

Lecture 4: Phenomenology of the Landscape

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Key text

- ▶ Tilley, C. 1994. Phenomenology of the Landscape. Places, Paths and Monuments. Oxford: Berg Publishers.

Debating Landscapes

- ▶ "Thus location of sites [...] becomes explained as a result of a mix of 'rational' decision-making processes involving some or all of these factors". (1994, 2)
- ▶ "The statistical correlations and functional interdependencies arrives at are the function of a contemporary myth-making in which an exclusively modernist Western logic has simply become superimposed on the past". (1994, 2)
- ▶ "In this process how people perceived the landscape in which they lived is either regarded as irrevocably lost, or irrelevant, or both". (1994, 2)
- ▶ Stresses "the symbolics of landscape perception and the role of social memory in choice of site location" (1994, 2)

Perception

- ▶ "In so doing I do not wish to set up a polar divide between a supposed economic rationality and a cultural or symbolic logic" (1994, 2)
- ▶ Until the 60's "archaeology as concerned with space-time systematics and the ordering of artefacts and other evidence into cultural units within a delimited territorial area with a putative ethnic significance". (1994, 7)

Phenomenology of the landscape

- ▶ Positivism came in with the 'new' archaeology coupled with functionalism, geography became a spatial-science and archaeology as a science of the past was born.
- ▶ Re-theorization in archaeology in the 1980's questioned the 'usefulness' of a 'scientific' conception of space abstracted from human affairs has systematically been called into question. (1994, 7)

Space

- ▶ Space was neutral and people passed through it and caused 'friction'. Any space from any time could be compared 'a container for action'
- ▶ "Space does not and cannot exist apart from the events and activities within which it is implicated. Space is socially produced, and different societies, groups and individuals act out their lives in different spaces. Space itself no longer becomes a meaningful term. There is no space, only spaces." (1994, 10)



Space

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- ▶ "They are meaningfully constituted in relation to human agency and activity. A humanized space forms both the medium and the outcome of action, both constraining and enabling it it". (1994, 10)

Debating the Landscapes

Somatic States

(relating to the body)

- ▶ "A centred and meaningful space involves specific sets of linkages between the physical space of the non-humanly created world, somatic states of the body, the mental space of cognition and representation and the space of movement, encounter and interaction between persons and between persons and the human and non-human environment. Socially produced space combines the cognitive, the physical and the emotional into something that may be reproduced but is always open to transformation and change" (1994, 10)

Socially
produced
space-space
is not
neutral!

Social Space

- ▶ Social space is "contextually constituted, providing particular settings for involvement and creation of meanings". (1994, 11)
- ▶ "The specificity of place is an essential element in understanding its significance. It follows that the meanings of space always involve a subjective dimension and cannot be understood apart from the symbolically constructed lifeworlds of social actors". (1994, 11)

Symbolically
constructed
lifeworlds

Space...

- ▶ "What space is depends on who is experiencing it and how" (1994, 11)

Space

- ▶ "The experience of space is always shot through with temporalities, as spaces are always created, reproduced and transformed in relation to previously constructed spaces provided and established from the past. Spaces are intimately related to the formation of biographies and social relationships" (1994, 11)

Space

Biography of
the object
Kopytoff
1986

- ▶ “The approach requires, rather, a continuous dialectic between ideas and empirical data. From this perspective, the intimate connection of space with the social, with the formation of biographies, with action, event, power, context and subjectivity, materializes or concretizes its specificity and impact in the social world.” (11)

Debating Landscapes

- ▶ "A key issue in this approach is how people experience and understand the world. Phenomenology involves the understanding and description of things as they are experienced by a subject. It is about the relationship between Being and Being-in-the-world. Being-in-the-world resides in a process of objectification in which people objectify the world by setting themselves apart from it. This results in the creation of a gap, a distance space". (12)

Phenomenology of the landscape

- ▶ "To be a human is both to create this distance between the self and that which is beyond and to attempt to bridge this distance through a variety of means—through perception (seeing, hearing, touching), bodily actions and movements, and intentionality, emotion and awareness residing in systems of belief and decision-making, remembrance and evaluation." (12)