MUSIC AND DEPTH IN LANDSCAPE EXPERIENCE
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The estranged relationship with landscape exhibited by contemporary cultures has been well documented by prominent theorists (Corner 1990, 1997, 1998). Design professionals can begin to reconcile culture and landscape by proposing interventions in everyday landscapes which embrace uncertainty, acknowledge the temporal nature of phenomena, and introduce elements of ambiguity while simultaneously creating pleasing, functional environments. Such interventions encourage meaningful, imaginative experience, encourage multiple readings, and suggest renewed ways of dwelling in landscape.

The methodology for this thesis is a two part examination of contemporary approaches to the production of space in significant cultural landscapes. Part one, a position paper, reviews relevant literature and outlines a position to guide design proposals. Part two tests the principals and theories developed in the position paper through proposals for interventions at two sites.

The context for the design component is the Crooked Road Musical Heritage Trail. The Crooked Road is an ideal setting in which to explore the potential of interventions that seek to reconcile culture and landscape. It offers participants a framework for the experience of both regional landscape and culture in the form of traditional music rich in landscape themes. Proposals are developed for an abandoned homestead on Shooting Creek and the Floyd Country Store, both in Floyd County, Virginia, along the Crooked Road. The approach to intervention developed in these proposals is intended to guide the development of additional sites along the Crooked Road with the goals of enriching the landscape experience of participants, strengthening regional sense of place, and reconciling estranged relationships with landscape.
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Part One- Introduction

The folk cultures of Southwest Virginia are steeped in traditional (folk) music, be it old-time stringband music, bluegrass, sacred hymns, or blues. For many inhabitants of Southwest Virginia, participation in the traditional music scene, whether as a performer or fan, is a way of life. For others, and for visitors to the region, the music events of the region offer numerous recreational opportunities. Because references to place and landscape are abundant in the traditional music genres heard most often in regional public performances, and because the musical traditions of the region seem to possess an inherent resistance to fashionable change, participation in music events offers an especially rich emersion in local culture.

In May of 2004, The Crooked Road, a two-hundred-fifty-mile-long music heritage trail, was established to facilitate participation in traditional music events and encourage regional economic development (Powers, 2004). Using existing roads, the route links numerous music venues throughout Southwest Virginia. As such, the Crooked Road constitutes a significant opportunity to develop conceptual links between musical performances, music venues, and the wider landscape for visitors and inhabitants participating in the driving trail. Such conceptual links could serve a number of functions, the primary goal being to transform and enhance the experience of participants. By enhancing the experience of participants, thereby increasing the potential for their emotional, intellectual and physical engagement (including inhabitants), regional place identity might be strengthened and protected. Most importantly, issues of landscape objectification and estrangement endemic to contemporary western cultures can be addressed.

The process of landscape objectification and estrangement has been well documented by prominent landscape theorists (Corner 1990, 1997, 1998). Elizabeth Rodgers notes “we experience anomie and psychological dislocation of an increasingly migratory way of life” (Rodgers, 2001). Landscape architects often unknowingly or unintentionally contribute to the alienation and desensitizing of landscape in a number of ways. The alienation most often results from over reduction/simplification of landscape’s complexity. This over simplification often stems from the desire to create autonomous spaces which conform to aesthetic principles which govern visual composition and determine acceptable levels of visual coherence (Corner 1998, Dripps 2005).

In describing design approaches of the past, and those of the present couched in theoretical frameworks of the past, Michael Murphy states, “Form became a preoccupation that focused the emphasis of design not on shaping the quality of our relationships to one another or the environment, but on shaping the
visual quality of the form intended to establish those relationships” (Murphy, 2005, p. 144). As a result, designs were primarily developed and judged by visually derived aesthetics and functional considerations. The limitations and socio-political consequences of such composition are well documented (Howett, 1997, Corner, 1998, and Conan, 2005). Indeed, in *A Discourse of Theory I* James Corner exposes the self-referential nature of the work of such luminaries as Garret Eckbo, Dan Kiley, Roberto Burle-Marx, and Louis Barragan (Corner, 1990).

A culture of vision is partially to blame for the estranging treatment of landscape that continues to be perpetuated by landscape architects. Catherine Howett traces the evolution of visual culture in her essay, *Where the One-eyed Man is King*, from the conception of perspective through the picturesque aesthetic that still influences vernacular landscapes and current discourse on design theory (Howett, 1997). As observed by Murphy, landscape has been and, in some quarters, continues to be granted meaning, value, and significance based on visually based aesthetics and methods of assessment (in addition to economics). Allan Jacobs attests to the limited value of visually based methods of knowing in *Looking at Cities*. Jacobs describes the extent to which his exhaustive visual study of an Italian city fails to uncover the reality of the environment as later described by residents of the city (Jacobs 1985).

So, how might a landscape architect proceed when called on to intervene in a culturally significant landscape for the purpose of

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Fig. 1-1 Using existing roads, the Crooked Road Musical Heritage Trail connects significant traditional music venues throughout southwest Virginia.
enhancing the experience of participants? This work will examine pertinent issues and theories in an attempt to answer this question. It will suggest solutions in the form of a design proposal. It will develop the contention that, in light of recent scholarship on theory and built work, there are ways of intervening in culturally significant landscapes in a manner which promotes cultural stability by deepening regional identity, which is truly place appropriate (has surface/core congruency), and yet respects the dynamic nature of landscape/place by encouraging authentic participation and acknowledging the role of time. Robin Dripps’ begins to suggest a solution with the following—“Outside, the ground already exists as part of a broad network of political, social, and economic systems. If these systems where able to be part of the architectural whole, then the social, political, and environmental alienation that characterizes modern life might be effectively ameliorated” (Dripps, 2005, p.72).

The Crooked Road, with its landscape-based connection both to the physical and metaphoric aspects of the road and to the experience of traditional music steeped in the realities of dwelling with the land, offers a rich and rewarding framework for exploring the question at hand. For these reasons The Crooked Road—and the Southwest Virginia landscape through which it courses—is an ideal context in which to explore the assertion that an estranged culture and environment, can be partially reconciled by interventions which promote imaginative engagement and renewed participation in landscape formation. Such interventions— 1) promote depth and variety of experience, 2) respect and build on heterogeneity inherent to traditional cultural responses to landscape, 3) physically and psychically juxtapose disparate landscape elements in a manner which encourages a rich (thickened) sense of place, 4) acknowledge, support, and mark processes of change inherent to landscape.

Fig 1-2. Jamming by regional bluegrass and old-time musicians is a regular Friday night event in the town of Floyd, Virginia.
Part Two- Literature Review

Statement of Inquiry

Can interventions in culturally significant landscapes promote profound experience of place by inhabitants and visitors?

Critical Positions

The ensuing investigation will explore the generative role of landscape architecture in the treatment of culturally significant and or vernacular landscapes. The inquiry is grounded in critical understandings four concepts—intervention, landscape, place, and insider/outsider distinctions—which carry a multitude of respective meanings in common parlance.

Intervention

First, note that the statement of inquiry refers to interventions in lieu of designs or design for. The distinction, design vs. intervention, derives primarily from the work of Bernard Lassus. In writing about Lassus’ work, Robert Riley notes “to ‘design’ and to ‘intervene, producing transformations’ are not equivalent” (Riley, 1998, p.10). To design means variously to ‘create, fashion, execute, or construct according to plan; to make a drawing, pattern, or sketch of; and implies purpose, intent, and planning (Mish, 2003). Also implied by to design is a sense of composition, of the arrangement of objects to produce and effect. With some degree of contrast, to intervene means to “occur or fall points of time or events; to occur between two things”; to affect “the outcome or course of….a condition or process” (Mish, 2003). Note that with intervene the emphasis is on relating to phenomena instead of manipulating objects. In this sense, intervene is also closely related to inflect—to affect, to influence. There is a pronounced sense of being or coming between in intervene, a condition which reflects the role of landscape architecture in inflecting the landscape. Murphy states definitively that “it is not the purpose of design (nor should it be) to create new form. Rather, innovations in form are introduced for the purpose of creating…..improved relationships in the environment” (Murphy, 2005, p.144).

The literature of place making suggests that intervention plays a central role in creating cognitive relationships between spatially or symbolically disparate objects and/or spaces. Lassus writes “An intervention, even a very slight…..one, can create landscapes for what was only a heterogeneous succession of objects” (Lassus, 1998, p.50). George Descombes supports Lassus’ view—“I believe the largest of territories can be irreducibly restructured through small, laconic interventions as opposed to the unbearable excess of everything —objects, forms, material” (Descombes, 1999, p.80).

Landscape

“The landscape is nature interpreted” (Lassus, 1998, p.50).
Having established Lassus’ general framework for approaching the work of landscape architecture, the question arises—In what will the landscape architect intervene? The landscape architect will intervene in, seek to inflect, landscape. Landscape is used to describe a range of phenomena, from regional territories, to suburban yards, to business climate. Landscape will be used here with a greater degree of reverence and precision to describe the interface on environment and culture. J. B. Jackson holds to the common definition “a portion of the earth’s surface that can be comprehended at a glance” (Jackson, 1984, p.8). Thus, by interacting with, if only by viewing, the physical natural—the environment—humans create landscape. Landscape is nature differentiated, as is expressed by Wallace Stevens in the oft quoted The Anecdote of the Jar (Hunt, 1991, p. 19)—

\[
\begin{align*}
I \text{ placed a jar in Tennessee,} \\
And \text{ round it was, upon a hill.} \\
\text{It made the slovenly wilderness} \\
\text{Surround that hill.}
\end{align*}
\]

The Wilderness rose up to it,  
And sprawled around, no longer wild.

Wild nature, inflected by the human presence, becomes landscape. Michel Conan further enriches Jackson’s and Steven’s offerings by adding “Landscape is thus both nature and culture” (Conan, 2004, p.7). Caroline Lavoie clarifies this position with a slightly different characterization. In reference to distinctions of the “physical world” and the “phenomenal world” she states, “I refer to the former as the environment and to the latter as a world of relationships, the landscape” (Lavoie, 2005, p.13). A similar distinction and use of the terms environment and landscape will be used in this text.

**Place construction**

“Our entire landscape tradition is the product of shared culture; it is by the same token a tradition built from a rich deposit of myths, memories, and obsessions.” Simon Schama (Hogue, 2005)

*Place* refers to the landscapes and the architectural spaces that acquire personal and collective meaning over time. If landscape is nature differentiated, place is landscape differentiated. Places are the portions of landscape we know, that we move through. Humans acquire knowledge of place or sense of place by moving through landscape, by engaging it with our bodies; Elizabeth B. Rodgers states “place is …..kinetic, a pattern of habitual movements through remembered space” (Rodgers, 2001).

*Place* is never static, though it is often perceived to be so; place is, however, inherently stable in the mental dimension, tending to become more or less concrete in memory and myth. Place has physical, mental, and temporal qualities (Rodgers, 2001). In most instances, significance of place occurs as a function of repeated engagement (Carney, 2004).
Rodgers likens place to a mental fabric woven of space and human movement (Rogers, 2001). She uses the metaphor to describe the construction of place—the strings being analogous to paths, roads, etc., the seams and flattened or trampled surfaces/volumes that we use to move through space—the knots or intersections of string being the spaces we linger in or points of departure. Place is thus an interdependent fabric of occupied figure and traversed ground, or what might be called the there and the in-between.

Place plays a central role in the construction and support of identity for its inhabitants. In an article entitled A Matter of Context, Frasier Osment states, “regional identity…..is primarily about the way people identify with a place” (Osment, 2002). Central to place identity is the vernacular landscape—the common, everyday, or working environment—the place in which people dwell (Jackson, 1984; Lassus, 1993; Corner, 1998). Indeed, Lassus notes, “My field of work is everyday life.” (Weilacher, 1999, p.116). Caroline Lavoie notes that role that place names play in constructing identity and in maintaining temporal continuity through the perpetuation of legend and myth (Lavoie, 2005). In Sense of Place in Appalachia Mont Whitson quotes Frederick Turner “The function of art in a landscape, says J.B. Jackson….is to allow people to participate emotionally in their place of living. That surely was one of the functions of the place-rooted myths of old. A part of that emotional identification came through the remembering that the myths inspired, for the places of the myths were visible reminders of that ancient past that lives in the present, of the enduring and the transitory, of eternity and mortality” (Whitson, 1988, p.iii).

Martin Heidegger notes that dwelling, while not being definitive of human being, is, nonetheless an essential condition of human existence (Heidegger, 1971). Dwelling occurs in place (Heidegger uses location, a rough analogy to place). As such, place encompasses the entirety of human building or crafting of space, which Heidegger refers to as “letting dwell” (Heidegger, 1971, p. 156). The condition of human building is inherently heterogeneous, relating to the vernacular. Rodgers and George Descombes both note that, owing to the heterogeneous nature of human dwelling, place resists the autonomy, finitude, and limited vision of master planning efforts (Rodgers 2001: Descombes, 1999). In regard to a project he managed, the Swiss Way, Descombes states ‘my aim was….to make manifest the sheer complexity of the territory and the avoid the desperate reduction and negation of experience that plagues contemporary planning operations….I like the idea of discrete, tactical operations of the clumsy “totality” of the master plan. (Descombes, 1999, p.80).

Insider/outsider distinctions

Inhabitants of a place and visitors to the same place perceive its qualities in vastly different ways. Familiarity or lack of familiarity with a place affects the degree to which the particular qualities of a place are available. In his essay The Visible, the Visual, and the Vicarious, Robert Riley makes similar distinctions in the
various levels, or scales, of visual perception. Riley distinguishes visually based experiences in the following manner—

1) The *visible* is the level of empirical knowing, wherein vision is "a source sensory and mental information" (Riley, 1997, p.201). At this level of perception landscape is exclusive, external input.

2) The *visual* is the "realm of landscape experience" (Riley, 1997, p.203). At this level, visual data is synthesized. Landscape acquires meaning through the deduction of relationships and affects.

3) The *vicarious* of landscape enters the realm of imagination and internal experience (Riley, 1997). Images of landscape take on meanings that transcend that which is generally referred to as 'real'. Understanding and significance moves beyond observable surface and acquires psychological depth. The vicarious is the realm of the everyday, the realm of dwelling, and of attachment to place. Lassus and Corner operate in the *vicarious* when they speak of imaginative perception and the *demeasurable*.

Visual information plays a major role in human perception of environment and to a large degree, determines our concept of what constitutes landscape (Riley, 1997). Furthermore, the level at which one perceives landscape, visible, visual, or vicarious, has a direct effect on one's ability to find of meaning in landscape experience and is closely related to one's familiarity with a place. As familiarity increases, the participant relies less exclusively on immediate visual information; imagery and imagination play a role as landscape is internalized. The internalization of landscape leads Riley to comment on distinctions between outsider experience and insider experience. He states that the outsider operates almost exclusively in the realm of the visible and the visual, while the insider relationship is defined by the presence of vicarious experience (Riley, 1997). Neither term—outsider nor insider—is absolute. The distinctions occur along a continuum and can only be made relative to collective experience in much the same way that Lassus observed relative perception of naturalness in his experiments with objects introduced into visual fields (Lassus, 1998).

Allan Jacobs’ account of the discrepancy between visually derived knowledge and the richer, more rooted knowledge of the resident vividly illustrates the insider/outsider distinction made by cultural theorists. The primary mode of perception for the outsider is vision. This level of perception is epitomized by the tourist gaze. The outsider perceives the surface. The outsider perspective is favored in scientific circles due to its illusion of objectivity (Howett 1997). The outsider perspective is celebrated and perpetuated in popular culture; as such, it is a constant reality and, to a degree, has become the norm. The tourist, the onlooker, the gaze reign supreme in the imaging that inundates the consciousness of humans participating in post-industrial society. Robert Riley goes so far as to suggest that the tourist boom of recent times portends the defeat of the insider perspective (Riley 1997). The result is a reduction and subsequent objectification of the cultural source. Image becomes a com-
modity to be bought and sold.

The insider, conversely, has intimate knowledge of the local. Corner states, “for the insider there is no clear separation of self from scene, subject from object” (Corner, 1998, p.23). Only with great effort can the outsider look beneath the surface and command the depth of understanding implicit in the insider point of view. For the insider, knowledge of environment extends beyond vision to encompass the other senses and include dreams, memory, spirit, and myth which often unfold and are rooted in landscape (Riley, 1997). Bernard Lassus acknowledges the role that disparate levels of familiarity can play in the experiences of participants in landscape (Riley, 1998). For Lassus, coexistent with a layered depth of knowing and understanding of place, insider knowledge, is a degree of poetic mystery in contemplation of the palpable other, the unknowable which he refers to as the demeasurable. For the outsider, Lassus offers access to the poetic dimension by creating landscapes which promote imaginative participation and subtle links to the unconscious.
Approaches to Intervention

Landscape theorists have much to say in response to the question—Can interventions in culturally significant landscapes promote profound experience of place by inhabitants and visitors? James Corner and Bernard Lassus offer particularly significant observations and methods of working. By promoting profound experience through the introduction of thoughtful interventions, each theorist seeks to reconcile the processes of human dwelling with the environment.

Corner’s primary directive is two-fold—1) to challenge conventional methods of landscape representation, 2) to reengage landscape to facilitate a closer relationship with landscape, physically and psychically. He uses the terms re-present or recover to discuss various aspects of this macro concept. Strategies for reengaging landscape are most cogent to this inquiry. In describing strategies for reengagement, Corner presents history of the concept of landscape and posits the idea that landscape has come to be synonymous with cultural estrangement. Corner first distinguishes between various roots of landscape, most notably the Old English landskip (visually derived or iconic) and the Old German landschaft (meaning the everyday) (Corner, 1998, p.24). Corner suggests that the objectifying connotation of landskip, a primary root of landscape, is at least partially to blame, if not at the very root of the anomic and estrangement endemic to contemporary culture. Corner further suggests that landscape architects and planners seek to a return in process and proposals to “an emphasis upon the experiential intimacies of engagement, participation, and use over time and upon the way geometrical form and formal concerns can serve human economy” (Corner, 1998, p.24). The everyday and the working landscape are privileged over the master planned and the composed.

Lassus has two prime concerns— “how intervention produces transformation in the landscape experience” (Riley, 1998, p.9) and how “diversity of landscape experience” is facilitated and encouraged through intervention (Jacobs, 1998, p.8). A secondary concern of Lassus’ is the role of time in the process of landscape formation, how the participant experiences time, how time and its effects are expressed and actuated in intervention. These concerns have as their logical end the promotion of physical and imaginative participation, or personal reinvention, on the part of those who encounter his work. His primary means is an reinvention and/or inflection of landscape heterogeneity. Lassus’ position regarding treatment of the physical environment to promote profound experience is summed up nicely by the following—“a landscape is built upon the need to sustain the potential of the site: to affirm its present potential and to invent its future” (Jacobs, 1998, p.8).

Depth

“The black of a hole is like the flame of a fire. The flame makes the energy of fire visible. The black hole is the earth’s flame—its energy”
Andy Goldsworthy in (Friedman and Goldsworthy, 1990).

The work of Corner and Lassus has a common sub-theme, the exploration of depth. Corner explores methods of creating depth of meaning for landscape through its representation and through seeking the eventual realization of built work that enables depth of expression, of both physical and psychic engagement, and depth of humanistic relationship with the land that is congruent with historic, engrained ways of relating to the land. Lassus seeks depth in the physical psychic experience of participants in his projects. He considers depth in both its vertical and horizontal dimensions, both in the transition from sky to earth and from urban to wild. In both examples, Corner and Lassus, the implusus to move beneath surface or move beyond detached view, to increase the depth of daily experience, lies at the heart of their work. Lassus’ works in particular—his writing, proposals, and built projects—offer an exhaustive examination of the many manifestations of depth.

Lassus on Depth

The earth’s surface has been explored; every corner of it. Most of the earth’s surface is now decidedly landscape as opposed to wild or nature. As a consequence, the sense an untainted or dangerous wild and the imaginative qualities its potentiality lent to space is not applicable to the vast majority of design scenarios; as an imaginative dimension, the horizontal dimension of landscape is no longer a productive field of inquiry for the architect (Bann, 1998). In his recognition of this condition, Lassus has identified and turned away from modes and styles design that are conceptually grounded in traditional ideas of transition from the domestic, to the cultivated, to the natural, to the wild unknown. Lassus asks a rhetorical question, “Can we any longer attempt the traditional ways of progressively conquering wildness with constructed forms in the horizontal dimension” (Bann, 1998, p. 183).

As will be discussed in depth later, a central tenant of Lassus’ theory is that the imagination must be engaged. With the loss of the imaginative in the horizontal dimension, Lassus turns to the vertical dimension, which he most often refers to as depth. Lassus’ speculative project, The Well/1972, demonstrates the potential of depth to stimulate the imagination. The Well invites participants to drop a coin in to a well. Because the coin is intercepted in its fall, the expected splash does not materialize, and the participant is left to speculate or imagine the fate of the coin.

After securing an acknowledgement of the unknown in the vertical dimension, Lassus seeks to extend the concept of depth beyond the Cartesian grid. Lassus asserts that the visible aspect of landscape is but a fraction of its totality, which lies beneath or beyond the visible (Lassus, 1998). He states—(In landscape) we have what is largely an interplay between the ‘seen’ and the “hidden”—between what is directly perceived and

Here Lassus is clearly making a case for depth not only in the vertical dimension, but also in the temporal. Not only can the earth have depth, but experience place (experience over time) can too. And, not only can one imagine depth, but imagination has its own dimension of depth. In his design for the Garden of the Tuleries, Lassus also explores the possibility of historic depth, which he relates physically to archeological depth. Furthermore, regarding Lassus’ proposal for The Garden of the Anterior, Stephen Bann observes that the landscape “presupposes….a repudiation of the horizontal dimension….in favor of the rediscovery of the vertical dimension in which time and space are conjoined” (Bann, 1998, p.185).

Lassus uses the example of The Well, a speculative imagining, to articulate a central concept in his work, the demeasurable. The demeasurable is, in part, that which can not be comprehended instrumentally, occurring just beyond the grasp of empirical investigation; the demeasurable is “the immeasurable of the imagination” (Bann, 1998, p.185). Consider again the possibility of a stone that vanishes when dropped into a well. The phenomenon leads the participant to speculate about the potential dimensions of the well. Does it fully penetrate the earth? Its imaginative dimension proves to be infinite (Lassus, 1998). The Well approximates the effect of camouflage, in that it extends the imaginative dimension. Lassus explores camouflage again in Stockholm, The Landscape (Lassus, 1998). Lassus’ sudden realization that he was standing before an enormous camouflaged warship at harbor leads him to speculate on the optical effect of camouflage. He concludes that camouflage has the effect of extending the dimension of the ship, and certainly extending the imaginative dimensions of the city’s edge (Lassus, 1998).

Lassus labels the unknown dimension of these phenomena the demeasurable. He also uses demeasurable to describe the poetic (vernacular) constructions of certain folk artists, whom he refers to as dweller-landscapers (Bann, 1998). The folk gardens Lassus studies utilize manipulations of scale and juxtaposition of iconic figures and symbols to stimulate the imagination of visitors. The gardens combine humor and wonderment. Lassus’ intent in his use of the concept of the demeasurable is to emphasize interest in the role of the participant’s imagination in forming and engaging landscape (Bann, 1998). The demeasurable, plays and instrumental role in allowing a reading of meaning in the work of Lassus, the demeasurable being that dimension which is recognizable, but not fully comprehensible. The demeasurable is both that which is and that which is becoming.

Lassus also explore the implications of depth in a different scale and context in his wading of the Aradin River/1965. As a way of understanding the significance of this experience to Lassus’ work, consider a quote by Victor Shklovskii—

“The crooked road, the road on which the foot senses the
stones, the road which turns back on itself—this is the road of art.’

The phrase *the road on which the foot senses the stones* offers a clue. The road here may be said to symbolize the horizontal dimension, that aspect of spatial experience that is fully known; *on which the foot senses the stones* would then represent the tactile and visually inaccessible dimension of depth. Each step for Lassus involves the exploration of at least two dimensions, the horizontal and the vertical (Bann, 2003). In effect, Lassus’ tenuous walk up the Aradin River is a metaphor for his professional traverse the temporal ground separating the horizontal as a paradigm of landscape imagination and his conception of the new landscape of the vertical, the frontier of historical layering and the demeasurable.

It would be useful here to make reference to the concept of *ground* which will be examined in depth later in this text. In short, *ground* as developed by Robin Dripps, is the under-layer of landscape, both physical and metaphorical. Dripps develops the concept by exploring aspects of depth in the work of Gaston Bachelard. In reference to his phenomenological treatment of the dwelling and his metaphorical exploration of the cellar, Dripps writes, “The cellar contrasts with a site’s simple autonomy and provides the antidote to its inhabitant’s estrangement of the world” (Dripps, 2005, p.67). So the dimension of depth reconciles, in part, the inhabitant’s (and the architect’s) separation from the other; subject and object are metaphorically joined in the depth. Furthermore she writes, “Forest and *ground* are just those places that tend to destabilize the authority of human artifice so that these subterranean passages connecting the distant forest become the necessary complement to a premature foreclosing of political and personal injury. Concentration (depth) and extension (the horizontal) coexist to make this complex whole” (Dripps, 2005, p.67). The vertical dimension combined with the horizontal dimension, constitutes *ground*—the under-layer of landscape.

**Depth and the Residue of Dwelling**

The processes of landscape formation, cultural interaction with and adaptation of environment—dwelling—produce physical manifestations which become artifacts as subsequent layers of inhabitation accumulate. What assumptions may be made about the basis on which a landscape architect might intervene in a landscape with a history of inhabitation? To what degree and to what end should the residue of layered cultural and environmental depositions on a site be considered and retained?

In her examination of the complex structures and flow that underlie landscape, Robin Dripps attempts to answer these questions. Dripps considers an intellectual debate that occurred among leaders of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. The debate centered on the nature of beginning, on the different views of architecture represented by the terms *prendre parti* and *tirer parti*; *prendre parti* refers to the representation that is today referred to
simply as parti (Dripps, 2005). A parti is “unencumbered by attachments that might compromise its formal authority”; as such, the parti has come to be emblematic of the architectural object, a composition that has unity and autonomy (Dripps, 2005, p.75). *Prendre parti* favors distinction of form and separation from the background. Alternatively, “*tirer parti* means to take advantage of or make the best from what you find” (Dripps, 2005, p.76). *Tirer parti* favors adaptive form and integration with surroundings.

Dripps also develops the concept of invention. She points to differences in historical and modern conceptions of invention. As the concept of *prendre parti* become ever more engrained in a language of architecture favors and rewards distinct, separable form, the meaning of invention also shifted (Dripps, 2005). Whereas to invent had historically connoted something closer to the modern meaning of reinvent, to remake or find potential in and existing condition, invent came to mean to make something new, as in to be inventive. These subtleties of meaning have had an enormous impact on the articulation of form conceived as invention. Dripps points to the similarity between *tirer parti* and historic meanings of invention; she suggests this historic precedent as a point of departure for a reinvention of concepts of beginning in architectural discourse (Dripps, 2005). The implication is that traces and artifacts of past use should play a significant role in an imaginative reinvention of landscape which responds to context.

Similarly, Bernard Lassus’ approach to the complexities of the environmental and culturally layered landscape is to reinvent it. Bann states that Lassus seeks to reinvent landscapes with historical complexity by treating the site as a palimpsest (Bann, 1995). In an interview with Udo Weilacher, Lassus admonishes landscape architects with the following directive, “We must be inventive” (Weilacher, 1999, p. 116). Lassus demonstrates his ideas regarding physio-historic or archeological depth in his proposal Redesign of the Tuileries Gardens for which “he proposed a revolutionary approach to the restoration of a historic garden, which consisted on superimposing different levels corresponding to the different historical stages traversed by the garden’ (Lassus, 1998, p.38). Lassus developed the following set of principles to guide re-invention of a space with extreme historic complexity which remains a vital part of the Parisian cultural space (Weilacher, 1999, p. 107) —

1) *Restoring those portions of the garden with sufficient documentation or which had been adequately preserved from a significant historic period.*

![Fig. 2-1. Diagramatic study exploring how dwelling in place often reduces surface texture. Common ground, a point of reference, lies beneath.](image)
2) Rehabilitating those portions of the garden for which documentation exists, but at a level insufficient to guide restoration.
3) Re-invention of the portions that lack documentation in a manner congruent but not limited by historic patterns of use.

Lassus’ aim in reinvention is not to summon nostalgia or sentimentality for the loss of an idealized past, but to acknowledge the complexities of becoming and “to reinvest the present with fresh perceptions and new opportunities” (Bann, 1995, p.71).

**Depth of Engagement**

Questions regarding scales of engagement are central to the work of Lassus. In his account of wading the Aradin River, Lassus reports the degree to which the depth of the water, its flowing surface, forced him to walk slowly, to make conscious judgments with each step, to feel with his feet the River’s bottom (Lassus, 1998). Lassus makes distinctions concerning scale of engagement that allow him to articulate experience by way of phenomenological experiments such as wading the Aradin. The scale of immersion in the Aradin is the tactile.

Lassus makes a basic distinction between experience at the visual scale and experience at the tactile scale. The visual is that which is at a distance sufficient to feel removed, we only perceive the visual scale by means of the eye. Conan observes that the visual experience “dematerializes the world” (Conan, 2004). The visual scale, depending on the context, can either be the scale of imaginative contemplation, as in the sublime, or the scale of base detachment and indifference.

The tactile scale is the scale at which we apprehend the world, the one which gives environment a material reality, “the one in which we move” (Lassus, 1998, p.43). The tactile experience involves a degree of anticipation (Conan, 2004). While the tactile involves a degree of intimacy, it also can be extended by means of tools or vehicles (Lassus, 1998). For instance, the speed available to the auto traveler extends the range of the tactile. Conan offers as example the experience of driving a car alongside a stone wall° (Conan, 2004). As in the case of Lassus’ wading, the visual information received at the tactile scale requires additional levels of engagement to allow comprehension or to avoid injury. Caroline Lavoie observes that articulated surface or implied danger in surface or ground plane heightens environmental perception (Lavoie, 2005). Design that encourages engagement at the tactile scale is critical to a more imaginatively engaging relationship with landscape. In this context, George Descombes states, ‘It is absurd that artist like Richard Serra have to remind architects that the human body should be the central point of reference in architecture, that a step is determined by the human stride, that tactility—touch—is important’ (Descombes, 1999, p.80)°.
Surface and Experiential Depth

A central tenant of Lassus’ work is that the heterogeneous (cognitive field/landscape) is more receptive than the homogenous. However, not only is the heterogeneous more receptive than the homogenous, it also heightens our perception of and adds depth to our experience of landscape. In an essay extolling the virtues of sketching the landscape, Caroline Lavoie states that there is a direct correlation between the relative pronouncement of surface and environmental qualities, such as roughness and heat, and the extent to which the qualities of place are represented in depth and detail (Lavoie, 2005). The first conclusion to be drawn from Lavoie’s observation is obvious, that environmental qualities influence the participant’s experience of place. Another conclusion is less obvious, that roughness of surface, which affects our perception of danger, actually modifies the level or quality of our perception, hence Lavoie’s observation that “The uneven surface—demanding greater concentration for exploring—helps me to connect and increases my awareness and my will….” (Lavoie, 2005, p.16). So surface texture, the relative heterogeneity of surface articulation has a direct influence on the depth of our experience with landscape.

Musician Richard Thompson addresses texture in music in a trailer to the film, The Grizzly Man (Herzog, 2005). Thompson is asked by the director, Werner Herzog, to compose and play an introduction to the film that will convey power, dissonance, and raw, dark emotion. After several takes, Thompson verbalizes his feelings and his thoughts on the essence of musical power—

You want music that transcends…something. And sometimes if its rough…has a rough quality, it transcends. If you repeat music too often…if you…rub the edges off music, you really take away. The music is in the edges. Its in the rough bits. If you smooth it over, you’ve got nothing left…you’ve got notes left, but no music. So there’s always a striving to something alive…something fresh…something that has…ah…vitality to it.

The heterogeneous, the rough edges, the crusty texture of music is what imparts vitality, the quality that allows a musician to express visceral, corporal being. In music, the heterogeneous surface, the rough texture allows, even demands imaginative participation.

If, as Lavoie suggest, a relatively heterogeneous surface facilitates an increased sensitivity to detail in landscape, might the articulated surface also prepare one to receive a suggestion of what lies beneath? Shklovskii’s comments once again offer a way of making connections—

‘The crooked road, the road on which the foot senses the stones, the road which turns back on itself—this is the road of art.’

The phrase the road on which the foot senses the stones suggests that corporal or tactile engagement of the road is a neces-
sary aspect of experiencing the road of art: this is, the road which allows the participant to see for the first time what was already there. Indeed, Lassus focuses on accommodation for and return to sensitivity. He states, “one of the most important aspects of my work (has always been) how can I restore sensitivity to daily life?” (Weilacher, 1999, p.117). Lassus repeatedly makes reference to importance for his work to engage the everyday landscape: “My field of work is everyday life” (Weilacher, 1999, p.116).

James Corner also calls for landscape architects to look on the everyday landscape or the working landscape as source of inspiration and with a renewed vision for its future integration (Corner, 1998). As J. B. Jackson and other have noted, perhaps no other category of landscape is more a part of daily life than the road (Jackson, 1994). The road then is a fertile field for work which seeks as its end and increased sensitivity to the everyday.

However, another look at the quote by Shklovskii suggests that the road that leads to increased sensitivity or awareness is not the paved road of widespread everyday experience; it is the road which has texture or roughness, the road on which the foot senses the stones. The surface of this road provides clues to what lies beneath. Can not one also infer that the experiences one has while traveling the road of art would offer clues to what lies beyond?

If the road of art is the road that gives clues to what lies beneath, the surface with texture, the way that doesn’t become an endless series of scenes without structure, then what of the road of common experience, the highway, the interstate? Lavoie discusses the role surface plays in perception of landscape features. In discussing a street scene she had chosen as a sketching subject Lavoie includes the following quote by Paul Carter—

_We do not feel the surface of the ground nor do we align our lives with its inclines, folds, and pockets. We glide over it; and to do this, to render what is rough, smooth, passive, passable, we linearize it, conceptualizing the ground, indeed the civilized world, as an ideally flat space...._ (Lavoie, 2005, p.16).

Lavoie suggests that the impulse to create flattened, easily comprehended space rises from our desire to “sterilize and control space using the homogenized ground plane as a primary instrument of control” (Lavoie, 2005, p.16). She also talks of the role a sense of danger plays in making the textured, unsmooth surface more perceptible. The possibility of a fall for the pedestrian or a crash for the driver/passenger makes the participant more aware of surface, more present, thus more receptive and open to engagement. This observation also points to experiential differences in the scale of engagement. Furthermore, Dripps suggests that textural complexity, heterogeneous surface, leads to increased potential in becoming; she writes, “edges, seams, junctures, and other gaps reveal moments of fertile discontinuity where new relationships might grow” (Dripps, 2005, p.71).
Normative Cultural Landscape Practices

There is a widely held maxim among LA's that introduced elements in a given site or region should reflect, respond to, or, in the least be inspired by the unique characteristics of place. Frazier Osment makes the observation, however, that temporal implications of this widely held assumption is rarely called into question by practitioners (Osment, 2002). Throughout the various eras of theoretical development in LA, the notable exception of certain modernists, the basic premises of this philosophy have been recycled with nuanced meaning and appeared under different monikers—genius loci, design with nature, sense of place, ecological/native design, context sensitive design, signature-based design (Bann, 1995). Common among these approaches is a general concern for the 'fit' and appropriateness of introduced elements or manipulations of topography.

Such operations, however, all too often result in works based primarily on visual characteristics, as Osment points out, or result in works which respond to place in a superficial way, such as the promotion of native plant use in a manner which doesn’t take into account variations in soil type, surface hydrology, aspect, and plant communities that truly determine the endemic habitats of native species, or such as design imperatives that privilege certain aspects of landscape to the exclusion of detriment of others. These operations often result in alarming, if somewhat placating, illusory effects which present a veneered surface or appearance that is mimetic of natural/vernacular/or place characteristics. The intent is to create an illusion of well being, safety, comfort, connection. Such illusion can create indistinguishably blurred relationships between the pre-existing condition and the introduced elements, often in the questionable service of transition or naturalness.

Robert Thayer addresses this illusory design from the standpoint of sustainability in landscape with his concept of surface/core congruency. In brief, Thayer proposes that the qualities and essence of an architectural or ground surface should be congruent with the conditions and processes of becoming which allow it to exist and be perceived. There is an implied level of integrity and honesty in Thayer’s concept; he further states that clear distinctions should be made between pre-existing and introduced elements, which does not preclude blending, but mandates transparency in intent. [The New Urbanist approach is and apt example of the blurring of such distinctions in its historicity which challenges the surface/core congruency of Thayer.] In discussing J.B. Jackson’s concern for social justice in landscape expressed in his essay “To Pity the Plumage and Forget the Dying Bird”, George Henderson echoes Thayer’s concern for congruency of surface appearance and substratum, with specific concern for the social conditions that underlie designed landscapes (Henderson, 2003).

Preservation

These issues become particularly focused, though no less
problème quand le design entre dans le domaine des paysages culturellement significatifs et/ou des paysages qui abritent des événements culturellement significatifs \(^{11}\). La réponse des professionnels du design et de la gestion professionnelle dans de telles situations a souvent été la préservation \(^{12}\). La réponse est compréhensible, pour protéger une source culturelle précieuse qui doit être stabilisée, protégée et gérée intégralement, de manière permanente.

La préservationniste est noble \(^{13}\), mais elle oublie les processus de devenir et d’engagement actif (démembrement) qui confèrent du sens au lieu ; elle institutionnalise et stultifie les processus dynamiques et spontanés de vie authentique, de l’environnement et de la communauté, qui produisent de riches paysages (Osment, 2002). Rodgers souligne que “purge de rancœur politique et de misère ordinaire (le quotidien), les paysages qui projettent le mystère (romance) des âges passés….retiennent leur emprise et l’imagination humaine, devenant totem de prestige et d’idéologie” (Rodgers, 2001, p.473). Cependant, ces paysages oublient également la vérité de l’idée de Thayer sur la surface et le cœur du concept ; Rodgers avance, “les icônes héréditaires ne tapent pas les réservoirs personnels de mémoire” et cite Kevin Lynch de la City Sense and City Design, “Nous commencerions à commémorer les histoires des gens ordinaires dans les lieux ordinaires [à mesure que] le temps local, intime a beaucoup plus de pouvoir pour nous que le temps illustre de monuments nationaux” (Rodgers, 2001, p.473).

Michael Murphy critique les efforts de préservation en soulignant les déficiences opérationnelles du lieu préservé dans le contexte de la transformation et des formes culturelles qui sont en constante évolution. Rodgers se joint à Murphy, soulignant que l’attachement culturel à un certain ensemble d’images est souvent derrière les efforts de préservationniste, et que ce set d’images est maintenu en suspension, éloigné d’une compréhension significative du contexte et des conditions temporels dans lesquels il a été valu (Murphy, 2005; Rodgers, 2001). Murphy affirme que le sentiment d’émotion de suspension du lieu de préservationniste qui souvent résulte de l’effort de préservationniste contraint le mandat des architectes paysagers à “faire la forme et améliorer le paysage ; le paysage est une forme dynamique, pas une forme statique” (Murphy, 2005, p.147).
In the context of his criticism of preservationist philosophy, Murphy makes a critical statement regarding the essential intention of landscape architecture with regard to cultural landscapes—“Landscape form should not only be functional, physically attractive, and amenable to change, but should also encourage and promote change….the landscape should facilitate the continued elaboration of new and more appropriate conditions and relationships” (Murphy, 2005, p.147).

George Descombes expresses a similar position—“Landscape never finished or completed like a can of preserves: it is and accumulation of events and stories, and continuously unfolding inheritance” (Descombes, 1999, p.81).

How then, should landscape architects proceed when called on to intervene in culturally significant or vernacular landscapes? Rodgers presents another quote by Lynch that offers direction “to conserve and to destroy the physical environment so as to support and to enrich the sense of time held by the people that use it” (Rodgers, 2001, p.473). Lassus proposes a similar approach. In commenting on Lassus' theory Michel Conan states, “The search for historical authenticity, for the meaning that should be given to each part of the site, would mean choosing a determined horizon of interpretation and therefore give priority to a single cultural reading of each place” (Conan, 2004, p.90). Echoing the spirit of Thayer’s concept of surface/core congruency, Conan states that in Lassus’ work “verisimilitude takes precedent over the quest for authenticity” as a framework for excellence (Conan, 2004, p.8). Lassus seeks to express and build on the true spirit of the place. He seeks to recognize the fullest extent of dwelling and the role of time in changing the cultural significance and meaning of landscape (Conan, 2004). Thus, the range of possibilities for active engagement and, more importantly, the capacity of the place to resist calcification by being open to imaginative reinvention or reinterpretation are severely impaired. Instead, Lassus seeks to broaden the range of potential becoming of a place by introducing ‘elements of ambiguity’. Yet, as previously discussed, Lassus does not propose that a site be wiped clean. Rather, Lassus proposes

![Fig. 2-3. Renovations underway at the Floyd Country Store in 2006. This landscape supports a sense of history while maintaining flexibility.](image-url)
A revised ontology for intervention is demanded by current cultural debates and contemporary transitions in cultural paradigms. In general, postmodern culture is moving from a static sense of space and time to one in which time and space are relative. Human existence is no longer autonomous and absolute but in relation to other bodies and phenomena.

Discussing the work of Lassus, Conan observes that a change in ontological paradigms for is underway and is having a profound effect the nature of contemporary thinking about design intervention (Conan, 2004). In discussing parallels between ecology and emerging landscape theory, Kristina Hill notes shifting ontology for ecology and tendency of “theoretical metaphors (to) cross disciplinary boundaries” (Hill, 2005, p.132). A multitude of sources note that postmodern challenges to spatial concepts derived from subject/object duality and to planning concepts based on static, Cartesian space are changing the way architects and landscape architects conceive of interventions. In recent discourse, the picturesque, which privileges a particular viewpoint (physical and cultural) and seeks to compose a landscape as a painterly composition, and the modernist landscape, which considers landscape as an autonomous entity onto which discrete entities might be introduced, have both been called into question as valid modes for evaluating landscapes. In contrast to the rooted connotation of place—to be in place—Kristina Hill notes the shifting nature of both site and place and how historic
conceptions of place have been challenged by theories such as the nonequilibrium paradigm (Hill, 2005). This new paradigm considers the fluid aspects of landscape to be integral to design, acknowledges the role of time, and allows equally valid readings from multiple points of view. It also recognizes that space is differentiated by experience, (Heidegger, 1971) and that human activity is instrumental in the process of landscape formation (Conan, 2004).

**Approaches To Landscape**

*‘It is with our entire being that we stand before a landscape’*

Simmel in (Conan, 2004, p.7)

Two distinct but related theoretical frameworks have developed in response to the new ontology for design. One framework seeks to challenge traditional concepts of spatial duality—the personal and the other, inside and outside. The other framework embraces the fluidity of landscape and seeks to incorporate aspects of change and time into landscape. Both frameworks acknowledge indeterminacy. First, to challenge duality—

**Challenging Boundaries**

In his essay entitled *Ecology and Landscape as Agents of Creativity*, Corner develops the concept that certain western intellectual traditions which privilege rationality, seek cultural mastery of nature, and perpetuate subject/object dualities have lead to an impoverishment of the spirit and an impoverished relationship with the land (Corner, 1997). He also recognizes the existential paradox that arises from an ontology based on subject/object dualities—the sense that one is both separate from and part of one’s surroundings. John Briggs also notes this paradox in his examination of Layerist art (Briggs, 2004). Corner suggests that this existential crisis can be overcome in part by imaginative engagement of the physical as spiritual aspects of landscape. He further suggests that representational methods, such as the collage of Max Ernst offer ways of re-associating the human body/intellect and the environment. He suggest that such collage techniques construct imaginative relationships turning seemingly disparate or autonomous objects into interrelated components of a cognitive field; that they create bodily and spatial indeterminacy, and suggest simultaneous spatial occupation by objects (Corner, 1997).

In the absence of distinct entities, subject and object, the in-between assumes a role of magnified significance. The in-between is the non-body that differentiates figure, that aspect of space often equated with landscape (Clarke, 2005). Because it is a place of potential action the in-between has been by turns either exploited or ignored. Postmodernist critiques of Cartesian space have called into question past injustice done to that which lies between, and seek recognition the necessity and agency of the in-between. Clarke writes, “By reconsidering the middle or in-between as a potentiality, as the place wherein possibility, futurity, and becoming unfold, we also then allow landscape...
architecture a valued, crucial agency in cultural production” (Clarke, 2005, p.53).

For theoretical grounding, Clarke points to the work of theorists Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. The ontology of Deleuze and Guattari play an instrumental role in rethinking the in-between—the in-between constituting the phenomenal aspects of being that produce and allow participants to engage landscape (Clarke, 2005). Clarke also incorporates Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of the Body without Organs. She explains that The Body without Organs offers an alternative, perhaps truer (in the sense of Lassus’ striving for verisimilitude), relational model than linear hierarchical models such the root/tree model and binary pairs (Clarke, 2005). Clarke states, “The Body without Organs exchanges stable, interiorized, unifying qualities of a traditionally defined subject (human or otherwise), for perpetually changing, unstable, impermanent qualities of a body without boundaries” (Clarke, 2005, p.53). The resulting agent has a “porous identity”, is necessarily concomitant with its surroundings, and is continually “transformed by an ongoing active exchange” with its surroundings. (Clarke, 2005, p.53). Yet, the body remains an entity in as much as it is recognizable, even if only by non-instrumental means. Clarke also points to collage, and to photomontage, as an effective way of representing the body, non-body.

In ‘Signifying Ritual’ Yuriko Saito writes about the distinction between “substance ontology” and “process ontology” (Kim, 2002). Saito points to the role that time plays in perception and environmental experiences. Saito also reveals the fallacy of reduction that occurs when we perceive environments as static, a misinterpretation that has informed the long-held paradigm of substance ontology. Alternatively, process ontology seeks to construct a reality that recognizes the ultimately fluid nature of surface and flux of time. Saito’s process ontology accurately describes the process and cultural significance of ground.

In her essay Groundwork, Robin Dripps proposes a radical conception of the limits of a site and the significance of site’s context and substratum which she calls ground (Dripps, 2005). Dripps addresses the concept of ground in both a literal ‘real’ and metaphorical sense, as the biological and geologic structure of the earth and as the stage on which consciousness unfolds. Dripps states, “Metaphorically, ground refers to the various patterns of physical, intellectual, poetic, and political structure.

Ground

Between the idea
And the reality
Between the motion
And the act
Falls the shadow.

T. S. Eliot in The Hollow Man (Bartletts)
that intersect, overlap, and weave together to become the context for human thought and action” (Dripps, 2005, p.59). Ground includes all the layers of human intervention in combination with the physical and ecological processes of nature. Ground produces landscape. Ground is a process, in constant flux and is infinitely complex.

A clear distinction must be made between ground and site. Though it bears a degree of cultural significance as a record of land tenure, site is essentially an artificial designation which derives significance from politically determined convention (Dripps, 2005). The boundaries of a site delimit the field of physical action, but do not limit either the pervasive, underlying influence of ground on the site or the influence that intervention on a site will have on the surrounding environment. Optimistically, site may be considered as a “repository of clues to ground” (Dripps, 2005). Site may also be understood as the temporarily static superimposed on the fluid.

In a society that numbers among its core principles the concept of private ownership, the designation of site is necessary in that it allows interventions to proceed within political and legal structures. However, there is an inherent danger in considering site; site has an objectifying and limiting effect on ground. Designation of site produces “figure and has thereby reduced the potential for accommodating the fullest range of human possibility” (Dripps, 2005). Dripps concept of ground and the extended field of site also call into question conventional understandings of boundary. So, while J. B. Jackson in his examination of the spatial relationships borne out of dwelling in the landscape emphatically states, “The most basic political element in any landscape is the boundary. Boundaries, therefore, unmistakable, permanent, inviolate boundaries, are essential” (Jackson, 1984, p.13), Martin Heidegger states with similar conviction, “A boundary is not that at which something stops but, as the Greeks recognized, the boundary is that from which something begins its presencing” (Heidegger, 1971, p.152).

Indeed, Dripps calls for a categorical re-invention of site, one that expands it metaphorically and psychologically beyond the limits of boundary. She states instead of, “limiting the site to its artificial political and economic boundaries, the site ought to be considered more as a special repository of clues—an opening to more extensive and varied grounds” (Dripps, 2005, p.71). Dripps suggests that site contains clues to human intent, to ecological complexity, to flows of the animate, to flows of information, to hydrologic flows, and, perhaps most importantly, clues to fragmentary narratives of dwelling (Dripps, 2005). This body of clues, though variable by site in depth, invariably suggests imaginative recombination; site, as conceptualized by Dripps, is ripe with potential becoming, ripe for reinvention. Note that Lassus’ methods of revealing archeological strata are in direct response to the clues of site that Dripps identifies. Both Lassus and Dripps emphasize the potential of imaginative becoming in the temporally layered horizons of the past and present.
"Building accomplishes its nature in the raising of locations by the joining of their spaces." (Heidegger, 1971, p.157)

"Culture is a thick and active archeology, akin to a deep field that is capable of further moral, intellectual, and social cultivation" (Corner, 1997, p.84)

In his act of wading the Aradin River, Lassus is symbolically immersing himself in the demeasurable, the continual state of becoming. He is immersing himself in landscape. The juxtaposition of his tentative, unsteady movements with the graceful flow of the river nicely encapsulates the philosophers struggle to comprehend and actuate the demeasurable. Lassus is inflecting the demeasurable. In doing so, his experience is dramatically tactile, intimate. Lassus notes that his steps have at once a horizontal movement and a vertical movement (Lassus, 1998). His movements simultaneously express horizontal movement, wanting to be elsewhere characteristic of the visual scale, and vertical movement/depth, wanting to be fully here, fully present. Consider once more Dripps’ comment regarding the metaphorical effect of simultaneity in the vertical and horizontal dimensions, “Concentration and extension coexist to make this complex whole. Thus, the section cutting through the castle from sky to earth extends the closed figure of the plan and connects it to possibilities not yet imagined” (Dripps, 2005, p.69).

The music venues linked together by The Crooked Road exist within a thick fabric of physical, metaphoric, and psychic realities which combine to make place. In light of Dripps’ statement, might the cross-section of a music venue extend to “possibilities not yet imagined”? If we take as a mandate her challenge to see site as, “an opening to more extensive and varied grounds” (Dripps, 2005, p.71), might the effects of Lassus’ experiment be translated to inflections in the cultural ground of traditional music venues, the experience of the road, a regional landscape?

Nonetheless, to be legible, space or place must be more or less distinct, defined by our ability to perceive it (Hill, 2005). In the least, it must be bounded by a general characterization or intuitive feeling sufficient to enable its identification. Dripps points out that once a place or site is opened, is made more responsive and receptive to the processes of ground, “attention shifts away from the center and toward an increasing number and variety of edges” (Dripps, 2005, p.85). This is the affect of the heterodite\textsuperscript{15}, an embrace of the edges, a challenge to “unified composition…(that emphasizes)…the internal heterogeneity of a work” Conan, 2004, p. 90). Yet, the complexity, the problem of boundary remains and contains and intellectual trap. Boundaries potentially create a potentially alienating duality, inside and outside.

Dripps’ solution to this quandary arises from the recognition that a boundary not only separates, but also joins. One might think that the solution would be to make boundaries distinct, in the
manner of a razor’s edge or a window. However, Dripps' solution is to set inside and outside in dialectical opposition, to create a dialogue. She suggests that the dual nature of boundary, simultaneously becoming inside and outside gives it an intellectual thickness and porosity as a concept (Dripps, 2005). The solution for Dripps is to impart a similar thickness to spatial boundaries, to give them a sponge-like thickness and porosity. Again, there is a connection to the heterodite which “privileges ambiguity of meaning” and seeks to enable expansive, personal interpretations of place by “introducing elements of ambiguity in the treatment of the limits between fragments” (Conan, 2004, p.90).

If one looks to ecology as a model, the areas of greatest diversity and potential for becoming are the eco-tones, the edges of ecosystems. The eco-tone and the heterodite are alike in that thickness, porosity, and edge complexity only add to potential for becoming. Like the ecosystem model, the place of region with thickened edges offers zones with different potentialities in articulation of identity. Dripps states—

…the apparent contradictory constructs of continuity and discontinuity are able to be present as the same time and place. With this comes the ability for the human to be part of the larger network of political, social, and ecological systems while at the same time being removed and protected from this excess complexity to reflect on how best to engage it (Dripps, 2005, p.87).

An ecosystem with a healthy, thick, heterogeneous edge is receptive while resilient. It has a degree of integrity or resistance, while holding the potential to respond to change and remains indeterminate. What better analogy for a healthy cultural site, rural community, or culturally significant region? In his critique of conservationist instrumentality and restorationist romanticism (Corner, 1997), James Corner calls for landscape architects to find creative ways of incorporating the sound principles of ecological understanding into the imaginative re-invention of cultural constructs. Dripps analogy of ecological boundary and site or place boundary unequivocally answers his call. Interestingly, the thickened boundary also holds the promise of dematerializing and thereby partially reconciling insider, outsider relationships of allowing a realization of the Body without Organs.

Embracing Change

‘Survival is not possible if one approaches the environment, the social drama, with a fixed, unchangeable point of view—the witless repetitive response to the unperceived.’

Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore (Howett, 1997, p.85)

A world devoid of autonomous, distinct entities, the Body without Organs, a world of interdependent fields or bodies of energy, is a world that can be chiefly characterized by dynamic relationships, by flows. This new world challenges the static rigidity and predictability of Cartesian space and is no longer adequately
described by points, lines, planes, and three dimensions, but seeks new geometries to manipulate flowing, shifting and ambiguous spatial constructs (Emmer, 2004). How are landscape architects to proceed in such an atmosphere that seemingly invalidates long-held touchstones of excellence such as durability, stability, balanced composition, completeness, legibility?

Karsten Harries suggests that the project of architecture (landscape architecture) should be “the interpretation of a way of life valid for our time” (Harries, 1997). Surely, a way of life…for our time can only be considered valid if it responds to and embraces change, flow, and ambiguity. Corner suggests that interventions which respond in a valid manner will increasing eschew appearances and autonomous visual composition as the end of good design. Instead, a recognition and incorporation of the agency of human and nonhuman activity, of the “dynamics of occupancy, and the poetics of becoming” will become the new operational standard (Corner, 1998, p.24). Corner proposes that landscape architects seek to establish “engendering strategies”, “frameworks”, and “well disposed fields” (Corner, 1998, p. 24). The function, and aesthetic, of such “strategic fields” is to facilitate the activities of becoming (the vernacular or everyday), to allow for flow and change, and to encourage creative, imaginative participation in forming landscapes that support a way of life valid for our time (Corner, 1997, p. 102).

Corner proposes that landscape architects seek to employ strategies primarily at the landscape or regional scale, favoring metrical and programmatic operations (Corner, 1998). However, while Lassus’ theoretical framework has much in common with Corner’s, Lassus asserts that positive change can be affected at the site scale, that appropriate interventions can have far-reaching implications and create lucid mental images from loosely allied objects or spaces (Lassus, 1998). Furthermore, while Corner suggests that landscape architecture should move away from compositional operations, Lassus contends that art, and therefore aesthetics, is a necessary component of the practice of landscape architecture, “It’s not possible to separate landscape architecture and art” (Weilacher, 1999, p.112). Interestingly, both Corner and Lassus look to the heterogeneous aspects of landscape—Lassus to this concept of the heterodite/Corner to “structured heterogeneity”—to guide outcomes. Because Lassus employees his theory on actual site-scale projects which encourage change and open-end interpretation, an examination of his work is crucial to this inquiry.

Open-ended Intervention

“The fact that a place exists before one proposes to do something to it has repercussions on the nature of the intervention and poses, in a radical way, the question of knowing whether or not one has to intervene….the minimal intervention is to bring other tangible dimensions to what is already there” (Lassus, 1998).

In an interview Lassus states “Minimal intervention doesn’t mean not wanting to do anything, but using espace propre...
carefully….This is the principle of minimal intervention: the place is not altered physically in any way and, nevertheless, you change the landscape" (Weilacher, 1999, p.117). Lassus offers his 1965 experiment with the tulip *Un air rose* as an example of a minimal intervention. In an effort to test the limits of transformation by intervention, and to better understand the nature of a tulip, Lassus inserted a strip of white card stock into the bell (volume) of a tulip flower. Lassus discovered that the intensity of color projected onto the strip increased relative to the depth of insertion into the flower, leading him to the conclusion that the color that eventually reached his eye is in fact, much more than surface reflection, a volume of color (Lassus, 1998). He then removed the card and reports, "If the flower appears to be the same, it is not…..Indeed, could I ever look at a tulip again without considering that it can be a volume of “air rose”?" (Lassus, 1998, p.13). In conclusion to the description of the experiment, he offers an aesthetic and a clue to thoughtful intervention, “for there to be a landscape, there does not need to be a physical transformation…”(Lassus, 1998, p.13)

Lassus describes his concept of *espace propre* (unique or personal space, the space of apprehension that occurs between but in contact with the planes of abstract/conceptual space and real/tactile space) as an exploration of “the connection between real and abstracted space” (Weilacher, 1999, p.111). He goes on to say, “I’m interested in the relationship between the imaginary components and the real” (Weilacher, 1999, p.111). So then, minimal interventions may be said to be those that change the participant’s perception and subsequent experience of landscape without dependence on physical alteration of its essence. Interventions are conceived and introduced with a sensitivity to relationships between conceptual or ‘abstracted space’, the space of the subconscious, the intellect, the imagination and the space of actuality, the space of visual and physical presence. Lassus makes five primary claims for the agency of appropriate minimal intervention. He states that such interventions can 1) suspend the complexities of temporal change via the
“de-realization of the poetic” which makes possible “luminous simultaneity”, 2) allow rediscovery of obscured aspects of being, 3) suggest relationships among objects in a heterogeneous field and call into question the nature of the field, 4) suggest the “possible evolution” of said objects or bring forth traces of new practices, and 5) engage the imagination of the participation in suggesting connections between the participant and the landscape” (Lassus, 1998).

On a practical level, using Lassus’ minimal intervention as a means of developing a conceptual framework to guide design decisions, allows designers to intervene sensitively in complex landscapes and bring often disparate parts under a single, though perhaps not easily discernible, conceptual umbrella (Weilacher, 1999). In an article describing his approach to intervening in The Swiss Way project, George Descombes is critical of generalizations often committed by those engaged in master planning activities. Descombes primary criticism is that the master plan is apt to oversimplify landscape in a search for unity and or what he refers to as a ‘clumsy totality’ (Descombes, 1999, p.80). As a working theory, minimal intervention lays the ground work for an answer to Descombes’ criticism by recognizing the value of the disparate parts of a heterogeneous composition or the landscape as it is.

This idea leads to a further consideration, the degree to which control is sought over experience and form in landscape; the degree to which landscape is ever complete, approaching object-ness, vs. the degree to which time in the form of cultural and environmental dynamics is expressed and accommodated landscape intervention. Lassus states, “the point today is no longer to provide one single answer….but rather several answers” (Lassus, 1998, p.52). In calling for minimal intervention, Lassus does not necessarily call for minimal form or detailing, though that approach is implied; rather he calls for a minimal intent to control experience, a minimal level of didacticism. Lassus refines this concept and suggests how it might be applied to landscape concerns in description of the heterodite.

**Heterogeneity Becoming Heterodite**

Lassus’ heterodite arises from two primary interests—1) his readings of Foucault’s writings on the metaphysical distance between rational or utopian planning theories, which take place in conceptual space, and complexities of actual dwelling, which takes place in concrete space. Lassus appropriates the term espace propre to describe the interaction of conceptual and concrete space, which can only be comprehended by bodily experience (Weilacher, 1999). 2) his experiments with heterogeneity and the relative receptivity and accessibility of the heterogeneous field vs. the homogenous field. First, to examine ideas of receptivity and the heterogeneous.

Lassus has within the scope of his work the conception of a new poetics of landscape. In 1975 and 1976 he conducted a series of experiments intended to explore the underpinnings of this new
poetics which is to be found in the receptivity of the heterogeneous. As a subtitle to the 1976 experiment Glasses and Bottles II he penned the phrase Substratum + Contribution = New Landscape. Stemming from prior research on landscape integration, this experiment tests the receptivity of groups of objects varying in heterogeneity but assessing the degree to which introduced objects are visually integrated into the visual field. Lassus’ conclusion is explicit “The heterogeneous is more receptive than the homogenous” (Lassus, 1998, p.59).

Lassus then extrapolates his findings to landscape. He arrives at the conclusion that the heterogeneous landscape would likely be far receptive to cultural differences than the homogenous. Lassus’ aim is less a ‘warm fuzzy’ feeling of receptivity, that a cognitive accessibility that allows a maximum of engagement to the end of his overall goal of stimulating the imagination. “When that space is perceived as repetitive, the possibilities to appropriate it for oneself are accordingly diminished” (Lassus, 1998, p.93).

The glass and bottle experiments also tested the degree to which groupings of visually disparate but associated objects might be perceived as an ensemble. Michel Conan notes that this phenomenon was observed when vague similarities in the objects, similarities of use for example, allowed participants to deduce “proximities of meaning” (Conan, 2004, p.27). Conan states the experiment suggests that participants were able to perceive qualities of objects in a given field at multiple levels or horizons of perception. This observation validates the common perception of a thing ‘as it is’ and a thing in relation to its symbolic value. In addition, the findings suggest that distinctive, separate objects may be perceived as being part of a larger, more cohesive whole, and important observation for landscape intervention. What are the limits of this principal? How far removed in distance can objects be and still be associated with a whole? How far removed in time? Does it apply to place associations at a regional scale? The principal certainly has profound implications for works that seek to stimulate the subconscious such as the Kennedy Memorial by Geoffrey Jellicoe (Jellicoe, 1991). The principal should also prove indispensable in work that seeks to convey subtleties of meaning and reveal interconnected relationships.

In summation, Lassus’ experiments with the relative receptivity of heterogeneous and homogenous fields has implications for design interventions intended to be open to experience and various, thematically related, interpretations. The occurrence of gestalt perceptions which allow participants to find meaning in groupings of dissimilar but related objects could be used to great advantage in interventions which seek to simulate the subconscious and suggest relationships/ identity/ process/ temporality/ meaning, both at the site scale, and, possibly, the larger regional scale. Lassus’ findings might also be applicable to interventions which seek to address the visible (in Riley’s sense of the word) aspect of the auto travelers experience of landscape.
Inquiry into relationships between real and abstracted space informs Lassus’ sense of aesthetics, an influence expressed in his concept of the *Heterodite*. Lassus also maintains that relationships between real and abstracted space realized in landscape, which are a significant component of aesthetics, are inextricably intertwined with professional issues of social responsibility (Weilacher, 1999, p.114). In the sense that landscape is inherently political and reflects the values of its culture, Lassus calls for interventions that are not readily co-opted by political forces, and thereby remain receptive and responsive to the ebbs and flows of those who dwell therein (Jackson, 1984, Conan, 2004, p. 90).

*Heterodite*

The *heterodite* is a theory of aesthetics and composition and does not depart from the traditionally held concept of completeness in composition—that from which nothing need be added or removed (Conan, 2004). However, it does depart from traditionally held ideals of composition in that it doesn’t seek visual autonomy, it promotes a reading of landscape that doesn’t depend on homogeneity for validation, it allows a reading of completeness that is not dependent on finality; the “*heterodite* pursues the heterogeneous as the fundamental quality of a work”¹⁹ (Conan, 2004, p.88). Lassus relies heavily on internal contrast among the various components of a place to disallow a unified reading—an effect which keeps participants focused on spatial and metaphorical relationships in lieu of compositional unity and grand statement of intent (Conan, 2004). The *heterodite* encourages an engagement and perpetuation of the rich, rough edges of landscape. In doing so, the *heterodite* positions landscape architecture firmly in emerging social discourses, to “foreground those entities which present among them the greatest differences” (Lassus, 1998). In fact, Michel Conan states that Lassus is deeply concerned with the role his work might play in social change; he doesn’t, however, support the concept that artistic works can directly affect social change, as have designers from Olmstead to Le Corbusier and beyond, but seeks to affect experiences of landscape which stimulate the imagination and engender appreciation alternative points of view (Conan, 2004).

The *heterodite* calls for an uncovering of the various fragments of what may be multiple histories, or history from multiple viewpoints, of a place. The *heterodite* calls for the construction of an internal story of becoming. Yet, the *heterodite* does not offer a textural narrative; the narrative of the *heterodite* is more poetic, more akin to collage. Above all, the *heterodite* seeks to offer a contextualized history of place and an imaginative field for becoming by juxtaposing the place’s various fragments in a manner that will “allow people to produce themselves the interpretation of the places they are visiting” (Conan, 2004, p.90).

Introducing Lassus’ work at the Crazannes Quarry, Conan notes that certain intellectual traditions in architectural criticism seek to give meaning to place, to constructions, or objects (Conan,
The implication is that meaning is intrinsic to built form, much like meaning was ascribed to nature in the theories of the Romantics. Lassus seeks a wholly different source for meaning in his work. In fact, he does not seek to ascribe meaning at all. By introducing landscape inflections in keeping with principles of the *heterodite* he does propose to articulate form and spatial relationships in such a way that meaning emerges as one of the temporal qualities of a place; interpretations arise from the individual imaginative constructs of participants who experience landscape (Conan, 2004). This minimal intent, i.e. the minimal intervention, imbues his work with an open-ended quality. Lassus creates landscapes that unfold in the continuum of time, that become.

Minimal intent does not imply minimal engagement on Lassus’ part, however. As the Crazannes Quarry project demonstrates, Lassus goes to great lengths to encourage imaginative participation by users, while not dictating culturally of gender specific experiences and accommodating varying levels of engagement. Landscape experience and imaginative participation are critical prerequisites for meaning, which accrued as participants move through a site, in relation to the environment and in relation to one another (Conan, 2004). For Lassus, meaning is accrued through movement and association heterogeneous elements; the end of the *heterodite* is to accommodate those activities.

**Scales of Engagement**

Lassus’ purpose in articulating distinctions between scales of vision is clear. He conceives of the tactile and the visual scales as being representative of different horizons of perception (Conan, 2004). Lassus’ distinction of scales of vision begins to answer the question—how can the highway traveler be encouraged to participate in the linear landscape of the road at a level which promotes profound experience? How can one transform the landscape experience of the automobilist? Lassus would answer this question by suggesting that one seeks to alternate horizons of perception. On a large scale, such an alternation would involve the introduction of places to pause on the journey, places clearly indicated by perceptible changes in landscape; on a smaller site scale, variations in tactile and visual experience recast the automobilist as a pedestrian and potentially enrich the visceral experience of moving through the site.

The alternation of horizons of experience serves to organize spatially detached experiences, experiences of the heterogeneous. Lassus’ proposition that, “an intervention…..can create landscapes for what was only a heterogeneous succession of objects, or can question again the usual reading of a place” (Lassus, 1998, p. 50) implies that the spatial scale of intervention is limited only by the agency of the intervention in producing subconscious or overt associations in participants, by piquing the imagination or sensitivity of participants—to make them more fully participants. Regarding the Quarry at Crazannes, Conan
states—

“Visitors are invited to dream in these places and to bring them alive by lending their own interpretation. Unlike a book, the project does not propose that they gain new knowledge, but rather invites them to be carried along by their imagination….the alteration of tactile and visual experiences forms a sensory substratum…uniting all possible interpretations of the visitors…(allowing)…Lassus to create the conditions that will transform the time spent making this visit into a singular duration…endowed with an internal structure (landscape syntax) that is beyond the conscious level. (Juxtaposed fragments of the work of nature and the work of laboring hands) leads to an imaginary voyage, to the discovery of a network of relationships that (are not dependent on the highway) and that link this underground place with towns in the region.” (Conan, 2004, p.21).

In the Crazannes Quarry walk, visitors experience a landscape designed to alternately close in, becoming intimate and mysterious, and open to belvederes, revealing the horizon. At a small scale such as the Quarry walk, the technique allows Lassus to compress the remembered and imagined aspects of a visit into an event of a single duration. Thus, an internal structure can be imparted to the experience (Conan, 2004). Conan asserts, “the alternation of tactile and visual experiences forms a sensory substratum, a melody uniting all the possible interpretations of the visitors” (Conan, 2004, p.21). This sentence could easily be interpreted to mean an internal experiential structure forms a sense of place. Note also Conan’s use of a musical metaphor, melody, to describe discrete experiences occurring over time linked together by a common theme.

At a larger scale, that of a journey between venues along the Crooked Road for instance, attention could be called to the alternation of tactile and visual scales experienced while driving. In addition, and internal structure could be formed of the primarily visual experience of movement alternated with the primarily tactile experiences of pauses. The effect could be a structure that, while not reducing the heterogeneity of the road, allows a more comprehensible reading of duration and the linear, compartmentalized landscape of the road; one that enables more Gestalt, less dissociated understanding of place, a sort of syntax that makes the journey more legible and comprehensible. In this context, Conan’s melody metaphor acquires additional significance, for melodies give a song temporal coherence and structure. Melodies engage. Melodies are accessible. Lassus uses the term inflection to describe interventions that transform experience. Inflection—to bend—is a particularly fitting description for interventions which transform the experience of the road and the experience of the music; consider the phrases bend in the road (landmark) and bending the strings (emotion, tension). Bann notes, “ratios of movement within our environment must be understood at the level of the virtually imperceptible as well as the brutally rapid” (Bann, 2003, p.73).
Seeing Through Ambiguity

*The wild geese fly across the long sky above.*

*Their image is reflected upon the chilly water below.*

*The geese do not mean to cast their image on the water;*

*Nor does the water mean to hold the image of the geese.*

—Unattributed (Chung-yuan, 1963, p. 57)

Concepts of expanded or thicken boundaries and open-ended intervention which arise out of the challenges to existential duality—binary pairs—and in response to static, determinant spatial constructs have a common manifestation—ambiguity. Yet, these contemporary ways of conceptualizing space do not necessarily constitute new ways of being. Rather, they are more suggestive of new ways of seeing, a new-found willingness to acknowledge the conditions of being. In essence, these intellectual frameworks allow humans to see their reflection, and in that image, a more accurate representation of the relationship of body to environment, culture to nature.

Corner notes the position that humanity has evolved as “nature rendered self conscious” (Corner, 1997, p. 95). Our feeling of separation (alienation) from the natural results from an evolved ability to contemplate our surroundings which remain in a certain respect always other (Corner, 1997). Yet, as formerly noted in relation to this existential paradox, we are also able to recognize that we are hardly separate, depending on our surroundings for bodily existence. The great potential of the revised ontology for design is to embrace and engage the ambiguity of existence, to facilitate a constructive dialectic of being.

To begin to understand the implications of embracing spatial and bodily ambiguity, landscape architects must search for appropriate representational models. The mobius strip is useful in this respect, challenging notions of inside/outside and allowing a designer to visualized ambiguities of spatial position (Emmer, 2004). Landscape architects might also begin to set up landscape frameworks that encourage and facilitate explorations of ambiguity as George Hargreaves has with projects such as Byxbee Park.

At Byxbee Park, by introducing elements of relative stability—walls, poles, weirs, paths—and juxtaposing topography and vegetative regimes that embrace the dynamic flows physical and biological forces, Hargreaves allows visitors to observe change and thereby contemplate ambiguities of human intervention (Beardsley, 1996). This work also begins to suggest open, unstructured narratives to those who engage and contemplate the ever emerging landscape. These narratives result primarily from the juxtaposition of static (relatively) and dynamic form. In effect, the static forms become markers or registers of change in that they enable visitors to read change over a range of temporal scales—wind blown grass, shadow cycles, shifting/settling soil, etc (Rainey, 1996). Of course, after extended contemplation/engagement, participant’s might come to realize that the register—the static elements—are also moving; Byxbee Park
covers a landfill. In this sense, the juxtaposed static and dynamic elements—imperceptibly changing and perceptibly changing—the marker and the marked—become an active and poetic allegory for the ambiguity of human being. The inflected landscape whispers a narrative of dwelling.
A Setting For Intervention

‘The Map Sings’ Alan Lomax (Carney, 1979) p.99

The Crooked Road offers a rich opportunity to develop similar narratives of dwelling, deriving from the particularities of the Southwest Virginia landscape, but in some respects, common to all human existence. The Crooked Road offers a two-fold opportunity to experience open-ended narratives of place (and attendant narratives of dwelling) by offering 1) a loosely structured framework for moving through the landscape thereby forming potentiality for common or shared experience 2) a framework for experiencing traditional, folk musical forms in authentic settings. The road offers access to spatial manifestations or traces of dwelling. The lyrics and, in certain instances, the structure of the songs offer access the psychic and mythical manifestations of dwelling. The dwelling narratives are of infinite variety, but are characterized by certain major themes such as—1) The struggle to subsist on marginal lands. 2) The physical and mental effects of manual labor required to work the land. 3) Landscape dependent rituals and rites of passage—births, courtings, marriage, hunting, processes of death and grieving. 4) Out migration from marginal lands. 5) Exile from home and longing to return. 6) Travel through the landscape. Because it offers the possibility for juxtaposition of both landscape experience and musical performance, The Crooked Road constitutes significant opportunity to thicken the perceptual boundaries of landscape entities and promote profound experience place. An examination of the role landscape plays in the traditional music one might encounter in Southwest Virginia will offer a glimpse of the potential richness of such experience of place.

The Music

Ideally, live musical performances are central to the experience of those participating The Crooked Road musical heritage trail. Two forms of music dominate the traditional music scene in Southwest Virginia, old-time stringband music and its derivative, bluegrass. The two musical forms are derived from Irish and Scottish instrumentals, Anglo-Saxon ballads, sacred music, and, in the case of bluegrass, the blues and jazz (Cantwell, 2003). While similarities are many, there are fundamental differences in the two forms. Old-time or mountain stringband music predates bluegrass. Though balladry and elements of the minstrel show are part of the repertoire, the music is primarily instrumental incorporating rhythms sympathetic to and intended for dance or celebration. Bluegrass is a music that is intended to be projected, played not to intimate gatherings, but from stage, to listening audiences (Posen, 1993). Bluegrass emphasizes the lyric with vocal arrangements derived from southern gospel traditions.

Because of its accessibility for interpretation due to a musical emphasis on lyrical performance and its wide-spread popularity in the region, the focus here will be on themes found in bluegrass music and on venues which host bluegrass22. Bluegrass ori-
nated as a distinctive musical form under the guidance of Ken-
tucky native Bill Monroe in the 1930’s and 40’s (Carney, 1979)\(^2\). In contemporary Southwest Virginia the music may be experi-
enced by way of radio, outdoor festivals, paid and free public per-
formances, dance venues, and private gatherings. Venues range in size and typology from agricultural fields with minimal accommodations for listeners and campers to dedicated stage venues designed from performance and dancing to garages and porches of private homes. Of particular interest in this project are venues of vernacular form, with multipurpose or everyday uses, that host regular or periodic performances that serve as community gathering points.

**Landscape Themes**

Unfortunately, little scholarly attention has been paid to the occurrence of landscape themes in music in general (Gumprecht, 2003). However, George O. Carney has noted the frequent occurrence of place names in both the tittles of popular bluegrass songs and in the names of prominent bands (Carney, 1979). This occurrence is not insignificant. Caroline Lavoie writes of the role place names play in constructing place identity. Lavoie suggests that place names help create sense of place in that they engender feelings of connection (Lavoie, 2005). Lavoie writes, "(a place name)….is an intrinsic construct derived from the cultural background and practices of a group or individual deciding the name of a particular place" (Lavoie, 2005, p.23). It follows that the occurrence of place names in music illustrates a direct relationship between traditional music and cultural prac-
tices which engender connection to place.

The most extensive treatment of the influence of landscape and place on the work of bluegrass artists is found in Bluegrass Breakdown by Robert Cantwell. In a chapter entitled *The Landscape of Bluegrass* Cantwell examines the repertoire of Bill Monroe. Cantwell first identifies major themes found in bluegrass such as the mythic beyond, the exiled hero, and idealized childhood. He then explores landscape themes and evocations in such tunes as Lee Highway Blues, Bluegrass Breakdown, Panhandle Country, My Rose of Old Kentucky, Footprints in the Snow, and On My Way Back To the Old Home, among others. Cantwell identifies an idealized rural world, often one of days-gone-by, as central theme of the music (Cantwell, 2003). Since rural culture is essentially couched in landscape, it would follow that landscape themes are also of major importance to the music. In an article named *Country Music and Landscape Themes*, Douglas Meyer briefly describes four major traditions and attendant themes of country music—blue heart songs, the drifter or wanderer, nostalgia, and resistance to technology and the urban life (Meyer, 1979). Meyer also identifies several secondary themes—‘historical events, folk traditions, patriotism and protests, war, drug abuse, economic, social and cultural change, and unemployment’ and ‘protest against the deteriorating quality of the environment’.
Fig. 2-5. Iconic images of bluegrass music's mythological landscape are juxtaposed in this collage which seeks to approximate the mental voyage of the traveler.
Experiences of place and landscape clearly influence the work of certain influential bluegrass artists. The evocation of landscape in bluegrass is not limited to the use of place names and generalized themes of life and struggle. Landscape forms a sub-theme or serves as field for the circumstances of life that inspire the themes described by Meyer and Cantwell. In certain instances, landscape themes are dominant. Indeed, one need only examine the chorus of a seminal song by the late Bill Monroe, *The Walls of Time*, to see that this is true (Monroe, 1994).

The wind is blowin’ across the mountain
And down on the valley way below
It sweeps the grave of my darlin’
When I die, that’s where I want to go.

Landscape is presented by Monroe as the poetic and somewhat sublime stage on which the events of living and dying, the processes of dwelling, unfold. Landscape is presented both as visual backdrop—the valley down below—and tactile, vicarious agent—the wind is blowin’. In a 1977 interview Monroe remarked, “I don’t know why, but the lay of the land does a lot to me. It touches me a lot. It’s played a big part in my music” and earlier, in 1973 regarding his Tennessee farm, “I like to be up on the hills and mountains, and see the valleys” (Cantwell, 2003, p.246).

Robert Cantwell indicts Bill Monroe for the Romantic vision of landscape and place he relates in his music, a vision that has been perpetuated largely intact by contemporary bluegrass musicians (Cantwell, 2003). Monroe’s tonal and lyrical portraits of the mythic westward land *Kentuck*, are indeed idyllic visions of a pastoral world in which the rough of edges of dwelling have been smoother over, a world that exists only in the mind, in the folk myths of the common people. Monroe’s mythical world is one from which he is exiled, in love and land; the singer is cast as a heroic wandering figure, forever striving to return to a better place and time.

Monroe’s image of place is undeniably Romantic. However, the following description of the intense attachment to place and home in mountain culture lends a degree of credence to his narrative—

The Appalachian mountaineer has a close relationship with his natural surroundings, his own piece of land, and the home he lives in. This closeness cannot be measured by a map, as the young mother insisted, nor summarized on a deed or mortgage, nor translated into a dollar value on a county tax list. The mountaineer’s way of “living with the land” is so intensely personal that it discourages interpretation by the norms of mass society.”

The mountains were a shield from the outside world. Among the people of the hollow or gap there was a feeling of security and pride. A consumer economy was and still is unknown and not desired. The inhabitant of Appalachia does not look beyond the small patch of earth he man
ages. His frame of reference could be a mile length and fifty feet wide. The outside world is not attractive. The mountaineer has a deep sense of environmental habitat; his security transcends poverty and scarcity. His place is the center of the world; “to settle somewhere, to inhabit a space, is equivalent to repeating the cosmogony and hence to imitating the work of the gods.” The most important fact of life is to settle down on a piece of land. It becomes the perfect place, combining completeness (mountain and water) with solitude, and thus perfect because at once the world in miniature is Paradise, a source of bliss and place of immortality.” John Opie in (Whitson, 1988, p. iv)

While Mr. Opie’s account appears to suffer from a degree of hyperbole, it does offer evidence of the historic role landscape played in the life of mountain culture. Opie’s account is of a paradisiacal land inhabited by a culture to which the place meant everything and left one dependent on nothing; in that sense the landscape was nurturing if not womb-like, which partially explains the themes of childhood, mother an the grave in bluegrass music. Indeed, Opie’s account is borne out in Larry Sparks’ performance of City Folks Call Us Poor, written by Marshall Warwick (Sparks, 2005)—

Moonlight shining on the grassy meadow
Looks like diamonds shining in the night.
Whippoorwills singing in the white oaks

Coondogs baying in the bright moonlight.
Honeysuckle smells just like sweet perfume.
Old dog’s lying over by the door.
Watermelon rinds momma puts up in a jar
And the city folks, they call us poor.

Monroe’s psychic landscape approximates the vicarious landscapes that Robert Riley writes about (Riley, 1997). It presents a loose narrative of Monroe’s relationship with the land, dwelling within it, traveling the roads that course through it. In some sense, all of Monroe’s songs are autobiographical, but he often referred to the more overtly autobiographical lyrics as true songs (Fleischhauer and Rosenberg, 2001). Monroe presents the insider’s view of landscape, an insider in symbolic exile, but an insider nonetheless. The mythical landscape of bluegrass also resembles landschaft, a root word of landscape from the Old German. Landschaft refers to “the environment of a working community, a setting composed from a collection of dwellings, pastures, meadows, and fields, and surrounded by unimproved forest or meadow” (Corner, 1998, p.22).

Corner calls for landscape architects to look to the historic understanding of landscape, Landschaft, for clues to reinventing the contemporary landscape (Corner, 1998). In this respect, the landscape of bluegrass is a trace or repository and a useful representation of the psychic and mythic power of historic modes of dwelling with the land. However, Corner doesn’t call
for a return to the romantic landscape of bluegrass myth or for a return to field and the forest in the manner of Thoreau or the back-to-the-landers of the 1960’s and 70’s. The economic, cultural, and political conditions that allowed widespread, authentic participation in small-scale agriculture and cottage industry have become a part of the fabric of history. Instead, Corner calls for a reconnection to the psychological dimensions of landschaft by revaluing the working landscape of past, geocentric ways of dwelling and to reinvent our relationship to the land. For Corner as well as Lassus, the project is less about changing physical relationships to land, than it is about changing the viewpoint and level of engagement of the observer. The presumption is that a demand for beneficial physical change will come as a result of imaginative psychic realignment (Corner, 1997).

Thickened experience

Who wants to understand the poem
Must go to the land of poetry;
Who wishes to understand the poet
Must go to the poet’s land.

Goethe, from Divan of East and West (Barletts)

As formerly noted, Lassus asserts that “An intervention, even a very slight…..one, can create landscapes for what was only a heterogeneous succession of objects” (Lassus, 1998, p.50). Might then, appropriate interventions along the Crooked Road create a legible sense of place and connection at the landscape scale? Might appropriate interventions create a type of thickened landscape—a deepened sense of place which promotes profound experience—from what was formerly a dissociated, estranged set of landscape elements? The design component of this inquiry will explore and offer answers to these questions.

The design proposals to follow—and the criteria for selecting sites—are informed by and responsive to the thick, rich fabric a place available to inhabitants of Southwest Virginia and participants in The Crooked Road. As a framework that both facilitates landscape experience across a range of scales and settings—the spontaneous musical performance, the music venue, the rural town, the city, the road, the landscape, the region—and facilitates access to the landscape themes or dwelling narratives of traditional music, an inflected The Crooked Road holds great potential for the project of reconciling contemporary culture and environment. Interventions which seek to juxtapose visitor’s short-term memories of physical landscape experience with the visceral, yet universal, qualities of mythical narratives available in live musical performances offer a significant opportunity for a reconnection to landscape. The resulting experience might be one of rejuvenation, a partial quenching of the longing or thirst for reconnection to the land described by Corner (Corner, 1998).

With a new set of landscape experiences and images, participants will be equipped to experience the everyday landscape with a refocused sensitivity—one responsive to depth, edge, texture, ground. Participants will have renewed access to the road of art, in all its manifestations.
Part Three- Design

The theories and approaches outlined in the preceding literature review are tested in proposals for intervention at two sites in Floyd County, Virginia. The first site is the wooded, rural landscape adjacent to the ruin of a homestead on Shooting Creek in southeastern Floyd County. The second site is the urban landscape surrounding the Floyd Country Store in the town of Floyd. Following is a general criteria used to select appropriate sites:

1) The sites are to be representative of landscape themes and/or topics in bluegrass music.
2) The sites are to be suitable as representative examples to inform or guide development of additional sites with the goal of creating a loosely structured, legible journey for Crooked Road participants.
3) The sites are to be indicative of typical regional responses to dwelling in landscape.
4) The sites are to exhibit qualities of confluence or convergence—i.e. brimming with phenomenal or physical energy and/or forces.

The sites are intended to be representative examples of similar sites to be found along the length of the Crooked Road. Ultimately, a sequence of landscape interventions along the Crooked Road would significantly improve the experience of participants in the Crooked Road, be they visitors or inhabitants. With repeated engagement, a profound sense of place, combining an insider’s level of knowledge of regional culture and landscape with the outsider’s ability to comprehend patterns and connections, could be garnered by visitors and inhabitants alike.

Fig. 3-1. Both proposals for intervention address sites in Floyd County, Virginia. (GIS base-mapping provided by Virginia Tech library).
Process

In both instances, at Shooting Creek and the Floyd Country Store, the design process was one of paring down or stripping away layers of didacticism, over programming, visually derived compositional tendencies, finality and permanence, strictly defined limits, and preconceived notions regarding material choices where common in the initial iterations. Ensuing design iterations became evermore 1) place specific, 2) simultaneously refined yet spatially ambiguous, 3) responsive to change, cycles, flows, and improvisation, 4) open to multiple readings, and 5) functional.

Additionally, the plan diagrams of each site gradually became less complex. An essential component of each diagram is a linear element intersecting the road at a right angle. Thus, the contemporary, introduced layer squarely intersects the preexisting layers of landscape form. In each site diagram a secondary axis compliments the primary axis and relates the primary axis to the site’s context or prominent features. At Shooting Creek, the ruined homestead and the opened hollow opposite are set

![Fig. 3-2. Underlying conceptual organization at Shooting Creek.](image)

![Fig. 3-3. Underlying conceptual organization at the Floyd Country Store.](image)
against the primary axis formed by the dry-stacked wall. At Floyd, the town context and road are embraced by the secondary axis.

**On the Intent of Intervention- Macro Concepts**

Though the proposals for intervention at Shooting Creek and the Floyd Country Store respond to the unique landscape characteristics found at each site, the proposals have in common a number of approaches and concepts. Each seeks to mark for view the passage of time, to give structure to space and experience, to loosely narrate site/landscape stories, to respond to and be activated by the actions of time, spontaneous interaction, and environmental change. Like music, the interventions are intended to be activated and given meaning by human interaction.

A central metaphor informs the proposals for both the site at Shooting Creek and the landscape surrounding the Floyd Country Store. The Country Store may be likened to a spring or fountainhead. The Country Store is like a spring in that it, as well

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Fig. 3-4. Ink study exploring manifestations of the spring metaphor.

Fig. 3-5. Seeing the surface for the first time at Shooting Creek.
as many other venues, is a point of concentration and creative exchange—a place where the culture of a community pours forth. During an event, people gather, sometimes from great distances. They exchange creative energy and appreciation. The human body is activated by the experience, often stimulated to pat a foot, if not break into full-fledged dancing. Participants revel in the experience and come away renewed.

The spring metaphor played a central role in comprehending and coming to terms with the relationship between a venue or site and its supporting landscape. The metaphor provides a framework for understanding the complexities of blurred boundaries, of the concept of figured ground (Dripps, 2005). A crucial observation arises from the spring metaphor—a spring (venue), commonly understood to mean a place where ground water pours forth from the earth, is in essence only the place where the water becomes visible or accessible. It has no permanent form, only constant flow and change. The spring, then, is also the body of groundwater (cultural landscape) and bedrock that feeds it. Though recognizable and knowable, the spring’s limits are indefinable. Spring is to groundwater as venue is to cultural landscape (cultural ground).

If one accepts that the spring is inseparable from its ground then it follows that a change in the ground of the spring will ultimately affect the flow, the phenomenon called spring. To be sure, however, most changes or (interventions) will little affect the essence of the spring. Though its flow, composition, or spatial characteristics might be altered, it is still a spring—or, alternatively, retains the essential characteristics of the venue. However, Lassus’ observation that “An intervention, even a very slight…..one, can create landscapes for what was only a heterogeneous succession of objects” (Lassus, 1998, p.50) suggests appropriate and thoughtful interventions in the ground of the spring or venue might be designed to improve the qualities the place or heighten the experience of it (see footnote 30 for further discussion of the spring metaphor).

The proposals for Shooting Creek and the Floyd Country Store share the following additional similarities—

1) Each intervention utilizes local or native materials and construction techniques to the extent possible.

2) Each intervention incorporates fieldstone structures—dry-stacked walls at Shooting creek/masonry stone walls and stone cobbled tree planting beds at Floyd. A fieldstone’s visual and tactile qualities result from the physical properties of the parent material, the actions of weathering, the particulars of circumstance, and the cycles of human dwelling in landscape.

In the making of a dry-stacked wall one stone—a thing or object, becomes a sort of body when combined with 10,000 other stones—the one becomes a whole. Such a wall is an apt expression of open-ended design while serving as delineator, provision, device, framework, it is simultaneously fluid, respond-
ing readily to subtle shifts in the land’s surface. Yet, in relationship to the environment surrounding it, the wall is a silent, static point of reference, a register for change, a familiar marker one can look to for the reassurance of return. As such, the dry-stacked wall occupies a space between...between architectonic expression of control and certainty and process oriented submission to uncertainty and flux.

The very making of the wall is a balancing act of spontaneity and control—a balance between the directives of the architect and the response to material, circumstance, and place of the waller. The architect extends an intention, a framework for action and becoming...but not absolute control. The wall becomes of the place in its making. An honesty and poetry reside in the properties of the stone and in the techniques of building which bind the stones together to make a beautiful, useful structure.

The wall at Shooting Creek is a contemporary inflection of the trace remnants of past actions and responses to landform. Though conceived in the spirit of those historic gestures, the proposed wall squarely intersects the old. It tells a new story with time worn words, reflecting the contemporary need to reconnect with the land and with past modes of dwelling.

Looking beyond the intimate confines of the site, the wall becomes a metaphor for place. By the action of moving through the landscape and gathering experience of distinct places such as music venues, those places might be combined in the imagination to form a cohesive, legible whole that facilitates and enriches the lives of participants in the Crooked Road. Making reference to Lassus’ descriptors, in the stone wall, the horizontal, the vertical, and the imaginative dimensions are expressed in the conglomeration of discrete objects—stones—to make a legible, functional, expansive whole.

3) Each intervention incorporates elements intended to serve as registers of cyclical and long-term changes in the landscape. At shooting creek, stone markers are placed at each corner of the ruined homestead to mark the continued collapse of the remains. Along with glass sculptures and a wall, the stone markers will allow visitors to see changes in the landscape at varying temporal scales—the fall of shadow, the regeneration of forest. At the Floyd Country Store patterns of land fragmentation found in the larger landscape are scaled down to form patterns in the ground plane of the alley south of the store.

By introducing the registers, dual scales of temporal change are juxtaposed in a manner which encourages participants to become aware of the role change plays in forming our concepts of landscape. In addition, the registers lend a degree of legibility to the open-ended interventions, becoming a touchstone to which repeat visitors can turn for familiarity and reassurance.

4) Each intervention proposes to introduce elements in a transparent manner; the contemporary landscape layers introduced to each site are intended to be readily identifiable. The introduced
elements are designed to encourage and facilitate a revised, deeper reading of existing landscape features.

5) Finally, each intervention seeks foremost to create, in its detailing and articulation of space, a pleasing and functional landscape. Each seeks to not only subtly convey meaning,

**Shooting Creek Design Iterations**

Fig. 3-6. An early concept for Shooting Creek was to wind a reflective ‘ribbon’ through the site with the intention of suggesting the dynamic nature of various flows found there.

Fig. 3-7. Concept 2 introduces a series of walls to the site, creating a graduated chamber or spatial sequence.

Fig. 3-8. Concept 3 is a variation of concept 2, but introduces forms evoking a sense of flow.

Fig. 3-9. A series of studies and diagraming exercises led to the final, stripped-down but rich diagram found in Fig. 4-21.

Fig. 3-10. Conceptual study exploring the idea of introducing a circuit path to the site.
Fig. 3-11. A more developed sketch showing a boardwalk introduced to ‘float’ over the site and cause a minimum of disturbance.

Fig. 3-12. The idea of cast-glass sculptural elements is first explored in this scheme. Groupings of cube-shaped glass blocks spill from beneath the rusting roof of the homestead ruin.

Fig. 3-13. The scheme developed in Fig. 4-12 is refined here. The sculptures become more spatial in nature and larger in scale. Surface texture, reflection, and unseen depths are suspended simultaneously before the on-looker.

Fig. 3-14. In this iteration the cast-glass sculptures have evolved into glass seats.

Fig. 3-15. The design nears final form and takes on more refined three-dimensional characteristics.

Fig. 3-16. A conceptual diagram expressing the transition of material and detail across the site, from intermit-tent machine--the road--to constant natural flow--the creek.
Fig. 3-17. Spatial sequence study diagraming the experience of approaching the Shooting Creek site via automobile and foot.

Fig. 3-18. Preliminary sketch exploring the flowing qualities of cast-glass.

Fig. 3-19. The design in final form and a sketched detail study of one of the cast-glass sculptures.

Fig. 3-20. A carefully fit-together stone sign adjacent to the road degenerates into a rubble wall near the creek.
An Intervention on Shooting Creek, Floyd County, Virginia

Fig. 3-22. Sketch of the proposed intervention at Shooting Creek showing the dry-stacked stone wall and cast glass sculptures. Shooting Creek is to the immediate left, Shooting Creek Road to the right.

Fig. 3-21. Ink and pastel study describing the proposal’s relationship to the surrounding landscape.
Fig. 3-23. Final conceptual plan for the Shooting Creek homestead site. Introduced elements fit seamlessly, but visibly into the existing landscape.
Fig. 3-24. Plan depicting the relationship between parking accommodations, a connecting path, and the intervention which addresses the ruined homestead.
Country Store Design Iterations

Fig. 3-25. An early study exploring spatial organization within the alley south of the Country Store; also includes a preliminary study of a sign and wall for the Shooting Creek site. The study seeks to develop a common language of spatial articulation and detailing.

Fig. 3-26. Preliminary study introducing a farmer’s market facility across Rt. 8 from the Country Store.

Fig. 3-27. A strong generative concept employing the organizational principles of a 5-string banjo.

Fig. 3-28. The detailing and organizational principles guiding this design inform the final solution. The stage was removed due to lack of space.
An Intervention at the Floyd Country Store, Floyd, Virginia

Fig. 3-30. The proposed landscape intervention at the Floyd Country Store accommodates impromptu performances as well as everyday activities. Native plantings and materials evoke a distinct sense of place.

Fig. 3-29. Ink and pastel study describing the proposal’s relationship to the surrounding landscape.
Fig. 3-31. Final conceptual plan. The plan carefully integrates introduced elements with existing features. Pre-existing spatial uses are respected. The landscape is activated by everyday activities and Friday night performances.
Fig. 3-32. Conceptual lighting plan. Lighting will play a critical role in creating space without defining boundaries. Loosely controlled space promotes spontaneous performances by jamming musicians.
Fig. 3-33. Stone and timber seatwalls across Rt. 8 balance additions to the landscape adjacent to the Country Store.

Fig. 3-34. Birds-eye view of improvements and town context.

Fig. 3-35. Eye-level view of sidewalk improvements in front of the Country Store.

Fig. 3-36. Conceptual sketch of timberframe bench/guardrail.
The proposals for intervention developed in the design component of this thesis are hypothetical in nature. The proposals make generous assumptions about the availability of funding, public support, administrative agency support, and political will. Neither site is likely to be developed as proposed. The proposals are intended, rather, to demonstrate the potential of design interventions—under best case scenario conditions. The primary intent of the proposals presented here is to guide subsequent investigations—ones more rooted in real-world dynamics.

The interventions are presented as prototypical examples to inform 1) the selection of appropriate and significant sites, 2) the process of uncovering and discovering the historical, physical, and spiritual dynamics that are both particular to a site and bind it to the wider landscape, 3) the expression of those dynamics at site scale in a manner which respects past layers of being while introducing contemporary layers of spatial manipulation which seek to reinvent the site and facilitate or describe a way of relating to landscape “valid for our time” (Harries, 1997), 4) the imaginative, deeply rooted construction of place by juxtaposing personal and shared experiences—in the short-term memory of a day’s journey or the accumulated memory of a lifetime—of a variety of inflected landscapes along a common travel route.

Perhaps the most significant outcome of this exercise has been to focus and clarify a set of critical questions which need further study or investigation. The questions outlined below stem from a focused study of musical themes/regional landscape and contemporary design approaches to culturally significant landscapes. However, the questions attest to the applicability of principles and techniques garnered from this study to other design or planning contexts. The set of questions constitute a point of departure to guide the development of my practice of landscape architecture; furthermore, the questions offer a roadmap for future investigations of contemporary landscape architectural practice.

Topics for further study or research

1) Concerns over the accessibility to participants of layers of meaning and symbolism found in the design proposals form a basis for several critical comments offered by faculty in that regard. The design process demonstrates a series of iterations which vary primarily in regard to the perceived level of accessibility of the proposals. In response to an ever more clarified position stemming for the literature, the process was one of paring down and stripping away layers of didacticism and ingrained approaches to composition. The designs became less ‘sign-like’ with each revision; the intention was less to create enigmatic or cryptic interventions than to maximize the potential for individual-
ized, profound experience. Perhaps the best possible outcome of an individual’s hypothetical visit to one of the proposed interventions would be less the concrete narration of a story or conveyance of a singular meaning than a priming of the imagination, preparing it to receive additional stimulation. Still, the question remains—What role does the accessibility of designed intent play in determining the success of landscapes which incorporate layers of meaning and are open to a range or interpretation? At what level must participants get it…and which participants?

2) Music venues in southwest Virginia often utilize improvised space in a variety of public or semi-public settings—restaurants, bars, garages, barbershops, musical supply stores, general merchandise stores, flea markets and the landscapes surrounding them. Do these co-opted spaces share a set of common characteristics? If so, how might designers begin to understand and incorporate those spatial characteristics into designed spaces? In a similar vein, what is the role of time and accumulated experience in making or imparting significance, richness, and spontaneity to such everyday landscapes? To what degree might contrived or self-consciously designed landscapes acquire the psychic qualities of everyday landscapes and be adopted or co-opted over time as settings for everyday life? More importantly, to what degree are cultural activities influenced or shaped by spatial characteristics—what degree of independence, indifference, or resistance do ingrained cultural manifestations exhibit to intellectualized, designed space?

3) How might cultural and civic institutions balance the goals of facilitating access to experience of place or region by outsiders against the need to protect the insulating and restorative qualities of place relied on by inhabitants for well-being? Or, from an alternative perspective, how can aspects of regional culture and landscape be developed as an economic resource without compromising the essential qualities of culture and landscape?

4) A major focus of this thesis is the prevalence of landscape themes in bluegrass music. That fact holds great potential for enriching landscape experiences of participants in the Crooked Road. Because very little research on the subject is available, the arguments presented here are based, in varying degrees, on common sense observations and pieced together fragments of evidence. More concrete, focused studies would be of great use. Topics that need study include—How does landscape form influence the creation and perpetuation of folk music forms in the United States? What is the nature of the relationship between place, landscape, and folk musical forms? To what extent is the relationship a reciprocal one—landscape influencing musical form, musical themes becoming manifest landscape?

5) The questions posed under the previous heading (4), relating to music and landscape, suggest the need for a more refined look at more fundamental questions such as—What are the psychological dimensions of place? Is there a critical mass of psychic significance and environmental qualities that constitutes place? Precisely what role do events and cultural phenomena
play in forming sense of place? How might designers reliably develop a syntactical landscape structure to punctuate the experience of moving through landscape and deepen the experience of place by participants? What are the elements of landscape syntax? In a broadened sense, how can manipulations of spatial qualities and spatial sequence heighten awareness of landscape, thereby facilitating and encouraging depth of experience?

6) The proposals for intervention at Shooting Creek and the Floyd Country Store both incorporate elements intended to serve as markers or registers of change. The markers provide a point of reference for repeat visitors to mark the passage of time manifest in changes at the site level and in the individual. The markers strive to lend legibility—temporal legibility—to designed landscapes that embrace change, flow, and improvisation. In a world of ambiguity and thickened boundaries—both separating and joining—and with designs that promote heterogeneity and change, what constitutes an acceptable level of legibility in design interventions?

7) The proposals for intervention are informed by an overarching metaphor, the concept that regional music venues are analogous to springs, pouring forth the cultural ground of southwest Virginia. Future investigations might further explore the depth and richness of the spring metaphor in expressing the physical, psychic, and spatial qualities of place or the relationships between site and landscape. What are the practical limits of the spring metaphor—what other places might be accurately represented by the metaphor? What are the poetic limits of the spring metaphor? How does the spring metaphor guide intervention? What are the spatial manifestations of the spring metaphor when it is applied in other contexts?
Part Five- Notes

1As a detached, enclosed, high-speed mode of movement through the landscape, the road, in some respects, epitomizes the tourist gaze characteristic of landscape estrangement (Riley, 1997).

2Landscape is notably absent from Edgar and Sedgwick’s Cultural Theory, the Key Concepts.

3In Land-scopic Regimes, Landscape Journal, Holly Getche Clark develops the concept of the figured in-between, a discussion significant to place. See ‘revised ontology’ in this text for more on this subject.

4The invention and/or articulation of landscape based myth plays a significant generative role in the work of Samuel Mockbee. Mockbee’s paintings and collage are rich manifestations of localized place mythology (Moos, 2003; Dean, 2002). They are, in a certain sense, visually analogous to the thematic, lyrical representations of myth in the old-time southern stringband and bluegrass genres.

5Interestingly, the making of place and vernacular building occur from the standpoint of insider knowledge. Professional planning, landscape architecture, and architecture is generally performed from an outsider’s perspective. Though outsider knowledge has the advantage of ‘fresh perspective’ it also suffers from an incompleteness and superficiality of knowing. The outsider “views landscape as an object….not only scenically, but instrumentally and ideologically too” (Corner, 1998, p.23). Much of James Corners work with regard to representation is essentially an attempt to describe methods for overcoming the limitations of outsider status by representing landscape in an expansive, imaginative, open-ended manner during the various phases of the design process (Corner, 1998). His work suggests that reconciling, mitigating, or perhaps creating ambiguity in insider/outside understandings of landscape and place, conjoining subjective and objective viewpoints, might be key to finding new ways to live with the land.

6Corner pointedly declares that he is not calling for a return to previous modes of existence. However, care must be taken in adopting Corner’s call of return to landschaft that one’s stance on landscape or what landscape should be not be tilted too far in the service of Romanticism. George Henderson points out the tendency of the dialogue over landschaft, or the rural, everyday working landscape, to turn toward romantic views of an idealized and static past (Henderson, 2003). This dialogue has no place in contemporary discourse over landscape design and planning. Landscape is explicitly a place of exchange, a space of continual unfolding, and there is no going back to idealized models of the past, no re-invention of the landschaft. However, certain aspects of landschaft are desirable to re-invent, the valuation of everyday or working landscape experience, frequent haptic encounters with the earth, and the mythic and deep psychological connections to land that were supported by proximity. Regarding the re-invention of historic landscape relationships Bernard Lassus says, “We must have the day before yesterday in order to understand yesterday” (Bann, 1996, p. 37). Of all that was lost to modernity with the passing of landschaft, that aspect that should be studied and pursued for possible re-invention or re-presentation is heightened sensitivity to landscape processes and cycles. Sensitivity is what we have lost and must regain. Sensitivity is a prerequisite of careful observation of surface and appearances in our attempt to understand what lies beneath.

7Lassus’ abandonment of the wild in the horizontal dimension must not be taken as also and abandonment of the concept of the natural. Lassus recognizes a nature preexistent to landscape. In fact, he invokes the concept of naturalness in his cognitive experiments. In one experiment, Lassus invited participants to insert red dots into the field of various compositions. In reference to the effect of a particular insertion by a participant Lassus says, “Through the introduction of that artificial object we witnessed a slide toward the natural of all the present elements: a displacement and, at the same time, perhaps an enlargement of the existing field” (Lassus, 1998, p.50). Lassus thereby recognizes that perception of the relative naturalness of an object occurs along a
continuum, relative to the context or field in which the object resides. George Descombes relates his use of this principal in his description of the particular design language developed for the Swiss Way (Descombes, 1999, p. 84). Lassus comments further on perception of naturalness and its cultural implications in his essay Landscape Values (Lassus, 1998).

8The narrow, curving mountain road, Shooting Creek Road, along Shooting Creek in Floyd County, Virginia offers a particularly vivid example of this phenomenon. From state route 40, the road follows the bottom of a hollow to reach a narrow pass which empties onto a high, extended plateau. In the half-mile before it reaches the pass, the road it cut heavily into the mountainside and curves sharply in response to the topography. In places a shear drop, as much as one hundred fifty feet in elevation, separates the road the creek. The effect is to make driver and passenger at once very aware of the implications of a missed turn.

9Andy Goldsworthy’s work occurs almost exclusively at the tactile scale. Could this be a clue to his rapport with change, flow—to use Lassus’ term, the demeasurable?

10“The most rewarding thing ever said to me was by a Dutch woman of a shape I had carved in sand. She said, “Thank you for showing me that was there.” Andy Goldsworthy in (Friedman and Goldsworthy, 1990)

11ie venues for traditional music in Southwest Virginia

12Please note that the intent of this inquiry is not to attack the validity of preservation as a landscape operation, per se, but rather to question preservation as a default treatment for vital, continually unfolding cultural landscapes. The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties offers guidance for the preservation of historic properties eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. The Secretary’s standards are widely employed by preservationists, planners, and designers. Included in the standards is a publication entitled Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes which addresses methods for evaluating and selecting appropriate treatments of cultural landscapes. The four treatments are preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction. The diversity of treatments respond to various physical and management conditions. Of the four, only rehabilitation allows landscapes to continue to evolve in respond to changing cultural needs and values. (U.S. Department of the Interior, 2005)

13“It is perhaps curatorial, protecting what is important until a more enlightened era when social and economic processes are based in, and sensitive to place.” (Osment, 2002, p. 18)

14Though Dripps treatment of the subject is perhaps the most extensive and suggestive of potential becoming, the concept of ground, with minor variations in language or emphasis, is a common thread in the work of range of practitioners and theorists. See Christophe Girot—grounding, Lassus—depth/The Well, Robert Thayer—the core of surface/core congruency, and J. T. Lyle—Deep Form.

15Lassus’ concept of heterodite will be developed in detail later as a valid approach to intervention. For clarity, the heterodite can be briefly described an aesthetic and approach to composition that recognizes the value of heterogeneity in existing landscapes.

16For an in-depth discussion of ecological theory and its relationship with emerging spatial planning theory see Christina Hills’ essay, Shifting Sites, in Site Matters.

17The concept of setting up frameworks in the landscape that are designed to respond to and be shaped by natural and cultural forces also appears in the work of George Hargreaves (Beardsley, 1996).

18George Hargreaves also seeks to create landscapes with conceptual narratives, that provoke thought without providing concrete answers and that embrace or even depend on environmental change for their full realization. (Rademacher, 1996; Meyer, 1996)

19Corner also suggests that “structured heterogeneity” be a fundamental quality of landscape architectural discourse. (Corner, 1997, p. 102).

20Or rediscovered ways of seeing—see (Chung-yuan, 1963).
Norm Cohen defines folk music as “the music that survives without complete dependence on commercial media” (Cohen, 2005, p. xxii). Cohen further suggests the term ‘traditional’ is often used interchangeably with ‘folk’.

One should note that bluegrass is partially a derivative of old-time stringband music and that the two styles are often performed on the same night in the same Southwest Virginia venues.

Based on the origin of performers and/or bands, the origins of the musical style, and the occurrence of concerts and festivals, George O. Carney has noted that the cultural hearth of bluegrass is located in mid-Appalachia, encompassing the mountains and foothills of four states—Kentucky, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia (Carney, 1979). Though it has recently been embraced by popular culture at large (as evidenced by film and grammys, etc.), bluegrass remains a primarily ruraly based musical form, based to some degree on certain spatial implications of desirable venues for festival performances (Carney, 1979).

There seems to be a symbiotic relationship between rural themes (place, landscape, work, home) in bluegrass and the degree to which those of rural heritage identify with, request, and purchase, thereby perpetuate a more or less intact form, that music. This relationship might account for an observed resistance of the music or the tendency “to conserve the ‘old-timey’ music exemplified in bluegrass” as noted by Carney (1979, p. 107).

While there is no conclusive analysis to support this assertion, a cursory search of the bluegrass song lyric archives maintained by www.bluegrasslyrics.com using the search engine found at www.picosearch.com/cgi-bin/ts.pl?index produced the following results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Hits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home</td>
<td>456</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mountains</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hills</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
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<td>Town</td>
<td>136</td>
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<td>Land</td>
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<td>Highway</td>
<td>36</td>
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<td>Fields</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garden</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Numbers are indicative of the number hits containing the exact word or phrasing.

Please note that, while the data provides evidence of the prevalence of landscape-based themes in bluegrass, the numbers should not necessarily be interpreted as evidence of the relative importance the respective landscape elements as themes. A more qualitative analysis would be necessary to assess the relative importance various landscape features play as lyrical themes.

A multitude of songs exhibit the influence of landscape experience in lyrical form. Another particularly apt example is *Flood of 57*, by Carter Stanley (Stanley, 1994)—

```
Come listen good people wherever you are
And hear a sad story you’ve been waiting for
About the flood of 57 as it happened to be
In Kentucky, old Virginia, and East Tennessee.

How the rains came down as we often had seen
To swell a broad river or some little stream
But this one was different and we soon realized
That the floods were a raging and we fought for our lives.

Many were praying as never before
As the high, muddy water came in through their door
```
Some were left homeless their life savings gone
But their lives had been spared and the cold rains were gone.

Little babies were crying and other were sad
For in all our lives we’d seen nothing so bad
But the brave and the strong were there by the score
To help the sick and needy to safety on the shore.

How we all escaped it I never will know
It must have been God’s will it was not time to go
And by the help of his mercy some managed to smile
And face the disaster while the waters run wild.

26 Just as insider/outsider relationships are inherent to the experience and perception of place (Riley, 1997), so do they play a definitive role in the experience of folk music. The degree to which a participant is an outsider occurs along a continuum relative to the status of other participants and the degree of ‘insiderness’ of the performers. This relationship affects the degree to which a participant is able to interpret and engage performance, the degree to which the event is accessible to the participant. Norm Cohen makes the observation that folk lyrics often employ inside or coded, nuanced meanings and that the degree to which a folk tradition/culture is accessible to a participant has significant influence on the comprehension of the event by the participant (Cohen, 2005).

27 “Two factors, land and family, were interwoven as the basic threads sustaining that fabric of life. For mountain residents, land held a special meaning that combined the diverse concepts of utility and stewardship. While land was something to be used and developed to meet one’s need, it was also the foundation of daily existence, giving form to personal identity, material culture, and everyday life. As such, it defined the ‘place’ in which one found security and self worth. Family, on the other hand, as the central organizing unit of social life, brought substance and order to that sense of place. Strong family ties influenced almost every aspect of the social system, from the primary emphasis upon informal personal relationships to the pervasive egalitarian spirit of local affairs. Familism, rather than the accumulation of material wealth, was the predominant cultural value in the region, and it sustained a lifestyle that was simple, methodical, and tranquil.” Ronald Fuller in (Whitson, 1988, p. iv)

28 Following is a general criteria for site selection:
1) The sites be representative of landscape themes and/or topics in bluegrass music.
2) The sites be suitable as representative examples to inform or guide development of additional sites with the goal of creating a loosely structured, legible journey for Crooked Road participants.
3) The sites be indicative of typical responses to dwelling in landscape.
4) The sites be representative of confluence or convergence—i.e. brimming with phenomenal or physical energy/forces. See footnote 28 regarding the spring analogy.

29 Or inhabitant’s long-term memory.

30 The notion of quenching a latent thirst leads to an apt analogy for the music venues of Southwest Virginia and their attendant landscapes or cultural ground, an analogy explored in the design proposals for the site on Shooting Creek and the Country Store at Floyd, Virginia. Venues such as the County Store are similar to springs in that they are places where the cultural underpinning, the narrative ground which feeds traditional music performances emerges from the landscape as water emerges from the ground. That which is hidden but present becomes visible and immediate. Given the examples at hand, the Country Store is analogous to the spring proper—the place where the flow emerges; the Shooting Creek site is analogous to the ground, the realm where the flow is present perhaps even palpable yet remains unseen. On a more intimate scale, the Shooting Creek site has its own ground, one even more nebulous. One of the objectives for the design proposals is to make the relationships between spring and ground readable.

Physical springs and cultural springs (music venues in the present context) are similar that both—
1) are interruptions in surface
2) flow and change
3) respond to topography and surface textures
4) emerge from ground and have varying depths
5) have both vertical and horizontal dimension

Regarding Lassus’ comments on his wading of the Aradin —“From the
obscure depths of the water of the basin steadily emerge, from all sides, rock, sand, and gravel, and then the flow and its fine surface, sliding across these accumulations, recopying their forms...these movements have length and depth at the same time" (Bann, 2003, p.61)—might not the steps that travelers and/or participants in the flow of the venue’s/music’s cultural spring also have both depth (imaginative, cultural) as well as length (spatial traverse)?

6) exist across a range of scales
7) are renewing and vitalizing
8) exhibit a reciprocal/cyclical relationship with the ground
9) have a distinct, legible presence yet has no beginning or end
10) have social dimensions
11) determine patterns of dwelling
12) are places of destination

Furthermore, if one accepts Goethe’s claim “I call architecture frozen music” (Bartletts), and one also accepts previously established claims regarding the relatively static nature of architecture vs. the fluid nature of landscape, then would landscape architecture not be flowing music with many of the qualities of a spring?
Part Six- Bibliography


Discography


Part Seven-Vita

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EDUCATION

Master of Landscape Architecture- Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Virginia, 2006

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Bachelor of Arts-History with minor in Horticulture- Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Virginia, 1995

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Community Design Assistance Center- Blacksburg, Virginia, 10/05-present ---Design Intern. Prepare master plan for a public marshland trail system in eastern Virginia. Present plan to sponsoring organization. Perform reconnaissance, contact regulatory agencies, and develop site analysis.

Virginia Tech, Landscape Architecture Department- Blacksburg, Virginia, 8/04-present ---Graduate Teaching Assistant. Assist in teaching site engineering course sequence. Assist in development of educational strategies. Intermittent delivery of lectures. Assist students with laboratory exercises and grade assignments.

SFCS, Inc.- Roanoke, Virginia, 5/05-10/05---Architectural Planning Intern. Work with project architect to execute master plans for retirement community campuses. Perform site reconnaissance and develop site analysis documents. Attend master planning sessions. Draft meeting notes. Develop master plan graphics and prepare master plan documentation books.


PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATIONS

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