

Interpreting Space and Place: An Introduction to Archaeological GIS

Lecture 08

Space, Place and Landscape: Identity



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Gonzalo – Perception of the Landscape

Recent technological advancements skew our perception of time and space, but other cultures probably do not share such perceptions

This has resulted in a 'compression of time and space' for those of us in the modern world, an understanding of the now in other places...

Goal: show how one group conceptualizes time and space on the landscape

Appadurai – social sciences consider native so much a part of their natural study as to be confined by it

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Even for the West, we now understand that space is personal and 'man-made'

Q'eqchi' – Mayan-speaking people in modern-day Guatemala

Myth employs space; land or space are not different to landscape

Everything is living, remember Brady and Ashmore and van de Guchte's chapters

Relationship with landscape is essential to human relationships

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Snead and Preucel – Ideology of Settlement

When archaeologists moved away from an ecosystems approach and realized the constructed nature of landscape, land's use as a resource took on symbolic dimensions

This new approach as generated new methods (think epistemology and methods)

Findings of their research into a 500 year period through two case studies

- continuity of well-developed shrine systems as place-making process
- meaningful aspects of the physical world (those parts associated with supernatural entities) were re-created at the local
- the natural world was 'domesticized' in a similar way that class structures are naturalized in order to justify the ruling elite's position in society (religious/group leaders associating their houses with mythical spaces)
- society used the landscape as a means to preserve group identity for nearly half a millennium

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Barnes – Buddhist Landscapes

The ambiguity of meaning in relation to various landscape points

Buddhist landscapes in East Asia are often the result of intentional markings

- 1) earthly
- 2) other-worldly

The movement of sculpture out-of-doors transports visitors to other levels of consciousness

Buddhist statues themselves are the result of cultures meeting

Theravada – monastic style enlightenment; less visible representation

Mahayana – enlightenment for the masses; recognizable representation

Tantric – the most complicated, symbolic version; difficult to represent

Over time, the basic symbols of cave (where the Buddha spent time) and mountain (considered supernatural in Chinese folk beliefs, particularly Daoists) mixed in a way to write upon the entire landscape the various forms of Buddhism that spread throughout Asia, and involved the masses through physically inscribing such symbols on the real-world version