

Technology Available to Solve Landscape Problems— Session A: Descriptive Approaches

Seeing Desert as Wilderness and as Landscape-An Exercise in Visual Thinking¹

JOHN OPIE^{2/}

Abstract: Based on the components and program of VRVA (Visual Resources Values Assessment), a behavioral history of the visitor's perception of the American desert is examined. Emphasis is placed upon contrasts between traditional eastern "garden-park" viewpoints and contemporary desert scenery experiences. Special attention is given to the influence of John Wesley Powell's writings and the art of Georgia O'Keeffe. The specific region examined is Canyonlands.

One of the most important new commitments of contemporary society has been toward environmental quality. Landscape planning, assessment and impact statements have become decisive aspects of environmental preservation, conservation and development, based on the influence of public opinion, special interest groups, government agencies and legal statutes. These new circumstances have also meant an enormous growth in the need for information, more or less precise, about landscape aesthetics, including the visual resource. But such reports have often been of poor quality or limited usefulness, based upon outdated, irrelevant, or excessively narrow data. Major historic preconceptions which control landscape values are rarely considered. Analysis of written descriptions, illustrations, paintings and photography are rarely given much credibility. Contemporary viewpoints of scenic landscape by the general public are played down for the sake of professional evaluations which may miss the mark entirely. One difficulty is that aesthetic and value information is difficult to quantify. Another difficulty is the lack of significant normative guidelines and hence a lack of pragmatically useful information.

This is not the place to develop abstract theories of landscape values, or to review the extensive (and excellent) visual landscape

assessment literature from England and the Continent. The task of this essay is to explore the essential historic, cultural, and social presuppositions of the modern traveller, tourist, or vacationer. The needs of permanent residents and the profit-motive of the businessman are another subject. Our attention is focussed on the visitor who experiences the desert, notably the Canyonlands region, as a temporary interlude intentionally different from his usual environs.

The following outline seeks to organize complex visual subjects into a manageable and interpreted framework. Nevertheless, in this reduction the landscape-observer interaction must not be ignored. Nor can the immeasurable and often-subjective nature of values assessment be denied. This outline is proposed to encourage further disciplined enquiry, analysis, criticism and review in order to shape a viable program for a visual resources values assessment.

PRELIMINARY OUTLINE

VISUAL RESOURCES VALUES ASSESSMENT:

A structural analysis of the visual experience of American landscape

Equation: Physical Environment + Behavioral Environment = Perceptual Environment

Behavioral Environment
cultural tradition
historical development
natural history
social patterns

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^{2/} Editor, Environmental Review; Professor of History, Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, Pa.

technological innovations and limits
information processing capability
economic conditions
political interfaces

Physical Environment (components)

space/scale
observer position
form
climate
light
color
vegetation
wildlife
archaeological, historic, culture sites
existing human impact

Physical Environment (dynamics)

dimensions
 2-D (picture plane)
 3-D (space perceived)
 4-D (observer motion in space)
sequence
 vertical/horizontal
 inner/outer
order/zone
 panoramic
 feature
 enclosing
 focal
 detail

Perceptual Environment (Physical + Behavioral)

controls
 uniqueness
 naturalness
 environmental quality
 land-use priorities
 land-use compatibility
 hazard level
 limits on intrusions
 controls on disruptions
impact framework (dialectical tensions)
 nature/man
 nature/culture
 beauty/ugliness
 aesthetics/economics
 rarity/abundance
 elitist/public
 public/private
policy guidelines (management decisions)
 project description
 definition of clientele
 accessibility
 land-use activities
 available technology
 type and quality of intrusions
 jurisdictional authority
 fiscal resources
 externalities

The unique desert of southern Utah and northern Arizona, notably Canyonlands, is used

here as a sample region to explore VRVA as a useful framework. In other words, Canyonlands will act as an informal case study for the suitability of certain components for values assessment. To make the case study as productive as possible, two highly suggestive control exercises will not be abstract, but historic and concrete--traditional view of desert regions; and historic descriptions of American scenery which travellers find visually desirable, interesting, or aesthetically pleasing. Limits of space make the following narrative description highly selective and obviously incomplete.

NARRATIVE

Unlike most other geographic zones, the legendary image of desert is an environment utterly hostile to human settlement and development. This strong antipathy is not mere fable. Mankind emerged in subtropical regions, while a desert can be defined as an arid zone of high heat, intense sunlight and radiation, and low humidity, perhaps as little as six inches of rain a year. Summer temperatures reach 120°F and nights can be uncomfortably cold. Desert soils are often highly alkaline, not prone to agriculture even if water were available. Vegetation and animal life are more scarce than in humid regions. Giving little direct support for human life, deserts are known for their "terrible indifference to man" (Tetsuro 1943, Shepard 1967). There is a profound consciousness that "this wide extent of hopeless sterility" is a world not easily domesticated by man. It is among "the presently uncomfortable empty places," parts of the world literally off the map of any geography of human habitation. Psychologically, it was believed that entering the desert courted not only death, but also madness and the dissolution of one's being in a primeval chaos which was best left alone and unknown. What if, during the era of discovery, North America's Atlantic coast had been a desert? The physical and psychological problems of inland penetration and survival would have been insuperable.

American painters, who influenced so many of our notions of pleasant scenery, historically disliked desert regions. In 1835 the romantic landscapist Thomas Cole said every landscape without water was defective. A modern painter said it took him a long time to adjust his work to the desert: the land impressed him as vast, empty and paralyzing, with only four or five colors (Gussow n.d.). Georgia O'Keeffe, master at evoking the sense of the desert, observed while "a flower touches every heart, a red hill in the Badlands, with the grass gone, doesn't" (O'Keeffe 1976). In contrast, the Canyonlands

painter, Harold Bruder, a New England man, wrote in the 1960's: "I don't like New England. I don't like green mountains. I don't feel like painting them and I don't respond to green landscapes. I like desert, I like rocks, and I like the sense of the West. I can smell the air, feel the vast open sky....There are things you've got to go to the edge of--an abyss--and look in, and the thing opens up. What I try to get in the paintings is a quality of discovery" (Gussow n.d.).

To the earliest settlers and frontiersmen, the visual experience of the eastern United States presented a familiar and even friendly aspect. Like Europe, it was heavily-forested, with occasional open spaces, with natural entries through seacoast bays and river valleys, and with a temperate climate. For a millenium European civilization had been carved out of such an ecologically benign region. Biblical and classical traditions had already explained paradise in pastoral and agrarian terms (Glacken 1967). Later, in America, Crevecoeur and Jefferson would heap praises upon the yeoman farmer, identified as the typical American. He cleared out the wilderness, established the rural landscape, and ordered the land. Early travellers like William Bartram and Timothy Dwight informed Americans of the virtues of the domestic landscape. This would be turned into a visual aesthetic by transcendentalists like Emerson, Thoreau, Cole and Durand (Huth 1957, Conron 1974, Marx 1964).

Hence, in the early nineteenth century, when the American traveller began to visit his own land, he did not seek out rugged and uncleared places. The dominant biblical tradition told him that wilderness areas, notably desert regions, were places of primeval chaos. The cursed place, Sinai, had to be avoided and the promised land, Israel, entered. Desert was the dreaded zone of evil, meaninglessness and the victory of nature over man. Instead the early tourist looked for satisfaction in cultivated land, where man could be seen as "the immortal co-worker with God" (Shepard 1967). By the 1920's, the European visitor, Count Keyserling, described a Kansas landscape as near-perfect because it was the most fully-exploited place he had ever seen. The farmland of fabled Middle America stood out as the ideal visual image (Schmitt 1969).

The difference would not only be between loamy farmland and the western desert, but also between landscape and wilderness. Wilderness was defined as any place uninhabitable, impenetrable, barren and unfarmable, such as ocean, forest, mountain and desert. Landscape was any place habitable, fruitful, civilized, arranged and shaped by man, such as an oasis-like meadow or pasture, symbolizing harmony, serenity

and safety (Conron 1974, Stilgoe 1978).

These viewpoints involved a long visual history involving the simultaneous development of travel for pleasure, nature painting and the use of leisure time. Dutch painting in the seventeenth century portrayed the small, self-sufficient farm scene--a cluster of houses circled by fields and woodlots. This was a civilized space--a landscape--devoted to plowing, sowing, harvesting and husbandry. This would be followed by Gainsborough, Turner and eventually the French Impressionists (Shepard 1967). For most of American history, our artists were unabashedly nature-romantics, including Thomas Cole, Martin Johnson Heade, Frederick Edwin Church, Thomas Moran and the transplanted Albert Bierstadt. In 1905 the painter Worthington Whittredge (McShine 1976) wrote about the poverty of true landscape in America; we had too much wilderness. "I was in despair...The forest was mass of decaying logs and tangled brush wood, no peasants to pick up every vestige of fallen sticks to burn in their miserable huts, no well-ordered forests, nothing but the primitive woods with their solemn silence reigning everywhere" (fig. 1).*

The landscapes invented in these paintings, as well as popular travel narratives, taught the prospective tourist what he wanted to see, and where to see it. The tourist was encouraged by idealized paintings and topographical pictures to seek out the same picturesque materials in the landscape itself. This packaging of the visual experience may have reached a self-caricature with the picturesque, literally the scenery framed into pictures. William Gilpin turned Americans to a search for visual effects in pictorial places. These included rustic bridges, old oak trees, classic ruins, rugged rocks and the strong interplay of light and shade (Conron 1974).

The artist and writer, and after 1850 the photographer, selected significant details of the environment and out of them synthesized a highly-interpreted panorama. Looking at the desert and looking at a painting of the desert involved a feedback system, "a circle of constant comparison, discovery, and modification." The test of the traveller's vista was its success as a work of art. Today's traveller in his automobile comes upon the scenic turnout or viewpoint, already chosen for his benefit.

Eventually the barren desert did gain traveller's interest (Powell 1379). The route was somewhat circuituous. American vacationers

*See color illustration on page 387.

soon sought novelty in their scenery. Natural historians like Bartram and Jefferson had already imagined a kind of wild garden, divinely maintained, in a forest or mountain valley. Paradise moved westward with the discovery of natural or wilderness parks. According to Gilpin, a park included scattered trees in a grassland lawn, with winding streams connecting alpine lakes (Conron 1974, Fine 1972). In Canyonlands today an oasis of green is called, significantly, Chesler Park. Soon interpreters made a distinction between the traditional eastern rural landscape and wilderness parks; the former were merely beautiful while the latter were sublime. Americans tested potentially sublime places by Burke's 1756 features: power, obscurity, privation, vastness, sense of infinity, difficulty of access and magnificence. Far-off untamed places, beginning with Niagara Falls and later with Yosemite and Yellowstone, became the new shrines of the American tourist; the parks blended together personal, national, historic, primitive and religious needs. A visit to a wilderness park made "marks on the mind" (Nash 1973, Worster 1977).

Under these changing circumstances, curiosity arose about America's western desert regions. The traditional "forbidden ground" became visually accessible through paintings and narratives long before it was physically accessible to the public. The earlier image of a hostile zone was now covered over with an alternate biblical tradition of retreat into the desert for spiritual renewal. Desert became the "environment of revelation," the archetype of "sacred space" (Eliade 1957, Douglas 1973). Symbolizing purity and timelessness, the western desert became America's Holy Land. Today the landscape historian, John Brinkerhoff Jackson, describes "an existential landscape--without absolutes, without prototypes, devoted to change and mobility" for modern technological man. In contrast, Paul Shepard speaks of a multipath desert awareness, involving "power and omniscience of an ultimate and final presence," and "a sudden, awful awareness of self in space and time" (Shepard 1967). In this light, zones of absolutes and prototypes as Americans search for certainty in a world of flux and change. In 1928 the painter John Marin wrote: "Seems to me the true artist must perforce go from time to time to the elemental big forms--Sky, Sea, Mountain, Plain,--...to sort of nature himself up, to recharge the battery. For these big forms have everything". (McShine 1976). And Robert Rosenblum in 1976 argued that the new generation of painters "would have to leave the realm of paint and canvas and move to the land itself, precisely to what is left of those remote, still pristine regions of Nevada, Arizona, Utah, or California, which for the 1960's and 1970's are the equivalent of the unspoiled

American wilderness that inspired a Cole or a Church" (McShine 1976).



Figure 2--Physiographic map of Canyonlands (Reisz 1957)

Among the inaccessible desert regions of America, the least reachable until recently was Canyonlands, covering large areas of southeast Utah and northern Arizona. Even today a place called "the Maze" seems to defy investigation (Brooks 1964). The first reports heard in the east about this region were not favorable. By the 1830's the occasional trapper or trader spoke of mountains "heaped together in the greatest disorder," or he crossed the area but didn't find anything worthwhile to say (Huth 1957). But by 1858 a Lieutenant Ives, leading his expedition along the South Rim of the Grand Canyon, was captivated by the "strange sublimity of the region." He wrote of "wondering delight, surveying the stupendous formation... till the deep azure blue faded into light of cerulean tint that blended with the dome of the Heavens" (Huth 1957). Ives's words indicated clearly identifiable and sophisticated visual appreciation. John Wesley Powell provoked more interest by his remarkable journeys in 1871 down the Colorado River entirely through Canyonlands, and his equally spectacular reports in 1874 and 1875 to Scribner's Magazine (Stegner 1954). Powell's popularity depended upon his satisfying specific public expectations about natural beauty and scenic value, and his purple prose fulfilled these expectations. "Stand at some point on the brink of the Grand Canyon where you can overlook the river, and the details of the structure, the vast labyrinth of gorges of which it is composed, are scarcely noticed; the elements are lost in the grand effect, and a broad, deep, flaring gorge of many colors is seen. But stand down among these gorges and

the landscape seems to be composed of huge vertical elements of wonderful form. Above, it is an open, sunny gorge; below, it is deep and gloomy. Above it is a chasm; below, it is a stairway from gloom to heaven: (Powell 1957, Conron 1974). The region was not physically accessible to the traveller until the Santa Fe railroad reached the South Rim in 1901 and the Union Pacific snaked into southern Utah in the 1920's (Hollon 1966). It can also be argued that Canyonlands came into its own as a visual experience with the invention of Kodachrome color film in the mid-1930's.

John Wesley Powell in particular used words to spin a visual web which even today dominates the visitor's perspective on the canyon region. He was unabashedly romantic and quasi-religious, portraying a mix of reality and unreality in the area (Krutch 1958). Powell's writings also epitomized the American traditional quest for concrete representations of ephemeral ideals. "The reflected heat from the glaring surface produces a curious motion of the atmosphere; little currents are generated, and the whole seems to be trembling and moving about in many directions Plains, hills, and cliffs and distant mountains seem vaguely to be floating about in a trembling wave-rocked sea, and patches of landscape will seem to float away, and be lost, and then reappear" (Powell 1957, Conron 1974). Simultaneously, Thomas Moran's canvases incarnated Powell's prose (Figure 3*).

Later, in the 1960's, Eliot Porter's classic requiem for the dam-drowned region, The Place No One Knew: Glen Canyon on the Colorado (Porter 1967) would claim a similar perspective. This would be followed in 1971 by the text of Edward Abbey and photographs of Philip Hyde in Slickrock (Abbey & Hyde 1971), which was a conscious attempt to influence public perceptions of the area. A very similar view was adopted by the Japanese photographer, Yoshikazu Shiradawa, whose Eternal America in 1975 is dominated by Canyonlands. Shirakawa's experience involved his "rediscovery of the earth" (Shirakawa 1975).

What are distinctive visual components of this desert experience (Smardon 1977)? Most of this essay has centered on the visual stereotypes which desert observers carry with them. And we have looked at the controlling power these stereotypes can have over us. It is equally important to look at the external forces which contribute to the visual experience. In 1935 the artist Maxfield Parrish wrote, "What is meant is ... those qualities which delight us

in nature--the sense of freedom, pure air and light, the magic of distance, and the saturated beauty of color" (Gussow n.d., McShine 1976).

Sky (aspect of VRVA space/scale). In 1835 Thomas Cole spoke of the sky as "the soul of all scenery... the fountain of light, and shade and color. Whatever expression the sky takes, the features of the landscape are affected in unison." In 1843 Emerson wrote, "The sky is the daily bread of the eyes." And in 1852 Thoreau described different skies in terms of different kinds of wine (McShine 1976). Eastern visitors find the desert sky almost an exaggeration. The eastern sky is perceived, if at all, through a jumble of branches and leaves, filtered by the perpetual haze of high moisture (and pollution) and often heavy with clouds. It forms an indistinct and distant background to close- and middle-distance objects. It may not be seen at all, a matter of indifference. In contrast, the illumination, weather conditions, clouds and figure-ground relationships of desert sky make it pre-eminent. It is seen unobstructed and becomes an experience both encircling and infinite. In 1962 Barnett Newman, a painter, wrote, "For me space is where I can feel all four horizons, not just the horizon in front of me and in back of me because then the experience of space exists only in volume" (McShine 1976). Sun, clouds, moon and stars seem more ideal than real. Landforms, trees and human beings seem to contract as the field of view expands. Not framed by windows, leaves, or branches, the objects of the desert are observed in the open and seem reduced in size and importance. Powell writes, "The heavens constitute a portion of the facade and mount into a vast dome from wall to wall.... clouds creep out of canyons and wind into other canyons. The heavens seem to be alive, not moving as move the heavens over a plain, in one direction with the wind, but following the multiplied courses of these gorges.... In the imagination the clouds belong to the sky, and when they are in the canyon the skies come down into the gorges and cling to the cliffs and lift them up to immeasurable heights ... Thus they lend infinity to the walls" (Conron 1974).

Landforms. In 1976 Georgia O'Keefe said, "The black rocks from the road to the Glen Canyon dam seem to have become a symbol to me--of the wideness and wonder of the sky and the world. They have lain there for a long time with the sun and wind and the blowing sand making them into something that is precious to the eye and hand--to find with excitement, to treasure and love." (Figure 4*) Bold angular shapes of erosion form the scenery of Canyonlands for visitors. It

*See color illustration on page 387.

is profoundly a world not made by man, a metaphysical stage set for superhuman events. In Colorado an old tourist site is called Garden of the Gods. The experience is like being present at a primeval moment before the creation. One stands under the encircling sky, in a bold, empty, simple, silent, and yet real terrain, at the center of a theophany (Eliade 1975). The shapes are aesthetically abstract and lend themselves to human interpretation. Canyonlands landforms have been, from the earliest days, interpreted as monumental architecture akin to the pyramids of Egypt, Stonehenge, or the figures of Easter Island. Powell took to temples, and named sites Isis, Buddha, Brahma, Zoroaster, Walhalla and Deva. For Americans, without a classical past, but hankering for one, the forms became America's ancient ruins out of a legendary past. In the 1830's, Thomas Cole had written, "We feel the want of associations such as cling to scenes in the old world. Simple nature is not quite sufficient. We want human interest, incident, and action, to render the effect of the landscape complete" (Zevi 1957, Shepard 1967). Much attention was given to the discovery of natural "ruins."

Color. Powell's journal entry for June 7, 1869, concludes: "This evening, as I write, the sun is going down, and the shadows are settling in the canyon. The vermilion gleams and roseate hues, blending with the green and gray tints, are slowly changing to somber brown above and black shadows are creeping over them below; and now it is a dark portal to a region of gloom--the gateway through which we are to enter on our voyage of exploration tomorrow. What shall we find?" (Powell 1957). The most unanticipated feature of Canyonlands may be the extraordinary colors. New meaning is given to terms like color feeling, color weight, color intensity. After living with the shadings of greens, browns, blacks of a world filled with plants and soils, the strong reds, oranges, yellows, together with blue and azure in the sky, are new experiences. It is as if the age and varnish were removed, as when apparently gloomy Dutch masterpieces are brightly revived by the restorer's hand, and the original vivid colors the artist intended are recovered. It is an ontological discovery. We say, "So that's what the world is really like!" Eastern fecund scenery was appreciated at the same time of the appearance of the Claude Glass--low-toned pocket mirrors which not only were used to frame a scene, but to darken it to look like a dirty, heavily-varnished Rembrandt before the vivid colors were recovered (Shepard 1967). Color vision and color memory have also been greatly enhanced by the invention of color film in the 1930's. The impact of this new medium has not been adequately explored.

Soil-less/Lack of Vegetation. For most American travellers, important visual signals are missing in the psychologically alien desert--a hazy horizon and sky forming a background to the close maze of branches and leaves along the Appalachian Trail in the Blue Ridge or Great Smokies, grassy loamy soil underfoot and soft air. It is difficult to use the old visual habits and old sense of perspective here; the desert is sensorily austere. Here is a region which flaunts its lack of vegetation. Georgia O'Keeffe uses bones and skulls as metaphors for the soilless, treeless land; both are down to irreducible basics. (Figure 5*) The masks and costumes are off. She once said, "Dirt resists you. It's very hard to make the earth your own" (O'Keeffe 1976, McShine 1976). In 1965 Andrew Wyeth wrote, "I prefer ... when you feel the bone structure in the landscape--the loneliness of it.... Something waits beneath it--the whole story doesn't show" (McShine 1976, Gussow n.d.). In Canyonlands prosaic ground cover is removed as nowhere else, and one is allowed to see the real stuff of eternal America. It is as if we suddenly know too much, as in a religious revelation. We do not expect clarification from a place so boundless and empty, devoid of comforting visual signals. Life is intensely acute when it is experienced without any mediation or gradual awareness. The desert, lacking a mediating cover, is a place of purgation, chastity and discipline.

Geology. The French historian, Fernand Braudel, when he looked for the long-range forces controlling human affairs, spoke of historical "structures" (Braudel 1966, 1972). These structures included climate and terrain as Braudel sought to emphasize the power of natural forces upon man. American history is said to be too brief to include Braudel's structures, but their presence appears in the desert, a virtual embodiment of the geological roots of American existence. Even the history of tourism, and its dependence upon the garden-park visual experience, involves the appropriation of geological knowledge. In the middle of the last century, fixed biblical time was replaced by primordial time. In the desert this geological world is unburdened by soil or ground cover, the structuralist world of unbelievably slow rhythms is open to view. The dimension of space is penetrated by the dimension of time. As Braudel argues, fleeting human events, even the spans of civilizations, are a temporary efflorescence compared to the tempo of the rocks. In Canyonlands, one has a sense of being "present at the creation," and at the end of time, and all ages in between. Powell combines biblical and geological imagery in his description of canyon rock formations: "Let us call this formation the variegated quart-

*See color illustration on page 387.

site...Let this formation be called the cliff sandstone... .Let it be called the red wall limestone..." (Conron 1974). Canyonlands becomes a metaphor for the eternal and the infinite. This is a rare experience in our abbreviated national history.

In the above, attention to Canyonlands features has hardly been tapped. Space does not allow a further extension of this narrative.

Tourism, beginning with ancient and medieval origins, is a pilgrimage into the extraordinary, away from ordinary visual experiences (Shepard 1967). Historically, the common foundation for tourism in America was learning natural history and exploring strange places, with the hope of renewal or healing. The idea of the vacation as a general restorative from mundane and hectic daily existence drew in-creasing numbers to nature, which was understood to be therapeutic. Soon, as conveniences arose, travel in and of itself was supposed to be pleasureable. Tourism was an ideal way to use the new leisure time because of its educational and redeeming qualities.

Yet the naturalist-interpreter of a park or monument finds himself repeatedly responding to the boredom of the tourist, who begins to see his vacation as publicly expensive and privately monotonous. Today's tourist has trouble keeping busy, and seeks to keep his days filled with entertainments and recreation likely to be unconnected with the visual potential around him. His awareness is clogged by anticipation and anxiety, and he is disappointed. The visitor's disappointment may be the result of limited, scanty, or inappropriate anticipation. I suspect the vacationer seeks one particular phenomenon as part of a holiday fantasy--to experience a kind of rapture, arousal of primeval feelings and transports of the imagination. The desert is a region off the map for most tourists, with their visual baggage tied to the garden park. This absence of recognizable landmarks means encounter with a truly alien wilderness. This getting lost involves an acute visual disorientation leading to the experience of being out-of-control. The potential rapture or transports which result is a major theme of Edward Abbey's narratives about the desert (Abbey 1960, 1977).

We habitually bind ourselves to routine visual patterns. We are in danger of seeing only a world of labels which stereotype our visual worlds. We repeatedly invent the same landscapes (Lowenthal & Bowden 1976, Watts 1975). We have also looked at the visual innocence of the American traveller in the sense that he does not recognize his visual traditions. We have also looked at his lack of conscious visual techniques to the extent that his visual

responses to new scenery are largely naive and unconscious. One must admit the virtues of spontaneity and yet management of the visual landscape implies teaching the visitor not only content but technique.

We are enquiring into the question of human access to the physical facts of a landscape. Simultaneously, the landscape is the concrete embodiment of a person's (nation's) habits, needs, values and ideals. Georgia O'Keeffe said that the world of shapes and colors makes more definite and enduring statements than does the world of words (O'Keeffe 1976). The landscape historian John Conron argues that when a traveller encounters an extraordinary place, "we are awed, not informed ...we settle for celebrating the sheer amazing fact that this wondrous thing is self-sufficiently there before us" (Conron 1974). Space, more than time, roots the American experience; space is the central fact of American history.

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