Landscape Is...!

Essays on the Meaning of Landscape

Edited by Gareth Doherty and Charles Waldheim

ROUTLEDGE

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Chapter 10: Is Landscape Labor?

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There are two established ways of defining landscape as labor; they are distinct but interrelated. In the most widely used meaning, understood across design and the natural sciences, landscape is a protagonist in the story of natural processes. Certain landscapes aid in converting natural matter into human provisions (e.g., food, fiber, fuel) and, as subspaces of ecosystems, they locally maintain environmental life support systems (e.g., filtering water, oxygenating the atmosphere, regulating temperature). These landscapes—sometimes explicitly called "working landscapes," "productive landscapes," or providing "ecosystem services"—sustain human life. The second definition concerns social processes: human labor is embedded in landscapes. Landscapes are labor because they are not naturally occurring; they themselves are made and managed over time. This definition encompasses the intentional and coordinated human activity that produces landscapes: the conscious articulation of form by trained designers and non-professionals alike, the physical construction of a site, and the ongoing maintenance of these places. The first definition—the working landscape—allows humankind to make a living on the Earth. The second definition—the worked landscape—is one way of making a life through an ever-changing (and always contested) social agreement on the continuous process of building the environment.

To define landscape as labor is to define the synthesis of making a living and making a life—and to do so to distinguish landscape from nature as a scale of authorship, interpretation, and representation. The meaning of the "working landscape" vis-a-vis landscape architectural theory and praxis has evolved through time to parallel a shift from landscape as process toward landscape as a co-worker. In "worked" landscapes, designed sites of direct human intervention, the construction of the immediate social milieu begins during the construction of the physical milieu. As the pastoral is still a dominant aesthetic in Western landscape architecture, the metabolic and economic processes of making and maintaining a landscape are often concealed by an inherited affect of restrained productivity in the public realm. As a framework for decoupling economic activity in the landscape from productive social activity, philosopher Hannah Arendt's concepts of *labor*, *work*, and *vita activa*—and more recent scholarship across ecofeminism, political ecology, and Black ecology—offer new interpretations of labor as

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an equalizer when it intersects with other forms of kinship and solidarity. A theory of *landscape as labor* discerns the interwoven productive activity of natural processes and human actors, de-universalizes what is natural and what it means to be human, and perceives the social worlds created by these relationships.

THE DEVOURING PROCESS: DEFINING LABOR

In its earliest usage in the English language, "labor" described physical exertion that had a habitual association with difficulty, sorrow, and pain, with possible origins related to "slipping or staggering under a burden."[1] By the early eighteenth century, labor had acquired its more abstract meaning as a social activity with physical requirements; labor was not inherently about a specific individual but a pool of individuals (and their actions) with a subjective economic cost.[2] In *The Human Condition,* Hannah Arendt reclaims the fleshy, corporeal aspect of labor as a precondition to the societal; this metabolic specificity has the greatest relevance to defining landscape as labor. To Arendt, *labor* sustains biological life and is most directly related to the cycles of energy that bind human existence to the greater natural world. Labor is an incessant "devouring process"—a cycle of bodily needs and the fulfillment of these needs through transforming material for consumption.[3] It is, essentially, a private activity of elemental human sustenance made public in the modern age through markets and institutions. *Work*, by contrast, constitutes social worlds. Arendt claims, "From the viewpoint of nature, it is work rather than labor that is destructive, since the work process takes matter out of nature's hands without giving it back to her in the swift course of the natural metabolism of the living body."[4] Put crudely—to eat, shit, and die is a process of labor; the human as *animal laborans* merely "mixes with" nature.[5] The working human, *homo faber,* "works upon" nature.[6] Arresting matter into durable forms (such as buildings and furniture) offers the potential for ingenuity, creativity, and craft.[7] It is important to note that Arendt's argument does not aim to demean the work of "laborers" as somehow less-than-human. Rather, it identifies the kind of society that such a being inhabits. By her account, the foodstuffs produced by advanced manufacturing processes could be part of a laboring society without meaning.[8] The *vita activa*, never fully realized in Arendt's view, is the active life "devoted to public-political matters," which reproduces the shared interests of humankind.[9]

Although Arendt does not discuss "landscape" as such, she is perplexed by a paradoxical aspect of human intervention on the land as a project of persistence without durability.

> Cultivated land is not, properly speaking, a use object. the tilled soil, if it is to remain cultivated, needs to be labored upon time and again. A true reification in which the produced thing in its existence is secured once and for all has never come to pass; it needs to be reproduced again and again in order to remain within the human world at all.[10]

Landscapes (unlike chairs or tables) demand the ongoing attention of labor *and* work, of being bound to basic metabolic cycles *and* the stability granted by deliberate and strategic creativity. Arendt's description is of a nineteenth-century understanding of landscape, wherein maintaining a productive agricultural field is a local affair. In the twenty-first century, the duality of labor and work necessary to maintain a landscape has global implications; it is central to questions of scale, scope, and complexity in landscape architecture and the discipline's relevance in the face of climate change. The climate crisis is undoubtedly one cause of the present-day enthusiasm for new materialist theory in the design disciplines, wherein the disposition of nonhuman or more-than-human entities and actors can have profound societal effects—and, in many ways, constitute society itself [11] For designers, it is important to parse the differences between "nature" and "landscape" as nonhuman entities in applying such theory; these distinctions matter if there are to be any political or ethical conclusions drawn from knowing the interconnectedness of things. To ask the question, "What kind of person makes a landscape. a landscape?" is to suggest the constitution of new human subjects beyond *animal laborans* and *homo faber*

CO-OPTING NATURAL CAPITAL

In classical economics, "land"—broadly defined to include land and sea—and the stuff that can be extracted from it was considered capital, the primary element of production beyond what is necessary for sustenance alone.[12] Land is material (tangible) and alienable (transferable), but natural processes—ecosystem services—were taken for granted as always available. As early as the mid-nineteenth century, amidst the polluted air and water of industrial cities and depletion of soil fertility in rural areas, the concept of "natural capital" arose to describe "natural-material use values constituting *real wealth*," to be seen in opposition to a capitalist system concerned only with exchange value.[13] Natural capital—inclusive of place and processes—played an exceptional role in creating monetary wealth because it was underestimated in all forms of accounting. These concerns were resurrected in the mid-twentieth century by British economist E.F Schumacher in his 1973 *Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered* (Figure 10.1):

> To measure the immeasurable is absurd and constitutes [on the part of the economist] but an elaborate method of moving from preconceived notions to foregone conclusions: all that one has to do to obtain the desired results is to impute suitable values to the immeasurable costs and benefits of nature. The only real result of such an endeavor was to perpetuate the myth that "everything has a price," or, in other words, that money is the highest of all values.[14]

For Schumacher, natural capital is unique in that the consequences of its mismanagement result not only as a threat to civilization but also to human existence.[15] Presciently, Schumacher used the concept of natural capital to critique

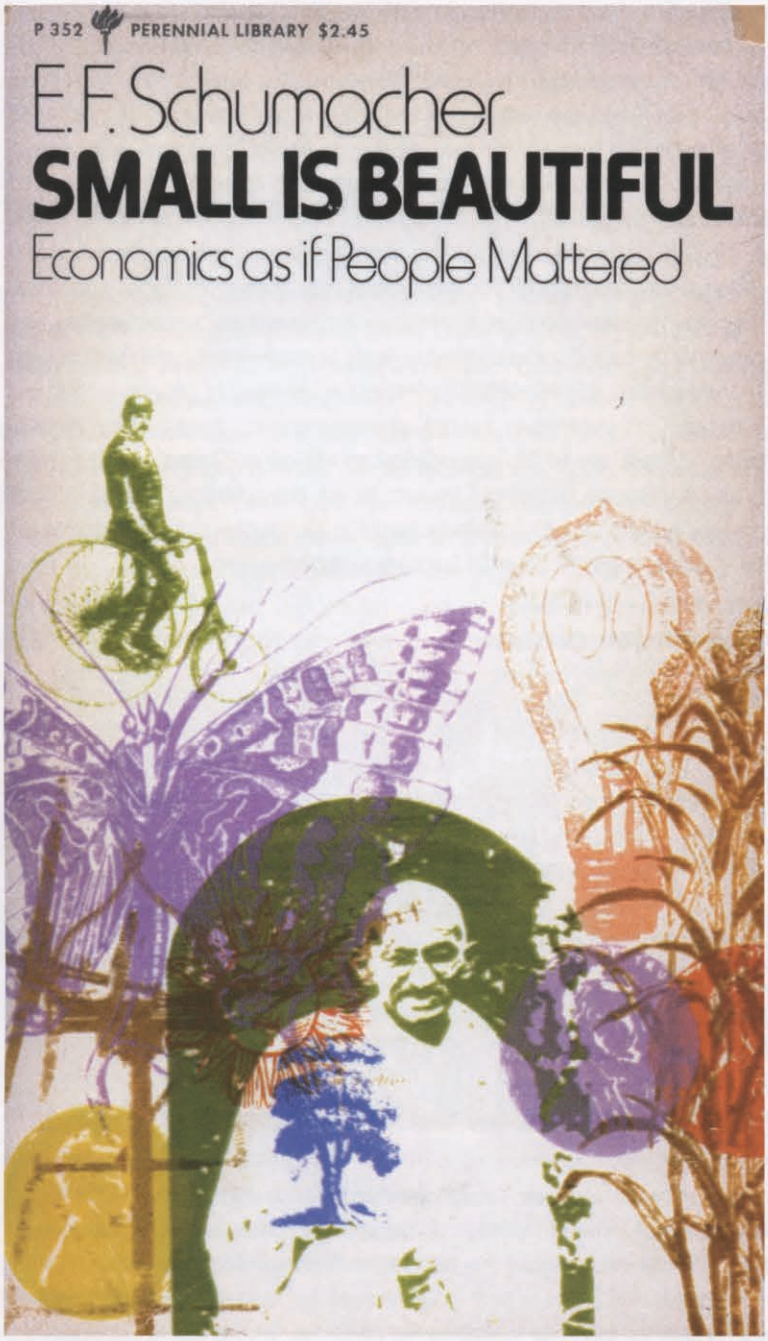

Figure 10.1 British economist E.F. Schumacher resurrected the term "natural capital" in the twentieth century as a rhetorical device, not economic theory. *Small Is Beautiful* by E. F. Schumacher. Copyright (c) 1973 by E.F. Schumacher. Used by permission of HarperCollins Publishers.

the economic presumption of fossil fuels as a sort of business income, an expendable resource.

> If we treated them [fossil fuels] as capital items, we should be concerned with conservation. money obtained from the realization of these assets—these irreplaceable assets—must be placed into a special fund to be devoted exclusively to the evolution of patterns of living which do not depend on fossil fuels at all.[16]

Schumacher was not calling for a greener capitalist system and was critical of socialism's attempts to "out-capitalize the capitalists" through an abiding faith in technology.[17] Rather, the accelerated growth of Western institutions through the consumption of finite resources was highly irrational by its own logic. The ongoing survival of the species required that the frameworks established by the exploitation of nature undergo a sort of controlled demolition: "What is at stake is not economics but culture; not the standard of living but the quality of life."[18] For Schumacher, the rendition of ecological crisis into economic terms was a rhetorical device, not economic theory. By the late twentieth century, with oft-cited estimations of the value of natural capital (and natural processes) in the trillions of US dollars, these concepts lost their non-conformist associations as they were absorbed into mainstream policy literature.[19]

FROM THE "WORKMAN'S CODE" TO ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

In Karl Marx's labor theory of value, labor (rather than capital) is the primary source of wealth.[20] For instance, the labor of weaving linen converts the natural matter of raw flax into its "general social form" of cloth.[21] This transformation of flax into cloth—labor in its "coagulated state"—renders a socially recognizable material ready for exchange: "As a commodity, it is a citizen of the world."[22] In her critique of Marx, Hannah Arendt asserts that material provisioning for an individual person can be decoupled from the reproduction of society; the expenditure of natural resources through industrial capitalism is not the only possible trajectory for modern life. For Arendt, in the "unutopian ideal that guides Marx's theories all things would be understood not in their worldly, objective quality, but as results of living labor power and functions of the life process."[23] The durability of a linen coat indeed *should matter*, not only for its exchange value or its use value of protecting a body from the elements but for the customs and habits that arise from its existence. Does it swaddle the wearer? Accentuate the human form? Is it adorned with embroidery, logos, or sequins? Or are the details of its construction simple? A coat does not merely exist in the world; its endurance offers stability and meaning to a specific world of human beings.

Arendt's distinctions between the products of labor and work—for cyclical consumption and a durable environment of things, respectively—can be found to coexist in conceptions of landscape in the twentieth century. Throughout various elements of Western landscape environmentalism, those more pragmatic than transcendental in their outlook, nature itself is identified as the laborer in

alliance with human workers. George Perkins Marsh, in his 1864 *Man and Nature,* calls for "reclaiming and reoccupying lands laid waste by human improvidence. The task is to become a co-worker with nature in the reconstruction of the damaged fabric."[24] Anne Whiston Spirn describes how Frederick Law Olmsted likewise employed "natural and cultural processes as 'co-workers'" in the sanitary engineering of the American metropolis and represented a middle ground "between John Muir's idea of nature as 'temple' and Gifford Pinchot's idea of nature as 'workshop.'"[25] Humans are no longer directly integrated into the metabolic processes of landscape—Arendt's "swift" return of nutrients through night soil, cadavers, or replanting crops—but the deleterious effects of human consumption and waste could be remediated through urban development (Figure 10.2). During the nineteenth century, this scale held the potential for reciprocity among the primary biological appetites of humans, the human conversion of natural matter to satisfy these appetites, and the ongoing commitments to landscapes needed for repair and regeneration. However, with the expansion of industrial capitalism and globalization and increasing scientific knowledge about ecosystems and planetary systems, the predominantly local concerns of landscape labor and the increasingly complex regenerative requirements of landscape work became too convoluted to understand within a single site.

Landscape planners and designers of the mid-twentieth century, notably Ian McHarg, sought systematic methods of understanding human and

Figure 10.2 Nineteenth-century designers and engineers confronted lands "laid waste" by human development. Chicago Daily News, Inc. *Chicken standing on crusted sewage on Bubbly Creek at Morgan Street.* April 1911. Photograph. DN-0056899, Chicago Daily News collection, Chicago History Museum.

nonhuman metabolic processes at multiple scales. Throughout *Design with Nature,* McHarg foregrounds the "natural processes that perform work for man [such as] natural water purification, atmospheric pollution dispersal, climatic amelioration, water storage, flood, drought and erosion control, topsoil accumulation, forest, and wildlife inventory increase."[26] McHarg's "workman's code" calls for an ecological mandate for design that is grounded in the scientific knowledge of the period.[27] Although the term "ecosystem services" never appears explicitly in *Design with Nature*, it emerges from the same arena of ecology legitimized as a quantitative science in the late 1960s and early 1970s.[28] A "strong form" of science-based utilitarianism, one that systematically recognizes the benefits that ecosystems offer to humankind, was considered a safeguard against weaker, erratic or poorly informed kinds of humanistic utilitarianism[29] (Figure 10.3).

The concept of ecosystem services, as it emerged during this period, was not concerned with intrinsic values in the moral sense, nor, despite the transactional inflection of terms like "inventory," was it initially concerned with economic value. It demonstrated that the ecological processes that sustain human life are nested within larger systems. The 1970 *Study of Critical Environmental Problems (SCEP)* was a landmark interdisciplinary conference convened by MIT professor of

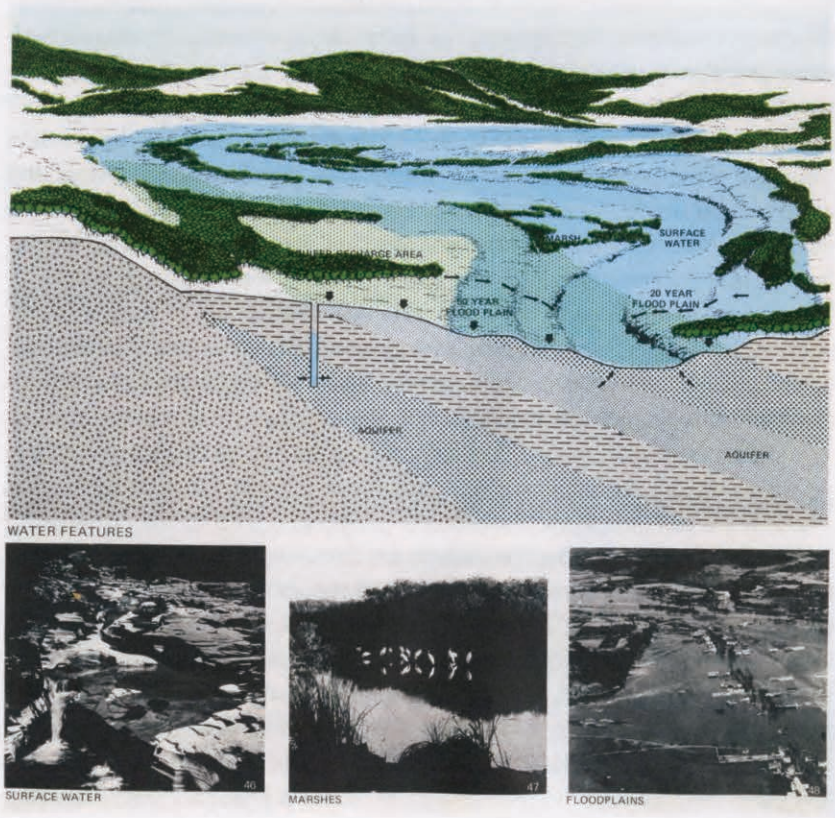

Figure 10.3 Ian McHarg's 1969 study of the Philadelphia region in *Design with Nature* enumerates "natural processes that performed work for man." Ian L. McHarg, *Design with Nature* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1971), 59.

management Carroll L. Wilson. In the conference report, the Work Group on Ecological Effects (chaired by biologist Frederick E. Smith, then faculty in the department of landscape architecture at the Harvard Graduate School of Design) lists nine threatened "environmental services" to humankind, ranging from insect pollination to flood control. The authors of this section wryly note, "It is a mark of our time, and a signal of the degree to which man is ecologically disconnected, that the benefits of nature need to be enumerated."[30] In fact, the report does not attempt to calculate any environmental services or their replacement costs. Instead, it offers detailed summaries of the threats to their efficacy by industrial waste, urban runoff, agricultural pesticides, and the combustion of fossil fuels.

By the time that "ecosystem services" appeared in print in 1981, from conservation biologist Paul R. Ehrlich, it was explicitly opposed to any affiliation with economic logic: "In their [economists'] view, environmentalism is simply a demand for more goods and services (clean air, water, and so forth) Similarly, other species are commodities that society can value or not value, depending on its desires."[31] As scientists like Ehrlich continued to advance knowledge of the complexity of ecosystems, they bristled against efforts to align natural and constructed systems: "technological substitutes for ecosystem services are no more than partially successful in most cases. Nature nearly always does it better. When society sacrifices natural services for some other gain. it must pay the costs of substitution."[32] A deeper scientific understanding of ecosystems offered mounting concrete evidence for their irreplaceability. Like economist E.F Schumacher's efforts to reframe natural resources as natural capital, the term "ecosystem services" emerged to conceptualize natural processes to the broader non-scientific community that directed economic and land-use policy. However, by the late twentieth century, the term's usage shifted from the conceptual toward the quantitative; scientists were developing new techniques of calculating ecosystem services to understand the "replacement costs" of nature to humankind.[33] In the face of dramatic environmental degradation, nature was no longer a reliable "co-worker" in the arena of biological exchange. The concept of ecosystem services, which was initially proposed as a governor on the work of productive human activity, could now be reinterpreted as an allowance for new development or the creation of new markets.

UNDERCOUNTING ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

"Ecosystem services" is now the mainstream term in landscape architecture for identifying the benefits provided to humans by natural processes. The concept is central to the Sustainable SITES Initiative, the landscape complement to the US Green Building Council's LEED rating system.[34] Through the evaluation of individual projects, the program is designed to "distinguish sustainable landscapes, measure their performance, and elevate their value."[35] The rating scorecard, in which points are accumulated (but never deducted for ecosystem disservices), lists goals ranging from "Conserve and use native plants" to "Divert reusable

vegetation, rocks, and soil from disposal."[36] Under this rubric, constructed landscapes are agents of ecological harm reduction, reflecting a general shift in the American discipline from Ian McHarg's suitability studies toward sustainable development in the latter half of the twentieth century.[37]

A recent survey of global assessments of ecosystem services claims that most assessments *exclude* cultivated and urban areas because they are human-dominated environments.[38] Even with more advanced modeling techniques than those available to scientists like Paul R. Ehrlich in the 1980s, the functions of anthropized ecosystems are considered too difficult to calculate or too compromised by the concentration of global resources relative to their footprint. For instance, the ecosystem services provided by a green roof are heavily subsidized by non-ecological processes such as fossil fuel extraction. A certain generation of Western landscape architects—those who "identified as advocates for nature"[39]—may be chastened by the invisibility of the discipline to mainstream scientific discourse on climate change and the pairing of conservation ecology with the engineering sector as the most prominent interdisciplinary alliance toward climate action.[40] If the global scientific community does not recognize the ecosystem services offered by urban landscapes as a net benefit to planetary systems, then one liberatory response is to shift the focus from landscape processes alone toward new hybrids of landscape labor (ecological and metabolic) and landscape work (sociocultural).[41] Such a shift resonates with the trajectory of the mainstream discipline from sustainable development toward landscapes of resilience and adaptation.[42] Crucially, the making of a landscape through both labor and work does not merely provide a "service" to a predetermined public in the manner of landscape construction followed by maintenance. It holds the potential for ongoing co-authorship between the metabolic processes harnessed by a landscape and a new public that is produced.

MORE-THAN-HUMAN, MORE-THAN-LANDSCAPE

The concept of the "more-than-human" emerged in the early twenty-first century as a new paradigm for humanity's relationship to nature. The concept circulates across the humanities, art, and design, amalgamating deep ecology's moral unification of human life and all other forms of life, actor-network-theory's assignment of social agency to nonhuman things and beings, and new materialism's messy, ever-unfolding pluralism. In contemporary design, just a few recent expressions include the theme of the Venice Architecture Biennale 2021, *How Will We Live Together?*; the 2021 *Broken Nature* exhibition at MoMA in New York and the Triennale di Milano; the 2020 issue of *LA+*, "Creature", and the 2021 *Feral Atlas: The More-Than-Human Anthropocene* (Figure 10.4).[43] Following the conceptual shifts from "nature as co-worker" to "nature as governor" to "nature/landscape as co-author," this sensitivity to the more-than-human is unsurprising, given the environmental volatility of the present-day and unknown future effects of climate change.

Figure 10.4 "A view looking up from underneath a clot of marine plastic, a perspective from within a claustrophobic and contaminated environment that humans have created for other living beings as well as ourselves." The 2021 *Feral Atlas* is a touchstone in "more-than-human" discourse in design; it seeks to represent the uneven effects of ecological degradation on different human populations. Artwork by Feifei Zhou, with Amy Lien and Enzo Camacho. Excerpt from the *Feral Atlas: The More-Than-*Human Anthropocene. Copyright 2021 Feifei Zhou, Anna Tsing, et al. Artwork by Feifei Zhou, with Amy Lien and Enzo Camacho.

However, some aspects of the more-than-human have met friction from different quarters of feminism, queer theory, and Black ecology, where there can be no universal locus of who precisely is the "human." In climates past and climates future, "we" have never been in this together. Philosopher Rosi Braidotti asserts that the humanities have always been androcentric, excluding not only women but a plurality of genders.[44] In refiguring the relationship of Blackness to animal life and labor, the writer Joshua Bennett asks, "If we are willing to militate toward the abolition of the genre of Man and think companionship anew. What rises to the fore in the wake? What beauty? What unthinkable terror?"[45] Earlier scholars explored a more direct accounting of labor to critique the universal "man" in relation to nature. In demanding wages for housework in the 1970s, Silvia Federici and Nicole Cox identified the disproportionality of socially necessary domestic labor to monetary compensation. Importantly, Federici and James were not asking for recognition or sympathy—they were declaring the power of women's work and making real the consequences of domestic strikes (Figure 10.5).[46] In a similar vein, philosopher Val Plumwood identifies naturalization as a means of devaluing work: "Those areas previously excluded as nature—the nonhuman, the reproductive and bodily sphere, the labour of those colonized as nature are treated as invisible inputs to the rational economy."[47] Ecosystem services are just one form of hidden labor among many that have been historically undervalued. Across the work of all these scholars is a demand for the moral and ethical claims of human kinship with the nonhuman to lead to radical transformations of material relations. For Braidotti and Bennett, this may take the form of kinship that can only develop through mutual senses and sensations. Living and breathing bodies may find unanticipated commonalities in how they are affected by the specific landscapes they inhabit. For Federici, Cox, and Plumwood, the adverse affiliation of women with nature can yield a forceful politics of alienation; reproductive work can be celebrated, refused, or substituted

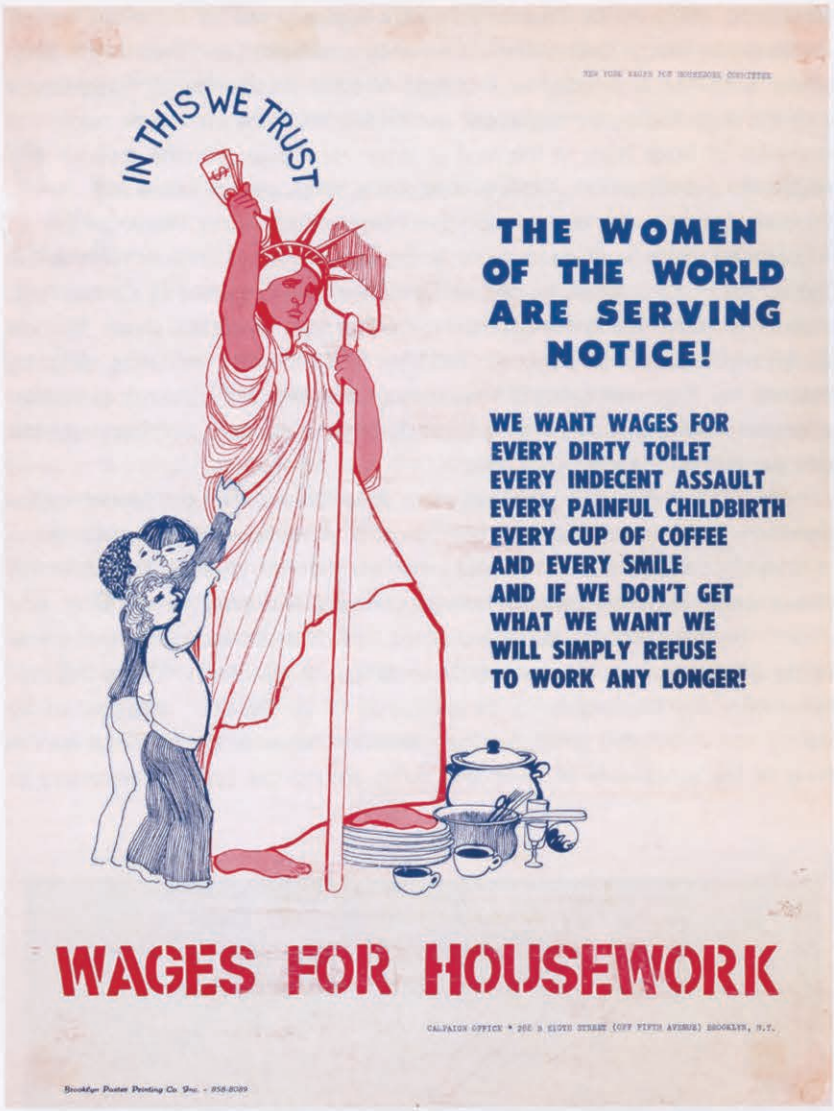

Figure 10.5 In the 1970s, feminist activists' refusal to naturalize reproductive work led to a forceful politics of alienation. Jacquie Ursula Caldwell. *Wages for Housework*, Poster, ca. 1974.

on its own terms. None of these examples are stifled by static representations of identity or demographics passing through a preexisting "public realm", the plurality of what it is to be human can change in time and space.

LANDSCAPE AND THE PLANTATIONOCENE

The roots of the discipline of landscape architecture in North America are entangled with the unequal recognition of humanness and human labor in the landscape. The plantation and the pastoral both represent a synthesis of productivity and a particular aesthetic mode. The emblematic American plantation is

Monticello, designed by Thomas Jefferson, arguably one of America's earliest landscape architects. Over 600 enslaved people cultivated and lived in this landscape, which persists today as a tableau of subdued abundance.[48] Landscape architect Kofi Boone, writing about the Middleton Place plantation, notes the invisibility of Black labor in the field at large. He argues that the sophisticated landforms and waterworks were evidence of a "high level of talent and ingenuity, even under extreme duress," and that "by any other name, the Wolof people who built Middleton Place. .were landscape architects" (Figure 10.6).[49] The hidden labor of the American pastoral landscape, as exemplified by Central Park, assumes a related but rather different form. The flock of grazing sheep, symbols of genteel productivity, persisted into the 1930s despite increasing difficulty maintaining their well-being.[50] Their presence belied the tremendous human effort required to blast underlying bedrock, regrade the land, and construct the vast subterranean drainage network.[51]

In 2014, a group of social scientists collectively coined the term "Plantationocene" to join the scene of the "cenes"—Anthropocene, Capitalocene—that attempt to define the indelible human mark on the geologic record. In this conversation between Donna Haraway, Noboru Ishikawa, Anna Tsing, and others, the Plantationocene, as a concept, indicts a particular ethos of transforming the land through concentrated practices of relocation.[52] Tsing and Ishikawa note the "long-distance simplification of landscapes" propped up by slavery and indentured servitude. The plantation requires "the historical relocations of the substances of living and dying around the Earth as necessary to

Figure 10.6 The plantation aesthetic relies on the "long-distance simplification of landscapes" and the subdued presence of labor. Frances Benjamin Johnston. *Middleton Place, Ashley River vic., Dorchester* County, South Carolina, 1938. Photograph. Frances Benjamin Johnston Photograph Collection, Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, LC-DIG-csas-03840.

their extraction. These processes depend on the relocation of the generative units: plants, animals, microbes, people."[53] The plantation and the pastoral choreograph the relocations and transformations of matter as a landscape aesthetic, yet, as noted by Raymond Williams, "the meanness of a shepherd's life" is never on display.[54]

Evidence of the Plantationocene's more recent relocations can be found in present-day parks. Post-industrial landscapes—and the people who once labored in them—were left behind across North America because of major geopolitical realignments. These post-industrial landscapes are not, in fact, "post-" anything; the fuel, food, and fibers that support everyday life and habitation have, over many decades, been offshored by the economic logic of "fossil capital," thus tightening the knot between globalization and global warming.[55] For the last several decades in landscape architecture, the repurposing of these sites into parks and cultural complexes is more aligned with the rise of the service economy, which is well established as a mode of landscape production possessing its own aesthetic. These projects, such as Freshkills Park in New York, are forms of Leo Marx's "complex pastoralism" (as opposed to sentimental pastoralism), which synthesizes "moral ambiguity, the intertwining of constructive and destructive consequences generated by technological progress" (Figure 10.7).[56] The genuine threats to human health—belching furnaces, polluted water—now exist elsewhere; relics of industrial activity are integrated into park features, embedded in thriving urban ecosystems.

Figure 10.7 "Complex pastoralism" is morally ambiguous, embedding the evidence of constructive and destructive forces into landscape features. Copyright 2019, Jade Doskow. Jade Doskow, *East Mound Low Road, Iron Stained Rainy Seeping, Gabion Walls, and Phragmites*, 2019. Photograph. Copyright 2019, Jade Doskow.

LANDSCAPE AS A WORKPLACE

Landscape labor and landscape work—to harness natural processes and to continuously renew these relationships through deliberate human action—create social worlds. The concepts of natural capital and ecosystem services once described the notional limits of nature's resources; by the early twenty-first century, their meanings had diversified, drifting toward accumulation and exchange. Theories of the more-than-human attempt to redress this shift, but to further complicate things, the universality of the "human" in private and public realms has been rightfully challenged. What is it like today to work in a landscape as it is created and managed, with nature as an aloof (and periodically hostile) co-worker?

From modernism onward, architecture has engaged workplace design as a coherent design exercise that organizes the programs and productive activities of an office building, hotel, factory, etc., and solidifies the social protocols specific to an organization in space. Designed landscapes are not typically sites of productive economic activity. However, they are workplaces for the people who build, maintain, and manage them through landscape labor and landscape work. The chairs in an office are not rebuilt every year, but ecological urban landscapes require a suite of episodic and recurring activities to respond to dynamic environmental conditions. The outcomes of these actions—managing aggressive invasive species, reconciling dead wood with public safety, periodic replanting—are more deeply integrated into the spatial constitution of a place for landscape than for architecture. The design of the spaces in which this recurring physical labor takes place is seldom thought of as workplace design, reinforcing hierarchies between the intellectual work that takes place in the professional design studio and the manual labor that takes place in the field. More attention has been given to this in scholarly and professional contexts in recent years, with studios such as Los Angeles-based Terremoto attempting to make structural adjustments to the frameworks of compensation, social standing, and security that distinguish manual and non-manual labor in a project with normative methods of delivery.[57] Furthermore, these efforts recognize workers' deep knowledge and creativity in the field as a continuum of the design process; the flows of information and influence should move in multiple directions, from abstraction to materiality, from the drawing set to the site. To take the design of the landscape seriously as a workplace in this way, as a reformist social project, can have tremendous cumulative effects.

The grids, modules, and hierarchies of the modern factory and office were mutually developed with the regimentation of the workday and the translation of manufacturing processes into spatial relations; they continue to evolve with emerging forms of automation, modes of delivery in manufacturing, and the precarity/mobility of a white-collar workforce. For the landscape labor and landscape work of designed sites, the relationships between spatial organization and temporal occupation are less well-defined—and thus open to greater reinvention.

Figure 10.8 Operation by women of a new sawmill at Turkey Pond, NH, 1942. Records of the Forest Service 1870–2022, Records Relating to Timber Salvage. National Archives at Boston. Courtesy: United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service.

However, the nineteenth-century notion of large parks as places for the private body and mind to recharge the capacity to work still lingers. Jack Halberstam's concept of "queer time" asserts the possibility of creating alternative worlds through "strange temporalities, imaginative life schedules, and eccentric economic practices" that are less about sexual identity than a challenge to traditional frameworks of family and work (Figure 10.8).[58] As potentially applied to landscape, temporal considerations—such as seasonality and diurnal cycles, human and animal migrations, and the distortions caused by climate change—may engender novel possibilities for form and occupation. If designers can consider the possibility that hedonism and productivity are not mutually exclusive, as Kenneth Frampton asserts, they may also consider with greater intensity the design of landscape as a workplace for nature and people—perhaps irrespective of the program as a park, campus, farm, etc.[59] Can the labor of landscape management, research, and renewal be brought into the public realm without resorting to self-conscious didacticism or the fuzzy romanticism of the pastoral? The "long distance simplification" of landscapes has not only distorted the true accounting of material flows but prolonged the pastoral as a dominant aesthetic mode that represents the "work" of landscape and people (often historicized or hidden), setting up a false opposition between a seemingly self-sufficient natural environment and the complex economic activity of the city.

Natality and Design

Hannah Arendt critiques the obsession with death in Western human relations made possible by the undervaluation of natality, a notion that is less about

childbirth or child rearing than the latent capacity of every individual to create a new polis in coordination with others. Labor and work are rooted in natality as they must "provide and preserve the world for, to foresee and reckon with, the constant influx of newcomers who are born into the world as strangers."[60] Natality is an inchoate capacity for productive activity beyond economic impulse. As Virginia Tassinari and Eduardo Staszowski interpret, "Seen in this light, designing is a moment of the natalic capacity for beginning. It is intervention carried through as the affirmative but always propositional negotiation of incommensurability inherent in every human situation and condition."[61] Natality is a form of participation that *does not* express preexisting politics but is the source of a new set of relations. Landscape labor and landscape work present a special case because the durability of the human artifact is dependent on (rather than compromised by) ongoing natural processes. As a framework for understanding landscape design, it is to propose new measures for productive activity that can change over time.

Natality in the landscape, in a flexible form, may resemble landscape architect Jill Desimini's concept of the "fallowscape", these sites are freed from pressures to produce ecosystem services, generate income, or create jobs.[62] In Desimini's scenarios for urban lands—ranging from nurseries to circuses—fallowness is a precondition for shared delight and regeneration (Figure 10.9). In Newark, New Jersey, anthropologist Kessie Alexandre documents different strands of resistance to city-sanctioned green stormwater infrastructure within Black community gardens. The relative ecological value of water management versus food production cannot be understood apart from a context of massive disinvestment in civic water infrastructure; despite rain gardens being a quantifiable form of water management and climate resilience, their worth could ultimately only be determined collectively by the locals who tended the land.[63] Recent work by designer Kira Clingen examines the spaces and forms of knowledge exchange of twenty-first-century "preppers." Despite wildly divergent ideological beliefs, preppers, perhaps by definition, invent ways of provisioning a world that has not yet come into being.[64] An example of natality in a concentrated form was introduced within Nelson Byrd Woltz's design for Memorial Park in Houston, Texas. A 65-acre grove of pine trees, arranged in grids, marks the location of a World War I training camp and soldiers marching in formation.[65] (It goes unnoted in the 2015 Master Plan that the site, Camp Logan, was home to the all-Black 24th Infantry and a deadly race riot in 1917). The designers proposed that, upon reaching maturity, certain groves could be felled and milled into lumber to construct affordable housing throughout the city (Figure 10.10).[66] This aspect of the proposal does not appear to have been integrated into subsequent design phases, and one could mount a plausible critique that it does little to redress the concentration of public and philanthropic funds; as a productive landscape within a high-profile large park, it is a fragile proposition that makes little ecological and economic sense. However, it is also an unexpected expression of natality in contemporary large park design. It puts faith in future generations to realize a material and social relationship conceived decades prior.

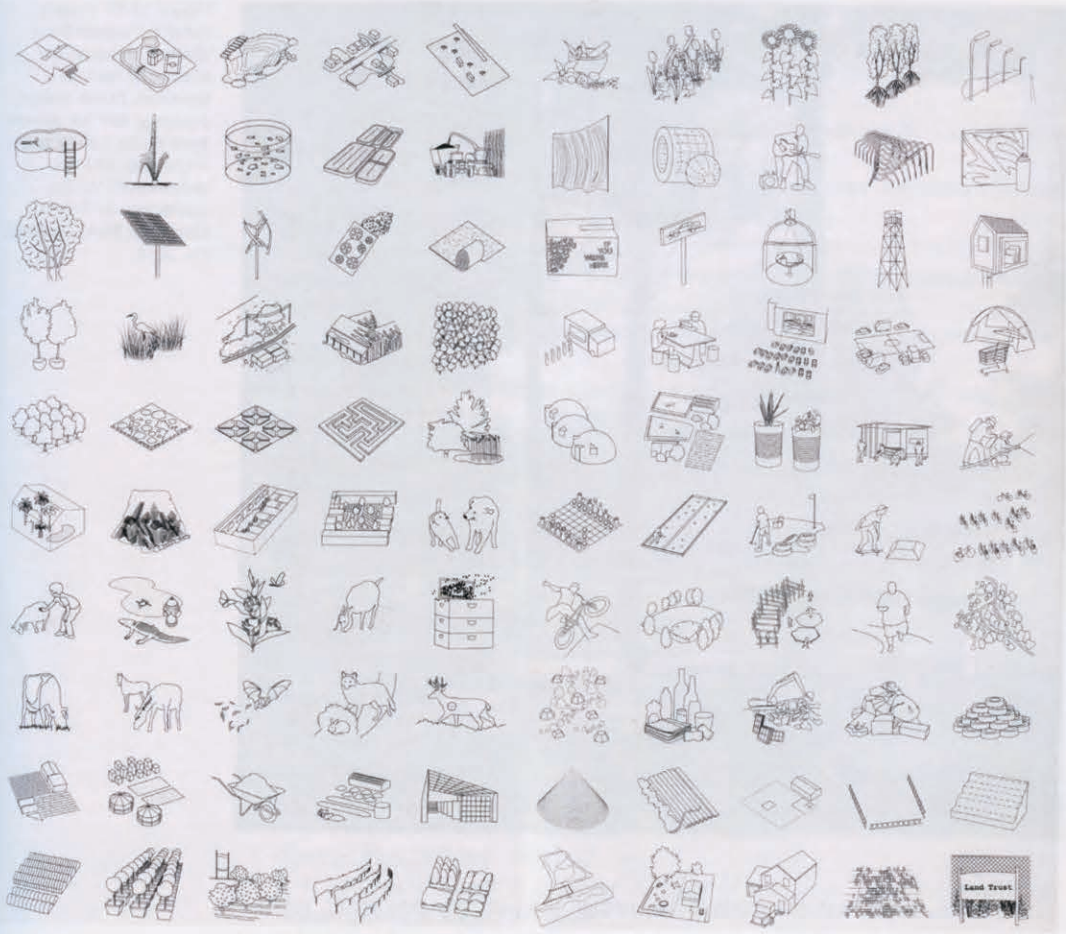

Figure 10.9 Fallowscapes are lands freed from the pressure to produce ecosystem services, generate income, or create jobs. Jill Desimini, Daniel D'Oca, and Julia Czerniak, *From Fallow: 100 Ideas for Abandoned Urban Landscapes*, First edition (Novato, CA: ORO Editions, 2019), 346–347. Copyright 2019, Jill Desimini.

LANDSCAPE IS LABOR!

A theory of landscape as labor is an accounting of the interlinked productive activity of natural processes and human actors. By distinguishing *landscape labor* (harnessing biological processes) from *landscape work* (renewing actions required for durability), it recognizes uncompensated exertion and claims a politics by requiring the definition of whose needs are met and how; it suggests a scale and dominion of exchange. The concepts of natural capital and ecosystem services assign value to the work that landscapes, as subspaces of larger systems, perform for humanity; a shift from "landscape as process" toward "landscape as labor" replaces a framework of distancing with a framework of mutuality. Landscape as labor also encompasses the landscape as a workplace. As a social and aesthetic project, the design of the landscape workplace is inhibited by the legacies of the pastoral and the plantation and underexplored in the discipline. A fuller, more inclusive understanding of the different forms of human labor required to produce a landscape at different

Figure 10.10 Fragile natality: Nelson Byrd Woltz's proposal for Memorial Park in Houston, Texas. Image courtesy: Mir for Nelson Byrd Woltz Landscape Architects. MIR for Nelson Byrd Woltz Landscape Architects, Memorial Park, Houston, TX, 2015.

moments in time must de-universalize, rather than merely de-center, what it means to be "human." Furthermore, labor, as a concept, need not be bound to wage labor and economic activity. To define landscape as labor is to articulate the constant interchange of natural processes and human action, to recognize undervalued or obscured forms of human labor, and to unify making a living and making a life.

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