THE POLITICAL SYNTAX OF AMERICAN ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN TRADITION

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ABSTRACT:
This essay arose out of a new intellectual stream that specifically aims at understanding the role of politics in the perception of nature in American environmental design tradition. No doubt that a range of tendencies, movements, and styles in environmental design reflect certain perceptions and ideologies about the relationship of society to the natural world. They also represent the changing perceptions of natural and cultural landscapes in design practice over time and place. In this changing perception of landscape, it is the objective of this essay to explore the notion of resistance as the principal issue to understand the political power of environmental design for social change. Environmental design is a domain of politics because it produces a practice as a system of social and cultural power that emphasizes the transformation of both natural and cultural landscape at once. Its apprehension thus requires an ideological analysis; yet, it should be supplemented by an understanding of social relations, hierarchies, and power relations within society, institutions, grassroots organizations, and social groups involved in the general process of production of cultural patterns. The analysis, in other words, has to expose the ways in which the social production of space is reproduced, performed, perceived, and made available to the public in a cultural setting.

KEYWORDS:
Ideology, Political Syntax, Environmental Design

INTRODUCTION

Environmental design closely relates to nature because it is a form of the active engagement of social agents with the material world outside. By transforming the physical properties, the social agent produces a form of landscape; yet, here 'landscape is not merely the world we see, it is a construction, a composition of that world' Cosgrove (1984). Thus landscape is both a social construction and a social product at once as a consequence of a collective human transformation of nature. Landscape represents a specific way of experiencing the world under specific social, cultural, and historical conditions. It is therefore an ideological concept and the properties of it represent a way in which social agents have signified themselves and their world through their imagined relationship with nature. Landscape then becomes culturally and historically specific and reveals such symbolic dimensions invested in the process of production, reproduction, and invention of it. A landscape is the result of ideological actions, and the process of its production is captured in history. For Marx, at every process of history there is a material outcome...a historically created relationship to nature and of individuals towards each other, a sum total production of forces that is transmitted to each generation by its predecessor and on the one hand is modified by the new generation but on the other itself prescribes its own living conditions and imposes upon it a definitive development, a special character of its own-so that, in other words, circumstances make men just as men make circumstances Baker.

In other words, the transformation of the material world, according to Marx, requires the exercise of power. Power is invested in discourse, yet it finds its expression in landscape as it produces an environment of its own as a system of signification of power. Possessing a compelling human significance, the exercise of power emphasizes the transformation of natural landscapes into cultural landscapes or vice versa.

Middle landscape as myth, ideology, and discourse

Recognizing the fact that environmental design is a political issue and the exercise of its power requires the ideological transformation of landscape, one should emphasize environmental design discourse in relation to the idea of Middle Landscape. Middle landscape reveals the persistent struggle for power between the two rival convictions of nature and culture. Although as early as the turn of the century the design practice of middle landscape became a dominant enterprise as a part of the general cultural theme in American life, the history of the idea of middle landscape is in fact as old as the first American settlement. The most comprehensive work in this issue came from a distinguished American historian, Leo Marx (1991, 1967). His major contribution lies in his unique understanding

of some of the basic conflicts of American society. Taking two simple themes of pastoralizing and technological development, he has furnished the cultural landscape of American thought and experience, particularly in the nineteenth century. For him, the idea of middle landscape in facts defines a general cultural theme in the perception of politics and nature. Scholarly contributions since then have been establishing themselves more forcefully to the present day. Tuan (1974), for instance, offers a comprehensive analysis of humankind's attachment to the environment. By examining environmental perception and values at different levels, he shows how the convictions of culture and nature mutually contribute to the formation of ideologies. His idea of the changing perception of environment also provides a solid sense of social change from a dialectical perspective.

However, there are very few contemporary studies in design literature that question the mythic and ideological aspects of space in terms of the changing perception of nature; also neither did those scholarly contributions emphasize the American environmental design tradition in relation to the basic premises of middle landscape. Yet, some studies began to shape their philosophy as the cultural and social history of American society became the common intellectual trend in postmodern America. In this trend, the mode of surveys is now concerned with the interconnections of power and design practice in social and cultural representations. In response, the theoretical focus has shifted from the design artefact to the social construction of environmental design; i.e., the idea that the confiscatory structure of the middle landscape would explain some of the cultural themes in environmental design was adopted. However, of many prominent figures, it was in fact Rowc (1991) who fully introduced the notion of middle landscape into architectural history to furnish the cultural patterns of the American suburban development during the post-World War II period.

To understand the middle landscape as a virtual bridge between traditional and modern theories of the design of social change, therefore, one needs theories that would incorporate the politics of culture and cultural politics into design. In this perspective, important contributions to the development of Marxist spatial analysis can be found in the works of Dal Co (1979) and Ciucci (1979). They both question American design practice with respect to everyday politics and discuss certain ideological issues about the relationship of society to the natural world.

Orthodox Marxist spatial analysis as exemplified in the works of Dal Co and Ciucci, however, does not provide a solid theory for social change. Thus one still requires contemporary tools that would favour the idea that social change is possible with politics in design. In this respect, the Neo-Gramscian view of social change finds a definitive field of theoretical appreciation in this area. As manifested in the works of, in particular, Soja (1993), Jameson (1991), and Lefebvre (1991), contemporary cultural theories argue that there is a strong link between design practice and the social relations of production, and social change cannot be successful unless at the same time a consciously spatial change takes place.

The symbiotic relation of environmental design with middle landscape, or more precisely the design practice of middle landscape, in this sense, draws our attention to social relations of production in design practice. The design practice of middle landscape does not solely represent a design trend in American history, but also becomes one of the most significant milestones in the works of cultural politics because it suggests a subversive design practice as it reveals a public sphere for the growth of opposition and resistance. By studying the social construction of environmental design or middle landscape one can find the political means of resistance that would provide the necessary social conditions to develop power for struggle as well as social change.

The social construction of middle landscape has a threefold structure: myths, ideologies, and discourses. Myths are cultural constructions represented in particular political means such as ideologies. Ideologies, on the other hand, are operational tools of discourse. Myths, ideologies, and discourses therefore are not a set of separate ideas but different forms by which these ideas are executed in the course of everyday life. These three elements of social relations in fact constitute a cohesive political medium for design practice, and they constantly refer to one another in building such concepts as nature, wilderness, countryside, city, culture, etc., with reference to specific locale and society.

On myth: whose truth is it?

Myths, according to Levi-Strauss (1978), are fundamental cultural processes in making sense of how culture works [2]. It was in fact Barthes (1993) who first saw a mutual relation between myths and the political construction of reality in bourgeois democratic societies. Myths, for him, have particular social forms and turn history into natural, by constructing the common sense in the interest of power groups [3]. Like Barthes, Short (1991) also believes that myths are cultural representations of reality and they do not imply falsehood yet they contain both fact and fancy.

Therefore, concepts like wilderness, countryside, or city develop public images for different social groups as they create an idealized place of their own as Idyllic nature, pastoral country, and cultured city. Therefore the definition of city, the cultural production of countryside, and the wilderness then produce significant messages that generate cultural and social power. The mythic middle landscape and its design practice in the New World is then a by-product of this process-a middle

way which best represents the American dream located somewhere between wilderness and city.

On ideology: the power of ideology or the ideology of power

The term ideology is used in many different ways; e.g., from the sociological point of view, ideology is the cement of a social formation, or for psychology, it is a form of cognitive map which directs the individual to action. However, ideology can be characterized in three basic ways: descriptive, pejorative, and positive [4].

Despite clear-cut definitions, the distinction between the three views is ill-defined. Ideology, therefore should be explained in the organization, maintenance, and transformation of power in society. In this sense, one of the most significant contributions has stemmed from Althusser (1989) who developed a theory of ideology which is principally concerned with the nature of social structures rather than pure beliefs and ideas [5]. His analysis provides a strong basis for understanding the ways in which a design practice as a political act is exercised. Ideology, in this sense, not only refers to the ways in which signs, meanings, and values help reproduce a social power in design but also represents a significant conjunction between discourse and the political interest in relation to design practice.

On discourse: design knowledge and power

A discursive practice, for Foucault (1972), allows for contrary opinions, and contradictory choices because there are always differences in perceptions and worldviews. Environmental design discourse is thus composed of beliefs, ideas, and concepts and its practice involves such conflicting ideas, beliefs, and concepts. Based on Foucault's assumptions, environmental design practice would be explained as a form of interplay of the rules that make possible the appearance of objects during a period: 'objects that are shaped by measures of discrimination and repression, objects that are differentiated in daily practice, in law, in religious [6]. What Foucault in fact suggests is that discourse is a form of power. One should, therefore, principally concerned with environmental design discourse and its knowledge base as a form of power that has stemmed from certain tendencies, movements, and styles.

On hegemony: a form of power struggle for resistance

The subtle relation of ideology and discourse with power requires a critical analysis mainly organized around the politics of culture and the culture of politics. In contemporary capitalist societies, a Gramsci an account of hegemonic relations between the power-bloc and the alliance of people is thus crucial in understanding the persistent struggle for power between the two rival parties of the dominant and the subordinate. For the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937), his model of hegemony (moral and political claims to leadership) suggests that the power struggle is a continuing feature of any society in which different ideologies (dominant and subordinate) closely stay together. He explains: The awareness of being part of a determined hegemonic force (i.e. political consciousness) is the first step towards a further and progressive self-consciousness in which theory and practice finally unite (1983).

The power-bloc (dominant) and the people (subordinate), however, are not social categories, but 'alliances of social interests formed strategically or tactically to advance the interests of those who form them' [10]. The power struggle between the two, therefore, is not structural but post structural because it is a constant process of contestation and its elements are never structurally determined. Power here can be defined as a systematic tool of political operations to help perpetuate the existing social order, and for Foueault (1972), it operates through the mechanisms of institutions and technologies rather than social classes. Power, for Fiske, has a twofold structure: the top-down power of the dominant that is interested in maintaining and strengthening its control over people; and, the bottom-up power of the subordinate that is to produce a local power of resistance through the conditions of everyday life and a specific space. This space is social, physical, and temporal at the same time and can be defined as locale: it is interior, for it is where social identities, social relations and social histories are experienced; it is socio-political, for it exists within a social order; it is physical, for it is localized in the places where people dwell and play and work; it is temporal, for it exists only for time in which those who construct it inhabit it [12].

The locale is thus both a social and physical space where a contester relationship between the bottom-up power of the subordinate and the top-down power of the dominant forcefully takes place. The locale, both socially and physically, then becomes a social metaphor by which myths, ideologies and discourses, knowledge, and representations co-exist for power, control, discipline, struggle, resistance, and social change. In short, space is a locale because it represents a particular knowledge of the immediate conditions of its social and physical surroundings. It also represents the social relations and power relations involved in knowing both the dynamics of the interior resistance produced and the power of the exterior world imposed on it. In fact, the Gramscian theory of hegemony in modern capitalism becomes one of the most important contributions in the works of cultural politics. Contemporary scholars now realize that his analysis provides a subversive practice because it defines a form of reactionary public sphere for the growth of opposition and resistance. The resistance in design practice can also be defined as a form of power that is to contest the given systems of production and circulation. The design practice of middle landscape built upon a variety of locales now becomes a political cause to

locate diverse attitudes in social and cultural contexts. Thus Gramsci's theory of hegemony and power relations is well suited to understand the complex relations between the social axes of American culture as well as the polar structure of middle landscape such as nature and culture, rural and urban, peasantry and urban life. In this sense, there is no doubt that the ideal middle landscape as a collective act of transforming nature virtually represents a form of locale as it involves the conflicting claims of American culture at once: it is a bottom-up power of resistance yet it is always in a contester relationship with the top-down power of the dominant.

The polar structure of middle landscape: nature, culture

Although definitions are complex, vague, and amorphous nature defines the untamed, unspoiled rural, whereas culture represents the lamed, spoiled urban reality of American heritage [7]. 'Man is a political animal, as Socrates discovered, awakening to the city as the niche for humans,' says Rolston (1988,329); the American ideology of space follows a similar dictum, by which the American city serves as a political and cultural niche in developing the idea of human nature in American thought. During the course of American history, from the Puritan belief of God to the contemporary secular counterpart, both religious and secular discourses reinforced the polar forces of the rural of nature and the urban of culture and emphasized the rightness of their terms through established institutions as private or public land, entrepreneurship, class structure, gender identity and roles, and the ethnic superiority (Curti 1980). The rising idea of a unique American experience was believed to be a major theme for the intellectual conflict between the two polar models. Culture, in this conflict, was considered as the human production and nature was the inmost residence as old as the ancient polis. American environmentalism, however, attempts to resolve this intellectual debate on the basis that social agents live both in a cosmos and in a polis. The idea of cosmos represents the physical reality whereas the idea of polis, in a political sense, is the culture itself as an artistic and organizational accomplishment [8].

Culture is systematically, yet paradoxically carved out both 'within' and 'against' nature; social agents therefore perform with nature, and sometimes gain dominion over it. They arrange natural settings to make a comfortable living environment, yet the size and the quality of it may vary from a small shelter to a complex urban area. But the recurring paradox is constant: seeking an optimally satisfactory fit into the natural environment. Involving both active polar forces-nature and culture- American environmentalism then suggests that the act of fit should be defined within the domains of wild/uncivilized and urban/civilized. However, neither of these domains, nor the oppositional encounter between them gives an accurate and a developmental sense of history. Rather, it sketches a complex political stage on which natural and cultural histories can be performed through a variety of discourses. This is in fact a history of ideas and, as suggested by Foucault (1972), based on opposing relations.

Values as perceived: nature and the American ideal

The domains of nature and culture are complex and ill-defined: thus in the American ideology of space, there are no purely urban or rural values, since the values of nature and culture constantly interfere with each other. The American environmental design tradition never ceases to reside in nature, however, there some values are projected far into urban, others in rural, but the contester interaction is always constant [9]. In this sense, this interaction of nature and culture, is at least one of the most important political sources in the faculty of American history. As Carly as the colonization of the New World, the complexity and the internal contradictions of this process that characterize the course of the American development arc very intense. The transformation of American nature into an urban industrial nation, however, represents an intellectual debate between the two rival forces: the pastoral ideology, based on an agrarian ideal and the progressive ideology, steamed through the forces of the Enlightenment -the cultural modernity. American civilization, in other words, is an intellectual rival between the frontier culture of an agrarian ideology and the cultural modernity of industrial revolution where they represent an important terrain of values -rural and urban. In this rivalry, however, the American ideology of space tended to accept a dichotomy of city and countryside not as a conclusion, but as a point of departure for the development of a political strategy of reconciliation. Both values suggest a politically symbolic harmonization in which the mythic spirit of virgin-land meets with the civilization of the Enlightenment.

Three important variants of American ideology of space, claims Leo Marx (1991), have developed since the mid-nineteenth century. The first principal ideology captures its mythic core throughout the frontier culture and derives its momentum from the initial European impression of the New World, in which the New World is identified with its boundless immensity and emptiness, or ahistorical character [10].

The second ideology is based on the primitivism culture. Primitivism has inspired many scholars as well as many works of art; it created a nature-oriented aesthetic form and provided an agenda in which wilderness was believed to be the center of life. It was, indeed first, yet an unsystematic critique of the organized society, in particular of industrial capitalism [11].

The third and final mythic core was the pastoral version which was favoured by a much larger population. The New World, within this view, is

presented as an opportunity to realize a genuine harmony between humankind and the wilderness. Here, the pastoral view focuses upon neither the over civilization of the Old World, nor the frontier culture; but rather a middle landscape that is neither urban in European sense nor wildly rural, i.e., a middle landscape as a border land between civilization and nature that combined the best features of each. The pastoral myth was evolved from a specific literary mode and became a political discourse more than an ideal scheme -it was now a forceful ideology [12].

The pastoral ideology was again a battlefield for two foci: culture and nature. Leo Marx, in his seminal book 'The Machine in the Garden', examines these two forces as important cultural symbols that characterize the American life today. For him, nature represents the garden, whereas culture is machine, and the struggle between the two creates the Middle Landscape as a powerful metaphor of the American paradox. The two-hundred-year contrast between two worlds (one identified with the simple mode of countryside and rural peace, the other with the power of urban life and sophistication and chaos) becomes the dominant intellectual mode in creating the symbolic landscape of America, a symbolic landscape believed to be a delicate blend of myth and reality. The American ideology of space, in this sense, becomes a powerful symbol of the American Paradox that preoccupies the images of an urban (or, industrial, capitalist) society, and of a rural (or, agrarian, pre-capitalist) world at the same time. This constant conflict İn fact represents the faculty of American politics: as Kammen writes, 'this dualistic stale of mind can be found in the domestic political values subscribed to by most Americans', and it is indeed inherent to American cultural life. The origins of American civilization, for him, can be summarized as the 'People of Paradox' (1974, 280). The people of paradox then constantly move around these belief systems and develop a physical environment/ landscape that is both a conscious withdrawal from the European experience and from the naive anarchic primitivism in an attempt to launch a uniquely American design practice.

HISTORY TURN INTO NATURAL
The idea of pure nature, for some, found its ideological roots when Jefferson wrote the Notes on Virginia in 1785. His formulation defines a national ideology as a political guide to social policy; a social policy that describes the New World as a kind of Virginian pasture. In Jefferson's notes the continental landscape provokes a Utopian vision that captures an important influence upon the pioneers. His basic account, however, was quite identical with the literary mode of the eighteenth century intellectual milieu, which added a new set of theoretical arguments.

According to Jefferson, the continental landscape meant more than an uncultivated land; rather it was believed to be a supreme opportunity for the American yeoman. The land gives the yeoman hope for economic sufficiency, which is in turn a chance of freedom for him because he labours on his own property. Along with its economic reinforcement, the idea of land politically has a nation-making value that truly represents the possibility of a secular, egalitarian, naturalistic state. The land and its value system are in this sense a potentially mythic idea, an idea that provides an ethical vision based on a unique philosophy of nature for Americans. That ethical vision in fact was an image, originally inherent to the Christian rhetoric. It produced a persuasive utilitarian spirit, and an effective bias over nature by emphasizing the natural world as lawless -in other words, nature had no rights. Utilitarianism based on Genesis was the dominant discourse: as White (1967) discussed, for this view, 'God gave humankind domination over nature and the right to exploit it' [13].

Taming the wilderness was a significant dimension of American cultural practice; in fact, it was closely associated to the true American identity. The frontier in this game played a crucial role because, first, the frontier culture was considered as an important foundation for the American spirit of freedom; second, the westward movement of frontiers was believed to decrease the industrial dependence on the Old World. Although there is a vast contribution to this area, the most important biographer of the American frontier was Frederick Jackson Turner (1861-1932). In his famous work, Frontier in American History, he argued that 'American social development has been continually beginning over and over again on the frontier... The frontier is the line of most rapid and effective Americanization' [2-4]. According to him, the American frontier is sharply different from the European one because it truly represents the free land -the continental wilderness: Little by little he [the frontier] transforms the wilderness, but the outcome is not the old Europe, not simply the development of Ger-manic germs, any more than the first phenomenon was a case of reversion to the Germanic mark. The fact is, that here is a new product that is American. At first, the frontier was at the Atlantic coast. It was the frontier of Europe in a very real sense. Moving westward, the frontier became more and more American [4].

The distinct advance of the frontier indicates a continual tendency away from the political influence of the Old World, as well as a constant growth of independence with political, economic, and social results. For Turner, the demand for new land and the taming of wilderness encouraged the frontier ever onward. The frontier culture also advocated the notion of democracy in America and in Europe. In Turner's own terms, 'the frontier İs productive of individualism... Steadily the frontier of settlement advanced and carried with it individualism,

democracy, and nationalism, and powerfully effected the East and the Old World' (1940). The idea of the frontier culture is important to understand the domains of the contemporary American literary mode with respect to nature. Because, for some, Turner's frontier thesis encapsulates a powerful motif in American thought. Before 1890 the frontier was part myth, part historical process, after 1890 it was purely myth. Yet the American's view of themselves continued to pivot around this myth and it was to be a recurring theme in social criticism and popular culture (Short, 1991).

From the Civil War onward, the dominant myth of the agrarian America has dwelled on the idea of small family farm which provided a number of images [14]. To encourage the family farm and agriculture was to guarantee the American moral properties in the new republic, believed Jefferson, during his term as President (1801-1809). However, his point of reference in defining the role of the agrarian myth should not be understood as merely a descriptive tool but as a prelude for a wider cultural discourse which explains and reflects the American-agrarian past. Jefferson's political syntax is, however, a pastoral not a primitivism view. Although his discursive tone in expressing the American pastoral ideal seems to be a preference for romantic naturalism over civilization, what it precisely means is a real place, a middle landscape, located somewhere between the old European regime and the new egalitarian system. Moreover, it is a landscape for an independent, rational, democratic, and moral husbandman.

The rural virtue is the moral center of a democratic society, a society that approves an economic self-sufficiency, yet paradoxically rejects remaining a rural nation. American agrarianism, on the other hand, had many reasons not to be built upon European capitalism. As Beard wrote, in spite of all the difficulties and discouragement confronting the American people, land is the real basis of democracy, the only genuine and enduring basis... It stands on an independent foundation (1949). The agrarian interest therefore was the true basis of a real democracy and of the rights of private property. The rural life as a moral seed would enable the American people to abandon the problems of industrial capitalism and of a market-regulated society [15].

The politics of the garden society in fact was an authentic attempt to establish an ideal governmental system based upon the theory of nature (Beard, 1949). Within this political view, the domain of city and its cultural components were undesirable: the new Republic should be saved from the chaotic atmosphere of the old European cities because the urban industrial life in the Old World was believed to be the real cause of environmental as well as social catastrophe. Thus, as Bender (1975) has shown, the agrarian ethos therefore should not incline to cherish either the environmentally impoverished conditions, or the interests of the working class of the cities in the Old World. The industrial city in fact was the place where landed and labouring interests clashed with each other. The landed interests of course were the overwhelming majority and, it is not so evident that Jefferson, so cordially cherished the labouring interests of the cities. On the contrary, Jefferson, repeatedly and with great deliberation, declared... a profound distrust of the working-classes of the great cities (Beard, 1949).

With a distrust of the working class, and of commerce, and a romantic devotion to a pastoral myth, in particular to role of agriculture, the result was an ideological break between the two political views: agrarianism versus capitalism. The eighteenth century was a period in which nine out of ten Americans were farmers, and agriculture was believed to be the dominant enterprise for centuries to come. However, the American intellectual milieu was unaware of the inevitable relation between the growing agrarian commercialism and changing social institutions -the connections between technology, and economic development. It was indeed an intellectual failure for agrarians not to recognize the obvious dilemma of pastoral politics which eventually embraced both the romantic agrarian ideal and the capitalist, industrial power. The agrarian ethos on the one hand and the developing pressure of the American industry on the other, as discussed by Beard in 'Economic Origins of Jeffersonian Democracy' created a fundamental conflict between capitalistic and agrarian interests which were supported by the Federalists and the Republicans respectively. For Beard, it is established upon a statistical basis that the Constitution of the United States was the product of a conflict between capitalistic and agrarian interests. The support for the adoption of the Constitution came principally from the cities and regions where the commercial, financial, manufacturing, and speculative interests were concentrated and the bulk of the opposition came from the small farming and debtor classes, particularly those back from the sea board (1949).

The industrial development soon provided an enormous growth in the American economy. However, the nationwide reconstruction of the new Republic mainly took place after the Civil War as a congressional plan: the people of the United States turned in the spring of 1865 to peacetime tasks. The tasks were, as usual, in the main political, economic, and moral... Northern economy was expanding with unprecedented speed [9].

The post-war economic reconstruction and economic expansion was, in other words, growing almost as a parallel force to the dominant agrarian vision. There the continental landscape was slowly turning into a garden imagined, yet a garden with a massive production of industrial wealth. What was coming in the new continent therefore, for some, was a second industrial revolution. With the

expansion of the spirit of capitalist enterprise as well as the extension of facilities for production and transportation an idea of machine became part of the imagined mythic garden [16].

The immense power of technology had easily captured the nation's imagination and became a national obsession for the American people. It was a new American ideal as a fate for the New World located in the instruments of the industrial development that soon helped Americans advance over the natural obstacles. With the growing image of the industrial development the most important value was actually political. The new technology was regarded as a significant political apparatus to fulfil the egalitarian aims as it began to represent the democratic foundations of the nation. The political views that 'scientific knowledge can make all American people free' were supported by the scientific, humanistic faith of the Enlightenment. With the idea of democratic egalitarianism, the American version of the Enlightenment project was in fact used to define a course for science, politics, and everyday life. There the popular belief of technological progress suggested that science and technology were uncovering the real principles of the universe [17].

The growing power of technology was then believed to be the necessary counterpart of the agrarian world. Nevertheless, it did not occur to the American people that the advanced factory system was also a necessary feature of technological progress, which in reality needed a complete shift from the small agrarian workshops to the machine-based modern factory. The workshop was a tool for a rural society where the factory meant a total transformation. Technology would make a substantial difference in the nation's development, a difference that would virtually realize the Arcadian myth. Industrialization and building factories was then taken as an important means and the agrarians soon began to blend the tools of the capitalist enterprise into rural scene to combine the power of technology with the art of nature. For some, what was appearing was actually the emergence of 'the machine in the garden' as an American cultural symbol. There was a special relationship between technology and the American ideal and the uncultivated, continental landscape was an ideal natural setting for it. North America, in that sense, would be considered, by many, as the first example in which the struggle between civilized man and wild nature was so powerful: technology and the rural ideal attempted to provide a very unique way of neutralizing the conflict -the integration of culture with nature. The idea of integration nevertheless was a nationwide project, and now it was the capitalist spirit that was creating a new garden in which the industrial achievement was bringing the new nation into a complex pastoral Utopia. In this Utopia the objective was a society of middle landscape that would exhibit a delicate balance between culture and nature as surely as urban and country.

The ideal settlement as an image of the American paradox

The gradual appearance of technology in everyday practice also changed the conventional images of American settlements. However, the change was not instant by which the traditionally agrarian towns suddenly deduced to urban-industrial environments. It was rather a continuous interaction of two views at once: a strong belief in rural myth along with an awareness of industrial progress as a counterforce to agrarian belief. This interaction, however, was not an end-product in itself but rather an original representation of a long term search for the American ideal settlement. American culture, in this sense, reflects a wide spectrum of intellectual positions in order to formulate a decisive resolution between the two views of rural myth and of industrial progress. As a founder of the American Transcendentalist movement, for instance, it was in fact Emerson who first inclined to combine the technological progress with a romantic love of nature as he came to blend popular American pastoralizing with post-Kantian philosophy [18].

As Miller (1981) has shown, according to Emerson, the advance of civilization can technically teach human beings to understand the factual aspects of life, it is nevertheless the countryside İn which a moral sphere arises. Thus he proposed that the tension between the city and the countryside should be resolved. Like Jefferson, Emerson was also quite confident that under natural conditions science and technology can be appropriately utilized for a rural ideal. Emerson's attitude reflects some of the basic assumptions of idealism. Within the same idealist view, Henry Thoreau also followed a similar course, and withdrew from the practices of industrial society in the direction of nature. In the late nineteenth century, Thoreau increasingly influenced the bio centric, Arcadian view in environmental debate in the United States. He was a romantic naturalist and called for a new bio centric or eco centric conception of values in which non-human natural objects were recognized as having intrinsic value, value independent of human consideration (Miller, 1981). He assumed that if natural facts were properly perceived and accurately transcribed they would yield the truth, the truth which would reveal the ultimate relation between human with non-human [19].

The American transcendentalist discourse gave way to visually rich, yet contradictory images suggesting that the pastoral ideal in the age of capitalist development was possible. The American Ideal in environmental design practice also reflects the same contradictions as symbolized in the literary mode of the period, i.e., it has been built upon social conflicts and the complex system of contradictory interactions and interests, not by the harmonies of its culture. The system of

contradictory interactions is nothing but the ideological struggle itself. This struggle, we have discussed, can be explained however through a model of hegemony and articulation as an active form of defining reality as an unceasing contradiction between radically opposed forces. The very essence of a cultural form, in other words, runs throughout its inner discursive conflicts and their meanings and powers lying in their contradictions. The American environmental design practice then is an intricate reflection of what is defined as a contradictory interaction, or an intellectual violence between the antagonistic states of mind: nature and culture [20].

Middle landscape, since the turn of the century in this sense, draws our attention to the role of ideas, and social relations in a subversive design practice. The middle landscape in the American context can be defined, in Gramsci's own terms, as a war of position, a position between a romantic sentiment toward nature and the ideology of capitalist development. It represents a form of gradual transition toward an egalitarian yet contestatory culture in which both parties persistently stand side by side. Having a counterhegemonic potential, on the other hand, the idea of middle landscape suggests an opposition in the form of partial and fragmented resistance. In history, the design practice of middle landscape has thus provided a significant power for popular struggles within a civil society. Through the emergence of a widespread consciousness for environment it demanded a more critical discourse based on a qualitatively different practice to the relationship between the forces of capitalist economy and nature. This framework, however, needed a set of political manoeuvres at the level of power to change the social relations. Yet, examining the history of middle landscape throughout the twentieth century one can find the principles of a resistance culture in the general themes of an environmental design tradition. Resistance, in other words, has been within the dynamics of environmental design theory and practice as its sensitivity to the requirements of a balanced design practice of the natural and the built-environment has well provided a unique cultural politics.

Today the American environmental design culture therefore can be defined neither as a constant flow of a single idea, nor as an unintentional superimposition of a variety of ideas, but its form of existence is struggle -a struggle embedded in middle landscape. Historically, the new republic was overwhelmingly rural in its first decades and its condition was believed to be truly American. With the emergence of industrial development, the notion of city then became an ideological domain to examine the agrarian values as well as the established political protocols against the new ideas (Reps, 1989; Bridenbaugh, 1938).

Practically, environmental design culture, one would argue, emphasized two major trends: the city as threat to social order and the city as opportunity (Short, 1991). In the former, the city has been considered as social space where the cultural resistance to established authority was eminent. If rural America was the center of the agrarian ideal, the urban America was the dominant threat, threat to the central authority as well as to the moral locus of the American idyll. In this view, urban life corrupts the individuals because it is morally wrong and counter to the idea of family farm, which of course symbolizes moral integrity. Urban dwellers, on the contrary, are culturally alienated individuals, and separated from the social codes which bind people together. For Park, for instance, the peasant, who comes to the city to work and to live, is... emancipated from the central control of ancestral custom but, at the same time, he is no longer backed by the collective wisdom of the peasant community [24].

The latter view of the city as opportunity, however, supported the American progressive ideology. In comparison with Europe, the Puritans had an opportunity to build new urban environments, totally independent from the constraints of their historical legacy. The new settlements then should have been the places where various religious and social minorities sought to express their dreams. For Carl Bridenbaugh (1938), who broadly examined the foundations of the American urban life and its transition from predominantly rural agricultural towns to the nineteenth century industrial city, the American city is in fact an expression of the political power of community for the pursuit of economic growth with social equality. The progressive social and political organizations largely enjoyed the benefits of the city; for this reason, the city as opportunity view has long been associated with radicals. If the rural view has been the ideal prospect for supporting conservatives, the idea of urbanization then has been an ethos for radicals for emancipatory purposes.

However, the urbanization process, either in rural or in progressive ideology, becomes as a powerful social metaphor for social change by representing a gradual transformation. The American environmental design practice here represents a significant chapter in this everlasting process. By the mid-nineteenth century onward it gradually but definitely began to draw a more complex environmental vision with a new understanding of city and country as well as art and nature. However, environmental design did not totally abandon agrarianism in favour of a new urban point of view; on the contrary, it produced a remarkable design practice of interplay between the pure agrarian vision and the urban industrial development. The early American agrarian architecture, which was a political philosophy and a definition of social ideal, slowly fused into an urban-industrial design paradigm. This transition was, however, nothing but practically a tremendous

interplay of contradictions as also reflected in the national ideology [21].

CONCLUSION

To write a complete history of environmental design tradition is beyond the scope of this short essay, rather we examined significant concepts to understand critically the ideological preferences of this particular area of American culture. Yet, one should conclude here with the fact that environmental design in North America basically challenged, and still challenges the two states of mind; anti-urban and urban: in the architects' dream, Americans were seeking ways of having both nature and civilization... accepting a dichotomy of city and nature not as a conclusion, but as a point of departure [13-4].

In the course of American history, the point of departure for developing an architectural strategy changed in relation to conflicting claims of nature and city reconciled. What was common in those strategies, however, was the truth that nature and city were the cardinal nexus of their design practice. The strategy of reconciliation in this practice was the incursion of the machine into garden in the mid-nineteenth century. Design practice in the Progressive Era on the other hand emphasized the urban -industrial development with little attention to nature. The mid-twentieth century witnessed a massive pseudo-urbanization in the countryside called suburbanization. Since the 1960s, however, Americans have been experiencing a nationwide environmental movement with conflicting beliefs, and ideals. The image of wilderness, countryside, polis, or metropolis has already been changed in a greater distance as their definitions become more complex and obscure. For some, the ideologies of the early nineteenth century are being remobilized in the late-twentieth century; nevertheless, what remains is the constant conflict of nature and culture, the countryside and the urban life. Whatever the paradigm is, today the persistent struggle still continues to exercise its power over the American environmental design practice. Environmental design tradition, in this sense, represents a struggle, a struggle that is itself a gradual accumulation of the American design history, and a struggle of politics in which the art of environment and the power of American civilization resides together.

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