for nourishment and sustenance. In language, as well as in thought, we may learn

from this concept, so that our understanding of nature and culture in the landscape might benefit from a set of variable conditions, rather than a fixed position. (Bahre, 1991) We could then think, metaphorically, of a landscape as a "tidepool of the mind," ecologically rich and biologically diverse in a variety of settings, rather than limited to solid ground or robust ocean, but never the edge between them. The interest here is not only on richness and diversity, however, but upon the interplay between nature and culture.

This "ecotone" is regularly modified through human interaction with the landscape. The notion that some cultures address land management with a pure heart, while others only willingly destroy them, is grounded in great part upon an overly romantic view of the past. (Cronon, 1983, Silver, 1990). While we may consider the past, for example, as "a foreign country," and while modes of landscape appreciation, perception and alteration were different in the past than they are today, it is the modalities of those actions which mark the differences between past and present. (Lowenthal, 1985) The excessively narrow landscape view that institutionalizes the separation of nature and culture stems not so much from the realities of the landscape, as from a construct, both common and elite, which seeks to maintain an overly simplistic view of nature and culture. Additionally, the desire to reduce complex history to attractive simplicities (Brown, 1994) is common

throughout many avenues of historic re-vision.

In its extreme, this dichotomized construct fails to recognize legitimate management conflicts (such as open stream flow versus historic bridge preservation) between natural and cultural resources while overemphasizing erroneous conflicts (such as meadow protection for drainage and rare species protection.) Additionally, through the legitimization of polar opposites, the construct encourages a version of "landscape violence," an extension of a striking part of the American tendency towards violence which so much pervades our society. The role of violence in American history and throughout American society has been well documented (Brown, 1994). A key feature of this concept is the legal recognition, developed over many years, that Americans have "no duty to retreat," in the face of a threat or attack. This is a dramatic departure from the English common law which is clear on the requirement to move away or retreat from attack, all the way "to the wall" if necessary, prior to using force. (Brown, 1994)

Our attitude towards the landscape may be seen, in part, as an acceptance of the attitude towards violence in American society, and subsequently in the underlying nature/culture conflict which informs our land categorization and management. The idea that these two constructs are in opposition is essentially a violent concept, for it establishes an adversarial relationship

between those who first consider natural systems and those who first consider cultural systems. Additionally, the ability to "strike out" at the landscape, through ill-considered development and poorly regulated environmental controls, results in an inability to gain either time or perspective on circumstances. In turn, this reduces the potential for considerate thought and rational response to difficult situations.

Violence comes in many forms, and it would be ill-considered to suggest that all violence towards the landscape is intentional or necessarily malicious. Violence can be premeditated or accidental. It can be the accidental result of a different intentional path. While the actions may be harmful, sadistic, willful or merely inexcusable errors, the result to the landscape is often the same.

The American acceptance of violence breeds a lack of consideration for the details of a landscape, and a belief that power equals right. This can be seen most readily in the ways in which we build in locations such as overhanging cliffs, floodplains, and hurricane alleys. The power of technology breeds a hubris of violence towards natural forces and landscape elements. Our myths and stories speak of conquering the landscape, and honor those forbears who overcame great odds to establish cities, towns, farms and villages. This is not a nostalgic view of the past, but a recognition that modern technology have enabled us to overcome the limits which had been historically estab-



lished by the landscape. In this common vision, landscape development is rarely seen as an act of violence, but rather an act of courage and perseverance.

The adversarial relationship between people and place is implicit in the way we talk and think about the land, the manner in which we continue to refuse to retreat in the face of reasonable odds, and the associated glorification of the violent vigilantism displayed by continued disregard for natural systems in the American landscape. There are vigilantes on both sides of this argument, and those that spike trees to inhibit logging at any cost are themselves members of what Edward Abbey refers to as the "monkey wrench gang." (Abbey, 1990) The issue is not whether one side is right or wrong. The issue is the acceptance of violence as a reasonable means of action and as a way to settle disputes.

The ways in which we think and speak about landscape, therefore, and our understanding of landscapes, often reflect the ways in which we have come to revere places as much for what they were as for what they are. These reflections are about what exists today in places of supreme natural splendor and wonder, and about the larger and parallel idea that nature the ideal often overshadows nature, the real.

### **Landscape Differentials**

Landscape, of course, is both a word and an ideal. While some see landscape as the embodiment of

simplified national tendencies (Nevius, 1976), it can conversely be understood as place. There is a complex relationship which we hold with the landscape, including the intricacies of nature and culture as they are played out within that relationship, and the manner in which we describe these places. While the intent here is to generalize some of these ideas, the primary vehicle for this discussion will be a view of Yosemite Valley as a landscape of both nature and culture.

As with the idea of a semantic ecotone, the concept of a landscape differential borrows much from a linguistic model. The research tool of the semantic differential is used to encourage or force research respondents to place their views along a marked continuum from one extreme to another. The most commonly used semantic differential is one which asks that the respondent strongly agrees, agrees somewhat, is neutral, doesn't agree, or strongly doesn't agree with a statement or idea. In landscape terms, the implicit acceptance of a differential model has resulted in an attempt to place any specific landscape at an exact point in a conceptual continuum. This has resulted, I believe, in a forced categorization of increasingly integrated landscapes.

Landscapes such as Yosemite Valley are complex systems (Sauer, 1925) of both natural and cultural resources; there are ways to manage these places which recognize not only our current societal needs and intent,

but also the natural and human history of these places. Furthermore, these landscapes are inadequately served when we consider them only within one classification of landscape and resource type.

The flawed dichotomy of nature/culture and the "landscape violence" which it breeds informs the framework for land management. Unlike the landscape itself, however, the management system today is not a synthesis of efforts, and therefore integrated resources are treated separately. This, in turn, breeds a competition for scarce resources as well as public favor, a sort of non-violent violence and mistrust of the views of others. Unless we reconsider our attitude towards landscape resources, the way we describe those resources, and our professional and intellectual boundaries, we will continue to be limited in land management and protection potentials.

One of the more puzzling idiosyncrasies of land management in the United States has been the forced and often illogical categorization of land and resource types into rigid pigeon holes of natural, historic, wilderness, and recreation. As we have learned more about our environment (physical, social, and psychological) there has been an increased role for the "resource specialist" (the caretaker) as well as the "resource enthusiast" (the consumer). We seem to be mired in a view of isolated resources, not in the sense of ignoring our fundamental ecological understanding of natural systems, but rather in our

substantial inability to extend that paradigm to a larger world view which integrates natural and cultural resources. For example, we rely upon legislation to "establish" wilderness, even if people have lived in an area for generations. We somehow need legislation and code to inform us that a place is, or isn't historic.

This dichotomy of land resource management is evident in the history of Yosemite Valley - a history which is as much about landscape control (i.e., culture) as it is about landscape protection (i.e., nature). This history is as much about landscape abuse and violence as it is about landscape use. Yosemite is also one example of the ways in which we think and speak about nature and culture in our public landscapes. The valley has historically been controlled by planning based upon a landscape differential, but with the potential to be understood within a richly diverse semantic ecotone.

Yosemite Valley was first set aside and "reserved" by the State of California in 1864. There has been a great deal written about the Valley and the Mariposa Big Tree Grove and about the battles over Hetch Hetchy and about what has become of this remarkable American wilderness. Scholars and writers such as Alfred Runte (Runte, 1990), Roderick Nash (Nash, 1989), François Matthes (Matthes, 1950), Carl Russell (Russell, 1959) and others (Clark, 1910; Demars, 1991; Foley, 1912; Hutchings, 1886; Orland,

1985) have taught us to understand what Yosemite means to us as a people and as a group of peoples. The photographs of Carleton Watkins, George Fiske, and Ansel Adams, to name a few, have concretely set the landscape of Yosemite in our collective construct of wilderness, westernness, and nature. Along with that other great icon of the American west, Yellowstone, Yosemite has been both revered and criticized, honored and desecrated, attended to and neglected.

Yosemite Valley is not so much the abandoned wilderness, but a landscape which has been gradually modified over time, till it has reached the point that it no longer coincides with its public image. The reality no longer fits the image, but it is a reality which has been changing slowly, not dramatically, over time. This image is based, as Runte points out, on the "art of promotion," from Albert Bierstadt and *Sunset Magazine* to the railroads and the National Park Service itself.

The landscape, as well, is based on divergence of thinking about what is nature and what is culture. Neil Evernden, in his book *The Social Creation of Nature*, observes that "what is nature is the not-human." (Evernden, 1992) Evernden argues that we have created nature, and the idea of nature, as a "resource for humans," in great need of management and control. Equally important to this discussion is the understanding of "nature" as a dual term, describing

both that which is non-human, i.e., the natural world, and that which is the fundamental characteristics of an entity, i.e., the essence of an object or person. We regularly refer to "human nature," never quite realizing that this is a creative juxtaposition of words.

Furthermore, in this line of thinking, "to ask what is the nature of something is to ask about its character or essence," (Evernden, 1992) implying that nature is somehow above, beyond or more supremely delineated than the human characteristics of that same entity. Nature as a place, however, is different. "[T]he domination of nature is not only a right but an obligation: nature is to be overcome, not preserved." (Evernden, 1992) Nature, however, is also about change, and what happens to place. We understand it to imply the dynamic characteristic of a place, and those qualities which cause the place to evolve and change. Finally, nature is a thing, an object, a trophy to be displayed in a showcase. We think of preserving nature by inhibiting change in a place, clearly a contradiction which it is difficult to overcome.

Nature, then, has many forms: characteristic, process, entity, and object. All of these assist in the understanding of Yosemite and the ways in which, since the early 1860s, non-native peoples have altered and modified that landscape, sometimes in the name of protection, but more often in the name of control, dominance, and exploitation.

## Landscape as Teacher

While we have inherently understood, therefore, that nature is to be dominated and placed in our societal trophy rooms, we also inherently understand that nature is the great educator, the great teacher, a source of knowledge about life and its meaning. While filled with contradictions, this notion allows us to revere what we capture, to venerate what we control and to worship that which we subjugate. Given the perverse and often contradictory relationship between people and the American landscape, perhaps there is no other way. In Yi-Fu Tuan's terms, we view nature through the dual lens of "dominance and affection," with a need to both love and control it. (Tuan, 1984)

This idea of nature as educator is not recent, of course. One of the most vivid and common examples comes from the writing of James Fenimore Cooper, the first great American novelist, whose writings were popularly published and circulated. In his famous *Leatherstocking* series, Cooper described his protagonist, Deerslayer, as having the "signs of belonging to those who pass their time between the skirts of civilized society and the boundless forests." While it is clear that Cooper's gender-focused characterization of this society carries other implications, for this discussion it is the heroic descriptions of the man that are of interest. Deerslayer is a man of the woods and of the edge, the ecotone, the frontier between civilization and sav-

agery, who learns from what is around him. As he and a companion approach an especially beautiful and untouched lake (described by Cooper as having "Rembrandt-looking hemlocks"—America's answer to European culture) Deerslayer exclaims: "This is grand!—'tis solemn!—tis an edication of itself, to look upon." (Cooper, 1841)

This is far more than the noble savage, and implicitly better than the "book-learning" of the schoolhouse. The strength of wilderness and nature is clear, not only because it breeds an atavistic nobility, but also because there are lessons that only "nature" can teach. (Deakin, 1967).

Yosemite Valley, as both place and teacher, can be read in the same way. In a concise collection of poems, for example, first published in 1897, Yone Noguchi (Noguchi, 1897) describes the Valley as "the balance of Glory and Decay." Although we may think of Yosemite as an "embattled wilderness," as Runte terms it, it is also a manipulated landscape, molded and shaped as much by human decisions as by natural systems.

Early pamphlets extolling the wonders of Yosemite also reminded potential visitors of the efforts of the federal government in assuring that a visit to this "wilderness" would not be too wild, after all. In 1919, Secretary of the Interior Franklin Lane prefaced a Yosemite guidebook (United States Railroad Administration, 1919) with the following comments:

### **To the American People:**

*Uncle Sam asks you to be his guest. He has prepared for you the choice places of this continent - places of grandeur, beauty and of wonder. He has built roads through the deep-cut canyons and beside happy streams, which will carry you into these places in comfort, and has provided lodgings and food in the most distant and inaccessible places that you might enjoy yourself and realize as little as possible the rigors of the pioneer traveler's life. These are for you. They are the playgrounds of the people. To see them is to make more hearty your affection and admiration for America.*

While Lane and National Park Service Director Mather were experts at promotion and public relations, our interest here is on the understanding that this was (and is) often a landscape to be altered for short-term human enjoyment, satisfaction and pleasure, without the "rigors of the pioneer traveler's life." While this is not an unknown concept (Demars, 1991) recent studies of Yosemite Valley reveal a landscape of both nature and culture, yet one which is popularly revered for its natural splendor, to the almost constant exclusion of human history. The idea that one must choose between nature and culture is reinforced in interpretive displays, visitor services and staff competition for resources and recognition. The organizational and disciplinary structure encourages and

fosters this differential approach.

Currently at Yosemite, there is a some effort to consider the interrelationship between natural and cultural resources, their interaction in producing this landscape, and to affirm the value of the park's cultural landscape resources while also allowing for improved visitor services, interpretation and enjoyment. (Gramann, 1992; Demars, 1991; Sargent, 1975) The essential goals and intentions of the park will not change, and one might anticipate the conflicts between visitor use, resource protection, and management intentions will continue. While there is some hope that the process will seek the "ecotone," there is great resistance to this from all quarters.

In the past fifteen years a method has been developed for understanding cultural landscapes, especially in the American landscape (Land and Community Associates, 1994). This method is partially based upon the linguistic analogy that to understand and appreciate cultural landscapes, we must learn to "read" them, as well as consider the forces which caused them to develop. This process is much like learning to read a language. We recognize patterns, details, ("words"), parts that go together, and pieces that "sound" strange next to each other. We must learn the "grammar" of the landscape, and allow the landscape to be a teacher. This is, of course, not an easy task. We are accustomed to looking at historic structures and understanding their importance and potential signif-

icance. Cultural landscapes, however, are more subtle than structures, and require a somewhat different approach. As a visibly dynamic entity, the landscape, (natural and cultural) is best understood by an analytical system which responds to the changing details of that landscape.

### **A View of Yosemite Valley**

There are many prominent natural features of Yosemite which serve to explain its cultural prominence as a natural landscape, as well as our natural inclination to downplay its history. (Geological Survey of California, 1869) Formed by alpine glaciers moving through the Merced River canyon, the U-shaped Yosemite Valley, sometimes called the "Incomparable Valley," is one of the world's best known glacier-carved canyons. (Matthes, 1950)

Its broad, flat floor; steep, sheer granite walls and domes; lush, green meadows; and spectacular waterfalls are familiar scenes well-documented in literature, painting, and photography. The Merced and its tributaries wind their way through the valley floor, waterfalls continue to marvel in their power and variety, and wetlands provide wildlife habitat as well as seasonal wildflower displays.

Major geological features [such as El Capitan, (3593 feet), Half Dome, (8842 feet), and Sentinel Rock (7038 feet)] dominate many Valley views and present an imposing facade of natural strength and fortitude. (Hall, 1921) The first non-native peoples to see this valley were awed by its sheer

magnitude, as it was unlike any thing they, or any of their colleagues, had seen before. (Russell, 1959; Matthes, 1950)

Valley vegetation occurs in alternating patterns of open meadowland and dense groves of trees that create a series of landscape spaces. From dark, dense forests to open spaces with long, dramatic views, the character of the Valley is heavily influenced by vegetation. The relationship of forest and meadowland is dynamic, however, and subject to changes wrought by seasonal and annual fluctuations in available moisture, catastrophic weather, pedestrian and vehicular traffic patterns, and National Park Service maintenance programs, such as clearing and planting programs. (Hill, 1916)

The eleven meadows comprise one of the most sensitive ecosystems in the Valley. Over the years, human alteration to the natural channel of the Merced have lowered the water table and changed the composition of the vegetation in the meadows. Intentional introduction of non-native species has had an adverse impact on native plant materials. The landscape of the meadows, far less dramatic than that of El Capitan and Half Dome, was readily sacrificed in the name of flood control which was necessary to protect human features. The "wilderness" landscape was modified, and then modified again to protect the previous investments.

Over the years the National Park

Service has attempted to control the natural lateral movement of the Merced River channel by deepening, widening, or rechannelizing flow. These attempts were motivated by the desire to protect investment in bridges and other structures in developed areas. Current degradation of adjacent vegetation has made it abundantly clear that these programs have been detrimental to the environment, and there is now discussion of allowing the Merced to return to its natural configuration. This, of course, could have profound implications for this landscape—implications which have not yet been adequately addressed.

We cling to the understanding that this is a landscape to be used, and not always protected for its natural values. The valley is not a landscape of seclusion, nor one of gradual and incremental rejuvenation. Through its multiple uses, inspired by the intense needs of so many visitors so far from other vestiges of western civilization, Yosemite valley has become what in any other setting we would term "urbanized." Thus, the valley is a landscape of broad differentials.

Controlled views and vistas are critical to the average visitor experience, and, as with many other aspects of Yosemite, through the years the experience has been set, programmed and controlled. At one time Kodak engaged in tree cutting, clearing and trimming (with the active consent of National Park Service) to ensure that classic photo opportunities would always be available. The

landscape of Bierstadt and Adams can now be personally reproduced and displayed in photo albums, slide shows, and home videos along with images of other great California icons.

The notion of interpretation—actively showing and engaging the visitor with what they are seeing so that they may better appreciate it—is fundamental to the experience of this landscape. Throughout the Valley, views to supreme natural wonders are carefully framed, described and made available to the visitor. (U.S. Department of the Interior, 1931; Stornoway, 1888) While nature is something to behold, especially here, it is also a prize to be captured - and then revealed again and again as a trophy in the profound comfort of one's home. More than anything, the idea that we "take" pictures has a special meaning in this landscape. It reflects the profound need to mark ourselves in this space, so that we may be sure, and so that others may be sure, that we were actually here. The marking of oneself in a special place, not through writing or poetry or memories in our minds, but through the taking of photos, is one of the great sports of our century. It is the fox hunt of civilized America, with a reward which proves to all that we have been "here." Nature becomes culture in this valley. (Orsi, 1993)

The landscape of Yosemite, like so many landscapes of the North American continent, (Malin, 1984; O'Brien, 1984) is neither the wilderness which we seek, nor the city



which we so often fear. For many, it has become the point of quest - the place to meet a personal, societal, and natural history. While the National Parks, both ideal and real, are a major contribution to the democratization of the American landscape, they nonetheless allow us to push aside some broader questions. For example, Yosemite, both ideal and real, absorbs a great many pressures. There are the pressures of the visitor, the pressures of the experts, the pressures of politics, the pressures of our collective consciousness which repeatedly says that this is a place which must be available to anyone who wants to come to it, but must also be protected for all of those who would come here in the future. In many ways, this is a Herculean task which we have set for ourselves. Most importantly, this valley must withstand the pressures of differential extremes that are imposed upon it in the guise of caring.

Yosemite, and all of the National Parks, must respond not only to the immediate pressures and needs of its clients and taskmasters, but also to the larger societal realities of population expansion and the increased popularity of nature as an idea. This concept of nature as an artifact to be viewed and extracted sets in motion the perceived imperative to protect Yosemite as an imagined wilderness, forgetting the true reality of the complex past of the American west. (Limerick, 1987) If, after all, it is just another place to spend time in a swimming pool, why come here? If it

is, after all, just another place to sit at a picnic table, why spend the time and effort to arrive here? If it is, after all, just one more traffic jam, why bother?

One answer perhaps lie in our need and desire to get close to nature, but only so close; to leave behind the comforts of our home, but only so far behind. (Wilson, 1922; Worster, 1993) The on-going dialogue between nature and culture is evident not only in the history of the American landscape, as reflected in Yosemite, but in its present as well; a present which raises great concerns for the future of this landscape. As the national parks of the nineteenth century were seen by some as lessons for our society, perhaps it is still true today. The confusion, over-burden, and intense focus on Yosemite and all of the national parks and our public landscapes raise substantial issues about the collective ways in which we treat the places we revere. As Alfred Runte reminds us: "Yosemite is too important to be just another place." We may think about it, however, as an indicator species, revealing both our past opportunities, our recent foibles, and the future of our mistakes.

### Conclusion

How then do we reconcile the unrelenting need to protect natural systems with the impulse to transform them into human systems? Perhaps, we achieve this through an inclusive view that nature and culture are, in fact, not merely "two sides of the

same coin." Rather, we need to engage in non-linear and cyclical modes of thinking about nature, culture, and landscape. This is a complex relationship, one which is best understood through clarification, rather than through simplification.

As with an ecological ecotone, a semantic ecotone enables us to look beyond the limited values of a singular view (or landscape type) towards an understanding of temporal and resource based changes in both the virtual and actual landscape. The intensely felt need to stake our landscape views at different ends of the linguistic and managerial spectrum (or even the view that there is a spectrum) is ultimately harmful to the larger goal of landscape sustainability, whether we are grounded in a natural or a cultural perspective. At some level, of course, the concept of the semantic ecotone must address the reality of different "species" competing for the same geography and resources. Diversity can result in its own degree of competition.

Land managers and design professionals, through need, professional impulse, or codified expectations, have come to rely upon narrowly de-

fined understandings of landscape values. There is the opportunity, however, to recognize that a broader and more complex understanding of these values will, in turn, support a richer and more satisfying process for determining and protecting landscape values. In Yosemite valley this would mean, for example, a policy which allows for the inclusive management of the valley meadows. This policy might recognize that the meadows are landscapes of both natural (hydrologic) and cultural (native American) significance. Rather than the competitive management which now presides, this landscape could be treated as an integrated and dynamic whole.

In any study of the landscape, we can recognize that it has always been the "garden" which has had as its subject the relationship between nature and culture.<sup>2</sup> If we recognize "landscape," therefore, as the integrating force for nature and culture, we will then present ourselves with the opportunity to move beyond the staked positions at extremes of a landscape differential and towards the inclusive and dynamic ground of the semantic ecotone.

### Endnotes

- 1 The author extends thanks to Kenneth Helphand and Polly Welch, University of Oregon, and Simon Swaffield, Lincoln University (New Zealand) for their careful reading of previous drafts of this article, and their especially insightful and helpful comments.
- 2 Thanks to Kenneth Helphand for this concept.

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**Robert Z. Melnick, FASLA, Professor of Landscape Architecture and Interim Dean, School of Architecture and Allied Arts, University of Oregon, Eugene.**