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**Teaching Landscapes**

**A Personal understanding or the Environment**

**BY**

**Christine Edward**

**A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University of  
Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirement of the degree  
Master Of Landscape Architecture**

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Teaching Landscapes:  
A Personal Understanding of the Environment

Christine Edward

A Practicum Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Masters of Landscape Architecture  
Department of Landscape Architecture  
Faculty of Architecture  
University of Manitoba  
Winnipeg, Manitoba

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# Teaching Landscapes

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A Personal Understanding of the Environment

Christine Edward

2005

## Abstract

Teaching Landscapes: A Personal Understanding of the Environment is a journey of self discovery about who I am as a designer, as an Aboriginal person, how I learn, and the influences my experiences and education has played on my understanding of the environment. This work covers the topics: using constructed landscapes to pass on information; learning from the environment; contextualized learning events; 'Four Ways of Knowing'; and creating a personal wisdom. Teaching Landscapes uses 'ways of knowing', the creation of a land ethic, worldview, and connection with the environment to aid in understanding and incorporation of diverse perspectives into design. Teaching Landscapes is a personal perspective on identifying 'ways of doing' and the role of designers and Landscape Architects should play in passing on knowledge using constructed landscapes.

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And finally I would like to say thank you to Peter, who has stood by me through these years. He has encouraged, consoled, and comforted me when the stress and home sickness took hold. It has taken a lot but it is finally done.

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*The Elders are Watching*

*David Bouchard*

*The colour green has come back to the land.  
It's for people who feel like me.  
For people who treasure what nature gives,  
For those who help others to see. 42*

## Forward

My project has been one of self-understanding and discovery. I have been in school for many years, I have learned many things, but my real education started in my first year in the Master's program. It started when I was forced to confront my role as a student, the education I was receiving, and my personal development. For the first time I was faced with the question of identity.

This was the start of a turbulent journey, one that made me loose control of the hold I had over my feelings, emotions, and the ability to hold things at bay. I was forced to look inside, to discover who I am and what future I wanted to have. Before this time I was absorbing the information provided to me. I was given tools; I learned to wield and use these tools well. There was no personal investment in the work that I did. The work did not reflect me as an individual. I was just going through the motions and meeting the requirements. The work did not represent me as an Aboriginal person.

I have gone through a personal growth. This practicum became an avenue for understanding my world-view, the environment and the role I want to play in that environment.

I have written this as a requirement for my master's in landscape architecture, but more importantly I completed this journey as an exploration of my own world-view, land ethic and role as a Landscape Architect. I am a person who has the privilege of considering herself a part of the Aboriginal community.

In the end, better understanding my own role as a landscape architect, and the connections and understandings I have with the environment, I can envision work being produced that incorporates an aboriginal perspective into the spaces around us. There is a role for me in the development of constructed landscapes in which individuals can learn about the environment, an aboriginal perspective, and their own understanding of the world around them.

Christine Edward

## Intermediate Presentation April 13, 2004

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To obtain my understanding of the environment I am using multiple voices to tell this story. My sources have come from readings, investigations and critical thinking of many aboriginal individuals and authors. These people explore how they see, understand and use the environment and landscape around them.

By understanding how others connect with the environment I am better able to understand my own connection. In my work I will be using their words, thoughts and images along with my own ideas, insights and investigations to provide a project that contains a unique perspective.

# 1 Learning From the Land

## introduction

Landscape Architects and designers use their education and the profession to create environments. They use tools, activities and insights to understand their own perspective and include the perspectives of other individuals in the projects produced. Teaching Landscapes is based on the concept of sharing information and knowledge using constructed experiences incorporating a variety of ideas and understandings. Designers can use contextualized learning events that encourages active participation with the constructed landscapes. Incorporation of diverse perspectives adds value to the experiences of the environment, which will also have the ability to reach a wider audience. The goal is to create stories using the environment that will take a person through Four Ways of Knowing leading to the creation of a personal wisdom affecting their understanding of the environment, and of themselves.



*Teaching Landscapes: A Personal Understanding of the Environment* is a journey. The journey has included experiences through the academic world, the introduction to numerous ideas and insights, and the need to change the title from 'An Aboriginal Understanding' to 'A Personal Understanding'. The change was not made out of recommendations from advisors but a personal choice based on the insight that the Aboriginal perspective is important to my own understanding of the environment, but is not solely defined by it.

This work uses a number of different voices to tell the story. The story is about a personal understanding of the environment and the elements that influence this understanding. Included are: thoughts and insights recorded during time in the master's program; quotes from Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal authors who speak to thoughts and ideas generated in the writings; images I have taken that provides a glimpse into how I see and what I notice; and excerpts from exercises and presentations completed during stages of this project. This story is intended to engage the reader to participate in the 'telling' by creating their own linkages and connections using their own insights and knowledge. The hope is the readers will learn something interesting about themselves in the process.

## Ways of Knowing

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Traditional education was to insure that the principles or rules for constructing a cognitive map for life were learned well by all people. From this they would make tools for making a living. The environment was their school and their cathedral, and reading its natural processes gave meaning to all life.

Kawagley in *A Yupiaq Worldview: A Pathway to Ecology and Spirit*.

Ways of Knowing - was an exercise conducted which resulted in a booklet looking at a Physical, Intellectual, Emotional and Spiritual Understanding of the Environment

## history lesson

Before there were textbooks, the information came from the environment around us. People were taught to interpret the elements in their surroundings enabling them to work, live and survive. There were no limits to what could be learned by observing, interpreting and understanding the processes and events in an experience. Information was available to be viewed, read, and understood by everyone.

### **A Natural Textbook**

There was a time when there were no books outlining information on plant material, biology, ecology and science. These things were learned and understood by observing, thinking and experimenting with the elements found in the environment. The environment was a tool, a textbook for learning and understanding. This tool, like many others, needed to be practiced with before becoming proficient at wielding it. The experience and practice came from being immersed into the environment and opening the mind to the information contained there.

Learning from the environment is a natural process used by humans. As children, we learn by watching and as indicated by Berger (1972) in his book *Ways of Seeing*, "Seeing comes before words. The child looks and recognizes before it can speak" (7). Author Oscar Kawagley also shares similar thoughts in his writings about traditional education and the Yupiaq people of the Alaska Region.

"Their constructed technology was mediated by nature. Their traditional education processes were carefully constructed around mythology, history, the observation of natural processes and animals and plants styles of survival and obtaining food, and use of natural materials to make their tools and implements, all of which was made understandable through thoughtful stories and illustrative examples" (Kawagley 1995, 2).

So in the past apprenticeships and learning from the environment was the only training people received. However in present day, there has been a shift away from experiential knowledge gained from the environment, toward information contained in books. This shift changes the way people could relate to their environment. According to Gablik, "the visionary function, which fulfills the soul's need for placing itself in the vast scheme of things, has been suppressed, with the result that as a culture we have lost the gift of vision" (Berger 2001, 14).

## gathering information and knowledge

The way people experience the environment, using the elements to produce knowledge, is determined by how they orientate themselves to the world through their cultural understanding. Culture shapes the way we understand the world. Information is gathered and used to place ourselves in space and gain understanding of what is occurring there. We can visually see the ways in which Western society approaches and views the environment compared to the way Aboriginal peoples do.

Understanding and knowledge of the processes and elements contained 'in the environment' requires an intimate involvement with the environment. Understanding of the environment can be found in all cultures who utilized their environment on a daily basis. Every culture held a connection with the environment at one point in their history. The understanding and knowledge usually became ingrained in the teachings, belief systems and ceremonies of the people. It is what many would consider Traditional Knowledge.

### *Those Who Fell From the Sky: A History of the Cowichan Peoples*

*Long before history books were ever created, the natural world was like a book itself, which could be read and reread by each and every generation. In oral-based cultures, such as the Cowichan, one could walk the traditional landscape and literally watch history unfold before his or her very eyes. Each and every stone marker told a story, and with every story, a past was preserved. 37*

**Robert Marshall**

## Community Elders

Elders in communities commonly hold Traditional Knowledge. The information held by these Elders is respected and sought after by individuals and is essential to the research of many organizations, groups and professionals. Many of these people are working in the social science, economic and environmental fields. Elders of the community are listed as important people to visit when gathering information about the community and area. The traditional lifestyles and personal experiences of these Elders provide them with an understanding of the local environment.

## Contemporary Education and Traditional Understanding

There is a need to balance contemporary education and traditional understanding held by community members. The importance placed on information held by Elders changes when society 'values' knowledge found in textbooks and courses over personal experience.

## Bus-ride Transcripts

Bus-ride Transcripts are thoughts recorded while riding on the bus to and from the university.

Jan. 2004 ~ I have started a studio presentation with "Welcome to my world". This is my world, that I am allowing you to experience. My thought, interpretations and ideas. Framed in my own context in which I have been raised, choose to live in and experience in my life. My world is a dynamic place, where thoughts begin and flow into each other.

To see the world the way I do. Landscape of my heart. My voice, what I want to say about me, about where I come from. What question do I want to answer about my "world view". My world. Engaging the reader in the text, engaging the viewer into the work, where they bring meaning, by their own interpretation of the base information I have provided. I do not know it all. I am not an expert. I share with you my own experiences/insights for you to share, interpret and use to enrich, fulfill, deepen your understanding of my world, your world, of the world that surrounds you.



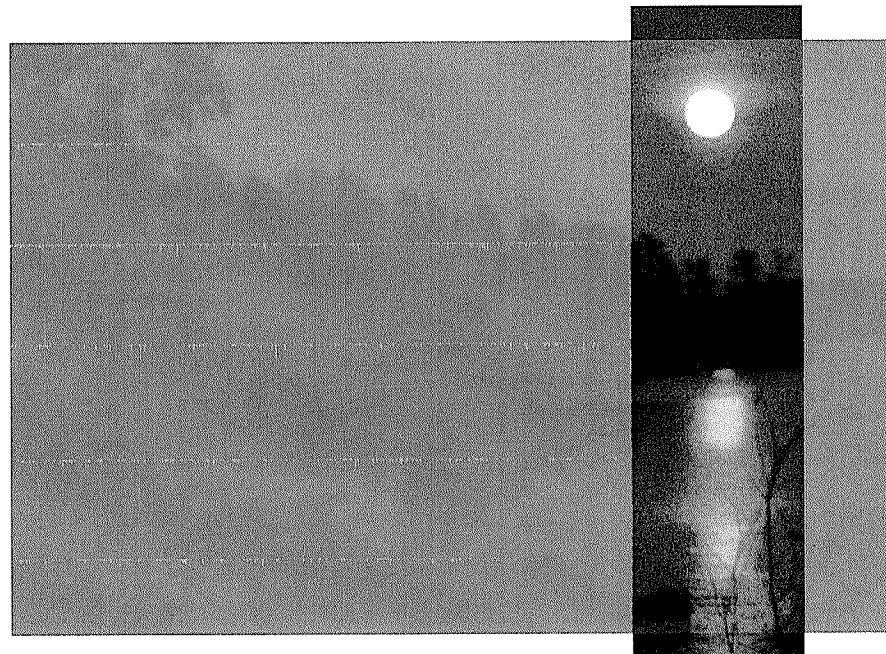
The Elders' stories are being forgotten; with the stories goes one way of connecting with the environment. Kawagley (1995), in his book A Yupiaq Worldview: A Pathway to Ecology and Spirit, writes "the constellation of these new values, beliefs and practices introduced through schooling, religion, government, economics, and numerous technological devices represents a worldview quite distinct from that of the Yupiaq" (3). This changing worldview effects the way people value the information and understanding provided by the elders and knowledge holders in communities.

### **Personal Perspectives and World Views**

According to Baptist (2001) "we cannot separate our knowledge from knowing because all meaning is culturally constructed and contextualized" (5). Our worldview is a way of seeing, thinking, and using the knowledge provided. Cultural association, the dominant society and personal beliefs influence this world-view.

### *Ways of Knowing*

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## perspective

The internalization,  
the personalization,  
the shift

from  
the exterior,  
out of body,

to  
the internal,  
the mind  
and  
thought.

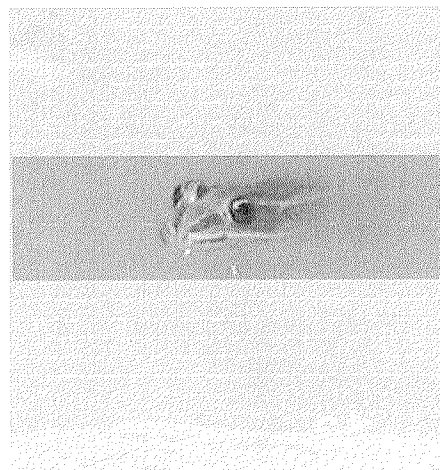
Over the years, societies have shifted from cultures dependent on subsistence practices to commerce. The intimate knowledge of the environment has been reduced. The traditional lifestyles, which were based on understanding the environment, have been changed with the adoption of a technology-based way of life. It is difficult to say what effect this shift will have on the way information is gathered and passed on.

## teaching landscapes

Teaching landscapes is not about the physical realities of the environment but the way in which the spaces are seen, felt, questioned and used. Education is not limited to classrooms but to each place visited. Teaching landscapes is about engaging people in the environment to better understand the connections, processes and events occurring there.

### Teaching Landscapes Concept

A great opportunity exists to discover new ways of using the landscape to share information about the physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual capacity the environment has.



### Bus-ride Transcripts

As a person I often wonder the difference between the way I think and those around me.

This work is a personal exploration into the ideas of my mind. What I can see in the world around me. It is about the possibilities that do exist in our surroundings/ environment and presenting it in a way to help others to experience my view of the world, of the landscape and our roles as designers, planners, students and teachers. It is part of our responsibility to pass on our knowledge and experiences for others to learn.

*In the old traditional way, an Ojibway man would take his child with him on his journeys along the trap lines, on hunting trips, fishing or just on long rambles across the land.*

*The father would point out the things he saw on those outings and tell his child the name of everything he knew, explain its function, its place in Creation. Even though the child was an infant and incapable of understanding, the traditional man would do this thing. He would explain that the child was a brother or a sister to everything and that there was no need to fear anything because they were all relations. . . . He would do it so that kinship was one of the first teachings the child received. 8*

The environment can be used to pass on information from one person to another and from individuals to the community. Anyone is able to learn from the environment. Many may need to be taught, or shown how to set the mind free and ask questions. The experience provides a connection to the environment in which people live, work and play. The concept is to enrich the lives of the people by creating experiences that teach the person something new. The intention is to provide an opportunity to learn how people and communities communicate, understand and use their environments.

### **Application of Teaching Landscapes**

Teaching landscapes are being used all over the world. Schools and education institutions have developed programs where they take the class and 'learning' out of the room, using the outdoors, to actually see the theories in practice. Programs such as "Learning Through Landscapes" (1995) highlight how schoolyards are designed to enable teaching of school subjects, essentially creating "Ecological Learning Laboratories".

Teaching landscapes are also included in interpretive programs. Greenhouses, buildings and interior spaces can be used to teach. There are no boundaries to what can be utilized for learning. Teaching Landscapes is a natural process of learning from the environment that can be seen throughout history.

# 2 Ways of Knowing

## understanding our environment

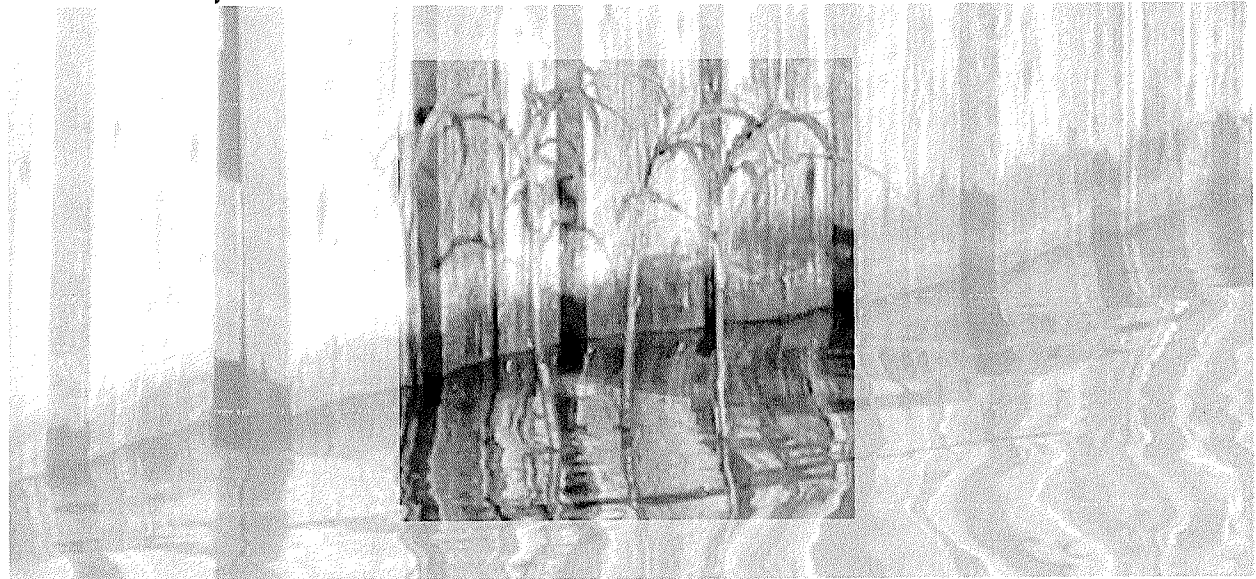
### **What is the Environment**

"It is seeing which establishes our place in the surrounding world; we explain that world with words, but words can never undo the fact that we are surrounded by it" (Berger 1972, 7). Our physical reality includes the things that are seen and unseen and includes the processes, connections and relationships around us. It is not limited to the soils, trees and physical aspects of the surroundings; it encompasses the playgrounds, parks, buildings, rooms, interior and exterior spaces, natural or artificial.

### *Ways of Knowing*

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a process of learning, knowing, understanding



The 'way' the environment is viewed effects what is seen and understood since what is looked at is what is noticed. It is essential to have an understanding of how the environment is envisioned, used and understood since it relates to another set of functions. The understanding "structures what we see, how we move, what we eat, our sense of time and space, how we relate to each other, our sense of security, and how we experience the particular places in which we live". It also affects "our ability to imagine better alternatives" (Orr 2002, 31),

### **Interacting with the Environment**

Interacting with the environment helps to bring understanding of that same environment. Experience enables a unique sense of what is happening in that space and the variety of elements that may be involved. Each experience will bring to light unknown insights since the world is absorbed through the senses (Baptist 2001). Each space can be experienced in a variety of ways establishing a unique sense of connection with the environment based on the accumulation of information gained through interaction with the site.

### Intermediate Presentation April 13, 2004

There is a great potential in the landscape, to enrich the lives of individuals by providing experiences that can be taken away with the person and provide a greater sense of connection to the place in which they live, work and play. By focusing on teaching landscapes, I want to bring forward the ideas that we have the ability to learn from what is around us. That our education is not limited to classrooms and interior environments but to every place that we visit or experience. In the end teaching landscapes is not about the physical realities of what is around us but the way in which we see, think, feel and question the spaces which we are in.



The environmental fabric instructs movements and the ability to engage with buildings, landscapes, technologies and communities (Orr 2002). Essentially the environment effects actions taken and influences what is seen, thought, and learned. Knowledge is found within the environment, providing clues to identity and values that relate to a personal understanding and perspective.

There is no one way of looking at or understanding the environment as indicated by Lippard (1997) "If Landscape is a way of seeing, there are potentially as many landscapes as individual ways of seeing, or at least as many as cultural ways of seeing" (61). Lippard also suggests that by "looking at land through nonexpert eyes, we can learn a lot about our own assumptions and about the place we live in and pass through" (125). A person's unique understanding and perspective reflects the interaction a person has with the resources available in the environment.

### **Creating a Land Ethic**

Actions, thoughts and beliefs are influenced by personal understandings and interactions with the environment. A land ethic is formulated using personal experiences which effects how situations and environmental issues are thought of and dealt with. The ethics created are not only applied to the relationship with the natural surroundings but also to the interactions we have with humans as well (Lippard 1997). This land ethic transcends personal boundaries working its way into actions taken as individuals, designers and professionals.

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## ***Poetry and the Prairie: Writing Aboriginality, and the Land***

*I am born, I look at the world around me, see what is to be seen and hear what is to be heard, and then I attempt to translate that nonverbal experience into the human language into which I was born. In that sense, then, I am a conduit, a facilitator, an interpreter. 81*

**Randy Lundy**

Even though a land ethic is based upon personal insights, it is possible to have reduced awareness of the full impact decisions and actions have in the surrounding environment. Orr (2002) comments that “the capacity of the mind to wonder, however, has been diminished by the tacit design of the systems that provide us with food, energy, materials, shelter, health care, entertainment, and by those that remove our voluminous wastes from sight and mind” (30). Therefore the exposure education, lifestyles, and community structures have on a person can greatly influence what is included in their land ethic.

## connecting with the environment

Connecting with the environment depends on how people engage their surroundings. If they choose, humans have the ability to connect on a personal, intellectual, emotional and spiritual levels. The environment has the capacity to provide these connections. Discovery and exploration of these connections can nurture an understanding of image, identity, culture and personal perspective. Questioning connections available with the environment allows understanding of not only a personal level but on a community or societal level. It can provide insight into the role humans have in the ‘larger equation’ (Lippard 1997).

### Arctic Dreams

Barry Lopez

*In the time I was in the field with Eskimos I wondered at the basis for my admiration. I admired an awareness in the men of providing for others, and the soft tone of voice they used around bloodshed. I never thought I could understand, from their point of view, that moment of preternaturally heightened awareness, and the peril inherent in taking a life; but I accepted it out of respect for their seriousness toward it. In moments when I felt perplexed, that I was dealing with an order outside my own, I discovered and put to use a part of my own culture's cultural wisdom, the formal divisions of Western philosophy - metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, aesthetics, and logic - which pose, in order the following questions. What is real? What can we understand? How should we behave? What is beautiful? What are the patterns we can rely upon?*

*As I traveled, I would say to myself, What do my companions see where I see death? Is the sunlight beautiful to them, the way it sparkles on the water? Which for the Eskimo hunter are the patterns to be trusted? The patterns, I know, could be different from ones I imagined were before us. There could be other, remarkably different insights. 202*

### **World View**

While a land ethic is based primarily on an individual's thoughts and actions, a world-view consists of all aspects of an individual's life. It contains their beliefs, identity, culture, ways of knowing, understanding, and connecting. It contains their personal perspective. Oscar Kawagley (1995) writes "The world view enables its possessors to make sense of the world around them, make artifacts to fit their world, generate behaviour, and interpret their experiences" (8). It is the person's discoveries and thoughts that make each world view unique.

A world-view can be unique but similarities may be found among other groups or cultures. However, it is important to note that having connection with a particular culture does not mean the people will have similar world views. For example not all Aboriginal people will have the same perspective, feel the same connections, or have the same understanding of the environment. Each person is influenced by personal experience, training and education. Berger (1972) reflects on this when writing, "The way we see things is affected by what we know and what we believe" (8) relating back to how connections with the environment are made.

## *Ways of Knowing*

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"A world view consists of the principles we acquire to make sense of the world around us. Young people learn these principles, including values, traditions and customs, from myths, legends, stories, family, community, and examples set by community leaders" (Kawagley 1995, 7).

There is a possibility to have an understanding and respect of how other world-views are created and what they consist of. Many people come to this understanding by seeing, acknowledging, and understanding the similarities and differences that are found in each perspective. There needs to be the realization that this understanding is not complete (Kynoch 2003). Only the individual could truly know their own world view.

### ***"Culture Ties Farmers to Land, Not the Economic Rewards"***

*It is generally accepted that farming offers miserly returns to capital and labour, between half and one-third of what other businesses can expect - which invites the question: "Why do people keep farming?"*

**Peter Schroedter**

*To understand the reasons, it helps to look at the people engaged in farming rather than at the business of farming.*

*People engaged in agriculture are a unique sector of society, clearly distinct from their urban neighbours. Their value system is unique, especially the traditional cattle producers whose attachment to the land, livestock and nature is as strong as you'll find in any aboriginal culture.*

*The traditional family farms are the remnants of ancient European aboriginal culture at the time when people evolved from hunter-gatherers to farmers. The attachment to the land and its ability to provide is one of the strongest tenets in the agrarian cultural belief systems. Even when the land does come up short it is usually blamed on bad markets, poor weather or a farmer who failed to do the work properly.*

*Farmers share a common culture that makes them resemble an ethnic group more than a business or professional caste. The farming community has its own traditions, myths, music, and status symbols.*

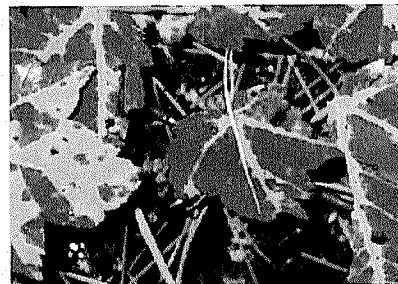
### **The Aboriginal World View**

According to Kynoch (2003) “ An Aboriginal world view differs in its physical, emotional, social and spiritual dimensions from that of a Western world view” (3). It is forged from the intimate relationship the people had with the environment and communities they lived in. Their experience with the resources available and their dependence on land contributed to the values of the people. The shared culture was derived from the need to adapt to the conditions in the environment, and within their community and social structure.

“For most hunter-gatherer societies the land has been an inextricable part of their lives; it provided not only their sustenance in the form of game, fish and vegetable foods but also the foundation of their spiritual beliefs and hence of their social control mechanisms” (Young 1992, 255). These resources were the teaching tools of the people and helped to formulate the Aboriginal world view.

According to many writers, the Aboriginal connection to the land is seen in the language, culture and education of the people (King 2003) driving the notion of identity and Aboriginality. These ideas relate back to how an individual uses the environment, formulates a personal land ethic, and how and what is experienced.

### ***Rediscovery: Ancient Pathways, New Directions*      *Thom Henley***



*Personal sharing of problems and true-life stories often happens naturally under circumstances that would be difficult to duplicate in a principal or school counsellor's office. One Rediscovery staff member says he has the best heart-to-heart discussions with participants who volunteer to help in the garden after dinner. Because both people are busy harvesting, planting, or weeding, there's no pressure for either to speak. If they wish to talk they can, all the while keeping their hands busy. . . . Nature acts as a catalyst for self-expression, and is the ideal place to share thoughts with others. 39*

*The vision is that I will make a contribution. In doing so I will see the greatness in every person and see the aboriginal in every person. My vision is to see every person, not as separate from me but as an inclusion in my own perspective as a part of the human family, and to reflect on that. 116*

The ability to understand where the environment fits into the Aboriginal world view is not difficult. Their understanding of the environment is the understanding of the land, water, air, and the connections these have to the spiritual, cultural and teachings of the people and Aboriginal communities. These understandings are not unique to the North American Aboriginal people.

The North American Aboriginal societies did not invent these teachings and are not the only people to incorporate them into their culture. Many people, around the world, have the same thoughts within their teachings, cultures, and belief systems. "Virtually all ancient spiritual models in every culture emerge from or exist in intimate relation to land or place" (Lippard 1997, 147). The difference between the North American Aboriginal people and other aboriginal people from around the world is the teaching tools and application of the thoughts within the ceremonies and connections being made with the environment. The context or local setting greatly influences these things.

### **Use of Ceremony**

Participation in a ceremony influences the way in which an individual 'sees', understands and uses the environment. It can change the frame of mind of an individual or group. The actions of the Aboriginal people distinguish their world view from their western counterpart. The people use ceremonies to aid in the connection to the environment and the development of symbiotic relationships. These traditional methods and ceremonies were important to provide guidelines helping to protect and preserve the environment communities were dependant upon (Orr 2004). These guidelines can be expressed in the way Aboriginal communities respect 'mother nature' and are identified as 'keepers of the earth'.

"For native people, it is not the communication with the invisible, intangible, and mutable forces that is important . . . . The phenomena in their collective representation are not lawful in themselves but depend on changeable relations between the group and aspects of its surroundings" (Von Maltzahn 1994, 20). Traditional methods and ceremonies are altering as the fabric upon which the people's beliefs are taught and passed on changes. However, ceremony is still being used to connect and maintain a relationship with the environment.

### **Aboriginal Understanding and Teaching Landscapes**

An aboriginal understanding of the environment is situated in teaching landscapes, and the ability to learn from the land. The environment becomes the textbooks containing all the information required. Kawagley (1995) mentions this as he describes the Yupiaq person's mythologies which "include observation, experience, social interaction, and listening to the conversations and interrogations of the natural and spiritual worlds with the mind" (18).



connected?

Intermediate Presentation April 13, 2004

Maintaining connections with the environment is important for Aboriginal because it connects the changing world with the past, an aboriginal identity and the unique world view they have. "One reason to know our own histories is so that we are not defined by others, so that we can resist other people's images of our past, and consequently our futures" (Lippard 1997, 85).

### **Overstating the Aboriginal Connection**

No other world view has been referred to as regularly as the Aboriginal world view has been. It is found in movies, literature and on TV. The connection Aboriginal people have with the environment has been romanticized to the point where it rarely resembles the 'traditional', let alone, the modern Aboriginal perspective or world view. Lippard (1997) speaks of the change toward the aboriginal perspective; "Native American's have had good historical reason to keep their most important feelings and knowledge to themselves, to maintain a kind of emotional sovereignty. Indian views of nature have been so overstated, misunderstood, and abused . . . it is difficult to sift out any perceptions about landscape or place from the little we have actually been told" (72).

## ***A Yupiaq Worldview: A Pathway to Ecology and Spirit***

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**Oscar Kawagley**

*The task is to carefully reconstruct and redefine ourselves by replacing pieces to engender a new Native identity, its infrastructure built around valued native traditions. Right now it is emotionally and mentally costly to try to succeed in either world . . . our youngsters enter school confused and graduate confused and disoriented. They may show signs of pride and smugness for being native, but, I venture, it is often a fragile façade. Anxiety is ready to burst as an antisocial act at any questioning or slight of this supposed Native reality and being. 110*

# 3 Ways of Seeing

## learning - asking the questions

### How We Learn

Learning is a natural act that is instrumental in the ability to understand the environment and events happening in it. People learn in a variety of ways and use a number of tools in the process. The most common way of learning is by asking questions. By asking questions a personal interest is satisfied bringing meaning to the information obtained by the mind. "We all as humans rely on visions and vocabularies to help us interpret our experience, our relationship to others and world at large, and social charge" (Anderson and Gale 1992, 2).

The act of learning may be natural; it is also possible to be trained in learning techniques that stimulate the senses even more. People can be trained in the art of looking at the world as one looks at and interprets poetry, literature, stories or movies. Education in observation and interpretation enables people to learn from any event, situation, experience or location.

Education can start as easily as identifying specific ways of seeing the environment and the information found there. It could happen on a variety of levels such as the physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual realms. An individual can start to see how information is being transformed into knowledge and the application of wisdom.

## Information and Knowledge

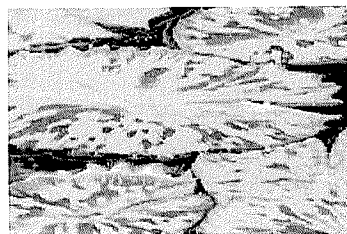
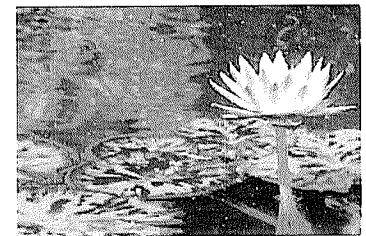
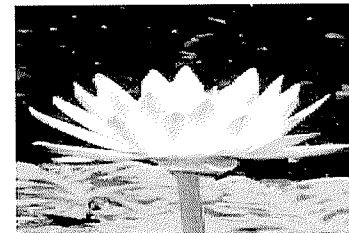
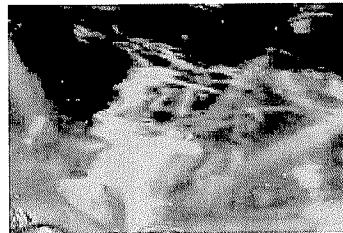
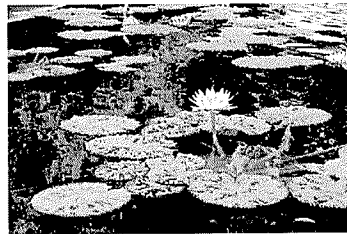
The ability to learn is important in gathering facts and information about the environment. There are many processes occurring in places people are experiencing. The ability to identify and absorb the information is a key element in learning and the production of knowledge. There is a difference between information and knowledge and it should not be confused with wisdom (Orr 2002).

## *Ways of Knowing*

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ways of knowing

thinking



Information can be identified as data collected about specific items or issues. Information is “the leaves on the trees”, “the soil the roots are in” and “the height of the specimen”. Knowledge is the underlying connections between the data collected and relationship it has with known facts. Knowledge explains the reason behind “the leaves being on the tree”, “why the roots are in the soil” and “why the height has been attained by the specimen”. Orr (2002) notes “information moving too quickly to become knowledge and grow into wisdom does not recharge moral aquifers on which families, communities and entire nations depend” (48).

### **Wisdom**

Wisdom is a reflective state of learning. Knowledge is gained by experiencing information and understanding relationships and connections that exist. Wisdom is the application of knowledge. Wisdom is the ability to take the basic fundamental concepts learned from the tree, ‘why and how it grows’, and apply it to experiences in life. Wisdom is the abstraction of the information and knowledge collected, unseen and immeasurable. Wisdom can only come from experience. Kawagley (1995) speaks of this when discussing the wisdom retained by elders in the Yupiaq community, “The attainment of knowledge and respect was based on their reasoning ability and accumulated experience” (18).

## ***Barry Lopez***

## ***Arctic Dreams***

*Because you have seen something doesn't mean you can explain it. Differing interpretations will always abound, even when good minds come to bear. The kernel of indisputable information is a dot in space; interpretations grow out of the desire to make this point a line, to give it direction. The direction in which it can be sent, the uses to which it can be put by a culturally, professionally, and geographically diverse society, are almost without limit. The possibilities make good scientists chary. In a region like the Arctic, tense with a hunger for wealth, with fears of plunder, interpretation can quickly get beyond a scientist's control. When asked to assess the meaning of a biological event - What were those animals doing out there? Where do they belong? - they hedge. They are sometimes reluctant to elaborate on what they saw, because they cannot say what it means, and they are suspicious of those who say they know. Some even distrust the motives behind the questions. 128*

## The Lawn and Aboriginal People

## Landscapes Perceived

I was once asked the question: If Aboriginal people have such a respect for the land, how come their lawns and houses are not taken care of on the reserve?

I spent some time thinking about this question while I worked on my practicum. After going through much material and starting to understand how an Aboriginal perspective is different from other perspectives. I have come to the realization that the Lawn is a concept and socially constructed concept held by many western cultures.

Very rarely did you see aboriginal people removing all existing vegetation from around their living quarters to place one grass species that requires regular maintenance and up keep.

Times have changed since the aboriginal people travelled the land in search for resources and shelter. There was a time when families constructed cabins in loosely formed communities. These communities tended to be self sufficient and contained many amenities for the people. Families constructed gardens and hunted for their meat. Fishing was abundant and resources readily available.

There have been a number of traumas felt in aboriginal communities. Many families have been relocated from resource rich lands to areas that contain little or no value for the production of food or animal life. The people were taken from homes constructed by the family and placed in units that met few of the families needs. The way of life of the people was altered, and new values given to the people. Community members were given houses they did not know how to maintain and lawns they did not know what to do with.

We must look at the perspective and values of the communities we are working with. We need to understand that their cultural constructs may not include a big house, a double car garage and white picket fence. We need to realize that mowing a lawn of Kentucky Blue Grass may not be the ideal pastime of community members. We need to understand where our cultural ideals end and where community member's start. Are we providing what we think the community needs? Or, what they really want? Listening to the community means hearing what they are saying but also understanding what they are not saying.



Each person gains wisdom at different paces using a variety of tools. Not every person will gain wisdom in all areas. The exposure to information, knowledge, and wisdom is dependant on the situations and environments the people experience. Culture, education and lifestyle affect the way people learn as indicated by Young (1992) when writing " . . . social groups do not necessarily observe and interpret environments in the same way. Our experience, along with those which we have learned and accepted through contact with others, affect our interpretations and reveal something of the particular social and cultural environment in which we exist" (255). These thoughts are echoed by Kynoch (2003), "Personal knowledge is based on observation and experience, and is completely unique. Quantity and quality of knowledge [and wisdom] depends upon gender, age, social status, intellectual capacity, and professional/vocation between community members" (6).

### **Traditional Knowledge and Contemporary Education**

Traditional knowledge and wisdom is an area researchers and professionals have put a lot of focus on in the social and science fields. There is urgency by these individuals to gather, record and organize the knowledge and wisdom held by Elders in Aboriginal communities around the world. Changing society and lifestyles of these people and their communities has affected the connection the community members have with their environment. The children have been placed in classroom and removed from the traditions and stories that were used to teach the other generations. The sense of authority has been removed from the elders in the community and a dependence on literature and textbooks fostered.

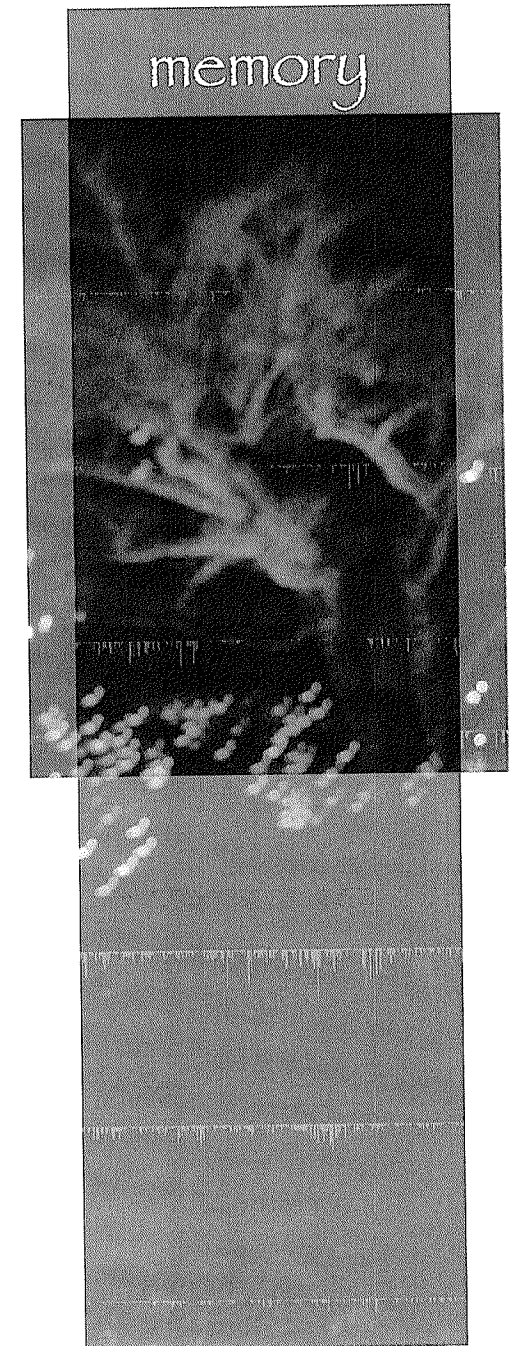
### Bus-ride Transcripts

Nothing is given to those who have not worked for it. Teachings/ traditions/ceremonies . . . are given to those who have gone through the work to receive these tools, teachings, understanding because they are ready and able to accept the responsibility, to go along with it.

Recording of the knowledge and wisdom held by the elders in communities has to occur with an understanding of the context and environment upon which the people gained their knowledge. To understand the personal knowledge, it is essential to understand what produced that knowledge. Kawagley (1995) observes the experimental and predictive qualities that Inuit knowledge exhibits. He talks about how predictions were made using observation and reading of sign markers of nature, which were made on observable phenomena (Kawagley 1995). Berger (1972) also speaks of the relationship observation has with 'understanding the environment' when he states, "We are always looking at the relation between things and ourselves" (9).

"Traditional knowledge was to insure that the principles or rules for constructing a cognitive map for life were learned well by all people. From this they would make tools for making a living. The environment was their school and their cathedral, and reading its natural processes gave meaning to all life" (Kawagley 1995, 23).

Contemporary education provides a basic understanding of information and data. Classrooms are teaching tools used to train for the observation of events, phenomena, and the formulation of thoughts and ideas around the relationships and connections that are seen. For knowledge to be formulated and wisdom to occur the tools need to be used by the person to generate a personal experience resulting in understanding. Orr (2002) provides insights on the issue when discussing the level of practical knowledge held by college graduates, "Our practical knowledge of particular places is often considerably less than that of the native people we displaced. As a result, the average college graduate would flunk even a cursory test of local ecology, and stripped of technology most would quickly flounder" (26).



## Bus-ride Transcripts

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Laura once told me that she misses going to Marigolds with me. We would go, as I attempted to bring new life to my grandmother's yard, while I returned home for a year. We would go, walk around the garden centre and I would explain what I knew about the plants (which is not too much). It was not necessarily about the information, but the time we took together, communicating, attention, talking, contemplating. A new experience.

### Using the Tools

The ability to experience, connect and understand the environment comes from using the tools formal education and personal experience have provided. Learning is dependent on the actions people take as active participants in the environment. Von Maltzahn, in Nature as Landscape: Dwelling and Understanding (1994), describes this positioning and connections being made with the environment, "We can place ourselves opposite landscape, separate from it or incorporate ourselves into and participate in it" (6). The sentiment is echoed by Berger (1972) when mentioning the impact the 'act of choice' has on our experience with the environment and that "we only see what we look at" (8).

Understanding the limits values and perception places on the ability of people to connect with the environment is important. Values can limit or even extend individual or group perception and the appreciation of information (Kolmodin and Bartuska 1994). Formal education also has a similar effect on the access, processing of information, and production of knowledge and wisdom. It is recommended by Baptist (2001) "to maximize our visionary possibilities as beings-in-the-world, we must remove the ideological blinders which prevent us from viewing ourselves as connected to ourselves, to others and to nature" (31).

### Experience of Place

The ability to learn from the environment comes down to 'experience of place'. As learners and educators it is essential to understand the learning process can be applied in any setting as indicated by Orr (2002) when writing about the role university campuses can have on the education of the students attending the school. "As commonly practiced, education has little to do with its specific setting or locality. The typical campus is regarded mostly as a place where learning occurs, but is believed to be the source of no useful learning. A campus is intended, rather, to be convenient, efficient, or aesthetically pleasing, but not instructional" (Orr 2002, 127).

Experience of place is what sets the aboriginal perspective apart from other societies. The aboriginal experience of place has been ingrained in the culture, teachings and understanding of the environment that it is still integrated into the identity of the people, even in urban settings.

Experience of place is a process of connecting with the environment. Within traditional teachings there are four dimensions of "true learning" or ways of connections that can be made with the environment. In the Scared Tree these ways of learning "are in every person's nature" (Bopp, Bopp, Brown and Lane 1984, 29) and can be described as the 'Four Ways of Knowing'.

### Arctic Dreams

**Barry Lopez**

*For a relationship with landscape to be lasting, it must be reciprocal. At the level at which the land supplies our food, this is not difficult to comprehend, and the mutuality is often recalled in the grace at meals. At the level at which landscape seems beautiful or frightening to us and leaves us affected, or at the level at which it furnishes us with the metaphors and symbols with which we pry into mystery, the nature of reciprocity is harder to define. In approaching the land with an attitude of obligation, willing to observe courtesies difficult to articulate - perhaps only a gesture of the hands - one establishes a regard from which dignity can emerge. From that dignified relationship with the land, it is possible to imagine an extension of dignified relationships throughout one's life. Each relationship is formed of the integrity, which initially makes the mind say: the things in the land fit together perfectly, even though they are always changing. I wish the order of my life to be arranged in the same way I find the light, the slight movement of the wind, the voice of the bird, the heading of a seed pod I see before me. This impeccable and indisputable integrity I want in myself. 404*

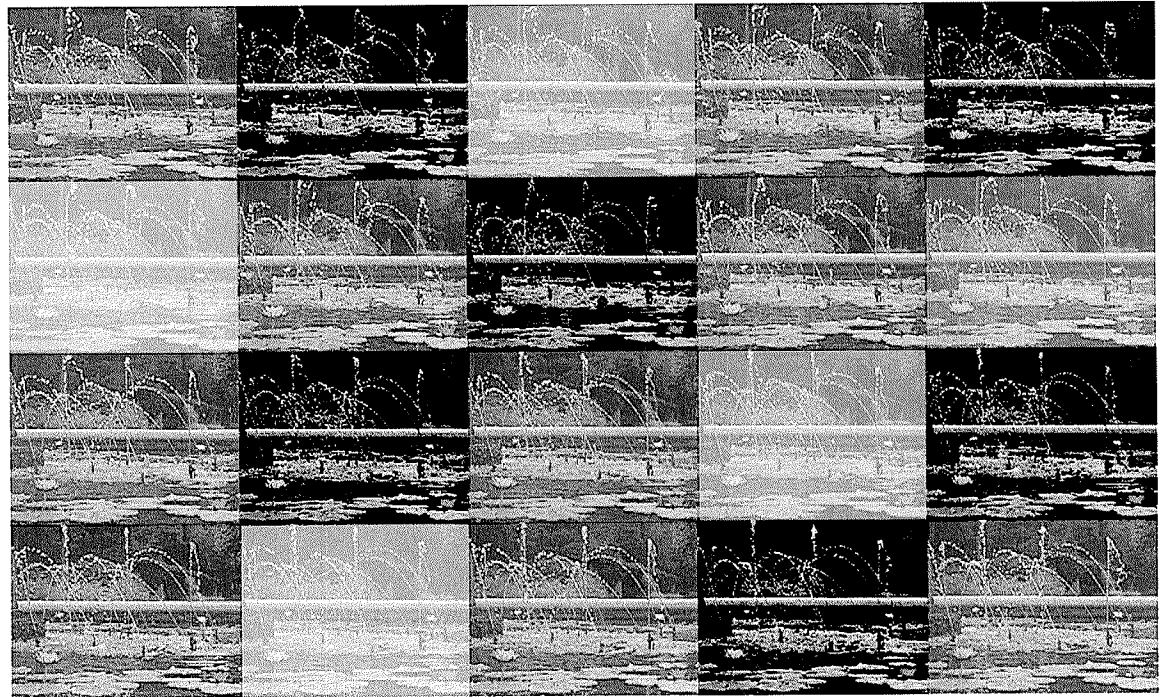
## four ways of knowing

“The objective world – constructed in thought. In contrast to this constructed world, there is the world as it may appear before each of us, the phenomenal world of direct experience. This is the life-world, our world of everyday experience, the reality we live. When we speak of the life-world, we need to refer to our body as the instrument of our experience – not however, as we know it from the outside but as we perceive it from inside” (Von Maltzahn 1994, 5).

### *Ways of Knowing*

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seeing sound



## *Rediscovery: Ancient Pathways, New Directions*

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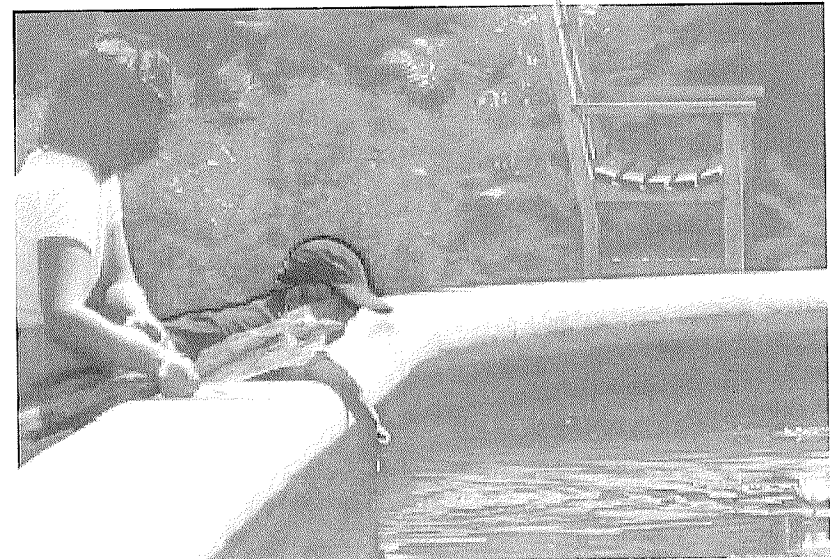
**Thom Henley**

*Each of us has our own discoveries and re-discoveries in life - profound personal experiences that renew or inner spirit, reawaken in us a desire to know and understand other cultures, and rekindle a sense of wonder in the natural world. I know I have had many. I grew up in Lansing, Michigan, U.S.A., a stone's throw from the belching smokestacks of the Oldsmobile factory. It was not the richest natural environment it might have been born into nor was it the poorest. There was a small vacant lot in my old neighbourhood, overgrown with trees and brush, fallen leaves and limbs, that was, for me, in my childhood imagination, a wilderness. . . . In my mind' eye, there were still deer and bear and wolverine roaming these wilds. . . . I tried to imagine Indians living in such a place and dreaming of finding an arrowhead or some other sign . . . 15*

## *Ways of Knowing*

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experiences





### **Capacity of the Environment**

People have the capacity to connect with the environment on physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual levels. The ability to connect on these four levels is possible in any place experienced. Connecting with the environment, like creating knowledge and wisdom from information, is a process that requires participation by the person involved in the experience. The process uses the person's own perspective, their world view, tools and training, knowledge, wisdom, and requires actions, decisions and choices. Connecting with the environment on the four levels is a process that is directed by the person and their ability to internalize the multitude of information, influences, and insights they are exposed to.

### **Ways of Knowing**

'Ways of knowing' (or connecting to) the environment can be separated into four areas: The Physical, Intellectual, Emotional and Spiritual realms. These areas use the experiences we have with the environment to create understanding, knowledge and wisdom. The process can be used in any situation or location, and with any experience.

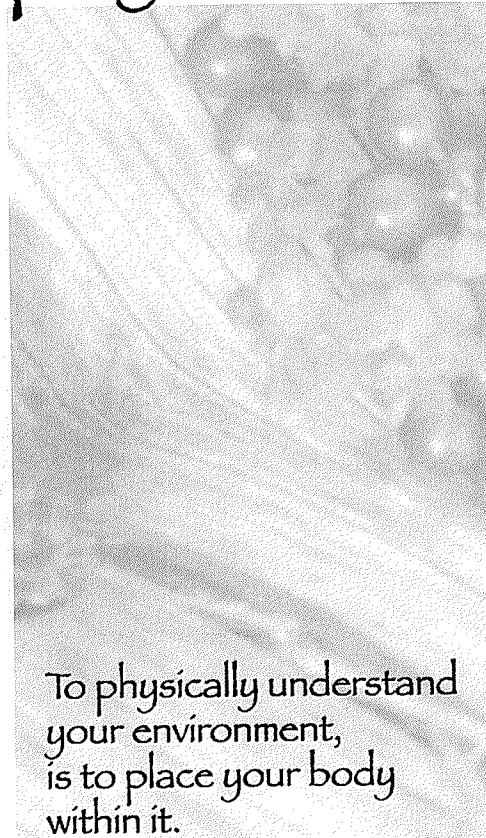
Each person will travel through the 'Four Ways of Knowing' the environment in their own way. Many will experience all four connections while others may experience only one or two levels. The 'Four Ways of Knowing' can be experienced in any order. Not every situation and experience will connect on all levels. People may actively travel through the process or not participate at all. However, it is still important to understand the process, how people are able to connect with the environment, and ask the questions to make the connection.

## Physical Way of Knowing

A Physical 'Way of Knowing' is usually the first step in the process of learning and connecting with the environment. It requires the use of a person's senses to experience the things that can be touched, felt, seen and heard. This is the 'observation and collection of data' phase of knowing and learning. It is the realm most often achieved by each person experiencing an environment.

## *Ways of Knowing*

# physical



To physically understand  
your environment,  
is to place your body  
within it.

Ways of Knowing, Understanding –  
Physical Understanding June 27, 2004

A physical understanding of my environment.

I reach out with my body, my senses. I feel the heat of the sun, the cool breezes, the fluttering of mosquitoes as they find a place to land. I feel the hardness of the bench on which I am sitting, the bricks on which my feet rest.

A physical understanding of your environment.

You reach out with your senses, your smell, your vision, to the many areas around you, to what you can observe, to what is in your site lines.

You experience your environment in the movements you make, the things you touch, feel, and experience, where you sit, walk, and ride. The shade, textures and patterns you feel. Changes in levels, the slopes, stairs and pathways.

The Physical 'Way of Knowing' can occur on a very superficial level requiring little effort from the person to experience. However, through training, a person will be 'tuned' to observe specific information, spawned by knowledge or wisdom they may already have.

## Ways of Knowing

A physical understanding is touching the water, feeling the leaves, walking through the grass, feeling the bite of mosquitoes. It is hearing the water, the people chatting, sounds of cars passing by, footsteps, roller blades, high heels. It is sensing a change in humidity as the sun is blocked and the heat stolen by the trees.

People try to take a physical understanding home with them. In photographs. Souvenirs of the physical environment. Recordings of their experience.

To gain a physical understanding of the environment, experience the world as a child would. As someone who has never seen or experienced these things, questions formulating in the mind, the willingness to touch, to explore, to find out. The fascination of the many things present, the stone, water, tree, sculpture, it doesn't need meaning, it needs to be experienced.

## ways of knowing

Physical -

1. of or relating to nature or the laws of nature. 2. Material as opposed to mental or spiritual. 3. Of, relating to, or produced by the forces and operation of physics. 4. Of or relating to the body. (Merriam-Webster Dictionary)

## Intellectual Way of Knowing

An intellectual 'Way of Knowing' comes from insights, questions, teachings and thoughts of the physical elements found in the environment. It is a thought process that occurs. An intellectual understanding looks to the application of the materials, elements and processes; creating 'wonderment' at the underlying causes. This is the 'knowledge producing' stage of knowing, where information is being analyzed and considered. An intellectual understanding of the environment is centered in the mind.

## *Ways of Knowing*

Ways of Knowing, Understanding – Intellectual  
Understanding June 27, 2004

An intellectual understanding of the environment, requires me to use my mind, my curiosity to look at, and understand the things I have experienced physically.

It is an engaging of the intellect which changes the impact the environment has in our knowing. It is the questions. What is this? And the knowledge that follows.

# intellectual

An intellectual understanding includes the processes, the underlying schemes that exist. The fountains, the rocks, the mulch, I can identify the different things present, seen and unseen.

An intellectual understanding of my environment is the ideas and thoughts that are generated about the location I'm in. The ideas and thoughts of what is happening around me.

I can have an intellectual understanding of my environment because I have chosen to think about my surroundings, to engage, to contemplate. I am starting the process of internalization.

The intellectual aspect of understanding requires the involvement of the person beyond the physical aspects of knowing as depicted by Von Maltzahn (1994) "Interpretation implies the act of understanding, but understanding necessitates that we enter into a relationship with those aspects we wish to understand" (6).

## Ways of Knowing

I want to learn more, I want to understand, I want to be able to read, see, hear, and remember what it is I have seen. I am searching for the spaces within the spaces, the tidbits of knowledge which makes each place unique, to personalize it in some way, to make it something that I can relate to. I am thinking, I am knowing, I am questioning.

I can know my landscape in many ways, I can learn about my landscape in many ways. Books provide information, but to see it in real life and to experience it, makes the knowledge I have learned, even more rich. I can look at pictures, posters, or images on TV, but to know that I am experiencing "the knowledge" in a way which adds value to the knowledge I already have.

An intellectual understanding of the environment, adds value to my experience. It gives me insights in to what my surroundings hold, and what it provides to myself. An interactive understanding is something that uses my own knowledge, understanding, information that has been part of my own education, my own biases, thoughts, and ideas. It is a compilation of the many years of my own knowing, my own experiences.

We use the words we have been taught to explain the world around us. Our education influences the way in which we are able to experience our surroundings. We are taught to look and observe specific elements. To fully understand our surroundings intellectually, we need to look past the conceptions that we have about our surroundings, by questioning those things that we think we know, to challenge the assumptions we make, to question the things that are obvious, to see the mundane, the things that we don't even see because they are always there.

Intellectual - 1. of, relating to, or performed by the intellect. 2. Given to study, reflection, and speculation. 3. engaging in activity requiring the creative use of the intellect (Merriam-Webster Dictionary)

## Emotional Way of Knowing

An Emotional 'Way of Knowing' results from the physical and intellectual connections made with the environment. It is the thoughts that occur and the feelings being provoked due to the ideas being perceived by the individual. The person will start to have a particular understanding about what their senses and thoughts are informing their minds. The emotional connections are the reactions a person has to the environment. The person has done more than observe and think, they have formed opinions containing their perspective and knowledge. This is a 'transition' stage, where knowledge is being understood. The person has made an opinion, which is part of the learning process. They will remember that opinion. The thought has become apart of their thinking and understanding. Information has become knowledge.

## Ways of Knowing

Arousal of feeling, knowing and understanding. The way we think and feel about what we are learning and experiencing.

## emotional

Emotional 1. of or relating to emotion. 2. Prone to emotion. 3. Appealing to or arousing emotion. 4. Markedly aroused in feeling. (Merriam-Webster Dictionary)

### Ways of Knowing, Understanding – Emotional Understanding - Aug 3, 2000

An emotional understanding of my environment is the way in which I think about what is around me, the elements that are present, the relationships and the way that they are presented.

An emotional understanding is about how I feel about these things. This is the internalization process that occurs when I take what I know and make judgments on it.

Many people do not make a connection to their surroundings and environment because they choose to experience only the physical and intellection connections to the spaces around them. But to experience an emotional connection, people have to take what they see, think, hear and convert it into a personal understanding.

Some people have strong emotional reactions to environments due to the connections their experience is having with knowledge they already have. It is possible to examine the emotion and understand the information that is evoking that particular response.

"Some idea or some practice becomes a value when a feeling has been attached to it." (Kawagley 1995, 18)

## *Ways of Knowing*

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I start to make associations of what I am experiencing to other things that I know, the experience is being connected, being stored in my vast cavity of knowing to be recalled when I experience a new place.

When we travel and experience new locations, we are moved by some places. This attachment of emotion to a specific space is what leaves a lasting impression in our memories of places and events. An emotional understanding of the environment allows us to place significance on the experience that we are having, or had.

When I talk with individuals about what they remember from growing up, the places they remember are charged with emotion. Happy or sad, all are memorable. By associating teaching methods into this memorable event, the teachings should also become a part of that memory.

When people talk about their grandparents, individuals tend to recount a wide variety of information in the telling of the story. This retelling is in fact a form of teaching, since the way in which things are done, the processes, the techniques are a part of the story. The knowledge is present, to be recalled when the

memory is triggered by the need to connect with this information.

So how can we take and use this connection between the emotional and the teachings contained in those emotions, the knowledge that is triggered by the thoughts, ideas and memories.

An emotional connection to the environment is an important aspect in helping individuals learn from their surroundings. Emotions are triggers, these are cues to help a person remember. To evoke emotion is to evoke experience. Experience of place. A person then takes more notice of their surroundings, they are changing the way that they are seeing, sensing and experiencing.

An emotional understanding of the environment results from the physical and intellectual connections made in the space. As I start to think about my environment, I start to understand things about that space. I start to make judgements and associations about what I am experiencing. A person starts to feel about what they are shown or informed. An emotional understanding of the environment are these reactions, if I like it, if I don't. I am reacting to it, I have done more than think, I have formed opinions which contain my own perspective.

### **Spiritual Way of Knowing**

A spiritual 'Way of Knowing' requires greater involvement of the person into their environment and thoughts, than the other three aspects of knowing. The spiritual 'Way of Knowing' normally results from going through the three other stages of connecting with the environment. A spiritual connection can be made when the feelings, insights, observations and understandings experienced in an environment is internalized. It is made a part of the perspective, world view and understanding of that person. A spiritual 'way of knowing' the environment is the conversion of information and knowledge into wisdom, which can be applied to other areas of a person's life. The person has the ability to take this new understanding outside of the context in which it was learned.

### *Ways of Knowing*

## Value, Identity, A Way of Seeing

# ways of knowing spiritual

Ways of Knowing, Understanding –  
Spiritual Understanding Aug 3, 2004

The emotional understanding of the environment is the internalization and personalization of an experience. It is a way of seeing what is around me. The information contained in that space, by that space, because of that space. A spiritual understanding takes this experience further. It takes the internalization and thoughts and brings it to another level. The ideas, the thoughts, become an impression that is taken away with me. I now have the ability to take this understanding outside of the context in which I learned it.

It becomes a part of the person, to be taken with them where ever they are going, not to be left, but incorporated and applied to other aspects of their life.

Spiritual - 1. of, relating to, consisting of, or affecting the spirit. 2. Of or relating to sacred matters. 3. Ecclesiastical rather than lay or temporal. (Merriam-Webster Dictionary)

A spiritual 'way of knowing' is less about having a sacred experience with the environment but an experience, which touches some part of a person's understanding or beliefs. A connection can be made any place, at any time, and during any event because the understanding is a result of the internalization of thoughts, feelings and experiences.

A spiritual connection requires the most work from an individual. The transformation of knowledge to wisdom, from emotional, intellectual and physical to spiritual, is dependent on the actions taken by the person. Only they can decide to internalize the information.

## *Ways of Knowing*

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# spiritual

To gain a spiritual understanding is to understand things through my own perspective, because it has now been tainted by my milieu, my sensibilities, the way in which I distinctly see, view, feel and understand the world.

A spiritual connection is less about having a sacred experience with the landscape but an experience that touches some part of my understanding, my beliefs. I can find this in any place, at any time, during any event because this understanding is a result of the internalization of my own thoughts, feelings and experiences.

Spiritual is secular and it is not secular, it is about you, it is about me, it is about us. It is secular and non-secular because we are secular and non-secular. It is about how we view the world. This worldview is how we understand everything around us; it affects the way we interpret, see and think. It guides what we see, what we hear and what we know.

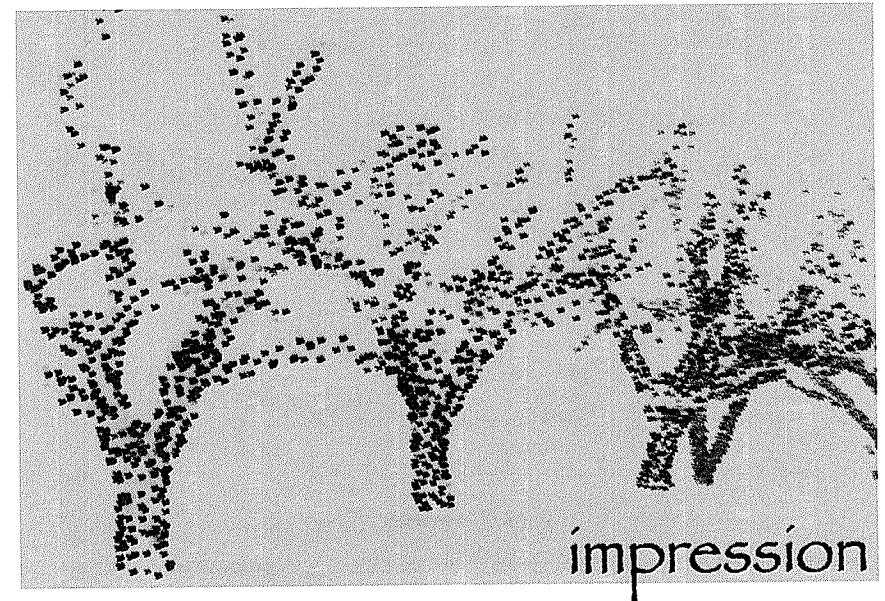
### **Internalization**

The internalization process related to the 'Four Ways of Knowing' is one of the most important aspects of learning. The process relies on the ability to look past the physical level of a situation, event or location, to the deeper meaning beneath the superficial layer seen by all. By going through the internalization process, information and knowledge gained from these experiences, is transformed into wisdom that can be applied to many experiences. Essentially an individual internalizes their experience, learns from it and takes it away with them. It becomes a part of the person, a part of their values and wisdom.

### **Connection With the Environment**

"Yupiaq knowledge was based on a blending of the pragmatic, inductive, and spiritual realms" (Kawagley 1995, 33). The ability to learn from the environment is found in the connections made in that environment. The connections can be made using ceremony or observation, active participation, consciously or unconsciously.

## *Ways of Knowing*



The 'Four Ways of Knowing' are capacities the environment holds. It is provided to people who make the decision to observe, think, feel and understand what is in their surroundings, seen and unseen. "If the information is not valued by the receiver, it will not have very much impact" (Kolmodin and Bartuska 1994, 60). Being exposed to the 'ways of knowing' is not enough. The person needs the 'will' to follow through the many stages of knowing and understanding. "Culture has much to do with our state of mind and the stories are necessary tools for the transmission of appropriate attitudes and values of mind" (Kawagley 1995, 33).

### **Aboriginal Perspective**

Greater insight can be gained about the aboriginal perspective by understanding the 'Four Ways of Knowing' and the ability to connect with the environment on a multitude of levels. The 'Four Ways of Knowing' can be seen as exercises that some aboriginal people use to form their understanding with the environment. Their connection can be made with any environment; the rural landscape; town or community; an urban centre; or education facility. The 'Four Ways of Knowing' helps to identify ways of seeing and is one method for understanding other peoples perspectives.

The role of the designer, Landscape Architect, or professional is as a facilitator. Clients, communities, and Aboriginal groups we may serve know what they need and want. They may require our education and expertise to place their voice into a format that can be read by other professionals and support agencies. It is our duty to use our training and experience to aid in their development. This can be done by creating projects that reflect and respect the various perspectives through constructing landscapes that contribute to the culture and identity, and their ability to use the landscape to pass on teachings.

### ***Schneekloth and Shibley***

### ***Placemaking***

*The world does not exist simply for our consumption. If we pay attention, we will see that it presents itself to us in so many ways as an active presence in our lives – as colors, smells, openings, faces, all enclosing, exposing, or protecting us. Our places offer themselves to us in a special relationship, and as a form of reciprocity our recognition is expected.*<sup>17</sup>

# 4 Ways of Doing

## role of designers

### Profession and Training

As a profession the design field is based on finding solutions to a variety of issues. Designers provide materials, plans and structures that people visit, see, and experience. Essentially the role of a designer is to provide spaces to be used and enjoyed. Stories are constructed and told, images are seen, and experiences are had. Spaces are created that require understanding by the people and communities that use the location. "It is not just about making things, but rather remaking the human presence in the world in a way that honors life and protects human dignity" (Orr 2002, 4). According Schneekloth and Shibley (1995) in Placemaking, the designer's role is in the "translation", "transformation" and "knowledge construction" fields (10).

Designers and professionals conduct research to develop strategies, narratives, and concepts. However, the spaces created also contribute to the social and cultural fabric of the communities as mentioned by Baptist (2001) while discussing the role the environment has in educational experience of children. "People-built elements are a part of our culture and represent ways that humans solve complex problems. To learn about, to value, and to ultimately protect their world, children need to experience it fully in both its natural and built forms" (132).

***Barry Lopez***

***Arctic Dreams***

*One of our long-lived cultural differences with the Eskimo has been over whether to accept the land as it is or to exert the will to change it into something else. 411*

"Part of the professional's role is to embed the work, research, and action in the framework of the people who must live in, manage, and maintain the environment in question" (Schneekloth and Shibley 1995, 9). Projects are based around clients, organizations and communities, who at times, have different values and perspectives from the designer. This creates the need to provide spaces that not only answer the requirements laid out in the project, but also incorporate the 'unnamed' needs the client may not know they have.

### **Constructed Landscapes**

Understanding how people learn is important. It is also important to understand one's own learning process. Understanding brings appreciation and the ability to learn from events and experience faced throughout life. This understanding of the learning process provides a base for helping others learn from the environment.

Landscape Architects use constructed landscapes to enable 'experiences of place'. Information is conveyed and social, cultural and environmental needs are satisfied in the planning and design of the projects. "The built environment emerges not only from attempts to fulfill personal and societal needs and wants, but also reflects personal and collective values" (Bartuska and Young 1994, 10). It is essential that the designer understand 'whom' they are working for and have tools needed to convey the clients' messages to the greater public. The 'Four Ways of Knowing' and understanding of the learning process are great starting points for including a client's or community's perspective into the project.



### Comparing Perspectives

Understanding one's own perspective gives the designer an insight into how they learn, where their ideas are generated from and how the surrounding environment might influence their thoughts, suggestions and designs. This understanding can also help a designer know what information and experience they have and where more questions may need to be asked. This will enable the designer to compare their own perspective to other individuals. Similarities and differences can be ascertained and common ground achieved when having to deal with a single individual or a number of people simultaneously in a project. This is especially important when the project requires the designer to incorporate diverse cultural needs, personal perspectives and criteria.

Designers need to have the ability to understand and incorporate diverse perspectives into their work especially when dealing with cross-cultural situations or projects. Sometimes while working with other cultures or perspectives there is a fear of offending the clients or communities they are engaged with. By having an understanding of the client's perspectives and what contributes to them, the designer is better able to find similarities and differences between their own world view and the community's. This process can help eliminate some of the mysteries that are associated with cultural traditions and ceremonies. The ability to understand and incorporate other perspectives is an essential tool every designer should have in their training.

### Bus-ride Transcripts

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March 8.04 - Multiple understandings of the environment. We have to be able to answer the questions, by providing the information in a variety of perspectives. So individuals have the choice to read it in a number of ways. To engage the reader into the story.

I can see the greenroof design as a story. Something told to provide the listener with the facts, to draw them into the experience, to internalize. By internalizing they are able to take it away, as a part of their understanding.

I can start to see/hear the story the roof space will tell, a narrative to be beside, along with, part of the design. But the meaning of the story is up to the interpreter, the audience.

## Writing a Textbook

In Those Who Fell From the Sky: A History of the Cowichan People it is commented that the landscape is a textbook containing the history of the land and people, which could be read by all individuals (Marshall 1999). Designers are also writing textbooks that contribute to the generation of knowledge and understanding. Each landscape has the potential to be used to pass on information and it is important to provide a framework for this transfer to happen. To succeed there needs to be an understanding of how people may 'read' our work (experience of place).

### Thomas King

### The Truth About Telling Stories

*Narcisse Blood is a good friend. One time he took me out to visit his grandfather, who lived in a small house on the reserve. The old man had a garden, and he took me through it, showing me each plant. Later we had tea in his kitchen.*

*Did I know about the big storm? He asked  
I had to admit that I didn't  
It was a big one, he said. It came up quick and hard.*

*So I told him about my trip from Salt Lake City to Lethbridge and how we had been trapped under a freeway overpass by a storm.*

*Yes, those storms can be tricky, he told me. You see those tomatoes out there? From the kitchen window you could see his garden. The tomato plants were just beginning to produce fruit.*

*When that storm came through, I was just getting ready to pick my tomatoes. They were big and red. Real ripe. But that storm beat me to it. First the rain. And then the hail.*

*And here the old man stopped and helped himself to more tea. Then he sat back and looked at the table.  
I tried to be sympathetic. You must have been upset, I said.*

*Nope, said the old man, without even the hint of a smile. Always good to have some ketchup. 112*

## Bus-ride Transcripts

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February 28.04 - It is not necessarily complex understanding of the environment but the world-view. How we see and how we understand.

It is strongly tied to past, history. But I question the transition of a traditional/spiritual connection to the land, and how this can be integrated into the urban context.

Learning the land, the bush. These people will not know these aspects to experience them personally. Does that mean that they will not be able to truly experience a true connection with the landscape. Or is it the ability to take what is around you by living by the morals, beliefs, and the context can be anything.

That is what D. Mercredi was talking about in "Eagle Dancer", the ability to connect mind, spirit and body can happen in any location because this connection is an internal event. It is your ability to see, to listen and watch what is around you. Learning through observation.

Baptist (2001) quotes Sewell "A finely tuned imagination is informed by the physical world, drawing from the past and present, and from the edges of our awareness. At the edges of our visual field and at the edges of our consciousness, the world is almost not quite known. The edge is where our known experience becomes flavored with the unknown, where imagination steps forward into the realm of possibility" (51).

When using the environment as a textbook, a designer should keep in mind the three essential variables in any experience: People – the essential participants; Built Environment – the humanly created component; Surrounding – The environmental context (both built and natural) (Bartuska and Young 1994, 33). The ability to develop culturally specific projects requires an understanding of how the people may interact with the environment. One place to start is investigating how people may 'see' or read the textbook the designer has created.

*Whatever evaluation we finally make of a stretch of land, however, no matter how profound or accurate, we will find it inadequate. The land retains an identity of its own, still deeper and more subtle than we can know. Our obligation toward it then becomes simple: to approach with an uncalculating mind, with an attitude of regard. To try to sense the range and variety of its expression - its weather and colors and animals. To intend from the beginning to preserve some of the mystery within it as a kind of wisdom to be experienced, not questioned. And to be alert for its openings, for that moment when something sacred reveals itself within the mundane and you know the land knows you are there. 228*

**Ways of Seeing**

Understanding how people see and incorporating these ideas into designs will enable the visitor to engage the space in new ways. "Learners can begin to see familiar environments in new and startling ways" (Baptist 2001, 45). The message, or text, of the landscape must be decided upon and incorporated into the process.

"Every image embodies a way of seeing" (Berger 1972, 10). The meanings people receive from their environments changes with the 'way' a person sees it. For a person to be able to read the textbook being written into the landscape, requires thought into how to capture the sight to the viewer. Baptist (2001) comments, "learning to see requires practice, risk-taking, and a deliberate awakening of conscious perception" (33). The space must draw from a recognizable image that speaks to the person drawing from personal memories or sparks curiosity.

**Passing on Information**

"Architectural design is unavoidably a kind of crystallized pedagogy that instructs in powerful but subtle ways. It teaches participation or exclusion. It directs what we see, how we move, and our sense of time and space. It affects how and how well we relate to each other, how carefully we relate to the natural systems from which we extract energy and materials and to which we consign our wastes. Most importantly, it influences how we think and how we think about thinking" (Orr 2002, 137).

One goal a designer should consider in their work is to pass on information using the spaces they created and built. The information could include technology, social or cultural issues, or identity. It is the concepts that drive the research and the investigations used in the design process. No matter what the project consists of information will be included, intentionally and unintentionally. It would be better to insure that the messages included reflects the perspective of the client and designer. "At what rate can we process information, or sift through the daily tidal wave of information to find that which is important or even correct?" (Orr 2002, 65). The outcome is to have the information intentionally included in the design being 'read' or seen first.

## Ceremonies and the Land

## Landscapes Perceived

Ceremonies are used as a tool to alter the way a person interacts with their environment. In the past Aboriginal people would provide prayers for many of the tasks performed throughout the day. The people would give thanks and say a prayer for the food they collected, the animals they killed, and for the resources provided for them. An elder spoke about how his family would say a prayer when they crossed the river.

A connection can be made using the action of ceremonies and the way that people viewed and understood their environment. Conducting prayers places an individual within a specific mind set in which they would look at the elements and the world around them. This mind set was essential in the aboriginal culture since it is the basis for their connection with the environment, with Mother Earth. Ceremony and rituals can give the environment a new meaning and role in the lives of the people there. If this is done naturally, why not incorporate it into design.

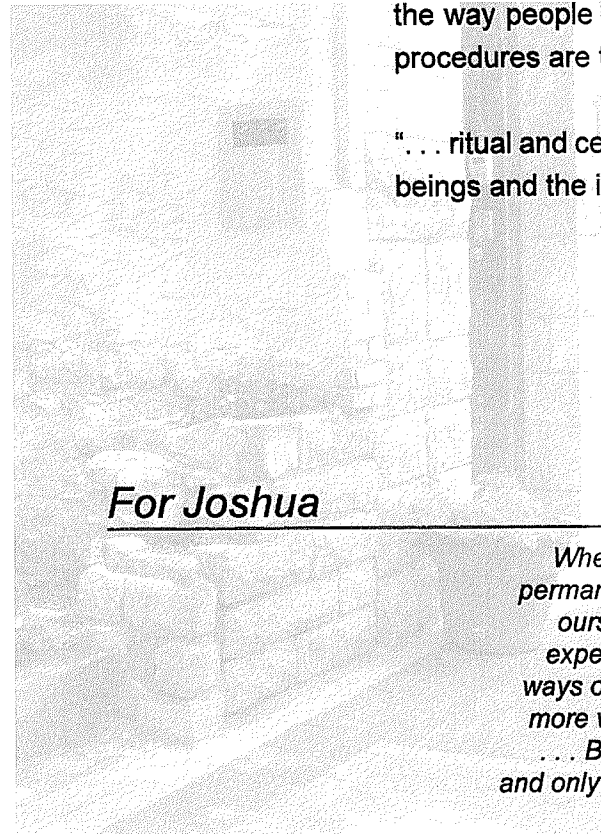
Each space produced by designers has a purpose. A Teaching Landscape has the purpose to pass on information. Is it possible to place the visitors to the spaces into a mind set that readies them to learn the ideas and thoughts contained in the space? Yes it is possible.

The challenge is to construct an experience that takes a person through a series of exercises. These exercises are meant to open the mind to the ideas that are contained in the space. To provide them with an introduction, consciously or unconsciously, to what they are to be experiencing. The experience is similar to a ritual or altering of the mind set, opening up the mind to the many possibilities contained in the space. And as with the Aboriginal ceremonies that opens the mind to the interconnectedness of all the elements in the environment, visitors can open their mind to the information contained in their surrounds. The goal is to change the way in which they see their surroundings.

"When we 'see' a landscape, we situate ourselves in it" (Berger 1972, 11). A role of the designer is identifying what type of experience the constructed landscape may provide. Is the space for meeting, training, community work, economic development, personal expression. The type of space decided upon ultimately affects the project development and how the experience is organized.

"In a film the way one image follows another, their succession, constructs an argument which becomes irreversible" (Berger 1972, 26). A landscape can also be laid out in the same fashion. The context provided by the landscape will influence the way people experience and read their environment. Ceremonies, events and procedures are tools that can be used to construct an experience.

"... ritual and ceremony enable them to recognize their own uniqueness as human beings and the interconnectedness of all." (Kawagley 1995, 35)



### *For Joshua*

*Richard Wagamese*

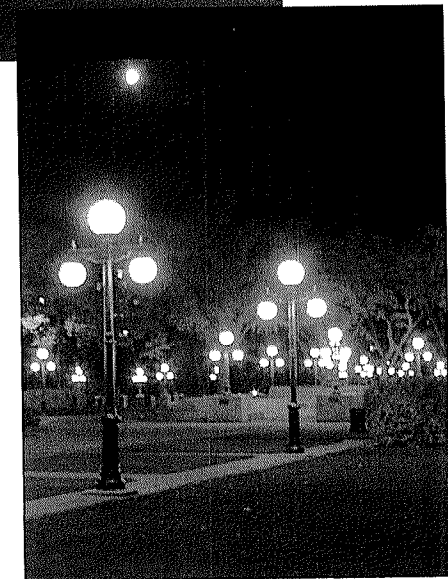
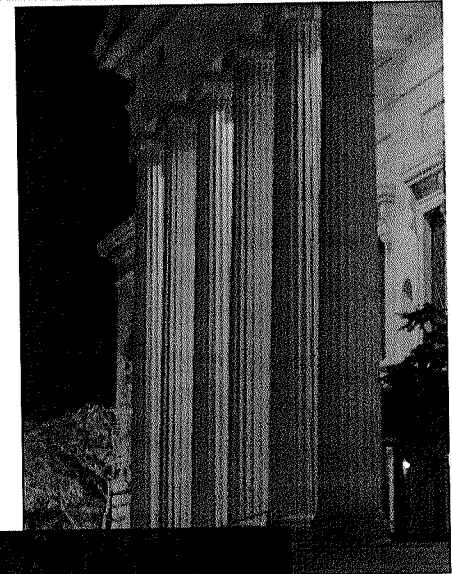
*When we travelled about in the days long past, it wasn't a search for permanence that drove us. For one place on the land that we could call ours. It wasn't a search for a territory we could control. It was for the experience of the land.... Our travels gave us new perspectives, new ways of seeing, new teachings and a renewed sense of ourselves. The more we experienced of the land, the more we experienced ourselves. ... But our people knew that we are who we are because of the land, and only through experience combined with teachings could we gain true knowledge. So we travelled. We experienced. 214*

### Constructing Experiences

Knowledge generation is another role of the design profession. Orr (2002) comments, "the design of buildings and landscape is thought to have little or nothing to do with the process of learning or the quality of scholarship that occurs in a particular place. But in fact, buildings and landscape reflect a hidden curriculum that powerfully influences the learning process" (127).

Teaching Landscapes is about constructing experiences enabling the visitors to travel through the 'Four Ways of Knowing'. The idea is to provide information, knowledge and wisdom about the environment using their understanding and perspective. Technology, method and process can be combined constructing an engaging experience that provides information. Essentially it is the creation of a constructed landscape curriculum. According to Baptist (2001) "Curriculum and curriculum inquiry should inspire wide awakesness; a positioning in the world where eyes are open to the potential of making meaning from an infinite range of experiences" (2).

The built environment has the potential to instruct the general public, if given the opportunity. "The curriculum embedded in any building instructs as fully and as powerfully as any course taught in it" (Orr 2002, 128). Study of human through their interaction with environmental variables provides a better understanding of the purpose and quality of the built environment (Bartuska and Young 1994).



The experiences being created in the environment must include the perspectives of the client and community commissioning the work. The idea of incorporating diverse perspectives into the design requires the ability to listen and comprehend what the people are sharing about their perspective, but also what they are not sharing. It is the responsibility of the designer to interpret these ideas and thoughts into their solutions.

### **Diverse Perspectives**

Each person coming to the table in the design process has a personal perspective. The ability to understand diverse perspectives is important for a design, as well as the skill to incorporate the perspectives into the project. Incorporating the diverse perspectives add value to the process by providing a 'holistic' view. A wider audience could be reached since a variety of values, ideas and solutions resulting from the multiple perspectives is strengthened by the resources and experiences of the members involved.

## *Invisible Cities*

*Italo Calvino*

CITIES & DESIRE

*In the centre of Fedora, that gray stone metropolis, stands a metal building with a crystal globe in every room. Looking into each globe, you see a blue city, the model of a different Fedora. These are the forms the city could have taken if, for one reason or another, it had not become what we see today. In every age someone, looking at Fedora as it was, imagined a way of making it the ideal city, but while he constructed the miniature model, Fedora was already no longer the same as before, and what had been until yesterday a possible future became only a toy in a glass globe.*

*The building with the globes is now Fedora's museum; every inhabitant visits it, chooses the city that corresponds to his desires, contemplates it, imagining his reflection in the medusa pond that would have collected the waters of the canal (if it had not been dried up), the view from the high canopied box, along the avenue reserved for elephants (now banished from the city), the fun of sliding down the spiral, twisting minaret (which never found a pedestal from which to rise).*

*On the map of your empire, O Great Khan, there must be room for both the big, stone Fedora and the little Fedoras in glass globes. Not because they are all equally real, but because all are only assumptions. The one contains what is accepted as necessary when it is not yet so; the others, what is imagined as possible and, a moment later, is possible no longer. 32*

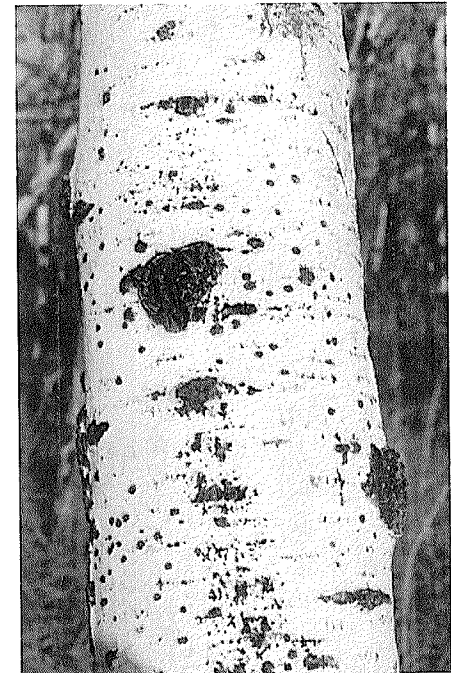
## Arctic Dreams

Barry Lopez

*Hunting in my experience - and by hunting I simply mean being out on the land - is a state of mind. All of one's faculties are brought to bear in an effort to become fully incorporated into the landscape. It is more than listening for animals or watching for hoofprints or a shift in the weather. It is more than an analysis of what one senses. To hunt means to have the land around you like clothing. To engage in a wordless dialogue with it, one so absorbing that you cease to talk with your human companions. It means to release yourself from rational images of what something "means" and to be concerned only that it "is". And then to recognize that things exist only insofar as they can be related to other things. These relationships - fresh drops of moisture on top of rocks at a river crossing and a raven's distant voice - become patterns. The patterns are always in motion. Suddenly the pattern - which includes physical hunger, a memory of your family, and memories of the valley you are walking through, these particular plants and smells - takes in the caribou. There is a caribou standing in front of you. The release of the arrow or bullet is like a word spoken out loud. It occurs at the periphery of your concentration. 199*

Understanding diverse perspectives requires the designer to use the tool of listening. They then have to sift through the layers of information provided by reaching the fundamental base for the different perspectives. Questions such as – What is it? Why does it exist? – can help to identify the structure and formation of the perspective base (Schneekloth and Shibley 1995).

"By asking questions about the history and societal purposes of any place (such as an institution, city or neighbourhood), the views of the multiple members, and the power relationships, one gains insights into how the environment is used to support, maintain, and/or subvert the agreed-on purpose of the social form" (Schneekloth and Shibley 1995, 13). When dealing with an aboriginal perspective it should be noted that people are in the middle of fundamental changes in their perspectives and lifestyles, resulting in a dynamic and diverse group of people. Understanding needs to be flexible, changing as people react to the outside influences occurring in the community.



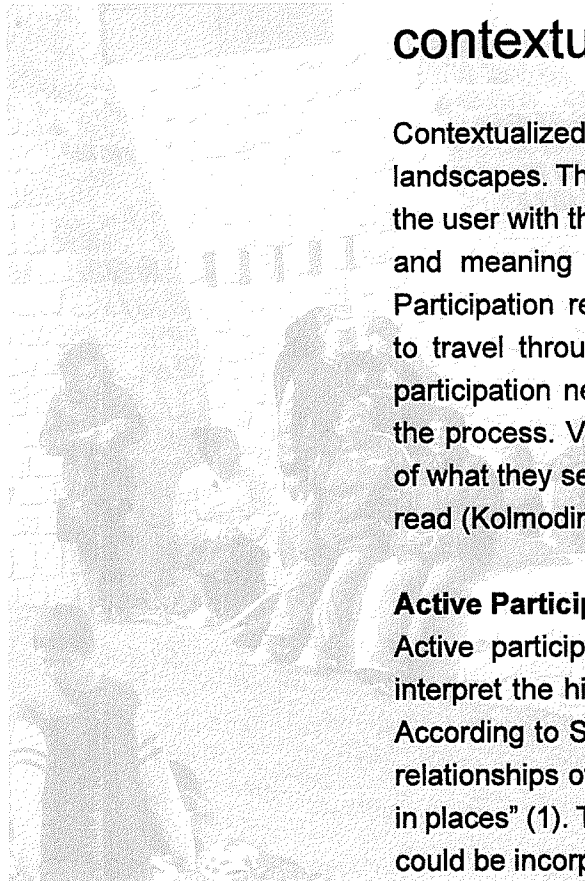
The ability to understand diverse perspectives comes down to the skills of listening and learning. "The confirmation of the everyday experience of people occurs through careful observation and through much talking and listening in workshops, meetings, and interviews that carefully record participants perceptions and values" (Schneekloth and Shibley 1995, 9). It requires a sensitivity to understand what is being shared about the individual's perspective and what is not. The process also requires the understanding of the history of the people, their worldviews and things affecting it. There is no way to truly understand and incorporate all perspectives, but the effort to try should be made.

## contextualized learning events

Contextualized learning events can be used to pass on information in constructed landscapes. The 'experience of place' should have a hands-on element integrating the user with their environment. "Learners construct body experiences, memories and meaning through interactions with the living world" (Baptist 2001, 94). Participation results in a better experience allowing the people an opportunity to travel through the 'Four Ways of Knowing'. This will create the interactive participation needed to learn from the environment and incorporate the user in the process. Visitors remember more of what they do than what they see, more of what they see than what they hear, and more of what they hear than what they read (Kolmodin and Bartuska 1994).

### Active Participation

Active participation provides an individual the opportunity to investigate and interpret the history and culture of the environment using their own perspective. According to Schneekloth and Shibley (1995) "Placemaking is not just about the relationships of people to their places; it also creates relationships among people in places" (1). The visitors will be able to connect with the diverse perspectives that could be incorporated in the constructed landscape.



## Seabird Island First Sustainable Community Demonstration Project

### Spiritual Healing Garden

### Landscapes Perceived

The Seabird Island First Nation is located an hour outside of Vancouver, British Columbia. The community has completed a demonstration project that contains residential units and garden area. The project contains a number of interesting features that place it at the forefront of sustainable design, planning and technology. The project focus was to address community concern on housing and was to have community involvement. The plans were to include traditions and culture of the Sto:lo people.

The Spiritual Healing Garden is one element included in the sustainable community plan. The Garden is the cultural focal point of the seven residential units and connects the new housing with existing residential areas. The site is bordered by a seasonal stream and riparian area.

The Spiritual Healing Garden and the Demonstration Project is meant to reflect social values and design. According to Broadway Architects, elders designed

the Garden and school children were growing plants to be placed in the garden. Totem figures, carved by local artists stand at each cardinal point and depicts animals or human figures.

After construction of the first residential units were completed. The community, residents, elders and children have not used the Spiritual Healing Garden. Planting has not occurred and no plans are in place to maintain the new community space. The Garden is a tangle of weeds that have grown in place.

These developments raise questions about the actual community involvement in the planning and design of the Spiritual Healing Garden. I wonder if the Garden was the best element to develop within the community. I also look at the design and placement of the medicine wheel on the lands of the West Coast Salish People. This is the application of a symbol used by Aboriginal people from other parts of the country.

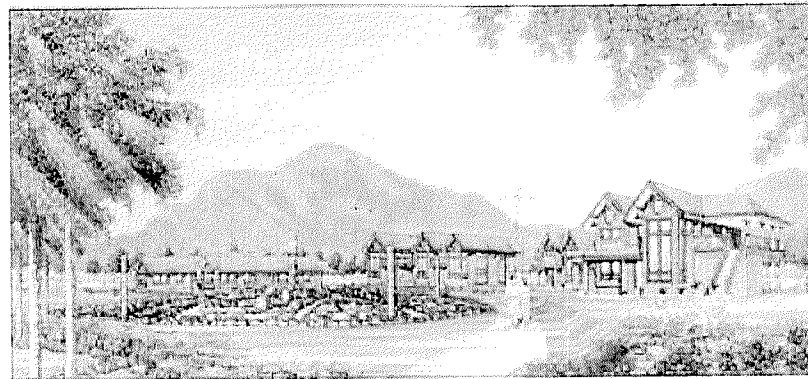


Image 1:  
Concept Drawing Seabird Island Sustainable  
Communities Demonstration Project. Source:  
Broadway Architects

## Reflection

How can we get the community more involved in the space now that it is complete?

How can we put in place a plan to maintain and use the space provided to the community?

How can we create a space that can be utilized by a number of different users such as community members, residents, elders and children?

How can we represent local culture without the over application of symbols such as the medicine wheel?

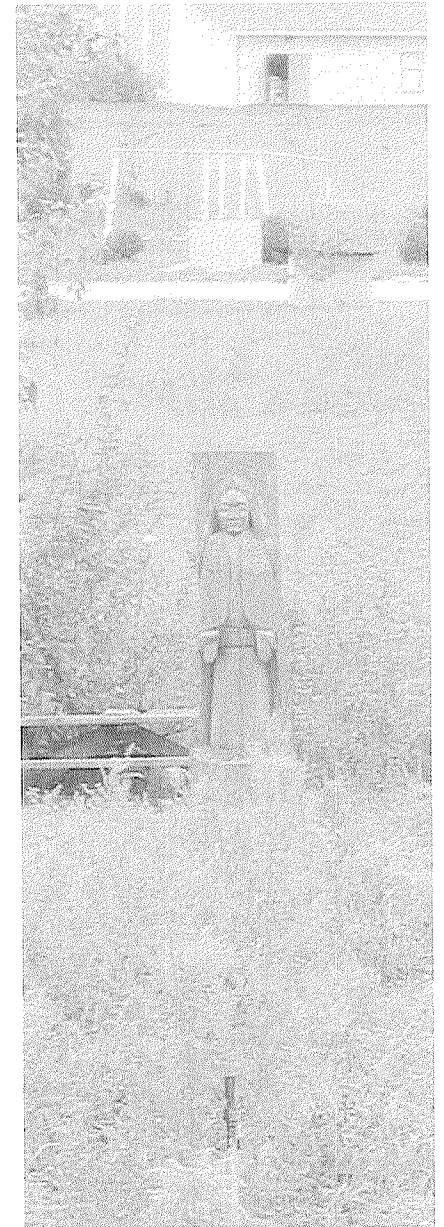
How can we incorporate teachings in the space to be experienced by members of the community?

How can we contribute to the communication of culture and traditions from the different generations within the community.

Image 2: Spiritual Healing Garden September 2004



Image 3: Female totem figure



"We drink of the world with our senses, pilot earthly landscapes through the movement of our limbs and share interpretations of our lived-world through embodied creation such as music, dance, sculpture, architecture, gardens and play." (Baptist 2001, 68)

Teaching and learning is about exposure to a variety of thoughts and ideas. Contextualized learning events allow individuals to leave with knowledge and wisdom that incorporates not only their own values, beliefs and world-views, but that of others. As designers, features can be incorporated into the spaces that engage the view into the environment. Many of these features can be seen in the interpretive programs that use the environment to teach. These elements can be incorporated into the constructed landscape as a tool to solicit participation into the space.

### *Whispering in Shadows*

*Jeannette Armstrong*

*Penny chuckles and motions Julie in the direction of the comfortable looking champagne lounge chair with bright satin pillows.*

*Penny this chair is heaven. I would never have thought of putting it in the kitchen. All your chairs in here are great . . . . We think of kitchen chairs for the kitchen and sitting room chairs for the living room. To you a chair is to sit on. Period. Comfortably if possible. You're always so radical.*

*Maybe not knowing stuff like that is radical. I'm not sure. But I think it's just common sense. 78*



### **Incorporation in the Process**

Participation within the finished project is a goal of Teaching Landscapes however, an even better step is to integrate the people in the process of the project. This step goes past providing information for the design to help in formulating ideas and to learn about the design process. This is building capacity among the people, contributing to their knowledge and wisdom. This is an opportunity to introduce another perspective than the one they have. The relationship between the designers and the client changes from information flowing in one direction – community to designer – to include designer to community.

The ability to learn on the job: first by watching, then trying, and followed by instruction on the parts they did not understand. Team members involved in the project first start by watching to see how the process works, and then using activities designed for participation in the process. These activities should provide an understanding of the decisions being made and the results they have in the overall project. This model is included in an integrated design process used by many design firms.

### ***Barry Lopez***

### ***Arctic Dreams***

*This is an old business, walking slowly over the land with an appreciation of its immediacy to the senses and in anticipation of what lies hidden in it. The eye alights suddenly on something bright in the grass - the chitinous shell of an insect. The nose tugs at a minute blossom for some traces of arctic perfume. The hands turn over an odd bone, extrapolating, until the animal is discovered in the mind and seen to be moving in the land. One finds anomalous stones to puzzle over, and in footprints and broken spiderwebs the traces of irretrievable events. 254*

The conceptual environment: refers to a society's cultural world, including the built environment, a world shaped by ideas and human thought (Bartuska and Young 1994). Contextualized learning events are about participation of people into their environment and the design process. This participation is essential for Teaching Landscapes.

## stories being created

Constructing Landscapes is about creating stories of using the environment. "Where once stories detailed shared experiences, today it may be mostly the stories themselves that offer common ground. Once you start hearing the stories, you are becoming 'related', because the story is, as Terry Tempest Williams says, 'the umbilical cord between past, present and future' (Lippard 1997, 50).

Stories help to engage people into the process of learning. Aboriginal people used stories to provide the opportunity to learn. The person could absorb as much as they were capable of at that time. Retelling of the stories happened when they could learn more. Creating a story from the environment uses the 'writings' we have imbedded in the 'natural' textbooks. It is the meanings toward and features included in the constructed landscapes. The stories are the things that are ultimately felt, seen and heard by the people.

"She looks directly at what is, looking into the world and then beyond the edge of presumed reality, cultivating the power to translate between seen and unseen realms with attention and imagination (Sevell observation)" (Baptist 2001, 9). Constructing landscapes provides the opportunity to other designers, communities and clients to provide something everlasting, like a story. These spaces evolve with the changing times. The stories found in the space will generate new stories and an understanding that speaks to the individual personally. 'I was at this presentation and it fascinated me' or 'I was at this building and it was amazing'. These are capacities constructed landscapes contain. The decisions are identifying what story to tell, what experience to provide, and how to do it.

The stories do not need to be elaborate. Make them simple and un-complex. Too many stories packed into one space will get lost in the telling. Each space should represent one element, one thought. It can be embellished on later. That is part of the planning for flexibility and the evolution of the space.

### *Arctic Dreams* *Barry Lopez*

*A few years ago there were three birch trees in an atrium in the building's lobby. In September their leaves turned yellow and curled over. Then they just hung there, because the air in the enclosure was too still. No wind. Fall came when a man from building maintenance went in and shook the tree. 396*

In the end visitors should have an experience that is engaging, informative and fun. Integrating the idea of 'stories being creating' can make the process interactive. Constructed Landscapes not only tell a story using the environment; it provides insights into the perspective of the designer. "We need more fluid ways of perceiving the layers that are everywhere, and new ways of calling attention to the passages between old and new, of weaving the old place into a new place" (Lippard 1997, 85).

## 5 Changing the Way Things are Done

Designers use their education and the profession to create constructed landscapes. They need to compare perspectives, first by understanding their own. They must look at 'ways of seeing', and how people engage in their spaces. The goal is to pass on information using constructed experiences that incorporate diverse perspectives. Contextualized learning events require active participation and an incorporation of team members, clients and visitors in the process. A designer creates stories of place, taking a person through 'Four Ways of Knowing' and the creation of personal wisdom, that effects the person's understanding of the environment and themselves.

To be able to do these things, we must change the ways things are done. This practicum project has brought to light many tools that can be used to create Teaching Landscapes. It outlines the importance of a 'personal understanding of the environment' and the knowledge and wisdom that is contained there. Teaching Landscapes draws from learning from the land, the natural textbooks, knowledge and information, and personal perspectives. It depends on 'ways of knowing', the creation of a land ethic, worldview and connections with the environment. It can also be affected by the particular 'way of seeing' used. In the end, Teaching Landscapes comes down to the 'ways of doing' and the role the designer plays in the process.

### **Capricorn** (Dec.22-Jan.19)

*It's important to focus  
your mind and believe  
in yourself right now.  
That's because hidden,  
little doubts somewhere  
in the deep ether of your  
subconscious now erode  
your self-confidence. The  
paralysis of the negative!  
(Being a perfectionist  
isn't easy in this imperfect  
world.) The good news is  
that VIPs, bosses, parents  
and teachers totally prove  
of you now. Wonderful  
opportunities come your  
way to boost your career  
and make a name for  
yourself. Your soft, caring,  
generous side shows now.*

## Reflections

I have chosen to concentrate on telling a particular story. I have been trying to understand what it is to be an aboriginal designer and what elements might make up a design that incorporates an aboriginal perspective. I want others to understand that this struggle exists. That making something personally meaningful is important but it also affects and contributes to a greater circle. It can go beyond the individual and to the public, the culture and identity of the people experiencing our spaces.

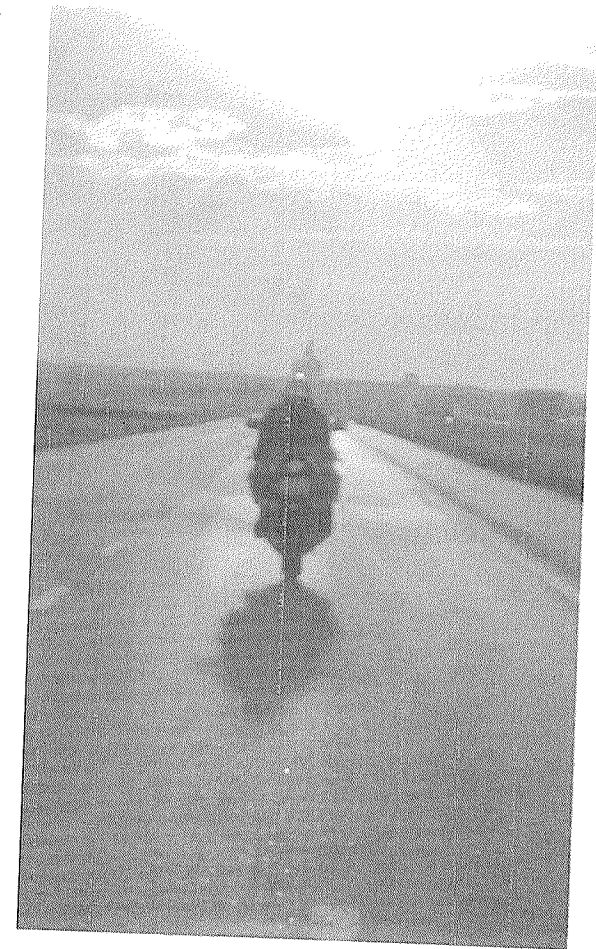
A next step in this process would be an investigation into designs and projects that contribute to culture, identity and understanding of a perspective and a world view. It need not be aboriginal design but a design that reflects the ideas, ideologies and understandings of a people. It has to go past the application of symbols (superficial or not) but something that teaches.

I venture that this issue will be surfacing more often as societies change and the world becomes more integrated and diluted. Communities are fighting to maintain and strengthen their identifies and cultures. The aboriginal communities are in this position. Their lives have changed, their communities have been altered, and values are being imported into their homes. New housing, planning, relocation of urban centres, loss of language, . . . the list goes on.

Changing the way things are done is about helping these individuals to reconnect with their teachings and perspective by using the education received as a designer. The hope is to help them identify, voice, and represent their ideas within the spaces we design. By incorporating them into the process and having them teach us, they are investigating for themselves as well.

"In a half century the average person has learned to recognize more than 1,000 corporate logos but can recognize fewer than 10 plants and animals native to their locality" (Orr 2002, 54).

What mark do I want to leave?



I had set out with this work to create a project that depicted an Aboriginal greenroof design. It was to incorporate medicinal plants, cultural features, and be used to teach information about Aboriginal people. During the stages of the project my focus shifted from the design to the process of learning from the environment.

This work has helped me understand a different process. Not a new process, for I am sure that there are other people out there that have these same thoughts, but a process that reflects my world view, perspective, and personal understanding of the environment. It has changed the way I think about space, my consultations with groups, and what it is I want to learn from my experiences.

I have taken these insights with me as I visited First Nation communities for my work outside of the academic realm. Going through this personal journey while traveling and talking with community members has provided a testing ground for the ideas I was generating about my own understanding and what other aboriginal people saw within the environment. It has challenged what I thought I knew, confirmed ideas I had, and influenced the paths I could explore.

I now understand this process and can see how projects - introduced to me during history and design theory courses - reflect or use many of the ideas I have written about. It has brought my understanding full circle, which is what I think the master's practicum is about. It is about bringing together all the information and knowledge you have experienced through your educational and personal experiences and creating your own personal wisdom.

I have shared my new understanding, my own wisdom with you. This work is a personal perspective, one that has been influenced by the experiences provided in this work, and much more I was not able to include. I hope that you take my experiences and the voices I have shared and create your own wisdom.

Christine



final thought

i do what i do . . . .  
i see what i see . . . .  
i think what i think . . . .  
i know what i know . . . .  
i live as i live . . . .

.. because of who i am

what do you do?  
what do you see?  
what do you think?  
what do you know?

who are you?



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