

6-2. The era of industrialism has largely been identified in terms of the move to the city. However, as the readings make clear, this move also brought with it corresponding transformations in the notion of landscape. Show how the understanding of landscape was transformed as a response to the advance of industrialism.

Nature : Preservation and Integration

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The advent of the industrial revolution reinforced and exaggerated the boundaries between the urban and natural spheres. As Francesco Dal Co states, “Urban civilization leads to a separation of work and residence, to congestion, to the division between city and country.” (Dal Co, p. 165) Ultimately, changes in policy and urban planning solutions led to a blurring of these boundaries.

Specifically, new development exploded out of the city limits and into the rural sphere, while nature was introduced into the city as both leisure space and infrastructure. The fundamental motivation behind these policies was a new understanding of nature as a model for development. Again, Dal Co: “nature is not only the source of spiritual joy and physical health; it also affords practical instruction and holds the secrets of a just rational order.” (Dal Co, p. 147).

The article “Factory” by Gillian Darley introduces the phenomenon of the company town seeking greener pastures. As “a vile picture of fouled landscapes and formless industrial cities, of degraded labour and negligible amenities was quickly emerging,” (p. 60), company towns started to position themselves beyond city limits. She describes both the Cadbury factory at Bournville as “the factory in a garden” and Port Sunlight as “set in acres of grass and trees, the strongest possible contrast to the sooty back-to-backs of Birkenhead or Liverpool.” (p. 69 and 72 respectively). And “in New England, there was a concerted policy to keep factories out of cities, ... the American Society for the Encouragement of Domestic Manufactures pictured them on chosen sites, by the fall of waters and the running stream ...” (p. 62). An additional motivation for this move to the country was to harness the power of natural resources such as the positioning of the mills at Lowell next to and organized around the canals which initially served as the primary power source for the factories.

In Olmsted’s view, all the problems stated in the introduction – congestion, division, etc. – “could be resolved through the efficient planning of urban services, an adequate use of technology, and the creation of suburban neighborhoods, not cut off from the city and provided with all the necessary services.” (Dal Co, p. 165). These notions came to fruition in his prolific body of work, three examples of which are Prospect Park in Brooklyn, the Fens in Boston, and his plan for the town of Riverside near Chicago. Prospect Park aimed to integrate the urban grid with the layout of the park. In addition to being a successful project for the cultivation of leisure, “the park was an urban planning project justified on the basis of purely functional and economic considerations. ... it

stemmed directly from ethical and ideological considerations of its social function.” (Dal Co, p. 165). It was this park which proved that “the park was no longer an “addition,” ... it was the fundamental structure of the urban environment.” (Dal Co, p. 165). The Fens established a greenbelt parkway system in Boston while also implementing a means of managing runoff and wastewater. In his plan for Riverside, Olmsted used landscape as “a precise instrument of urban planning.” (Dal Co, p. 167). “Riverside was the product of what had become a widespread movement, with its origin in Olmsted’s conception of the suburban neighborhood not as an urban utopia but as a natural and necessary outgrowth of the metropolitan reality.” (Dal Co, p. 167).

Riverside, then, can be seen as the turning point in the relationship between country and city in the U.S. No longer do they form a point/counterpoint opposition, but a singular continuum. At the time, Olmsted’s work, and that of his contemporaries, were rational responses to inadequate conditions. But now in the present day, sprawl is our artifact of this impact. Now is the time when we need a new Olmsted to respond to the new exaggerated conditions, and redefine the relationship between city and country once more.

Nature as Capital

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The era of industrialism encouraged a move to the city as the center of economic production. Driven to organize labor and machinery in the most efficient manner possible, industrialism enacted a corresponding model for the efficient harnessing of natural resources in the cause of the new social and economic structures. Just as the enclosure of labor within the confines of the factory or the factory-city allowed for greater organization and control over the production process, so too it was eventually recognized that the control over hydrological regions and metropolitan park systems would likewise maximize the extraction of the economic and social benefits of nature.

Ebenezer Howard's Garden City in 1892 was an early attempt to reverse the unhealthy environment created by industrialism in England. In the U.S., the English example served as a warning from the beginning of the industrial period, encouraging factories and factory-cities to locate outside the city limits, in the countryside. In New England, the proximity of the textile mills of Waltham, Lowell, and Lawrence to major rivers kept the power source nearby, while avoiding the contamination of the city from industrialism through the device of the all-controlling factory town. As Gillian Darley notes, in the early 18th century "the urgent dilemma in North America was how to retain an agrarian society that remained in step with the march of urbanization" (60). Thus the transformation of the daughters of New England farmers into the mill girls necessitated a corresponding paternalistic imperative to preserve the "morality" of agrarian life that Jefferson extolled as a singularly American tradition.

As Francesco Dal Co argues, the religious revival of the early nineteenth century influenced early urban planning in the U.S., specifically in so far as nature was celebrated as a source of joy and natural ethics. Dal Co cites the early plans for the Washington Mall by Andrew Jackson Downing as the beginning of the Parks Movement of the 1840s and the introduction of the natural ethic into urban life (160). The Parks Movement of the early 19th century played into the development of the Conservation movement in the 1880s, wherein Major John Wesley Powell argued for the consideration of water resources as the legal basis for partitioning land in the Great Plains. Powell's plan, according to Dal Co, "set forth in embryonic form certain principles that would eventually guide regional analysis. . . the birth of an organic theory of planning" (179). Such a regionalist planning of natural resources would later become central to hydroelectric power planning, such as the scope of the Tennessee Valley Authority. Powell's influence on the Regionalists of the early 20th century, Dal Co argues, was significant. Most notably so in the theories of Benton MacKaye for whom "nature was no longer a romantic dream but a means for producing—a power to be won over, to be rendered efficient, to be planned" (183).

Thus the development of the industrial city prompted the corresponding return to nature of the Transcendentalists and Unitarians, which in turn drew from the agrarian myths of Jefferson. Industrialism's example of increasing systematization of resources contributed

to the transformation of notions of landscape in the U.S., aided by a belief in the spiritual and ethical benefits of nature. As a result, natural resources became increasingly harnessed for economic and social benefit through the growth of regional planning.