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BODIES OF LAND
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1.

'Land ho!': the sailor's cry of discovery, from high up on the mast, as the ship approaches its goal after a life at sea. This is the beginning of the word 'landscape.' In order for discovery to be possible, land has to be considered first as far away; land has to be far off so that it can be seen all at once, as a panorama. Land recedes and becomes 'landscape.' 'Landscape' equals 'land-escape'; the land escapes, out of your reach: the word 'landscape' pulls the land away, or pushes you back away from the land -- that land now, unused and unusable by you, is free to expand out in front of you. Once the land is in front of you, it isn't land anymore, it isn't ground: the land becomes landscape, the ground becomes a wall, the wall becomes a picture. The word 'landscape' is subsumed into the phrase 'landscape painting': 'landscape' is not just a view of land, it's a picture of land, a picture that comes with its own history and its own conventions of pictorial representation. As a picture, 'landscape' is not only seen but also made, constructed, produced. 'Landscape,' then, comes with an aura of untouchability; it has double safeguards: first, in order to be viewed, it has to be kept at a distance -- second, since it is produced and therefore owned and exchangeable, it has to be protected.

2.

'Landfall': (def.) a sighting of land when at sea, the first sight of land after a voyage. The word 'landfall' implies that, when land is come upon for the first time, it's the land that comes upon you; 'landfall' is like a rainfall, a snowfall -- the land comes down the way snow and rain come down. For the land to come down, it has to first rise up. As the ship approaches the shore, the shore bulges; the shore swells up, like a whale, over the ship -- the land engulfs the ship and the sea. The word 'landscape' guards against the word 'landfall.' So that the land doesn't come up like thunder, it's kept in place and at a distance. 'Landscape' is land made passive, and subjected to operations. If land is wild and

free, then 'landscape' is tame. Or, reversely: if land is expensive to buy and to own, then 'landscape' is free -- but it's free because it's only an image, you can't get your hands on it. 'Landscape' is domesticated land; 'landscape' frames the land, and then the framed picture is kept in the mind and put into the home (where the landscape is dreamt about, in bed, or desired, on the wall or on a television screen).

3.

When land is turned into a picture of land, you don't have to go there, you can just stand back and look. The implication of landscape might be: you're not supposed to go there. Whatever land you happen to be on, there's always land you can never reach, there's always land that's only a picture. Wherever you are, there's always somewhere else; the notion of landscape lives so that desire never dies. Once there is 'landscape,' there is future, or hope, or universe, or God. Distance is the distribution of power. On the one hand, land far away retains its power, since you can't get to it; on the other hand, land far away is in your power, since it can't get to you, it can't take you over, you can keep it at a safe distance. As 'landscape,' land recedes into the distance; landscape is land in perspective -- you're the viewer, it's your perspective, the land is yours, you're the landlord.

4.

Land-scape/Land-scope. As 'landscape,' land is subjected to instruments for observation -- a telescope, a microscope, a radarscope. Land is abstracted and turned into a network of landmarks. 'Landscape' is a fabrication of land: not a building on land but a building of land, a building in the mind. The land functions only as the support for 'landscape,' whose building matter is numbers and signs and logic systems; landscape is the architecture not of land but of air -- landscape is land reduced to an idea. In the middle of landscape, you walk on the land with your head in the clouds; you're on land at the same time you're off it. Either 'landscape' speaks about the land (with 'landscape' you apply

language to the land, you analyze the land); or 'landscape' speaks for the land, and makes the land speak (with 'landscape' you turn the land into language, into figures of speech, into metaphors for and metonymies of other lands).

5.

When the first encounter with land is from afar, either by seeing or thinking, then later -- when you're in it, when you're on the land and can touch it -- you have a nostalgia for the way it was before, when you first encountered it: you want to make it go away and be afar again, distant enough so that its rough edges are cleaned up, 'Landscape' is the elimination of the 'other' -- the superfluous, the unaccountable -- so that the land can stretch again as far as the eye can see, so that the land can fit into the mind's eye, as if through the eye of a needle. 'Landscape' pampers the mind and the eye, and neglects the body. The means to 'landscape' is either cultivation or war; one way or the other, the land is purified -- either weeds are removed, or bodies.

6.

The logical end of 'landscape' is the end of landscape, the blank landscape, the landscape all white or all black; either all the details have been removed, or all possible details have been combined, all lands have been amalgamated. The person standing in front of this landscape has nothing to point to, or too much to point to all at once. Since pointing allows a person to point to 'there' while remaining 'here,' the absence of the goal of pointing confuses 'here' and 'there': the pointer is drawn into the act of pointing, the person is swallowed up into the projection and disappears into the perspective and into the future.

7.

I hold myself back, I keep myself from being projected into the end

of landscape by clinging to language; I turn landscape into language and define two kinds of landscape: the landscape that exists by itself and the landscape that exists with others.

The landscape that exists by itself exists for itself: the park and the garden, for example, exist either in the middle of nowhere or as an enclave in the middle of the city -- pathways lead to the park/garden but, once you're inside it, the park/garden provides its own systems of pathways, its own pathways take over and proliferate upon themselves within it, the park/garden entwines within itself. As language, this landscape is a self-embedded construction: the sentence whose clauses are placed within, between subject and predicate. The sentence is slowed down by its embedded construction -- instead of continuing doggedly toward its end, the sentence harks back to its beginning, or spins off in another unsuspected direction, before re-directing itself toward its final punctuation, its period; the park/garden, too, is slowed down by its embedded construction -- the winding pathways, in greater or lesser degree like a labyrinth, slow down movement and keep people inside a realm of withdrawal or respite.

The landscape that exists with others exists for others; the plaza and the courtyard, for example, function at the service of the buildings around them, while the street functions at the service of the city: the plaza and the courtyard are extensions of the building to the outside -- the street traverses the city like a corridor, or a railroad, that leads to or stops at each building in turn. As language, this landscape is an additive construction: the sentence whose prepositional phrases and subordinate clauses and parentheses are tagged on at the end, after the verb, extending the sentence. The additive construction keeps the sentence going, transforming the period into only a comma, only a temporary rest -- the sentence refuses to stop, either repeating itself endlessly or accumulating non-sequiturs, like a shaggy-dog story; in the same way, the additive construction of the plaza/courtyard brings trees into the atrium of the building, and the street keeps going for yet another block.

8.

With 'landscape' on my mind, I set my body onto the land. When I 'take a stroll through the park,' I set myself on to the park, on top of the grounds of the park; when I 'take to the street,' I take the street, the street becomes taken by me. The land becomes passive; it's been pre-treated by notions of 'landscape' -- once 'landscape' provides a ground to see, to survey, that ground is there to make use of. 'Landscape' prepares the land to be exploited, to be raped.

9.

'Landscape' is an attempt to keep land in place, to keep land in one piece, lest it be fragmented and blown to bits by 'land mines' -- (def.) cavities in the earth that contain explosive charges, just below ground surface, and that are designed to go off from the weight of persons passing over them. On a 'landscape,' you're in the world of science-fiction: passing over the earth in a spaceship, you have a vantage point from which to explore the earth, map the earth. On a 'land mine,' you're in the world of detective-fiction, film noir: you don't have the luxury of looking around you and looking ahead, you have to keep looking at exactly where you are -- one look to the side or to the front takes your mind off the earth at your feet, one look away and the earth takes over, the ground comes up from under you and blows you up off the ground.

10.

In a long shot, in a panorama, land is 'landscape.' Close-up, land is either quicksand or hard rock. Either it sucks you in, or it resists you and keeps you out. As you move through the park, inch by inch, each particle of grass or dirt is so soft it becomes a swamp; the earth quakes, the land splits and spirals downward, off the horizontal and into the vertical, underground. As you move down the street, inch by inch, each particle of sidewalk is so hard it becomes a reflective surface; buildings, that should have been at your side, are mirrored under your feet -- the buildings fold

and sandwich you inside. In a close-up world, there's no distance that allows you to draw back and look; in a close-up world, things blur out of focus and can't be named. To the body without eyes, the body without language, the land close-up becomes sea (since the grass and dirt are soft, you might as well dig through -- sooner or later, water will seep through). To the body without eyes, the body without language, the land close-up becomes sky (since the concrete and asphalt are hard, and you can't break through, all you can do is rub it, polish it, until it reflects the clouds).

11.

To get past notions of 'landscape,' go, literally, past the land, and down to the mines below the earth. The landscape is grounded on the pits and excavations below. Landscape architecture might be re-defined as architecture in and under and through the land. Landscape architecture is the architecture that escapes the land, that hides and goes underground; if building on top of the land is addition (the act of adding structures to the land), then building under the land is subtraction (the act of taking land away, so that structures can be fit inside the land: the land is analyzed -- separated into bits). Landscape architecture is the architecture of basements: the building of a base -- slippage occurs from the base to basic instincts, and baser desires. As a land mine, the land can be considered as an excavation, a hole, a cavern; or the land itself can be picked up, like a bomb, like a land mine, and exported elsewhere -- a plot of land can be attached onto a building, like a leech (the leech will grow), or inserted into a building, and through a building, like a cancer (the cancer will grow).

12.

A view of the landscape can be replaced by a view to the landscape, and through the landscape. The landscape, instead of being an object for the eyes, becomes an object for the body; instead of being an object of sight, it's an object of touch -- an object of the body's insertion into the landscape. Instead of being the

passive receiver of sight, the landscape becomes the active agent of motion: the landscape moves as it's subjected to motion, as it's moved into and moved through. The landscape rises and falls; it can be considered as a series of horizontal planes, parallel horizontal planes going from below ground to above ground. These parallel horizontal planes are the infrastructure of behavior; they cut through the body as the body cuts through them. The body drifts through parallel planes of landscape, while parallel planes of landscape are driven through the body.