

AFFECTIVE LANDSCAPES IN LITERATURE, ART AND EVERYDAY LIFE

MEMORY, PLACE AND THE SENSES



EDITED BY
CHRISTINE BERBERICH, NEIL CAMPBELL
AND ROBERT HUDSON

This book takes us into a world that seems oddly familiar, but as it casts a critical light on the people, places and processes through which life is made, it reveals aspects of our world that too frequently elude and slip past us. Through passionate, rich and at times deeply moving prose, this is a book that encourages us to look-again and bring into plain sight the complex, intimate and lived nature of our everyday lives.

—Angharad Saunders, University of South Wales, UK

Bringing together a diverse group of scholars representing the fields of cultural and literary studies, cultural politics and history, creative writing and photography, this collection examines the different ways in which human beings respond to, debate, and interact with landscape. How do we feel, sense, know, cherish, memorize, imagine, dream, desire or even fear landscape? What are the specific qualities of experience that we can locate in the spaces in and through which we live? While the essays most often begin with the broadly literary – the memoir, the travelogue, the novel, poetry – the contributors approach the topic in diverse and innovative ways. The collection is divided into five sections: 'Peripheral Cultures', dealing with dislocation and imagined landscapes'; 'Memory and Mobility', concerning the road as the scene of trauma and movement; 'Suburbs and Estates', contrasting American and English spaces; 'Literature and Place', foregrounding the fluidity of the fictional and the real and the human and nonhuman; and finally, 'Sensescapes', tracing the sensory response to landscape. Taken together, the essays interrogate important issues about how we live now and might live in the future.

Christine Berberich is Senior Lecturer in English Literature at the University of Portsmouth, Neil Campbell is Professor of American Studies in the College of Law, Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Derby, and Robert Hudson is Professor of European History and Cultural Politics in the College of Law, Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Derby.

Cover image: David Crouch, 'Space Forms' (2013).







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ASHGATE

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Published by Ashgate Publishing Limited Wey Court East Union Road Farnham Surrey, GU9 7PT England

Ashgate Publishing Company 110 Cherry Street Suite 3-1 Burlington, VT 05401-3818 USA

www.ashgate.com

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

The Library of Congress has cataloged the printed edition as follows:

Affective landscapes in literature, art and everyday life: memory, place and the senses / edited by Christine Berberich, Neil Campbell, and Robert Hudson. pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-4724-3179-0 (hardcover: alk. paper)—ISBN 978-1-4724-3180-6 (ebook)—ISBN 978-1-4724-3181-3 (epub) 1. Landscapes in literature. 2. Landscapes in art. 3. Memory in literature. I. Berberich, Christine, 1969—editor. II. Campbell, Neil, 1957—editor. III. Hudson, Robert, 1955—editor.

PN56.L26A37 2015 809'.9332—dc23

2014039126

ISBN: 9781472431790 (hbk)

ISBN: 9781472431806 (ebk – PDF) ISBN: 9781472431813 (ebk – ePUB)



Printed in the United Kingdom by Henry Ling Limited, at the Dorset Press, Dorchester, DT1 1HD

AFFECTIVE LANDSCAPES IN LITERATURE, ART AND EVERYDAY LIFE

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Christine Berberich is Senior Lecturer in English Literature at the University of Portsmouth. Her research specialism is Englishness and the creation of National Identity. She has published book chapters and journal articles on Englishness as well as the authors W.G. Sebald, Julian Barnes, James Hawes, Kazuo Ishiguro and Ian Fleming. Her book *The Image of the English Gentleman in Twentieth Century Literature: Englishness and Nostalgia* was published by Ashgate in 2007. She is co-editor (with Arthur Aughey) of *These Englands. Contemporary Conversations on Englishness* (Manchester University Press, 2011) and, with Neil Campbell and Robert Hudson, of *Land & Identity: Theory, Memory, and Practice* (Rodopi, 2012). She is editor of *The Bloomsbury Introduction to Popular Fiction* (Bloomsbury / Continuum, 2014) and is preparing a new monograph dedicated to affect and identity formation in the contemporary English Home Tour.

Neil Campbell is Professor of American Studies and Research Manager at the University of Derby . He has published widely in American Studies, including the books American Cultural Studies (with Alasdair Kean), American Youth Cultures (as editor) and co-editor of Issues on Americanisation and Culture. He has published articles and chapters on John Sayles, Terrence Malick, Robert Frank, J.B. Jackson and many others. His major research project is an interdisciplinary trilogy of books on the contemporary American West: The Cultures of the American New West (Edinburgh, 2000), The Rhizomatic West (Nebraska, 2008) and Post-Westerns (Nebraska, 2013). He is, with Christine Berberich and Robert Hudson, co-editor of Land & Identity: Theory, Memory, and Practice (Rodopi, 2012).

Nancy S. Cook is Associate Professor of English at the University of Montana, where she teaches courses on place studies, Western American culture and literature and the environment. Her publications include essays on the language of US water policy, on ranch real estate ads, on social class in the rural west and on authenticity in western American autobiographical writing. She is working on a book-length study of women who lived and worked in western National Parks.

David Crouch's work in cultural geography has influenced much of the thinking behind this collection and his landmark book *Flirting with Space* (Ashgate, 2010) points towards how new ideas of land, identity and creativity should be thought about in the future. His Afterword to this collection draws out themes and issues surrounding affect for future debate and research.

Martin Dines is Senior Lecturer in English Literature at Kingston University, London. His research focuses on the place of the suburbs in Anglo-American writing, queer domesticities and the interconnections between national identity, space and sexuality. He is the author of *Gay Suburban Narratives in American Literature and Culture: Homecoming Queens* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009) and coeditor (with Timotheus Vermeulen) of *New Suburban Stories* (Bloomsbury, 2013).

David Dunn worked in network television in Scotland and in England for 30 years, dividing his time between directing and / or producing drama series and soap operas including *Machair*, the Gaelic language continuing drama, and making arts documentaries, many of which profiled the life and work of writers and their relationship with place. On returning to the academy his doctoral thesis at the University of Birmingham and his subsequent publications have focused on factual and fictional televisual representations of place and space, with particular reference to holiday and lifestyle programmes. He has taught at the Universities of Wolverhampton, Salford and Paisley, and was, before his retirement, Dean of the School of Drama and Creative Industries at Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh.

Robert Hudson is University Professor in European History and Cultural Politics at the University of Derby, and Director of the Identity, Conflict and Representation Research Centre. He is a graduate of the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University of London, and held a Yugoslav government scholarship as a Post-Graduate Fellow at the University of Sarajevo. In the 1980s he lectured at Exeter College of Art and Design and the University of Rennes (France). He is co-editor of *Politics of Identity: Migrants and Minorities in Multicultural States* (Palgrave/Macmillan, 2000), *Different Approaches to Peace and Conflict Research* (University of Deusto, 2008) and *Peace, Conflict and Identity: Multidisciplinary Approaches to Research* (University of Deusto, 2009), as well as *Land and Identity: Theory, Memory, and Practice* (with Christine Berberich and Neil Campbell, Rodopi, 2012) and *After Yugoslavia: Identities and Politics within the Successor States* (Palgrave/MacMillan, 2011).

Victoria Hunter is a Practitioner-Researcher and Senior Lecturer in Dance at the University of Chichester. She completed her PhD in site-specific dance performance exploring the relationship between the site and the creative process in December 2009. Her research is practice-based, with productions including *Beneath* (2004; situated in the basement of the Bretton Hall mansion building), the *Library Dances* (2006; in Leeds Central Library), *Project 3* (2007; a durational dance installation work) and *x3* (2010; a site-specific dance film). In July 2011

she conducted a site-dance exploration of Flamborough's South Landing as part of the *Wingbeats* Cultural Olympiad project and, in June 2013, a practice-based project, *Bodies and Beaches*, for West Wittering beach near Chichester. Vicky's work has been published in *Performance Research*, *New Theatre Quarterly* and the *Contemporary Theatre Review*. She is currently preparing a site-dance book for Routledge.

Richard Keating researches aesthetics in the context of individual-group-institution-nature relationships, especially with regards to landscape change processes and community resilience. His collaborative, social and environmental drawing-walking practice borrows from previous experience of landscape design, urban fringe management, community forestry and group facilitation. Currently he is completing a practice lead PhD at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, Swansea, intervening in landscape change around his home town of Stroud. He is co-founder of the arts collective *Walking the Land*, a member of *Space, Place and Practice* and a director of two community organizations – *Stroud Woodland Co-op.* and *Stroud Nature*.

Andy Lock is an artist and researcher who works with photography. Since graduating from Westminster University's MA Photographic Studies programme in 2003, he has exhibited his work at venues and photography festivals in the UK, the USA, India and China, with solo shows in 2006 at the University of Michigan Museum of Art and in 2009 at George Eastman House. Andy's photographic work is held in major public collections in the USA and the UK. His photographs have also featured in books, including the V&A's *Twilight* (2006), and in journals, including Portfolio, EXIT, Grafik and Architectural Design. Andy currently teaches photography at Nottingham Trent University. He has a particular interest in the ways in which photography constructs the viewer's experience of architecture and of place.

Susan Naramore Maher has published widely on the literature of the American and Canadian Wests, with particular focus on creative nonfiction, environmental writing and Willa Cather. She is co-editor of *Coming Into McPhee Country* and *Artifacts and Illuminations: Critical Essays on Loren Eiseley*, and has completed a forthcoming study entitled *Deep Map Country: Literary Cartography of the Great Plains*. A Past President of the Western Literature Association and Past President of the Willa Cather Foundation, Dr. Maher is Dean of the College of Liberal Arts at the University of Minnesota Duluth.

Katharine Norman holds a PhD in Music from Princeton, and is a composer, sound artist, writer and scholar. In recent years both her creative and scholarly work have put an emphasis on place, soundscape and listening. Her music and sound art have been widely performed, and are recorded on the Innova, NMC, empreintes Digitales, Cadenza Music and Metier labels. Her online interactive work, *Window*, was winner of the 2012 New Media Writing Prize. Her writings are

widely published and include *Sounding Art (Eight Excursions through Electronic Music)* (Ashgate, 2004) as well as many commissioned essays and journal papers for *Organised Sound*, the *Journal of Sonic Studies*, *Open Space* and others.

Deirdre O'Byrne teaches literature of Ireland and other cultures at Loughborough University. Her research focuses primarily on contemporary Irish women's writings, particularly in a rural context. She is very active in community work and the university's Widening Participation programme. She is Chair of Nottingham Irish Studies Group.

Sue Porter is a Research Fellow based in the Norah Fry Research Centre, at the University of Bristol. Her research specialism is the disabled body and disabled identity. She has published book chapters and journal articles on disability and independent living and the lived experience of disability and its contribution to sustainability, as well as the use of arts based methods in research, walking as a research methodology and place and identity. Sue has a walking and making practice, and is a member of Place, Space and Practice.

Joanna Price lectures in English literature and culture at Liverpool John Moores University. She has written about trauma, memory and mourning in fiction about the war in Vietnam in articles and in her book *Understanding Bobbie Ann Mason* (2000). She is currently exploring these topics in the context of the literature and culture of Antarctica.

Rosemary Shirley is a lecturer in Art History at Manchester School of Art, Manchester Metropolitan University. Her research centres on everyday life and visual cultures, with a particular emphasis on contemporary rural contexts. She is interested in how the English landscape might be explored through discourses of modernity and this has led her to write about topics as diverse as litter, motorways, folk customs, scrapbooks and the Women's Institute. Her forthcoming monograph Rural Modernity, Everyday Life and Visual Culture will be published by Ashgate this year.

Kathleen Stewart is one of the leading figures in the area of affect studies, whose book *Ordinary Affects* (2007) is a key text in establishing a new field of cross-disciplinary work that edges between anthropology, ficto-criticism and cultural studies. Her Preface establishes a resonant context for this collection.

Michael W. Thomas is a Lecturer with the Open University and a freelance writer. He has published on the poetry of Robert Frost and W. S. Merwin, the fiction of Elizabeth Bowen and William Trevor and the drama of Joe Orton. His latest novel, *Pilgrims at the White Horizon*, was published in 2013, as was his latest poetry collection, *Batmans Hill, South Staffs*. From 2004 to 2009, he was poet-in-residence at the Robert Frost Poetry Festival, Key West, Florida. He is a regular contributor to *The London Magazine* and reviews for *The Times Literary Supplement*. He is currently working on *Nowherian*, a Grenadian's memoir.

Daniel Weston is Lecturer in Twentieth-Century English Literature at the University of Hull. He has research interests in a broad span of twentieth- and twenty-first-century writing, and is currently working on a monograph examining representations of urban and rural landscape and place in contemporary literature. He has published work on Ciaran Carson, Philip Larkin, D.H. Lawrence and W.G. Sebald. He has forthcoming publications on the contemporary novel, on landscape and environmental writing since 1945 and on contemporary nature writing.



Preface

Kathleen Stewart

This book actively attunes to landscapes becoming affective. Bits of writing score over the refrains of a landscape becoming a horizon for thought. Tracks of influence and memory shards have the tone, timing and mood of a pressing environ. Things spied as if out of the corner of the eye carry the weight of a background hum.

This is writing weighted with the world of an affective landscape. The subjectobject-world relation skirts the odd interruption of a critique of representation, lurching back to a node of recognition. Ontologies jump into affecting forms to become fields, catchment areas, trajectories of action or pools of sensory impact. Materialities swell into modes of address.

Affective forms happen as singular events. Something becomes legible as an object of repulsion or desire, as a thing attuned to, or missed or mistaken for something else. In every breaking event, zones of belonging and exclusion animate a series of moves toward and away from potentialities and threats. What accretes in an affective landscape is not just the encounters of being in a place or the iconic metaculture through which a place comes to be identified but all of the impacts and energies, attunements and disorientations set in motion by moving with a landscape (Ingold 2000).

Take, for instance, the place I come from outside Boston. When I say it is an affective landscape I mean that it is a corporeal mantel shot through with the fault lines of potentiality and a sad slackening. I mean that the hard surface of matter pulls into an emergent expressivity. That mute things metamorphose into an aesthetic phenomenon. That loud, declaratory voices lurch into laughter with little or no provocation. That 50 different town accents stretch jaws and vocal chords and tighten the muscles of the mouth. The exercise of a world's muscular pushing and pulling is what a subject recognizes as a state of being in place.

When I say the place I come from is an affective landscape I mean that its co-presencing has qualities that do not escape the notice of those involved. What I know of this place outside Boston, for instance, I know as a townie. As one of those who were born here before 'the sticks' became master-planned zones of McMansions and who lived, therefore, in walking distance to the town center, the post office, the schools, the churches and the library. As one who walked. As one who heard those accented voices calling out, who suffered those adult stories on the side of the road that interrupted play or the path to the library. As one who knew I was a member of two big clans and related to over half the kids in my parochial school. I knew what it meant when my brothers and their kids took up the practice of running errands in the winter wearing only a t-shirt, shorts and flip flops. I became alert to the sudden or gradual, seasonal or permanent, shifts in the affordances of the place, the qualities of life written onto the landscape, the colour

of the season's trees and skies and the characteristics of other people's attunements and failings.

Being in this landscape was funny and sad, beautiful, comforting, claustrophobic and strange. A threat of depression – of being shut in – hung over the place's visceral fears of dark woods and the gray, windy isolation of winter at the beach. When someone died, a thousand people walked to the wake which meant not that 'community' existed flat and certain but that there were responsibilities to bear things and that death permeated the place, made all the more graphic in the stories that circulated of how lives ended and what the end times were like.

We, the townies, were both propelled and burdened. We floated downstream on an overwrought affective landscape that magnetized bodies, objects, sensations, practices, socialities and flights of fancy into forms of partial coherence. But this also made us subjects who ventured out with the weight of the world. The place was for us what Derek McCormack calls 'the singular experience/experiment of living – the milieu through [which] new refrains might emerge' (McCormack, 2010, p. 217). We literally took form ourselves through our orientations and disorientations 'to its differences, positions and juxtapositions from a training of our senses, dispositions and expectations and from being able to initiate, imitate and elaborate skilled lines of action.' (Anderson and Harrison, 2010, p. 9). We were singularly 'of' an affective landscape and variously capable of maneuvering its shifting ground.

The landscape we move along with becomes legible not through a representational sleight of hand that might present it as a fixed context for living but in the actual scenes of its intensification and dispersal, in lines of enclosure or abandonment, in residues, or accidental side steps, or blockages. An affective landscape, then, is an immanent composite, intense yet fragile, caught in a space and time and revisable (Latour, 2010, p. 472). Its prismatic and imperfectly aligned elements spin on axes of rote repetition and chains of associations, inattentions, mistaken impressions or amazingly precise intuitions. Yet an affective landscape has muscle.

In the place outside Boston, a few pansies planted in a window box each spring can be a lonely gesture at worldly contact. Anxiety trips over rage when drivers whip into traffic without looking and then explode into horn-honking and foul mouths if anyone breaks a rule. This is a place where there is a way to be but the rules are emergent in forms of recognition and circuits of reaction. Judgment lashes out in sharp tongues or rests in a simple glance of recognition between townies watching someone else 'lose it'. But this is also a landscape that puts a fine point on the move to let things go. The same person who just tried to ram your car for cutting in line in traffic will decide, in the face of your anxious apology, that the fender-bender in the pharmacy parking lot is so forgivable that there's no need to exchange insurance information (Merry Christmas and a warm eye contact verging on a hug)! There is an intimacy in the yellow light passing out of houses with uncurtained windows and the town bars that feel distinctively like 1970s basement rec-rooms. Leaving this place is, in a way, unforgiveable, or perhaps more precisely, unthinkable.

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As a townie who left but returns, my affective landscape of the place hones to the fine point of the estranged but familiar lines of a life arrayed like a prismatic fan of remembered scenes. My affective landscape here is made up of entities that are both present and absent – atmospheres, potentialities, the unremembered, the things that got away, the sharp points of experiments in living. It leans back and forth between form and matter. Red maple leaves and red barns touch the threat of being a shut in. The darkness of the woods both threatens and motivates the energy of an expansive gesture.

The affective landscapes gathered in this book are also varied and internally riven. They have tones and atmospheres, fault lines and muscular force. They are both circulations that re-assemble the social and nodes of condensation, sensory impact, and accrual. They take place on beaches and in childhood scenes of home, in the desert, in television series, in photographs, architecture and roadside trauma shrines, in suburbs and housing estates, in sunlight, in quotidian detail and literature, in grasslands, spatial idiolects, in the Antarctic and in ghosts, ice, the sudden sensory perception of a smell or a sound, in geographical accounts and loud voices, on an acre of land on the edge of the North Yorkshire moors and in vernacular memorials on the side of the road in the USA, in psychogeographies and corporal landscapes, in a body moving through place and in soundscapes encountered through stillness, in walking to Derby or on the strip in Reno, in trees, walls, sidewalks, the sky.

The affective landscapes gathered here are a prism of poetic worlds lodged between what is neither here nor there. They are material and imaginary landscapes that unsettle, underpin and spin. They are landscapes of relations, expressivities that pull things into legibility and submerge them in weighty matter. They are re-mappings of experience that propel and collide. They propose an energetics of the subject, the concept and the ambient jump between matter and meaning in the qualities of a world that feels like something.

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