Cultural Landscapes and World Heritage: An Uneasy Relationship?

by

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Abstract

This thesis argues that the assimilation of cultural landscapes into World Heritage activities and the framework within which it designates sites has been accompanied by conceptual problems. It uses academic scholarship on theoretical approaches to the study of cultural landscapes as both tangible and intangible articulations of an association between culture and nature to inform an analysis that highlights several problematic considerations pertaining to the current World Heritage approach to cultural landscapes. The categorisation of cultural landscapes within the World Heritage operational framework is critiqued for its ability to accommodate the intangible, immaterial and cognitive dimensions of cultural landscapes, particularly those associated with non-monumental and indigenous cultures. The thesis further suggests that several inherent qualities of cultural landscapes (namely plurality and dynamism) are potentially at odds with the notion of universal value that underpins all World Heritage designations. The application of this research to an explicitly Canadian context is highlighted.

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Glossary

Canadian Heritage – is a federal department within the Canadian Government that is responsible for heritage conservation activities.

ICOMOS – The International Council on Monuments and Sites.

IUCN – The World Conservation Union.

State Party – a country that has adhered to the *World Heritage Convention*.

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation.

World Heritage – is an organisation of administrative bodies within UNESCO that operate together under the banner of World Heritage and administer the *World Heritage Convention*.

World Heritage Committee – is the statutory body responsible for decision-making on all matters related to the implementation of the *World Heritage Convention*. The Committee consists of representatives from 21 State Parties.

Introduction

UNESCO's World Heritage recognises heritage the world over through the designation of sites onto its World Heritage List. Natural sites of outstanding beauty and ecological importance are inscribed alongside significant buildings, historic towns, archaeological remains and other cultural sites. Sites inscribed onto the World Heritage List may become the object of considerable attention at local, national and global scales, often growing in iconic status as a result. Cultural landscapes, a new form of heritage recognised by World Heritage, were first inscribed onto the World Heritage List in 1993. The concept of a 'cultural landscape' is complex and multifaceted, making it a challenging addition to the activities of World Heritage, both theoretically and operationally. However, it is also an interesting mechanism through which to recognise heritage that has not traditionally featured on the World Heritage List. This thesis argues that certain conceptual issues that warrant attention and discussion have characterized the way World Heritage has assimilated cultural landscapes into its activities. In order to set the stage for a statement of the central questions of this thesis, a brief summary of the process by which cultural landscapes were introduced into World Heritage follows.

At the eighth session of the World Heritage Committee held in Buenos Aires, 1984, concerns were raised over the method of evaluating 'mixed' sites (largely 'rural landscapes') that satisfy both cultural and natural criteria for inscription on the

UNESCO World Heritage List. As a result, a task force including representatives of the World Heritage Committee's principal advisory bodies (the IUCN and ICOMOS) was convened for the purpose of elaborating on the guidelines for identification and nomination of such sites. Following their meeting in Paris, 1985, the task force recommended amendments to the existing guidelines and criteria by which cultural and natural sites were evaluated with a view to more readily accommodating 'mixed' sites such as rural landscapes. However, at its tenth session held in 1986, the World Heritage Committee expressed reservations pertaining to the adoption of the task force's recommendations because it felt it was premature to institute changes in the absence of a concrete nomination that overtly challenged the adequacy of the existing guidelines and criteria.

At the same session, a representative of the United Kingdom responded by offering to present a draft nomination of a rural landscape for inscription at the subsequent 1987 session, to enable the Committee to apply the existing guidelines and criteria to a 'concrete' nomination (and therefore test their appropriateness). Thus, the World Heritage Committee's advisory bodies, the IUCN and ICOMOS, evaluated the nomination of the Lake District National Park for inscription as both a cultural and natural (i.e. 'mixed') World Heritage site at the Committee's 1987 session. ICOMOS, the Committee's advisory body on cultural heritage, was in favour of inscribing the Lake District National Park, while the IUCN, the advisory body on natural heritage, was against inscribing it. As a result, the World Heritage Committee

deferred the nomination until such a time as it had clarified its position on 'mixed' nominations of this type. Upon conferring with ICOMOS, which had supported the nomination, the United Kingdom decided to revise its nomination of the Lake District National Park and re-present it as a cultural site only (i.e. not 'mixed'). Despite support from ICOMOS, the second nomination was once again deferred because the Committee deemed that there were insufficiently clear criteria to rule on this type of site as constituting World Heritage under the cultural category. The World Heritage Committee then decided to set about developing a criterion or criteria for what were now being called 'cultural landscapes' instead of rural landscapes.

By 1991 a possible new criterion had been developed which would allow for the inclusion of 'cultural landscapes' as a type of cultural heritage (now distinct from natural heritage). Its adoption was promoted as allowing for a "more rigorous examination of the special features of such sites than the previous practice of considering them as mixed cultural and natural sites."¹ While the specific criterion for the inclusion of cultural landscapes as cultural heritage tabled in 1991 was never adopted, the language of the existing criteria for the inscription of cultural heritage was amended to accommodate the inclusion of cultural landscapes following the Meeting of the Expert Group on Cultural Landscapes held in La Petite Pierre, France in 1992. Following this meeting cultural landscapes had thus become an official part of the UNESCO vocabulary and World Heritage related activities. In an attempt to

¹ UNESCO, "Revision of Operational Guidelines" 3.

come to terms with this newly acknowledged form of heritage, regional expert meetings and thematic studies were promoted to assist the World Heritage Committee in its decision-making concerning cultural landscapes. In 1994, the *Global Strategy for a Balanced and Representative World Heritage List* highlighted cultural landscapes as a means of acknowledging the heritage of traditionally under-represented cultures.

This brief summary reveals a process that raises some questions about the intellectual and procedural implications of adopting cultural landscapes as a heritage type by UNESCO's World Heritage Committee. The process seems to have begun as an attempt to clarify the designation of 'rural landscapes' thought to be 'mixed' sites that challenged the existing distinction between cultural and natural heritage. However, it ended with the replacement of the idea of 'rural landscapes' with that of 'cultural landscapes', which became categorized and designated as a new form of cultural heritage, altogether disassociated from the category of natural heritage. As Rössler points out, the debate surrounding the whole process was "narrowed and distorted" by the disproportionate importance given to the case study of the Lake District National Park in coming to terms with the issues being discussed.² The importance placed on the Lake District National Park case study seems to have *operationalised* the concept of 'cultural landscapes' from the moment it was first discussed by the World Heritage Committee, effectively precluding "a more general discussion concerning the

² Rössler, "Unesco and Cultural Landscape Protection" 43.

definition of cultural landscapes and criteria for their inclusion in the World Heritage List.”³

This thesis suggests that conceptual problems have accompanied the assimilation of cultural landscapes into World Heritage activities, perhaps in part attributable to the prevailing operational concerns that informed their adoption. I argue that the decision to include cultural landscapes in the category of Cultural Heritage has created a conceptual paradigm that relates cultural landscapes to practices and frameworks that have been designed for other types of cultural heritage. This, I contend, is problematic in as far as it may lead to an undervaluing of many of the inherent qualities and characteristics that make cultural landscapes a unique type of heritage and an important addition to the activities of World Heritage. Moreover, this conceptual paradigm may limit the potential of cultural landscapes as a vehicle through which to highlight traditionally under-recognised heritages and might ultimately hinder the World Heritage Committee’s own objective of using the concept of cultural landscapes as a way of redressing existing imbalances on the World Heritage List. Effectively, I am arguing that the way cultural landscapes have been included and understood as part of the World Heritage category of Cultural Heritage needs to be critically analysed, particularly given the (operationally driven) circumstances that led to their categorisation as such.

³ Rössler, "Unesco and Cultural Landscape Protection" 43.

There is, I believe, a second issue that also needs to be critically analysed. As I point out above with reference to Rössler, there is an apparent lack of substantive theoretical discussion concerning the character of this heritage resource and how it should most appropriately be included into the activities of World Heritage.⁴ The case study nomination of the Lake District National Park appears to have driven the adoption of cultural landscapes by World Heritage and to some degree eclipsed a comprehensive theoretical and conceptual analysis pertaining to the broader considerations of doing so. I argue that this has left underlying intellectual problems concerning the potentially problematic notion of designating cultural landscapes as heritage sites, especially within an ideological framework that seeks to attribute 'universal value'. I believe it is important to revisit the fundamental, yet largely unproblematised, assumption that cultural landscapes can be designated as World Heritage without potential consequences to their integrity as a heritage resource. In doing so my objective is not to suggest that cultural landscapes have no place in UNESCO's heritage related activities; rather it is to open the door for re-evaluations of how cultural landscapes might be included in World Heritage in the most appropriate way to secure both their integrity as heritage resources and their role in the international heritage conservation movement.

This study is being undertaken with relevance to a specifically Canadian context in mind. At present there are thirteen designated World Heritage sites in Canada, none

⁴ Rössler, "Unesco and Cultural Landscape Protection" 43.

of which are inscribed as cultural landscapes. However, in June 2004 Canadian Heritage released a Tentative List of sites they will seek for inscription onto the World Heritage List. This Tentative List includes eleven sites, a number of which could be characterized as cultural landscapes for the purposes of World Heritage designation. The emphasis on nominating sites that are in line with World Heritage criteria for the designation of cultural landscapes is likely in response to the 1994 *Global Strategy for a Balanced and Representative World Heritage List*. The *Global Strategy* calls for UNESCO State Parties that are well represented or over-represented in terms of the number of World Heritage sites located within their borders (of which Canada is one), to only nominate heritage sites, such as cultural landscapes, that fit into categories of heritage currently under-represented on the World Heritage List.⁵ While conforming to the guidelines of the *Global Strategy*, Canada's Tentative List can also be viewed as an attempt to increase national and international recognition for Canada's plentiful and diverse cultural landscape heritage. Furthermore, the presence of several sites on the Tentative List associated with Aboriginal cultures may reflect recent efforts to use the concept of cultural landscapes as a vehicle through which to commemorate Canada's heretofore-undervalued Aboriginal heritage.

In light of Canada's recent Tentative List, I believe it is important to undertake an analysis of how World Heritage has incorporated the concept of cultural landscapes into its activities in order to determine the appropriateness of nominating Canadian

⁵ Buggey, "Canadian Cultural Sites".

cultural landscapes for World Heritage designation. Given the issues discussed above, Canada should be aware of the implications and considerations of endorsing the designation of its cultural landscapes onto the World Heritage List. After all, World Heritage designation will have a significant role in defining, commemorating and, ultimately, successfully conserving Canadian cultural landscapes. Even conforming or 'packaging' Canadian cultural landscapes according to the World Heritage model for the purposes of nomination influences the way we conceptualise our cultural landscape heritage. Moreover, understanding some of the conceptual problems that have accompanied the inclusion of cultural landscapes into World Heritage activities can be seen as contributing to Canada's growing awareness in terms of identifying and commemorating its own cultural landscape heritage at a national level. Finally, as a State Party to UNESCO with abundant cultural landscape heritage, Canada has an important role to play in both assessing and contributing to the understanding and operationalising of the concept of cultural landscapes within World Heritage. To this end, an understanding of the issues is an important starting point.

Chapter One of this thesis undertakes a theoretical analysis of the term 'cultural landscape'. Drawing on literature from the disciplines of heritage studies, geography, anthropology and archaeology, among others, I discuss academic thought related to cultural landscapes and highlight various theoretical approaches that have been used to study and understand them. With reference to this discussion, I highlight the value

of this academic approach to the study and understanding of cultural landscapes and identify its relevance to the lines of argument I make throughout the remainder of the thesis. In doing so I place myself in a position to inform a critical analysis of the World Heritage perspective on cultural landscapes with non-institutional literature that deals with approaches to identifying and understanding cultural landscapes. It is effectively through this juxtaposition (which I expand upon below) that I intend to highlight the existing limitations and conceptual problems I suggest infuse the existing relationship between World Heritage and cultural landscapes.

Chapter Two concentrates on examining the categorisation of cultural landscapes within the organisational and operational structure of World Heritage. More specifically, I undertake a critical discussion of the implications of the World Heritage decision to accommodate cultural landscapes within their activities through the modification of existing criteria designed for the identification and designation of cultural heritage. I argue that this decision delimits parameters by which cultural landscapes are understood and designated, effectively supporting a Eurocentric conceptual paradigm that equates cultural heritage with tangible cultural artefacts or relics such as buildings or monuments. The resulting focus on the material dimensions of cultural landscapes over their metaphysical and social dimensions (notions discussed in Chapter One) has shifted focus away from the intangible, associative qualities that make cultural landscapes an important addition to World Heritage in terms of its ability to incorporate the heritage of non-monumental, often

indigenous cultures. I argue that the inclusion of cultural landscapes within the category of Cultural Heritage burdens the interpretation and understanding of cultural landscapes with a Eurocentric predisposition towards tangible, monumental heritage that is incongruous with the intangible dimension of cultural landscapes.

Having posited from the outset that designation with a view to conserving heritage is often undertaken without a full appreciation of its effects on the broader system of culture, Chapter Three discusses issues concerning the potential effects of designating cultural landscapes as World Heritage. It argues that there is an inherent friction between the designation of cultural landscapes predicated on the notions of ‘universality’ and ‘universal value’ (which are critically discussed), and the diversity of meanings and dynamism of forms that characterize most cultural landscapes. More specifically, two main issues are raised. First, I argue that designating a cultural landscape as World Heritage may highlight or privilege an interpretation of the landscape that satisfies the criteria required for achieving World Heritage status, in the process undermining the diversity of legitimate meanings that characterize, and are supported by, the landscape at any given time. Second, I consider how World Heritage designation may discourage change to the form of cultural landscapes over time, essentially ‘freezing’ an inherently dynamic entity that is constantly changing and evolving.

A rich and varied body of academic literature informs my approach to the analysis of cultural landscapes and the institutional concepts and practices applied to them by World Heritage. The concept of 'landscape' has received a significant amount of academic attention in the past fifteen years from a variety of disciplinary fields coinciding with the introduction of cultural landscapes into World Heritage activities. As such, this body of work presents a useful starting point due to its theoretical insights, timeliness and external positioning in relation to the institutional construct of UNESCO. Its employment therefore, is intended to encourage shifting focus away from the operational paradigm of World Heritage to a perspective that starts with cultural landscapes as a theoretical concept. It should also be mentioned that while there is considerable literature originating from within the institutional framework of UNESCO and its advisory bodies, there is a substantially smaller body of literature originating from outside that framework that looks critically at UNESCO and its activities. It is hoped that by engaging in a conceptual and theoretical discussion on cultural landscapes this thesis contributes to this growing body of work and to the building of links between academic and institutional thinking in this area. That its perspective is also a Canadian one suggests the continuing role Canada has to play in the conceptualisation and formulation of cultural landscape heritage.

Chapter One

A Discussion on Academic Approaches to Cultural Landscapes

The ‘Sauerian’ Approach to Cultural Landscapes

The term ‘cultural landscape’ describes a complex entity that is neither easy to define nor simple to appreciate. Although it started out life as a relatively unproblematic term used to describe a rather straightforward concept, over time scholars have suggested new dimensions to the notion of a cultural landscape and pioneered new approaches for coming to terms with its complexity. In this chapter I undertake an analysis of the evolution of academic thought in relation to cultural landscapes with a view to exploring different theoretical perspectives on how best to conceptualise cultural landscapes. With reference to this discussion, I then highlight the relevance of this academic approach to informing the lines of argument I make throughout the remainder of my thesis.

The term ‘cultural landscape’ can be traced back to 1925 and the work of American geographer Carl Sauer. In response to the idea of ‘environmental determinism’ (dominant at the time), which posits “that human activities are controlled by the environment” and “that human agency [has] scant autonomy in the shaping of the

visible landscape,” Sauer sought to stress the agency of ‘culture’ as a force in shaping the visible features of landscape.¹ In his seminal essay *The Morphology of Landscape*, Sauer defined cultural landscapes as follows:

The cultural landscape is fashioned from a natural landscape by a cultural group. Culture is the agent, the natural area the medium, the cultural landscape is the result. Under the influence of a given culture, itself changing through time, the landscape undergoes development, passing through phases, and probably reaching ultimately the end of its cycle of development. With the introduction of a different – that is – alien culture, a rejuvenation of the cultural landscape sets in, or a new landscape is superimposed on remnants of an older one.²

Effectively Sauer argued that the interaction between people and their environment is more complex and involved than the straightforward causal relationship proposed by environmental determinism. It is important to note in Sauer’s definition that while the physical environment is still considered one of the key elements in forming areas of cultural homogeneity through its capacity to condition human activity, it is rejected as the overarching causal determinant of human behaviour and expression.³ Operating on the premise that people and the aggregate of their way of life, or culture, also acts on the surrounding environment, Sauer proposed that over time the dual forces of culture and environment shape what he termed a ‘cultural landscape’.⁴ Thus, while drawing “a neat distinction between culture and nature,” where the physical environment is “the medium with and through which human cultures act,”

¹ Lewthwaite, 1966 in Livingstone, "Environmental Determinism" 212.; Cosgrove, "Cultural Landscape" 138.

² Sauer 1925 in Cosgrove, "Cultural Landscape" 138.

³ Hugill and Foote, "Rereading Cultural Geography".

⁴ Crang, "Cultural Geography".

Sauer nevertheless attributed significance to both cultural and natural elements in the production of cultural landscapes.⁵

As the title of his essay suggests, Sauer's methodological approach to identifying cultural landscapes was to study their 'morphology'. Sauer believed a cultural landscape to be "an area made up of a distinct association of forms, both physical [natural] and cultural."⁶ Forms, such as buildings (and their architectural features), settlement and land-use patterns, water management and transportation infrastructures and the domestication of particular plant and animal species, were interpreted by Sauer as constituting cultural responses and adaptations that altered the natural environment.⁷ This morphological approach "stressed that landscape was an objective area to be studied scientifically through observation" and "laid greatest emphasis on the visible forms of a cultural landscape as the principal features for geographic study."⁸ Sauer also believed that the location of a cohesive grouping of these forms indicates a culturally homogenous geographical region or 'culture area', at the core of which is located what he termed the 'cultural hearth', the "area of origin of a cultural group involved in creating a cultural landscape."⁹ Thus, Sauer saw cultural landscapes as "the *material* expression of the (seemingly unified) cultural group who live in that region."¹⁰

⁵ Cosgrove, "Cultural Landscape" 139.; Ibid 138.

⁶ Duncan, "Landscape" 430.

⁷ Cosgrove, "Cultural Landscape" 139.

⁸ Duncan, "Landscape" 430.; Cosgrove, "Cultural Landscape" 139.

⁹ Cosgrove, "Cultural Landscape" 138.

¹⁰ Cresswell, "Landscape and Obliteration of Practice" 270 (emphasis added).

Towards a Subjective View of Cultural Landscapes

In the 1970s humanistic geographers “argued for a view of landscape that took the human imagination into account. Rather than provide accounts of distinctive regional material landscapes,” as Sauer had done, “[they] began to see landscape as residing within the minds and eyes of beholders: landscape as a way of seeing.”¹¹ Jackson and Meinig, following in the tradition of landscape analysis focusing upon Sauerian themes, were both important figures in the development of the concept of cultural landscapes.¹² They directed their attention to vernacular American landscapes and emphasised “the communicative and representational aspects of cultural landscapes.”¹³ Jackson “recognized the importance of art and emotion in the study of landscape as he attempted to teach his students to ‘read’ the landscape as a kind of text full of symbolic clues to the meaning that lies behind the bare morphology.”¹⁴ Meinig, in his essay *The Beholding Eye: Ten Versions of the Same Scene*, foregrounds the notion that “even though we [may] gather together and look in the same direction at the same instant, we will not – we cannot – see the same landscape.”¹⁵ While recognizing the influence of Sauer’s ideas on cultural landscapes, Jackson and Meinig shift their focus away from the strict morphology of landscape and the objective analysis of its correlation to a homogenous cultural group. The work of these two geographers is significant to the conceptual

¹¹ Cresswell, “Landscape and Obliteration of Practice” 270. See also Berger, “Ways of Seeing”.

¹² Duncan, “Landscape” 430.

¹³ Cosgrove, “Cultural Landscape” 140.

¹⁴ Cresswell, “Landscape and Obliteration of Practice” 271.

understanding and approach to cultural landscapes in that it moves towards a subjective analysis of landscape, which encourages multiple 'ways of seeing' landscape and an interest in the 'meaning' of landscape.

The 1980s and 1990s saw an intellectual shift in geographical study and other disciplines that brought questions of culture to the forefront, at least in part as a result of influences from literary theory and cultural studies. This 'cultural turn' "explicitly appl[ied] social and cultural theory to landscape interpretation, and show[ed] greater concern for both the socio-cultural and political processes that shape landscapes as well as the role that landscapes play in these processes."¹⁶ Operating within this new theoretical environment prompted a critical reassessment of Sauer's morphological approach to cultural landscapes, in the process challenging four of its inherent assumptions. First, Sauer's view of the natural landscape as a "*tabula rasa* upon which 'culture' inscribes itself" was seen as ill founded because nature had ceased to be thought of as ever having been a blank slate.¹⁷ Second, Sauer's neat distinction between nature and culture was considered problematic given "that 'nature' itself and the boundaries which separate it from the human are culturally contrived in radically different ways by different groups in different historical contexts."¹⁸ Third, the assumption of a homogenous cultural entity upon which Sauer's ideas seem predicated is problematic given the inherent social structure of all cultural groups.

¹⁵ Meinig, "The Beholding Eye" 33.

¹⁶ Schein 1997 in Duncan, "Landscape" 430.

¹⁷ Cosgrove, "Cultural Landscape" 139.

¹⁸ Cronon 1995 in Cosgrove, "Cultural Landscape" 140.

Fourth, Sauer's attention to the material (tangible) form rather than the processes inherent in cultural landscapes was thought to overestimate the significance of the material cultural expression and underestimate the significance of intangible socio-cultural processes to their creation.¹⁹ Therefore, in contrast to Sauer's distinction between culture and nature and his reliance on morphological cultural expressions, Cosgrove suggests that perhaps nature and culture "are best regarded together, as co-productions, [a]ll landscapes are thus equally natural landscapes and cultural landscapes, according to the questions we ask of them and the processes we choose to examine in relation to them."²⁰ What warrants highlighting is that this 'new' attempt to theories cultural landscapes stresses notions of process and plurality, a point to which I return in Chapter Three.

The visual representation of landscape, the semiotics of landscape and the 'practice' of landscape are three examples of the ways in which geographers and archaeologists have informed their study of cultural landscapes since the 'cultural turn'. Work by geographers in the mid 1980s focussed on a fluid conception of landscape that emphasised the social construction and representation of landscape as imbued with networks of power and contestation.²¹ In this work, "all aspects of landscape are considered cultural signifiers."²² As such their interpretation is thought to reveal

¹⁹ Cosgrove, "Cultural Landscape" 139.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Cosgrove, "Cultural Landscape" 140.

²² Ibid.

social attitudes and ideological contexts within which the material structures of landscape are created.²³ As Cresswell explains, some geographers

argued that landscapes were material productions within which were coded particular ideologies. Landscapes were diagrams of power and influence that helped to reproduce the very power structures that produced them in the first place.”²⁴

For example, Cosgrove argues that highlighting the multiple ways of seeing a landscape rather than focussing on landscape as a static image or object allows one to understand the way in which particular classes have represented themselves and their property.²⁵ Investigating the visual representation of landscapes, namely in Renaissance Italy, and the subsequent role these depictions played in the expression and legitimization of social order, Cosgrove argues that the conscious creation and manipulation of meaning through place images (iconography) is one of the most pervasive features of any cultural landscape.²⁶

While Cosgrove was attempting to understand the social construction of landscape through the study of representation, Duncan pursued the same objective by studying the semiotics of landscape.²⁷ In this context, landscapes are viewed as texts to which post-structural notions of intertextuality, drawn from literary theory, are applied.²⁸ In the early 1990s, “Duncan argue[d] against the privileging of vision and suggest[ed]

²³ Baker, "Ideology and Landscape" 3.

²⁴ "Landscape and Obliteration of Practice" 271.

²⁵ Cosgrove, "Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape".

²⁶ Cosgrove, "Spectacle and Society".

²⁷ Duncan, "The City as Text".

that we might think of landscapes as being constructed linguistically – as a signifying system that encourages some readings rather than others.”²⁹ He argues that ‘reading’ a cultural landscape can reveal the signifying system through which the social system is communicated, reproduced, experienced, and explored.³⁰ “In addition to denaturalising [or deconstructing] landscape by demonstrating its construction of one of a number of ways of seeing, semiotic approaches [to landscape] really come into their own when landscape meanings are understood to be constituted through the subject’s reading of an arrangement of signs.”³¹

Entrikin explores the idea of landscapes as ‘practice’ in an effort to consider how experience informs an understanding of place.³² He argues that how one sees a place is dependent on how one experiences it. “The specificity of places,” Entrikin suggests, “is thus a function of the unique experiences that individuals and groups associate with places.”³³ Entrikin’s focus on ‘place’ is similar to Ashmore and Knapp’s focus on ‘space’, in that both are activated in the ‘practice’ of landscape. According to the latter, “landscape embodies more than a neutral, binary relationship between people and nature along any single dimension.”³⁴ They argue that “space is both a medium for and an outcome of human activity: it is recognized by means of

²⁸ Duncan, "Landscape" 430.

²⁹ Cresswell, "Landscape and Obliteration of Practice" 272.

³⁰ Williams 1982 in Duncan, "The City as Text" 15.

³¹ Hinchliffe, "'Inhabiting' - Landscapes and Natures" 212.

³² Entrikin, "The Betweenness of Place" 305.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ "Archaeological Landscapes" 8.

specific places, and in this sense, does not exist apart from that activity.”³⁵ In effect, therefore, the ‘space’ one inhabits, which is conditioned by different social, political-economic and ideological forces, will result in the projection of different configurations of meaning onto the landscape.³⁶ In this way “no landscape – aesthetic, poetic, moral, material, or surreal – has an objective appearance or significance independent of the beholder.”³⁷

Cultural Landscapes as Cognitive Constructs

The approaches to landscape discussed above effectively rely on deconstructing material, visual landscapes with a view to foregrounding the poetics and politics inherent to their material form and production. In doing so they challenge Sauer’s earlier understanding of cultural landscapes as the strictly morphological, artefactual expressions of a homogenous cultural group by emphasising multiple perspectives embedded in the production and reception of all cultural landscapes. They illustrate how cultural landscapes may be spaces of contestation and coercion, subjugation and erasure, testimonies of resistance and emancipation, or simply places of complex social interaction.³⁸ Moreover, such approaches resist what Baker calls a “one

³⁵ Knapp and Ashmore, "Archaeological Landscapes" 8.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Fitter 1995 in Knapp and Ashmore, "Archaeological Landscapes" 8.

³⁸ See Bender and Winer, "Contested Landscapes".

landscape/one message” understanding that masks diversity and plurality inherent to all cultural landscapes.³⁹

A corollary to the notion that cultural landscapes are the object of different ways of seeing is an understanding of cultural landscapes as cognitive constructions activated and reactivated in the singular and collective minds of those who inhabit them. In other words, it opens the door for an approach to cultural landscapes that does not begin with the material, but rather with the mental. Indeed, some scholars suggest that cultural landscapes are first and foremost cognitive constructions associated with a physical place. For Schama, “landscapes are culture before they are nature...before [they] can ever be a repose for the senses [they] are the work of the mind.”⁴⁰ Schama goes as far as to suggest that these mental constructs can never be found in reality quite as visualised in the mind and that it is only the mental image of landscape that serves to represent what has been experienced.⁴¹ In fact, Darvill argues that memories and mental constructions of landscape can often be at odds with what can actually be observed.

Thus, a hillside that was once covered in woodland may continue to be treated, in social terms as a wooded place even though the trees have gone. The old order will be perpetuated through such devices as myths, legends and place names, which in turn serve to stimulate memories and mental images at odds with what is observed.⁴²

³⁹ "Ideology and Landscape" 9.

⁴⁰ "Landscape and Memory" 61, 6.

⁴¹ "Landscape and Memory".

⁴² Darvill, "Historic Environment, Landscapes" 107.

Such theoretical discussions suggest that cultural landscapes are also constituted of the immaterial, associative aspects of the culture-nature relationship.

It is important to link the cognitive construction of landscape with the construction of identities both at the individual and group levels. Lynch and Harvey argue for recognition of the role of landscape in one's own biography, claiming that it "evokes specific kinds of meanings [that] serve as spatial coordinates of identity."⁴³ Indeed, in line with Darvill above, one could argue that place names and other landscape-bound signifiers such as myth and memory, act as prompts to a mental geography that is fundamental to people's identities.⁴⁴ At a national or group level, collective awareness, history and identity may be actively constructed in relation to an imagined geography that helps "create a compact, homogenous and unified form" to be harnessed for nationalistic reasons.⁴⁵ For example, Schama discusses conceptualisations of the Bialowieza forest in the formation of Polish national identity and the relationship between Teutonic attachment to the forests of Germania and the construction of a German identity.⁴⁶

Perhaps the best examples of cognitive constructions of landscape can be drawn from Aboriginal peoples the world over. Aboriginal cultural landscapes often lack material evidence of their existence since they may not be characterized by tangible,

⁴³ Lynch 1972 in Osborne, "Putting Identity in Its Place" 42.

⁴⁴ Osborne, "Putting Identity in Its Place" 46.

⁴⁵ Kaufmann and Zimmer, "In Search of the Authentic Nation" 487. See also Osborne, "Putting Identity in Its Place" 41.

morphological, and hence visual, modifications to the natural environment. Instead, they are formed and sustained through the attribution of intangible cultural values onto natural landscapes. Such landscapes of association rely on “the interconnectedness of all aspects of human life with the living landscape.”⁴⁷ This includes the activation of the landscape through practices of everyday life that are rooted in an intimate knowledge of the natural environment, the seasonal round of yearly activities, patterns of movement, and the procurement of resources.⁴⁸ They are also the product of cosmologically and mythologically created spaces that are associated with particular places in the natural landscape deemed to possess spiritual or otherwise cultural significance.⁴⁹ Aboriginal cultural landscapes effectively order “physical geography...into a social landscape where culture and topography are symbolically fused.”⁵⁰

For example, the oral history of the Sahtu Dene and Metis cultures of Canada’s North-West Territories is so bound up in the landscape that it does not have an existence independent of its physical context. “[T]raditional place names serve as memory ‘hooks’ on which to hang the cultural fabric of a narrative tradition” that relies on the visual, mnemonic role of ‘place’ to assist in the telling, and learning, of oral history.⁵¹ As a result, the landscape becomes instrumental both in the

⁴⁶ “Landscape and Memory”.

⁴⁷ Buggy, “Approach to Aboriginal Cultural Landscapes” 8.

⁴⁸ Buggy, “Approach to Aboriginal Cultural Landscapes”.

⁴⁹ Henderson, et al., “Aboriginal Knowledge and Heritage” 408.

⁵⁰ “Rakekée Gok’é Godi: Places We Take Care Of” 21.

⁵¹ Ibid 21.

transmission of cultural knowledge and the structuring of identity, for “not only does place anchor narrative, but together they inextricably link the orator to the cultural landscape, because without the storyteller, the stories would never be voiced.”⁵² Similarly, Henderson et al describe the entire landscape of the Mikmaq as “a symbolic historical and educational record, testifying to the unique experience and identity of the people.”⁵³ Such associative Aboriginal cultural landscapes effectively embody identities that cannot be conceptualised outside of the culture-nature relationship.

The land is not really the place (separate from ourselves) where we act out the drama of our isolate destinies. It is not a means of survival, a setting for our affairs, a resource on which we draw in order to keep our own act functioning. It is not the ever-present ‘Other’ which supplies us with a sense of “I”. It is rather a part of our being, dynamic, significant, real....[t]he relationship is more one of identity...than of affinity.⁵⁴

Yet it bears remembering that these cultural landscapes are not visible to the naked eye since they bear no tangible, morphological markers that act as testaments to the complex relationship between Aboriginal cultures and the environment they inhabit.

⁵² "Rakekée Gok'è Godi: Places We Take Care Of".

⁵³ "Aboriginal Knowledge and Heritage" 415.

⁵⁴ Gunn Allen 1980 in Henderson, et al., "Aboriginal Knowledge and Heritage" 409.

The Value of these Academic Approaches to the Understanding of Cultural Landscapes as Heritage

The discussion above suggests that the concept of a cultural landscape is complex and multifaceted, making it resistant to easy definition and categorisation. There are multiple ways of approaching and seeking to understand cultural landscapes, each relevant to a given perspective. However, there seems to be a generally accepted common denominator that posits cultural landscapes as the product of an interaction between culture and nature. They effectively arise from a culturally determined interpretation of a particular physical (i.e. natural) area that leads to an association based on selective valorization, practice, and the attribution of meaning. This association may be articulated through such signifiers as place names, oral histories and collective memories, traditions, beliefs and ideas, artistic representation (drawing, writing, music), and, often most apparently, by the presence of built structures or other tangible, culturally determined modifications of the physical environment.⁵⁵ This is not to suggest, of course, that all of these signifiers are involved in the articulation of all cultural landscapes, but rather that specific cultural landscapes can be evidenced through the presence of signifiers that represent the result of a sustained interaction between culture and nature. Neither is it to suggest that such articulations are culturally homogenous expressions unreflective of the internal heterogeneity and social differentiation characteristic of all cultures and their collective products.

In reviewing the various theoretical approaches to the study and understanding of cultural landscapes since Sauer, it is clear that one should be cautious about giving primacy to the structural, built – and hence visual or morphological– dimension when thinking about cultural landscapes. First, there is a risk of overlooking or otherwise devaluing cultural landscapes (such as many Aboriginal ones for example) that lack any tangible, visual alterations to the natural environment, but which are largely cognitive constructs created and recreated through intangible cultural articulations. Second, the morphology of a landscape may not give an accurate indication of the cognitive conceptualisation of the cultural landscape. In other words, the cognitive construction of a cultural landscape may be so embedded that it exists independent of changes to the landscape's material form, such that it resides in the mind quite distinct from what is visible on the ground. Third, focussing on the material expression of a cultural landscape may de-emphasise the equally important intangible articulation of a cultural landscape that both sustains the production of material forms and articulates altogether different aspects of the cultural landscape.

I believe that it is precisely the complex and multifaceted character of cultural landscapes that makes this concept interesting to the field of heritage conservation. The fluidity of the concept and its receptiveness to different horizons of interpretation mean that it has the potential to allow for the acknowledgement of heritage that is not easily accommodated otherwise. The academic work reviewed above is particularly

⁵⁵ For a framework that attempts to integrate the various tangible and intangible elements of cultural

relevant in this regard because it by and large resists establishing categorical definitions, preferring instead to highlight the intersections, negotiations, and frictions that are embodied in cultural landscapes. This approach is illuminating when attempting to view cultural landscapes as heritage and allows for value to be found where more concrete definitions may preclude it. Thus I use this academic literature to inform my critique of the World Heritage approach to cultural landscapes, to use it as an intellectual lever of sorts to pry open instances in which I feel there are conceptual shortcomings in relation to how cultural landscapes have been adopted into the operational structure and activities of UNESCO.

Chapter Two

A Critical Examination of the Inclusion of Cultural Landscapes into the World Heritage Category of Cultural Heritage

The Categorisation of Cultural Landscapes within the UNESCO Operational Framework

In the concluding paragraphs of Chapter One I note that cultural landscapes are the product of an interaction between culture and nature that creates an association which can be articulated in a number of different ways. Some of these are tangible in the sense that they alter the morphology of the landscape leaving a distinct, visual cultural imprint. Others can be considered intangible because they lack material form, but none the less reflect the existence of the cultural landscape as a cognitive construction. In general it could be said that a given cultural landscape can be evidenced by both tangible and intangible articulations of the association between culture and nature. Moreover, there is often an interplay between the tangible and intangible such that the two reflect and sustain each other over time and space contributing to the continuity of the cultural landscape in the process. This being the case, in Chapter One I also highlight the problematic nature of relying on tangible or morphological features as the primary way of approaching the study and understanding of cultural landscapes. These may be the most visually apparent

articulations of a cultural landscape, but they are only a part of a larger system of signifiers that reflect an association between culture and nature. However, I argue in this chapter that the World Heritage approach to the designation of cultural landscapes is characterized by a predisposition towards the tangible (i.e. material, artefactual, built, morphological) articulation of cultural landscapes, which effectively eclipses the equally important, though not visually apparent, intangible articulation of cultural landscapes that may be an integral part of their heritage value.

To begin with, this predisposition is both reflected and perpetuated in the way cultural landscapes have been categorised within the organisational and operational structure of UNESCO (Figure 1). Upon recognising cultural landscapes as a type of heritage in 1992, UNESCO accommodated them within the *World Heritage Convention* as a form of cultural heritage (one of two categories of heritage along with natural heritage).¹ On a more practical level, they also amended the *Operational Guidelines* aimed at implementing the *World Heritage Convention* such that the criteria by which cultural heritage is evaluated allowed for the designation of cultural landscapes

¹ Article 1 of the *World Heritage Convention* considers the following as 'cultural heritage': monuments which include architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting, elements or structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings and combinations of features, which are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science; groups of buildings which include groups of separate or connected buildings which, because of their architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the landscape, are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science; and sites which include works of man or the *combined works of nature and man*, and areas including archaeological sites which are of outstanding universal value from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological point of view (UNESCO, "Definition Cultural and Natural Heritage" (emphasis added)).

Figure 1 Organisational and Operational Framework of UNESCO's Tangible and Intangible Heritage Activities.

(Figure 2). However, the *World Heritage Convention* and its *Operational Guidelines* address themselves exclusively to tangible heritage.² Therefore, it is fair to say that cultural landscapes have been incorporated into an operational and conceptual structure that is intended for tangible and not intangible heritage.

This is not to say that the *World Heritage Convention* does not acknowledge that tangible cultural heritage (which for them includes cultural landscapes) may have significance because of intangible associations. Indeed, criterion vi of the *Operational Guidelines* describes how cultural heritage can be “associated with events or living traditions, with ideas or with beliefs, or with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal value.”³ However, the *Operational Guidelines* also make it clear that this criterion for evaluating cultural heritage should only be used in “exceptional circumstances” and always in association with other criteria that clearly refer to tangible heritage.⁴ This implies that intangible cultural expression is only of interest in as far as it relates to the significance and maintenance of tangible forms.

² It was not until 1997 that UNESCO’s General Conference decided to formalise the preservation of “the oral and intangible heritage in a geographically and balanced way” with the *Proclamation by UNESCO of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity* (UNESCO, “Proclamation of Masterpieces”). This new area of heritage conservation is completely separate from UNESCO’s World Heritage project both conceptually and operationally (Figure 1). The *Proclamation* honours forms of popular and traditional expression such as languages, oral literature, music, dance, games, mythology, rituals, customs and craftwork know-how; and cultural spaces where popular and traditional cultural activities take place in a concentrated manner (sites for story-telling, rituals, marketplaces, festivals etc.) or on a regular basis (daily rituals, annual processions) (UNESCO, “Proclamation of Masterpieces”). It judges candidatures based on their outstanding value (and not their outstanding *universal* value) and does not apply the ‘test of authenticity’ (necessary for all tangible heritage) to affirm their genuineness. The overall impetus and focus of the *Proclamation* is to safeguard the intangible elements of cultural heritage against disappearing with a view to affirming cultural identities and sustaining cultural diversity.

³ UNESCO, “Criteria for Cultural Properties”.

⁴ Ibid.

- i. represent a masterpiece of creative human genius or
- ii. exhibit an important interchange of human values over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town planning or *landscape design*, or
- iii. bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a *cultural tradition* or to a civilisation which *is living* or has disappeared, or
- iv. be an outstanding example of a type of building or architectural or technological ensemble, or *landscape* which illustrates *a significant stage or significant stages in human history*, or
- v. be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement or *land-use* which is representative of a culture or cultures, especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change, or
- vi. be directly or tangibly associated with events or *living traditions*, with ideas or with beliefs, or with *artistic and literary works* of outstanding universal significance (a criterion used only in exceptional circumstances, and together with other criteria).

Figure 2 Cultural Criteria for Inscription onto the World Heritage List.

It should also be noted that not only have cultural landscapes been categorised as tangible heritage, they have also been sub-categorised as a form of cultural heritage despite the fact that UNESCO defines cultural landscapes as the “combined works of nature and man.”⁵ This begs the question of why they were not accommodated under the category of natural heritage, or indeed in a separate category that combines cultural heritage and natural heritage (perhaps modelled after the IUCN’s Protected Areas Category V).⁶ As I argue shortly, categorizing cultural landscapes as (tangible) cultural heritage subjects them to a traditional UNESCO understanding of cultural heritage that gives further emphasis to tangible, even monumental, cultural expressions.

The way cultural landscapes have been situated within the UNESCO organisational and operational structure delimits the conceptual parameters by which cultural landscapes are understood and designated. I argue that these parameters are confining and often fail to take into account the full heritage value of the intangible dimension of many cultural landscapes. Indeed, as Mason and De la Torre point out, “heritage conservation is only partially understood and incompletely conceived if it is seen as dealing only with the material aspects of the object.”⁷ Furthermore, these parameters promote an either/or interpretation of cultural landscapes (and other heritage alike) and discourage the possibility of acknowledging heritage value from

⁵ UNESCO, “Definition Cultural and Natural Heritage”.

⁶ Cultural landscapes are not inherently cultural heritage or natural heritage. The characterisation of cultural landscapes as cultural heritage reflects a choice.

⁷ “Conservation and Values” 4.

the spaces in-between, or confluences of, the tangible and intangible and the cultural and natural. "One of the reasons that the concept of landscape is beginning to prove so useful is that it is a concept in between...it is useful to have a concept that is free from fixed positions, whose meaning is elusive, yet whose potential range is all-encompassing."⁸ This chapter analyses UNESCO's approach to cultural landscapes with a view to illustrating the incongruous, problematic categorisation and characterization of cultural landscapes as tangible, cultural heritage.

Conceptualising Cultural Heritage as Tangible, Monumental

The conceptual parameters surrounding UNESCO's World Heritage project, which include the separation of the tangible and intangible, the natural and cultural, can be traced back to a Western Enlightenment philosophy.⁹ UNESCO claims that cultural landscapes, as expressions of the "combined works of nature and man," actually challenge the view, long-held by Western civilisations, that nature and culture are distinct subjects.¹⁰ This is a view, it should be pointed out, that many non-Western (often indigenous) cultures do not subscribe to, instead seeing nature and culture as co-agents comprising an inseparable, harmonious and co-dependent whole.¹¹ Yet, despite this apparent challenge, I contend that traditional Western notions of heritage,

⁸ Morphy, "Colonialism, History, Construction of Place" 205.

⁹ Pocock, "Reflections on World Heritage" 261.; Plachter and Rössler, "Cultural Landscapes of Universal Value" 16.

¹⁰ McNeely and Keeton, "Biological and Cultural Diversity" 26.

¹¹ Buggey, "Approach to Aboriginal Cultural Landscapes".

particularly cultural heritage, are structurally and conceptually embedded in UNESCO and World Heritage and thus in their approach to cultural landscapes. Therefore, in order to explain the incongruous, problematic categorisation and characterization of cultural landscapes as tangible, cultural heritage within the UNESCO structure, it is important to briefly discuss the influence of Western notions of cultural heritage on World Heritage activities.

The *Venice Charter* (1964) establishes guidelines to direct conservation activities in the area of cultural heritage, which it defines as historic monuments and sites.¹² Historic monuments are identified “not only [as] the single architectural work but also *the urban or rural setting* in which is found the evidence of a particular civilization, a significant development or an historic event” and apply not only “to great works of art but also to *more modest works* of the past.”¹³ According to this definition, historic monuments should not be limited to unique built structures or pieces of art but should also include buildings’ contextual surroundings and art’s more familiar expressions. Historic sites are defined simply as the “places where monuments [are] situated.”¹⁴ These definitions of cultural heritage and their conservation guidelines are clearly

¹² The International Restoration Charter or *Venice Charter* was adopted in 1964 at the Second Congress of Architects and Specialists of Historic Buildings. It was created out of a need to organise and codify the conservation efforts of an increasing number of specialists in the field. To this end, a second resolution recommending the creation of ICOMOS was also adopted (ICOMOS, “The Venice Charter 1964 - 1994” 20).

¹³ Jokilehto, “Venice Charter” 61 (emphasis added); ICOMOS, “The Venice Charter 1964 - 1994” 110 (emphasis added).

¹⁴ Jokilehto, “Venice Charter” 61.

evident in the *World Heritage Convention's* definitions of cultural heritage.¹⁵

However, according to Cleere, World Heritage practices have “place[d] considerable emphasis on historic towns and town centers, places of worship and other *monumental* buildings and ensembles,” but have for the most part “ignore[d] the traditional village settlements and historic landscapes that form the social and economic infrastructure for the conventional ‘monuments’, and which in many cases have preserved their historical content and integrity more effectively.”¹⁶ These observations suggest that World Heritage has had a predisposition towards interpreting cultural heritage to mean *monumental* cultural heritage, precisely those ‘great works of art’, and not local, vernacular or non-monumental ‘settlements and landscapes’ that I would suggest are also an important part of cultural heritage.

The World Heritage interpretation of cultural heritage as monumental stems perhaps from a long-standing European fascination with architectural ruins, particularly those of the Greek, Roman and Byzantine civilisations, as well as the built heritage of other monumental cultures and religions such as those found in imperial China and on the Indian sub-continent.¹⁷ I contend that this European predisposition towards archaeological, art historical and architectural heritage informs the designation of nominated sites as World Heritage, effectively supporting a conceptual paradigm that

¹⁵ See note no. 1.

¹⁶ Cleere, "Uneasy Bedfellows" 26 (emphasis added). The background to the Progress Report on the Global Strategy explains “the predominance of Western European monumental architecture compared to the non-monumental heritage of other regions, have raised particular concerns, as has the need to strengthen the protection of past and continuing human-environment interactions through World Heritage conservation” (UNESCO, "Progress Report Global Strategy").

equates cultural heritage with tangible cultural artefacts or relics such as buildings or monuments. As a result, cultural heritage that is non-monumental or based on intangible associations has been traditionally over-looked by World Heritage.¹⁸

If World Heritage approaches cultural heritage as exclusively tangible and predominantly monumental, then the evaluation of potential sites for World Heritage designation must also reflect this understanding. Indeed, 'the test of authenticity', which all cultural heritage (including cultural landscapes) must pass in order to be designated as World Heritage, is a concept that originated in the practice of conserving buildings and monuments. More specifically, it can be traced to Article III of the *Venice Charter*, which states "[t]he intention in conserving and restoring monuments is to safeguard them no less as works of art than as historical evidence."¹⁹ Article III seeks to ensure "the authenticity of the resource and the truthfulness of the sources of information in order to guarantee the credibility of its history and cultural context."²⁰ Thus, 'authenticity' foregrounds the belief that the inherent significance of a building or monument resides in it being a physical testament to, or record of, the past and the degree to which this past is legitimately embodied in the artefact. 'Authenticity', from a World Heritage point of view therefore, equates the significance of cultural heritage directly with its material genuineness.

¹⁷ Ibid 25.

¹⁸ Cleere, "World Heritage Convention in Third World" ; Cleere, "Uneasy Bedfellows".

¹⁹ ICOMOS, "The Venice Charter 1964 - 1994".

²⁰ Jokilehto, "Venice Charter" 63.

I believe that the importance given to material authenticity in the designation of cultural heritage reflects and reinforces a conceptual paradigm that considers cultural heritage in terms of tangible, monumental artefacts. In fact, it is not surprising that the artefacts that most readily satisfy the World Heritage 'test of authenticity' are the cathedrals, temples, castles, and palaces that constitute the cultural heritage of monumental cultures and religions.²¹ It is often their colossal magnitude, their physical endurance over hundreds of years, their iconic quality and their 'universal' appeal as material testaments to human ability and creativity that encourages their designation as World Heritage. The evocation of the past, conjured up as a result of the artefact's material authenticity, nurtures a romantic and nostalgic perception that feeds the aforementioned European predisposition (which is at least in part aesthetically based); a predisposition that creates an aura of mystique and wonder around these artefacts that is based on their originality, longevity, beauty and the authenticity of their tangible form.²² The effect of this correlation is that tangible artefacts have become iconographic in terms of their capacity to directly link the present to an authentic past. Within this paradigm non-monumental and intangible cultural heritage does not hold such an easily apparent, tenable or direct link to the past and therefore does not seem as accessible a concept for World Heritage.

I would be remiss not to add that the predisposition towards monumental heritage that characterises the World Heritage approach to cultural heritage is also characteristic of

²¹ Cleere, "Uneasy Bedfellows".

their understanding of natural heritage. The preference seems to be for natural areas whose heritage value lies in grand, majestic, and unique land formations or vegetation assemblages whose ‘integrity’ – the natural heritage equivalent to ‘authenticity’ – and hence their heritage value comes from their supposed pristineness.²³ This can be illustrated with reference to Canadian natural World Heritage sites. To begin with, the heritage value of three of Canada’s sites (Rocky Mountain Parks, Kluane National Park and Reserve/Tatshenshini-Alsek Park, Waterton Lakes National Park) is at least in part derived from the “striking mountain landscape”, nature’s equivalent to cathedrals, temples and monuments. A similar case could be made for the “deep canyons”, “huge waterfalls” and “unique limestone caves” of Nahanni National Park and the exposed “deep ocean crust and rocks of the earth’s mantle” of Gros Morne National Park, a colossal testament to the process of continental drift.²⁴ The remaining three Canadian natural sites are also structured around a central monumental feature: Dinosaur Provincial Park and Miguasha National Park are both designated based on their extensive fossil beds, and it might even be claimed that the centrepiece of Wood Buffalo National Park is the buffalo itself, without whose iconic presence, the park would doubtfully have qualified as World Heritage. Thus, the propensity towards designating monumental heritage, rather than less visually tangible heritage, seems to pervade natural as well as cultural heritage designations.

²² Benjamin, "Work of Art".

²³ Phillips, "Nature of Cultural Landscapes" 27.

²⁴ UNESCO, "Rocky Mountain Parks".; UNESCO, "Nahanni".; UNESCO, "Gros Morne".

Conceptualising Cultural Heritage as Tangible, Monumental: Implications for Cultural Landscapes

The conceptual paradigm that equates cultural heritage with tangible cultural artefacts or relics such as buildings or monuments has resulted in the over-representation of heritage from monumental cultures on the World Heritage List and an under-representation of heritage from traditionally non-monumental, often indigenous cultures.²⁵ Indeed, Cleere's analysis of the World Heritage List suggests an "implicit conflict between the perceptions and aspirations of European and certain Latin-American and Asian countries...and those whose cultures are predominantly non-monumental."²⁶ Furthermore, Cleere points out that many World Heritage sites located in countries or regions whose populations are predominantly indigenous or otherwise non-monumental "are connected with colonial domination or immigrant religions rather than [local] indigenous cultures."²⁷ This state of affairs is not helped by the fact that cultural landscapes, a potentially suitable type of heritage for representing non-monumental and intangible (often indigenous) cultural heritage, are also under-represented on the World Heritage List. According to Head, this is due, at least in part, to the World Heritage Committee's tendency to understand cultural landscapes with reference to monumental architecture, the material production of which is not often associated with non-monumental or non-material cultures.²⁸

²⁵ Cleere, "World Heritage Convention in Third World"; Cleere, "Uneasy Bedfellows".

²⁶ Cleere, "Uneasy Bedfellows" 21.

²⁷ Cleere, "World Heritage Convention in Third World" 102.

²⁸ Head, "Cultural Landscapes and Environmental Change" 92.

Furthermore, specifically indigenous cultural heritage that is based on intangible cultural signifiers has often been misunderstood as natural heritage:

[t]he first two properties to be included on the World Heritage List for their associative cultural values were Tongariro National Park in New Zealand and Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park in Australia. Both properties had already been listed for their natural values. This highlights the close correlation between traditional custodianship by indigenous people and the maintenance of qualities described as 'natural heritage', and begs the question of the extent to which environments valued for their 'naturalness' are in fact artefacts of indigenous activity over millennia.²⁹

The *Global Strategy for a Balanced and Representative World Heritage List*, adopted in 1994 by the World Heritage Committee, is intended to redress the imbalance and improve the representativeness of the World Heritage List. Under-represented State Parties (generally bearers of non-monumental heritage) are encouraged to submit nominations that best reflect their heritage (most often cultural landscapes) and over-represented State Parties (generally bearers of monumental heritage) are encouraged to suspend new nominations or nominate only those properties that fall into under-represented categories such as cultural landscapes. All State Parties are encouraged to prepare nominations that highlight "the interaction between human beings and their environment and human beings in society" usually understood to mean cultural landscapes.³⁰ On paper, the *Global Strategy* reflects "an awareness that cultural values cannot be measured only in terms of great monuments but also exist in the spiritual significance and cultural importance attached to landscapes by human

communities.”³¹ In other words, the *Global Strategy* calls for a shift in paradigm from the monumental to the non-monumental, from the archaeological to the anthropological. This new awareness married with the desire to redress the imbalances of the List by concentrating on the heritage of non-monumental cultures has translated into a significant focus on cultural landscapes.

Indeed, as Head explains, the inclusion of cultural landscapes as a type of cultural heritage under Article 1 of the *World Heritage Convention* was an attempt to move beyond the traditional interpretation of cultural heritage strictly in terms of monuments and buildings to recognise that the inter-relationship between culture and nature was more profound and pervasive than had been previously recognised.³² Since the adoption of the *Global Strategy* there have been a series of regional meetings held in an attempt to assist in identifying the cultural landscape heritage of regions under-represented on the World Heritage List. These meetings have emphasised the intangible, associative value of landscapes created by the sustained interplay of the natural and cultural realms. The *Regional Thematic Meeting on Cultural Landscapes in the Andes* (1998), presented nine case studies in which the associative value of landscape, created through cultural interaction with a particular geophysical environment, was emphasised. Similarly, the *Expert Meeting on African Cultural Landscapes* (1999) considered seven case studies, which exemplified the

²⁹ Head, "Cultural Landscapes and Environmental Change" 90.

³⁰ UNESCO, "Expert Meeting Global Strategy".

³¹ Phillips, "Nature of Cultural Landscapes" 28.

³² Head, "Cultural Landscapes and Environmental Change" 90.

spiritual significance of living African landscapes. Finally, the *Regional Expert Meeting on Cultural Landscapes in Central America* (2000) also foregrounded the importance of intangible articulations in the identification of cultural landscapes.

However, as I mention above, despite these initiatives cultural landscapes remain a relatively under-represented category of heritage on the World Heritage List. According to Cleere, they “have for the most part been ignored, since they lack the monumental elements inseparable in the European mind from the traditional ‘cultural heritage’.”³³ Indeed, the decision to define cultural landscapes as cultural heritage, and therefore, as tangible heritage, betrays underlying assumptions made by World Heritage as to what constitutes a cultural landscape. I argue that this categorisation has burdened the interpretation and understanding of cultural landscapes with the predisposition towards monumentality discussed previously “resulting in a focus on physical [material] and structural dimensions rather than on metaphysical and social aspects.”³⁴ Painting cultural landscapes with the same brush as (monumental) cultural heritage, I suggest, has had the effect of shifting focus away from the intangible qualities that make cultural landscapes an important addition to World Heritage in terms of its ability to incorporate the heritage of non-monumental, often indigenous cultures. Thus, what is perhaps the most appropriate mechanism for accomplishing the objectives of the *Global Strategy* is being interpreted in a way that runs contrary to achieving this end.

³³ Cleere, “Uneasy Bedfellows” 26.

Effects of Categorizing Cultural Landscapes as Cultural Heritage within the UNESCO Operational Framework

As I illustrate in Chapter One, indigenous and other cultures often create cultural landscapes based exclusively on the cognitive attribution of significance to the natural environment. The activation of the natural landscape through such intangible cultural signifiers as myths and legends, seasonal patterns of land-use, place naming, etc. are all examples that illustrate how indigenous cultures in Canada and elsewhere create cultural landscapes that both reflect and perpetuate their heritage.³⁵ In effect, such cultures interpret, sustain, and honour their heritage according to their own notions and traditions.³⁶ However, I argue, the World Heritage categorisation of cultural landscapes, as cultural heritage does not favour cultural landscapes based on exclusively intangible articulations. Rather, it fosters a 'way of seeing' cultural landscapes that translates Western visual sensory dominance into specific aesthetic values.³⁷ As I indicate earlier, these aesthetic values have permeated the World Heritage Committee's notions of heritage and have had the effect of favouring tangible and monumental, as opposed to non-monumental and intangible (hence unseeable) cultural heritage.³⁸

³⁴ Darvill, "Historic Environment, Landscapes" 104.

³⁵ Buggey, "Approach to Aboriginal Cultural Landscapes"; Lee, "Europe's Cultural Landscapes".

³⁶ McNeely and Keeton, "Biological and Cultural Diversity"; Lowenthal, "Stewarding the Past".

³⁷ Howett, "One-Eyed Man" 86.

³⁸ Cleere, "World Heritage Convention in Third World"; Cleere, "Uneasy Bedfellows".

This visual sensory dominance, rooted in Enlightenment thinking, has not only influenced aesthetic values, it has also contributed to the epistemological basis of Western knowledge.³⁹ “It is assumed by many anthropologists” for example, “that the ability to visualise a culture is somehow synonymous with the ability to understand it.”⁴⁰ ‘Seeing’ therefore, is ‘knowing’ or, to put it another way, knowledge is gained through sight. In the present case, positing visual supremacy as the basis for empirical knowledge equates a desire to ‘know’ a cultural landscape with a need to visualise it.⁴¹ This need to visualise has translated into a morphological approach to landscape on the part of World Heritage. The limited number of cultural landscapes designated by World Heritage based on cognitive, intangible articulations of the association between culture and nature is suggestive of this inability to *see* beyond the tangible dimension of landscape.

Indeed, of the thirty-five cultural landscapes designated as World Heritage, only two (Tongariro National Park, New Zealand, and Uluru Kata-Tjuta National Park, Australia) represent cultural landscapes that are the result of an almost entirely intangible cultural imprint on the natural landscape. Both of these sites had previously been designated as natural heritage and were re-designated as cultural landscapes to take into account their importance to local Aboriginal peoples. It is interesting to note that these sites were re-designated in 1993 and 1994 respectively,

³⁹ Layton and Ucko, "Gazing on the Landscape".

⁴⁰ King, "The Politics of Vision" 135.

⁴¹ Ibid 135.

around the time when the *Global Strategy* first appeared and when there must have been considerable impetus to show how cultural landscapes could be used as a way of redressing representative imbalances on the World Heritage List.

Of the remaining thirty-three cultural landscapes designated as World Heritage, all, it can be argued, derive their World Heritage value from tangible, built structures. In only five cases was an intangible articulation of the cultural landscape highlighted alongside the other criteria by which the site was designated.⁴² In addition, the majority of these thirty-three cultural landscapes (twenty-two of them to be exact), all of which were designated as World Heritage after the *Global Strategy* came into effect, are located in Europe (an area of the world over-represented on the World Heritage List). As one would expect they are characterized by historic towns and villages, monasteries, castles and other architectural monuments, archaeological sites, vineyards and other distinctive agricultural land-uses, and so forth. Even some of the eleven cultural landscapes outside Europe are characterized by similar features including monasteries (Ouadi Qadisha and Horsh Arz el-Rab, Lebanon), palaces (Sukur, Nigeria), royal cities (Royal Hill of Ambohimanga, Madagascar), and archaeological remains (Mapungubwe, South Africa). Indeed, the World Heritage approach to cultural landscapes seems rooted in the Sauerian tradition from which the term developed.⁴³ As Head points out, “the cultural heritage sector uses the classical

⁴² I have used the presence of criterion vi of the Operational Guidelines in the justification for designation of the site as an indicator that an intangible, associative aspect has been identified and acknowledged by World Heritage.

⁴³ See Chapter One.

geographical sense of landscapes as modified by human activity, with an emphasis on ancient monuments and historical buildings.”⁴⁴ I believe this is precisely the case here: World Heritage has pursued a morphological understanding of cultural landscapes, a way of looking at cultural landscapes that satisfies their predisposition towards designating tangible (visual), monumental cultural heritage.

Thus, considering that most cultural landscapes designated as World Heritage are either in Europe and/or characterized by ‘ancient monuments and historical buildings’ among other things, it does not seem that the inclusion of cultural landscapes as a heritage type has gone very far in redressing the representative imbalances on the World Heritage List. In fact, this is a point with which World Heritage seems to agree.⁴⁵ As I have been arguing, the problem lies in an organisational and operational categorisation of cultural landscapes that fosters conceptual and practical roadblocks when it comes to designating cultural landscapes that are primarily characterized by an intangible cultural expression of the relationship between culture and nature. In other words, as the List reflects, categorizing and therefore approaching cultural landscapes according to traditional Western notions of tangible cultural heritage, has meant that European and European-like cultural landscapes are easily designated

⁴⁴ Head, "Cultural Landscapes and Environmental Change" 77.

⁴⁵ The 2002 Ferrara International Workshop on ‘Cultural Landscapes: The Challenges of Conservation’ concluded that significant challenges have faced the designation of cultural landscapes on to the World Heritage List. They include: the limited implementation of the *Global Strategy for a Balanced and Representative World Heritage List* and regional imbalances with 21 of the inscribed sites residing in Europe.

whereas others, which speak to a different aesthetic that may not be visually based, are not so easily accommodated.

The Bamiyan Valley: an Illustration of the Case in Point

A case study that illustrates some of the arguments I make up to this point can be drawn from recent World Heritage activities at the *Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley* World Heritage site. The *Bamiyan Valley* site is located in the central highlands of Afghanistan approximately 250km to the west of Kabul. It is centred around a long stretch of cliffs into which were carved giant Buddha figures and an ensemble of a reported 12,000 caves that once housed Buddhist monasteries, chapels and sanctuaries (many decorated with wall paintings). The site also comprises several Islamic fortresses and citadels. The majority of these structures were constructed between the 3rd and 13th centuries, although many have been in some form of use until the present day. Most recently, the Bamiyan Valley has been home to some 50,000 inhabitants, thereby ensuring its contemporary relevance as a lived space and not only as a relic testament to the Buddhist faith.⁴⁶

Following the much-publicized destruction of the Bamiyan Buddha figures by the Taliban regime in 2001 (and subsequent to this regime being overthrown) World

⁴⁶ ICOMOS, "Advisory Body Report" 3. It is difficult to accurately assess the nature of the inhabitation of the Bamiyan Valley region, as literature and reports are often unclear on this point. The sources used in this 'Illustration' are assumed to be correct to the best of my knowledge.

Heritage took steps aimed at preserving further destruction of the site, which had been designated as World Heritage in 2003 and immediately placed on the World Heritage in Danger List. According to a reporter who recently visited Bamiyan, these steps involved cordoning off the cliff face containing the destroyed Buddha figures with large barbed-wire fences and sealing the nearby cave openings with brick walls and locked doors.⁴⁷ The families now inhabiting the caves were moved into prefabricated one-room houses in order to secure the protection of the paintings and sculptures inside the caves from the destructive effects of the inhabitants' lifestyle.⁴⁸ This intervention has contributed to an overall sense of confusion and helplessness within the community and has generated a feeling of resentment toward the conservation efforts of World Heritage, not least because the place to which the inhabitants have been relocated lacks farmland and water.⁴⁹

According to the justification for nomination of the Bamiyan Valley site as World Heritage, submitted by the State Party, Afghanistan,

the Bamiyan Valley is an 'organically evolved landscape' which has evolved through geological formation and human intervention, and the process of evolution in their form and component features are still visible today. Even today, one can witness the landscape being continuously used, which retains an active social role in contemporary society of the local communities.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Pazira, "The Buddhas of Bamiyan".

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ In ICOMOS, "Advisory Body Report" 2.

Thus, the State Party acknowledges the historical and contemporary cultural heritage significance of the site. For them, it is both the iconic status and the active socio-cultural relevance of the site for which they sought designation. However, when the World Heritage Committee designated the site, it did not acknowledge the State Party's assessment that the heritage value of the Bamiyan Valley is at least in part derived from the activation of the site by its contemporary inhabitants. Instead, the World Heritage Committee's general statement on the outstanding universal value of the site calls the Bamiyan Valley "an exceptional cultural landscape resulting from the interaction between man and nature especially from 1st to 13th centuries CE" and goes on to detail the significance of the site's artistic artefacts ending with a mention of the caves "many of [which] have been richly decorated with paintings and sculptures."⁵¹

This statement points to a discrepancy between the characterization of the landscape (and its values) between the State Party and the World Heritage Committee. The former sees heritage value in the site as an organically evolved cultural landscape that is presently inhabited and therefore definable as a continuous, not relict, landscape. The latter, on the other hand, defines the cultural landscape in terms of its significance as a repository of artistic artefacts and as an artefact itself of the 1st to 13th centuries. The World Heritage report makes no mention of any contemporary significance of the site as an inhabited landscape and only calls attention to the caves

⁵¹ ICOMOS, "Advisory Body Report" 4.

to describe their artistic cache and relic importance as a spiritual site and not their current role as lived spaces. It is undoubtedly this understanding that justifies the drastic measure of removing the contemporary inhabitants from the Bamiyan Valley in order to protect the paintings and sculptures inside the caves. After all, World Heritage has not acknowledged the contemporary inhabitation of the Bamiyan Valley as a contributing factor to the site's heritage value, suggesting that a rigid distinction has been made between tangible and intangible heritage values with preference being given to the former.⁵²

First and foremost, this case study illustrates the degree to which World Heritage has adopted a morphological approach to cultural landscapes that readily finds heritage value in built, often monumental artefacts. Second, the desire to protect the tangible artefacts of the Bamiyan site appears to supersede interest in the less tangible heritage value that arises from the activation of the Bamiyan caves as contemporary lived spaces. As the State Party document points out, the caves play an 'active social role' in the lives of the contemporary local inhabitants, shaping both their everyday life and socio-cultural identity, that could be seen as an important aspect of the Bamiyan Valley cultural landscape. With respect to the interpretation of cultural landscapes in archaeology, McGlade cautions that, "archaeological heritage needs to be presented as the locus of participatory action as cultural fragments within the larger context of the complexities and contentious nature of contemporary life. These are, after all, the

⁵² See Mason and de la Torre, "Conservation and Values" 8 for the need to redress such rigid

ingredients that constitute the human environment as a living, evolving entity.”⁵³

Third, this case study is an example of how actions predicated on the conceptual approach to cultural landscapes discussed thus far, run the risk of not only overlooking, but possibly degrading the less tangible heritage values of a cultural landscape. Indeed, it illustrates how simply securing the perpetuation of the physical landscape may not take into account the full value of cultural landscapes as heritage resources.⁵⁴

Concluding Remarks

Based on the content of their thematic meetings, cultural landscape evaluations, and even the designation of Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park, Australia and Tongariro National Park, New Zealand, it is clear that the World Heritage Committee is aware that the heritage value of many cultural landscapes is in part, if not wholly, derived from intangible associations between culture and nature. However, I would argue that their conceptual and operational structure continues to rely on a tangible, monumental expression of the cultural association with nature as a basis upon which to designate a given cultural landscape. Allow me to return briefly to the notion of ‘authenticity’ that I refer to at the beginning of this chapter. Despite discussions at the regional and thematic expert meetings referred to earlier and the *Nara Conference*

distinctions between material heritage and immaterial heritage.

⁵³ "Archaeology and Evolution" 479.

⁵⁴ Dower, "Cultural Landscapes".

on Authenticity (1994) on how best to apply the concept of 'authenticity' to cultural landscapes, the fundamental appropriateness or effectiveness of this criterion for the assessment of cultural landscapes has gone largely unchallenged. As I explain, the 'test of authenticity' became part of the World Heritage project as a way of determining the degree to which a building or monument was a genuine reflection of the period it represented in terms of such things as building materials, architectural features, construction techniques, etc. Heritage value then, according to this conceptual approach to cultural heritage, becomes commensurate with the degree to which the structure (artefact) is authentic.

The transposition of this concept to the assessment of cultural landscapes suggests that cultural landscapes have been unproblematically viewed in the same light as other cultural heritage designated as World Heritage. However, it begs the question of how one can test for authenticity when the heritage value of a site is derived, at least in part, from the intangible articulation and conceptualisation of lived space that might lack tangible, monumental expression. One must remember that it is the conceptualised association between a cultural group and their environment that ensures the continued relevance of a cultural space, and not only the presence of tangible artefacts upon the landscape. Yet, the application of the criterion of authenticity to cultural landscapes reflects and perpetuates the perception of cultural landscapes as primarily tangible entities to be studied with reference to their

morphology rather than cognitive constructions articulated through numerous cultural expressions both tangible and intangible.

Given its many Aboriginal cultural landscapes, Canada is in a position to challenge the current World Heritage approach to cultural landscapes by nominating cultural landscapes such as Scented Grass Hills for World Heritage designation. Since the World Heritage operational structure changes incrementally in response to problematic nominations, such a move might highlight the need to modify the categorisation of cultural landscapes so as to make it easier to designate cultural landscapes whose heritage value does not lie in the tangible form. At the very least it would draw attention to the cultural landscapes of non-monumental cultures (many of which are Aboriginal) and increase the precedent for their nomination as World Heritage. However, it is also important for Canada not to nominate certain cultural landscapes simply because they have a good chance of being designated within the current conceptual and operational approach to cultural landscapes. Such a situation, in which the World Heritage approach to cultural landscapes effectively dictates which types of cultural landscapes get nominated and which do not, would not likely help redress representative imbalances on the World Heritage List or mobilize interest in identifying or conserving Canada's cultural landscapes, many related to First Nations.

Chapter Three

Universal Value, World Heritage Designation and the Conceptual Implications for World Heritage

Designation as Intervention

The inscription of a site onto the World Heritage List is widely regarded as a prestigious honour bestowed on a select number of sites from around the world each year. It is the culmination of a long process that effectively transforms a site from one of local significance to one of global significance, and sometimes vice versa. For example, *The wooden churches of Maramures*, Romania, is a World Heritage site that comprises examples of a local vernacular building style that is deemed to be of global significance because it is representative of a regionally specific interpretation of an even more wide-spread religious building tradition.¹ In contrast, the designation of *The historic sanctuary of Machu Picchu*, Peru, as a World Heritage site significant for its contribution to the understanding of humankind's development on earth, has transformed the site into the nucleus of a substantial tourist industry that exerts an

¹ UNESCO, "Wooden Churches of Maramures".

influence on the local economy and social context.¹ Given that the Romanian and Peruvian governments nominated these sites for World Heritage designation, a change in their significance was probably anticipated and more than likely sought after. For along with prestige and honour, a World Heritage designation also brings with it ancillary benefits. It can encourage an elevated awareness of, and responsibility for, the conservation of the designated site, facilitate the mobilization of funds and good will towards the site, and generate revenue from tourism. However, as I argue in this chapter, designating cultural landscapes as World Heritage may have implications and effects that are neither as apparent nor desirable as the ones mentioned above.

This chapter is based on the premise that “acts of conservation do not simply ‘maintain’ a cultural artefact and its meanings and values; conservation is itself an act of interpretation, selection and valorizing.”² It follows that designation, as one of the key mechanisms of conservation in the field of heritage, is not an unproblematic activity. Indeed, I argue that designation can be seen as an intervention that has potential effects, positive or negative, on the heritage site with which it is associated. On a practical level, intervention of one kind or another is widely considered a necessary component of any conservationist strategy. Generally recognized as an attempt to stem the degrading effects that come with the passage of time, interventions bear the burden of proving their legitimacy and being accountable for

¹ UNESCO, “Historic Sanctuary of Machu Picchu”.

their methods. In other words, heritage conservation practitioners are aware that physically interfering with a built structure or natural environment provokes a change for which they are responsible. Therefore, decisions on if and how to intervene in a given context are normally informed by a careful analysis of the existing conditions of the site, the desired conditions following intervention, and the most appropriate way of moving from the former to the latter.

However, there are some changes potentially associated with intervention that have traditionally been given far less consideration. For example, notions such as the significance, values and/or meanings attributed to a heritage site by its associated cultural group are, I suggest, very vulnerable to the impact of intervention, but often receive less attention than the more tangible, structural or visual results of the intervention process. Yet, as Mason and de la Torre argue, it is far more important to preserve the profusion of values, meanings, ideas and interpretations attached to artefacts – “the culture borne through the artefacts” – than simply sustaining the integrity of physical structures.³ Alteration of this aspect of a heritage site can have profound and lasting effects on the interpretation of the site (especially by the cultural group with which it is associated), and potentially jeopardise the future conservation of the heritage site itself. As an act of interpretation, valorization and selection, designation is a form of intervention that is particularly apt to have such effects.

² "Conservation and Values" 7.

Given that cultural landscapes are in part created and recreated through intangible cultural associations that are infused with spatial attributions of significance, value and meaning, sensitivity toward the impact of interventions such as designation on these notions would seem even more essential than with other types of heritage sites. With this in mind, in this chapter I investigate the potential effects of World Heritage designation on cultural landscapes. On a broad level, I argue that designating a cultural landscape as World Heritage may, in effect, highlight or privilege an interpretation of the landscape that satisfies the criteria required for achieving World Heritage status. If one imagines that there is a hierarchy of heritage value ranging from the local to the universal, the attribution of ‘outstanding universal value’, as a result of a World Heritage designation, can be considered the ‘ultimate’ heritage value attributable to a cultural landscape. Such a designation sanctions an interpretation of the landscape’s heritage value based primarily on the characteristics that make it of ‘universal value’.

I suggest that there are two interrelated reasons for concern here. First, I discuss how the interpretation and valorization of a cultural landscape based on its designation as World Heritage may become privileged at the expense of other, generally local, interpretations that might themselves be characterized by a plurality of perspectives or relationships vis-à-vis the cultural landscape in question. In this scenario the designated interpretation becomes naturalized over time thereby eclipsing existing

³ Mason and de la Torre, "Conservation and Values" 10.

and/or discouraging the development of alternative interpretations. In essence, designating a cultural landscape based on a particular interpretation might prove incongruous with the diversity of legitimate meanings that characterize, and are supported by, the landscape at any given time. Effectively, the designation of cultural landscapes as World Heritage can be seen as constituting an intervention through which particular interpretations become fixed and future meaning and value is constructed and defined for both the associated cultural group and outside parties alike. Second, I argue that it is important to consider that the inherent dynamism of cultural landscapes, which stems from the constantly changing and evolving negotiation between culture and nature, may be undermined by designation because changes to the elements on which designation is based are naturally discouraged once designation has been awarded.⁴ In other words, designation may acknowledge the form of a cultural landscape at a particular time and discourage change to this form over time, essentially 'freezing' a dynamic entity (the cultural landscape) that is always in the process of being shaped and reshaped.⁵

To suggest that World Heritage is not aware that their activities have potential effects on the heritage being designated would be both unfair and inaccurate. Indeed, a 2003 World Heritage conference proposed the following recommendation for reconciling universal and local values:

⁴ Emerick, "Use, Value and Significance".

⁵ Bender, "Time and Landscape" 103.

- Recognise the whole range of values including local, intangible and spiritual values, which should be fully understood and respected.
- Emphasise that universal and local values are part of a continuum not a hierarchy and that it is not viable to identify or manage universal value without acknowledging and maintaining value of place to local people.
- Acknowledge that World Heritage properties are dynamic entities where cultural and social values evolve. They should not be frozen in time for purposes of conservation and the evolution of the local value of the place should not be impaired.⁶

However, these statements also illustrate that the desire to achieve reconciliation between local values within the framework of universal value, persists. In the case of cultural landscapes it may be very difficult to do this because, as I argue in this chapter, it appears that there is a fundamental incongruence between the two that cannot be accommodated with amendments to operational details alone, but rather necessitates a conceptual re-evaluation of the relationship between UNESCO and the designation and conservation of cultural landscapes.

World Heritage and the Principle of Universal Value

Before constructing the arguments I outline above, I feel it is important to undertake a critical review and examination of the 'principle of universal value', which informs all World Heritage designations. The presence of 'outstanding universal value' is

necessary for a site to be designated as World Heritage by UNESCO and thus the 'principle of universal value' in large measure dictates how heritage sites get selected and subsequently 'framed' or 'packaged' by UNESCO. The interpretation and valorization of a heritage site based on the characteristics that give it 'universal value' is what, I maintain, makes World Heritage designation potentially problematic for the integrity of cultural landscapes.

Given the destructive effect of World War II on Europe and its inhabitants, it is not difficult to imagine that an overwhelming desire for a "unanimous, lasting and genuine peace" pervaded the post-war period.⁷ The world was a fractured place in 1945, cities and families lay in ruins and the morality of humanity at large was in question given the horrors of the holocaust. On the heels of this devastation and uncertainty and in the hopes that an "intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind" would stem the onslaught of another world war, UNESCO was formed in November 1945.⁸ As an institution it espoused the belief that the notion of a universal human condition could be translated into an overarching moral responsibility for our collective condition. Its mandate was

to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among nations through education, science and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms which are affirmed for the peoples of

⁶ UNESCO, "Universal and Local Values" 2.

⁷ UNESCO, "Constitution of Unesco" 1.

⁸ UNESCO, "Unesco's History" 1.

the world, without distinction of race, sex, language or religion, by the Charter of the United Nations.⁹

Twenty countries (including Canada) ratified the Constitution in 1946 acknowledging that their membership in a multilateral peaceful world obligated them to commit to a membership in UNESCO. This ideology of 'universalism', this belief in the universality of "education, the unrestricted pursuit of objective truth and the free exchange of ideas and knowledge" continues to underpin the activities of UNESCO today.¹⁰

Similar ideological underpinnings are evident in the growth of the international conservation movement, also inspired by the devastation of war. The physical destruction caused by World War I created a desire for the conservation of what was increasingly becoming thought of as a 'shared' heritage.¹¹ Intended to stimulate international debate and cooperation around issues of conservation, the Athens Charter was drawn up in 1931 as a result of a conference convened by the League of Nations. In 1954, the eight-year old UNESCO adopted the Hague Convention, which was aimed at preventing the destruction of heritage in times of war, this time in response to World War II. Throughout the 1960s a series of milestones built on and encouraged the growing acceptance of responsibility by nations around the world for what was conceptually thought of as 'universal' heritage. For example, the

⁹ UNESCO, "Constitution of Unesco" 1.

¹⁰ UNESCO, "Constitution of Unesco" 1.

¹¹ UNESCO, "30 Years Old".

transplantation of Abu Simbel and other Nubian temples away from the rising waters of the Nile River following the construction of the Aswan Dam was a project funded and supported by 50 different countries. This was an important development in the activities of UNESCO as, in the words of France's then culture minister, "the first world civilisation publicly proclaim[ed] the world's art as its indivisible heritage."¹²

Reflecting this spirit of the 1960s, the ideal of 'universality' was formalised with the drafting of the World Heritage Convention in 1972. In its preamble, the Convention recognised that, "parts of the...heritage are of outstanding interest and therefore need to be preserved as part of the world heritage of mankind as a whole" and "calls upon the international community as a whole to participate in the protection of the...heritage of outstanding value."¹³ The ongoing interpretation and implementation of this ideal has been carried out on a case-by-case basis by the World Heritage Committee through the drafting of *Operational Guidelines* and inscription of sites onto the World Heritage List. As an ideology, the concept of 'universality' has become synonymous with the *World Heritage Convention*. Moreover, designation of a site as World Heritage is entirely predicated on the doctrine of 'universality', which is embedded in the institutional interpretation of any site proposed or accepted for World Heritage status.

¹² Ibid. This is a revealing comment that suggests a Eurocentric proprietary attitude towards the heritage of non-western cultures, one, which in hindsight might be said to have influenced World Heritage activities since its inception.

¹³ Cleere, "Uneasy Bedfellows" 22.

“The concept of a heritage of world status is awe-inspiring. It implies an ability to recognize, evaluate and classify sites, which, in the words of the Convention’s preamble, are ‘of outstanding universal value’.”¹⁴ Of all the criteria required for a World Heritage designation, the criterion of ‘outstanding universal value’ is foremost and as such, infuses all of World Heritage’s practices. The application of this criterion, however, does not seem to be, well, universal. Given that there is no definition of ‘outstanding universal value’ in either the *World Heritage Convention* or the *Operational Guidelines*, its application has been (and continues to be) essentially interpretative.¹⁵ In fact, doubt as to the legitimacy of the concept has led to the suggestion that true ‘universal value’ is not attributable to any type of heritage except perhaps those sites that display early hominid and Palaeolithic activities, and which are representative of a time prior to cultural divergence.¹⁶ Indeed, difficulties in finding clear criteria for what constitutes universal value in a heritage site has led World Heritage to place increasing emphasis on the representative value of heritage sites through relative evaluation with other comparable sites.¹⁷ Thus in practice, it has been proposed, universal value should really be seen as “an extraordinary

¹⁴ Pocock, "Reflections on World Heritage" 266.

¹⁵ Titchen, "Construction of 'Outstanding Universal Value'" 239. ‘Outstanding universal value has referred variously to historic, artistic, scientific, aesthetic, ethnological, anthropological and conservation value. It has referred variously to a diversity of levels of value such as importance, uniqueness, significance, masterpieces, achievements, exceptional testimony, outstanding examples and outstanding universal significance (Titchen, "Construction of 'Outstanding Universal Value'").

¹⁶ Pocock, "Reflections on World Heritage" 267.

¹⁷ Ibid 266.

combination of the unique and the representative” rather than a standard which a heritage site either possesses or does not.¹⁸

However the criterion of ‘outstanding universal value’ is satisfied, the significance of World Heritage (as a result of designation) is inextricably linked to the wider system of social and cultural relations in which the meaning of ‘outstanding universal value’ is constituted.¹⁹ In other words, the agencies of designation and the attribution of ‘outstanding universal value’ are not to be underestimated or oversimplified. ‘Universality’ as an ideology, embedded in the *World Heritage Convention* and implemented via the World Heritage List, presumes that “a global cultural heritage is related to and interpretable through a world history.”²⁰ However, ignoring the politics and power relations of the World Heritage apparatus with respect to their designation of heritage could be seen as naive given the current post-colonial environment. The concept of a world history “perhaps largely unchallenged during the early years of UNESCO’s existence, is now intellectually untenable” because of contemporary concerns over the “reinforcement [of] colonizing relationships as assumptions of universality are not challenged.”²¹ Moreover, according to Bhabha

the difference of cultures cannot be something that can be accommodated within a universalist framework....The assumption that at some level all forms of cultural diversity may be understood on the basis of a particular universal concept, whether it be ‘human beings’, ‘class’ or ‘race’, can be both very dangerous and very limiting in

¹⁸ Titchen, "Construction of 'Outstanding Universal Value'" 240.

¹⁹ Barnes and Gregory, "Reading Human Geography" 297.

²⁰ Pocock, "Reflections on World Heritage" 267.

²¹ Ibid.; Howitt and Suchet-Pearson, "Ontological Pluralism" 567.

trying to understand the ways in which cultural practices construct their own systems of meaning and social organization.²²

Finally, framing heritage within an ideology of universalism may make it “more clustered, uniform, and homogenous than if untouched,” which is in opposition to the contemporary awareness of the politics of representation and the theoretical call for plurality.²³

On Universal Value, Designation and the Inherent Plurality of Cultural Landscapes

The idea that the interpretation and valorization associated with designating a heritage site may privilege a particular way of understanding or conceptualising the site at the expense of others is of particular concern in the case of cultural landscapes. Far from being a stable and static entity with a single fixed meaning, a cultural landscape may be better characterized as an ecosystem, one where there is no “single unique and knowable reference state.”²⁴ Instead, there is a continually changing, dynamic configuration of elements that support a variety of relatively stable meanings and whose understanding depends on the context within which it is embedded.²⁵ As Schama argues, a cultural landscape is first and foremost a cultural construct and as such is not generally monolithic, but rather both mutable and pluralistic in terms of

²² Bhabha 1990 in Howitt and Suchet-Pearson, "Ontological Pluralism" 566.

²³ Lowenthal, "Age and Artifact" 118.

²⁴ Cook, "Is Landscape Preservation an Oxymoron?" 4.

²⁵ Cook, "Is Landscape Preservation an Oxymoron?".

how it can be interpreted and understood.²⁶ Indeed, cultural landscapes are subject to continuous interpretation and as “the outcome of an interplay between historically determined structures, contingent processes” and cultural contexts, are constantly in the act of ‘becoming’.²⁷ Duncan and Gregory have gone as far as to equate landscapes to ‘texts’, claiming that this metaphor “conveys the inherent instability of meaning, fragmentation or absence of integrity, lack of authorial control, polyvocality and irresolvable social contradictions that often characterize them.”²⁸

However, it has also been suggested that landscapes have the capability of appearing as material and natural constants when, in actuality, they are deeply implicated in human constructions and practices.²⁹ They “make subjects and objects appear as fixed and reified.”³⁰ In other words, while a particular landscape may be the product of a complex and heterogeneous history, its ability to ‘naturalize’ often erases the processes (with their inherent complexity) through which it was constituted. Cultural landscapes may be pluralistic and dynamic entities subject to multiple interpretations and valorization by their inhabitants and outsiders alike, but they do not wear this on their sleeve so to say. Their visual appearance may not belie their complexity.

Thus, designating a cultural landscape based on certain features (generally material as we see in Chapter Two) deemed to make it of universal significance may lead to an

²⁶ "Landscape and Memory".

²⁷ McGlade, "Archaeology and Evolution" 460.

²⁸ "Writes of Passage: Reading Travel Writing" 7.

²⁹ Michie and Thomas, "Introduction" 12.

understanding of the landscape that does not take into account its full complexity or indeed value and importance as a heritage resource. Given the profile of a World Heritage designation, one can expect the understanding of the cultural landscape on which the designation was based to become the preferred way of conceptualising or 'reading' (to return to the text metaphor) the landscape at the expense of others. The 'naturalizing' capacity of landscape only aids and abets this because it would have the tendency to harmonies the designated interpretation of a given cultural landscape with what is actually visible.

At this point it is important to ask what are, in theory, the possible effects of this scenario. Duncan's claim that landscape "acts as a signifying system through which a social system is communicated, reproduced, experienced, and explored" provides a good starting point.³¹ Landscape, Duncan goes on to say, plays a central role in a cultural system through which social order is reproduced, it is a representation of ideas produced by people on top of a social hierarchy.³² He suggests that if this is taken into account relationships of power and social contradiction might be revealed, in effect proposing a deconstruction of the 'naturalized' landscape in order to reveal how social order is produced and reproduced. As we see above, cultural landscapes are by no means homogenous despite their tendency to appear as such. Within all cultures there is generally a social hierarchy that distributes power and privilege

³⁰ Duncan, "The City as Text" 19.

³¹ "The City as Text" 17.; See also Cresswell, "Landscape and Obliteration of Practice" 277.

³² "The City as Text".

unevenly, and one group's ability to "instantiate their own image of the world on the ground, and in the stones, concrete, bricks, and wood of the landscape" will depend on the relative position within this hierarchy.³³ This makes it difficult to assess the socio-cultural context in which the cultural landscape is produced and reproduced.

Given that World Heritage has the propensity towards acknowledging the tangible, material elements of a cultural landscape as constituting 'universal value' for the purposes of designation, it is very possible that World Heritage designation may work to efface underlying traces of struggle, contestation, tension, or simply diversity and heterogeneity, in a cultural landscape. Furthermore, in this way World Heritage designation may legitimize and normalize power relationships in a cultural landscape if it does not acknowledge and "trace the process by which landscape effaces its own readability and naturalizes itself."³⁴ My point is neatly illustrated with reference to Anderson's seminal study on Vancouver's Chinatown. Anderson argues that contrary to what is commonly considered to be a unique material expression of Chinese culture, Vancouver's Chinatown is really "the product of negotiation between those with the 'power to define' Chinatown and those who [have] to live their lives in it."³⁵ Similarly, designating a cultural landscape based on particular elements that satisfy the notion of 'universal value' may not reflect or highlight the multiple realities and meanings with which a particular landscape is infused.

³³ Mitchell, "Cultural Geography" 109.

³⁴ Mitchell, "Landscape and Power" 2.

³⁵ Anderson 1991 in Mitchell, "Cultural Geography" 107.

The very idea that cultural landscapes designated as World Heritage possess 'outstanding universal value' is misleading and an investigation into why supports the argument I make throughout the course of the present sub-section. A cursory examination of the usage of the term 'universal' reveals a relatively homogeneous concept: according to the de Stijl art movement, 'universal' beauty is demonstrated by a pure formal vocabulary, a distilled essence of basic elements, and is rational, objective and balanced. In the discourse of logic, 'universal' is a general or abstract concept considered absolute. In common usage, the term is generally applied to something pertaining to or affecting the entire world or all within it. Accordingly, 'universal' heritage might be characterized as a heritage of a higher plane, one outside the realm of the everyday and insulated from the social practices of politics and power, an absolute, pure distillation of a common heritage, relevant to the inhabitants of the entire world. However, in practice, there has been a tendency on the part of World Heritage "to interpret 'outstanding universal value' as 'prime national value', the very best examples of a nation's heritage."³⁶ If the World Heritage List is really only "the sum of scrutinized national heritages" then there appears a need to foreground the relationship between cultural landscapes and nationalist aspirations.³⁷

Landscape has long been employed in the building of nations and activated in the name of nationalism. Indeed, "national identity would lose much of its ferocious enchantment without the mystique of a particular landscape tradition: its topography

³⁶ Titchen, "Construction of 'Outstanding Universal Value'" 236.

mapped, elaborated, and enriched as a homeland.”³⁸ Cultural landscapes, as a form of heritage, are symbolic activations of a nation’s landscape that give shape to the ‘imagined community’ of the nation.³⁹ Inherent in a nationalist use of landscape as heritage, are selection and designation processes by which the cultural landscapes that best embody and naturalize the nationalist project are privileged. As with World Heritage designation, there is a process of interpretation, in this case one that effectively decides whether a cultural landscape is either included in or excluded from a nation’s story of itself. Nationally designated cultural landscapes then, often garner their meaning from their perceived proximity to a nationalist project.

Within nation states, history and heritage tell powerful stories, often ones that stress stability, roots, boundaries and belonging. We need to be alert to whose stories are being told, and to be aware that they naturalize particular sorts of social relations.⁴⁰

Given that the World Heritage Committee receives and generally does not solicit nominations from its State Parties, it does not have a history of actively seeking out cultural landscapes that have been excluded at the national level. Nor does it seem to challenge nominations by undertaking a deconstruction of the social and political practices that have led to their national designations. World Heritage designation of nationally significant cultural landscapes, therefore, may have the effect of validating the interpretations and values that caused a particular cultural landscape to become of

³⁷ Pocock, "Reflections on World Heritage" 267.

³⁸ Schama, "Landscape and Memory" 15.

³⁹ Daniels, "Fields of Vision" 5.

⁴⁰ Bender, "Introduction" 5.

national significance, irrespective of the fact that these may have been ideologically motivated and characterized by the exclusion of particular parties in favour of others.⁴¹

On Universal Value, Designation and the Inherent Dynamism of Cultural Landscapes

Thus far, the discussion has focused on the potential effects of World Heritage designation on the plurality or diversity of meanings and interpretations attributable to and embedded in cultural landscapes. However, I have yet to discuss the potential effects of World Heritage designation on the dynamic qualities of cultural landscapes (although the idea that cultural landscapes are dynamic does permeate the discussion above). Cultural landscapes can be regarded as dynamic both in the sense that their physical appearance is constantly (if often imperceptibly) evolving, and in the sense that the way they are perceived and understood by their associated cultural community is also undergoing constant revision in response to changing conditions and stimuli, be these physical, social, cultural or other. Therefore it follows that there is no single point along a linear continuum that can be considered the 'ultimate' expression of a particular cultural landscape.⁴² Indeed, they are always in the process of being shaped and reshaped, and their temporal nature makes them more of a

⁴¹ See also Ashworth and van der Aa, "Bamyan: Whose Heritage".

⁴² Cook, "Is Landscape Preservation an Oxymoron?".

recording than a record.⁴³ However, as I argue below, in addition to naturalizing particular interpretations of cultural landscapes, World Heritage designation may also have the potential to arrest them in time and space, to remove the inherent dynamism that characterises and sustains them.

Acts of intervention intended to conserve cultural heritage have often been accused of having the effect of 'freezing' heritage resources in time and space, that is, achieving much the same result as if they had been placed under a glass box in a museum.⁴⁴ Cultural landscapes, as Ashworth points out, are particularly vulnerable in this respect.

[L]andscapes are in process of continuous change. Interruption to that process and thus the maintenance of a state of fossilization denies the operation of an integral quality and thus in itself introduces change. As a building ceases to be what it was and becomes something else the moment it is designated as a 'monument', so also does a landscape change its essence, if only by losing its intrinsic dynamism, once it is declared to be conserved.⁴⁵

A corollary of this state of affairs is the separation of the landscape from its surrounding context through both the delimitation of boundaries required by the designation process (which may or may not correspond to those of the cultural landscape as understood by the associated cultural group) and removal of the cultural landscape from the stream of time which continues to act on everything around it.

⁴³ Bender, "Time and Landscape" 103.

⁴⁴ Mason and de la Torre, "Conservation and Values".

⁴⁵ "Starting Point: Ending Point" 29. Unless the dynamic qualities are understood as values in the process of designation and long-term management decisions are taken accordingly.

Protective measures, argues Lowenthal, remove heritage “from the here and now, from continuity with the world around [it], to an exclusive milieu.”⁴⁶ Similarly, McGlade discusses the trend towards separating cultural landscapes from wider regional contexts for the purposes of packaging them for consumption.⁴⁷ Given that the inherent dynamism of cultural landscapes is derived from responses to changing conditions within and around them, designations that act to fix cultural landscapes in time and space could have a serious impact on the continuity of a given cultural landscape.

It is important to consider that the relatively recent introduction of cultural landscapes to the UNESCO World Heritage project has occurred within the much-debated context of globalisation. The process of globalisation has been characterized by ever-greater time-space compression resulting from increased ease of mobility. From a cultural perspective, the sheer volume of movement around the globe has led to an unprecedented level of cultural interaction and the associated processes of transculturation and cultural hybridization. This cultural blending, along with the erosion of place specificity due to global economic forces that some suggest create placeless, soulless geographies, has resulted in wide-spread fears that place-bound, ‘authentic’ cultural expressions are being displaced by ‘inauthentic’ mass produced commercial forms.⁴⁸ As a reaction to it, globalisation has produced a nostalgic desire

⁴⁶ “Age and Artifact” 112.

⁴⁷ “Archaeology and Evolution”.

⁴⁸ Crang, “Cultural Geography”. See also Relph, “Place and Placelessness”.

for distinct and ‘authentic’ identities, which, as Massey points out, are sought in physically grounded places and spiritually grounded ‘senses of place’. Massey observes that it seems as if

people desperately need a bit of peace and quiet – and that a strong sense of place, of locality, can form one kind of refuge from the hubbub. So, the search after the ‘real’ meaning of places, the unearthing of heritages and so forth, is interpreted as being, in part, a response to desire for fixity and for security of identity in the middle of all the movement and change. A ‘sense of place’, of rootedness, can provide – in this form and on this interpretation – stability and a source of unproblematical identity.⁴⁹

Harvey supports this idea when he suggests that the elaboration of place-bound identities has become more rather than less important in a globalised world.⁵⁰ In fact, I propose that this notion is evident behind the recent interest in cultural landscapes in the heritage movement. In this context, cultural landscapes might be perceived as expressions of place-bound identities, visual testimonies to the diversity of people’s sense of place, distinct mappable spaces of “unproblematical identity”. With reference to World Heritage, the designation of cultural landscapes responds well to the search for authentic identities and for the articulation of stable identities amidst constantly fluctuating ones. It speaks to a sense of nostalgia for what was, in the face of what is.

Predicating the above is the notion that cultural landscapes, like all supposedly ‘authentic’ expressions of place-bound identity, are at risk of being lost, of becoming

extinct as it were. Cultural landscapes have been seen by World Heritage, on its own admission, as a vehicle through which to integrate the cultural heritage of non-Western, non-monumental cultures that has been traditionally unacknowledged by a designating framework that is not designed to accommodate them⁵¹. However, it is precisely non-Western, 'traditional' cultures that have been widely viewed by Westerners and Western institutions as still harbouring the place-based cultural expressions and identities that have been lost to the process of globalisation. Thus, it is possible to associate the inclusion of cultural landscapes into the World Heritage project with the idea of heritage conservation as "the advocate of the voiceless or 'under-represented submerged masses whose lifestyle and material culture [are] threatened with passing unnoticed and unpreserved into extinction, overwhelmed by mass produced consumer capitalism."⁵² Indeed, in relation to World Heritage one gets the sense that 'cultural diversity', a term that appears repeatedly in their expert meetings on cultural landscapes, can be preserved in part through the designation of cultural landscapes as World Heritage. The inherent idea is that "the existence of a 'cultural record' [heritage] works as a brake, so that cultures do not erode or disappear as fast or as completely as if globalizing forces had free reign."⁵³ Indeed, Massey's claim that globalisation has brought on an "introverted obsession with heritage" that makes place the focus of a romanticized escapism from the dynamics of

⁴⁹ "A Global Sense of Place" 319.

⁵⁰ Harvey n.d. in Hayden, "Power of Place" 43.

⁵¹ See discussion in Chapter Two concerning *Global Strategy*.

⁵² Tunbridge and Ashworth, "Dissonant Heritage" 40.

⁵³ Mason and de la Torre, "Conservation and Values" 6.

real-life, supports the notion that at least one of the inherent reasons for designating cultural landscapes is precisely to fix them in time and space.⁵⁴

However, in the case of cultural landscapes this 'cultural record' is not a static object or structure, but rather takes the form of a dynamic association between culture and nature that is maintained through cultural innovations that constitute responses to changing social and biophysical conditions. Returning to globalisation, Hannertz maintains that cultural innovation as a result of inter-cultural contact increases as a result of globalization more rapidly than does homogenization.⁵⁵ Cultural landscapes, therefore, could just as easily be valued as expressions of the negotiated encounters brought about by increased mobility, than as vestiges or remnants of place-bound expressions of cultural identity thought to be vanishing under the weight of globalisation. However, a World Heritage designation of a cultural landscape might discourage those developments or manifestations within a cultural landscape that are responses to its negotiation with the influences of globalisation given that these would, in all probability, jeopardise the 'authenticity' of the cultural landscape upon which it was originally designated.

An example of the case in point can be drawn from the World Heritage cultural landscape of the Rice Terraces of the Philippines Cordilleras. According to Villalon, the Rice Terraces are at risk from out-migration on the part of local youth whose

⁵⁴ "A Global Sense of Place" 319.

departure has increasingly led to a shortage of people with the know-how, motivation and incentive to continue the traditional practice of terrace farming.⁵⁶ Partly in response to this, a 1995 World Heritage management plan stressed that the “overriding principle of conservation [for the Rice Terraces] is the sustainability and continuity of the balanced cultural and ecological integration between humanity and nature which gives rise to the landscape.”⁵⁷ The focus, therefore, seems to be on preserving the culture and traditions of the local inhabitants such that they will continue to recreate the physical structures (the terraces) that characterize the landscape. The more specific recommendations of the management plan corroborate this by placing emphasis on protecting characteristic landscape features, increasing and strengthening the awareness of local people to their own traditions, maintaining the viability of farming traditional crops using strictly traditional methods, and strengthening the capacity of the local community to cope with external pressures and forces.⁵⁸ The idea that the traditional practices of the local community, and consequently the physical expression of the landscape, might have to change or flex in response to contemporary contexts if a strong association between culture and nature is to be retained in the Cordillera Mountain Range of the northern Philippines does not seem to form part of the vocabulary of this management plan. The onus appears to be on conserving the elements and conditions that will allow for the continued re-creation of the Rice Terraces in their present form (which is effectively

⁵⁵ Hannertz 1996 in Mason and de la Torre, "Conservation and Values" 6.

⁵⁶ "Rice Terraces".

⁵⁷ UNESCO, "Asian Rice Culture" 5.

⁵⁸ UNESCO, "Asian Rice Culture".

their form at the time of designation). I am not arguing that this is appropriate or inappropriate, right or wrong, in the context of the Rice Terraces since such an assertion would necessitate a far more detailed investigation into the specific conditions of this particular case study. Rather, I am arguing that this example points to a possible inclination toward promoting the cyclical re-creation of designated forms. Given the inherent dynamism of cultural landscapes, this should not go unproblematised or unaddressed.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter essentially adopts a conceptual approach to the potential effects of designating cultural landscapes as World Heritage, having from the outset posited the view that the designation and conservation of heritage is often undertaken without a full appreciation of its effects on the broader system of culture.⁵⁹ It argues that there is an inherent friction between the designation of cultural landscapes predicated on the notions of universality and universal value, and the diversity of meanings and dynamism of forms that characterize most cultural landscapes. Fundamentally, the concern is that World Heritage designation might lead to the creation of “fictive landscapes” in which meaning and form have been removed from the pluralities and temporalities of lived experience.⁶⁰ Such a state of affairs would of course run counter to the conservation and management of cultural landscapes as a heritage

⁵⁹ Mason and de la Torre, "Conservation and Values" 10.

resource because it undermines the socio-cultural processes that create and sustain them as lived and 'living' entities.

At the very least, this analysis suggests that the self-aware recommendations made by World Heritage concerning the reconciliation of universal values with the integrity and relevance of sites to local contexts, may be difficult to implement in relation to cultural landscapes (under the status quo) with attention to operational details alone. This is because the potential effects of designation as a form of intervention are, in this case, I believe, rooted in a designation paradigm that is not easily reconciled with the unique qualities of cultural landscapes as a heritage resource. Lest I be misunderstood, I am not arguing that cultural landscapes cannot be acknowledged as a heritage resource by UNESCO or even as World Heritage without undermining their inherent qualities. On the contrary, as a relatively recently recognised and unique heritage resource, cultural landscapes have an important role to play both in acknowledging the multifaceted nature of the world's heritage and developing responses as to its effective conservation and management. However, I am suggesting that in the case of cultural landscapes, it is important to consider the conceptual effects and implications of designating them as World Heritage because it is on this plane that, I maintain, the relationship between the designating body (World Heritage) and the heritage resource (cultural landscapes) needs to be

⁶⁰ McGlade, "Archaeology and Evolution" 461.

problematized and possibly reconsidered. It is only after this has taken place that operational structures can be changed and adjusted accordingly.

Conclusion

In the chapters above, I hope to highlight that the assimilation of cultural landscapes into the activities of World Heritage has given rise to a set of conceptual issues that warrant critical discussion. More specifically, my intention is to use academic scholarship on cultural landscapes to identify and inform instances in which the relationship between World Heritage and the concept of cultural landscapes has proven problematic from a conceptual and theoretical point of view. Given the operationally driven circumstances surrounding the adoption of cultural landscapes into World Heritage activities and the relative absence during this process of general, theoretical discussions on cultural landscapes as a concept and their role in World Heritage, I feel that the perspectives provided by this academic literature are particularly relevant and challenging.¹ They contribute an understanding of cultural landscapes at the theoretical level and thereby act as a good starting point from which to critically analyse operational structures and practical approaches. More importantly perhaps, I wish to highlight their potential in contributing to the institutional approach to cultural landscapes in terms of helping to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of how best to work with the concept of cultural landscapes. Indeed, I suggest that the integration of World Heritage's practical approaches to cultural landscape heritage with scholarly, theoretical approaches

¹ Rössler, "Unesco and Cultural Landscape Protection".

would be beneficial to both and further the overall understanding of cultural landscapes.

In the introduction I attempt to lay out the relevance of this study to the Canadian context, a point to which I would now like to return. More specifically, I wish to discuss the implications of the arguments I make to the Canadian context, beginning with the ideas discussed in Chapter Two. In Chapter Two I argue that the categorisation of cultural landscapes within the UNESCO organisational and operational structure delimits conceptual parameters within which cultural landscapes are understood and designated. I argue that this categorisation has effectively structured a paradigm within which cultural landscapes are approached according to traditional European notions of built cultural heritage. The resulting focus on the tangible, material dimensions of cultural landscapes shifts focus away from more intangible cultural expressions of the association between culture and nature that give rise to cultural landscapes. The consequence, as I attempt to illustrate, is that the cultural landscapes inscribed onto the World Heritage List are largely European (or bear similar hallmarks) whereas other cultural landscapes, which are more easily defined and attributed value based on intangible articulations of the association between culture and nature, are considerably under-represented.

The implications to the Canadian context arise if one considers how the above may influence the choice of which Canadian cultural landscapes get designated as World

Heritage. Indeed, the inclination towards designating cultural landscapes based primarily on their morphological expression would favour the designation of certain Canadian cultural landscapes and not others. For instance, European settlements such as those evidenced in Côte-de-Beaupré, Quebec, and on the prairies of southern Manitoba, are good examples of cultural landscapes that can be visualised as a result of culturally influenced morphological changes to the natural environment. They are characterized by the presence of distinctive farming patterns, specific architectural styles, and a characteristic layout of homesteads.¹ Such cultural landscapes seem to be the type favoured for designation by World Heritage since they are characterized by tangible, material forms that can be understood through a particular visual aesthetic and are easily reconciled with the notion of authenticity.

However, such cultural landscapes, and others like them, can only be considered a part of Canada's cultural landscape heritage. Indeed, many cultural landscapes in Canada are not characterized by large-scale material production that results in widespread and striking morphological change to the natural environment. Perhaps the best and most widespread examples of such cultural landscapes are those associated with Canada's Aboriginal people. Buggy lists and discusses numerous examples of Aboriginal cultural landscapes in Canada that are created and sustained based on associations with the natural world that are articulated largely through

¹ See Buggy, "Cultural Landscapes in Canada" 261-62.

intangible means.² Furthermore, given the influential role of the natural environment in the development of Canada and the idea of Canada, there are many demonstrable cases in which cultural landscapes have developed through conceptualisations of the natural environment that are not materially evidenced in the landscape. A prominent example is the powerful iconic symbolism embedded in such places as Algonquin Park, Georgian Bay and Algoma, which is most notably produced and reproduced in the paintings of the Group of Seven. Once again, with reference to the arguments in Chapter Two, these cultural landscapes, which arguably represent an important aspect of Canadian heritage, have characteristics that are not easily accommodated within the current World Heritage operational and conceptual framework for cultural landscapes. Thus, in theory there exists the potential for World Heritage to favour the designation of Canadian cultural landscapes that are only representative of a particular segment of Canada's heritage. Perhaps a more significant issue is the potential for the current World Heritage framework to infuse the way Canada approaches its own cultural landscape heritage at the local and national levels by naturalizing a paradigm in which cultural landscapes are equated with tangible, material, cultural heritage.

In Chapter Three I attempt to problematise the act of designating cultural landscapes with reference to an ideology of 'universal value'. I argue that such a designation (especially given its high profile) runs the risk of highlighting or privileging an

² "Approach to Aboriginal Cultural Landscapes".

interpretation of the cultural landscape that relies heavily on the elements that are deemed to constitute universal value. The conditions for this to happen may be further created by landscapes' intrinsic ability to harmonies interpretations with what is actually visible on the ground. In the case of cultural landscapes, this scenario is particularly problematic given that it may undermine the diversity of meanings and interpretations embedded in the landscape. It may also undermine its inherent dynamism as an evolving entity whose construction is the result of a constant negotiation and renegotiation between the cognitive and the physical. A designation that does not acknowledge these pluralities and temporalities may significantly influence the association between culture and nature that begets a cultural landscape. Thus, I suggest that the appropriateness of designating Canadian cultural landscapes as World Heritage should not be taken for granted and that it is important for Canada to consider the implications of such a designation on each of the sites it nominates. Part of the value of a cultural landscape as a type of heritage is that "it is never finished or complete, not easily framed or read," which is what makes it an interesting mechanism with which to expand the boundaries of heritage designated by World Heritage.³ However, it is also a consideration to bear in mind by State Parties such as Canada in whose interests it is to balance the continued integrity of their cultural landscapes with the benefits of having them inscribed onto the World Heritage List.

³ Cresswell, "Landscape and Obliteration of Practice" 280.

These cautionary notes are not intended as arguments against Canada nominating its cultural landscape heritage for designation as World Heritage but to raise awareness of issues relevant to Canada that Canada might take initiative in addressing. Indeed, Canada is in a privileged position to encourage UNESCO to modify the current framework that approaches cultural landscapes as tangible cultural heritage to be designated in the same way as buildings, churches, temples, archaeological ruins and so forth. To begin with, unlike many other countries whose cultural landscape heritage is to a considerable degree articulated through intangible means, Canada has the resources (in terms of finances and expertise) to undertake substantive research into the intangible dimension of cultural landscapes. Given its Aboriginal heritage and the important role the natural environment played (and plays) in the creation of Canada as a place and idea, the Canadian context provides an almost limitless supply of case studies to enrich the understanding of cultural landscapes. An emphasis on building upon Canada's growing awareness and activities in relation to the intangible dimensions of cultural landscape heritage can be seen as an important contribution to World Heritage if it helps to further an understanding of how to commemorate cultural landscapes in a way that takes into account their unique characteristics as a heritage resource. Furthermore, by presenting World Heritage with nominations that challenge the current framework for cultural landscapes, Canada can provide World Heritage with concrete case studies upon which to base conceptual and operational changes to their management of cultural landscapes. Coupled with theoretical

discussions on cultural landscapes, this might provide a strong impetus for modifying the way cultural landscapes are approached by World Heritage.

Further research to develop on the conclusions reached in this thesis might result in concrete recommendations on how UNESCO could change the way cultural landscapes are incorporated into their heritage related activities. Indeed, the analysis in this thesis concludes that the relationship between UNESCO and cultural landscapes needs to be revisited from a theoretically informed perspective that posits cultural landscapes as a concept as much as a mechanism through which to achieve the designation of sites that do not fit existing categories of heritage. Were this to be done, I believe the inclusion of cultural landscapes as a sub-sub category of tangible, Cultural Heritage would reveal itself as confining and in need of revision. Moreover, such a re-examination could acknowledge and develop the natural connection between cultural landscapes as a concept and UNESCO's recent activities pertaining to intangible heritage. This would also provide a way for a conceptual re-evaluation of designating cultural landscapes as 'World Heritage of universal value' because UNESCO designates intangible heritage outside the structures it has developed for the designation of World Heritage. In the end, if the discourse on cultural landscapes as heritage were to take as its starting point the association between culture and nature, and the innumerable ways this is expressed and sustained around the world – in lieu of privileging the material artefacts this relationship produces – perhaps the foundations of a new category of heritage dedicated exclusively to cultural landscapes

might be realised within UNESCO's heritage related activities. Such a category could act as an important link between intangible and tangible heritage, natural and cultural heritage, not to mention heritage of universal value and simply outstanding value.

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