1 Market, Place, and Landscape

"The other ambassadors warn me of famines, extortions, conspiracies, or else they inform me of newly discovered turquoise mines, advantageous prices in marten furs, suggestions for supplying damascened blades. And you?" the Great Khan asked Polo, "you return from lands equally distant and you can tell me only the thoughts that come to a man who sits on his doorstep at evening to enjoy the cool air. What is the use, then, of all your traveling?"

ITALO CALVINO, *Invisible Cities*

Great social transformations mark both an end and a beginning. In the structural changes of the past twenty years, Americans have struggled to define which elements of their lives have been destroyed forever and which are in the process of being created. Swiftly fading from mind are the industrial prosperity that was guaranteed by U.S. dominance in the world economy and a shared middle-class way of life that was accessible by work and skill. In their place rise alternate images of great wealth, insecurity, and fragmentation.

Few towns write to Pope John Paul II, as Waverly, New York, did, to bless their application for designation as an economic development zone. And only a small number of cities—Chicago, New Bedford, Yonkers—have tried to use the legal system to force companies to keep plants open. More often assembly-line workers at GM in Detroit and Apple computer assemblers in the Silicon Valley lose their jobs in shutdowns, relocations, or overseas investment by the parent firm. More commonly, too, large numbers of white-collar employees are cut loose from industrial giants like DuPont and Eastman Kodak, pushed into early retirement or unemployment.

When Joseph Schumpeter wrote forty years ago about capitalism's creative destruction, he was not thinking about local communities that mortgage their survival to economic growth. Instead, the "essential fact" that he stressed about capitalism is recurrent innovation. He meant the new product, the new organization, the new link between desire and demand "that incessantly revolutionizes the economic structure *from within*, incessantly destroying the old one, incessantly creating a new one."[1] Schumpeter admitted that the "perennial gale" of capitalist innovation imposes costs on those who are unable to compete. But the "process of decline, of loss of caste, of elimination" that kills "old businesses" compensates by clearing ground for new men and women to rise. The balanced "circular flow" of economic life that he described has its counterpart in constant upward (and downward) social mobility. Choosing the very image that had earlier struck Henry James as typical of America's consumer society, Schumpeter depicts the upper classes as "hotels which are indeed always full of people, but people who are forever changing."[2]

This image of progress has been hard to sustain in the post-postwar period of economic growth. We know that U.S. businesses must compete with cheaper or smarter competitors, that organizations have to be global to survive, and that automated technology has replaced much human labor. But attempts to reorganize production for greater profits have imposed painful social costs. Fewer Americans can count on the high income, good skills, and steady work that traditional industry fostered. Regional cleavages—between Sunbelt and Frostbelt, city and suburbs, "bicoastal economy" and heartland—are common. Moreover, the cultural understandings and social structures that constitute economic institutions are in disarray. These days, workers are important because they consume, not because they produce anything the culture values. Public arenas of work and community foster private pursuits. Like the "great transformation" that occurred in England in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, abstract market forces that detach people from social institutions have overpowered specific forces of attachment identified with place.[3]

Creative destruction along these lines creates a dramatically different landscape of economic power. Banks are independent of the industries they finance; corporate headquarters are isolated from plants under their control. The wealth of cities seeps out to border regions, and within the city, the center acquires a new, aggressive-seductive lure. Place, moreover, is sharply divided between landscapes of consumption and devastation. Those places that remain part of a production economy, where men and women produce a physical product for a living, are losers. To the extent they do survive in a service economy, they lack income and prestige, and owe their soul to bankers and politicians. By contrast, those places that thrive are connected to real estate development, financial exchanges, entertainment—the business of moving money and people—where consumer pleasures hide the reins of concentrated economic control. Some people identify these shifts as part of a process of decline and decentralization called deindustrialization. Others accept them as evidence of a high-technology, postindustrial society. But neither of these terms captures the simultaneous advance and decline of economic forms, or the sense that as the ground shifts under our feet, taller buildings continue to rise.

The late-twentieth-century landscape of economy and culture is both varied and changing. Following Schumpeter, who suggested that economic factors were not enough to explain institutional change, I look at this landscape as a social, cultural, and political product of creative destruction. Influenced by the economic historian Karl Polanyi, I define it as a fragile compromise between market and place. Tracing a critical social geography in landscapes of power challenges an ingrained belief in markets. Markets represent free movement and impersonal judgment, hallmarks of the American way of life from de Tocqueville to Reagan. By emphasizing earning over either giving or taking, markets satisfy Americans' moral yearning for a peculiar sort of social equality.[4] Yet ironically, just as a market culture has finally been exported from America around the world, it poses most danger to the cultural values of place.

THE SEPARATION OF MARKET AND PLACE

The opposition between *market* and *place* really dates from the beginning of modern market society. Exploring debate over the Enclosure movement in seventeenth-century England, Karl Polanyi finds the Tudor aristocracy aware of a contradiction between the "gentleman" 's desire for "Improvement" and the "poor man" 's goal of "Habitation."

Polanyi points out that English aristocrats already expected "to achieve improvement at the price of social dislocation" whose costs would mostly be borne by poor peasants and their households. But in his view, the contrast between habitation and improvement drawn in 1607 "also hints at the tragic necessity" of protecting the places where people put down roots from the leveling forces of market production.[5]

Historically, of course, market and place are tightly interwoven. At its origins, a market was both a literal place and a symbolic threshold, a "socially constructed space" and "a culturally inscribed limit" that nonetheless involved a crossing of boundaries by long-distance trade and socially marginal traders.[6] But markets were also inextricably bound up with local communities. In feudal times and beyond, local markets occupied a specific place and time, usually in front of the church on festival days. The denseness of interactions and the goods that were exchanged offered local communities the material and cultural means for their social reproduction—that is, their survival as communities. At least until the seventeenth century, the market in England "was an island in space and time, a threshold at which the antagonisms, reciprocities, and solidarities of a particular locality could be periodically confined and tempered into the social and cultural matrix of simple or small commodity production."[7] Evidently, the social institutions of markets and places supported each other.

Nowhere is this shown more clearly than in the spatial and temporal effects of market practices on a "sense of place." In the great towns of Europe in the eighteenth century, markets defined streets and quarters as well as the rhythm of daily life. "A whole book could be written on the Halles in Paris and the smaller market for game, on the Quai de la Vallée," Fernand Braudel says; "on the regular dawn invasion of the town by bakers from Gonesse; on the five to six thousand peasants who came in the middle of every night half-asleep on their carts 'bringing vegetables, fruit, flowers.' . . . The ears of the servants on the upper floors were well accustomed to interpreting the babble, so as not to go down at the wrong moment."[8]

Yet prior to the nineteenth century, market transactions did not create a culture divorced from that of specific places. When this separation first emerged, it did so in the labor market. In the decades following the French Revolution, a conception gradually arose of a distinct entrepreneurial role. Entrepreneurialism was identified with employers, whose priority of cutting production costs included transforming production from home work or shop work to piece work, and shifting this work back and forth among different groups of workers. Each of these practices stoked the workers' resistance. Working at home, in familiar surroundings, often with their own tools and materials, the workers were used to acting as their own bosses. To a degree, they were both entrepreneurial and exploited. They thought in terms of product rather than production. But slowly, between 1815 and 1900, both employers' claims and workers' counterclaims began to echo the distinctly quantitative rhetoric and symbolic language of market forces.[9]

From that point, market no longer internalized place. Instead, in a long and painful process that lasted through most of the nineteenth century, place began to internalize market culture. Newly built factory towns from Pullman, Illinois (1880), and Gary, Indiana (1905–8), to Le Creusot and Décazeville represented the extreme case of socio-spatial structuring by market norms. They created a social regime that responded to industrial capitalists' needs by housing a labor reserve and attaching workers to their employers on a permanent basis. The employers were concerned with utilizing fixed capital in their factories, satisfying increased demand for their products in domestic and world markets, and securing a labor supply with sufficient skills to work complex new machines. Planners of these towns reflected labor market conditions by recruiting workers before building schools, stores, and hospitals. They also stratified workers' housing according to skill level, and imposed conditions of sobriety and morally satisfactory family life on worker-residents. To live in this space was to be subjected to factory control: unlike the freer labor market in cities, the factory town provided employers with a captive labor market.

To this end, employers called for theories of moral education, schemes of sanitation, and strategies of urban design that would permit them to build an agglomeration of labor without reproducing the social promiscuity—involving both sexual license and unsupervised social contacts—of big-city environments. Employers believed that resistance to market norms was endemic in urban working-class communities. But by providing both the public buildings and private housing, all utilities, and rules of order for both the factory and the town, the paternalistic company that owned a factory town attempted to create a "tempered, pacified mass. This domesticated people was a swarm of bees and the mining town, their hive."[10]

Throughout the nineteenth century, two contradictory processes juxtaposed market to place. On the one hand, employers organized production to take advantage of both temporary workers—migrants to industrial towns and seasonal labor who "camped out" or boarded in the town in "nomadic" conditions—and a permanent work force of more highly skilled craftsmen who were firmly attached to the factory. On the other hand, workers entered into community life with every desire to socialize, organize, and institutionalize their own cultural patterns. When employers tried to change the customary basis of wages or simply lower them, often playing one group of workers against another, their manipulation of the labor market threatened to fragment the cohesion of specific places.[11]

Over the years, the closely related issue of whether workers should be attached to—or free to float from—their place of employment divided professional economists. For more than two centuries, shifts of opinion joined practical, theoretical, and moral concerns. Adam Smith stated the classical position by asserting that only the free movement of workers from job to job would permit labor to find its "best" price. During the nineteenth century, however, the discourse of factory-town planners reversed this approach by maximizing workers' attachment to their jobs for maximum employers' control. Yet the frequent use of migrant and immigrant workers recognized a de facto labor mobility.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, economic opinion shifted again. Reflecting employers' concern about the costs of labor turnover, economists recommended reattaching the work force to the factory. But after World War II, as capital investment flowed to new regions, their judgment shifted back in favor of labor mobility. That climate of opinion lasted until the 1970s, when economists again advocated attaching workers to the firm. This time, employers would develop internal labor markets that would move workers from job to job within a company throughout their entire careers. This shift of opinion was part of a larger consensus on authority relations and social as well as economic costs. The professional judgment against labor mobility in the 1970s accompanied a renewed interest in strengthening institutions based on property rights and a growing tolerance of unemployment.[12]

By the 1980s, a neoclassical consensus again endorsed labor mobility. Employers' interest in downsizing firms, reducing excess production capacity, and transferring work from one geographical region to another required that workers be detached from the company. Business literature extolled worker "flexibility," and institutional means were devised for facilitating both voluntary and involuntary separations.

By changing retirement conditions and pension benefits, establishing job-placement services for outbound workers, and contributing to community programs for retraining unemployable workers, employers shed large portions of their work force. At most, employers like IBM offered highly trained employees the opportunity to move to a plant or office in another region, generally changing jobs in the process. Yet all employees were never offered this option. When Westinghouse closed the robotics operations of a high-technology company in Connecticut it had bought several years before, and moved some of the jobs to Pittsburgh, it invited only 50 of 210 workers to move with it.

Faced with employers' changing interests, economists sharply divided between neoclassical and neoliberal positions. Some professional economists and government officials favored "portable pensions" and giving tax advantages to workers who saved for their own retraining and eventual geographical move. Others supported more active government intervention in trade policy and a minimal advance notice to workers and employees before business closings. The problem is not a small one. From January 1981 to January 1986, more than five million American workers lost their jobs because of plant closings, slack work, or elimination of their positions, and these workers had "significant attachment," as researchers put it, to their employers.[13]

An interesting aspect of these changes is that they have a different impact on executives, who get golden parachutes to take early retirement or otherwise move from their firms, and displaced workers who depend on short-term unemployment benefits. There is a similar difference in the way these detachments affect different sorts of communities. Executives, like all white-collar employees, tend to live in areas that mix people from different industries. Workers, however, live in areas where individual firms and industries are concentrated. Therefore, when plants, companies, or networks of customers and suppliers in related businesses lay off workers, the communities where they live and shop are devastated. Executives' communities are buffered by the diversification of their economic base—including residents' stock ownership as well as employment. Another difference concerns the tendency for more or less geographical mobility among different groups in the work force. In all industrial societies, professional and managerial employees tend to be more mobile than manual workers. For these reasons, market changes affect communities where workers' residences are concentrated more than most upper-middle-class and upper-class communities. The major exceptions occur in areas like Detroit, Houston, or Rochester, New York, where the historical predominance of a single industry or firm—the Big Three auto makers in Motown, the oil industry throughout the Southwest, and Eastman Kodak in Rochester—imposes its product and profit cycles on the life cycle of all surrounding communities.[14]

Although the opposition between market and place has every structural reason to persist in a capitalist world economy, it can be altered by elites and buffered by the organization of consumption.

Local businesses and local governments play an increasingly important role in the survival of local social institutions. State governors and their commerce departments have actively moved into business restructuring, especially in the Middle West. They have pursued nonlocal business investment to the extent of studying Japanese etiquette in the new car-assembly regions of Ohio, Tennessee, and Kentucky. On a regional level within states, local government officials have transformed community protests against plant closings into economic development commissions with new revenue-raising powers. The church-sponsored ecumenical coalitions that opposed steel shutdowns in the Monongahela Valley near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, have grown into a regional development commission that issues industrial development bonds.

Among economic elites, major businesses in Boston have organized a program that will guarantee financial aid to all graduates of the city's high schools who get into college, and then provide jobs for them when they finish their education. Under the Boston Compact, an earlier and a more modest plan, graduates of fourteen public high schools were matched with entry-level jobs in local businesses. With the sponsorship of the National Alliance of Business and funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and private industry, similar programs have recently been established in Albuquerque, Cincinnati, Louisville, Memphis, Indianapolis, San Diego, and Seattle. Although such efforts have little effect on structural changes, they cushion the impact on places of market forces.[15]

The organization of consumption can also mitigate the opposition between market and place. Unemployed workers often exchange services instead of paying cash. Sharing with relatives also relieves economic strain. In an expanding economy, however, men and women may forget their insecure market position because consumer goods are "affordable." Cheap prices, credit, and an ideology that legitimized individual purchases made mass consumption a pillar of the "Fordist" production system (with assembly lines, unionized workers, and government welfare guarantees) that stretched through the middle of the twentieth century. During that period, cars, houses, and televisions were bought in such quantities that they introduced a new consumer society.

Owning or renting a home is probably the most important means of consumption, and certainly the most important expenditure in most people's lives. But homeownership is surrounded by a contradictory aura of both autonomy and dependence. On the one hand, owning the roof over one's head, and a little plot of land around it, means liberation from the landlord or landlady and from boarding with relatives. On the other hand, eviction is just as likely at the hands of the bank or mortgage-holder, whose payment at regular intervals compels job stability, saving, and, most important, staying in place. Homeownership also indicates a relationship between investment and consumption. Over the past forty years, buying a home has become a ticket in the great sweepstakes of rising land values, as well as a traditional means of securing shelter. Yet owning a home may be "a costly asset," the authors of a historical study of homeownership in the Boston area tell us. The social mobility it implies may in the long run bring only "the accumulation of devaluing assets." In the short run, moreover, because of the costs of buying and maintaining a home, a person's place in the housing market shapes his or her entry into the labor market.[16]

Homeownership is one of those institutions that tie economic production to social and cultural life. It also bridges the means of production and means of consumption. When mortgage rates rise or the housing market gets tight, the change affects an individual's position in the housing, labor, and capital markets. Depending on these interrelated effects, homeownership may emphasize either stability or lack of mobility. In this sense, it represents a cultural compromise between market and place.

PLACE

In contrast to the preeminence of markets, most modern cultures either trivialize or ignore the idea of place. The language of modernism expresses a universal experience of movement *away* from place, and aspires to submerge or incorporate it into a "larger" whole. Until the Iranian revolution, localism—a concept related to place—had no role in theories of social and economic modernization. It was assumed that traditional status systems and parochial loyalties would wither away in the course of economic growth. Recent efforts at decentralization or separatism around the world indicate how much place was repressed—like ethnicity or religion—in this notion of modern life.[17]

Technology reinforces the idea that local communities are archaic, even while making their image more available. In the nineteenth century, the railroad and photograph lost the immediacy and depth of a foreground view of place, although they made distant places more accessible. Today, simultaneous exchanges by electronic media tie together even the smallest places, but they destroy the social distance that made experiencing them so distinctive.[18] In brief, as markets have been globalized, place has been diminished.

We are used to thinking of place as a geographical location, a point on a well-bounded map. Place on that level indeed refers to territory—a territory with its own flora and fauna and local allegiances. Closely related is the idea of specific places as concentrations of people and economic activity. Place in this sense is a form of local society rendered so special by economy and demography that it instantly conjures up an image: Detroit, Chicago, Manhattan, Miami. Place in a third, broader sense is a cultural artifact of social conflict and cohesion. The layers of experience that are created by capital investment and labor organization make factory towns and downtowns special types of places that have a predictable response to change. A "deindustrializing" region, a "gentrifying" urban neighborhood, a suburb transformed from an enclave of the rich into a corporate headquarters location: these should be understood as both specific places and representations of a more general notion of place. A useful concept in social theory, place expresses how a spatially connected group of people mediate the demands of cultural identity, state power, and capital accumulation.[19]

One of the most fascinating aspects of place in recent years is that it has become more homogeneous in some ways and more heterogeneous in others. The spread of national and even global cultures (especially those that emanate from Hollywood and Disney World) tends to weaken local distinctiveness. So do cheaper transportation costs, which encourage the long-distance diffusion and consumption of industrial products. The use of new technologies, moreover, equalizes conditions of *producing* goods in different regions of the world. The same standardized motors or jeans can be produced anywhere from Oshkosh to Singapore. And the job of manufacturing them can be shifted from North Americans to Mexicans and Chinese, or from middle-aged men to young women. As more women have entered the labor force, and more jobs have been shifted outside the advanced industrial economies, traditional wage differences have been reduced. This equalizing tendency has in turn eroded labor militance and bargaining strategies based on the historic acquisition of skills and gains by specific groups. All in all, the net effect of these technological and organizational changes is to make places "more equal."[20]

At the same time places have also become more differentiated. New patterns of regional specialization reflect the selective location of highly skilled and highly valued economic activities—finance, corporate leadership, and research and development—in zones that offer amenities. These concentrations enable places to capitalize on their initial advantage. By the same token, areas that begin to lose business investment become even less attractive. They utterly fail to develop high-status production and consumption. The same country, and the same region, can easily be divided between these two paths of development.[21]

We often think that these processes originate in decisions made by the largest corporations. Yet there is a tension between corporate power to remake geography and labor-force potential to resist change. The organizational ability to split parts of the production process among different places often confronts forceful opposition by local residents, workers, and employees. Business organizations also respond to the image of place: an image of docility or autonomy, homogeneity or social mixing, central power or decline.

In traditional coal-mining areas of Britain and France, for instance, the decline of old industries and the partial entry of new ones have reduced the number of jobs for highly paid skilled men. With the ebb and flow of industries and male employment, many untrained women, often the wives of unemployed miners, have been recruited into the labor force. Meanwhile, in seaside regions, where agriculture and tourism have been more important than mining, both men who work in industry and women who earn money by self-employment lack the militant history of high wages and unionization for which miners are well known. These areas become a more attractive site for new capital investment.[22]

Other factors also account for increasing regional specialization. Like the services in southeast England, high-tech firms in the United States are attracted to such amenities as educational opportunities and climate. This seems especially to be the case for the most dynamic activities, such as electronics, computers, and communications equipment. The availability of business services is also important, particularly for mature sectors like receivers, transmitters, plastics, and paints. In the fastest-growing sectors, however—those associated with military spending—labor-force characteristics, including the percentage of black workers, influence firms against certain locations.[23]

But the process of capital accumulation can create surprising divergence within the same locality. A city or a metropolitan area may experience growth in some areas and decline in others. The central business district may grow while the rest of the city sleeps. In the past few years, moreover, old industrial regions have gained new jobs that fail to generate long-term prospects for development. Subcontracting generates those jobs, as do part-time and temporary employment. The divergence between well-paid, highly skilled jobs and jobs that offer few chances of upward social mobility is responsible for a persistent new kind of regional dualism.

Most worrisome of all are the problem regions that no longer create highly skilled, highly paid jobs. Every country has its own negative examples: Britain's south Wales, Tyneside, and Clydeside, the Nord and the Lorraine in France, and the Middle West in the United States show the same pattern of decline relative to growing areas of the country. During the first half of the 1980s, for example, the Middle West lost the greatest proportion of high-wage jobs in the United States and had the greatest increase in low-wage employment. At the same time, interregional economic differences in the country as a whole widened. Between 1979 and 1986, a 50-year trend toward regional parity in per capita income was reversed.[24]

Regional disparities have in fact become so pervasive that people now speak of a "bicoastal economy." The sixteen states on the country's East and West coasts practically monopolize the highly differentiated benefits of economic growth. During the 1980s they had three times as much real economic growth as, and experienced 90 percent more job growth per capita than, the rest of the country. A small proportion of residents of these states also benefited from the lion's share of real growth in wages and ownership income in the entire United States.[25]

This social and spatial restructuring contrasts with the desires expressed by existing populations and many local governments. The basic problem derives from a simple imbalance between investment and employment: capital moves, the community doesn't. For many people who are enthusiastic about the next economic transformation, imbalance and dislocation are a painful but necessary part of the transition. But for those who worry about the present, and find the future still uncertain, dichotomous landscapes pose a major problem. Not only do they embody alternative economic and political strategies; these strategies also carry a burden of existential choice.

Some people find the source of dichotomy is an opposition between capital mobility and labor mobility, or capital and community. Alternatively, they contrast "life space" with "economic space." Still others juxtapose restructuring "for capital," in which return on investment takes priority over people and place, to restructuring "for labor," in which investment provides an existing work force with a means of survival. A related issue concerns whether men and women can be considered separate from place. Should economic growth primarily benefit people or the places where people live?[26]

The same disputes mark debate over the "deindustrialization" of America. In terms of aggregates—the manufacturing sector's contribution to GNP, total employment, value of exports—U.S. industry has not completely failed. Moreover, the continued profitability of many U.S. businesses, especially the overseas operations of American-based transnational corporations, suggests that some Americans still know how to manage industry—although they may be doing it outside the country. The same goes for patterns of increased overseas investment in research and development.[27]

Business considerations maintain the illusion that response to *market* forces is the only factor on which the survival of America's industrial society—or the creation of its postindustrial society—depends. But critics who argue that America is being deindustrialized draw attention to factors associated with *place*. For them, the reduction of high-wage, highly skilled jobs and the cutbacks that have sapped labor unions' strength destroy the culture that underlies the U.S. economy. Shaped by both market and place, this culture is based on a high standard of living, self-generated organizational capacity, and local influence on dominant social institutions. Until recently, these have constituted the American landscape.[28]

LANDSCAPE

Landscape, as I use the term here, stretches the imagination. Not only does it denote the usual geographical meaning of "physical surroundings," but it also refers to an ensemble of material and social practices and their symbolic representation. In a narrow sense, *landscape* represents the architecture of social class, gender, and race relations imposed by powerful institutions. In a broader sense, however, it connotes the entire panorama that we see: both the landscape of the powerful—cathedrals, factories, and skyscrapers—and the subordinate, resistant, or expressive vernacular of the powerless—village chapels, shantytowns, and tenements. A landscape mediates, both symbolically and materially, between the socio-spatial differentiation of capital implied by *market* and the socio-spatial homogeneity of labor suggested by *place.*[29]

The concept *landscape* has recently emerged from a long period of reification to become a potent tool of cultural analysis. It connotes a contentious, compromised product of society. It also embodies a point of view. As the opposition with vernacular implies, powerful institutions have a preeminent capacity to impose their view on the landscape—weakening, reshaping, and displacing the view from the vernacular.

Even in art history, a landscape's inclusion and denial of physical reality have always been highly selective. The term itself refers to both a piece of rural scenery and the conceptual prism through which it is viewed. At the outset of landscape painting in Western Europe in the fourteenth century, landscapes were pictures of symbols rather than fact. These pictures combined elements familiar to the viewer to represent a religious or moral system. Similarly, in eighteenth-century English landscapes, painters' portrayals of the countryside and its inhabitants reflected a way of seeing that was part of the larger social system. Artists generally shared in the upper classes' shift from seeing rural areas as places of leisure and indolence to viewing them as sites of entrepreneurial farming and industrious agricultural laborers. More picturesque landscapes, however, either ignored recent rural improvements or persisted in depicting older practices as if they were unchanged.[30]

Throughout the early modern period in Europe, to make a landscape was also to recreate natural topography in images of power. It was normal for such activities as landscaping the grounds of a country estate and drawing maps of the world to distort, obliterate, and rearrange geography to serve the interests of the viewer. More generally, landscape both imposes and represents a visual order. In the origins of modern art, the concept *landscape* refers to a painting that stimulates the viewer's recognition by both the repetition and singularity of its constituent elements.[31]

Today the concept landscape is almost less likely to refer to a genre of painting than to a sociological image. When we hear people speak about "the urban" or "the suburban landscape," we picture either the density of production and transportation in city life—human society swallowed up by skyscrapers, bridges, and freeways—or small-scale outcroppings in the hinterland of shopping malls, ranch houses, and office parks. Similarly, the smokestacks and red-brick chimneys of an earlier "industrial landscape" evoke a way of life, its rhythms, and—such is the power of this built environment—its abstract social controls. The struggle to impose the factory owners' idea of discipline created *"the familiar landscape* of industrial capitalism, with the time-sheet, the timekeeper, the informers, and the fines."[32] The "postindustrial landscape" in modern Vancouver or Silicon Valley is also evocative. Its image of ecology, leisure, and "liveability" feeds off the consumption preferences of professionals in a service economy, even though those preferences conceal an underbelly of business and personal strain, female minority workers jammed into assembly jobs, and mounting suburban blight.[33]

Increasingly complex and suggesting an inclusive social reality, this concept of landscape has crept into the common vocabulary of our time.* The most interesting thing about the variety of landscapes that I have mentioned is that today we know them all. Although they were constructed sequentially, on different scales, they now coexist in space and time. They make us more aware of the asymmetry of economic power. Certainly, in the course of social change, men and women have always confronted, or been forced to move between, different landscapes. For a runaway serf from a medieval manor, there were vital differences be-

* This term is used so extensively that even the president of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York said in a speech to the Overseas Bankers Club in London (February 2, 1987), "Individual firms can choose their position on the *financial landscape*" (emphasis mine).

tween town and country. Before Emancipation, an escaped slave in the United States often found survival by moving from the south to the north. But since the nineteenth century, shifting from one landscape to another has depended less on individual mobility than on a broad-scale, varied remaking of landscape itself.

The urban scale and commercial variety of Haussmann's Paris in the mid nineteenth century led into the aesthetic and technological monumentality and rapid pace of change that helped to define the modern use of space and time in major cities. By contrast, the persistence of older landscapes began to suggest a general economic and social decline. With modernism, "old" was rarely "better." The tortured viability of older landscapes was viewed as an irritant, or a stimulant to an additional and ultimately homogenizing round of structural changes.[34]

For several years, at least since Robert Venturi published *Learning from Las Vegas,* architects have taken on the task of interpreting the development of modern landscapes. Recently, however, geographers have also reclaimed landscape as part of their professional terrain. To do so, geography has to focus on the built rather than the natural environment and to open itself to cultural as well as physical analysis. Taking "ordinary landscape" to be the "continuous surface all around us," cultural geographers "regard all landscapes as symbolic, as expressions of cultural values, social behavior, and individual actions worked upon particular localities over a span of time." In this broad sense, landscape is "at once a panorama, a composition, a palimpsest, a microcosm."[35]

Like early European landscape painting, historical American landscapes often represent panoramas of a moral or philosophical system. In the eighteenth century, newly built churches revolutionized the hierarchical spatiality of organized religion by both the intimacy of their interior design and their geographical distance from established communities. This spatial organization represents in a panorama the influence of Isaac Newton's scientific ideas. Another sort of panorama emerges in the grid pattern by which streets were laid out in midwestern towns in the early nineteenth century. The sense of permanence in this panorama negated earlier patterns of transience and mobility by which Americans had continually extended the western frontier.[36]

In a different sense, landscape also represents a microcosm of social relations. During the centuries before the rise of the modern state, landscape represented a field of impact between authority and resistance.

This concept of landscape contrasts with that of *country*. Landscape is the area where peasants thrive, the cottages and fields that embody their collective and vernacular use of space. By contrast, *country* represents the spatial organization imposed by the powerful on the powerless; country embodies "the aristocratic or political concepts of space" upheld by the bishop, the lord and lady of the manor, or the monarch.* Like our contemporary landscapes, however, the peasants' vernacular and the aristocrats' country coexist in space and time. Then as now, to read landscape is to study the society and technology "underneath . . . symbols of permanent political power," where communities governed by tradition and custom "involuntarily" adapt to mobility and change.[37]

Themes of power, coercion, and collective resistance shape landscape as a social microcosm. Yet the task falls to economic geography to provide a sense of landscape's "structured coherence." For a radical economic geographer, landscape is the tabula rasa of capital accumulation. It reflects the "spatiality" of the capitalist mode of production in each of its historical phases. From this perspective, the underlying cause of repetition and singularity in the landscape is the profit motive, shifting capital between investment in industry and in property, cycling it into new construction or reconstruction, shuttling it between the downtown and the suburban periphery. This idea of landscape also suggests the opposition between market and place that I have described. Relations between social classes determine and are in turn affected by "the tension between free geographical mobility and the organized reproduction processes." This ongoing and conflict-laden structuring of people's lives derives its social coherence from the fact of local political autonomy and the unifying factors of local experience and collective consciousness. But in the struggle for expansion in the built environment, and control over the uses of space, economic power predominates over both the state and vernacular culture. "Capital creates and destroys its own landscape."[38]

* At the beginning of the twentieth century, however, in *The Decline of the West,* Oswald Spengler considered *landscape* to be the equivalent of *country*. He contrasted the civilization of cities with "the rustic drawl of the landscape" ("The Soul of the City," in *Classic Essays on the Culture of Cities,* ed. Richard Sennett [New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1969], p. 69). Yet again, the tendency to draw an opposition between aristocratic, official, or political culture—the spatiality of the powerful—and the vernacular landscape or popular culture of the powerless is common to many geographers and all structuralist analysis.